

# Mennonite Historian



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## Steinbach Post.

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Steinbach, Man. den 3. Oktober 1923.

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### Stimm an ein frommes Lied.

Wenn's in die Tobt und stürmt,  
Sich Sorg' auf Sorge türmt,  
Du nicht weist aus noch ein,  
In deiner Angst und Pein,  
Von dir der Friede scheid,  
Stimm an ein frommes Lied.

Und wär dir noch so bang,  
Es trägt dich dein Gesang  
Zu reinen Hö'n empör,  
Wo aller Heil'gen Chor,  
Die ew'ge Liebe prei'st  
In Wahrheit und im Geist.

Stimmst du erst jagend ein,  
Wald lernst du fröhlich sein,  
Gewinnst auf's neue Mut,  
Es legt sich Sturm und Flut;  
Und Friede der dich mied,  
Rehrt ein im frommen Lied.

(Julius Sturm.)

### Über die Neueingewanderten.

Es wird viel geschrieben jetzt über den Dank oder Undank der Neueingewanderten, und da möchte ich bitten: Habt ein wenig Geduld und laßt sie erst an die fremden Verhältnisse sich gewöhnen. Wer zuerst in ein anderes Land kommt, dem fallen die Kontraste scharf auf, Heimweh kommt dazu und wenn er sich dann mal abfällig ausdrückt, dürfen wir das nicht so wörtlich nehmen. Gewohnheit und besseres Verständnis für die hiesigen Verhältnisse schleifen halt das zuerst

dann die Unterschiede und der Eingewanderte ist dann eher fähig das Gute, das dies große Land bietet, zu würdigen. Es kann oft gar nicht schaden, wenn der Eingewanderte, wenn er das geliehene Geld zurück erstattet hat, mal ein paar Jahre ohne Verkehr mit den Verwandten lebt, sich selbständig durchschlägt, dabei weit besser Land und Leute kennen lernt, als unter dem Schutz der Verwandten. Für gewöhnlich wird dann nachher das Verhältnis zu den Leuten viel angenehmer und herzlicher, weil nun beide Parteien auf derselben Höhe stehen.

Über die hier in unserer Stadt im letzten Jahre Herübergekommenen, läßt sich nur das Beste sagen. Alle sind tüchtige, fleißige Menschen, bekamen gleich durch ihre hiesigen Verwandten Arbeit, wenn auch durchaus nicht das, was sie gewohnt waren, u. haben schon zum größten Teil das geliehene zurückbezahlt, oder, wo es die Verwandten nicht brauchen, lassen sie andere Angehörige nachkommen. Es sind ohne Ausnahme intelligente, lebhaftige, tüchtige Menschen, die sich hier durchaus nicht erdrückt fühlen, und man muß stolz sein auf unser altes Vaterland, daß es trotz allen Elends noch solch lebensfähige Menschen hervorbringt und daß Deutschland, wenn sich die Verhältnisse nur halbwegs einlittle gestalten,

tauschen, denn die Papiernot ist groß drüben. Das alles ist doch geradezu rührend, nicht wahr?

Natürlich werden gewiß hier und da auch häßliche Fälle von Undank vorkommen und das ist immer recht bitter, wenn man es so gut gemeint hat, aber das kann einem mit hier geborenen Amerikanern auch passieren. Ein Beobachter.

(Herold)

### Silfswert - Notizen.

(Schmarrt von Bernou Samter.)

Das folgende Kabelgramm, das Bezug hat auf die ernste Lage der mennonitischen Kolonisten in Sibirien ging kürzlich hier ein von Dr. A. J. Müller. Wie vor einiger Zeit in diesen Spalten gesagt war, wurde auf Grund von Gerüchten und Berichten, die unser Hilfsweck in Russland erreichten, jemand dorthin gesandt, um die Zustände dort zu untersuchen. Das Kabelgramm ist das Resultat dieser Untersuchung:

„Unser Inspektor Riesen kehrt zurück Pawlodar Slawgorod Sibirier Kolonien.) Berichtet vollständige Mißernte.(.) Hungernot beginnt.(.) Zwanzig Prozent hungern jetzt.(.) Bei November 8000. 75 Prozent in Lumpen.(.) Zwanzig Prozent Kinder bis 8 Jahren sind nackt allezeit. Zustände kritisch.(.) Sofortige Aktion geboten. Nach

1971, its early issues have not been available to the public until now.<sup>1</sup>

Jacob S. Friesen (1862-1931) began publishing *Der Volks-Bote* in 1913 when he was 51 years of age. Typhoid fever had struck the family and had brought both Mr. and Mrs. Friesen as well as two of their daughters near death. Their only son, Peter T. Friesen, had been working in a printery in Calgary at the time but came straight home; he writes, "After Father got better, he decided to start a weekly German paper."<sup>2</sup>

Jacob Friesen printed 500 copies of a four-page prospectus and sent it to potential readers in Manitoba, other provinces and the United States. It was Peter's job to roam the countryside for subscribers. The paper was to be called *Der Volks-Bote*--the People's Messenger--and was to be a "family paper of interest to Germans of western Canada, and free of any political ties." In this introductory edition editor Friesen welcomed correspondence, reports, and advertisements from all readers. The cost of the proposed weekly would be \$1.00 per year in Canada, and \$1.25 in the United States. Then, on December 31, 1913, the first issue was published: Volume 1, Number 1 of *Der Volks-Bote*.

Although Friesen initially geared it to a general German readership, the paper became known as the "first and only Mennonite German weekly in Canada" and was intended as a "newspaper for the family."

