

Mennonite Historian

Volume IX, Number 3



September, 1983



A class of students at the Mennonite Educational Institute in Altona, Manitoba. The date is thought to be the first year the school opened, 1908-1909, or so. The picture was provided by John Dyck of 48 Coral Cres., Winnipeg. He mentioned that his father, Peter J. Dyck, was one of the students. Mr. Dyck became a teacher at Hochstadt/Kleinstadt after studying here for a year. Can anyone send names of people on the photo?

The Origin and Early Years of MBI

By Rev. Wilhelm Pauls

We are pleased to present a story that will be familiar to many Albertans but perhaps not to others. It has been left in the language used by the author, in deference, let us say, to the generation which served so well in past years.

Das **M.B.I.** wurde bei Didsbury, Alberta, in der Neu Bergtaler Gemeinde gegrundet. Wer sind Bergtaler? Wo kommen sie hier? Wann haben sie sich diesen Namen beigelegt? Eine Bergtaler Gemeinde gab es schon in Russland. Die ersten Mennoniten die aus der Danziger Gegend Deutschlands nach Russland kamen, siedelten im Jahre 1789 in und um Chortitza am Dnjeprfluss an. Sie gruendeten die Chortitzer Gemeinde welche bald den Namen **Alte Kolonie** erhielt als erst viel mehr Mennoniten kamen, die sich an der Molotschna niederliessen.

Nach 45 Jahren siedelten 145 Familien (landlose) aus der Chortitzer Gemeinde ueber

auf 30,000 Acker in den Mariupoler Kreis. Hier gruendeten sie **fuenf Doerfer**: Bergtal, Schoental, Friedrichstal, Heubuden und Schoenfeld. Alle gehoerten zu einer selbststaendigen Gemeinde die sich die **Bergtaler Gemeinde** nannten. Da haben wir den Namen.

Als im Jahre 1870 durch das Militaergesetz in Russland die Wehrlosigkeit gefaehrdet schien, war diese Bergtaler Gemeinde unter denen, welche die Auswanderung auf's eifrigste betrieb. So kam denn die ganze Mariupoler Ansiedlung, als geschlossene Gemeinde, mit ihrem Aeltesten Gerhard Wiebe und ihren Predigern nach Manitoba, wo sie sich in der Ostreserve niederliessen. Bald nach der letzten Jahrhundertwende kamen von diesen Mennoniten aus Manitoba und siedelten im Osten von Didsbury, Alberta, an. Im Jahre 1905 bauten sie sich eine Kirche und diese Gemeinschaft schloz sich zu einer Gemeinde zusammen die sich den

Namen **Neu-Bergtaler** Gemeinde beilegte.

Als die Einwanderung in den zwanziger Jahren von Russland einsetzte siedelten diese einzeln und auch gruppenweise an verschiedenen Stellen in Alberta an. In den Staedten Arbeit suchen durften wir nicht, weil wir als Einwanderer versprochen hatten auf dem Lande zu arbeiten oder anzusiedeln. Aelt. C.D. Harder diente den Mennoniten bei Didsbury mit dem Worte Gottes. Ihm wurde es zur Aufgabe vom Herrn alle Prediger unsrer Gemeinderichtung zu sich einzuladen. Acht Prediger und ein Diakon fanden sich dort am 29. Februar 1928 zusammen.

Ueber Alles hatten diese Brueder die Gnade Gottes geruehmt, die sie aus dem Lande der Gottlosigkeit herausgerettet und nun im freien Lande ungestoert geistliche Gemeinschaft pflegen durften. Die Prediger fuhren dann auseinander und jeder ging an die Organisierung der Gemeinde an seinem Ort. Es war ein schwerer Anfang bei der groszen Armut der Eingewanderten und es dauerte lange bis jede Gemeinde sich ein Gotteshaus bauen konnte. Die grosse Reiseschuld, welche die Einwanderer hatten, war ein schweres Kapitel an fuer sich. Im Jahre 1929 traten die neuen Gemeinden zusammen und dieses war dann die erste Konferenz in Alberta.

Unser Mennonitenvolk ist noch immer um das geistliche Wohl ihrer Jugend besorgt gewesen und so fing man in Rosemary und Didsbury in den Wintermonaten mit Bibelunterricht an. Die wirtschaftliche Lage fuer unsre Leute war eine schwere und nur ausnahmsweise konnte jemand von den jungen Leuten eine Hochschule besuchen. Ein richtiges Gebet fuer die damaligen Gemeinde war wohl: Herr, bewahre uns vor grosser Armut denn dieselbe ist so bitter; bewahre uns aber auch vor grossem Reichtum, denn derselbe kann uns so leicht den Riegel vor die Himmelstuer schieben.

Auf der 1935 Konferenz (provinziale) wurde beschlossen eine Konferenzbibelschule ins Leben zu rufen. Die Bergtaler Gemeinde bei Didsbury bot ihr vergroeszertes Gotteshaus dazu an. Alberta hatte eine Anzahl von Bibelschulen in Calgary, Didsbury und Three Hills. Dieselben waren auch gut aber es waren nicht die unsrigen. Die Lehren in diesen Schulen waren in mancher Hinsicht unserm mennonitischen Volke wesensfremd. Wir konnten doch nicht erwarten dass, in
(cont. on page 2)

Family Studies

New Genealogical Books

Dyck, John P. ed. **Braeul Genealogy (1670-1983)** Springstein, Man., 1983. pb. 97 pp. \$16.00 For further information contact the editor at Springstein, Manitoba.

