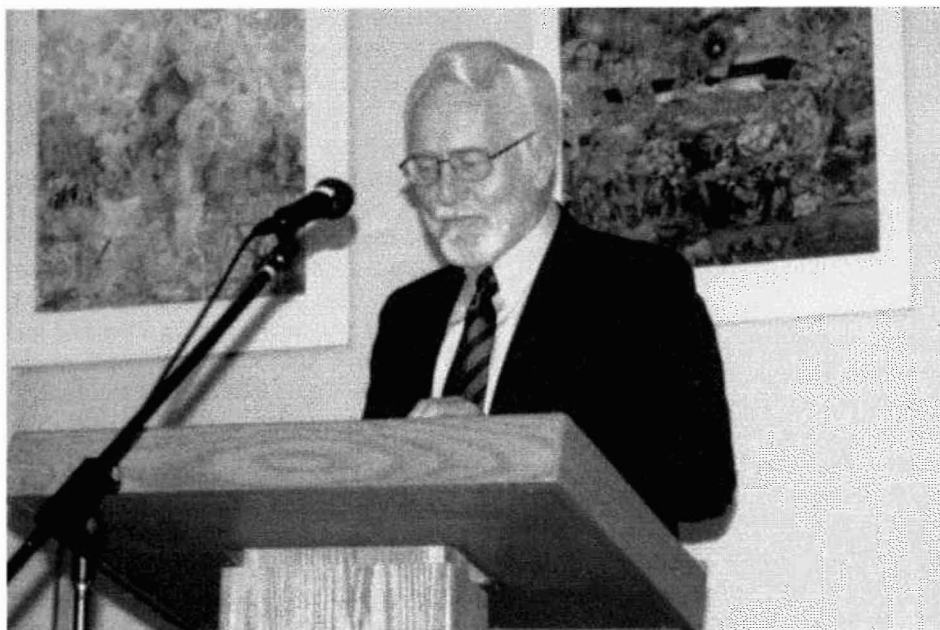


Mennonite Historian

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



Dr. Abraham Friesen of University of California, Santa Barbara, delivering the inaugural lectures of the John and Margart Friesen Lectures in Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg on Nov. 12-13, 2002. (Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz)

The John and Margaret Friesen Lectures in Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies

by Bert Friesen

Dr. Abraham Friesen recently delivered the inaugural lectures of the newly launched annual lectureship in Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies, co-sponsored by Canadian Mennonite University, the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. The lectures were delivered at Canadian Mennonite University on 12-13 November 2002. They were on the theme of Russian Mennonites and World War I. The three lectures were entitled:

"The 'Sect vs. Confession' Controversy on the Eve of World War I," "Russian Mennonites and the Government's Land Liquidation Measures," and "The Dutch-German Controversy during and after World War I."

Abraham Friesen is a native of Manitoba, having studied at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College and the University of Manitoba. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University in California and since 1967 has taught at

(cont'd on p. 7)

The Borosenko Memorial

by Margaret Bergen

In September 2002, I joined the Mennonite Heritage Cruise in order to be able to participate in the dedication of a memorial stone in the former Mennonite village of Ebenfeld, Borosenko Colony, now the Ukrainian village of Iljanifka, in memory of the victims of the massacres of the villages of Ebenfeld and Steinbach.

One cold December night in 1919, a band of Machnovites brutally massacred all the families in the villages of Ebenfeld and Steinbach -- 67 men, woman and children in Ebenfeld, 54 in Steinbach. Only a very few people escaped. The dead were hurriedly buried in mass graves by several men from neighboring Mennonite villages.

The Mennonite cemetery in Ebenfeld still exists. It is surrounded by acacias, and has been maintained by the Ukrainian family on whose property it is located. They describe it as "sacred ground". They know the exact spot of the mass grave.

Two years ago I approached Harvey Dyck regarding a memorial stone for the mass grave in the Ebenfeld cemetery. I took on the financial responsibility, and Harvey did all the preparatory work. He engaged Paul Epp, Toronto, to design the stone which was made in Ukraine by Aleksandr and Elena Pankew. He met with the Ukrainian family in Ebenfeld on whose land the cemetery is situated and the local administrators to obtain permission for this project, and he set up the program for the memorial service.

The memorial service was held in the Mennonite cemetery in Ebenfeld/Iljanifka, on October 5, 2002. The memorial stone had been set up beside the mass grave. The service was well attended by local Ukrainians who stood respectfully and reverently in a semi-circle in the cemetery. It was also attended by two bus-loads of people from the Mennonite Heritage Cruise, as well as two bus-loads from the Zaporozhye Mennonite Church.

