

Mennonite Historian

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June, 1983



World War I conscientious objectors at Camp Travis, Texas. Three of the men are from the Herold community, Washita County, Oklahoma. First row seated, centre (No. 1) is Johann M. Klaassen, son of Michael Klaassen. The picture was taken in 1917, and John passed away the next year. Photo from The Herold Mennonite Church 70th Anniversary 1899-1969. By John Arn, p. 16.

The Herold Mennonite Congregation, Morden, Man.

By Lawrence Klippenstein

Several months ago someone brought to the archives an important manuscript titled: **Protokolbuch der Herold Gemeinde bei Morden, Manitoba; 1920.** On its thirty handwritten pages can be found the minutes of the Herold Mennonite congregation of Morden from the years 1920 to 1939. Among its final entries is a reference to Rev. Benjamin Ewert as a "leading consultant" regarding matters related to (debts which remained when) some financial matters which had to be cleared up when the congregation dissolved.

The Herold congregation had a claim to some uniqueness within the Mennonite community of Manitoba. The founders of this congregation came with a group of 18 families who had emigrated from the U.S.A. to Canada as "draft dodgers" at the end of World War I. Aeltester Michael Klaassen, their leader, had come originally from the Koeppenthal settlement on the Volga in Russia. He had been part of the group which

had joined the trek to Central Asia with Class Epp, but then decided, in the face of many difficulties and considerable disillusionment, to leave that region and move on to the U.S.A. It might be mentioned that David Toews, later of Rosthern, Saskatchewan was with this move as well.

Seven of the emigrant families eventually came to Manitoba, the others having remained in the Eigenheim, Saskatchewan area where the eighteen families first settled in Canada.

From a church register also brought to the archives one can get the names of the first families who came to Morden, and as a body of nineteen members, formed the congregation. These included David and Katharine Loewen Dalke, Michael and Katharina Dalke Klaassen (second wife), Gustave and Helena Klaassen Dalke, Cornelius and Katharina Schroeder Dalke, Peter and Anna Nachtigal Dalke, and Johann and Katharina Reimer Loewen.

This congregation built its first meeting house in 1920, with dedication held on October 17. The cost of the 24' by 40' structure at that time was \$4300.00. The Protokolbuch, which began with entries on January 14, that same year, records the decision to build and the appointment of the committee to select a site. Persons present at this meeting are listed as: G. Rempel, and son, Thiesen, Wiens, A. A. Quiring, four Dalke brothers and Peters. M. Klaassen was with the group as well. Minutes of the next meeting, held February 6, detail discussion about size of the building, as well as financing purchase of the lot, and mention the appointment of a building committee: C. K. Dalke, J. Loewen, and G. Rempel.

A number of other archival items related to the Herold church family have been left with the archives as well. Among them are the memoirs of Michael Klaassen, an extensive correspondence carried on between members of the Klaassen family, and son Johann who was imprisoned as a conscientious objector at Fort Leavenworth, and copies of several photos related to the Klaassens and the church.

The congregation dissolved around 1944 when members who were left joined the Bergthaler and other existing congregations of the Morden community. Aeltester Michael Klaassen had passed away in 1934. Persons who once belonged to the Herold church community remember those years with much appreciation. A reunion was celebrated in 1974, and steps are being taken to maintain the cemetery at the old location as a historic site. The original building was moved to Kane, Manitoba and was used there for a number of years till the congregation there ceased meeting also.

The documents of the Herold Mennonite congregation remain to tell an important story of a Christian community, a story with such meaning and significance for those who were touched by during two decades or more.

It is well worthwhile to preserve the records of congregations which merge with others or terminate for one reason or another. If you have materials to deposit, contact the Mennonite Heritage Centre to arrange for shipping or pick-up at your convenience. Call 888-6781 or contact Mennonite Heritage Centre 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4.

Family Studies

The Importance of genealogies

By Frank H. Epp

(Based on a talk given at the first public meeting of the Genealogical Committee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 18 November 1982).

Should people spend time and energy preparing genealogies? Should the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario apply some of its human and monetary resources to genealogical work? My own answers to these questions arose largely as a result of coming to terms with my own family tree.

It began, some twenty years ago, with the search for, and correspondence with, close relatives - uncles, aunts, cousins - in the Soviet Union, people whom I had never seen until a representative family group of eleven from Karaganda met us in Alma Ata, the capital of the Kazakh Republic, in the summer of 1976.

Then it became personally necessary for me to fit together all the parts of a vast family now scattered not only in Europe and Asiatic Russia but also in the Middle East, Africa, and mostly, of course, in the Americas, both North and South.

Actually, my sister, Anna Epp Ens, was already far along in this task, and at a large Epp family reunion at Leamington in 1980 she presented us all with *The House of Heinrich*, a 333-page well-illustrated hard-cover book, telling the story of my great grandfather, Heinrich Epp (1811-1863) of Rosenort, Molotschna, and of over 3,000 other persons now linked directly, or through marriage indirectly, to his ancestry. These personal experiences have led me to reflect, not only on my family history but on genealogies in general.

