

Mennonite Historian

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



Mennonite Historical Society of Canada annual meeting in Winnipeg on November 30, 2001. Seated (l-r): Ted Friesen, Winnipeg, James Urry (guest from New Zealand), Royden Loewen, Steinbach, David Giesbrecht, Clearbrook, Laureen Harder. Middle Row: Linda Hecht, Kitchener, Natalya Ostasheva Venger (guest from Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine), Marlene Epp, Waterloo. Back Row: Abe Dueck, Winnipeg, Victor Wiebe, Saskatoon, Alf Redekopp, Winnipeg, Ted Regehr, Calgary, Bert Friesen, Winnipeg, Jake Peters, Winnipeg, Richard Thiessen, Abbotsford, Henry Fast, Steinbach, Leonard Doell, Aberdeen, Sam Steiner, Waterloo. Photo: Courtesy of Susan Brandt.

The Bergthal Colony Revisited: Some New Sources for Community and Family Research

William Schroeder's study titled *The Bergthal Story* made its mark for many Russian Mennonites when it first appeared in 1973. A third edition has appeared by now¹. Since then a number of other people have visited the former Mennonite villages of this colony. Some of these still exist in Ukraine today. Their beginnings and relatively short earlier life continue to interest people whose roots and experience remain a part of their "community family tree".

Two recently-uncovered sources will be discussed here. One is a diary written in German long-hand entitled "Tagebuch

gefuehrt von David Epp in Chortitz 1837 Jan. 1 ten" (Diary kept by David Epp of Chortitz 1837 Jan 1). It is the first ledger of a longer series of diaries kept after that date by David's son, Jacob, who lived in the Judenplan for some years².

David Epp's diary was recently published by John B. Toews in an English translation as *The Diaries of David Epp 1837-1843*. The published portion of the diary begins with an entry for 1 January 1837³. That was less than a year after a number of families of the Chortitza colony left to establish a daughter colony

(cont'd on p. 2)

Mennonite Historical Society encourages "Divergent Voices"

WINNIPEG, MAN. – The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada heard an update on "Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites" at its annual meeting at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg on November 30, 2001.

The two current DVCM projects are a book by Marlene Epp on the history of Canadian Mennonite women, currently in the early stages of writing, and a conference on the "Return of the *Kanadier* to Canada" scheduled for October 3-4, 2002 in Winnipeg.

Mennonite Central Committee Canada has provided \$48,000 in funding over six years for four "Divergent Voices" projects. A major conference on Aboriginal-Mennonite relations was held in 2000, and a conference on Asian and African refugees who have been assisted by Canadian Mennonites has been tentatively scheduled for 2004.

The Society also heard the *Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* (CMEO) sponsored by the Society continues to increase its profile. Over 175,000 different persons have visited the site since April 2000, with 650 visitors each day. The CMEO editorial committee has mandated a series of new biographies to be written for the encyclopedia in the next year. The site is located at <http://www.mhsc.ca>.

The board authorized a Global Mennonite History conference focused on the North American Mennonite experience to be held in 2003, and set aside \$5000 for that purpose. The conference will inform the writing of a volume on the Mennonite experience in Canada and the United States. The Global Mennonite History Project hopes to have the African and Latin American volumes ready for the Mennonite World Conference assembly in 2003.

Other actions included appointment of Jake L. Peters and Leonard Doell to study the feasibility of a cooperative effort to create one or more memorials for Canadian conscientious objectors. This study responds to interest in having such a memorial at the International Peace Gardens near Boissevain, Manitoba.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada was first established in 1966 to sponsor the *Mennonites in Canada* history series by Frank H. Epp and Ted Regehr.

