

Mennonite Historian



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Photo: Werner Ens, Reinland, Man.

This is an aerial photo of the present village of Gnadenthal in southern Manitoba. The site of its centennial celebrations appears in the middle. Ruth Bock is one of the writers working on a Gnadenthal history to be published during the next year or so.

A Mennonite Village Wedding in Manitoba

by Ruth Bock

A wedding in the village! This was always an event which everyone, young and old, looked forward to. It was the gala affair which everyone participated in, and enjoyed.

The wedding rites began with the announcement of the engagement two weeks before the wedding service. The engagement was announced in the Sunday morning worship service. It was the one occasion when it was acceptable for a male and female (the engaged couple) to sit together in church — on the men's side.

The afternoon of the announcement relatives of both the bride and groom would come together at the home of the bride for an engagement celebration. Most of the afternoon was spent visiting, men in the living room, women in the kitchen, children outside or in the barn, and the engaged couple... nobody knew. Part of the afternoon was devoted to a semi-formal religious service in honor of the bridal couple. Hymns were sung and a father (or a minister if there

happened to be one among the relatives) would direct some sound pre-wedding advice to the young couple — combined with Scripture and prayer. The event was, of course, topped off by a traditional Mennonite *Fahspa* consisting of *Zwieback*, homemade butter and jam, sugar cubes and fruit tarts, served with freshly brewed coffee and real cream from the cows.

The extended family played an important role in the lives of a young engaged couple. The time between the engagement and the wedding was spent visiting relatives — grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. It was a good way to keep the bridal couple occupied while plans for the wedding went ahead.

The bride's parents usually took the initiative in preparing for the wedding. Preparations were simple, and uncomplicated by elaborate plans. Each wedding was more or less the same and little effort was made to outdo previous weddings in grandeur or style. Everyone knew what to

expect and what was expected of him — often without being asked. Nevertheless, weddings were anticipated with great joy for it was a time of active socialization for villagers who ordinarily led fairly uneventful lives.

Wedding invitations, always a headache for hosting parents nowadays, were dispensed in a very simple manner. The parents of the bride would have a member of the family carry a written invitation to the neighbor next door. This neighbor would, in turn, give the invitation to his neighbor, and so on till it had made the rounds of the village. Everyone was invited and everyone came.

On the Friday before the wedding (weddings were usually held on Sundays) mothers would send their little daughters to the home of the bride with a pound of fresh butter. This was to be mixed into the bun dough the next morning.

On Saturday morning the work for the women would begin. Each housewife would take her large dough mixing bowl and walk to the bride's home to join all the other village ladies in mixing and kneading the *Zwieback* dough. After the dough had been prepared she would take a portion home with her to let it rise. Later in the day the dough would be formed into hundreds of piggy-back buns and baked in wood-burning ovens till golden brown. They would then be delivered back to the home of the bride where they would be dumped onto an already mammoth pile of *Zwieback*.

These wedding *Zwieback* were extra good because of all the butter used to make them. Young and old anticipated savoring them the next day.

The evening before the wedding was known as *Poltaovent*. This was an evening where skits, poems, songs, usually on the lighter side, were performed for the benefit of the couple. Presents were also brought which the bride and groom unwrapped. These usually consisted of small household items like towels, spatulas, mixing bowls, etc. Sometimes the groom was remembered with a hammer or chisel. Occasionally from underneath innocent looking wrappings would appear a baby bottle. This would induce gales of laughter and merriment among the crowd but also a sheepish grin on the groom's face and a gentle blush on the bride's. (*to be continued*)

... The Peter Epp Family by Gilbert Epp

Conclusion

Upon arrival at the homestead, attention was first turned to building a log house for a roof over their heads, and to breaking the sod. During this time, the family lived with the John Andres on their farm at Eigenheim. That first summer five acres of oats and some potatoes were planted. No doubt making a living those first years was difficult for the family was large, grain had to be hauled by oxen to market at Rosthern, a distance of about 15 miles, and equipment was poor. However, apparently things went fairly well for very soon Grandfather took a pre-emption on the south-east quarter of Section 9 at \$3.00 per acre, and obtained title to the land on March 6, 1899.

