

# Mennonite Historian



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*A Sunday school picnic of the Chinook-Sedalia congregation. The date was July 19, 1932. Sunday School teacher G. G. Baergen is with the group. Photo courtesy of Irene Klassen.*

## The Neukircher Mennoniten Gemeinde von Chinook-Sedalia (1928-1950)

By Irene Epp Klassen

Who can say of any life, a person, a community, or a congregation, that it was lived in vain? The **Neukircher Mennoniten (Kirchliche) Gemeinde von Chinook-Sedalia** was born, budded and died, perhaps a premature death. But can it be said that it bore no fruit?

This is my tribute to a congregation of which I was a part, and which left its imprint on me.

When, in the mid-1920s, the newly arrived Mennonite immigrants sought farms in western Canada, there was an area in eastern Alberta that became available. It extended from the Saskatchewan border between the main CNR Saskatoon to Calgary line, through Chinook, in the south, and the CPR line through Consort in the north - a span of about 40 miles. In 1926 the CNR built a spur line which dissected the area at Sedalia, and although the train ran only once a week, it did improve communication and especially grain shipment tremendously.

The area had been settled about 20 years earlier. However, being just within the boundary of the infamous Palliser Triangle, it had

already shown its vacillating climatic moods, and discouraged pioneers were now eager to sell. Some of them were also eager to take advantage of these "ignorant greenhorns" and they did just that.

The terms of purchase - no cash down-payment, half the crop share for up to 15 years, plus taxes, plus seed, plus all other expenses - seemed reasonable enough in those first good years. Later they proved quite disastrous.

Before long over 300 Mennonites (about 50 families) had purchased farms either through the Colonization Board or privately. Addresses included Chinook, Cereal, Excel, Naco, Sedalia, New Brigden, Esther, and Monitor.

On March 14, 1928, the first brotherhood meeting was called and the **Neukircher Mennoniten Gemeinde von Chinook-Sedalia** was born. William Martens, who had been largely responsible for collecting all the loosely-grouped and scattered people, was given the leadership. Other ministers in the group at that time were Heinrich Janzen, Cornelius

Penner, and Gerhard Huebert. Four more were elected: George Harder, Heinrich Dueck, Peter Regehr, and David Boese.

Rather than choose their own elder at this point, it was decided to call on Jacob B. Wiens, Herschel, Saskatchewan to perform those duties designated only to elders, i.e. baptism and communion.

Deacons were elected - Gerhard J. Baergen, and Tobias Schmidt (also later Gerhard Schmidt) - and these were given the responsibility of gathering and distributing the mission funds. A large portion of these were sent to Russia, but there was also some need within the congregation.

**Vorsaenger** (song-leaders) were an important part of the worship, and the first ones chosen were Gerhard Schmidt and Heinrich Voth. The hymn books that were available were the **Gesangbuch** with its chorales, and the **Dreiband**, a three part collection of somewhat livelier songs. It seems that the preacher chose whichever he preferred. He would read a line or two and the **Vorsaenger** would start the singing, the preacher read the next few lines and so on throughout the numerous verses. Even without notes, or any instrumental accompaniment, the congregation always sang in four-part harmony, and they sang well.

With high hopes and in great faith, a fully-responsible congregation stepped forth.

Because of the great distances, two major sub-divisions were created, the South at Chinook and the North at Sedalia. These people had come from many and varied backgrounds in Russia, each person with his own ideals, so during the following years internal struggles did exist.

Although the group was mainly General Conference, the Mennonite Brethren and the Alliance were also represented, and their preachers, G. Harder, G. Huebert and C. Penner, were generally accepted. Some of the mission funds were divided among the Conferences; there was even a baptism service for the Mennonite Brethren; **Bibelbesprechungen** (Bible studies) were conducted by ministers from both conferences. Some rivalry arose at times, but the people sought to settle differences amicably, since their chosen motto stated: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

*(to be concluded)*

## Family Studies

### MHC Genealogy Sources

#### Conclusion

*The first section of this article appeared in the June, 1982 issue of Mennonite Historian.*

#### Maps

These help to pinpoint origins, and create background information for family studies.

#### Genealogical Publications

German Mennonites like B.H. Unruh, G. Reimer, K. Kauenhofen, etc. have published useful studies on Mennonite families and names. Unruh's valuable book on the Dutch-Prussian backgrounds of the Mennonites in Russia is still available at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College bookstore. The Centre also subscribes to several genealogical journals which are very helpful sometimes.

#### Mennonite Historical Library at C.M.B.C.

This may be the largest collection of Mennonite history materials in Canada. Most of it can be used on loan from the library, and offers a broad selection of information for background materials on family studies.

**Titles useful for family studies:** (brackets show what MHC Archives has on hand).

**Archiv fuer Sippenforschung** (1961-1968) Baxter, Angus. **In Search of Your Roots. A Guide for Canadians Seeking Their Ancestors.** Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1978.

**Clues** (published by the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia - 1973-present).

Doane, Gilbert H. **Searching for Your Ancestors. The How and Why of Genealogy** (Bantam Books, 1974). Paperback.

Jonasson, Eric. **The Canadian genealogical handbook: a comprehensive guide to finding your ancestors in Canada.** Winnipeg, Wheatfield Press, 1978.

**Mennonite Family History** (1982- ) **Mitteilungen des Sippenbandes der Danziger Mennoniten Familien** (1926-1939?).

Unruh, B.H. **Die niederlaendisch-nieder-deutschen Hintergruende der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahr hundert.** (Karlsruhe, Germany, (1955).

For further details write for an article entitled "Canadian Sources for Mennonite Genealogies - The Mennonite Heritage Centre," available free from the Mennonite Heritage Centre archives, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Can. R3P 0M4.

