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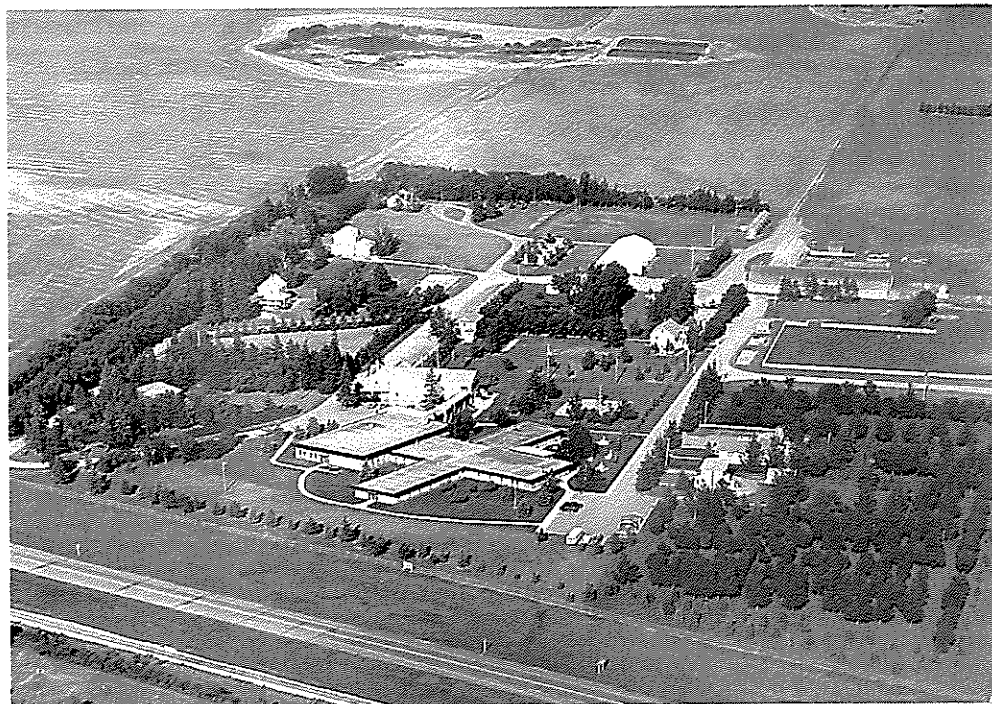
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The Mennonite Youth Farm, at Rosethorn, SK. circa 1985 view - 75 years of History

Mennonite Youth Farm History

by George Epp

The name, "Mennonite Youth Farm" says it all—in that prosaic way we Mennonites used to name things. It's **Mennonite**, its origin is in the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization (SMYO)*, and it's a **farm**, sort of. Now when we've just taken note of its origins—75 years ago—it seems remarkable that it has survived. In times of rapid changes that have seen institutions terminating, re-purposing or being taken over by government or private corporations—that the *Mennonite Youth Farm Complex* has thrived and grown with very similar objectives to those envisioned at its inception.

Transitions have been many: the dairy is long gone, the petting zoo and corn maze are recent innovations, a state-of-the-art Nursing Home has replaced the *Invalidenheim* (Invalid Home); the *Crippled Children's Home* and the Women's and Men's homes for handicapped adults are no more; the agricultural land is rented out and ownership of the whole has passed in stages from the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization*

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The Editor's Perspective

Ruth Marlene Friesen



We've rearranged our publishing schedule to make our fall issue more of a summer issue. This spaces them more evenly apart. It has eased the pressure of close deadlines for me, and given me more time.

That is a blessing because I am in a transition because of cataract surgeries. I had my first one June 16th, and will have the next on July 28. The new eye can see way over there in such sharp, vivid colours! The old eye can handle close up better, especially through my prescription glasses, but I can tell now that it sees the dull, softer edges. They don't make a good team right now.

Maybe you've been through this already?

As we have said, this is a year of milestones. You may have marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Canada on July 1. Some patriotic folks are celebrating all year long.

It is the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation, counting from when Martin Luther posted his 99 thesis on the door in Wittenburg. So far no one has offered us an article about how that has affected Mennonites.

The Waisenamt of our history has been the Mennonite Trust in Saskatchewan for 100 years. Maybe you know enough about them to do a good overview of this non-profit organization?

The writer we asked to write about the history of the Sask Valley News, and the transfer of their records into our Archives, has been too busy over the summer. He may be able to do it a little later.

Lastly, we have had some real interest in older recipes. Particularly those handed down through the generations. We've got a few in this issue, but we want to encourage you to submit your old family favourites. See the example Esther Patkau offered on page 23.

I thank her, too, for the articles on womens' ministries in the Mennonite Churches of Saskatchewan.

RMF

MHSS President's Corner

by Dick Braun

I want to thank all the people who help to make each issue of the Historian an interesting issue to read.

I also want to encourage all of you to think about writing an article about your life or your family's life. There might also be an interesting thing that happened in your community that we all would like to read about. There are many stories out there that have been told to you, and they might be lost if not written down and published.

We are encouraged by the many different kinds of books and documents that are donated to the archives.

While I was in Winnipeg I stopped at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and Conrad Stoesz showed me a book that was published in 1530 and rebound in 1830. This book was used by Mennonite midwives. It is a book that dealt with plants and their usefulness. The book was in very good shape and the pages were very pliable. Victor Wiebe tells me that the way the paper was made at that time made for very soft paper and was obviously long lasting.

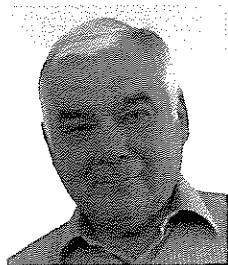
There may well be such kinds of books and articles in Saskatchewan somewhere.

MHSS now has a sign mounted on a 4ft x 8ft sheet of plywood, which can be used in a parade or stationary display. The sign has our website on it and a bit of what we do.

This tractor and sign was in the July 1, 2017, parade in Osler.

Canada is in full swing of celebrating the 150th birth date of Canada; I hope that we do not lose sight of the fact that long before the Europeans called this place Canada, there were already First Nations people living here, and governing this big country.

DB



Events of Interest to Historian Readers

August 12 - MCC Spruce River Folk Fest

A fundraiser with a Pipe ceremony at 10 am and music from 1 to 6 pm. There is an entrance fee. 20 km north of Prince Albert on the # 2 highway.

August 19 - Hague Museum Heritage Day -

featuring breakfast, meat-cutting demos, vintage cars, old-fashioned foods and live music all day. There will be cultural days in September, too.



September 16 - Hague Threshing Day -

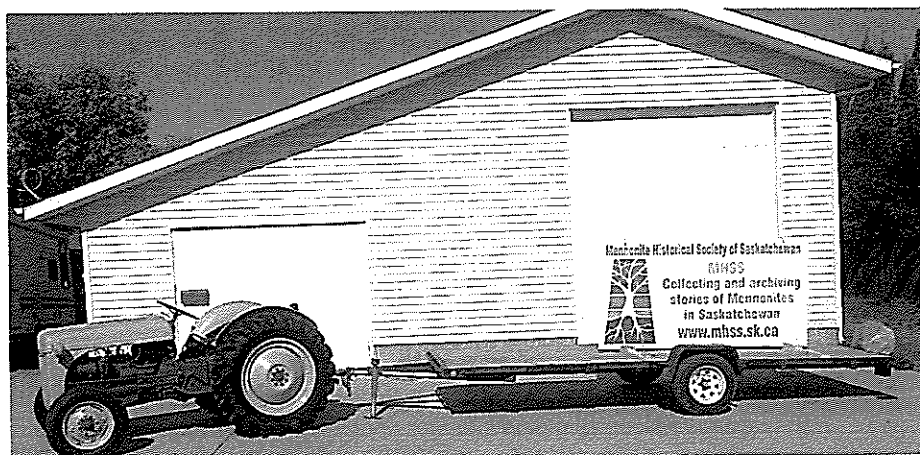
Tractor competitions, and old-time threshing demonstrations, with food and markets open all day.

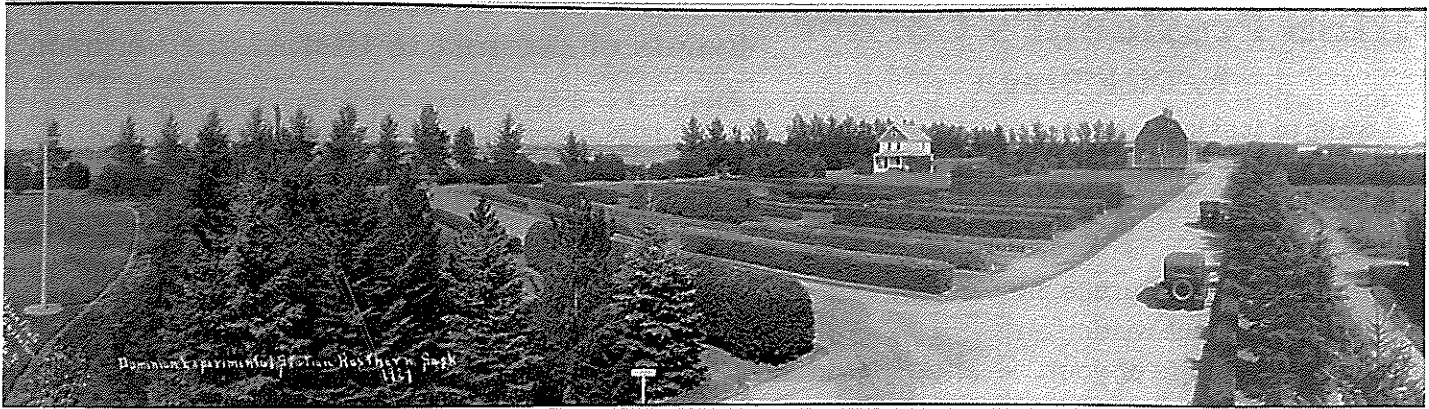
November 4 - MCCS Encounter and AGM

November 11 - MHSS Peace Event -

Conscientious Objectors with DVD videos

Watch for more detailed announcements on our website, mhss.sk.ca/events/ and in the E-Updates by email as we draw closer to November.



