

# Mennonite Historian

A PUBLICATION OF THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE and THE CENTRE FOR MB STUDIES IN CANADA



Karassan Mennonite Church in Crimea (1996) Photo: Courtesy of Rudy Friesen.

## A New Church in the Crimea (1921)

JOHN B. TOEWS

The village of Karassan, Crimea, seemed an unlikely site for religious radicalism. Established in 1865, it soon became one of the wealthiest of the Mennonite villages in the Crimea. Large homes constructed of limestone and surrounded by a profusion of trees stood in long array along the village street. An elementary school, a high school and a girls school ensured cultural continuity. Karassan was usually thought of as the centre of Old Church influence in Crimea, a notion reinforced by a local sanctuary capable of seating one thousand persons.<sup>1</sup>

Two other Crimean Mennonite villages, Schoental and Spat, were dominated by members of the Mennonite Brethren Church.<sup>2</sup> Some ten miles distant from

Karassan was the village of Tschongrav, founded in 1912. The arrangement of the village was unique: Old Church members tended to live on one side of the street, the Brethren on the other.<sup>3</sup> Congeniality and cooperation characterized the religious life of the village. The Tschongrav Bible School, founded under Brethren auspices in the spring of 1918, received strong support from both groups. The school not only generated spiritual renewal among Old Church and Brethren adherents in the village, but promoted inter-Mennonite cooperation in the broader Crimean constituency. Thanks to its faculty and students, the school also provided direction and continuity for the religious revivals which occurred in many villages during and after the Russian civil war.<sup>4</sup>

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## Truth Is Stranger than Fiction

WILLIAM SCHROEDER

That familiar saying was aptly illustrated by two episodes involving a certain obscure, primitive pioneer gravestone.

Growing up in Rosengard in the Mennonite East Reserve in Manitoba in the 1930s and 40s, we had repeated occasion to travel by horse and buggy to Gruenthal. Much of the trail ran along the famous gravel ridge that served as a natural highway between Steinbach and Gruenthal. For us children the monotony of the drive was relieved by an alluring landmark, the old, neglected, overgrown cemetery near the site of the extinct village of Schoensee. But our busy father could not stop for us to go exploring. And when I was old enough to do the driving, I had to give full attention to the restless horses spooked by the mysterious grey apparitions lurking among dogwood bushes and stunted poplars.

Then one Sunday afternoon my brother and I walked the six miles to Gruenthal to visit friends who had moved there from Rosengard. Eagerly we climbed through the decrepit barbed wire fence to explore the cemetery. Brother George, ever the actor, proceeded to read out one particular epitaph, mimicking the sonorous tone and pompous style of the Rosengard *Vorsaenger* (song leader) when he announced hymns to the congregations. Loudly, in sepulchral tone, George declaimed into the wild bush: "Hier ruht Justina Klassen, Jakob Thiessen seine Ehefrau." The letter "N" at the end of one of the names was turned around like the Russian equivalent of the letter "T". The German wording was somewhat quaint. I visualized a grieving pioneer widower with a primitive chisel, etching a tribute to his dear departed. The whole scene stuck in my memory.

It was poignantly recalled about 18 years later some 7000 miles away, deep in the isolated interior of the Paraguayan Chaco. I had been sent to teach in the secondary school of Neuland Colony, settled by refugees from the Soviet Union after World War II. During a summer vacation two local cousins of mine took me on even more desolate trails to Menno

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Colony, founded by Canadian Mennonites over 30 years earlier in the 1920's.

During the great mid-day heat we had to stop to feed and rest the horses. A certain Mrs. Wiebe invited us in for a siesta, and graciously prepared a lunch of *Ruehrei* (an omelet). The Wiebe family had been very helpful hosting and settling my driver's family when the latter had arrived destitute. When I was introduced as coming from Manitoba, the elderly lady eagerly plied me with questions. Had I ever seen the Schoensee cemetery? Could I perhaps recall any of the names on the gravestones? Promptly I recited, "Hier ruht Justina Klassen, Jakob Thiessen seine Ehefrau." Mrs Wiebe burst into tears. "That was my mother!" she sobbed.

How fortunate that there were gravestones at Schoensee, Manitoba. That had not been the case in some other Mennonite migrations over the centuries, when the trauma must have been increased by having to abandon the graves of loved ones. During teaching assignments in Russia and the Ukraine in the 1990's I toured the haunts of my ancestors. I was glad to find many exact spots where they had lived, studied, worked and worshiped, even the approximate places where some had died at the hands of the Machno

anarchists. But no precise gravesites could I identify. Some cemeteries had never had gravestones. From others the stones had been removed to be used as building blocks during the Communist regime. But as I told my Ukrainian Bible class when we studied the future rapture and resurrection (I Thessalonians 4, etc.), the spirits of departed believers are already with the Lord, and He will find their graves when He returns.

## Microfilm records of the Berlin Document Centre and Deutsches Ausland Institut

by Tim Janzen

Several weeks ago I was doing some searching for Mennonite materials on the Salt Lake City LDS Family History Library online catalog at <http://www.familysearch.org> and stumbled across a group of microfilms that appeared to be microfilms of material from the Berlin Document Center. I discovered a collection of 1,964 microfilms which were microfilmed in 1992 at the Koblenz Bundesarchiv listed in the LDS online catalog under the category *Einwanderer Kartei 1939-1945* of the *Deutschland Einwandererzentralstelle* (EWZ). These microfilms are apparently microfilms of the same set of cards which are referred to as the *E/G Kartei* in the Berlin Document Center microfilms housed at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland.

These cards are the index used by the EWZ to keep track of the information on approximately 2.9 million people of German background who were planning to immigrate to Germany during WW2. The *E/G Kartei* give the names and birth dates for individuals as well as an EWZ number which allows one to locate the appropriate file for a person in the *Stammblatt*, another collection of files containing more detailed ancestral charts and family group sheets for the people referred to in the *E/G Kartei* index.

The *Stammblatt* files were also microfilmed by the LDS Church in 1992 at the Koblenz Bundesarchiv and two collections of microfilms from these files are listed in the LDS online catalog under the categories of *Stamblätter 1939-45* and *Stamblätter 1940-41*.

It appears that the LDS Church has also microfilmed extensive records from the

Deutsches Ausland Institut (DAI) and many different categories of records from that source are listed in the LDS online catalog.

I am inserting below more detail about the contents and microfilm numbers for these microfilm collections.

Researchers can order these microfilms through LDS Family History Centers and save themselves the hassle and expense of having to travel to Washington, D.C. to research these records themselves or of having to hire a local researcher in Washington, D.C. to review the microfilms for them.

If any of you want to review the LDS Library's online catalog be aware that it can be somewhat difficult to find these sources in the catalog. I suggest you may want to search for some of the microfilm numbers I have listed or do a search for Russian or German immigration information which will also eventually lead you to these collections of microfilms.