Hiebert, A. H. and John H. Toevs, eds. **The Family of Johann Hiebert, 1816-1975** (n.p. ca. 1976) pb., 121 pp. For further information contact John H. Toevs, 115 S. Ash, Hillsboro, Kansas 67063.

Klassen, Clara Niessen Schulz, ed. **Schulz Genealogy** (n.p. ca. 1980), 525 pp. For further information contact Mennonite Genealogy, Box 393, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 2H6.

Klassen, Johann J. and Peter Zacharias eds. **Klassen A Family Heritage** (Winnipeg Manitoba, 1980), hdc. 522 pp. \$25.00 This is a work of excellent quality, including a number of color photos. There is also an introduction to the Mennonite story, and with it many family stories, along with the usual genealogical information. Its background notes and photos make it distinctive in other ways. To order contact The Heritage Centre.

Peters, Karen, and committee, eds. **Wilhelm and Helena Peters and Descendants 1902-1983** (Steinbach, Man., 1983), hdc., 122 pp. For further information write to: Henry Peters, Box 56, Randolph, Man., Can. R0A 1L0.

Regier, Helen Buhr. **The Friesens 1768-1983** (Newton, Kansas, 1983), hdc. 243 pp. For further information contact Helen Regier, 212 N. Pine St. Newton, Kansas, USA 67114.

Siemens, H.D. and K. Bergmann, eds. **The Story of Jacob and Helena Peters Siemens and Descendants**. (Victoria, B.C., 1983), hdc., 211 pp. For further information write H.J. Siemens, address above.

Siemens, H.J., K. Bergmann and C.P. Hiebert, eds. **The Story of Johan and Helena Toews Hiebert and Descendants** (Victoria, B.C., 1983), hdc. 315 pp. Includes an introduction, and material on "Who are the Mennonites?" Reproduction of a number of documents also. For further information contact H.J. Siemens, 831-440 Simcoe St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 1L3.

MGS Workshops - 1983

The Manitoba Genealogical Society will hold its annual seminar on October 28-30, 1983 at the University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The keynote speaker will be Anita Coderre from the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa.

Themes to be dealt with in the workshops include: Ukrainian genealogical sources by Stella Hryniuk, a similar topic for Mennonite materials, by Lawrence Klippenstein, "The Methods in our Madness," by Thomas Stacey, on the Polish resources by Ed Dobrzanski, the German, by Dieter Roger, and as well, treatments on American and French materials.

An evening session on October 29 will deal with Manitoba and include as speakers, Abe Loeppky, of the Department of Municipal Affairs, Peter Bower of the Provincial Archives, and Ruth Breckman, Manitoba Genealogical Society.

Write for your registration forms to: MGS Inc. Seminar '83 Box 2066, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3R4. The seminar fee (for the whole series) is \$20.00. Space will be available for displays of research and personal materials.



Mennonite Family History is a genealogical magazine published at Elverson, Pa. USA. The editors are Lois Ann and J. Lemar Mast. Subscription fees are \$12.00 per year (US), and copies may be ordered from MFH, Main St., P.O. Box 171, Elverson, Pa. 19520-0171.

Research Requests

Information is needed about the following:

Gertrude (Trude), nee Ewert, born 1887 in Velikokniascheskoie in the Kuban region, married to Jakob Rempel before the Revolution. They had an estate in the Crimea, then a few years also in the Kuban. Peter was arrested, and the family fled. Are any of the children alive? If so, where? The youngest was Hermann, born ca. 1912. Then there was Greta, born ca. 1910, Woldemar (Wolodja) and Margarete (Gretel).

Catherina (Tinchen), nee Ewert, born 1894 in Velikokniascheskoie /Kuban. She married Peter Reimer who apparently was arrested around 1929. Tinchen was deported with her family to Siberia during WW II and may have died there. Her daughters, Marga and Irma born 1920, and 1922/23 worked in the Trud Armee, survived this time and were married. One married a man named Herzog, and the other, a Russian. Apparently they were looking for their brother Petjz after the war. Does anyone know about the Reimer children?

Please send any information you have about the above to:

Anni Weiland-Ewert
Im Rehteich 11/94
D 7506 Bad Herrenalb
West Germany

Thank you so much.

I am looking for information on the family of Bernhard Isaak Walde and Anna Epp married in 1835. This couple may have lived in Gnadenheim, Samara. They had eight children: Isaak - 1836; Bernhard - 1837; Heinrich - 1838; Anna - 1840 (married August Penner); Maria - 1841; Johann - 1846 (married Aganete Regehr Andris, then Helene Abrams); Abraham - 1848 (married Elisabeth Siemens); Kornelius - 1849 (married Elisabet Wichert). Anna Epp Walde married Abram Langemann in 1857 and they had two sons, Jacob - 1858 and Peter - 1860. If you have any information about this family, please write to:

Mrs. Sandra Klassen
335 Brookmere Road S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2W 2P4

(cont. from page 1)

Schulen anderer Glaubensrichtungen man unsere jungen Leute fuer unsre mennonitische Gemeinden in unsrer Eigenart und nach mennonitischen Prinzipien erziehen wuerde. Dieses war eben unsre Aufgabe und unser Vorrecht. (to be continued)

MMHS

Board Meeting Report

The fall meeting of the MMHS board took place on September 26 in Altona, Manitoba. Ten board members were present. Reports were heard from the committees and from Gerhard Ens on behalf of a new ad hoc group set up to erect a monument to Mennonite martyrs. The Board has agreed to support the cairn project in suitable ways. Funds and donations to help should be sent to the treasurer, Ken Reddig, at 77 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, Man., and earmarked "Mennonite Martyrs' Cairn."