The contents of the *Steinbach Post*, as it was re-named on June 9, 1915 (Volume 2, No. 20), were varied. Every issue contained an installment of a serialized story, one that Jacob S. Friesen had carefully read beforehand to check its suitability. There was always a correspondence page with letters from such faraway places as Oklahoma, Ontario, Kansas, Mexico, Saskatchewan, Washington, Oregon or Alberta. Local news from the Steinbach area was printed on page four. The front page usually included a poem, an editorial on such things as the debate about district and one-room schools and news items about the immigration of Mennonites to Canada in 1923, for example. Of course the newspaper also provided an opportunity for Steinbach businessmen to advertise their wares, something of which

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## Jacob S. Friesen and the *Steinbach Post*

by Dennis Stoesz

Recently the issues of the early years of the widely read Mennonite German newspaper, *Der Volks-Bote*, later *Steinbach Post*, were microfilmed by the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Mrs. Gertrude Friesen of Steinbach,

Manitoba, whose father Jacob Schellenberg Friesen first edited and published the paper from 1913 to 1924, has kept the early issues of the newspaper. She made original copies available to the Heritage Centre for microfilming. While many remember the *Steinbach Post*, which was printed until

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they certainly took advantage.

Mrs. Gertrude Friesen, now 79 years of age and the youngest of the Jacob S. Friesen children, helped set the type for the paper from about 1919 until her father sold it in 1924. She recalls that she left school at the age of thirteen in order to help in the printery. Working in the shop was a family affair in which everyone helped. The oldest two sisters, Katherine and Agnes, were married by the time the paper started but Peter and his younger sisters, Anna, Margaret, Elizabeth, Marie and Gertrude (Mrs. Friesen) all helped at one point or another. Father did the editing, but everyone learned how to set the type and run the press. It was mother's job, Mrs. Katherine (Toews) Friesen, to set *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, the small paper of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, of which Mr. and Mrs. Friesen were members. Besides these two papers, there were always other printing jobs to do as well.<sup>3</sup>

The work was difficult at times, not so much on the body as on the mind, recalls Mrs. Friesen. Each letter of each word had to be set by hand and it took quite some time to fill a page. After one stick (or page) of lead type was full, a proof of the page was printed in order to check for errors. Even today, Mrs. Friesen says she can still read type backwards and upside down and is conscious of misspelled words.

Good quality newsprint was available until 1916 when the war began to affect its supply. Inferior paper had to be used until 1922 when better paper once again became available. The newspaper was 8½ by 11 inches in size during the time Friesen published it, and eight pages in length.

Mrs. Friesen recalls two financial setbacks for the family during these years: in Giroux, Manitoba, when the family had typhoid fever, and near the end of the First World War when federal legislation prohibited publishing in an "enemy alien language" such as German. In November 1917 the *Post* came under criticism for refusing to run an advertisement for the Victory Loan bond sale. The Chief Press Censor of the Canadian government tried in vain to stop the circulation of German papers. The following June the publisher was in trouble again, but this time for printing resolutions passed at a church conference which reaffirmed the Mennonite position on nonresistance. The Censor considered these to be "most objectionable matter, matter which . . . encourages opposition to practically all the war measures of the government."<sup>4</sup> That storm too was weathered by Mr. Friesen, but effective October 1, 1918 the publication of virtually all papers in German was forbidden.

When the next two issues of the *Post* (October 2 and 9, 1918) still appeared in German, the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Regina, filed a protest report, objecting that "the whole edition does not contain even one reference to the War, neither editorially nor in the news which in itself is proof of its pro-Germanism."<sup>5</sup>

The October 15, 1918, issue came out in English, reduced in length to four pages. Friesen gave no hint for the language change and by the following week the paper was back to its usual eight pages. On November 13, 1918, the front page headline announced: "PEACE! THE WORLD WAR IS AT AN END." Five days later Friesen wrote to the Chief Press Censor for permission to print the *Post* in German again, now that the war was over. The request was denied. It was not until January 7, 1920 that the return to German was permitted. In that issue readers finally received an official explanation from the editor why their beloved *Post* had appeared in English during the past fourteen and a half months.

Editor Jacob Friesen writes:

To Our Readers and Friends!

Now that the government of our country has again allowed us to publish our

newspaper in the German language, we greet all our readers with a happy "Grüss Gott!"

First and foremost, we must thank all our beloved readers who, despite their difficulties in reading the English language, regularly paid their subscriptions to the paper during this difficult time.

Although we did often appeal to the good nature of our readers, we also repeatedly wrote to the Secretary of State to ask for permission to print in German. The latter was to no avail and of the former, many did not want to donate their dollar . . . At the start, many seemed to think that we printed in English out of sheer arrogance . . .

We hope that all of our readers will help us further and with new courage by submitting good, high-quality news and by encouraging as many new, paid-up subscribers as possible . . .

Starting something new as a newspaper was not unusual for the Friesen family. Jacob S. Friesen had worked at several different vocations since coming to Manitoba in 1876. He worked, first as a farm hand, and then, after he was married, farmed on his own land. Friesen also became interested in machines and eventually became quite



*Mrs. Gertrude Friesen holding copies of early issues of the Steinbach Post prior to microfilming, October 30th, 1984. (Photo by Dennis Stoesz.)*

knowledgeable about threshing machines, sawmills and windmills. He started a cheese factory in Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) and operated it for many years. On top of this he repaired watches during winter and fitted eyeglasses for people.

