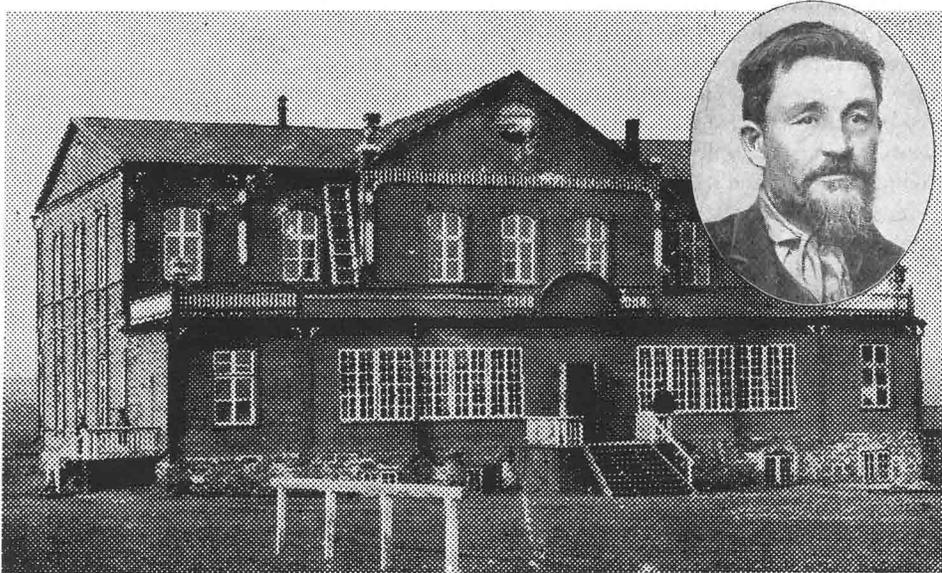


# MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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The Zentralschule in Pretoria, Orenburg settlement, Russia. Inset: Boer leader General Christiaan de Wet. Photos: From P. P. Dyck. *Orenburg am Ural* (1952), p. 84 and *Christlicher Familienkalender* (1913), special insert re: *Siegen und Sterben: Die Helden des Burenkriegs*.

## Russian Mennonites and the Boers of South Africa: A Forgotten Connection

by James Urry

Many Mennonites will have watched recent events in South Africa with considerable interest. No doubt most have welcomed the end of apartheid and the establishment of majority rule. Many have sympathized with the lot of the non-white peoples of South Africa who at last have gained their democratic rights. Almost a hundred years ago some Russian Mennonites were also keenly following events in southern Africa. This time their sympathies were with the Afrikaans-speaking Boers as opposed to "the English" and the other peoples of the region.

Two villages founded in Russian Mennonite colonies around 1900 were named after Pretoria, the principal city of the southern African Boers. One was located in Orenburg near the Ural Mountains and the other was in the Terek settlement of the Caucasus. Pretoria, a town in Transvaal, was founded in 1855 by the Boer leader Marthinus Pretorius (1819-1901). It was named after his father Andries (1798-1853) who had been a leader of Boer trekkers (immigrants) to the region. In 1860 Pretoria became the capital

of the Union of South Africa. Today it is the capital of the new Republic of South Africa.

The Mennonite colony of Orenburg was initially established in 1894-97 and new villages were added after 1900. One of them, village number 14, was named Pretoria. The settlers came mainly from Chortitza; in 1907 the Zentralschule for the colony was founded at Pretoria. In the Terek settlement village number 11 was named Pretoria in 1901. In the case of Orenburg, the choice of the name Pretoria was clearly a reflection of Mennonite sympathy with the Boers, then engaged in a bitter struggle with the British for the mastery of southern Africa. Indeed the mayor of the new village, Heinrich Koslowsky, is reported to have been known as Ohm Peter, so named after Peter Kruger (1825-1904), the president of the Boer Republic of Transvaal.<sup>1</sup>

British imperial expansion in southern Africa at the end of the nineteenth century brought them into conflict with Boers and Zulus. The Boers were descendants of European settlers, mainly Huguenot refugees from France and what is today The Nether-

lands. They had settled around the Cape of Good Hope in the late seventeenth century. During the early nineteenth century, after the Cape had become a British colony and slavery was abolished, Boer settlers moved outside British control and established their own republic.<sup>2</sup> Late in the nineteenth century, as British imperial power increased and rich deposits of diamonds and gold were discovered in southern Africa, the mainly-farmer Boers came into conflict with the British authorities. The final confrontation came with the Boer War of 1899-1902. After a bitter struggle, the Boers were defeated by the British. In 1910 the Boer provinces were incorporated into the Union of South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Mennonites in Russia were well aware of the Boer War. Regular reports of the fighting, as well as the British response to the Boer population and diplomatic moves were published in the German-language newspaper *Odessaer Zeitung*. At least one German-speaking colonist contributed a poem condemning the English.<sup>4</sup> During the war, reports in the German and Russian press were anti-British and pro-Boer while the governments of both countries pursued policies in sympathy with the Boers and in opposition to British actions.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that Mennonite sympathies lay with the Boers, or that there was considerable interest in the War and in the fate of the Boers.

The Mennonite publisher and editor, Abraham Kroeker (1863-1944), included regular reports on the War in his annual *Familienkalender*. His sympathies were clearly pro-Boer. He blamed English greed for starting the War, and condemned the English for wasting money by waging war on the Boers when they should have been caring for their starving subjects in India. He also accused the English of barbarity in their policy of imprisoning Boer families in concentration camps where many subsequently died.<sup>6</sup>

Abraham's cousin, Jakob Kroeker (1872-1948), later wrote a detailed account of the Boers and the War for another Mennonite *Kalender*. Obviously written for a general German-speaking audience rather than just for Mennonites, Kroeker provided a history of Boer settlement and then painted a highly romantic picture of Boer life and education with which many German-speaking colonists

(cont'd on page 2)

## Mennonites and the Boers of South Africa (cont'd from page 1)

living in rural southern Russia would have easily identified.

In a long section he also discussed Boer religious piety presenting examples of how, from the lowliest farmer to the Boer civil and military leadership, their lives were ruled by Christian principles. There appeared to be no criticism of Boer militancy or their use of religion to justify their use of force to resist the English. Instead, Kroeker presented the Boers as innocent victims, and the English as guilty aggressors.<sup>7</sup>

In this article Kroeker included long quotations from a book written by Frederik Rompel (1871-1940), a Dutch/South African journalist. It was entitled **Victory or Death: The Heroes of the Boer War** and dealt with the Boer struggle against the English.<sup>8</sup> The Mennonite bookseller, Peter Janzen of Gnadenfeld in the Molotschna colony appears to have sold copies of the German edition of Rompel's book. Sometime after its publication in 1901, he distributed a double-sided flyer advertising the book. The advertisement pictured all the Boer civil and military leaders including the German "volunteer" commanders who assisted the Boers.

Also included is a picture of "Three Generations in the War" showing a grandfather, father and son armed and equipped to fight. All in all, this was a strange book for a Mennonite bookseller to be advertising to non-resistant Mennonite customers. It obviously pointed to a continued Mennonite interest in the Boers and their fate.<sup>9</sup>

Mennonite sympathy with the Boer cause was, however, based on more than familiarity with events in distant lands. Like Mennonites, the Boers appeared to be a simple farming people living in communities committed to Christianity, and established after migrating in search of a homeland. The fact that they spoke Afrikaans, a language related to Dutch, like Mennonite Low German, added to the appeal of seeking a common identity. Kroeker described them as "farmers", as a "God-fearing folk" of Dutch descent "like our Low German Mennonites".<sup>10</sup> Another Mennonite who made this connection was the famous religious leader and "historian", P.M. Friesen (1849-1914). In his massive account of the Mennonites in Russia he noted:

*A Mennonite is a taciturn, reserved "Boer" with the exception of the fact that he does not fire guns or cannons; Boers and Mennonites also have the same ancestry, predominantly Dutch.*<sup>11</sup>

This linking of Mennonites with Boers appears to have fascinated Friesen. A year before his death and suffering from eye cataracts which hindered his ability to write, Friesen wrote from Moscow to the editor of the Mennonite Brethren newspaper, *Friedensstimme*. He announced that he was busy at work on a new history of the economic, cultural and religious life of the Russian Mennonites from about 1850 to the present. The title he proposed for the book was **From the World of the Russian Boers or Mennonites**.<sup>12</sup>

There is still a view that for a long time Russian Mennonites were an apolitical people, isolated in their "island" colonies. Events outside their own world were of little concern to most Mennonites, who remained largely ignorant of national and international affairs. But it is now apparent that some Mennonites were well aware of political events beyond their own world and were willing to express political opinions on national and international affairs. The scattered references to Mennonite pro-Boer sympathies in the early twentieth century need to be set in the context of the rapidly changing Russian Mennonite world. By the 1890s Mennonites were beginning to address issues concerned with their own identity in the face of increasing Russian nationalism and imperialism. Some sought links with other "identities": Dutch, German and apparently even Boer.