It is a credit to our forefathers that even in those early pioneer days the education of their children was not neglected. School was held in various homes during the first year. Son Henry, who had acquired some schooling in Russia, was the first teacher and conducted classes in his father's home. The second teacher was Peter Classen who taught in his home. For textbooks, the teachers read German-language papers such as *Herold der Wahrheit*, printed in Elkhart, Indiana, *Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Der Nordwesten*.

Late in 1894 a petition was signed by farmers of the area requesting formation of a certain tract of land into a school district. Names on the petition no doubt included most or all of the following farmers then resident in the area: David Epp, Heinrich Epp Sr., Heinrich H. Friesen, Johann J. Neufeld, Heinrich Epp Jr., Peter Epp, Heinrich Warkentin, Gerhard Hoepfner, Abraham Dyck, Peter A. Dyck, Franz Klassen, Johann Fast, Jacob Neufeld, David Friesen, Johann P. Epp, David Berg, Peter Classen, Dietrich Neufeld and Heinrich D. Friesen. The petition received approval from the Council of Public Instruction, as the Department of Education was then known, in a letter dated February 20, 1895.

On July 26, 1897, the Waldheim School District (Public) No. 454 of the North West Territories officially came into being with Peter Classen, Abraham Dyck and Johann P. Epp the first members of the school board. One or more of the Epps has been on the school board continuously since that time until a few years ago. Among the minutes of the meetings held during the first years, Grandfather's name appears frequently as a mover or seconder of resolutions in

connection with the establishment of the school.

Upcoming Family Books

A new genealogical work will soon be published by Esther Patkau, 2206 Wiggins Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7J 1W7, featuring the Franz Paetkau branch of Peter Jacob Paetkau born in 1792 (brother of Johann Jacob Paetkau) and also containing appendix regarding Jacob Jacob and Johann Jacob Paetkau and other branches of Peter Jacob Paetkau.

A study on the genealogy of Johann Klippenstein, going back to 1783, will be available on November 15. The paperback volume of about 100 pages, with photos, can be ordered for \$12.00 from Ted Friesen, Box 720, Altona, Manitoba, R0G 0B0.

Also in print soon will be **The Ens Family. The Descendants of Gerhard Ens and Margaretha Rempel**, edited by Gerhard J. Ens and Heidi M. Harms. The book has 60 pages, is illustrated, and can be ordered for \$4.50 from Gerhard Ens, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4.



Photo: James Friesen

Rempel Toys

We have a rubber toy bearing the trade mark "REMPEL - Made in Canada". We would appreciate hearing from anyone who can tell us who Rempel was and any details about his toy manufacturing. Write to David Luthy, Amish Historical Library, Route 4, Aylmer, Ontario, N5H 2R3.

Research Requests

We are interested in obtaining information about our ancestors:

a) Peter Ratzlaff and Anna Lohrenz, the parents of Peter P. Ratzlaff born August 22, 1863 in Friedensdorf, Russia. Other children in the family were: Heinrich, Wilhelm, Lena, Anna, Johann, and ?. Heinrich and Johann were both teachers in Russia. Anna married Peter Lange, and Lena married Johann Wanov.

b) Jakob Krahn (an auctioneer) and his wife?, the parents of Katherine Krahn born October 31, 1863, who lived in Fürstenland and married Rev. Johann J. Enns born September 1, 1860 in Chortitz, who also lived in Fürstenland (Alexandertahl, and then Olafeld). Other daughters of Jakob Krahn were: Mary, Anna, Edith, Sarah, and ?; sons were: Cornelius, Jakob, and Isaac. It is most likely that the father of Jakob Krahn was Cornelius.

