

Mennonite Historian

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



Bethany Bible School ca. 1952. Photo: Courtesy of Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg.

The Historical Roots of Bethany College

By Bruce L. Guenther

Editor's note: On July 19-21 Bethany College (formerly Bethany Bible Institute) celebrated its 75th anniversary. The following article is an abbreviated and slightly revised excerpt from the recently completed dissertation by Bruce L. Guenther, who is a faculty member with the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary at the ACTS campus in Langley, BC. The dissertation is entitled, "Training for Service: The Bible School Movement in Western Canada, 1909-1960" (Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 2001.

Bethany Bible Institute was one of a number of Bible schools begun shortly after the arrival of Mennonite immigrants from Russia in the 1920s after the Russian Revolution. The proximity of the German-English Academy in Rosthern, the early Bible classes initiated by J.F. Harms, and occasional visits from H.W. Lohrenz, the founding principal of Tabor College, which was started in 1908 and located in Hillsboro, Kansas, combined to stimulate interest among the Mennonite Brethren in the northern part of Saskatchewan for their own "Bible-

centred school" that could help preserve the use of the German language, teach the Bible to their young people and prepare more leaders for their churches.¹ At the time, the vast majority of Mennonite Brethren in the Rosthern District were descendants of the *Kanadier* immigrants who had arrived in Saskatchewan after having first lived in Minnesota, South Dakota and Nebraska. As early as 1912, a fund was started by local congregations for the purpose of organizing a school for higher education. Between 1912, starting in Brotherfield, and 1925, the Mennonite Brethren churches of the district

experimented with itinerant Bible classes in various churches.² Although this *Wanderschule* was helpful, the desire for a more established Bible school continued to be expressed. Finally, in 1926, influenced by the fifteen years of experience on the part of Herbert Bible School in the south, the Mennonite Brethren in the Rosthern District invited George Harms, who had studied at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, to teach three months of evening classes in Hepburn.³ More than thirty young people attended. Convinced that this was proof of the need for a local Bible school, three ministers, Jacob Lepp of Dalmeny, H.A. Willems of Brotherfield and John Harder of Borden, canvassed the area for support.

Although a consensus had not been reached concerning the location of a Bible school within the district, the sudden availability in 1927 of the public school building in Hepburn prompted local leaders to take action. Hepburn's advantages included its central location within the Rosthern District as well as the proximity of the largest Mennonite Brethren church in the region. In 1927, Bethany Bible Institute came into being under the direction of a local Bible school association with Dietrich P. Esau as teacher and principal.

The stated objectives of the school were clearly outlined. According to the school calendar of 1937, its purpose was:

To give our . . . youth foundational Bible instruction in the German and English languages . . . , to wrench our youth away from frivolous pursuits and the contemporary "Zeitgeist". . . , to nurture the German language as a special possession handed down from our fathers . . . , to raise believing youth for the battle of the faith . . . [and] to take into account the needs of the congregations in the methodical training of Sunday school teachers and sundry (church) workers.

Early leaders claimed that the school stood "on an interdenominational base" and that it taught "the oneness of the church of Christ." The characterization of the school as an institution providing "interdenominational, non-sectarian religious education" continued until the late 1940s, when a more intentional Mennonite Brethren identity gradually emerged.⁴ Although the school's "interdenominational" objectives did attract a few Mennonites from other denominations, the majority of students were Mennonite Brethren, and the ethos of the school was always strongly shaped by its Mennonite Brethren teachers and

(cont'd on p. 2)

Bethany College

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local supporters.

Esau, together with John A. (Vaeterchen [Daddy]) Toews, who arrived in 1928, designed the school's curriculum. What began initially as a two-year curriculum was expanded to three years in 1932, to four years in 1934, and then to five years in 1941--a move that coincided with a name change to Bethany Bible School and Bible College. The fifth year was eventually dropped in 1945. Unlike many of the other Mennonite Brethren Bible schools where a three-year program was adopted as the standard, Bethany Bible Institute maintained a four-year program during most of its early history--although for a time during the 1940s a three-year diploma was in place with the option to proceed to an additional two-year college program (the three-year diploma program could be reduced to two years for high school graduates).⁵

In 1955 a four-year program with more diversified specializations was re-established. Although a thorough study of the Bible was at the centre of each program innovation, Bethany Bible Institute joined the Evangelical Teacher



Jacob H. Epp, at Bethany for 28 years (19 years as principal. Photo: Courtesy of Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg.

Training Association in 1935, which prescribed the inclusion of practical courses in Christian education, particularly Sunday school work. During the first decade, students as young as fourteen were on occasion admitted. However, a minimum age was soon set at sixteen with little consideration for previous education--the majority of students came with a grade eight education. The curriculum of the first two years was therefore designed to help young people acquire more Bible knowledge and relate it to life. The third and fourth years offered more advanced courses to older students who showed promise for Christian service, either in the church or in missions.

By the early 1930s, student numbers at Bethany Bible Institute eclipsed those of Herbert Bible School, reflecting the larger critical mass of Mennonite Brethren in the Rosthern District. Although enrolments fluctuated from year to year, by the end of the 1930s student numbers exceeded one hundred, necessitating a series of building projects to expand and improve campus facilities. Considerable financial help for such projects came from the congregations in the area. Oddly, student numbers plummeted rather drastically immediately following the end of the depression and only gradually increased during the late 1940s and 1950s. By 1960, enthusiasm in the school ran high as student numbers were once again exceeding 100. This steady increase in students during the 1950s coincided with

the numerous closures and amalgamations of other Mennonite Brethren Bible schools, which left Bethany Bible Institute, in 1960, as the sole Mennonite Brethren Bible school in Saskatchewan and the Mennonite Brethren Bible school with the largest enrolment in western Canada, although at least five other Bible schools were established by the denomination in Saskatchewan--some in relatively close proximity to Hepburn.⁶

The most influential persons in shaping the ethos of a school are faculty members--by the end of the 1950s, more than thirty people had worked as full-time teachers at Bethany Bible Institute. Although faculty members were poorly paid and often called upon to make considerable sacrifices for the sake of the institution, they were highly regarded as spiritual leaders and often occupied prominent positions of leadership within the denomination.

The way in which the school's governing association was structured meant that the principal became the chairperson of the Board of Directors, and faculty were automatically included as directors giving them considerable influence in the operation and direction of the school. Other directors consisted of elected representatives from churches active in the association (one representative per one hundred members). It was not until after the amalgamation with Herbert Bible School, which closed in 1956, that this governance structure was redesigned, an event that coincided with a general move towards professionalized models of ministry within the denomination at large. Other changes included the inauguration of salary scales and a group insurance plan for faculty. The integration of the governance of the school with the denominational infrastructure led the school to become more intentional about its role within the denomination.

