

Mennonite Historian

Volume IX, Number 4



December, 1983



A scene showing the arrival of the first Mennonites in the Swift Current, Saskatchewan area. The year was 1905. The donor writes, "The government had tents erected as temporary homes for the newcomers. They were located about 15 miles out of town." Photo: Courtesy of Jacob and Anna Friesen, and Mennonitische Post.

The Janzen Group in Saskatchewan

By Henry Funk

Jansen is a small Saskatchewan town located on what is known as the Yellow Head Route, Highway 16, approximately 95 miles east of Saskatoon and 100 miles north of Regina.

The Jansen group was a Mennonite community which functioned as a rural congregation ten to fifteen miles north of Jansen. It no longer exists today. The following is a brief history of this group.

In April, 1925, six Mennonite families who had recently migrated from Russia, arrived to settle on land in this area. The first three families arrived together — the Heinrich J. Siemens, the Gerhard Martens and the Daniel Janzens. They were soon joined by three more families — the Abram Pankratz's (Mr Pankratz was later ordained to the ministry in Mission City, B.C.), the Heinrich Fast's and the Johann J. Friesens.

In May, 1926, nine more families, also recent Russian Mennonite immigrants, settled in the area — the Klaas K. Janzens, the Nikolai Janzens, a Mrs Penner (widow), the Johann Martens, the Heinrich J. Thiessens, the Johann Thiessens, the Franz Goertzens,

the Franz Wiebes (father-in-law of Rev. J. J. Nickel of of Aberdeen and Langham) and a Froese family.

There were also a few other families who became part of this group. A John Harms family lived to the north near Le Roy. In 1930 an Abram Enns family joined the community. Both of these had also recently come from Russia. To the north-east, near Watson, there was a Jacob Riesen family which had migrated from Kansas around 1903. At Watson there was also an Abram Doell family which had moved from Steinbach early in the century.

During the first year the six families attended a rural German Lutheran Church located in the neighborhood. When more families arrived, however, they began their own meetings in the Heinrich J. Siemens home which was large enough to have a living room that held up to 100 people. Most of these Mennonites were of the "Kirchliche" background. Three families were of Mennonite Brethren background — the Heinrich J. Thiessens, the Johann Thiessens and the Franz Goertzens. For leadership the

group looked to three men — Klaas K. Janzen, Johann Thiessens and Jacob Riesen. Klaas K. Janzen had been elected as a minister in Russia but had not yet been ordained. Johann Thiessens had been a candidate for the ministry in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia but the family had to leave Russia before the election could be carried out. Jacob Riesen had extensive experience as a Sunday School teacher in the United Church at Watson. These three shared the preaching along with the help of Abram Pankratz and Heinrich J. Thiessens.

In 1927 (?), Rev. Benjamin Ewert (a General Conference "Reiseprediger" working out of Winnipeg) and Rev. H. H. Bartel (the elder of the North Star Mennonite Church at Drake) helped the group organize as "Die Gruppe zu Jansen" (The Jansen Group). They were not officially organized as a congregation, but in all other respects seemed to function as one.

In April, 1929, the Klaas K. Janzen family moved to Provost, Alberta. Mr. Janzen was later ordained to the ministry at Strathmore, Alberta. In 1930, feeling the need of having their own minister, the group chose two candidates from their midst — Jacob Riesen and Johann J. Friesen. The same year they elected Johann J. Friesen and also ordained him. Either Benjamin Ewert or H. H. Ewert officiated at the ordination.

Some families stayed in the area only a short while, finding better opportunities elsewhere. Consequently the group gradually decreased in size and smaller houses could, therefore, also be used to host the meetings. They then took turns hosting the meetings. By the late 1930's the group was quite small but it kept up services as best possible.

Johann J. Friesen was 48 years of age when he was ordained. In 1948, at the age of 66, he retired from his farm and moved to Drake. As long as he was able to drive a car, Rev. Friesen continued to drive out to serve his congregation faithfully — till approximately the mid-sixties when he was in his early eighties. Different ministers from Drake also helped out over the years. When Mr. Friesen could no longer serve them, the group dissolved. He had served the group for over 30 years. He died in Regina on June 24, 1969, at the age of 87 and was buried from the North Star Mennonite Church and in the Drake cemetery, on June 27.

(To be continued)

Family Studies

Black Creek Honors Pioneers

By A. B. Koop

Black Creek celebrated the 50th anniversary of its early settlers and the first Mennonite pioneer family — the Henry Schulz Family on Sunday, August 1. It was an all-day, historic celebration, beginning 10 a.m. in the United Mennonite Church and ending 10 p.m. with a salmon barbecue at Henry and Eugene Schulz' place near the highway.

Planning and hosting was by the four Schulz descendants, Henry, Elsie, Peter and Annie. Henry is well known in the meat market and in land developing, Peter as storekeeper and real estate agent. Annie married Jake Wiebe and both sell real estate in Prince George. Elsie is married to Aron Enns, who was in charge of the morning program.

It all started when Henry Schulz with his family arrived here 50 years ago in the middle of October, 1932, and released a letter of praise and invitation to the Black Creek and Merville area, printed October 19, 1932 in **Der Nordwesten**. This letter had been filed away by his oldest daughter, Elsie, and was now read during the service. It surely had its designed appeal to prairie people. In it Schulz wrote of an isolated land, void of dust storms, snowstorms, potato bugs and hail. This land grew nearly everything. The climate was mild and land was cheap, in fact, \$7.25 per acre.

Aron Enns called on Rev. Friesen, long-time former minister, and on Jacob Falk and Henry Schulz. All spoke of pioneer days as trying but as good days of community building when each had supported the other. Mrs. Visser, Black Creek, was the first school teacher. She received applause. Julie Wiebe and Eugene Schulz read original poems about Black Creek. Gary Enns sang with his girls and some nieces. Jake Wiebe led the congregation in a spirited, old-time hymn-sing.

