

# Mennonite Historian

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



Jake P. Hamm, an 83-year old resident of Neubergthal extending an official welcome on July 1 at the homecoming and the unveiling of a Parks Canada plaque with commemorative inscription designating the Mennonite street village as one with national historical significance. Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz.

## The 125<sup>th</sup> West Reserve Anniversary Celebrations Peaked this Summer

LAWRENCE KLIPPENSTEIN

A few people wondered why we needed a celebration when the centennial activities of 1974 had taken place only 25 years ago. It may have been millenium talk that helped to get another celebration underway. Or perhaps it was the feeling that a revisiting of this Mennonite story would be good for all of us somehow.

The August 1, 1999 experiences at The Forks and the Mennonite Heritage Village climaxed another round of reflections on the coming of Mennonites to Manitoba in 1874. As many as 3000 persons may have joined these worship services last year. A good deal of reporting and comment resulted also.

A group of planners with the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society had helped to make the former East Reserve somewhat of a focal point for last year's festivities. This

year (2000) that celebration shifted to the Pembina or West Reserve since its first Mennonite settlers arrived at Fort Dufferin, or West Lynne/Emerson, in 1875, also 125 years ago.

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society headed up the programs but much initiative emerged and remained with local groups. The best example of this was probably the Peter Wiebe clan's decision to erect a memorial to recall the leadership and ministry of Aeltester Johann Wiebe, the first bishop of the Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde which formed the main Mennonite church body of the West Reserve in the early decades.

An unveiling of the Wiebe memorial took place on July 22 with a plaque placed

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## The Beginnings of *Friedensstimme*

JOHN B. TOEWS

Early in the twentieth century the Russian Mennonite periodical *Friedensstimme* began publication in Berlin, probably to avoid tsarist censorship. It was only moved to Halbstadt, Molotschna in January, 1906, in response to the provisions of the October Manifesto of 1905, which granted freedom of press and speech. Copies of the paper were subsequently filed with the Imperial Archives in St. Petersburg, apparently the only run of the periodical to survive. *Friedensstimme* did have North American subscribers but to date only a few individual copies have been found on this continent. It ceased publication with the Russian prohibition of the German language press at the outbreak of W.W.I. When the Provisional Government came to power early in March, 1917, Abraham Kroecker resumed publication deploying the title *Nachrichten des Volksfreund*. The paper appeared fairly regularly throughout 1917 and during the first six months of 1918. In July, 1918, he again named the paper *Friedensstimme*. Copies of this later publication were found in Stuttgart in 1970 by Joseph Schnurr, then editor of *Heimabuch der Deutschen aus Russland* and *Volk auf dem Weg*. The collection unfortunately ends in August, 1918. Kroecker kept on publishing the paper until the summer of 1920 when he fled Russia. Currently the original 1917-1918 copies of the *Volksfreund - Friedensstimme* are in the possession of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, California.

Unfortunately the earliest copies of *Friedensstimme* have not been found. To date our only scattered clues as to its origins and content come via chance references in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century *Zions-Bote*. One such reference is particularly significant. Its editor, John F. Harms, decided to reprint the inaugural editorial of the first *Friedensstimme* ever published. The translated contents speak for themselves. Several significant facts in the document: the paper began late in 1902; it made use of volunteers; it deployed modern promotional tactics, including subscription, specials and free gifts. There is no hint as to how the material got from Spat, Crimea

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## Beginnings of *Friedensstimme* (cont'd from p. 1)

to Berlin or from what location the papers were mailed to subscribers.

"Eine neues Blatt: "Friedensstimme,"  
*Zionsbote*, Vol. 18 (1902), no. 47.

What does *Friedensstimme* wish to accomplish? A broad field of ministry has opened up for us through the production, favorable reception and widespread distribution of our two calendars (the *Christliche Familienkalender* and *Christliche Abreisskalender*). Thanks and praise to the Lord. Our readers have frequently expressed the wish that we publish a Christian periodical. It is not an easy task to found and sustain such an enterprise. Such a venture generally encounters great difficulties since many good Christian periodicals exist. Furthermore since various other duties also demand our attention we cannot devote our full-time efforts to this task. If it were not for the support of volunteers the endeavor would prove to be overwhelmingly difficult. We rejoice and are encouraged by the fact that several talented brothers

have promised their help. There are others who have also indicated their willingness to help.

We believe that those people who have come under our influence by reading our calendars also need their own paper. After seeking God's leading and after earnest prayer we have decided to make a move in this direction. Currently we envisage publishing one paper in November and one in December. Beginning 1903 our paper will be published every second week. If the Lord grants his blessing and gives us success we may in time produce a weekly publication. This will depend on the wishes of our readers, the help of qualified brethren and the number of subscriptions [we can sell].

The *Friedensstimme* desires to provide spiritual nurture, teaching and support on a broadly Christian basis and in an easily understood language. While it desires to meet the needs of the Christian community with which we are affiliated, the paper will not function as its [official] organ. As a rule we will try to avoid controversy but if called upon we will defend God's truth against human error. We will seek to do this in the spirit of humility and gentleness. Our main aim will be to serve the "scattered" strangers in the world: (1 Peter 1:1) in the various communities that yearn for the nurture of their intellects and souls. As a true voice of peace (*Friedensstimme*) we want to present Jesus the Prince of Peace to [human] souls. We want to warn them against sin and unrighteousness and cause them to reflect on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8).

Though we are convinced that God has directed us to this task and that blessing will accompany it, obvious mistakes and shortcomings will manifest themselves. We ask your forbearance and patience as well as brotherly correction where necessary. Helpful criticism of our work will always be thankfully accepted. May this modest work build God's Kingdom and glorify his name.

Two samples of the *Friedensstimme*, each with extra copies, will be sent to various addresses. Beginning in the new year (1903) it will be published every second week. Those who receive the samples are asked to pass them on to neighbors and acquaintances after they have read them. Hopefully, many will be able to read these [sample] copies and so become acquainted with our endeavors.

The cost of a yearly subscription is four marks in Germany, two rubles in Russia and one dollar in America... All subscribers will receive the first papers published in 1902 as long as the supply lasts. Those who pay the year's subscription in advance will receive one of the sermon booklets *Witnesses for Christ*. Whoever sends the year's subscription and adds 70 kopecks will receive the entire sermon collection, *Witnesses for Christ* (valued at one ruble). Those who send in a year's subscription plus 40 kopecks will receive either a 1902 or 1903 yearbook (valued at 50 kopecks). Multiple orders for *Friedensstimme* from one address can receive a number of these publications since this saves postage and labor.

Payments and subscriptions should be sent to A. Kroeker. Articles and news reports from the colonies to Jacob or Abraham Kroeker in Spat near Simferopol.

*John B. Toews teaches at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.*

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Editors: Abe Dueck (CMBS)

Alf Redekopp (MHCA)

All correspondence and unpublished manuscripts should be sent to the editorial offices at:

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.,  
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4  
Phone 204-888-6781

e-mail:

aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca

or

1-169 Riverton Ave.,  
Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5  
Phone 204-669-6575

e-mail: adueck@mbconf.ca.

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Abraham J. and Agatha Kroeker. Abraham was the founder and editor of the *Friedensstimme* published by Raduga Publishing House in Halbstadt, Molotschna, South Russia. Photo: Courtesy of CMBS.