If you can supply information about these ancestors and relatives, please write to **Hank and Agatha Ratzlaff, 13718 Glen Place, Surrey, B.C. V3V 6L5.**

I am working on a family tree for both sides of my family. As I have very little information, I am asking for help in finding out more about John Klassen born 1888 (?) in Reinfeld, Sagradowka, Agatha Warkentin 1897 (?), Blumstein, Sagradowka, as well as Nicolai Kroeker, 1893, and Maria Pauls 1901, both of Neuendorf, Old Colony. Please write to: **Mary Klassen, Box 210, Vineland, Ontario, Canada, L0R 2C0.**

German Canadian Yearbook

Number Five of this yearbook again informs us about various groups and pioneers of German descent in Canada, including articles on well-known Mennonite leaders. It has a wide selection of articles in English, German, and French. Volumes 1-5 are still available for \$16.00 each, and can be ordered from: **Historical Society of Mecklenburg Upper Canada, Inc., P.O. Box 193, Station "K", Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4P 2G5. Professor D. Roger, Winnipeg, Man.**

The Mennonite Heritage Centre needs a copy of P. M. Friesen's *Die Altevangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland*. Who can help?

Mennonite Celebrations in 1980

by Peter Paetkau

The decade of the seventies brought many festivities and celebrations for the Mennonites in North America. Anniversaries of every kind have provided sufficient reason for getting together at any season. Celebrations taking place in southern Manitoba during 1980 give every indication that we will continue to cultivate this new feature of our lifestyle even after all the village centennials have become history. At any rate, we are enjoying our different and simpler festivities as much as other Canadians enjoy the municipal fair.

During the past year two major village centennials as well as several church-related anniversaries took place in Manitoba. The first, held on June 15, was a splendid affair organized by the Klassen family of Homewood to honour their parents, Rev. David D. and Susan Klassen for their fifty year long ministry in the Mennonite Church (1930-1980). Several persons from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, including H. J. Gerbrandt, David Schroeder, both from Winnipeg, and Frank H. Epp from Waterloo, were invited to speak at this occasion. Many other guests shared the event as well.

During the first weekend in July the village of Hochfeld, south of Winkler, celebrated its somewhat-belated centennial also. It was a fine festival with a large attendance to witness proceedings despite 100°F in the shade. At this festival there was a great deal of reminiscing, including a fifty minute talk by a long-time former teacher Harry Tonik, who taught there from 1928 to 1939. The Sunday worship service included messages from ministers of several denominations represented in the community, among them, Rev. Herman Voth of Morden, who for a number of years had a worship centre here and carried on missionary activity for the Mennonite Brethren in the vicinity.

On the following weekend the village of Gnadenthal celebrated its centennial. A lengthy Saturday evening variety program was highlighted by a number of interesting features. A "History of Gnadenthal", presented by Ruth Bock was surely the finest historical report that has been heard at any centennial in southern Manitoba. A second feature brought words from former teachers, including J. Armin Sawatzky (1934-1938), Irma Pauls, speaking on behalf of her father, Paul J. Schaefer (1928-1943), and Henry G. Ens (1954-1958). Finally, a one-hour dramatization of "One Hundred Years of Gnadenthal", mainly in the Low German language, was presented as a special tribute to the work of Paul J. Schaefer, who was not only a teacher, but deeply involved in the life of the community as a whole.

The quality of the Gnadenthal programs was such that it would rank as one of the



Photo: Centre for MB Studies

Left to right are Carolyn Hamm, Hilda Dyck and Charlotte Rempel, working on the Rundschau index this past summer. The MB archives has almost a complete set of the paper from 1900 to the present, and the Mennonite Heritage Centre has it from 1924 on. Earlier issues can be found in the Mennonite libraries at Goshen College and Bethel College in the U.S.A. Plans to microfilm part or all of it are also underway.

finest celebrations ever held in the Mennonite villages of Manitoba. A notable dimension of the activity here was certainly the music, constituting possibly a quarter of the entire program. It was of the very best quality heard anywhere in the Mennonite community. Two groups of particular interest were the male quartet founded in 1935 — with members of the Kuhl and Redekopp families, and "Himmelschluessel", founded as a young girls' choir in 1945 by Susie Peters Harms, who now directed it at its renewal with the same people, now adults, and many with their own daughters of the same age as when the choir began originally.

One instrumental number might not have been heard had J. Armin Sawatzky not found a violin in Gnadenthal. With it he accompanied his sister Elsa in the Mennonite "national hymn", *Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe*.