Mr. Friesen had lived in Hochstadt with his parents from 1876 to 1881, and then moved with his widowed mother, who had remarried, to Blumenort in 1881. Here J. S. Friesen married Katherina B. Toews (1863-1933) in 1884, and in 1889 they moved to Langdon, North Dakota where his older brother Gerhard lives. After four years of farming here, the family went to Jansen, Nebraska, in 1893 but then returned to Manitoba in 1897. They settled in Gruenfeld where Friesen ran the cheese factory for seven years. After this they moved to farm at Rosenfeld, Blumstein, then Gruenfeld again and then moved to Giroux in 1910 where Mr. Friesen started printing the *Giroux Advocate* for local businessmen Dave and John Langill, Mr. Seymour and Mr. Lawson. This venture was not successful, but out of that printing experience was born a new German Mennonite weekly, *Der Volks-Bote*. By this time the Friesens were 50 and 51 years of age, and had had a family of ten children, of whom 2 died in infancy.<sup>7</sup>

We conclude with the words of Jacob S. Friesen in his last editorial of March 26, 1924:

#### Farewell Thoughts from the Editor

With this issue of the *Steinbach Post* I am giving up the position of editor of this newspaper . . . . I must say that it is difficult to resign from this calling, one which has been both pleasurable and painful and through which I have made so many new and beloved friends. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep and heartfelt thanks to all friends and patrons for the friendly assistance they have given us. We value this highly and will never forget it.

I was partially, although not directly, forced to give this position because our family and thus our potential help was continually decreasing in size; therefore, we are passing on this job, which is steadily demanding more and more time and with which we can no longer successfully cope, to younger and more capable hands . . . . I also ask for forgiveness from those readers whom I may have offended or otherwise hurt . . . .

As for my future plans, I will likely return to the watch repair business which I gave up after going into the printing business.

I shall remember you often my dear readers, and ask that you remember me as well.

God be with you.<sup>8</sup>

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Mennonite Heritage Centre has in its holdings: *Der Volks-Bote*, 1913-1915 (on microfilm); the *Steinbach Post*, 1915-1963 (1915-1924 on microfilm; scattered issues from 1924-1953; nearly complete sets from 1954-1963); *Die Post*, 1963-1971; *Die Welt-Post und der Staats-Anzeiger*, 1971-1977.

The Legislative Library of Manitoba has a microfilm copy of the *Steinbach Post* from February 1920-February 1972 as well as some original copies.

See also the reference books: National Library of Canada, *Canadian Newspapers Held by Canadian Libraries*, Ottawa, 1977; D. M. Loveridge, *A Historical Directory of Manitoba Newspapers, 1859-1978*, University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Friesen, Peter T. "Nachruf unserem lieben Vater und frueherem Editor und Gruender der *Post*, Jakob S. Friesen," *Steinbach Post*, May 26, 1932 (Volume 19, No. 21), p.3.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Mrs. Gertrude Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, by Dennis Stoesz, November 15, 1984.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Adolf Ens, "Mennonite Relations with Governments, Western Canada, 1870-1925," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1978, p. 318.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 320. I am grateful to Adolf Ens for researching the section on the war.

<sup>6</sup>Translated by Bev Suderman. It is an excerpt of the letter.

<sup>7</sup>In writing this article, several sources were consulted: Barkman, Anna (daughter of Mr. Friesen), "Erinnerungen aus dem Leben meines Vaters," in *Die Post*, December 31, 1963 (Vol. 50, Sonderausgabe zum 50-jaehrigen Jubilaem), pp. 4 & 5. This article was reprinted along with some photographs in *Die Mennonitische Post*, September 4, 1981 (Vol. 5, No. 9), pp. 1 & 19.

Warkentin, Abe, *Reflections on Our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the R.M. of Hanover from 1874*, Steinbach, Manitoba: Derksen Printers Ltd., 1971, pp. 119-122.

Loewen, Royden, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition, 1874-1982*, Blumenort: Blumenort Mennonite Historical Society, 1982, pp. 155, 278-279.

Friesen, Gertrude (daughter of Mr. Friesen), "Erinnerungen an meine Eltern--Jakob S. Friesens," *Die Mennonitische Post*, November 16, 1984 (Vol. 8, No. 14), p. 19.

<sup>8</sup>Translated by Bev Suderman. It is an excerpt from the letter.

#### Editors, Publishers and Name Changes of the *Steinbach Post*

Name of Paper	Date	Vol. No., Issue No.	Editor	Publisher(s)	Place of Publication
Der Volks-Bote	31 Dec. 1913- 2 June 1915	1,1-2,19	Jacob Schellenberg Friesen	J.S. Friesen	Giroux, Manitoba
Steinbach Post	9 June 1915- 26 March 1924	2,20-11,13	J.S. Friesen	J.S. Friesen	Steinbach, Manitoba
Steinbach Post	2 Apr. 1924- ?, 1936	11,14-23, ?	Abr. B. Dyck	A.B. Dyck & P.A. Vogt (2 Apr. 1924- 19 Dec. 1928) A.B. Dyck & Gerhard S. Derksen (1933/34-36)	Steinbach, Manitoba
Steinbach Post	?, 1936- 24 Apr. 1957	23,?-44,17	Gerhard S. Derksen	G.S. Derksen	Steinbach, Manitoba
Steinbach Post	1 May 1957- 24 Oct. 1961	44,18-48,43	Jacob H. Block	Derksen Printers	Steinbach, Manitoba
Steinbach Post to Die Post	31 Oct. 1961- 8 June 1965	48,44-52,23	Edwin Goering	Derksen Printers	Steinbach, Manitoba
Die Post	15 June 1965- 3 May 1966	52,24 (?)- 53,17	Bernhard Bott	Derksen Printers	Steinbach, Manitoba
Die Post	19 July 1966- 2 Feb. 1971	53,18-57,5			Omaha, Nebraska
Die Welt-Post und Der Staats-Anzeiger	1971-1977	1,19-6,52			Omaha, Nebraska

## “Memories of My Parents — the Jakob S. Friesens”

by Mrs. Gertrude Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba

I will try to write something about my beloved father, editor Jakob S. Friesen, who in January of 1914 founded the *Steinbach Post*, then known as the *Volks Bote*.

