

My Inter-Mennonite Christian Heritage

By William Schroeder

Mennonite Historian

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



Conscientious objectors felled and cut thousands of trees as one expression of alternative service during the Second World War. This photo was taken at Cave Trail, BC, circa 1943-44. COs also planted trees – 17 million on Vancouver island alone – to revive burnt out forests. Photo Credit: Jake Krueger photo collection.

Conscientious Objectors Story Told on New Website: www.alternativeservice.ca

by Annemarie Plenert

Winnipeg, Man. — About sixty years ago, over 10,000 Canadian conscientious objectors, many of them Mennonite, chose alternative service instead of fighting in the Second World War.

Their story has been largely relegated to short print-run books and contributions to archival collections. In 1996, Conrad Stoesz, now archivist and researcher at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, contacted the federal government to obtain conscientious objector (CO) records but was told the files had been destroyed.

This revelation planted the seed of an idea that has now grown into a comprehensive 700 page web site called www.alternativeservice.ca. The web site tells the stories of men who, instead of fighting, built roads and bridges, fought fires, taught school children, mined, logged,

farmed, worked in manufacturing and the medical field. By law, most of their earnings were sent to the Red Cross for relief work. The site makes comprehensive use of rare archival documents and photos, film footage, and audio recordings. It also tells the stories of families and churches that supported COs.

The web site was officially launched on May 26. At the launch, Esther Epp-Tiessen representing Mennonite Central Committee's peace and justice desk, said, "Conscientious objectors gave us the gift of showing another way, and this website is an example of their gift." MCC together with Mennonite Church Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Culture Online Program, as well as the Canadian Council of Archives,

(cont'd on p. 7)

When my grandfather Gerhard Heinrich Doerksen (1866-1930) died, I was only three and a half years old. But I have a number of clear recollections of him. A few years later I knew that he had been an important teacher and *Kirchlicher* preacher, the latter in both the Ukraine and Manitoba¹. It is likely that I had come to this realization about the time when my father, W.W. Schroeder, became a Mennonite Brethren minister. Of course at that time I was not capable of comprehending the distinction between those two designations nor of understanding their historical context. Gradually I became aware that those two categories were sometimes associated with some controversy in the Mennonite world. But in my naiveté I felt a certain satisfaction, almost pride, in having both kinds of preachers in my ancestry.

Through a career with wide exposure to the Manitoba Mennonite mosaic, *Dittsied*, *Yantsied*, in Winnipeg and beyond, I gained some insight into its intricacies, experienced some disillusionment, but ended up with a deep appreciation of my inter-Mennonite heritage. Over the years I have enjoyed fairly extensive reading in Mennonite history and researched and documented family history.²

The unique case of Grandfather Doerksen's ordination seems to warrant further comment. Several decades ago in my reading I came across what appeared to be a casual reference to his ordination by his biological brother, Dietrich Doerksen.³ Years later I somehow found out that Dietrich Doerksen had been a Mennonite Brethren minister, leader of the M.B. church in Tiegengagen, Molotschna. That threw a different slant on Gerhard's ordination. I thought that in the light of the close relationship between the Doerksen brothers, the M.B. minister had been invited to a *Kirchliche* church for the ordination. That would have been a fine fraternal gesture, though probably unusual at the time. After all, my M.B. father had been asked to preach, though not to perform the actual ceremony, at the ordination of his childhood friend as deacon in a "General Conference" Mennonite church in Manitoba. That had, in fact, caused some flak, but nothing major. Still, I was not convinced that I

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had the whole story.

It would be less than candid, perhaps even dishonest, to omit reference here to the frequent tensions between these two major Mennonite denominations, from the time of the M.B. secession in 1860 to half way through the twentieth century, notwithstanding some notable exceptions. Today we can be cordial and frank with each other, and on occasion even a bit ashamed of the past. Thank God, the two churches have apologized to each other at conference level. Nowadays numerous joint endeavors, extending also to the smaller denominations descended from the earlier immigrants of the 1870's, attest to a better Mennonite ecumenical climate. Toward the latter groups both GCs and MBs had at times displayed unbrotherly attitudes. *Kanadier* and *Russlaender*, highly perjorative terms during my childhood in the 1930's, are on the way to being used merely as objective designations by historians.

Certainly on the personal level the relationship between my grandfather and father was always most hearty. Father frequently, in later years, paid tribute to his father-in-law's help during a time of deep personal spiritual struggle until he came to assurance of salvation in Jesus

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

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Subscription rates: \$11.00 per year, \$20.00 for two years, \$28.00 for three years. Individual subscriptions may be ordered from these addresses.