Along with the *Festansprache* by Rev. A. A. Teichroeb during the Sunday worship, a choir directed by Professor Jake Redekopp, sang some of the old hymns. They included *Der Friedensfuerser* by special request. Two fine ladies' trios added much beauty to the service.

The Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church, an early congregation in the Bergthaler circuit, also had a weekend celebration to mark its 75th anniversary. It too was a fine celebration allowing for much visiting and reminiscing. An anniversary church history and directory was introduced during the Saturday night program. Rev. George Groening, ordained in Lowe Farm together with Ernest Wiebe in 1948, was the guest speaker during the Sunday worship service. The Sunday afternoon program was highlighted by songs from the specially constituted mass choir and historical sketch by Rev. Henry J. Gerbrandt, along with greetings from former ministers who have served in Lowe Farm in the past.

The Rundschau Index

This summer the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada received a grant from the Canadian government under the Summer Student Employment Program. This grant was placed under the Ethnic Museums of Manitoba Project supervised by Luba Krywyj and enabled the archives to hire three students, Hilda Dyck (Grunthal), Carolyn Hamm (Winnipeg), and Charlotte Rempel (Winnipeg), for a period of fifteen weeks. These students were involved in producing a subject index of *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* under the direction of Herb Giesbrecht, Head Archivist and Ken Reddig, Associate Archivist.

The project is bigger than it seemed at first. During the past summer seven and a half years (1920-1927) have been completed. It is hoped that more can be done soon.

Mennonite Studies

On October 24-25, 1980 Professor John B. Toews of the University of Calgary will present three guest lectures on "Non-resistance and the Russian Mennonites" at the University of Winnipeg. On Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. Toews will deal with "The Russian Mennonite Concept of Non-resistance" and on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. he will speak on "Russian Mennonites and World War I" and "Russian Mennonites and Anarchy - The *Selbstschutz* Experience". The public is cordially invited to attend all lectures.

These lectures are part of a series of papers and seminars conducted in each academic term by the Chair in Mennonite studies. Dr. Harry Loewen is professor of Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg.

MMHS Board Meeting Minutes

Just over half a year ago the new Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society came into being. A thirteen-member board was elected, and committees began to carry out the program of the fledgling organization. On September 18, 1980, the full Board held its second meeting, at the MCC (Canada) office in Winnipeg, to assess its activities to date, and lay further plans for the year ahead.

The nine members present heard the first reports of committee chairmen, and then the treasurer of Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. The Research and Publication committee, said Chairman Vic Doerksen, will try to encourage research and publication, primarily, but not only, by and about Manitoba Mennonites. It expects to support a broad range of endeavors, both from professional and lay researchers, with excellence as its goal.

It may be that the proposal to publish an English translation of Gerhard Wiebe's *Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Amerika* (1900), will create a focus for an upcoming seminar proposed for next winter. Helen Janzen of Winnipeg is the translator of the manuscript now in the hands of the committee.

The Board approved membership of this committee to include also: Ted Friesen (Altona), Elizabeth Peters (Winnipeg), Leo Driedger (Winnipeg), Abe Dueck (Winnipeg), Harry Loewen (Winnipeg) and Peter Peters (Winnipeg).

An Arts and Inter-Disciplinary Committee, headed by Al Reimer, (Winnipeg), and including Doreen Klassen (Winnipeg) and Bill Schroeder (Winnipeg) will assist existing programs, and institute new ones where deemed helpful, in the arts and other cultural areas of Mennonite concerns. Perhaps it can aid in bringing Mennonite activities in the arts and related disciplines into better dialogue and creative enrichment in sharing cultural and artistic experiences. The committee has observed with interest the work already being done through family reunions and community celebrations, by the *Mennonitischer Sprachverein*, The Mennonite Art and Music Festival, the Landmark Low German Drama Society, the Mennonite pavilion planners, and also a number of individual artists throughout the province.

Some new areas of involvement suggestions came from the Artifacts and Historical Sites Committee, led by Herman Rempel (Morden). It has been discussing the erection of a major Mennonite cenotaph, perhaps on the legislative grounds, and the location, as well as restoration of cemeteries in Mennonite communities. The Board gave approval to the further proposal of preparing a guide to historical sites in Manitoba Men-

nonite areas, for use by schools, tourists, and others. Also in this committee are Gerhard Lohrenz (Winnipeg), and Peter Goertzen (Winnipeg).