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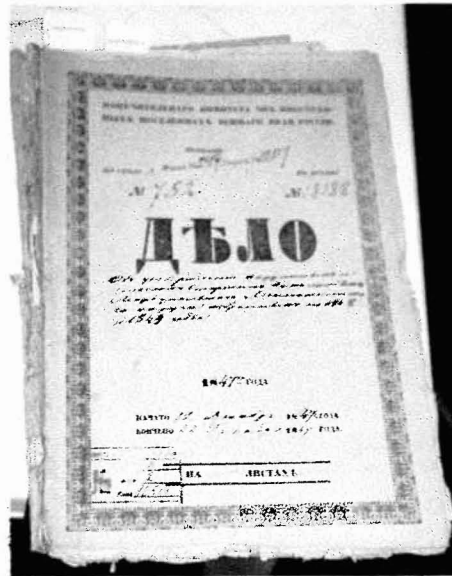
New Sources for Bergthal (cont'd from p. 1)

Bergthal. It lay just over 200 kilometres (about 120 miles) east and south of Chortitza, and north of Mariupol on the Azov Sea.

On 29 January Epp entered minutes from a meeting held at the home of Aeltester Jakob Dyck in Rosenthal. The notes mention a decision to transfer a teacher, Jakob Braun, who was originally from Schoeneberg and then of the Bergthal settlement, to the Chortitza colony, in the spring of the year. Another Jakob Braun, minister in the Chortitza colony, was also present at the meeting.

On 31 October Epp recorded "Aeltester Jakob Dyck, brother W[ilhelm] Penner and J[akob] Braun left for the Bergthal settlement this afternoon. They want to celebrate communion and engage in some discussion." Bergthal connections are alluded to in numerous further entries. To check a few more one may follow a trail of activities for Minister Jakob Braun who is first mentioned as preaching at Neu Osterwick, one of the Chortitza villages, on 17 January 1837.

It is known that Minister Jakob Braun also moved to Bergthal when the new



Cover page of a file containing Bergthal records in the Odessa State Archives in Ukraine. Photo courtesy of Gordon Gerbrand, Denver, Colorado.

settlement began. Several written sources say he moved with the first settlers in 1836. The diary ends the preaching rotation of Braun in the Chortitza colony with a sermon on 20 February 1837. It would appear that he moved to the new colony soon after that, and not when the first settlers left for Bergthal in the spring of 1836. The next entry referring to his preaching mentions his coming from Bergthal to preach at Neuendorf on the "the first day of Pentecost" on 14 May 1839⁴.

On 21 August 1840 Epp recorded that Aeltester Jakob Dyck and Minister Heinrich Penner had gone to Bergthal to conduct a ministers' and deacons' election. For 28 August the diary recorded the return of these men after the ordination of Jakob Braun as Aeltester for Bergthal, along with the election of Peter Epp as minister and Abraham von Baergen as deacon. An installation for Braun is mentioned in the entry for 11 October that same year. Family records note that Braun was chosen as minister at Chortitza on 2 October 1824, elected as Aeltester at Bergthal on 25 August 1840, and ordained as such by Aeltester Jakob Dyck the next day.

Other facts about the Braun family are of particular interest for our family. Jakob Braun was married to Susanna Lemke (Leike?) and they had eleven children. The fourth child, Justina was born on 18 September 1821, and married Abraham Rempel on 18 June 1839. Their son Abraham (1845-1923) married Helena Kehler (1850-1923) in 1868, and

they had six children⁵. This family was one of the first three to settle in the new village of Old Altona around 1880. One of the sons, Abram (1880-1952) married Katherina Loewen (1882-1927) and they had four children. The third child was Helena who was my mother. She was born on 22 June 1906 and passed away on 7 November 1944.

Also of family interest are the references to Klippensteins in the diary. Several have to do with "school teacher Klippenstein" which would in all likelihood have been Heinrich, the oldest son of Berend (1781-1841) and Katherina Penner (1781-1856) Klippenstein. They were married in 1805 and obtained a farm in Schoenhorst where they lived for a time before moving to Neu Osterwick and possibly still later to Chortitza. The diary records the preaching of diarist Epp at the funeral of Berend on 6 August 1841. Epp also recorded here that the family had 12 children, although the names of only eight appear in family documents available to date⁶.

Heinrich taught for a time at Schoenhorst and is mentioned as having to appear before a brotherhood meeting for alleged misconduct. The first appearance, dated 14 July 1838, cleared him of these charges which were in fact falsely laid by one Abraham Dyck who confessed to having made up the story. On 26 January 1840 Heinrich was asked to give evidence in charges laid against a certain Dirk Dyck accused of stealing wood. The case was brought before a ministerial meeting on 1 February where someone who had spoken to Heinrich about this matter confessed that he had actually known nothing about the affair.