*Dominion Experimental Station - in 1929*

cont'd from page 1

to Mennonite Church Saskatchewan without any real loss of continuity.

In his 1994 book, *Grace Upon Grace: A History of the Mennonite Home of Rosthern* (sic), Kelly G.I. Harms traces the origins and development of the Mennonite Youth Farm from the *Christian Endeavour Society (CES)* movement through the formation of the (SMYO), and the use of the *Dominion Experimental Station (DES)* at Rosthern for youth retreats and its eventual purchase.

At its inception in 1941, a dedicated group worked tirelessly to provide opportunities for Mennonite youth to learn and embrace the faith of their predecessors. Elder David Toews' concern for faith, language and secular education beginning with the establishment of the *German-English Academy (GEA, later Rosthern Junior College, RJC)* in 1905 can't be discounted when chronicling the direction and energy resulting in the eventual establishment of a permanent youth facility. Without the tireless work and vision of a few, (plus a substantial stroke of good fortune, some would say) it would never have happened.

Forerunners to the establishment of the *Mennonite Youth Farm* as we know it need to be

acknowledged. The *Christian Endeavour Societies*, the *Daily Vacation Bible School* programs, the *Revivalist Movement* and the dedication of pastors, elders and deacons in the Saskatchewan Valley area all played a part.

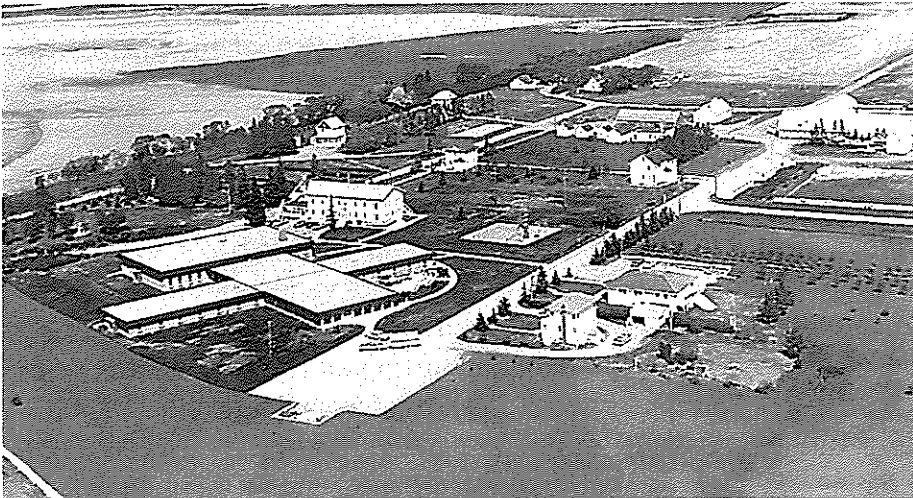
Christian Endeavour

Christian Endeavour Societies (CES) were formed first in Portland, Maine in 1881. Originally interdenominational, the CES spread to other areas and eventually the concept was "denominationalized" and in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, became part of North American Mennonite church scene. The original *Christian Endeavour Societies* encouraged the banding together of youth under Christ's banner; "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would like to have me do; that I will make it the rule of my life to pray and to read the Bible every day, and to support the work and worship of my own church in every way possible; and that just so far as I know how, throughout my whole life, I will endeavor to lead a Christian life."¹

Until about 1960, the Mennonite version in Saskatchewan (*Jugendverein*, literally "youth



1929 Besides research in development of better agricultural practices, the DES provided local employment.



Aerial view of the Mennonite Youth Farm, including the Nursing Home in 1971

society) existed to "... give as many young people a chance to serve as possible," and to "... [give] them an opportunity to discover their gifts and also their weaknesses when standing before an audience."ⁱⁱ

In practice, a *Christian Endeavour* committee of youth was formed in a church and charged with the task of putting together a program of poems, songs, readings and homilies to be presented by youth for the edification of the congregation at a monthly Sunday evening service. Probably because they did little else, the program began to dwindle with time, but the experiences of the participants had a profound effect on them and may well have led them into further Christian Education and service.

Education with a Plus - German English Academy/Rosthern Junior College, Rosthern Bible School.

Educational institutions contributed a great deal to youth ministry efforts in the Saskatchewan Valley. GEA/RJC, RBS brought well-qualified teachers to the community and made of the Valley a hub of Mennonite activity, including efforts geared toward youth. A look at the leadership of these institutions alongside SMYO and MYF boards shows considerable overlap. Rev. Jacob C. Schmidt, instructor at RBS, was one of the three men on the SMYO board along with Henry W. Friesen, a graduate of that school, and Rev. Isaac Epp (and, later, Rev. Paul Schroeder). It was they

who nurtured the idea and provided the impetus for what would eventually be a significant undertaking, namely the purchase of a section of land along with buildings and test plots from the Government of Canada.

The beginnings of the MYF as a youth-centered venue was accompanied by an awakening revivalism in the churches of the Valley. Influences of what we now call *fundamentalism* were carried to RBS and to the meetings of lead-

ership wrestling with directions in youth ministry. Area churches had begun by 1940 to hold revival events in the hope that it would instill faith in youth and keep them present and active in the church.

In *The Days of our Years*, Walter Klaassen writes: "The interest in evangelistic meetings in the area [Eigenheim/Rosthern] was part of the influence of the Rosthern Bible School. Revivalism had become part of its character with the appointment of Jacob C. Schmidt to the faculty. He brought it with him from *Winnipeg Bible Institute* and the *Mennonite Brethren Bible School* in Hepburn."ⁱⁱⁱ

The emphasis on personal conversion remained strong at the summer retreats/camps through the 40s, 50s and 60s with *Child Evangelism* exerting some influence to the point where the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1953 felt the need to study and pronounce on children and conversion: "... revivalist emphases that made Mennonites uncomfortable were: (1) the prominence given to the confrontation of the individual with the devil and to the theme of the wrath of God; (2) the focus on the individual; and (3) conversions that did not result in church membership."^{iv}

Rosthern Bible School closed its doors in 1957. The *Daily Vacation Bible Schools* that were an important avenue by which its students learned to practice their faith through service were moved to the *Mennonite Youth Farm* and gradually replaced by summer camps: *Youth Farm Bible Camp*, *Shekinah Retreat Centre* in the Saskatchewan Valley.

The birthing of a Youth Farm

The *Dominion Experimental Station* at Rosthern was established in 1908 in order to augment the efforts of the Indian Head Experimental Station in "supply[ing] all the necessary information to immigrant farmers entering Saskatchewan."^v Orderly hedgerows and orchards, field plots, manpower and horsepower are prominent in photos depicting the DES. The facility operated under the direction of the federal Department of Agriculture and provided welcome employment for locals.

A 1935 government publication described the DES thus: "Today, spacious lawns and ornamental grounds offer excellent facilities for the station to play the part of host at picnics and field days of every description. The agricultural field day held co-operatively each year with the Wheat Pool alone attracts several thousand farmers with their families."^{vi}

The DES property was the site of an initial, 1941 youth retreat, one of the first organized functions set up by what was first called "Youth Organization of the Canadian Conference of Mennonites - Saskatchewan Division."^{vii}

The retreat was a great success in the eyes of the organizers but at Canadian Conference sessions following, concern was expressed about the appropriateness of outdoor, fireside services as well as about the fact that the retreat had primarily been conducted in English, not

