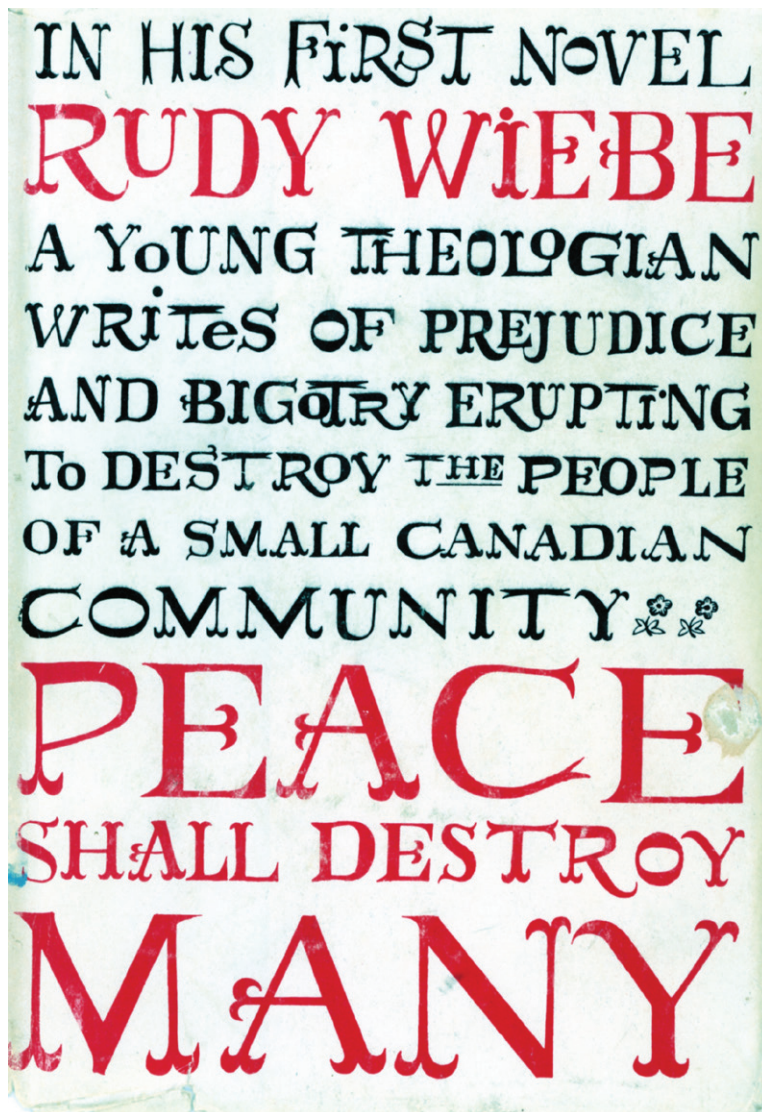


# Mennonite Historian

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



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“The Dust Jacket Flap”: this is how Paul Tiessen describes the complicating effect the dust jacket (pictured at left) had on the reception of Rudy Wiebe’s first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (McClelland and Stewart, 1962). Apparently, the dust jacket was “designed by McClelland and Stewart without any input from Wiebe.” It was to “communicate the essence and import of the novel to a non-Mennonite readership.” However, the dust jacket had a chilling effect on many within the Mennonite community. “With the dust jacket, the publisher in effect yanked the project out of the hands of Wiebe and his ‘Mennonite’ readers—hijacking the meaning and achievement of the novel.” See story on page 8. Photo credit: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg.

# Philip Mandtler and his son Jacob, the clockmaker from Alexanderwohl

by James O. Harms

The Mandtlers<sup>1</sup> were known as a clockmaking family in the Mennonite settlements of Prussia and Russia for more than 200 years. The oldest extant Mennonite clock is a Mandtler, dated 1720. It is not a simple clock, and from this we can infer that the family had already been clockmakers for some time. The 1720 clock has machine-cut gears, indicating they had machine tools early on. The family lived on the Vistula River delta, southeast of Danzig. This was the area offered as sanctuary to early Mennonites by the King of Poland in 1535. After the First Partition of Poland in 1772, this

region was incorporated into the Prussian province of West Prussia.

We know the names of some of the early clockmakers in the Mandtler family. One of these was Jacob Mandtler (b. 1760<sup>2</sup>). He was probably the 4th generation clockmaker in this family. At least one of his clocks survives, dated 1804. He trained his sons to be clockmakers. His son Jacob (b. 1790) was well-known for his clocks, and moved with his family to Lichtenau in the Molotschna settlement of Russia in 1839. He was the father of Gerhard (b. 1821) and the grandfather of Gerhard (b. 1855), both prominent clockmakers in the Mennonite settlements of Russia.<sup>3</sup>

Jacob P. Mandtler (b. 1842) was a clockmaker for 40 years. In this article, I will refer to him as Jacob P. to differentiate him from other family members named Jacob. I first read about this clockmaker

Jacob P., his clocks, and his family. We know even less about his father Philip. But we know enough to tell the story of another clockmaker in the Mandtler family, and add another branch to the Mandtler family tree. What we know has been assembled like a puzzle, one small piece at a time. This article is about the pieces of this puzzle that have been found so far.

I located some of the Mandtler information in official sources, like the census, school records, grain loan records, and church books. Some is from the papers of Anna Andres, who worked to assemble records of Mennonite families from original sources that existed prior to the Second World War, many of which were destroyed by the war. Some information comes from the family record in the Bible of Aganetha (Mandtler) Block (b. 22 June 1886), the oldest daughter of Jacob P.

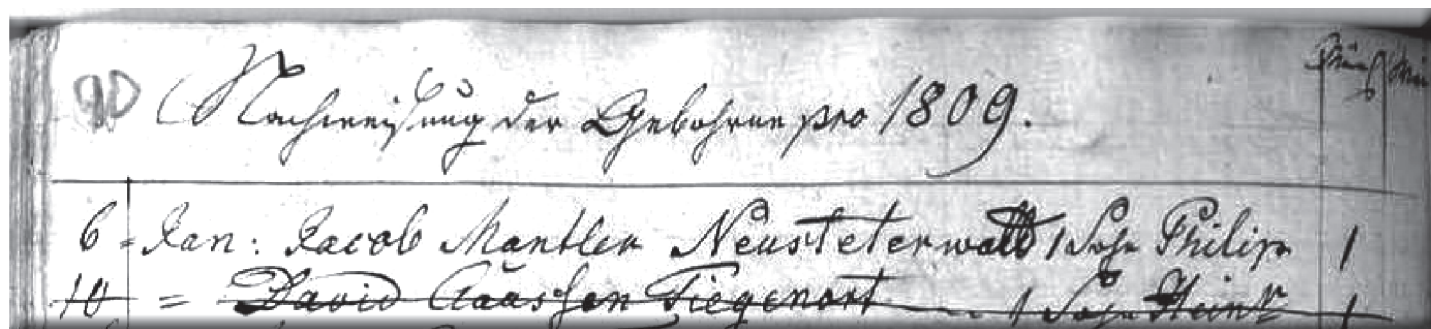


Fig. 1. This is part of page 90 from the 1782 Tiegenhagen Church Book. Source: Glenn Penner.