J.B. Toews replaced Esau as the second principal of the school in 1934, in part because he was fully bilingual. Educated in Russia and Tabor College, Toews redesigned the courses in Bible and theology upon the advice of A.H. Unruh.⁷ Both G.W. Peters who succeeded Toews as principal in 1937, and G.D. Huebert who succeeded Peters in 1942, had their early training at Herbert Bible School--Peters also studied at Winkler Bible Institute and completed a semester at Prairie Bible Institute.⁸ Both Peters and

(cont'd on p. 4)

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Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

Recent Books

Erv Wiens. *A Dream Come True: Reflections on the Life of Abram and Anna Wiens* (Windsor, ON: by the author, 2002)

This item consists of the reflections by a son on the life of his parents Abram Wiens (1918) and Anna Wiens (1920-2000) whose life began in the Soviet Union. Abram Wiens left the Soviet Union in 1930 by crossing the Amur River in the dead of winter and eventually reaching Harbin, China. Through the help of the German Consul in Beijing and the support of the Mennonite Central Committee, they left for Paraguay in 1932 together with 375 other refugees. In 1948 the family left Paraguay for Canada and settled initially in Alberta. In 1959 they again re-located to southern Ontario. The author has written these reflections in the form of a story. A complete family register of the children, grandchildren and great-greatchildren is included at the end of the compilation. Contact: Mary Warkentin, 32411-9th St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P7

Helmut A. Epp. *Four Generation Genealogical Listing for Peter Heidebrecht (ca. 1715-1770), his wife Katharina Braun (1721-1777, and their Descendants followed by Jacob Cornelius Heidebrecht (b. ca. 1817) and his Descendants* (Fonthill, ON: by the author, 2002) 8, 1, 74, 15 pp.

The author of this compilation began his research with the GRANDMA database produced by the California Mennonite Historical Society. Instead of listing all the descendants of Peter Heidebrecht (b. ca. 1715) he limited his compilation to the first four generations and then focused on the descendants of one of his great grandsons, namely Jacob Cornelius Heidebrecht for which the GRANDMA database was less comprehensive. Jacob was born in Lichtenau, Molotschna and moved to the Schoenfeld Colony in 1869. Each section in this compilation also has been indexed.

Contact: Helmut A. Epp, 7 Concord St., Box 1016, Fonthill, Ontario L0S 1E0, phone 905-892-4534 or e-mail helm.epp@sympatico.ca.

Michael B. G. Penner. *The David F. and Helena Penner Family Picture Book* (Winnipeg, MB: by the author, 2002) 60 pp.

This booklet that tells the family history of the descendants of David F. Penner (1903-1984) and his wife Helena Reimer (1907-1982) of Landmark, Manitoba through photographs and interesting anecdotes. Included as well are the 6-generation ancestry charts for both of these grandparents of the author, as well as the detailed listing of the descendants. Contact: Michael Penner, 1603-707 Seventh Avenue, New Westminster, BC V3M 2J2.

Queries

Friesen - At the archives we often get requests for information. We recently receive a request from Irma Guliaeva living in Bulgaria looking for information on her Friesen ancestry and we wondered in there was anyone who could help. Irma's great grandfather was Alexander Friesen who died in 1920. His wife was Maria Georgievna. Alexander had two siblings, Frieda (ca. 1905-1970) and another sister who fled to Germany during 1943-1945. Alexander's two children were Elvira (1911-) and Rudolph (1914-1941) and they lived in Melitopol, Russia until 1917. In 1941 Elvira was exiled along with her daughter Nina (Inna) and mother Maria. Nina's daughter is Irma, the one asking for information. She has a two-year-old daughter Anna. Does anyone have information about these or other family members? Any information would be helpful. Contact: Conrad Stoesz at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3P 0N3. E-mail cstoesz@mennonitechurch.ca or phone (204) 888-6781.

New CD ROM Resource

The Chortitza Family Registers : Two volumes from the Chortitza Mennonite Church in Ukraine, circa 1888-1934 / jointly published by the State Regional Archives in Zaporozhye, Ukraine, the California Mennonite Historical Society and the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Fresno, California.

This CD contains the scans of 600 pages found in the only two known surviving volumes of family registers for the Chortitza Mennonite Church, Chortitza Colony, circa 1888-1934. Accompanying the scans is a careful English translation of the original records, which were written primarily in Russian and minimally in German. Also included in the CD are:

- an introduction to the family registers by Alexander Tedeyev
- an index to the 7,641 people found in the registers for whom birth dates are given
- a guide to all locations referred to in the registers
- a document guide explaining various details about the registers.

Attention: High School Students

Family History Essay Contest

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society invites you to enter an essay contest presenting research in family history.

The **Henry E. Plett Memorial Award** for Family Histories consists of two cash prizes in the amount of \$250 (first place) and \$100 (second place) annually for the Manitoba high school students who are judged to have submitted the best writing and research in the area of their family history. The deadline for submissions is April 30.

Send entries to:

Henry E. Plett Memorial Award
Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Genealogy Committee
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.,
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

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

Bethany College

(cont'd from p. 2)

Huebert brought a keen interest in missions and premillennialism to Bethany Bible Institute.⁹ The person who still holds the record for the longest tenure as principal of Bethany Bible Institute is Jacob H. Epp, whose stay lasted twenty-eight years (nineteen years as principal). He spent five years as a child in China where his parents served with the China Mennonite Mission Society. As a young man he studied first at Prairie Bible Institute, until G.W. Peters convinced him to come to Bethany Bible Institute. After plans to return to China were foiled first by the depression and then by World War Two, Epp returned as a teacher. He helped expand the facilities and continued to encourage particularly the emphasis on missions.

Despite the numerous commonalities with other Mennonite Brethren schools, Bethany Bible Institute is unique among Mennonite Brethren Bible schools in at least three respects. First, it was the first school to experiment with a move towards offering a "college" program. Although ultimately unsuccessful in sustaining such a degree program in theology, it was a harbinger of things to come among the Mennonite Brethren. This interest in higher education within the denominational constituency came to fruition more fully in 1944 with the start of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg.