ISSN 07008066



Early ministers of the Schoenfelder Mennonite Church and their wives: Johan Driedgers left, and Gerhard Doerksens, ca. 1927. Photo: Courtesy of William Schroeder.

Christ. Of that he left an eloquent written testimony from that time. His own father had had to remain in Russia. Both, Father and Grandfather, operated above the general level of inter-Mennonite relations of the past. Dad had good friends in half a dozen Mennonite denominations and well beyond them. And this even though there had been considerable rumbling because of his transfer to the M.B. church, which even we children got to feel. Grandpa had already died earlier. Dad's "ecumenical" spirit was finally illustrated when on his deathbed in 1975 he solemnly instructed me that at his funeral one of the speakers was to be a certain younger G.C. pastor, a personal friend.

In an attempt to shed light on the puzzling ordination of Grandfather, I consulted John Doerksen, the youngest and by then the only surviving member of the Gerhard Doerksen family. He knew nothing about the M.B. ordination of his *Kirchlicher* father. He had been under 10 years of age at the time. That seemed to be the end of the trail, although I was constantly on the lookout for more information.

In the spring of 2003 during a research project on both my grandparents Doerksen, a cousin lent me several large folders with Grandfather's papers, whose existence I had been unaware of. There out of a worn envelope I pulled a most exciting primary document, the original ordination certificate! It was neatly handwritten in elegant German, signed by Dietrich Doerksen and two other leaders of the Tiegenghagen M.B. church.

Assisting in the ceremony was Rev.

Abr. Peters, who as a very elderly man was later introduced to me in Winnipeg by my mother as a good friend of her father. There is no reference to any participation of *Kirchliche* church officials, as I had hoped. I still hope that at least some *Kirchliche* persons were in attendance. It is evident that the ordination had occurred in the Tiegenghagen M.B. church; it had taken place June 8, 1924, but the certificate was signed only July 20, a few days before the Doerksens left for Canada. The certificate recommends Gerhard Doerksen to "all churches" as minister of the gospel, and notes that he had had some 15 years of preaching experience. We know that most of that had occurred in *Kirchliche* congregations in various villages where he had taught and lived. The previous four years had been in nearby Petershagen, today Kutuzovka.

The Petershagen church building used for over 70 years as a granary and machine-shed in the Soviet commune, was officially granted to a local church. My brother, George, significantly helped missionary Frank Dyck restore the building and served with a translator as acting pastor for six months. We find that highly poignant. Not only had our grandfather preached there, but our parents had been married in this building and our father had served as tenor soloist and choir conductor.

Precious as we find the ordination document, it leaves many questions unanswered. Only a fraction can be raised here. Why did the ordination not

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Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

Recent Books

Rita Schroeder, *The Heinrich Johann & Katharina Siemens Enns Family* (Grand Marais, MB: Enns Family, 2001) 89 pp.

This compilation traces the family history of Heinrich Johann Enns (1862-1918) and his wife Katharina Siemens (1863-1929) who made their home on the Gruenteich estate in South Russia. Katharina emigrated to Canada in 1924 with some of her children and died in Winnipeg in 1929. The book includes stories, genealogical data and photographs of the descendants as well as a section about the Enns family ancestry. Contact: Rita Schroeder, Box 171, Grand Marais, MB R0E 0T0.

Martha Martens, *Abram & Justina Dyck History Story Descendants* (Winkler, MB: Martha's Musings Production, 2003) 219 pp.

This compilation consists of information about the ancestors and descendants of Abram Dyck (1880-1956) and his wife Justina Dyck (1886-1955).

Abram was the son of Heinrich Dyck (1832-1887) and Aganetha Friesen (1841-1896), and his wife Justina was the daughter of Heinrich Dyck (1844-1914) and Anna Wall (1844-1915). These families originated in the Berghthal Colony in Russia and came to Manitoba in 1875. The book includes many photographs and personal memories about Abram and Justina Dyck by the children and grandchildren. Contact: Martha Martens, 225 Pembina Ave. East, Winkler, MB R6W 3N8.

Richard D. Thiessen, *From the Urals to the Fraser Valley: A Biography and Genealogy of Peter Jacob Esau (1895-1981) and Anna (Neufeld) Esau (1896-1976)* (Abbotsford, BC: Richard D. Thiessen, 2004) 337 pp.

