

Mennonite Historian

A Mennonite Newspaper One Hundred Years ago - 1912

by Bert Friesen

*What dominated communication between Mennonite communities in Europe and North America? What did the different Anabaptist groups hear and know about each other? Thanks to the financial assistance from the D.F.Plett Research Foundation, Bert Friesen is indexing the **Mennonitische Rundschau** for the decade from 1910-1919. ed.*

The year 1912 included many events and issues which concerned MR editors and readers. Such diversity of content made for interesting reading. This medium connected Russian Mennonites in Czarist Russia and North America; and it attracted readers still comfortable with the German language from the Swiss/Pennsylvania Mennonites. There were also some readers of Hutterian background, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, and other groups. What issues dominated the newspaper in 1912?

Migrations within North America received sustained reporting. The movement continued from the mid-western states to the west coast, mostly California, but also to Oregon and Washington. Then there was migration from Minnesota and the Dakotas to Saskatchewan; these were 1870s immigrants from Russia looking for better farming opportunities.

There was an attempt at resettling families from Terek colony in the Pinea region of Georgia, south of Macon. They were to become cotton farmers. The venture proved to be a failure, mainly because the climate, conditions, and isolation from other Mennonites became intolerable. These settlers mostly moved on to the mid-western states.

The sinking of the Titanic ocean liner in 1912 was big news. It was reported in MR because there was a special interest in a missionary named Annie Funk, returning from India. She lost her life in the tragedy. [*Recently, a 36-minute DVD called **Remembering Annie Funk (and the Titanic)** was released, documenting her story. – ed.*]

Reports of the Chinese revolution affected the Mennonite mission work in China. It was the beginning of long-term changes in China, affecting the work of many mission organizations.

Advertisements continued to be a major feature of most issues. These consisted of offers of land for individual farms and for agricultural colonies in western states, such as Colorado, California, Idaho, and

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



Mennonite Refugee Camps in Germany, 1921-1951: Part II – Lager Mölln

by Peter Letkemann (Winnipeg)

In the summer of 1929, some 55 Mennonite families (most of them from Slavgorod), who had travelled to Moscow in order to obtain exit visas were granted permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Canada. As word of their success spread, thousands of other Mennonite and German farm families from all parts of the Soviet Union streamed towards Moscow in the fall of 1929 in hopes of also gaining permission to leave the country for Canada. For various reasons, including growing unemployment and a poor economic outlook, both federal and provincial governments were unwilling to accept more Mennonites and other eastern European immigrants at this time. The situation of the refugees in Moscow, who had sold homes and possessions and left everything behind them, seemed hopeless.

At this point the German government came to their rescue, agreeing to take up

to 13,000 persons and to provide temporary shelter in Germany until such time as they could move onwards to Canada, Brazil, Paraguay, or other countries. As was the case in Lechfeld almost 10 years earlier, plans were made to house these new refugees in military barracks and training schools in various parts of northern Germany, left vacant and unused as a result of the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles.

The first group (the so-called “Kiel Group”), with 323 men, women, and children, left Moscow on 29 October for Leningrad. They embarked on the *Felix Dzerzhinskii* and arrived in Kiel on 3 November. They were temporarily housed first in Kiel and later in the *Überseeheim* in Hamburg. This group was later the first to be transported to Mölln, on 21 December 1929.

A second group (the so-called

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Hundred Years Ago

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Montana. There were household items such a cream separators for sale and relief from ailments in the form of services and medication.

The Mennonite history written by Peter M. Friesen and published in 1911 was heavily advertised and promoted. Recently, the North American section of this volume was translated and published. [See review in this issue (p. 9).]

A fair portion of space was filled with local reports submitted by local correspondents. These reports included details about visits, travels to other locations, weather, crop yields, crop prices, and so on. Often there was an appeal for news on a missing family member. Scattered across Europe, Asia, and North America, MR remained a vital communication link.

There were an increasing number of full-length obituaries, in addition to the death notices. Usually one and up to three extended obituaries appeared in an issue. The year turned out to be a momentous one for MR and its editor, Claas B. Wiens (1869–1962). He kept cajoling his readers to keep submitting material. He longed to travel more to meet them, but this was difficult because of time and financial constraints. Yet Wiens fulfilled his objective, serving as a means of communication for his readers and keeping them informed about ideas, events, and changes in their world.

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Editors: Alf Redekopp (MHC)

Jon Isaak (CMBS)

Associate Editor: Conrad Stoesz
(CMBS/MHC)

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

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

E: aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca

or

1310 Taylor Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB R3M 3Z6
P: 204-669-6575

E: jisaak@mbconf.ca

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Mölln camp

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“Swinemünde Group”), numbering 396 persons, left Moscow on 31 October en route to Leningrad, where they arrived on 6 November. Here they were detained by local officials hoping to earn bribe money. The group was finally allowed to sail aboard the *Aleksei Rykov* on 29 November and arrived in Swinemünde, Germany on 2 December 1929. They were housed here temporarily until the Camp in nearby Mölln was ready to receive refugees.

Throughout November, negotiations between German consular staff and Soviet officials continued for the release of the estimated 13,000 refugees remaining in Moscow. Just over 5,000 were finally allowed to leave in 9 train transports between 29 November and 9 December. The remaining 8,000 or more were transported back to their home regions or to labour camps in northern Russia and Siberia.

On 9 December the first transports from Moscow began arriving at Camp Hammerstein (now Czerne, Poland); within a few days almost 3,000 persons were housed in five large former military barracks. Due to overcrowding and a serious outbreak of measles among the children, 563 refugees were transferred further west on 12 December to military barracks in the town of Prenzlau, 100 km north-east of Berlin; another 525 persons were transferred the following day. By 21 December there were 1,700 persons in Prenzlau – 68 Lutheran families (300 persons) and 270 Mennonite families (1,400 persons).

On 21 December 1929, a third camp was set up in Mölln. Because of its proximity to the port of Hamburg, Mölln became the staging point for all refugee transports from Germany to Brazil, Paraguay, and Canada. Persons travelling to South America sailed aboard German ships, with passage and credit (to be paid back over a ten-year period) provided by the German government. Mennonites traveling to Canada sailed on CPR ships as credit passengers, with guarantees provided by the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in Rosthern.

The beautiful and historic small town of Mölln lies nestled among forests and lakes about 50 km south west of Hamburg. In Germany it is known as a *Lufikurort* (Fresh Air Health Spa), where people with breathing disorders come to

enjoy fresh, unpolluted air. It also is famous as the burial place of the legendary Till Eulenspiegel.

It is here that the Prussian Army chose to establish an *Unteroffiziersvorschule*, a training facility for young men destined to serve as non-commissioned officers. Construction began on 11 November 1913 and was completed in mid-1917. From 30 June 1917 to 31 March 1920 the building served its intended function. In the wake of restrictions imposed on the Germany military by the Treaty of Versailles, the training school was closed. From 2 April 1920 to 30 Sep 1923 it was temporarily used to house several of the remaining companies of the German *Reichswehr*. After that the Ministry of Defence had no further use of the buildings, along with dozens of other military camps and barracks throughout Germany – including Lechfeld, Hammerstein, and Prenzlau – all of which were destined to play a brief but important role in the history of Mennonite refugees from Soviet oppression.

In 1925 the complex was transferred to the Ministry of Finance and placed under the administration of Adolf Thoret, a retired tax assessor in the Regional Finance Ministry of Schleswig-Holstein. For the next five years the buildings stood mostly vacant, although parts were used briefly as a Youth Hostel.