With a few last-minute additions membership in the Society rose to ninety-nine the night of the Board meeting (several have joined since!). Lawrence Klippenstein, chairman of the Publicity and Membership Committee reported on various forms of solicitation and sharing of information already utilized, and others planned for the remainder of the year. Frank Zacharias (Gretna) and Abe Warkentin (Steinbach) are also in the committee.

The Board agreed to continue use of the *Mennonite Historian* as a major news channel of the Society, and to send all members copies of the periodical, if they were not already subscribing. Members will also be receiving the total membership list shortly.

A membership meeting, joined to a Mennonite studies seminar, is being scheduled for February, 1981. Peter Zacharias, the Board treasurer, reported that the Society assets (mostly unsold books and literature) total about \$1,500.00, and the treasury holds just over \$1,300.00. Since publishing and other projects may require funding, it was suggested that further discussion be given soon to fund-raising in the Society.

Other items remaining on the agenda now are the questions of incorporation, relationship to the Canadian Mennonite Historical Society, and the organization of new committees in such fields as inter-Mennonite unity, Mennonite genealogy, etc. The executive will give some attention to possible constitutional amendments, and report proposals at the next meeting of the Board.

Members and friends of the Society are invited to send questions, suggestions for projects, etc., and inquiries about more personal involvement in the program and committees, to the secretary, Ken Reddig, at 77 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 1L1. Comments are welcome and all support will be appreciated.

Lawrence Klippenstein

Another Pavilion?

The Mennonite Pavilion at Winnipeg's Folklorama Festival this past August has raised considerable discussion about the appropriateness and validity of such an enterprise. Significant comments have appeared in the August 29 issue of *MB Herald*, the September issue of *Mennonite Mirror*, and the newsletter of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. How do you feel about it?



One of the areas of interest in the Mennonite Historical Society relates to locating and restoring old cemeteries. This marker was found several years ago on a small cemetery in the Edenburg district east of Gretna.

Join the new

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

Get Involved In:

Research
Photography
Family Studies
Newsletter
Publication
The Arts
Seminars

Fees (annual):

Regular \$10.00
Student \$ 5.00

Write to:

MMHS
c/o Ken Reddig
77 Henderson Hwy.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2L 1L1

This page was contributed by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

Recent Publications

Brazil

*Pauls, Peter Jr., ed., **Witmarsum in Parana**. Eine geschichtliche Darstellung der Siedlung Witmarsum vom Krauel, Abwanderung nach Parana und die Entwicklung von Neu-Witmarsum mit Einzelberichten ueber persoenele Erlebnisse. Witmarsum, Brazil, 1976. Pb., 116 pp.

*Pauls, Peter Jr., ed., **Urwaldpioniere**. Persoenliche Erlebnisse Mennonitischer Siedler aus den Ersten Jahren am Krauel und von Stolzplateau, S. C. Witmarsum, Brazil, 1980. Pb., 81 pp.

Canada

Barkman, Betty, **Four Buds in His Bouquet**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980. Pb., 135 pp., \$5.00. The story of a family which was severely tested when four of their children succumbed to a rare heart disease.

Dueck, Peter G., Benno Schroeder, and J. L. Braun, eds., **75th Anniversary, Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church 1905-1980**. Lowe Farm, Manitoba, 1980. Hardcover, 48 pp., \$8.00.

Ens, Anna Epp, ed., **The House of Heinrich. The Story of Heinrich Epp (1811-1863), Rosenort, Molotschna and his Descendants**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980. Hardcover, 333 pp., \$18.00. Order from John J. Epp, 612 Oakland Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, or phone 339-3302.

Flint, Joanne. **The Mennonite Canadians**. Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, 1980. Pb., 72 pp., \$5.50.

Friesen, William and John L. Braun, eds., **Lowe Farm 75 Anniversary**. Lowe Farm, Manitoba., 1976. Pb., 64 pp., \$4.00. Order from Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce, Box 265, Lowe Farm, Manitoba., R0G 1E0.

