

# MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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Some of the *Freedom 50-Year Jubilee* participants at Steinbach on August 15. Peter Dyck in foreground. Photo: Courtesy of Jakob Klassen, Winnipeg.

## Providential Meeting with Aunt Elisabeth at Fredeshiem

by Evangeline Neuschwander

### Editor's note:

Recently the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies received the translation of an account entitled, "My Experiences and My Flight from Russia," by Elisabeth Klassen. The account was dated 3 July 1946, at Roverestein, and is approximately 38 pp. in length (typescript). The following is an introduction to the account written by Evangeline Matthies Neuschwander of Goshen, Indiana, who sent the translated manuscript to us.

vacated the large home when the Nazis came into the country. Then the Canadian Occupational Forces took over. Their horses were sheltered in the large marble-floored halls. It took much work and preparation to make this place liveable for people again.

Meanwhile, groups of Russian Mennonite refugees had arrived at the Dutch-German border. With the help of Drs. Hylkema and others, entry passes were issued to allow the refugees entry

(cont'd on p. 2)

Roverestein was a large estate surrounded by a woods with rare trees and open fields. In 1946, the Mennonite Central Committee was granted permission to use this large, three-story brick house for putting up Russian Mennonite refugees coming into the Netherlands. The Dutch Mennonite family, Oosterwijk van Bryun, had

### In this issue

The previous issue of the *Mennonite Historian* (June, 1998) focused on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Mennonite immigrants in Canada from the Soviet Union in the 1920s. The primary focus of this issue is on the experience of the Mennonites in Russia during and after World War II and the arrival of the Mennonite refugees in Canada (1947-51).

A special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event called "Freedom 50 Jubilee" took place at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach and the Concert Hall in Winnipeg on August 15 and 16. Many individuals who had been refugees after World War II met to tell stories, visit, thank their hosts in Canada, thank the Canadian government, and to worship and praise God for his deliverance. Many others participated as well. Some of the items in this issue relate to that event. We hope this will give our readers a better perspective of those events of 50 years ago and that it will help us all to remember.

A book which will chronicle this story in greater detail has been commissioned. Dr. Harry Loewen has been asked to write a book which will tell the story of the Mennonite experience with primary emphasis on World War II, the Great Trek and the eventual arrival in a new home in Canada and South America. The two archival centres in Winnipeg will facilitate this project. Readers are encouraged to submit photographs, stories, etc. to either of the Centres. AD

### Fate of Soviet Germans and Soviet Mennonites, 1941-45

	Soviet Germans	Mennonites
Living in the Soviet Union in 1941	1-1.1 million	100,000
Deported by the Soviets	650,000	55,000
Evacuated by Germans or fled westward	350,000	35,000
Overtaken by the Red Army	200,000	?
Forcibly repatriated by the Allies	80,000	?
Remaining in the west, Sept. 1945	70,000	12,000

Source: T.D. Regehr. *Mennonites in Canada, 1940-1970*, p. 81.

## Fredeshiem

(cont'd from p. 1)

into the Netherlands. Big trucks hauled them to Amsterdam and Friesland. The Dutch retreat house, Fredeshiem, provided temporary shelter. In all, some 443 refugees were admitted before the border closed.

Several of us felt the need to look over the group to help in our planning ahead at Roverestein. One Sunday afternoon we drove to Fredeshiem. We found a large group in the assembly room: a group of elderly people huddled around a wood stove. I was attracted to a white-haired little lady and engaged in conversation with her. Her goal was to go to British Columbia in Canada. To my question who her sponsors were, she responded with the names of my uncles. When I told her who these people were, she looked up at me, startled, and asked: "Who are you, then?" I related my family history and she could hardly keep from shouting with joy: "Then you are my sister's granddaughter!" From her I learned much about my mother who had lived with them while she was studying. I was nine years old at the time of my mother's death. Mother died at the early age of 39, in the second year after we had come to Manitoba, Canada, in the year 1924.

In the account Aunt Elisabeth mentions various activities in Roverestein. Recycling was practiced to the fullest extent. For example, MCC canned fruit, chicken and vegetables. Shoes and clothing had been packed in wooden crates and cases for shipping overseas. These were dismantled and the best of the wood used to build a much-needed washhouse and showers. Then, wooden suitcases were constructed out of the piles of scrap lumber. Each family received one.

The estate was fairly close to the village of Maartensdijk, which had a good bakery. Flour from America was hauled to this bakery and every morning the bakery delivered 90 loaves of fresh baked bread. On festive occasions our cooks arranged for the use of the baker's ovens. They would come back with piles and

piles of Zwieback to everyone's delight. Many empty flour sacks accumulated and found their way back to our home. Young people shook the last of the flour dust out of inside-out sacks. They were put to soak in the sinks in the washhouse. After being washed, dried and bleached on the grass, they were unraveled. Every bit of string they had been sewn with was carefully saved. Sacks were treated as new cloth. Clever fingers brought forth undergarments, aprons, uniforms, pillow cases and sheets -- hundreds of them later to be shared with the many refugees who had none.

The unraveled string was crocheted into useful items. When we later went to South America on MCC assignment, it was a pleasant surprise to find curtains, crocheted from this string, decorating the windows of the mud-brick homes in the Volendam and Neuland colonies in Paraguay. There these homeless people were refugees no longer. With pride they showed us their new homes. Tears welled up within us as we stood with each family in their *own* home, praising God for this new beginning.

Our joy was great when my husband, Vernon, and I were later reunited with Aunt Elisabeth and Susa on a visit in their home in British Columbia. Both have since died there, as well as Katja, the daughter-in-law. All have found a peaceful resting place.

Back in 1946, our days at Roverestein closed with evening devotions, a time of binding together. A song frequently suggested, as lost loved ones were being re-membered, was "*Guter Mond, Du gehst so stille...*" ("Good Moon, You move so quietly..."). The same moon shining so brightly over Roverestein was also shining on loved ones in Siberia, in other locations in Russia, and wherever loved ones were scattered.

Today, the same moon looks down on the many graves in Russia, Siberia, British Columbia, Brazil, and Paraguay. With a sad heart, but with precious memories.... *Evangeline Matthies Neuschwander lives in Goshen, Indiana.*

## Mennonites and the Berlin Document Center

by Richard D. Thiessen

What do Russian Mennonites, Heinrich Himmler and the SS, the U.S. Third Army, and the U.S. National Archives have in common? They are all components of the story of how the Berlin Document Center came into existence.