### Berlin Document Center

The Berlin Document Center documents refer to the microfilms of German government and Nazi Party documents captured at the end of WW 2 by the Allied Forces in Germany. Microfilm copies of the index cards (*E/G Kartei*) for approximately 2.9 million people of German ethnicity are available on LDS microfilm numbers ranging between 1799322 at the beginning of the index to 2098683 at the end. The ancestral charts (*Stammbblätter*) going back as far as three generations or more and family group sheets on the people listed in the *E/G Kartei* are available on LDS microfilm numbers 1796579-1797321 and 1364501-1364568. The BDC collection also includes microfilms containing applications for naturalization.

### Deutsches Ausland Institut

The Deutsches Ausland Institut (DAI) in Stuttgart, Germany was the German governmental agency which dealt with issues related to people of German ethnicity in foreign lands. This institute was especially active during WW 2.

The most valuable material is the collection of records related to Mennonites living in the Ukraine during the German occupation therefrom 1941-1943.

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# Genealogy and Family History

by Alf Redekopp

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## Queries

**Dyck-Loewen** - I am looking for information about ancestors and descendants of Gerhard P. Dyck (b. July 26, 1867, d. Mar. 19, 1940) and his first wife Anna Loewen (d. 1905 in Rosental, Ukraine). Their children were: Gerhard G. Dyck (1894-1945) (my father), Anna Dyck (1897-1974) married to Abram Bergen, Sarah Dyck (1900-1986) married to Johann Wiens, Katharina Dyck (1904-1986) married to Abram Pauls. Gerhard P. Dyck and his second wife Elizabeth immigrated to Canada and lived in Gouldtown and Herbert, Saskatchewan. Please contact: Tena Siemens, Box 67, Fiske, SK S0L 1C0 or phone 306-377-4724.

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## Recent Books

George Unger. *The family of 3.8 Jacob Stoesz & Anna Wiebe 1834-1996* (Goshen, IN : George & Dorothy Unger, 1996) 209 pp.

This book begins with the early history of the Stoesz family tracing the lineage of Jacob Stoesz (1834-1892) back to his grandfather Cornelius Stoesz (1731-1811) who lived and died in West Prussia. Jacob's father came to Russia in 1817 and eventually settled the Chortitza Colony. The family moved to the Bergthal Colony in 1838 and on to Canada in 1874. The focus of the book is on the descendants of the 6 children of Jacob and Anna Stoesz who reached adulthood. Some descendants of this clan migrated on to Mexico and South America during the 1920s, while others remained in Manitoba. Contact: George & Dorothy Unger, 1512-6 Kentfield Way, Goshen, IN 46526.

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Adina Reger. *Familienstammbuch und Geschichte der Familie Reimer 1740-1995* (Großwallstadt, Germany : Bibel Mission, 1998) 717 pp.

This book tells the family history of the ancestors and descendants of Aron Reimer (1814-1874) and Anna Warkentin (1818-1891) who lived in the village of

Fuerstenwerder, Molotschna. The author has traced the story of the descendants to United States, Canada, Germany, Paraguay and parts of the former Soviet Union. Some family members endured the work camps and prisons of Siberia. Others pioneered in Oklahoma and Kansas. Yet others went to Mexico and Canada in the 1920s. This volume includes many photographs and reproductions of archival documents. Contact: Adina Reger, Tulpenstr. 14, 56575 Weißenthurm, Germany.

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Katie Durksen. *The Descendants of Jakob Julius Heinrichs (1849-1893) & Katharina Dueck (1850-1910)* (Winnipeg, MB : Private publication, 1999) 110 pp.

This compilation traces the descendants of Jakob Julius Heinrichs (1849-1893) who was born in Prangenau, Molotschna and lived in Schardau. His widow, Katharina Dueck (1850-1910) then married widower Heinrich Jakob Derksen (1835-1913). Later two of the Heinrich daughters, married sons of Derksen (see book note below). Descendants from some of the branches of this family migrated to Paraguay in 1930, others came to Canada, and yet others remained in Russia. Contact: M. Albert Durksen, 27 Pinecrest Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1W2 or e-mail: madurksen@home.com.

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Katie Durksen. *The Descendants of Heinrich Jakob Derksen (1835-1913) and Maria Sudermann (1841-1894)* (Winnipeg, MB : Private publication, 1999) 101 pp., plus appendices)

This compilation begins with Heinrich J. Derksen (1835-1913) who was born in Schoensee, Molotschna and first married Maria Sudermann (1841-1894). Included in this compilation are several reproductions of the data recorded in family bibles, death notices, obituaries and written memoirs. Contact: M. Albert Durksen, 27 Pinecrest Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1W2 or e-mail: madurksen@home.com.

## Noteworthy Website

Judii Rempel and Janet Morgan of Calgary have received an award at GenTech, a genealogical technical conference in San Diego for their site known as the Canadian Genealogical Projects Register (<http://www.afhs.ab.ca/registry/>). The award was granted by the New England Historic Genealogical Society (Boston, MA, founded 1845).

One of the important features of the site is that it identifies not only extant resources, but also works in progress. For example, if an individual or organization is considering transcribing the headstones in a particular cemetery, they can first consult the Registry to see if it has already been done or even to see if it is a work in progress. In this way, the Registry offers them an opportunity to collaborate on unfinished work or redirect energy to a different project, eliminating rivalries and duplicated efforts. The site is sponsored by the Alberta Family History Society.

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## Letter to Editor re. Russian Mennonite Church Register

Regarding your note in the *Mennonite Historian* (Dec. 1999) about excerpts from the Chortitza colony church register. I am including two photocopied pages that I acquired about 20 years ago. Unfortunately, I do not know the source. I suggest that people send you any copies that they have. The MHC could keep a file of these.

Glenn Penner, Guelph, Ontario.

**Editor's note:** This is a great idea! Glenn sent a page which documents the family of Heinrich Schwarz (1758-1799) who was married to Anna Klassen (1764) who later married Isaac Toews (1774-1831). If any one has more information about the source of this document or other similar ones, please contact us at the address below.

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Send inquiries to Alf Redekopp, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4  
E-mail: aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca.

## Berlin Documents

(cont'd from p. 2)

The DAI records include the following categories of records:

(1) BestandsKartei of the German Russians 1750-1943; index cards arranged by surname of ethnic Germans in Russia giving their birthplace and date, names of ancestors who first immigrated to Russia, as well as places and dates of birth, marriage, death, and occupation for spouses and birth places and dates for children; 48 microfilms, LDS microfilm numbers 1335722-27, 1457135-36, 1528981-87, 1529015-19, 1457323-27, 1538533-42, 1538614-17, 1538715-18, 1538830-31

(2) Emigrant cards for individuals and their families who emigrated from Russia 1750- 1943; 15 microfilms, LDS microfilm numbers 1538832-34, 1538968-72, 1538978, 1539128-32, and 15391236

(3) Information cards for German immigrants residing in Russia 1750 to 1943 giving their birth, marriage, and death dates and other genealogical information, arranged alphabetically by government jurisdiction, village, and then surname; 7 microfilms, LDS numbers 1568486, 1568487 (Taurien), 1568549 (Taurien), 1568550 (Jekaterinoslaw), 1568551-52, 156602

(4) Assorted correspondence between Karl Stumpp and the DAI in 1942 and 1943 including inventories of materials in the Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye Archives, extractions of census material by Karl Stumpp, and selected original documents related to Mennonites from Ukrainian archives; 374 rolls of microfilm in the T81 microfilm series at the National Archives. Summaries with abbreviated indexes of selected individual microfilms are posted on the Odessa Library web site

(5) Additional information, including information about emigration from Russia to Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

The original records are currently stored at the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany and microfilm copies available at National Archives, College Park, Maryland and Salt Lake City LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

A sub-category of Deutsches Ausland Institut materials have become known at the "Captured German Documents", a



With a mural outlining some East Reserve history in the foreground, the Crystal Springs Choir provided a fine sacred music package at the 125th anniversary windup on January 22. It certainly was "worth the trip to Steinbach" to hear the a cappella harmonies!