In the years following the end of the Boer War, and especially after the turbulent events of 1905, sometimes called the first Russian Revolution, issues such as national and international affairs, Mennonite identity and the relationship of Mennonites to the state were to become increasingly important. A number of prominent Mennonites became involved in Russian politics, and ordinary Mennonites began to take note of the increasingly turbulent events in Europe which were to result in the First World War.

The Boer War, which over a decade before the Mennonites had followed with such interest, had marked the end of the Boer republic. Similarly, in hindsight, the First World War was to mark the end of their own "Men-

nonite commonwealth". During the War Mennonite leaders often claimed a Dutch identity for the Mennonites to counter accusations of their "German" ancestry. The fact that The Netherlands was a neutral power during the War undoubtedly made such appeals additionally attractive, whereas reference to the more martial-spirited Boers was perhaps deemed inappropriate in the circumstances.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> On the choice of name and the village mayor in Orenburg see Peter P. Dyck, *Orenburg am Ural: die Geschichte einer mennonitischen Ansiedlung in Russland* (Clearbrook, BC: Christian Book Store, 1951), 43; on the village in the Terek see C. P. Toews, *Die Tereker Ansiedlung: Mennonitische Kolonie im Nordkaukasus: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Untergang. 1901-1918/1925* (Steinbach, MB: Echo Verlag, 1945), 12.

<sup>2</sup> The classic study of the establishment of the Boer republic is Eric A. Walker's *The Great Trek* (London: A. C. Black, 1934).

<sup>3</sup> The most recent comprehensive account of the War is by Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Regular reports on the progress of the Boer War were printed in the section "Zur Lage". On the colonists' response see GK in *Odessaer Zeitung*, 8 (12/24 January, 1900), 2, which includes the poem condemning the English.

<sup>5</sup> There is a detailed study of the Russian response in E. Kandyba-Foxcroft's *Russia and the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Roodeport: Cum Books, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> See Kroeker's entries in the current affairs sections of his *Christlicher Familienkalender*, 1902: 115-17; 1903: 120-21; 1904: 127-28. In private Kroeker may have reflected on the apparent connection between his own name and that of the Boer president, Peter Kruger.

<sup>7</sup> Jakob Kroeker. "Die Leidensgeschichte der Buren in Südafrika", *Christliches Jahrbuch zur Belehrung und Unterhaltung* (1902), 80-117.

<sup>8</sup> Kroeker. *Die Leidensgeschichte*, 88; Frederik Rompel, *Siegen und Sterben. Die Helden des Burenkriegs*. (Stuttgart: K. Thienemanns Verlag, 1901). The book was translated from the original Dutch into a number of European languages including

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## GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

### Queries

**Bartel** - I am looking for documentation to verify that Heinrich Bartel was the father of Kohnert Bartel b. July 25, 1756 (possibly in Niedergruppe, W. Prussia). Kohnert (b. Mar. 3, 1813 in Niedergruppe) was the father of Elder Peter Bartel of the Montau-Gruppe congregation. I would appreciate any information on siblings of Kohnert. Contact: Peter H. Bartel, Box 885, Altona, MB R0G 0B0 (204-324-5833).

**Bergmann** - Looking for information on the cousins, siblings and ancestors of Aganetha Bergmann b. ca. 1869, living in Rosenthal in 1889, married a Jacob Siemens, moved to the Orenburg colony, Russia, during the early 1900s, became ill in the early 1920s and presumably died around that decade. She had red hair and was not very tall. Her husband, Jacob Siemens, became an influential businessman in Orenburg. Their children were: Agatha (1889-1974) m. to Jacob P. Martens (1871-1959), Katharina m. to Jacob Enns, Wilhelm m. to Maria Wolff, Jacob, Aganetha, Justina (1898-?) m. to Peter K. Sawatsky (1905-1966), and Helena (1901-?) m. to Abram H. Goertzen (1902-1994). Contact: Elma Schemenauer, 92 Caines Ave., Willowdale, ON M2R 2L3.



Aganetha (Bergmann) and Jacob Siemens, 1914.

**Kroeker - Abrams** - I am looking for information about Elizabeth Kroeker b. Oct. 2, 1872, married to Jacob M. Friesen, and believed to have come from Russia with an Abrams family along with her mother and three brothers. Contact: Elsie Rowland, Box 38, Delisle, SK, S0L 0P0.

**Neufeld** - I am looking for information about Henry Neufeld (ca. 1880-ca. 1917), his wife Agnes (nee Wiebe) b. Jan. 20, 1881, (Russia) and d. Sept. 18, 1944 (Dinuba, CA), and their children, Heinrich, Johann, Jakob, Tina, Abe, Mary and Peter. Contact: Eric Neufeld, Box 1474, Swan River, MB R0L 1Z0.

**Reimer** - I am looking for information about Isaac Reimer (ca. 1846-ca. 1927), his wife Susana Kroeker (ca. 1850 -ca. 1934), and their

children Katherine (1879-1955), Susanna (1882-1982), Isaac (1885-1920), Marie (1887-1985) and Abram (1903-1973), all born in Lichtenau, S. Russia. Contact: Eric Neufeld, Box 1474, Swan River, MB R0L 1Z0.

**Reimer** - I am looking for information and possible descendants of Aaron Reimer and his wife Anna Suderman (b. ca. 1887-1890 in Alexandertal, Molotschna). They lived in Dawlekanovo, USSR, in 1926. It is known that they had a family of ten children. Contact: Victor Suderman, Box 847, Fort Smith, North West Territories, X0E 0P0

**Waldheim** - We are researching inhabitants of Waldheim, Molotschna, a village founded in 1836 by mainly Volhynians. Common names of these settlers were: Dirks, Sperling, Friesen, Koehn, Voth, Ewert, Richert, Neufeld, Nachtigal, Dueck and Becker. We would like to hear from any descendants of Waldheim inhabitants. Contact: John and Irmie Konrad, 4805 Meadfield Road, West Vancouver, BC V7W 3E6.

### Book Notes

Elsie H. Epp, *The Peter Huebert Family Tree. Second Edition 1739-1993* (Henderson, NE : Private publication, 1994) pb., 128 pp.

This book traces the descendants of Peter Huebert (1821-1864) born in Muensterberg, Molotschna, son of Claas Huebert (1739-1853). The book includes the names of more than 6,600 descendants born in the United States or Canada since 1874. The first edition of this book was published in 1974. Contact: Mrs. Elsie H. Epp, Box 6, Henderson, NE 68371.

Chris Penner, ed., *Zacharias-Hiebert Family History* (Altona, MB : Zacharias Family Book Committee, 1993) hdc., 146 pp.

This book traces the family history of Frank F. Zacharias (1880-1954) and Helena Hiebert (1884-1976) who farmed in the Glencross School District, six miles south of Morden, Manitoba. They raised a family of twelve girls and four boys. The book devotes one chapter to each of these children. Numerous photographs, biographical information and lists of descendants are included. Contact: Zacharias Family Book Committee, Box 152, Altona, MB R0G 0B0

Gary Strahl, *A Canadian Story : The Bill and Martha Strahl Family* (Sardis, BC : Don Dearborn, 1994) hdc., 385 pp.