Second, the school developed a reputation for the aggressive promotion of missions. The actual application of this emphasis took several forms. Early on, G.W. Peters, who had accompanied Bestvater on his itinerant preaching tours while a student at Herbert Bible School, used a similar pattern of inviting student music groups to accompany him during the summer. In 1933, the Bethany Prayer League was organized. Encouraged by Bible school faculty, its members helped inculcate a strong missionary spirit within the school. Two years later, the Bethany Prayer League Children's Mission was formed as an outreach extension of Bethany Bible Institute (the name was changed in 1937 to the Western Children's Mission and eventually became known as the Mennonite Brethren Mission of Saskatchewan). Although the personnel for the Western Children's Mission overlapped directly with Bethany Bible Institute, the new Mission did have

its own charter that characterized it as "interdenominational, international, evangelical and evangelistic." The Western Children's Mission, led by the previously-mentioned Jake H. Epp, recruited and sent dozens of young people into rural communities across northern Saskatchewan to conduct Vacation Bible Schools for children. One estimate suggests that during the 1930s upwards of 75% of Bethany Bible Institute students spent from two to six weeks in Vacation Bible School work each summer. The organization served, according to Menno Lepp, as the "cradle of Bethany's foreign missionary thrust."¹⁰ The work of Western Children's Mission and Bethany Bible Institute was augmented in 1951 with a radio ministry initiated by faculty. The short program called "Gospel Echoes" was broadcast from several radio stations in central and northern Saskatchewan.¹¹

Closely connected to the vigorous emphasis on missions was the third unique feature of Bethany Bible Institute, namely the comparatively early transition from German to English. At the outset, the language of instruction was predominately German, but it quickly became a mixture of German and English as pressure for a more bilingual curriculum mounted from students. By the end of the school's first decade, the transition to English language instruction was virtually complete. However, in response to concerns expressed within the larger denominational constituency about the move towards English, the faculty continued throughout the 1930s to reassure people that "great weight" was being placed on the German language at the school, and that students were displaying an "intense interest" in learning the language. This has led scholars such as Gerald Ediger to note the "growing gulf between perceptions and aspirations of Canadian Conference leaders and the linguistic realities among their youth," and to observe that the Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Bible schools--Herbert Bible School and Bethany Bible Institute in particular--were on the leading edge of accommodation to the English language.¹²

At the end of the 1950s, Bethany Bible Institute faced a new dilemma. As the number of Mennonite Brethren within urban centres increased during the 1950s, and as more young people began to attend university, suggestions were made that the school relocate to the nearby city of Saskatoon (by the end of the 1950s the

Mennonite Brethren congregation in Saskatoon had become the largest congregation in the province). The proposal to relocate to Saskatoon was ultimately rejected in the late 1950s, setting the stage for new capital projects on the Hepburn campus that signalled the school's ongoing commitment to the training and discipling of young people.

Endnotes

¹Frank Epp speculates that the Mennonite Brethren in Hepburn, Dalmeny and Waldheim were reluctant to support the German-English Academy in Rosthern because of their desire to have their own school and their concern that not enough Bible was being taught (*Education with a Plus*, 40). In 1932, a Bible school was initiated in Rosthern which shared, at least for a time, both building and faculty with the Academy (Lydia Pankratz, "An Historical Sketch of the Rosthern Bible School," Unpublished paper, 1950, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives).

²"Bethany 1927-1957," in *The Ray*, 1956-1975 (Hepburn, SK: BBI, 1957), 6-7, Bethany College Archives (BCA).

³The language of instruction was English ("M.B. Bible Schools in Canada," *Konferenz-Jugendblatt* 11, No. 62 [November-Dezember 1955]: 12).

⁴*Prospectus of Bethany Bible School and Bible College* (1944-45), 3, BCA.

⁵In addition, special courses in Health and Home Nursing were offered to third and fourth-year women as substitutes for Homiletics (Margaret Epp, *Proclaim Jubilee* [c. 1977], 39).

⁶The school in closest proximity was Tabor Bible School, which was located in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan less than twenty miles from Hepburn.

⁷See J.B. Toews, *JB: The Autobiography of a Twentieth-Century Mennonite Pilgrim* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1995), 88-89, 96-99.

⁸Peters became the first president of Pacific Bible Institute, a Mennonite Brethren Bible school started in Fresno, California in 1944.

⁹According to Margaret Epp, A.C. Gaebelein was Peters's authoritative reference point (*Proclaim Jubilee*, 41).

¹⁰Epp, *Proclaim Jubilee*, 50-51. In 1937 Western Children's Mission sent out forty-six workers who travelled more than 8,000 miles to serve in thirty-six locations (George Geddert, "'To God be all the Glory': 1927-1987 Historical Summary of Events, Buildings, Changes During Bethany's First 60 Years [Program of Bethany's 60th Anniversary Service, April 10, 1987], 5).

¹¹"Mennonite Brethren Radio Broadcasts Across Canada," *Konferenz-Jugendblatt* (Maerz-April 1955): 20-27.

¹²Gerald C. Ediger, "Deutsch und Religion: Ethnicity, Religion and Canadian Mennonite Brethren, 1940-1970" (Th.D. Dissertation, Toronto School of Theology, 1993), 26-27.

Horse Manure

by Conrad Stoesz

Manure, dung, excrement what a substance! Most of us see this substance as dirty waste that pollutes our land, air, and water. It is something to get rid of - to minimize - a problem. In other times and places manure was embraced and used in many different applications. People dried animal dung and used it for heating in the winter when wood was scarce. It was mixed with straw, placed in moulds and made into bricks for building. It was, of course, used as fertilizer for gardens and fields. These applications I was well aware of. However recently I came across two new uses for this wonderful substance. Deep from the bowels of the archives I discovered a recipe where dung was used in medicinal applications. I also discovered that my mother-in-law, Marg Warren, owns an old cookbook handed down through the generations. In this cookbook there is a recipe in which dung is used in food preparation. What other great uses are there for this glorious, universal, readily available product that our ancestors knew so much about but that most of us have forgotten?

A remedy prescribed by Dr. Wilhelm Toews of Rosenthal for women when their monthly period does not occur, as found in the Jacob Wall diary of 1824-1860 (MHC Volume 1086:5a).