The memorial stone is circular, representing the continuity of the past, present and the future. The inscription is in German and in Ukrainian. Mourning viewers must walk around it in a circle to read it, thereby participating in the gesture of continuity and its message of hope. The incisions on the stone are similar to those of a millstone. This humble artifact represents the simple agrarian life of those be-

(cont'd on p. 2)

Borosenko Monument

(cont'd from p. 1)

ing commemorated. The anchor at the centre of the memorial is the historical Tsarist and Russian Mennonite symbol of Christian faith and hope. The inscription on the memorial stone reads as follows:

In trauernder Erinnerung an Menno-nitische Opfer des Massenmordes in der Nikolaithaler/Nowosofiewkaer Wolost während des Bürgerkrieges 1919. Ebenfeld/Uljanowka 4. Dezember, 67 Männer, Frauen und Kinder im nahestehenden Grab bestattet. Steinbach /Kuzmizkoje 5. Dezember, 54 Männer, Frauen und Kinder im gewesenen Dorf bestattet. Anderswo in der Wolost, 17 Männer, Frauen und Kinder. Darum lasset uns dem nachstreben was zum Frieden dient, Römer 14, 19. Im Geiste der Ver-söhnung von den Verwandten der Opfer und der Internationalen Mennonitischen Memorial Gesellschaft im Jahre 2002 errichtet.

In his opening remarks, Harvey Dyck gave a brief history of that violent time. He then stated that we were gathered to lament the violent deaths of the villagers and to ensure that these dead not be forgotten.

I spoke briefly since this was a very per-

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Margaret Bergen at the Borozenko Memorial, October 5, 2002.

personal journey for me because my uncle Johann Bergen, was one buried in this mass grave. The burial, more than 82 years ago, was done hurriedly, in an atmosphere of panic and great fear by several men from nearby Mennonite villages, without any regular Christian Mennonite funeral ceremony. The mutilated bodies could not be washed. There were no coffins for the 67 massacred victims. There were no hymns, no sermon, no prayers. There were no mourners left to mourn. Through this memorial service we honored the memory of those who died giving them the funeral denied them in 1919, through words, hymns, prayers and the reading of their names.

Zinaida Slavinskaya from Ebenfeld/IJankfka and I from Winnipeg unveiled and dedicated the memorial. John Bergen prayed for forgiveness for the perpetrators of these massacres, for reconciliation, and for God's blessing on those who now reside in these villages where our people once lived. The hymn "Bless the Lord O My Soul" followed.

Svetlana Bolyeva, director, Institute of Ukrainian and German Studies, Dnepropetrovsk National University, spoke on "Those Evil Days". The fratricidal civil war which followed the 1917 Russian Revolution, caused the collapse of law and order, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people of every nationality and

faith who had lived side by side with Ukrainians for generations. The memories of those unspeakable crimes linger in the hearts of the relatives. So let us Ukrainians and Mennonites preserve these memories.

Pupils from the local school then sang "A Gift of Life". Helmut Epp, pastor of the Petershagen/Molochansk Mennonite Church, Molotschna Colony, spoke on the topic: "Let us keep Peace", where he emphasized that one should not meet evil with evil, that one should be ready to forgive, and that peace was more than the cessation of armed conflict. It means that one needs to live in harmony with God and with fellowmen.

This was followed by a minute of silence, a prayer, and the laying of flowers on the memorial stone on behalf of the relatives, on behalf of the Ukrainian villagers, by village children and by local and foreign guests.

For the memorial service represented a closure – a service to remember and to reconcile. The innocent Mennonite people who were massacred here in Ebenfeld and in Steinbach and in other villages in the Borosenko Colony, now had the funeral service that was denied them in 1919.

We came here in a spirit of reconciliation and to honor those who had suffered a horrific death.

Margaret Bergen lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Heinz Bergen of Regina displaying a copy of an 1867 detailed topographical map of the Chortitz Colony he recently acquired. The details depict the economic conditions including village boundaries, roads, fields, buildings, property numbers, community pasture lands and topographical features. The original brilliantly coloured map with a 36 item graphic legend measures 1.6 metres by 2metres and is drawn at a scale of 1:16800. Hopefully this map will be made available in a form that will allow further study and analysis. For further information contact H. Bergen, 59 Richardson Cr., Regina, SK S4S 4J2 or e-mail hbergen@accesscomm.ca

Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

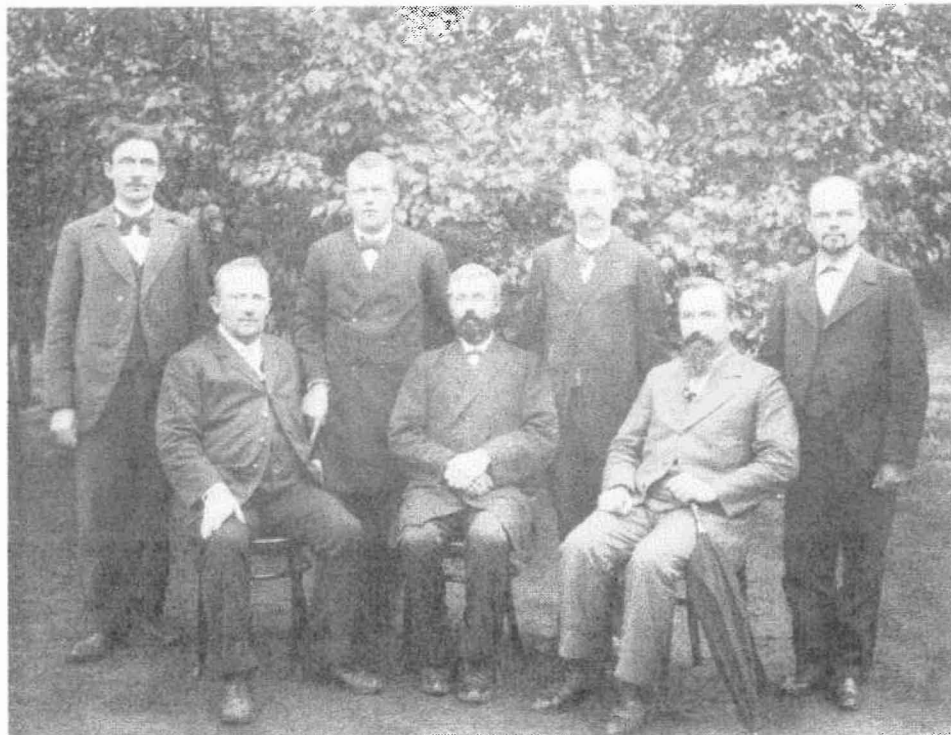
Recent Books

Reg Rempel, editor. *Descendants of Johan Doell and Helena Rempel: A Family History and Genealogy* (Aberdeen, SK: Leonard Doell, 2002) 144 pp.

This book focuses on the family history of Johan Doell (1865-1947) and his wife Helena Rempel (1867-1947) who were born in Russia, came to Canada during the 1870s, married in Manitoba in 1888, and died in Saskatchewan. Their pioneer years in Manitoba were spent in the village of Blumstein. In 1899 they moved to Saskatchewan and farmed near Schoenwiese. Johan was active in the community in church and civic life. He served as a *Vorsaenger* (song leader) in the church and was also on the Council of the Rural Municipality of Warman. Contact: Leonard Doell, Box 364, Aberdeen, SK S0K 0A0.

Lynne (Kroecker) Ward. *David Heinrich Friesen History* (Winnipeg, MB: by the author, 2002) 450 pp.

This book focuses on the family history of descendants of David Heinrich Friesen (1846-1915), who was first married to Barbara Klassen (1852-1888) and then Anna Janzen (1868-1929). Sixteen of 24 children from these two unions survived to adulthood. The book includes articles on Mennonite life and history, major biographies on each of these 16 children, genealogical data on over 1,800 descendants spanning 7 generations, some ancestral lines traced back as far as 1720, graphs, charts, anecdotes, over 1000 photographs, and more. Contact: Lynne Ward, 3 Fawn Place, Winnipeg, MB R3R 2Y9 or 204-885-3104.



Lepp - One of the men in this photo is my great grandfather Peter Lepp (b. 1853). He first married Elizabeth Zacharias (b. 1856) then Helene Klassen (b. 1863), widow of Aron Lepp, and third to Katharina Wiens (b. 1866), widow of a Mr. Isaak. Peter Lepp was a minister in Fuerstenland colony, South Russia (villages: Georgstal, Olgafield, Alexandertal, and Rosenbach). We have been unable to prove how my line fits into the Lepp line of the Lepp-Wallman Factory. One man in this picture resembles Herman Lepp from the factory. Are the men in this photo the factory owners? I would be interested in any information about the factory or Lepp families. Contact: Charlotte R. McCrae, mccrae@westman.wave.ca

Queries

Dyck - I am looking for descendants of two daughters of Heinrich Dyck (1832-1887) and Maria Epp (1833-1877). Maria Dyck (1859-1831) married Abram Friesen (1859-1933). They had 12 children and live near Rosthern, Sask. Gertruda Dyck (1863-1940) first married Heinrich Wiebe (1859-1908) and then Cornelius Friesen (1860-1929). They had 10 children and first lived on the Manitoba East Reserve and in 1927 moved to Menno Colony, Paraguay. Contact: Bill Schroeder, 434 Sutton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0T3 or e-mail: b_schroeder26@hotmail.com.