On 26 November 1929 Thoret was informed by the Finance Ministry of the potential use of these buildings as a shelter for German refugees gathered in Moscow. The German government established a *Reichskommissariat für die Deutsch-Russenhilfe* on 5 December 1929 and appointed the socialist parliamentarian, Dr. Stücklen, to coordinate the relief effort. He had earlier served as director of the *Reichskommissariat für Zivilgefangene und Flüchtlinge* (Reichskommissariat for Civilian Detainees and Refugees) in the early 1920s, at the time when the Lechfeld Camp was established.

On 4 December 1929 a commission came to inspect the buildings in Mölln; detailed instructions for renovations were issued and work began on 9 December. Over the next 12 days dozens of local craftsmen were employed to renovate plumbing, electrical, heating systems, and kitchen facilities to accommodate an estimated 1,000 refugees. Furnishings for all of these camps (beds, tables, chairs, etc.) were transported from the Rheinland,

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Genealogy and Family History

Mennonite Economic Dynasties in Zaporozhye Region

Translated and edited by Olga Shmakina
(Fresno, CA) from a book on the history and
contemporary life of the City of Zaporozhye.

After complete oblivion during the Soviet period, Mennonite history resurfaced in Ukrainian history in recent years. During the late 1990s some articles appeared in the scholarly press and a few articles appeared in the Zaporozhye press about the Chortitza Mennonites story, mainly authored by the late Anatoly Karagodin, Professor of History at Zaporozhye National University. Still the local population of the area was not well familiar with the story of Russian Mennonites and their contribution to the development of Russian and Ukrainian society. So it was a pleasant surprise to come across a section dedicated to four Mennonite industrialist families in the large, cloth-bound city history - *Zaporozhye i Zaporozhtsy*, by N. Kuzmenko and N. Mikhailov (Zaporozhye: PA Tandem-U, 2005). Inclusion of these descriptions into a general history of Zaporozhye recognizes the Mennonite story as an integral part of Ukrainian history. It also indicates what part of the story was presumed to be significant and of interest to the readers of this Russian-language book.

The Lepp dynasty

The whole epoch in the history of Mennonitism in Ukraine is associated with the Lepps - industrialists and philanthropists.

Peter Heinrich Lepp, the founder of the dynasty, arrived in this world right on the eve of 1817 in Einlage, Chortitza colony. At age 15 he became an orphan and was sent by his relatives to Prussia. After studying the craft of a clock-maker, in his historical homeland, he returned to Russia, settled in Chortitza and soon established a clock factory there.

An active mind, native wit, and commercial instincts helped Peter Lepp to establish a solid industrial family clan. In 1850 he set up the first private agricultural machinery enterprise. The knowledge of local conditions helped him to produce machinery convenient for farmers. His mowers, fanning machines, and reapers successfully competed with foreign

models. Products of the Lepp factory won honorable mention at an agricultural exhibition held in Simferopol in 1863 and a certificate of appreciation from one in Odessa in 1869. The laudable products of the Lepps were also awarded an 1875 citation by the Taurida gubernia zemstvo [council] and another one in 1879, by the Ministry of the State Domain of Russia.

By this time Peter's sons, Abraham and Peter, were managing the business (The dynasty's founder died in 1871). In the memorable year of 1879 Johann, a grandson of the factory founder, who by this time had graduated from the Ekaterinoslav technical school, took the helm. He managed the company up to 1918.

In 1880 Peter's son-in-law Andreas Wallmann senior, the largest Chortitza landowner, joined the family business. The factory was renamed the Lepp and Wallmann Trading Firm.

Wallmann's financial investments secured business expansion. In 1885 a factory branch was set up in Schoenwiese near Alexandrovsk. The proximity of the railway produced a favorable effect on the supply of raw materials and shipment of ready products. In 1900 another branch was established in Pavlograd, Ekaterinoslav uyezd. Two hundred people were employed at the factory which was quite a substantial number at that time.

By the end of 1880s the volume of the products manufactured by the factory as well as the range of products had significantly expanded. In 1867 Lepp produced 11 mowers, 50 fanning machines, 176 horse-driven rakes, 125 threshing machines, and 12 reapers. In 1889 his factory produced 1200 reapers, 220 mowers, and 500 fanning machines. The Lepps mastered production of steam-engines, steam-boilers, creamery presses, dryers, and harvesters. By the end of the century the capital of Lepp and Wallmann Trading Firm was estimated at 1.5 million rubles. It was the largest machine-building enterprise in Southern Russia.

In 1903 the Trading Firm was reorganized into a Joint-Stock Trading-

(cont'd on p. 10)

More on August Liebig

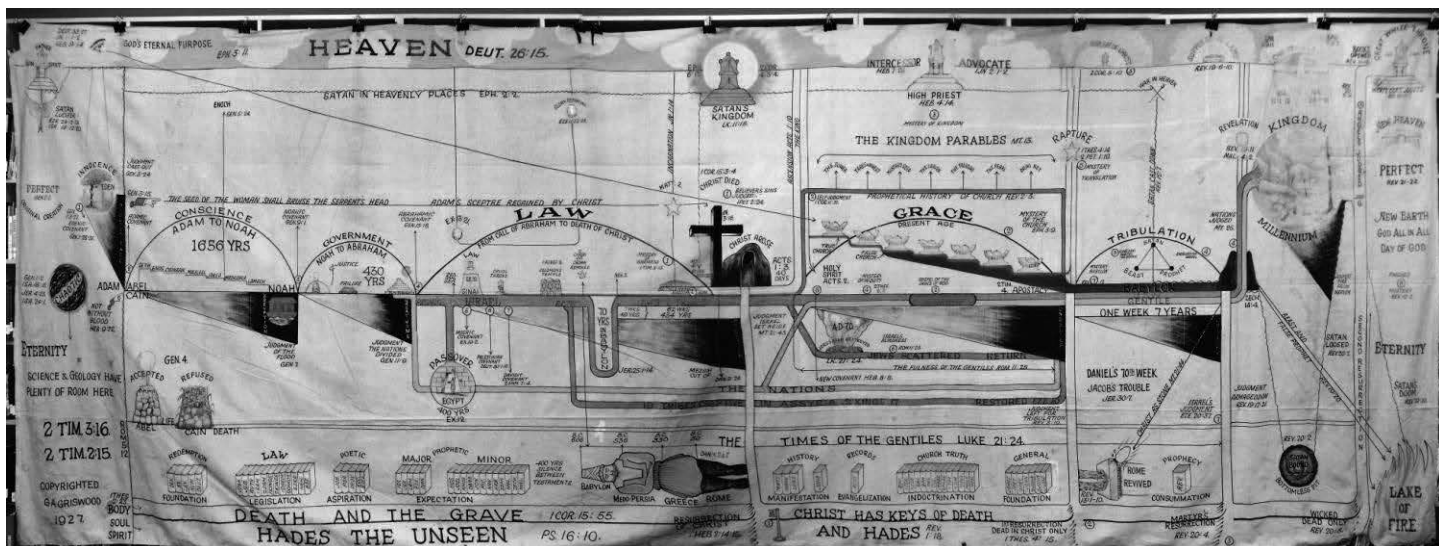
A number of readers have responded to my article on August Liebig and have provided additional information, which is always gratifying. I also noted that since the original publication of my article in 2004, a major article by Albert Wardin was published in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* in 2010 (pp. 167-186).

Richard Thiessen and Glenn Penner checked sources such as the New York passenger lists and the 1900 census for McCook, SD, and discovered that August Liebig's wife was Sophie (b. 1844). Wardin indicates that her maiden name was Sophia Ratzeburg. Four or five children were living at the time, although they had ten children altogether. I indicated that the oldest daughter was simply referred to as Schwester Lutz. However, the sources indicate that her name was Marie (d. August 6, 1925) and that she was married to Thomas Lutz on July 13, 1905. Lutz's previous wife was Lydia Shell. Thomas died June 5, 1944.