During World War II approximately 35,000 to 37,000 Mennonites from the Soviet Union were resettled in the Third Reich. They represented only a tiny fraction of the more than 2.9 million individuals processed by the German Immigration Center (EWZ), headed by Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler to facilitate the resettlement of ethnic Germans from other parts of Europe. As these ethnic Germans arrived in Germany, they were first registered and photographed. All individuals over the age of 15 were registered and photographed individually. Everyone was subject to a health and racial examination to determine their qualifications for German settlement and citizenship. This resettlement was part of a much larger plan by Himmler and the Schutzstaffel (SS) to create a pure race of Germanic people throughout the Third Reich.

The documents of the German Immigration Center (EWZ) were captured in Bavaria by the U.S. Third Army in April, 1945 as German officials were preparing to destroy them. The documents were part of a much larger collection of SS documents and were thus of prime importance in the investigation into the acts of genocide committed by the SS during and preceding the war. These documents were transferred to the newly created Berlin Document Center in January, 1946, and later transferred to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The records were finally returned to the German government in 1994 after they

(cont'd on p. 9)

## GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Alf Redekopp

### Queries

**Peters:** Searching for the descendants of the siblings of Peter Abram Peters (1854-1899) of Neuendorf who was married to Maria Dueck (1856-1915) and had the following sons: Abram Peters b. 1874 d. 1962 in Duschanbe, Jakob Peters b. 1877 d. 1942 in Neuendorf, Peter Peters b. 1880 d. 1927 in Osterwick. Contact: Margaret Bergen, 405-246 Roslyn Road, Winnipeg, MB R3L 0M2 or phone 204-453-0943.

**Wiebe:** Searching for information on both sets of parents of Bernhard D. Wiebe (1821-1897) and his wife Kornelia Wiebe (1824-1896) who married in 1844 in Neuendorf, lived in Heuboden, Berghthal Colony, came to Canada and in 1881 lived in Weidenfeld near Rosenfeld, Manitoba. According to the journal of *Aeltester* David Stoesz (1842-1903), Bernhard D. Wiebe is his uncle. *Aeltester* David Stoesz (1842-1903) was married to a Maria Wiebe b. 1842, daughter of Heinrich Wiebe (1806-1865). Is it possible that Bernhard D. Wiebe (1821-1897) and Heinrich Wiebe (1806-1865) are brothers? Can anyone confirm this relationship? Contact: Audrey J. Holens, 8 High Lake Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5T3 or tholens@cc.umanitoba.ca

### Recent Books

Elma Schemenauer. *Jacob Siemens Family Since 1685* (Toronto, ON: Private publication, 1998) 200 pp.

This book includes Mennonite families such as Sawatzky, Bergman, Enns, Andres, Dyck, Janzen, Martens, Kehler, Quiring, Neufeld, Friesen, Penner, Goertzen and more. The author explains how she researched the Siemens family. An annotated bibliography lists useful sources. Specifically, this book pertains to the ancestors and descendants of Jacob Siemens born 1862 in Chortitza who married Aganetha Bergman. The book describes the Siemens' lives, in pre- and

post-revolutionary Russia, and later in Canada and the US. The name index includes about 800 persons. Contact: Farland Press Inc., 92 Caines Avenue, Toronto, ON M2R 2L3 or e-mail at: sunflower@ibm.net.

Elaine Wiebe and Gladys Wiebe. *Discovering our Wiebe Heritage : Peter Wiebe 1861-1920* (Saskatoon, SK: Private publication, 1998) 370 pp.

This book traces the ancestors and descendants of Peter Wiebe (1861-1920) who was born in Neuhorst, Chortitza Colony, Russia, migrated to Canada in 1875, settled in Rosengart, Manitoba, and moved to Neuhorst in 1898 where he died in 1920. The book includes stories, photographs and genealogical data. Contact: Elaine Wiebe, 24-1605 7<sup>th</sup> St. E., Saskatoon, SK S7H 0Z3.

### Family History Awards

Andreas Rutkauskas and Steven Gregg, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate graduates tied for first place in the 1998 Henry E. Plett Memorial Family History Award. The students' papers were presented to and critiqued by their classmates and then judged by the Genealogy Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.. Laurie Penner and Adrienne Reimer from Steinbach Christian High School shared the second prize in this annual award.

### Length of a Mennonite Generation

(published in *Friedensstimme*, No. 88 (9 Nov. 1913), p. 8 and translated by Alf Redekopp)

A frequent measure of time in earlier times was the concept of a generation. One usually thought of a century as consisting of three generations. However it was Rümelin who first prepared a precise definition for this notion. If we want to use a generation as a measure of time, we must use the age span between parents and children. The length of one generation in Germany was calculated at 36.5 years based on the average marriage age of men (30 years of age) plus half of the length of the child-bearing years (12.2-12.5).

I wondered what the length of a

Mennonite generation would be if this notion were used. In order to calculate the length precisely, I took the family register of the Lugower Mennonite Brethren Church consisting of 326 marriages. I calculated the average marriage age of the men to be 24.35 and the average length of the child-bearing period at 18.42-18.6 years.

Using the male marriage age as 24 years plus 1, because the first child is generally born the next year after the year of marriage, and the length of the child-bearing years, marriage year to the birth of the last child, 18 years minus 1, we get  $24+1+(18-1)/2$ , or 33.5 years. Accordingly the length of a Mennonite generation is 33.5 years.

Furthermore I also discovered the following: the average marriage age of women, 21.39 years, the youngest female to marry, 17.3 years, the oldest female to marry, 36 years, the youngest male to marry, 18 years and the oldest male to marry, 46 years.

Men marrying under 21 years of age, 2.76%; women under 20 years of age, 23.93%. Marriages where the wives are older than the husbands, 12.57%. Longest child-bearing years, 27 years; last birth given at age 48. The largest age span between husband and wife, 17 years. In all calculations only first marriages for both partners were used.

It would be desirable if others would prepare similar calculations and the results could be compared.

H.M.

### Research in Russian Archives

The AHSGR newsletter of Spring/Summer 1998 published two articles entitled "Procedures for genealogical requests according to official regulations in Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian Archives" by Vladislav Y. Soshnikov, and "Overview of Archival Sources of the History of Germans of the Taurida Province (up to 1918) and Crimea (up to 1941)", by L. Kraftsova.

To pursue further connections with these authors contact AHSGR, 631 D. St., Lincoln, NE USA 68501-1199.

Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5. E-mail: aredekopp@confmenn.ca

## Freedom 50-Year Jubilee

*Editor's note: The following is an edited version of the script presented at the "Freedom 50-Year Jubilee" at the Concert Hall in Winnipeg, 16 August 1998. Agnes Dyck, who kindly submitted the manuscript, is a cousin of Susie (Wiebe) Werschler. Elvira Derksen is a friend.*

### *Agnes Dyck:*

My parents, Johann and Helena (Wiebe) Dyck fled Russia in 1929 and arrived in the Altona area in March, 1930. Their welcome by mother's relatives was muted - the thirties had just begun. However, they were grateful to be free of fear and to have enough to eat. Elvira Derksen's family was not so fortunate.