Herman Rempel reported for the Historic Sites Committee that its work of mapping Mennonite cemetery sites has been completed in its present phase. Materials on it have been placed in the Mennonite Heritage Centre for research and other use.

The Publication Committee is working hard with the Arnold Dyck multi-volume publication, and is looking at the possibility of publishing an English translation of Klaas Peters' *Die Berghaler Mennoniten*.

The Membership and Publicity Committee, reported on by committee member Dennis Stoesz, noted a record membership of 156 persons. This committee plans to put out a brochure for sharing information and soliciting more involvement. Memberships cost \$10.00 a year and may be obtained by writing to MMHS Membership, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4.

Ted Friesen reported on the work of a Task Force on Mennonite Encyclopedia revision which has been set up by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Further discussions on this will be held later in October.

Fall program plans for MMHS members and guests were announced by Bert Friesen. The program is outlined elsewhere on this page. *(Based on minutes submitted by Ruth Bock.)*

(Book review cont. from p. 7)

individual chapter. This constitutes a valuable asset for children old enough to read on their own.

Natives to southern Manitoba will find Elsa Redekop's book *Wish and Wonder* of particular interest. She has the rare gift of being able to intertwine personal experiences and memories with historical events.

Customs and values are portrayed throughout the book giving children of all ages the opportunity to recall or to learn anew something of Mennonite culture and heritage. The story of Lisa will carry the readers on wings of adventure and memories. Lisa's childhood innocence and faith expands and develops with the help of a loving family and a warm, receptive community.

Friesen History Workshop

Friesen Printers of Altona will be hosting a "History Book Workshop" at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on Monday, October 24, 1983 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

All aspects of compiling, writing, financing and printing a local history book will be covered.

Presentations will be made by representatives from New Horizons, Manitoba Genealogical Society, Department of Cultural Affairs and the Manitoba Archives.

Fred McGuinness of the Brandon Sun, and host of the popular CBC "Neighborhood News from the Prairie" will speak on "The Importance of Recording Local History."

All groups or individuals interested in local history are urged to attend.

Information regarding the workshop can be obtained from the History Book Coordinator at D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., in Altona.

MMHS WORKSHOP AND TOUR

Date: October 29, Saturday, 1983, 9:30 a.m.

Place: Steinbach, Man. Steinbach Bible College for A.M. meeting. Tour leaves from there locally.

Program: A.M. — "Printing and Publishing in Our Area" — discussion/presentation by Abe Warkentin and Al Reimer.

— "Enterprising Mennonites in Our Area"

— Panel headed by Roy Vogt, U of M.

P.M. — Tour of the local community.

Buses will leave Winnipeg (MBCI, 173 Talbot) at 8:30 a.m., return to Winnipeg by 5 p.m.

Cost: \$12.00 per person for Winnipeggers, \$6.00 for persons getting on in Steinbach. This will include transportation fare, lunch and local tour for Winnipeggers, lunch and local tour for Steinbachers.

To register intent to come phone or write to:

MMHS
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Man.
R3P 0M4

To phone call Bert Friesen,
1-204-339-8677.

The materials on this page were prepared and sponsored by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

BLUMENORT/BLUMENHOF TWIN CREEK

A Mennonite Community
in Transition
By Royden Loewen

The Mennonites of Manitoba have undergone a remarkable change since 1874. This book tells the story of one community, Blumenort. It tells how Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites settled here and how they have changed since then.

It answers questions such as:

- How did the Mennonites conquer the harsh wilderness?
- What was life in the early years really like?
- Who were the Blumenort pioneers?
- Why did the Mennonites begin changing?
- How did technology, new laws, and Winnipeg affect them?
- How Mennonite is Blumenort today?

The book includes:

- 300 photographs
- 50 charts and tables
- 30 maps
- 7 appendices
- 669 pages in all
- hardcover binding

Available from:

Friesens Mall
Altona, Manitoba, R0G 0B0

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

Blumenort Historical Society
Box 100
Blumenort, Man. R0A 2A0

Price:

\$25.00 plus mailing costs

Grant to MVM

Mennonite Village Museum recently received a grant of \$15,000.00 for its project, "CULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM '83", from the Minister of State, Multiculturalism.

The department expressed hope that financial support of projects such as this one will enrich the cultural fabric of Canada.

The monies will support research, development and productions of audio-visual programs for use both in the museum complex and in schools.

Mennonites in the U.S.A.

MEA — What is it?