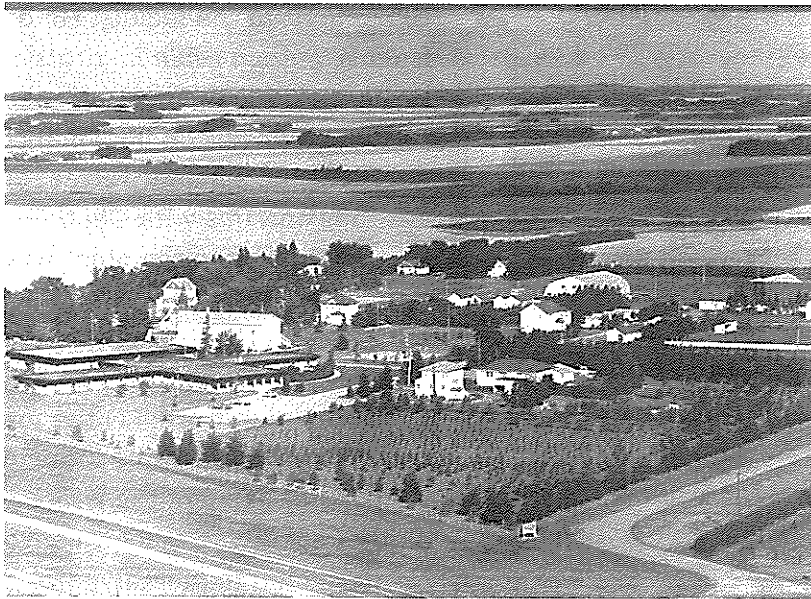
German.^{viii} No doubt it was the success of this retreat in this setting that endeared the location to the board and led to the dream of owning the facility which had fortuitously just come up for sale.^{ix}

In time, the DES came to be seen as redundant and an expense that could be foregone, a special

motivation during wartime. After considerable prayer at the *Rosthern Bible School* and elsewhere in the vicinity, a letter was sent to Agriculture Minister, James G. Gardiner, offering to purchase the DES site for charitable purposes, namely retreats, camps, a relocation of the Rosthern Bible School and an orphanage. On that basis, the offer to buy for a price far below its value—\$20,000—was quickly accepted and expedited.^x

The plan for supporting all the dreams that were evolving was simple: the farming operation would provide income to finance charitable programs. 600 acres of grain-growing, forage-growing land would provide a base, a dairy herd would supply the Town of Rosthern with milk and the hog operation and chicken barns would serve to feed residents and staff.

The orphanage never happened; the Rosthern Bible School never moved but the newly minted "Mennonite Youth Farm" rapidly became a beehive of charitable activity. Its goals were established to be two-fold: to spread the gospel and to provide humanitarian care. The first goal would come to



Mennonite Youth Farm circa 1975

involve summer retreats for children and youth, Daily Vacation Bible School, and the provision of voluntary service opportunities for youth. The second goal was realized in the establishment of an Invalid Home (1944), a Children's Home (1946 - 1959), a Crippled Children's Home (1953 - 1971), and a Home for

Handicapped Men and Women (1954 - 1968/73).

Changing times, changing needs and the establishment of alternative placements for handicapped children and adults allowed most of the early "homes" to close. Institutionally, then, the successor to the first *Invalidenheim* (Invalid Home) became the heart of the charitable functioning of MYF and

remains so to this day. The youth focus has morphed into a year-round camping and projects institution providing camps including an *Adult Special Needs Camp*, *Children and Youth Camps*, and a *Junior Staff Program* for training youth in leadership at the camp and beyond. An annual service trip to Mexico for staff and supporters serves as an education in cross-cultural outreach. Functioning under a separate Mennonite Church Saskatchewan elected board, the YFBC has become financially self-supporting.^{xi}

The combination of a farm, a youth-centered ministry and charitable homes for the needy—all in one place and under one management—made the transition times complicated. In the 1940s, the modest scope of the charitable work required only a few employees with volunteer help. The farm functioned similarly with managers for the various livestock enterprises, supported by volunteers and Men's Home labour as appropriate. The farm operation grew rapidly, especially after the equipment for providing Rosthern with pasteurized milk created an income stream for the time.

In the 1950s, the farm qualified as a charitable organization eligible to place American conscientious objectors and numerous war resisters spent their allotted alternate-service requirement working in the barns, fields and homes.

The growth of the farm and yard operations can be illustrated by the relevant inventory valuations: a property purchased for \$20,000 in 1944 was valued at \$252,000 by 1955.^{xii}

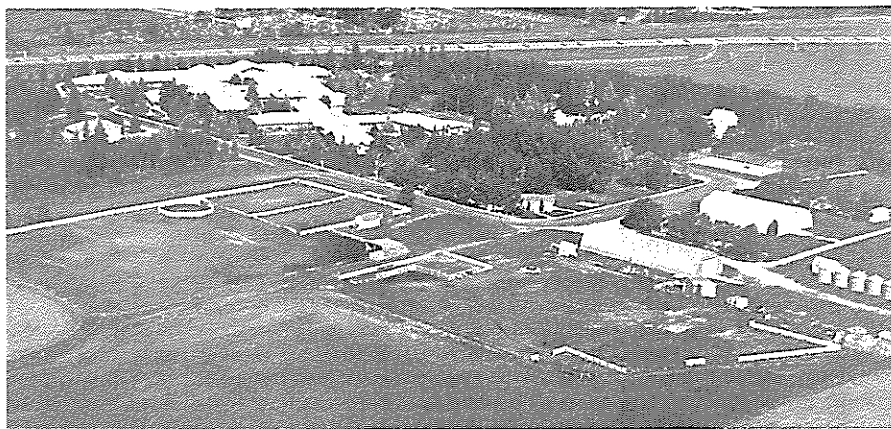
Toward the present era

The Invalid Home (1944) faced an immediate high demand for beds and rapidly grew into an institution far too large for the original structure to handle. The first home—a 2 ½ story

residence—had to be added to. Later the Rosthern Hospital building was moved onto campus and the Invalid Home morphed into a Men's and a Women's home. That, too, gave way to a dedicated, single home for elderly and handicapped adults and seniors.

The 1960s saw a major transition in how care facilities would be run. The shift from church charity to secular, government social supports was moving rapidly, and for the Mennonite Youth Farm's board, that meant a rethinking of the future to meet provincial goals and standards. It also meant that financial support would be forthcoming from the provincial government.

Irvin V. Schmidt summarizes the 1960s shifts well: "The decade of the sixties^{xiii} brought with it the era of greater specialization, better performance and a shift from church supported institutions to government subsidies. In part this new emphasis was also due to the involvement of professional resources people on committees and in the constituency."^{xiii} The changes meant modernizing, both on the farm and on the charitable side. In 1966, construction began on



2002 aerial view from the eastern side of the M.Y.F.

a new nursing home, one that would comply with increasing standards of care. At about the same time, the phaseout of the farm was beginning in response to the pressure of financ-

ing needed for upgrades and the difficulty of remaining profitable. The phases of development of a facility that could accommodate the needs of seniors from modest rental suites (*Country Gardens*) to assisted living options (*Pine View*) to full-time nursing care (*Mennonite Nursing Home*) constitutes a story all on its own, a story not yet complete in that the current board has embarked on the addition of a facility for seniors who need more care than the assisted living wings can offer, but don't yet qualify—according to governmental

assessment—for the nursing wings.

Currently, the *Mennonite Youth Farm* is the legal property of *Mennonite Church Saskatchewan*, which organization elects the membership of both the *Mennonite Youth Farm Complex* board and the *Youth Farm Bible Camp* board at its Annual Delegate Sessions. The Complex board administers the property in total and the YFBC board, its administration and staff control the camping program utilizing MYF facilities and coordinating with the MC Sask and Complex boards.

Quality of service at the Nursing Home is monitored by the Saskatoon Health Region, which bureaucracy also assigns residents to any beds available in the region. The Complex board, administration and staff have continued to maintain the Anabaptist/Christian flavour of the institution despite its close affiliation with the Health Region, but the question of how that will play out in the future is always in doubt.

It's been 75 years of adjustment and compromise. It's a story whose core values may historically be declared to have been more about the triumph of faith, perseverance and and love over disagreement and change. It's a story that models one way in which service to Christ and His Church can bear marvellous fruit . . . over a long time and through massive trials.

Endnotes:

- ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_People's_Society_of_Christian_Endavour retrieved February 15, 2017
- ⁱⁱ Klaassen, H.T., *Birth and Growth of Eigenheim Mennonite Church: 1892-1974*. Rosthern, Sk. Valley Printers, p. 35
- ⁱⁱⁱ Klaassen, Walter. *The Days of our Years: A History of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church Community: 1892-1992*. Rosthern: Eigenheim Mennonite Church, 1992, p.151.
- ^{iv} Bender, Harold S., Ernst Crous, Nanne van der Zijpp and Beulah Stauffer Hostetler. (1990). *Revivalism*. *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 17 February 2017, from <http://gameo.org/index.php?title->



Drone shot taken in 2016 by Mark Wurtz, YFBC Director

Revivalism&oldid=146780

^v http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/agriculture_canada_research_stations.html, retrieved February 18th, 2017.