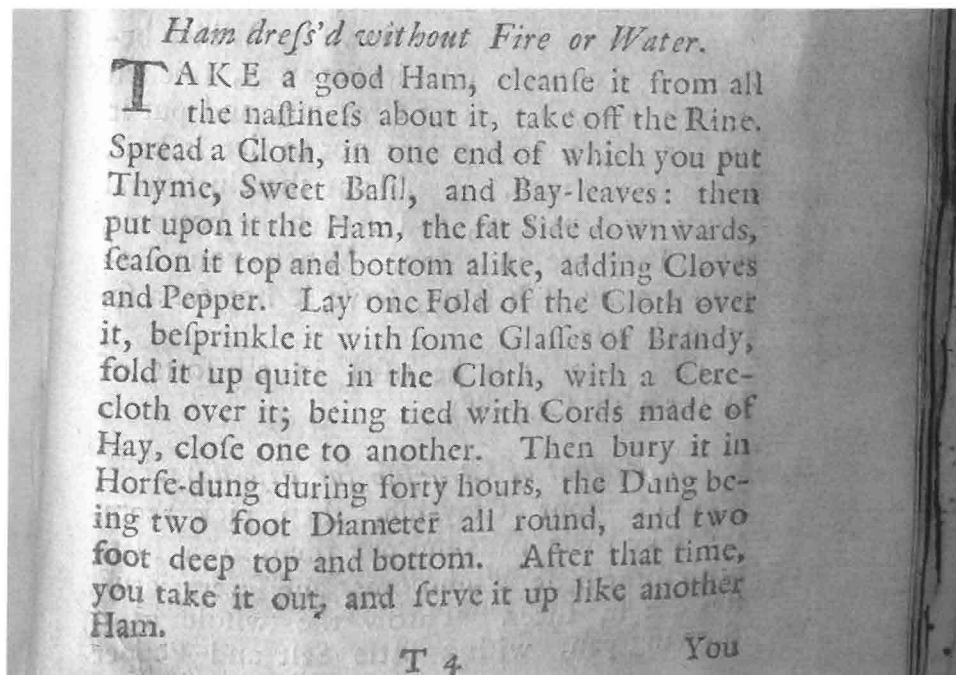
Take 1 quart of yellow Moscatel wine, 1 nutmeg, 1 loth star aniseed, ½ loth seasoned cloves, 2 solotnick fine cinnamon, 1 loth yellow ginger and 2 spoons horse radish root.

Mix this together in a jar and bury it in horse manure for 24 hours. Drink 2 kopecke whiskey glasses of it morning and evening with brandy.

Menno Colony Celebrates 75th Anniversary

The Menno Colony, which was established in 1926 when a large group of Mennonites from southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan left because of dissatisfaction with circumstances in this country, celebrated its 75th anniversary in June. The events included a history symposium, traditional worship services, and a concert with the Loma Plata Chamber Choir and the symphony orchestra from Asuncion. Today the colony has a population of about 9,000.

(Excerpt of report by Willi Falk in the *Canadian Mennonite*, August 26, 2002, p. 15).



A Recipe from *The Second Volume - The Modern Cook*, published 1735. An excerpt from Chapter XI "Of Cold Entremets", entitled "Ham Dressed without Fire or Water". Note the sentence structure and syntax which seems like a direct translation from German, as well as the "gothic" letter "s" which looks like our modern letter "f". Also note how the nouns tend to be capitalized as in German. The recipe begins: "Take a good Ham, cleanse it from all nastiness about it, take off the Rine. Spread a Cloth, in one end of which you put Thyme, Sweet Basil, and Bay-leaves: then put upon it the Ham, the fat Side downwards, season it top and bottom alike, adding Cloves and Pepper. Lay one Fold of the Cloth over it, besprinkle it with some Glasses of Brandy, fold it up quite in the Cloth, with a Cerecloth over it; being tied with Cords made of Hay, close one to another. Then bury it in Horse-dung during forty hours, the Dung being two foot Diameter all round, and two foot deep top and bottom. After that time, you take it out, and serve it up like another Ham."



A boy mixing dung and clay in the Neuland Colony in Paraguay. This colony was established by Mennonite refugees from Europe in 1948. The mixture of clay and dung was used to make walls for their initial homes. Photo credit: MHC CMBC Publications Photograph Collection 518:6.



Recent Accessions

1. Photocopy of Register of Mennonite Burials in Coaldale Cemetery 1927-1994. 2001-122.
2. Two VHS videos of Mennonites in the Soviet Union. An interview with Geog Hildebrandt, Heidelberg, Germany, documentary on Karaganda, and *Wir kamen Stalin zuvor* regarding the German Edelweiss division. 2002-001.
3. EWZ (Einwandererzentrale) Series 50 microfilm nos. A075, A076, A077, A078, E083, E084 which include German immigration applications for the Mennonite surnames Braun and Letkeman 6 reels out of 7,320. 2002-024.
4. The "Dr. Abraham B. Hiebert" Letters (Letters written to Dr. Hiebert Rosental, Manitoba and/or his family) 1877-1924 / translated by Edward Falk. -- 2002.) bound with circlux 2.5 cm thick). 2002-029.
5. Diary of Jacob J. Dyck (1875-1921) of Osterwick, Russia and after his death continued by his wife Maria Klassen (1877-1976). Translated by Hilda Wooles. - 1920-1935, 2000. 2002-037.
6. Translation of Peter P. Elias journal of the emigration of Mennonites from Russia and up to 1913 / William J. Kehler. -- 1990. -- 70 pages. 2002-040.
7. Russian manual for a Fordson tractor that was sent by MCC to Russia in the 1920s. -- 1925. 2002-046.
8. An account of the Mennonite involvement in city of Jekaterinoslaw by Peter Heese, translated by Jake K. Wiens. -- [194-?]. 2002-057.
9. Obituaries appearing in the Mennonitische Rundschau from 1940-2001. 2002-070.
10. Aeltester Peter A. Toews of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church record book. --1929-1961. 2002-072.
11. EMMC records 1937-1996. 2002-073.

CDS



Isaac I. Friesen (1900-1974)

Isaac I. Friesen Fonds

After the death of I.I. Friesen in 1974 his large collection of materials were donated to Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the conference archives. A few boxes of materials have been deposited in the more recent years, but the majority came shortly after his death. The main portion of the materials was boxed however never processed. This summer Joanne Moyer worked through the materials with the financial help from a Canadian Council of Archives grant.

Isaac Irwin Friesen (1900-1974) was born in Rosthern, Saskatchewan to Isaac P. and Katherine Friesen. In 1919 he was elected as a lay minister along with his

father in the Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Saskatchewan. In 1937 he married Elsie Funk of Drake, Saskatchewan. I.I. Friesen led a life that was full of education. He attended no less than 14 post secondary schools in North America and Europe.

He worked at the Salem Deaconess Hospital in Salem, Oregon from 1939-1942, where he also directed the hospital radio program. In 1943 he was called to work in the Bethel Mission Church, Winnipeg (which later became Bethel Mennonite Church). He was ordained as elder in 1945 and served as minister from 1943-1951. He was one of the first teachers at Canadian Mennonite Bible College and served for 21 years, 8 as president. He was a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GCMC) Board of Education from 1947-1956, he served as vice-president of the GCMC Executive Committee from 1956-1962, he was a member and chairman of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada Board of Education, and he served on the GCMC Commission for the Study of Scripture between 1961-1962.

The I.I. Friesen fonds includes sermons, research notes, topical files, essays, teaching notes, minutes, reports, diaries and photographs from the various places and positions Friesen held. These documents record the life and times of a man and his wife who were devoted to the church.