In the first place, genealogies have theological meaning. This is true, of course, not just because genealogies are in the Bible but because there is a good reason for their being there.

What may that reason be? I find a probable explanation in the doctrine of incarnation, broadly understood. Again and again the Bible reminds us of the manifestations of the divine spirit in space, in time, and also in the flesh. The created world, the son of God, the people of God, the kingdom of God on earth are all incarnations of the divine will.

Thus, genealogies are a reminder of the fundamental human fact that the children of God are not only spiritual souls but persons

in the flesh. And I find it rather interesting that Matthew begins his gospel with the declaration that his book is "the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" and that Joseph "the husband of Mary of whom Jesus is born" is an indispensable link in that genealogical chain. In other words, for Matthew it was essential that Jesus "who is called Christ" be inseparably linked to the human race through genealogical continuity.

There is an ongoing debate among us Mennonites concerning the merits or demerits of ethnicity in our spiritual pilgrimage and church identity. In this regard, I would suggest that the biblical genealogies and genealogies in general represent some food for thought.

Secondly, genealogies have historical meaning. To the extent that we love history we must also be interested in genealogy.

Genealogies, like chronologies, can, of course, be very shallow histories. Mere dates and facts are at best the skeletal framework of history, and no historian can be satisfied with bones and frames. To these must be added the stuff of historical life, namely flesh and blood, heart and brain, soul and personality.

The words of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Carlyle come to mind. Said the former, "There is properly no history, only biography." And the latter: "The history of the world is but the biography of great men."

A more contemporary version of Carlyle would leave out "great men" because we no longer accept that proper history can be written only in terms of the leaders - monarchs, presidents, prime ministers, generals - but that it must be written also in terms of all the people.

Genealogical work can also have broad sociological meaning. The information that is uncovered in family-related research can be quite fascinating and instructive.

Consider for instance the great variety of names, including non-traditional surnames, which appear in genealogical research and which speak not of a static but of a dynamic ethnicity. The index of *The House of Heinrich*, for instance, reveals a whole new set of beautiful names, which are not a part of the Epp family, names like: Aitchison, Babcock, Bloomquist, Borodawka, Carlson, Coleman, DeVries, Elliot, Foster, Gingerich, Hawkins, Iwanowna, Javonski, Krasnoba, MacInnis, Miedermeise, Orsulak, Rychliwski, Salzman, Szozda, Swanson, Usov, Van de Ham, Wachitewa, Xaxthopaulos, Ysseldyk and Zimmerman. There are many more like that.

Religious affiliations produce another wide spectrum: among the *Freundschaft* are not only all kinds of Mennonites, denominationally speaking, but also all kinds of Christians, as well as persons related to other faiths.

The vocational distribution includes virtually all the possibilities ranging from the traditional occupation of farming to freelance artistry with all conceivable professions and business occupations in between.

Genealogical work has psychological meaning. It can contribute to a stronger sense of identity, in a number of ways.

In a recent issue of *Newsweek*, Lorraine Dushy, a mother who had been reunited with a child she had previously given up for adoption, writes about this problem. According to her, child psychiatrists have established that children who know their genetic roots have much better prospects in life.

People who don't know where they come from don't easily know who they are and where they are going. Thus, the strongest case against test-tube babies, sperm banks, and surrogate motherhood lies in a child's need and right to know the genetic connection. Reprinted with permission from *Mennogespreech*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 5.

A scene from the Mennonites studies seminar held at Leamington United Mennonite Church in March. Left, Hugo Thiesen, and right, Mary Janzen, members of the History Committee of the Leamington UM congregations. The speaker is Lawrence Klippenstein.



The Arts

The Many Roles of the Artist . . .

by Allan Siebert

"Prophet, clown, revealer, mirror, disturber, celebrant." Those are the many roles of the artist in a community, Rob Regier told a good-sized crowd at a symposium of Mennonites and artists in mid-April.

He was speaking in the chapel of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College on a Friday evening. To his left were nine Canadian artists with some connection to the Mennonite community. They had come from four provinces - unsure of what to expect but summoned by an eager committee of organizers from the Mennonite Festival of Art and Music and sped on their way by a grant from the multiculturalism program of the federal department of the secretary of state.

Collectively assembled on a curving haphazard arc of chairs in a Bible college chapel, they were like a living art-piece - an assemblage thrown together by the wind and soon to disperse - shifting in their seats, muttering wise-cracks, unused to the spotlight, but for one evening representing themselves as "Canadian artists of Mennonite heritage in dialogue with the community."

Getting this dialogue going among Mennonites isn't easy, Regier continued. Then he told a story. A young Mennonite wanted to draw and paint. He announced his desire to be an artist. The community's response was a visit from the bishop who informed him that "if he wanted to paint, well, the meetinghouse needed another coat."

Communities are "uneasy with the language of vision," Regier said. To a community dominated by the work ethic - a community that is "often unutilitarian and pragmatic" - the artist brings gifts of mystery and ambiguity that stretch the mind and senses.