The first section of this book documents the ancestors of Peter J. Esau (1895-1981) and Anna Neufeld (1896-1976). A section divided into 17 chapters consists of the biography of this couple, starting in the Orenburg Colony in Russia and ending in the Chilliwack area of the Fraser Valley. The final two sections

consist of the genealogical listing of the descendants of Jacob J. Esau (1859-1923) and his wife Susanna Regier (1862-1928), and the listing of the descendants of Jacob Martin Neufeld (1878-1921) and his wife Anna Penner (1878-1949). Contact: Richard D. Thiessen, 2241 Center Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2N1.

Queries

Rempel - Looking for ancestral information on Bernhard B. Rempel (1864-1917) who was married to Helena Unger (1879-1939?) They had 8 children: Sara (1891), Helena (1893), Justina (1894), Anna (1896), Bernhard (1898), Margaretha (1903), Henrietta (1907). Contact: Ken Derksen, 797 Cavalier Dr., Winnipeg, MB R26 1C5, 204-837-4990 or e-mail kderksen@shaw.ca.

Huebert - Looking for ancestral information on Franz Huebert (1854-1918) and his wife Maria Thiessen (1865-1919). Their daughter Aganetha Huebert (1904-1975) married Cornelius Derksen (1903-1986). Contact: Ken Derksen, 797 Cavalier Dr., Winnipeg, MB R26 1C5 or e-mail kderksen@shaw.ca.

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



Does anyone else have this photo? Can you help identify the people? This photo consists of Mennonites from the Fuerstenland Colony (Olgafeld, Alexanderthal, Rosenbach, and Georgsthal) and is alleged to have been taken in 1926 just before many immigrated to Canada. According to Charlotte McCrae, owner of the original photograph, her great grandfather Peter Lepp (b.1853) was the minister of these people, but did not get onto the photo. Being in a wheelchair, crippled by arthritis, they forgot about him and he was left inside the building. Contact: Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3M 0P4; e-mail: archives@mennonitechurch.ca.



Dr. David Schroeder, a conscientious objector during the Second World War, is interviewed by a local TV station at the launch for www.alternativeservice.ca. Schroeder, a retired professor of New Testament, wore a white lab coat to symbolize his alternative service work as an orderly at the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg. Photo Credit: Dan Dyck

MHC Launches CO Website: www.alternativeservice.ca

On May 26th the Mennonite Heritage Centre launched a web site that helps tell the story of the Canadian conscientious objectors to war during the Second World War (1939-1945). Utilizing rare letters, interviews, photographs, personal stories and film footage, the web site helps tell a story of one group of people who worked at finding an alternative to killing people through war.

Written at a grade six level the content conveniently converges with school curriculum from grades 4-11. Lesson ideas are included for teachers. The multi-layered site challenges anyone to consider what they believe about war and violence and encourages people to see alternative service as an honorable option.

Conrad Stoesz, project manager, for the development of this site will lead a seminar at the annual Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Winkler, in which he will highlight this site as a new resource for teachers wishing to develop a unit on alternatives to war.

AR

CMC history book to be released at Winkler 2004

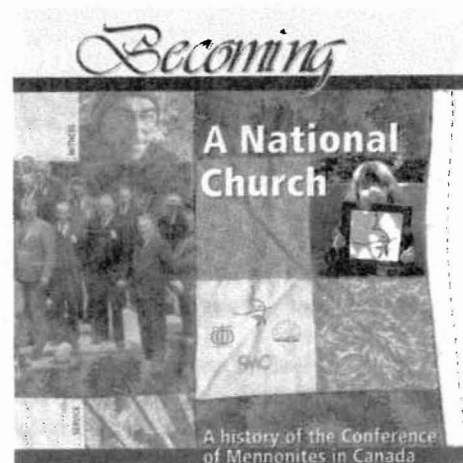
by Dan Dyck

Canadian Mennonite University Press have published a new book on the history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. The book was commissioned by Mennonite Heritage Centre, a ministry of Mennonite Church Canada.

An excerpt from the foreword by Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, reads, "The history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada is the story of a church that has been transformed. It is an account of a people of God supporting each other and working together to accomplish the mission to which God has called them."

Adolf Ens, retired Professor of Historical Theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College researched and wrote the book. The project, said Ens, had already been "talked about for twenty years" and was officially commissioned in 1998.