The sanctuary was filled to capacity. Guests had come from Ontario, Prince George, Alberta and other towns of B.C. Special guests were of the Gossen Family, Coaldale, Alberta: Louise, John, Erna and Annie. The celebration included a delicious, multi-course meal for all. The salmon barbecue for the many relatives and guests was held at Henry and Eugene Schulz' place.

At the corner of Island Highway and Lalum Road, in honor of the first Mennonite Settler Family, is now a site of interest — a MONUMENT! Stop by some time. *Adapted from Comox District Free Press Sept. 1, 1982.*



The existing basement remains of the meeting house for the Herold Mennonite congregation, Morden, Manitoba. Photo courtesy of Karl Klaassen, Kelowna, B.C.

Congregational Cairn Being Planned

The descendants of the late Rev. Michael Klassen of the Herold Mennonite Church near Morden, Man., have recently decided to erect a memorial at the site of the congregational cemetery in that area. The steering committee includes John Dalke as chairman, and Martha Rempel as secretary. Karl Klaassen of Kelowna, B.C. is another of the organizers for this project.

The foundation of the Herold congregation meeting house remains intact at the former site of the worship centre of the congregation. The cemetery has been maintained with care since the congregation merged with other groups in the area (Cf. **MH**, June, 1983 p. 1 for a brief story on the congregation). Persons interested in more information, or offering financial support for cairn construction are invited to contact Karl Klaassen, 735 Ace Rd., Kelowna, B.C. V1X 4C4.

Book Review

Sarah Froese DeFehr, ed. **Im Wandel der Jahre**. Winnipeg, Man. 1976. Pb., 198 pp. \$15.00. Reviewed by Peter Paetkau, *Sperling, Man.*

Im Wandel der Jahre is a family album intended for the children and grandchildren so that they may remember something about their predecessors, and on that score it is also a historical album which points back to the earliest Anabaptist martyrs. From the extensive collection of the author about 800 photographs have been included dating back 135 years. Data, places and names are under each picture, coupled with interesting comments in a rather poetic style.

Family albums are family chronicles. Her interest to collect notes about local and fami-

ly history was already awakened where her infant crib was harboured many years ago by her one great-grandmother who talked interestingly about the past. The author's grandfather, Johann Froese, (born in Schoeneberg) was founder of the family millworks and machinery factory, and Grandfather Braun was the second village head in Gruenfeld, serving twelve years. The earlier predecessor, Peter Froese, born in Danzig in 1755, emigrated to the Ukraine already in 1789. The present volume exists as an extract from the large collection of notes and manuscripts in the possession of Mrs. DeFehr - whoever has lost track of his predecessors in Gruenfeld very easily may find them here!

When the bounds of a family chronicle are so broadly presented, the chronicle becomes historical observation in the final analysis - not merely the story or record of Gruenfeld and its inhabitants, but the history of a much larger field in southern Russia during a particular period, a remote settlement somewhat removed from the older **Mutterkolonie**, and published here for the first time. Here is beginning, growth - and how prosperity is drawn to a tragic conclusion.

Thus even with these features the significance of the work is not exhausted. We note further a fine map of Gruenfeld, the previously unpublished list of the exiled and the banished from Gruenfeld, the family register of the families concerned (DeFehr, Froese, Kehler, etc.), as also the statistics about events in the life of Gruenfeld. Altogether it is well-bound with family crest of the Froese establishments and title inscription in gold on a red soft cover.

Therefore, children and grandchildren, relatives and friends must express their gratitude to the author and Eugene Regehr, the printer. Absolutely no Gruenfelder may

(continued from page 2)

be excused, because they will be deeply touched by its content, also no true historians, archivists, librarians, and all those who appreciate evidence of God's dealings with mankind in the course of history. The price is well worth the effort to secure a copy before its limited printing is exhausted, postage included. **Im Wandel der Jahre** will not be available in the bookstores. The book may be ordered from Peter B. Paetkau, Box 116, Sperling, Manitoba R0G 2M0.

The Origin and Early Years of the MBI

By *Wilhelm Pauls*

Conclusion

Die alte Kirche der Bergtaler Gemeinde diente in den ersten zehn Jahren als Schule und auch als Internat. In den Kirchenraumen wurde unterrichtet, im Keller-raum wurde gekocht und in den Dachstuben hatten die Schueler ihre Quartiere. Hauseltern wurden angestellt die auch das Kochen besorgten. Zwei Lehrer waren fuers erste Jahr angestellt. Die Eroeffnung der Bibelschule und Weihung derselben fanden am 7. November, 1937 statt. geleitet von Aelt., David Janzen von Springridge. Sehr viel Menschen waren zu dieser Einweihung erschienen.

Am naechsten Tage fing der Unterricht an. Schueler waren im ersten Jahr nur acht. Der Unterricht war nur in deutscher Sprache, weil ja alle Gemeinden ihre Andachten und Sonntagsschulen nur in dieser Sprache hatten. Manche Arbeit mussten die Schueler tun. Morgen holten sie Milch von der Nachbar Farm. Ihre Waesche mussten sie selbst waschen und das Wasser fuer jeglichen Gebrauch holten sie von den Nachbarn. Der Unterricht dauerte fuenf Monate. Die Bergtaler Gemeinde hat sich damals einfach in ruehrender Weise der Schule angenommen. Im Sommer wurde eine bessere Heizung eingesetzt. Die Frauen uebernahmen sich das Backen des Brotes und jeden Morgen brachten sie dasselbe zur Schule. Fussboden faerben und die generale Hausreinigung im Herbst ehe die Schule anfang, tat auch die Gemeinde.