Regier spoke from years of experience as an artist for Mennonite agencies and teacher at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas. "He put into words everything I would want to say," said Bill Epp, the first artist to stand up and respond during the open forum session.

Exhibitors who participated in the dialogue of "Images and Identities" included: William H. Epp, Saskatoon, sculptor; Cornelius Martens, Coaldale, sculptor; David Hunsberger, Waterloo, serigraph; Susan D. Shantz, Waterloo, mixed media; Aganetha Dyck, Winnipeg, sculptor; Wanda Koop, Winnipeg, painter; Ernie Kroeker, Winnipeg, photographer; Ken Loewen, Altona, photographer; and Gerald Loewen, Winnipeg, sculptor. Top centre, sculpture by William Epp.



Robert Regehr, artist and professor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, spoke at the artists' seminar, on Friday, April 15, 1983. Photos: Gerhard Ens, Winnipeg, Man.



Contemporary Fraktur by Alfred Siemens, Vancouver, B.C.

Die Wiedertaeuffer in Muenster

Peter Rempel, an MCC worker in Europe, recently viewed an exhibit at the new city museum in Muenster. By letter he gives his impressions of this interesting and informative exhibit.

"The exhibit visually portrays the religious and political setting in which the Anabaptist kingdom of Muenster emerged. The first section, "Apocalyptic Age" (57 items) includes the series of wood cuts of scenes of the apocalypse by Albrecht Duerer as well as portraits of reformation and predictions of the imminent apocalyptic age. The second section (16 items) depicts Muenster and its political situation before the time of the Anabaptists with portraits and religious art pieces as well as a map and a chart. The main section (107 items) has four subsections: the seizure of power, the New Jerusalem, the kingdom and the conquest and punishment. Displayed are the writings and portraits of the Anabaptist leaders, manifestations of their book burning and iconoclasm (eg. damaged statues), the change in the city's coins and seals in the new kingdom, armor and weapons sketches of the city and its sieging forces and finally the records of their punishment by their victors. Many of the publications of that era relating to the Anabaptists are also exhibited.

The final section (24 items) displays the rehabilitation of the city and contemporary reports on the happenings in Muenster and then various artistic renditions to the present day of the events."

From the newsletter of Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg.

Display of "Fraktur" in Vancouver Gallery

Burnaby, B.C. — "In the Beginning was the Word" is the title of an art exhibit which was on display at the Burnaby Art Gallery from March 17 to May 1. The exhibit, organized by Vancouver Mennonite artist Tom Graff, is a collection of Mennonite illustrated manuscripts from the 17th century to the present.

The illustrated manuscripts, known as "Fraktur" (from the Latin "fractura" meaning fragment, referring to the broken gothic-style lettering), were collected by Graff from various Mennonite archives across North America. Included are a 285-year-old hand-copied Bible, mathematics tables, penmanship samples, school certificates and maxims, all illustrated with the flourishes, designs and symbols accompanying the careful calligraphy.

Alfred Siemens of Vancouver, a draftsman by profession, has a collection of contemporary Fraktur upstairs in the gallery. Graff calls Siemens the only known living Russian-Mennonite Fraktur artist active today.

Research

CMBC Student Papers

by John Friesen

Each year CMBC students in the Mennonites Studies class are required to complete a major research project. Students may choose from a variety of topics. The requirement is that the papers constitute original research and be based on primary documentation. The large collection of material in the Mennonite Heritage Centre is utilized for many of the studies. Students are encouraged to collect additional documentation, and also to do surveys and interviews. The papers normally included this information in the appendices.

These papers are deposited in the Mennonite Heritage Centre and are available for those interested. During the past year the following papers were completed and deposited.

Biography/Family History

- Alvin Bergen
The History of the Bergen and Redekop Families
- Don Bergen
Gerhard Lohrenz
- Lynell Bergen
The Bergens: A Genealogy and Family History
- Keith Boldt
The Block Family History
Peter Block to Abram A. Block
- Gerald K. Enns
The Life of Anna (Dyck) Wiens
- Charlene Epp
A History of the Wiens Family
- Jim Epp
The Life and Work of G.G. Epp
- Kenneth L. Froese
A History of the Froese Family
- Patti Harms
Genealogy of the Reimer Family
- Bruce Neufeld
Family Genealogy
- David Ruby
The History of the Amish Mennonites and their Development in Ontario with special attention to the late Bishop Joseph Ruby 1813-1897
- Monica Strempler
Bruno Enns and the Destiny of Prussian Mennonites
- Harry Warkentin
The Warkentin Genealogy 1788-1983
- Peter Wiens
The Life of Jacob B. Wiens
- Rod Wiens
Biography of Jacob B. Wiens

Congregational Histories

- Bob Crosland
A History of the Calgary Mennonite Fellowship. "A Dream turned into Reality."