## HSHS Annual Meeting and East Reserve 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Windup

by Karen S. Peters

On Saturday, January 22, 2000, a grand celebration co-sponsored by the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Inc. and the East Reserve 125 Steering Committee was held at the Steinbach Mennonite Church. The memorable event was planned by a sub-committee consisting of two people from each of the dual supporting groups.

The function began at 4:30 p.m. with a brief HSHS business meeting. At 5:00 p.m. the committee recognized many who had contributed to the commemoration of the

1874 settlement in the area now known as Hanover. They included fifteen Community contacts, contributors to the *AM 1250 RADIO* vignettes and *The Carillon* articles, the designer of the Afghan Tapestry, authors of a group of three Low German anniversary plays, the organizing committee of the August 1 worship service, leaders and participants in the Trail Ride Re-enactment and the contributor to the anniversary float. The volunteers in attendance were handed a commemorative mug (from the Steering

collection ( 9 reels of microfilm). The records were originally from the Deutsches Ausland Institut (DAI) in Stuttgart, Germany, and were transferred to the Library of Congress after WW 2. A portion of these materials from containers 149 to 154 from shelf 16435 at the Library of Congress were microfilmed in 1975 after they had been located there by Dr. Adam Giesinger of Winnipeg in 1973. They were reportedly a portion of a collection of 700 items from the DAI which are held in Library of Congress.

The most valuable documents in this collection are the extensive records related to Mennonites living in the Ukraine, primarily in the Chortitza Colony and to a lesser extent other colonies such as the Sagradovka Colony, during the German

occupation there from 1941-1943. They included detailed village histories, census lists naming the head of each household as well as the approximate ages of all the residents in their household, lists naming the head of each household, the wife's maiden name, the year of their marriage, and their ages at the time of their marriage, and lists of the names of those who were murdered, banished, or who starved to death between WW 1 and 1941 and their ages when these events occurred.

The original material is apparently still stored at the Library of Congress and microfilm copies are available at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and at number of Mennonite archives in Canada and the U.S.A.

Committee) and a book by John Dyck (from HSHS). While the radio spots were played, the persons involved there (as well as in the corresponding newspaper articles) were invited to stand.

The 6 o'clock reception allowed people to mingle amid displays of flags, anniversary souvenirs, Mennonite books, artifacts and photographs. The committee was thrilled to promote their new book and audio tape entitled *East Reserve Reflections*. By 6:30 p.m., mouths were watering in anticipation of the aromatic *Kielke & Schmaunfat* and farmer sausage. A delicious dessert of Mennonite *Plumi Moos* rounded out the palatable banquet prepared by S.M.C. Catering Services. In the gymnasium, door prizes were distributed and some anniversary memorabilia were auctioned by Henry Penner. Jack Thiessen, a local satirist, provided some satisfying after-dinner entertainment. Following a break, the assembly of about 200 moved into the sanctuary.

The Crystal Springs Choir provided a sacred package of songs. The *a cappella* harmony of the uninhibited Hutterite youth was delightful! Following Royden Loewen's introduction, the keynote speaker, Dr. John Warkentin of Toronto, dug into the topic "1874 Revisited". Surrounded by murals depicting a variety of pioneer scenes, Warkentin presented stimulating glimpses into local history, weaving them together in a fascinating fashion. John, a geographer, illustrated his words with slides. Spellbound, many did not notice the length of the presentation -- 1874 was definitely revisited! Soloist Deborah Rogalsky enchanted the audience with a refreshing collection of "heritage songs", defying the lateness of the hour.

To conclude the evening, Reeve John Driedger honoured the anniversary Steering Committee for fulfilling their Mission Statement: *The East Reserve Steering Committee exists to raise awareness of the 1874 settlement of the Hanover area, known as the East Reserve, and to promote and celebrate the 125th anniversary of this historical event in 1999*. On behalf of the R. M. of Hanover, "Community Volunteer" medals were conferred on the committee by Councillor Bruce Taggart. The inscription reads: Presented to. . . for Time & Effort, 125<sup>th</sup> East Reserve Celebrations, 1874-1999, JAN. 22, 2000.

In good Mennonite tradition, those who bought \$25 banquet tickets certainly got their money's worth! The affair was a golden opportunity to come out, meet friends and enjoy a great entertainment package! The past year contained many successful anniversary celebrations, simultaneously bringing a century and a millennium to a close. The East Reserve/Hanover settlers were truly honoured by reflecting on and "Celebrating our Heritage" in 1999!

May the 125th celebrations refresh our memories of the hardships our ancestors endured in Russia and the struggles they encountered in their resettlement in Manitoba, and may we ever remember that their faith in God sustained them through the years.

*Karen S. Peters was the East Reserve 125 Steering Committee Chairperson and Hanover School Division Representative*

## Internal Passports 1812-1821

by Tim Janzen

It was a new insight to learn how Russian authorities controlled the movements of Mennonites and other German colonists during the early 1800s within Russia. It appears that it was fairly easy for Mennonites to move around within a colony as we can see by reading the 1802 Chortitza property owners "Feuerstellen" list in B.H. Unruh, p.246-253. However, it appears that the Russian authorities required a passport each time one of the colonists travelled outside their colony, even if for business or other necessary travels.

The following list is a summary of the names found in Fond 6, Inventory 1, File 607 of the records of the Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in New Russia housed in the Odessa Region State Archive.

Johann von Bergen is referred to on pages 19, 20, 24, 25, 32 to 36, and 38 to 40. He is the Johann Bergen (b. ca 1787) (Grandma #198672) who is mentioned as residing in Neuendorf in 1808 and in Kronsweide in 1814 per B. H. Unruh, p. 286 and 280. He requested a passport in 1812 to move from Krons Garten to the Chortitza Colony with his family since he didn't have a farm. Their passports were

approved in 1813.

Isaac Bergmann is referred to on pages 61 and 62. He is likely the same as Isaac Bergman (b. 1751) (Grandma #198384). He is given a passport in 1814 to travel to Odessa for 3 months to sell oil.

Jacob Ensz is referred to on page 69. He is given a passport to travel to Odessa in 1814. It is not possible to definitively identify him in the Grandma database at this time.

Doerk Goertzen is referred to on pages 59, 60, 67, and 68. He was a single merchant from the Chortitza Colony who was given a passport in 1814 to go to Kherson and Odessa to work. He cannot be definitively identified in the Grandma database, but may be the same as Dietrich Goertzen (b. 1790) (Grandma #199014).