The other Liebig children listed were Martha, August, and John F. Albert Wardin adds Elizabeth to the list (p. 179). According to the passenger list, Martha was 19 years old in 1892 when the family arrived in the U.S. This suggests that Martha was born about 1873 rather than in 1866, as I indicated based on the *Missionary Album 1889-1963* (see note 14 in my article). Additional family information is provided by Thiessen, Penner, and Wardin.

Gerry Friesen, who grew up in the area of North Dakota where the Liebig family was active, provided additional interesting information. In particular, her family knew the Wahl family very well. Gerry also provided a significant correction to note 17 by pointing out that Jacob Wahl, the second husband of Martha Liebig, was likely not the son of Jakob Wahl referred to, but was the Jakob Wahl who died in 1935 and whose son, E. P. Wahl was the first president of what later became the North American Baptist College in Edmonton. Gerry indicates that another son, Jakob Wahl, likely was a member of the McClusky MB Church until it closed. Furthermore, Gerry's grandmother (father's side) married George Schafer and was baptized by August Liebig in the Alta Baptist church. Later they joined the MB Church because the Schafer family had an MB background.

Abe J. Dueck



Heinrich Regehr (1898–1991) and his Dispensational Chart

by Jon Isaak

Recently a Bible study group from a local Winnipeg MB church contacted the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS) to find out if they could come and have a look at the dispensational chart that is part of the collection at the Centre. “Of course,” I said. With the help of a few others, we hung the 19 by 7 foot chart on the wall in preparation for their visit (see photo). I also prepared a short presentation for the group coming to look at the chart that belonged to Heinrich Regehr (1898–1991). What follows is an extended version of that presentation.

What strikes you as you look at Heinrich Regehr’s chart? How would you describe this way of reading the Bible? World events? Read the note attached at the bottom left-hand corner (quoted below). What questions would you have for Heinrich Regehr?

The descriptive note reads: “Used in the Herbert Bible School and in church lectures in the 1930s. Later used in Gretna at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute from 1944–1947. When Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute was founded, Heinrich taught there and used the chart from 1947 to about 1958. The chart was purchased from G. A. Griswood, Chicago, about 1935 for some \$25, approximately 1/10 of his salary.”

What is the background to this way of reading the Bible and world events? According to Harold Jantz, “If we are to look for ways by which dispensational teaching entered into Mennonite Brethren circles in America [and Canada], we will likely find that William Bestvater, more than any other, became such a way. He was a highly effective teacher and he

taught a wide circle of early leaders.”¹

In 1921, Bestvater accepted an invitation to re-start the Herbert Bible School in Herbert, Saskatchewan, which had closed two years earlier after struggling financially. He stayed there until 1930. “During those years, he brought several excellent teachers into the school, particularly Heinrich Regehr and Isaac Regehr, both recent immigrants from Russia, who joined him in frequent traveling ministries and often doing the same dispensational teaching.”²

Bestvater was a prominent exponent of dispensationalism, probably the most prominent of any MB in his day.³ According to his diary, it was while Bestvater was studying with J. A. Sprunger at the Light and Hope Bible Institute in Cleveland, Ohio (1901) that he “received a comprehensive view of the synthesis of Bible truth and also an understanding of dispensational teaching and eschatology.”⁴ The 1909 publication of C. I. Scofield’s King James Version reference Bible, with John N. Darby’s dispensational notations in the margin, served to anchor this way of reading the Bible for Christian fundamentalists, including many MBs. Between April 1937 and May 1940, Bestvater wrote no fewer than 30 articles for the American MB church newspaper, *Christian Leader*, expounding the dispensational eschatology.⁵

So, what is dispensationalism anyway? While there are several versions, basically it divides world history into dispensations and aligns them with biblical texts to give a panoramic view of the world’s beginning, middle, and end. In step-by-step fashion, God’s timetable unfolds, so

that the content of saving faith varies with each successive dispensation. Usually there are seven dispensations identified: (1) Innocence (before the Fall), (2) Conscience (from the Fall to Noah), (3) Human government (from Noah to Abraham), (4) Promise (from Abraham to Moses), (5) Law (from Moses to Christ), (6) Grace (the church age), and (7) the Kingdom (the millennium).⁶

Dispensationalism attempts to translate the symbolic language of the apocalyptic genre in the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation into a literal map forecasting the political outcomes still in the future. Of particular interest is Revelation 20:1–6, where the millennium is read as a literal thousand-year reign of Christ before the final judgment. Key to the scheme is distinguishing God’s program for Israel from God’s program for the church. Specifically, the church does not begin in the OT, but at Pentecost. Neither does the church carry forward the promises made to Israel in the OT. Instead, the church is in one dispensation and the Kingdom of God is in the following dispensation, where Israel is again the central focus. During the present church dispensation, individuals are saved by trusting in Jesus. However, in the future kingdom dispensation during the millennium, Israel accepts Jesus as its political Messiah and the nation of Israel carries out the Messiah’s political rule. In this way, the nation of Israel wages war against evil until evil is eventually defeated. However, just before the inauguration of the thousand-year reign, the church is “raptured” out of the world to escape the intense backlash of evil (the Great Tribulation). Finally, evil is defeated at the Last Battle of Armageddon when Messiah

Jesus returns to lead Israel to military victory and the millennium closes, ushering in the Eternal State.

Why was dispensationalism so popular for 20th-century preachers like Bestvater and Regehr? There are probably many reasons why this way of linking Scripture with world events was so popular among many MB preachers and the people they led, but here are several:

1. It offered *certitude* for Christians who were fearful, wondering about what was happening in the world (e.g., depression years of 1930s, WWI, immigrant experience in America and Canada, etc.). What was God up to? Here was assurance of a discernible plan that set out God's ultimate victory over evil, with Scriptural evidence.

2. It appealed to the *mechanical* aspects of modernity. It had an air of sophistication and elaborate precision. This was a map of the world events, as they were unfolding.

3. It made the Bible *understandable*. Admittedly, the ancient world of the Bible can be confusing to those shaped by western civilization, given the Bible's collection of stories, poetry, and fantastical images from a pre-modern world (especially in the books of Daniel and Revelation). A dispensational chart made things easy to visualize and explain. It functioned as a great pedagogical tool, mapping out a complete curriculum for studying and teaching the Bible.⁷

4. For some Mennonites, it gave them a way to talk about their particular way of reading the Bible. They could use the phrase, *Progressive Revelation*, to explain the way they elevated the NT (life and teaching of Jesus) above the OT. It was like one dispensation giving way to the next. Even though few traditional dispensationalists were pacifists, Mennonites could, with considerable effort, fashion dispensationalism into supporting some of their Anabaptist-Mennonite ideals (separation from the state, non-resistance, discipleship, etc.), leaving God to determine the end.

Where are things now? Even though dispensational charts, like Heinrich Regehr's, are no longer used very much in preaching and teaching (although at some Prophecy Conferences, you can still see them), a generic form of dispensationalism still functions as the default theological framework for many Christians, including MBs (witness the popularity of the best-selling series of novels, *Left Behind*⁸).

However, for a significant number of

Christians, the dispensational interpretation model of reading the Bible has several problems:

1. It suggests that a period of *Tribulation* is limited to some time in the future. This seems to privilege the west, since many parts of the church in the south and east experience tribulation right now. Our global brothers and sisters might have something to say about this ethnocentricity.