The 250-plus page book encompasses the years 1902 to 1999. Ens said, "Many of the issues that Mennonite Church Canada faces today are in some way related to issues that CMC and the Mennonite conference of Eastern Canada predecessors have faced at some point along the way too. One can learn from the approaches that worked and the approaches that didn't work".

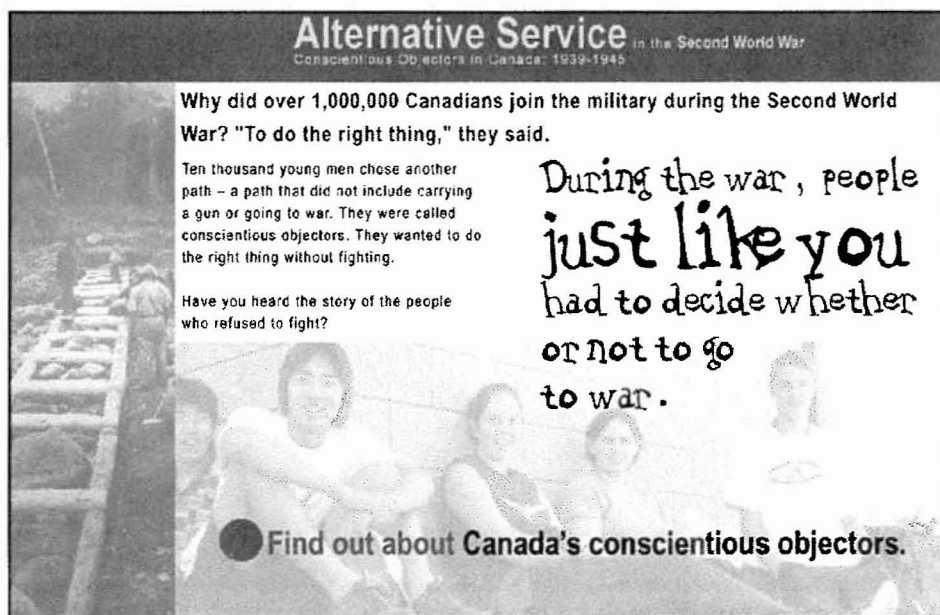


Adolf Ens

Dr. Karl Koop, Chair of CMU Press Committee and Associate Professor of Historical Theology at CMU said, "This book brings to light an important account of a church body that began with two diverse founding partners in 1902 that eventually formed a national church representing a rich blend of Christian faith and witness. Adolf Ens is to be commended for his scholarship, and for writing an inspiring story".

The book will be officially launched on July 8 as part of the Mennonite Church Canada assembly this summer in Winkler, Manitoba (July 7-11).

Canadian Mennonite University and Mennonite Church Canada joint release. June 1, 2004.



First page of www.alternativeservice.ca. Design Credit: Lynette Wiebe.



Women in nurses' training, Riga, Latvia, circa 1902.

CMBS Featured Photo

A new feature on the CMBS web site (<http://www.mbconf.ca/mbstudies/index.en.html>) is a monthly featured photo. Readers will be introduced to a unique photo, a description, a short narrative, and links to holdings at the Centre for further research. The photo above is an example of an up-coming feature photo. It comes from the Agatha Isaak Photograph Collection (NP002-01-12).

This photo shows 9 women posing in a medical classroom filled with posters and replicas of human anatomy. In the foreground are chairs and desks. On the left hand side is Helen Regehr. She graduated from this medical school in Riga, Latvia as a registered nurse in 1902 and received a diploma, which is stored in the oversized photo area at the Centre.

The period from 1870 to the Russian revolution (1917) has been called the golden era of the Mennonites of southern Russia. It was a time when the economy, education, health, and cultural progress flourished.

Midwives and bonesetters (chiropractors) were very common in the Mennonite communities in Russia, Canada, and the US. One such example was Sara Thielman (1878-1968), who was a midwife in south Russia and in Canada. She kept a diary of sorts which included descriptions of female anatomy and various remedies for illnesses peculiar to women. It could be called a gynaecology manual. The second part of her book is a record of the births over which Sarah

presided from 1909 to 1941.

Helen Regehr decided to become trained as a registered nurse at a prestigious formal school outside the Mennonite colony.

Helen was born on May 12, 1872 in the village of Margenau, Molotschna colony, south Russia. In 1888 she became a member of the Rueckenau Mennonite Brethren Church. She enrolled in the medical school in Riga, Latvia and graduated in 1902 with a diploma in nursing. In 1911 she married Joahnn Isaak. Three children were born to this marriage. Johann died in 1923.