# Genealogy and Family History

by Alf Redekopp

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## Recent Books

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Margaret Bergen. *The Peter Peters Family Book 1855-2000* (Winnipeg, MB : Private publication, 2000) 124 pp.

This book tells the story of the descendants of Peter Peters (1855-1899) and his wife Maria Dück (1855-1915) who lived in Neuendorf, Chortitza Colony, South Russia. The story of their three sons, Abram Peters (1874-1962), Jakob Peters (1877-1942) and Peter Peters (1880-1920) includes the experiences of World War I, the Russian Revolution and the subsequent rise of communism in the Soviet Union. At least one granddaughter, left Russia in 1923, but the majority of descendants remained in the Soviet Union and experienced World War II, the Germany occupation and the trek westward with the retreating German army. Some descendants came to Canada and others repatriated by the Soviet Union eventually immigrated to Germany in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The book contains the genealogical data, many photographs and all the biographical sketches in English and German. Contact: Margaret Bergen, 405-246 Roslyn Road, Winnipeg, MB R3L 0H2.

Sara (Sally) Harms. *The Herman Heide Family 1748-2000*. (Winkler, MB : Harms Publishing, 2000) 283 pp.

This book includes information on 10 generations of Heide descendants, beginning with Nicholas Heide (1748-1802) of Danzig who died in Einlage, Chortitza, South Russia. This book includes 404 colored and 103 black and white photos, 20 maps and reproductions on many other documents of interest to the family history. A "unique cataloguing system" is used to trace the maternal/paternal/marital ancestry. For example, the author's name is catalogued as Sara Heide-Friesen; Harms (AKA Sally). Contact: Harms Publishing, Box 681, Winkler, MB R6W 4A8.

Sara (Sally) Harms. *Friesen Fest Memoirs 1998* (Winkler, MB : Harms Publishing, 2000) 117 pp.

This book documents the story of the descendants of Peter Friesen (1835-1893) who was married to 1) Margaretha Sawatzky (1835-1858), 2) Anna Giesbrecht (1839-1869) and 3) Katharina Klassen (1850-1896). The book includes the activities of the Friesen Reunions held in 1996 and 1998 including the text of the skit depicting the journey from Russia to Fargo to Manitoba in 1874. The book has 220 illustrations which include photos of family members, ships that carried the immigrants, various artifacts and much more. Contact: Harms Publishing, Box 681, Winkler, MB R6W 4A8 or phone/fax 204-325-4698.

Ed & Eleanor Reimer and Erna Karlowsky. *Reimer / Braun Family Genealogy*. (No publication data, 2000)

This compilation begins with tracing the family history of the descendants of Johann Kornelius Reimer (1878-1947)(born in Muensterberg, Molotschna) and his wife Anna Braun (1876-1952) who came to Canada in 1924 and settled at Whitewater, Manitoba. It also includes some Reimer genealogical data for earlier generations starting with Johann Reimer (b. abt. 1819) who lived in Margenau, Molotschna. This compilation also includes the genealogical data on the descendants of Johann G. Braun (1805-1872) who lived in Muensterberg, Molotschna. Contact: Eleanor Reimer, 75 Valence Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3T 3W6.

Anton "Tony" Driedger. *Abraham & Kornelia Bergen Driedger Family Tree*. (Winnipeg, MB : Private publication, 2000) 99 pp.

This compilation traces the descendants of Johann Driedger (1826) and Katharina Eitzen (1823) with a particular

emphasis on the descendants of their son Abraham Driedger (1867-1946) who was married to Cornelia Bergen (1872-1948) who lived at Gruenthal near Gretna, Manitoba. The book includes many photographs and biographical sketches submitted by various descendants. Contact: Tony Driedger, 62 Mahonee Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2G 3S2.

Frank Wiehler. Ed. *Chronik Der FamilieWiehler : 400 Years of History -A Retrospective View*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition updated and enlarged. (Luxemburg, 2000) 297 pp.

This chronicle of the Wiehler family was first published on the occasion of the third Wiehlertag 1995 in Weierhof, Palatinate, Germany. This Wiehler family has had reunions dating back to the first Wiehlertag held in Grunau, West Prussia in 1921 where the research of Rudolf Wiehler (b. 1862) of Elbing was shared. The Wiehlers met again in 1928, 1995 and 2000. For several centuries before 1945, the area around Elbing, West Prussia was the historical centre of the family. Since then the family has dispersed in all directions and may now be found in Germany, Poland, Canada, the USA, Latin America, Africa, the South Pacific and other places. This edition is in English and German. Contact: Erwin Wieler, 2251 140 A Street, Surrey, BC V4I 9R8.

Tina Rempel. *Rempel - Ewert Genealogy History 1787-1998* (Lowe Farm, MB : Private publication, 1998) 192 pp.

This compilation includes the family history of Peter K. Rempel (1867-1957) who was born in Heuboden, Bergthal Colony, South Russia, came to Canada in 1874 with his parents and lived in Kronsweide, Manitoba. Contact: Tina Rempel, Box 141, Lowe Farm, MB R0G 1E0.

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

## The 125<sup>th</sup> Celebrations

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on the first Mennonite church building (now a community centre), erected in the village of Reinland, Manitoba (west of Gretna) in 1876, and a cairn at the old cemetery of the village of Rosengart, not far away, where Wiebe resided at the time.

A special West Reserve history insert issued on June 26 in the local papers of Altona, Winkler, Morden and Carman had helped to raise awareness of what was to come. It also invited readers to come to Fort Dufferin on the Red River (just north of Emerson) to commemorate the arrival of the first Mennonite families of the area.

Some 1500 persons responded to the invitation on Sunday, July 16. For most people it was a first visit to this locality. The tent set up for the occasion could not hold all the attendees. However, the pleasant Dufferin park surroundings, good weather and few mosquitoes, and, of course, the excellent contributions of a wide-ranging number of speakers and music groups gave a good space for the two programs of the day. An afternoon worship service and a Christian music concert in the evening brought an inspiring focus to the gathering.

By that time, the communities of the area had several earlier equally significant events behind them. One was the June 30/July 1 village of Neubergthal unveiling of a new sign set up to highlight the village as national historic site, so designated by Parks Canada, and hosted by the local heritage society. Not far away, and almost simultaneously (on July 1-2) people who

once knew Edenthal and Edenburg (just to the south of Neubergthal) as their home villages, were recalling that wonderful time at a reunion held in Gretna and the former site of Edenburg just to the east of town. Four hundred or more people were present at each of these occasions.

By then family gatherings of the region had begun. Voths were meeting at Morden that weekend, while Heinrichs (at Gretna), Schroeders (at Altona), Wiebes (two different clans, at Providence College, Otterburne and Reinland/Rosengart), Hoepfners (at Steinbach, East Reserve, and Waldheim, West Reserve), Epps (at Winnipeg) and Bergens (at Gretna) were gearing up for gatherings of their own perhaps others, very specifically put a visit to Fort Dufferin on their own program.