Henry E. Plett Award for Mennonite Family History Research and Writing

Attention: High School Students

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society invites you to enter an essay contest presenting research in your family history. Prizes consist of \$250 (first prize) and \$100 (second prize). For more details contact the MMHS Genealogy Committee, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or check the web at www.mmhs.org.



Winners of the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award for Family history research and writing: Dustin Braun (on the left) first place prize winner, and Adam Braun (on the right), second place prize winner awarded in June 2002. Both winners attended W.C. Miller Collegiate in Altona at the time of the contest.

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



Goossen Family Photos

The Mennonite Heritage Centre recently acquired 31 high quality photographs of the Jacob Johann Goossen (1858-1920) and Aganetha Kaethler (1861-1946) family. These were donated by John Enns. The Goossens owned the large Wintergruen estate which was about 30 verst away from Schoensee, Molotschna. Jacob and Aganetha had thirteen children, seven of which survived early childhood. In 1906 the family took a first class holiday to Europe and the USA to avoid difficulties in Russia immediately after the Russo-Japanese War. They visited family and friends in North America and returned to Wintergruen in June 1907. The family continued to live at the estate until October 1918 when they left for their own safety. On December 10, 1918 the estate was pillaged by Machno bandits. Jacob Goossen died in 1920 and the situation in Russia continued to become more desperate. In 1922 daughter Maria left Russia to join her fiancé A.A.



The Jacob Johann Goossen family photo taken in the family garden on the Wintergruen estate. Back row: Maria (1889-1934), Aganetha (1885-1934), Katharina (1887-1904). Front row: Anna (1897-1922), Aganetha (Kaethler) Goossen (1861-1946), Johann (1899-1979), Jacob (1858-1920), Helena (1895-1985), Elise (1890-).

Friesen in Canada who was a prominent member on the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. On June 21, 1924 the family sold their last cow, the little furniture they had, and boarded a train in Lichtenau, Molotschna immigrating to Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan. For more information on this family see *Daydreams & Nightmares; Life on the Wintergruen Estate*, by Helena Goossen Friesen.

Video Review

Women of Courage. An address by Marlene Epp on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the post World War II Mennonite immigration to Canada, at the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB, in the summer of 1998 / videotaped, edited and produced by Otto Klassen.

Reviewed by Gerhard Ens of Winnipeg.

We all know, of course, that videotaping a public address too often simply results in yet another "speaking head" depiction, but somehow this is the only way we Mennonites can preserve and popularize events of historical importance.

Marlene Epp is the daughter of the well known late Mennonite historian, Dr. Frank H. Epp. As she says in this video: "I grew up in a home where we lived and

breathed Mennonite history." A few years ago she undertook a significant research project on a subject in which relatively little was known objectively, namely of the fate of women without men – the women of the latest major wave of immigration to Canada during the decade of 1948-1958.

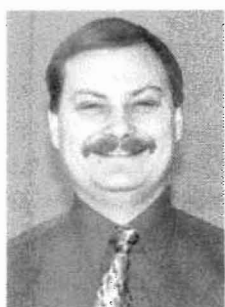
A very large number of the women of this migration had lost husbands, brothers and sons in Stalin's infamous purges during the years of 1937 and 1938 and to the armed forces of both the Soviet Union and Germany who simply conscripted them into military service. In her research Ms. Epp has interviewed scores of these women some forty years after they were "widowed" and has written a book titled "Courageous Women".

Marlene Epp is a superb reporter. We sense that the subject is very close to her heart and are therefore not surprised when she reveals that her own mother-in-law is, in fact, one of these women. Her matter-of-fact reporting style, with only the odd catch in her voice betraying the poignancy of the subject matter, makes the whole subject stark and surrealistic. "We will never find out how many of these women were raped", Ms Epp says. "They simply refuse to talk about that. Whenever one opens up a little, we find that the women endured this ultimate degradation of their bodies as a act of protection for their children or as the only means of survival in a world gone absolutely mad." What added insult to injury, Ms. Epp reports further, was the lack of empathy and understanding when they came to meet their unscathed relatives in Canada. "And yet", Ms. Epp reports, "it is absolutely marvelous how faith not only survived in this climate, but was actually strengthened and passed on to fatherless children growing up under these conditions.

This video is an eye opener of endless fascination. Otto Klassen has once again produced a "simple" video with astonishing effect. He has skillfully woven into the texture of Ms. Epp's report footage from his extensive film library depicting women in the Great Trek managing teams of horses and repairing vehicles while at the same time nursing their children, cooking for their families, bedding down the infirmed and, most heart breaking of all, burying the dead along the endless trek.