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in a 1986 interview that Jake Peters did with John D. Mandtler (1912–1987) of Winnipeg.<sup>4</sup> John spoke of his grandfather Jacob P. Mandtler, the clockmaker, and his great-grandfather Philip Mandtler. He did not know the identity of Philip's father. At the time, even Mandtler family members in Germany who were descendants of Philip did not know the identity of Philip's father. I assumed Jacob P. and his father Philip were members of the Mandtler family of clockmakers, but without knowing the father of Philip, there was no way to place them on the family tree. This is where my search began.

We now know Philip (b. 1809) was the youngest son of Jacob (b. 1760<sup>2</sup>) and his second wife Maria Wiens.<sup>5</sup> We don't know if Philip was an active clockmaker, but we can assume he was trained as a clockmaker by his father and passed this knowledge on to his son Jacob P., whom I refer to as the clockmaker from Alexanderwohl.

At present, we don't know a lot about

and his second wife Maria Wiebe. Other information comes from family stories.

My research found two birth dates for Philip Mandtler: 6 July 1808 and 6 January 1809. The Mandtler family in Germany uses 6 July 1808, as does B.H. Unruh in *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (p. 375). But Anna Andres believed, as do I, that both dates refer to the same person. She writes: "Philipp \*6.7.1808 Neustädterwald. Nach einer 2. Lesart \*6.1.1809" (Anna Andres Papers,<sup>5</sup> Section S: Mandtler, p. 3).

With this in mind, I looked for his birth record and found it in the 1782 Tiegenhagen (Prussia) Church Book,<sup>6</sup> page 90, where it lists Philip as born on 6 January 1809 in Neustädterwald. He is the son of the clockmaker Jacob (b. 1760<sup>2</sup>), half-brother of the clockmaker Jacob (b. 1790), uncle of the clockmaker Gerhard (b. 1821). See Fig. 1.

Anna Andres says Philip moved to Pordenau, Molotschna, Russia, in 1832. The

(cont'd on p. 4)



# Genealogy and Family History

## Mennonite Archival Image Database continues to Grow

The Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID) is growing and with it, extending its reach for people looking for rare photographs. On the eve of its first anniversary, MAID welcomes the Mennonite Library & Archives at Fresno Pacific University (ML&A) as our newest archival partner.



ML&A is the eighth MAID partner and the first outside Canada, which enhances MAID's vision of being a source for "the discovery of photographs of Mennonite life from around the world." MAID's eight partners have now collectively uploaded over 82,000 photographic descriptions into our Internet-accessible database (<https://archives.mhsc.ca>); nearly 19,000 of these have scanned images attached.

With each new partner the Mennonite family and network becomes larger and stronger. Archival photo experts from each centre help provide valuable information about photos in their own collection and collaborate with other partners, improving the contextual knowledge of various collections, benefiting everyone. Over time as people and families disperse and organizations change, information is scattered and becomes lost. Sometimes some of these materials find their way to an archive.

As MAID photo experts work at posting and describing photos, connections between photos that are held in different archives are found. It is not uncommon for two, three, or four archivists to be in discussion on a series of photos. Each archivist can supply important pieces of the puzzle that brings us collectively closer to identifying a photo or people in the photo. Each archivist has long-standing knowledge, and networks that can be tapped to help identify people, places, and events. Through the collaborative network of MAID and its partners, the Mennonite

community of yesterday is slowly being reconstituted.

ML&A has begun entering photographs into MAID from its rich collections, which consists of tens of thousands of photographs. Highlights include the Henry J. Wiens photographs of Mennonite Brethren church buildings, photographs of Mennonite Brethren congregational life on the west coast of the United States, the Fresno Pacific University photograph

collection, and a massive collection of Mennonite Brethren mission photographs from around the world.

Kevin Enns-Rempel (library director) and Hannah Keeney (archivist) are coordinating photograph entries from Fresno, which involves selecting images and providing the descriptions that will make them searchable on the Internet. "These photographs have been available in the archives for many years, but only to those researchers able to visit the archives," says Enns-Rempel. "MAID will make these photographs visible to the world, and will spur interest in the larger archival collections at Fresno."

The Mennonite Library and Archives is one of four North American archival centres for the Mennonite Brethren church in North America. It is located in the Hiebert Library at Fresno Pacific University. The archives hold records of the Pacific District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Fresno Pacific University, and personal manuscript collections related to the Mennonite Brethren church. In addition to the archival collections, the ML&A also holds an Anabaptist/Mennonite library collection of nearly 17,000 volumes.

The Mennonite Archival Image Database is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. It was launched in 2015 by seven original partners: the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

(Winnipeg), the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, the Mennonite Heritage Centre (Winnipeg), the D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, and the Mennonite Historical Societies of Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

For more information, contact Laureen Harder-Gissing ([lhargergissing@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:lhargergissing@uwaterloo.ca)) or Conrad Stoesz ([conrad.stoesz@mbchurches.ca](mailto:conrad.stoesz@mbchurches.ca)).

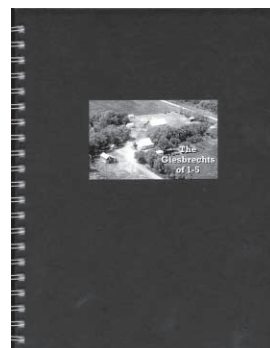
*An expanded version of the "news and events" post from January 19, 2016, on the MAID website (<https://archives.mhsc.ca/news>).*

## Book Note

by Conrad Stoesz

Eugene Letkeman, *The Giesbrechts of 1-5: 117 Years of Family History 1888–2005: Cousins Reunion–2013* (2013), 63 pp. Available from MHC.

This book focuses on the descendants of Margaretha Zacharias (1888–1977) who married John Giesbrecht (1887–1964). The book begins with information about Margaretha's father, Peter Zacharias (1846–1930), who immigrated to the Rosenfeld area of Manitoba and had children with three wives. Margaretha was the first child from the second marriage with Maria Klassen (1867–1900). The family belonged to the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church. Also included is a narrative about John Giesbrecht who moved to Manitoba in 1892 as a boy. The majority of the book is a photo album depicting the descendants of John and Margaretha Giesbrecht with a genealogical outline.



## Recent Books:

*If you have recently published a genealogy or family history book, please send us a complimentary copy and it will get noted.*

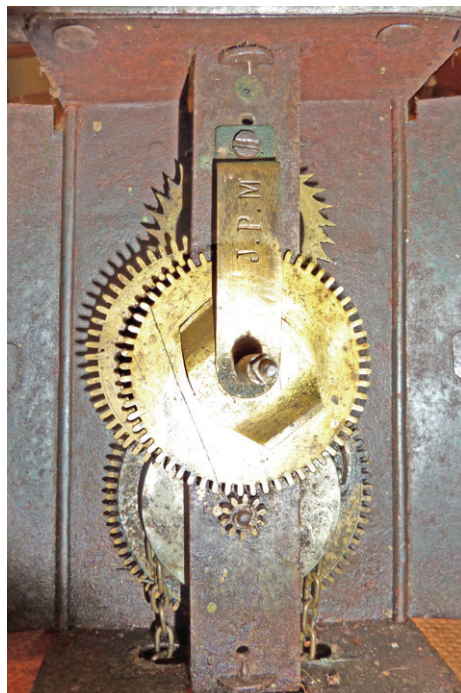
## Queries:

*Send queries to Conrad Stoesz, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or email [cstoesz@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:cstoesz@mennonitechurch.ca)*

## Clockmaker from Alexanderwohl

(cont'd from p. 2)

1835 Molotschna Census has Philip living in Pordenau and his older brother David in Muntau. At the time of the 1835 Census, Philip was not married. Anna Andres says he returned to Prussia for a brief time in 1835 to marry Catharina Dyck,<sup>7</sup> daughter of Franz Dyck from Ellerwald. They were married on 6 September 1835. This date is confirmed in the 1831–1940 Elbing-Ellerwald Church Book.<sup>8</sup> Anna Andres writes: “From this marriage there were supposedly five children,” but she found no information about them (*über deren Schicksal ich nichts erfahren konnte*).