This book, compiled primarily for the family, depicts the family history of Bill Strahl (1926-1983) and Martha Ens (1930- ) in three sections. Section A traces the ancestry and family history of Martha Ens which includes

the following families: Rempel, Dyck, Peters and Enns. The Enns family moved from Manitoba to the Hague-Osler area of Saskatchewan in 1899. Section B traces the ancestry and family history of Bill Strahl which includes the Larson family. The story of both of these families begins in Sweden. Section C focuses on the story leading up to the marriage of Bill Strahl and Martha Ens in 1952, and continues with the events of their life together. A final section in the book (Section D) is entitled "Family Customs and Recipes". Contact: Gary Strahl, 6193 Parsons Road, Sardis, BC V2R 1B1.

Robert G. Guenther, *Passionate Possessions of Faith : The Jacob Guenther Family 1725-1994* (Honolulu, Hawaii : Robert G. Guenther, Bryan Guenther, Kevin Guenther and Darren Guenther, 1994) hdc., 308 pp.

This book describes the travels and experiences of the Jacob Guenther family and descendants. The book includes Switzerland, Moravia, The Netherlands, Prussia-Germany, Poland, Russia and North and South America. It is the result of fifteen years of study and travel, including information from a multitude of letters, books, papers, maps, photographs, interviews, and trips to libraries, archives and former homelands spread across America and Europe. One notable feature in the book includes the history of the author's ancestral names, with information about the countries and villages and their geography, politics and culture, all documented with footnotes. Another highlight is the abundance of photographs, etchings, maps and charts. A complete bibliography and an index of over 1500 names make this book a valuable addition to the realm of Mennonite family history. Contact: Robert G. Guenther, 4074 Koko Drive, Honolulu, HI 96816, ph. (808-735-5978).

Christa Stache, ed., *Verzeichnis der Kirchenbücher im Evangelischen Zentralarchiv in Berlin. Teil I. Der östlichen Kirchenprovinzen der Evangelischen Kirche der altpreußischen Union.* (Berlin: Evangelisches Zentralarchiv, 1992) pb., 307 pp.

For anyone travelling to Germany and contemplating doing research on family history and genealogy, this book would be a good resource to examine before leaving. Although Mennonites are not specifically mentioned, the book does provide a description of the Protestant church registers available for various church districts. These districts include East Prussia, West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen, Silesia and Brandenburg.

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, CMBS, 1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5.

## Peter, A Man of Stamina and Courage

(Conclusion from the previous issue of MH)

by A. E. Heidi Koop

After dropping off his family, Onkel Janzen was determined to return to the estate once more and that meant Peter had to accompany him. Again they went a roundabout way approaching the estate from the east, along the railroad track in order to enter the yard through the front gate. They did not always stay on the road, driving over the fields for fear that they were being observed. Approaching from this direction enabled them to pass by the residences of the estate's permanent employees just on the outskirts of the grounds. They hoped to ascertain from the foreman that was happening.

Eventually they arrived at the foreman's abode where they were delayed for a while. They were not welcomed in good humour - he refused to let them enter the yard from where he himself had just returned. Apparently chaos and confusion prevailed. The foreman insisted that they would not be able to reason with anyone. Having accomplished nothing, they returned to Ekibash.

Even as they neared the town they could see some of the soldiers leaving Ekibash. Onkel Janzen ordered Peter to "turn right and take off across the fields." But it was too late. They had been spied and several riders were advancing toward them. The horses' trot turned into a gallop. A shot rang through the air. Onkel Janzen threw himself down on the floor of the wagon: "Koop, go! Whip them! Move!" He knew what was in store for them and he screamed in terror.

Fortunately the other horses did not measure up. They were obviously starving, worn out, tired - totally inferior. It was not easy to wind in and out between the hay stacks. Guiding young mares is not an easy task at the best of times, and under such stressful conditions it becomes very demanding and strenuous indeed.

For a short while their assailants lost track of them so Onkel Janzen and Peter got away. They turned into one of the yards where fortunately a group of men had gathered. Peter urged his uncle, who was still sprawled out on the wagon floor, to join the group which he did immediately.

It was not long before the riders caught up with them, shouting at the men. No one could tell who had just arrived. Intuitively Peter knew they would go after him. Then the men pointed to Peter, saying that he had



The map is taken from an insert in *Die Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Russland während der Kriegs- und Revolutionsjahre 1914 bis 1920 (1921)*.

just pulled up. Onkel Janzen, in his early fifties, which was old in those days, was approximately the same age as the others. So why not turn on the younger one? But Peter, too, refused to divulge any crucial information. When they asked why he had fled he simply informed them that he had feared falling into their hands, that he had not known whether or not they were military of the Red Army, that he had not known why the shots were fired and had thought that perhaps they were out to shoot him.

Conversing with them he instantly felt safer when he learned that they belonged to the White Army. Nothing serious came out of this incident except that the officers took ownership on the spot, ordering Peter to harness the horses and hand them over. They commanded Peter to come along with them. Thus they secured a fine wagon with a healthy team of horses, and Peter as driver. Arriving at the military base the officers gave Peter strict orders to stay with them. Otherwise he was free to do as he pleased.

Moving on in a southerly direction, into the mountains, Peter was disappointed that they did not pass by the estate. He would have been sure to come up with a plan to escape. This was another new experience for Peter and he did not feel totally comfortable. Preoccupied with thoughts of escape he studied his options. To take the team and wagon was impossible. There were not enough roads to get away and the officers were too pleased with their newly-acquired vehicle. The only way to leave was on foot, empty handed, since he was not entrusted with a rifle.

They settled into a Russian village in a valley at the foot of three converging mountains. Arriving at sundown it was impossi-

ble to discern anything moving in from the west. Even with binoculars they were not able to ascertain whether military of the Red or White Army was approaching. Then suddenly the command rang out: "Prepare to fight! Get set!" What an uproar!

In time it was concluded that the approaching men were White Army soldiers. They could relax. The officers acted as if they "had the world by the tail." Their behaviour was offensively boisterous and insolent. They invited Peter to drink to the occasion with them but he excused himself; the horses needed to be fed and cleaned.

After dark, when they were unable to think or see straight, Peter determined to escape. Relinquishing the wagon and horses he vanished into the dark night. Fleeing the village he approached a Russian hovel on the outskirts of the settlement. He walked to the door, knocked and asked for permission to hide for the night. He promised to leave before sunrise. His request was granted. In fact, he was invited to sleep in the same bed with the father of the family.

Arising before sunrise, Peter was on his way. Through valleys, over hills, and through forests he trudged, always in a northeastern direction. He avoided roads, plodding straight ahead "as the crow flies." Finally after several days of wandering he saw a town in the distance. His steps lightened and even though he did not yet know which town he was approaching, he expected to meet congenial people. To his joy he had arrived in Karassan, Crimea, his birthplace. He was delighted!

*Heidi Koop is a writer residing in Winnipeg, MB.*

## Our Lohrenz Ancestry

by *Agatha Ratzlaff*

The Lohrenz family is a stream in our ancestral heritage, since my husband's paternal great-grandmother was Anna Lohrenz (the daughter of Wilhelm Lohrenz) who married Peter P. Ratzlaff of Friedensdorf, Molotschna, South Russia (Ukraine).

In researching our Lohrenz family history, I contacted the late Dr. Gerhard Lohrenz of Winnipeg, in 1980. He graciously loaned me seventeen letters he had received from various Lohrenz relatives when he was researching his ancestry. From the information recorded in these letters dating back as far as 1936, and from several other sources, I have compiled the following information about our Lohrenz(t)z ancestry.

A. A. Vogt, of Steinbach, Manitoba wrote in a letter dated April 1, 1966, that it is assumed that all Lohrenz families among the Mennonites are descendants of a common ancestor. In his own personal ancestry record, Dr. Lohrenz recorded that in 1527 a Thomas Lorenz from St. Martin, and a Heinrich Klausson from Alkmaar, Netherlands, led a group of Dutch settlers into the vicinity of Danzig. Whether this Lorenz was the forebearer of the Lohrenz family found around Danzig we do not know, but it is possible.