### U of M Genealogy Course

The Continuing Education Division of the University of Manitoba will be offering a genealogy course beginning on February 7, 1983. The course will continue for 10 weeks, Monday nights from 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

As an introductory course, the study is designed to "provide a basic grounding in genealogical research, with emphasis on beginning and organizing the research process." Eric Jonasson, founder and past president of the Manitoba Genealogical Society will be the instructor. Tuition is \$65.00.

If interested, please contact Dr. James B. Hartman or Eilain Stevenson at the Continuing Education Division. Call 261-5760 or toll free 1-800-432-1904.

### More on Reunions

A Stoesz reunion (descendants of six Stoesz's who came to Manitoba 1874-80, Mary, Anna, Katharina, Jacob, Cornelius and David) was celebrated on June 19-20, 1982 at the Winkler Bible School. It was planned by Mary Wiebe of Portage la Prairie and Ed Stoesz of Winnipeg. George Unger of Morton, Ill. has collected much material on most of the lines of Cornelius and Jacob.

The H. A. Dyck family held a reunion on August 14-15 in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. The Dyck family formerly resided at Waldheim, Sask. Among the guests were persons from Indiana and Omaha, Nebraska.

In Edenthal, Manitoba, the grandchildren of the late Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Wiebe met last summer at the Rempel home. About 600 Wiebe cousins attended, some from as far away as St. John, N.B.

### Research Requests

I am looking for information about the family of Cornelius Huebert (1835-1897). We know that he was born at Schoenwiese in Ukraine, and that he married Anna Wiebe, a widow with four girls from an earlier marriage. Any pictures, or other information about the C. Huebert family would be very helpful.

If you have anything, please write to:

**Victor Huebert**  
R.R.2  
Ruthven, Ontario  
N0P 2G0

I am looking for information about the performance of a song entitled "Manitoba" in the Legislative Buildings around 1927. I understand that a Mennonite group, possibly school children, sang this song in that setting. The song was composed by Jonathan

Hughes Arnett in 1922 as a theme song for the province of Manitoba. It appears to have been taught in many schools after that.

If you were taught that song, and remember it, or if you can tell me something about that performance at the Legislative Building, write to:

Ed Thornhill  
c/o Manitoba Seniors Journal  
1102 Childs Bldg.  
211 Portage Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2A2

P.S. The melody and words of "Manitoba" were reprinted in Manitoba Seniors Journal for Autumn, 1982, p. 6. Samples of the reprint are available on request. Enclose a stamped envelope for an answer.

#### FOR SALE

##### First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon 1932-1982

The history of the congregation from its early beginnings to the present. 320 p., 307 photos.

**Price:** \$25.00, plus \$1.60 postage.

##### Order from:

First Mennonite Church  
418 Queen St.  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7K 0M3

#### Family Album - Patkau, Harder, Krahn

A family tree of each seven generations of Jacob Paetkau (1759-1818), Marten Harder (1839-1891), and Johann Krahn (1763- ? ) 320 p., 297 photos, plus stories.

**Price:** \$40.00

##### Order from:

Esther Patkau  
2206 Wiggins Ave.  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7J 1W7

#### Meditations on a Place and a Way of Life

By Ken Loewen and Margaret Loewen Reimer

Selection of black and white photos by Ken Loewen, with selected suitable text by Margaret Loewen Reimer. 128 p., pb. \$14.95

##### Order from:

Mennonite Heritage Centre  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3P 0M4



## Milestones of First Mennonite Church

by Esther Patkau

### Part IV (Conclusion)

The 1970s brought other changes. In July 1971 Rev. Enns left the pastorate here and Rev. Henry A. Wiens took his position in September of the same year.

To give added space and more functional room, under the intiation of the Men's Service Organization, the area between the church buildings and the manse was filled in, adding a pastor's office, a library, and Board room, a Sunday school room, and a much appreciated lounge on the lower level. That was in 1972.

The format of the services changed. In 1973 two services, one all in German held during the Sunday School hours, followed by an all English service, was tried, and has continued to work well. J.J. Martens, who at one time served as conductor for the regular choir and for many years had been a member of that choir, now in 1974 took on the directing of a German choir.

Search was made for an assistant to aid the pastor and in 1976 Esther Patkau was installed in that position. In 1977-1978 a young man, John Braun, was received as a pastoral apprentice to learn by experience the work of ministry. That changed his course in life, and after further training he was ordained as a pastor in Steinbach, Manitoba, on January 31, 1982.

The 1980s are indicating new blessings. In January 1981 the Covenant Mennonite congregation began meeting, and on May 31, Robert and Ellen Krahn from this congregation transferred their membership to become charter members there. Thus the 7th General Conference Mennonite Church in Saskatoon began.

Rev. Wiens was granted a study leave in the fall of 1981 to spend time at the Seminary to enrich himself and thus better to serve the church.

To provide better accessibility for the ones who have disabilities, an elevator was installed which meant adding a few extra feet of new entrance on Queen Street. The dedication was held December 13, 1981.

In the fall of 1981 Ken and Rhonda Warkentin were hired as Ministers in Music.

As we look back over five decades of this congregation, we must in all humility say: Thanks be to God! It was not because of the many programs, organizations or activities that this church grew; nor because of the persons who have served in various roles; nor because of the contributions in money or in talents that was invested here but alone through the blessing and grace of the Father that this congregation is what it is today.