In colonial Pennsylvania some Mennonites settled line-fence by line-fence among non-Mennonite neighbors; others settled in almost solidly Mennonite communities. Was the difference important? At that time Mennonites spoke much of suffering. Later they spoke of humility, then of active work, and still later of Anabaptist vision. Was faith changing, or only the words? Through their American experience Mennonites and Amish generally saw themselves as separated from the world and its outlook. Were they then different from most Americans in the way they thought about the nation, or about slavery and race, or about Indians in Oklahoma? In the 1870s Saloma Overholt, reared Mennonite, moved with her family from Pennsylvania to Nebraska. Soon she was telling a cousin of a thirst for social life and a good time. Then she married a "stranger" and all but disappeared farther west into Colorado. How many other young Mennonite women on the frontier shared her feelings and her story?

Many Mennonites arriving from Russia in the late-19th century had just undergone Pietistic revivals in their Russian communities. Did that fact affect how they chose to fit into the American denominational pattern? In the U.S. Civil War Jacob Schwarzendruber, an Amish elder in Iowa, asked whether his people could enjoy the nation's freedom and wealth and still not send their sons to its battlefields. Did the same question affect how young Amish and Mennonite men responded to the draft in the 20th century?

If Mennonites have survived as an identifiable group (or groups) through 300 years, what does their experience tell about the nature of America?

In the mid-1970s, with the 300th year of permanent Mennonite settlement in America approaching, reflective persons realized how many questions remained unanswered. Mennonite Central Committee provided a seed grant to bring such persons together, and they began to plan a *Mennonite Experience in America* series of four volumes to bring the American part of the Mennonite story together. The series was to:

- Be inter-Mennonite.
- Ask a very wide range of questions, from the theological to the economic, from class and race to the nature of work and play, and more.
- Treat not only internal Mennonite events, but also how Mennonites have fit into national developments, national expansion, and national economic, social and religious currents.

• Illuminate both the Mennonite story and broader American history.

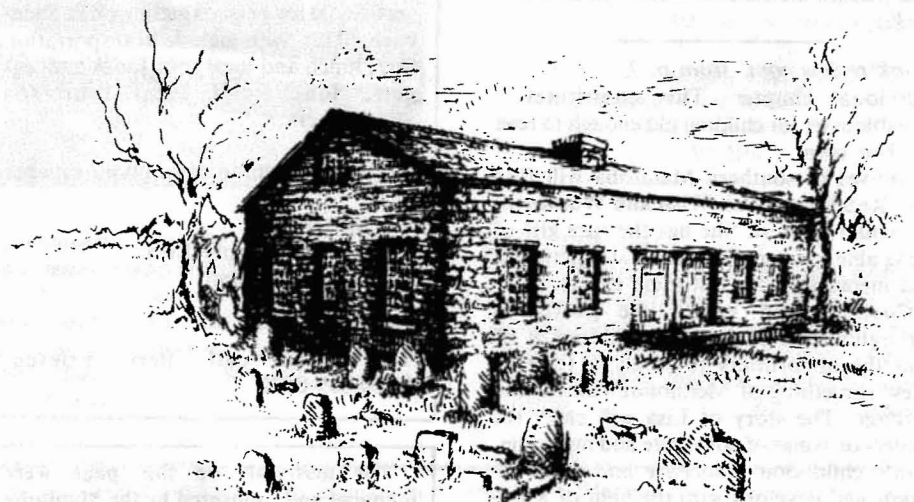
• Be very readable, yet provide depth and stand with the best of scholarship.

The project has developed without heavy organizational machinery. Its governing body is an Editorial Committee (listed below) who in turn has appointed four experienced authors to do the actual research and writing: Richard MacMaster of James Madison University, Theron Schlabach of Goshen College, James Juhnke of Bethel College, and Paul Toews of Pacific College at Fresno. Each of the four combines thorough training in American history with profound personal interest in Mennonite faith and life. Each is already an accomplished, publishing author.

Other persons and organizations are sharing deeply in the project with research and financial support. The General Conference Mennonite Commission on Education, the General Board of the Mennonite Church, and the two major "Centers for Mennonite Brethren Studies" have endorsed the project, as have some district conferences and quite a list of regional Mennonite historical societies. Financial support has come from such organizations; from grants given by Schowalter Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mutual Aid, and Goodville Mutual Casualty Company; from the Mennonite colleges and seminaries most closely involved, through supporting services and some direct funds; and, not least, from generous individuals.

As of mid-1983 Volume I by Richard K. MacMaster is at Herald Press, Scottsdale,

1683 Germantown 1983



Pa., awaiting publication. It is scheduled to appear in the spring of 1984 with the title *Land, Piety and Peoplehood: the Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790*. The other three volumes (1790s-1890s; 1890s-1930s; 1930s-1960s) will follow in the mid to latter 1980s.

MEA Editorial Committee (1983)

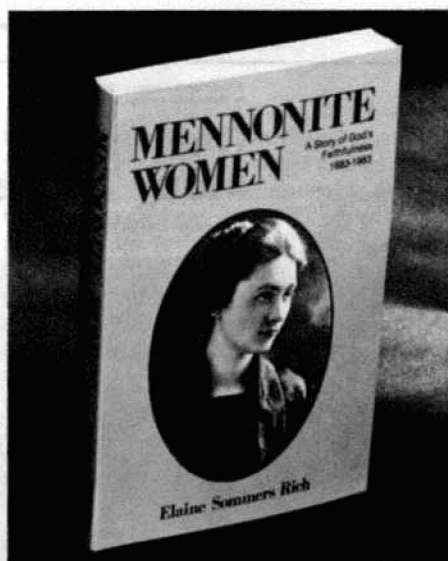
Robert S. Kreider, Bethel College, Chairman
Peter Klassen, California State University - Fresno
Carolyn C. Wenger, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
Cornelius J. Dyck, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries
Willard Swartley, AMBS
John A. Lapp, Goshen College
Wesley Prieb, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies at Tabor College
Leonard Gross, Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church
Theron Schlabach, Goshen College, Project Editor.