In 1925 Helen and her children immigrated to Canada, settling in Steinbach, Manitoba. She supported her family by using her training and worked as a midwife. She died at the age of 94 in 1966 in Steinbach.

Related Material: Sara Thielman fonds

Selected bibliography: Helen Isaak obituary in *Mennonitische Rundschau*, August 3, 1966.

CDS



Shauna Hudson



CENTRE FOR

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

Grants Received

The Centre is pleased to report that it has been successful in receiving three grants this summer. The first is for phase 4 of the MB Herald photograph project. Donovan Giesbrecht is back for his fourth summer on this project processing another 4000 photos. Of this 70-80% will be described and made searchable through our photograph database.

The second grant is for special archival supplies to extend the life of the records in the archives. These projects were made possible by financial assistance from the federal government through the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA). The CCA grants began in 1985 and have been a major support to small archives including the Centre and the Mennonite Heritage Centre. The money helps hire short-term staff but also funds professional development workshops, advisory services etc. The federal program is being reviewed and we are strongly advocating for a continuation of this program through our provincial association.

The Centre also received a grant from the Summer Career Placement, a program of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Shauna Hudson was hired to work at processing annual congregational statistics, updating finding aids, digitizing documents, filling research requests etc.

CDS



Donovan Giesbrecht

An 80th Bote Birthday: Celebrating With MHSS

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Der Bote and Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan were new to me in 1975. That was the year I began my work with the Bote committee and I needed to travel to Saskatoon quite regularly to meet with the editor, Peter B Wiens and others with whom I was working. In that process MHSS members crossed my path. The organization was then barely two years old.

On Saturday, April 24, 2004, nearly 30 years later, they came together for me again. The MMHS was now doing a birthday celebration for *Der Bote* which had reached the respectable age of 80.

The Bote 80th birthday party began with a link to the 75th when crokinole "get-togethers" became the rage through out Mennonite communities in Canada. Several dozen folks gathered in the afternoon to give it another round during a lead-up to the evening activities, held at Bethany Manor, where the Society has begun an archives. Here we joined 150 or more guests who had come to hear the male choir of the Saskatoon First Mennonite Church join the honouring ceremony of a long-time member of MMHS, and strong supporter of the Bote, John Nickel of Battleford, and to hear me, as another "senior" in the crowd, say something about the Bote. It was also book launching time for an important new publication, *Chortitza Colony Atlas - Altkolonie*, edited by Heinrich Bergen of Regina, and published by MMHS, with editorial assistance from Victor Wiebe of MMHS, and encouragement from Otto Klassen of Winnipeg and others.

The Bote has meant a great deal for its thousands of readers over these eight decades and more. No project in our conference seems to have had the unwavering personal financial and moral support which the Bote has been able to enjoy. That speaks well for its role in the lives of German readers and subscribers who are still with us in our congregations and communities in large numbers.

While I cannot claim to have been a life-long reader myself, I have become more aware of its significance since my involvements over the past three decades or so. In my remarks at this gathering I stressed its contribution to research and writing about our Russian Mennonite

story. The paper began as a vehicle of communication and mutual support needed by new immigrants from Soviet Russia arriving in Canada in the 1920s. Its first editor, Diedrich H Epp, and indeed all subsequent editors, have done a great deal to include for its readers all sorts of materials that would keep alive the memory of homes and friends and family remaining in "*die alte Heimat*" (the old Homeland), to which important attachments continue to the present day.

The point of my own address on this occasion was to stress the value of photos, stories, memoirs, documents, discussions of issues, and a variety of other types of information sharing about our Russian Mennonite experience that have been gathered in *Der Bote* all through these years. The completion of an index, totalling five volumes covering 1924-2000, and a sixth volume in progress, is naturally a tool of incalculable value in using the materials. The diligent work of Helene Friesen, indexer for 1964-2000 and Bert Friesen, indexer for 2001 to the present, are the latest persons to acknowledge for bringing this project up to date.

I congratulate the staff and board members of MHSS for creating one of the most dynamic provincial Mennonite historical societies in Canada. It is good to see its support for *Der Bote*, and it is inspiring to see numerous people in Saskatchewan exert their ongoing energies to keep our heritage stories and memories alive.