Im zweiten Schuljahr waren zehn Schueler. Einen zweiten Lehrer hatte man nicht auf-treiben koennen und so war ich dann die einzige Lehrkraft. Unterrichtet wurde wieder die Bibel, Katechismus, Altertumskunde (Archaeology), biblische Geographie, Exegese, verwandte Gegenstaende und deutsche Sprache.

Am 1. September, 1939 brach der zweite Weltkrieg aus. Mit etwas gemischten Gefuehlen fingen wir das dritte Schuljahr mit 13 Studenten an. Der Krieg war gegen Deutschland gefuehrt, und hier war eine ganz deutsche Schule in welcher obendrein auch

noch die Wehrlosigkeit gelehrt wurde. Im Sueden Albertas wurden bald zwei mennonitische Gotteshaeuser angezuendet. In Saskatchewan wurde eine mennonitische Bibelschule gewaltmaeszig geschlossen und ueber unsrer Schule, die sich damals **Neu-Bergtaler Bibelschule** nannte, hielt der Herr schuetzend gnaedig seine Hand.

Als zweiter Lehrer war J.W. Nickel von Saskatchewan angestellt. Er war ein sehr begabter und begeisterter Lehrer und Chorleiter. Seine Rundreise mit Saengern im Herbst, wo alle Gemeinden besucht wurden, brachten jetzt 52 Schueler hin. Die Unterbringung von 52 Juenglingen und Jungfrauen war keine geringe Sache. Strenge Disziplin musste gewahrt werden, damit die Eltern daheim sorglos und ruhig bleiben konnten. Das Rat geschafft werden musste, war jetzt nicht nur dem Komitee deutlich sondern der ganzen Konferenz. Die Petroleum Lampen, feuchte Kellerraume und die Strohmattzen waren anfaenglich gut genug gewesen, jetzt aber nicht mehr.

Die allgemeine wirtschaftliche Lage hatte sich gebessert und man ging dran ein "Dormitory" zu bauen. Um den Unterschied zwischen reichere und aermere Studenten zu bahnen wurde ein einfaches Kleid als Uniform fuer alle Maedchen obligatorisch. Die Schule wurde dreiklassig. Weil die Schule jetzt der ganzen Konferenz diente, wurde der Name geaendert und hiesz jetzt **Menno Bible Institute**.

Anno 1941 sank die Zahl der Studenten auf 38, vielleicht weil viele junge Maenner in den C.O. Camps dienen mussten. Im Jahre 1942 verliess uns Lehrer J.W. Nickel und ein Absolvent vom Prairie Bible Institute mit Namen Abram Koop kam als Lehrer hin. Wir hatten in dem Jahr 44 Studenten und da bot P.P. Dyck von Rosemary sich als Helfer an und kam and diente. In den Gemeinden fehlte es an S.S. Lehrern und wir bemuehten uns die Studenten dahin auszubilden. Was uns zu allererst das Wichtigste war, war die Studenten zu Christus zu fuehren. Wie haben wir so froh und herzlich dem Herrn gedankt wenn zum Schulschlussfeste alle Studenten ein Eigentum der Herrn geworden waren. In der vierten Klasse wurde auch Homiletic unterrichtet.

Nun fingen diese Studenten an mit Morgenandachten zu dienen, die dann spaeter in der Klasse kritisiert wurden. Diese Arbeit ging sehr gut und die Klasse nahm die Arbeit sehr ernst. Jetzt wurde auch schon manch ein Gegenstand in englischer Sprache unterrichtet. Die Schule wurde Mitglied der S.S. Teacher Training Association. Wer die dritte Klasse beendigte erhielt ein Zeugnis vom M.B.I. In der zweiten Klasse lernten die Studenten die beste Predigt die es gibt auswendig, naemlich Bergpredigt nach Matthaeus Kapitel 5-7.

Wir hatten dann noch etliche Jahre eine Schuelerzahl von 45. Im Mai des Jahres 1945 wurde der Krieg beendet; die mennonitischen C.O. Juenglinge kamen nach

Hause. Im Herbst des Jahres 1945 erschienen 58 Studenten. Dieses war die Hoechstzahl der Schueler die M.B.I. je gehabt hat. Die Kirche war ja an fuer sich kein entsprechendes Gebaeude fuer eine Schule. Wenn z. B. in der Gemeinde ein Gebraebnis war, fiel der Unterricht fuer den Nachmittag aus.

Ich sprach mehrere Konferenzmitglieder an bezueglich eines neuen Schulhauses. Doch dafuer hatte man noch keine Ohren. Die Antwort war einfach: "Unsre Konferenz hat keinen Acker Land den sie eignet, wo ein Schulhaus gebaut werden koennte; und haben auch keinen Dollar um so ein Haus aufzufuehren." Bei der naechsten Morgenandacht die ich in der Schule zu halten hatte, teilt ich diese Antwort auf meine Bitte der Schulfamilie mit. Die 58 Studenten waren enttauscht dieses zu hoeren. Dann sagte ich weiter: der Herr kann uns eine geraeumige Schule geben wenn wir darum beten werden, und wir haben noch drei Wochen bis die Konferenz stattfindet. In diesen drei Wochen koennen wir den Herrn darum anflehen. Von dann an wurde nach der taeglichen Morgenandacht von den Studenten um ein neues Schulhaus gebetet.

Ich fuhr zur Konferenz und Lehrer Koop anberaumte, fuer den Nachmittage in der Schule eine Gebetsstunde, wenn laut dem Programm auf der Konferenz die Sache der Bibelschule besprochen wurde. Als nach der Beratung die Frage aufgeworfen wurde, Schule bauen oder nicht? war man einstimmig fuer "Bauen". Das Dreigespann von Lehrern: David P. Neufeld, A. Koop und Pauls hatten auch mit 58 Studenten es einen Winter geschafft.

