

Mennonite Historian

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



Edith and Neill von Gunten, co-directors, Native Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada, retired on 31 May 2011, after serving for over forty years. Photo credit: Deb Froese.

Neill and Edith von Gunten: Over 40 years with Native Ministry

By Alf Redekopp

Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry has been blessed with many passionate and dedicated workers over its 60-year history. Neill and Edith von Gunten are the most recent workers to retire. Over 40 years of their 46-year marriage has been spent with Aboriginal communities in Manitoba and across Canada. Since the Fall of 2005 they worked out of the Winnipeg office, as co-directors of Native Ministries, transforming a program that was mainly provincially-focused into a national program.

Neill and Edith von Gunten grew up in the same school district of rural Indiana, USA – Neill on a dairy and pig farm and Edith on an acreage. This rural background of self-sufficiency helped them prepare for the demands of life in

northern areas of Canada, where innovation is often required to make repairs without access to all of the appropriate tools and parts.

Both Neill and Edith realized even before they were married in 1965 that God was calling them into ministry. This sense of calling made it seem natural to begin their life together on a two-year Mennonite Voluntary Service assignment. That assignment brought them into a south-side Chicago black ghetto. There they learned a lot.

In Chicago, they also met Rudy Regehr from Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), which led them to Winnipeg in August 1967 – Neill to study at CMBC and Edith to work in the office of Conference of Mennonites in Canada

(cont'd on p. 2)

GAMEO appoints Managing Editor, releases DVD edition

The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) Management Board held its annual meeting on November 20, 2010 in Akron, Pennsylvania.



One of its first actions was to appoint **Richard Thiessen** of Abbotsford, British Columbia, as managing editor of GAMEO effective January 2012, following the retirement of current managing editor, Sam Steiner, whose term ends this year. Thiessen, Library Director at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, has been serving as associate managing editor of GAMEO since November 2006.

The Board also learned a DVD edition of GAMEO was in preparation. The edition of 250 copies was released in March 2011, and includes all of the encyclopedia's content through January 19, 2011. Sam Steiner of Waterloo, Ontario, said the target audience for the DVD edition was conservative Anabaptist groups who utilize computers but do not access the internet. Some copies may also go to Mennonite groups outside North America where internet accessibility is limited. Steiner said the 2011 edition will be provided without cost, though donations would be accepted.

After extended discussion, the Board approved formation of a panel of consulting editors. Both internationally and North American-based, the consulting editors will advise on larger subject areas like theology, history, sociology, and the arts. Steiner noted current subject articles in GAMEO are 20-50 years old. The editors will review existing articles in their area of expertise and recommend updates or rewrites. Barbara Nkala (Zimbabwe), Gerhard Ratzlaff (Paraguay) and Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Germany) are among the international consulting editors named.

GAMEO has also obtained permission to translate into English selected content from the *Mennonitische Nachschlagewerke (MennLex V)*, an ongoing project of the Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein in Germany, and the *Lexikon der Mennoniten in Paraguay*, published by the Verein für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay in 2009.

Work continues on expansion of GAMEO

(cont'd on p. 2)

(CMC, now known as Mennonite Church Canada). There Menno Wiebe introduced them to Mennonite Pioneer Mission (MPM), a ministry begun by the Berghaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba in 1948, and which had come under the governance of the CMC Board of Mission in the early 1960s. MPM was a ministry to Canada's aboriginal people.

At a recent retirement celebration for the von Guntens, Ron Boese, who had been a first year student at CMBC with Neill in the Fall of 1967, recalled how Neill could tell stories from the Chicago ghetto, of rats the size of cats, of close encounters with gangs, and participating in civil rights demonstrations together with Dr. Martin Luther King. Boese also recalled how Neill loved to push the edges. He told the story of how Neill one day decided to disguise himself as a homeless person and spend the night on the street in Winnipeg's core area. Still in disguise, he attended a Mennonite church in order to experience the reaction. One week later he returned to that congregation without his disguise, and prompted a discussion to help congregants move to a greater understanding and acceptance of people of different cultures.

Neill and Edith's first two assignments with Native Ministries were short voluntary service assignments, both at Bloodvein River -- the first over Christmas break 1967 and the other, the



Von Guntens bringing together members of Altona Mennonite Church and Riverton Fellowship Circle. Photo credit: MHC Archives.

following summer. Travelling by boat to the ministry location was a very new concept for people who had been land-based all their lives!