**Fig. 2. Works of an early clock by Jacob P. Mandtler. Note his “J.P.M.” mark above the gear at the front of the clock.** Source: Tony Funk.

I found nothing that tells us what happened next. When we find Philip again, he is in Muntau. Perhaps his wife died and he went to Muntau to be close to his brother David. We don’t know. From Elena Mandtler in Germany, we have information that Philip married Katharina Kunkel, who came to Muntau with her parents in 1821.<sup>9</sup> Philip and Katharina had a son, Jacob P. (01 August 1842–05 July 1915).<sup>9</sup> In 1863, Philip received a grain loan in Muntau as part of the Molotschna Grain Loan Program. This is the last time I found Philip in official records. Family records from Elena Mandtler indicate

Philip moved to Alexanderwohl in 1874.

In 1874, most (but not all) of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, plus others from the community, moved from Molotschna to America. Some settled near Henderson, Nebraska,<sup>10</sup> but the majority settled in central Kansas, near the town of Goessel. There were more than 800 people in this group, and it is likely some of their farms were sold at reasonable prices when they left Molotschna. This is conjecture, but may explain why Philip left Muntau and moved to Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, at that time.

Jacob P. was still living in Muntau in 1876, and 1892 Alexanderwohl school records show his son Johann was born 18 December 1876 in Muntau. The 1883–1884 Alexanderwohl school records list three of his children—Peter (13), Maria (10), and Heinrich (9)—indicating that Jacob P. and his family had moved to Alexanderwohl by 1884. We have no record of when they moved. Family records suggest Johann may have been the last child born in Muntau. So Jacob P. and his family might have moved to Alexanderwohl as early as 1877. Philip died in 1884<sup>9</sup> and Jacob P. inherited his father’s farm.

Much of what follows comes from the family record in the Bible of Aganetha (Mandtler) Block<sup>9</sup> and family stories from Mandtler relatives living in Germany. Most of these family stories were sent by Elena Mandtler. Other sources are credited in the text.

Jacob P. Mandtler spent most of his life as a farmer. According to his grandson, John D. Mandtler, he started making clocks “perhaps about 1870” and continued almost until his death in 1915. His clockmaking business in Alexanderwohl was local and much smaller than the enterprise of his cousin Gerhard in Lindenau. On the farm he had his own brass foundry, which was used for clock parts and also for the fancy brass-trimmed horse harness made by his sons when they weren’t working in the clock shop or on the farm. Clockmaking was one of several businesses that kept Jacob P. and his sons busy.

Even so, Jacob P. was respected as a clockmaker. Peter Lorenz Neufeld, writing about clocks and Mennonite history,<sup>11</sup> considered him a “master craftsman.” Jacob P. and his sons made clocks in two basic styles. Some of the clocks had a “chime,” a brass bell to strike the hour. Some also had a calendar, a third hand to

show the day of the month. These clocks were more complex, and were thus more expensive. A clock without the chime and its associated mechanism cost less. All the clocks were powered by weights. Clocks without the chime had one large weight, and clocks with a chime had a second large weight to power the strike mechanism.

The photo (Fig. 2) shows the works of one of his early clocks. This is a simple clock with only one hand and no chime. Note the letters “J.P.M.” stamped on the



**Fig. 3. This clock was made by Jacob P. Mandtler in 1908. It has two hands, no chime. The face is dark green, with gold numerals. There are flowers on the arch and the four corners of the time ring. Not many of his clocks survived the revolution and civil war in Russia, and two world wars.** Source: Elena Mandtler.



clockworks, which is how he marked his clocks. Also note the small notch at the top of each door next to the hinge pin. This notch makes it possible to remove the doors to service the clock without disassembling the metal box that protects the works. This has been a fixture of all Mandtler clocks since the early 1700s.

The Photo (Fig. 3) is a clock made by Jacob P. in 1908. It has two hands, no chime. It was a wedding gift to his youngest daughter Sarah (1888–1961) at her 1911 marriage to Johann Kröker (1886–1947). This is one of few clocks by Jacob P. that survived the wars that ravaged this area.

Jacob P. was married three times.<sup>9</sup> His first wife was Helene Buller (1842–1884). Their children were: Jacob (11 February 1866–13 June 1921), Katharina (15 March 1867–04 August 1923), Helene (01 November 1868–27 March 1934),<sup>12</sup> Peter (27 January 1870–28 June 1922), Liese (19 February 1872–24 March 1924), Maria (04 July 1873–02 April 1905), Heinrich (06 January 1875–05 February 1938), Johann (18 December 1876–11 October 1946), Anna (14 September 1878–28 September 1915), Sarah (09 February 1881–12 November 1882), and David (13 April 1884–22 July 1956).

His second marriage (01 November 1884) was to Maria Wiebe (07 April 1845–16 January 1905).

A family photo (Fig. 4) was taken in 1887. The children from this union were: Aganetha (22 June 1886–15 August 1965) and Sarah (27 May 1888–13 October 1961).

His third marriage was to a Mrs. Friesen. She was a widow, and the mother of four children.

This article has focused on the life and family of the clockmaker Jacob P. Mandtler, his father Philip, and how they are related to the extended family of Mandtler clockmakers. It is a brief summary of my research to date.

*James O. Harms has done extensive research on the Mennonite clockmakers of Prussia and Russia. During this time he learned there is a lot of information in family records that is not yet part of published Mennonite history. If anyone has information to add, or the answer to any of the questions presented here, he would like to hear from you. Contact him by post at 318 W. 4th St., Newton KS 67114 or by email at joharms@sbcglobal.net*



**Fig. 4. Jacob P. Mandtler and family. This photo was taken in 1887.** Source: Elena Mandtler.

## Endnotes

1. In official records (church, government) I have seen the family name spelled Mandtler, Mandler, Mantler. The earliest signature I found from a family member was by Jacob Mandtler (b. 1790) in 1835, and I have used that spelling throughout.

2. 1758 is the date I used in previous articles. This is the date listed in GRANDMA (The Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry). No source is given for this date, so there is no way to verify it. Anna Andres' research found different dates: March 1760–10 June 1842 (Anna Andres Papers, Section S: Mandtler, p. 3). See endnote 5.

I am grateful to Glenn Penner for sending me a copy of the original source used by Anna Andres, the church record of the Jungfer Lutheran congregation.