Nathaniel Goertzen is referred to on pages 14 to 16, 21, 25, 26, and 32. He is likely the Nathaniel Goertzen (b. 1791) (Grandma #198705) who was from Schoenwiese, Chortitza Colony. His father's name was also Nathaniel Goertzen, but it seems more likely that the younger Nathaniel Goertzen is being referred to in this case since it is mentioned that he didn't have a farm. He requested and received a passport to move from Schoenwiese to the Molotschna Colony in 1812. He is reported to have purchased a home on the Molotschna River from which he sold various goods.

Karl Jaeger is referred to on page 36. He is likely the Karl Jaeger (b. 1 Jan 1783) (Grandma #198860) who resided in Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony per the Grandma database. He was given a passport in 1813 so that he could go to the Ekaterinoslav district as needed for his gardening business.

Abraham Jantz is referred to on pages 40 and 42. He was from the Josephsthal Colony and was the stepson of Paul Tietz and had two brothers Johann and Jacob. In 1813 when he requested a passport his age is given as 28, suggesting that he was born ca 1785. It is quite likely that he was not Mennonite given that he was from Josephsthal, although there is a slim possibility he could be the same as Abraham Janzen (b. 1784) (Grandma #7640) or Abraham Janzen (b. 1785) (Grandma #214622).

Abraham Jantzen is referred to on pages 59, 60, 67, and 68. He was a single

(cont'd on p. 10)



## Mennonite Heritage Centre

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### Recent Acquisitions

1. One folder of Wieler genealogical material collected by Erwin Wieler, Surrey, BC. This folder includes genealogical information of the descendants of Johann Wieler (1809-1894) and of Jacob Klaus Wieler (1793-).
2. Abraham M. Friesen diary received courtesy of Delbert F. Plett. This item consists of photocopies of the original German diary (and an English translation) written by Abraham M. Friesen for 1882-1915, and a diary kept by his son Peter Friesen for 1915-1918.
3. Peter J. Klassen (Quidam) papers received from Elsie Warkentin, Saskatoon, SK. This collection includes some of the fictional writings of Peter J. Klassen, Superb, SK and later Yarrow, B.C.
4. Ten photographs associated with All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR taken around 1974. These photos were recently discovered inside the cover of a book from the library of the late Rev. Gerhard Lohrenz.
5. 17 township maps from the Mennonite West Reserve in Southern Manitoba dating from 1875-1930. These maps were donated by Dr. John Warkentin, York University.

### Under new Governance

On March 2, 2000 the General Board, Mennonite Church Canada accepted the recommendation from the Canada Program Transformation Team to align the structural relationship of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Committee under the Resources Commission. Previously the Heritage Committee reported directly to the General Board.



### How a doll nearly destroyed a family

by Renata (Rena) Dyck Kroeker

The year was 1927, the place Lysanderhoe, Am Trakt, Russia. Johannes and Renate Dyck with their nine children were trying to flee the increasing perils of communistic Russia and immigrate into Canada. They had some considerable wealth and desperately thought of ways to bring it across to the new country. They bought this doll and filled the head with very high denom-

ination bank notes. (Johannes Dyck spent 10 days in Moscow getting U.S. money.) They dressed the doll in many layers of clothes and gave it to the youngest child, Rena, aged 4 years to play with, and thus bring it across the border without arousing suspicion. Rena had no idea of any of this except that she was given a new doll for the trip.

Since Dyck had for a long time been a leader in the Am Trakt settlement, he was viewed with great suspicion. The family and their luggage had been searched again and again but they found nothing. Finally the parents breathed a sigh of relief -- now they could go. But one of the officials was still suspicious and announced just one more strip search -- the men to the room at the right and the women to the left. The parent's heart sank, but they did not dare to give Rena any signals. While they were herded into the room Rena was interrupted in her play and left the doll lying on the bench outside the search room. The search was very thorough, pockets, seams, linings, everything was investigated -- nothing was found. The frustrated official had to let them go. As the family came out of the room Rena casually picked up her doll, swung her by one arm as was her habit, and went along with the rest -- all the way to the wonderful country of Canada.

### Computer in Reading Room

Family historians and genealogists have frequently wondered and asked how they could use some of the more recent acquisitions such as CD ROM genealogical databases, and other world wide web resources at the Heritage Centre. The Centre now has computer set up in the Reading Room to do just that.

One of the most popular databases which researchers are using is GRANDMA (Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry) produced by the California Mennonite Historical Society. The computer can also be used to access resources via the internet.

In the future this computer will also be used as a terminal from which to search a variety of archival inventory finding aids.

The MHC acknowledges the significant gift by Ralph Thorpe, Ottawa which made the purchase of this computer possible.



## Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies to Relocate

After years of uncertainty, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS) will finally have a new home. The Centre will move to another location within the present Concord College building, an area which was once known as the A. H. Unruh Memorial Building. Part of this building was already previously occupied by the archives of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, prior to the move to the present location in 1979. The space that will be occupied by the Centre includes part of the stack area of Concord College library on the main floor, which will become the vault of the archives, and the second floor now occupied by the administrative offices of Concord College. This will house the offices of the Centre, the John A. Toews Historical Collection (Mennonite library), a work area, and study space. The move will take place this summer after Concord College vacates the space to move to its new location as part of the Mennonite College Federation on Shaftesbury Boulevard.

The beginnings of systematic archival collection by the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches go back to the early 1960s, when Herbert Giesbrecht, the librarian of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, began to collect and preserve materials. In 1969 the Canadian Conference formally established an archival centre, and in 1975 the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies was formally established as one of three North American archival and study centres, each with specified areas of responsibilities. The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg was given a mandate for all of Canada. In 1979 the Centre moved to a new facility in the basement of the library addition, a space that it has occupied until now.

The Historical Committee which is responsible for CMBS began considering options for the future as early as 1994 when it became obvious that the present facility would not be adequate for many more years. A "Needs Assessment Report" was completed in October, 1994 which looked at issues such as space requirements, environmental control,



**Archives room in the A.H. Unruh Memorial Building with Herbert Giesbrecht, the first archivist (part-time) appointed by the Canadian Conference.**

accessibility, relationship to Concord College, etc. It projected that space requirements for the next 15-20 years would increase to approximately 3000 sq. ft. from the present 1628 sq. ft. This should include an enlarged separate storage area or vault at or above ground level, an enlarged space for the library and reading/research, as well as more space for offices, for work and for exhibits. In general the report also favored a location close to Concord College so that it could continue to provide resources for faculty and students and benefit in other ways from being close to an academic environment. On the other hand, the report also recognized the importance of close proximity to Canadian Conference offices because the archives serves the entire Canadian Conference and needs to be visible and accessible to that constituency and its programs.

During the last five years events have unfolded slowly and specific issues had to be taken into account as details of the new Federated Colleges emerged. Consideration



CENTRE FOR  
**Mennonite  
Brethren  
Studies** IN CANADA

1-169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2L 2E5

was given to housing the Centre on the new site as well as joining with the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Neither of these options appeared viable for various reasons. As a consequence the Historical Committee began to investigate the option of moving into another space within the present facility of Concord College. A consensus emerged that the former A. H. Unruh Memorial Building was the best of the available options.