2. It separates the Return of Christ into two stages—at the *Rapture* and then at the *End*. The problem is that there is no clear biblical evidence for making such a separation (1 Thes 4:14 and 2 Pet 1:19 are not unambiguous). Again, such a separation feels self-serving, designed to benefit a western form of Christianity (escape from tribulation). While not as neat and tidy, it may well be more biblical to anticipate a single final wrap-up of the ages, even if we do not know how it will be exactly.

3. It tends to give *automatic and unquestioning support* of the foreign policy of the State of Israel. Regardless of how oppressive to Palestinian interests, often there is tacit approval, because Israel operates under different “rules of engagement” than the Christian church. Besides, so the argument goes, the State of Israel must receive the Christian's full support, because if there is no State of Israel, how can Jesus return to lead its troops at the final battle? Of course, there are other ways that Christians think about the relation between Israel and the church, or the unfolding of the final end, but these do not fit the dispensational chart.

4. It typically pushes Jesus' ethical imperatives (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount, love of other, even enemy, etc.) to the future dispensation.⁹ These values are not realistic in the dispensation of the church, at least in any public or pragmatic sort of way. Therefore, *they do not apply to the church in our day*. Again, there are other ways that Christians look at the teaching of Jesus.

An alternative to dispensationalism emerged in the 1960s through the ministry of David Ewert (1922–2010), another well-known MB Bible teacher. By 1980, his book, *And Then Comes the End*,¹⁰ directly challenged dispensationalism. It was very controversial, precisely because he disputed several of the cherished aspects of dispensationalism that were so popular among MBs during the 20th century (i.e., the rapture, escape from tribulation, and the timing of the last days).

This is how Ewert put it in his autobiography: “Having discovered the wonderful continuity of God's saving plan for humankind in the Bible, I lost interest in the eschatological intricacies of the dispensational school. I had disposed of Larkin's eschatological charts long ago.¹¹ Questions such as ‘Will Christ come before or after the tribulation?’ became irrelevant for me, for Jesus and the apostles clearly taught that the saints must enter the eternal kingdom through much tribulation. Since I found no evidence from the New Testament for dividing up the return of Christ into two ‘comings’ (the rapture and the Day of the Lord), and that, in fact, the ‘last days’ had begun in the first century, I was spared speculating about which current events might be signs of the imminent return of our Lord. As far as I was concerned, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 had nothing to do with the blessed hope of the believer. However, for such views I was called interesting names. I still have a folder full of letters denouncing my ‘heretical’ views on eschatology. My book, *And Then Comes the End*, allayed some of these criticisms, when it was discovered that I held to every fundamental teaching of the New Testament on eschatology. What was missing was the nonsense that goes under the guise of ‘prophecy’ (such as date-setting, or determining from political, sociological and economic developments how close we are to the end).”¹²

I suspect that Ewert's view, prioritizing God's mission and the future hope, has become the more dominant view among MB church leaders today, at least those whose formation has been at any of the MB educational institutions since the 1970s.¹³ However, because eschatological teaching is rarely developed systematically from MB pulpits these days, it is not surprising that there are some MB church-goers who continue to find very satisfying the certitude, clarity, and triumphal nature of dispensational timetabling, even if they do not use the dispensational terms of reference.

The presentation to the Bible study group visiting the Centre ended with some reflective questions: What remains unclear or troubling for you on the topic of eschatology, biblical interpretation, or dispensationalism? What is becoming clearer to you now? What changes have you noticed over time? What do you make of these developments? How would you explain your current view to family members or friends?

(cont'd on p. 9)



**Mennonite
Heritage
Centre**

600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

MHC Update

The Heritage Centre is pleased to be able to work together with Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in several of their programs again this year. One of these is the on-campus student employment program, where students may apply for various types of jobs, allowing them the experience of preparing a resume, being interviewed, being hired, getting experience, and being evaluated – all of which should be an asset in future attempts at finding employment. The Heritage Centre for its part, provides one job opportunity for this program. This year, we hired Michele Kramer as an archival assistant for three hours a week. She has helped with entering data, managing the inventory of used books for sale, helped with mass mailings, and has sorted the recently deposited records from the Portage Mennonite congregation.

The other CMU program in which the Heritage Centre participates, is the Intensive Practicum. This program is designed to help students get experience-based education through a supervised assignment with an institution or agency.

Since September, Wendy Cope, is working at the Heritage Centre to complete her CMU Practicum requirement. Three mornings a week she spends at the Heritage Centre, fulfilling supervised assignments. These have included creating and editing inventory lists of books and videos, searching on-line catalogues for similar records, data entry for a periodical index and drafting a biographical sketch for a new archival description record. Some of the specific collections or acquisitions that she has worked with are: the Ed Schellenberg books and papers, videos acquired from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre, historical books from the Mennonite Genealogy Inc. collection, the Canadian Mennonite Index project, and the Peter and Justina Penner papers.

The MHC Archives and Gallery will be closed Dec. 24, 2012-Jan. 1, 2013. If you are visiting from out of town or have trouble coming any other time, contact me via e-mail at aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca.

Alf Redekopp



Michele Kramer, CMU archival assistant



Wendy Cope, CMU Practicum student



Hosting visitors from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Winnipeg, Canada) and the Holodomor Memorial Museum (Kyiv, Ukraine) on November 23, 2012, MHC Gallery (l-r): Alf Redekopp, Clint Curle, Senior Researcher, CMHR, Angela Cassie, Communications director, CMHR, Dr. Stanislav Kulchytsky, the Deputy Director of the Institute of History of Ukraine, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; and Ms. Lesya Onshko, the First Deputy General Director of the Holodomor Memorial Museum. Photo credit: Dan Dyck.

CMBS Update

This fall CMBS has been involved in five initiatives. First, the Historical Commission announced two competitive awards for 2013. One is a research grant worth \$1,500 and the other is a 5-week summer archival internship with travel to four MB archives, housing, and stipend of \$2,000. These awards are subsidized by the Katie Funk Wiebe Fund. See ad on this page and website for application details.

Second, the digitized version of fifty-one years of the *MB Herald* is now on sale. This is the fruit of a two-year project. Many hours of scanning have produced over 7 Gigabytes of PDF files on a USB drive, representing 1,292 issues of the *MB Herald* (1962–2012). The USB drive includes search engine and the PDF files are completely searchable. See ad on this page and place your order with CMBS.

Third, on November 3, 2012, together with the Mennonite Heritage Centre, we showed three Otto Klassen documentary films at the Winkler MB Church in Winkler. One gave an overview of Mennonite history and the other two

featured the particular contexts of Russia and Mexico. A total of 13 Otto Klassen DVDs are available from either MHC or CMBS.

Fourth, two manuscript editing projects are underway with projected release dates in 2013. The first is a memoir of discovery. Thirty years ago CMBS published Maureen Klassen's biography of C.F. Klassen, trusted Mennonite leader who helped negotiate the passage of thousands of Mennonites out of Russia and Europe. Now, with new information that she and her husband, Herb, learned while living in post-Soviet Moscow, she is telling the story of Mary Brieger Klassen, CF's wife. It is a story of family secrets revealed, of searching for meaning in the midst of adversity, and the strength of hope in God.

The second manuscript is Walter Regehr's translation of Johann Pritzkau's Baptist history of South Russia. Why this translation? MB historians have regularly pointed out the many things that the MB renewal movement in Russia borrowed from the German Baptists—immersion baptism, congregational polity, conference structure, and mission



mindset. Presently, Canadian MBs have adopted an aggressive mission strategy that partners with other denominations. Pritzkau's history shows that such collaboration is not new for MBs—it is part of their founding narrative.