3. A more comprehensive view of Mandtler family history can be found here: James O. Harms, "The Search for Jacob Mandtler, Clockmaker," *Mennonite Life*, 2010, Vol. 64. <http://ml.bethelks.edu/issue/vol-64/article/the-search-for-jacob-mandtler-clockmaker/>

4. This 1986 interview was part of an oral history project by Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba.

5. Anna Andres Papers, Section S: Mandtler, p. 3. An incomplete photocopy of the original manuscript is available at Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. [http://mla.bethelks.edu/archives/ms\\_488/](http://mla.bethelks.edu/archives/ms_488/)

6. The 1782 Tiegenhagen Church Book, p. 90. [http://mla.bethelks.edu/archives/cong\\_314/book1/90-91.jpg](http://mla.bethelks.edu/archives/cong_314/book1/90-91.jpg)

7. In the 1831–1940 Elbing-Ellerwald (Prussia)

Church Book, p. 65, the name is spelled "Dyck." Anna Andres in her manuscript used the German spelling "Dück."

8. The 1831–1940 Elbing-Ellerwald Church Book, p. 65, lists Franz Dyck and three children. Catharina (b. 18 February 1810) is the oldest. A later entry, appended to Catharina in 20th-century handwriting says "Dyck ∞ (married) 6 September 1835 Philip Mandtler, Pordenau, Molotschna." The writing style is suspiciously similar to that of Anna Andres (I have a copy of her original manuscript for comparison), and it is not inconceivable that she added this information when she checked this book, and based this comment on her earlier research. The following begins on the same line in the next column, but was written by another hand in different colour ink: "angeblich (supposedly) + (died) 3 September 1861 in Zeyersvorderkampen (Prussia)." This is not about Catharina, but is part of the information about her brother Franz, listed on the line below. <http://rep.mefor.org/kb/kbebel.pdf>.

Glenn Penner also notes that the original source of the wedding information is the 1809–1846 diary of Elbing-Ellerwald Ältester Jacob Kroeker.

9. From the family record in the Bible of Aganetha (Mandtler) Block (b. 22 June 1886). She was the oldest daughter of Jacob P. Mandtler and his second wife Maria Wiebe.

10. C.B. Schmidt, "Kansas Mennonite Settlements, 1877," *Mennonite Life*, April, 1970, Vol. 25, No. 2, p. 54. <http://ml.bethelks.edu/store/ml/files/1970apr.pdf>

11. Peter Lorenz Neufeld, "Mennonite Hanging Clocks," in *Prairie Vistas* (Glendosa Research Centre, Minnedosa, Manitoba, 1973), p. 52.

12. *Die Mennonitische Rundschau*, 16 May 1934, p. 8.



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## Why a *Mennonite Church* archive? Part One

by Korey Dyck

Looking back to see a new future, the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives & Gallery represents the enduring memory of the church. Websites, diaries, blogs, financial records, congregational reports, paintings, and pod casts all record the life, engagement, and mission of the Mennonite Church as a people of God. Said simply, the vision of the Heritage Centre is to bring faith to life, by connecting the past, present, and future through art and history.

The mission of the Centre and its two overlapping programs is to facilitate respectful community dialogue so that faith perspectives engage current events through the collection, preservation, and exhibition of curated art and heritage projects on behalf of the Mennonite community for all Canadians. The Centre provides national leadership and subject expertise through professional services in archival processes, curated exhibits, digital collections, educational programming, and public presentations.

In years previous, a denominational archive was simply taken for granted. Archiving videos, letters, and annual reports was an expected part of the work of churches—recording how faith was lived out within a particular denomination. Since 1933, the Mennonite Heritage Centre has actively been gathering the Mennonite Church's working documents and personal examples of faithful people in order to educate future generations. Nevertheless, the historically critical role of denominational archives now seems to be in question.

Why indeed do we continue to collect weekly church bulletins? Why should we bother?

A short answer is that the church needs stories of people in the past to inspire seekers and believers in the future. We learn to be better Christians by learning from our church's faith heritage.



Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg.

A longer answer is that archives serve a holistic purpose—healthy communities simultaneously preserve and invent their culture. That is, while we need to develop new expressions of faith for current times, we also need to conserve our history and heritage. These are two sides of the same coin. Often, the concept of preservation is interpreted as meaning stagnation when, in fact, heritage and history can be the basis for innovation and advancement. Moreover, heritage and history are frequently essential sources of meaning that give the church character and resonance.

In a denomination as complex and diverse as Mennonite Church Canada, the histories of founding and newcomer church communities are layered and contested. What is the story of this local church? Why did they decide to join MC Canada? Some churches join while others leave, each adding and leaving an influence on the larger church. All of these groups bring a richness and uniqueness that combine in surprisingly beautiful ways. Articulating the stories of who we are collectively can significantly contribute to preserving, celebrating, challenging, and inventing our Mennonite Church identity in the years to come.

One church body that has articulated a comprehensive vision for culture, art, history and heritage is the Roman Catholic Church. A 1997 Pontifical Commission document called "The Pastoral Formation of Church Archives" explains the value of managing the vast heritage and cultural resources at the Vatican. For the Catholic Church, operating an archive is connected to announcing the gospel, the work of the church. To gather, protect, and exhibit

the memory of works in the service of the gospel creates a culture of Christian inspiration, something indispensable for evangelization. In addition to producing stories and material goods, the church is also interested in their pastoral use—how these works are used in carrying out the church's mission.

A Mennonite Church Canada archive's primary importance then lies in documenting the journey of Canadian Mennonites through the centuries in differing countries and communities. The Mennonite Heritage Centre tracks these webs of relationships to discover the places where faith is present and how it influences people, both in the past and present. But it does not end there.

For the church in 2016, saving history for history's sake cannot be an end in itself. Rather, as the Pontifical Commission argued, an archive must "systematically gather all data making up the articulated history of the church community so that what has been done, the results obtained, including omissions and errors, may be properly evaluated." For example, material on Indigenous relations has been carefully gathered for 60-plus years. Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, this treasure trove of materials can now be used to evaluate how Mennonites have engaged Aboriginals in Canada, rightfully or wrongly.

The church does not know the questions that will be asked in 60 years. By archiving the church's work and mission, we can verify our memories and evaluate our previous and ongoing relationships. Archives hold the church accountable for the actions the church has undertaken.

*To be continued in the next issue . . .*



## John C. Klassen creates Low German song resources, written and recorded

by Karla Braun, associate editor, MB Herald

After a full career teaching elementary and junior high, retiree John C. Klassen began working to leave another legacy. “Translating songs into Plautdietsch is an ideal retirement project for me,” says Klassen who has experience in orchestral performance, music arranging (*Ziffern* notation), and choir direction. “I have the combination of musical interest and familiarity with music theory, harmony, and counterpoint, plus practical experience with singing groups to do this job of providing Plautdietsch songs.”



John C. Klassen describes the genesis of his Low German hymn project in November 2015. Photo credit: Karla Braun.

Furthermore, “No one else had done much of this before.”

The Centre for MB studies recognized Klassen for his work at their annual volunteer appreciation dinner on November 19, 2015 (see “CMBS Update,” *Mennonite Historian* 41/4 [Dec 2015]: 7).

At the event, John spoke about the genesis, impact, and reception of his Low German hymn project, and even led the group in singing a few of the hymns.



Klassen’s second hymn collection, *Plautdietsch Ewanjellische Leeda* (2013).