Paul wrote it this way: "For we are God's fellow workers . . . neither the one who

plants nor the one who waters is anything, but GOD who causes the growth." (I Corinthians 3:7-9). *Reprinted from Church Family News, Mar. 15, 1982, pp. 1-4.*

## Notes from Tiefengrund

by Helen L. Funk

*This material was prepared for the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Tiefengrund Mennonite Congregation, held October 1980.*

The first church, built in 1910, was sold to the Horse Lake congregation, about 25 miles northeast of Tiefengrund, for \$1000.00 when the second church was built in 1958. This Horse Lake congregation was one of the many outposts served faithfully by horse and buggy or sleigh by Rev. John Regier, son of Rev. Peter Regier and uncle of the present pastor Rev. R.A. Friesen.

The little church is beautiful. The ceiling is high and rounded ("gewolbt") made of narrow, varnished hardwood boards. The acoustics are perfect "like the inside of a beautiful guitar," as Marvin Regier former director of music at R.J.C., and grandson to Elder John Regier, said. The main area is untouched, except for upkeep, also the ladies' and men's rooms. The basement has been arranged for accommodating meals at weddings, funerals, etc. It was recently painted (outside walls and roof) and is appreciated. A small entry to the church and basement and a minister's study had already been added in 1945 in Tiefengrund, at the rear side.



*Pat Reimer, graduate of Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg, Manitoba won first prize for an essay submitted to the Heritage Commission, GCMC, in 1982. Her essay was titled "The Significance of the Anabaptist Vision Today". Pat is presently a student at CMBC. Third prize winner was Audrey Falk, of Waldheim, Saskatchewan, with an essay titled "Origin of the Mennonites".*

## Gnadenthal Dedicates Its History

by Peter P. Paetkau

A special dedicatory service to unveil Gnadenthal's recently published history book took place at the new Gnadenthal School on Sunday, December 12, 1982.

Following Paul J. Peters' welcome to the full house assembled for the event, Professor Jake P. Redekopp, chairman of the Book Committee, presented the book for dedication. Assisting him were representatives of the two church bodies which once had a place of worship in the village. Written "in the spirit of faith, that our fathers have exemplified," the history of Gnadenthal was dedicated to the glory of God by Rev. Abram A. Teichroeb (Conference of Mennonites in Canada) and Mr. Henry H. Kuhl, Sr. (Mennonite Brethren Conference), both long-time residents of the village.

Noting the "commitment and dedication" that a local history book committee must have in order "to record it at least in some measure," Redekopp proceeded to introduce the members of the committee. He requested each to face the audience, so that it could have a good look at them while Redekopp portrayed them in his own inimitable manner, and handed to each a gift copy of the Gnadenthal history.

While the Committee did all the work in researching the records of Gnadenthal's past, as well as some preliminary writing, Professor Elizabeth Peters, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, was engaged to do the major editorial work.

Presenting greetings to the people assembled here were Arnold Brown, MLA, Rhineland, and Rev. Peter D. Zacharias, recently ordained pastor of the Blumenorter Mennonite Church. Both men emphasized the fact that "the book does have significance beyond the Gnadenthal community and the Mennonite educational circles."

The program concluded with the auctioning off of the first, second and third editions of the book by the local auctioneer Ben Schellenberg.

After the auction the 1500-copy first printing went on sale for the first time. Amidst coffee, cookies and glimpses guests could now see this new thing wrought in Gnadenthal, the pride and joy of everyone who has ever been associated with the community. The book, **Gnadenthal 1880 - 1980**, is indeed one of the finest local histories to be published by the Mennonite community in Canada.

**Note:** The book can be ordered from Mrs. John Dyck, 48 Coral Cres., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The cost is \$25.00 plus postage.

## Mennonite Heritage Centre News

### Goals for 1983

by *Lawrence Klippenstein*

At the threshold of a new year we invite all our readers to consider how a better history-archives program can be developed in 1983. Four years ago in January we officially opened the Mennonite Heritage Centre as a symbol of a more serious effort to understand our heritage and to interpret it for future generations. Fifty years ago the Conference of Mennonites in Canada asked B.J. Schellenberg to serve as archivist so that materials for such interpretation would be on hand when needed. What steps shall we take now to carry forward this vision and this concern?

Together with you, the members of our constituency, we propose the following goals for our program at the Centre:

1. To take another look at our many attics, closets and old trunks, also our church nooks and crannies, in search for valuable documents and other records, which should be placed in the archives. We want to undertake a stronger collection program so that additional valuable items can be preserved in proper archival facilities. An "archives in the attic" meeting, perhaps several, will be planned - with more details to follow.

2. To set up a schedule for monthly public gatherings at the Heritage Centre where concerns of Mennonite church life, history, literature and community development can be considered and discussed.

3. To prepare additional finding aids and registers for the collections already on file. Two new staff members, Marilyn Froese and Mark Froese, with us since December 13, 1982, will be working on this with regular members of the staff.

4. To complete our "Mini-Centre" for children. This will be a mobile display of books, photographs, audio-visuals, games, etc. which we hope to loan to churches and schools for heritage education and appreciation purposes. The lending library part of it is already finished, and groups are invited to write us to obtain the list of books available.

5. To provide workshops and seminars for interested communities in various areas of our conference. The first one this year is planned for Leamington, in March. More information will be forthcoming.

6. To provide a directory of all newspapers, periodicals, newsletters, etc. now available at MHC. As well, a list of holdings in the Mennonite Historical Library of CMBC will hopefully be completed this year.

7. To complete work on a second volume of the **Bote Index**. The first volume covering the years 1924-1947 was published in 1976.

8. To enter discussions with other Mennonite groups who might wish to work with the program of the Mennonite Heritage Centre from 1983 on.