Horst, Isaac. R. **Up the Conestogo**. Mount Forest, Ont.: the author, 1979. Hardcover, 462 pp., \$10.00.

..... **Separate and Peculiar**. Mount Forest, Ont.: the author, 1979. Pb., 76 pp., \$2.50.

Hunsberger, Albert I. **Nineteen Nineteen**. Kitchener: Arnsworth Press, 1979. Pb., 244 pp., \$3.75. About village life in Bridgeport, Ontario, during the year 1919.

Martin, Virgil Emerson. **The early history of Jakobstettel**. St. Jacobs: the author, 1979. Pb., 102 pp., \$12.75.

Redekopp, Calvin, ed. **The Marketplace**. Waterloo: Conrad Grebel College. New version of monthly newsletter for MIBA/MED A. Began in March, 1980.

Teigrob, David. **What Mean These Stones? Mennonite Brethren Church, Port Rowan, 1927-1977**. Port Rowan: The congregation, 1979. Pb., 90 pp.

Tiessen, Paul, ed. **Berlin, Canada. A Self Portrait of Kitchener, Ontario before WWI**. St. Jacobs: Sand Hill Books, 1979. Hardcover, 328 pp., \$29.95. Expanded reprint of a 1912 edition: **Berlin; Celebration of Cityhood**.

Waltner-Toews, David. **The Earth is One Body**. Winnipeg, Turnstone Press, 1979. Pb., 51 pp., \$5.00. A book of poetry. Cf. **Mennonite Reporter**, May 12, 1980, p. 9 for a review.

Paraguay

*Harder, Jacob and Hans Duerksen. **Fernheim 1930-1980**. Bildbericht ueber das Leben einer Siedlung im Chaco. Kolonie Fernheim, Paraguay, 1980. Pb., 136 pp., \$30.00.

*Wiens, Peter, ed., **50 Jahre Kolonie Fernheim**. Ein Beitrag in der Entwicklung Paraguay. Kolonie Fernheim, Paraguay, 1980. Pb., 320 pp., Illustrated with maps and charts.

*Order from: **Christian Book Store, 266 Hawthorne, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, Ph. 334-2128**.

United States

Dyck, Cornelius J., ed., **The Mennonite Central Committee Story**. Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980. Pb., \$4.60.

Vol. I — **From the Files of MCC**, 150 pp.

Vol. II — **Responding to Worldwide Needs**, 155 pp.

Vol. III — **Witness and Service in North America**, 122 pp.

Good, Merle and Phyllis, **20 Most Asked Questions About the Amish and Mennonites**, Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 1979. Pb., 85 pp., \$2.95 U.S.

Kaufmann, Gordon D., **Nonresistance and Responsibility and Other Mennonite Essays**. Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1979. Pb., 144 pp.

Kauffman, Joel, **The Weight**. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1980. Hardcover, 152 pp., \$5.95 U.S. A novel about the question of draft registration set in the period of the Vietnam War.

MacMaster, Richard K., ed., with Samuel Horst and Robert F. Ule, **Conscience in Crisis. Mennonites and Other Peace Churches in America, 1739-1789. Interpretation and Documents**. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1979. Hardcover, 576 pp., \$17.95.

Martens, Wilfred. **River of Glass**. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980. Pb., 232 pp., \$6.95 U.S.

Nyce, Dorothy Yoder, ed. **Which Way Women?** Akron, Pa.: MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women, 1980. Pb., 150 pp., \$3.00 U.S.

Peachey, Urbane, ed., **Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns 1900-1978**. Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, PA., 1980. Hardcover, 282 pp., \$20.00.

Pellman, Hubert R. **Mennonite Broadcasts; The First 25 Years**. Harrisonburg, Va.: Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc., 1979. Pb., 289 pp.

Ruth, John. **A Quiet and Peaceable Life**. Intercourse Pa.: Good Books, 1979. Pb., 61 pp., \$2.95 U.S.

Voth, Matilda K. **Clear Shining After Rain**. Newton, Kansas: 22150 Walnut, 1980. Pb., 355 pp., \$5.70 U.S.