The video is available at the MHC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 for \$15.00 plus postage and handling.

Photograph Project Proceeding



Peter Woelk joined the Centre staff on a half-time basis for the current year to work on a project that was initiated two years ago. The project, which was funded for the past two

years under the Control of Holdings program of the Canadian Council of Archives, consists of processing the massive collection of *Mennonite Brethren Herald* photographs which have been collected since the founding of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* in 1962. Approximately 3000 photographs were processed each year by Donovan Giesbrecht, which leaves approximately 10,000 or more photographs still to be processed. The photographs are first appraised and selected, resulting in the discarding of about 1/3. The remainder are arranged and described and entered into a searchable database. Finally, the photographs are placed in standard archival envelopes for storage.

Peter is working on this project on a temporary basis because of staff changes and budget adjustments in the Canadian MB Conference. The Centre is expecting to apply for a CCA grant again for the coming year to continue processing of photographs.

Centre Placed under Jurisdiction of New Board of Discipleship Ministries

As a result of a major restructuring of the Canadian MB Conference ratified at the convention in Abbotsford, BC in July, 2002, the Centre has been placed under the mandate of the newly created Board of Discipleship Ministries. A search for an Executive Director is currently underway. The Board of Communications, which was previously responsible for the Centre, has been discontinued, as has the Board of Christian Education. The more immediate supervision of the work of the Centre will continue under the Historical Committee. The Director of the Centre, Abe Dueck, is currently working on a half-time basis and expects to retire fully at the end of May.

75th Anniversary of Concordia Hospital

Abe Dueck, Director of the Centre, has been commissioned by the Board of Directors of Concordia Hospital to write the 75th Anniversary book for Concordia Hospital. The hospital was founded in 1928 and will be celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2003. Dueck authored the 50th anniversary book in 1978. The new book will include much of the material in the previous edition, but will add a significant section on the past 25 years.

Recent Accessions

1. Photo of the Maedchenschule (girl's school) in Tiege, Molotschna, 1910 and a photo of the staff at one of Erdman Penner's and Otto Schultz's store on the West Reserve, ca. 1890. Donated by Bill Schroeder (Sutton Ave).
2. Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church minutes, reports, and Schwestern Verein materials.
3. Issues of the German language newspaper, *Der Nordwesten*, 1923-1953.
4. Cornerstone Community Church, Dartmouth, NS records, 1967-1993.
5. 4 photos of Maria Enns and Nikita Saloff-Astakoff, an evangelist in Russia and North America.
6. 7 books of Statutes and minutes of the Jugendverein of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Aberdeen, Saskatchewan, 1910-1956.
7. Photo album of photos from Isaac Wiens (1867-1942) and Katharina Warkentin (1869-1955). The photos are of the Wiens family and



Dr. Helmut Huebert, Chair of the Historical Committee of CMBS and co-editor (with William Schroeder) of the *Mennonite Historical Atlas*, presenting the 5000th copy of the atlas to Paul Friesen, librarian at Canadian Mennonite University. (Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz)



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descendants who lived in the Winkler, MB area.

8. Correspondence to and from Linda Banman, missionary to Brazil, 1955-1986.
9. Borden MB Church records, 1906-1974.

Photo Identification by Reader

The September issue of the *Mennonite Historian* (XXVIII, 3, 2002) carried a photograph on p. 10 of the funeral of William (Wilhelm?) Klassen in the Ignatyev Colony in southern Russia and asked readers to help identify other individuals in the photograph. Mr. Herman A. Neufeld of Tehachapi, California wrote and indicated that the individual in the front row, third from the left, was Elder Hermann A. Neufeld and that it was probably taken in 1923 or shortly prior to that. A search of the journals of Elder Neufeld, which are housed at the CMBS archives in Winnipeg and which have also been translated by the grandson, Herman A. Neufeld of California, may also yield further information. Thank you to Mr. Neufeld, who has also sent the photo to Dr. Abe Neufeld (Elder Neufeld's son) to seek to identify others in the photo.

A.D.

Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

The Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (CMEO) editorial committee met at Columbia Bible College on 5-6 December 2002. It was reported that the web site for the encyclopedia (www.mhsc.ca) has averaged 734 unique visitors per day since the site was first tracked in April 2000. The total number of unique visitors during this time has topped the 300,000 mark. The encyclopedia currently has over 2,300 articles, with 65 having been added this year and many more anticipated for 2003. Many of the articles were originally published in the Mennonite Encyclopedia but more recently new articles have been commissioned for the encyclopedia, and many others are or have been revised.

The committee has focused on new articles for educational institutions and significant individuals during the last few years, and is now beginning to turn its attention to major revisions of congregational entries. There is hope that local writers from the various congregations will be willing to contribute articles for the next stage of the encyclopedia's development.