A final item related to the aforementioned themes includes a note about the return of Aeltester Braun to the Chortitza Colony to preach - once on 24 September 1842 at Neu Osterwick and the second on 4 October that same year at Neuendorf. He returned to Bergthal with his family the next day.

The second source is what may be the most extensive accession of Bergthal-related records found now in any North American Mennonite archives. This is a collection of microfilm (five reels) of *Fuersorgekomitee* (Guardians Committee) files which has been deposited at several places, including the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, both in Winnipeg⁷.

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Mennonite Historian is published by the Mennonite Heritage Centre of Mennonite Church Canada and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

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ISSB 07008066

Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

Recent Books

Anne Braun Letkeman. *The Brauns 1756 to 1990* (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 2001) 176 pp.

This compilation traces the descendants and family history of Jacob Braun b. 1756 in Neusteter, Elbing, Prussia who settled in Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, South Russia in 1805. It focuses primarily on the descendants of a great grandson Johann Braun (1861-1938) who immigrated with most of his children to Canada in 1925 and lived and died at St. Elizabeth, Manitoba. Contact: Anne Letkeman, 111-445 Stafford, Winnipeg, MB R3M 3V9

Victor Kliewer. *Pankratz / Loewen Genealogy of the Families of Heinrich Pankratz & Katharina Dück and Gerhard Löwens & Katharina Dück 1785-2000* (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 2001) 236 pp.

This genealogy and family history presented in a bi-lingual German - English format traces the Pankratz family back to Heinrich Pankratz who died in Rudnerweide in 1858. His wife Katharina Dück (1827-ca. 1902) was the daughter of Gerhard Dück (1785) and Katharina von Rüssen (1792). After her first husband's death she married Gerhard Loewen (1837). This book traces the families of these Pankratz and Loewen children through their experiences in Russia, USSR, Eastern Europe, South and North America. Contact: Victor Kliewer, 112-426 Kingsford Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0J8.

Anne Martens Braun. *A Web of Memories : Chronicles of the Ancestors and Descendants of Jacob and Anna Martens* (Winnipeg, MB: Private Publications, 2001) 116 pp.

This family history focuses on the story of the author's parents who were among the Mennonite refugees who

fled Russia for Germany via Moscow late in 1929 and came to Manitoba in 1930. The book includes the family recollections of their home in the Zagrađovka Colony in Russia, as well as the new beginnings and developments in Canada where they settled near Sanford. Contact: Anne Braun, 420 Chalfont Rd., Winnipeg, MB R3R 0R3.

Bill Klassen. *Jacob Niebuhr (1766-1835) Descendants* (Winnipeg, MB: Private publication, 2001) 456 pp.

This book which was compiled for the Niebuhr Reunion held in August of this year, traces the family history for descendants of eight of the 14 children from the two marriages of Jacob Niebuhr (1766-1835). This Jacob Niebuhr who migrated to Russia in 1789 and settled in Alt-Kronsweide is believed to be the ancestor of all Russian Mennonite Niebuhrs. This family is remembered for the mills and factory that they established. Contact: Bill Klassen, 15 Eaglemere Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2K 4K3.

J. Harold Moyer. *An Isaac Family Record: Descendants of Gerhard Isaac (1836-1886) and Agatha Hiebert Isaac (1836-1912)* (North Newton, KS: Private publication, 2001) 86 pp. plus charts.

This compilation traces Gerhard Isaac's ancestry back to his great great grandfather Phillipp Isaak (1694-1753) and Agatha Hiebert's ancestry back to David Hiebert (1775-1852). Gerhard and Agatha Isaac left Russia for America in 1876 and settled in the town of Lehigh, Kansas where they opened a general merchandise store. This item includes many photographs and biographical sketches on each family. An index as well as fold-out charts will make this item easy to use. Contact: J. Harold Moyer, Box 146, North Newton, KS 67117.

Paul Siemens. *Johann Jakob Siemens (1771-1809) Descendants* (Toronto, ON: Private publication, 2001) 29 pp.