The information in two letters from our grandfather's first cousin, Rev. Jakob Wilhelm Lorenz of Hutchinson, Kansas, the son of Wilhelm Lohrenz, who was a brother to our great-grandmother, Anna (Lohrenz) Ratzlaff, provided the key to our ancestry. In his letter of September 4, 1938, he said his father was Wilhelm; also his oldest brother (he had only one) in Russia was named Wilhelm. His father Wilhelm had three brothers and two sisters: Lena, Heinrich, Anna (whose daughter, a Mrs. Lange lived in Buhler), Johann (who died in Samara or Siberia), and Peter (whose son Heinrich also lived in Buhler). He could not confirm if the order of names as he had listed them, was according to age. He wrote that he had tried several times to contact Mrs. Lange, but could never find her at home. He wanted to check out the accuracy of this with her, if indeed she could help. Jakob Lohrenz also wrote about an old Mrs. Penner nee Lohrenz, in Buhler, who could probably provide more information, and he would seek an opportunity to ask her.

In 1924, shortly before his emigration from Russia, Jakob Lorenz visited his school teacher in Halbstadt, Molotschna, a Mr. Braun who had in his possession a book



**Photo of Sarah Neufeld and Peter Lohrenz, grandparents of the late Dr. Peter L. Neufeld. Taken by the photographer K. A. Ivanov in Bolshoi Tokmak, Ukraine. (See page 9.) Photo: Courtesy of Elsie Neufeld, Winnipeg, MB.**

which he had rescued from the archives, before the Bolsheviks burned the buildings. There Jakob had learned that his father Wilhelm was a son of Wilhelm Lohrenz, and that the latter had emigrated as a small boy with his father Johann Heinrich Lohrenz in 1819 from Germany (Prussia) to South Russia. In the Russian documents at the archives, it had not been recorded from which city or district in Prussia they had come.

In his letter of August 29, 1937, Jakob Lorenz wrote of a Lohrenz family gathering that had taken place, at which he had tried to gather more information about their ancestry. One hundred and seventy three Lohrenz family members had been at the gathering. The Peter Lohrenz line had been represented most strongly. Peter Lohrenz had emigrated in 1817 from Grossweide, Prussia to Russia, and who had been a brother (or perhaps a cousin) of his grandfather, Wilhelm Lohrenz. In Buhler a late cousin of his late father had a book with various genealogical facts about the Lohrenz ancestors, which Jakob said he hoped to research. Jakob explained that he had dropped the "h" from his surname in Russia since there was no "h" in the Russian language, and had neglected to replace the "h" when he applied for citizenship papers in the United States. Jakob Lorenz also wrote that his former high school teacher, Kornelius Unruh from Ohrloff, had once told him that Jakob's great-grandfather, or even a more distant ancestor, had been a doctor in Berlin.

On July 12, 1938, Franz Harder from Danzig, having obtained information from the Marienwerder (Tragheimer Mennonite

Church) records, wrote that Heinrich Lohrenz, from Grossweide, had three sons, all born in Grossweide: Heinrich, born November 17, 1779; Peter, born July 1, 1781; and Johann, born November 5, 1785. Peter was baptized in 1798 in the Tragheimerweide Church. On January 12, 1812, Peter Lohrenz married Maria Dyck, then 24 years old. They had three children: Johann, born November 17, 1815 in the Muehler Marienwerder; Anna, born February 25, 1817 in Dyck's Muehle, and, Maria, born December 23, 1818 in Dyck's Muehle (in Prussia). The baptismal record did not include these children, therefore they must have been baptized in Russia. Nothing is recorded about the emigration to Russia, but Franz Harder writes that it could not have been in 1817. In a letter dated June 10, 1938, Franz Harder explains that Grossweide and Marienwerder belonged to the Tragheimerweide Mennonite Church.

Karl Stumpff in his book records a Peter Lohrenz(t)z born January 17, 1781 from Dycksmuehle, Marienburg, who emigrated in 1819 to Taurien (Russia). The birthdate differs with that given by Franz Harder, which is July 1, 1781; and with that given in the family record I received from Paul G. Lohrenz of Mountain Lake, Minnesota (a descendant of Peter Lohrenz(t)z, which is June 30, 1781. B.H. Unruh's book includes information on Peter's marriage, given as January 12, 1812, Dycksmuehle; and lists three children: Johann, born November 17, 1815; Anna, born February 25, 1817; and Maria, born December 23, 1818. It also states that the family came from the Tragheimerweide Mennonite Church. The family records of Paul G. Lohrenz, Mountain Lake, MN, differ from Unruh in that they indicate the wedding date as January 6, 1810, and they include two children born before the three listed in Unruh, Stumpff and Harder's letter. They are Peter and Heinrich Lohrenz. Where the information from various sources differs, I have chosen that which comes directly from the family records.

Hermann P. Lohrenz of Whitewater, Manitoba wrote in a letter dated June 16, 1936, that he was born in 1883. His father was Peter Heinrich Lohrenz, born in 1843 in Schardau or Alexandertal; and died September 30, 1901 in Fuerstenau, where he had been farming land since 1883. Before that he had been a teacher, primarily in Fuerstenau.

Hermann had no male descendants. His wife died March 27, 1935. Hermann's cousin, Heinrich Friesen, was a long-time teacher in Grossweide and Alexandertal. Hermann knew the Jakob W. Lorenz from Tragheimerweide, who was living somewhere in the USA

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## Recent Acquisitions

We are pleased to share a further listing of recent acquisitions at the Heritage Centre.

1. P. Ryedeman's *Rechenschaft* (early edition of 1565). Photocopy. Courtesy of Dr. John Friesen, CMBC, Winnipeg.
2. Articles on Mennonites from *Neues Haus und Landwirtschaftskalender für deutsche Ansiedler im Südlichen Rußland* (1867, 1892, 1907-1908, 1910-1911, 1913-1914). Received from MLA, Bethel College, N. Newton, KS.
3. West Reserve village correspondence, dated 1910. Photocopy. Courtesy of Bruce Wiebe, Winkler, MB.
4. *God's Footprints* by Jacob H. Block (Grunthal, MB) translated by Agnes Dyck, 1978. Photocopy. Courtesy of James Urry, currently in Calgary, AB.
5. Elim Bible School photographs. Courtesy of *Mennonite Reporter*, Waterloo, ON.
6. Photograph of students at the *Taubstumenschule*, Tiege, Russia. Courtesy of *Der Bote*, Winnipeg, MB.
7. *Dem Herrn sei die Ehre*. Manuscript by Abram J. Reimer, St. Catharines, ON. Courtesy of Katherine Reimer Janzen, Pickering, ON.
8. *Der kleine Künstler* by Peter H. Koop, Winnipeg, MB. Photocopy. Courtesy of Dr. John Unger, Winnipeg, MB.
9. "The rejected child". Manuscript translation of *Das verstossene Kind* by William Enns, trans. by Justina Funk. Courtesy of CMBC Publications, Winnipeg, MB.
10. Harder genealogical material. Courtesy of George T. Harder, Victoria, BC.
11. Genealogical material re Klippenstein, Enns, Giesbrecht families. Courtesy of Agatha Ratzlaff, Clearbrook, BC.
12. The Rempel Genealogy beginning with Johann Rempel ca. 1830-1973. Courtesy of LaVerna and James Shaw, KS.
13. Wire recording of D. Schroeder lecture. Courtesy of C. N. Friesen, Clearbrook, BC.
14. Low German program which includes Reuben Epp, John Wittenberg and *Bunte Tjalva* dated May 6, 1994 - one cassette. Bought from MCC BC.



A group of former MCCers from Korea were hosted at the Centre during a reunion weekend retreat held at CMBC in early July. Tina Letkemann of Winkler and Kay Friesen of Winnipeg helped make the arrangements.