Gleich nach der Konferenz ging man ans Planen, Geldsammeln und die Grundlegung fuer ein neues M.B.I. Die Alberta Konferenz kaufte von der Bergtaler Gemeinde den ganzen Hof samt der Kirche und fing an zu bauen. Von allen Gemeinden kamen freiwillige Arbeiter. Die Gemeinde baute sich westlich von dem Platze eine Kirche. Zehn Jahre war der Unterricht in der Kirche gewesen und im Fruehling 1947 war das Schulhaus fertig und wurde dem Herrn geweiht. Im Schuljahr 1946-1947 waren 53 Studenten erschienen. Es waren vier Klassen aber man hatte nur 2 Lehrer angestellt.

Rev. C.L. Dick schreibt von dem Schuljahr im Buch "The Mennonite Conference of Alberta" folgendes: "Pauls und Koop again wer required to work unreasonable hours." Dieses ist nicht uebertrieben, es ist wahr. Die Tagesstunden reichten nicht aus und deshalb unterrichteten wir auch noch abends. In den ersten zehn Jahren hatten 233 Studenten das M.B.I. besucht. Viele von diesen sind tuechtige Arbeiter im Reiche des Herrn geworden: Lehrer, Missionare, Aelteste, Prediger, Diakone, S.S. Lehrer und Lehrerinnen und viele viele treue Gemeindeglieder.

Die Arbeit mit der Schule hat sich gelohnt denn der Herr hat reichlich seinen Segen gegeben.

Russian Studies Seminar

"Images of Imperial Russia"

May 9-10, 1984

Conrad Grebel College

Wednesday, May 9, 1984

Arrival and Faspá - 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Keynote address: "Aspects of Russian Mennonite Intellectual Life" — James Urry, University of Wellington, New Zealand

Free time and displays

Banquet

"Russian Mennonites: The Australian Connection" — James Urry

Reflections on Imperial Russia — diaries, readings, stories

Thursday, May 10, 1984

Session I - 8:30 a.m.

A. "Soviet Scholarship and Interpretation of Mennonite History: A Review of the Literature" — Walter Sawatsky, European Director, Mennonite Central Committee

Respondents

B. "Mennonite Response to the 1905 Revolution: Analysis of the Mennonite Press" — Len Friesen, University of Toronto.

Respondents

12:00-1:00 Lunch

Session II - 1:00 p.m.

A. "Images of Mennonites by the External World: German, Russian, Nationalist and Marxist Views" — Harvey Dyck, University of Toronto.

Respondents

B. "Mennonite Pacifism in Russia: A Case Study in Church-State Relations" — research report by Lawrence Klippenstein.
C. Panel Discussion: "Agenda of Scholarship in Russian Mennonite Studies"

Adjournment - 4:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel College.

Accommodations and meals will be available at Conrad Grebel College at a very reasonable cost. There will be art and book displays during the conference, including the Henry Pauls and Woldemar Neufeld collections.

For further information write to: Sam Steiner, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6.

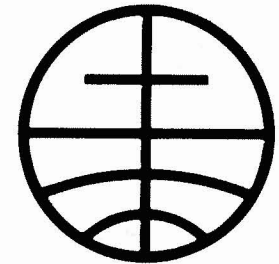
On Oct. 24, the Man. Mennonite Historical Society sponsored a tour of the former East Reserve in Manitoba. Here the group notes a memorial marker erected at the cemetery site of the former village of Bergfeld (Old Barkfield). Photo: Courtesy of Allen Siebert, Winnipeg.



The Ukrainians of Canada recalled the 1932-1933 famine catastrophe of Ukraine at special celebrations held at Winnipeg, Manitoba in October, 1983. Photo: Courtesy of G. Ens, Der Bote, Winnipeg, Man.

XI

Strasbourg 1984



The eleventh gathering of the Mennonite World Conference is scheduled to take place at Strasbourg, France on July 24-29, 1984. Paul Kraybill is directing preparations from his office at 30 Allee de la Robertsau, 67000 Strasbourg, France.



MMHS News

Update on Activities

By Roy Loewen

The MMHS has completed another year of working to preserve and bring alive the Mennonite experience in Manitoba. The MMHS has met several times to discuss business arising out of the various projects and objectives of the society. The last board meeting was hosted by Mr. Ted Friesen at the D.W. Friesen & Sons firm headquarters in Altona on September 26. This meeting has been followed up by an executive meeting of the Georgian Room at the Bay in Winnipeg on November 23. At both of these meetings action was taken on various committee recommendations. A progress report on some of the committees and the major projects of the MMHS follows:

1) **The Arnold Dyck Project:** The Research, Scholarship and Publications Committee for some time now has given its major attention to editing of Arnold Dyck's works. As of September this year it was able to report that the first volume of this multivolume work had been edited by Professor Vic Doerksen and Harry Loewen. The first volume will include two works: "Verloren in Der Steppe," an autobiographical account by the author, and "Aus Meinem Leben." Three other volumes are scheduled to be completed over the next three or four years. Volumes II and III which are being edited by Professor Al Reimer will include Dyck's most famous work **Koop enn Bua** plus other **Plautdietsch** fiction. The last volume of the edition will include unpublished fiction, essays and correspondences which Dyck wrote in English. Besides the members mentined above, the editorial board consists of Professors Elisabeth Peters and George Epp.

The multi-volume series will come out as a hard-cover, library edition. The new **Plautdietsch** orthography which hopefully will become the official one of the Mennonite Low German will be used in this work. In addition many of Arnold Dyck's pen ink drawings which have recently been discovered in his home in Germany and made available by his oldest daughter Heidi Knoop will appear.

While the work of editing is progressing well, word has not yet been received on the grants which the Committee applied for. If the grants are awarded shortly the first volume will be available sometime this fall (1984). The management committee of the project includes Ted Friesen, Roy Vogt and Ken Reddig.