These are some of our objectives. Naturally, we will also continue to welcome visitors, and help researchers of all types as much as possible. We want to work at the program as a part of our God-given conference ministry to our communities and congregations, and to other people as well. Our prayer is that as an interested supporter you will join us in this endeavor in the months ahead.

### Donor Acknowledgments

We are much indebted for support in recent months to a number of persons who have remembered the Centre in their giving. The total of these contributions (October-December) was \$1,358.00. Thank you very much!

**Frank H. Epp**, Waterloo, Ontario  
**Peter Letkemann**, Lethbridge, Alberta  
**Elmer Reimer**, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
**John P. Friesen**, Headingley, Manitoba  
**Helen Janzen**, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
**S. A. Derksen**, Langham, Saskatchewan  
**B. Hoepfner**, Vancouver, B.C.  
**LaVerna Klippenstein**, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
**A. P. Toews**, Fergusson, Missouri  
**Etta S. Schmitt**, Goshen, Indiana  
**Emil O. Toews**, Sacramento, California  
**Wm. Friesen**, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
**K. Giesbrecht**, Port Alberni, B.C.  
**Linda Thiessen**, Mather, Manitoba  
**Tina Gollan**, Edmonton, Alberta  
**Jacob Mantler**, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
**Arthur B. Hoock**, Langley, B.C.  
**Jacob G. Guenter**, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
**Anton W. Dyck**, Lowe Farm, Manitoba  
**Donald L. Klippenstein**, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
**Henry Siemens**, Victoria, B.C.  
**H.H. Goertzen**, Winnipeg, Manitoba

### New Staff Help

Two CMBC graduates, Marilyn Froese and Mark Froese of Wheatley, and St. Catharines, Ontario respectively, recently joined the MHC archives staff. They will be staying for six months under a federal government employment grant. Their tasks include preparing inventories (e.g. of periodicals), microfilming, sorting, cataloguing and research assistance.

## Rhineland Mennonite Studies Seminar

by *Peter B. Paetkau*

A second Rhineland Mennonite Studies seminar sponsored jointly by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Mennonite Heritage Centre was held in Altona on December 11, 1982.

The seminar, attended by about forty interested people and meeting in the Education Wing of the Altona Berghaler Church, focused primarily on the writing of local history. The general theme was examined by two very thorough study papers, and complemented by reviews of two recently published local histories on the Altona and Gnadenthal communities of southern Manitoba.

After the usual introductions and sharing of some projects by participants, Dr. John Friesen of CMBC, presented the first paper entitled: "Family Studies as Local History."

In his paper Dr. Friesen discussed three different approaches to genealogical studies. After noting that the original purpose of Mennonite genealogical studies, begun in Europe during the 1930s, was to determine the purity of the Mennonite lineage, he proceeded to discuss more wholesome and broader reasons for engaging in genealogical research, urging genealogists to put their studies within the perspective of Anabaptist-Mennonite history.

Genealogy can contribute toward an understanding of local history by including beyond the context such specifics as diaries, travelogues, writings and sermons produced by members of a family, Dr. Friesen said, and is merely one way of recording history. Since "it is one window into the movement of a people, one should make it as good as possible so that the values, the beliefs and the issues of a people can be handed on to the next generation," he advised in conclusion.

After the discussion following the review of the Gnadenthal history book by Peter D. Zacharias, a second paper was read by Betty L. Dueck on "How to Write Local History." "I learned to research local history," she began, "the 'guess and by golly' way." She was now going to share proper methods about research and writing, and so went into detail about that process, citing some simple guidelines derived from her own writing experience, and in effect discussed, among other things, such matters as methods of filing information, working with a history committee, gleaning information from the archives and assembling photo collections.

Followed by some interesting reviews and discussion of the Altona history, a report about the Altberghal School Preservation project and reference to developing a museum facility in Altona, the seminar concluded with a tour of the Friesen's printing plant.

## Russo-Ukrainian Studies

### Karaganda Mennonites: Invited to Strasbourg

A long-delayed hope came to fruition in Karaganda, U.S.S.R. on September 16, 1982. A Mennonite World Conference delegation of four persons spent one day in that long closed city.

The delegation was comprised of Carl Brusewitz, vice president of MWC; Jacob Pauls, MWC Executive Committee member; Abram Enns, pastor of Enkenbach Mennonite Church; and Paul N. Kraybill, MWC Executive Secretary. This visit was part of a 12-day tour of the Soviet Union. The visit followed upon invitation by the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, host for the official delegation. A member of the Council, Rev. Jacob Fast, served as guide for the tour.

The crowded schedule included a morning gathering with 100 local ministers and leaders. Lunch followed in the home of Heinrich Goertzen, Mennonite Brethren leader who was part of the MWC delegation from the U.S.S.R. to the 1978 Tenth Assembly of MWC in Wichita, Kansas.

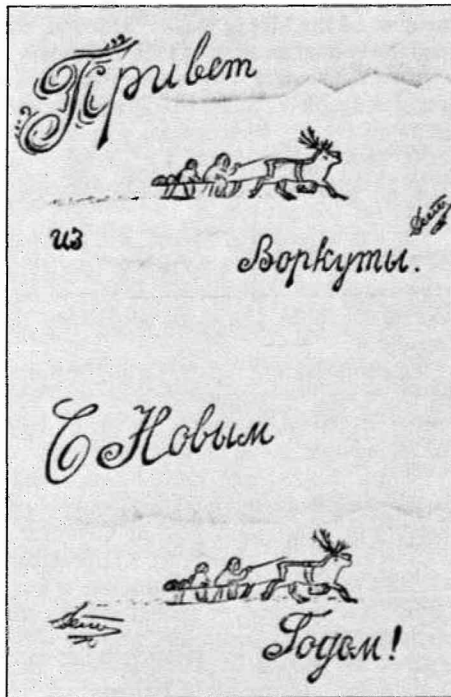
The usual obligatory city tour was uniquely different. Instead of visiting the typical landmarks and memorials, the delegation was accompanied by 15 or 20 people in a tour of the city's remarkable variety of churches. Visits were brief, but were concluded each time with songs, sung together by the group before leaving the church building. The tour included the Mennonite, Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic and Baptist churches. Time constraints prevented a visit to the Lutheran and Adventist churches.