Low German is a “kitchen language,” says Klassen, a language spoken domestically, without formal usage in education or trades, so though it is spoken by Mennonites in Germany (*Umsiedler*), South America, and increasingly in Canada (particularly in Ontario and Alberta), there are few resources available in the language. [Although in the 14th century, it was the language of diplomacy and commerce in the powerful Hanseatic League of Europe. Eds.]

“In the last decades, with the Plautdietsch Bible translation, a renewed interest [in Low German] has developed.” Klassen relied on *Die Bibel* and the work of Ed Zacharias and Herman Rempel for spelling in this pioneering written work.

Half a lifetime after he collaborated with others from Gospel Light Hour on 14 *Plautdietsche Leeda* in the 1960s for



Family Life Network, Klassen took up the project again to produce *Plautdietsch Ewanjellische Leeda*. Refamiliarizing himself with his long-dormant “mother tongue” on volunteer service in Paraguay, Klassen spent several years creating the hymnal of 250 songs (see image at left).

In addition to producing a book of hymns written in traditional four-part harmony (see sample at page bottom), Klassen has created a website (<http://www.plautleet.ca>) that contains audio recordings as well. A “medical accident” allows Klassen to record all four voices himself: afflicted by sleep apnea, the 1st tenor found the bottom of his range opening up so he can now sign the bass line too.

For Klassen and his partner in life and music, Bertha, the project is not only an intellectual challenge and a useful way to spend their retirement, but a meaningful one. Teaching gospel songs in the heart-language of people whose Bible knowledge often comes through a lesser-known second language, it’s “an evangelistic opportunity.”

It was Low German that allowed Klassen to speak with a long-lost cousin in Kazakhstan. “He cried because of the connection to his Canadian relative,” says Klassen. Klassen’s English got him nowhere with the cousin’s Russian and vice versa, but through the music, they discovered common ground and a message of hope.

## Groota Gott, wie lowe die

Weed: John C. Klassen, 2009

Musikj: P. Ritter, 1792

Melodie

1. Groo- ta Gott, wie lo- we die! Har we  
 2. Au- les waut die lo- we kaun, Cher- u-  
 3. Heil- ja Vo- da, Heil- ja Sän, Heil- ja

## Rudy Wiebe and the 1960s Mennonite Brethren: An archival study

by Paul Tiessen

During recent years, I have worked on the career of Mennonite novelist Rudy Wiebe (b. 1934) in three different archives. My encounters with the “voices” I have heard in these archives have been similar to my experience with other literary archives in Canada and beyond. Archives, quite simply, can be places of significant, even astonishing, discovery. Their holdings can affect, in surprising ways, entrenched presuppositions or overarching narratives that collectively we have long nurtured.

As I have noted elsewhere, novelist Aritha van Herk of the University of Calgary provides a pithy summary about the literary archive, which—though a distinctly “low-tech” operation—can be a very lively place, one that speaks beyond its cabinets and containers. Van Herk remarks that “most archives do not sit cosily in their acid-free boxes, glowing with a sepia nostalgia. They perform, declare, argue and shout; they speak a record of change and movement, discovery and revision.” Much depends, of course, on the researcher.

Van Herk, who—I might note parenthetically—was once one of Wiebe’s creative-writing students at the University of Alberta, warns us that an archive might very well refuse to endorse “the official reality, the broad strokes of a master narrative.”<sup>1</sup> Certainly my experiences with the “Wiebe” archives demonstrated van Herk’s suggestion: they refused to endorse what has become received “reality,” and pointed to new “truths” of their own.

The specific event I was investigating in the three archives—all located in Canada—was the reception among Mennonite Brethren, especially during 1962–1963, of Rudy Wiebe’s first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962). I paid attention not only to what was already well established: the fierce resistance the novel engendered. But I paid attention also—and this was something that I increasingly discovered the further I delved into the layers of manuscript materials—to the enormous support and applause that *Peace Shall Destroy Many* generated among Mennonite Brethren.

Today the novel is widely known,

among Mennonites and beyond, for the opposition to Wiebe it provoked—opposition to him both as novelist and as founding editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (January 1962 to June 1963). But to this day *Peace* is barely known for the sophisticated variations of *positive* response its appearance stimulated.

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MANY"**

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editor of the **M. B. Herald**

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Advertisement for *Peace Shall Destroy Many* that appeared on page 17 of the 30 November 1962 issue of the *MB Herald*. In the next issue of the magazine (7 December 1962), a second advertisement on page 11 states: “Publisher announces that the paper edition is out of print. Still available in cloth for \$4.95.” Source: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg.

Indeed, I increasingly came to feel that Wiebe’s novel, along with his work as editor of the *Herald*, had a palpable positive impact even on American Mennonite Brethren, including the philosopher Delbert Wiens, who was teaching at Tabor College, the Mennonite Brethren college in Hillsboro, Kansas, when the novel came out. In 1963, Wiens hosted a major lecture-event at Tabor that placed Wiebe front and centre before an important audience.

It was archival material that made me aware of Wiebe’s influence on Wiens’s dramatic emergence among Mennonite

Brethren in 1965 as author of the provocatively titled *New Wineskins for Old Wine: A Study of the Mennonite Brethren Church*. Wiens’s manifesto was widely read by Mennonite Brethren in the United States and, in 1966, in Canada.

It was with archival material housed at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg that, in 2012, I began my investigations. There, the large collection of papers of the Mennonite Brethren Board of Publications reveals a great deal about the tumult that Wiebe’s work was generating, for the Board was charged with overseeing the mandate of the *Herald*. One detail that came as a great surprise to me was that even among the members of the Board there was a wide and ever-shifting diversity of thinking on the question of what should be “done” about their *Sorgenkind* (problem child), specifically with respect to his prominent role as the openly progressive and increasingly controversial editor of the denomination’s national magazine.

Drawing on my own research at the Centre, and on earlier work there by Hildi Froese Tiessen (who kindly made her findings available to me), as well as on correspondence held in the Rudy Wiebe Archive at the University of Calgary, plus a wide range of interviews with key people who vividly recalled the complicated events of the 1960s, I published my findings, along with my conjectures and conclusions, in a long essay that appears in the January 2016 issue of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, with the title: “Re-framing the Reaction to *Peace Shall Destroy Many*: Rudy Wiebe, Delbert Wiens, and the Mennonite Brethren” (73–102).

Here is a hint of the scope of this archive-inspired essay: “this study explores some of the oppositional forces within the Mennonite Brethren denomination that came into play when *Peace Shall Destroy Many* appeared. It draws into focus Wiebe’s identity as editor of the *Herald* as well as skirmishes between church leaders and the increasingly prominent and cosmopolitan musicians in the church, skirmishes prefiguring the church’s battles with Wiebe. In short, the study addresses the long-simmering tensions between inward-looking pietistic expression and outward-looking intellectual engagement among Mennonite Brethren during the 1960s. In particular, it makes visible some of the



intellectual and artistic breakthroughs that occurred among Mennonite Brethren during that decade” (adapted from the abstract, 73).

Pursuing some of the implications of my archival work along the way, I developed other observations that came as surprises to me. For example, I increasingly came to sense that the dust jacket of Wiebe’s novel played a provocative role in raising the church’s ire toward Wiebe. Not only did the dust jacket generate negative reactions to the novel; it also threatened to reduce even sympathetic readers’ understanding of the nature of its achievement.