The A. H. Unruh Memorial Building was erected in 1964. The second floor initially had four offices on the west side of the hallway, a Conference meeting room, a seminar room, and an archives room, whereas the main floor was used as an extension of the library. When the Administrative offices of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College were moved to the second floor in 1984, structural changes were made which removed the hallway and the separate rooms on the east side. A reception area was added at the front and a new addition in the front provided space for a large lounge.

Careful planning will have to be done over the next several months to determine the best configuration of the new space. The close proximity to Canadian Conference offices will allow better sharing of certain services such as secretarial, reception, copying, etc. Overall, the new location should enable the Centre to serve the public better in the future.

AD



**A.H. Unruh Memorial Building which housed the archives from 1964 to 1979.**

## New Church in Crimea

(cont'd from p. 1)

Hermann Rempel was born in Gnadenfeld, Molotschna and first came to Karassan as a teacher in the elementary school. The religious atmosphere in the local Mennonite Church was a curious mixture of orthodoxy and liberality. The current elder, A. Friesen, insisted on upholding traditional liturgies and practices. On the other hand special services often featured speakers from the Mennonite Brethren like elder David Doerksen or Abraham H. Unruh, a teacher at the Karassan High School.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile Hermann Rempel was appointed as a minister in the Karassan Mennonite Church and not long after elected as elder. Several problems confronted the reform-minded Rempel. He became concerned with the absence of vital faith as well as serious lifestyle shortcomings among members of his congregation. Especially worrisome was the fact that many Mennonites grew grapes for the Crimean wine industry and some of them personally succumbed to alcoholism. The elder's active home visitation program further convinced him of the spiritual bankruptcy of his congregation.<sup>6</sup> There was one other dimension: Rempel reexamined his own faith pilgrimage. According to the recollections of his friend and confidant, A. H. Unruh, elder Rempel struggled with the reality of his personal beliefs during 1920, a process which climaxed in an overwhelming sense of salvation assurance.<sup>7</sup>

Rempel, together with a considerable number of lay ministers, now attempted to infuse new spiritual vitality into the Karassan Mennonite Church. Bible studies, home visitations, special meetings in other village congregations affiliated with Karassan - such activities produced diverse results. Personally Rempel felt he could not continue leading a church which embraced all of Mennonite society. Meanwhile there were calls for his deposition and excommunication.<sup>8</sup> A congregational split resulted when the elder and his fellow reformers decided to subject all church teachings and practices to the scrutiny of Scripture because "they desired a clearer understanding of conversion, communion and the believers' daily walk."<sup>9</sup> When the elder and his

supporters left, the Brethren congregation in Tschongrav placed their church building at the disposal of the dissidents. Here a series of consultations generated surprising and decisive results.

Fortunately some records of this remarkable process were brought from the Crimea to Hillsboro, Kansas during the 1920s by John K. Siemens, a one-time Bible school student at Tschongrav. These materials, now lodged with the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Hillsboro, Kansas, provide considerable insight into the spiritual pilgrimage of the elder and his adherents. Unfortunately at present we know only the beginning and end of the story.

The first of a series of consultations was held in Tschongrav on August 12-13, 1921. The minutes reflect an overriding concern with transforming a nominal, corporate Christianity towards a personal conversion experience based on genuine repentance and individual faith.<sup>10</sup> Only then it was argued, was baptism meaningful. Baptismal candidates were required to give a public testimony of their faith experience before the assembled congregation, which sought to assess the spiritual validity of what they heard. The consultation further concluded that only true believers should participate in the communion celebration. Church discipline must be exercised in the case of those who lapsed from faith or deliberately continued to participate in worldly amusements. By way of affirmation fourteen church leaders, including elder Rempel and ten lay participants, signed a summary of the deliberations. Two issues appear to have dominated this and subsequent discussions: the question of personal conversion and an attempt to define what it meant to be the New Testament Church.<sup>11</sup>

The "Crimean Evangelical Mennonite Church" was officially established on October 31 and November 1, 1921. Its charter was obviously the product of further discussions between late August and late October. The mode of baptism was, it seems, a critical issue for the new church, yet the matter was not even mentioned during the first consultation. Editorial comments in the manuscript indicate that baptismal candidates were initially at liberty to request other baptismal modes, provided the issue was raised at a congregational meeting. When some Old Church members pointed to the

inconsistency of officially endorsing immersion while allowing effusion, the newly organized church decided to practice immersion. Charter members who were personally convinced that immersion was the only acceptable biblical mode of baptism could request rebaptism. On the other hand individuals who were convinced of the validity of their first baptism were not required to do so.<sup>12</sup> The immersion issue was probably brought to a head when six of the leading Old Church ministers, including elder Rempel, took the extraordinary step of requesting a minister from the Brethren to rebaptize them by immersion. When the six had been baptized, Rempel baptized others anxious to join the new church. Large baptisms followed at later occasions.<sup>13</sup>

While the founding charter stressed the need for personal faith and baptism upon that faith, much of its content focused on Christian lifestyle. Members of the Crimean Evangelical Mennonite Church were expected to engage in Bible reading and prayer every morning and evening, keep the Lord's Day holy, avoid all use of tobacco and forgo the "excessive" consumption of alcohol. Worldly pleasures were specifically associated with dancing, card playing and pub activities.<sup>14</sup> Every member of the congregation "has the obligation to admonish the undisciplined and careless and to allow themselves to be admonished with regard to their own shortcomings."<sup>15</sup> Church discipline was taken seriously, to be practiced according to the model of Jesus and his apostles.

The new congregation affirmed a plurality of leadership with the primary authority vested in the elder, ministers and deacons, whose paramount task was the preaching of the Word and the care of souls. The restrictive cultural setting of the day was significantly broadened when the congregation concluded that "sisters can be called upon to assist with the spiritual needs of the women of the church."<sup>16</sup>

In 1921 the largest Mennonite Church in the Crimea suddenly plunged into a process of self-examination and renewal which resulted in the founding of a new church some months later. It is difficult to reconstruct a larger context for this event. The German *Allianz* movement with its emphasis on the unity of all who believed in Christ had a strong impact on both the Old Church and Brethren in the Ukraine prior to WWI, but appears to have had

limited influence in the Crimea. The Brethren, often accused of proselytizing at the expense of the Old Church, had little direct influence on elder Rempel and his associates. Earlier there were occasional Brethren preachers in the Karassan church and a Brethren minister was asked to rebaptize six ministers but other than that the renewal was very much an Old Church affair. Except for the use of the Brethren Church in Tschongrav, the documents make no mention of Brethren participation. We appear to be dealing with a spontaneous, inward looking renewal seeking to reaffirm the cardinal concerns of Mennonite spirituality - genuine conversion, the nature of the believers church and consistent lifestyle.