Wiebe, Katie Funk, ed., **Women Among the Brethren: Stories of Fifteen Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Women**. Hillsboro, Kansas: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1979. Pb., 197 pp., \$6.95 U.S.

..... **Good Times with Old Times. How to Write Your Memoirs**. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1979. Pb., 175 pp.

New Records Found

The Public Archives of Canada has recently received 100 or more boxes of Eastern European immigration records of the period 1910-1922. Inside the boxes are the remaining records — old letters, passports and birth certificates of about 100,000 to 150,000 Russian, Jewish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and other groups who came to Canada during that period. Mennonite, Doukhobor and Jewish groups are represented as well.

The core of the collection derives from the records kept by the directors of czarist consulates in Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax from about 1910-1917, when the Russian Revolution brought about the closing of these offices.

When the Russian officials resigned in 1922, they shipped the records to the Soviet consulates in New York and Boston. Eventually they landed in the Soviet embassy in Washington. From there czarist sympathizers removed them into hiding, so that immigrants might not be traced by the Soviets to North America. It took until last April, a total of forty-seven years to recover them again.

The collection will be completely catalogued over the next eighteen months, and then people from cities like Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver where many of the descendants reside, may be able to trace their roots better than before.

Upcoming Publication

The book *Mennonite Images Historical, Cultural and Literary Essays dealing with Mennonite Issues*, edited by Dr. Harry Loewen will be available in local bookstores this month. It will have 304 pages with photos by Ken Loewen, and a soft cover. The publisher is Hyperion Press Ltd. of Winnipeg.

Mennonite Images is a collection of twenty articles by well known Mennonite scholars in Canada and the United States who write about various aspects of Mennonite life and letters. The articles are grouped under the headings historical, cultural, and literary and they contain informative and often provocative material that suggests the many ways that Mennonite thinking and Mennonite lifestyle have changed over the years since Mennonites have emigrated to North America.

Book Reviews

Wilfred Martens, **River of Glass**, Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980. 229 pp., pb. \$8.05. Reviewed by Clara K. Dyck, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

River of Glass is a novel which deals with a Mennonite family's 1927-28 flight from Siberia to China. Their strenuous and perilous trek is seen from the perspective of two teen-age boys dreaming of America, the promised land.

The boys' views of God, anabaptism and communism play tug-of-war with their unanswered prayers, their gun-carrying father and their sister's kind Russian boyfriend and a Russian official who becomes symbolic of freedom and new life.

Fear dominates this story where "life is so cheap", pleasure and pain are interlaced, and bandit hordes lurk nearby. When they have overcome the dangers of the Manchurian mountains and the Amur River, and are about to break out in jubilation at their successful escape, fear's sinister finger points at them from a red hammer and sickle ensign atop a flagpole in China and from Russian uniforms on the street.

Refreshing is Martens' occasional burst of poetic symbolism, especially when nature's moods speak for man.

One empathizes with the frustrations of fourteen year old David standing in line trying to come to terms with the disparity between the bumper crops at home and the small chunk of bread he is waiting for here. And again, in the end, when his twenty year old brother, saved earlier from the draft by his crutches, is now left behind in a Harbin hospital-bed with his post-operative pain and feelings of aloneness while his hope-filled parents and brother steam off to America.

None of the potential dangers and threats become reality in this novel, thus leaving the reader feeling somewhat short-changed, for these actually did happen to some of our people. Elimination of repetitions and rephrasing of grammatically awkward sections might have "tightened-up" the story-line and helped it flow along faster. Still, teen-agers will enjoy the suspense of this novel from the Reimer boys' point-of-view.

The author of **River of Glass** is assistant professor of English at Fresno Pacific College in Fresno, California, U.S.A.

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Lawrence Klippenstein, ed., **THAT THERE BE PEACE: Mennonites in Canada and World War II**. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Manitoba CO Reunion Committee, 1979. 104 pp., pb., \$6.00, hdco., \$9.00. Reviewed by Ryan Toews, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

That There Be Peace: Mennonites in Canada and World War II was written "to recall and recount" the experiences of Mennonite conscientious objectors during the Second World War. The editor has drawn upon a variety of sources to take the reader

through a brief overview of the different aspects of alternative service. A short history of the difficulties between the Mennonites, the Russian, and the Canadian governments over the question of military service and how these problems were dealt with provides the reader with a background to the specific problems encountered during World War II. In Canada, as in Russia before, the Mennonites obtained a special exemption from military service. When this exemption was done away with after the First World War and the question of serving in the military again arose as war clouds gathered over Europe a new arrangement had to be reached. The solution lay in various forms of alternative service for the government, a concept which had been previously tried in Russia after 1874 and had been found to be acceptable to both conscientious objectors and the government alike.