### *Elvira Derksen:*

When my family tried to flee in 1929 my parents' brothers and sisters were already in Siberia. I was five years old. I just remember that my mother was expecting my brother and she was so weak and there was not enough to eat so she withheld herself, so that dad would have the strength to work.

The fear of dad's being taken away was always there. Sometimes we would take dad's family pictures and run behind the barn. I don't know what that would have helped. We were so afraid. My parents reminded us that if father were sent one

way and mother another way, we had relatives in Canada. In Russia, the children were usually put in orphanages. So mother and father always told us if that happened to us as a family we had relatives in Canada. I don't think we had an address or anything. I remember how often we wondered in the evening: "Oh are they coming tonight?" It was very scary. And then one night the KJB came. It was a quarter to three. I still remember how they knocked on the door and I woke up and sat up in bed. They grasped my dad's beard and said, "Get up!" and so he had to get up. I was sitting on the bed watching it all. Mom and dad had just a few rubles which they divided. Dad said to the men, "Why are you taking me? I have not done anything." They said, "Be quiet or else!" They took many men out of Chortitza at that time (75-100 at a time).

This was just before Christmas, 1937. My dad's hobby was making guitars, and I remember how I went to these gatherings where he played with other men. It seemed so special to be walking with my tall father. For that Christmas he had made a guitar for me. But we had to sell it for money later. I think I'll remember that all my life. The whole thing was so cruel, so brutal, no reason for it. Life became very harsh. It was just a struggle to get enough to eat. Mother would go to work and we lived in one little room. There was a lot of sadness, but children can take a

lot. There was always a lot of love and a lot of care. Those women who were in the same dilemma looked out for each other.

When the second world war started, we didn't know what was coming, so we felt we had to use whatever opportunity we had to get out rather than live under such conditions. We lived by the big oak, and when the Germans advanced we saw the Russian soldiers sitting on the tree like birds, not knowing where to go. For weeks we would run for shelter when the alarm went. The rockets wailed above our heads. One time we looked up and a plane came and dropped what looked like a bag of balloons on the railroad track. They were bombs.

In 1943 when the Germans came everything switched to German. When the Germans left we went with them and that is how we eventually got out. I enrolled in teacher training in Kiev away from my home. One day the teachers asked us all to pack our suitcases. They gave us each sausage and bread and we left, standing room only, on the train. In Poland, Red Cross workers stood at the train station and served us coffee and soup. People were on the go - it was just move, move, move. I had no idea where my family was. Later I discovered my mother and sister and brother were also on this trek and they ended up in the Danzig area in a refugee camp. The Red Cross distributed letters to connect family members with each other.

### *Agnes Dyck:*

One of my earliest memories here in Manitoba is of praying for my grandmother, Aganetha Wiebe, who wrote regularly from Russia until 1939. Sometimes code language was used to describe the famine and fears engendered by their plight. Later we heard that she, her daughter Neta and family had been stranded in Germany and then forced back into Russia. The surviving women struggled desperately for long years to save their families in the face of unimaginable grief and deprivation. I found evidence that my parents sent money to Russia during the thirties, even though the *Reiseschuld* was always on their minds and they were attempting to build a new and secure place here. When my parents heard that Liese Wiebe, mother's sister-in



The "Great Trek", 1943. Photo: Courtesy of CMBS.

Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, 6257..... Hausverzeichnung.....		
800—4th AVE. PHONE 7640 SASKATOON, — SASK.		
Vor-, Vaters- und Familiennamen	Mann geboren	Wo geboren
B. [REDACTED], Frau M. [REDACTED]	MAY 18, 1899	
Kinder:		
J. [REDACTED]	JULY 6, 1924	OSTERWIEK
J. [REDACTED]	AUG. 28, 1926	RUSSLAND
M. [REDACTED]	SEPT. 23, 1928	
L. [REDACTED]	NOV. 18, 1930	
W. [REDACTED]	SEPT. 5, 1934	
Mann vermisst.		
Zepter Wohnort in Russland OSTERWIEK		
Dann Russland verlassen ... id. OSTERWIEK, 1943		
Wo und wann angekommen? DEUTSCHLAND, OSTERWIEK, 1943.		
Reisende Stationen in Europa bis zur Ausreise ROSTOCK, WERNIGERODE, LANHTENHAL, GÖLLAR.		
Kontakt nach einer Schiffsfahrt nach Canada? Mai 25, - 48. BREMEN HAKEN.		
Name des Dampfers BELVERBRAE.		
Dann gelandet in Canada JUNE 12, 48. Wo gelandet? QUÉBEC.		
Großer Aufenthaltsort in Canada HERBURN, SASK.		
Verwandte in Canada oder Vereinigten Staaten J. E. P. [REDACTED] HERBURN, SASK.		
Bezeichnung der fehlenden Mitglieder dieser Familie:		
Vor-, Vaters- und Familiennamen	Wann geboren	Wo zurückgeblieben
J. [REDACTED] T. [REDACTED] B. [REDACTED]	JAN 7, 1901	RUSSLAND
		IN DER VERBANUNG UN 1937

Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Registrations forms for each immigrant family are part of a larger record collection housed at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

—law and her family were stranded in Germany it was clear that they needed to help.

#### Susie (Wiebe) Werschler:

In Germany we were put into a camp. In spring of 1944 we were told that since I had turned 15 that year, I would have to join the *Landdienst*. I went through horrifying experiences and hunger at that time, but all the while I was led by the grace of God. Mother had given me the address of my aunt, her sister, who was already living in Ost Friesland, Germany, close to the Dutch border. That's where I was headed. After short trips by train, sometimes with military wagons and sometimes by foot, I eventually found my aunt. With the help of the Red Cross we all found our way back together again. When the war was over, American troops occupied our town in Ost Friesland. One day mother said to us children, "I have received a letter from the Red Cross that Tante Lena, My dad's sister and Onkel Hans of Winnipeg, Canada are looking for us." Well, there and then the immigration

to Canada started for us.

I was sick for the whole voyage on the freighter. After we arrived in Halifax we boarded a CPR train. On the train we were given bread and sausage. It was very good, just wonderful. We were all so hungry. That's all I remember of the train ride. On 22 August 1948 we arrived in Winnipeg. We were very anxious to see what was going to happen and, of course, what our relatives looked like. And we were very tired.

We were brought with the station wagon to my uncle and aunt's place.

