

# Mennonite Historian



Volume VII, Number 2  
June, 1981



*This is the private school building which was donated to the Mennonite Village Museum of Manitoba, this spring. The donor is Mr. Abram P. Driedger, Gretna. The school was constructed in the village of Blumenhof near Gretna, about 1885, and has stood on its original location since then. Mr. Driedger attended this school from 1907 to 1915. The school will be moved to the museum grounds this summer and restored as fully as possible to its original condition. A large portion of the restoration is being made possible by a donation from Rev. Peter J.B. Reimer of Rosenort, Manitoba. Photo by Ken Loewen, Altona, Manitoba.*

## About My Family, The Koslowskys

By Agatha Ratzlaff

### Part II

David D. Koslowsky (1812-1869) married Katharina Dyck, born July 23, 1814. After the death of his first wife, he married a second wife, a widow, Maria Thiessen (nee Hildebrandt), born May 29, 1825 in Burwalde, Russia. David died November 1, 1869; Maria died May 19, 1893.

Anna D. Koslowsky (1822-?) married a Johann Rempel. Jakob D. Koslowsky (1831-1899) married Sara Wall, born Sept. 25, 1833. Sara died June 9, 1879. Jakob married a second wife in the fall of 1880, Helena Born, from Molotschna, who died in the Spring of 1881. Jakob died August 5, 1899, at

the age of 68 years, 3 months, and 7 days. His grandson Gerhard G. Koslowsky lives in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Canada. Maria D. Koslowsky (1833-?) married a Klaas Kroeker. She died in America.

My great-grandfather, **Johann D. Koslowsky** (1827-1894), was born August 20, 1827 in Einlage. He was married to Aganetha Tilitzky, born November 25, 1827, the daughter of Bernhard Tilitzky. Their marriage was blessed with five children: David; Peter, born June 23, 1869; Aganetha; Johann; and Maria. Johann D. Koslowsky died January 8, 1894; and Aganetha died February, 1895.

Einlage was the center of the beginning and spread of the Mennonite Brethren of the

Chortitza settlement. The Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church, which was started in 1860, was supported by some of the industrialists of Einlage who were members of this church. Johann D. Koslowsky and his brother Jakob and their families were members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Einlage. Jakob D. Koslowsky's name is mentioned twice in the book by Heinrich Epp, **Abraham Unger...Gründer der Einlager Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde**, telling of the founding of the Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church. Both times it is obvious that Jakob D. Koslowsky was a strong and faithful supporter of Abraham Unger, the founder of the Einlage Mennonite Brethren Church. Abraham Unger set up a private school for the children of Mennonite Brethren families in a house which he bought for this purpose. My great-grandfather's children and his brother Jakob's children attended this school.

My grandfather, **Peter J. Koslowsky** (1860-1942), was born June 23, 1860 in Einlage. He received his education in Einlage, in the private school set up by Abraham Unger. Peter entered the teaching profession and taught in the village schools of Alt Kronsweide, Neuhorst, Ebenfeld, Schoendorf, Einlage, Peterpol, etc.

He was married on December 2, 1884 in Alt Kronsweide to Katharina Krause, who was born February 28, 1863 in Alt Kronsweide, the daughter of Franz and Katharina (Martens) Krause. Peter and Katharina's marriage was blessed with nine children; six of which survived infancy. At the birth of their ninth child, both Katharina and the baby girl, Liese, died. The family of six children was then left without a mother. Peter's cousin, Heinrich J. Koslowsky, who was childless, wished to have one of Peter's children to raise as his own. Maria, my mother, was the one that Peter gave to his cousin and his wife, Margaret. Maria was six years old at the time, and always was lonesome for her own family. At the age of fifteen, she returned to her father's home. Peter J. Koslowsky's second wife was Susanna Ratzlaff, the daughter of Adam Ratzlaff. (Through her my husband and I are third cousins.) One child was born to Peter and Susanna Koslowsky, a son, Heinrich. Peter J. Koslowsky died in 1942 in Russia; and Susanna died in 1945, also in Russia.

(to be continued)

## Prussian Church Records

Mennonite genealogists often wonder how to get hold of microfilms of Prussian Mennonite records through branch libraries of the Mormon Genealogical Society of Utah. The **Mennonite Historian** (III no. 3, Sept. 1977) listed the Canadian addresses of the genealogical branch libraries. The following is a partial listing of the film numbers of Prussian Mennonite records in the Salt Lake collections:

- 548,788 (Danzig 1667-1809 Stadtgebiet mit Familienbuch von 1789)
- 450,469 (Danzig 1815-1943 mit Lücken)
- 555,796 (Tiegenhagen 1780-1944)
- 386,919 (Petershagen, Tiegenhagen, Ladekopp 1775-1845)
- 555,792 (Ladekopp 1775-1873)
- 555,794 (Rosenort 1858-1942)
- 555,789-790 (Fürstenwerder 1776-1946, 2 rolls)
- 555,791 (Heubuden 1772-1900)
- 555,795 (Thiendorf-Markushof 1782-1943)
- 555,793 (Orloffelfelde 1772-1899)
- 555,785 (Elbing-Stadt 1857-1895)
- 555,786-788 (Elbing-Ellerwald 1744-1940, 3 rolls)
- 555,797 (Tragheimerweide 1773-1943)
- 072,158 (Montau 1661-1874)
- 386,917 (Montau-Gruppe 1782-1874)
- 415,102 (Montau-Gruppe 1857-1944, Schönsee Taufen 1862-1944)
- 450,468 (Kossowo-Przechowka-Alexanderwohl since 1782)
- 071,784 (Königsberg 1766-1859)
- 477,311 (Königsberg 1769-1811)
- 1056552-553 (Mennonitenwesen 1775-1802, 2 rolls)
- 1056557-559 (Mennonitenwesen 1802-1806, emigration, 3 rolls)