CDS



Bert Friesen, Joanne Moyer and Sharon Brown worked on projects at the MHC this summer made possible by the Government of Canada through the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives. Photo: Courtesy of Alf Redekopp.

Northend Minutes Translated

John M. Thiessen, a former high school teacher in Winnipeg, recently translated the minutes of the first Mennonite Brethren church in Winnipeg from 1909 to 1926. The church, which was first called Northend Chapel, later became the Northend Mennonite Brethren Church, and is now the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church. The first services were conducted in homes in 1906. It was also the first Mennonite church in Winnipeg.

Recent Accessions

1. The Klassen-Buhr Photo Collection received from Margaret Cormie of Winnipeg. The collection includes 27 photographs and a family history.
2. Map of Molochansk [formerly Halbstadt, Molotschna, Petershagen, Halbstadt, Muntau and Tiegenhagen. - Based on 1991 satellite imagery, scale 1:50,000. -- 21.5 x 28 cm.
3. 580 photos from 79 Canadian MB Churches focusing on worship in the 1980s and collected by Vernon Wiebe for a projected publication on Mennonite Brethren worship. Received from the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Hillsboro, Kansas.



CMBS Summer Project workers: Leslie Wiebe, Career Placement, Human Resources of Canada; Bert Friesen, Canadian Archival Information Network, and Donovan Giesbrecht. Control of Holdings. Photo: Courtesy of Susan Brandt.

4. *Mennonitische Rundschau* obituary index 1940-2001, prepared by the Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia (Erica Suderman).
5. Large collection of Ontario Mennonite Brethren Conference and congregational materials. -- [1930-2000]
6. John M. Schmidt, preacher with the Gospel Light Hour, sermons and topical files. -- 1950-1992.
7. Sermons and reports of Peter Hamm, MB missionary to India, missions administrator, and MBBC professor. -- 1952-1988.

CDS

Benjamin B. and Maria Janz Memorial

On August 4 relatives and friends of the Janz family gathered in Coaldale, Alberta to erect a memorial and remember the work of Benjamin and Maria Janz. Janz was the man who headed the efforts that led to the migration of thousands of Mennonites from the Soviet Union to Canada in the 1920s. More information will be carried in the next issue of the *Mennonite Historian*.



CENTRE FOR
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Brethren
Studies** IN CANADA

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New Book Released

This summer marked an important transition in the history of the North American Mennonite Brethren Church. The General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches was officially dissolved at concurrent conventions of the United States and Canadian Conferences in Abbotsford in July. The evening sessions were joint sessions of the two conferences and the first night focused on the history of Mennonite Brethren in North America. At that session the Historical Commission also released a new publication entitled, *For Everything a Season: Mennonite Brethren in North America 1874-2002*, edited by Paul Toews and Kevin Enns-Rempel (Winnipeg, Manitoba and Hillsboro, Kansas: Kindred Productions, 2002). Thirteen different authors contributed chapters on a variety of topics relating to the history and work of the conference. The book also has a large number of photographs. The price of the book is \$35.95 (plus taxes and shipping) and is available from CMBS or Kindred Productions.

AD

Other books available

The following books by Gerhard Ratzlaff are also available from CMBS:

1. *Die Ruta Transchaco: wie sie entstand* (Asuncion, Paraguay, 1998). \$15.00.
2. *Hospital Mennonita Km 81: Liebe, die taetig wird.* (Asuncion, Paraguay: Gemeindegemeinschaft, 2001). \$12.00.
3. *Ein Leib viele Glieder: Die mennonitischen Gemeinden in Paraguay* (Asuncion, Paraguay, Gemeindegemeinschaft, 2001). \$19.00.

NOTE: Taxes and shipping charges are extra.

Letter to the Editor

Re. The Pax Story

In the article "The Pax Story:....." (Vol. LXXVIII No. 2, March 2002, p. 9) I noticed that they gave the Latin meaning for *Pax* as peace. While they may be right, I can't help but wonder if that is so. I'm a member of the Niagara Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society (I'm the current treasurer), and as such have participated in the transcription of old tombstones for our Cemeteries Committee. Most of the work I did was at Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines, and a goodly number of the graves were of Catholic folks. It was quite common to find the transcription "Requiscat in Pace", the latin for "Rest in Peace". When I go to my 1968 edition of Webster's New World Dictionary I find that *Pax* was the Roman goddess of peace, and the section on *Pax Romano* says as follows: "the terms of peace imposed by Rome on any of its dominions; hence...a peace dictated to a subjugated people by a conquering nation."

This leads me to suggest that *Pax* may have been Roman for peace, and *Pace* was Latin for peace. However, I'm hardly a scholar of Latin and there may well be various forms depending on the situation. I suggest you have someone well versed in Latin review and explain the different forms...

Helmut A. Epp, Fonthill, Ontario

400 Attend Loewen Reunion In Gretna

Gretna, MB – Four-hundred descendants of Heinrich and Sara (Toews) Loewen, who were born in the 1820s and who grew up and were married in Molotschna Colony in South Russia, gathered at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) in Gretna July 12-14 to celebrate their kinship. The participants came from across Canada (every province from Quebec to British Columbia was represented), from five states in the USA (Indiana, New Jersey, North Dakota, Texas and Virginia), and from Mexico.

Activities at the reunion included bus tours of the area where the Loewen family settled in 1879, a midnight viewing of the homestead in Silberfeld, wagon rides and walking tours of Gretna, a golf tournament, a service to dedicate a memorial erected on the homestead site, viewing the massive genealogy charts, artifacts and picture displays in the MCI gymnasium, and of course, much visiting. Special activities were available for the nearly 80 children under the age of twelve who came to the event.

There were two larger get-togethers in the MCI chapel. One was a Saturday evening program at which stories were told about the five children of Heinrich and Sara who grew to adulthood and about their families. The second larger gathering was a Sunday morning worship service. Garry Loewen, the Executive Director of the North End Community



This 10-foot metal memorial to Heinrich and Sara Loewen, crafted by Geoff Loewen of Silberfeld, a fourth generation descendant of Heinrich and Sara, was dedicated at the conclusion of the Loewen Family Reunion on Sunday afternoon, July 14. The memorial is located on the Loewen homestead on what is now Loewen Drive in Silberfeld. Photo: Courtesy of Ralph Thorpe.

Renewal Corporation in Winnipeg, presented the sermon. It was entitled, "Longing for Home."

The reunion concluded Sunday afternoon with the dedication of a memorial to Heinrich and Sara Loewen at the homestead site in Silberfeld, which is approximately 3 ½ miles northeast of Gretna, and a traditional Sunday afternoon meal (*fasha*) at the MCI.