In my pursuit of the significance of the dust jacket, a third archive—the McClelland and Stewart Papers in the William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections at McMaster University in Hamilton—proved invaluable. The records of McClelland and Stewart, Wiebe’s 1962 publisher, suggest that within the publishing house there were strong differences of opinion about the novel and its commercial potential. These differences led to the provocative wording and perhaps even the look of the outside front and back covers of the first edition. The wording (effected by Jack McClelland himself) and the look (uniquely created for this book by designer Frank Newfeld) led, I conjecture, to opposition to Wiebe among even the most eminent of Mennonite Brethren leaders, including Reverend B.B. Janz.

A summary of my exploration of the impact and implications of the dust jacket appears in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* essay that I cite above. However, my considerations of the politics of the dust jacket appear in much more meticulous and extensive detail in my companion essay, “Double Identity: Covering the *Peace Shall Destroy Many* Project,” published in *After Identity: Mennonite Writing in North America*, ed. Robert Zacharias (University Park, PA and Winnipeg, MB: Penn State University Press and the University of Manitoba Press, 2015 and 2016), 70–85. In “Double Identity,” I suggest that we might even regard first publisher McClelland and Stewart as a fairly strong collaborator or co-creator with Wiebe in the presentation and performance of the 1962 edition of *Peace Shall Destroy Many*.

My two essays remind us, too, that archives also are collaborative presences.

Whether the Mennonite Brethren Archive in Winnipeg, or the archives at the universities in Calgary and Hamilton, they participate in the development of new interpretations of the Rudy Wiebe story. They give up secrets of hitherto unknown worlds—of the Board of Publications, for example, or of the McClelland and Stewart offices—of which we cannot possibly have been aware. Even Wiebe himself has not been privy to or cognizant of most of the conversations held within these cloistered realms.

The researcher, alone, as I observed above, develops the first line of new knowledge. And therein lies a warning, too, for the researcher must always overcome the temptations of a prejudiced or otherwise myopic or reductive reading of the manuscripts. Wiebe himself, in stories like “Where Is the Voice Coming From?” and “Bear Spirit in a Strange Land,” provides cautionary tales that warn researchers to proceed with humility and integrity when they listen to, and try to interpret, the voices that arise from an archive.<sup>2</sup>

We should note also that much depends on archivists, who are also collaborators in the researcher’s quest. My thanks to Jon Isaak and Conrad Stoesz at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies—and to the archivists at Calgary and McMaster—for contributing to my archival pilgrimage in search of Wiebe and the Mennonite Brethren world of the sixties. Thanks to Jon and Conrad, also, for encouraging me to summarize my experience with this brief report.

*Paul Tiessen is Professor Emeritus of English and Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario. Tiessen’s recent memoir of his mother appears in Sons and Mothers: Stories from Mennonite Men, ed. Mary Ann Loewen (University of Regina Press, 2015).*

## Endnotes

1. I am quoting from my essay, “‘I want my story told’: The Sheila Watson archive, the reader, and the search for voice,” in *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace: Explorations in Canadian Women’s Archives*, ed. Linda M. Morra and Jessica Schagerl (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 270, 277 n 9.

2. I am drawing again on the essay that I cite in note 1, this time from pages 264–265. Concerning Wiebe’s own attention to archives, and the role of “touch” in archives, see also page 276 note 3.

## *Mennonitische Rundschau* Index: New access to the *Facebook* of a century past

by Conrad Stoesz

The long-awaited volume 4 subject and author index to the internationally read *Mennonitische Rundschau* has been completed thanks to Bert Friesen, with financial support from the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation. The 1,394-page index provides simplified access to the German-language paper in the years 1910–1919. Friesen indexed the periodical with a fine-toothed comb so that researchers could find the proverbial “needle in a haystack.”

The index represents an intellectual organization of the vast and varied contents in the paper. Friesen believes that providing an index was urgent because increasingly fewer people in North America have the skills to read the German language, especially in the gothic script. This index is designed for the English reader, giving students, scholars, genealogists, community historians, novelists, film producers, etc. pointers to information they want, which makes working through the archaic font manageable.

If the index were taken apart and laid out, it would cover 820 square meters of space. In contrast the paper that Friesen read was published once a week and had 16 pages and covers 5,491 square meters. The index is now the key to accessing the contents in the paper.

During the 1910–1919 time frame, the *Mennonitische Rundschau* was published in Scottdale, Pennsylvania. The paper began publishing in 1878 and ended in Winnipeg in 2007, making it one of North America’s longest-running German-language papers. It was the *Facebook* of 100 years ago. It was a forum where average people would write about their family and community so that relations in the next province or continent could stay connected. As the Mennonite community spread from Russia to Canada and the US, the *Rundschau* kept family and friends connected.

The creation of this index has been six years in the making and accompanies volumes 1–3, 5, and 6. Friesen has been the workhorse behind the indexing project that saw its first volume published in

1990, covering the 1880–1889 decade. He is responsible for volumes 1–4. The index itself shows the vast range of topics people were writing about: farming, war, weddings, anniversaries, courtship, health, births, deaths, earthquakes, blizzards, missions, worship, airships, dreams, Eskimos, insects, and discipleship, to name a few.

210

Desire

Anon; 15 December, 1915;  
p.5.

Desire

*Erzählung. Untitled;*

Hölty, L. H. Chr., 23 October,  
1912; p.9.

Desire for God

*Meine Seele dürstet nach dem  
lebendigen Gott;*

Anon; 11 September, 1912;  
p.2.

Despair - Religious aspects -  
Christianity

*Unterhaltung. Verzagttheit;*

Anon; 16 November, 1910;  
p.2.

*Der Mann mit dem Maßstab;*

Anon; 4 March, 1914; p.18.

*Elend;*

Anon; 17 April, 1918; p.13.

Deutsch-Wymysle (Masovian  
Voivodeship, Poland) - History

*Deutsch Wymischle, Russisch  
Polen;*

Heier, H. u. A., 17 September,  
1919; p.6.

Devil

*Rußland. Satans Wissen*

The MR Index is set out in three columns per page. The above image is taken from page 210 and shows how the index is organized alphabetically by subject heading, followed by article title, author, publication date, and page number. Source: Centre for MB Studies.

For inquiries about *Mennonitische Rundschau* index volume 4, please contact the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Digital copies of the other five indices can be found on the Centre's web site: <http://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca>.

## Book Reviews

Ernest N. Braun and Glen R. Klassen, eds., *Historical Atlas of the East Reserve* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2015), 256 pp. \$50.00 Available from the MHC.

