

Mennonite Historian



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A group of Mennonite pioneers at Renata in 1908-1911. The first ads of *Der Mitarbeiter* announced the sale of 10 to 60 acre lots of Kootenay Fruitland, with a promise to clear land and follow with planting.

Early Mennonites in B.C.: Renata, 1907-1965

By Lawrence Klippenstein

During the years 1874-1880 the first Mennonites of Western Canada established homes and villages in the east and west "reserve" of Manitoba. Emigration from these areas to other parts of Canada, as well as the U.S.A. began almost immediately. Already in 1875 some families from the East Reserve moved to Minnesota, and others, from the Scratching River settlement northwest of Morris, left for Nebraska that same year. Some had stayed in the Fargo area upon arrival in the summer of 1874 and never got to Canada at all.

Departures for the Northwest Territories and regions beyond did not begin till somewhat later. By 1890 a small migration to what became Saskatchewan and Alberta was getting underway. The arrival of additional families directly from Russia soon afterwards also helped to stimulate this movement.¹ Western states such as Oregon were being considered as well.

When the first Mennonites reached British Columbia is not certain. In 1901 the Canadian census registered eleven persons under the "Mennonite" category, a figure which rose to 191 in the federal count of 1911.²

By that date at least two Mennonite settlements had taken firm root in the province, the first of these at a place called Renata, in the Dog Creek area along the Arrow Lakes, with the other appearing near Needles in the Wachun Valley some miles to the north.

The Story of Renata, written by Mary Warkentin and Rose Ann Rahn, who were both of that community, offers interesting glimpses of pioneer Mennonite community life in British Columbia during this period.³

Some excerpts follow:

In 1907 the Western Land Company of Winnipeg, Man. sent Frank F. Siemens,⁴ then of Altona, Man., as their agent to buy all the available land in the Dog Creek area

from Mr. Nash.⁵ This land was then subdivided and advertised for orchard land. Mr. Nash kept his homeplace and some land for his brother Ben Nash and family.

In 1908 on the recommendations of Mr. Nash, Mr. Hitchin and others, the name of Dog Creek was discarded and a contest was sponsored by the Western Land Company for an appropriate name. The winning entry came from a Mr. Hanson⁶ of Altona, Man. who suggested Renata. His prize was a free trip to British Columbia. The meaning of Renata is "Rebirth".

In 1909, first child in the re-named village was born to Mr. and Mrs. Siemens. The parents had named her Judith, but before they had registered the baby's birth Mr. Nash and others asked that she be named after the village . . .

When the first settlers came to Dog Creek, most of the flat was a dense forest with two creeks, Long Creek, changed to Renata Creek and Dog Creek running through the valley.

These settlers came mostly from Herbert and Rosthern, Sask. and a few from Manitoba. They were a hard working lot of Dutch origin and most of them of Mennonite faith.

A lot of clearing and building went on during the first five years, with some of the early dwellings being built of logs, others from lumber brought over from the ghost town of Brooklyn, on the lake to the south of Renata.

There was a continual exchange of properties over the years and some of the first settlers resold to others. In five years time, however, most of the area had been cleared and planted in fruit trees. By 1913 the settlement had taken on the look of a neat village.

Some of the family names of the first large group to come were - Frank F. Siemens, General Manager of the Company that subdivided the village, Peter H. Siemens, Peter Abrams Sr., Peter Abrams, Jr., Aron Abrams, J. Lentzman, Jacob Wiebe, Jacob Loewen, William Born, George Rempel Sr., George Rempel Jr., George Buhler, Abram Friesen, Martin Zacharias, Peter W. Harms, Henry Schapansky, William Nickel, Mrs. Jacob Schwartz and son John and Isaac and George Wiebe, bachelors, and Bernard Friesen . . .

(Cont. on page 2)

Peter Abrams and sons are best remembered for their lumber mill and the following is a copy in part of a letter written June 13, 1965 by Peter P. Abrams Jr. to his brother-in-law, Jake Friesen of Renata. "In Nov. 1909 my brother Aron and myself decided to go to British Columbia to live on our own, so with a railway car loaded with feed, two horses, 50 chickens and all personal belongings we set out for Renata, travelling the last of the way by the S.S. Rossland. When we landed and saw the heavy wooded land I decided to do something else beside clearing and farming. George Wiebe, a bachelor, and myself joined partnership and logged during the winter. The only way we could get the logs to the beach and on the lake was to clean out the creek from fallen logs, so we hired some of the boys to do logging with the horses we had brought from Saskatchewan. George and I blasted along the creek with dynamite to make way for the logs. When spring came we floated them down the creek to the lake, but by this time we had spent all our cash. In 1910 when the logging was done I wrote to my parents that we would not stay in Renata and wished to come back, but on the day my letter was mailed I received a letter from them saying that they had sold and were coming to Renata. This shattered our plans but when we found that we would be able to buy Shannon's store and post-office, we asked our parents for \$1,000.00, bought the store and the parents stayed in Renata for 10 years."