Fifth, during December, Darren Wesselius worked in the archives on a two-week field placement. Darren is a student at Red River College, Winnipeg, in the library and information technology program. The placement is a part of his course work. Conrad, our archivist, managed to keep him busy cataloguing, processing, scanning, and updating website indexes. We enjoyed having Darren with us and wish him all the best as he completes his studies and searches for employment as a library technician.

Jon Isaak

Katie Funk Wiebe RESEARCH GRANT & INTERNSHIP



The Historical Commission of the U.S. and Canadian Mennonite Brethren Churches announces an "Open Research Grant" of \$1,500 to promote research and publication on the history and contributions of Mennonite Brethren women around the world. The grant is made possible by generous support from the Katie Funk Wiebe Fund. Projects may include, but are not limited to, books, articles, lecture series, symposia, and multi-media presentations.

Application deadline:
April 1, 2013

The Historical Commission also announces a "Summer 2013 Archival Internship," designed to give a college student practical archival experience at each of the four Mennonite Brethren archival institutions in North America. Spanning five weeks from the middle of July to the middle of August (exact dates to be determined), the intern will spend a week at each of the MB archives (Winnipeg, Hillsboro, Fresno, and Abbotsford). Each archival site will host the intern, providing orientation to the context and collection, and involve the intern in its ongoing projects. In addition to experiencing a functioning archive, the intern will gather stories, images, and video during the four weeks, spending the fifth week producing a report that is compelling and image-rich—one that promotes the mission of church archives. Airline travel and accommodations will be provided by the Historical Commission. The internship comes with a stipend of \$2,000.

Application deadline: **March 1, 2013**



**Mennonite Brethren
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**FOR APPLICATION
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www.mbhhistory.org**

*What issues concerned
the Canadian Mennonite
Brethren family in 1973?*

*When did Uncle Jake start
pastoring that church in B.C.?*

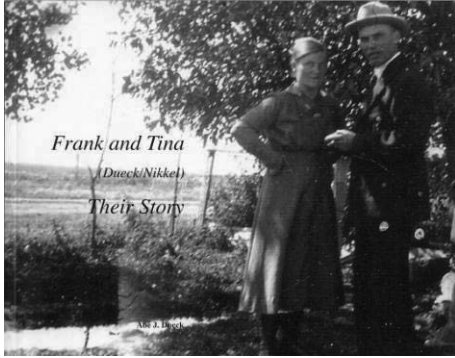
*What year did my college
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For a mere \$30, find your answers in the *MB Herald's* new digitized, fully searchable USB drive, containing all 1,292 issues from 1962 to 2012.

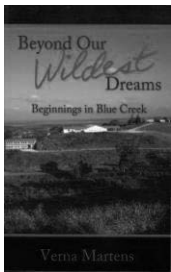


Contact
jisaak@mbconf.ca at
the Centre for MB
Studies in Winnipeg
to order a copy.

Book Notes



Abe J. Dueck, *Frank and Tina (Dueck/Nikkel): their story* (Winnipeg, 2012, 105 pp.), is family photo journal telling the story of the four families that came together to form the Frank and Tina (Nikkel) Dueck family--Duecks, Petkers, Nikkels, and Thiessens. The story moves from early Anabaptist/Mennonite beginnings, through the Orenburg Colony in Russia, migration to Canada, and farming in Coaldale. Included are excerpts from interviews with family members and from travel journals. There are lots of photos of family members, pets, tractors, cars, homes, schools, and churches. Abe's book is a tribute to his parents, Frank and Tina, a documentation of their life and legacy.



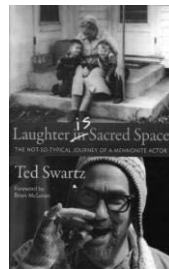
Verna Martens, *Beyond our wildest dreams: beginnings in Blue Creek* (vernamartens@yahoo.ca, 2007, 353pp.), is the autobiography of pioneer EMMC missionaries, Jake and Verna (Giesbrecht) Martens. Leaving Altona, Manitoba, in 1964, they moved their family to Belize, Central America, to help plant a church and develop a community. After almost twenty years of working in the jungle setting, they returned to Canada in 1982. Their "fruit"? They established a successful farming operation, a church, a clinic, a school, an airstrip, a store, and a credit union in Blue Creek, among an "Old Colony" group of Mennonites in Belize. Verna narrates their remarkable story of collaboration with diverse local Mennonite groups, government officials, and many North American volunteers, all for the larger purpose of building a vibrant faith community with a viable

infrastructure. Photos of the community's early years in the 1960s, combined with photos taken on a return visit in 2007, give a sense of the magnitude of the achievement.

Dora Dueck, *What you get at home* (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 2012, 179 pp.), is a collection of short stories, some new and some revisions of earlier publications. The collection divides into two parts. One part contains eight stories about various characters interacting with their worlds and their homes. The other holds seven stories about one character, Liese, a Paraguayan Mennonite immigrant to Winnipeg. Liese, too, interacts with various aspects of home--leaving, building, exploring, reshaping the home she left and is making in Canada. Developing deep characters with surprisingly few words, Dora draws the reader into the worlds of these characters. In all fifteen stories, one feels immediately and intimately connected to the leading characters, as they navigate the very real aspects of family life--loss, success, disappointment, faith, and community. After two novels, *Under the still standing sun* (1989) and *This hidden thing* (2010), this is Dora's first collection of short stories.



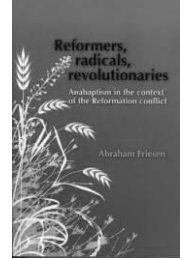
Ted Swartz, *Laughter in Sacred Space: the not-so-typical journey of a Mennonite actor* (Waterloo: Herald, 2012, 280 pp.), is an honest backstage tour through the development of the two-person comedy theater company known as *Ted and Lee*. Ted tells the story in five acts, combining hilarious incidents from their twenty-year stretch of acting together, with a narration of the tragic loss of Lee to mental illness and suicide in 2007. They are probably best known for their comedic representation of the stories of Jesus, as Peter and Andrew. The video series, *Fish-Eyes: stories you thought you knew through the eyes of the disciples* (in eleven episodes) was released in 1994. Ted also narrates his own identity struggle as a Mennonite, who trained at seminary



for a career in parish ministry, but found his vocation instead in theater and acting. Today, Ted continues acting under the label *Ted and Company* (www.tedandcompany.com).

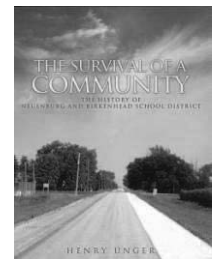
Abraham Friesen, *Reformers, radicals, revolutionaries: Anabaptism in the context of the Reformation conflict* (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2012, 223 pp.), is a collection of four lectures given at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, in February 2008. These, together with a leading essay on the link between Erasmus and the early Anabaptists, complete the five-essay collection. Abraham's argument is to place early Anabaptism squarely in the context of the Renaissance and Reformation, not allowing the Anabaptists to be isolated from the Reformation as marginal radicals or seditious revolutionaries. For Abraham, Augustine and Luther are largely responsible for the 16th-century problem of dividing the Reformed church from the essential aspects of medieval ideal Christianity, which the Anabaptists continued to espouse.

Jon Isaak, co-editor.



Henry Unger's *The Survival of a Community: The History of Neuenburg and Birkenhead School District* (Morden, 2012, 250 pp) contains the history of a former Mennonite West Reserve village and the surrounding area. In addition to a chapter on the Mennonite background before coming to Canada, there are chapters on the first settlers, the private school, the public education and the development of the community -- its economy, services, people, and memories. Maps, photographs, and other indexes, including detailed class lists from 1921-1992, make this a book of significance to local community historians and anyone who once lived in the area.