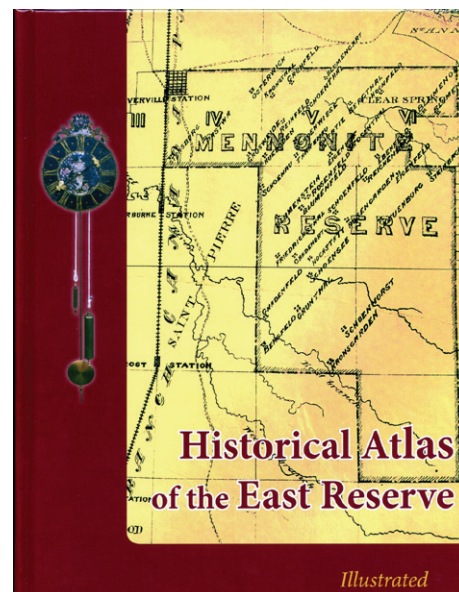
*Reviewed by Carl Tracie, Professor Emeritus of Geography at Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia*

Although titled *Historical Atlas of the East Reserve*, this handsome hardcover atlas is much more. The core of the 256-page atlas is the more than 140 clear and colourful maps and plats showing surveys, vegetation, homesteader and village locations and plans, roads and trails, schools, cemeteries, historical sites, migration routes, ethnic distribution, and other related matters. The maps are supplemented by airphoto mosaics, detailed charts of cemeteries, schools, and cairns with GPS locations, historical and biographical sketches, and by scores of high-quality photographs, old and new. The accompanying text is dense with historical and genealogical detail.

The atlas begins with an excellent foreword by geographer John H. Warkentin, who is steeped in his own research of the Manitoba Reserves. A preface by the editors acknowledges the significant prior work on which the atlas is based, including a special tribute to John Rempel (1920–1994) and William Harms (1921–1998). The rest of the atlas is divided into six parts, and an appendix. Parts I to V progress from small scale maps to large scale maps and diagrams; the appendix includes both.

Part I, “Background,” gives the general physical (glacial and geological) and historical (Indigenous peoples, fur trade, and treaties) context for the more detailed information to follow.

Part II, “The Survey and Beyond...,” focuses on the survey as the framework for settlement, on early settlement patterns and ethnic distribution, and on the beginning of the Mennonite settlement including maps showing the origins of the three major groups of Mennonites and of the other early ethnic groups. It also includes a detailed focus on the Clear Springs Settlement that preceded the Mennonites in the area that would become the East Reserve. A reference to additional material on the Clear Springs Settlement on pages 123–133 would be useful here.



Part III, “Village Placement Maps,” narrows the focus to the Mennonite villages in the East Reserve itself. A sequence of fourteen maps, from James Hamilton’s 1876 map to the EastMenn map of 2014, the product of the rigorous research and fieldwork of the editors, shows the variation in what was known about village locations throughout this time span.

Part IV, “Township Profiles,” continues to narrow the focus by examining each of the seven townships in detail. Each is depicted by a sequence of five maps: homesteaders and villages; survey plat (showing vegetation at the time of survey); airphoto mosaic; village lands (including roads and trails); and historic sites (including cemeteries, cairns, schools, and churches). A very helpful feature is that each map is a similar size, allowing the reader to see easily where a village would be found on each of the maps. Photos and charts illustrate and amplify information about significant features, while the detailed text comments on people and process. This is clearly the heart of the atlas.

Part V, “The Scratching River Settlement,” is included because of its strong links to the Kleine Gemeinde groups in the East Reserve, and it is covered in similar detail. A location map showing the relation of this settlement to the larger East Reserve, as is done for each of the individual townships within the East Reserve, would be helpful here.

Part VI focuses on the movement of East Reserve settlers. Maps and text detail the expansion of East Reserve settlement to areas bordering the Reserve, and the



migration of East Reserve settlers to areas further west (the West Reserve, Saskatchewan, and Alberta), to the United States, and to the Paraguayan Chaco.

The appendix, "Political Boundaries," shows changes in provincial and municipal boundaries and in provincial and federal ridings, including lists of reeves, mayors, MLAs and MPs from 1870 to the present.

It is perhaps churlish to make suggestions for improvement to such a satisfying work. I appreciate the scholarly desire to document sources carefully while maintaining a clean page format, but I found the practice of citing sources within the text distracting and repetitious. Endnotes may be annoying, but they would preserve the clean format while reducing the repetition of full citations. Bringing together information treated in separate sections—the ethnic distribution material (p. 55 and p. 206), the material on the survey and open-field system (p. 84 and Part II), and village information in both the treatment of villages and village lands in Part IV—would reduce overlap.

These are minor issues and do not detract from the excellence of this important work. It combines a labour of love with meticulous scholarship and aesthetic excellence. Maps are clear, colourful, and informative. Charts give locations of significant features with GPS precision. Photos are carefully chosen and are inserted into the text with pleasing variety and placement. Original government documents and other manuscript materials are carefully photographed and clearly presented. This atlas sets a high standard for future regional atlases and will be valued by scholars and general readers alike.

Harvey L. Dyck and John R. Staples, eds, *Transformation on the Southern Ukrainian Steppe: Letters and Papers of Johann Cornies*, Vol.1, 1812–1835, translated by Ingrid I. Epp (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 576 pp.

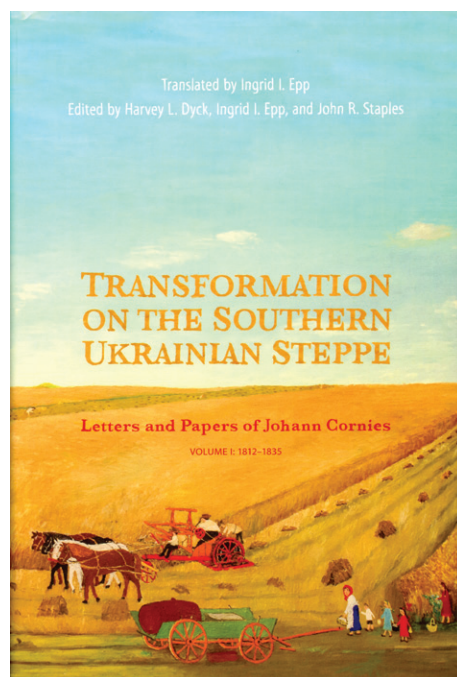
*Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein*

The more liberal policies of Mikhail Gorbachev and fall of the Soviet government in 1990–1991 dramatically changed the political, social, and economic situation in what became known as the former Soviet Union. Among other things, it offered much freer access to archival centers throughout the area.

Several Mennonite scholars—notably George K. Epp, Harvey L. Dyck, Paul Toews, and Peter Letkemann—undertook significant searches for Mennonite documents in the collections of such centers in Odessa, Ukraine, St. Petersburg, Russia, and finally Zaporozhe, Ukraine. With the permission of local archivists and the aid of other assistants, these scholars were able to locate tens of thousands of documents and have them microfilmed, making them available to the major Mennonite archival centers in Canada and the USA.

David G. Rempel and this reviewer, as well as others, began this archival research movement some decades earlier with materials found in the Leningrad archives and surprisingly, in the University of Birmingham archives in the United Kingdom. Walter Sawatsky, Andrei Savin, and other scholars continue to collect Mennonite documents from this period.

Understandably, many if not most of the documents were written in Russian, but among them were also numerous items written in German and occasionally in English and French. The great majority of papers required translation in order to become researchable, and thus ultimately publishable, increasing accessibility to them in North America and in other English-speaking regions of the world.



The most ambitious volume of translation and publication of such items is the title being reviewed. Epp and Dyck stand at the forefront of making possible

this particular transfer of primary source materials to North America and beyond. The inclusion of documents from the voluminous personal correspondence collection of Johann Cornies (1789–1848) of Jushanlee in the Molotschna settlement of New (south) Russia, later Ukraine, is a coup of a very special kind.