- Ken Grove
The History of the Hagerman Mennonite Church
- Anita Hein
The Neuwied Mennonite Church 1946-1980
- Angi Hiebert
The History of the Unique Separation of the Douglas Mennonite Church from the Springfield Mennoniten-Gemeinde (1976-1982)
- Dennis Kasdorf
Bethel Mennonite Church 1936-1982
- Patti Steinman
The History of Crosshill Mennonite Church 1888-1982
- Janice Wideman
A History of the Wideman Mennonite Church 1816-1928

Institutions/Organizations

- Sharlene Baergen
A History of the Youth Orientation Units in Alberta
- Hildi Janzen
A History of the Mary School for Deaf-Mutes, Tiege, South Russia
- Ella May Kroeker
A History of the Lowe Farm District Schools
- Lori Kroeker
The Transition from "The Canadian Mennonite" to "The Mennonite Reporter"
- Bonnie Nickel
History of Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home
- Ed Neufeld
A History of the Landmark Drama Company
- Kathy Plett
Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Mennonitengemeinden zur geistlichen Betreuung der Umsiedler

Maps

- Laurel Elias
Map of Danzig, West Prussia, Prussia, Galicia and Voynia
- Dwayne Regehr
Map of the Ukraine

Miscellaneous

- Jacob Giesbrecht
In the "Nachfolge" tradition: The Sommerfelder Mennonites in Manitoba, Canada
- Arthur Klassen
Mennonites in Canada: a Comparison of Church Practices Among the Mennonite Brethren, General Conference and Mennonite Church.
- Kathy McArdle
Amish Society of Ontario
- Brenda Neufeld
A Survey of Anabaptist-Mennonite Hymnology

- Winnie Pankratz
A Study of the Sommerfelder Hutterite Colony
- Hermann Stahl
Mennonites and Natives in the Paraguayan Chaco
- Bruce Wiebe
A Study of the Hutterite Christian Faith

Association of Manitoba Archivists

The Association of Manitoba Archivists made its debut in 1980. Its membership rose rather quickly to over sixty members, archivists, and others interested in the work of preserving records and documents important for the province.

A major event of AMA's past year's program was the sponsoring of Archives Week from May 29-June 3. Its central focus was a large exhibit prepared by 22 participating archives in Manitoba. Materials were placed in the foyer of the Manitoba Archives building at 200 Vaughan, and were accessible to the public during that period. An official opening took place on Sunday, May 29, with an address by Eugene Kostyra, Minister of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources for Manitoba.

Manitoba has six major Mennonite archival collections; the Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, Mennonite Heritage Centre archives, Winnipeg, the archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Steinbach, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference archives at Mennonite Heritage Centre, Mennonite Genealogy Incorporated, Winnipeg, and the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach. The first two of this list were also represented in the exhibit.

AMA executive members for 1983-84 include: Lawrence Klippenstein, MHCA, president; Diane Haglund, United Church archives, vice-president; Judith Beattie, Hudson's Bay Co. archives, secretary; Shirley Payment, University of Winnipeg, treasurer; Anne-Grace Diehl, Boissevain Community Archives, member at large; and Zenon Hlusok, Ukrainian Cultural and Education Centre, Winnipeg, immediate past president. Nancy Stunden of the Manitoba Archives edits the newsletter of the Society.

Research Request

I am looking for information about the parents of Justina Bornn born February 4, 1915, in Prangenau, Russia. Her father's name was Thiesen or Tiesen, and mother's Epp. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Write to:

Eileen Bornn
Box 152
Fork River, Manitoba.
ROL 0Y0

MMHS

Society Reorganization Finished

The 1983 reorganization meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society took place on May 3 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. Major business for the meeting included election of a new executive and committees to carry out the program for the year.

Elected as officers for the 13 member board were Delbert Plett, Steinbach, as chairman; Ted Friesen, Altona, first vice-president; Bert Friesen, Winnipeg, second vice-president; Ruth Bock, Headingley, secretary; and Ken Reddig, Winnipeg, treasurer. Sub-committee appointments are being finalized.

Several major projects are in progress at the present time. The Research and Scholarship Committee is working on a new edition of the works of Arnold Dyck, planned in four volumes, with the first one to appear next year. The Inter-disciplinary Arts Committee is working with the production of a recording of Victor Davies' Mennonite piano concerto prepared for the Centennial celebrations in 1974. Active work is also being done on setting up a Mennonite Book Club for more effective distribution of Mennonite literature and books.

Membership of the Society now stands at 140. Persons interested in joining may write to Ken Reddig, 77 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 1L1, or Lawrence Klippenstein, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4. Other board members will be of help as well.

The 1983-84 MMHS Board

Executive

Delbert Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, president
 Ted Friesen, Altona, Manitoba, first vice-president
 Bert Friesen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, second vice-president
 Ruth Bock, Headingley, Manitoba, secretary
 Ken Reddig, Winnipeg, Manitoba, treasurer

Committee chairpersons and members at large

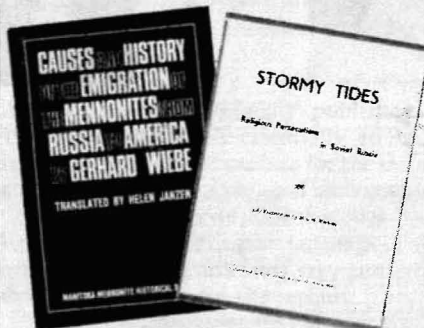
Elizabeth Peters, Winnipeg, Manitoba
 Al Reimer, Winnipeg, Manitoba
 Herman Rempel, Morden, Manitoba, Historic Sites
 Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Membership Publicity
 Doreen Klassen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Interdisciplinary Arts
 Ed Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba
 Roy Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba
 Bill Schroeder, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Education Resources

CELEBRATE!