Book Notes

by Adolf Ens and Lawrence Klippenstein

Anniversary publications by Mennonite congregations are not uncommon, but bicentennial volumes are still quite rare. Indeed, Laureen Harder's *Their Richest Inheritance: A Celebration of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ontario, 1801-2001* (Vineland: The First Mennonite Church, 2001) may well be the first one. This attractive 80-page booklet is well illustrated with both photographs and brief quotations on a wide range of issues from a broad spectrum of people. As a companion piece W.M. Fretz has compiled *Sequence of Events*, a 24-page brochure chronicling key stages in the history of this "first and

oldest organized Mennonite congregation in Canada." This model could be emulated by congregations approaching an anniversary.

The versatility of personal computers and the leisure enjoyed by active retirees makes possible the production of good quality research reports in small editions. A number of them have been donated to the Mennonite Heritage Centre recently.

Arthur Toews has compiled *The Eichenfeld Collection* (122 pages, 2004) for his grandchildren. In 8½x11-inch coil-bound format, the collection of maps, personal accounts, data tables, etc. provides a bit of the story of this Mennonite village in Russia. The account focuses on the massacre during the period of anarchy in 1919.

Margaret (Sawatsky) Ewert, Drake, Saskatchewan, has translated three diaries of her grandfather, Abraham Klassen of Insel Chortitz in Russia and the Balmoral area of Manitoba. Klassen (1859-1933) kept a diary at intervals from 1891 to 1927. A farmer and blacksmith, he describes with perceptive detail both agricultural rhythms and community and church life. *Diaries of Abraham Johann Klassen 1891-1927*, by the translator, 2003; 162 pages, coil-bound, 8½x11 inch format.

In the area of La Salle, Manitoba, Mennonite Brethren and "Conference" Mennonite immigrants from USSR worshiped together in the first years after their arrival in the 1920s. Helmut N. Enns has recovered and preserved some of the history of the early years of this community in *La Salle Mennonite Cemetery: In Memory of Our Fathers and Mothers*. (History Committee of the La Salle Mennonite Cemetery, 2004); 66 pages plus 28 pages of photos, coil-bound, 8½x11 inch format. While the focus is on the cemetery and the people buried in it, the book provides good insights into community life through the text and photo captions.

Documents related to a late 1930s attempt at founding a Mennonite settlement near New Westminster have been compiled and translated by Margaret Ewert in *The Pitt Meadows File: An Attempt to Organize a Closed Community in B.C.* 68 pages, 8½ x 11 inch format, duo-tang file folder. David Toews, chair of the Mennonite Board of Colonization, called this attempt a "fiasco." Land hungry Mennonite immigrants seeking to escape the prairie drought found too much water at Pitt

Meadows, despite 11 miles of dikes and 60 miles of drainage canals developers had created to make the area habitable.

Deportirovannii v kazakhstan narody: Vremia i Sudby (The Deported Nations to Kazakhstan: Time and Fortunes), prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Information and Public Accord of the Republic of Kazakhstan, under the general editorship of Abish Kekilbaev, was published in Almaty in 1998 (hdc, 412pp.). It is a collection of extensive documentation related to various ethnic groups which were sent to Kazakhstan from the time of the Stalin terror on. Some discussion of the culture of the area is included.

Viktor Dyck is the editor of another volume dealing with Kazakhstan (formerly in the Soviet Union), **Svet Evangelia v Kazakhstane: Evangel'skie tsechenia v pervoi polovine xx veka** (The Light of the Gospel in Kazakhstan: Evangelical Initiatives in the First Half of the XX Century) (hdc, 381 pp). It is a very professionally published work with an extensive collection of excellent photos, maps and documents. Baptists and Mennonites constitute a prominent force in the work of the churches covered in this volume.

These Russian language volumes may be read at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, located at 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CO Story on New Website

(cont'd from p. 1)

the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and private donors helped fund the project. The project cost about \$20,000, plus significant volunteer contributions.

Dr. David Schroeder, one of the site's contributors, briefly told his story to the 50 plus people gathered to commemorate the launch. After he was drafted, he applied for CO status, and became an orderly at St Boniface Hospital.

Schroeder spoke about how conscientious objection led many men to lives of service in society. Of the twenty-eight COs that worked in the St. Boniface hospital with him, twenty-five of them pursued careers in social service. "In the long run, I am more convinced that I made the right choice. We need to address the futility of war."

Henry Born worked in a forestry camp

at Radium Hot Springs with other CO's. The conditions could be challenging. "We ate elk meat that was so old that they were just about ready to die off. That's what the boys got. Old tough elk meat. Boy, you had to have good teeth."