A more complete report on microfilm sources of Prussian Mennonites in the German language is available from the undersigned. Enclose \$5.00 (American funds) with order; and write to:

12934 Buchanan Trail East  
Waynesboro, Pa., U.S.A.  
17261

Adalbert Goertz

## Corrections

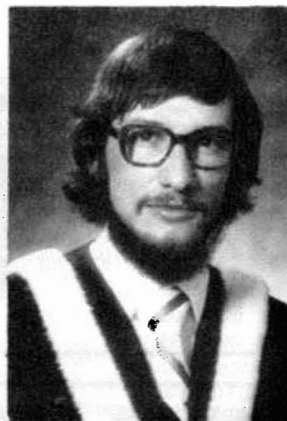
The second last paragraph of the report on the Centre for MB Studies in Canada (MH, March 1981, p. 6) should have begun with this sentence:

A major project sponsored by the Mennonite Brethren Historical Society of Canada has been the preparation of an English script for the film *Heimat fuer Heimatlose*.

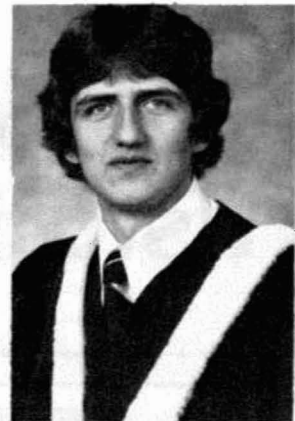
The title of Henry D. Friesen's booklet was *Blumen und Blueten* (cf. Mennonite Historian, March, 1981, p. 7). Apologies!



Ruth Epp



Dennis Stoesz



Werner Klierer

## Summer Activities at the Heritage Centre

Winnipeg, Man. — Special funding assistance for history-archives work will help to strengthen the summer program at the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Several temporary staff additions have been made to expedite these developments.

Dennis Stoesz, a graduate student from the University of Manitoba, and Werner Klierer from Mennonite Biblical Seminary, are continuing the microfilming of congregational records begun last summer. Fifteen Manitoba congregations completed their projects last year, and a number have since then brought in materials for filming during the next few months. It is hoped that all Conference of Mennonites in Canada congregations may eventually be serviced in this way.

Jake Peters has given valuable help during June in cataloguing and especially in beginning an oral history project of interviewing Mennonites in Winnipeg. He has received government grant assistance for his work.

Evelyn Peters, a CMBC graduate, recently completed a contract of work assisting with genealogy research, and developing a bibliography of articles on Russian Mennonites published during the past two

decades.

Ruth Epp, a student at the University of Manitoba, replaced Iris Toews, who terminated her work as secretary-receptionist at the end of April. Ruth will be at the Centre till classes resume in early September. The visits of groups and various individuals add a responsibility to the regular research assistance and other help given by the Centre during the summer months.

Archives staff members plan also to catalogue a good deal of "back-log" manuscript material during the next three months. An attempt is being made to complete sets of a number of Mennonite periodicals, and deposits of back numbers of any related material are always welcome. Very early issues of *Der Bote* (1924-1930) and *Mennonitische Rundschau* (before 1924) are especially appreciated.

We also appreciate the continuing help of Glenn Penner in genealogical research and may soon have further volunteer help from Mary Dueck Jeffery of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Visitors are invited to inquire about used or new Mennonite books for sale at the Centre, and to write or call for other help they may need.

## Our Donors' List

We want to express our appreciation to numerous individuals who have shown their support through recent donations to the Mennonite Heritage Centre. The list covers the period from April to June, 1981.

H. Janzen — Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Victor G. Wiebe — Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Arnold Wiebe — Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Herman Rempel — Morden, Manitoba  
Guenther Sickert — Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Ian E. Wilson — Regina, Saskatchewan

Elizabeth Enns — Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Henry J. Sawatzky — Carstairs, Alberta  
Harold Hildebrandt — Calgary, Alberta  
Helen E. Regier — Newton, Kansas  
Isaac Klassen — Laird, Saskatchewan  
Peter Dueck — Riverton, Manitoba  
Klaas Giesbrecht — Port Albernie, B.C.  
Mary Unruh — Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Jacob D. Dyck — Herbert, Saskatchewan  
P.C. Bergen — Kitchener, Ontario  
Emil O. Toews — Sacramento, California  
Contributions for this period total \$307.00. The total to date for 1981 is \$669.00.

## Canadian Mennonite Archives

### Rosthern Junior College Archives

The archives of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and Alberta are located at Rosthern Junior College in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Since 1973, when the facility was opened, the archives have primarily been a depository for various publications, records, and writings. These include some correspondence and minutes of provincial conference activities, extensive collections of *Mennonite Life*, *The Canadian Mennonite*, and *Der Bote*, along with local, church and family histories, as well as various other miscellaneous documents and records.

The Rosthern Cultural Museum, also located on the R.J.C. campus, contains a large number of German books used by our Mennonite people in the first half of this century. Many of these will be transferred to the archives in the near future, as the museum is being moved to a larger, more convenient location.

An important project currently underway is the microfilming of all the back issues of *Der Bote* by the Saskatchewan Provincial Archives in Regina. This collection, which began in 1924, is complete here from 1925 to the present.

A Heritage Resource Survey done a few years ago is being followed up by Norman Bull through a series of oral interviews with long-time residents of the area. This project is being funded by the Saskatchewan Archives Board, but one copy of each of the Interviews will be left with the MHSSA archives. *Bernie Thiessen and Debbie Schmidt.*

### Reimer Historical Library and Archives

Parts of a library and archives for the Mennonite Village Museum became reality as early as 1967. More recently a rather large collection of early Manitoba textbooks, and related materials, found their way to the museum, and space was made to house them on the premises.

To these materials have been added several years of *Steinbach Post* (ca. 1915-1916), land holding documents, some school records, and miscellaneous documents. Some of these are on regular display for visitors, while others remain in storage.