Join us in giving recognition to all those who have helped to create an archives for CMC during the past fifty years ☆ Special activities at the Conference sessions will focus on this theme. Visit the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and the archives, take note of special exhibits, and make a deposit in the records collection this summer if you can ☆

Materials on this page were provided by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

SPECIAL OFFER!



The English translation of Gerhard Wiebe's *Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Kanada*. Translated by Helen Janzen.

73 pp., paperback: \$4.00

Stormy Tides. Religious Persecution in Soviet Russia. By Mrs. H. Martens

78 pp., paperback: \$1.00

Postage extra.

Order from:

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

You must mention seeing ad in Mennonite Historian to get discount!

DYCK FAMILY REUNION

Descendants of
 Jacob Dyck (1800-1869) and Elizabeth
 Jaeger (1807-1893)

Date: Sunday, July 17, 1983

Begins: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Winkler Park in Winkler.

Indoors in case of rain.

Food: Manitobans asked to bring their own. Guests will be looked after. Hot and cold water available.

Program: Informal. Singing. Visiting.

Contact: Jacob Dyck, Box 1314

Winkler, Man. R0G 2X0

Phone: (204) 325-8757

or

John Dyck, 48 Coral Cres.

Winnipeg, Man. R2J 1V7

Phone: (204) 256-1637

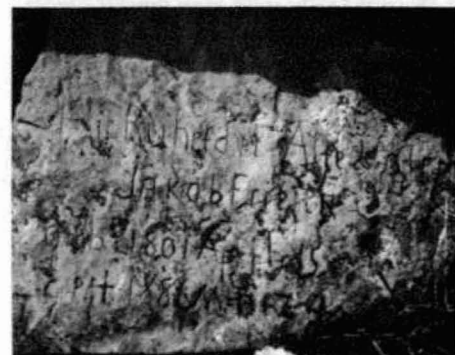
New Musical Resource Discovered

A Protokollbuch der Dirigenten — Kursen in Manitoba was recently discovered in the First Mennonite Church Library in Winnipeg. This minute-book of early M.B. musical activities dates back with its first minute to February 23-25, 1912 and continues with the last minutes dated June 14, 1936.

Containing some 101 pages of minutes it gives valuable information on the early musical activities of M.B. congregations in Manitoba. Written in gothic script a transcription has been made by Erica Voth to enable those unfamiliar with the script to gain access to its contents.

A special thanks to the First Mennonite Church for alerting us to its discovery and for depositing the book in our Centre.

From the newsletter of Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg.



Grave stone of Jacob Friesen (1801-1886), remaining in a field northwest of Steinbach, Manitoba. Son Jacob, moved to Mountain Lake, Minnesota, USA.

MHSC

New Journal Coming

Subscribers and other interested persons ask from time to time when the new **Journal of Mennonite Studies** will appear. The **Journal** is at present at the printer and we expect this year's issue to be ready for distribution by August.

The inaugural issue of the **Journal** will carry the proceedings (some twelve articles, responses and a review) of the Mennonite Studies conference which was held in June, 1982, at the University of Toronto, St. Michael's College. The conference which brought many Mennonite scholars from Canada and the United States together, was held on the occasion of the publication of Frank Epp's second volume of **Mennonites in Canada 1920-1940**, and was sponsored by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, and the Ethnic and Immigration Studies Program of the University of Toronto.

There are as of now 260 paid subscribers to the **Journal**. Some half of these have subscribed for one year and the other half for two or three years. Another 250 copies of the first issue of the journal will be purchased by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

The three societies which sponsored the Mennonite Studies conference are also contributing substantially toward the publication cost of this inaugural issue of the **Journal**.

For subscriptions to the **Journal** readers may write to: The Editor, **Journal of Mennonite Studies**, The University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2E9.

Dr. Harry Loewen

Mennonite Encyclopedia

The appearance of the four volume **Mennonite Encyclopedia** was quite possibly the publishing event of the late 1950s. The project, headed at that time by editors, Harold S. Bender, Cornelius Krahn and Melvin Gingerich, provided an invaluable tool for students of Mennonite life throughout the world.

More recently it has seemed appropriate to consider updating and possibly expanding the **Encyclopedia** to more adequately reflect current research and changing needs of the constituency. Discussion has gone on for some time now at the Institute for Mennonite Studies at Elkhart, Indiana, and privately in various areas of Canada and the USA.

Both the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and Mennonite Historical Society of

Canada have come out strongly in favor of a revision. It is not clear yet whether the best move would be the preparation of a fifth volume to add new materials, or the undertaking a larger more thorough rewriting of the four volume work as a whole.