This compilation begins with a computer generated descendant chart for Jakob Siemens (1740) the son of Johann Jakob (1771-1809). It continues with notes on several subsequent generations of the Siemens family that migrated to Russia in 1793. It concludes with two pages of general Mennonite history and an index of all names in the compilation. Contact: Paul Siemens, 2301-155 Marlee Avenue, Toronto, ON M6B 4B5.

Continuing Education at CMU offers

Genealogy, computers and the Internet

Dates: January 8, 15, 22, 29 (2002)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50.00

Instructor: Alf Redekopp

This course is designed to introduce participants to the genealogical tools that are available to them using computers and the internet. The participants will use the CMU computer lab and also have time to engage in personal research under expert guidance.

To register contact Canadian Mennonite University Continuing Education, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2 or call 487-3300.

Genealogy Workshop

featuring

Dr. Tim Janzen, Portland, Oregon

Saturday, February 2, 2002, 8:00-4:00

169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg

Cost: \$20.00 (including lunch)

This full-day workshop will include a survey of the genealogical resources available for Mennonites in North America, Russia and Prussia with an emphasis on the newer and less familiar discoveries. Of special interest to many will be the demonstration of the beta version of GRANDMA4 as well as the recently acquired Chortitza Colony Family register.

To register call Alf Redekopp or Conrad Stoesz 204-888-6781 or 204-669-6575.

Sponsored by the
Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Genealogy Committee.



Elizabeth (Isby) Bergen † (1908-2001)

Elizabeth "Isby" Bergen, of Altona, Manitoba, passed away on November 5, 2001. Isby spent her early years in Saskatchewan, and then Gretna, Manitoba. She was well known as a Red River Valley Echo journalist and local historian, and was much involved in the Women's Institute, and similar groups in the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church. She was also an honorary member of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

Katherine (Kaethe) Hooze † (1903-2001)

Katherine Hooze was born on a south Russian Mennonite estate, Bergmannstal. She came to Canada with her parents, Peter and Katharine Hooze in 1923. The family settled in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where Kaethe spent 41 years working with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Immigration and Colonization. She was also very active in the First Mennonite Church of Saskatoon. She passed away on October 19, 2001.

Congregational Records Being Described



Since the beginning of November, Bert Friesen, has been employed at the Mennonite Heritage Centre as a contract archivist, preparing descriptive invent-

ories of congregational records that have been collected by the Centre. The project consists of writing a short historical sketch, describing the scope and content of each collection, and preparing a file list where none exists for each congregation.

The funds for this project were received from the Federal government from a grant from the Canadian Council of Archives.



Heritage Centre Staff and volunteers at the December Volunteer Appreciation Reception (l-r): Connie Wiebe, Archives/Gallery Assistant, Jane Fast, Gallery volunteer, Michelle Stoesz, Archives volunteer, Alf Redekopp, Heritage Centre Director, Jake K. Wiens, Archives volunteer, Conrad Stoesz, Archivist and Ed Enns, Archives Volunteer. Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz.

Volunteer Appreciation

On December 10, 2001, the Heritage Centre hosted a Volunteer Appreciation reception in honour of volunteers which assist at Mennonite Church Canada in Winnipeg. Five of these volunteers were recognized for their contribution to the work of the Heritage Centre and Gallery, and the five were recognized for their contribution to *Der Bote*.

Jake K. Wiens, Ed Enns, Lawrence

Klippenstein, Jane Fast and John Funk were recognized for their contribution to the Heritage Centre. These volunteers assist with research requests, transcribe and translate Gothic German script, create inventory lists and indexes and prepare mailings. John Funk has prepared all the dry-mounted texts for gallery exhibits free-of-charge for the last 3 years.

Thank you, again for your dedication and efforts. They are much appreciated.

AR



The Altona and District Research Centre had its launching "open house" on November 17th. About 50 people attended. Al Schmidt is chair of the board for the new Centre. The archives is located in Golden West Plaza (Centre Ave.) on the main floor next to the library. The Mennonite Heritage Centre has assisted with advise and provided them with a database template to begin cataloguing their holdings. For further info call 1-204-324-5442 or e-mail aschmidt@mb.sympatico.ca. Photo: Courtesy of Lawrence Klippenstein.