2) **The Russian Mennonite Memorial Cairn Project:** This project is being pursued by an ad hoc committee headed by Mr. Gerhard Enns. The committee is attempting to establish a medium by which to recognize the many Mennonites who have died violent deaths this century. The MMHS has committed itself to support the cairn project in suitable ways. The committee is still seeking a suitable site for the cairn.

3) **The Mennonite Encyclopedia Project:** The Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart, Indiana together with Herald Press is planning a revision of the current Mennonite Encyclopedia which was published some 20 years ago. Three different proposals on how extensive the revision should be will be examined at the annual IMS meeting in January. These options include: a) the writing of a complete new encyclopedia, b) a complete revision and rewriting of the present 4 volumes with an additional fifth volume up-dating the present work, c) a minimal revision and expansion of material with the major focus on a fifth volume. The MMHS has ear marked \$500 towards a study of the feasibility of a complete revision. Vic Doerksen, an instructor in the German department at the University of Manitoba, has been chosen to be the representative of the Canadian Mennonite Historical Society at the IMS January meeting. Both the MMHS and the CMHS support a complete revision of the encyclopedia.

Another development in the Encyclopedia project has been the establishment of a Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Committee which will act as a liaison between the Canadian Mennonites and the ME editorial board. Its objective will be to work toward the particular revision of the ME which the IMS board will decide on in January. The MMHS representative on this committee is Bert Friesen.

4) **The Book Club:** A book club which will seek to expand the market for Mennonite books was organized in December. The club which is sponsored by the MMHS has asked Hyperion Press of Winnipeg to act as the agents of the club and handle the physical aspect of the club such as warehousing books, taking book orders and publicizing new releases.

At the December meeting a decision was made to incorporate the club as soon as possible. As well the Club organized itself into two sub-committees; the Selections Committee which will come up with a list of books the Club may wish to incorporate into the initial inventory and a Management Committee which will seek ways to make the Club both solvent and yet attractive to the public.

The immediate objective of the Club is to have all the machinery in place for operation

to begin at the end of January when another Club board meeting is scheduled.

5) **Historic Sites Committee:** This committee now includes Herman Rempel, Morden, Helen Janzen, Winnipeg, and Ernie Friesen, Steinbach (see photo). The committee has been approached by a Rempel group from Morden who is interested in erecting a cairn at the site of the Herold Church located some three miles northeast of Morden. The church began during World War I by General Conference Mennonites fleeing the United States in the face of the general conscription there, disbanded sometime ago and most of its members joined the Morden Bergthaler Church. The committee is advising the Morden group on its project.

The Historical Sites committee is also looking into the possibility of officially recognizing Mennonite farmsteads which have been in one family for 100 years .

6) **The Membership and Publicity Committee:** This committee has recently completed a publicity brochure which outlines the objectives of the MMHS, its various projects, and information on new membership applications. The occasion of the brochure was the 25th anniversary of the historical society. A brief history of the society is also included in the brochure. Existing members who might wish to have a number of brochures to help solicit new members may obtain them by writing the MMHS, 77 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg.

7) **The Financial Report:** The last report submitted by treasurer Ken Reddig at the September board meeting in Altona revealed the following information: During the eight months from January to August of 1983, the society received around \$2,600 in membership fees, donations and book sales. It spent some \$3,200 for advertising, membership in the CHMS, the Mennonite Encyclopedia Project, the March banquet costs, and book purchases. As of September, 1983, the society's savings account stood at \$3,354.16.

8) **Upcoming Events:** The executive has tentatively scheduled the annual membership meeting of the MMHS for March 17, 1984. Further details of the March meeting will be forthcoming. A MMHS board meeting has been scheduled for sometime in January, 1984.

A new edition of Klaas Peters' **Die Bergthaler Mennoniten** (1922) has been published by *Mennonitische Post*. The edition includes some ship lists, maps, village data, etc. which was not in the original. Write to **Mennonitische Post**, Steinbach, Man. R0A 2A0.

MHSC News

Annual Meeting - 1983

The annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada took place at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, on December 3, 1983. About 25 persons were present.

Reports from the provincial Mennonite Historical societies came as an early agenda item. Ontario members are becoming more involved with 1986 Bicentennial preparations, and are now receiving a newsletter published by MHSO titled **Mennogespraech**. Sam Steiner is editing the eight-page periodical which has appeared in two issues so far. In Manitoba the Arnold Dyck publication project is proceeding well. Plans for organizing a Mennonite Book Club have been launched, and a genealogical committee is being considered for the Society. The Alberta-Saskatchewan Society will be looking at treating separate and independent organizations for the two provinces, and B.C. continues to give priority to its museum program in Clearbrook.

The upcoming **Mennonite Encyclopedia** revision project came up for discussion as well. It was emphasized that Canadian scholars should be able to have strong involvement, and it was generally agreed that: 1) the idea of a general revision of the ME should be promoted 2) that some sort of organizational base in Canada might be advisable in assisting with the project and 3) that we try to look for financial support sources in Canada.

A resolution resulted as follows: That MHSC formalize a subcommittee which would be supportive of whatever direction the IMS project takes though possibly suggesting a particular direction at this point. This subcommittee is to help IMS in conceptualizing the project, in soliciting input from Canadian scholars, and in fund-raising." Several MHSC members plan to attend IMS meetings in late January.

Frank Epp reported on progress re: preparation of the third volume of *Mennonites in Canada*. He is receiving help in word processing, and has begun extensive research on the volume. Funds are still needed for obtaining released time to write. A Committee was set up to discuss some options with Conrad Grebel College where Frank is teaching at the present. MHSC went on record as supporting a reprint of Volume I which is currently out-of-print. Support is also needed in improving the sale of Volume II which has been moving only slowly.