Photos are an important part of the MVM archival collection. They have been indexed, with some duplicated for display, and others simply on file for research or other use. Many focus on early Manitoba Mennonite

experiences, and some on Mennonites in Russia.

Rare books are an additional significant feature of the holdings. Several old hymnbooks, and particularly Bibles form an interesting exhibit for regular viewing. Among the Bibles is one owned by deputy Jacob Hoepfner who helped to lead the Russian Mennonite migration from Prussia to Russia in the 1870s.

Facilities for both library and archives will need attention in the near future, being at present inadequate for proper research or study use. Persons interested in seeing any materials other than those on display may contact the museum office at 1-(204)-326-9661. *Peter Goertzen.*

### Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference Archives

The EMMC archives were established at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in 1978 (cf. *Mennonite Historian*, September 1979, p. 2). Some materials were deposited almost immediately, including the early membership registers of the Conference, personal papers of Rev. Peter S. Zacharias, congregational records of the Neuhorst church in Saskatchewan, and additional copies of *Der Leitstern*.

An important recent project was the microfilming of everything deposited so far so that the material could be used by a researcher who is working on EMMC history. The microfilm is now available at the Heritage Centre. As part of this collection an entire set of *Der Leitstern* (actually two issues are still missing) as well as the *Recorder* were put on the film.

Another interesting part of the collection is a set of sermons by several EMMC ministers, including the late Rev. Cornelius G. Stoesz of Plum Coulee. These sermons are on loan and will be microfilmed also. Hopefully others will send similar materials to be deposited or duplicated.

The archives also holds six or seven term papers written on the EMM conference or its congregations. The closing-down program of the Rosefarm congregation was taped, with copies left in the archives.

From time to time there will be articles on EMMC archives in *Mennonite Historian*. This periodical is now being mailed to EMMC congregations across Canada.

If you want to deposit materials please contact Frank Zacharias, Gretna, Manitoba, or send them directly to the Heritage Centre, indicating clearly where they come from. *Lawrence Klippenstein and Frank Zacharias.*

The materials on Canadian Mennonite archives are provided by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

## Directory

### British Columbia

Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. Archives. 2825 Clearbrook Road, Clearbrook, B.C., V2T 2Y2. Director: Hugo Friesen.

Mennonite Educational Institute Archives. 4081 Clearbrook Road, Box 2240, Clearbrook, B.C., V2T 3X8. Archivist: Hugo Friesen.

### Saskatchewan/Alberta

Rosthern Junior College Archives. Rosthern Junior College, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, S0K 3R0. Archivist: Bernie Thiessen.

Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Conference Archives. Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Saskatchewan, S0K 1Z0. Contact person: George C. Gedder.

### Manitoba

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada. 77 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 1L1. Archivist/Director: Ken Reddig.

Conference of Mennonites in Canada Archives. 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4. Historian-Archivist: Lawrence Klippenstein.

Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives. Box 1268, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0. Contact person: Dave Schellenberg.

Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference Archives. 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4. Director: Frank Zacharias.

Reimer Historical Library and Archives. Mennonite Village Museum, Box 1136, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0. Manager: Peter Goertzen.

Mennonite Genealogy, Inc. 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4. Director: Margaret Kroeker.

Mennonite Historical Library. 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4. Librarian: Margaret Franz.

### Ontario

Amish Historical Library. Route 4, Aylmer, Ontario, N5H 2R3. Director: David Luthy.

Mennonite Archives of Ontario. Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G6. Archivist: Sam Steiner.

A directory of all Mennonite archives known to exist in the world is available from the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

The manual on writing congregational histories, *Stories with Meaning*, written by Dr. Frank H. Epp, is still available at the Heritage Centre for \$2.00 a copy.

## Russo-Ukrainian Mennonite Studies

### A Sunday on Chortitza Island in 1840<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Peter Pauls

*In 1974 Centennial celebrations aroused new interest among many Canadian Mennonites in their Russian and Ukrainian homeland. Tours to former colonies in these regions have become quite common. Numerous books and articles have been written, describing Russian Mennonite villages as they once were and as they appear today.<sup>2</sup>*

*The following excerpt is taken from Kornelius Hildebrand's description of a church service held in a schoolhouse on the island of Chortitza almost 150 years ago. This "reminiscence" was originally published in the Russian Mennonite *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1913) and reprinted in *Mennonitische Warte* (Spring, 1937). It was then edited by Victor Peters and republished in the German language in *Zwei Dokumente* (Echo Verlag, 1965).*

*The entire article has now been translated into English by Dr. Peter Pauls, professor of English at the University of Winnipeg.*

The school is situated quite close to the mighty river. Only the street, actually a roadway, and a narrow stretch of riverbank lie between the building and the water. For the newcomer, the view of the majestic river from the windows of the schoolhouse is most delightful; the native islander, however, takes little notice of this unusual natural prospect, particularly on a Sunday when he focuses his attention entirely on the awaited worship service. Within half an hour, most of the inhabitants of the island are assembled at this place.

Differences of opinion on religious matters are still unknown among these people and the neglect of public worship services is simply unthinkable, especially since a pastor can visit them only every third or fourth Sunday. Should someone who is in good health be absent from his usual place in the schoolroom on a Sunday, this would create such a stir that there would be an immediate inquiry and within an hour of the conclusion of the service the entire village would know for what reason the person in question had not been there.

The schoolroom is not large. The worshippers sit closely crowded together, the men to the right and the women to the left of the improvised pulpit. A solemn quiet comes

over the congregation. No one instigates conversation. A new arrival wishes his neighbour "Good Morning" but only in the softest whisper. Other than this, no word is spoken. The silence is reminiscent of a graveside ceremony. A hungry little bee which has strayed into the sanctuary through one of the open windows suddenly creates a loud, humming noise. One can also hear the chirping of sparrows and the warbling of a blackbird in the bushes outside.