## MHCA Staff Changes

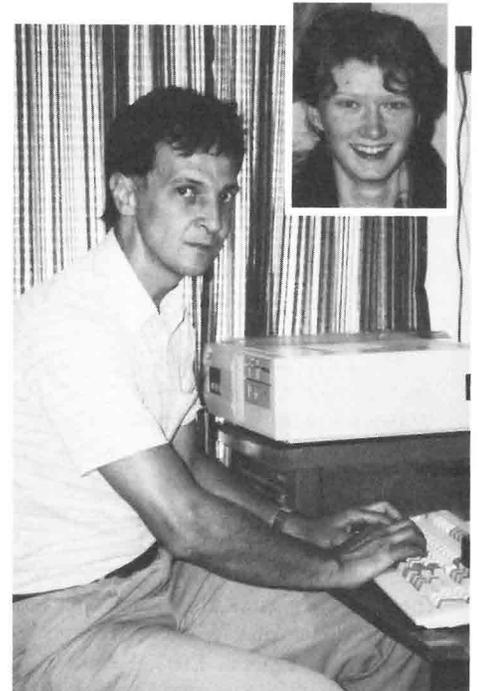
We are pleased to announce that Alf Redekopp began his work here as half-time assistant archivist on August 2. He will be primarily involved in archiving new accessions, as well as backlog collections. He will give some time also to helping researchers, especially in the area of genealogical studies. Alf has been a member of the Association of Manitoba Archivists for a number of years and completed a number of professional training workshops offered by AMA.

Alf and his wife Kathy and their three children, Elizabeth, Andrew and Christina reside in Winnipeg. They are members of the Home Street Mennonite Church.

Once more we want to add a word of warm thanks to Peter H. Rempel who held this position for three years prior to Alf's coming. Peter is now a member of the staff of the Commission on Overseas Mission (GCMC), working out of Winnipeg.

As well we are delighted to have had Julia Zacharias, a CMBC student, serve as summer assistant for seven weeks. Julia did an excellent job of dealing with a variety of archival and other tasks that needed attention in the Centre. Thanks much, Julia!

Several other persons including Robert Nickel, and several other CMBC students including, Mike Thiessen, Jerry Klippenstein, Bruce Dyck, Joel Warkentin and Anna Janecek helped us also. We are glad to note finally that our volunteers Jake Wiens and Ed Enns have kept up their strong involvement as well. Thanks to all - again.



Alf at his new desk in the Heritage Centre. Photo: Courtesy of Roma Quapp, CMC editor in Winnipeg. Inset: Julia Zacharias, CMBC.

### Just Off The Press!

A. E. Heidi Koop, *Peter, A Man of Stamina and Courage*. Winnipeg. Privately published, pb., 181 pp., \$22.00. About a Mennonite young man, Peter Koop, (the author's father) who survived the Russian Revolution and Civil War and then established a family in Canada. **Order from the Mennonite Heritage Centre.**



At the official opening of Donwood Manor, September 19, 1970. Helmut Klassen (left) is receiving the keys from Helmut Peters (right) of the MBGA, also architect of the facility. Photo: Courtesy of CMBS, Winnipeg.

## Donwood Manor Looks Forward to the 25th

by Weldon Epp

It is sometimes said that one can learn much about a community by observing how it cares for its senior citizens. Donwood Manor, 25 years old next year, provides an interesting observatory of the Winnipeg Mennonite Brethren community. Founded in 1970, its short history spans an important transition period for geriatric care institutions - a period in which the average level of dependence has increased dramatically. The Mennonite Brethren Geriatric Association of Metro Winnipeg Inc. (MBGA), which founded Donwood Manor and three satellite facilities, was created by an ad-hoc committee of concerned individuals. Yet it has come to represent ten Winnipeg MB churches on matters of providing care for their senior members. How it has designed and directed its facilities (which jointly serve 450 seniors), and especially how it has addressed the significant changes in its clientele, reflect both the challenges for geriatric care during this period, and the character of the Winnipeg Mennonite Brethren community which has risen to those challenges.

In 1967 a general meeting was called to discuss whether, and how to proceed with building an MB home for the elderly. The meeting was called by several enthusiasts who now managed to mobilize church support for their initiative, which the Manitoba MB Conference had previously rejected. A founding committee was formed, land was procured, and the government of Manitoba became involved.

Given a demand at the time for personal care homes, the provincial government offered financial incentives for their construction (the owners would procure the land and 10% of the equity, the government would pay the rest). However, the founding committee's initial vision was to obtain a seniors' housing complex. Given the need for government financing they agreed to build a personal care home, after the government rejected their proposal for a 50% hostel/50% personal care status facility.

It is interesting that after Donwood Manor opened in 1970 the MBGA, upon prompting by the government, soon began plans for a second facility, designed for independent seniors. In 1974 Donwood II, an elderly persons' housing facility (EPH), was opened next door.

Donwood II was innovative. It was attached to the personal care home, and for many tenants Donwood Manor was also psychologically near, because the emergency call button in each apartment gave them the security of knowing that nursing care was only moments away if necessary. This proximity also allowed couples of whom one might need the attention provided by a personal care home, while the other might want the independence of a private apartment, to continue to live much of their lives together. Tenants could pay for meals in Donwood Manor's dining room, and the activity and chaplaincy programs were extended to them as well.

Integration has been another characteristic of Donwood. To keep seniors integrated in the community, and the community involved in the lives of seniors was a primary goal of several important Donwood programs. The annual Donwood Tea and Ba-

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B Brethren  
S Studies in Canada

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zaar (now Tea and Bake Sale) and the Donwood Women's Auxiliary were both means of bringing the church community and the neighbourhood into regular contact with Donwood seniors. The Women's Auxiliary was initially organized to help with the Tea and Bazaar. Then however it took on a life of its own and has, over the years, paralleled the mostly-male MBGA board in representing the constituency's concern for the needs of Donwood seniors.

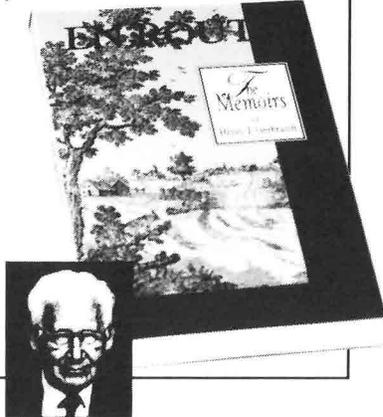
In 1981 the Youth Volunteer Program was initiated. It brought students into Donwood to interact with residents for six weeks during the summer. The program itself was created for the benefit of the students. Yet it was an important success in two-way integration.

Throughout this period of both innovation and integration an important tension has remained a constant for the MBGA: program development versus facility development. In 1982 Donwood South, another EPH, was opened and in 1988 Donwood West, a seniors' condominium community, was opened. During the forthcoming year the original Donwood will be renovated and expanded. Yet, for Donwood's first 19 years, the government fully funded the chaplaincy program - providing a half-time salary. Only since 1989 has this been augmented by an additional quarter-time salary provided by the constituency. Furthermore, the constituency's portion has not grown despite the potential need, which could justify at least a full-time chaplaincy position. Is financial commitment from the constituency more readily available for new facilities than for expanded programs? As the chaplain's "congregation" grows with the 40-bed expansion to a potential 287 seniors, will the three quarter time chaplaincy program grow as well?

The DALs program, which offers limited personal care to tenants of Donwood II on a fee-for-service basis, has been innovative in allowing seniors to remain as independent and integrated into society as possible, and as long as possible. Yet it has not been the focus of any constituency fund-raising. Rather, it has been designed to be viable only as long as it pays for itself - a goal which has at times been difficult to attain, and awkward to administer.

(cont'd on page 9)

# Off The Press



## EN ROUTE:

### The Memoirs of Henry J. Gerbrandt.

The warm and engaging story of a deeply committed man who never stopped in his lifelong search for faithfulness.