You Can Help

Contributions may be sent to **MEA Project, Institute of Mennonite Studies, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517**. The Institute serves as the project's financial agent, and gifts are tax-deductible.

An index and description of *The Mennonites of Southeastern Pennsylvania 1683-1983* was prepared for Bethlehem '83. The authors are Joseph S. Miller and Marcus Miller. It has 32 pages and a paperback binding. Order from MHEP, 24 Main St., Souderton, Pa. 18964.

Two Mennonite history films, "Anabaptist Beginnings" and "Mennonites Come to North America", have been produced and are available for purchase from the Audiovisual Library, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.



Mennonite Women, A Story of God's Faithfulness 1683-1983 was published by Herald Press in 1983. The author is Elaine Sommers Rich. It is illustrated and sells for \$9.95 (US) and \$11.95 (CAN). Order from your local bookstore or Fellowship Bookcentre, 1477 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, Man. Can. R3T 2C5

**Illinois Mennonite
Heritage Center**

The Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society opened its library and archives on April 5 on the lower level of the Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center, three miles west of Metamora, Ill., on Route 116.

It is being staffed by library committee members and volunteers on the first and third Tuesdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Other hours may be arranged by appointment with either Mildred Schertz 309/367-4424 or Mae (Mrs. Clarence) Imhoff 309/823-7345.

The library contains over 600 volumes with the emphasis of the collection on Mennonite and Anabaptist history and genealogy.

The upper level of the heritage center is the site for the Illinois Mennonite Museum.

Note: Attention should be drawn as well to the publication of a congregational history by the First Mennonite Church of Berne. **Pilgrimage of a Congregation** is authored by Naomi Lehman.

Book Review

Smith, Willard D. **Mennonites in Illinois.** Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History No. 24. Kitchener: Ontario: Herald Press, 1983. 613p. Ca. \$25.00 (USA) *Reviewed by Dennis Stoesz, Winnipeg, Man.*

Mennonites in Illinois have certainly been fortunate. Fifty years ago, Harry F. Weber wrote his scholarly **Centennial History of the Mennonites of Illinois, 1829-1929** (1931), and today one has an update, supplement, and

In the first two chapters, Smith traces the settlement of Mennonites in Illinois from 1830 to 1880. After this introduction, he outlines the histories of five main Mennonite denominations in Illinois: the Central Conference Mennonites, the Evangelical Mennonite Church (Defenceless Mennonites), the Old Order Amish, the Amish Mennonites (Western District Amish Mennonite Conference), and the 'Old' Mennonite Church (Illinois Mennonite Conference). These chapters are written in a relaxed style, and one takes enjoyment in listening to Smith chronicle the ministers, worship places, and characteristics of these Mennonite groups.

On top of this, one chapter is devoted to explaining nine other Mennonite groups like the Reformed Mennonites, the General Conference churches, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and others. The weakness of this section is its geographical limitations, but its strength is in its inter-Mennonite approach. And Smith is aware of this. "A complicating factor is writing the state history of a group that extends beyond the borders of the state...But this book is more than a conference history; it includes all branches of Illinois Mennonites." (p. 20)

In the second half of the book Smith goes on to look at the Mennonite experience in Illinois as a whole. This enables him to isolate various encompassing themes like education, missions, and service. It also gives him a chance to examine many significant events like the beginning of the Sunday schools, the revivals, the change from German to English, and the new periodical ventures in the late nineteenth century. In the 1910's and 1920's the liberal-fundamentalist controversy rages, and the two World Wars (1914-18 and 1939-45) brought further changes to the Mennonites.

In all of this Smith consciously portrays the different sides to the issues. For example, David Luthy, an Amish scholar of non-Amish background, is quoted on his interpretation that the Amish Mennonite conferences held between 1862 and 1878 "were under the control of the progressive Amish, not the stricter ones." (p. 87). As Theron Schlabach correctly notes in the introduction, when one reads the book one implicitly gains an insight into the progressive, the conservative evangelical, and the traditional responses to the various events and themes of this 150-year historical period.

I cannot comment on the historical accuracy of the facts or the interpretations of Smith, but it is his correlation of the meticulous denominational histories with the wider themes to which all denominations had to respond that makes the book a good history. Such a book provides a model for writing a history of the Manitoba Mennonite experience.

Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Vol. XLIV



**When All Mennonites
Celebrate History**
The Historical Committee
and M.

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We Are Pelted." Our lot
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the Ministers
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and the Ministers
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working quietly in silence
the materials through
and year we have over
served as a people, so as to

Mennonite Historical Bulletin is edited by Leonard Gross and published by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. Regular subscription is \$5.00 per year. Write to Mennonite Archives, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, Indiana, USA 46526 for further information.