Ted Regehr shared information on how the translation of Anna Baerg's diary is coming along. The manuscript is nearing completion and will be considered for publication when the translation is done. Some constitutional changes were brought in and pass-

ed. Organizations other than historical Societies will be able to obtain membership in MHSC through these changes.

An archivists' report shared information about the new archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference headed by Dave Schellenberg with Roy Loewen assisting. An audio-visual is to be prepared on the work of Mennonite archives in Canada.

Additional reports dealt with the upcoming Mennonite Bicentennial in Ontario, the preparation of a biography on Jacob Y. Shantz, and the finances of the Society. A deficit in the budget will necessitate the raising of extra funds in the new year. Interested persons are invited to send contributions to the treasurer, Lorna Bergey at R.R.2, New Hamburg, Ontario, N0B 2G0.

Changes to the executive include replacement of secretary Herb Giesbrecht with Ken Reddig, both of Winnipeg, and the addition of Larry Kehler, Winnipeg, to represent MCC (Can.). Others on the executive are Ted Friesen, Altona, Man., Lorna Bergey, New Hamburg, Ont., Rick H. Epp, Saskatoon, Sask. and Gerhard I. Peters, Clearbrook, B.C. *Adapted from minutes of the meeting prepared by Herb Giesbrecht.*

Jacob Y. Shantz Biography

Sam Steiner is reviewing materials collected by Lawrence Klippenstein and Frank H. Epp, and will be working on a draft manuscript in 1984. It has been agreed that the publication of a J. Y. Shantz biography will become the project of the Mennonite Bicentennial Commission.

Descendants of Shantz, or others who may be holding materials, i.e. letters, copies of articles, business records, etc. that could assist in writing this biography are asked to contact Sam at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario as soon as convenient.

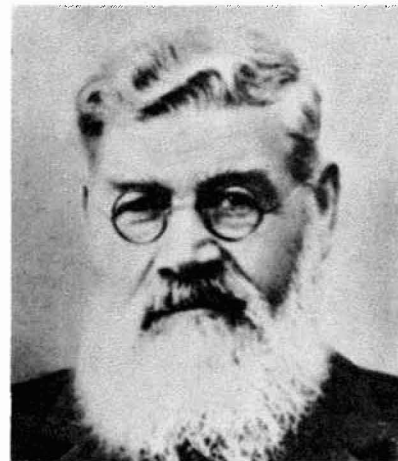
The Mennonite Bicentennial (1986)

Two years ago MHSC passed a resolution encouraging "the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario to assume leadership" in the matter of appropriate observances for the Mennonite Bicentennial.

Since that time a federally incorporated Mennonite Bicentennial Commission has been created and this Commission is now meeting regularly and planning a wide variety of events. A general program and some specific events have already been approved, and funds are now being sought to help make all this possible.

A preliminary summary of events and projects for 1983 and 1984 includes the following: a bicentennial map of historic sites, institutional locations and other points of interest in southern Ontario, a bicentennial poster, bicentennial music, a travelling

caravan to visit communities across Canada, and the publication of a special bulletin to publicize these events. Later will follow a conference, a festival of high school choirs, regional art exhibits, publications such as the J. Y. Shantz biography and "A Portrait of Ontario Mennonites", and then the local and regional celebrations in 1986.



Jacob S. Friesen of Steinbach, Man. began publication of Steinbach Post (at first called Volksbote) on December 13, 1913. If the paper were still running it would have had its 70th birthday this month. It ceased publication around 1965. The Heritage Centre Archives is looking for back issues for the period 1913-1933. Can you help? Write to MHC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4.

Bote Indexing Continues

The indexing of **Bote** issues was resumed at the Mennonite Heritage Centre this fall. Mark Froese, an assistant archivist at the Centre for the past year, is editing the materials prepared by Peter H. Rempel and others at the time of publishing the first volume of the index in 1976.

To help complete what Rempel and his group began, Olga Rempel volunteered her time to index the volumes for 1973, and 1975-1979. This was an important contribution to bring the indexing more up to date. We need now to complete 1972, 1974 and 1980-1983 in order to finish the first draft.

It is expected that the second published volume will cover the years 1948-1967. There is then enough material to do a third volume which hopefully can be completed later on.

A number of copies of the first volume 1924-1947 are still in print. It was edited by Adolf Ens and Peter H. Rempel. A half-price sale makes these copies available now for \$6.00 a volume with postage extra. If interested please write to Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4.

MHC Donors List

October-December, 1983

We again want to thank all persons who generously donated to help support the Mennonite Heritage Centre program in 1983. The contributions for the October-December period added up to \$1880.00. This brought the total for 1983 to about \$3800.00.

We will need about \$4500.00 in 1984 and will welcome your continued help. Thank you again.

October

Joe Eichler - Kamsack, Sask.
Henry J. Siemens - Victoria, B.C.