Alf Redekopp, co-editor.

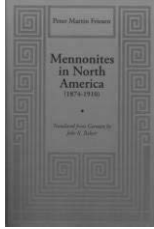


Book Review

Peter Martin Friesen. *Mennonites in North America (1874-1910)* / translated from German by Jake K. Balzer (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2012) 211 pp.

Reviewed by James Juhnke

In 1911, Peter Martin Friesen's master work on the history of Mennonites in Russia was published in Halbstadt. That book included a "Part II" on the Mennonites in North America. In 1978, the Mennonite Brethren Board of Christian Literature published a 1,065-page English translation of "Part I" of Friesen's book. Now "Part II," translated from German to English by Jake K. Balzer, is available in a paperback volume of 211 pages.



Friesen had not visited North America. His "Part II" was mostly a collection of reports from personal correspondence, church newspapers, college catalogs, and other items from North America that he was able to compile. He made use of D.K. Cassel's *History of the Mennonites* (1887). But Friesen's work was not a connected historical narrative. In his own words, this was not a "history," but rather a "statement of the subjective viewpoints of a contemporary...made up of 'chronicle' and 'memoirs,' which will have to await the objective analysis of future historians" (p. 188).

Today, just over a century after Friesen's work was published, we have English-language multi-volume histories of Mennonites in Canada and the United States that are based on research that far surpassed Friesen's. Why, then, is Friesen's *Mennonites in North America* worth reading? Part of the answer is that Friesen's selection of material is interesting in its own right and his sharp judgments of Mennonite failures are a refreshing contrast to most Mennonite historical writing today.

The shape of this book reflected the author's viewpoint as a Mennonite Brethren scholar whose work had been commissioned by his own church. He began by telling about the Mennonite Brethren migration and settlement in the 1870s, rather than telling the story chronologically in 1868 with the first arrival of European Mennonites in the

American colonies. Friesen's account was most complete for the Mennonite Brethren, and least adequate for the Swiss-background "Old" Mennonites and Amish who were the earliest to arrive and the most numerous in North America.

In the 1870s, Friesen had opposed those who chose to migrate from Russia to America. Three decades later, after observing the vitality and institutional developments among the settlers in America, he changed his mind somewhat. "Emigrations," he wrote, "have a steeling, rejuvenating effect" (p. 94). But he balanced his praise with criticism of Mennonite partisanship in America: "They constantly learn from and compete with each other, mutually promote one another, and co-operate in charitable and educational institutions and societies, as well as economic enterprises...However...their activity is interspersed too often with mutual jealousy, mistrust, even hostility and slander. They are delighted to discover and point out all sorts of errors, mistakes, and sins in the other people's camp!" (p. 95).

Friesen advocated an alliance of all Mennonite groups. He favored inter-Mennonite cooperation in education, in mission, and at the worship communion table. He promoted "an energetic evangelical life" as well as progressive institutional development. He was an equal opportunity critic of those who did not live up to his standards—the Mennonite Brethren as surely as the other groups. On the bitter early conflict in Kansas between the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonites over the form of baptism, Friesen wrote, "It is really shameful. The matter had already been solved in Russia..." (note 14, p. 5).

This is an important book, both as a selective chronicle of historical events and as a window into the mind of one of the most important Mennonite scholars in Russia.

Regehr and Dispensationalism

(cont'd from p. 5)

Endnotes

1. Harold Jantz, *Rightly dividing the word of truth* (unpublished essay on William Bestvater), 3, in the William Bestvater Personal Papers fonds, vol. 916-917, at CMBS, Winnipeg. It would be incorrect to say that all MB leaders subscribed to dispensational theology uniformly. Abraham H. Unruh (1878-1961), prominent MB Bible teacher, for example, was ambivalent, preferring to focus rather

on the larger truths of God's mission and the future hope (David Ewert, *Stalwart for the Truth* [Winnipeg: Board of Christian Literature, 1975], 135). Unruh is said to have asked good-naturedly one of his more ardent dispensational teaching colleagues (in Low German): "Do you think God is going to follow your rag?"

2. Ibid, 5.
3. Ibid, 5. Although, at the beginning of the 20th century, the dispensational biblical interpretation of John N. Darby (1800-1882) was also gaining popularity among the Russian MB leaders who attended Prophecy Conferences in Blankenburg, Germany (J. B. Toews, *A Pilgrimage of Faith: The Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and North America 1860-1990* [Winnipeg: Kindred], 109-10). Jakob W. Reimer (1860-1948) was one Blankenburg attendee and promoter who later came to Canada and was instrumental in the spread of dispensationalism among both Russian and Canadian MBs (J. B. Toews, "Mennonite Brethren Identity and Theological Adversity" in *Pilgrims and Strangers* [Fresno: CMBS, 1977], 138).
4. *Autobiographical Sketches from our Diaries*, 5-6, a memoir written by William and Helena (Janzen) Bestvater, in the William Bestvater Personal Papers fonds, vol. 916-917, at CMBS, Winnipeg.
5. J. B. Toews, *A Pilgrimage of Faith*, 109-10.
6. See Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1966, 1995) for the standard treatment of classic dispensationalism.
7. Some MB missionaries (e.g., to India, Congo, and Japan) and Bible school teachers shaped their classes around a dispensational framework. For a Bible school example, see Bruce L. Guenther, "'Monuments to God's Faithfulness': Mennonite Brethren Bible Schools in Western Canada, 1913-1960" *Direction* 30/1 (2001): 21-32. For a missionary example, in this case Japan, see Kazuhiro Enomoto, "Peacemakers in All Situations: A Meditation on Love and Nonresistance" *Direction* 27/1 (1998): 14-19.
8. Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye published a 16-book series called, *Left Behind* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1995-2007). The series has also been adapted into three thriller adventure movies.
9. "The Sermon on the Mount has application . . . literally to the kingdom. In this sense it gives the divine constitution for the righteous government of the earth. Whenever the kingdom of heaven is established on earth it will be according to that constitution" (C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible* [1917], 999-1000). See also John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1975), 377-79.
10. David Ewert, *And Then comes the End*

(Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1980). The book was so well received that it had to be reprinted after the initial 5,000 copies sold out. In 1987, a translation into Spanish was published by Herald Press.

11. Clarence Larkin (1850–1924), professional draftsman and ordained minister, popularized dispensationalism by drawing the diagrams that came to be associated with its method of biblical interpretation. His titles include: *Dispensational Truth, Rightly Dividing the Word, The Book of Daniel, The Book of Revelation, Spirit World, and Second Coming of Christ*. The 340 charts from these volumes have been digitized and ten are accessible at no charge at www.preservedwords.com/charts.htm.
12. David Ewert, *A Journey of Faith: An Autobiography* (Winnipeg: Kindred, 1993), 255–56.
13. In his autobiography, Ewert writes: “The Board of Reference and Counsel [now called the Board of Faith and Life] had for some years worked on a revision of our Confession of Faith. It had been my privilege to have a part in the final stages of the revision and I was asked to read this revised Confession to the conference [1975]. The Confession was well received. Some concern was expressed that we had no statement on the Millennium in our Confession, but since there had never been a statement on that subject in our earlier Confessions, there was little interest in introducing it” (*Journey of Faith*, 195). See also *We Recommend: Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches*, compiled by A. E. Janzen and Herbert Giesbrecht (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, 1978), 280.