MHSC

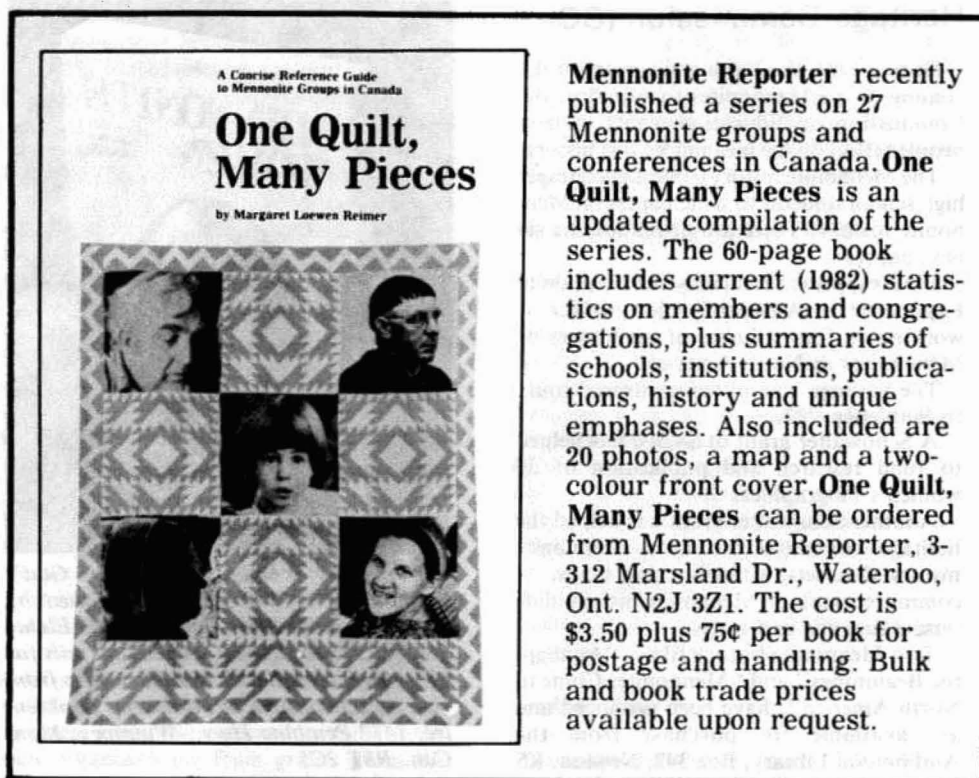
New Journal of Mennonite Studies

The first issue of the new *Journal for Mennonite Studies* was published in August. The journal is an annual publication of the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, in cooperation with Canadian Mennonite Bible College, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, the Mennonite Literacy Society, Inc., and MHSC.

The 208-page inaugural issue of the journal contains the proceedings of the Mennonite Studies conference held at the University of Toronto in June, 1982. The twelve main articles are titled as follows: "The Writing of Canadian Mennonite History" by T. D. Regehr; "Sociology of Mennonites: State of the Art and Science", by Leo Driedger and Calvin Redekop; "Mennonite Studies in Economics," by Roy Vogt; "Mennonites and Politics in Canada and the U.S." by John Redekop; "Canadian Geographers and Their Contributions to Mennonite Studies," by John Warkentin; "Mennonite Literature in Canada: Beginnings, Reception and Study," by Harry Loewen, "Studies in Mennonite Education: The State of the Art," by John W. Friesen; "Psychology and Mennonite Studies," by Bill W. Dick; "Mennonite Studies as a Part of Religious Studies," by William Klassen, "Response to William Klassen's Paper," by Waldemar Janzen; "Reflection on Mennonite Theology in Canada," by Peter Erb, "A People's Struggle for Survival: A Review", by Gerald Friesen, and "Mennonite Studies: Preparing for the Next Agenda," by John A. Lapp.

The three sponsoring societies, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, the

The first CO Reunion in Saskatchewan was held on Aug. 20-21, 1983. Participants are pictured below. For a complete report on the event see Mennonite Reporter, Sept. 19, 1983, pp. 1 and 4. Photo courtesy of Helen Funk, Laird, Saskatchewan.



The book may be ordered also from Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4. Mailing costs extra.

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, and the Ethnic and Immigration Studies Program of the University of Toronto, also contributed substantially toward the publication cost of the inaugural issue.

The journal already has close to 300 paid subscribers. **Information is available from the editor, Dr. Harry Loewen, Journal of Mennonite Studies, The University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2E9.**

Mennonite Reporter recently published a series on 27 Mennonite groups and conferences in Canada. **One Quilt, Many Pieces** is an updated compilation of the series. The 60-page book includes current (1982) statistics on members and congregations, plus summaries of schools, institutions, publications, history and unique emphases. Also included are 20 photos, a map and a two-colour front cover. **One Quilt, Many Pieces** can be ordered from Mennonite Reporter, 3-312 Marsland Dr., Waterloo, Ont. N2J 3Z1. The cost is \$3.50 plus 75¢ per book for postage and handling. Bulk and book trade prices available upon request.

D.G. Rempel Recognized

Dr. David G. Rempel received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Waterloo at Spring Convocation on May 26. Born in 1899 in the Chortitza Mennonite Colony in Russia, Rempel emigrated to Saskatchewan in 1924. He studied at Rosthern, then at Bluffton College and finally in California where he completed his doctorate in Russian history. He remained in California as a teacher, administrator, and scholar. His scholarly work focussed primarily upon the Mennonite experience in Russia.