In June 1969, after two years at CMBC, they moved to Manigotagan on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. They were given tremendous hospitality by the residents in the area, but also had many things to learn. Their work definitely formed a holistic ministry. Neill inherited the manager and bookkeeper position of the Wanipigow Producers Co-op, and was the pastor of the Chapel. When the provincial government instituted a system of local government in this Metis community, Neil became its first mayor, a position he held for two years.

Oliver Boulette began his long career as civil servant as a member of Neill's first town council. Boulette, who served as Deputy Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, as well as Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, attended the retirement celebration.

By 1975, the von Gunten's family had grown to include three children and moved back to Winnipeg for a year so that Neill could finish his CMBC degree.

After Neill graduated with a Bachelor of Theology, the family moved to the west side of Lake Winnipeg. They made their home was in Riverton, but their lives and ministry encompassed Matheson Island, Pine Dock, Loon Straits, Riverton and an ever-widening region, throughout the next 29 years.

When asked how they could serve such a long time in one area and ministry, they jokingly answered that they never both felt like moving on at the same time! When people commended them on the sacrifices that they have made, they

responded that they preferred to think about the privilege they've had, and how they've been shaped by their experiences -- the fishing, trapping, hunting, rough roads and people.

In their ministry the von Guntens aimed to integrate word and deed. They worked at community development, in local government and pastoral work, always developing and cherishing personal relationships along the way. With complementary skills and belief in a "hands-on" ministry, the von Guntens lived with the people whom they served. As they transitioned into an office position for the final five years of their ministry career, they never lost the depth and passion of their commitment, but the biggest legacy they left was a network of relationships which will continue to benefit our communities and as they embrace diversity.

GAMEO

(cont'd from p. 1)

to include multiple languages. Two French-language articles are presently included in GAMEO, but fundraising towards creating a truly functional multilingual site continues. Steiner said about half of the required \$20,000 has been raised.

GAMEO is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Central Committee, and Mennonite World Conference. All work is done by volunteer staff, editorial boards and writers. It is freely available at www.gameo.org. It includes over 1,800 contributors and 14,750 articles.

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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Genealogy and Family History

By Alf Redekopp

Adalbert Goertz (1928-2011)

by Glenn Penner

Last month the worldwide community of Mennonite genealogists lost a giant. On May 7, 2011 Adalbert Goertz died in Colorado Springs, CO, at the age of 82. Adalbert, a



retired physicist, was a very active genealogical researcher for over 50 years, having written well over 150 articles on the history and genealogy of Prussian Mennonites. Many of his contributions can be accessed at the Prussian page of the Mennonite genealogy web site: www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/.

Adalbert was always one step ahead of the rest of us, recognizing, decades ago, that information pertaining to our Prussian Mennonite ancestors, which many of us thought was lost due to the destruction of Mennonite church records during and before the war, was often available in Lutheran and Catholic records. He also tried to interest the Mennonite genealogical community in West Prussian property and inheritance records, which are currently held in Polish archives and are only recently being acquired by Mennonite researchers. He was using his university's mainframe computer for genealogical purposes long before the rest of us were making our own databases.

Adalbert lived a very interesting life, which he chronicles on his web page (<http://users.foxvalley.net/~goertz/chr1.html>).

His passing is representative of the disappearance of an important generation – those who were born and raised in our Prussian homeland, only to flee for their lives at the end of the war. With the passing of this generation we will lose our direct connection to the land where our ancestors lived for hundreds of years!

My correspondence with Adalbert started in 1976 and continued until about 2 months before his death. During those 35 years he passed on a wealth of information, not readily available in

books or online, for which I will always be grateful. I was fortunate to attend an annual conference in Denver, CO which gave me the opportunity, every few years, to rent a car and visit Adalbert and Bärbel at their home in Colorado Springs. I will very much miss those visits!

Adalbert's contributions to Mennonite genealogy and to the history of Mennonites in Prussia will last for a long time to come. Until the age of the internet he published mostly in obscure German periodicals. Fortunately he was highly computer literate and embraced the internet as a medium for the dissemination of genealogical information and sent many files for posting at mennonitegenealogy.com. I hope to convert his older genealogical publications into electronic form for future posting. A bibliography of his numerous Mennonite genealogical publications (up to 2001) can be found at www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/biblio.htm.

As the great physicist Sir Isaac Newton once stated "If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants".

Recent Publications

Margaret Morris & Grace Wohlgemuth, *Aron M. & Maria Penner Family Book 1887-2006* (No publication data, 2006) 233 pp.