That There Be Peace examines, through a series of vignettes using photographs, interviews, reminiscences, and newspaper clippings, the new experiences of the young men who performed the various duties involved in alternative service.

The work in the bush camps, probably the best known of the work done by conscientious objectors, is well documented. However, the book also examines the less well known duties of the men who were placed in medical care jobs or who opted for service in the Medical Branch of the armed forces. Not forgotten are those conscientious objectors who were imprisoned for what they believed; the account of Peter J. Friesen brings home consequences of a person living by his conscience in opposition to the dictates of the state.

Unfortunately, the emphasis on the work and personal experiences of the individual CO has resulted in a partial neglect of the position of the CO in a Canadian society at war. While contemporary newspaper accounts provide a view of how the CO was perceived by Canadians in general, details as to how the mechanics of the system of alternative service worked are lacking or must be inferred from the text. At one point the term of service for the COs is described as three to four months but later on the term is indicated as being for the duration of the war.

Fortunately, however, an extensive reading list is provided for those who would seek further information on any matters which this book may not cover.

On the whole **That There Be Peace: Mennonites in Canada and World War II** accomplishes the task which it set out to do. It provides a good look at the impact of war on a people who would rather embrace peace.

Helps for Family Studies

Anna Epp Ens, **The House of Heinrich**, The EPP Book Committee, 117 Lanark Street, Winnipeg, Man., 1980. Hdco., 233 pp., \$18.00.

Neil Heinrichs, Marianne Heinrichs Janzen, Arthur Heinrichs Toews, **Kornelius Heinrichs and His Descendants 1782-1979**, Kornelius Heinrichs History Society, Winnipeg, Man., 1980. Hdco., 286 pp., \$18.00.

Mary Dueck Jeffery, ed., **Aeltester Johann Funk: A Family Tree**, published by the author, 713-3000 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, Man., 1980. Hdco., 229 pp., \$10.00.

Peter Goertzen, **Teichroeb**, published by the author, 309 Montgomery, Winnipeg, Man., 1980. Hdco., 207 pp., \$16.00.

Those who plan to publish a family history will wish to consult these four recent studies. They offer a variety of helpful models for such a project.

The book by Anna Epp Ens provides the most detailed suggestions, for starting a family study. The process which the Epp family followed is described, and the methods used to organize the material are carefully explained. This book also includes a bibliography of published and unpublished materials which will be useful for locating the significant sources.

These four books provide a variety of methods for organizing the genealogical material, and for identifying people. The simplest method is employed by Mary Jeffery and Anna Epp Ens. They identify the oldest person as number "I", and then each digit indicates a subsequent generation. A person in the fifth generation could receive the identification number e.g. of 17652. Anna Epp Ens includes the additional feature of parentheses for in-laws.

These books also illustrate the value of the judicious use of maps and pictures. Maps of the various settlements in Russia and America are a helpful complement to the historical surveys; the large number of photographs are valuable and particularly so in the Epp book where they are well coordinated with the text.

A good family history ought to consist of much more than genealogical lists. If a study includes biographies and historical surveys, as at least three of these studies do, a family history can provide the reader with a glimpse into the Mennonite experience throughout the world.

These four studies also include a number of other features which are worth noting. Every family study should have an index of all the names so that people can be easily located. Care should also be given to the size of type so that it will appear neat, but also legible. A good binding is important because most family histories will receive heavy use.

A vast amount of effort is required to produce a good family history. It is, however, evident that the effort is worthwhile. It can give the family involved a greater sense of its own identity. For the general reading public it can be an excellent introduction into Mennonite beliefs and experiences. **John Friesen, CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba.**