*"Most of the specific incidents in this book were not factually new information to us. What was startlingly different was the emotional context and impact of these events on Dad's life and work... So we never realized the gut-wrenching trauma of a 14 year-old boy watching his mother die...we never knew about the aching, black despair of a young man in his lonely search for Truth...about the humiliation of failure, betrayal and devastating losses of the Mexico experience."*

From the Preface by his daughter  
Elaine Gerbrandt Bergen.

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## MCC Conference "75" Coming

A conference titled: "Unity Amidst Diversity: MCC and the 20th Century Mennonite Experience" will be held at Fresno Pacific College and MB Seminary, Fresno, CA from March 9-12, 1995.

This conference will commemorate the



**Leonard Doell, member of the board of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan presented an honorary membership certificate to Tobie Unruh at a recognition evening held in Hague, SK, on April 29, 1994. Looking on is Society chairman, Dick Epp of Saskatoon. Tobie was recognized for major contributions made to museum development in Hague, SK. Photo: Courtesy of Frank Letkemann, Rosthern, SK.**

75th anniversary of Mennonite Central Committee. It is co-sponsored by Center for MB Studies, Fresno Pacific College and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, all of Fresno, CA.

Program details and registration information will be available from MCC Akron, PA 17501-0500, MCC West Coast, 1010 G Street, Reedley, CA 93654 and Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, MBBS, 4824 E. Butler, Fresno, CA 93727.

## Hague-Osler Reserve Centennial and History Book

by Leonard Doell

The Hague-Osler community is planning on celebrating its 100th birthday in the summer of 1995. In May of 1895, the first Old Colony Mennonite settlers left Manitoba and arrived in Saskatchewan. The village of Neuanlage was the first village to be formed in the new settlement.

Material is being collected and research being done, in order to compile a history book of the area. It is to be completed by 1995. Former residents and neighbours are encouraged to attend the celebration activities planned for the long weekend in August, 1995.

The response to the proposed history book has been very good. Photographs, historical documents and written submissions have been received which will add sig-

nificant value to the book. The deadline for submissions is Sept. 15, 1994. They can be sent to Jacob G. Guenter, Box 1281, Warman, SK S0K 4S0.

This centennial is a significant milestone in the life of the community. As the children of Israel took time to reflect and celebrate its history and to thank God for His leading, so we too are called to look at our past and to learn from it.

**Note:** The Mennonite Heritage Centre has been offering consultative services, and providing research materials for this project.

## Mennonite Periodical Titles Now on ATLA Microfilm

- 1993-S000 **Angenehme Stunden**, no. 1-no. 13 = 1 reel
- 1993-S012 **Christian Evangel** (Chicago), vols. 1-23, 1910-33 = 4 reels
- 1993-S013 **Christian Evangel** (Scottdale), 1936-57, 22 vols. = 3 reels
- 1991-S001 **Christian Monitor**, v. 1-43, 1909-1951 = 15 reels
- 1993-S004 **Familien Kalender**, 70 vols., 1871-1940 = 2 reels
- 1993-S002 **Family Almanac**, 1871-1955, 85 vols. = 3 reels
- 1990-S000 **Gospel Herald**, v. 1-48, 1908-1955, 48 reels
- 1991-S000 **Gospel Witness**, v. 1-3 April 1907 - March 1908 = 2 reels

(cont'd on page 9)

## Donwood Manor Looks To 25th (concluded from page 7)

Donwood's programs - innovative and integrative as they have been - are ultimately the source of any Mennonite identity within the MBGA and its work. To the extent that they have been in tension with the facility agenda of the MBGA, it the question of whether there is a Mennonite Brethren identity evident in the history of the MBGA and its facilities, remains unanswered.

### Sources:

MBGA minutes and Donwood Manor files, including transcripts of interviews conducted by Elsie Regehr-Neufeldt in 1991, and interviews conducted by the author in 1994. All are currently lodged in the Donwood Manor archives.

*Weldon Epp is a history student at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. He was engaged in research and writing for Donwood Manor during the past summer.*

## Environmental Monitoring Equipment

The Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg recently received a \$700.00 Federal Government grant through the Canadian Council of Archives toward the purchase of equipment to monitor temperature and relative humidity in the archives storage area. A datalogger and the appropriate computer software will be purchased to assist in collecting an ongoing record of the temperature and relative humidity. The project reflects an on-going commitment to provide good care for the records deposited with the Centre.

## Our Lohrenz Ancestry (concluded from page 5)

and was a preacher. He also knew Franz Lohrenz, who was originally from Margenau, Molotschna and had lived for a while in Muntau; and John Lohrenz, also originally from Margenau.

Hermann's brothers were: 1) Peter P. Lohrenz, born in Fuerstenau, whose children were Peter, Daniel and Agatha (who married a Neufeld, parents of the late Dr. Peter Lohrenz Neufeld of Minnedosa, Manitoba and later of Winnipeg), and whose widow later lived in Whitewater, Manitoba; and 2) Daniel P. Lohrenz, a businessman in Waldheim, Russia, who had two sons (both deceased).

I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has further information to add

to the Lohrenz story, especially with regards to our great-grandmother, Anna Lohrenz, who married Peter Ratzlaff. Anna was the daughter of Wilhelm Lohrenz, who came from Danzig to Russia in 1819 with his father Johann Heinrich Lohrenz.

My father-in-law, John P. Ratzlaff, told me that his first cousin, Rev. Peter R. Lange of Fresno, California remembered their grandfather Peter P. Ratzlaff. He had been about four years old when their grandfather died. This would mean that our great-grandfather, Peter P. Ratzlaff died around 1901 or 1902. In 1906 his widow, Anna nee Lohrenz, left Russia and settled in Minnesota with her married daughter, the Martin and Lena Wannow family. I am searching for information about their arrival in the USA, specifically, Anna's birth, marriage and death records.

### Sources:

#### Archival

Letter of 1980 by Gerhard Lohrenz to me.  
Letter of April 1, 1966 by A. A. Vogt to Gerhard Lohrenz, Winnipeg, MB  
Letters of August 29, 1937 and September 4, 1938 by Rev. Jakob W. Lorenz to Gerhard Lohrenz.  
Letter of July 12, 1938 by Franz Harder to Gerhard Lohrenz.  
Letter of June 16, 1936 by Hermann P. Lohrenz to Gerhard Lohrenz.  
Letter of February 27, 1971 by Dr. Peter L. Neufeld to Gerhard Lohrenz.  
Family record of the Gerhard P. Lohrenz family from Paul Gerhard Lohrenz, Mountain Lake, MN.

#### Books

Stumpp, Karl. *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862*, (Lincoln, NE, 1982), 188.  
Unruh, B.H. *Die niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, (Karlsruhe, 1955) 367.

*Agatha Ratzlaff is a homemaker and writer residing in Clearbrook, B.C.*

## Mennonites and the Boers of South Africa (concluded from page 2)

an English edition in 1903.

<sup>9</sup> The flyer has a stamp of Peter Janzen's book dealership on the right hand front of the advertisement. I located it in a copy of Kroeker's *Christlicher Familienkalender* for 1914 in the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg, Canada. It is un-

clear how it came to be in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> "Sie sind, weil sie auch hollaendischer Abstammung sind, mit unsern plattdeutschen Mennoniten stammverwandt" wrote Abraham Kroeker in *Christlicher Familienkalender*, (1902), 115.

<sup>11</sup> Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)*. (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), 515.

<sup>12</sup> The title in German was *Aus der Welt der rußländischen Buren oder Mennoniten*, in a letter from Moscow dated 17 July 1913, and published in *Die Friedensstimme*, 11 (57) (24 July 1913), 5.