Yarrow Research Committee Issues a Call for Papers

The Yarrow Research Committee is a group of people interested in writing and preserving the history of what was once the largest and most influential Mennonite community in British Columbia. The YRC was called into existence several years ago to prepare a popular history of the community. A book-length manuscript entitled *Relating Yarrow, British Columbia: Toward a Cultural History of a Mennonite Settlement* and containing a collection of essays, is now nearing publication.

The YRC is also planning a scholarly conference under the title "From Hill-Tout and Siddall to Harder and Harms: Settlers and Settlement in Yarrow and the Central Fraser Valley, 1890-1950." It will be held at the University College of the Fraser Valley (Abbotsford) on 5-7 June 2003.

James Hill-Tout was an early church and community leader; Eva Siddall a faithful and long time member of the Methodist church. Both were pioneers of the Central Fraser Valley and witnessed the influx of Mennonite settlers in the late 1920s and 1930s. Elizabeth Harms was a Mennonite midwife who served the community for many years, while John Harder was the influential leader of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Yarrow. The conference will focus on the settlement experiences of these and other settlers in the Central Fraser Valley and examine the broader contexts. Sessions will include topics such as the experiences of First Nations peoples, intellectual and spiritual pioneers, educational institutions, wartime experiences, post-war resettlement, statistical profiles, etc.

The organizing committee welcomes paper proposals approximately 100 words in length. These should be sent to Ted Regehr, 39 Sierra Morena Circle S. W., Calgary, Alberta, T3H 2W or e-mailed to tregehr@ucalgary.ca. Papers will also be considered for publication.

The conference is sponsored by the Yarrow Research Committee with the support of the University College of the Fraser Valley, Columbia Bible College, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Historical Society of BC, the Chilliwack Museum and Historical Society, and the Quiring-Loewen Trust fund.

From report to the MHSC by Ted Regehr

Mennonite Museum in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico

The official dedication of the first phase of the Mennonite Museum at Kilometer 10 in Mexico took place on November 23. During the morning the program was in Spanish and consisted of choral and other music by students of the nearby school. There were also brief addresses by several board members and government officials and the ribbon cutting by one of the government representatives.

After the noon meal, consisting mostly of traditional Mennonite food, there were addresses in German and the viewing of films made by Otto Klassen. There were also threshing demonstrations and demonstrations of agricultural implements used by the Mennonites in various phases of the development of the colony.

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is a partner with the Mexican Mennonites in the development of the museum and archives. Four videos have been produced by Otto Klassen and these have been used to help in the fund-raising project. Several recent events have featured these videos and more are anticipated. The annual meeting and banquet of the MMHS at 169 Riverton in Winnipeg on February 2 will centre on a Mexican theme and a report and video will be presented. AD

New Sources for Bergthal

(cont'd from p. 2)

This collection contains at least two dozen files directly related to four Bergthal settlement villages: Bergthal, Heubuden, Schoenthal and Schoenfeld. They appear to be dated around 1850. One of the files has to do with an 1847 election at Heubuden.

At issue were the election of a new regional director (Gebietsvorsteher) and his assistant (Beisitzer), as well as a village mayor (Dorfschulz) and his assistant (Beisitzer). In that sequence of officers the persons elected were Jakob Siemens of Bergthal with 21 votes (five other candidates named), Johann Harder of Bergthal with 10 votes (nine other candidates), Peter Krause with 20 votes (four other candidates) and Peter Huebert with 22 votes (four other candidates). A

total of 28 names (signatures) appeared on the voters' list.

There is in fact a small file of newly-acquired material which contains an 1850 and an 1858 census from the Bergthal colony. It includes an 1850 list of all family members in Heubuden, with the heads of family being therefore almost the same names as those on the voters' list of 1847⁸.