Mölln camp (cont'd from p. 2)

where they had been used for occupation troops.

The administration of the Mölln facility was placed in the hands of the town mayor, Dr. Gerd Wolff, who also served as chairman of the local German Red Cross section, the local Lutheran pastor of the Nikolaikirche, Paul Bruns, Adolf Thoret, and the military commandant, Major Kirstein.

The first 340 Mennonites, most members of the Kiel Group, arrived on 21 December 1929; another 450 persons (including members of the Swinemünde Group) arrived on 23 December. Between Christmas and New Years an additional 400 refugees arrived, making a total of almost 1200, in a facility designed for 1000 persons.

It had been decided from the start that all refugees en-route overseas would be processed in Mölln before proceeding on to the nearby port of Hamburg for embarkation. As refugee groups left Mölln, new refugees arrived from Prenzlau, and this camp was soon closed in April 1930. The Hammerstein Camp closed by the end of June 1930.

The first transport of 199 persons left for Brazil on 16 January 1930; a second group of 299 left on 3 February. The last transport for Brazil left on 18 July 1931. During this year-and-a-half time span a total of 2,533 Mennonite, Lutheran, and Catholic refugees travelled on to Brazil.

Through the efforts of the American MCC, the government of Paraguay opened its doors to new Mennonite immigration in February 1930. The first transport for Paraguay left on 16 February 1930; this and subsequent transports brought a total of 1,572 Mennonites to the new Fernheim Colony in the Chaco.

The first transport for Canada left on 28 January 1930. Over the next two years some 1,344 persons were able to reunite with relatives in Canada.

By February 1931 most of the refugees had left and the office of the *Reichskommissariat für die Deutsch-Russenhilfe* closed on 30 March 1931. On 1 February 1931 the management of the camp, now renamed “*Mennonitenheim*,” was transferred to Benjamin H. Unruh and a committee of Mennonite representatives. The camp population as of 31 January 1931 stood at 371 Mennonites, 12 Catholics, 9 Adventists, 11 Lutherans = 403 persons. The costs of operation were covered in part by Prussian and German Mennonites, but mostly with funds from Dutch Mennonites and the American MCC. The aim was to get as many of the remaining persons overseas as possible, and by the end of November 1931 there were only 73 persons left. By November 1933 there were still about 38 persons in the *Mennonitenheim*. The home was closed in late 1933 and the remaining persons transferred to private German homes or to the Mennonite Senior’s Home in Wandsbek, near Hamburg.

In late 1933 the complex was again taken over by the German state and used for a variety of purposes. From 1933-37 it served as a sports centre for SA troops and the Hitler Jugend. From 1937-40 it was used as a *Zollschule* – a training

facility for customs officials. From 1940-45 it served as a *Reichsfinanzschule* – a school for training officials in the Ministry of Finance. During the closing years of the war, from 1 March 1943 to 8 May 1945, parts of the buildings were converted into a hospital to treat wounded soldiers.

After the war, the buildings stood empty until the 1950s, when they were renovated to house a *Lungenheilkllinik* (a clinic for lung diseases). In 1972 the complex was again taken over by the German military and has again been used as a *Bundeswehr* training facility to the present day.

Author’s note:

I am indebted to commanding officer, Hauptmann Karsten Belz, for information on the military history of the *Unteroffiziersvorschule*, and to Christian Lopau, archivist at the Stadtarchiv Mölln, for access to the extensive files of the former refugee camp. Further details will be found in my forthcoming book on *Mennonite Refugees in Germany, 1921-1951*.

Mennonite Dynasties

(cont'd from p. 3)

Industrial Company. In the early 20th century the products manufactured by the Lepps, as confirmed by the documents, were in demand in Minusinsk, Samara gubernia, Turkestan, Lithuania, and Bessarabia. The Falz-Wein family, the largest landowners in the Southern Russia, was a regular buyer of the company’s products. The Trading Company was awarded thirty gold, silver, and bronze medals at various agricultural exhibitions.

During the First Imperialistic War, the Lepp and Wallmann company was combined with the Koop’s factory, thus Lepp, Wallmann, and Koop enterprise was established. They concluded several contracts with the Chief Artillery Department for the manufacture of ammunition needed by of the Russian army.

Meanwhile the Lepps were not reputed to be greedy people and they shared their incomes with society. The register of company expenses stipulated funds for the upkeep of forestry teams, central schools, military hospitals, and wounded soldiers, as well as church construction. Johann Lepp was generally not indifferent to education issues. He established a factory school and financed courses for his workers at Alexandrovsk Mechanical-

Technical School. The Peter Lepp Senior Scholarship was designated for children of his workers. For his wide-ranging philanthropy, the Ministry of Public Education awarded Johann a Gold Medal on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty.

In 1910 Lepp initiated construction of the first factory hospital in Chortitza. His company also took part in the creation of Bethania Mental Hospital. This great man was a member of the all guardianship committees in Alexandrovsk and rightfully was awarded the title of an Honorary Citizen of Alexandrovsk.

The activity of the Lepp and Wallmann family clan in Alexandrovsk was interrupted when the Bolsheviks came to power. In 1920 their business was nationalized and the Lepps emigrated to Prussia.

The Koop dynasty

Abram Koop, the dynasty founder, was not scared to follow in the footsteps of the Lepps and established his own agricultural machinery factory. Moreover, he studied the experience of his senior colleagues.

Abram was born in Chortitza in October 1838 into the family of a minister. Jacob, his father, had also been a teacher of the Russian language and was held in high esteem by his fellow villagers. Peter Lepp, showing respect toward his venerable neighbor, Jacob, hired 18 year old Abram Koop as a foreman assistant.

Although the minister's family lived well, they had no idle capital, therefore the young man had to start from scratch, relying exclusively on his hard work and a great wish to achieve success.

Having studied the basics of mechanics with the Lepps, he opened a small blacksmith shop in Chortitza where he repaired farm utensils and implements. His high quality services were in demand. He gained more orders, hired more help and in addition to doing repairs started manufacturing mill-stones and metal parts for windmills.

In 1874 Koop began construction of a factory. Three years later he installed the first steam engine at the factory. The factory produced plows, threshing-machines, and self-binders. The demand for his products grew year after year. In 1877 the factory produced 32 self-binders and ten years later – 600 binders just during harvest time. In 1888 Koop built a branch of his factory in Schoenwiese. Eventually the capacity of the branch

surpassed the factory in Chortitza and in 1903 the branch produced 3,000 agricultural machines. The same year he bought out a Friesen factory in Einlage.

Production expansion of his agricultural machines was hampered by the need for cast iron parts from abroad for his agricultural machines. Koop found a solution for this global problem. His company joined with the German industrialist Gelker and started a foundry in Alexandrovsk – A. J. Koop and Gelker Joint-Stock Company.

At the beginning of the new millennium, the Koop factory employed 800 people. In 1912 he and two Odessa companies (Elworthy and Owen) established Urozhai Trading-Purchasing Artel. In a few dozen years, Abram Koop, a modest but skillful blacksmith, had become one of the largest industrialists of Southern Russia.

The Niebuhr dynasty

Jacob Niebuhr, like other Prussian millers arrived in Southern Russia in 1789 and settled in the village of Neu-Kronsweide. Jacob started a flower mill and a bakery; however his large family (seven children from two marriages) had not achieved significant prosperity.

The founder of the future Niebuhr's corporation was Abraham Niebuhr, Jacob's older son from the second marriage. To what he inherited from his father he added land in Kronstal and a flour mill in Rosengart. It was Abraham's son Herman Niebuhr who really expanded the business. In 1849 nineteen-year old Herman was hired at the flour mill of Jacob Dyck, Chortitza minister and elder of the Mennonite congregation. Soon he was recognized as the best miller in the Mennonite colonies.