This was not an easy beginning for my parents but they had courage and trusted in God. Their large family was also of great help to them since they were willing to work in the business.

It was necessary for my parents to be able to speak both the English and the German languages. Neither had received much formal schooling in their youth but both enjoyed reading. As young marrieds they began to learn English; they obtained several English schooltexts and studied from them. A number of their neighbours joined them too.

My father first began to learn to speak the English language when he and my mother lived in North Dakota for several years. There he met a man who eagerly wanted to learn to speak German; since my father wanted to learn English, this was a well-timed opportunity for them both.

My father likely will not have foreseen that three successive generations of his offspring would continue working in the printing field:

son P.T. Friesen (deceased) of Winkler; grandson Harvey Friesen of Winkler; and great-grandson Glen Friesen of Winkler, the present publisher of the *Pembina Times*.

My parents moved from Kleefeld to Giroux in order to begin a printing business there. Not long after, my father decided to publish his own German weekly newspaper, the first such in Canada.

Later, they moved to Steinbach and there the newspaper was renamed the *Steinbach Post*. He made many friends through his business and was widely known.

Their spiritual and prayer life helped my parents when they went through difficult experiences.

My father kept one issue of each *Steinbach Post* which he had printed, and bound each year (52 issues) into one volume; I still have these volumes.

These are some memories of my father which I have recorded.

(Letter translated from the German by Bev Suderman; article printed in *Die Mennonitische Post*, November 16, 1984)



Some of editor Jakob S. and Katherina Friesen's daughters, in May 1965 in Abbotsford, British Columbia, (l-r): Mrs. Gertrude Friesen, Mrs. Marie Friesen, Mrs. Margaret Hiebert, Mrs. Elizabeth Hiebert, Mrs. Agnes Loewen and Mrs. Anna Barkmann. (The Friesens also had another daughter, Mrs. Katherine Isaac, and a son, Mr. Peter Friesen). (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Betty Zielke.)

## Book Reviews

Peter D. Zacharias. *Footprints of a Pilgrim People. Story of the Blumenort Mennonite Church*. Gretna, MB: Blumenort, Mennonite Church, 1985.  
by John Friesen, CMBC,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

*Footprints of a Pilgrim People* is the story of immigrant people from various backgrounds who settled in Manitoba and developed into one church community. With a light brush Peter D. Zacharias reviews the Anabaptist-Mennonite story from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. With somewhat fuller detail he unfolds the story of Mennonites in Russia, giving special attention to Baratov-Schlachtin, and other settlements from which Blumenort Church members originated. He recounts the events of the First World War, the Russian Revolution, civil war, famine, relief program, and eventually the emigration to Canada. It is these events which were seared upon the minds of the 1920s emigrants and became the “Exodus” story which the immigrants recounted in Canada at every special occasion.

The Blumenort Church story began as an immigrant people settling among Mennonites who had already spent half a century in Canada. Many of these earlier immigrants had become disillusioned with Canada and felt betrayed, especially in the matter of control of their schools. In the same years that the Blumenorter people came from the Soviet Union, thousands of other Mennonites were moving to Mexico and Paraguay. In a sensitive yet vivid style Peter D. Zacharias portrays the different worlds of values and lifestyles which characterized these two groups. For one, Canada had become the liberator, for the other the oppressor.

As the story of the Blumenort Mennonite Church unfolds in Canada, the separation between the two groups is gradually bridged. Eventually many members are drawn from the group of earlier immigrants (Kanadier) and they together with the immigrants of the 1920s (Russlaender) form one united church community. The unification of the two groups is exemplified in that the last two leading ministers have been descendants of the earlier immigrants.

This book by Peter D. Zacharias who earlier wrote *Reinland: An Experience in Community* (Reinland Centennial Committee, 1976) continues the high standards of his previous publication. Zacharias is sympathetic yet analytical. He provides a great amount of local detail in charts, biographies and in the copy generally, yet he places it into the context of the larger Manitoba, Canadian and world events. He recognizes the contributions of various leading people, yet he maintains a balance and proportion which allows him to avoid idolizing a few. The

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book is written in a popular style, yet it is carefully footnoted. The book includes many pictures which are carefully integrated into the text. He highlights the role of women as well as that of men. As a relative outsider, even though he is at present the leading minister in the congregation, Zacharias could both gain a personal touch through extensive interviews, and also stand back and analyse, evaluate, and provide perspective.

For members, the detailed information collected in tables and charts will be very important. Zacharias includes a list of the charter members, with a brief description of their lives. Husbands and wives are listed individually. All baptism classes until 1983 are listed, together with personal information about each person. There are additional tables listing all missionaries and MCC workers, Sunday School leaders, choir directors, youth leaders and church council members. A fairly extensive biography for every minister and deacon in the church is also included.

*Footprints of a Pilgrim People* is much more than the story of one congregation. It becomes a window through which to observe a large segment of the Canadian Mennonite community. It will be of interest and value for members, former members and also for people who have had no physical connection with the Blumenort Church. The study is a worthy tribute to a church with a rich heritage.

## SIX MUNICIPAL CENTENNIAL HISTORIES

by Adolf Ens,  
CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Bernard R. Ayotte, co-ordinator, *Reapers of the Valley 1882-1982* (Letellier: Montcalm History Group, 1982), 573 pp.

Betty Dyck, *Hugging the Meridian* (Sanford: Macdonald Municipality, 1981), 388 pp.

Leonore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley* (Morris: Rural Municipality of Morris, 1980), 891 pp.