This book was prepared for the descendants of Aron M. Penner (1887-1963) and his wife Maria D. Goossen (1887-1972) who lived and raised their family in the Greenland area, north of Steinbach, Manitoba. Their parents had come to Canada from Russia during the migration of 1874 with the Kleinegemeinde. Aron M. & Maria Penner became members of the Church of God in Christ (Mennonite). This compilation includes helpful maps, some photos and illustrations, genealogical listings, some reproductions of original documents and autobiographical sketches written by the children.

Book received courtesy of Lloyd Penner, Stettler, Alberta.



Al Hiebert, *Hiebert Heritage to 2010: Wilhelm and Anna Hiebert Descendants and Ancestors* (Steinbach, MB: Private publication, 2011) 117 pp.

This compilation contains the family history and genealogy of Wilhelm Hiebert (1889-1962) and his first wife Anna Neufeld (1892-1958), both children of immigrant parents with connections to the Berghal Colony. The family were part of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church until the establishment of the Rudnerweide Mennonite Church (currently the EMMC) in 1937. They lived in Winkler, Horndean, Kane and Steinbach. They raised a family of 12 children. This book includes stories, photographs, genealogical listings, maps and a comprehensive index. Contact: Al Hiebert, 19-100 Home Street N., Steinbach, MB R5G 2G9



Judith Rempel (1952-2011)

It is with deep sadness that we recently received the news that Judith Rempel, genealogist and family historian, of Calgary, passed away on 24 May.



Judith was an active volunteer with the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta in the areas of genealogy projects, archives, and web site. She was enthusiastic and worked toward excellence in the things she did. She was recognized for this when she won the first New England Genealogy Society's Genealogy Technology Excellence Award for her work on the Canadian Genealogical Projects Registry.

Judith Rempel was born and raised in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. In 1970 she moved to Akron to work with MCC, first as secretary to Orie O. Miller (one of the founders of MCC) and later as secretary to the Personnel Section. In 1972 she transferred to Winnipeg to continue as secretary for MCC.

Judith earned degrees in sociology, specializing in social demography from the Universities of Waterloo and Western Ontario and worked in this field in Manitoba and Alberta.

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



**Mennonite
Heritage
Centre**

600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

So we need money...

It may be news to some of you that the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives and Gallery raises over 70% of its annual operations budget which includes salaries, benefits and program costs, through events, appeals, sales and services.

Mennonite Church Canada, our main ministry partner, provides the space, support services (financial accounting, basic office equipment like phone, computer & internet) and a small operating grant. However, like most nonprofits, we rely on donations to operate.

You may have heard that Mennonite Church Canada recently had to implement a process of downsizing which included reducing its annual budget by \$500,000.

Fortunately, there was only a small impact on the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives and Gallery as a result of this process. Nevertheless, it did confirm for us that we will need to strengthen and increase our financial support. **We need to raise \$135,000** this fiscal year to meet our annual expense budget of \$180,000.

As we head toward our summer slump, income is already behind our expenses, and so we are including this appeal in this issue, in case you did not get a separate appeal letter, or if you thought of giving later. **Can you help us, now?**

You can be sure that any amount donated to the Mennonite Heritage Centre will make a difference to us. Please keep us in mind.

You can make a single donation or set up a recurring gift! Today it is common to pay utility and credit-card bills and to even make donations to one's church or favorite charity by regularly transferring funds electronically directly from one's bank account. Mennonite Church Canada can also set up this service for you. Feel free to contact us if you would like more information about how to make regular contributions.

Thank you for your interest and support in gathering, preserving and sharing the story of the Mennonite people, so that we can learn from the past and be guided for the future.

A.R.

Page 4 June 2011 Mennonite Historian



A particularly busy day at the Heritage Centre Archives recently (l-r): historian Adolf Ens being assisted by MHC Director Alf Redekopp, Esther Epp-Tiessen, currently researching and writing the history of MCC Canada, Jamie Reimer, CMU archival assistant and Harold Peters-Fransen, archives volunteer. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz.

Manitoba Day Awards

The Manitoba Day Award is an award presented annually by the Association for Manitoba Archives which recognizes those users of archives who have completed an original work of excellence that enhances the archival community and contributes to the understanding and celebration of Manitoba history. This year the Mennonite Heritage Centre nominated Ronald Friesen, for his book *Pioneers of Cheese: A Social and Economic History of the Cheese Industry in Southern Manitoba 1880-1960*. Through this book, Friesen increases our knowledge and understanding of the early cheese industry



Alf Redekopp presenting Ronald Friesen with one of the 2011 AMA Manitoba Day Awards . Photo credit: Kathy Kushpel.

in Manitoba. He includes biographies of significant people in the industry, both from the Mennonite and the Franco-Manitoba communities. He used archival sources at the Mennonite Heritage Centre such as our extensive *Mennonitische Post* collection as well as the records of the Kleefeld Cooperative.