Then came the August 26 Post Road Memorial Trail inaugural tour to cap all these events, as it were. It took two bus loads of celebrants from Fort Dufferin, where the first memorial post was put in place, all the way across the former West Reserve to a community now extinct, Mountain City, located about seven miles south of Morden and adjacent to Stanley Park.

Here the last post of the memorial trail was put in place, while Rev. Abe Rempel of the Old Colony Mennonite Church shared some very meaningful remarks as he compared the new memorial trail to the spiritual trail on which God wants to lead His people in life. Ten sites, all twelve of which were also given a lectern-mounted plaque to highlight the place of these communities on the Post Road many decades ago.

A series of radio spots of CFAM/CHSM had brought Mennonite heritage vignettes to listeners throughout the summer. Some of these will reappear as a special column in the local papers cited here earlier on. Copies of the insert published on these themes and a special West Reserve souvenir pin are still available for those interested. Papers are with the editors of the towns and the pin can be had by calling Conrad Stoesz at 888-

6781 and 669-6781. A Low German drama video can be purchased this way as well.

We want to thank all those who helped make these celebrations possible, and who supported the program financially. If you would like to make your own gift to help, contact the number given above. We hope you were able to take part somewhere on the 125<sup>th</sup> celebrations program, last year or this one, and blessed by doing so.

## The Post Road (part 2)

by Conrad Stoesz

Before the Post Road was established, two expeditions made significant treks through the area. The Boundary Trails Commission began at Fort Dufferin in 1873. It went south to Pembina and then followed the Pembina River to what became Gretna. Here it split into two groups, one continuing to follow the Pembina River into the US, and the other going in a northwesterly direction. The latter group camped at the site where Reinland was later established. From here the Boundary Trails Commission made its way to Mountain City. The southern group, after coming to St. Joseph (now Walhalla) followed the foot of the Pembina Hills to meet the other at Mountain City. Here the two groups joined again and continued west.

The following year, 1874, the North West Mounted Police also began its inaugural ride through the prairies at Fort Dufferin. They hugged the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel and rode straight west, camping overnight near the present day town of Gretna, and then continued until they found another natural campsite, the location that is now Reinland. From here they continued in a northwesterly direction to Mountain City and further west. While these two treks proceeded through what became the West Reserve, both of them always stayed south of what became the Post Road.<sup>25</sup>

The Post Road was thus a road in its own right. It became more traveled and important with the instillation of the markers. There were stopping points along the way and some people opened up their homes to travelers. Most notably were the David Schellenberg family in Neuanlage<sup>26</sup> and the Jacob Giesbrecht family in Reinland.<sup>27</sup> The Schellenberg family did not lock their doors at night so



Flags today mark the entrance to historic Fort Dufferin on the Red River near Emerson where Mennonites first landed in 1875 to begin settlement of the Manitoba Mennonite West Reserve. Mennonites returned to the site 125 years later for a worship and celebration program in a large tent on July 16. Photo: Courtesy of Elmer Heinrichs.

that the weary travelers could enter the house, find a spot on the floor, and get some rest. When waking in the morning, the Schellenbergs never knew how many guests they would have on their floor.<sup>28</sup> At times as many as fourteen people took refuge over night there.<sup>29</sup> Further west, just outside the village of Neuhorst, William Brown established a hotel<sup>30</sup>. This hotel and livery barn was considered the best accommodations anywhere in the west according to the *Southern Manitoba Times*.<sup>31</sup> In an August 31, 1881 letter from the Land Surveyor office in West Lynn, A.F.A. Martin states that the Brown property had one large two-story hotel measuring 40 x 36 feet which cost five thousand dollars. The barn measured 56 x 32 feet and cost one thousand, six hundred dollars. Other buildings on the property measured 60 x 25 feet and 12 x 18 feet, which together were worth eight hundred dollars.<sup>32</sup> Brown settled on the land in December of 1879, after he bought the land from a certain Mr. Stevenson.<sup>33</sup> In 1881, Brown was given permission to erect a new "first class" stable and hotel on the property.<sup>34</sup> The establishment of such a business in the heart of the Mennonite West Reserve did not sit well with the Mennonite leadership. They tried to have him removed from the reserve, but Brown retaliated by garnering over 350 signatures of people who supported him and his business, many of them from Emerson and West Lynn. The signatures show that there were many non-Mennonites who traveled the Post Road and believed that such a stopping place was of importance. In the end the government decided to allow Brown to remain on the land.<sup>35</sup>

The road's importance as a trade route grew substantially. In an 1883 article the *Southern Manitoba Times* reports travelling "...behind one of Shorttreeds's fast nags we were soon bowling along at a lively gait along the famous Post Road..."<sup>36</sup> Business men, farmers, and stage coaches all traveled along the road.<sup>37</sup> Open prairie, fields of grain, villages, hotels and sawmills were found along the way. Teams of horses that hauled freight along the Post Road would pull an average weight of one to two tons. The distance they traveled was determined by various factors such as weather and road conditions, the maximum distance being about thirty miles a day.<sup>38</sup>

It did not take long for the mail service

to take advantage of this new well-marked road. The route is marked on an 1882 federal postal map.<sup>39</sup> Emerson was the central location for distributing mail as far west as Nelsonville, Manitoba.<sup>40</sup> These circumstances together allowed the threefold increase in agricultural output to be brought to market in Emerson.<sup>41</sup>

While the Post Road facilitated better and faster travel, it also brought new issues to the communities. During the winter of 1882, travelers along the Post Road brought, and presumably helped spread, diphtheria in the Mennonite settlements. Many graves were dug in the frozen ground "by men who had hardly the strength to do it."<sup>42</sup> It also brought in a foreign language into the settlement. For Mennonites, the German language was important. It provided a way of keeping separate from the world and holding church and family close together. David Schellenberg of Neuanlage states in his recollections that the English settlers as far west as Killarney took shelter in his parent's home. These people, with their new language, gave the young David a chance to learn English.<sup>43</sup>

The people who traveled the Post Road soon realized that the oak<sup>44</sup> posts needed replacing due to weathering and perhaps due to people needing firewood. Müller contacted the local representative in the provincial legislature for help in maintaining these posts. On May 25, 1881, the provincial assembly passed "An Act to protect guide posts along certain roads in this Province".<sup>45</sup> This legislation introduced by Mr. Greenway stated that anyone found destroying or mutilating the posts would be subject to a ten dollar fine. This is one of the first laws in Manitoba governing road travel.<sup>46</sup>

The eastern portion of the Post Road remains today, with the most easterly portion incorporated into the provincial road number 243. The western portion is no longer in use, having become parts of farmers' fields and pastures. By 1930 virtually no trace of the western part of the Post Road is visible on aerial photography.<sup>47</sup>

It is unclear as to when and exactly why the Post Road came into disuse.

Numerous factors should be considered. By 1883 the road was no longer used as a colonization route.<sup>48</sup> In 1884, the newly established municipal government began to give more attention to roads and their upkeep.<sup>49</sup> When the Post Road was established there was no land drainage. Each farmer drained his own land as he saw fit. Once firmly established on the prairies, the farmers were able to break more ground for crop production. In addition, new settlers and new machinery put greater demand for land to be cultivated. In 1885 the village system began to break down. This affected the trails which connected them. Farmers began to petition the municipal government to allow them to plow up the trails and roads on their property. While this was a slow process, farmers through the 1890s continued to plow up more and more land. Even the government road allowances were not safe. In 1891, notices were published in newspapers warning farmers to allow for the ninety-nine foot road allowance.<sup>50</sup>

Until about 1900, only main section roads, which were six to eight miles apart, existed. It is unlikely that the important Post Road fell victim to the farmer's plow until more of the road allowances were established and graded, which began to happen after 1900, and was almost completed by 1914.<sup>51</sup> The smaller trails to wells and other villages naturally would have been the first to be worked under.