Peter Klippenstein appears on both lists. This would presumably have been another son of Berend mentioned above. Of Berend's children three are known to have moved to Bergthal: Johann (1809-1877), Katherine (1811-1892) and Peter (1819-1885). All of them moved to Manitoba in the 1870s. Johann had a son Heinrich who married Sarah Friesen. They first settled in Bergthal of the East Reserve, but then moved to (Alt) Bergthal in the West Reserve around 1891. Heinrich's son, Peter (1878-1960), who married Maria Dyck (1879-1943) of Altona, and then took up farming also in Altberghthal, was my grandfather.

Peter's son, Cornelius, was my father. He was born on 25 November 1905 and passed away on 27 May 1983. These stories of my forebears are, of course, also my stories. November remains a special month in the family (9).

Endnotes

1. William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony*. Rev. ed. (Winnipeg, Man.: CMBC Publications, 1986).
2. The original David and Jakob Epp diaries are in Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Vol. 1017. File 3 has David's material.
3. The English translation was published by Regent College Publishing, Vancouver, B.C. in 2000. Its title erroneously suggests that there were several diaries and has left a number of words untranslated. It has also inadvertently omitted translation of all entries between 14 March and 15 April in 1837. The remaining April entries are erroneously dated as March entries.
4. See Ed Schellenberg and Elma Dyck, eds. *Abram and Anna Falk Braun: Family Reflections 1860 - 1991* (Altona: Abram Braun Reunion Committee, 1991).
5. See blank pages entries in Johann Friedrich Starck, *Taegliches Handbuch in guten und boesen Tagen* (Calw & Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, n.d.). Copy in the author's file.
6. See Ted Friesen, *The History and Genealogy of Johann (1845 - 1923) and Agatha (1843 - 1927) Klippenstein* (Altona: The Family, 1993).
7. See the inventory for the microfilm titled "Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia", Fond 6, Inventory 2; Microfilm reels 786 - 790 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.
8. The small file is titled "1850 and 1858 Bergthal Census Records", unaccessioned file at Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.

9. Lawrence Klippenstein, "The First Klippensteins Who Came to Manitoba", *Klippings* No. 7, December, 1998, 1 - 2. The family tree of Heinrich and Sarah Klippenstein is in Bernhard Klippenstein, compiler and publisher. *Genealogy of Heinrich Klippenstein 1843 - 1977*, published in 1977.

Book Review

(cont'd from p. 8)

each of the three groupings in each chapter when attempting to locate families of interest to them.

Another major shortcoming is the fact that the book does not include footnotes to the sources for any of the genealogical data and includes very few footnotes in the historical chapters. If the author had provided an index and had also heavily footnoted the genealogical material, his book would have been much more user friendly than it currently is. Providing footnotes would have given researchers the opportunity to more readily locate original sources for specific data found in his book if they so desired. To his credit, he does include a long list of references at the end of the book however. Researchers familiar with the majority of his references will be able to determine the sources for some of the material in his book, but they certainly will have significant difficulty tracking down sources for specific dates for various events unless they contact him personally.

The following are some additional shortcomings that researchers using this book should be aware of:

1. Mr. Schapansky does not clarify the fact that many of the years of birth that he gives for individuals mentioned in the genealogical chapters are merely approximations. These estimated years of birth are derived from ages given for individuals in the various Chortitza Colony censuses or in other similar sources where people's ages were listed at a specific point in time. Some researchers will be misled into believing that an individual was truly born in the year given for that person in the book when in fact that individual may have been born a year or more before or after that year. It would have been better if he had placed "about" or "circa" before years of birth which are simply approximations.

2. For the heads of families listed in the book he mentions which ones were listed in the currently available portions of the 1795, 1802, 1806, 1808, and 1814 Chortitza Colony Censuses, but he doesn't

mention which ones were listed in the 1797 or the 1801 Chortitza Colony Censuses or those who had children listed in the 1809 and 1814 Chortitza Vaccination Lists.

3. He uses a date format that is potentially confusing to researchers. He chose to give dates in the following format: 12.8.1796. This format is generally not used in modern historical and genealogical publications because readers may accidentally confuse the months with the days of the month.

4. He does not provide locations for any of the births, baptisms, marriages, or deaths mentioned in the book even though he had knowledge about where some of these events occurred.

5. He did not review some readily available sources, in particular the Grandma 3 database, that contain additional genealogical data that he could have integrated into his book.