November

Sandra Klassen - Calgary, Alta.
Alexander Malucky - Calgary, Alta.
Elmer Hildebrand - Altona, Man.
Rhinehart Friesen - Winnipeg, Man.
W. J. Kehler - Altona, Man.
Henry C. Janzen - Ottawa, Ont.
John P. Nickel - Nanaimo, B.C.
A. J. Thiessen - Winnipeg, Man.
Keith Wilson - Winnipeg, Man.
C. J. Dyck - Elkhart, Indiana
Martin D. Klassen - Gretna, Man.
Erwin Siemens - Winnipeg, Man.
R. P. Penner - Saskatoon, Sask.
Irene Klassen - Calgary, Alta.
Gordon Schmidt - Henderson, Nebraska
Nettie Neufeld - Steinbach, Man.
P. W. Enns Family Found. Inc. -
Winkler, Man.
Alexander Rempel - Niagara-on-the-
Lake, Ont.
Henry Goertz - Virgil, Ont.
William Janzen - Gloucester, Ont.
David Newcomer - Seattle, Washington
M. P. Hochstetler - Wolford, North
Dakota
J. E. Isaac - Winnipeg, Man.
C. J. Warkentin - Herschell, Sask.
Helen Epp - Saskatoon, Sask.
Reuben Goertz - Freeman, South Dakota
Karen Bergmann - Winnipeg, Man.
Jim Kolesnikoff - Grand Forks, B.C.
Richard Friesen - New Westminster, B.C.
Guenther Sickert - Winnipeg, Man.
David G. Rempel - Menlo Park,
California
Ted D. Regehr - Saskatoon, Sask.
Peter Letkemann - Kitchener, Ont.
Dave Schellenberg - Winkler, Man.
Stanford Penner - Landmark, Man.
John Rempel - Altona, Man.
Otto Andres - Toronto, Ont.
Gary Wiebe - Surrey, B.C.
Anne Unruh - Winnipeg, Man.
B. B. Fast - Winnipeg, Man.
C. Pauls - Abbotsford, B.C.
Lloyd Penner - Stettler, Alta.
D. W. Friesen & Sons - Altona, Man.
T. E. Friesen - Altona, Man.

December

Henry Schultz - Black Creek, B.C.
Helen Dyck - Rosthern, Sask.
Peter Wiebe - Winnipeg, Man.
Ed Pohranychny - Edmonton, Alta.
William Braun - Winnipeg, Man.
Anne Eitzen - Winnipeg, Man.
H. W. Enns - Winkler, Man.
Crystal Blouw - Winnipeg, Man.
Katherine Hooze - Saskatoon, Sask.
D. Langeman - Winnipeg, Man.
E. H. Nesbitt - Winnipeg, Man.
Peter Wiebe - Winkler, Man.
Peter and Etta Schmidt - Goshen, Indiana

A Reader Replies

Dear Sirs:

Recently the undersigned read a copy of the March, 1983 issue of the **Mennonite Historian**, reading with particular interest the article entitled "Heinrich H. Ewert and Mennonite Education" by Gerhard Ens.

The article mentions that on Sept. 13, 1882, Prof. H. Ewert was "ordained to the Christian ministry . . ." The person who officiated at this ordination was Elder Leonhard Sudermann, Elder of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church." This is an error. At that time Rev. Leonhard Sudermann was Elder of the Emmaus Mennonite Church of rural Whitewater, Kansas. In 1882 the Rev. Jakob Buller was Elder of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church of Goeseel, Kansas.

For this reason may I respectfully suggest that on your file copy of the **Historian** you pencil in this correction, so that it will not cause confusion to researchers at a later date.

Thoroughly enjoyed the article about Prof. Ewert, as well as the whole paper. The undersigned never met or knew Prof. H. H. Ewert, but did see him in the waiting-room of the Bethel Hospital in Newton, Kansas a few years before his death, recognizing him from his likeness to the picture seen of him in periodicals. This coupled with his voice and faultless German diction was ample proof that it was indeed Rev. Heinrich H. Ewert.

Respectfully submitted,
A. C. Claassen

Whitewater, Kansas, USA

Book Reviews

(Cont'd from p.8 col.3)

further deepen the reader's understanding of the events examined in the book. Most remarkable, however, is the fact that the pictures are selected and arranged in such a manner that they are able to tell the story almost by themselves.

One small flaw in this otherwise very well executed work is regrettable. The fact that the volume contains neither a table of contents nor an index makes it rather difficult to find things quickly and thus makes it hard to use the book as a reference. However, this consideration need not be of concern to the general reader who will find this book most fascinating otherwise.

Gerlach's book is an excellent pictorial history of the Mennonites, full of interesting facts and written and arranged in such a manner as to make enjoyable and informative reading for the general reader with an interest in Mennonite history. The **Bildband** is the kind of book that one should peruse from cover to cover, but one will choose to browse through it time and again.

* * *

Gerhard Lohrenz. **The Lost Generations and Other Stories**. Winnipeg, Man., 1982, pb., 175 pp, \$9.00, and **Fire Over Zagradowka**. Winnipeg, Man., 1983, pb., 56 pp, \$6.00. *Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Man.*

The author of **Lost Generation** and **Fire Over Zagradowka** is known to many of us for his various involvements, not least of all though, for his ability to tell stories well. That's true again in his two latest publications which will interest readers for that reason alone.

But there will be other reasons too. **The Lost Generation** shares with us the story of Mennonite young men from the time and setting of Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union. Eduard Allert lived in the Mennonite community which had survived the horrors of the thirties. He was in the Molotschna settlement when the German forces entered Ukraine in World War II and occupied also the area settled by Mennonites for many years.

As a volunteer for the **Selbstschutz** of that period (1941-1943) Eduard experienced the movement and work of the German army in Ukraine itself, then retreated with the **Komraden** on the long trek back to Germany, and was finally released from service at the end of the war.

Lost Generation helps to fill our information gap on the Mennonites who were dispersed from the Ukraine during World War II, and to some extent also their life in the older settlements before these were destroyed. We don't know a great deal yet about the hundreds of young Mennonite men who joined the German army either voluntarily or otherwise around that time. This book illuminates that theme as well.

Fire Over Zagradowka is really part of another story, though not altogether. Here the author recalls once more the devastating onslaught of the Mokhnotsy during the civil war in Russia. Zagradowka was the home settlement of the author so those experiences will never be forgotten.

Book Reviews

Ken Loewen and Margaret Loewen Reimer. **Meditations on a Place and a Way of Life.** Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1982. Paperback, 128 p. \$14.95. *Reviewed by Dr. Andre Oberle, U. of W., Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

Meditations is a wonderful book of photographs by Ken Loewen and various texts selected and written by Margaret Loewen Reimer. The philosophy behind the book is outlined by Mrs. Reimer when she writes in the introduction: "The photographs in this collection recall for Mennonites the mood of the old days. The communal life with its ordered sombre ways is no more, but the ideal of Mennonite faith nurtured so long by this people in this place must continue to grow" (p. 13). In their beautiful work the authors ably convey this conviction through an arrangement of photographic images interspersed with descriptions of early pioneer life, with letters, passages from diaries and personal accounts, as well as sermons of the early clergy of the West Reserve in Manitoba.