There are varied reports of revival among the Mennonites in the Ukraine and the Crimea during the 1920s. We know only a few details about their nature or character. Some were quietistic revivals often associated with the work of itinerant ministers in homes, schools or the local church. Others were associated with the American style revivalism of a David Hofer later in 1922 and early in 1923. In other instances it took the form of active evangelism among the Russians. In Karassan the religious ferment impacted the majority of leaders and split the Old Church - it seemed the old wineskins could not contain the new wine.

The new church, and especially its leader Hermann Rempel, soon experienced the wrath of atheistic Bolshevism. Rempel's farm was confiscated and his livestock and farm equipment sold at public auction. In 1929 he and his family tried to go abroad by joining the Mennonite trek to Moscow. Unsuccessful, he returned home only to face arrest. For a time he worked at the Dnieper power dam, then was exiled to Siberia where he died.<sup>17</sup>

#### Endnotes

1. On the general theme of Mennonite settlements in Crimea see the compilation by Martin Durksen, *Die Krim war Unsere Heimat* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1977) as well as H. Goerz, *Die mennonitischen Siedlungen der Krim* (Winnipeg: Echo Verlag, 1957).
2. John K. Siemens, "Der gegenseitige Einfluss der Mennoniten oder der sogenannten Kirchengemeinde und der Mennoniten Bruedergemeinde in der Krim im ersten Viertel des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts" (ms. in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies,

Hillsboro, Kansas).

3. John K. Siemens, "Die Entstehung einer neuer (Mennoniten) lokalen Gemeinde unter den Namen, 'Die Krimer Evangelische Mennonitengemeinde'", (ms. in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Hillsboro, Kansas).

4. Durksen, pp. 209-216.

5. "Die Entstehung", pp. 2-3.

6. Ibid.

7. "Aeltester Hermann Rempel, Karassan, Krim," in Aron A. Toews, *Mennonitische Maertyrer* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1949) I, pp. 90-91.

8. "Die Entstehung", pp. 3-4.

9. Ibid., p.5.

10. "Resolution der am 12. und 13. August 1921 in Tschongrow Stattgefundenen Predigerbruder Beratung der Karassaner Mennonitengemeinde und einiger Gemeindeglieder" (ms. in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Hillsboro, Kansas. A translation of the ms. is in the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg, MB).

11. "Schriftliche Festlegung der Gemeindeordnung auf der Gruenderversammlung am 31 October und 1 Nov. (a. St.) 1921 der Krimer evangelischen Mennonitengemeinde" (ms. in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Hillsboro, Kansas).

12. Ibid.

13. "Die Entstehung", pp. 5-6.

14. Schriftliche Festlegung", p. 3.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p.4.

17. Toews, p. 92.

#### Appendix

Resolutions of the consultation held by the Ministers of the Karassan Mennonite Church and several church members on August 12, 13, 1921, in Tschongrav:

Elder Hermann Rempel reported that the consultation was concerned with ascertaining the spiritual state of the congregation. An extensive exchange of views and a thorough examination of the [spiritual] state of the congregation in the light of God's Word followed. The consultation unanimously decided that both the lifestyle and the spiritual nurture of the congregation was not in accordance with the Word of God. The latter constitutes the main reason for decline and decay of the spiritual vitality of the congregation.

The consultation is deeply convinced that a return to the clear teaching of Scripture in matters of congregational nurture and discipline can save the congregation from complete ruin. Ps. 119: 105; John 8: 31-32; Acts 2:42; James 1: 22-23. In order to correct the

shortcomings and bring about renewal the congregation desires to implement the following resolutions:

We want to organize village consultations in order to teach congregational members about their relationship to God and the teaching of Scripture concerning the life of the congregation and their participation in it.

Through these consultations we have come to the fundamental conclusion that, according to the New Testament, the church consists of members who through repentance and faith have the personal assurance of being children of God.

a) the first church: Acts 2: 41, 44, 47.

b) the way the apostles address the church: Romans 1:7; Eph. 1: 1.

c) the distinction made between church and world: Romans 6: 17-18; Eph. 2:5; 1 John 5:19; 1 John 1: 6-7.

d) the command to separate from those living unworthy lives: 2 Thess. 3:6; Romans 16: 17; 1 Cor. 5: 11-13.

We find it essential that each congregational member make a personal declaration so that we might gain a clear insight into their pilgrimage: 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Tim. 6:12 Romans 10: 10.

When candidates present themselves for baptism and church membership, we want to consult with their parents about their spiritual vitality. Before actual baptism parents will be asked to testify on behalf of their children. Each candidate will be examined before the assembled brothers and sisters and only those will be baptized who have truly found faith.

We wish to discourage a person from claiming faith simply because he wishes to be baptized at Pentecost. Rather we are prepared to baptize at all times, especially when a person has found his Savior.

If people are accepted into the congregation via the baptismal process who in some way demonstrate that they are not followers of Jesus but children of this world, the matter shall be presented to the congregation and discussed.

We want to make it clear to the congregation that only believers can expect a blessing from the celebration of communion, otherwise participants bring judgment upon themselves. Communion is exclusively for believers.

We must, according to the Word of God, deal with those who are obviously unbelievers and heretics. Several brothers will speak with them to determine their

spiritual status. Their cases will be presented to the congregation. The congregation must excommunicate them since they hold contrary beliefs.

Similarly, those of our members who participate in dances and other worldly amusements shall be interviewed by several of the brethren. If they persist in their ways we must inform them that they are excommunicating themselves from their congregation. On the other hand, we want to cultivate Bible study and prayer fellowship wherever possible.

In order not to make marriage dependent on baptism, the consultation agrees that on occasion persons who are not yet members of the congregation can be joined in wedlock.

Conscious of our weakness we acknowledge our dependence on God's grace in all things.

[Signatures]

Elder: Hermann Rempel

Ministers: Gerhard Wiens, Heinrich Reimer, Johann Goerzen, Kornelius Loewen, Jacob Loetkemann, J. Tjart, Julius Doerksen, G. Friesen, J. Koop, A. Unruh, August Strauss, J. Wiebe, Peter Wiens.

Congregational members: Johann Wiens, Gerhard Dueck, G. Wiens, Jr., P. Warkentin, Jacob Wiens, Johann Wiens, Jacob Huebert, P. Bekker, B. Doerksen, Jacob Abrahams.

*John B. Toews is professor of Church History at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.*

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## Internal Passports

*(cont'd from p.5)*

merchant from the Chortitza Colony who was given a passport in 1814 to go to Kherson and Odessa to work, but he apparently didn't actually go and thus relinquished his passport. He cannot be definitively identified in the Grandma database, but could be the same as Abraham Janzen (b. 1784) (Grandma #7640) or Abraham Janzen (b. ca 1785) (Grandma #214622).

Joseph Kirsch is referred to on pages 48 to 50. He was converted from being a Lutheran to being a Mennonite. He resided in Kronsgarten, but was granted a passport in 1813 to go to Kherson, Taurida, Ukrainian Quarter and Poltava Provinces for 2 months. In 1813 he was 36 years old, suggesting he was born ca 1777.

He cannot be located in the Grandma database.

Johann Klassen and son Johann are referred to on pages 67 and 68. They are likely the same as Johann Klassen (b. 1766) (Grandma #198728) and his son Johann (b. 1790) (Grandma #198729). He was given a 10 day passport to travel to Kremenchug from Kronsgarten in 1814.