Richard D. Thiessen, Abbotsford.

Reflections on 'The Pacifist Who Went To War'

by Lawrence Klippenstein

It was my privilege to see the Winnipeg premiere of the National Film Board of Canada production "The Pacifist Who Went to War" at the Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg on November 7th. The viewing and panel discussion that followed became a "moment" to reflect on issues raised by Remembrance Day and the call to go to war repeated every year.

This documentary, directed by Manitoba filmmaker David Neufeld, portrays the experiences of Mennonites of southern Manitoba trying to come to terms with responding to the service challenges, military and otherwise, that arose during the years of World War II (1939-1945). When Canada joined World War II, thousands of young Mennonite men were forced to decide -- should they join the military machine and kill where "necessary", or should they take the



The Sharon Mennonite Collegiate Institute on Wilson Road, North in Yarrow, BC -- one of the sites visited by the Historical Society tour on December 6, 2002. Photo credit: Agatha E. Klassen, *Yarrow: A Portrait in Mosaic*, p. 104.

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada Meets in Abbotsford

For the first time in its history, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada met in a location other than Winnipeg, Manitoba or Waterloo, Ontario, for its annual meeting. The annual meeting, which usually convenes in the first week of December, met at the Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford on 7 December, 2002. This change of location was in recognition of the fact that an increasing percentage of Mennonites in Canada reside in BC and that the Mennonite Historical Society of BC is one of the most active in Canada. It was reported that it has a membership of over 700. In the future it is anticipated that the meeting will convene in other provinces as well.

The Board received reports from each of the provincial societies, from archival centres, and from other related agencies such as the Chair of Mennonite Studies. There appears to be increased activity

across Canada. Of particular note is the establishment of an archive at the Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Store in Calgary and at the Bethany Manor in Saskatoon.

Major activities of the Canadian society include the CMEO project (see report on this page), the ongoing work of the "Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites" project, and an overarching volume on Mennonites in Canada.

In addition to the meetings, members of the society were taken on a tour of Fraser Valley Mennonite settlements. Agatha Klassen provided an interesting commentary on the emergence and growth of these settlements.

On Friday evening the society members were hosted by the BC society at a dinner and a program which featured an interesting talk by Hulda (Reimer) Fast Redekopp about growing up Mennonite in the Fraser Valley.

AD

peace stance that Mennonites traditionally had taken in situations like this. The film sets out very deliberately to present "both sides".

In a rather unique way the film builds the portrait around brothers Ted and John Friesen, sons of the late D.W. Friesen of Friesen Printers founding fame, who chose very different paths. Ted became a conscientious objector, while his brother went into military service.

I want to thank NFB warmly for this attempt to analyze what was involved in the Mennonite response to the call to arms. There have been very few portraits of this

issue that have brought the two very different and opposite responses together. Reunions of COs, and more lately of veterans from Mennonite background, have been held many times. But it has been more difficult and perhaps there has been more reluctance to put both sides "on the screen" simultaneously, for us all to see what the larger picture actually looked like.

So what did I see and hear in the film? I heard a narrative text that gave a rather clear statement of the dilemma as it appeared in the Canadian Mennonite communities of the time - certainly clear

enough to highlight the issues and become a good discussion starter. It was good that a panel could pick up the material and get to work on it right away.

I saw a fairly clear, if not particularly forceful, presentation of the CO side of the matter with statements from Ted Friesen, David Derksen, Anton Dyck and others commenting about why they took their stand. Perhaps presenting a peace position does not call for a "forceful" presentation by the very nature of what it is-- a quiet statement though firmly held. But the statements of the "pacifist who went to war" (John Friesen on the film and in the panel discussion) suggested that a far stronger case can and should be made for finding other solutions than military ones--opposing war at all costs.

One veteran who saw the film felt the pro-war service case had not been made strongly enough and too much of the CO side had come through on the film. I viewed the veteran side as quite forceful enough. I realize clearly enough that the veterans felt very strongly that they had this coming and, as they saw it, as being long overdue. I have wondered if more monuments for conscientious objectors might be overdue as well.

Still, the comparison in the rather lengthy footage of the local veteran celebration dancing and a somewhat attenuated scene of the quiet worship service of COs elsewhere in the community when the big monument was unveiled was interesting to see, but what was it trying to tell us? I was looking for the "Mennonite" part in all of this and was somewhat confused. I was watching for a strong statement of peace-making from the church somewhere but it was difficult to find. That may show exactly the situation we are in today. That too makes me wonder, and even more confused.