In receiving the honorary degree, Rempel was cited for his life-long commitment to documenting and interpreting the story of his people in Russia. The dean of Mennonite Russian history deservedly received this honour just blocks from where his compatriots from Russia were welcomed to Canada by Waterloo Country Mennonites almost sixty years ago.

The materials on this page were prepared and sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

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Book Reviews (cont.)

the unspecified incidents and observations refer to Mennonites. Thus the references to various archival sources would lead to information of interest to the specialist seeking the Mennonite experience. For instance the reports on the revival of religious life in the German settlements, contrary to the hostile stance of the Nazis toward authentic Christianity, also reflect the situation among Mennonites. Generally Mennonites seem to have been regarded by the officials of the occupation as superior to other German colonists because of their racial purity, cultural standards and work ethic. The book reports only rare instances of German colonists collaborating with the Nazis in their excessive violence toward the Slavic and Jewish population. Whether there were no Mennonite collaborators is not explicitly stated.

After the arduous trek had brought the Germans from the Ukraine to Poland, a plan for their re-settlement which took special consideration of the religious groupings was presented within the SS - "the Protestant and Mennonite groups were to be placed and re-educated in national socialist shock troop settlements (Stosstruppsiedlungen) in the new German territory." (p. 228). This fate would have been only slightly less devastating to the Mennonite community than the one which eventually struck those who fell back under Soviet domination.

Cornelius C. Funk, **Escape to Freedom** Trans. and ed. by Peter J. Klassen, Hillsboro, Kansas: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1982. 124 pp. Pb. \$6.95 (US), \$8.35 (Can.) Reviewed by Mark Froese, MWC, Winnipeg, Man.

This book follows the life and experiences of the author from his youth in Russia through the Revolution, Civil War and New Economic Policy to eventual emigration to and establishment in Canada. Essentially an autobiography written for the author's family that has then been published, the book suffers from a danger inherent in this genre: There are too many details that are only marginally interesting to the casual reader. Although the description of the family mill and its operation in Russian and later in B.C. for example, as well as numerous individuals who helped the Funks along the way is certainly of interest to the family, this does not always hold the attention of the reader. More careful editing would have been helpful in remedying this situation.

Omission Noted

We did not include the name of reviewer Jacob Peters of Winnipeg, Manitoba with the Anabaptist studies book review in MH, June, 1983, p. 7. Our apologies!

The book contains some information on conditions in Russia under the New Economic Policy, as well as the experience of a new immigrant in Canada. We can sympathize when the author, a former mill owner, recounts the difficulty he had finding work during his first year in Canada. It is worthwhile to be reminded of the humble beginnings of many of our grandparents, particularly at a time when political instability in much of the world has already created many refugees looking for a new homeland.

Despite a few interesting anecdotes (Funk tells of how he was forbidden to speak German while doing road construction in Coaldale, since this was government work), the story is almost entirely descriptive and at times makes for tedious reading. Although the author is clearly not a novelist he still fails to transmit his personal experiences into the universal. Here again the editor must assume responsibility. Ultimately though, we can be thankful that some details of our past from an original source have been preserved in print.

The book is available from Multi Business Press, P.O. Box L, Hillsboro, Kansas, 67063.

Margaret Epp, **Sarah and the Persian Shepherd**. Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1983. Pb., \$4.95. Illus. Ruth Wiens.

Nan Doerksen, **Bears for Breakfast: The Thiessen Family Adventures** Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1982. Pb. \$2.25. Illus. Kathy Penner.

Elsa Redekop, **Wish and Wonder: A Manitoba Village Child**. Winnipeg: Redell Publishing, 1982. Pb., 59pp., \$3.95. Illus. Valeda Goulden. Reviewed by Elfrieda Thiessen, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Recently, three books were brought to my attention. While written primarily for children, I found each book delightful reading bringing back nostalgic memories of my own childhood.

Sarah and the Persian Shepherd is a heart warming story about a young girl's adventures during her growing up days. Readers will feel Sarah's pain as she struggles with the knowledge of her mother's illness. They will respond to the excitement of being lost in the fog while crossing a frozen lake. The harassment of the Darnley boys which results in a dreadful mid-winter accident will add a sensation of anxiety and indignation. Margaret Epp, as in her previous books, has a unique way of compelling the reader to merge with the character(s) of her story.

Bears for Breakfast: The Thiessen Family Adventures contains six stories about experiences of the Thiessen family. Short enough to hold the interest of very young children makes this an excellent book for parents to read at bed-time. I found the title somewhat misleading but was impressed with the illustrations and lesson content in each

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Book Reviews

Cornelius J. Dyck ed. **Something Meaningful for God: The Stories of Some Who Served with MCC.** The Mennonite Central Committee Story, Vol. 4. Biographies. Scottdale, PA, and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981. 399pp., pb., \$9.55 (Canadian). Reviewed by Paul Friesen, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Something Meaningful for God is a collection of experiences of fifteen different individuals and couples who have served with Mennonite Central Committee both at home and throughout the world. The volume is part of a series, the purpose of which is to present the MCC story in a firsthand way and to provide a resource for other writers, for study groups in congregations and schools, and for private enjoyment. These stories of those who served meet these expectations. They are captivating and filled with fascinating episodes. These eyewitness accounts not only make the history of MCC more accessible, but also illuminate the much broader Mennonite story. At the same time that one learns something about some of MCC's many workers and volunteers, one gains an added understanding of such things as the tragedy of the Mennonite experience in post-revolutionary Russia, the relief and resettlement work among Russian Mennonite refugees after World War II and the settlement of Mennonite refugees in South America.