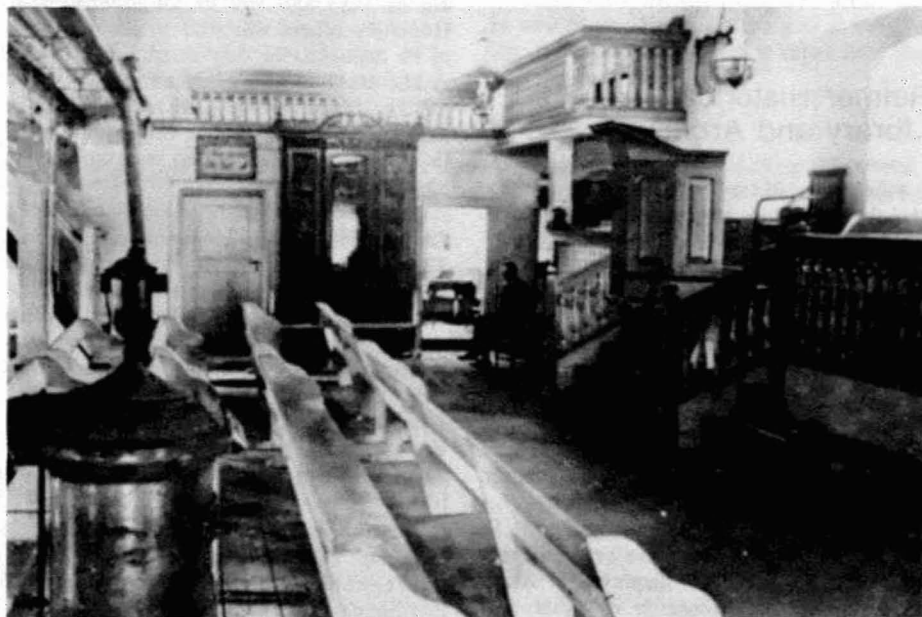
One of the men sitting near the front finds the silence deafening and begins to cough awkwardly. This is followed by a barely audible shuffling of feet. One of the young women, feeling a delicate sneeze coming on, cautiously takes her stiffly starched cloth bag which contains the "Marienblatt" (sprig of thyme) and wafts it back and forth a few times under her nose releasing a veritable cloud of herbal perfume which drifts slowly over to her neighbour. Once again, there is absolute quiet - silent, pious expectation. Even the more active young people sit as if hypnotized. If one looks closely enough one can see on the white, otherwise smooth foreheads of the young maids, fashionable wrinkles of concentration and devotion.

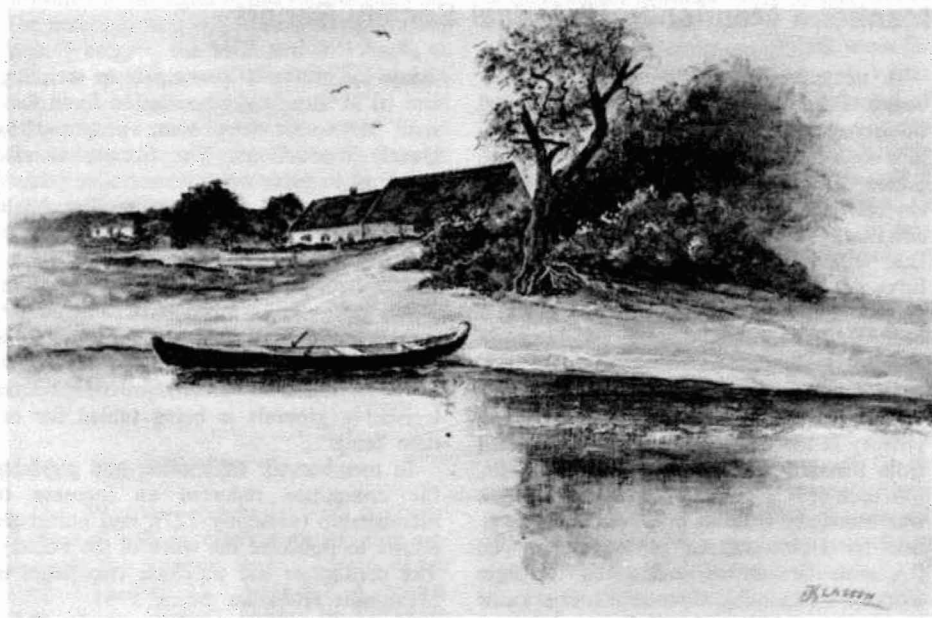
The *Vorsänger* now emerges from the teacher's living quarters and proceeds with measured, ceremonious strides to take the place reserved for him next to the minister's still vacant chair. The *Vorsänger* of this place is a man with a large, bony physique, a true islander. He is obviously well nourished, his face smoothly shaved, his handsome head covered with shiny black hair, parted in the middle, combed smoothly back behind

the ears and cut off straight at the neck. He wears his long, black ruffled coat with great dignity. Since there is no resident minister in the village, he is the leader of the congregation and hence a very important person, at least locally. Solemnly he takes his place, turns a few pages in the hymnal as though searching for an appropriate hymn, coughs a few times, and then announces monotonically: "Rise up, rise up, my spirit to praise - Number 358."<sup>3</sup> After a brief pause, he repeats, "Number 358!" There is a brief moment of silence and then he begins to sing with stentorian voice. The others do not hold back either, as do so many today who are young in years but old at heart, who don't deserve the voices their Creator gave them. Here, however, fifty voices join in with enough energy and enthusiasm to bring down the walls of Jericho or put the Midianites to flight. The singing is full-throated and vigorous with many challenging high notes and low notes but these singers proceed without faltering to the conclusion.