This is, generally speaking, a volume of high quality and very considerable breadth, given the time period covered by the material. However, it is not without its glitches and certain stylistic shortcomings. Space is too limited to include these corrections here.

Readers will appreciate an extensive and footnoted contextual introduction provided by the editors, and credited to co-editor John Staples. The translation is clear and well-edited. Assessing the accuracy of translation would require checking the originals, something which would be a special exercise and not possible here. Consistent dating and references to writer and recipient of each letter/paper are as complete as possible. It is already a heavy volume, but still some readers will be wishing for more footnotes on thematic matters, places, and people.

There is nevertheless much new material to discover. For example, Cornies' work with the Nogais, Molokan, Doukhor, and other neighbouring peoples is something Mennonite studies have not done much with in the past, but now a new opportunity presents itself. As in many of the "uninhabited" regions to which Mennonites migrated, this region too was not as unpopulated as is often assumed. This is useful to remember.

The many little and larger windows on the "piety" of Cornies is also quite possibly something new for many readers who have been given a picture of a hard-driving overseer and almost secular person. Scholars may find some things here that warrant a reassessment of that perception.

The editors have arranged Cornies' letters in "packages" of years, the first nine assembled for the period 1812–1823, the next eight years as a packet for 1824–1832, then several hundred more divided over the years until the collection reaches the final ones translated, as #527–535 for 1836.

A look at the first packet is interesting. The first document is a letter from Inspector Sieter to Johann Cornies (referred to as JC from here on), the second one is from the Molotschna District Office, the third is

an agreement document between Johann Cornies and Molochnaia individuals, the fourth is an authorization for Johann Cornies by village majors (Schulzen). The fifth one is from Johann Cornies, to Ivan N. Inzov, addressed to “his Excellency Lord Head Curator and President of the Guardianship Committee for Colonists in Southern Russia, Lieutenant General Inzov....” All letters to officials of this rank begin with a quite formal style of address and are written in very respectful and restrained language. The sixth letter translated is from Andrei M. Fadeev, as is the seventh one, the eighth is from one Werner (no further identification), and the ninth from Samuel Contenius (an inquiry about the identity of two Quaker visitors, William Allen and Stephen Grellet, who visited Russia in 1819).

The correspondence connects Cornies with dozens and dozens of individuals and groups, on topics of almost any description—book sales, counselling regarding personal problems, sheep buying, tree planting, internal school affairs, and more. Also included are half a dozen special reports on religious groups, local problems, and agricultural matters. The scope of Johann Cornies’ involvements is impressive.

With two more volumes projected for this series, this material now offers inestimably important information on relationships, personal connections, areas of development, and generally the web of interchange that characterized Cornies’ life. The material also documents the life of the Russian Mennonite settlements over which he presided, charting the progress and growth of the whole community literally in all aspects of their assembled life.

The three-volume series, if and when completed, will offer one of the most revealing source collections of data on this theme made available to our generation.

Katie Funk Wiebe, *My Emigrant Father: Jacob J. Funk, 1896–1986*, (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2015), 301 pp.

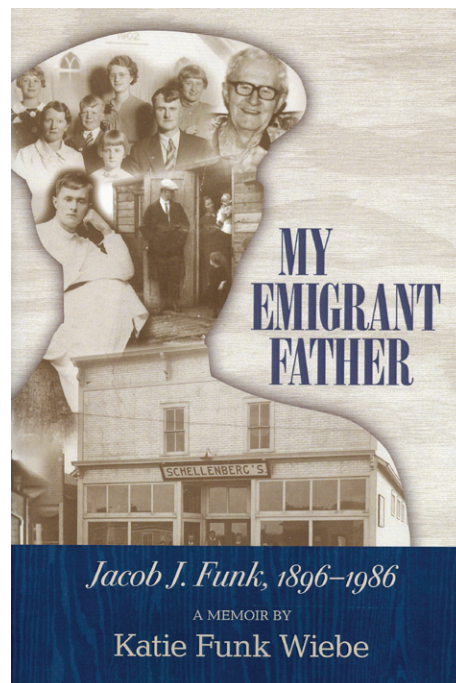
*Reviewed by Elfrieda Neufeld Schroeder*

Wiebe begins her father’s story by recounting Mennonite history, tracing a slice of Mennonite migration from Holland to Poland/Prussia, and later to Southern Russia. After introducing her topic, Wiebe (often somewhat

sarcastically) deals with the many factions that have plagued Mennonites throughout their history, beginning with their national identity.

“What are we, Dad?” she asks her father. “Are we Dutch, German, or Russian?” At some point in their history all three of these identities have been claimed by Mennonites, depending on which way the political wind was blowing at the time. Her father always claimed to be Dutch, even though they spoke German at home, never Dutch. Wiebe then takes the reader on a journey of how the Dutch language was eventually replaced by Low German in the daily life of the Mennonites in Poland/Prussia, with High German used in the more formal settings of school and church.

The division between Flemish and Frisian Mennonites, she writes, had already begun in the Netherlands. This split included mode of baptism, choice of clothing, and style of housing and furniture. Church conflict played a large role in the life of Wiebe’s father and caused him a lot of grief.



In chapters five through twelve, Wiebe describes the setting in Russia during her father’s time. I found chapter five, “Life in Rosenthal, Valley of the Roses,” particularly fascinating because my maternal ancestors, the Kroegers, owned a clock factory in Rosenthal. Wiebe’s father’s family owned and operated a flour mill there. Most likely some of my Kroeger

relatives and Wiebe’s Funk relatives went to school together!

Wiebe writes of events leading up to World War I that caused terror, bloodshed, disease, and starvation. It was at this time that the American Mennonite Relief Administration (AMRA), forerunner of the Mennonite Central Committee, was organized to provide food and clothing for those on the edge of starvation. Wiebe’s parents, Jake and Anna Funk, were chosen to serve in the relief kitchen because of Anna’s experience of cooking at Bethania, a Mennonite institution for the mentally handicapped. My own mother often told me that if it had not been for that daily bun and cup of cocoa, she and her brother would have starved to death.

The second half of Wiebe’s book focuses on her family’s life in Canada, particularly that of her father, who found work in a grocery store. As a young boy in Russia, he quit school early due to the fact that he was left-handed and mercilessly tormented by both teachers and students. As a result, he was hired to work in a grocery store at a young age. He loved this work and eventually purchased his own store in Canada.

Wiebe’s perspective in her latest memoir, *My Emigrant Father*, is that of a teacher/historian and omniscient narrator. Her tone is quite different from that of the chatty, informal, and easily readable style in her own memoir, *The Storekeeper’s Daughter* (1997). However, I find it quite ironic, and also humorous, that in a memoir about her father, who never cooked a meal in his life, Wiebe intersperses her story with a Mennonite recipe at the end of each chapter. It made me smile every time I saw a recipe that was quite appropriate for the next chapter. For example, *Wotasupp* [water soup] precedes the chapter on famine in Russia.

In spite of the rich and full life Jake Funk had, the horrific experiences of his youth came back to haunt him in his old age and he became severely depressed. I respect Wiebe for also sharing this aspect of her father’s life with her readers.

Wiebe’s book is informative, educational, entertaining, and authentic, and I am grateful she has inherited her parents’ genes for longevity so that she could give the gift of her family’s story to her fellow Mennonites. It occupies a place of honour on my Mennonite book shelf.