^{vi} Fifty years of progress on Dominion Experimental Farms, 1886-1936 Retrieved on February 20, 2017 from http://www.archive.org/stream/fiftyyearsprog/fiftyyearsprog_djvu.t

^{vii} Harms, Kelly G. I. *Grace Upon Grace: A History of the Mennonite Home of*

Rosthern (sic). *Mennonite Nursing Homes Inc.: Rosthern*, 1994, p.4

^{viii} Schmidt, Irvin V. *The Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Farm* (a paper written for Dr. J. C. Wenger's course in Anabaptist Mennonite History, 1976. p.2. Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Archives. 4.3.40

^{ix} Ibid: 17

^x Ibid: 19-20

^{xi} 2016 Annual Report - *Mennonite Youth Farm*

^{xii} Ibid: 6

^{xiii} Schmidt, 13

^{xiv} Schmidt, 13

Names Embroidered on a 12x12" cloth

It appears to come from Drake, SK. with dates back to 1906 and 1911, when Mennonites from Kansas



moved to Drake. We would love to have more information. If you know anything more about this cloth, please contact Board member, Susan Braun. R M F

Kronsthal Old Colony Mennonite Church

by Jake Buhler

The Kronsthal Old Colony Mennonite Church, shown in this 1962 photograph, was located a mile south and just over 1.5 miles east of Osler along the Powerline Road (SE-15-39-4-W3). Its story is a journey that deserves telling. In the early 1900s, this building was the home of Old



Colony minister Rev. Johann Wall and his family who lived in Neuanlage. Sometime after 1919, ownership transferred to either the Peter Enns family or to the Cornelius Schmidt family. It is possible that one owned it first and sold it to the other one.

From either the Enns family or the Schmidt family location in Neuanlage, it was moved in 1952 to a site east of Osler on the Powerline Road.

It was renovated, and became the Kronsthal Old Colony Mennonite Church. On April 2, it was dedicated by Aeltester Abram Loewen with a text from Psalm 116, verse 12: *What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?* The church was served by various lay ministers that included Rev. Peter Martens, Rev. Julius Enns, Rev. Herman Bueckert, Rev. Jacob Enns, Rev. Johann Ginther, Rev. Peter Zacharias, Rev. Peter Peters, Rev. Johann Giesbrecht, and Rev. Herman Friesen. Two Vorsanger included Johann Klassen and John G. Wiebe. Aeltester Abram Loewen presided over baptisms and twice-annual Lord's Suppers. In Plautdietsch the term is *Owendmol*, and in High German, *Abendmahl*.

Sunday School was taught for at least some years. The biblical texts were read in High German, but frequently the teacher told stories or explained things in Plautdietsch (Mennonite Low German). English was not used. David Reddekopp was one teacher, among others.

Singing was done in High German. Three or four Vorsanger sat in the front beside the pulpit facing the worshippers. One of them would call out the number of the hymn and the name of the hymn. The Vorsanger would begin to sing and the worshippers would join in. Only the melody

was sung; there was no four part harmony.

Each adult brought her/his own Gesangbuch (hymnbook) from home. None were provided in the church. The Gesangbuch had about 700 hymns, but without any notes. But approximately one hundred melodies served all the hymns. So when a Vorsanger called for a hymn to be sung, he looked at a number next to the title which indicated which melody was to be used. The Vorsanger were gifted and knew the melodies from memory. Among others, Isbrand Friesen, Johann Klassen, and John G. Wiebe were Vorsanger.

A small room at the back called a *Stowkje* was where the minister would dress himself. He wore boots and a long black coat. When he walked down the aisle that separated the men from the women, the service had begun. The benches at Kronsthal were painted and had no backs. When the minister called for the worshippers to pray, they would turn around and kneel.

For a number of years, David S. Friesen, who lived nearby, would go to the church on Saturday evening and start the stove in cold weather. He was there again early on Sunday morning to ensure the church was warm. There was no electricity.

It was common for children of about 12 years of age to be given a German language Catechism book by their parents. The mother, frequently, would ask the prescribed question, and the child would answer. In one family, the mother would call up each of

her children by turn, while she was knitting, and ask questions. The children would oblige by giving the answer. A number of children knew some or all of the Catechism book from memory. Some of these Catechism books remain keepsakes even 50 to 60 years later.

A fastly held custom was that members who wished to marry in the church, attended *Katechismus-Unterricht* (High German) or *Katejismus-Unjarejcht* (Mennonite Low German). This was usually done at about age twenty. Baptisms followed around the time of Pentecost. For many years, Aeltester Abram Loewen conducted baptisms.

The church served families living in the Kronsthal - Osterwick area that broadly included the Saskatchewan School District. Families that attended the church included names like Wiebe, Janzen, Klassen, Friesen, Bueckert, Giesbrecht, Unger, Reddekopp, Braun, Peters, Wall, and Miller.

The Kronsthal OCMC church did not have a Kjoakjhof (cemetery). Funeral services were held at the church but burials were done at other churches like Neuanlage and Neuhorst, or elsewhere.

Around 1969 or 1970, the church closed and was moved to Martensville where it continued to be an Old Colony Mennonite Church for twenty more years.

In 1990, the church closed and was moved back to Neuanlage where for several years it became the Church of God in Christ Church. It was then sold to a John Reddekopp family who turned it back into a house.

How is it possible that the building could so easily be a house and a church?

The first Mennonite places of worship were in houses, and hence the term, *Kjoakjhus* (church house) became common usage. Old Colony churches resemble houses with their rectangular windows, shingled roofs, a single entrance, and no bell towers or crosses.

And so the cycle of this building is House > House > House > Church > Church > Church > House. It began as a series of houses, then be-

came a series of churches, and finally reverted back to a house.

The Kronsthal Old Colony Mennonite Church served its community for almost twenty years.

Hundreds of people worshipped, sang without musical instruments, heard sermons, participated in the Lord's Supper, attended funerals, and were married in this Church. To the best of their ability, members of this church tried to be faithful and obedient to God.

JB

Sources used: Elizabeth Friesen interview in 2015, and; *Hague - Osler Mennonite Reserve 1895 - 1995*. ed. Jacob G. Guenter, et al. Information was also provided by Louise Wiebe Buhler.

Use Your Archives by the Editor

Meet the Friendly Volunteers at Your Archives



Today, Meet Kathy Boldt

The last two years we've been describing some of the great resources you will find at the Archives. This year I want to introduce you to some of the volunteer staff there.

First, let's meet Kathy Boldt, Coordinator over the volunteers. Her duties include documenting the donations as they come in. After sorting they are passed on to other volunteers for further documentation. She serves on the Archives Committee as liaison to the MHSS Board.

RMF

Women's Ministries - Saskatchewan Story

by Esther Patkau

The first Mennonite settlers came from Manitoba by train to station Rosthern in 1891. On arrival the railway coaches were shunted onto a siding, and these early settlers lived in them for five weeks while deciding just where to establish their new homes.

In the following summer and fall (1893), Rev. Peter Regier, who had recently come from West Prussia to Saskatchewan, visited these settlers. The families invited him to serve them with the Word, and he did, visiting the families in Eigen-

heim district, six miles west of Rosthern. The leadership of the older congregations in Manitoba were concerned for the spiritual care in the new settlements. Rev. Regier's service in one of the homes led to the organization of a new congregation, the Rosenort Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan in July 1895, with Eigenheim as its centre.

More families came in the following years. At a brotherhood meeting on July 2, 1894, the foundation for the Rosenort Church was laid. In the following years congregations were established in surrounding communities, with their first worship gatherings held in area schools: Eigenheim (1895), Rosthern (1903), Langham (1910), Aberdeen (1910), Waldheim (1916), Tiefengrund, Bergthal, Hague, Osler, and others.

These new settlers were pioneers. Pioneer years were difficult. Families worked hard. Travel was by horse and buggy, in winter by horse and sleigh. Winters brought lots of snow and blizzards. Communications by phone was rare. Men met for business transactions where they socialized with other men during the week and discussed the

events of the times. They gathered for brotherhood meetings to discuss church and community issues.

But for the women it was a lonely life; they were mostly confined to their homes with their children. Outside of hosting services in their homes, and later

attending Sunday services after the first log church was built at Eigenheim in June, 1896, they did not have much opportunity to socialize with other women.

They did not have the privilege to attend brotherhood meetings, nor had they voting rights to decide issues.

Through their spouses, the women learned what decisions were made, but there also were widows who had no representation at the meetings. Yet the women wanted to participate more directly in church ministry. There always were concerns and needs. They needed their own peers and time to discuss the issues that were relevant to them; they needed a place where they could share their concerns. They needed the support and fellowship of neighbourhood women.

As more families came, some established their home in the growing town of Rosthern. In 1903 the second church building of the Rosenorter Mennonite congregation was built in Rosthern. Here, too, the women wanted to participate in ministry in more than just hosting and serving meals.

Through the visit of Elders (Altester) from Manitoba in 1902, Manitoba and Saskatchewan congregations began a relationship that led to the formation of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada. (The name "Central Canada" was used since the prairie provinces were considered to be central, bordered by B.C. to the west and Ontario to the east). The first conference was held in Manitoba in



Rosthern Mennonite Church 1907 - First Ladies Aid in Saskatchewan.

1. Mrs. J. J. Friesen, 2. Mrs. B. B. Loewen, 3. Mrs. W. Esau, 4. Mrs. R. S. Rempel, 5. Mrs. H. B. Penner (Pres), 6. Mrs. P. L. Friesen, 7. Mrs. David Toews, 8. Mrs. M. Kehler, 9. Mrs. J. J. Janzen, 10. Mrs. W. Rempel, 12. Mrs. A. G. Hamm, 13. Mrs. T. Loewen, 14. Mrs. Friesen, 15. Mrs. M. J. Janzen, 16. Mrs. F. F. Siemens, 17. Mrs. A. Dyck.