Gerhard John Ens, *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland 1884-1984* (Altona: R.M. of Rhineland, 1984), 302 pp.

Lydia Penner, *Hanover: One Hundred Years* (Steinbach: R.M. of Hanover, 1982), 196 pp.

*Our First Hundred Years* (St. Francois Xavier: St. Francois Xavier Municipality, 1980), 369 pp.

In the early 1880s the Manitoba government took increasing initiative in stimulating the organization of municipal governments. No matter how reluctantly such organization took place then, a number of these municipalities have now celebrated their centennial with the publication of handsome (and expensive) history books. All but the

first (Montcalm) six municipalities, whose histories are listed above, have substantial Mennonite communities in them. Rhineland and Hanover are predominantly Mennonite.

The six books fall into two quite distinct categories. Three tell the story of the community living within the municipal boundaries (Macdonald, Rhineland, Hanover): the other three provide some interesting information about organizations and institutions within the municipality, but devote the bulk of their pages to unconnected, short family histories of their citizens (Montcalm, Morris, St. Francois Xavier). The first three have identified authors responsible for selecting material to be included, organizing it, and giving shape and direction to the story. The other three are much more the product of a committee responsible for compiling and coordinating the material, and publishing it with minimal editing of the original contributions of many volunteers. Not surprisingly, the latter three volumes are larger, both in format (8½x11 inches vs. the standard 6x9 of the first three), and two of them also in the number of pages. They provide us with a wealth of information and illustrations, even if they do not attempt to tell the "story" of the municipal community, or of its sub-communities in an organized way. Much of this information was only remembered, not written down, and would have been lost but for the efforts of the committees and the encouragement of the municipal councils to collect and preserve it now.

*Montcalm* Municipality, whose southern portion is squeezed between the Mennonite West Reserve and the Red River, represents a largely Francophone community with only a scattering of Mennonites in the Langevin area. It is therefore something of a surprise to find the "Brummtop Song" (in German) alongside of some French poetry among the frontispiece documents, or to find a richly bemedalled Jake Wiebe in the photo gallery of the Municipality's "Roll of Honor."

*St. Francois Xavier* Municipality at one time extended south to include Springstein and Elie, but its Mennonite population is now restricted to the communities of Pigeon Lake and Marquette. The Mennonite church communities there are described briefly, including a few paragraphs on the now defunct Mennonite Brethren church at Marquette.

Betty Dyck's story of *Macdonald* Municipality is well researched, carefully footnoted, and interestingly written and organized. The Mennonite communities in the La Salle-Sanford-Domain area are briefly described, including a section on the now-closed Mennonite Brethren church at Domain.

Mennonites have been much more important in *Morris* Municipality than in the above three. They founded the first villages in the area (Rosenort and Rosenhof) with the arrival of Kleine Gemeinde immigrants from

Russia in 1874, and have remained the largest identifiable population block in the Municipality, with Bergthal and other settlers moving into the areas around Lowe Farm, Kane and Krongart. The book accords a substantial section (60 pages) specifically to the Mennonites, in addition to their coverage in the general development of the area. Leonore Eidse shows some fine editorial touches in the general sections over which she had some control, but the sections on family histories and even some of the local community histories slip into repetition in both story and photo of things already dealt with adequately in the overall history. Her use of full page photographs in some of the section dividers enhances the impact of the book. A moving "Peace Hymn," found among the possessions of Pte. Jacob Cornelson who was killed in action during World War I, introduces the section on "The War Years."

*Hanover* and *Rhineland* represent virtually solid Mennonite communities, situated entirely within the boundaries of the old Reserves. The challenge for Penner and Ens is to give adequate recognition to the contribution of the minority groups, which was quite disproportionate to their numbers. Both have the benefit of good earlier research work, some of it published: e.g., Abe Warkentin's *Reflections on our Heritage* (1971) and E.K. Francis' *In Search of Utopia* (1955). Both succeed in adding something new to our understanding of the respective Municipalities.

Penner's approach is almost journalistic, introduced by a travelogue style opening chapter and concluded with a newspaper type of report on the centennial celebrations. About half of the 196 pages are devoted to photographs, other illustrations, boxed vignettes, and footnotes. In the other half she selects incidents out of the Municipality's history to illustrate trends. The best contributions come in Part 3: Making a Living, in which some carefully selected statistics provide a good picture of economic development within the region, and of the Municipality's place in the larger economy of the Province. The last chapter in this section, dealing with education, is perhaps the weakest in the book. It includes inaccuracies in detail and glosses over the serious school controversies during the first fifty years of the community's development.

The *Rhineland* book is the most successful one as history. That is, it not only tells the story of the community within Rhineland Municipality but also sets that story into the larger context of Manitoban and Canadian history. Statistical data, very helpful in seeing trends, are provided in over thirty tables. There are fewer photographs than in the other books.

Ens also attempts to interpret the history he records. In the first chapter he characterizes the basic stance or value system

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of the Mennonites coming to this area. In the final chapter he assesses the effect of one hundred years in the Canadian context. "By the time Rhineland celebrates its centennial in 1984 it will be more homogeneously Mennonite than it was a century before, but much less distinctively Mennonite," he writes (p. 225). He sees this acculturation not only in the loss of such emphases as German language, separation from the world, and rural lifestyle, but even more in the "majority culture" way of thinking that has become evident. At only its second meeting the council of the newly founded Municipality moved on 2 February 1884 to petition the Manitoba legislature for permission to conduct its meetings in the German language. A hundred years later, when the legislature was considering a bill to restore bilingualism to the province, the Municipal Council not only deplored this step but declared itself in favour of English only as Manitoba's language for official business.