Abraham Neufeld is referred to on pages 44 to 47, 49, and 73. He was a damask master from the Chortitza Colony who was given a passport in 1813 to travel to Feodorovka for one year to establish a cloth factory there. He is difficult to place in the Grandma database since his age is not given on the passport. He may be the same as either Abraham Neufeld (b. 1777) (Grandma #14771) or Abraham Neufeld (b. 1792) (Grandma #98171).

Joseph Nowitzky is referred to on pages 72 to 74. He is likely the same as Joseph Nowitzky (b. 5 Feb 1776) (Grandma #187166). He was given a passport in 1814 to travel to Prince Baryatinsky's village of Ivanovka, Kursk Province, Lgov District for business in butter and cheese.

Johann Peters is referred to on pages 72 to 74. He was given a passport in 1814 to travel to Prince Baryatinsky's village of Ivanovka, Kursk Province, Lgov District for business in butter and cheese. It is not possible to definitively identify him in the Grandma database at this time.

Peter Siemens is referred to on pages 16, 17, 23, 24, 26 to 28, 38, 47, 49, 60, 62, 68, 69, and 72 to 74. He is the Peter Siemens (b. 16 Apr 1765) (Grandma #136330) who was the Oberschultz of the Chortitza Colony from 1801 to 1805 and from 1808 to 1823. Of interest is the fact that he requested a passport in 1812 so that he could travel uninhibited by local city police from the Chortitza Colony to Ekaterinoslav where he frequently needed to go on official business. Siemens stated that he had repeatedly been detained because he did not have a passport.

Wilhelm Siemens is referred to on pages 61 and 62. He is likely the same as Wilhelm Siemens (b. ca 1786) (Grandma #198828). He was given a passport in 1814 to travel to Odessa for 3 months to sell oil. B.H. Unruh, on. p. 261, states that he had gone to Odessa at the time of the 1808 census.

Christoph Strimmer is referred to on pages 48 to 50. He converted from being a

Lutheran to being a Mennonite. He resided in Kronsgarten, but was granted a passport in 1813 to go to Kherson, Taurida, Ukrainian Quarter and Poltava Provinces for one year. In 1813 he was 29 years old suggesting he was born ca 1784. He cannot be located in the Grandma database.

Peter Wieler is referred to on pages 19, 20, 24, 25, 32 to 36, and 38 to 40. He is the Peter Wieler (b. ca 1778) (Grandma #187168) who is mentioned as residing in Nieder-Chortitza in 1814 with his family per B. H. Unruh, p. 280. He requested a passport in 1812 to move from Kronsgarten to the Chortitza Colony with his family since he didn't have a farm. Their passports were approved in 1813.

Jacob Wiens is referred to on pages 37 to 40. In 1813 he was fined for improper use of certain papers in 1809. There is insufficient data given to identify him in the Grandma database.

Gerhard Wilhelm is referred to on pages 61, 62, and 69. He was given a passport in 1814 to travel to Odessa for 3 months to sell oil. He cannot be definitively identified in the Grandma database, but is probably the same as Gerhard Willms (b. 1766) (Grandma #197293) or his son Gerhard Willms (b. ca 1794) (Grandma #197297).

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## Anabaptist Vision Symposium

A symposium entitled "An Anabaptist Vision for the New Millennium: A Search for Identity" will be held at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 15-18 June 2000. Goals include:

- 1) To gather a large number of persons concerned about questions of Anabaptist/Mennonite vision and identity from a variety of professions.
- 2) To engage in conversation and dialogue. All participants in this symposium should expect to be active players rather than passive listeners.
- 3) To worship together in addition to conversing together.
- 4) To engage a new generation of 'concerned Anabaptists' through a competition for graduate and undergraduate students.

There will be eight plenary sessions, only two of which will involve longer presentations by a single individual. The

*(cont'd on p. 11)*

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## Book Notes

by *Adolf Ens and Abe Dueck*

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Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, published a 200-page hard cover book on the occasion of the congregation's fiftieth anniversary in 1999. *Bless the Lord, O my Soul*, edited by a committee under the leadership of John Dyck and Shirley Derksen, is attractively laid out with numerous photographs and easily accessible data compressed into a series of tables and charts in appendices. A much more modest volume had been published as a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet in 1975.

Anne Monkman's lovingly compiled collection of "real life stories, history, family tree, maps, recipes and Grannie's cures" is the first major publication about a community in which Mennonite Pioneer Mission (later Native Ministries) has been active. *Loon Straits: Looking Back* is a fabulous nostalgia trip for anyone who has lived there. Missionaries and other "outsiders" are not featured in this book. It is an insider's look at the community itself.

Three recent family books consist largely of narrative rather than genealogy. Johann and Elfriede Steffen's story is the most tumultuous; they call it *Im Schmelzriegel*. Beginning in Wernersdorf, Ukraine in the early Society era, the story moves to Poland with the retreating German army in 1943, followed by forcible repatriation to repeated prison and Soviet "work camp" sentences. After their release a period of home life near Alma-Ata, they make it to Germany. Jacob Dyck's *Stories of My Life* is a series of anecdotes loosely held together as a memoir. Like Steffen, Dyck grew up in a Russian Mennonite colony (Borosenko), survived the difficult inter-war years, and escaped with the retreat of the German army to Poland in 1943. Conscripted into the German army the following year, he eventually made it to Canada after the war was over. Ron Friesen's *Kleefeld Pilgrims of a Mennonite Tradition*, is a narrative tribute to his Canadian-born parents, John R. and Maria Friesen. The Friesens were dairy farmers and John R. (1897-1983) a minister in the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba.

A new edition of J. Pritzkau's 1914 work entitled, *Geschichte der Baptisten in Suedrussland* was recently published by Logos Verlag in Germany (1999, 18.50DM

plus 10DM shipping). The book deals with German Baptists in Russia immediately before World War I and includes sections on Mennonite Brethren, J.G. Oncken and August Liebig. Unfortunately it is essentially a reproduction without any new introduction or critical apparatus.

Logos has just published another volume entitled, *Flucht Ueber den Strome des Schwarzen Drachen: Aus dem Leben und Wirken von Maria DeFehr* (Germany: Logos Verlag, 2000). This book relies heavily on the previous biography *Mia* by Gerhard Lohrenz, but is a new account. It also includes endnotes, a bibliography, and an index of persons, places and subjects.

Another recent new publication is Helmut T. Huebert's *Events and People: Events In Russian Mennonite History and the People that Made them Happen* (Winnipeg, MB: Springfield Publishers, 1999), 258 pp. \$25.00. Huebert documents a variety of human interest stories that are unlikely to have been told in detail by other historians. The book also includes numerous biographies, maps and other resources. A more lengthy review will appear in the *MH* in the future.

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## Symposium

(cont'd from p. 10)

other six will consist of the presentation of three or four 15-minute 'manifestos' on topics ranging from 'Anabaptist Theology and the Shape of the Church in the New Millennium' to 'An Anabaptist Vision for Missions and Evangelism.' Manifesto presenters who have agreed to participate include Arnold Snyder, Abraham Friesen, Marlene Kropf and Paulus Widjaja.