The recent appointment of a task force by MHSC is intended to focus thinking on this matter, and perhaps to propose some auxiliary action on the project within the Canadian Mennonite scholarly community. Much work will be involved. It is important that maximum energies be gathered if this undertaking is to succeed.

Note: A brief history of the ME enterprise, as it developed for the publication of the four volumes, appeared in **Mennonite Life**: Cf. Rachel Waltner, "From Anabaptism to Mennonitism: The Mennonite Encyclopedia as a Historical Document" (December, 1982), pp. 13-19.



Mennogespräch is a research bulletin and newsletter introduced by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. Editor is Sam Steiner. For further information write to the editor, c/o Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G6.

Research Requests

I am looking for a book called "Hauskanzel." I remember our Father reading a sermon on Sunday, or better said, a reading based on a Scripture. The book was a common household possession, and presumably copies of it might still exist.

If you have such a book or know where to get one please write to: **Tina Gollan** 8221-133A Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T5E 1G1.

I need information on Henry Henry Bartel. Born on December 14, 1898 in Krons-gart, Ukraine, he immigrated to Canada around 1929.

He first resided in Saskatchewan, and was married to Anna Peters, November 26, 1935. Anna was born in Wasseljevka on July 20, 1897. Henry's father was also Henry Henry Bartel. His mother was named Elizabeth Neufeld. Anna's father was Henry Peters and her mother was Aganetha Eitzen. After their marriage Henry and Anna lived in Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan.

Please send any more information you have to: **June Bartel, 11658 246th Street, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 6X6.** Thank you very much.

Neufeld Biography Underway

A. H. Neufeld, retired medical professor at the University of Western Ontario, is completing a book on the work of his father, Herbert A. Neufeld, who was an elder in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and became a travelling minister in the U.S. and Canada after 1923, making his home in Winkler, Manitoba. When the family fled Russia, they left behind their father's daily log of recollections from 1881-1923. The log was retrieved in 1929 by an American diplomat and forms part of the book. Publication is expected by September.

The diaries are now on deposit at the archives of the Centre of MB Studies in Winnipeg.

New Books in Print

Doerksen, Nan. **Bears for Breakfast. The Thiessen Family Adventures.** Winnipeg, Manitoba: Kindred Press, 1983, pb. 34 pp. \$2.25.

Hiebert, Albert H. and John H. Taeves, compilers. **The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1975.** Hillsboro, Kansas, 1976 (?). pb., 124 pp.

Hostettler, John A. **Mennonite Life.** Scottsdale, Pa., 1983, reprint. pb., 48 pp., \$4.95 US, \$5.95 Can.

Klassen, Is. P. **Finsternis und Licht. Drama.** Winnipeg, Manitoba, author, 1982. pb., 49 pp., \$4.00.

Quiring, Isaac. **Strangled Roots.** Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises, 1982. pb., 186 pp., \$8.95. The story of Frank Tilt-sky from adolescence to early manhood.

Reimer, Mavis. **Cornelius W. Wiebe. A Beloved Physician.** Winnipeg, Manitoba: Hyperion Press, 1983. pb., 133 pp. \$10.95.

Willms, Abram P. **Mein Lohn. Gedichte.** Winnipeg, Manitoba: Christian Press, 1982. pb., 272 pp., \$8.00.

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

Book Reviews (cont. from p. 8)

doubtedly inherited his flair for story telling; the later ones are recollections of personal experiences. In them the reader experiences with the author or his protagonists the Siberian steppes in all their wild beauty and their hidden dangers in all seasons: the floods in spring, the blizzards of winter, the sizzling heat of summer. He notes as well indescribable beauty of the flora and fauna, the waving sea of grasslands and the endless vistas and distant horizons.

As well, the reader may experience the turbulence of the two decades, 1907-1927: war, revolution, civil war. We even catch a glimpse of Stalin himself through the eyes of the story teller who encountered the dictator accidentally when he, as boys are wont to do "strayed" inside the Kremlin walls during the family's stay in Moscow en route to Canada.

The **Siberian Chronicles** afford several hours of relaxed as well as informative reading, even though the more experienced historian will wish that the author had been a little more explicit with dates and places, and had included a map or two. Such data form the framework, the skeleton of historical accounts. While far too much history writing suffers from too many "dry bones", these **Chronicles** have too few of them and as strictly historical accounts are too amorphous and unstructured. Also the author would have done well to update his account of the beginnings and the spread of Anabaptism in the centuries preceding the Mennonite migration to Russia.

Be that as it may, **Snowborne** is a "good read", as the saying goes, and a worthy companion volume to the historical monographs that we already have on the Mennonite experience in Siberia by authors such as Gerhard Fast, J. J. Hildebrand, Peter Rahn and others. Read the book; you will enjoy it throughout.

Note: The book may be purchased from the author at Box 34, Black Creek, B.C. V0R 1C0. Enclose cheque for \$10.00 when ordering.

James M. Stayer and Werner O. Packull eds. **The Anabaptists and Thomas Müntzer**. Toronto, Ontario and Dubuque, Iowa: Kenolle/Hunt Publishing Co., 1980. 167 pp., pb., \$2.95.