"Aron did not like the store business so he worked on boats on Kootenay Lake. In the meantime the Wiebe brothers influenced my father to start a saw mill. Father built the mill and we sold close to a million feet of it. The company was incorporated with Abram Friesen, J. Friesen, P. Siemens and my Dad, all shareholders. I kept the books and, as far as I know, after the logs bought from us were all sawed the mill stopped operating at that time."

Kootenay Frucht-Land

Wir haben soeben unsere Sub-Division in Renata (Dog Creek), Columbia River (Arrow Lake) ausgemessen und sind jetzt im Stande, Lotten von 10 bis 60 Acker zu verkaufen.

Wir übernehmen uns Land zu klären und zu bepflanzen.
Näheres bei

The M. & W. C. Land Co. Ltd.
Altona, Man.

Notiz!

Alle Arten von Kraftbriefe sowie offizielle Urkunden werden in der Altona Office pünktlich und gewissenhaft ausgeführt wie früher. Schiffsfarten werden verkauft und Geld auf verbessertes Eigentum ausbezahlt.

Meine persönliche Adresse ist jetzt
F. F. Siemens, Phone 302, 609 Cedar St., Nelson, B. C.

The family of Peter W. Harms, of Rosthern, Saskatchewan arrived in Renata May 1910. The land they had purchased was a densely wooded area and a lot of clearing had to be done. This family really pioneered and Mr. Harms did much to help improve development of the village after he got his family settled. The three older boys, William, Peter and Abram, worked along with the father. The two younger boys, Henry and Jake, both died in Renata.

By all appearances Renata became a thriving, one might almost say typically enterprising Mennonite community before long. Under the topic "Stores" in the *Story* we read the following:

A small Co-op store was started by Diedrich Epp, Peter Harms and Jacob Reimer and was located in a root cellar for one and a half years, next to Joseph Gray's home which then belonged to Hugo Young... In 1923 George D. Friesen, son of Diedrich Friesen, bought this co-op stock and his father's property and in 1924 built the present store.

(to be continued)

Note: The ad re: Kootenay Land appeared quite regularly in the 1908 and 1909 issues of *Der Mitarbeiter* which had begun publication at Gretna, Manitoba, in 1906.

New MHC Acquisitions

Collecting and cataloging records, manuscripts, documents, etc. remains an important priority of the archives program at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. New acquisitions of recent months include the following items:

Congregational records of Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba churches. Over twenty congregations have collected and brought in their records for microfilming during the past two summers. The project is expected to continue next summer.

Paul Esau papers and artifacts. These derive for the most part from the period 1900-1925 in Russia, and include a number of documents related to the life and work of Paul's father, J. J. Esau, who was at one time mayor of Ekaterinoslav and director of supplies for the Red Cross in southern Russia during W.W.I.

Twenty-three documents from the archives of the foreign office of the Bundesrepublik Deutschland. These are related to the emigration of Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union to Germany during the years 1929-1932. They were acquired in duplicate, courtesy of the Mennonite archives in Fernheim, Chaco, Paraguay.

John Dyck papers. This collection received as duplicate on microfilm, includes a number of letters of Russian Mennonites, written to Canadian relatives in Manitoba between 1900 and 1930.

Elim Bible Institute records, Altona, Manitoba. Included are student records, correspondence, early board minutes, etc., as well as a large number of German books from the library.

Back numbers of various Mennonite newspapers, including *Steinbach Post* (1923 ff.), *Gospel Herald* (Vol. 1, 1908 ff.), *Christlicher Bundesbote* (1882 ff.) and *The Mennonite* (1887 ff.).

Cassette tape recordings of the Reinfeld, Manitoba centennial celebration, the Winkler 75th homecoming program and the CO anniversary celebration of September 27, 1980.

If you have any materials - books, newspapers, letters, documents, diaries, etc., especially in the German language, which you would like to deposit in the archives call Lawrence Klippenstein, collect, at the archives of the Heritage Centre (1-204-888-6781), and a transfer will be arranged.

Der Bote on Microfilm

Der Bote will be completing sixty years of continuous publication in the not too distant future. It has been a widely read source of information and inspiration, and its historical materials have been a special feature of its columns as well. The collection of a complete run, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and the publication of an index to the years 1924-1947, have helped to make these materials accessible to researchers and others.

A further aid to the use of *Der Bote* is the microfilm of the entire collection, Vol. 1-57, 1924-1980. Making it was a task undertaken by the Saskatchewan Archives at the University of Regina this past summer. Provincial archivist Ian Wilson recently reported to the Heritage Centre that this run is now available on twenty-one 35 mm rolls which can be purchased singly or in a set, at approximately \$20.00 a roll. It will be a real boon for libraries and archives who have found it impossible so far to get a set of the originals in any form.