A.R.

MCC Canada History

In January 2011, the board of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada approved several new initiatives. The one is the writing of a history of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2013. The Society has contracted with Esther Epp-Tiessen of Winnipeg to write the history of this remarkable organization. MCC Canada's work in international relief and in a wide variety of Canadian projects is well known within and outside the Mennonite community. However the ability of widely disparate Mennonite groups to work together in 1963 was not a foregone conclusion. This history will provide a fascinating opportunity to explore the story of an organization that has come to symbolize "Mennonite" for many Canadians. Funding for the project will be shared by MCC Canada and the Historical Society. Ken Reddig chairs the project steering committee on behalf of MHSC, and will take leadership in fundraising for it.



Carmyn Campbell and Simone Hildebrand. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz.

CMBS News

The role of an archive is to document change. The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies documents change within the Canadian MB community, and is itself in a state of change. For the first 30 years (1969-1999) there were three directors: Herb Giesbrecht, Ken Reddig and Abe Dueck. In the next 12 years 1999-2011 the Centre will have had five directors: Abe Dueck, Heinrich Loewen, Ken Reddig, Doug Heidebrecht and a new director, Jon Isaak, who will start June 15, 2011. He comes to the Centre after a lengthy time as New Testament professor at the MB seminary in Fresno.

In April 2011 Tamara Dyck closed off a three-year stint working at the Centre as the Archival Assistant to take on more hours with the CMU library. This summer the Centre is fortunate to have Carmyn Campbell and Simone Hildebrand working with us on a part time basis. Simone will be finishing off the annual statistical survey that is compiled by the Centre, updating finding aids, and scanning some materials. Carmyn will be assisting in processing collections and filling research requests.

The centre's web site has also been changing. We have been adding several new periodical indices to our web site which now has over a dozen. They include *Odessa Zeitung*, *Mennonite Reporter*, *Mennonite Observer*, *MB Herald*, *Mennonite World Conference Courier*, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, and *Zionsbote*. These listings and indices give researchers greater access to the materials in our holdings.

This year the Centre's nominee for the Manitoba Day award was Harold Jantz for the book he edited, *Leaders who Shaped Us*. Many of the biographies written were based on research conducted at the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Jantz himself was the driving force behind the book and the author of 6 of the 25 biographies. In the preface Jantz writes that one of the goals of the book is celebrate a milestone but also so that we can "...know ourselves better". Endorsements for the book state that the books has been "... inspiring and humbling.", "... these 25 biographies add living colour to our history". "... *Leaders Who Shaped Us*, helps us find our way for the future. A must read, especially for young leaders."

This book crafts stories of influential leaders within the Canadian Mennonite Brethren community in an easy to read and accessible way. Source references at the end of each chapter speak to the important role archival holdings and historical books collected by the archival institutions played in the fruition of this project. In the acknowledgements Jantz writes "Few people know how good the archives are that we as a Conference possess in Winnipeg. The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, with its holdings and its staff... have been an indispensable resource in bringing this volume to realization. [The] archivists have been especially encouraging and helpful... The Mennonite Heritage Centre... has also been an important resource."

Conrad Stoesz

Conducting National Survey

Winnipeg, Man.—Studies suggest that churches, especially mainline churches across Canada are experiencing decline; how is our denomination doing in these uncertain times?

The Centre for MB Studies (CMBS) will have a well-informed appraisal in the coming weeks, after tabulating the results of its survey of the 246 congregations that comprise the Canadian Conference of MB Churches (CCMBC).

The annual survey, conducted by the Centre on behalf of the executive director and board, provides valuable data, tracking statistical analysis by province on such things as membership growth and decline, congregational demographics, and church leadership.

"The collective information from the survey helps conference leaders understand who we are, what trends are developing, and where we need to allocate our resources," says Conrad Stoesz, CMBS archivist. "It also gives MB constituents a helpful snapshot, informing them of their place in the larger story."

"High-quality denominational data are valuable for researchers who seek to understand religion in Canada," says executive board member and sociologist Sam Reimer. "As a member of the national board, the data are crucial for planning future initiatives."

A summary of the results will be printed in the next conference yearbook. The Centre has conducted surveys of this kind for more than 50 years.

—A Canadian Conference of MB Churches news release



Conrad Stoesz (right) presenting the Manitoba Day Award to Harold Jantz (left). Photo credit: Kathy Kushpel.