Scheduling problems necessitated the planning of two services for that evening. A joint Kirchliche Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren service was held in the Mennonite meetinghouse, and a second service was held in the Baptist church.

Twice during that day the delegation shared in a meal with the Mennonite and Baptist leaders after church services. These occasions provided opportunity for discussion, questions, fellowship and sharing. Among others, Julius Siebert, elder of the Kirchliche Mennonite congregation, and Heinrich Goertzen, elder of the autonomous Mennonite Brethren congregation, participated in the discussion.

The Mennonite Brethren church in Karaganda is an autonomous congregation and is registered. Its membership totals 1,046. The Kirchliche Mennonite congregation also registered, has a membership of

(cont. in column 3)



*This greeting card, wishing the receiver best wishes for a good Christmas and a Happy New year, was submitted to Der Bote by a reader, David Neudorf, of West Germany. Neudorf spent some time in a Soviet prison camp at Vorkuta in the Soviet Arctic region. Cards like this were drawn by the inmates and sent to friends at Christmas time.*

(cont. from column 1)

400. Both congregations meet in the same meetinghouse. Persistent efforts to secure permission to build a separate Kirchliche meetinghouse have been repeatedly refused. There is yet hope, however, that such an undertaking will become possible.

The Baptist church in Karaganda has a membership of 1,500, of which probably 70 per cent are German speaking. Many of these persons share a Mennonite Brethren background.

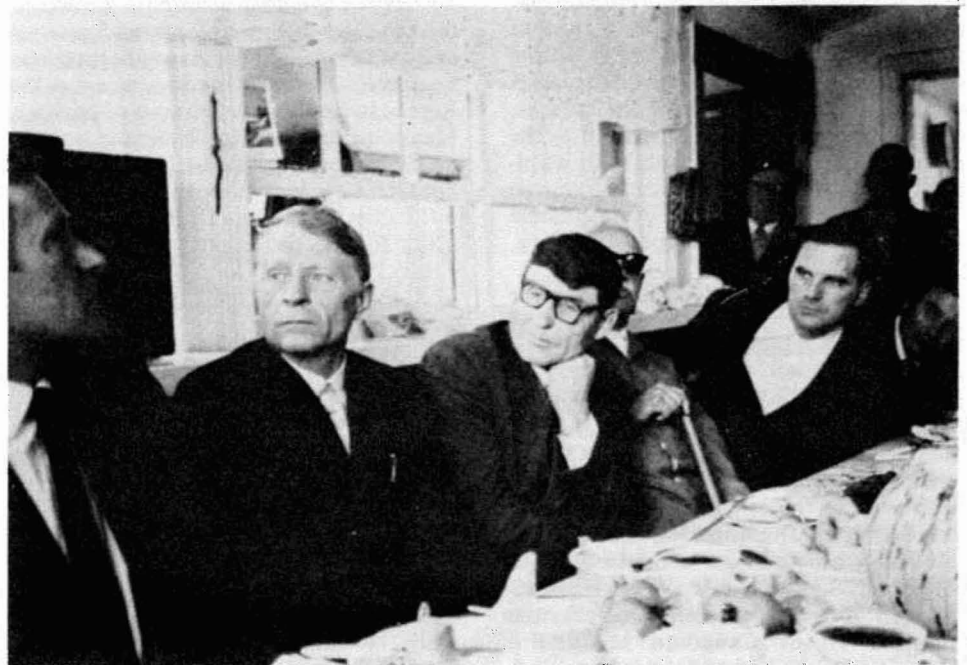
In addition to visiting the two congregations and the two elders in Karaganda, the delegation also made contact in Novosibirsk with the Kirchliche Mennonite congregation. Bernhard Sawatsky, another member of the delegation to Wichita in 1978, serves here as elder. A visiting elder, Johann Schellenberg from Tokmak, was also present.

Highlight of the tour was an opportunity to extend an invitation to the XI Mennonite World Conference, to be held in Strasbourg in 1984.

It seemed clear that such a delegation would be possible if the Kirchliche Mennonite were willing to seek the help of the All-Union Council in arranging the joint delegation. However, the Council of Religious Affairs, and the Baptist Union both confirmed that the Kirchliche congregations should make the selection of their four delegates.

The Kirchliche elders responded favorably to the invitation and the procedural suggestions. Excerpted from a report by Paul N. Kraybill in *MWC Newsletter*, December, 1982, pp. 1, 9.

*Mennonite and Baptist elders in Karaganda, Soviet Union visit with a "MWC" delegation in September, 1982. Rev. Julius Siebert, an elder of the Kirchliche Mennonite congregation in Karaganda is the second man from the left.*





# MHSC

## MHSC Meeting Notes

The annual meeting of Mennonite Historical Society of Canada was held on December 4, 1982. Twenty persons, including the five-member executive were present.

The following items re: information and decisions are of note:

- \* The MHSC constitution is to undergo revision. Ted Friesen of MHSC and Dr. John Friesen, of CMBC were appointed to serve. A third member will be nominated by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

- \* Provincial societies reported regional events. Ontario will be working hard on preparations for the Bicentennial celebrations in 1986. Manitoba sponsored a joint meeting with the Manitoba Historical Society in November. A major publication project being envisioned is the publication of a critical edition (possibly four volumes) of Arnold Dyck writings. A brochure on the orthography of Low German writings is being prepared, as is a register of Mennonite cemeteries in Manitoba.