When we walked into their home we discovered that my aunt had prepared a meal; we sat down to supper and Uncle John had devotions and we prayed. We had potatoes and ham and, I think, gravy; I remember that the meal was just fantastic. We just ate and ate and ate. The Dyck family just stared at us. It was so good.

That was the beginning in Canada. We moved up to their top floor. Mother cooked in the attic; she prepared all her meals there and it was very hot and very hard for her, I'm sure. The next spring, as soon as our uncle was able, he started to build a little house at the bottom of the garden. After we moved into that little house my brother Walter arrived. We couldn't speak English. So Uncle Hans suggested that I go and work as a housekeeper. I went to Gillespies; they had four little children and she was a teacher. I learned from the children; they didn't laugh at me when I made mistakes. I picked up English very quickly. The toughest adjustment was at the beginning — no friends. We were used to a lot of

socializing and we had a large group of young people in Germany to which we belonged. I cried so hard because I missed my friends— not because I was ungrateful.

#### Agnes Dyck:

In Winnipeg the refugees had been prayed for regularly. When they arrived they were all answers to prayer. We were so excited when the large crowd finally arrived at the CPR station. So we welcomed the Wiebes into our home. We settled people in the attic and in our garage. That hot summer we had the richest garden ever! Mother believed it to be providential. Refugee presence brought new life into church and home. As teenagers we were particularly impressed with all the interesting new boys in our area. The new arrivals were great story tellers, entertaining each other with funny anecdotes and with music. Being accustomed to making do with very little had made them easy house companions.

#### South American Mennonite Immigration, 1947-48

Paraguay .....	4663
Uruguay .....	751
Argentina .....	175
TOTAL .....	5589

Source: Frank H. Epp. *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 390.

#### Canadian Mennonite Immigration, 1947-51

1947 .....	542
1948 .....	3828
1949 .....	1632
1950 .....	580
1951 .....	1116
TOTAL .....	7698

Source: T.D. Regehr. *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970*, p. 94.



## Adolf Ens to Write CMC History

The Mennonite Heritage Committee and the General Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada have endorsed the appointment of Dr. Adolf Ens to write the centennial history of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). The CMC will celebrate its centennial in 2002 by which time the history is to be completed.

Adolf comes to this appointment well qualified. He has a long history of involvement with the CMC, most prominently as Associate Professor of History and Theology at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg. He is known for his clear, honest, reflections on critical issues. Over the years he has been very involved in editing books for both CMBC Publications and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

Adolf will retire in the summer of 1999. At that point he will be able to devote a large portion of his time to this project.

The writing of this history comes at a critical time in the history of the CMC. Already the CMC has merged with the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada and currently the CMC is in the midst of planning for integration with the General Conference and the Mennonite Church in the United States. It is therefore quite fitting that a history of the church be written at this crucial juncture.



## Ray Dirks appointed Art Curator

The Mennonite Heritage Committee is pleased to announce the appointment of Ray Dirks as part-time curator of the Art Gallery at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Since the construction of this building in 1978, the Gallery portion of the building has not been used as frequently as it could have been. It takes considerable time to keep art exhibitions happening on a regular basis. The appointment of Ray will mean that the Gallery will have regular exhibitions for the public to view.

Ray was born in Abbotsford, B.C., He and his wife Katie have two daughters. He attended Columbia Bible College, Vancouver Community College and apprenticed with world-renowned illustrator Carl Chaplin in Vancouver. He is a freelance painter, illustrator and graphic artist. Mennonite business people will know Ray as the designer/illustrator of the MEDA publication *Marketplace*—for which he has worked since 1986.

Ray has been the curator of numerous art exhibitions which have toured both Canada and internationally. He is well-known for his paintings of Africa and its people, and in Winnipeg is known for his fine series of paintings on his two grandmothers.

Ray will not only be creating exhibitions for the Heritage Centre Gallery, but will also be involved with art for use in congregations and worship settings. He will be available to make presentations to students in both public schools and universities and he will be creating traveling exhibitions of Mennonite artists from around the world. In addition to his Heritage Centre projects he will

work with Mennonite service organizations.

The funding for Ray's part-time work at the Heritage Centre has come from several family foundations. The Heritage Committee extends its thanks to these foundations. The first exhibition of Ray's work at the Heritage Centre will open in early November. Please watch for further information as to the opening dates.

## Fall courses at the Heritage Centre

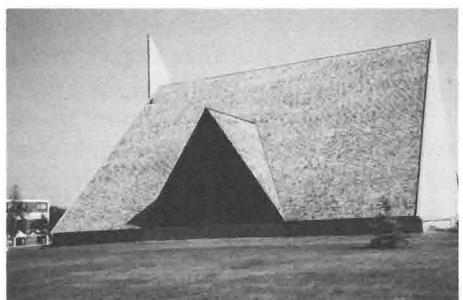
In cooperation with CMBC, the Heritage Centre is offering Thursday evening non-credit courses from September 17 through November 5, 1998. The courses are *Russian Mennonite History* with Lawrence Klippenstein and *Conversational Low German* with Ted Klassen. You are invited to come even if you miss some of the first sessions.

## Heritage Centre Anniversary

In 1978 the Mennonite Heritage Centre became a reality via a generous gift received from the Peter W. Enns Family Foundation for the construction of a building dedicated to preserving Mennonite-related books and papers. This building was dedicated on January 26, 1979.

This fall the Heritage Centre will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its building. It is timely to do so as the Centre has just completed some significant renovations to its structure. These renovations were necessary in order to prevent further leaking and damage to the lower level—CMBC Library stacks area.

The anniversary celebration is scheduled for November 20, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. The event will also feature the opening of Ray Dirks's exhibition of African and Canadian paintings.



## Russian Mennonite Brethren Congregations in Saskatchewan and North Dakota

During the earlier decades of this century there were several Mennonite Brethren congregations in Saskatchewan whose members were predominantly of Russian or Ukrainian background. Many of these had come to Canada as part of a larger immigration of Doukhobors around the turn of the century. Around 6,000 Doukhobors came to Saskatchewan, beginning in 1899, and formed five settlements or colonies with about 57 villages in areas around Yorkton and Saskatoon.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Arelee records, the earliest settlers there (Eagle Creek) came in 1897 from Kiev in Ukraine. Others came in 1902. Some had already been converted as a result of missionary efforts by Baptists in Ukraine, although they had not formally joined any church. It is possible that some of these missionaries were actually Mennonite Brethren. Among these early pioneers were Mike Rabuka, Jacob Kowlenko, Efim Perepelitz, Paul Melashenko and John Melashenko and their families. More came in subsequent years. The first baptism took place on November 9, 1903. Soon two places of worship were built which subsequently amalgamated. In 1944 the church moved to the village of Arelee. David Wiens was an associate leader of this congregation for more than a decade until about 1957.