Locating Marjewka (Maryevka), Ukraine

By Peter Penner

Katharina Derksen (#16348, Grandma 6) was born in Marjewka (Maryevka), Russia, and emigrated to Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba in 1925 with her father (my grandfather), Julius Derksen.¹ As there are various possible locations with this name, and Marjewka (Maryevka) is not referenced in either the Mennonite Historical Atlas² or the online Schroeder map collection³, it has been hard to pinpoint. My mother, however, marked the location on a 1962 map of Ukraine in the Kharkov district, between Izyum and Lozovaya. This excludes other possible locations nearer the Molotschna colony.

A Julius Peter Doerksen is listed in *Mennonite Estates* as owning, in 1908, 100 desiatin (270 acres) at Maryevka, Barvenko, Kharkov.⁴ This was likely my grandfather. It would be about 11 years after he moved from Apuchtin, Schoenfeld (1896 or 1897) to go into partnership with Peter I. Friesen at the Pohonwka estate (Marjewka).¹ Estate

owner Gerhard H. Nickel (#151722) was also from Maryevka, Barvenko. His grandson, John Janzen, corroborated the location of Maryevka, near Grigorievka, as the birthplace of his mother, Helena Nickel (#216874). George F. Loewen also mentions this location in an article about Grigorievka: "The neighbours from Novo-Petrovka (one mile west) and from Marievka (eight miles southeast) came to our church..."⁵

Marjewka appears on p. 84 of *The House of Heinrich*, map 9;⁶ and on a map of Mennonite villages in South Russia.⁷ Marjewka in these maps coincides with the village of Zaparo-Marivka at 48.80° N, 37.04° E, south of Barvenkovo, Ukraine (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 is an overlay of an excerpt from the Schroeder map 121³ on a Google Earth⁸ image of the area. Grigorievka corresponds to the village of Hryhorivka, the community of Pohonivka suggests the Pohonwka estate, and Novo-Petrovka⁵ coincides with Petrivka, 2 km west of Grigorievka; Barvenko (Barvenkovo) is off the map, about 11 km north of Maryevka.

Endnotes

¹GRANDMA 6 database, California Mennonite Historical Society, www.grandmaonline.org/.

²*Mennonite Historical Atlas* by William Schroeder and Helmut T. Huebert, Springfield Publishers, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1996.

³Schroeder maps: www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/archives/holdings/Schroeder_maps/.

⁴*Mennonite Estates in Imperial Russia* by Helmut T. Huebert, Springfield Publishers, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2005, p. 124.

⁵*Memories of Grigorievka*, ed. by Ted Friesen and Elizabeth Peters with Glenn Bergen, Ch.1, p.10

⁶Ens, Anna Epp. *The House of Heinrich: The Story of Heinrich Epp (1811-1863) of Rosenort, Molotschna and His Descendants*. Winnipeg: Epp Book Committee, 1980.

⁷*Hildebrand's Zeittafel* by J.J. Hildebrand, Karte der russlanddeutschen Siedlungen im Schwarzmeergebiet, 1:1,500,000.

⁸*Google Earth*: www.google.com/earth/

⁹The "overlay" technique is useful in identifying present-day communities on historical maps. This map was obtained utilizing the Menu>Add>Image Overlay window in *Google Earth*: then, with the dialog window open, the Schroeder map (#121, in "jpg" format) was selected, and the scale, position, orientation (and transparency) of the overlay adjusted to align the two images, using rivers, roads, towns, or other appropriate features.

Peter and Irma (Wiens) Penner live in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Peter is retired from UNB (Chemistry).