The subtitle to this volume led the reviewer to expect that the contents would deal with the experiences of some of the short-term volunteers who have served with MCC. The majority of those included, though, played a central role in MCC's history, whether as executive officers, administrators, directors or support staff. One should not therefore assume that the former did not make an equally important contribution to the work of MCC. The difficulty of whom to include is recognized to the work of MCC. The difficulty of whom to include is recognized by the editor. That six of the seventeen individuals considered are women is to be mildly commended. At the same time, in geographic terms, only five individuals are not American; two being non-North American and three Canadian. Hopefully a volume dealing with the contributions made to MCC by non-North Americans will become a reality, especially since MCC workers are quickly made aware of how much they learn from those they volunteered to serve. The individuals considered provide a good representation from both the various Mennonite groups and from the Brethren in Christ.

There is some confusion throughout the volume over whether it is a collection of

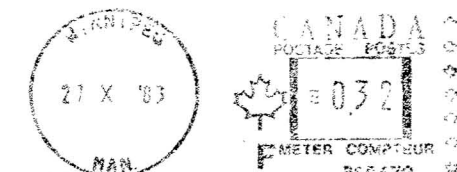
stories or biographies. Both claims are made in the title and the preface. The problem is most evident in the chapters on P. C. Hiebert and J. J. Thiessen, both biographic overviews which were drawn out of more extensive writings but which provide little about these individual's involvement with MCC. They are not stories about service with MCC, which seems the more legitimate intent and purpose of this collection. The inclusion of biographical material is indeed necessary and helpful for the reader, but in this volume it should only embellish the story about an individual's service with MCC. The chapter on Harry and Olga Martens, for instance, is much more in keeping with the intent of this volume. If the story format would have been adhered to throughout, a more uniform presentation of experiences would have resulted.

The aforementioned flaws do not detract from the value of this book. The insights into the life, faith and love of those who served with MCC, which this volume provides, again underscores the fact that MCC's greatest resource has always been its workers.

Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Nr. 46 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1983) by Ingeborg Fleischhauer, 258 pp, Price: 22 DM Reviewed by Peter Rempel, Neuwied, West Germany.

Students of Russian Mennonite history will be interested in a new book published in West Germany which relates to the traumatic experiences of the Mennonites in the Soviet Union during World War II. **Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion** by Ingeborg Fleischhauer is a fascinating account of the policies and practices of the Nazi regime toward the ethnically German population in the U.S.S.R. and as such it provides a valuable depiction of the forces which so disastrously affected the Mennonites during the German invasion, occupation and defeat in Ukraine. Reading this well-researched and documented study should remove the delusion, held by some, that the Nazi regime, however cruel it was to its many victims, intended or would have ultimately brought an end to the repression of the Germans in the Soviet territory it occupied.

The attitude of the Nazi party and government to these expatriate Germans is traced back to the extreme nationalist "All Germans" of the turn of the century, who viewed the German settlements in Russia as the forefront of the Germanic claims and power which would and should conquer eastern Europe and European Russia through its



racial and military supremacy. This view which valued the German colonists for their cultural and economic achievements was transformed by Hitler and his party into a crass utilitarian attitude which regarded them as pawns in the total ideological and military war against the communist enemy. The latter more respectful attitude was sustained in the staff of the state ministry's department for the occupied eastern zone while the more sinister view prevailed in the "Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle" of the SS. The constant power struggles between these two institutions and the ultimate supremacy of the SS worsened the situation of the German population in the occupied territory.

A primary method in the exploitation of the Germans in Ukraine was the categorization according to racial purity and ideological conformity. The research of the staff under Dr. Karl Stumpf, known for his extensive post-war studies of Germans in Russia, was to provide the "scientific" facts for the racially and ideologically tainted, this categorization was to select those who could serve Nazi purposes in its eastern frontier while the racially pure but ideologically indifferent were to be re-educated to enhance their usefulness. Those who had assimilated into the local population were to be exploited as labourers with their compatriots. Immediate execution or extermination in a concentration camp was the fate of those with a Jewish parent or those who were suspected of communist convictions.

Other policies which would cause immediate or eventual oppression are documented by the author. In most regions the few remaining men were pressed into military squadrons under SS command. The despised collective farm system was forcibly continued contrary to expectations in order not to jeopardize agricultural production for the war effort. The cruel consequences of Nazi policies became especially obvious in the westward trek in retreat from the advancing Soviet army. In their deluded refusal to anticipate defeat, the preparations for the evacuation of the German civilians was left to the last moment. German settlements, either in their original or in new strategic locations were to be defensive bulwarks of the "Reich" and thus were disbanded with extreme reluctance. The persistent struggle of the SS to retain its control over the Germans against the better intentions and sounder judgment of the civil administration delayed and confused the evacuation effort. As a result for many the trek brought anguish and death rather than escape and security.

There are occasional specific references to Mennonites in the book and surely many of
(More book reviews on p. 7)