The local hosts for the Reunion were Benno and Mary Loewen from Silberfeld, who were members of the Reunion Committee. They and their family received many accolades for their superb hosting.

Descendant listings of each of the five branches of the Heinrich and Sara Loewen family have been prepared by Ralph Thorpe of Nepean, Ontario, who is a member of the Loewen Reunion Committee and who is an accomplished genealogist. Copies of these listings are available to any interested persons at a cost of between \$7 and \$17, depending on the size of the listing.

Jen Loewen of Winnipeg scanned numerous photos onto a CD-ROM which were brought to the reunion by a broad range of participants. Most of the photos date back to the first half of the 20th century. Copies of this CD are available at a cost of \$10 each.

A video of the reunion, shot by Marvin Loewen of Winkler, will be available in both DVD and VHS format in late autumn or early winter. It will cost \$15.

Persons wishing to place an order for a descendant listing, the CD-ROM or the video may contact Larry Kehler, the secretary of the Reunion Committee. His address and phone number are: 440 Best Street, Winnipeg, MB R3K 1P3 ; (204)-888-8192; and his email address is jessieandlarry@aol.com.



Loewen Family Reunion at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Manitoba in July 2002 -- Descendants of Jacob Loewen (b. 1861) one of the branches of the Heinrich Loewen (1823-1908) and Sarah Toews (1827-1889) family who homesteaded at Silberfeld. Photo: Courtesy of Ralph Thorpe.

Dick Family Sponsors Siberian Mennonite Research Initiative

by Peter Penner, Calgary, Alberta

For some years now Mennonites have benefited enormously from archival resources that were discovered in Ukraine and Russian archives. This material has been a great boon for Mennonite Studies. What is needed now and what we have within our reach is the recovery of documents of primary interest to Mennonites from all those Siberian sources. How to get it done most efficiently and within reason financially was the big question. What seemed necessary was to find a Russian who knows the archival deposits, has learned to know and work with the Siberian archivists, and who could achieve our ends at a reasonable cost.

An opportunity to achieve this started when I had the chance to meet Andrej Savin, a young historian in the University City of Akademgorodok (near Novosibirsk). This was during the last part of my two-months stay in the Altai, Western Siberia, in October and November 2000.

Andrej Savin works out of the history department of this university. He is already familiar to some of us from his numerous articles in Klartext Verlag's *Forschungen in der Geschichte u. Kultur der Russlanddeutschen*, and from his recent book, with Professor Detlef Brandes, Duesseldorf, *Die Sibirien-Deutschen im Sowjetstaat, 1919-1938*, Klartext Verlag, 2001. Fortunately James Urry had forwarded some relevant articles by Savin, Belkovec, and others to me before I left for Siberia.

Savin's apparent qualifications, based on experience in those archives, and achievements in publishing, as well as his sympathetic interest in the story of the *Russlanddeutsche*, encouraged a number of western Canadian historians to join with archivists seated in Winnipeg and Fresno to form this "Siberian Mennonite Research Initiative". We met for the first time in conjunction with the History Conference staged by the Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, late in 2001.

It was left to Paul Toews, Director of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno Pacific University, to find

funding for this project and to negotiate with Savin the details of his assignment. We are pleased to announce that the Peter G. Dick family has agreed to fund the first instalment of research – essentially running over a period of eighteen months.

Peter Dick, who is doing well at age 96, lives in Vineland, Ontario. He himself was not born in Siberia, but in 1910 his family joined the large number of Mennonites moving to the Altai, Siberia. Peter has many happy memories of life there, but in 1927, at age 22, he decided to leave for Canada, alone without family, while he still could. Family relations who remained behind went through some terrible experiences because of the repressive measures and the purges of the next ten years, 1928-1938.

Beginning in July 2002 Savin will search the archives in Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Barnaul, and Omsk, as well as some in Moscow for materials of primary interest to Mennonites. He will list these first in Russian, and ready them for their eventual translation into English. Part of his initial assignment is also to make hard copy of the documents considered primary to our interest. The translation and publication of documents will likely constitute a second and separate project for which funding will be necessary.

The informal executive of the "Siberian Mennonite Research Initiative" is made up of Paul Toews, Fresno Pacific University; James Urry, Professor of Anthropology, University of Wellington, NZ; Harry Loewen, Kelowna, former holder of the Chair in Mennonite Studies; and Peter Penner, researching and writing in Calgary, Alberta. Supportive of this executive are the following, most of whom were present in Winnipeg in early December 2001: Archivists: Abe Dueck, CMBS, Winnipeg; Alf Redekopp, MHC, Winnipeg; Lawrence Klippenstein, retired archivist, Winnipeg; historians Hans P. Werner and Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg; John Friesen, Canadian Mennonite University; Colin Neufeldt, Edmonton, and Ted Regehr, Calgary; David Giesbrecht, BC; and Walter Unger, Ontario, well known for his annual Mennonite Heritage Tours down the Dnepr River.

Yarrow Research Committee News Release

The publication of local histories with new information is always cause for celebration. The Yarrow Research Committee is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of two volumes under the shared subtitle *Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise* that explore a historic Fraser Valley community in a way not done before.

Early in 1928, a fragmented group of war-ravaged European immigrants began arriving in Yarrow, BC to build a new home for themselves and their families. Now, almost seventy-five years later, a number of former Yarrow residents and associates have written two books that explore both the pre-Mennonite history of Yarrow and, after 1928, the fascinating and at times painful story of the founding and development of this immigrant settlement. The initiative for starting this study came from anthropologist Dr. J. A. Loewen, who in 1998-99 invited a number of scholars to join in a project of research and writing. Perhaps like Pacific salmon that spend years crossing in an open ocean but eventually feel compelled to return to their spawning channels, these former Yarrow residents found such an invitation irresistible.

After several years of work, the Yarrow Research Committee (YRC) can report that a distinguished publisher, Heritage House of Victoria, BC, has agreed to publish our study of Yarrow, covering the years 1928-1958. The projected release date is early December 2002. We expect to offer this set of 6" x 9" volumes, titled *Before We Were the Land's* and *Village of Unsettled Yearnings* respectively, in a slip case. The text will be complemented by some 120 pictures and a number of maps. This will be the first such study of a Mennonite community ever released by a publishing house in B.C.

While carefully researched and documented, these two volumes are written for the general reader. Volume I provides a historical survey of pre-Mennonite and early Mennonite settlement and, in its last two parts, features excerpts from personal memoirs and journals of 30 Mennonite settlers, ten of them women. Volume II offers numerous essays designed to serve collectively as a cultural mural of Yarrow from 1928 to the end of the 1950s.