Born described the reaction of some people to the CO stance. One of the cooks accused them of cowardice, saying, "Our men are out on the front lines and you're just fooling around here in the bush." What could we do? We just shut up and did our work and kept on going."

In a section called "Hard Questions", content developers respond to frequently asked questions and accusations leveled at pacifists. such as, "What is the difference between being a pacifist and a coward?" Schroeder's own thoughtful responses to the tough questions bring integrity to the entire package.

Developers paid close attention to making the language on the site accessible to a wide age range. "We developed the content keeping in mind that students in at least two grades in Manitoba have units in their curriculum that relate to the Second World War. Our hope is that teachers and students, in addition to others, will visit the site to learn more about peaceful alternatives to war," said Stoesz.

Annemarie Plenert, Dawson Creek, BC is a Canadian Mennonite University student who is doing an student practicum with Mennonite Church Canada this summer.

My Inter-Mennonite Heritage

(cont'd from p. 2)

take place in the Petershagen *Kirchliche* congregation? Was the disorderly state of civic and church affairs during and after the Russian revolution and civil war a factor in this matter? Perhaps related, why was this ordination done only when the Doerksens were already preparing to emigrate? How did Grandfather's *Kirchliche* colleagues feel about his irregular ordination? Was this held against him later in Manitoba? Apparently not in the Schoenfelder Mennonite Church which he had helped to found at Pigeon Lake, ca. 25 km. west of Winnipeg in St. Francois Xavier municipality. Johan Driedger its first leader after the church was officially constituted⁴ was a close friend of Gerhard Doerksen there, until the latter's death and had been that earlier in Petershagen and still earlier in Schoenfeld. Was the

ordination episode an illustration of the frequent friction between these two denominations, or rather an expression of growing cordiality in their mutual suffering in the hard times?

In the course of my research I asked a number of past and present members of the Pigeon Lake Church for any recollections of Gerhard Doerksen and/or information they had heard from their parents. Invariably their comments were highly positive, especially with regard to his sermons, although one informant was vaguely aware of some theological differences. Few knew about the extraordinary ordination. When I informed them, they assured me that Grandfather had been well accepted. One man, himself the son of another Schoenfelder minister, mistakenly believed that Grandfather had been Mennonite Brethren. That remark could be construed in several personal significantly different ways. One elderly lady, from personal recollection, regarded Gerhard Doerksen as the real founder of the Pigeon Lake Church, because he had already been the leader of a group on the large Strutt Farm at nearby Meadows, one of four groups that amalgamated to form the church.⁵

Frequently I had been told that my voice, or pulpit mannerisms, or a sermon itself, had reminded people of my father. Even more I felt gratified, because of the rarity, when one listener was reminded of my grandfather. To both I feel deeply indebted.

Endnotes

¹The teacher-preacher was a prominent feature of Russian Mennonite society. Gerhard Doerksen probably was a somewhat exceptional case. He had studied Pedagogy at a Pestalozzi Institute in Switzerland and taught in the model school associated with the teacher-training school at Halbstadt, Molotschna.

²Much of this essay is indirectly based on our family archives.

³I can no longer identify my source, despite attempts to locate it.

⁴Jacob Siemens, *Chronik der Schoenfelder Gemeinde, von 1925 bis 1968*, pp. 5-7.

⁵Jacob Siemens, p. 5.

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Book Reviews

Heinrich Bergen, compiler and editor. *Chortitza Colony Atlas: Mennonite Old Colony (1867)* (Saskatoon, Sask: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, 2004), pb., 116 pp., \$35.00.

Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein

For us the story of this rather striking map collection begins in 1996 when Heinrich Bergen revisited his original home village of Einlage (Kitchkas) in the former "Old Colony", Chortitza, and then stopped in at the Regional Archives in Zaporozhe, Ukraine. There he was shown a large coloured topographical map of the western part of the city, once known as Chortitza, or Old Colony. Dated 1867, the map was obviously an important document even for the local archivist, Alexander Tedelev, who was proud to exhibit the map for Heinrich and others with him on that occasion.

The map really caught Bergen's attention, and from that moment he could think only of how he could obtain a copy of that map and bring it back to Canada. The local archives had no facilities that make duplicating easily possible, so a few snapshots of the map were taken, and the rest of the project remained a dream.