A survey of available artifacts, and a series of oral histories, have been completed by students working for MHSSA. The Saskatchewan-Alberta society has helped to initiate the organization of a museum society in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Alberta members are being encouraged to form their own provincial organization. British Columbia has recently published a book **Remember Our Leaders**, written by G. I. Peters. Work is continuing on the Museum in Clearbrook.

- \* The chairman of MHSC reported that the papers of the Mennonite State of the Arts Conference (Toronto, June, 1982) will be published in the first issue of **Journal of Mennonite Studies**, scheduled for January, 1983. The **Journal** is being prepared by the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. Interested persons may write to Dr. Harry Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

- \* Frank Epp presented information on the proposed publication of Vol. III and IV of Mennonites in Canada. Grant money will be applied for.

- \* The board passed the following resolutions on a suggested new edition of **Mennonite Encyclopedia**: "That the MHSC go on record as strongly favoring the publication of a new and thoroughly revised edition of the Mennonite Encyclopedia, that it communicate this sentiment to the Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, and affirm its own willingness to assist in the preparation of Canadian Mennonite materials for the revised Encyclopedia." A

member of the MHSC will be asked to attend the annual meeting of IMS in January.

- \* MHSC has agreed to become joint sponsor of a Jacob Y. Shantz biography being prepared for the Bicentennial year in Ontario. Sam Steiner, Frank Epp and Lorna Bergey are members of a local editorial committee for this project.

- \* It was agreed that MHSC will become the official sponsor of a publication portraying geographical distribution of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations in Ontario.

- \* A proposal for preparing a audio visual on Canadian Mennonite archives was accepted. \$1500.00 was placed in the budget for this project to be completed in 1983.

- \* Frank Epp shared information about participating in the International Doukhobor Intergroup symposium held at Castlegar, B.C. in June, 1982. Lawrence Klippenstein was also present at this symposium. It was agreed that the Society should express its gratitude for this invitation, and its willingness to remain in dialogue with the Doukhobor community of Canada.

Representatives of the provincial societies appointed to the board of MHSC for 1983 include: Gerhard I. Peters (B.C.), Dick H. Epp (Sask. Alta.), Ted Friesen (Man.), Lorna Bergey (Ont.), Herbert Giesbrecht (member at large).

## First MHS - MMHS Joint Meeting

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society held its first joint meeting with the Manitoba Historical Society on November 16, 1982. About 75 persons attended a program at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, on the CMBC campus in Winnipeg.

In the format of the Manitoba Historical Society the program featured a lecture, in this instance, on the establishment of reserves in Southern Manitoba. A comparison was presented with slides on the beginnings of the Roseau Indian Reserve, just east of Letellier, Manitoba, and the two Mennonite reserves on the east and west sides of the Red River. Speaker Lawrence Klippenstein noted the difficulties of getting efficient government action to carry through the arrangements of Treaty No. 1 (1871) so that the boundaries of Roseau could be firmly set out (some difficulties persist to the present day). For Mennonites it was not nearly as complicated to get land settlements because they were among the settlers desired by the province in the 1870s.

Roger Townshend, researcher at TARR (Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research) research centre, brought some up-to-date information about significant recent efforts in community development at the Roseau Reserve. Several persons were acknowledged for new publications: Mary Enns, of Winnipeg, in writing the book **Mia** (the story of Mrs. A. A. DeFehr), and Victor Doerksen

for his translation of a book on MB church development in the USSR, written by Heinrich and Gerhard Woelk.

The presidents respectively of the MHS and MMHS are Shirley Smith, chief archivist at the Hudson Bay Archives in Winnipeg, and Dr. Victor Doerksen, chairman of the German Dept. at the University of Manitoba.

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## MHSO Genealogy Committee Formed

The Genealogy Committee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario held its first meeting at Conrad Grebel College on Thursday evening, November 18, 1982. Lorraine Roth is chairman; Alan Dettweiler, vice-chairman; Helen Freeman, secretary. The secretary outlined the committee's goal: to record information found on tombstones, set up a filing system, promote the collecting of family pictures, and assist those who are working on their own family histories.

Frank Epp spoke on the reasons for the existence of a genealogy society, illustrating his interesting lecture with his own family genealogy. **The House of Heinrich**, as well as other genealogical charts and books.

D. Douglas Millar

**The material on this page was supplied by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.**

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## Book Reviews

John Hofer, David Wiebe and Gerhard Ens. **The History of the Hutterites** Elie, Manitoba, 1982. 108 p., pb. \$5.00 History of the Hutterites **Workbook**, to accompany above. pb., 67 p., \$1.50; **Answer Keys and Review Tests to Workbook**. pb., 21 p., \$1.25. Reviewed by Mark Froese, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba

The first few chapters of this book link the Apostolic and Early Church with community of goods, non-resistance, persecution and martyrdom. These themes are the foundations of a continuity that followed the history of the Hutterites from their beginnings in Moravia, through to their migration and establishment in North America. While these emphases are clear to the reader the tone of the book is even, and it does not stray into polemics, a possible temptation given the nature of the history. Part II, deals with Hutterites in Canada, describing the organization and development of the colonies in such areas as agriculture, mechanization, colony expansion, education. As well, some of the philosophy behind these structures is explained.