For further information about these microfilm materials write to: Saskatchewan Archives, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan. To order the index write to Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4. The cost is \$12.00 with postage extra. The Centre also has a large collection of duplicate issues of *Der Bote* from about 1950 on. They can be had for the cost of shipping and handling, at the address given above.

Russo-Ukrainian Mennonite Studies



Courtesy of G. G. Dueck, Springstein, Manitoba.

These people gathered at the first Canadian reunion of one-time "forsteiers" in Russia, held at Camp Assiniboia near Winnipeg in June, 1951. The men had served in the forestry camps at Anadol and Azov, possibly just before or during World War I, where the very first of such Mennonite CO units in south Russia had begun their term of alternative service in the spring of 1881.

Only a few of these individuals could still attend the centennial celebration for CO's serving in Russia, held on September 27 at the Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They were joined by dozens of others who had served in non-combatant capacities under the Soviets after 1917, or in Canada beginning in 1941 and then the remaining years of World War II. Dr. Harry Loewen, University of Winnipeg and Dr. Bill Janzen of the MCC office in Ottawa spoke at the gathering.

FLASH!

The centre for M.B. Studies at Fresno, California, has just published *Die Mennoniten Brudergemeinde in Russland, 1925-1980* written by Heinrich and Gerhard Woelk. The paperback volume has 229 pages, and is already out of print. If you would like to see a reprint contact Vic Schmidt, Christian Press, 159 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, Man.

Professor Paul Tiessen of the Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, recently met with a small group of interested persons in the Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba to talk about his upcoming book on the photography of Peter Rempel, Rosenthal, of the Old Colony in the Ukraine. The book will be available in late October under the title: *Forever Summer, Forever Sunday: Peter Gerhard Rempel's Photographs of Mennonites in Russia, 1890-1917*. It will be cloth bound, with 144 pages of 70 large photographs by Rempel, 24 by others, and an introduction by John Rempel. The cost is \$17.95. Look for your copy in a local bookstore, or the Mennonite Heritage Centre.



Attend a lecture

by Dr. Paul Tiessen on

**THE PHOTOGRAPHER AS POET:
PETER GERHARD REMPEL AND
MENNONITE FICTIONS IN
RUSSIA (1890-1917)**

Place: University of Winnipeg
Room 431 Manitoba Hall
Theatre A

Time: Friday, November 27, 1981
8:00 p.m.

Sponsored by
**The Chair of Mennonite Studies
University of Winnipeg
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Admission Free

About The Koslowskys

By Agatha Ratzlaff

Part III

Peter P. Koslowsky (1885-1971), my uncle, was born as the first child to Peter J. and Katharina (Krause) Koslowsky, on September 24, 1885 in Alt Kronsweide. He was married May 5, 1911 in Sergejewka to Agatha Kasper, born November 17, 1889 in Sergejewka, the daughter of Heinrich and Helena Kasper. In Russia Peter was employed as a cabinet maker by Neufeld's factory in Sergejewka. Peter and Agatha with their three oldest children emigrated to Canada in 1926; arriving here November 4, 1926. They settled in Niverville, Manitoba, where they lived as long as they were in Canada. From 1926 to 1947 they farmed near Niverville, and in 1947 they retired to the town. Peter was a Credit Union manager for about seven or eight years. After that he served as Town Treasurer for about three years. Peter died at home on September 23, 1971; and his wife Agatha died November 5, 1971 in the hospital, six weeks after her husband's death.

Their five children are: Mary, (Mrs. Isaak Braun) of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Peter (m. to Betty Falk) also of Winnipeg; Helen, also of Winnipeg; Johnny (m. to Helen Kasdorf); Annie (Mrs. Henry Isaac). They all are very musically talented and actively involved in church work, particularly in choirwork. Peter P. Koslowsky is a nationally known tenor, having sung at numerous music festivals and similar occasions across Canada. He has also been frequently heard as a guest artist on the CBC Radio Network. Besides being interested in music, the family also enjoys sports. The children of Isaak and Mary Braun are also all very much involved in music. Irene (Mrs. Jake Enns) teaches music in a large school in Edmonton; Bill and Irmgard (Braun) Baerg are teaching at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg; Peter Braun and Ken Epp (m. to Connie Braun) are teaching music, Choir and Orchestra in the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg; Connie (Braun) Epp is Superintendent at Yamaha Music School; and Roy Steiner (m. to Eleanor Braun) is a manager at Yamaha. John Braun manages a Firestone store in Dauphin, Manitoba.