Drainage on a large scale began in 1902, when the Rural Municipality of Rheinland undertook a large drainage project, which was completed twelve years later in 1924.<sup>52</sup> It is possible that with the

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Olga Krahn, designer of the sign at the junction of Highway 75 and 243 marking the Mennonite West Reserve Post Road Memorial Trail which officially opened on August 26, 2000. Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz



**Mennonite Heritage Centre**

600 Shaftesbury Blvd Winnipeg MB Canada R3P 0M4

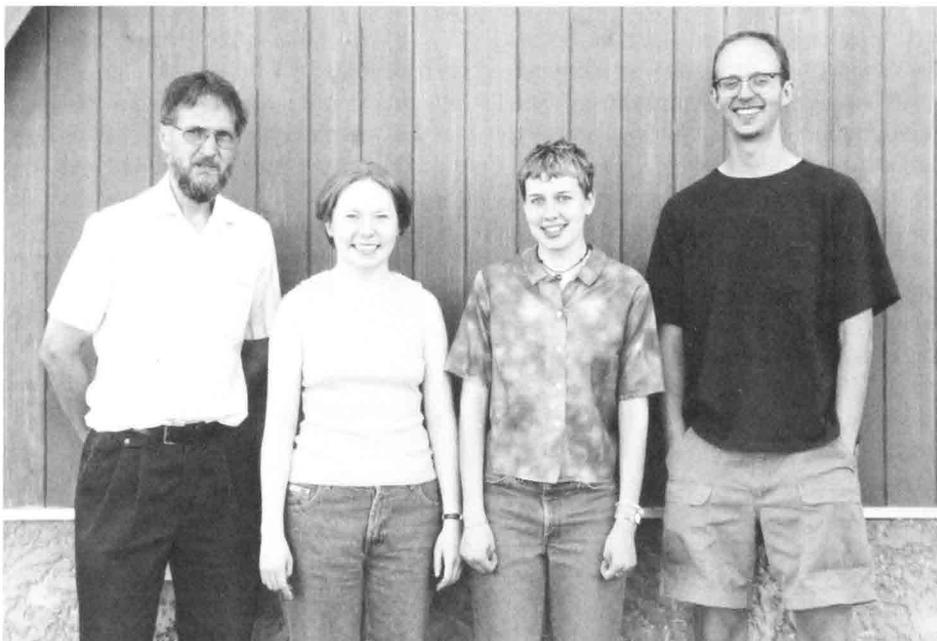
## MHC News

### Staffing Update

The Resources Commission of Mennonite Church Canada on June 12<sup>th</sup> announced the appointment of Alf Redekopp as Mennonite Heritage Centre Director, a transition from the interim position he held since November 1999. In addition to working at the Mennonite Heritage Centre on a part-time basis since 1994, Alf worked at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies as archivist since 1987.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre is also please to announce that Conrad Stoesz has been appointed as half-time archivist, also a transition from the interim position held since January.

Connie Wiebe, Archives secretary, will be working the equivalent of three days a week spread over four days, as she adds additional responsibilities at the Canadian Mennonite University Bookstore from September to April.



MHC Director Alf Redekopp with summer student archival assistants Kelli Downey, Shauna Weiss and Myron Dyck. Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz.

## Guide to Holding On the Web

Since the end of August the description of approximately 60 fonds or collections including the detailed file lists have been accessible as MS Word files to be downloaded from the MHC Web site. The description of each collection includes the following key elements of description: title, dates of creation, physical extent of the material, a biographical sketch or an administrative history of the creator of the records and a description of the scope and content of the collection. There are also often other notes about the history of the collection, when and who donated it and if there are any restriction with regards to access or use.

The web site is still very much in the process of being developed. Only a small portion of our holdings are described at our website. We plan to add many more in the future. We will continue to add to our site items which describe our holdings so that people can know of the magnitude of our historical resources. It is also hoped that researchers will be able to much better prepare for research visits and make the most of the time spent at the Centre.

Keep checking our website periodically for new additions. The address is: [www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/](http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/).

## Grants Received

The Mennonite Heritage Centre is very grateful for every financial contribution it receives. Financial assistance has been received this year in the amount of \$1,786 from the Government of Canada through the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives for some additional shelving and archival supplies for storing photographs. Two other federal government programs, *Summer Career Placement* and *Young Canada Works* granted a total of almost \$6,000 to hire summer students to work as archival assistants. All of these projects were performed on a cost-shared basis.

Financial assistance in the amount of \$5,000 was received from Mennonite Foundation of Canada toward the writing of the David Toews Biography.

For the operation of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery we thank and acknowledge the Vine and Branch Foundation, the P.W. Enns Family Foundation, the DeFehr Foundation, Palliser Furniture Limited, the Winnipeg Foundation and individual supporters.

## Funds Needed to Manage the Memory

The mission of the Heritage Centre could be described using the image of managing memory. We do this by collecting, arranging and preserving the resources of lasting historical value, by interpreting our story and by proclaiming God's work among us. There is a lot of memory to manage.

If we made one stack out of all the papers in the archives vault, it would be as high as the CN Tower. Our goal is to make it useful to the church and others seeking to understand the past in order to inspire greater faithfulness in the present and vision for the future.

You can contribute beyond your subscription to the *Mennonite Historian*. We need to receive \$26,000 by January 31, 2001. Your gift of \$100, \$200, \$500, \$1,000 or \$5,000 is needed.

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Boxes, boxes, and more boxes. Photo: Courtesy of Conrad Stoesz.

## CMBS on the Move

After several delays Concord College has moved to the new site of the Canadian Mennonite University, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies is finally able to occupy new space in the former library and administrative offices section of the building. Hundreds of boxes of documents, books and other materials were first moved from the basement location to the main floor. The shelving was then dismantled, moved and reassembled in the new location. Finally, materials were reshelved with provision for new accessions

where required.

In addition to the many hours of work by staff persons, a number of volunteers helped at various times. The move was very time-consuming, but it also provided a good opportunity to reorganize the materials and integrate collections that had become separated because of a lack of space. In a number of instances

decisions had to be made about whether or not to keep materials that were of doubtful historical value. As a result of this process and the expanded facilities, the Centre should have sufficient space for quite a number of years in the future. Service to the public should also be improved because of the proximity to the main Conference offices and better accessibility.

The Centre welcomes visitors to see the new facility as well as to utilize the rich resources available. Access to the Centre is at the main reception desk of the Canadian Conference offices on the second floor.