There are a few minutes, finally, to allow all concerned to pause for breath. This brief respite is followed by the hymn which precedes the sermon: "Dearest Jesus, we are here! Number 86!" - "86!" The *Vorsänger* need not have announced the number of this hymn even once because every "Ohmke" and every "Muhmke" knows where "Dearest Jesus" is to be found. In fact, most of them have memorized that one from beginning to end. In these "good old days," many simple, pious souls, especially mothers, go to the hymnal for spiritual nourishment and for this

*The inside view of the church at Chortitza, on the mainland as it remained in use after World War I. Photo courtesy of Olga Rempel, *Einer von Vielen* page 51. The photo on page 5 is taken from I.P. Klassen's *Die Insel Chortitza* page 56a. The farm home was located on the island.*





reason are better acquainted with this book than are most church members today. However, the *Vorsänger* knows his duty and calls out "Number 86," once again at the top of his voice. People living as far as three houses from the church could have heard him, had they been at home, for the windows facing Jerusalem are always open during the worship service as Daniel's were, according to the Bible.

And so all three verses of this song are sung. The beloved elderly minister who has entered during the singing now stands up in front of his table, upon which there is a lectern; he takes a blue envelope containing a hand-written sermon from the side pocket of his coat and salutes the congregation, without looking at his papers, with the apostolic greeting: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." With these words the congregation becomes as worshipful as those who long ago sat at the feet of Jesus. All that is earthly becomes silent.

Let us observe this minister more closely. He is, of course, an unpretentious man, but he is conscious of the fact that he has the respect of the congregation before which he now stands. He is a man who is aware also of his outward appearance. He is obviously a man of some means as his shiny leather *Korowonsche* boots testify. The trousers of this cleric are tucked neatly into this brightly polished, elegant footgear. Around his neck he wears a long black silk scarf, the corners of which hang down almost to his vest pockets. On each corner of the scarf, the initials of the wearer are embroidered in red cotton. *Ohm Jacob Dyck*,<sup>4</sup> who in his day was elder of the Chortitza Church, always replaced the customary black scarf with a white one on special festive days such as baptism. Like so many of our forefathers, he

felt that on such solemn occasions one must come into the presence of the Almighty immaculate even in one's dress. A slovenly outward appearance, it was felt, was an indication that the inward state was in even greater disorder.

After a brief introduction and prayer, the text is announced: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The minister then reads a deeply moving sermon written in a straightforward unaffected style. There is something in his voice, however, which speaks of personal experience and profound commitment. This simplicity and humility appeal directly to the hearts of his listeners without the aid of rhetoric. The congregation, deeply stirred, sits in reverent silence. Now and then a mother wipes a tear from her cheek. After all, the words spoken here emanated originally from the sacred mouth of Jesus. It was He who commanded his disciples to convey this blessed invitation to all mankind. "Come unto me..." How these words strike home, for it is the language forever associated with Canaan. It is the call of the beckoning Father. And who is not troubled and burdened? There is so much in life that one could regret, so much that weighs heavily upon the spirit. Yet, these troubles which we very often bring upon ourselves we can lay at His feet; the burdens which He places upon our shoulders are light by comparison.

The sermon concludes with the apostolic blessing: "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc." After this blessing the church members who have recently become engaged are announced. The names of the couples, and the names of their families are made public. Those who might have objections to the marriages are asked to voice such objections in good time.

The minister takes his seat, leans over toward the *Vorsänger* and whispers to

him: "I would like to have the congregation sing the hymn, 'Follow Me, Our Saviour calls us.'" The *Vorsänger* replies in an audible whisper: "I'm not sure I know the melody. Let me think about it for a minute." After a moment of reflection, he regains his former confidence, calls out the words of the first line and begins to sing with all his might. However, something isn't quite right as all the others remain silent. He tries to sing it quietly to himself once more, although everyone can hear him, but again it just won't work out. All continue to wait silently for the music master to find the solution to the mystery. The persistent *Vorsänger* does not give up. His voice is hesitant at first as it gropes its way up and down the scale but it grows gradually in volume as it finds familiar notes. An old grandmother is the first to join in with trembling voice just before the *Vorsänger's* voice swells to its customary triumphant crescendo. All now join in lustily. If some of the verses don't quite scan, the extra syllables are simply swallowed. And so the singers roar on with sounds that resemble "clashing swords" and "crashing waves," until the loose window panes in the old schoolhouse begin to rattle and shake. Surely the Good Lord must take delight in such praise.

The service finally concludes with the benediction and following this the worshippers rise from their unpainted pews, strengthened and comforted. The older people thank their beloved minister and, when he politely declines their invitations to come for dinner, shake his hand and bid him farewell. Then all move toward the exit with the women, being the weaker sex, leading the way. The men follow in slow and stately manner.

#### NOTES

1. The original article was entitled "Ein Sonntag von anno 1840 auf der Insel Chortitza".
2. Cf. Paul and Otto Klassen "Chortitza Revisited" *Mennonite Life* (December, 1973), pp. 119-20, and I.P. Klassen, *Die Insel Chortitza* (Winnipeg, 1979). A major study of Chortitza-Rosenthal by Nick J. Kroeker will be published shortly.
3. Cf. *Gesangbuch in welchen eine Sammlung geistreicher Lieder befindlich*. Copies of the seventh edition (Marienwerder, 1829), the ninth edition (Elbing, 1843), and the first Russian Mennonite edition (Odessa, 1844) are available in the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.
4. The reference appears to be to *Aeltester Jakob Dyck*, born 1779 in Neuendorf, Prussia, and chosen elder of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church in 1812. He died in 1853. Cf. *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 115.