Written primarily for use in Hutterite colony schools, it is interesting to examine how the Hutterites wish to portray their history to their children. Hutterite history receives a fair and balanced treatment in this work. It is well organized and reads easily. The bibliography is detailed and the suggested reading list for children is extensive. A 'difficult words' list at the end of each chapter is helpful for young readers. An accompanying workbook for pupils is simple and straight forward, designed to emphasize important points. The organization of both the book and workbook should make this a reliable teaching aid. As well, it is a concise, well written overview of Hutterite history for the interested reader.

The books are available at the James Valley Book Centre, Elie, Manitoba R0H 0H0.

Mary M. Enns, **Mia, The Story of a Remarkable Woman**. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Christian Press, 1981, 175 p., pb., \$4.95; also hc. Gerhard Lohrenz, **Mia, oder Ueber den Amur in die Freiheit**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1981, 178 p., pb. \$3.95; also hc. Reviewed by Clara K. Dyck, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

This is indeed the "story of a remarkable woman," as its title emphasizes.

The Russian Revolution totally destroyed Mia's stable lifestyle in a prosperous Mennonite home and community in the Ukraine. Later, for being the daughter of a "Kulak" (wealthy landowner) she was expelled from Medical School. Then, as governess in Moscow, she slept on a large trunk in a room

with two other women and a man.

Russia's doors had closed. Mia and a friend fled to the Russian-Chinese border, hoping to reach America eventually.

Midst fears of discovery by Russian border patrols, of drowning while crossing the two km. wide Amur River, and of guides who might turn them in to Russian authorities at the other side, Mia, her friend, and several men dared to escape Russia.

Harbin, China, had become a refuge for Mennonites. Mia and Anna reached this comparatively safe haven without possessions or food, and with scarcely any money, for they had lost the little they had when their terrified Chinese guide capsized their makeshift raft.

In 1931, at the age of 22, Mia finally reached San Francisco. She had a student visa, but was not permitted to work.

Penniless, while learning a new language and gaining three degrees in it, Mia simultaneously served hundreds of congregations with informative talks re - conditions in Russia. All consequent earnings were faithfully sent to Russia to keep her family from starving. The account of these years in particular, is a testimony to the beauty of true friendship in times of duress.

After two years of teaching, primarily German, she was not re-hired, due to the impending war. It was 1939.

Once more she was destitute - no work, no home. Systematically, with a believing faith, as she had approached life's problems to date, Mia prayed to God for a husband, alerting Him to three essential characters in such a man.

The Lord wasted no time in fulfilling her request, precisely, in A. A. DeFehr.

During her last illness Mia DeFehr wrote her life-story. Mary Enns drew on this account, as did Rev. Gerhard Lohrenz for his German version of Mia. Through the main sources is the same, the latter contains more historical and anecdotal material which adds considerable flair and imagination. How much of this is due to Mia's own writing, to the first-person account of the German book, or to Rev. Lohrenz' interpretive genius cannot here be determined. It does add zest to an already breath-taking story.

## Mennonitische Rundschau Microfilmed

The oldest Mennonite periodical published continuously under one name (105 years) is now available on microfilm. Coordinating the microfilming of this periodical was Ken Reddig, Archivist at the Center for M.B. Studies in Winnipeg.

Some 1½ years of effort went into the project, initially to locate and collate all existing copies. Principally the copies came from the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana; Mennonite Library and Archives, Newton, Kansas; and the Center for M.B. Studies in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

After negotiating with several companies to take on the task of microfilming the almost 70,000 pages, University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan was selected to complete the project.

The microfilming of this periodical now makes generally available also the first 22 years of the periodical, found only in the Goshen College and Bethel College historical libraries. The collection however, is not as yet quite complete. Some 27 separate issues, and the entire year of 1897, have not been located to date. According to Ken Reddig, every effort was made to locate missing copies both in North America and Europe without success. Therefore, it was decided to microfilm what was available and should additional copies eventually be located, they would be added to what has already been microfilmed.

Microfilm copies of the **Rundschau** may now be ordered from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48106. Ken Reddig, Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, Man.

### Book Note

A translation of the book on MB history in the Soviet Union written by Heinrich and Gerhard Woelk is now available in English. The title is *A Wilderness Journey Glimpses of the Mennonite Church in Russia 1925-1980*. Write to the Heritage Centre for copies. Cost: \$10.00

## Book Reviews (continued)

Berta Bachman, **Erinnerungen an Kasachstan: Erfahrungsbericht Einer Russlanddeutschen** Schriftenmissions - Verlag, Gladbeck, 1981, Pb., 160 p.

Reviewed by Peter H. Rempel, Neuwied, West Germany.

The book is a lucid and interesting account of the author's experiences as a young woman who was forcefully resettled with her fellow Germans to Siberia during WW II. It includes a short introduction (20 pages) on her childhood and youth in the pre-war period, then the major section (100 pages) on the life as resettled German in Siberia during the war, and a concluding section (35 pages) on the post war experiences. It is one of the few accounts of the Germans who were resettled to Siberia at the outset of the war rather than before or after it.

Church or religious life is mentioned infrequently in the first two sections but the last sections include a longer account (25 pages) of the formation of the German Evangelical church in Tselinograd and the ministry of Pastor Bachmann, the author's husband.

Mennonites apparently were included in the gathering of all Tselinograd Germans who formed the Evangelical church there. Mrs. Bachman wrote: "Auch Katholiken und Sekten Mitglieder waren uns freundlich gesonnen und opferten gern ihre Scherflein; hauptsache, es waren Deutsche!" (p. 133) Mennonites are mentioned specifically at several points.

1. A Mennonite widow named Goossen gave 800 rubles toward the enlargement of the church building in 1956 (p. 135-136).

2. By 1957 the church had a full choir, a large number of whom were Mennonites. The choir conductor had several song books with "Ziffern" as was the practise among Mennonites (p. 139).