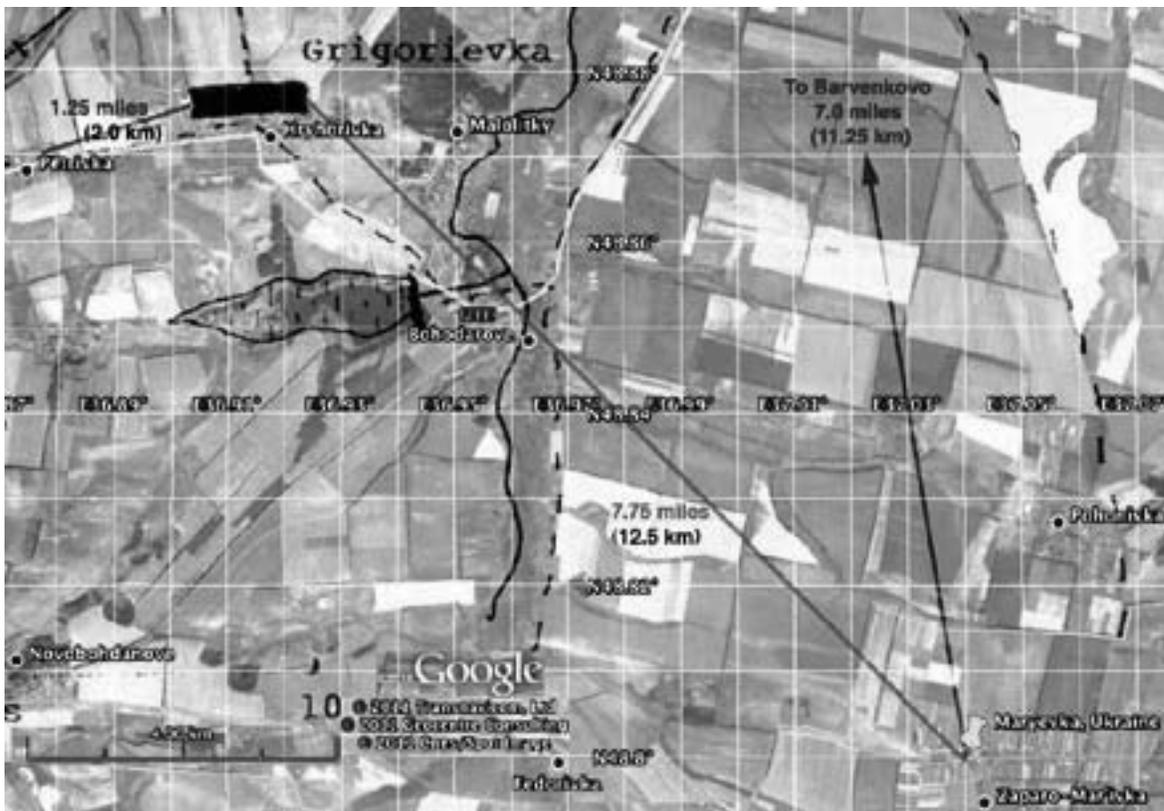


Figure 1: A Schroeder map of Grigorievka (#121, reference 3), overlaid on a Google Earth projection⁹ Distances to Petrivka (1.25 mi) and Maryevka (7.75) match the description from reference 5.

Book Notes

(cont'd from p. 7)
write a brief biography and summary of Sawatsky's work. Articles span such topics as a Soviet political police perspective of Mennonites in the USSR in the 1920s, the *Selbstschutz*, the role of women in evangelical history in the Soviet Union, current issues among evangelicals in the former east block, a history of the translation and delivery of Barclay commentaries to the Soviet Union and current issues in European missionology as it relates to Mennonites and beyond, and others.

Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 8)

principles of Islam and Sharia is the perfect guarantee for protecting human rights. Suavi is also considered a precursor of pan-Turkism since in his book on Khiva he called Khivans "Central Asian Turks". Overall, Walter Ratliff's book is a very successful attempt to demonstrate how the peaceful and industrious Mennonites established, while remaining true Christians, a mutual understanding with Muslims and build exemplary relationships with them.

Bertha E. Klassen, *Trovani* (Victoria: First Choice Books, 2010), 223 pp. \$15

Reviewed by William Schroeder, retired teacher and map maker, Winnipeg.

Trovani is the story of a girl who was born and grew up in a Mennonite family in a village in the Arkadak Colony located about half way between the Don and the Volga. Arkadak was a daughter colony of Chortitza.



Trovani was the only girl in a family of five children. She had two older brothers and two younger brothers. She was born about 1930, and the early chapters of the book shed some light on the struggles that occurred during collectivization and the lawlessness in the early years of Communist Russia. While still attending village school *Trovani* resolved that she wanted to become a doctor. Her family assured her that that was out of the question for a girl. True to her word, *Trovani* applied to the medical school in Moscow, and was accepted. A few years later she graduated as a medical doctor. Like so many Mennonites, *Trovani* moved to different points on the globe because of political unrest, poverty or other pressing concerns. *Trovani* heard about Paraguay and soon she joined the Mennonite pioneers in the Chaco. She served the Neuland, Fernheim and Menno colonies as a medical doctor. A few years later she packed up her suitcases and went to Germany, where she served in her chosen field among the Mennonite *Umsiedler*. Finally she proceeded to Canada, where members of her extended family had emigrated during the 1920s.

This is an unusual "biography". The real life *Trovani* died at the age of 14, but the author has extended her life. Many of

Trovani's experiences described in the book, are experiences the author herself has encountered, e.g. the train ride in Russia, travel in dilapidated cars on dusty roads in the Chaco in Paraguay, or the frustrating encounters with the *Umsiedler* in Germany.