## Johan F. Kroeker File at CMBS

Recently the *Canadian Mennonite* (June 26, 2000) and *The Mennonite* (June 20, 2000) carried an article on Johan F. and Susana Schowalter Kroeker, two of the first General Conference missionaries to India. The article reported on how Tina Block Ediger had discovered the grandchild of the Kroekers, Albert Friesen, who with his wife Elizabeth and their children had settled near Reinland, Manitoba in 1997. Albert's mother, Lilli Friesen Kroeker, a daughter of Johan and Susana, had first migrated to Germany from Russia in 1979. Lilli died there in 1987.

Coincidentally, Alf Redekopp, after reading the story, happened upon the Kroeker file at CMBS. The file came to CMBS after Lilli wrote to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1986. With her letter she had enclosed several photographs, postcards, etc. The letter

gives some information about the family, including the names and birthdates of the Kroeker children. It also gives an excerpt of a 1932 letter which Johann Kroeker wrote to his family from prison.

In addition to these materials, a letter which Johann Kroeker wrote to the editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* published on October 24, 1923 (p. 8), was discovered. This letter was written from Pavlodar, Siberia and appealed to North American Mennonites for help to come to the United States. The letter indicates that the family consists of six persons, and the names and ages of the four children are indicated. Strangely, there is some discrepancy between these and the names and birthdates which Lilli gives in her 1986 letter to the *MR*.

AD



CENTRE FOR  
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## Canadian Council of Archives Grants

When the Winkler Bible School was closed several years ago, a large collection of documents, photographs and other materials were received by the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Conrad Stoesz has begun processing a collection of approximately 5000 photographs and slides. The work consists of background research, culling, identifying, arranging and describing these items. This project was made possible by financial assistance (\$5555.00) from the Government of Canada through the National Archives of Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives.

Financial assistance was also received from the same source for several other projects. The largest was a grant of \$5000.00 to help purchase additional shelving as part of the larger relocation project of the Centre. Finally, a grant of \$429.95 was received under the Preservation Management Program for archival supplies. The Centre is grateful for these contributions which enable it to carry on its work more effectively.



Johan F. and Susanna Kroeker with the five children born to them in India taken ca. 1908. Others on the photo may include Anna Funk and the P.A. Penners. Photo: Courtesy of CMBS.

## Namaka Mennonite Reunion

by Henry and Erna Goerzen

On July 28 –30, 2000 more than 160 folk gathered at Covenant Bible College in Strathmore, Alberta, to revisit 75 years of experience since the beginning of the Mennonite Settlement in the Namaka area. At that time Namaka was already on the map of Alberta as a place “where the trails meet,” a converging of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Blackfoot Indian Reserve.

Thirty-six young Mennonite families from Soviet Russia had arrived in those early years and, with the help of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, they were settled onto about 20 sections of land held by George Lane Co. and the Dominion Bank. The beginnings were indeed difficult as they lacked capital and adequate housing; hail and drought were prevalent, and the Great Depression was soon upon them. Not all of the settlers came with farming experience. These conditions caused many to move to other parts of Alberta and Canada, particularly Ontario. Today only about 12 families that descended from the original settlers remain. A comment from one who stayed in the area was: “We were brought to this country to develop and teach agriculture. That is why we came and that is why we stayed.” This calling has largely been carried out. The Mennonite farmers of Namaka have become successful and have been active in the development of agriculture in the community and beyond.

Those who moved on see their Namaka experience as having been the staging area for their departure to eventual locations and vocations. They have made their mark in the service industries, professions, in secular and religious schools and on the mission field. They, as well as the people who stayed, have left their forefathers’ isolationism and have integrated into the community and culture around them. It is there that they serve and witness to their faith.

The reunion was a celebration of life at the Namaka settlement and in dispersion, and of God’s faithfulness from generation to generation. The initiator, Abe Quiring and his helpers, planned and worked tirelessly to make such an event possible. Art Wall from St. Catharines, Ont., led the

group in singing of old and new favorites. A quartet and other musical contributions brought back memories with beautiful and timeless German songs.

There was a buzz of conversation as old friends and acquaintances met, some of whom hadn’t seen each other for 60 years, exclaiming in delight as they recognized each other. Some came to revisit the place where their families had once lived, and the bus tour of the area gave reality to what had only been hearsay before. The school sites, the church, the tree shaded picnic grounds by the backwater of the Bow River, gave rise to many happy memories, and the visit to the church cemetery was opportunity to remember and honor those who had once lived here and gave so much.

During the Sunday morning worship service, recognition was given to the five still living original settlers, now all over 90 years of age. The three who were present were Mrs. Mary Thiessen, Mrs. Margaret Willms and Mr. David Penner.

The closing challenge was given by John Wall, a local Namaka boy who became an educator in secular and Christian institutions of learning in North America, a missionary in South America and an administrator for mission work. His message, “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness from Generation to Generation”, based on Psalm 100, highlighted the gathering. He encouraged each listener to see his/her own life as part of God’s bigger picture, which includes the past and its heritage, the present, whether joyful or difficult, and to look to the future, as the forefathers did when they came to this land – rejoicing in God’s faithfulness through all generations.

A longer account of this event, as well as the text of John Wall’s message will be with the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta.

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## Letters to the Editors

### Re. Post Road

I read the article on the Post Road (Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 2000), and found it very interesting. My background is Swiss Mennonite so I know little about this material. I recalled some of my summer experiences in VS with MCC, and meeting people from Plum Coulee, Gnadental, etc., who must be from this region.

I have read *My Canadian Journal* by Lady Dufferin. She includes an account of meeting Russian Mennonites (Aug. 5, 1877) who “are getting along very well. . . They are good settlers and in addition to the virtues of sobriety and industry they add the advantage of bringing money into the country.”

She mentions meeting a Mr. Jacob Peters on August 21 (“the Mennonites’ most learned man”) who gave a speech there, with a Mr. William Hespeler translating. Pages 255-258 are about Mennonites. She states, “The only fault is that the stables open into the living rooms. The inhabitants will gradually leave off this nasty plan, but it is their devotion to their cattle which makes them wish to have them so near. The village herdsman and the village schoolmaster are the only two paid labourers in the Mennonite vineyard. The clergyman receives no pay”.

I am from the US originally and am still amazed at how “young” Canada is. Lady Dufferin writes about all of Canada, east to west, but indicates that to get to Vancouver they go by train through Salt Lake City!

Rachel Schmucker  
Markham, Ontario

### Re: Old maps and drawing discovered

Checking through my letters from Gerhard Wiens he points out that the map (mentioned in the *Mennonite Historian*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 2000) was in fact purchased by his wife’s father, a Russian Mennonite from Kansas visiting Molochna in 1914 from a relative - a Dirks who owned a store in Gnadenheim (Letter dated April 10 1987). In the same letter Gerhard states he had spoken with their neighbour Hedwig Dyck who recalled that when the map first appeared there had been some

uproar. Her father and Johann Janzen were accused of being German spies and threatened with Siberian banishment, but they managed to convince the authorities that the map was for school children. One part of the railway shown was only built in 1913 and the map was purchased in 1914 which suggests a date probably in late 1913 or early 1914.

Also regarding Taschtschenak, your note identifying the Wiens estate with Cornies is incorrect. A number of estates were named thus after the local river and the Wiens estate was an independent purchase from Cornies. The following item entitled "Mennonite estate of Taschtschenak in southern Russia" is written by Gerhard Wiens himself.