Irmgard Braun Baerg was the pianist at the Mennonite Saengerfest commemorating the 450th Anniversary of the Mennonite Faith at the Centennial Concert Hall in Winnipeg, Manitoba on October 27th, 1975, and her husband Bill Baerg was the conductor. Irmgard is a concert pianist who received both her A.M.M. and A.R.C.T. in performance as a teenager in Winnipeg. She completed three years of advanced study on government grants in Detmold, Germany. Further studies were continued with Leon Gleisher in Baltimore and were supported by two Canada Council grants. Besides having taught advanced piano students at the Men-

nonite Brethren Bible College she has been heard repeatedly with the C.B.C.'s Toronto and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras, and also in solo performances.

My uncle, **Johann P. Koslowsky** (1887-1952), was born January 1, 1887 in Neuhorst as the second child of Peter J. and Katharina (Krause) Koslowsky. He was married March 25, 1912 in Sergejewka to Mary Neufeld, the daughter of Kornelius and Anna (Janzen) Neufeld, who was born December 29, 1893 in Sergejewka. Johann was employed by his father-in-law in the Neufeld Factory as master over all the other employees. He worked in the locksmith trade, and learned the trade of watchmaking also. His father-in-law died in 1917. The following year the family fled to Germany, where they lived for three years in Kornwestheim. Johann got a job in the only watchmaking business in the small city, which provided a substantial income for the family, having learned the trade of watchmaking in Russia. In 1922 they emigrated to Canada, living in Herbert, Saskatchewan for three years and then settling in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Johann found a good place of employment as watchmaker at Eaton's. They prospered in Winnipeg. On December 4, 1952 the Lord suddenly called Johann home, without pain or suffering, in his home. His wife Mary died in the Menno Hospital in Abbotsford, B.C., August 20, 1974.

Their three children were: John (m. to Lydia Thiessen) of Abbotsford, B.C.; Anna (Mrs. Bill Neufeld) of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Mary (Mrs. Peter Klassen) of Abbotsford, B.C. They too have all been very actively involved in music. John, who died in October 29, 1975, was a well known soloist in Abbotsford. He was foreman of the composing room of the **Abbotsford, Sumas and Matsqui News**, a weekly local newspaper, since 1963 until his passing. His children, Annita (Mrs. Melvin Epp), Herb (m. to Ruth Friesen), Harold (m. to Martha Klassen), and Lois are also all involved in musical functions. Bob Neufeld, the son of Bill and Anna (Koslowsky) Neufeld is occupied in sales with Kitchen Craft in Edmonton, Alberta; and Lynda Neufeld, his sister, teaches Voice (Music) in the Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

(to be continued)

VS Vacation in the Archives

By Olga Rempel

Whoever would take a vacation in Winnipeg, I often asked myself. Summer is such a beautiful season in Ontario. This year, however, I was pleasantly surprised. The weather here has been most pleasant, not only in August, but in September also - almost always the clear blue sky and sunshine with it as well. Just right for threshing, it seemed.

How I did enjoy these days especially during the noon hours on the lawn of the Mennonite Heritage Centre! A distinct scent of

ripe cornfields was in the air. The smell of crops brought back long-forgotten memories. I would have loved to ride a swather-combine on the fields again. Then I could have seen again how the ears of grain would be gripped by the wings, laying them flat on the platform, in minutes to appear as grain in the bin.

Such golden grains are the bread of life for the whole world. But it cannot be. In front of me looms the structure of the Heritage Centre. Its style is unique, its architecture definitely modern, I would say, distinctive. Only the tall and slanting pointed shingle roof reminds me of the sheds in the villages. What these large old buildings could not hide away inside!

The same is true of the archives building. Under its roof one finds many historical treasures. Incredibly much has found its way to the archives since it opened a few years ago. Sorting, organizing and cataloging the materials requires a good deal of time, energy and thought.

When I have any questions for Mr. Klippenstein, he knows at once what to say. The long aisles with their many boxes in the stack room create in me a feeling of awe. Every name represents a life and destiny of an individual. Many of them have lived out the faith of their fathers, and passed it on to the next generation. Many have suffered and died for their faith. Will our generation be able to do the same.

My task at the moment is to index the 1974 volume of **Der Bote**. As one places each article under the various topical categories, one is moved to think about the many points of view they take. How varied are the opinions of these writings, sometimes in fact a controversy or debate. I am always amazed how Peter B. Wiens, long-time editor, understood how to deal with the various opinions so wisely and well.

Here at the Centre I have also come to appreciate conversations I have had with CMBC students, many of whom have an awakened interest in the Mennonite story. They can appreciate the fact that one must know one's past to have self-understanding now. Looking backwards, yes, but not to become stagnant, rather to be planning for the future and work toward that end.

The archives has a section for genealogical study too. The late A. A. Vogt of Steinbach, Manitoba began this work. It is being carried on now with the help of his daughter, Mrs. Margaret Kroeker, and her sister, Mrs. Hanna Rempel, both of Winnipeg at present. Many who are doing a family study, will be able to find information here.