An underlying theme in this account of *Trovani's* life is the question of abortion. Moral, ethical and religious questions related to that topic surface repeatedly in the narrative of the book.

The book is well written and interesting. Its layout and comfortable font size make it "reader friendly".

The book is available at Sam's Place and Kindred Productions, both in Winnipeg.

Call for Papers

Mennonites and Human Rights: Grappling with State Power in the Past and Present

An Academic and Community Education
Conference hosted by the Chair in
Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg

18-20 October 2012

Mennonites have experienced state power in different ways. As a pacifist, minority group in 16th-20th Century Europe, Mennonites sometimes faced hostile governments and vested powers. As a non-violent global people today they continue to relate to nation states and powerful groups in unique ways.

In their history Mennonites have endured physical suffering, the contempt for human dignity, gross injustices and the squelching of dissent. But they have also envisaged ways to process and confront these human rights violations, advocating for the rights of others and for rights for themselves.

The planning committee invites submissions for research papers from a wide variety of disciplines.

Mennonites have not often used 'human rights' terminology. Indeed they have debated whether its language is too individualistic and coercive for an Anabaptist people. This conference asserts that the Mennonite experience can shed light on the issue of human rights, examining it from the perspective of a religious, non-violent and communitarian heritage.

Send short proposals and biographical sketches to Royden Loewen at r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.

Story tellers, artists, song writers and film producers are welcomed to make proposals too.

Proposal deadline: 31 October 2011.

The planning committee includes: Ray Dirks (Mennonite Heritage Gallery), Judith Dueck (Canadian Museum for Human Rights), John J. Friesen (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Soc./Canadian Mennonite University), Wendy Kroeker (Canadian Lutheran World Relief), Royden Loewen (Chair in Mennonite Studies), Ismael Muvingi (Menno Simons College), Dean Peachy (Global College); Alf Redekopp (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada), Peter Rempel (Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba), Eliakim Sibanda (University of Winnipeg).

Book Notes

By Harold Peters-Fransen

Maria Falk Lodge's *In search of Memories: Tales from the Rosengard Gravel Ridge* (self published, 2010, 208 pages) contains mostly a series of columns originally written for *The Carillon*, Steinbach's weekly paper. Often using a current event or holiday as a springboard, she reflects growing up in the environs of Rosengard, a community between Steinbach and Grunthal, Manitoba. Often reflecting on ordinary events such as mealtimes, playtimes, family gatherings, gardens, the seasons, she weaves mostly positive events as memories to give shape and meaning to our current lives, and causes the reader to reflect on our lives in the present. The stories are based on her growing up in this community in the 1940s and 50s. Many photographs enhance this book.

Life Journeys: The Stories of the Eden High School Class of 55 edited by Harold Jantz, (Winnipeg: Eden Echoes, 2011) 172 pages, grows out of the 50th reunion of this school's graduates of 1955. The school was a Mennonite Brethren high school, located in Virgil, Ontario. Mostly consisting of the personal stories of these 25 grads including the editor, the writers reflect both on their Eden years, and their life experiences since. A majority taught at some point in their lives and had significant experiences abroad. At the time of printing, only one was deceased. All living members still relate to a Christian church. All of that class came from either a Mennonite Brethren or General Conference Mennonite background. A couple of articles on the history of the school, and its present incarnation as an alternative evangelical school within the Niagara District School Board, and many photographs, both historic and contemporary, round out the book. The printing is a limited edition of 100 copies.

History and Mission in Europe: Continuing the Conversation (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2011), 419 pages, is a book in honour of Walter Sawatsky, a Russian history scholar and professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Twenty three writers from Europe and North America contribute on topics of Sawatsky's interest, writing in Russian, German, and English. The Russian and German articles have brief English abstracts. John Lapp and N. Gerald Shank

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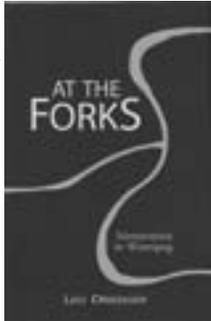
Book Reviews

Leo Driedger, *At the Forks: Mennonites in Winnipeg* (Kitchener : Pandora Press, 2010) 473 pp.

Reviewed by Dr. Henry J. Regehr, Wilfrid Laurier, University, Waterloo, Ontario.