*Dr. James Urry, currently doing research in Calgary, AB, is professor of anthropology at Victoria University of Wellington in Wellington, New Zealand.*

## Mennonite Periodical Titles (concluded from page 8)

- 1993-S007 **Handbook of Information of the General Conference Mennonite Church of N. A.**, 1947-1948, 2 vols. - 2 reels  
1993-S008 **Handbook of Information of the General Conference Mennonite Church of N. A.**, 1951-1956, 6 vols. = 1 reel  
1991-S002 **Herald of Truth** v. 1-45, 1864-1908 = 12 reels  
1992-S002 **Herold der Wahrheit** (Chicago), 38 vols., 1864-1901 = 10 reels  
1992-S011 **Mennonite and The Christian Evangel**, 1934-35, 2 vols. = 1 reel  
1993-S001 **Mennonite Family Almanac**, 1 vols., 1870 = 1 reel  
1993-S005 **Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac**, 1895-1930, 2 vols. = 1 reel  
1993-S003 **Mennonitischer Familienkalender**, 1 vol., 1870 = 1 reel  
1992-S001 **Nachrichten aus der Heidenwelt**, Jahrg. 1 - 3, 1885-1887 = 1 reel  
1993-S006 **Yearbook of the General Conference Mennonite Church of N. A.**, 1931-1946, 16 vols. = 1 reel

**Price:** \$28.00 US per reel plus shipping and handling.

**For further information or to order** write to: Geraldine M. Byrne, ATLA, Preservation Project, 820 Church Street, Suite 300, Evanston, Illinois, 60201-5603 USA.

## Rat/Red River Junction Park and Cairn Dedication

by Elmer Heinrichs

Former Manitoba premier and Governor-General of Canada, The Right Honourable Ed Schreyer, addressed some 400 Mennonites attending a park dedication and cairn unveiling ceremony held on August 1, 1994, at the junction of the Rat and Red rivers in southern Manitoba.

The ceremony, led by Royden Loewen of Steinbach, celebrated the landing 120 years earlier, on August 1, 1874, of the first 65 Mennonite families coming to settle in Manitoba. They disembarked from the International, a steam-powered river boat, and made their way by Red River carts to nearby immigration sheds (reception centres) erected by Jacob Y. Shantz, a Mennonite from Berlin (later Kitchener), Ontario.

Schreyer outlined the historical background to the Mennonite settlement. "An advance guard prospected the country. A crucial factor was the promotion by government agent William Hespeler and the support of Jacob Y. Shantz, without whom there might have been no Mennonite settlement here," he said.

"They came in six weeks time, and prepared for the winter. They were Mennonites from the Old Colony (Chortitza) and Borozhenko colonies of Ukraine (South Russia at the time). Three years later Lord Dufferin, Governor-General of Canada, touring the Mennonite East Reserve, wrote of 'passing village after village of homes with all the comforts of Europe, and fields with outstanding crops!'"

Schreyer, just back from a two-week Canadian tour to promote housing for the poor, added, "I can say that evidence of the contribution of descendants can be found not only in the Hanover municipality but also in the Fraser Valley of B.C., in Alberta and south-central Ontario. Here you'll find all the proof you'll ever need."

Association President C. Wilbert Loewen, who came out of hospital to attend the dedication, mentioned well-received approaches to Manitoba Cabinet Minister Clayton Manness and others for approval to develop the park. He compared Mennonites to the mosaic of a quilt, "an entrepreneurial and culinary mosaic, and still developing." Loewen also took note of the Mennonites who came after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. "Money for the park should be raised privately, without asking for government funding," concluded Loewen.

An invocation by Rev. Stan Plett, of Steinbach Bible College, several musical



Unveiling the cairn at the Mennonite landing site park on August 1. Left to right: C. Wilbert Loewen, Orlando Hiebert, Ed Schreyer. Photo: Courtesy of The Carillon, Steinbach, MB.

groups including violinists of the Steinbach Suzuki group, the Witmeier sisters of the Mennonite Children's Choir and the Landmark Men's Quartet directed by John G. Reimer, a drama and a dedicatory prayer by Rev. Gerhard Ens rounded out the program.

In the drama, directed by Wilmer Penner, a newly-arrived family from Russia reflected on the country they left, sharing their hopes and doubts about the unknown Canada, but looking forward to the freedoms promised to the Mennonites.

Milo Shantz of St. Jacobs, Ontario, a great-great-nephew of Jacob Y. Shantz, extended greetings. The latter was described as a very generous individual. Delbert Plett, president of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, thanked the landing site committee for undertaking this project.

Between 1874 and 1880 just over 7,000 Mennonites came to Manitoba from German-speaking colonies in Ukraine. A large number arrived via this junction, now to be found 25 kms south of Winnipeg on P.R. 200 (or 3 miles west and 1 mile south of Niverville).

From their base at Schantzberg, near Niverville, Mennonites established over fifty villages in the East Reserve, today known as the Rural Municipality of Hanover. Many of the settlers, however, soon relocated to settle in the West Reserve across the Red River in the vicinity of present-day Winkler and Altona. Others established a third settlement block at Rosenort and Rosenhof, two villages located on the Scratching (Mor-

ris) River. These Mennonite men and women were among the first Europeans to create farm communities on the open prairie. They also became known for a successful church-centred way of life.

After the unveiling, Schreyer read the cairn inscription which ends with these words about the newcomers of the 1870s, "We gratefully acknowledge their bequeathal of courage and faith in God. As a neighbour," added Schreyer, who grew up near the East Reserve and still resides in Winnipeg, "I concur with this inscription."

*Elmer Heinrichs is a writer residing in Altona, MB.*

## Mennonites in Canada Volume III Out Soon

by Ted E. Friesen

Volume III of *Mennonites in Canada* is headed for publication next year. The author is Dr. Ted Regehr of the University of Saskatchewan.

This publication is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. In setting up its program of publication the Society has had several goals in mind.

One was to write a comprehensive factual and objective history of the Mennonite people of Canada. The second objective was to provide a college text. The third one was

(cont'd on page 11)

## Mennonites in Canada

(cont'd from page 10)

to have a good and readable history for non-Mennonite readers.

We believe that the first two volumes have achieved these objectives well. Volume III will bring the history to 1970.

In an agreement with the publisher, the University of Toronto Press, the Society will buy 3,000 copies at \$15.00 each. This is an outlay of \$45,000.00. Our publication subsidy which was raised to \$25,000.00 at the last annual meeting, is now intended for the purchase of books. We hope to eventually recoup that through book sales, but that may take time. This understanding will allow both publisher and Society to fix the retail price at \$29.95.

Over 10,000 copies have been sold of Volume I, and 5,000 copies of Volume II. Again, those are very satisfactory sales figures, considering the nature of the book.

Can you consider making a grant and/or contribution towards the subsidy fund of the Society? Tax deductible receipts will be issued. Contributions should be sent to MHSC, c/o Ted Friesen, Box 720, Altona, MB R0G 0B0. Public acknowledgements of donors' names will be forthcoming.

## Local History Committee Book Projects Progress

by John Dyck

### Reinlaender Gemeinde Buch

Work towards publication of the *Reinlaender Gemeinde Buch* is nearing completion. This approximately 500 page volume will be essentially a reproduction of the family register of the Reinlaender Mennonite Church of the West Reserve. That register was started in 1880 and records individuals with birthdates as early as 1795. Marriages are recorded as late as the early 1900s. For many families the record includes children born up to the time of emigration to Mexico. The original record provides, birth, baptism, marriage and death dates for a large number of individuals.

The published volume will be supplemented with information from later registers of the church in Swift Current and Mexico and will include cross references to those registers. Those cross references will simplify searches in those later registers, copies of which are accessible at the Mennonite Heritage Centre and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, both in Winnipeg. The book will have an index of all heads of house-

holds showing the names of both spouses and their birth dates. Also included will be a list of the ministers of the church.

Some of the families in the register came to Canada after 1880. This means their names are not included in Mennonite passenger lists which have been published to date, making further research cumbersome. A separate list in the book will seek to identify those families and provide the year of their arrival in Canada. This volume will be going to the printers shortly and is expected to be available for shipment in time for the Christmas market.

### West Reserve Settlement Register

The *West Reserve Settlement Register* is the name that has been given to a census compiled by the West Reserve Mennonite *Gebietsamt* (local government) in 1880. This record provides the birthdate and village of residence of persons living in the West Reserve except for some of those Bergthaler who had relocated here from the East Reserve that year. Included are families who were not members of the Reinlaender Mennonite Church as well as those who were.