The denominational identity of this early group of believers is not clear. But on October 31, 1908 they met to organize the Russian Mennonite Brethren Church of

Eagle Creek as a result of contacts with Mennonite Brethren ministers. On November 1 Elder David Dyck, the leader of the Saskatchewan Conference, ordained two Russian brethren as ministers.

Two other predominantly Russian Mennonite Brethren congregations emerged at about the same time—one in Petrofka, later Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan and the other in Kief, North Dakota. The history of the Blaine Lake church is somewhat similar to the Arelee congregation. The individual who was most instrumental in founding the church was Hermann Fast who came to the Petrofka school in 1906 to teach. He conducted gospel services in Russian in the school. In 1912 the first church was built. After 1924 the Mennonites attended Baptist services for a time when the ordained minister, Wasyl Wasilenko, moved away. But in the 1940s a new beginning was made in Blaine Lake. The Russian language continued to be used to some extent until 1959 when the Russian-speaking members began to meet separately.

The three congregations, Arelee, Blaine Lake and Kief, had close contacts with each other and eventually formed a Russian Mennonite Brethren Conference which held annual conventions. It is not clear how many years these conventions were held. A report in the *Zionsbote* in 1913 refers to a conference in Kief, North Dakota. The Minutes of Arelee congregation on 30 December, 1914 refer to the attempts to establish a Russian Brotherhood Conference and several delegates were sent "to the brothers in the north" on 24 January 1915 to resolve the matter. A report in the *Mennonitische*

(cont'd on p. 9)

C Centre for  
M Mennonite  
B Brethren  
S Studies in Canada  
1-169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Canada R2L 2E5

## Art Collection Donated to CMBS

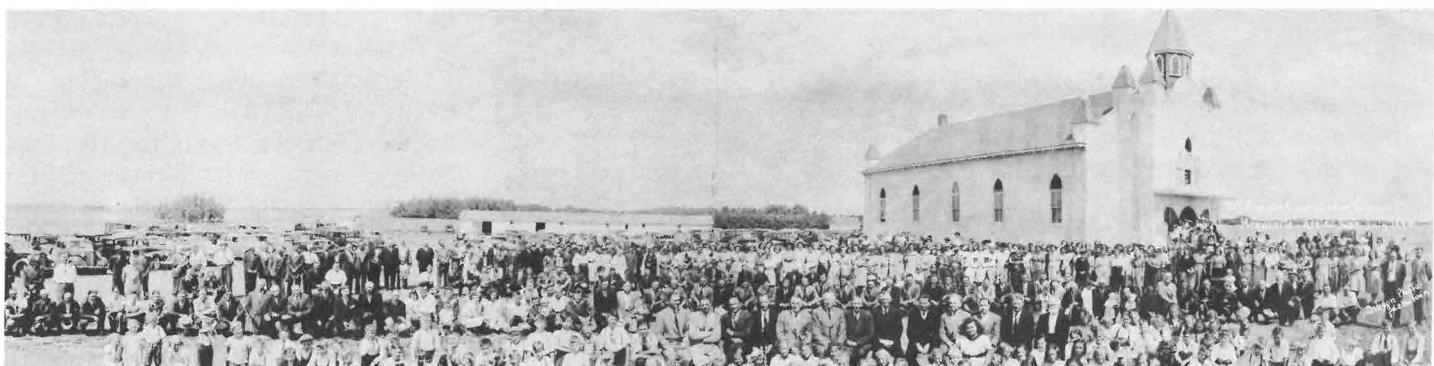
Adelheid (Heidi) Koop of Winnipeg recently donated an art collection, consisting of 17 framed pencil drawings, to the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies for safekeeping and display. These were part of a larger project which Heidi has prepared for publication. The manuscript is entitled, *The Band Plays ON: Mennonite Pioneers of Nord Kildona Reflect* and includes the stories of over 40 pioneers as well as 6 appendices. Helga Dyck assisted her in design and editorial work.

The drawings depict various aspects of pioneer life and activity in North Kildonan which is now a part of the city of Winnipeg. The settlement began in 1928.

The Centre expects to arrange an exhibit of this fine art work at a convenient location in the not-too-distant future.

## Book Collection Donated

A library of books, including approximately 100 volumes of *Mennonitica*, was recently donated to CMBS by Walter E. Kroeker. The collection included the first print copy of the English translation of P. M. Friesen's *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)* as well as a leather-bound copy of the work.



Russian Mennonite Brethren Conference in Arelee, 1948. Photo from *Diamond Jubilee of Mennonite Brethren Church, 1908-1968, Arlee, SK.*



**Back:** Sig Schroeder, Henry Schroeder, Helene Riesen, Karen Schroeder. **Front:** David Schroeder, Walter Schroeder, Victor Schroeder, Edith Schroeder, David Riesen, Maria Schroeder

## Cairn Dedication

On Sunday evening, August 16, 1998, the cairn and tombstone brought to Canada by Walter J. and Maria Schroeder (See the article "Memorial Cairns" in the June 1998 issue of the *Mennonite Historian*, p. 6) was formally gifted and dedicated at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

From the pictures you will note that the cairn has been placed within a wonderful landscaped setting before the main entrance of the Heritage Centre. The tombstone of Marie (Dick) Schroeder has been placed on a pedestal within the Gallery portion of the Centre. Helene Riesen, a descendant of Marie Schroeder, collected numerous family photographs and had them framed with appropriate captions to tell the story not only of finding these two stones, but also of the life, homes and estates of the larger extended family. Several laminated books were created by Helene to tell more of the story of this family.

At the gifting and dedication service, Henry Schroeder recounted the story of finding these two stones. Walter, who together with his wife Maria paid for the shipping, landscaping and placement of the stones at the Heritage Centre, then formally gifted these items to the Centre. Paul Friesen, Chair of the Heritage Committee, accepted the gifts and thanked Walter and Maria for this fine addition to the Heritage Centre. This was followed by

a prayer of dedication by Lawrence Klippenstein.

The event was well-attended. The Heritage Committee thanks the Schroeder family for their donation and for helping provide these two stones as a way of remembering the story of not just one family, but of the thousands of families who made their way to Canada through many difficult circumstances.

The cairn at the entrance to the building has the following inscription: "Suchet nicht nur nach dem was geblieben ist, sondern auch nach dem was bleibt." The translation of this text is: "Seek not only that which was and is, but also that which abides forever."



## Summer Student Assistance

### Mennonite Heritage Centre

The Mennonite Heritage Centre was fortunate to have two students employed for most of the summer months.

Conrad Stoesz, formerly of Altona and now living in Winnipeg, worked through the description of collections, preparing them for the Heritage Centre website. Funding for his work was provided by a *Canadian Council of Archives* grant.