6. The genealogical data as published in the book does contain at least some errors and is not always consistent internally. For instance, in the chapter on Kronsweide he lists Anna Fröse as the possible wife of Kornelius Banmann (b. ca 1781) and gives her year of birth as 1774 whereas in the chapter on Kronsthal he lists her unequivocally as Kornelius Banmann's wife and gives her year of birth as 1775 (p.241, 471).

7. There are many spelling and grammatical errors found throughout the book that could have been eliminated through more careful editing.

In spite of its shortcomings, *The Old Colony (Chortitza) of Russia* is a welcome addition to the published literature about the early Chortitza Colony settlers and will be a valuable reference for Mennonite historians and genealogists alike. I am sure that many will enjoy reading and digesting the information found within it. Individuals interested in purchasing a copy of this book may write to Mr. Schapansky at 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, BC V3L 4V5 or may buy it at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

¹West Prussian Land Register 1772/3, compiled by Rueben R. Drefs, published by the Odessa Digital Library, 21 June 1999, online <<http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/library/land/wprussia>>

²The 1789 Land Census/General-Nachweisung of West Prussian Mennonites, compiled by Adalbert Goertz, online <http://www.mmhs.org/prussia/1789cens.htm>.

Mennonite Historical Society

(cont'd from p. 1)

The new executive is Royden Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, as President, David Giesbrecht (Abbotsford, B.C.), Victor Wiebe (Saskatoon, Sask.) and Laureen Harder (Kitchener, Ont.).

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

Courtesy of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society we occasionally receive locally published books that would not come to the *MH* through normal channels. *Trails of Promise*, published in 1980 by the Medford & District History Book Committee [Saskatchewan] in 1980, is an example. Its 1155 pages includes a brief section on Glenbush, where both Mennonite Brethren and General Conference began congregations in the 1920s. Biographies of numerous Mennonite families are scattered throughout the book.

Adding to the still modest number of resources on women in the 16th century Anabaptist movement is "*Elisabeth's Manly Courage: Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women in the Low Countries* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 198 pages. The editors and translators, Hermina Joldersma and Louis Grijp, have selected writings by or about 15 women, including a number not in the *Martyrs Mirror*. Musical notation is included for a number of the songs. A helpful introduction sets these 16th century documents into their historical context.

Victor Fast, et al, *I am With You Always to the End of the Age. The life of Believers and the Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Mennonites of Karaganda and the Karaganda Region*. (Karaganda/Steinhagen: Acquilla, 2001), hdc., 192 pp. This is the first book of several planned volumes, and deals with the Stalin years of suffering and repression (1931-1946) in the Soviet Union. It commemorates the 70th anniversary of the life of the named churches in Karaganda. It is very well illustrated and depicts expert craftsman-ship in publishing. It appears so far only in the Russian language.

Book Reviews

Henry Schapansky. *The Old Colony (Chortitza) of Russia, Early History and First Settlers in the Context of the Mennonite Migrations*. (Rosenort, MB: Country Graphics & Printing Ltd., 2001), pb., 519 pp., \$39.

Reviewed by Tim Janzen, M.D., Portland, Oregon, a family practice physician and an avid Mennonite genealogist.

Henry Schapansky, who is a well-known authority on the history and genealogy of the early Chortitza Colony settlers, has published in this volume a synthesis of his research into this topic over the past several decades. His book consists of essentially two portions: one a historical synopsis about the origins and formation of the Chortitza Colony in Russia and the other a summary of available genealogical information regarding the earliest settlers in the Chortitza Colony.

The historical portion of the book, consisting of 158 pages, is found in the first 11 chapters. The author explores the development of Anabaptism and then in more detail discusses the history of Mennonites in West Prussia in the context of European history. He explains the origins of the various groups of Mennonites who migrated to West Prussia as well as the development of the Flemish and Frisian Mennonite churches in West Prussia. Chapter 4, which discusses the background of each individual Mennonite church (*Gemeinde*) in West Prussia, is particularly enlightening and provides excellent summaries about each church.