Now that the war drums are beating again as Canada is getting ready for the so-called "war against terrorism", the film is a timely project. I am hoping it will be seen by many more people, and be widely discussed. The problem we are dealing with here may be much bigger than we think. It is time to work hard on it..

Friesen Lectures

(cont'd from p. 1)

the University of California, Santa Barbara where he is Professor of History. He has published numerous books and articles, the most recent of which is

entitled, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists and the Great Commission* (Eerdmans, 1998).

The first lecture was a survey of Anabaptist/Mennonite history and their religious self-understanding. The sixteenth century was characterized by the Anabaptist's zeal for being true followers of Jesus. This prompted a severe response from both civil and religious authorities of the day. The authorities saw Anabaptism as a threat to their power and therefore strove to stamp them out. This persecution scattered the Anabaptists over most of Europe as they gradually fled eastward. One hundred years later, in the seventeenth century, the Dutch Anabaptists promised the East Frisian authorities that they would not proselytize among the local population and would live quietly in the land. By the beginning of the nineteenth century they had become the quiet in the land and the Mennonites migrating to Russia were not intent on evangelizing their neighbors. Even though the *privilegium* of Czar Paul I did not explicitly forbid proselytizing, the prohibition was taken for granted. Friesen maintained that the sixteenth century Anabaptists would never have agreed to this-- indeed they would rather have died than agree.

After over 100 years in Russia, much had changed. A revolution in 1905 changed circumstances and the Czar, after losing the war to Japan, was forced to give up some of his power to the newly created Duma. The reforms, however, did not last and for the next decade the Czar slowly sought to limit the religious freedoms. In this process the Mennonites were threatened with losing some of their privileges such as exemption from military service. The issue revolved around whether they were classified as a "sect" or "confession" by the government. This hinged, to a large extent, on whether they had broken the regulations regarding proselytizing. Many in the Mennonite Church (*Kirchliche*) believed that the Mennonite Brethren had violated the regulations and were therefore putting all Mennonites in danger of losing their privileges. The issue had not been resolved when World War I broke out.

The second lecture addressed the land liquidation measures that the Russian Mennonites had to face in the twentieth century. Land became an important issue for Mennonites, especially from the seventeenth century. The Mennonites who settled in Poland (later Prussia), slowly gained the right to lease and then

own land. With this right, however, came obligations to pay taxes and render military service. When the Mennonites migrated to Russia they wanted to ensure that they would be exempt from military service and that they would have other privileges, such as freedom to worship.

In twentieth-century Russia, land ownership became a serious problem and affected Germans in particular because of the circumstances leading to World War I. Slowly new laws and regulations were put in place. In order to get around these obstacles, the Mennonites attempted to define themselves ethnically as Dutch instead of as Germans, against whom these regulations were directed. In their appeals they were largely unsuccessful. Their third appeal to the Czar in 1917 resulted in a halt to the land expropriation but then the revolution intervened and the issue of ancestry remained unresolved.

The third lecture dealt with the unresolved question of whether Russian Mennonites were ethnic Germans or Dutch. From about 1910 until 1917 their efforts were directed at showing that they were of ethnic Dutch ancestry. Then, in 1918 when the Germans occupied the Mennonite areas of Ukraine, they argued that they were ethnic Germans. When the Germans retreated, the Mennonites' credibility with the new Soviet regime was destroyed. In the early 1920s they reverted to the Dutch ancestry argument, but by this time the Mennonites themselves were deeply divided on the issue. It proved to be an ongoing issue, even after the migration to the Americas in the 1920s, for some Mennonites. The issue is still not resolved today, although Friesen is determined to attempt a definitive answer in his next publication.

These lectures marked an important inauguration for this series. They focused on an era of Mennonite history that continues to raise important issues about our understanding of who we are.

Book Notes

(cont'd from p. 8)

of that book now in print, it must rival the *More With Less Cookbook* in popularity in modern books of Mennonite origin. The well-known poet and writer Julia Kasdorf has finally produced a biography of this versatile musician, athletic director, and late-blooming author. *Fixing Tradition: Joseph W. Yoder, Amish American* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press US, 2002; pb. 280 pp, \$22.95US) is No. 4 in the C. Henry Smith series.

Book Reviews

Lawrence Klippenstein and Jacob Dick, *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia*. (Kitchener ON, Pandora Press, 2002) 163 pp.

Reviewed by John J. Bergen, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta

This book gives a brief but comprehensive overview of Mennonites in Russia in relation to World War I. It includes a detailed diary of John Mathies and numerous photographs by Abram Dueck, illustrating their experiences. Both men had volunteered to serve as *Sanitaeter* with the Red Cross when war broke out in 1914.