My information about the Gutsbesitzer in Russia will start with Taschtschenak which was located about 18 verst from Melitopol and 18 verst from Fedorovka, the first railroad station north of Melitopol. In the Taschtschenak area were 18 estates which varied in size. The area was named after a small river, Taschtschenak (a Turkish or Tartar name), which flowed south into the Azov Sea.

Our estate was about 22 verst southwest from the colony (village) of Altonau in the Molochna colony. It consisted of an area of 765 desiatin. My mother's father, David D. Schroeder, had first rented the land from the government and in 1848 he purchased the land. In the 1870s my grandmother, Helene Schroeder, bought more land (2850 desiatin) from Prince Svjetopolk-Mirsky. This land was seven verst from our place and was called Helenenfeld. Around 1900 my father bought about 2950 desiatin from two sisters by the name of Mordvinov. They belonged to the Russian nobility. This land was located 12 verst south of Melitopol on the Molochnaia River. It was called Mordvinovka. A little later father bought 800 desiatin of land at 500 rubles a desiatin from Mr Fein, a Lutheran Gutsbesitzer. This land was adjacent to Helenenfeld. About half the area of land on the Helenenfeld and Mordvinovka estates was rented out to local Russian villagers. Father said they desperately needed more land.

Our neighbour, about one verst north, was Heinrich Schroeder who owned about 1000 desiatin. Two verst north was Aron Martens who owned about 1500 desiatin. He owned another estate of 1500 desiatin near Sofievka the first rail station north of Zaporozha [Alexandrovsk - in Ekaterinoslav].

Three verst north of our estate lived Paul Martens who owned about 1200 desiatin. Across the river from us lived Heinrich Martens with some 1200 desiatin of land. Next to him, about one verst south, lived David Enns owner

of some 500 desiatin. Three verst west from his place he owned another estate also of about 500 desiatin. Next was Johann Martens with 600 desiatin and then Isbrand Rempel with 600 desiatin. Two verst southwest lived Jakob Klassen who owned about 700 desiatin. Two verst north of Helenenfeld lived Johann Sudermann, owner of about 800 desiatin of land. Two verst north lived Johann Enns also with 800 desiatin. About three verst north lived Nikolai Rempel with some 800 desiatin. Nearby lived Wilhelm Martens with 500 desiatin. Three verst east lived Abram Reimer with 1000 desiatin. Next was Dietrich Friesen with 1000 desiatin. Two verst north lived Johann Martens with about 500 desiatin. Three verst northeast lived a Bräul with 500 desiatin.

Old Taschtschenak 12 verst south of Melitopol was started by Johann Cornies, the reformer from Molochna. His grandson still lived on this estate before the Revolution. It consisted of about 1000 desiatin. Cornies' granddaughter, a Mrs Neufeld, lived close by on an estate of about the same size. The Klatts also lived in this area.

At Brotsky, about 50 verst west of Melitopol were a number of estate owners including Jacob Willms, Johann Schroeder, Peter and Johann Dick and Thomas Martens. They owned large estates ranging from 1000 to 2000 desiatin. Near Fedorovka was located Falz-Fein's original estate with some 2000 desiatin of land."

*James Urry, Victoria University,  
Wellington, New Zealand*

## The Post Road

*(cont'd from p. 5)*

drainage of the land, people could now travel along the road allowances and farmers could cultivate all of their land. Wherever the Post Road was not a part of the grid system, it was cultivated and put into agricultural production. The one thing that appears to have survived from the western portion of the Post Road, is in the village of Reinland where, in a pasture, one bridge piling remains from a bridge that was on the Post Road.

People in the area still refer to the eastern portion of the road as "the Post Road". When asking for directions, to a certain house, people would explain that it is a certain distance from the Post Road. Over 100 years after the Post Road was established, it still plays a part in the life and history of the people and the area.

### Endnotes

25. John Rempel and William Harms, *Atlas of*

*Original Mennonite Homesteaders and Some Burial Plots of the Mennonite West Reserve Manitoba* (Altona, Manitoba: John Rempel and William Harms, 1990), p.4.

26. Enns, pp. 4, 6.

27. Enns, p.47.

28. Telephone interview with Ingvar Lundin.

29. *The Altona Echo*, Progress Edition, (Altona Manitoba, September 7, 1949), p. np.

30. Enns, p.11.

31. John Dyck, "From Paper on Isaak Müller", January 8, 1999, p. 1.

32. Copy of letter from A.F.A. Martin, August 31, 1881, in author's possession.

33. Copy of "Statement made by Mr. W. Brown with reference to Section 11, Tp.1R3W.", December 28, 1887, in author's possession.

34. Enns, p.11.

35. Letter to Mr. Brown from the Department of the Interior, and research done by the late John Dyck, now in the author's possession.

36. Enns, p.36.

37. Enns, p.11.

38. Enns, p.11.

39. J. Dewr, Chief P.O. Inspector, "Map of Manitoba Showing Post Offices and Mail Routes", Ottawa, December 1882, at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, H3 614.2 gmd 1882.

40. John Dyck, "From Paper on Isaak Müller", January 8, 1999, p.1.

41. Enns, p.10.

42. Henry J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, (Altona, Manitoba: The Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1970), p.139.

43. David Schellenberg, "Highlights of My Life", 1944, translated by Susan Schroeder at Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Volume 4673, File 25.

44. Elizabeth Bergen "Gretna Was Once Bald Prairie", in *Red River Valley Echo*, June 14, 1972, p. 4.

45. Enns, p.12.

46. Enns, p.12.

47. The Natural Resources, Aerial Photography branch has aerial pictures of the area as early as 1930. No trace of the Post Road could be found around the villages of Neuhorst, Osterwick, and Reinland, except for a hint of a path or road on the south side of Schoenwiese. It looks like a short cut that ran diagonal to the road allowance.

48. Warkentin, p.253.

49. Warkentin, p.255.

50. Warkentin, p.255.

51. Warkentin, p.256

52. Mel Reimer, "Rheinland RM incorporated in 1884 with 1,895 People", in *Centennial Section, The Red River Valley Echo*, Wednesday December 20, 1967, p. 15.

*Conrad Stoesz works as part-time archivist at the Centre for MB Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.*

## Book Reviews

(cont'd from p. 12)

discovered by literary or cinematic artists and the experiences of the Mennonite community replete with stories of war, conflict, sacrifice, heroism and an adventurous spirit will achieve a broader audience. When that happens a rich story imbued with faith, culture and an indomitable spirit will be more fully revealed.

Stoesz and Stackley's well-illustrated story is rather atypical of usual historical narratives focusing on a particular location. Replete with many photographs and illustrations, the book frequently seeks to tell individual stories of people as a means of describing significant events rather than merely recounting events in broad perspective. This gives a more personalized touch to the book, hence greater interest for general readership. It definitely helps the book rise to the top of the heap of the many community histories now being written.

The authors have also employed good formatting features in the book. The frequent use of sidebars to present important facts and interesting little stories, at times illustrated with a photograph, enhances the general layout of each page, a technique that makes for less tiring reading because each page is attractive and different.