Anyone placing advance orders for the two-volume set will receive a 25% discount. Subsidies have reduced the retail price of these volumes, and we are pleased to offer the discount. This offer, at \$32.00 per two-volume set (which includes GST), applies only to the complete set, and only to advance orders paid for before November 1, 2002. Shipping costs will be added to your order unless the books are picked up in person.

Persons interested in placing advance orders should contact either David Giesbrecht at 604-853-0382 (dg@paralynx.com) or Lora Sawatsky at 604-795-5197 (rsawatsk@dowco.com)

Return of the Kanadier: A History Conference on a Migrant People

October 3-5, 2002

Eckhardt Gramatte Hall
515 Portage Avenue
University of Winnipeg

This is an academic conference examining the history of the immigration and integration of Low German-speaking *Kanadier* Mennonites from Paraguay, Mexico and other Latin American countries into Canada. These migrants are the descendants of Mennonites who left Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the 1920s because of the schools question. During the last generation some 40,000 have 'returned' to places across Canada and in several states in the U.S. Here they have transplanted their family life, rebuilt churches, and learned new skills. In the process they have had to face the difficult decision of leaving an old home and the dynamic challenges of finding a new state and society. The conference hopes to pay special attention to the accomplishments of these recent Mennonite immigrants and the hurdles they faced as they integrated into Canada.

The opening session begins on Thurs. Oct. 3 at 7:30 p.m. For more information call Royden Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies, U. of Winnipeg 204-786-9391 or e-mail r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

Co-sponsors include the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Mennonite Central Committee and Canadian Mennonite University.



Funeral of William Klassen in Ignatyev colony in southern Russia. Can you help us identify any of the individuals on this photo? Contact: Centre for MB Studies, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 3E5 or e-mail cstoesz@mbconf.ca.

***Announcing the inauguration of* The John and Margaret Friesen Lectures in Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies**

Russian Mennonites and World War I

featuring

Dr. Abraham Friesen
Santa Barbara, California

November 12-13, 2002

Canadian Mennonite University Chapel
600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB

Tues. Nov. 12, 8:00 p.m. "The 'Sect vs. Confession' Controversy on the Eve of World War I."

Wed. Nov. 13, 10:30 a.m. "Russian Mennonites and the Government's Land Liquidation Measures"

Wed. Nov. 13, 8:00 p.m. "The Dutch-German Controversy during and after World War I"

For more information call Gerry Ediger, 487-3300 ext 637; e-mail: gediger@cmu.ca

Sponsored by Canadian Mennonite University, Centre for MB Studies and Mennonite Heritage Centre

Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 12)

-nite source do not so much tell a story as give a series of snapshots of then current events.

The disturbances caused by the spread of the Brethren movement (they were commonly referred to as *Hüpfer* or jumpers, due to their exuberant behaviour at religious services) gave rise to governmental involvement, and the "reflections" are contained in reports of a Lutheran magistrate, Alexander K. Brune, who was assigned the task of investigating the matter of this new "sect," as well as a number of other reports and documents subsequently located in the Central Government Archives in St. Petersburg under the heading "*Hüpfer*."

While many of these texts will be of interest to scholars, the main virtue of the collection, it seems to me, is the series of actual reports by Alexander Brune "on the character of the *Hüpfer* sect." As John Toews points out in his Introduction, Brune appears to move from a more sympathetic to a more critical view of the Brethren. At one point (p.104f.) Brune seriously attempts to place this development into historical perspective, and asks: "Is the appearance of the *Hüpfer* the decisive moment for the Mennonite Church of South Russia?" He continues:

There is no doubt that by the zeal they display in rebelling against the obvious shortcomings [of the existing church] and by their hard, persistent work to include all strict Christians into their community, they have served the church by sounding a warning cry. But unfortunately, they have destroyed the good expected of them, by not only rejecting human error, but also God's truth preserved within the church. They have also failed, while considering themselves and excluding everyone else, to prove that they are the elect and the true, invisible church of Christ....

On the other hand, Christians who are able to be God's instruments in the restoration and purification of the church are distinguished by the following characteristics: while having a realistic view of the depraved state of the church, they do not separate themselves on the basis of any prejudicial ideas in order to form an opposition party, but try to bring all its members to unity in one holy body; possessing clear and perfect knowledge of human salvation, they are ready to prove by works, all the days of their lives, that they not only personally understand the truth of God's grace, but desire to spread

among others the light given to them by God, believing that his truth overcomes the world; they display a selflessness and love that does not seek its own, but is patient, exhibiting joyful courage, and a strength through suffering and torture; and they exhibit a love that avoids outrage, arbitrariness and revenge (106).

Brune himself was a churchman, and he tried to assess the new movement in theological terms, while most of the officials' reports deal with events which "disturbed the public peace." Some of the documents contain obvious errors of fact, concerning matters like the place of the death penalty in the new movement, or charges of polygamy and orgies.. The literal reading of scripture led some to an understanding of communion as transubstantiation (128, 131). Also, there seems to have been some confusion of the Brethren with the new Templer movement, which arose more or less in the same place and time, and which had a political dimension lacking among the Mennonites. Toward the end of the *Hüpfer* file there seemed to be some hope that the movement of many Brethren families to the Kuban region would relieve the Taurida and Yekaterinoslav Gubernia officials of this whole vexing matter.

John Toews must be given credit for publishing these texts, which raise many interesting questions. It is unfortunate that he did not place them in a more substantial historical context, including the powerful and misunderstood influence of Eduard Wüst, echoes of whose preaching can be found here, and who was rejected by these Brethren with the same verse used to distance themselves from the Mennonite Church, (p.20) I Corinthians 5. 11: "But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy; an idolator or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not eat."

Brune's conclusion:

I would sum up the main characteristics of this sect as a strong passion for prophecy; direct understanding of Holy Scriptures and predictions; a dream of the imminent return of Jesus Christ; a proud desire to separate; fanatical teachings on repentance; the conceited arrogance of the Pharisees; a passionate desire to proselytize; and deep anger toward the church in general and opposition to the authorities and public order.

Considering all the above, it is not difficult to decide whether the *Hüpfer* have been chosen by God as instruments for reforming the fallen Christian church (111,112).

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

The Chortitz village Homecoming celebration in 1999 continues to have spin-offs. The Cemetery Project Committee, formed after the Homecoming, has now produced a 40-page, 8½ x 11 coil-bound souvenir booklet entitled *Chortitz Memories ... 1875 - 2002*. In four pages of prose text John Penner gives a succinct history of the village and its larger church and communal context. The rest of the book is full of photos and very compact family information: detailed village map showing residents 1875 to the present for each lot; homesteader map for the 8 sections of land belonging to the original village; detailed cemetery register; Old Colony Church ministerial 1936 to the present. The book provides an excellent resource for a self-guided tour of this historic village.