All six volumes have their value and appeal for residents and expatriates of their respective municipalities. The Morris, Hanover and Rhineland studies are of interest to the larger Mennonite community as well.

*Our Wiensz Heritage*

was recently published and can be purchased for \$5.00, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling, from:

Kornelius and Tina Wiens  
42570 Peters Road  
Sardis, British Columbia  
V2R 1A9

*Footprints of a Pilgrim People*

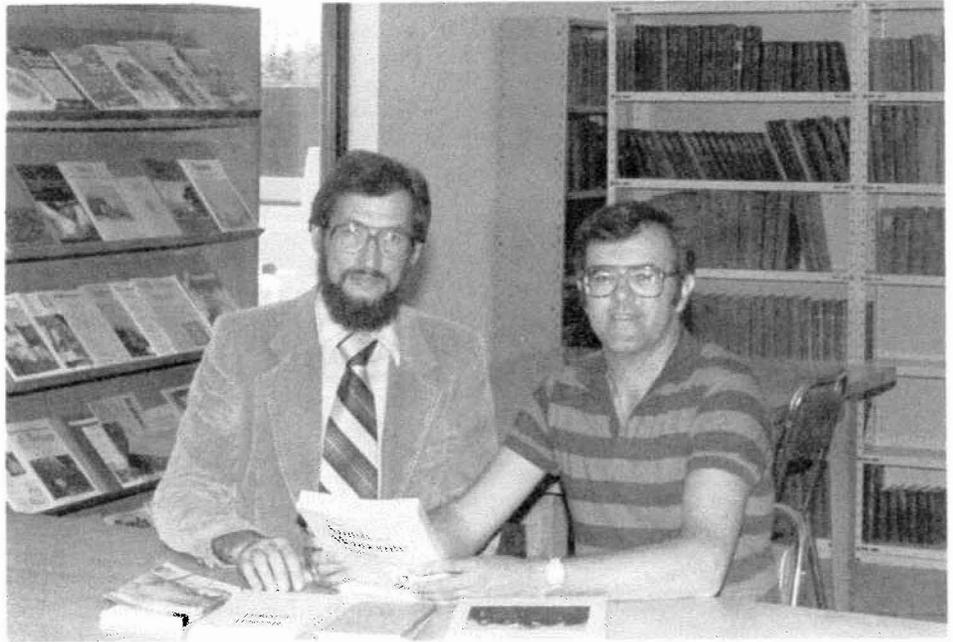
By Peter D. Zacharias can be ordered from:

Blumenort Mennonite Church  
Box 457  
Gretna, Manitoba  
R0G 0V0

Cost is \$25.00 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling.

**10th Anniversary Of Mennonite Historian**

10th Anniversary of *Mennonite Historian*  
The September 1984 issue of the *Mennonite Historian* marked its 10th anniversary. The first issue was published in September of 1975 and featured Cornelius Hiebert, Mennonite Genealogy Inc., the Conference of Mennonites in Canada History-Archives committee, congregational historians, research requests, new books, a book review of the Grunthal History and notes and comments on a Mennonite Saengerfest and a Jan Gleysteen Tour.



In July of 1984, an exchange of materials between Michael M. Miller of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society and Dennis Stoesz of the Mennonite Heritage Centre was made. Miller is collecting books for the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies at Fargo, North Dakota where he is located and the Mennonite Heritage Centre is interested in obtaining a complete set of the periodical *Heritage Review* (1971- ) which is published by the Society.

**Reunion of School District  
Rosenhoff North & Rosenhoff South**

On July 1st, 1985  
At Rosenort E.M.C. (Manitoba) (2 miles  
south of Rosenort)  
Please contact:

Mrs. George Bartel  
Box 7, RR1  
Morris, Manitoba  
R0G 1K0

**Mennonite Cookery  
Update**

by Bev Suderman,

In our December 1984 issue, we ran two articles about "Mennonite" foods-- "Wanted: 'Mennonite' Cookbooks" and "Pinwheel Cookies Anyone?" People have responded positively to both; it would seem that the topic of food is one which fascinates us all.

The request for cookbooks prompted Victor Goossen of PrairieView Press in Rosenort, Manitoba to deliver a copy of *Kitchen Treasures: A Collection of Favorite Recipes*, a cookbook with a broad spectrum of recipes, including those known as "Mennonite." Ted Friesen of D. W. Friesens and Sons, Ltd., in Altona, Manitoba, sent six cookbooks to the Heritage Centre: *More-With Less; Canadian Mennonite Cookbook; Melting Pot of Mennonite Cookery; Koame Aete; The Mennonite Treasury of Recipes; and Mennonite Community Cookbook*. This is a good beginning and the Heritage Centre

appreciates these two donations. And, we invite more donations, including those cookbooks published by community clubs, women's organizations or church groups. Just as importantly, the Heritage Centre invites you to check for Grandmother's or Great-grandmother's recipes--likely not printed or published books but hand-written booklets or loose pages gathered together. Any such recipes should be truly authentic.

Interest in the pinwheel cookie story has also been evident. People have called or written us to let us know that they were familiar with variations of the recipe; unfortunately, these variations were not what the Ottowan patent lawyers needed. An interesting note, however, appeared in the January 1985 newsletter of the Mennonite Library and Archives (Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas). It reported that Nabisco's patent lawyers visited these Archives as well as the central Kansas area for references to this recipe. The newsletter concludes its brief report by saying--"One Mennonite cookbook contained the recipe." Interesting isn't it?

# Botschafter der Wahrheit.

Der Gott aber der Geduld und des Trostes gebe euch,  
daß ihr einerlei gesinnt seid untereinander  
nach Jesu Christo. Röm. 15, 5.