## MMHS News

**The  
REINFELD CENTENNIAL**

will be celebrated in the  
Village of Reinfeld, Manitoba  
on  
July 11 and 12, 1981

**Program**

**July 11, Saturday**

10:00 a.m. — 12 noon — Registration  
1:00 p.m. — Parade in Reinfeld  
2:30 p.m. — Official opening at the school  
5:00 p.m. — Supper barbecue  
8:00 p.m. — Evening program

**July 12, Sunday**

10:00 a.m. — Community worship service  
12:00 noon — Noon meal followed by visiting  
4:30 p.m. — Fahspa  
7:30 p.m. — Program for youth

Some trailer camping available.

For further information write to:  
**Reinfeld Centennial**  
Box 143  
Winkler, Manitoba  
R0G 2X0

## Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Report

A near perfect attendance of the new board of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society marked its first meeting, on May 13, in a second year of activity. Executive committee president Vic Doerksen reported several items at the outset: a recommendation that two membership meetings a year be held from now on, agreement that some financial help be given to an interviewing project at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, if needed, and noting that a brochure on Manitoba Mennonites has been under discussion.

A recent MMHS publication, **Causes and History of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia to Canada** by Gerhard Wiebe, has been selling quite well so far. This book was translated from its original German edition by Helen Janzen of Winnipeg. The Research Committee was asked to begin work on a Manitoba Mennonite tourist guide brochure, and report on it to the next meeting of the Board. It was noted that the Mennonite Literary Society is preparing a related item for the Mennonite Pavilion this summer.

The Arts and Inter-Disciplinary Committee will be working on a display for the Mennonite Pavilion, and is hoping to secure artifacts from the Mennonite Village Museum for this project. Bill Schroeder will be mounting some of his maps at that display.

It was further agreed that the Society

would be willing to participate in scripting, and be in historical consultation for a Russian Mennonite film being proposed by Dueck Productions. The Society is also prepared to serve on a consultative basis if help is needed in producing the film, **Night Train from Moscow**, in progress under Forest Green Productions.

The Artifacts and Historical Sites Committee has released a brochure to assist persons who wish to become involved in the cemetery mapping project of the Society. A proposal for cenotaph construction on the legislative grounds is being tabled for the time being.

In membership solicitation and publicity the committee reported an increase of membership (presently 127), and numerous efforts to publicize the work of the Society. The committee will purchase two pages in **Mennonite Historian** during 1981.

Under reorganization of committees the following will chair groups: Elizabeth Peters, Research and Publication; Al Reimer, Arts; Herman Rempel, Artifacts and Sites; and Lawrence Klippenstein, Membership and Publicity. One or two new committees are under consideration.

Final changes to the constitution were worked through for presentation to the next board meeting for approval, and the upcoming membership meeting for adoption.

*Adapted from minutes submitted by Ken Reddig.*

This page is provided by the  
Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

## Mennonite Pavilion Again

The Mennonite Literary Society will again sponsor a Mennonite Pavilion at the University of Winnipeg as part of Folklorama this summer. A planning committee headed by John Friesen and John Bergen is hard at work organizing and coordinating the various parts that make up the pavilion.

Along with copious amounts of hearty Mennonite food, the Pavilion will provide both light and serious entertainment in the form of music and singing, a walk-through display of Mennonite history and culture, as well as a special display of Mennonite arts and crafts.

The Honorary Mayor of this year's Pavilion will be Rudy Regehr, an executive with Fellowship Books Inc. Harry Siemens will be deputy mayor. Roy Vogt has prepared a pamphlet of the Mennonite people for distribution at the Pavilion. Gary Froese, who teaches music at Westgate, will be in charge of entertainment in Riddell Hall Cafeteria. Susan Froese is coordinating the crafts display and Margaret Lundin will again be in charge of the food services.

Last year's Mennonite Pavilion was criticized in some quarters for not giving a balanced picture of Mennonite life, faith and culture. The Planning Committee has

The Mennonite Village Museum is presenting a series of sessions, **Interpreting Mennonite Life in the Past and Present**.

These sessions will be held at the Museum church, Sundays, 2:00 p.m., one mile north of Steinbach on the No. 12 Highway.

Sun., July 12: Abe Dueck, Winnipeg  
**Mennonites and Politics**

Sun., July 19: Dennis Stoesz  
Winnipeg  
**CO Service Among Russian Mennonites**

Sun., July 26: Doreen Klassen,  
Winnipeg  
**Low German Songs as Expressions of Mennonite Identity**

Sun., Aug. 2: Bill Schroeder,  
Winnipeg  
**The Lord Dufferin visit to the East Reserve**

Sun., Aug. 9: Adolf Enns, Winnipeg  
**Early Manitoba Mennonite School Developments in Manitoba**

Sun., Aug. 16: Peter D. Zacharias,  
Gretna  
**Reinland and the West Reserve**

Sun., Aug. 23: Leo Driedger,  
Winnipeg  
**Mennonite Urbanization**

Sun., Aug. 30: Gerhard Ens,  
Winnipeg  
**Mennonite Literature**

Everyone Welcome

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promised to do better in this regard this year. The entertainment will feature student choirs from Westgate, the MCI and Steinbach, as well as special choirs like the Springfield Heights **Liebhaber Chor** directed by John Albrecht and the Steinbach Treble Teens directed by Marge Koop. The walk-through display will be larger and more varied than last year's, and the craft display will also be improved.