My vacation time is almost over, and I take another look at the slanting roof of shingles, to notice the clock which I had not mentioned before. It is embedded in the peak of the A-frame front, without numerals, and at the moment showing exactly two p.m.

My holidays were a good experience, indeed.

Mennonites in the U.S.A.

The Mennonite Experience in America

For six years, the Mennonite Experience in America history project has been brewing. Now the project has been moved to the front burner. The people who have committed themselves to the work of research and writing are at it. The impetus for this projected four-volume work comes from the North American Mennonite Church's tricentennial observances to be celebrated in 1983.

The research writers were all working during the past summer. James Juhnke did research in Goshen, Ind., and Eastern Mennonite College's library and archives.

Theron Schlabach spent six weeks in Kansas, interrupting his work when his family made a weekend visit. Most of his work time he spent at the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, plus some days at Tabor College's Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies. His purpose was to delve into primary sources telling the story of Mennonite immigrations from Russia, Prussia, and Poland in the 1870s and 80s.

While Schlabach was in Kansas, Paul Toews of Fresno, Calif., went to Goshen for a stint of monkish work in both the Mennonite Historical Library and the Mennonite Church Archives. He studied especially the work of the Mennonite Church's general conference in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Meanwhile, Richard MacMaster was writing. By August, he put several chapters of his work on the project editor's desk. He had several more in process and expressed confidence that he could finish volume one on schedule. This is to appear in print before the tricentennial in 1983.

Theron Schlabach, Goshen, Ind., is project editor.—Adapted from the August 1981 *Occasional News Notes* and the *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 29, 1981.

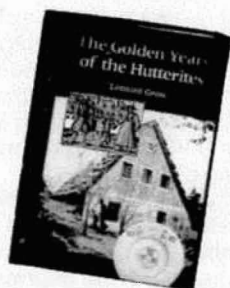
Shun

Shun is a "tongue-in-cheek" periodical printed four times a year by The Society to Preserve Mennonite Traditions, "printing things you just wouldn't see in *The Mennonite*, *Gospel Herald* or *Christian Leader*". The associate editors, LeRoy Goertz, Robert Hoffman and Allan Claassen say, "We welcome submissions from our readers for publication, preferably with a humorous slant".

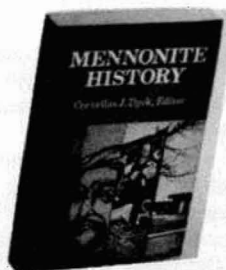
If interested, write to SHUN, 1009 N. Buffalo, Portland, Oregon, 97217.



Richard K. MacMaster, Samuel L. Horst, and Robert F. Ulle, eds. *Conscience in Crisis: Mennonites and other Peace Churches in America, 1739-1789: Interpretation and documents.* Scottsdale, PA, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1979. 575 pp., \$17.95 (U.S.), \$20.80 (Can.).



Leonard Gross. *The Golden Years of the Hutterites. The Witness and Thought of the Communal Moravian Anabaptists During the Walpot Era, 1565-1578.* Scottsdale, PA., and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1980. 263 pp., \$12.95 (U.S.), \$15.00 (Can.).



Cornelius J. Dyck. *An Introduction to Mennonite History. A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites.* Scottsdale, PA. and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981. A revised and enlarged edition. First published 1967. Now has 460 pp. with paper back edition priced \$9.95 (U.S.) and \$11.95 (Can.).

Mennonite German Writings: Bibliography

The Heritage Commission of the General Conference Mennonite Church has just published *Mennonitengeschichte und Literatur. Eine Buecherliste*, with recommended books for church libraries, and others interested in German Mennonite materials. The booklet is a supplement to an earlier list of recommended English-language Mennonite writings, compiled by C. J. Dyck with Maynard Shelly, and published a few years ago.

The sixteen-page *Buecherliste* attempts to include all Canadian Mennonite books in the German language still known to be in print, and for sale. A few from West Germany have been added also. For each title a brief annotation describes the theme, and the entry has an address for ordering as well. Besides noting literary and historical writings, the book includes titles on genealogy.

For copies write to Heritage Commission, 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas, 67114, U.S.A., or Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4, Canada.

Mennonite Library and Archives Notes

The Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton Kansas has just published *A Guide to the Mennonite Library and Archives*. (It is a record of contents for about 125 manuscript collections which have been indexed and catalogued). It lists all the manuscript collections of the MLA, provides a register for the first 100 collections, and has an index to subjects and individuals mentioned in these collections. It also has an outline for each of the six record groups used to organize the remaining archival holdings of the total collection.

Dr. David Haury, author of the *Guide* is now a full-time archivist, and acting director, of MLA while Dr. Robert Kreider is on sabbatical for the coming year. The guide is dedicated to John F. Schmidt, archivist for the period of 1947-1981, and recently retired.