While divided into four parts, in essence the book has two major sections. The first of these major sections is entitled "Strangers Become Friends in the Wilderness" and the second is "Building Community in the Wilderness." The first large section covers the various groupings that came together in the Chaco, including the Paraguayan Government, local Aboriginals as well as the various waves of Mennonite immigration. The second section covers topics of economics, education, health infrastructure governance and religion. These two sections are really the heart of the book and framed within an introductory brief history of the country and concluding with a couple of chapters on the Paraguayan Mennonite community at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Where the book breaks down a bit is in the constant theme of recounting each Mennonite Paraguayan experience as a series of success stories. While it is true that the entire story is one of an immigrant

people descending upon a new and unfamiliar land where through hard work and perseverance different waves of Mennonite immigrants made a new life for themselves amidst several different cultures, the question should be posed as to whether this is success or yet another form of colonialism. The authors never seem to pose any of these critical questions but rather are bent on presenting a triumphal recounting of immigration, economic and social development.

Nevertheless, the book overall is a good read and quite informative. But it does beg the question of where and what the rubs have been and continue to be both within the Mennonite community and over-against the Aboriginal and larger Paraguayan cultures. Perhaps for that we should not look to the writers of history but rather let the artistic community probe those issues. Can the historian ever get beneath the surface of events and lives of the people the way the artist can?

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E.S. Thiessen and A. Showalter. *A life displaced. A Mennonite woman's flight from war-torn Poland* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2000) pb., 217 pp.

M. Epp. *Women without men. Mennonite refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press) pb., 245 pp.

*Reviewed by Helene Friesen, Der Bote Indexer, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg*

Both these books focus on women's lives as they were prior to, during and following World War II, one from a very personal, subjective perspective, the other from a more detached, objective and analytical perspective.

Encouraged by her family and friends, Thiessen relates her straightforward narrative after a prolonged interval: "When I came to Canada, I built a wall between myself and Europe, and I wanted to keep the memories behind that wall. They stayed there for 40 years..." (p. 29).

Epp's post-doctoral book is based on "memory sources"—oral interviews, published and unpublished autobiographies and memoirs—recollections of the past which she uses "in a traditional sense to provide anecdotal and qualitative evidence from the lives of refugee immigrants

themselves, but also to explore the pattern of myths and in the process of remembering" (p. 14).

Apart from the treatment of women's history and changing roles, both writers touch on the related topic of ethnic identity. Epp traces Mennonite ethno-religious identity from the Netherlands to Prussia to Russia, and how they came to be identified as Germans in the USSR. Thiessen details her identifying herself as Mennonite and not German from an early age, and makes the distinction clear: "I was conscious of the fact that my Mennonite ancestors were Dutch, not German. We Mennonites were different from the German Germans, living in Germany, but also those of German ancestry, living in Poland" (p. 370). As well, nearly every story relates the difficulties subjects encountered in maintaining their ethical standards while fighting for their families' survival.

While Epp's focus is on the thousands of Mennonites of Soviet Russia who "experienced the full impact of Stalinist oppression during the 1930s and the reluctant disintegration of Mennonite community life" and were able to flee the Soviet regime, later emigrating to Canada and Paraguay (p. 9), Thiessen's narrative relates the Prussian Mennonites' displacement and emigration in the same stream. These are the authentic accounts of people caught between the Communists and the Nazis.

Thiessen draws readers into the brief, idyllic life she and her family and neighbours led on their farms and in villages, a small island of Mennonites near Warsaw, Poland, before Hitler's armies invaded and shattered their world. Relations with their Polish neighbours deteriorated; the war brought hardships, the limiting of options, induction into work and indoctrination camps and eventually separation from family as the unsought war rolled over them. Most appalling was life after the Soviet defeat of the German army. No detail is spared in the description of the brutal post-war atrocities imposed on the population by the Polish/Soviet authorities. For after the war, Thiessen declares, the new Polish government could not find the many German government officials who had already fled, to kill them or take them prisoner. So instead, they took prisoners of those "enemies" who remained—mothers and children, women of all ages and some older men.... Surviving the horrendous

and shameful things that happened after the war was the hardest part (p. 168).

Her escape to the West, assisted partly by MCC workers and many strangers but also accomplished owing to her courage, is nothing less than heroic, as is so much of the conduct of the mothers and daughters who endured. Yet, she declares that her strength came from God and that she is grateful for how good God had been to her. She speaks of *loslassen*, a letting go of any anger at those who maltreated her, and "freeing myself of the chaos that had so long entangled me" (p. 170). Having told her story, she came to know peace.

Epp begins her study with the aftermath of the Stalin's Great Purges upon the Mennonite villages of Ukraine, when the men were arrested by the secret police at night and sent to slave-labour camps, never to be heard from again, leaving thousands of disintegrated families. The hardships that women experienced prior to the war were temporarily and partially alleviated with the German advance into Ukraine but later, as the civilian population evacuated ahead of the Soviet army's push westward, greatly intensified. They become refugees fleeing the Soviet "liberation" and the ensuing atrocities. Eventually the survivors immigrated to the virtual wilderness of Paraguay or to the cities and prairies of Canada and endeavored to build meaningful lives.

But while gender roles may change as "some stereotypical gendered behaviour" was broken down by the war, "traditional thinking on sexual roles was unaltered" (p. 77). Epp documents the "dilemmas and opportunities" faced by "mothers, widows, and marriageable women" as heads of families in sometimes hostile conditions, by analyzing her memory sources' recollections of the past.

Epp indicates that while war "heightens the vulnerability of women...destroys their homes and tears apart their families", the war also broke down some social boundaries and freed women from behaving "in accordance with gender limitations" (p. 194). Settling into their new lives in the New World brought its own complications. Women's pre-migration lives of self-reliance juxtaposed with their Canadian existence "as subordinate within their churches and communities" (p. 186) resulted in their living with ambiguities while trying to

come to terms with life.

The inclusion of photographs and, in Thiessen's book a map and numerous documents telling her story, and in Epp's book an appendix of tables of pertinent statistics, the extensive bibliography and index, add immensely to the enjoyment of both books.

The insights gained from Epp's and Thiessen's recounting of women's experiences go far in our gaining an understanding of the turmoil ordinary people suffer as a result of war. If one objective of the writers was to weave memories into history, that intent has undoubtedly been achieved. Both volumes stand as significant and valuable contributions to published history.

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## Book Notes

by Adolf Ens

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John J. Bergen, Edmonton, has published the literary output of his late wife, Hilda Lohrenz Bergen. *Hilda's Pilgrimage* (200 pages, \$12) contains well over a hundred items, over half of them brief poetic compositions. Most of them were written for family and out of family experiences. Mennonite history buffs will appreciate the glimpses into Gerhard Lohrenz' character (Hilda's father) provided in a number of the selections.

*Kane – The Spirit Lives On* is a generously illustrated history, published on the occasion of the official closing of the Kane Community Centre. The Rose Farm – Kane area received much of the overflow of the Mennonite West Reserve of southern Manitoba beginning in the late 1890s. The committee headed by Dora Hildebrand has created an interesting and informative monument in this substantial (8½ x 11, 366-page hardcover) book. The section on World War II, for example, includes coverage not only of active military and CO involvement, but also shorter sections on German prisoners of war and Japanese-Canadian internees.