Published twice monthly by "Gemeinde Gottes in Christo." Subscription price 80c.  
Abr G. Ensz, Inman, Kans., Editor. David Toews, Hillsboro, Kans., Clerk.  
B. H. Koehn, Galva, Kans., Treas.

Entered as second-class matter January 1, 1920, at the Post Office at Hillsboro, Kans.,  
under Act of March 3, 1879.

Jahrgang 26. Hillsboro, Kansas, 15. August, 1924. Nummer 16.

Sage es Jesu!

Ruht eine Last du tragen,  
Die dir zu groß und schwer,  
Du darfst es Jesu sagen:  
„Ach, Herr, ich kann nicht mehr!“

Kennt dein vergangnes Leiden  
Gar eine leichte Last.

Darum, mein Freund und Bruder,  
Wird dir die Last zu schwer:  
Sag's nur dem Mann am Ruder

*The Botschafter der Wahrheit was published by the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. It was first published in 1897 and was discontinued in 1969. Mrs. Katherine Friesen set the type for this paper (see articles on Steinbach Post). Several back issues of the Botschafter were recently donated to the archives by John G. Penner, editor of Bote des Heils, its successor.*

## Diary . . . Jottings From the Archives

by Dennis Stoesz

**Congregations:** Recently Melvin Wiebe of the Zoar Mennonite Church dropped in and asked about remicrofilming the Zoar Church records. This congregation, situated in Langham, Saskatchewan, is celebrating its 75th anniversary July 12-14. A book is also being written for the occasion; the church published an historical album in 1960 of 24 pages and in 1970 held a Diamond Jubilee Festival.

Recently we received a phone call enquiring after the name of the Eyebrow Mennonite Church before it was relocated to Eyebrow, Saskatchewan. The caller had a picture of the church building when it was located in the country, 6 miles west of Eyebrow and 5 miles south of Tugaska. S. Martens who wrote a history paper on this church in 1952 referred to it as the "Eyebrow-Tugaske General Conference Mennonite Church." She mentions that the church first bought a building in 1943. In the archives here, there are also two church registers and three pages of a third register which were used by the church. They date back to the church's founding date of May 27, 1928 and include entries until 1965. Ericka Enns from Eyebrow writes that presently the church uses another church register book. These registers and essay tell a rich story of the life of one congregation.

It is again the time of year when churches and conferences hold their annual meetings. Many Annual Reports have already been sent to the archives. By June, we will be ready to report to the congregations about

materials they have sent to the Centre.

Hedy Janzen of the Conference offices recently prepared a list of the 20 congregations who have joined the Conference of Mennonites in Canada since 1975. She determined the founding date of each congregation as well as when each group first began to meet. It would be good to expand this list to include each of the some 150 congregations which make up this Conference as well as to include a short history of each congregation.

**Acquisitions, Visitors and Research Projects:** John G. and Agnes Penner of Ste. Anne, Manitoba dropped in and donated several back issues of *Botschafter der Wahrheit* (1924-1945), *Messenger of Truth* and a new paper (*Bote des Heils*) of which Mr. Penner is editor. The first issue of this newspaper appeared in July 1983. All of these papers are published by the Church of God in Christ Mennonite. Victor Goossen of PrairieView Press also dropped in and gave the Centre the third volume of the reprinted early issues of *Messenger of Truth* (March 1910-December 1911).

John K. Schellenberg, long-time secretary of the Hanover School Division, has written a history of 46 school districts situated in that division. The book should be out shortly. He and his son-in-law brought some school records of those districts which are no longer in existence to the Archives.

The 200-page diary of Bishop David Stoesz (1842-1902) of Bergthal, East Reserve,

Manitoba, has been transliterated (transferred from Gothic script into English letters) by William and Trudy Harms of Edenthal, Manitoba. Henry Stoesz of Altona, Manitoba, is in the process of translating the diary into English. Mr. and Mrs. Harms have dropped in several times to work on their family history and to examine the Stoesz papers in more detail.

Henry T. Klassen from Laird, Saskatchewan, sent a Financial Book, 1949-1953, of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada to the Centre in January of this year.

Ian and Ruth Wilson of the Grace Mennonite Church in Regina stopped in on January 24, 1985 for a tour of the Centre. They are involved in that congregation as well as in the archives under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Archives Board. This Board microfilmed *Der Bote* in 1981. Since the conference sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada will be held in Regina this summer, interested individuals will have a chance to see what other materials the archives has about Mennonites in Saskatchewan.

Jake and Trudy Unrau recently officially retired from their long-time involvement with Native Ministries and moved to Bethel Place in Winnipeg. They deposited several boxes of records and correspondence in the archives as a result of the cleaning and sorting that comes with moving.

Ben Braun, Winnipeg, brought in some early Bethel Mennonite Church (Winnipeg) records for microfilming. Annie Konrad sent her history of the Jacob L. and Agatha Dueck family and told of the good reunion that had taken place in Leamington, Ontario last year.

Researchers have included many students from the Canadian Mennonite Bible College who are working on their research papers for a course in Mennonite studies at the College. Other researchers have included: Wes Berg, who has been going through the J. P. Clasz papers; Anna Ens, who is reading her father's, H. M. Epp, correspondence; and others who are working on their family histories.

Gerhard Lohrenz recently identified some photographs from Russia that Robert Kreider of Kansas had sent to the archives. Lohrenz continues to provide strong support to the archives' program.

Areas of research have included urbanization among Mennonites, MCC's involvement in the third world, Menno Simons, Neuen-dorf, Russian, Mennonite catechisms, MCC Peace Section, Mennonite Pioneer Mission, voting patterns of Mennonites in Manitoba, Mennonite Collegiate Institute and Hoffnungs-feld, Manitoba. Several persons have come to work on their family histories. The following family names have been examined: Braun, Dyck, Esau, Giesbrecht, Groening, Harms, Hiebert, Klassen, Niebuhr, Penner, Thielmann and Thiessen.