Cornelius Krahn. **Dutch Anabaptism: Origin, Spread, Life and Thought**. Scottsdale, Pa. and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981. 304 pp., pb., \$20.85.

James Stayer and Werner Packull stand at the forefront of the current debate on Anabaptist historiography. The purpose of this anthology is "to acquaint the sophisticated student with the development

of Anabaptist studies in the last thirty-five to forty years." There is no question that they do an admirable job of fulfilling this goal. The book consists of representative readings from "the Bender School" of Anabaptist historiography, revisionist historians, and Marxist scholars. The result is a book that broadens considerably the range of good articles which are available in English.

Where the reviewer finds the book lacking is in its ability to give meaning to Anabaptist history. Harold S. Bender postulated that the Anabaptists derived their concepts of the gathered church, nonresistance and discipleship from the Scriptures. To maintain this view he had a narrow definition of Anabaptism. There was no place in his Anabaptism for Thomas Müntzer and the Münster revolutionaries.

The revisionists have succeeded in discrediting Bender's narrow definition of Anabaptism and the notion that there was a consistently-held core of belief. Links between Müntzer and several Anabaptist leaders can no longer be denied. The belief that Zürich was the center of Anabaptism from whence it spread to all other areas has been debunked. But in the process of "demythologizing" the Bender vision, any vision of the church has been lost. We know from Claus Peter Clasen's study that numerically martyrdom among the Anabaptists was not very significant. But what exactly there was that was significant - meaningful - the revisionist historians have not yet answered.

Cornelius Krahn's study of Dutch Anabaptism was originally published in 1968. This edition is essentially an exact reprint with an added preface for the second edition, and a short additional bibliography. Given the fact, however, that thorough book length studies in the English language of this subject are quite scarce, it is very gratifying that Herald Press did the reprint.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Krahn is the most competent scholar on this continent to have undertaken such a study. He does a first rate job of relating Dutch Anabaptism both to development among the Anabaptists in other regions and to the surrounding society in which it arose. His study reveals the extent to which both Anabaptism and other Dutch religious groupings were indebted to indigenous ideas like humanism and sacramentalism. To a large degree Dutch Anabaptism was a product of the soil in which it took root.

This volume probably does not give the last word on matters like Menno's view of the incarnation or the theological bases of the Kingdom of Münster. It is however, a very thorough and well researched work (as the twenty-five pages of footnotes will attest) which serves to make the literature on Anabaptism richer and more well rounded.

Krahn, in the conclusion of his book, lays

forth a challenge to writers (and readers) of Anabaptist history. It provides ample food for thought for all.

"What is now needed above all is a concentrated effort to restudy the **potential** (*emph. mine*) that early Anabaptism presented in its day and its application the needs of contemporary life. The Anabaptists were radical in their day in introducing changes in regard to antiquated religious, social, and political traditions. In what way can their discoveries and legacy be made of use in our day?" pg. 262.

Anabaptist Lecture-Film Series

by April Yamasaki

Last January, Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C. offered an Anabaptist film and lecture series as one of several study options during the Sunday School hour. Between sixty and eighty young people and adults attended each of the eight sessions.

The series included both local resource people and films from the Canadian Conference **Ways and Means** catalogue.

Bill Klassen, professor at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., held two sessions on Anabaptist beginnings. John Klassen, who teaches at Trinity Western College in Langley, B.C., spoke on Anabaptists and the family. Peter Loewen, a retired Mennonite Brethren lay minister, gave input on the Mennonite Brethren perspective. Erwin Cornelsen, assistant pastor at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver, B.C., spoke about his involvement with the Umsiedler work in Germany.

The films were "Anabaptist Beginnings", "Menno's Reins" (a film about Manitoba Mennonites) and "Mennonite Migrations to North America."

Class coordinators John Sawatzky and Bruno Bergen were pleasantly surprised by the number of people who chose to participate in the course. At least part of the reason for its popularity was the lecture-film format, instead of the church's more usual discussion format for adult study classes.

But the main reason for the success of the series was undoubtedly its content and the excellence of its presentation. Many participants were glad to be reminded of their early Anabaptist roots. Others found that the course material filled gaps in their knowledge of Anabaptist history. Still others found some of the information entirely new. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and the comment of one man summed up the feelings of many: "I've never enjoyed Sunday School so much!"

Book Reviews

Delbert F. Plett. **History and Events. Writings and Maps Pertaining to the History of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde from 1866 to 1876.** Steinbach, Manitoba. 1982. 166 pp., pb. \$11.00 (Can.)

Delbert F. Plett. **Plett Picture Book.** Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981. 159 pp. Hdc. \$20.00. *Reviewed by John Friesen, Associate Professor of History and Theology, CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

These two books interpret one of the smaller Mennonite church groups, the Kleine Gemeinde, which now carries the name Evangelical Mennonite Church. Most Mennonite history is written from the perspective of the larger and frequently the most acculturating groups. It is thus refreshing and instructive to look into the life and experiences of one of the smaller Mennonite groups and from its perspective to view the larger Mennonite history.