Some readers will remember Ab Douglas from his broadcast journalism beginning in the 1950s, first with CTV and then CBC. *No Dancing God: Mennonite Stories* (Kelowna: Rutgers Publications, 143 pages, \$14.95) is a collection of stories hovering "in the twilight zone between reality and fiction" according to author Ab Douglas Driediger. They show the writing

skill of an experienced journalist and the fascinating insights of a Saskatchewan Mennonite boy experiencing the world and describing it to the Canadian public.

*My Old Order Heritage* is Mary Ann Horst's updated and expanded (to 44 pages) popular booklet (now in its 11<sup>th</sup> printing) first published in 1970. Horst, from the Kitchener area, is a popular author who has also written on Pennsylvania Dutch folklore, the Kitchener Farmers' Market, and similar topics.

Esther Patkau has compiled a brief (16-page) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet of CMBC's first graduating class (Class of 1950). Photographs and brief biographies of the twelve graduates and their families are included.

Sociologist Leo Driedger's *Mennonites in the Global Village* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, 264 pages, \$24.95 pb) analyses the impact of modern and postmodern influences on North American Mennonites, who now represent only 39% of global Mennonite membership. Driedger has followed demographic changes among Canadian Mennonites for some time and has participated keenly in much of the recent Mennonite identity debate. Together with fellow sociologists Kaufmann and Harder, he has published two volumes (1975 and 1991) tracking trends among members of several Canadian and USA Mennonite conferences. This study looks at the impact of phenomena such as urbanism, professionalism, individualism, cultural changes, and the media. The global Mennonite spectrum is briefly surveyed as an introductory backdrop.

Annie Goertz, a descendant of the Waldheim (Manitoba) Heppners, later Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, has published her autobiography under the title *Miss Annie: God sent a 3¢ stamp and more ...* (Abbotsford, B. C., 256 pages). The title, "Miss Annie," comes from her local name in over 30 years in India with the Evangelical Alliance Mission.

Some other recent books received by the Mennonite Heritage Centre include: Jacob A. Loewen, *The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2000, 334 pages, pb) and Jakob J. Martens, *Ein langer Weg in die Freiheit: Gefangener der UdSSR* (Asunción-Filadelfia: im Eigenverlag, 2000, 360 pages, hc).

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## Book Reviews

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T.D. Regehr. *Peace, Order & Good Government : Mennonites & Politics in Canada* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2000) pb., 130 pp.

*Reviewed by John H. Redekop, Trinity Western University, Langley, BC*

In publishing this expanded version of the 1999 J. J. Thiessen lectures, the Canadian Mennonite Bible College Lectureship Committee has provided a very valuable service for the entire Mennonite constituency. It constitutes a significant addition to the still scarce studies of Mennonites and politics.

The five chapters, in sequence, present a general overview, describe 19th century developments in Ontario, analyze Mennonites and socialism as well as Mennonites and Social Credit, and offer an assessment of several national Mennonite politicians. The brief conclusion contains some provocative assessments.

Much of Professor Regehr's material is organized around several key themes. Canadian Mennonite political activity has incorporated elements of martyrdom as well as patronage and the solicitation of special favours. Attitudes of reluctance and avoidance have been more than matched by involvement and activism. Tensions between theological theory and political practice developed early and have increased over the years. And politically, Mennonites are "all over the map" but identify most readily with the conservative sector of the political spectrum.

Supported by significant research, the author explains that Mennonite political activism in Canada has expressed itself variously. The solicitation of special arrangements, initiated by the earliest immigrants, has continued to the present day. Even the most conservative groups have not hesitated to lobby for their own interests. Mennonite partisan candidacy at elections also has a long history. Already in 1864, three years before Canadian Confederation, Isaac Erb Bowman won the Waterloo North seat in the Upper Canada [Ontario] legislature. In Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, Mennonites won at least one seat in the first elections held after the creation of each province.

If we measure Mennonite political

activism according to candidacies, then the Canadian Mennonite record must be described as impressive. From Ontario to British Columbia, Mennonite candidate percentages have generally exceeded Mennonite population percentages. Significantly, Mennonites as defined by Regehr, constitute perhaps eight percent of the population in Manitoba but constituted "roughly one-quarter of the recent Manitoba provincial candidacies."

While Professor Regehr raises many key issues, concerning some fundamental matters his treatment is at best incomplete; space limitations doubtless account for part of the problem. He states, quite correctly, that the early Anabaptists avoided political activity and seems to affirm such a stance as Biblically correct but he does not adequately explain how such a theology should be expressed in radically transformed democratic and pervasive states in which church and state share broad common agendas, where the line between those who govern and those who are governed is increasingly blurred, and where almost half of all income flows through government hands.

Further, the author tends to define political activity largely in partisan terms but there are other components. Many Mennonites serve governments in the public service, in regulatory agencies and in government-owned corporations. Is such activity appropriate? Regehr also does not grapple with the fundamental Anabaptist/Mennonite dilemma concerning church and state, namely, why should Mennonites describe the governmental realm as part of "the Kingdom of Darkness" [Schleitheim Confession, etc.] and reject any involvement in it given that the New Testament writers instruct Christians to honour government, to be thankful for it, to pray for it, and to pay taxes for its operation? Would Jesus and the inspired writers instruct us to pray for the success of something which is intrinsically evil?

It also seems difficult to reconcile Regehr's accurate observation that various Canadian Mennonite politicians have rendered "valuable services to the state and to Canadian secular society" [p. 125] with the apparent inference that they should not have done so, given that Mennonite theology calls "for a complete separation of church and state". [p. 43] Is such Mennonite political activism commendable

or should it be opposed?

Several lesser assessments and interpretations should probably be revisited before any additional printings are undertaken. I suggest that it was not the "ambiguities of the Canadian constitution" which "made possible a gradual transition from the politics of special privilege and patronage to participatory democracy" [p. 21], but the growing understanding among ever more prosperous Canadian Mennonites of the opportunities and responsibilities in a democratic state. Further, reference to the King of England should be changed to King of the United Kingdom although, as used in this context, the writer actually refers to the King of Canada. Third, it was not that "Mennonites were slow to respond to the appeal of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation party," they were simply reluctant and suspicious of socialism. The author accepts the utility of the threefold categorization of ethnic, ethnic-religious, and religious Mennonites which I set out in a 1982 essay. The third type are those people who have no Mennonite ethnic identity but are part of the Mennonite family of faith. Unfortunately he defines this group inaccurately. Finally, any author would be well-advised either to define "antinomianism" or to use some other term.

All things considered, this slim volume is more significant than its brevity might suggest. It deserves a wide readership. All Mennonite pastors, social scientists, students, politicians and all others, Mennonite or non-Mennonite, who desire to understand how the heirs of the "third branch" of the Reformation have grappled with political change, and who desire to be informed and faithful citizens, should read this book. They will find it both interesting and helpful. It should, of course, be available in all church and school libraries.

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Edgar Stoesz and Muriel T. Stackly, *Garden in the Wilderness: Mennonite Communities in the Paraguayan Chaco 1927-1997* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1999) 219 pp.

*Reviewed by Ken Reddig, Executive Secretary, MCC Manitoba.*

At some point soon the drama of the Paraguayan Mennonite story will be  
(cont'd on p.10)