3. The choir conductor, probably a Mennonite (see point 2) was sent to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow in 1957 to complain about the closure of the church building. She had a brother in Moscow whom she visited on this occasion. She obtained permission from the Council of Religious Affairs for the congregation to worship in their church and was promised that steps toward the registration of the congregation would be taken (p. 139-140).

The author was born in 1923 in Asarowka, a German village south-east of Kharkov. She worked in a factory in Voroshilovgrad, was resettled to Kasachstan in 1941 with mother and family, and there worked on a collective farm at Cherssonowka. She moved to Tselinograd (Akmolinsk) after World War II, and married Pastor Bachmann in 1956. Later they immigrated to West Germany.

Jonathan F. Wagner. **Brothers Beyond the Sea. National Socialism in Canada**, (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press,

1981), 150 pp, hardcover, \$9.00. Reviewed by George K. Epp, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Jonathan Wagner is the first Canadian scholar to attempt a comprehensive review of the Nazi movement in Canada. There have been references to the phenomenon, but the serious broad study of this shortlived phenomenon in Canada was still missing. In the four chapters of this book, **Brothers Beyond the Sea**, Wagner presents evidence and a surprisingly objective analysis of one aspect of history of the Canadian depression years which some would rather forget. But we cannot run away from history, and this is obviously the author's position, when he attempts to recreate the stage of the depression era, to enable us to see the events from a distance. On the whole, Wagner's insights are very helpful.

Chapter one is devoted to the study of the Canadian German community of the 1930's. The author's conclusion that the large number of ethnic German immigrants from Eastern Europe, who had experienced not only communism on their own skin, but also the animosity and rejection by a society in which they lived as a minority, were very vulnerable to the enticement of a mystical "Volk-idea" presented in one package with anti-communist, is not surprising.

Quite successfully Wagner traces in this chapter Hitler's policy toward the Germans in Canada, and the gradual change of the mood among Canadian Germans from sympathy to enthusiasm, at least in some quarters. The thunder of "Sieg-Heil," we learn, was not restricted to Germany and many parts of Europe; in the depression thirties it could also be heard in Canadian cities, including Winnipeg.

The chapter on Canada's pro-Nazis is of particular interest. Although it will bring back painful memories for some of the still living actors of that period, after fifty years it is definitely time to forgive, but also time for a critical analysis of that inglorious period. We cannot benefit from history if we refuse to face our mistakes. Although it is clear that the Mennonite community, with its large share in post-1917 immigration from Eastern Europe, was not directly involved in the political movement, it is nevertheless embarrassing to read that along with most of the German press in Canada, the **Mennonitische Rundschau** and **Der Bote** are mentioned as papers with a pro-Nazi bias.

In his last chapter Wagner discusses the opposition to the movement in Canada and the failure of this movement. The author points out that until 1937 the only serious opposition came from the Canadian Jewish Congress and from communists, the two groups most directly threatened by the National Socialists.

In summary one could conclude from this study, that if the Nazi movement failed in Canada, in spite of the fact that "until late 1937 and early 1938, the majority of Cana-

dians, both within government and without, were evidently either not interested in hearing about the Nazi danger or too hostile toward those attempting to point it out . . ." (Wagner, p. 121), and in spite of the depression and the large pool of German immigrants from Eastern Europe, who could have been easy prey for an anti-communist ideology, Canada in the 1930's was not the soil for a Nazi movement or any other political extreme.

The author has presented us with an objective study of a subject that deserves our attention, especially at a time when nationalism and extremist movements are again very much in fashion.

## Other Books Received

Neufeld, Gerhard G. **What God Has Done**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982. Trans. by Margaret Neufeld. pb., 92 p. \$8.00. Order from: Marg Neufeld, 152 Barrington, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2M 2B2

Klaus, Menno, ed. **Growing up Mennonite. Stories by the People**. Vineland, Ontario, 1982. pb., 72 p. \$4.50

Hildebrand, Jacob. **A Backward Glance**. Crystal City, Manitoba, 1982. pb., 136 p. illustrated. \$10.00

Lohrenz, Gerhard. **The Lost Generation and Other Stories**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982. pb., 178 p., \$9.00

Loewen, Ken and Reimer, Margaret Loewen. **Meditations on a Place and a Way of Life. A Book of Photographs**. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Hyperion Press, 1982. pb., 128 p. \$14.95

Friesen, Bert and Epp, Frank. **Partners in Service. The Story of MCC Canada 1963-1982**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1983. Pb., 76 pp. Illustrated with charts.

Redekopp, Elsa. **Wish and Wonder. A Manitoba Village Girl**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Reddell Publishing, 1982. pb., 59 p.

Plett, Delbert F. **History and Events. Writings and Maps Pertaining to the History of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde from 1866-1876**. Steinbach, Manitoba. D.F. Plett Farms, Ltd., 1982.

Schulz, Henry. **Snowborne. The Siberian Chronicles of Henry Schulz**. Vancouver, B.C., Orca Sound Publishing, 1982. pb., 227 p. Hdc. \$25.00; pb. \$10.00.

Martin, Lynne. **Peace Unearth. A Directory of Canadian Peace Organizations with International Concerns**. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1983. 250 pp., pb. \$6.00, postage included. Order from: MCC (Manitoba), 1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Fast, Gerhard. **In den Steppen Sibiriens**. St. Catharines, Ontario, 1957. 156 pp., pb. \$5.00 (remainder of books left by Dr. H. Heese, Rosthern, Sask.).

**Note: All titles in above list, or mentioned in book reviews may be ordered through the Mennonite Heritage Centre.**