Assisting in working through more recent collections of records received by the archives was Iris Hiebert. Iris is from Steinbach, Manitoba. Funding for her position was provided by the *Summer Career Placement Program*.

Both students were a definite asset not only in the work they accomplished, but in assisting researchers during the summer months.

### Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Three students were employed during the past summer on various projects funded by government grants.

Cyndi Unruh was employed as an archival assistant under the Summer Career Placement program of the Department of Human Resources. She completed a variety of assignments including updating finding aids, sorting, arranging and describing records, data entry, etc.

Alvina Block, who has completed several projects in previous years, was back to work on a Mennonite Brethren Conference Photograph project. This involved some research to be able to identify describe the photographs adequately as well as appraisal, selection, processing and preparing a finding aid. The project was funded by a Control of Holdings grant from the Canadian Council of Archives.

Sergai Chnaiderman was employed at CMBS but funded through a grant received by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society under the Summer Career Placement program. He translated various Russian documents in the microfilm collection received from St. Petersburg as well as other documents that are of significant interest to scholars and researchers. This was the second year that Sergei has been engaged as a translator

## Berlin Document Centre

(cont'd from p. 2)

had been microfilmed and indexed by National Archives staff. In 1996 the 8,600 microfilm rolls were made available to researchers at the National Archives II at College Park, Maryland.

There are several groups of records, each with their own index for research purposes. One group of records are the *E/G Kartei* (A3342-EWZ57), containing almost three million alphabetically arranged cards of all ethnic Germans processed by the German Immigration Center. The information collected includes the following: personal information such as given names, maiden name if married, date and place of birth and date and place of marriage; names of parents and siblings; the names of family members living within the same household; and physical characteristics such as height and weight. Each individual was assigned a unique EWZ number, used throughout the collection of files.

A second group of records are the *Anträge*, containing the files of over 400,000 applications. These records are organized by country and regional subgrouping. The series of files pertaining to the Soviet Union are identified as A3342-EWZ50. These files contain an incredible amount of genealogical information, used by the Third Reich to determine the racial quality of the individuals concerned. The following information is included for each person as applicable: date and place of birth; date and place of marriage; names of parents and grandparents (including maiden names) including their dates and places of birth, marriage and death; name of spouse including dates and places of birth, marriage and death; names of all children including their dates and places of birth and EWZ number if they were over 15 years old; a complete listing of where each individual lived and when he or she lived there; years the individual attended school and the location of the school; dates of entry into the Third Reich; copies of naturalization applications and certificates and passports; and in many cases a life story. Records also exist for persons of German ancestry who lived in Poland before World War II (A3342-EWZ52) and

in the Baltic region (A3342-EWZ53), along with other areas throughout Europe.

I was able to visit the Berlin Document Center records at the National Archives II in June of this year. I took a free shuttle bus from the National Archives in downtown Washington for the forty-five minute drive to College Park, Maryland. The shuttle bus travels every hour on the hour during the day. First I registered on the main floor of the College Park site. Lockers were provided for the storage of personal belongings, because no bags or brief cases are permitted in the archives. Research notes may be taken into the archives, but these must be inspected and stamped for clearance. After receiving my researcher card I passed through the security gate, passed the security guard, then travelled up the elevator to the fourth floor where the Berlin Document Center is located. I found the archival staff to be very helpful in locating the indexes and microfilms, and in using the microfilm readers and printers.

After I had located the files of my father and grandmother, I was able to glean much new information to add to my genealogical files. As I scanned file after file of Mennonite names and studied the pictures of the individuals, I was able to catch a glimpse of the emotional and physical turmoil these people experienced. I paused for quite a while at the picture of my grandmother, Maria Delesky Thiessen, a 38-year old mother of five young children forced to survive without her husband, who had been exiled in 1941 along with all other adult men in their village of Gnadenheim in the Molotschna. I never met my grandmother, who was repatriated to the Soviet Union within a year and died in Kazakhstan in the 1960s, and yet I felt as if a part of her life and the lives of the thousands of Mennonites who travelled with her through the winter of 1944, had become real to me in a new way.

### Bibliography

Marianne Wheeler, "Unite Your Family With The Berlin Document Center Records," *AHSGR Journal* (Fall, 1997), pp. 7-11.  
 Tom Stangl and Janice Huber-Stangl, "Researching German-Russian Families in the Berlin Document Center Films National Archives II." (<http://pixel.cs>

[vt.edu/library/berlin.html](http://vt.edu/library/berlin.html)

*Richard D. Thiessen is Director of Learning Resources at Concord College in Winnipeg.*

## Russian Brethren

(cont'd from p. 7)

*Rundschau* in 1931 refers to the conference on June 25-28 as the 16<sup>th</sup> convention. These annual conventions continued on a regular basis until at least 1948. Missions efforts at home and abroad were the main agenda of the conference in addition to the fellowship of believers with a similar cultural background.

As early as 1905 the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America began publication of a Russian periodical called *Golos* (The Voice). It was a monthly publication and was produced in Hillsboro, Kansas until 1912. The editor was Hermann Fast from Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup> No copies of this periodical are available in any of the Mennonite Brethren archival centres. Readers who know of any extant copies are urged to contact the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg.

The congregational minutes of the Arelee (Eagle Creek) congregation, which are available on microfilm at CMBS, were written in the Russian language from 1908 until 1967. During this past summer translation work was begun by Sergei Chnaiderman and a draft translation for the period from 16 November 1908 to 19 June 1917 has been completed. The minutes of the Blaine Lake church are presently not available at CMBS.

### Endnotes

1. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Macmillan, 1974), 315.
2. *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, "Golos".

AD

## Upcoming events

October 16-17, 1998: *Engendering the Past: Women and Men in Mennonite History*: A symposium hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg.

December 5, 1998: Annual meeting of Board of Directors and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario.

## Book Reviews

(cont'd from p.12)

Anabaptist "recovery" and relates the ongoing discussion of Bender with the *Concern* group and John Howard Yoder in particular. He shows how Bender with remarkable success moved from paradigm to paradigm in his spiritual journey, from the Old Goshen of the Twenties to the stricter "New" order, from the old struggle between Fundamentalism and Modernism to a wider set of parameters in the international Mennonite world and beyond. What is remarkable about this passage from a relatively narrow to a much wider world is how Bender did this from a relatively conservative religious stance.

For many readers Bender's proposition of what he called "The Anabaptist Vision" will be the most interesting part, especially because it has since been problematized by subsequent scholarly research and discussion. That essay may be debatable in its historical detail, but there can be no doubt of its impact in the wider Mennonite world and on generations of Mennonite scholarship.