In Chapter 6 Mr. Schapansky explores the reasons for the Mennonite migration to Russia in some detail. In his view, the primary reason that the early Chortitza Colony settlers migrated there from West Prussia was to maintain their traditional democratic beliefs and culture (p.86). However, other Mennonite historians have emphasized the lack of available land for additional settlement in West Prussia, the attraction of Catherine II's promise of freedom from military service in Russia, and the potential for economic advancement in Russia. (p.83)

The author emphasizes the differences between the Mennonites who immigrated to Russia prior to the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1796-1815) and those

who immigrated to Russia later. He suggests that the earliest Mennonite settlers in Russia, particularly those who settled in the Chortitza Colony, tended to hold to traditional Mennonite values more closely than those who migrated to Russia after 1815. He concludes that many Mennonites, particularly those of Frisian background, who migrated to Russia after 1815 were more influenced by Pietistic teaching and thus held less tightly to conservative Mennonite viewpoints (p.87, 94). His statements about Pietism and about the early development of the Mennonite Brethren Church reveal some personal bias towards traditional 18th Century Mennonite theology and church practices. Some readers will feel that his statements regarding the Mennonite Brethren Church and Reformed theology are misleading.

Later chapters in the historical portion of the book discuss the formative years of the Chortitza Colony. Interesting information about the colony's early civic and church leaders with brief biographic sketches of the most important of these men is provided in Chapter 8. Chapter 11 includes many details about the various daughter colonies sponsored by the Chortitza Colony and about the subsequent dispersal of Mennonites from the Chortitza Colony throughout Russia.

The genealogical portion of the book, consisting of 336 pages, is found in Chapters 12 to 25. A chapter is devoted to each of the original nine villages in the Chortitza Colony (Chortitza, Einlage, Insel Chortitza, Kronsweide, Neuenburg, Neuendorf, Rosenthal, Schönhof, and Schönowiese) as well as those that were founded between about 1797 and 1812 (Kronsgarten, Burwalde, Nieder Chortitza, Kronsthal, and Osterwick). In each chapter Mr. Schapansky provides genealogical information about all Mennonites known to have settled in those villages by 1806. Within each chapter the immigrant families are listed alphabetically by surname in three groupings based on whether they immigrated between 1788 and 1795, between 1796 and 1798, or between 1803 and 1806. Additional notes about each family are also given as appropriate.

Two lengthy appendices are included near the end of the book that provide a detailed discussion of the currently available West Prussian Mennonite church records as well as early immigration and census records available relative to the Mennonite colonies in

Russia. Mr. Schapansky emphasizes the information published by Benjamin H. Unruh and Dr. Karl Stumpp. It would have been appropriate for him to have also discussed other major sources, in particular the 1797, 1801, and 1806 Chortitza Colony Censuses, in the appendix on Russian sources.

Mr. Schapansky is to be highly commended for his diligent efforts to synthesize the data found in the available West Prussian Mennonite church records and in the 1776 West Prussian Census with the information available about the early Chortitza Colony settlers. He gives data from the church records and from the 1776 Census where this is available. Several major sources that he should have utilized in his research but neglected to use are the West Prussian Land Register of 1772-1773¹ and the 1789 Land Census of West Prussian Mennonites². He also has not included data from the West Prussian Catholic and Lutheran church records, some of which contain significant amounts of genealogical data regarding Mennonites.

For the most part, the author has carefully studied the major genealogical sources relative to the Chortitza Colony, particularly the information published by B. H. Unruh, and has integrated that material into his book. The book also includes information from major primary sources that have only recently become available, in particular the 1801 Chortitza Colony Census and the Chortitza Colony vital records data for the period 1801 to 1807.

Much of the genealogical data found in his book has previously been published in Mr. Schapansky's articles about the early Chortitza Colony settlers that have appeared over the past 10 years in *Mennonite Family History*. However, the book also includes much new information that he has obtained more recently which was not published in those articles.

While Mr. Schapansky's book has many positive qualities, it also has a number of shortcomings. The most serious of these is the fact that the book does not include an index. This will be a major handicap to researchers using this book. Researchers will need to know which village a family lived in if they hope to readily locate that family in the book. Since the families of each village are subdivided into three groupings based on when they migrated to Russia researchers must also be careful to review

(cont'd on p. 7)