Among other things, MLA is the official archival depository for the General Conference Mennonite Church, the records of which are in 1278 boxes and five four drawer filing cabinets at this location.

MLA's most recent issue of a newsletter, *Gleanings from the Threshing Floor*, notes that cataloging photographs will be a special emphasis for 1981-82, and that John F. Schmidt has compiled a new index to the passenger lists of ships bringing Mennonites to the United States in the 19th century.

Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

The Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. has its head office at 2825 Clearbrook Rd., Clearbrook, B.C. V2T 2Z3. In cooperation with the Golden Age Society it publishes a newsletter called **Menno's Memo Insert**. The latest issue on our desk invites readers to deposit material for the newly-founded archives of the Society. Wanted are family histories, church and community histories, books about Mennonites, back numbers of Mennonite publications, and yearbooks of conferences, the M.E.I., C.B.I. and the former Bethel Bible School at Abbotsford.

The museum is looking for handicrafts, kitchen utensils used in the past, and old furniture, as well as many other items.

G.I. Peters, chairman of the society writes: "I have to share with you our concern that with renovation of the premises, displaying the articles, building tables and show cases, enlarging the photos, our finances are taxed to the limit. . . . We would appreciate donations to help us make the Museum and archives an attractive and more inviting place for our visitors."

Membership (life-long) in the Society costs \$5.00, and income tax receipts will be given for donations.

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan - Alberta

Members and friends of the MHSA are invited to attend a Mennonite studies seminar to be held at the Nutana Park Mennonite Church on Saturday, November 28th.

The program will give opportunity to share information about research projects in progress, and to become informed about historical and literary activities throughout the country. A display of recent and new Mennonite books may be available also.

Addresses and reports will include a presentation of Dr. Adolf Ens of Canadian Mennonite Bible College on early education among Saskatchewan Mennonites. Updates about archival holdings of Mennonite materials in Saskatchewan are expected as well.

For further information call Dick Epp, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at (306) 343-1238. Epp is chairman of MHSSA for the current term. Details about the program will be mailed to members and publicized elsewhere shortly.

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

MHSC is currently trying to complete the publication of the second volume of **Mennonites in Canada**. 1982 is now set as the target year for the work to appear in print. Projections are to cover the period from 1920- ca. 1940, with consideration of a third

volume possible. Further plans will be finalized at the next annual meeting of the Society in early December, to be held at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario. Dr. Frank H. Epp is author of the first two volumes.

The archives committee has been discussing the production of an audiovisual which would tell the story of archives centres and their function in Mennonite communities.

With the joining of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, MHSC now includes the membership of five provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. Hopefully the Mennonite communities of Quebec and the Maritime provinces can ultimately be included as well.

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

With the virtual completion of incorporation, MMHS has now basically finished its reorganization, and is working actively to develop program. The Research Committee is considering the publication of more documents, while the Historic Sites committee has completed the listing of about 85 cemeteries in southern Manitoba communities. At a recent board meeting (October 19) the Arts and Inter-Deixiplinary Committee reported on its involvement at the summer Folklorama activities where it set up a display. Membership has levelled off at just under 130, including 10 who are out of the province of Manitoba.

An all-day seminar, with membership business meeting is being planned for Saturday, November 28th. Members will receive special notices, and further information will be forthcoming shortly.

The soon-to-be published books on Niverville, Blumenfeld, and the Hanover Municipality (Centennial issue) are eagerly awaited by many, and the anniversary community celebrations of Reinfeld, Winkler, the RM of Hanover, and the Morden Berghaler Mennonite Church were events of importance as well.

Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario News

A new film "Trail of the Conestoga" will be shown at the Rockway Mennonite Collegiate auditorium in Kitchener on Friday, November 13th.

Persons interested in Mennonite family history and genealogy met in the Board room at Conrad Grebel College on October 15th. Persons wishing more details may contact Allan Dettweiler at ph. 1-519-664-2351, or by writing to him c/o Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

Sam Steiner, archivist and chairman of MHSO, as well as his wife, Sue are presently

The materials on this page are provided by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

studying at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

About 100 former residents of Reesor, Ontario held a reunion on August 9, 1981 at the St. Williams forestry farm. According to the report of Cornelius Penner, another reunion is planned for next year.

Indexing the Rundschau

The Centre of MB Studies in Winnipeg received another Federal grant this summer enabling it to continue indexing the **Mennonitische Rundschau**. This grant was received from the Summer student Employment Program of the department of Multiculturalism.

Employed under the grant were Anna Lee Lepp, formerly from Steinbach, Manitoba (an Honours student in German and History) together with Harry Loewen Jr., a doctoral student from Winnipeg who will be completing his studies in Germany this fall.

With the efforts of these students an index has now been prepared for the years 1920-1931. At the present it is only available for use in the Centre. However, plans are that when the indexing has been completed for the years 1920-1939 this material will be published in book form for use in other libraries and archives.