For a biography this book is a little short on the family and societal side of the Bender story, but it is hard to blame the author, who has filled 500 pages with the activities of his tireless protagonist. One of Bender's failings was, as Keim points out more than once, that he could not say no, nor stay away from any committees or boards. And these many obligations took Bender on a life itinerary that is mind boggling. It is no wonder that he set up and ran his own travel agency, which enabled him to travel further and more often than his limited Goshen salary would have allowed. And his constitution must have been as strong as his will in carrying out so many projects in the great cause of his life, a cause he summed up in his late addresses at Eastern Mennonite College: "These are my People."

Harold Bender may have been one of the best educated Mennonites of his generation, but Keim does not see his greatest contribution in his scholarship. Bender always had too many things pressing in on him, his College or Seminary deanship, his many boards and committees, the MQR, and so on, and as a result his scholarly output was limited,

both in quantity and quality; even the "Anabaptist Vision" paper was written hurriedly, its footnotes only inserted after its presentation as the Presidential Address of the American Church History Society. Although he authored some 958 articles for the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and published an important monograph on Conrad Grebel, his was not a life of scholarly detachment and/or contemplation. But as a Goshen educator Bender was a dedicated mentor to a whole generation and more of Mennonite academics, with whom he stayed in conversation even when their vision developed in directions he could not agree with. For a strong-willed leader of Bender's stature it was humbling to be opposed not only by peers like Orie O. Miller, but also by the forthright John Howard Yoder, and it is to Bender's credit that he kept the lines of communication open.

Harold Bender was first and foremost a churchman in the fullest sense of that term, and in this capacity his life was a hard-won victory. Instead of becoming a radical he expanded the vision of the church from within and from a rather conservative posture at that. In the inter- and intra-Mennonite controversies Bender chose always to take "his people" with him from the more limited to the larger world, whether in relief for the Russian Mennonites or in the campaign for a World Conference. Keim reports on many of the key meetings which Bender had with his colleagues from the several Mennonite constituencies, and the reader is given access to discussions and points of contention among the many Mennonite leaders of the time. Although it is patently impossible to treat all of these matters fully, Keim manages with an apt adjective or a closing comment to characterize the relative success or failure of the various endeavors, so that a balanced picture of Bender's dealings with his many contemporaries emerges.

As Keim points out in his Epilogue, Bender's achievement, both in his church and his scholarly work, can best be characterized by the term which he chose to replace "holiness of life" as the heart of Anabaptist faith: discipleship. In his words: "Discipleship had existed at the very heart of historic Anabaptism, and by the time of his death, it had become the central theological credo of his own

people."(528)

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to the wealth of material Keim has put before us. His list of sources give some clue of the archival work that was necessary to gain the overview which his biography shows the reader. The book is illustrated and includes a list of Abbreviations, End Notes, Sources and Bibliography (with a selected list of Bender's publications), and an Index. The text is beautifully set and almost error free. Herald Press has produced a handsome volume which for many reasons should stand not only in every Mennonite institutional library, but should be read widely by Harold S. Bender's "people."

Edna Boardman, *All Things Decently and In Order: and Other Writing on a Germans from Russia Heritage* (Minot, North Dakota: North American Heritage Press, 1997), Paperback, 146 pp., \$ ?

Reviewed by Ken Reddig, Director, Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Growing up in a rural North Dakota community and being part of a Mennonite Brethren congregation forms the basis for the first part of this informative book. Where others have written accounts of personal reminiscence and begun with stories of the farm, home or family, Edna Boardman has begun with the church and the religious life within the community.

She is honest in her reflections. This does not imply that kind of honesty which dares to be negative. For that she is not. She is honest in that she says what she liked and what she did not like. She covers such interesting topics as the church building, getting saved, baptism, Bible camp, harvest festival, women in ministry and dating. Overall she does not reflect negatively upon the church community. But the small rural church of Sawyer does have some drawbacks, and she notes them.

In the second part of her book Boardman reflects on her family and farm life. She provides brief vignettes of her life as a farm child during WWII. She describes impressions of the summer kitchen, water, windmills, schools and grandparents. She portrays a descriptive honesty that does not gloss over the short comings.

The last part of the book concentrates on who the Germans from Russia and who the Mennonites from Russia are. Brief and to the point, it is unfortunate that this part is not very well researched. However, that is not the emphasis of her book.

Readers unfamiliar with the North Dakota landscape, may find the interaction with both Germans and Russians in North Dakota to be quite intriguing. The countryside was dotted with these immigrant communities which included German Lutherans, Catholics and Mennonites, in addition to immigrants from Russia and Ukraine. Boardman provides many impressions of this mix of people and some historical background. It was not uncommon for these people to mix socially during the week, and then, on Sunday morning, attend their separate churches.

My wife grew up in one of these North Dakota communities. In fact, she had numerous relatives in the Sawyer church, but is not acquainted with Boardman. Over the years we have gone to many family and church events in a number of these communities. My general impression is that Boardman has described church, community and family life in this rural setting quite accurately.

## Book Notes

by Ken Reddig

Over the years scholars have pointed to the influence of Erasmus on the early Swiss Anabaptists and Menno Simons. This influence has never been firmly established. In his recently published book on this subject, Renaissance and Reformation scholar Abraham Friesen (University of California, Santa Barbara) develops a convincing case that the early Anabaptists did rely upon Erasmus's thought. He argues that the Anabaptist movement's understanding of believers baptism was derived from Erasmus's 1522 preface to his Greek New Testament, his paraphrase of the Great Commission and his annotations to the New Testament. Anyone interested in early Anabaptist history and thought will want to read this book and this new interpretation. The book is entitled *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission* and is published by Wm. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan

in 1998.

The twentieth century is replete with stories of war, conflict and escapes from conflict. A new book by Wilmer A. Harms details one small part of this global story in his book *The Odyssey of Escapes from Russia: The Saga of Anna K.* The book details the roots of Russian-German migration through China to the Americas. The book describes the historical setting and provides stories of various families and their escapes. Harms has also listed Lutheran and Mennonite refugees who passed through Harbin, China. The book is published by Hearth Publishing in Hillsboro, Kansas.

Further to the subject of war is the book *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* by Bill Waiser. The book contains a fascinating chapter on the Conscientious Objectors in Canada's national parks and places that story within the context of other groups which were set to work in these settings. The book was published by Fifth House in Saskatoon in 1995. It retails for \$27.95 in most Canadian bookstores.

A very good book on the subject of conscientious objectors is *Women Against the Good War: Conscientious Objection and Gender on the American Homefront, 1941-1947*. Written by Rachel Waltner Goossen this book tells the story of the 2,000 Mennonite, Amish, Brethren and Quaker women who, together with some 12,000 men, entered Civilian Public Service as an alternative to military service. Published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1997 the book is available in some Mennonite bookstores.