1903, the second conference in Eigenheim, Saskatchewan in 1904, the third in Winkler, Manitoba, in 1905, and again in Eigenheim in 1906. [J. G. Rempel, *Fuenfzig Jahre Konferenz Betreibungen 1902-1952*. p. 33]

With no hotels or motels at the time, delegates needed to be billeted and meals provided. While the men deliberated, the women provided food and lodging – time consuming work, yet considered a necessary part of living. Vegetables came from the garden; milk, cream, eggs and meat from the farm animals. The food preparations were done in the farm kitchen. Rooms were rearranged and children doubled up so that a guest might have the privacy of his room. Laundry facilities included heating water on the kitchen stove, a washing tub and scrub board, homemade soap, an outdoor clothes line for drying, and “sad irons” heated on the kitchen stove for ironing. Hosting brought with it much extra work.

In the annual conference reports, no mention is made of women's contributions, except that in a discussion on the ministers' visitation of the sick, it was noted that brothers and sisters in the congregation should be encouraged to also visit the ill.

At the close of the conference in 1906, the conference executive expressed thanks to the Rosenort Church for the brotherly welcome and hosting they had received (*“bruederliche Aufnahme and Bewirtung”*), but no mention is made of the work of the women. [Ibid.46]

In early 1907 a group of women met in one of the homes in Rosthern to form the first sewing society in Saskatchewan, naming it *“Rosenorter Frauenverien”* (Rosenort Women's Society). What inspired them to form a society, what their first concerns were, and what they discussed is not known, for there are no recorded minutes. They organized with President, Mrs. Henry B. Penner, and secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Abram G. Hamm. (In the early records the women are listed only under their husband's name, not their given name, nor maiden name; e.g. Mrs. Abram G. Hamm).

The earliest preserved minutes, handwritten in Gothic script in the German language, state: “The

sewing circle (*Naehverein*) at Rosthern was established in the beginning of 1907 by Mrs. H. B. Penner, and will meet in the homes of the members, if possible every two weeks. The purpose of the sewing circle is to work for missions, everyone according to her ability. The members will bring along their work to prepare for the mission sale. The proceeds of the sale will go for missions, where it is most necessary. At every meeting there is to be a voluntary collection taken for missions or for support of an orphaned child in India, if possible.”

[From a black notebook with handwritten minutes, 1907].

The minutes record the annual giving for the years 1907 to 1912, sent to General Conference Mennonite Church headquarters in Newton, Kansas, marked for foreign missions, for orphans in India, for medical work in Africa, for city missions in California. In 1912 some funds were also donated to the Rosthern hospital and some for the Rosthern Rosenort church organ. That was the beginning of many years of supporting one another, encouraging each other in the faith, sharing recipes and health remedies, discussing parenting skills, exchanging garden



Rosthern Senior Ladies aid in 1926. Front row: Mrs. Wm. Rempel, Mrs. I. Loewen, Mrs. Wm. Krahn, Mrs. Jake Friesen, Mrs. Dick Friesen, Mrs. Henry Derksen. Back row: Mrs. John Epp, Mrs. Henry Penner, Mrs. H. S. Derksen (Sr.), Mrs. David Toews, Mrs. Jake Andres, Mrs. John Andres, Rev. David Toews, Mrs. Jake Hamm, Mrs. H. G. Hamm, Mrs. J. A. P. Loewen.

seeds and garden expertise, and much more. Though these women contributed and participated in the church activities, no mention of this women's group, or their contributions, is made in the history of the Rosenorter Church written by John G. Rempel

[Rempel, *Die Rosenorter Gemeinde in Saskatchewan in Wort und Bild*. 1950. Rosthern, D. H. Epp.]

The women of the Zoar Mennonite Church in Langham was the second group that organized. The founding families of this congregation had come from Minnesota in the early 1900s to take up homesteads in the farming area west of Saskatoon. The congregation organized in November, 1910, with 26 members, all men except one widow was included. The wives are not mentioned as founding (charter) members. When the church was build in 1911, the furnishings: pulpit, pews and chairs were shipped from Winnipeg. They came unfinished, consequently the women were given the task to sand, polish and varnish the furniture. The early records were destroyed in a house fire in 1920, so the exact date when the women organized is not known.

The Langham women also handcrafted articles that were sold at mission sales, with proceeds to local needs, home and foreign missions. [*Our Heritage, Our Treasure, Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, Saskatchewan, 1910-1985*, 3-4]

The July, 1917, Canadian Conference was held in Langham. Missionary P. W. Penner had been invited to speak, but he landed in Saskatoon in hospital for an appendectomy, so Mrs. Penner took his place and held the audience spellbound for almost an hour with her description of their work, and the plight of poverty in India. It impacted everyone. The women became more diligent to provide for the needy. They sewed for children in India and China.

A decade later, rip-

ples of the First World War (1914-1918), being fought in Europe, were felt in this small peace-loving community of Rosthern, so far from the military front. The women had been sewing for those in need in their communities, had sold their handcrafted articles at mission sales and sent the proceeds to help home missions. They had collected funds to help needy families in their community. In 1914 the Rosthern Aid recorded their lowest income, only \$26.25; cash was so scarce they did not even arrange for a mission sale that year, for no one could afford to buy the items.

With the war came other needs. The Red Cross requested help from the women. The Red Cross would provide the wool yarn if the women would do the work. So the hands of the women were kept busy knitting socks, mittens, scarves and vests for men serving in CO (Conscientious Objector)

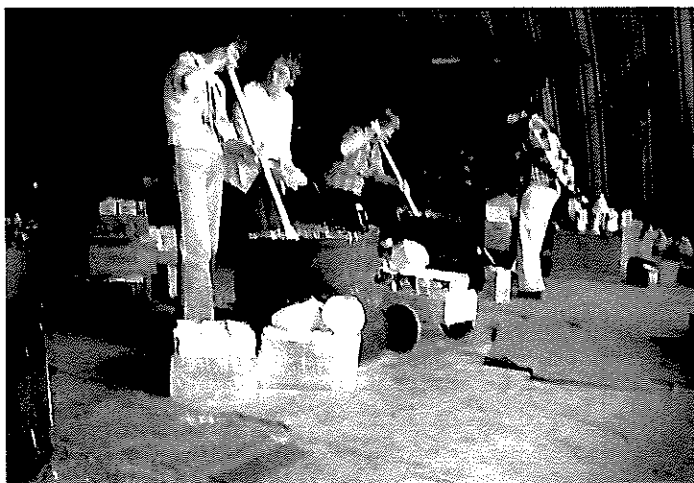
camp and in military action overseas. Out of compassion and concern for local men serving elsewhere, the women packaged small love-gifts and sent parcels to them through the Red Cross.

During the first 25 years (1907-1932) the Rosthern women raised \$5,243 by means of sales and collections among the members. In the next 25 years (1932-1957) the receipts more than doubled, increasing to over \$14,000. Their activities continued to increase: home-baking sales, making and donating

home-crafted articles: knitted mittens, socks, scarves, aprons, tea-towels, embroidery work for auctioning at so-called missions sales (called mission sales because the proceeds went for charity or for missions, locally; home missions or foreign). The women hosted guest speakers in their homes, served coffee and meals



Langham women making soap for MCC



Langham women making soap for MCC in a farm quonset

and home-baking at church functions; catered at conferences, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and funerals. They supported their own church financially, supported Bible Schools, the German English Academy in Rosthern (1956 renamed Rosthern Junior College), Home for the Aged, the Mennonite Youth Farm

institutions: the Crippled Children's Home, Invalid Home, and many other projects.

In the 1920s the request for sewn articles for overseas missions diminished. Missionaries requested funds rather than finished articles. The clothes sewn in America often did not fit the children for whom they were sent, or were the wrong colour or style in the culture to where they were sent. Materials could be purchased for lower prices in the country where they were needed, and they would also be saving on the sending costs. The Saskatchewan women complied with these requests.

Women sewing circles formed in other congregations: Hague, 1910; Aberdeen, 1912; Eigenheim, 1915; Drake/North Star, 1915, Waldheim, 1916, Herbert, 1917. They all had similar motives: to fellowship and encourage one another in the faith, to provide for the needs of the under privileged, both locally and abroad, to contribute to the congregation financially and through service.

In the 1920s, beginning with July, 1923, a new wave of refugee immigrants from Russia came to Saskatchewan to start a new life. Many had been dispossessed of their homes and possessions during the Revolution and aftermath of World



Rosthern Mennonite Ladies Aid, 1915. 1. Miss Strobel, 2. Maria Esau, 3. Miss Strobel, 4. Mrs. Strobel, 5. Mrs. Wilheimina Esau, 6. Mrs. Krahn, 7. Mrs. Wilhelm Rempel, 8. Mrs. Menno Galle, 9. Mrs. Abraham G. Hamm, 10. Mrs. B. B. Loewen, 11. Mrs. John J. Andres, 12. Mrs. Henry B. Penner, 13. Mrs. David Toews, 14. Mrs. Jacob Janzen, 15. Mrs. Hoffmann, 16. Mrs. Henry H. Derksen, 17. Mrs. Peter S. Rempel, 18. Mrs. Jacob A. H. Loewen.