All in all, the week of August 9-16 should be a week to remember at the Mennonite Pavilion. The theme of this year's Folklorama is "the family", a theme made to order for the Mennonite Pavilion and the traditions it represents. *Al Reimer.*

## News and Notes

- The Winkler community of southern Manitoba, will be celebrating its 75th anniversary this summer. Special Festivities are planned for July 31 - August 2. A drama, "The Cherry Hedge", written by Elizabeth Peters for this occasion, is to be presented on the first day of the program.
- Gus Dueck, an employee of Derksen Printers in Steinbach, Manitoba, has been commissioned to write a history of the Chortitzer Mennonite Conference of Canada. At present most of its congregation are in Manitoba.
- A Hildebrand family reunion is scheduled to take place at Gretna, Manitoba at the MCI grounds on July 4 - 5. A publication on the history of the family, prepared by Henry Hildebrand of Blumenort, will be available at that time.
- Recent Manitoba publications include two cookbooks: **New Bergthal: Heritage and Cookbook** (1980), compiled by Ray Hamm and "Village Friends", 120 pp. pb., and **The Common Sense Almanac: Mennonite Guide to Simple Living** (1981), compiled by Sue Barkman, 184 pp. pb. They are available at: Agatha Hamm, Box 269, Altona, Manitoba R0G 0B0 (\$3.00) and Derksen Printers, Steinbach, Manitoba R0A 2A0 (\$6.95) respectively.
- Rev. William Neufeld, formerly pastor of the North Kildonan MB Church in Winnipeg, is the author of an upcoming history publication of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba.
- The Mennonite Village Museum and Mennonite Literary Society have together published a new brochure entitled "Who are the Mennonites?" It is especially designed to introduce the Manitoba community to visitors at the Mennonite Pavilion in Winnipeg's Folklorama program this summer. For copies write to Mennonite Literary Society, 203-818 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0N4.
- The Morden Bergthaler Mennonite Church is celebrating its 50th anniversary July 31 - August 2. A publication on the history of the congregation will be distributed at that time.

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of time, a central image which can be viewed again and again and yet be different with each viewing and never entirely the same for the different viewers. When the poet writes history, he shapes the past not only out of facts and documents but also out of memory (which always reshapes even the indisputable facts) and dreams. The poet succeeds only if he is able to bring the reader or listener to respond to the fact and the dream, to respond prosaically or literally and poetically or imaginatively.

In **The Shunning** Friesen gives us his best example of the poet as historian. Both "prosaic time" and "poetic time" are clearly present throughout. Dr. Blanchard's factual diary entries and Loewen's literal interpretations of the Bible counterpoint Peter's highly imaginative descriptions of God's world and Johann's dream-like recollections of childhood. These conflicting perceptions of reality provide both dramatic tension and unity in this long poem which is made up of a series of loosely connected individual statements.

Ultimately, it is Johann who seems best able to reconcile the literal and the imaginative. The "brush" and "creek" of his farm are no more or no less real to him than "an overgrown orchard near poltava" or the "limat" river, both places he has never seen. For Johann, as for the poet, the past has become a succession of tenuously but meaningfully connected "moments" or "images" which are conjured up by the visible present.

Such moments, images or "slivers of light", as Friesen calls them, are what the poet hopes to recreate for his readers. At one point in **The Shunning** one of the protagonists asks, "What do you want to know about Mennonites?" The poetic response which I cite here is a good illustration of Friesen's concept of "moments", "images" and "slivers of light."

ukraine  
poland  
netherlands  
belgium  
switzerland

from the shed blood of  
Manz  
Eberle  
from Blaurock his blue coat flapping at the  
knees  
from lonely Denck who believed that love  
would never hurt  
from Pastor Philips  
from Simons running hiding behind his  
priestly collar  
from Grebel on neustadtgasse

and we've come from rivers  
rat  
red  
molotschna where father used to swim  
rhine  
limat that swallowed a few of us

**Note:** Turnstone Press was founded in 1975 to encourage the writing and reading of poetry in Canada, and particularly the West. It specializes in the work of Manitoba poets, prairie poets and poets from other parts of Canada in that order. For contacts call 1-204-474-9860, or write to Turnstone Press, St. John's College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

## Research Request

I am interested in information pertaining to my grandparents. Their names were John Miller and his wife, Helen Gilbrant.

They were born in either Russia, Germany or Poland. They were immigrants and arrived here in Canada by boat.

My father John Norman Miller was born in Winnipeg on April 10, 1910. They moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan and both he and his father worked for the C.P.R. My grandmother died in Herbert but I don't know the year.

They also had two other children. Their names are Helen Miller and Dietrich Miller. I don't know if they are still alive or were ever married.

If you have information please write to:  
**Mrs. Shirley Louis**  
**R.R. No. 7**  
**Vernon, B.C.**  
**VIT 7Z3**

## New Periodical Coming

**Mennonite Family History**, a new quarterly periodical featuring the genealogy and family history of those persons with Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren origins in Europe, will begin publication in January 1982.

**MFH** will also include general informational articles on how and where to find information. Articles to appear in the January 1982 issue are "Why I Like Genealogy" by genealogists from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Arizona, and Ontario; "Russian Mennonite Ancestry" by John F. Schmidt; "Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, Goshen, Indiana" by Nelson Springer; "Tracing Mennonites in Ohio"; "Palatinate Mennonites"; and "Pitfalls in Genealogical Research."

Regular features to appear in every issue will include columns titled "Our European Heritage," "Our Amish Ancestors," "Our Mennonite Immigrants," and "Our Brethren Cousins." In addition, "News and Notes" will cover current genealogical research projects, upcoming genealogical events, and a variety of genealogical notes and advice. "Book Corner" will consist of three sections: Books for Sale, Books Wanted, and Book Reviews. Queries and a listing of subscriber's names, addresses, and surnames researched will also offer assistance to subscribers.

For additional information on this new periodical co-edited by J. Lemar and Lois Ann (Zook) Mast, write to Mennonite Family History, P.O. Box 171, Elverson, PA 19520.

## Book Reviews

Jake Tilitzky, ed. **Churches in Profile: Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia**, Clearbrook, B.C., 1978. 118 pp. Paperback \$2.00.

C.L. Dick, ed. **The Mennonite Conference of Alberta: A History of its Churches and Institutions**. Edmonton, Alberta: The Mennonite Conference of Alberta, 1981. 147 pp. Hardcover. Reviewed by John Friesen, CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In the past decade numerous histories have been written about various aspects of the Canadian Mennonite experience. Provincial conference histories are a new development. As such these studies are unique, and will provide others with models both through their strengths and weaknesses.