Just published is a wonderfully illustrated book entitled *From the Steppes to the Prairies: A History of the Agneta and David Klassen Family* written by Paul Klassen. Containing many maps, photographs, lists and copies of documents the book traces the story of this family from the late nineteenth century, through the Russian Revolution and into Canada. Replete with stories, anecdotes and well-written historical narrative, the book provides a rather complete description of this family's experiences for approximately one hundred years. The book is in 8 1/2 x 11 inch format and printed on fine paper. Comprising some 304 pages it is available from the Heritage Centre for \$ 25.00.

## Research Note

Johannes Reimer, currently teaching at Concord College, is researching and writing the history of the Russian Tent Mission (1917-1923). In his research he has come across an account written by Saloff-Astachoff, the Director of the Russian Tent Mission after the death of Jacob Dyck.

Saloff-Astachoff describes the Makhnovcy (Makhnov's followers), who were a major threat to the mission. He writes, "Some of them were once revived, but had backslidden. Some Mennonites were among them too. These once enlightened people were always the most cruel."

Does anyone have further information on Mennonites who were involved with the Makhnovcy? If so please contact Johannes Reimer at Concord College, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 2E5.

## Dr. Victor Peters † 1915-1998

At press time we were informed of the sudden passing of Dr. Victor Peters of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He suffered a heart attack on September 10<sup>th</sup> enroute to Stratford, Ontario along with his wife Elisabeth and several family friends.

Peters was born in Petersdorf, Ukraine, came to Canada with his parents in the 1920s, taught in various Manitoba elementary schools including Hordean, Landmark and Winnipeg. He obtained a Ph.D. at University of Goettingen in Germany and eventually became Professor of History at Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota. He was married to Elisabeth Dyck, originally from Grigorievka who also emigrated to Canada in the 1920s.

Among his best known publications are the periodicals *Mennonitische Lehrerzeitung* (1948-50) and *Mennonitische Welt* (1950-52), and the books *All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life* (1965), *Nestor Machno: The Life of an Anarchist* (1970) and *Plautdietsche Jeschichten* co-authored with Jack Thiessen (1990).

## Book Reviews

Dyck, John and William Harms, eds., *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba, Canada* (Winnipeg, MB: The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1998), pb., 500 pp.

*Reviewed by Tammy Hannibal-Paci, an archivist at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg.*

The arduous process of compiling genealogical data into a readable and understandable text is no easy task. As an archivist and "weekend genealogist", I have attempted to consult and utilize countless family and community history publications, with dramatically varying degrees of success. In order for such a work to be effective, texts must achieve several things. First, these publications must be relevant and helpful to the community or family in question. The language must be clear and straightforward enough for a general audience. The information presented should also have the potential for scholarly use. Proper references are essential! Linkages between individuals within data tables should be possible to make, if they have not already been established. And finally, a good family or community history will reflect the personal nature of the subject material by including extraneous or anecdotal detail that forms the heart of genealogical research. Editors John Dyck and William Harms have accomplished all of the above with the 1880 Census of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba, Canada.

This text is a compilation of information extracted from several primary sources and molded into a navigable reference source. The book is divided into 6 sections: the original 1880 village census of the Mennonite West Reserve, 1880-1882 individual tax records by village, 1880 census families with supplementary data, profiles of Reinlaender Bishops, Ministers, Deacons, 1891 federal census of the Mennonite West Reserve, and 1880-1900 passenger list of Mennonite immigrants landing in Quebec. The 1880 village census is a reproduction of an original document compiled by the Reinlaender Gebietsamt and preserved by the Reinlaender Mennonite Church. The

information contained in this census form the basis for additional detail provided in the text. The 1880-1882 tax records are similarly presented, though the editors point out that this section is not an exact reproduction as they have added village lot numbers.

The third section is likely to the most widely utilized section of this book. It is an alphabetical listing of families in the West Reserve Settlement Register with genealogical details neatly compiled and presented. Linkages are made to original source materials that connect families to communities as well as to other families. Where possible photographs and additional comments are added. A handy index based on the wife's maiden name further broadens the applications for genealogical research.

The fourth section provides historical context for the history of the West Reserve and highlights key figures and events in its development. The remaining two sections are extractions from the 1891 federal census and 1881-1896 Quebec passenger lists. The editors and contributors to the book identify some of the problems encountered in conducting genealogical research using federal records, like unreadable microfilm, indecipherable or evolved surname spellings (like Trichriner to Teichreb, Dueck to Dyck), and federal data collection errors (confirmed by cross referencing with church and family records). The Quebec passenger lists for this time period were also problematic since the influx of Mennonites during this time period was much more sporadic than the waves of immigration in the 1870s and 1920s. Mennonite passengers were located by searching through lists for over 100 ships' voyages over a 15-year time period. Anyone who has been brave enough to attempt this sort of research can appreciate the painstaking efforts of the editors and the Local History Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society in extracting these families from such vast records.

In preparing this user friendly reference tool, the editors were sensitive to the difficulties genealogical researchers encounter when trying to access and understand the details contained in original sources. I was most impressed with the

thorough and succinct explanations of terms, language and margins of error. The finished product was respectful of the original sources, and great care was taken to reference and acknowledge sources of information. Maps and summary tables were helpful in providing additional details about West Reserve communities (most helpful for those of us who know shamefully little about this significant portion of Manitoba's settlement history). Most importantly, this book serves as a model for effective and comprehensive community-based histories. The book successfully integrates several different primary sources with local knowledge, and does an excellent job of preserving the integrity of the original documents while connecting them to the more detailed family histories. My only disappointment was not learning of the time frame involved in preparing this publication. Surely it must have taken years! In all, the *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba, Canada* is a well done, informative and praiseworthy publication.

Albert N. Keim. *Harold S. Bender, 1897-1962*. Scottdale, PA and Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1998. Pages, 592 pages.

*Reviewed by Victor G. Doerksen, Kelowna, B.C., Professor Emeritus, University of Manitoba.*

Biographies of religious leaders tend all too easily to hagiography, but in this masterful study there is none of that. Albert Keim has succeeded in tracing the many-faceted and complex life of this "scholar, educator, statesman, and New Testament Christian" (Franklin H. Littell) in an even-handed and eminently readable narrative. He has not avoided the controversies which surrounded Bender, some of which he provoked, and has emerged with a clear and balanced view of this influential figure.

Like many others of my generation I was influenced indirectly by Bender, but that influence, though indirect, was one of the most powerful and enduring of my spiritual life. Keim places into perspective the essay which is at the heart of the

(cont'd on p. 10)