War I, and by typhus epidemic and famine in South Russia.

Through the newly organized Canadian Mennonite Board of Immigration and Colonization, under the leadership of Bishop David Toews with an office in Rosthern, through travel credit arrangements with the Canadian Pacific Railway, thousands were able to come to Canada on credit fares, with the stipulation they would repay the fare debt after

their arrival here.

Many were eager to pay off that debt as quickly as possible, even with their first earnings. But wages were low and their needs were many. They had also left family members in the land they had come from, and their needs were also pressing.

Many new settlements were begun and congregations organized. Church services were held in homes, barn lofts, and other buildings until these new groups could think of building a church. Since the newcomers were required to settle on farms, they planted their gardens, milked cows, tended chickens and geese, kept cattle and pigs, and had their basic daily food supplies. From their meager incomes, especially during the drought years of the 1930s, and crop failures, there still were some financial donations. Cash was scarce. The culture and farming practices were different from that in their homeland. All had to learn the new language – English.

The leadership in the church was male; issues were discussed and decisions made at brotherhood meetings, with no women present. The women wanted a time where they could express their concerns, have fellowship with other women and contribute their share to the ministry. So in many of these newly organized congregations the women formed

sewing circles. Because distances were great, travel was with horse and buggy, young children needed to be supervised, and there were no baby sitters; often the husband took the wife and children to these meetings. While the women discussed areas of need and how they could contribute to relieve these needs, or did handwork while listening to the reading of a book, the men visited in an adjoining room. The needlework was sold at a 'mission' auction, with proceeds going to help in the construction of a church building, for its furnishings, or for missions. When possible, funds were sent to Russia to relieve the dire needs there.

Examples of contribution to the congregation was evident in various situations. In the Hanley church land was needed for a church and cemetery. But cash was scarce. So the

women sold their hand-crafted articles at a mission sale and donated the \$100 to purchase two acres of land for the church building and cemetery, then they sold their farm eggs to the local grocery store, and the funds were given to purchase furnishings for the church.

In Rosthern the women paid for the church organ.

During the 1920s and early 1930s many women's societies were organized, encouraged by the example of others. The purpose was always to have fellowship, to encourage and support one another, and participate in the ministry of helping where help was needed. Many groups took their motto from Scriptures that spoke of service to others, done for the Master. *"Serve the Lord with gladness."* Psalm 100:2. *"Let us not be weary in well doing."* Galatians 6:9. *"Whatever you do, do heartily as to the Lord... It is the Lord Christ you serve."* Colossians 3:23

Meetings were begun with prayer, hymns, Scripture and a devotional. Discussions focused

on local and mission needs and how they could contribute to alleviate these needs. The women worked on their handwork projects. The meetings concluded with a coffee break (Faspa).

Young girls were invited to come to these gatherings. In several congregations an older person formed a group with them, teaching them how to knit, sew, embroider, and read an interesting book aloud while they did their stitches. Thus the girls learned skills that would help them when they established their own families. They formed close bonds with the older women.



Langham women ready to board the charter bus for Saskatchewan Women's Conference in May 1956.

As groups increased in membership, homes became too small, the younger ones formed their own group. At times there were as many children as young mothers at their meetings. The underlying basis was the desire for friendship, for sharing and for reaching out to those in need and for

foreign missions.

Saskatchewan Women's Mission Conference

In 1941 Rev. David Toews, moderator of the Canadian Mennonite Conference, asked Mrs. Krehbiel of the Rosthern Ladies Society if the sewing societies could present a program one evening at the Canadian Conference sessions to be held in Laird that July. They did.

They also chose a committee that would arrange for future programs. As a result, the societies sought closer ties. When the Canadian Conference sessions were held in Langham in 1943, the women held a separate meeting and discussed forming a Women's Missions Conference; the idea was adopted with a large majority. Mrs. Marie (Hugo) Bartel of Drake was chosen as the first president of the new organization; Mrs. Justina (G. G.) Epp of Eigenheim as secretary-treasurer and Mrs. Anna (Peter D.) Willms of Saskatoon as the third member of the executive.

The first regular meeting was held October 17,



Helen Kornelsen ordination to ministry July 1948. Back: Mrs. Schmidt, Mrs. Sophie Krehbiel, Mrs. Justina (G.G.) Epp. Seated: Mrs. Hugo Bartel, Mrs. Anna Isaac (retired missionary to India), Helen Kornelsen, Mrs. Katharina Kornelsen (Helen's mother).

1943 at First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. Fourteen societies were represented with 73 delegates. The women came from Carmen, Clavet, Colonsay, Dundurn, Drake, Eigenheim, Hochfeld, Laird, Langham, Osler, Rosthern, Saskatoon, Swift Current and Tiefengrund.

The first project was suggested by Rev. J. J. Thiessen - a scholarship fund in memory of Mrs. David Toews. This fund, named "Margareta Toews Scholarship" would provide a year of schooling at the German English Academy in Rosthern (now Rosthern Junior College) for a needy girl. (This scholarship fund continues to the present - 2017, and is still used for needy students.)

The theme of the conference was "To Serve." One of the chief concerns was relief for England. It was during the Second World War (1939-1945) and the Red Cross as well as periodicals alerted the sewing societies to the suffering in Europe. The offering of \$28.52 was divided - half for foreign missions and half for relief in England.

The second conference was held in Osler in 1944 under the theme "Relief Work," with an attendance of 105.

In the next decades attendance continued to increase, reaching a peak of 550 in 1964, and again in 1969. Donations also increased, - from \$28.52 in 1943 to \$1800 in 1976, and since then,

much, much more. Many projects and institutions have benefited. To name a few: the Invalid Home and Home for the Aged, both in Rosthern, Rosthern Bible School, Rosthern Junior College, Mennonite Central Committee, home and foreign missions, and specific mission projects, as well as Canadian and General Conference Women's projects.

Another major ongoing project was for Helen Kornelsen, who was preparing for missions in India. She received support during her studies, beginning in 1946, and when in 1948 she was ordained for ministry and left for work in India, the Saskatchewan Women's Mission Conference faithfully supported her with funds, prayers and letters until her retirement in 1985. As a gift on her return home she was presented with a quilt, hand-crafted by the women - each of the 64 quilt blocks embroidered with the name of a society and a Saskatchewan flower.

When the Canadian Women in Mission was formed in 1952, the Saskatchewan women were participants, and supported the projects of the larger body.

Changes have come through the years. In 1953 a formal constitution was drawn up (redrafted in 1964), giving the name, purpose, membership, officers, voting details and other regulations. Also added was the office of a Junior Sponsor, someone to coordinate the work of the Wayfarers, a girls activity program. The Wayfarers program was begun in 1960 and the Junior Sponsor terminated in 1974, expecting the Wayfarer leaders could choose their sponsor from within their group. The Wayfarers were phased out and replaced with girls clubs in some churches.



Bethany Mennonite Church women at Watrous making noodles for MCC sale.

Until 1960 the hosting church served the noon meal and a lunch (Vaspa) to all guests. As attendance increased it became a burden to serve the noon meal. Because of preparations for the noon meal, the hosting women missed the morning session, and also part of the afternoon. Since 1960 women were asked to bring a bag lunch; the host women would provide the beverage, and serve a light closing Vaspa. This allowed the local women to attend all sessions.

Many speakers, including MCC workers and missionaries, have addressed the conference through the years. There has been ongoing communication between workers and supporters. Learning to personally know the individuals and their experiences has deepened the interest and understanding of missions, relief work and needs both locally and abroad.

The projects in which Saskatchewan women have participated have been varied and many. Over the years they have changed. To list them all is impossible. Here are some: sewing and sending clothing to impoverished areas in India and China (1917-1930), raising funds by serving meals, bake sales, catering at weddings, birthday celebrations, anniversaries, farm auctions, mission sales, compiling and selling recipe books, selling handcrafted articles, holding rummage sales. Projects included: providing furnishings for the local church, e.g. kitchen supplies, dishes, window shades, organ or piano, providing the library with books, the church nursery, hymn books, choir gowns, pews, providing funds to put in water and sewer pipes.

Humanitarian projects include sending relief to England via the Red Cross, during World War I (1914-1918), and again World War 2 (1939-1945), sending food packages to Russia (1930s), sending relief packages to local men serving overseas, to PAX men and Conscientious Objectors, canning beef for shipment to war-torn Europe, sending garden and grain seeds to Paraguay, making tons of soap sent to hospitals abroad (Africa).

In more recent years, women have focused on MCC projects: sewing layettes, bandages and other hygiene supplies, making blankets - tied and

quilted, serving in thrift stores, at the MCC depot and at relief sales, providing personnel to help at Red Cross blood clinics, canvassing for the Cancer Clinic. The women have served programs and sung at birthday celebrations at care homes, in nursing homes, acted in drama presentations (like the play: *Challenge of the Cross*), gone caroling at Christmas, held baby showers for new mothers, and welcome showers for new immigrants and refugees. They have had Prayer Partners since 1952, prayed for one another, visited the sick, and sent encouragement cards.