### Call for Manifestos

One of the eight sessions will be entitled 'A Panel of New Voices.' This session will focus on manifesto presentations by two undergraduate students and two graduate students. The students will be chosen on the basis of submitted manuscripts (no more than 6 pages, double-spaced). The local arrangements committee will review the submissions, and choose two manifestos from the undergraduate category, and two from the graduate category. These selected participants will have their expenses paid by the Fransen Family

Mennonite Foundation, the sponsoring agency for the symposium.

Questions or submissions should be directed to Dale Schrag, director of church relations at Bethel College (316) 284-5356 or e-mail to: [drs@bethelks.edu](mailto:drs@bethelks.edu).

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## Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 12)

Molotschna settlement in 1871. It was located in the Kherson guberniia (province) on the Inguletz River about 66 miles north of where this river empties into the Dnieper.

Its closest market at the time of its beginning was Berislav, a site about 50 miles away, originally chosen (but then denied them) for the first Mennonite settlement in New Russia.

Much of the material for the book was provided by families of the settlement who migrated to Canada in the 1920s and who maintained close contact with Lohrenz who himself came from Zagradovka and had a wonderful retention of details and stories as well. Most of those informants, including Lohrenz himself, have now passed on, making this deposit of information all the more valuable for readers and students of the Russian Mennonite experience today.

Back to the composition of the volume, one needs to note that the maps and photos remain a significant part of the story as told here, and the addition of some of these makes this volume an improvement in itself for current readers. A very sobering feature of the account as Lohrenz offered it more than fifty years ago, is the list of all those who died violently during the turbulent years of the Soviet takeover of Russia and Ukraine. Zagradovka had some of the largest mass murders of all the Mennonite settlements of the area. It was new for this reviewer to discover that a number of Klippenstein families were among the listed victims. It makes this volume more personally connected than it has been until now. No doubt other readers will have the same experience with this aspect of the book.

On the horizon is a future volume of the Echo Historical Series, i.e. *Zwei Dokumente*, edited by the late Victor Peters. We can look forward to it with the same anticipation as did those looking for *Zagradovka* and now having this rewarding outcome in their hands.

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## Book Reviews

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John Dyck, *A Foundation Like No Other: Mennonite Foundation of Canada, 1973-1998* (Winnipeg, MB: Mennonite Foundation of Canada, 1999). hc., 176 pp.

*Reviewed by Conrad Stoesz, Interim archivist (part-time) at Centre for MB Studies and Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg.*

*Foundation Like No Other: Mennonite Foundation of Canada 1973-1998*, was the last manuscript that the late John Dyck completed. John, known for his local history and genealogy books, took on this history of Mennonite Foundation of Canada and devoted the same through, kindly, and insightful research he had become known for. John saw the final manuscript on its way to the printers before he was called to his final rest.

The underlying principle of Mennonite Foundation has, and continues to be, to educate and provide ways in which the Mennonite community's "...wealth can be put to work to build the Kingdom of God." This undergirding and biblically based principle is evident in the book itself as it begins with a meditation by David Schroeder on the topic of stewardship. Schroeder states that "All of life has become sacred in Christ and therefore all of life is a sacred trust. All of life is stewardship." The Mennonite story has taken note of this and, in the second chapter, the author gives a brief summary of Mennonite history and the church's stewardship practises in the past.

In the third chapter the focus begins to turn to the issue at hand, Mennonite Foundation of Canada. The affluence enjoyed by much of Canadian society after the Second World War provided Mennonite church members with new amounts of money which they could donate towards numerous organizations and projects. The church also began new institutions and projects which required money. The church saw "the need to make donors aware of needs within their own community..." Educating people about stewardship and how it can be carried out continues to be a priority.

A foundation, known as The Mennonite Foundation Inc., started in the United States in 1965. Canadian

Mennonites saw this as a model to follow. In 1967 the Mennonite Conference of Ontario began to look into stewardship programs. MMF (Mennonite Mutual Foundation) was established in September 1968. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada was also thinking along the same lines and in 1966 formed Comeca, later to be renamed Mennonite Foundation. Both infant foundations relied heavily upon the volunteer board members and directors to give sermons, one-on-one contacts, and use print media to get the word out and educate the church members on stewardship options available. The gifts and sacrificial work of these and future pioneers provided the basis for the success of the organization in the years to come. In 1973 these two Canadian church-based organizations merged to become Mennonite Foundation Canada (MFC). There was strong support from the conferences, which provided operational subsidies for the foundation until 1995. However, there was some strong opposition to the foundation and the directors worked hard to address this. With time the foundation became well accepted. It faced other challenges as well, such as finding people with the gifts who were willing to serve. Tax laws were not static and were not the same in every province. This became especially apparent with the development of new programs. The size and diversity of Canada also proved to be a challenge.

The foundation's principles were biblical and focused on sound ethical decisions rather than high returns or growth. The foundation overcame many obstacles and soon began to give back to the community by offering church loans and funds for seniors housing, schools, MCC (Mennonite Central Committee), and the conferences. By 1998 a base trust fund of 40 million dollars was established. In the past quarter century, 12.9 million dollars has been distributed, five conferences are involved, and the foundation continues to grow to serve the community better. This all occurred during a period when government funding for community projects was cut drastically. Other organizations and communities often did not have a foundation to turn to. Today MFC continues to be on the cutting edge in its field and has resources and people to carry on.

Writing organizational histories can be difficult. The book is well written. The

way it is organized, however, leads to some repetition. For example, on page 91 the issue of a new head office is discussed. The move to a new location is again discussed on page 106 in relation to a director who saw the need for a move. It would also have been helpful to include a time line, indicating the shifts, changes, and new programs. The book is well researched and contributes to one of the primary objectives of Mennonite Foundation—educating Mennonites concerning stewardship of our God-given gifts.

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Gerhard Lohrenz, *Zagradovka : History of a Mennonite Settlement in South Russia* / translated by Victor G. Doerksen (Winnipeg, MB : CMBC Publications and Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2000) pb., 113 pp.

*Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein, for Historian/Archivist, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg.*

*Sagradovka* was one of the ranking south Russian Mennonite settlement studies when it first appeared in 1947. As a small run it was soon sold out, as have been other books written by Gerhard Lohrenz in more recent times (a list of his publications is found in this volume). The contribution of Echo Verlag which did the 14 volume series in which *Sagradovka* appeared, is appropriately acknowledged by the translation series in which the volume under review has now come out as its ninth title.

It needs to be said up front that this is an excellent translation, including transliterations from Russian which can be complicated at times. There are only one or two very minor cases where an alternate might be preferred. The top of p. 29 might read better as Kherson guberniia, and S'khod is more commonly transliterated as skhod (p. 39). This volume therefore sustains very well the high level of transliteration accuracy which the series translators and editors have demonstrated so far.

For new readers it could be noted briefly that the settlement of Zagradovka was the first daughter colony (eventually consisting of 16 villages) established by the

(cont'd on p. 11)