**Churches in Profile**, dealing with Mennonites in B.C., is not really a history of the Conference. The book does not include a summary of the Conference's development. It consists of brief, largely statistical, summaries of developments, such as membership growth, Sunday School developments, etc. in each of the Conference congregations. The historical summaries of each congregation are factual but not analytical. The statistical tables of various dimensions of church life are interesting because information is provided for each congregation in the same categories. This information, however, remains uninterpreted.

The survey of congregations includes the congregations which are now extinct, although mission efforts like Fort St. John, which did not develop into congregations, are not included. Conference institutions like Camp Squeah and the Bethel Bible Institute are not included either.

The twenty-fifth anniversary book about the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta is very different. It includes a brief history of the Alberta Conference, surveys of the history of each congregation which exists at the present, a brief section about each extinct congregation, and rather extensive discussions of Conference institutions like camps and song festivals. The text is liberally sprinkled with pictures of leaders, church buildings and important events. It contains a few statistical tables and lists of leaders.

C.L. Dick, the editor, has produced a book which other Conferences may wish to learn from. The appearance is professional, the pictures are sharp, and the historical surveys are well written and informative. The content is, however, somewhat uneven. This is probably due to the fact that various people submitted material which needed to be edited.

The study includes forthright discussion of conflicts, including the persons involved. On this point it is evident that editors will need to exercise great care in order to be honest, and yet also respect people.

These two works will be of help to future conference historians. They illustrate that it

is, however, much easier to collect factual information than to interpret its meaning within the larger development of a people.

Michael S. Bird. **Ontario Fraktur. A Pennsylvania-German Folk Tradition in Early Canada**, Toronto: M.F. Feheley Publishers Limited, 1977. 144 pp., hdbk., \$10.00. Reviewed by Gerald Loewen, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mennonites have habitually considered their own visual arts heritage unworthy of serious study largely because of its impractical and somewhat frivolous nature. God spoke through his word, not his pictures. The quaint doodling based on familiar Bible verses has been seen mostly as a school exercise our forebears were forced into by hard school masters.

So perhaps it comes as no surprise that Michael Bird, of Catholic background and quite familiar with the importance of art in religion, should be among the first to research and carefully document that practice of fancy lettering with ornamentation closely connected to Mennonite religious life.

**Ontario Fraktur** includes background information on the 'Fraktur' art form, biographies of many outstanding 'Fraktur' artists along with hundreds of illustrations, as well as a discussion of Mennonite folk art as religious art.

Bird defines 'Fraktur' as a peculiar style of writing or hand-lettering (calligraphy) which grew out of an earlier medieval flowing lettering style. Gradually a more angular, 'fractured' kind of script, or black letter form closely resembling German Gothic, came to be used.

As a basis for his study, Bird focuses on three major Pennsylvania groups; the Ephrata Cloister, the Mennonites and the Schwenkfelders. The practice of 'Fraktur' was carried along with later emigrations, and the author goes on to compare the Pennsylvania groups with three founding Mennonite settlements in Ontario; the Niagara Peninsula, Markham township and Waterloo County.

Bird suggests that 'Fraktur' folk art fulfilled a variety of functions in the community. Skilled calligraphers, usually school masters, copied and illuminated a variety of familiar texts to serve as copybooks for their students. Certificates, family registers, and familiar prayers were carefully lettered and decorated by community 'Fraktur' artists. Book covers and title pages were inscribed and embellished, indicating the author or owner of the material. Examples have been found in Ontario dating back to the late 18th century.

The short biographical sketches of noteworthy artists are very helpful but it raises the problem, as Bird suggests, of where true communal art ends, and individualistic expression of the artist takes

over (a practice frowned on by early Mennonites). In view of this, the author attempts to treat 'Fraktur' art as an unconscious, collective liturgical activity more in keeping with the folk art tradition.

The reproductions of original documents are well chosen and clearly marked for quick reference, although some of them seem to be too small to be of much use. The full color reproductions which greatly enhance Bird's documentation and show more accurately the skill of the artists, are too few and far between. But, with the high cost of printing, the decision of the author/publisher may be well founded.

**Ontario Fraktur** is a well designed and executed book. I would highly recommend it not only for its aesthetics but more importantly as a valuable resource on a rather obscure aspect of our Mennonite heritage.

## Poetry as History

By Peter Pauls

Patrick Friesen, **The Lands I am**. St. John's College, Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1976, 44 p. Paperback. (Out of print)

Patrick Friesen, **Bluebottle**. St. John's College, Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1978. 72 p. Paperback \$5.00

Patrick Friesen, **The Shunning**. St. John's College, Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1980. 105 p. Paperback \$7.00.

On February 26, 1981, poet Patrick Friesen spoke on the topic, "Poetry as History" at the University of Winnipeg. This was the last in the 1980-81 series of public lectures sponsored by the Chair of Mennonite Studies.

During the course of his presentation, Mr. Friesen read from all three of his volumes of poetry published to date: **The Lands I am** (1976), **Bluebottle** (1978), and **The Shunning** (1980). Friesen stressed the point that the poet "comprehends the invisible through the visible." The poet always works with concrete, natural images. The writing of poetry is, therefore, a down-to-earth process.

When the poet writes about the past, he attempts to see the invisible, according to Friesen. Since historians possess only bits and pieces of the past, the poet must fictionalize or invent in order to retrieve some of what has been lost. The poet's aim is to capture what Friesen calls the "true moment", something that is accessible or comprehensible to us today only through the poet's focusing upon a single sometimes insignificant object, person or event. What the poet sees or imagines may well be more true than that which is more readily and more widely perceived as historical fact.

A poem, Friesen said, can also be thought of as a kind of photograph, a frozen moment

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