## “Faith, Identity, Culture Discussed At Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Meeting”

By Dennis Stoesz,  
Membership and Publicity  
Committee, MMHS

The highlights of the MMHS Annual Meeting, held on Saturday, March 2, 1985 at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, were the thoughts and reminiscences of Ted E. Friesen and Elizabeth Peters upon their reception as honorary members of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

Elizabeth Peters recalled a 1956 meeting with colleagues Gerhard Lohrenz, Gerhard Ens and Victor Peters where a Mennonite historical society was discussed and planned.

Through colourful and humorous descriptions of persons dealing with each other and the world around them, she outlined five characteristics of Mennonites: 1) their ability to feel deep emotion, but their inability to reveal it; 2) their deep trust in one another; 3) the tendency to dream about the future and to set ideals too high while forgetting about those close at hand; 4) the sudden unity a Mennonite in a foreign country can feel with another Mennonite when the Low German language is heard; and 5) the sympathy and caring Mennonites show each other through deeds rather than through words.

Mrs. Peters remarked that behind all the research and activities of the Society was the prodding concern to keep our faith alive. She encouraged the members to keep the past alive.

In his reminiscences, Ted E. Friesen also spoke about the purpose of the Society. Friesen said he had always enjoyed the study of history. He had been given an understanding of its meaning for life by people like his father, D. W. Friesen.

Ted E. Friesen said that his view of history had also been influenced by early MMHS members such as Paul Schaefer, Benjamin Ewert and J. J. Siemens. They were willing to make an apology for their Mennonite faith and to identify themselves as Mennonite to others through their writing and leadership in the community. Friesen stressed that history was not “bunk” as Henry Ford and Voltaire declare. He challenged the Society not only to maintain and preserve but to create and transmit Mennonite faith into the present and future. “We need to make beliefs such as discipleship, pacifism and community our own.”

A group of approximately 45 people gathered at the annual meeting of the Society to hear what had gone on in 1984. The meeting itself was opened by Adolf Ens, a professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. He admonished the group to be truthful



*Elizabeth Peters and Ted E. Friesen received honorary memberships into the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society on March 2, 1985. Victor Doerksen, on the left, and Adolf Ens, on the right, presented the awards.*

to the past when writing history and not to seek self-glorification in the interpretation and presentation of that past.

The Secretary of the Society, Ruth Bock, then read the minutes of the last annual meeting, held on March 17, 1984. Abe Dueck presented the Treasurer's report. A total of \$10,166.75 came in in 1984 and \$5,555.33 of this was disbursed. In addition, there were three special projects: 1) the Russian Monument Committee, which received \$14,189.17 and disbursed \$1,386.61; 2) the Mennonite Book Club, which received \$1,793.18 and disbursed \$1,642.17; and 3) the Arnold Dyck project which received \$8,235.93 (including interest) from a Federal Multiculturalism grant and disbursed \$9,690.53. At 1984's end, the MMHS account totalled \$21,518.16.

The activities of the last year were brought into focus by President Delbert Plett. He highlighted the Russian Mennonite Monument project, the Mennonite Book Club, the Arnold Dyck project (under the leadership of the Research and Scholarship Committee), the family history seminar developed by the Genealogy and Local History Committee, and cemetery research done by the Historic Sites and Monuments Committee and the new newsletter put out by the Publicity and Membership Committee.

The Society appears to be headed in a direction of more involvement and activities at a committee level instead of at the Board level. At present several non-Board members sit on committees.

Elections were then held for ten positions on the Board. Ted Friesen and Elizabeth Peters stepped down after serving three con-

secutive terms; Ruth Bock and Herman Rempel resigned from their positions to pursue other activities. Elected were two incumbents, Ed Schellenberg and Bert Friesen, and eight new Board members. (See list below for 1985 Board members.) Adolf Ens was elected from within the Board to serve as the new MMHS President, replacing Delbert Plett whose capable management and energetic spirit in promoting and expanding the Society was clearly felt during his two-year presidency.

After the elections, some time was given to the members to report on upcoming or already completed projects, books or articles.

The annual meeting was followed by a banquet in the College's new dining hall and was attended by 57 people. A cinema evening concluded the day's events. Two films were screened - a 1975 CBC production featuring the Mennonite Village Museum, and an excellent documentary film about the Hutterites produced by Burton Buller with commentary by John L. Ruth entitled “To Care or Not to Care.”

The membership of the Society in 1985 presently stands at 136.

### 1985 MMHS Board Members

#### Executive:

Adolf Ens, President  
Victor Doerksen, Vice-President  
Abe Dueck, Treasurer  
Delbert Plett, Chairman  
(Secretary--as yet unfilled)

#### Board:

Victor Doerksen, Winnipeg  
Abe Dueck, Winnipeg  
John Dyck, Winnipeg  
Rhinehart Friesen, Winnipeg  
Doreen Klassen, Winnipeg  
Harry Lowen, Winnipeg  
Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach  
Al Reimer, Winnipeg

#### Newly (Re-)Elected:

Adolf Ens, Winnipeg  
Henry G. Ens, Reinland  
Jacob C. Fehr, Plum Coulee  
Bert Friesen, Winnipeg  
Margaret Kroeker, Winnipeg  
Roydon Loewen, Blumenort  
Wilmer Penner, Steinbach  
Brian Petkau, Altona  
Ed Schellenberg, Steinbach  
Bill Schroeder, Winnipeg

This page was paid for by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.