Delbert Plett is a lawyer by training and an amateur historian by avocation. He has a keen interest in the background, life, belief and values of his forebearers and this has motivated his historical research. His methodology gives evidence of a lawyer's concern for detail, careful documentation and original sources. The result is a fine addition to our knowledge of Mennonite history.

In the **Plett Picture Book** Delbert Plett follows the experiences of one family, the Pletts. In particular, it follows the story of the Cornelius and Sara Pletts and their descendants.

The **Plett** book is not a genealogy, hence it does not list dates of birth, death and marriage for all the descendants of Cornelius and Sara. It is rather the story of an extended family. The story is constructed primarily on the basis of primary materials; letters, diaries, etc. The extensive extracts from various diaries and letters provides one of the more valuable dimensions of the book. Each section is liberally footnoted.

Because this book records the life of one family, it includes many pictures both of people and places of residence. The Plett family story is, however, not told in isolation from world or Mennonite history. Plett is careful to set his story into a larger context by providing a helpful set of maps and appropriate general historical surveys. The **Plett Picture Book** thus provides insight into the life of a larger community as it moved from Prussia to Russia to Manitoba. The book contains an index of all names for easy

reference.

The second book by Delbert Plett is quite different, although its subject is the same community. In **History and Events** Plett presents in translation two lengthy documents written during the nineteenth century around the time of immigration to North America from Russia. The first of the two documents is by Peter Toews, ordained as Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde in 1870. It is an excerpt from a larger work of his entitled **Sammlung**. The excerpt is called **Anhang Number One**. Toews' **Sammlung** consisted of materials which he collected which relate to the history of his church from the beginning up to 1874.

The second article is by Johan W. Dueck, who settled at Rosenort, Manitoba. Dueck came to America as a young lad, and eventually became a school teacher in the Scratching River settlement. His article is entitled **History and Events** which Plett chose as the title for the whole book.

In **History and Events** Plett sets both of these documents into their historical context. The introductions are brief, but help the reader interpret the significance of these documents. Plett also provides enough of Mennonite historiography for the reader to realize that what he is reading here presents a different view of Russian Mennonitism than most Mennonite history books provide.

In Toews' **Anhang** are included many references to local Kleine Gemeinde events, but he also speaks to the larger issues affecting all Mennonites in Russia such as the conflict between the landless and the landowners, and the threat of military service. In Dueck's memoirs the reader gains a view of the everyday life of Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites in Russia shortly before emigration, and in Manitoba after settlement.

In this book Plett expresses his conviction that maps are essential for understanding a people which have been on the move in history. He includes twenty maps of Mennonite settlements in Prussia, the Ukraine, Manitoba, Nebraska and Kansas. This is the only book which gathers all relevant Kleine Gemeinde maps into one collection. Plett includes extensive footnotes, as well as a name and place index.

In these two books Plett has made a valuable contribution to a greater understanding of Kleine Gemeinde history. The perspective is clearly that of an insider. The larger more extensive interpretations will need to be given by other historians. These

two books, however, provide very important source materials, and insights into the life, faith and outlook of the Kleine Gemeinde people. For providing this valuable service Plett is to be commended.

H. H. Schulz, **Snowborne. The Siberian. Chronicles of Henry Schulz** (Vancouver, B.C.) Orca Sound Publishing, 1982 pb., 230 p., \$10.00. *Reviewed by Gerhard Ens, Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

In 1906 the Czarist government of the Russian Empire opened the crown lands of Siberia to settlers. Very soon after that the Mennonite colonies of Sagradowka, Ufa, Samara and Orenburg sent a delegation into the Omsk area to investigate the possibilities for agricultural settlement. They found the Barnaul region near the Ob River very suitable and they immediately reserved land for about 1500 people and negotiated terms of settlement with the government. In 1909 the first settlers arrived and by 1908, according to the **Mennonite Encyclopedia**, there were already 59 villages around the new centre of Slavgorod in an area of 135,000 acres of agricultural land. ME does not indicate whether all of them were Mennonite villages. Possibly they were not.

The book, **Snowborne**, with the sub-title **The Siberian Chronicles of Henry Schulz** deals with the period of settlement of this particular area. The author does not record only his own recollections (he was born 1912 in Slavgorod of pioneer parents) but also the stories which he must have heard from his parents and grandparents.

Henry Schulz is an excellent oral raconteur. His fund of stories and anecdotes is virtually inexhaustible, and he has the unmistakable flair of the born story teller, quite noticable (although somewhat less so) even in cold print. His writing style, of necessity without the gestures and voice inflections so important to the oral story teller, is further hampered somewhat by the fact that the author is not fully at ease in written English. One assumes he may have learned it on his own after his immigration to Canada as a 15 year old lad.

The 43 anecdotes of the **Chronicles** cover roughly chronologically the period of time from the author's maternal grandfather's fourth marriage and subsequent migration to Siberia (ca. 1907) to the author's migration to Canada in 1927. The early anecdotes, of course, were heard from his parents and grandparents from whom the author un-

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