The nineteenth book from the pen (or computer) of Leo Driedger is a most interesting and informative document about Mennonites in one particular locale, the city of Winnipeg, Canada. Driedger briefly traces the migration of Mennonites from the steppes of Ukraine to the prairies (“steppes”) of southern Manitoba, and from there into its major city, Winnipeg. Approximately 20,000 Mennonites were residing there in 2005, by far the largest number of any metropolitan center in Canada. The author, now retired, has taught sociology, particularly urban sociology, for more than three decades at the University of Manitoba. He has been an avid student of, and prolific writer about, Mennonites and brings an enormous wealth of knowledge and information as well as sympathetic and critical understanding to this task. He himself is Mennonite by birth, upbringing, and church membership, and has moved widely in academic circles as part of his professional activities. It is difficult to think of anyone better qualified to write this book than Leo Driedger.

A theme running throughout the book is the profound changes, fraught with many tensions, that occurred as a religious and ethnic people, steeped in a rural culture, adjusted gradually to life in “the big city.” In a small way, some of these changes already began in Ukraine. A second major theme is the adjustment of traditional Anabaptist views and values to the individualistic and secular orientation of modern times. The author focuses specifically on nine areas of current activities: church life, education, communication media, business, the professions, community services, music, creative writing, and the arts. How did Mennonites find their way into these essentially urban ways of life? Driedger



perceptively delineates the tensions between Anabaptist values and modern ones, and finds that Anabaptist values have a strong impact on current Mennonite practices in the above-named areas. For example, Anabaptist values significantly influence the relationship of Mennonite business owners to their employees. Also, Mennonite musicians view the practice of their professional skills not merely for status or financial gain, but shaped significantly by the service motif. Creative writing and the arts seem to have proven the most difficult to mesh with Mennonite identity and congregational membership. As a result, not all ethnic Mennonites have found it possible to retain their ethnic and religious commitment in this struggle. A surprisingly large number of them have.

The author draws on many sociological theories for his interpretation of data.

However, a sociological background is not necessary to understand and benefit from reading this book. The author’s explanations are not significantly weakened by leaving out theoretical considerations. The book is written for the general, relatively educated public; not specifically for highly educated specialists.

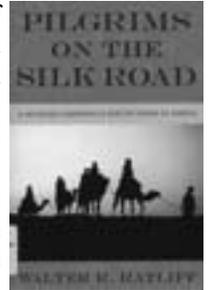
The enormous amount of research data the author brings to this book is almost overwhelming. He has consulted research from long ago as well as from more recent times, from many large surveys as well as from many small interview studies, and used them to paint and interpret the larger picture. Most impressive is the amount of the author’s own research in this connection, much of it specifically for this book. A significant number of the practitioners in the nine areas of participation mentioned above were given questionnaires to complete and were then personally interviewed for further clarification and elaboration. Personal observations and on-the-spot interviews were conducted in churches, businesses, schools, seniors homes, etc.

Driedger is to be commended for this data-rich, extensive, and sympathetic description and interpretation of Mennonites in Winnipeg. If you are interested in the Mennonite story, you’ll love this book.

Walter R. Ratliff, *Pilgrims on the Silk Road : a Muslim-Christian encounter in Khiva* (Eugene, OR : Wipf & Stock, 2010), 293 p.

Reviewed by Ahmet Seyhun, Professor of Islamic/Middle Eastern History, University of Winnipeg.

Walter R. Ratliff has written a very interesting work describing one of the epic journeys of the Mennonites, this time in Russia and Central Asia of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Central Asia, always a crossroad of civilizations and cultures, is the setting of this Mennonite odyssey. Events unfolding in this book occurred during one of the most important times in the modern history of Central Asia – its occupation by Russia. Throughout the nineteenth century, Tsarist Russia was on the rise and from 1865 onwards Russian hegemony was gradually established over the Turkic and Muslim states of Central Asia, namely the khanates of Khiva, Bukhara and Kokand. Russian conquest of the Trans Caspian Turkmen lands between 1881 and 1884 would bring Russia to the gates of India in northern Afghanistan. The Russian-British rivalry in Asia was called the Great Game and it constituted one of the most important episodes of imperialism. In his book Ratliff colorfully portrays the life in Khiva during the Russian conquest. His vivid account tells the story of the conquest with numerous secondary episodes, which describe the web of relationships between native Central Asian Muslims, Mennonites and Russians, and it is a very original book in its genre. As a historian of the Ottoman Empire specialized in the intellectual history of the late Ottoman period, I was delighted to learn that the ideas of Ali Suavi, an important young Ottoman thinker, were discussed among the Mennonites in Khiva. Ali Suavi is well known for his fiery articles published in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, denounced despotism and autocratic rule, and advocated democratic ideas. What is less known is that he also wrote a book on Khiva, According to Suavi, a true democratic regime emanating from the



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