This list is not exhaustive, and it continues in the present, even though many groups have disbanded for various reasons, but the caring continues. Only the Lord God knows what these women have done for others, in their service for the Lord.

Workshops and Retreats

Times, perceived needs and memberships change. So it has also been among the younger women in Saskatchewan. In 1968 the perceived need was for more sharing of projects and ideas, so planned annual workshops were initiated.

The first one, held November 2, 1968 at First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, was on the theme of learning to use the "Guide to Mission Study" and filling out the annual questionnaire.

In 1970 an overnight retreat was held at Pike Lake Bible Camp, including an evening of sharing around a campfire.

Weather played havoc with the 1971 retreat, and it was rescheduled for November 1972, held at Swift Current Bible Institute. The women over-nighted in sleeping bags on the floor of Zion Mennonite Church in Swift Current. But that did not diminish interest in sharing time together.

The topic of "Role of Women in the Church" had surfaced in conversation and debate, and led to lively discussions in 1973.

For several years the retreats were held at Camp Rayner on Lake Diefenbaker, then in various other centres, and from 2000, after the Timber Lodge at Shekinah Retreat Centre was completed, that facility was the place of choice.

The annual retreats have continued to the

1966 Nutana Park, Saskatoon 1966

Butchering - The Old-Fashioned Way

by Ed Roth (from his book, "Give Me A Bid"
by permission of his widow)

In 1987 Ed Roth received this letter:

Dear Sir,

I am Joe Williams, formerly from Rosthern, the son-in-law of Mr. C. K. Epp. My wife passed away with cancer very suddenly last September. My father-in-law stayed with us the last few years of his life. He died here at home with us. We had both retired. I am in good health and doing very well, but need to keep busy. So I am sending you a blank tape and ask that if you would, could you tell me how to butcher a pig the old-fashioned way it was done before freezers. If you don't have time, could you give it to someone in one of your villages? My son and I want to know how to make everything they made in the old days, and what kind of equipment I need - barrels, smoke, and whatever else. My son lives in the country and we can do it all there. We don't want spices, just old-fashioned ham and sausage, smoked in the smoke-house. How are they cured - liver sausage, head cheese, and so forth. Thanks.

Joe Williams, New Westminster, B.C

The Taped Reply ---April 29, 1987

This is Ed Roth telling Joe Williams how to butcher a hog the old-fashioned way, or rather, how butchering was taught me by my parents and grandparents. This goes back to the days when no electricity was in place on the farms, and no fridge or deep-freezers were available.

The butchering was usually done in November when the flies were of no bother anymore, and there were frosts at night. You will note - no spices were used whatsoever in curing the meats.

First, the hog is butchered. It is then scalded, and the bristles scraped off, and thoroughly

washed. Then the carcass is hung, the head cut off completely and cleaned with a razor. The eyes, tongue and ears are removed. Then it is sawed into quarters; we always removed the teeth. The head is put into boiling water in a cauldron and cooked until the meat loosens from the bone. This was usually done before the lard was rendered in the same cauldron.

Next, the animal is drawn, or the insides removed. This needs practice so as not to cut into any intestines. After removal, the organs are separated; the liver is separated, the bile cut off, and the liver soaked in cold water. The heart is removed and placed in cold water to remove some of the blood.

It is a delicate job if you want to clean the intestines. Scrape and clean with soda and salt water; scrape very clean without scarring or tearing them. Finally, the large intestines are cleaned with bran and vinegar. If you don't want to clean the intestines, you can buy casings for the sausages.

While the carcass is hanging, cut it in half right down the middle. I now use an electric meat saw for that. Then place the two halves on a cutting table, cut off the hams with the leg, and also the shoulder with the leg. Then I cut the leg off the ham and trim



butchering on Dick Braun farm - cutting animal with electric saw - photo by Dick Braun.

the top off to shape the ham, like you see them in the store. The shoulder I usually cut up completely and make a few choice roasts or grind it up for sausage. Make sure you take off the rind and most of the fat. Keep the fat in a separate container until later to grind up and render for fat and cracklings (Greven). Peel out the lard. Then cut the top back strip of the carcass which will give you the pork chops. Trim off most of the fat (as desired), and peel out the rind. Keep fat in a dish - cut it in strips for the grinding machine. Then let the

pork chop cool so it's easier to cut into steaks.

Next trim out the ribs (two sides) and cool. If you want to make ribspear (*Repsphar*) cut it in half for later use. If you want bacon, cut out the leanest of the chunk, about 12" by 24" on each side. The rest of the meat is cut into strips. Some will be lard and some lean meat for sausage. Grind all the fat for lard through a machine with large holes (about a third-inch or half-inch bottom). This is for rendered lard and cracklings.

The lard is rendered usually in a very smooth and clean feed cooker (cauldron or *miergrappen*). Start a fire under it and cook very slowly, continuously stirring with a wide wooden stick and scraping the bottom and sides all the time. Increase the heat slowly. When the



lard is soft and easy to stir, put in your ribs for 'rebspear'. Stir all the time. It will soon smell good; keep on stirring or it will burn on the bottom. When the bones in the ribs are loose (turn by hand), the ribs are done; take them out and salt lightly. The cracklings usually need a little more cooking. Take a sieve and dip into the lard; if the cracklings look fairly brown, your lard is ready. Dip out lard with a dipper and put through a sieve. Put the cracklings into a separate container. When finished removing the lard from the cauldron, let cool a bit and then put cracklings into small containers. Pour off lard slowly into containers to keep it white. At the bottom is brown lard, or *greven-schmault*.

I grind all the meat with a small bottom; I use a #22 meat grinder. When the meat for sausage is ready to season, I usually put in two or three handfuls of salt and one handful of pepper, then according to taste, I often put in a little more. It's done the old-fashioned way.

Another method; to fifty or sixty pounds of loin

pork, if desired, add five to ten pounds lean ground beef. Add one-third to one-half cup of salt and two tablespoons of pepper. Knead well; put into casings through a sausage stuffer. Then they are ready to smoke.

For smoking I use sawdust – poplar, willow or hickory. Do not use pine; it will taste in the sausage.

To make liver-wurst and head-cheese, take the meat from the cooked head. Grind it through a fine grinder and also grind the uncooked liver. Take two parts of meat and one part of liver. Add salt and pepper to taste. Sometimes we add one or two onions, and put it through the grinder. Mix well and put into casings and tie the ends together. (It can also be put into jars without the casings). I put them into small casings but do not fill them too full or they will break while cooking. Cook sausages in the cauldron for half hour, and keep turning them.

To make head cheese: boil the heart and tongue with the head meat. Also boil ten strips of rind or skin (very clean of bristles) tied together or put into a small cloth bag. When done, grind all together and season with salt and pepper, and add some soup stock. Put into pans to chill.

If you want pigs' feet, they also can be cooked with the head meat, heart and tongue. Cook these until they are very well done. Cool and put into a crock with salt and vinegar water.

To cure hams: make sure the hams are completely cooled. Salt them heavily with common white salt (not iodized salt). Push the salt along and beside the bone so it will draw into the meat. Some people mix a little brown sugar with the salt; I don't. Put the hams into a wooden box, or now a plastic bag, and cover them with salt. Let them freeze in a freezer for two months or so. In the olden days they were left in the granary all winter. Take them out, thaw them out and remove excess salt. Then smoke them for two weeks in slow smoke in a smokehouse. They will be nice and brown and taste good.

Here's another summer sausage recipe I got from my grandmother.

[Ed. Besides Ed's grandmother's recipe, we include some old-fashioned recipes that were used after a butchering bee]

Summer Sausage

80 lbs. beef

20 lbs. pork

Grind once, coarse; put the following ingredients in:

2 ½ lbs. brown sugar (some use white)

2 ½ lbs. salt (not iodized)

8 oz. Pepper

3 oz. Salt Petre

Knead by hand for half hour. Then grind fine and mix again for half hour. Stuff tight in cloth casings (which require: 4 yds unbleached cotton 40" wide; make casings 20" long by 4" wide), and sew up.

Hang to dry approximately 1 to 2 weeks. Then smoke. Dip in parawax or beef tallow, or wrap and put into the deep freeze. These are better with age.

I hope, Joe, you can get wise to all this, and I hope I have covered it all. Everyone does it a little differently, but it's according to individual tastes, I guess. This is the way I taught it to my boys, and they don't need me anymore when they butcher.

ER

[Photos taken from the Hague-Osler Reserve Book, for better clarity]

Butchering Recipes

(from the Mennonite Treasury of Recipes)

Brine Cure for Hams and Bacon

8 lbs salt

2 lbs sugar

2 oz saltpeter

4 ½ gals water

Mix all ingredients and stir until dissolved. Boil 15 minutes and skim. Cool well, it is best to make this brine the day before, so it is thoroughly cooled. Pour over meat, which is packed in a clean wooden barrel. Weigh it down, to keep the meat covered with the brine all the time. Keep it in a cool place. Pieces should cure in 14 to 20 days. Shoulder and hams 6 to 8 weeks.

Pickled Pigs Feet

Boil pigs feet in salted water until tender. Put

equal parts of meat stock and vinegar (enough to cover meat in crock) in container and add ½ cup pickling spice and ½ cup sugar. Bring to boiling point and cook 5 minutes. Pour over the meat and let jell.