Mennonites had settled in the Chortitza area in 1789 when pressure to assist the war effort was placed upon them in Prussia. When similar demands were made in Russia in 1874, about one-third of all Mennonites emigrated to North America, less than half settling in Canada.

During the Crimean War of 1854-1856, and again during the war with Japan, 1904-1905, Mennonites were obliged to provide transports for supplies and wounded soldiers, and also to collect money for the war effort. Horses were requisitioned for army use. Some leaders feared that such assistance would be a "breach of their non-resistant faith."

Forestry camps were organized and Mennonites were expected to finance the costs of operating them. Some men served on hospital trains, and some even joined active military service.

The issues that troubled the Mennonite leaders in Prussia and Russia, also surfaced in Canada during World War II. Whether donating blood could also be seen as saving lives, rather than assisting the war effort, became a contentious issue, but left for congregations and individuals to decide. (David P. Reimer. *Erfahrungen der Mennoniten in Canada waehrend des zweiten Weltkrieges*, Derksen Printers, Steinbach, n.d.)

Delegations to Ottawa were not of one mind. Those representing mainly the immigrants of the 1870s (who had opposed the changes introduced by the tsarist government) promoted work in forestry, farming and hospitals. Those of the 1920s (who had accepted *Sanitaeter* service) also requested that provision be made for service in the medical and dental corps, which was initiated in October

1943. This reviewer (a 1920s immigrant) found it to be acceptable to join such service when it became available, though he had lost his teaching license due to his pacifist position.

A.J. Klassen's *Alternative Service for Peace in Canada during World War II*, (1998) includes the stories of many who served in the forestry camps, in hospitals, and farms, but does not adequately cover those who had elected to serve in the medical corps. Reimer covers debates concerning the medical corps issue, but includes no account of individuals who made that choice.

What we find in the three volumes referred to here, is that the questions which concerned the Mennonites in Prussia, in Russia, and in Canada, were similar but had not been resolved by earlier generations. When this writer was asked to report to a forestry camp, but asked for permission to help his father on the farm, he was granted his request with the words, "Go help the war effort with farm production!"

We may place ourselves in a position where we are not directly connected to the war activity. But indirectly we cannot avoid it. Our tax dollars also support the military, and the making of bombs. The food we produce and the clothing we make also feed and clothe the military. When our people were severely tested as Makhno's band raged across the land, some felt justified in organizing the *Selbstschutz* for defence of their families. What actions would we find justified in such times of crisis? What principles of faith must we internalize in order to guide us, should we face such eventualities?

Norman Unrau, *Those Were The Days (And Those Were My People ...)* (Nelson, BC: Private publications, 2002) 207 pages, pb. \$20.00.

Reviewed by Edward Enns, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Norman Unrau may be familiar to those people who lived in the Steinfeld and Rosenheim communities near Lowe Farm, Manitoba, in the early 1930s, and others who lived in the Spencer/Grunthal communities after that. He is the son of Peter Unrau, school teacher at Rosenheim and other places and later teacher and farmer at Lister West School near Spencer.

Unrau describes his growing up years by means of scores of short descriptions of life and experiences from going to school, to gopher and deer hunting, to farm work and practices, to relatives and neighbors, to celebrations, to church events, to boyish escapades, etc.

By means of old photos and brief descriptions, he introduces his family, his relatives (including his cousins the sons of "Big Bill") and neighbors he remembers from days gone by.

Some 60 or more 1-3 page vignettes, plus introductions to several dozen relatives and neighbors and a tribute to his parents, make for entertaining reading and possibly allows some readers to do their own reminiscing about similar "good old days"!

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

The third *Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay* appeared in September. This volume focuses on the "Canadian" Mennonites in Paraguay. The bulk of the historical section consists of papers given at a symposium in Loma Plata in June on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Menno Colony. Published by the Mennonite Historical and Cultural Society of Paraguay, the yearbook is available for \$8 US. Contact niebuhr@telesurf.com.py. [Is it a sign of the digital age that no postal address is given?]

Ritas Leute: Eine deutsch-russische Familiengeschichte (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 2002) tells the story of singer Rita Pauls, now of Mannheim, Germany, via Karagnada, Kaskhstan. Descended from the Pauls and Janzen families of Lysanderhöf, in the Mennonite Am Trakt Colony near the Volga, Rita grew up in Karaganda and moved to Germany with her family in 1989. The story, engagingly told by the German filmmaker and historian Ulla Lachauer, brings a liveliness to the narrative that is missing in some more prosaic autobiographies written by modest Mennonites. Pauls has relatives in Winnipeg.

Most Canadian Mennonites who have heard of Joseph W. Yoder will have come to "know" him through his "autoethnography," *Rosanna of the Amish*, first published in 1940 when the author was already 68. With almost half a million copies

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