During the months of January to April the initial beginnings of the project were furthered by the work of Christine Penner who carried the index through the years 1926, 1927, and half of 1928. She concluded her final report (cf **Mennonite Reporter**, July 13, 1981, p. 8) with the following comment; "In my opinion, the **Rundschau** is one of the best resources available to us for the study of Russian Mennonites in North America".

That makes all the more significant the project of microfilming the entire run which is being co-ordinated at the Mennonite Historical Library in Goshen, Indiana, and which hopefully can be completed next year.

Ken Reddig



Christine Penner

CMBC

publications

price list

Heritage Remembered. 2nd ed. (1977)
By Gerhard Lohrenz

Enlarged and revised. 300 pp. Includes a number of new photos and maps, an index, as well as short essays on Mennonite life in Russia and Prussia 15.00

Wer Nimmt Uns Auf? (1977)
By Olga Rempel

A 29-page trilingual drama about Mennonite immigration to Canada. Suitable for amateur drama groups 2.00

Der Bote Index Vol. 1 1924-1947 (1976)
Eds. Peter Rempel and Adolf Ens.

A 262-page bilingual index to the 1924-47 volumes of Der Bote 12.00

Das Maerchen vom Weihnachtsmann
By Johannes H. Janzen (1975)
Edited by Waldemar Janzen.

Reprint of a 36-page Mennonite Fairy Tale complete with original illustrations to color 2.50

Canticles and Psalms (1979)
By Esther Wiebe

Seventeen settings of Scripture themes for church choirs 3.25

Fill My House (1975)
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Call to Faithfulness (1972)
Eds. Henry Poettcker and Rudy Regehr

Twenty essays on Mennonite history and thought 1.00

Just When We Were . . . (1978)
Edited by Irene Friesen Petkau

A 60-page seventy-fifth anniversary pictorial album on the Conference of Mennonites in Canada 6.00

Walk Humbly with Your God (1979)
By William Janzen

Twelve sermons preached by the author in the Ottawa Mennonite Church 5.00

Immer Weiter nach Osten (1981)
By Abram J. Loewen, and edited by Gerhard Ens

The story of Lili Goossen's seventeen-year trek from Russia through China to Canada with several families which left the Soviet Union in 1929 6.50

Waffen der Wehrlosen (1980)
Edited by Hans Rempel and George K. Epp

Accounts of alternative service by CO's in the Soviet Union, during the period 1920-1935 9.00

Einer von Vielen (1979)
By Olga Rempel

A biography of Aron P. Toews, exiled minister in the Soviet Union, including a diary from Siberia where he died 10.00

Go Ye (1980)
By Esther Wiebe

A cantata for mixed choir, soloists and congregation 3.25

All items except Heritage Remembered are paperback editions.

Available at:
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Or

CMBC Publications
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
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Book Reviews

Lehn, Cornelia, **Peace Be With You**, Newton, Kansas. Faith and Life Press, 1980. 126 pp, illus. Hardcover, \$11.95 (Can.) Reviewed by LaVerna Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"I don't get into fights anymore," said Jerry when he walked in from school. Jerry is more at peace with himself too. The most useful aid in helping Jerry handle his anger this year has been a book.

In **Peace Be With You** Cornelia Lehn tells fifty-nine fascinating stories of people who returned good for evil, who cared instead of killed, who showed loved instead of hate.

They lived in Alexandria and Alberta, in Russia and Japan, in New York and in Newton. They spoke English and Armenian, French and Irish, German and Dutch and many other languages, but they all lived the language of love.

The stories are arranged chronologically from the first century to the present and are with few exceptions well-researched accounts of actual experiences, told with a directness which leaves the reader with a clear understanding of their powerful message.

Included in this anthology are the familiar stories of Michael Sattler and Elizabeth Dirks as well as stories of Mathilda Wrede and her experience in a Finland jail and the story of Aron P. Toews in a Soviet prison.

"History has been generous in providing a legacy of war stories," writes Harold Regier in the foreword. This book is evidence that there is also a strong legacy of peace stories. It is an excellent resource for parents and teachers to help them share the way of peace with children and youth."

Our family found **Peace Be With You** to be an absorbing book for family worship (we're ages 10 to 50) and have already given eight gift copies to friends for use in their homes.

Toews, John A. **People of the Way: Selected Essays and Addresses**, ed. by Abe J. Dueck, Herbert Giesbrecht, and Allen R. Guenther; Winnipeg, Manitoba: Historical Committee, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1981. 245 pp. Hardcover. \$10.00 Reviewed by Dennis Stoesz, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Abe Dueck writes in the foreword that the main purpose for publishing the sermons of the late John A. Toews (1912-1979) is "in its potential for further instruction and edification of the church" (p. ix).