Herman's marriage to Jacob Dyck's daughter contributed to a merger of the two families' capital and the combined flour mill business got a new boost. In the 1860s Dyck and Niebuhr acquired several more flour mills and equipped them with steam engines. The only problem was due a great distance between production and large markets. The situation changed only after regular navigation was established between Alexandrovsk, Kherson, Nikopol, and Odessa.

In 1882 a new flour mill was started in Schoenwiese. Being situated next to the Lozovaya-Sevastopol railway station it earned a good profit.

Soon H. A. Niebuhr and Co. became well-known in the area. In 1904 it established a bank in Chortitza that in a

few years was reorganized into a banking-house.

A misfortune happened to the Niebuhr's family. In 1906 a band of robbers killed Herman. But his business continued to work. In 1914 four Mennonite flour-milling companies functioned with a total turnover of 6,000,000 rubles. Half of this capital belonged to Niebuhr and Co. firm.

The Hildebrand dynasty

This history may be a chapter in the Peter Lepp story or it can be a separate story about friendship stronger than commercial competition. Cornelius Hildebrand, son of a Saxonian by birth, when young was engaged in clock repair (as we see the knowledge of clock mechanism at that time was a starting point to large industry for many). Lepp, who was already a well-known factory owner, advised Cornelius to start production of cast-iron cogs for the milling industry.

The beginning of the Hildebrand's business was difficult; therefore his family lived from the profits of agriculture and not from his business.

Gradually Cornelius expanded the range of his products. He developed and started production of a plow of his own design and built a flour mill. Cast-iron wheels were cast at Lepp's factory once a week. The demand for them was growing, so Cornelius built his own small factory, with the support of Lepp.

When Peter Lepp introduced new technologies or machinery at his factory, he shared his production secrets with Cornelius. Lepp taught Hildebrandt management and planning. One can say that they were partners in machine building of that time.

Friendship with such an experienced merchant as Lepp helped Cornelius to quickly get on his feet and create his own business. Soon machine building factories of Hildebrandt were started in Chortitza and Schoenwiese.

Similar to Lepp, Hildebrand also paid much attention to the everyday life of his workers. A hospital, built at company expense, rendered medical services on a free basis to workers and their families.

Cornelius Hildebrand retired at the age of 78 and transferred his business to his sons Peter and Cornelius. Hildebrand Sons and Pries Company became one of the largest machine building enterprises in Alexandrovsk.

Author's note

Translated and published with permission.

Book Reviews

Anne Konrad. *Red Quarter Moon: A Search for Family in the Shadow of Stalin* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012) 356 pp.

Reviewed by Eleanor Chornoboy, Winnipeg.

This detailed and compelling account is not your average Mennonite history book. Konrad grew up, listening to her father pray aloud, mentioning relatives and oppressed people in the world. On religious holidays, her parents talked of tsarist Russia with longing and nostalgia, while sparing details of Soviet persecution.

Konrad's parents escaped the Soviet Union as refugees in 1929, but other family members remained behind. For over twenty years, Konrad searched for lost family members and those who had vanished within the Soviet Union. Her Mennonite ancestors had settled in the Ukrainian steppes in the 1790s.

She found her Braun and Konrad family members in Ukraine, Siberia, and Paraguay; and they told her of their experiences throughout the Stalinist regime, the German occupation, and up to the recent past. In retelling their story, Konrad weaves a compelling account of intrigue. Her family members were not spared murder, starvation, imprisonment, torture, and separation from their family and their communities.

Konrad tells the story of starvation, execution, betrayal, and slave labour, using visual and sensory images, without becoming embroiled in lurid details. She tells of loss and abject dehumanization, enormous suffering at the hands of the Red Army, the White Army, and finally the Hitler Germans, whom the Mennonite people thought would save them.

She tracked down family members and their descendants over years and across continents, gleaning stories of terror, imprisonment, and love relationships, as told by witnesses and victims alike. Her haunting narrative is personal, sometimes questioning the information given her, and then substantiating it. The text is



enriched by letters saved by her parents and family members. Konrad has injected numerous interviews given cautiously by intergenerational victims, reflecting the horrors of the Stalinist fears that linger within.

Konrad pieces her family story together with extended visits, analyzing letters saved by her parents, and finally reading the police files of her uncles' trials and executions, which were recently made available to the public.

Her research is impeccable. The chapters are separated by significant time periods and connected to specific family members, while still making intergenerational links to characters in other chapters.

Even though *Red Quarter Moon* is about a Mennonite family, told against the backdrop of Soviet policy, any family with connections to persons who lived in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist years will utter a soft "yes, this is about our family too."

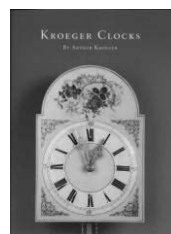
This gripping account makes an important contribution to our collection of Mennonite history during the Soviet period, adding understanding of the impact upon the subsequent generations who survived the Stalin era and lived behind the Iron Curtain for years.

While some readers may be overwhelmed by the number of characters in her book, Konrad's aim is to record as many of their stories as possible. Why? Because as Konrad puts it, "Having met survivors, learned about their lives and deaths, . . . those who suffered in the shadow of Stalin—needed to be remembered. But as real people and with more than names." The multitude of characters does not take away from the intrigue or the historical integrity of Konrad's story.

Arthur Kroeger. *Kroeger Clocks* (Steinbach, MB: Mennonite Heritage Village, 2012) 174 pp.

Reviewed by George Dyck, treasurer of the Friends of the Mennonite Centre (Ukraine).

This book outlines the origins and development of the Kroeger clock within the West Prussian setting and its move to Rosenthal in the



Mennonite Chortitza Colony of Imperial Russia. Using narrative, diagrams, and photos, Arthur Kroeger details the descriptions of the various clocks. Over time these clocks became treasured family heirlooms, with many stories to tell, as they hang on walls world wide today.

Part 1 *The Kroeger Clock Makers*, traces clock making through 5 generations of Krueger/Kroeger clock makers. Early beginnings outside the protective Danzig guilds, forced the early Kruegers to produce their clocks in secret using family members as workers. Opportunities in Russia prompted Johann II to move his family and business. As demand for clocks grew, new property was bought to provide additional production space. A conservative estimate concludes that 10,000 clocks were produced by the Kroegers in Russia before all production tragically ended in the 1920s.

Part 2 *The Clock*, provides an overview ranging from the Werder Clock, having only the hour hand, to sophisticated Kroeger clocks with chiming mechanism and calendar dial. Front and side views of the clock mechanism are illustrated. Extensive description is devoted to the pictures and various artistic designs/patterns of the face plate and decorative hands. These are all well documented with the use of excellent photos. Kroeger mentions Lepp, Hildebrand, Mandtler & Hamm clocks with a brief overview of their makers' history.

Part 3 *Amazing Clock Stories*, records 50 brief amazing clock stories that the reader will enjoy. They vary from clocks that resided on the family wall for generations, to clocks that were uprooted many times as owners fled in times of war. Some were shot at, damaged by Machnovits bandits, and rescued from dumps. Most in existence today have one thing in common. They have an owner that loves them. I wonder if Johann Kroeger would have ever have dreamt that his clocks would still be ticking in this modern electronic era?

This book leaves us with an excellent recorded story of the Kroeger clock, its makers and its effect on the Russian Mennonite diaspora.

George Dyck owns several clocks and has long been interested in how they were made, and even considered producing replicas with other skilled friends and relatives. —A.R..