This original document will be supplemented with a large amount of ancestry and descendant information in preparation for its publication at the end of 1995. Wherever possible, families will be cross referenced to church registers in which their names appear and the passenger ship on which they immigrated. Other items to be included in this volume are still to be decided.

### Henry E. Plett Award - 1994

The Genealogy and Family History Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society awarded the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award to Darcy Reimer and Tim Koop of the Steinbach Christian High School at the June 26, 1994 school graduation service. The award is given annually to two Manitoba high school students for research and documentation of a Mennonite family history.

Darcy received the first prize of \$100 for his essay, *The Brandt in Me*. The second

prize of \$50 was given to Tim Koop for his essay on *A Koop Family History*. The annual award by MMHS has been made possible through a generous contribution by Delbert and Doreen Plett of Steinbach, Manitoba.



Doug Reimer (left) and Tim Koop.

## Upcoming Events

### Chair of Mennonite Studies Lectures

Dr. James Urry of the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), will present the Chair of Mennonite Studies lectures at the University of Winnipeg on Nov. 3 - 4. The general topic for his three presentations will be "Peoplehood, Power and Politics: Aspects of the Russian Mennonite Experience, 1880-1940."

Lectures will be held at 11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 3, and at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 4. Dr. Urry will open the series with the subject "Power and the Pursuit of Privilege. The Mennonite Commonwealth in late Imperial Russia 1880-1917".

Further information will be posted. You may also call the director of the Chair, Dr. Harry Loewen, at 1-204-786-9104. Books on these topics will be available at the lectures.

### Anniversary Dankfest

A 70th anniversary *Dankfest* (Thanksgiving service, for persons coming to Canada in the 1924 Russian Mennonite immigration will be held at the Waterloo MB Church, Waterloo, Ontario, on Saturday, October 15, 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For further information contact the church office at 1-519-885-5330.

### Women's Conference

A conference titled "The Experience of Mennonite Women" will be held at The Meeting House in Harleysville, PA from October 20-22, 1994. For further information call Carolyn Nolan, 1-215-256-3020, at The Meeting House.

## BOOKREVIEWS

Plett, Delbert F. *Leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812 to 1874*. (Steinbach, MB: Crossway Publications, 1993). pb., 932 pp., \$30.00 Cdn.

Reviewed by Ken Reddig

The story is told of a student marvelling over the prodigious publications of his teacher, Swiss theologian Karl Barth. Barth is to have responded to the student with the comment, "If God gave me the grace to write so much he must have given someone the grace to read so much."

The prodigious amount of text relating to the Mennonite *Kleine Gemeinde*, edited or written by Steinbach lawyer Delbert Plett has not yet matched the output of Karl Barth--but it may. To my knowledge no historian, or possibly anyone else, has so prolifically written or published on any one Mennonite group.

This volume, sixth in Plett's *Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series*, contains both essays and information on, as well as selected writings of, fifteen *Kleine Gemeinde* leaders covering the first sixty years of that church's existence.

The volume is truly fascinating though not intended for the faint-hearted. The first hundred pages comprise a number of essays written by a number of historians on the Prussian and Molotschna background of the *Kleine Gemeinde*. Thereafter, the book follows a general format of giving the biography of a leader as well as a selection of that person's writings.

This format varies somewhat, depending on the leader. Some might be quick to criticize the volume for the resulting uneven quality. I would counter that argument and instead suggest that the format permits the reader to briefly glimpse the context in which each leader was operating and then sample that leader's thinking on issues and concerns of the *Kleine Gemeinde* Church.

From my perspective the importance of this volume lies in the translated documents of each of these leaders. As one reads their letters to congregations, children and sermons one begins to sense their deep piety and community-mindedness. Whether or not one agrees with the decisions and methods of church polity they employed, one cannot doubt their loyalty to the cause of Jesus Christ and his church.

What's next on the horizon for Mr. Plett? Already on page four we note that volume seven in the series is being produced--a genealogy of the Mennonite *Kleine Gemeinde*

in Russia. Karl Barth, if you're reading this, move over.

Ken Reddig is head of *Textual Records and Public Service at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba*.

Knoop, Heidi. *Wilder Honig. Eine Geschichte aus Heide und Moor* (Melle: Verlag Ernst Knoth, 1991), hdc., 192 pp.

Buhrows, Todd James ed. *The Mennonite Book of Poetry*. (Waterloo: Parkminister Publishing, 1993), pb., 55 pp.

Bergen, David. *Sitting Opposite my Brothers*. (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1993), pb., 142 pp., \$14.95 Cdn.

Reviewed by David Riesen

We are used to seeing Mennonites making major contributions to the musical scene in Manitoba, but one of the startling developments in the arts is the sudden appearance of really good Mennonite writers. Recently, for example, I have been browsing through three very different books, each by an author claiming Mennonite heritage.

*Wilder Honig* written in German by Heidi Knoop, the daughter of Arnold Dyck, is set in the lonely moors of Saxony. It is written from the point of view of a handicapped beekeeper's wife intent upon living a simple life close to nature. In unpretentious fashion we are presented with a series of vignettes focused upon such mundane problems as building a house, making beekeeping a profitable enterprise, and keeping the hired help or the children content. Then there are the animal stories featuring Maxi, the rooster, whose dominion over the hens is challenged and ultimately destroyed by a real Goliath of a rival rooster; Meck, the pet goat, whose innate sense of mischief drives his master to the brink of insanity; and Mauni the lovable kitten who, to the dismay of the family, must be put to sleep.

"Nett" is a work that German speakers might use to describe this book. In short it is a good book for young people and the young at heart, but don't look for great profundity.

Browsing through *The Mennonite Book of Poetry*, one is again impressed by writings that show considerable talent. Some of the better poems in this collection include "Gossips" by Sandee Pauls, a sharply etched picture of cruelty hidden by "exterior niceties", and Menno Wiebe's "Jonah", which mirrors the frustrations of a would-be modern prophet surrounded by "entangled office greenery". The poem I liked best, how-

ever, is Cathleen Hackman's "The Dogs of Santo Domingo". The author of this poem gives an ironically tense description of vicious dogs in the Dominican Republic, dogs who according to local authority destroyed the original barkless dogs of the natives, just as the natives in turn were destroyed by the Spaniards.

The prize winner, *Sitting Opposite My Brother*, is the final book under consideration and is easily the most impressive one. In a series of short stories, the author features the finely-honed observations of a narrator, often unnamed, confronting a situation which forces him to take stock of his relationship to wife, to daughter, to brother, to father, to mother or to in-laws and cousins. Disturbingly and obviously the relationship portrayed also often has incestuous overtones, as is the case in the final story, "La Rue Prevette", where the daughter's adult promiscuity is clearly the result of the father's loving attention from an early age to the present.

The texture of the prose in these stories is compact, at times almost cloying, as the author invokes all of the five senses to give us a perception of immediacy. Consider the opening of "Cousins" one of the later stories in the collection:

*So I take off Constance's shoe and sock and put my face on her sole. And I remember my youth, summers with the cows, because her toes are sweet and warm like the milk flowing from her mother's hands ... (Cousins, p. 94).*

As for the abstract world of ideas, community concepts, cultural concerns, they are out there as a vague kind of background, but only as a background. The immediate, physical relationship is front stage and centre. We learn, for example, that Timothy, brother of the narrator in the stories, "Where You're From" and "Sitting Opposite My Brother", is a missionary in Indonesia, but it is the immediate situation between the brothers or between Timothy and his sister-in-law, Bea, or between Timothy and his girlfriend, June which draws our attention. And the situation is always sensual. Indeed one has the feeling that the author trusts only the world of senses, that the rest of life, the wider canvas of existence is never to be trusted. In the short story as a rule this unusual immediacy works very well indeed. What will happen when David Bergen turns his attention to the novel, as is projected, should prove to be interesting indeed.

*Dr. David Riesen is a retired high school English teacher and currently a sessional lecturer at CMBC.*