One of the concerns of Toews is that the church continue to be nurtured by the Word of God. As radical Bible readers, Christians are able to discern correct doctrines, able to build a strong fellowship, and able to become educated in the ways of Christ. Education for the laity of the church in general is also important for Toews, and his many years as an educator at Mennonite Brethren Bible

College attests to this commitment.

Toews' second concern is that the church maintain a strong brotherhood, succumbing neither to local church autonomy nor to non-evangelical ecumenism and non-denominationalism. For a model of this "believers' church", Toews points to the early Christian church and to the Anabaptists. Naturally, Toews centres his thought specifically on the history and identity of the Mennonite Brethren church, in which he himself was a preacher and teacher all his life. He sees this church as part of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and as being influenced by the Pietistic movement in the nineteenth century. Two of his essays, however, that he is also aware of the wider Mennonite family.

Toews also writes provocatively about peace and non-resistance. He is wary of pacifism based on liberal principles, but fully supports a Christian and biblical non-resistance. Consistent with this peace stance, Toews maintains a strong separation between church and state for the Christian's personal and intergroup relationships (p. 166). On the one hand, this stance enables him to criticize the strong patriotic stance and anti-Communist propaganda espoused by many evangelicals. On the other hand this duality allows Toews to be conservative in his ethics toward the state and the world in general: he only addresses political and socio-economic problems in the world at a personal level for the Christian. Ultimately, for Toews, Christ transcends any political or economic system (p. 159).

The format of the book is as appealing as the content. The three editors have appropriately chosen "the church" as the main theme of this book and have grouped the essays under five subheadings. David Ewert has included a twenty-five page biography of Toews in which he summarizes Toews' life and traces his activities as a churchman. Herb Giesbrecht has included a bibliography of Toews' writings, which date mostly from 1947-1979.

These sermons make for enjoyable reading for anyone concerned about the church. One would hope that in the future one will be able to read sermons of ministers from other Mennonite traditions, particularly those less known and understood. We might yet come to appreciate the wider Mennonite brotherhood.

Book Notes

*Hofer, Joshua. **Japanese Hutterites. A visit to Owa Community**, Elie, Manitoba, James Valley Book Centre, 106 pp, pb. \$5.00. The author, a senior resident of the James Valley Hutterite colony west of Winnipeg, has shared portions of his travel diary written on a visit to the Owa New Hutterian Brethren Church of Owa in Japan. With a German text, the volume also includes, in English translation, a number of excerpts from comments by Japanese Hutterites,

some of whom have visited Canada in recent years. Nearly a dozen color and other photos, as well as a scholarly bibliography help to provide what will probably be for most Canadians, and others, a first introduction to the Hutterites of Japan.

Loewen, Abram J. **Wechselvolle Pfade. Gedichte**, Clearbrook, B.C., 1980, 67 pp, pb. ... **Ein jegliches hat Seine Zeit (Pred. 3:1). Betrachtungen und Aufzeichnungen**, (1981), 140 pp, pb.

The two collections of Loewen's writings "im Selbstverlag", i.e. privately published, represent a substantial portion of the author's work over a decade or more. They may be ordered from the author at 2781 Centennial St., Clearbrook, B.C. V2T 2V4. His more substantial work, **Immer Weiter Nach Osten. Russland - China - Kanada** (1981) hopefully will be reviewed in the next issue of MH.

Reimer, Peter. **Wir Waren mit Dabei. Erinnerungen eines alten Kommunisten**. Alms Ata, Kazakhstan, Verlag Kasachstan, 1977. 100 pp, pb. 15 kopeks.

An untold chapter of the Mennonite story in Russia and the Soviet Russia has to do with those who became a part of the new system and joined the Communist Party. Here is a brief glimpse into the life and thought of someone who left the Mennonite community to become one of the Reds. Though autobiographical in structure, the book makes reference to exploitation of workers, and also the way in which numerous Germans (including Mennonites) sought to do their share of building up a Soviet nation. The book is not available in Canada, but can be checked at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Foth, Maria. **Beyond the Border. Maria's Miraculous Pilgrimage**, published this year by G.R. Welch Co. Ltd. of Burlington, Ontario offers another fascinating account of a Mennonite trek from Soviet Russia and Germany in the 1940s. It includes several chapters about life in the Soviet Union between the wars. The paperback volume has 140 pages, and costs \$8.95 (Canadian).

Articles of Interest

Wiebe, Armin, "Kicking Against the Pricks" in **Manitoba Stories**, edited by Joan Parr. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Queenston House Publishing, 1981, pp. 129-138.

Carlyle, William Jr. "Mennonite Agriculture in Manitoba", in **Canadian Ethnic Studies**, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1981, pp. 73-97.

Redekop, Margaret Falk, "Translated into the Past: Language in the Blue Mountains of China," in **A Voice in the Land. Essays By and About Rudy Wiebe**, edited by W.J. Keith. Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Press, 1981, pp. 97-125.