Ken Loewen's photography is simply outstanding. His gorgeous black and white pictures are more than just beautiful images. Each photograph is a loving examination of some aspect of our heritage. The artist shows us his haunting visions of the vast landscapes of the prairies, he looks at old, abandoned buildings, at fascinating people and cherished objects that remind us of the past. Everything is seen with a haunting nostalgia that makes a wonderful impression on the reader.

The layout of the book is a testimony to the thought and careful planning that have gone into the making of this work. The printed text, pages with tasteful calligraphy, white spaces and striking black and white photographs are arranged in an impressively harmonious manner to create a wonderful work of art. Five sections examine the various aspects of Mennonite life in the West Reserve.

The section entitled "Earth and Sky" takes a close look at the land in the West Reserve as it probably appeared to the pioneers. "People and the Earth" looks at the Mennonite settlers who came to the West Reserve. "Building Shelters" shows how the Mennonite settlers established themselves on the land. "Cultivating the Soil" recreates the toil and rewards of the Mennonite farmer in the new land. "Vanishing Memories" takes a nostalgic look at nearly forgotten objects which belong to the past and threaten to disappear.

The texts and images combine in a harmonious manner to tell their story and to

convey the philosophy of the authors that we must not let our heritage be forgotten. The books makes its point not so much by the information it conveys but by the mood it creates and sustains.

This unique work is to be recommended to anyone who is interested in the ways of the past. It will also be appreciated by the lover of fine photography. **Meditations** is the kind of book the reader will want to look at again and again and he will discover new aspects every time. It is a book to share with friends or to use frequently in quiet reflection.

* * *

Menno Klaus. **Growing up Mennonite. Stories by the People.** n.p., n.d., Pb., 72 pp. \$4.50.

Gerhard G. Neufeld. **What God has done.** Translated by Margaret Klassen Neufeld. Winnipeg, Man. 1982. 92 pp. \$8.00. *Reviewed by Dr. John Friesen, CMBC, Winnipeg, Man.*

Both of these books reflect life within the Mennonite community. Gerhard Neufeld's book is a biography of his life which began in a setting of affluence in Lindenau, South Russia, and progressed through war, revolution and emigration to Whitewater in south eastern Manitoba. The other book, by Menno Klaus, consists of a collection of reminiscences by many Mennonite people of what they experienced as they grew up in a Mennonite community.

The character and organization of these books is very different. Neufeld's biography flows chronologically from his early childhood to his retirement years. The story is divided by topics, e.g. "My Parental Home", "To Canada." Klaus's booklet consists essentially of a string of vignettes of people's reminiscences. They are organized generally according to larger topics, e.g. Church Life, Family Life, The Language. Many of the contributions, however, transcend the topics under which they are organized. Neufeld's booklet is organized around himself and his experiences; Klaus's booklet is designed to reflect the diversity of a people.

Despite the diversity of structure and approach, both booklets provide a glimpse into Mennonite experience, identity and reality. Neufeld gives the reader one person's perspective of the good life in Russia, of the dangers of the civil war and revolution, of the insecurities of emigrating from one society to another, and of the frustration involved in getting established in Canada. Since Neufeld played an important role in the Canadian Mennonite community as a minister and elder, his insights and evaluations are very valuable.

Klaus's booklet presents a collage of experiences by people from a variety of Mennonite communities. The communities range from Ontario to California, from northern B.C. to eastern Pennsylvania. Writers belong

to all the major Mennonite Conferences, and to many of the minor ones. Out of this collage of experiences emerges a general impression of the Mennonite psyche. What emerges is a variety of amusing, entertaining and sometimes painful experiences. Some people write out of a deep sense of anger, frustration and disappointment about their "growing up Mennonite." Some people's contributions take on the character of a confession - a chance to bare the soul.

Both books could have been strengthened. Neufeld's translation would have benefited from careful editing for English style. The present translation includes too many unintentional "Germanisms". The content could also have been edited for historical accuracy. For example, in the Crimean War Russia did not fight against Japan.

The pages in Klaus's book are too crowded. There are hardly any margins. The book is also not trimmed properly and thus looks messy. Both books will still be of interest to many people.

* * *

Horst, Gerlach, ed. **Bildband zur Geschichte der Mennoniten.** Uelzen-Oldenstadt: Preusschoff, 1980. Hardcover. 216 p. *Reviewed by Dr. Andre Oberle, Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

This fascinating and most informative volume manages to tell the story of the Mennonites through an impressively comprehensive and huge collection of well-chosen pictures and a number of short essays on various important aspects of Mennonite history. The multi-faceted material is exceedingly well organized, with pictures, maps, tables and diagrams and essays as well as shorter accounts grouped under easily understood subject headings. The material presented covers all aspects of Mennonite life from historical events and personalities and the various activities of the church to the ravages of war and persecution, family life and snapshots of daily activities. Both the hardships and the rewards of the people are shown.

In the collection of essays the work presents first of all a concise general history of the Anabaptists by the editor which highlights the most important events in the history of the Mennonites. There follows a short history of the Mennonites in Western Prussia, written by Horst Penner, an essay on the German Mennonites in Russia, written by Gerhard Hein, and an essay on the Swiss Mennonite settlers in southern Germany, again by Gerlach.

In their various essays the authors manage to convey important information in a concise and most interesting manner. These essays round out the story told by the pictures in this book while numerous other documents, such as letter and official decrees

(Cont'd on p.7 col. 3)