Jac. Schroeder's memoirs, *Landscapes of My Life*, were written "at the request of our children." Over the course of 14 years this grew into a 650-page book (8½ x 11, pb). Unlike some of these memoirs "for the family," Schroeder's volume has an enormous wealth of information about life in the southern Manitoba Mennonite communities from the end of WW I to the present. Farming, teaching, cooperatives, the Rhineland Agricultural Society, the credit union movement, 4-H clubs, and other "public" topics receive the bulk of the attention. Life in Blumenthal, Weidenfeld, Schoenau, and other villages is reflected. Schroeder was among the very early high school students in both Altona and Winkler. The book is interestingly written and copiously illustrated with photos and other visuals, including some of his own sketches.

Celebrating God's Goodness ... 1950-2000 is a brief (109 pages, hdc) history of Central Heights Church, known until 1966 as Abbotsford MB Church (Abbotsford: Central Heights Church, 2000). Itself an offshoot of South Abbotsford MB Church, the congregation grew rapidly, in spite of groups leaving to help start new congregations: Bakerview in 1965; Northview, 1980; Mountain Park, 1991. Its 1550-seat sanctuary (1985) held an average worship group of over 1100 by 1999. Smaller congregations will find helpful ideas on outreach, evangelism and nurture, even without aspiring to become mega-congregations themselves.

Book Reviews

Helmut Harder, *David Toews Was Here: 1870 - 1947* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2002) 347 pages

Reviewed by Jake Letkemann of
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

We all had earlier opportunities to read bits about David Toews in books by Frank H. Epp, Ted Regehr and others, but here, for the first time, we have a full account of the rich, influential life of this Mennonite leader. I had been keenly anticipating the book and read it eagerly, with much satisfaction.

The title at first seems prosaic or flat, but Harder aptly justifies it in his preface. Toews had been scheduled to preach in Bergthal, a four-mile distance from his Rosthern home. Because it had been a very cold winter night, the man in charge of stoking the stove early Sunday morning had assumed nobody would show up, did not stoke the stove and wrote on the chalkboard, "There will be no service because the minister cannot come." Toews, however, had walked the distance in the cold, saw the writing and added, "DAVID TOEWS WAS HERE" and walked home. Harder proceeds to show throughout the book what a difference Toew's presence has made.

I can only speculate what that difference means for me. Had Toews not been there, my parents might not have migrated to Canada and I might have been destined to a life under Stalin, if I had lived at all. The same will be true for many people reading this book. I first became aware of Toews as a result of his indefatigable energy expended on behalf of Mennonites trying to leave the USSR.

It is nearly impossible to imagine what it meant for Toews to sign what Harder calls, "the infamous contract" in 1922. The CPR was willing to advance a \$400,000 loan on stringent conditions to transplant 3000 Mennonites from the Ukrainian steppe to the Canadian prairie. When the Conference delegates meeting in Winkler lacked the courage to make such a commitment, Toews did. This was only the first of many risks he took on behalf of Mennonites in the USSR. Harder vividly portrays what this cost him in terms of time, endless travel, misunderstandings and false accusations and sleepless nights. The messy "Braun-Friesen fiasco" (p. 152 ff) is one example.

For some of us it is these efforts on behalf of Mennonite immigrants that evoke our deepest gratitude when we think of Toews.

However, he also made very significant contributions in other areas for which others will be equally grateful. There might never have been a Rosthern Junior College if David Toews had not been there. One is impressed with his vision, dedication and personal sacrifice on behalf of that institution and Mennonite education in general.

About 45 years he served faithfully as an ordained minister and 31 years on the Conference executive, about 24 years as chairman. My 97-year-old uncle in Rosthern speaks warmly of Toews as his minister who baptized him and officiated at his wedding.

According to Harder, Toews was a staunch pacifist all his life and promoted the peace position as a community affair, "a way of life for a people" (p. 99). It is interesting to compare Toews' position here with that of J.J. Thiessen as portrayed by Esther Epp-Thiessen in her recent biography of that great leader. Because the work of Toews and Thiessen overlapped, and because both were deeply immersed in church and Conference leadership and in immigration matters, Epp-Thiessen's book includes part of Toews' story and Harder's book contains part of J.J. Thiessen's story.

Other fascinating aspects of the book include Toews' experience with the Klaas Epp migration out of the Ukraine to the East, his sojourn in the United States and his early educational contributions in Gretna, Manitoba.

Regarding his style of leadership, Harder writes that "even his critics had to admire his tenacity and stubbornness" (p.209). One example of his style was to make a personal decision to assign J.J. Thiessen to a task and if chastised for the decision, "to ask for forgiveness [rather] than be denied permission at the outset." (p. 195) Leadership also requires courage. During the WWII years, when Mennonites were accused of being members of the Nazi Party, Toews had written in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* that the accusation was false. Then he had added, "I consider National Socialism to be a political party that has at least as much right in any free country as, for instance, Communism has, toward which many of our Canadian papers are so very tolerant" (p. 248).

Harder also devotes considerable space to David Toews' wife and children. They too, made many sacrifices both involuntarily and voluntarily. One touching example of a personal sacrifice is recorded on page 171. On a "bitterly cold" winter day, a visitor to Toews' office had worn inadequate shoes. Toews had called home requesting that his children bring his newly acquired felt boots which he then gave to the visitor.

The primary organization of the book is chronological. Chapter headings and sub-headings also make it easy to follow the geography of Toews' pilgrimage as well as his major experiences and contributions during each stage. Adequate documentation adds authenticity.

The book could have been improved, I think, if we had been spared many repetitive details and if quotations had been kept shorter or even been omitted. For example, details like those on page 167 under, "On the Road Again" and the quotation on page 187 of amenities on the ship add volume without adding to our understanding and appreciation of the man at this stage of the book.

CMBC Publications and Helmut Harder have rendered a valuable service by providing us with this biography of a most deserving man.

The Story of the Early Mennonite Brethren (1860-1869): Reflections of a Lutheran Churchman / edited by John B. Toews (Winnipeg/Hillsboro: Kindred Productions, 2002) 188 pages, pb.

Reviewed by Victor Doerksen of Kelowna, BC.

In his volume of *Selected Documents of 1975* John B. Toews described two ways of writing history, either a reconstruction of events by the historian, or "letting the sources speak for themselves." His new collection might well be titled: *Selected Documents, Volume Two*, since he once again lets the sources speak for themselves. And what they tell, I think, cannot really be called "The Story of the Early Mennonite Brethren (1860-1869)." Perhaps something like "Contemporary Glimpses of Events Concerning the *Hüpfers* Movement" would be nearer to the truth, since these early texts from a non-Menno-

(cont'd on p. 11)