Heinrich never gave up, however. He spent several hundred dollars trying to have the photocopying done, but could not make it happen. It began to become reality when Otto and Florence Driedger from Regina, frequent visitors to Ukraine, and short-term teachers in a social work school at Odessa, managed to photograph the entire map in smaller sections, and bring the negatives to Canada. After having the film developed, Heinrich had the whole document with him, but only in many pieces. Assembling them to get something like the original did become possible (more or less), and a plan of publishing the material somehow could now be considered.

This atlas is the result of untiring efforts to put the fragments together, and make them usable for research. It features this very unique coloured map portrait of the colony's geography, showing the exact location of all the contiguous villages of the Old Colony on the Dnieper River (i.e. not including Kronsgarten and Schoenwiese because they were settled east of the river). The latter two villages are also featured, however, using other sources.

Keys for colour coding are included, along with various other kinds of interpretive aids, and related items to make the context clear for users. An important aspect of the final portion of the book is a 15-page brief early history of the colony provided by this reviewer, and giving the story of the villages founded and developed in the early years. It also features a discussion, on themes like the cemetery headstone of Jakob Hoeppner on the island of Chortitza, and Johann Bartsch of Rosental. It is accompanied by a plea to see if the monuments, removed years ago to the Mennonite Heritage Village at Steinbach, could be replaced in some way.

Most of the individual village portions of the larger map are supplemented with some type of village plan map showing the original farmsteads and their owners at some point in the histories of these villages. Details of the map include locations of the villages, designations of land areas for each community, as well as the location of creeks and gullies. Interestingly, these "schluchten" have Low German names transliterated on the map into Russian letters, hence are incomprehensible except for people who know and can read these two languages well - and have this key to reading them!

Among other items of interest are the locations of two sheep-raising pastures at sites called Gruenfeld, just east of Schoenhurst, and Bergthal, just west of Schoeneberg. An older map, provided by the Mennonite Heritage Centre, perhaps originating in the late 1830s, featuring both pastures, and the number of farmsteads found in each village at that time, has been added as Map 5b.

The number of maps totals around 70 with most being the different smaller portions of the 1867 large colour version. The fact that some sections are provided in German translation makes the atlas useful to German readers as well.

Many maps of the Old Colony settlement, and also a number of the villages, have appeared in earlier publications. This collection, however, brings the material together in a new convenient way, with perspectives that other versions usually do not have. The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, with its assistant editor for the project, Victor Wiebe, has undertaken a very worthwhile project in releasing this work to the public. Bergen will retain the credit of making sure that something very valuable found hidden away in an

archives in Zaporozhe (formerly Alexandrovsk), can now be viewed and consulted wherever a copy of this atlas will be available anywhere else in the world. We trust that readers of this review will increase the number of such locations and opportunities.

The book can be obtained by contacting Victor Wiebe at 1-306-934-8125 (e-mail: victor.wiebe@usask.ca) or by contacting the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg toll free at 1-866-888-6785 (e-mail: archives@mennonitechurch.ca).

Eleanor Hildebrand Chornoboy. *Faspa: A Snack of Mennonite Stories* (Winnipeg: Interior Publishing and Communication Ltd., Winnipeg, 2003), pb., 213 pp., \$28.95

Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein

This coffee table book features an array of fascinating vignettes and family stories drawn from the everyday life of the author's grandparents, Peter S. and Katharine Hildebrand, and Johann M and Helena Sawatzky. These families lived in the Edenburg area, east and somewhat north of Gretna, Manitoba.

All Mennonite readers of the generation of the author's parents will recognize this immediately as their home "world". She describes virtually the entire culture of a people, that group of Mennonite folks, which moved to southern Manitoba from south Russia/Ukraine in the 1870s.

How can one begin to offer a sample of the readings "smorgasbord"? Perhaps by a few titles of the small "bits" - The *Gank* (Low German), Country Gardening, Prohibition and the Border Patrol, Eva's Delivery, *Prips* (coffee of a kind), Henrietta's Toothache, Helena's Bread-making, Go West Young Men, Blackmail, etc, etc. One marvels at the variety of topics that could become the stuff of this telling, and there are some good photos of "old things" as well.

Katie Altendorf Cable did the series of very interesting illustrations, Anna Rojas Flores helped with editing, and many others pitched in with vim and vigour to give this book its final shape (not to mention the title), one that makes one want to share in the "*Faspa*" as those who know about *Faspa* cannot resist the meal when it is set on the table before them.