Kolodez (Jellied Veal)

3 lbs veal

3 lbs veal bones (knuckles)

2 large onions

1 tsp peppercorns

salt to taste

Cover meat well with cold water and bring to a boil, then simmer for 1 hour, add other ingredients and cook another 2 hours. Take out the meat and cut in bite-size pieces, strain the soup. Put the meat in molds, and just cover with the strained broth. Let this set until jelled. Serve cold for supper. Either rinse the mold with cold water or grease slightly with vegetable oil, so it will unmold easily.

Cracklings and Eggs

1 ½ cups cracklings (well drained and fried almost crisp)

4 eggs

salt and pepper

Spread cracklings on bottom of fry pan. Arrange in circles and break an egg in each. Cook over medium heat until eggs are cooked to the desired doneness, adding a tsp of water to prevent cracklings from becoming too crisp.

Leberwurst

10 lbs pork

2 lbs liver

4 onions, chopped fine

salt and pepper to taste

Cook pork 1 hour. The liver should not be cooked. Put both through fine grate of food chopper. To this add the onions, which have been sauteed in cooking oil until they are pale yellow. Add salt and pepper to taste. Put in casings, and cook 1 hour. You can also put this in pint sealers, and process 1 hour in boiling water. Fill sealers only to within ½ inch from the top.

Ladies' Time Out Ministries

by Esther Patkau

The Seed is Sown

In the fall of 1971 an evangelism campaign was organized in the city of Saskatoon, featuring evangelists, the Sutera Twins. The first sessions were held at Ebenezer Baptist Church, but as attendance grew, the meetings moved to Circle Drive Alliance Church. A revival spread through Saskatoon city and into surrounding districts. Lives were changed. Individuals confessed their wrongs, made amends, and wanted to live a more honest life. That led to searching what the Word of God taught. Individuals sought to increase their knowledge of the Scriptures.

Ladies Time Out

In the fall of 1971, in response to requests for Bible study a group of women met on a weekly basis for a morning of prayer and sharing. At first they met in the home of Genevieve and Carl Ens. Out of these spiritually enriching meetings grew Ladies Time Out, held once a month in a local restaurant.

With a good loud speaker system, piano music, coffee and rolls, the informal gathering drew more and more women. When the crowd outgrew the restaurant space, the monthly meetings were held at the Travelodge motel. Some 250 women from different backgrounds gathered around tables for fellowship.

The program began with the theme song, His Name is Wonderful, and included singing, listening to special music and sharing testimonies from someone, about how Jesus Christ had become real in her life and her life had changed. It was exciting to discover that others had similar problems, and that having a deeper relationship with Christ and with each other challenged these women to reach out to others. These monthly programs were co-hosted by Genevieve Ens and Mary Bartel. The participants both in the program and in attendance were women with a willingness to share and a desire to grow in faith.

By request, these Ladies Time Out meetings were also held in several surrounding communities and

brought spiritual peace and growth to many women.

Your Time Out

Out of the Ladies Time Out meetings another arm branched out. This time it was for men and women alike, for everyone to come to the Centennial Auditorium on Sunday evening several times a year for an evening of music, testimonies, refreshments and fellowship. People came from many points in Saskatchewan to hear featured musical groups and invited speakers – from professional football players to business persons and others who had found new life in Jesus Christ. Attendance grew from a few hundred to almost two thousand.

Time Out Ministries

As the outreach increased there was a need for a central organized unit, and so Time Out Ministries was established, with its office at Mayfair Mennonite Church. Through the various programs hundreds of people from a variety of experiences were inspired and deepened in spiritual growth. The structure of the programs was kept informal, but love and caring abounded.

The goals of Time Out Ministries were listed as: "a) to draw attention to God and His claim upon our life through Jesus Christ; b) to create an awareness in those present that many of their needs and feelings are shared by others; c) to develop and participate in human and spiritual relationships in an informal atmosphere of spontaneous Christian friendliness."

Time Out for Sunday Music

In February, 1978, Mary Bartel and Genevieve Ens contacted the local radio station (CJWW 1370) to provide a Sunday evening inspirational program. The broadcast staff at first was somewhat apprehensive about women leadership, but after a few sessions gave full approval.

The radio program, with co-hosts Carl and Genevieve Ens, consisted of inspirational music played from a variety of traditional and more contemporary albums. The music was interspersed with Scripture

and appropriate readings. It shared God's love and forgiveness through the powerful combination of music and God's Word. The program had a great listening audience. It continued until 1988.

Sponsorship varied from time to time. Businesses and individual sponsors could pay for one or more of 15-minute time segments. Advertising was limited. Tax deductible receipts were issued.

Ladies in Action

Another program surfaced, designed to give women the opportunity to enjoy fitness, fun, fellowship and a meaningful experience in crafts or discussion after a presentation by a special speaker on a variety of topics. There was something for the whole person - including inspiration, information, refreshments, and exercise. Babysitting services were available which made it attractive for women with children. These sessions were on Wednesday mornings for 10 weeks in fall and 10 weeks in spring, held at Mayfair Mennonite Church on Avenue D North in Saskatoon.

Time Out for Retreats

In response to the requests for more intensive Bible study and more time for personal interaction, another branch of Time Out activities was added: Time Out for Retreats. Retreats that would offer men and women the opportunity to withdraw from the routine schedule of life to hear dynamic speakers with a chance for dialogue, opportunity to laugh together, to relax in an informal way, to enjoy lots of singing and to spend time in organized Bible study, growing together in their faith in the Lord.

Times change. Leaders change. These ministries were there for a season and were very effective during the two decades of the 1970s and 1980s. Since then they have closed or have been absorbed into other ministries.

(From "Time Out Ministries" brochure, an outreach of Mayfair Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, no date.)

EP

An Invitation to send in

Christmas Recipes

Recipes have come up in planning the Historian and so we are inviting you to send in your favourite handed-down Christmas Recipes for the next issue of the Historian. It will come out at the beginning of December, so someone else may still rejoice in a chance to try out something new.

For inspiration, Esther Patkau offers her Mom's version of **Napoleon Torte:**

To make the dough:

8 egg whites, beaten,
flour,
1 cup sugar,
1/2 cup shortening,
1 cup sugar,
1 cup milk,
1 tsp. baking soda.

Knead together until hard enough to roll out. Roll out thin. Roll dough as thin as possible and bake on cookie sheets. Cool

To make the cream filling:

Beat yolks of 8 eggs,
add 2 cups of sugar,
2 cups of scalded milk,
2 Tblsp. Flour.

Mix and bring to a rolling boil. Add cream until it thickens.

To make the Torte: Alternate several layers of baked dough with cream filling.

EP

Please email in your recipes to me no later than the end of October. (You may write out and mail them in, too, if you have no email). In case there are more submissions than we can use, I may have the difficult job of choosing recipes, and those that come in earliest will have the best chance of being published.

If you are able to send a photo of your Christmas recipe - that would be extra Wonderful!

P.S. Word has leaked out and someone has already sent her recipes in! So we see this will be a popular Christmas issue.

RMF

Peters' Blacksmith Shop at Aberdeen Sask.

by Dick Braun

Johann Peters and his wife Margaretha (Wiebe) came to Canada from south Russia as did many other Mennonite families.

Mr. Peters was a skilled blacksmith, so would probably do the same work in the new country where they were headed. The story has it that on the way to Canada from south Russia, they stopped enroute. While they were waiting, he purchased a double horned anvil. It takes a very clear and deep thinking person to have the intuition to seize the moment when it presents itself.

Can you imagine what some of the people, or maybe even his wife, would have thought about a person bringing such a piece of iron along?

When the Peters family moved to Saskatchewan they settled in the Aberdeen area. On the farm-yard he set up a fully functional blacksmith shop. Mr. Peters was somewhat protective of his blacksmith shop and when he was not working in it, the shop was locked.

He owned and operated a Rumely steam engine and a Case separator and a breaking plow. He was a busy man in his shop and people came from all over to get work done by him.

The boys must have learned quickly by helping as it does not take a big person to help with some parts of black-smithing. The family tells a story and it is recorded in the Aberdeen book. The boys were not allowed to work in the shop on their own, but one day, while young Jacob was out plowing, he hit a rock and broke a plow share. He was sure he could forge weld it and it would be fit for work again but the shop was locked. He knew how to get into it and he did. Jacob worked fast and furious to get the job done before his father would be home. Jacob knew the situation would not present itself well if he was found in the shop, and

further more, to have broken a plow share.

He was just finished with the job when his father walked in and saw what he had done. The forge welding joint he had made was a job very well done, and so the father's heart was moved. The shop was not locked anymore.

Jacob must have continued on with the trade of blacksmithing and building and fixing. When he was on his own he was well known in the area for the work he could do. He built his own trip hammer and he made a lot of horseshoes. His blacksmith shop

was now complete, with a line shaft to operate the drill press, the grinder and the trip hammer.

Mary, the youngest child, tells the story of a horse they had, which had a problem when it ran. It would skin the inside of the lower leg by hitting it with the other leg. Mr. Peters would specially design the horseshoes for this horse so it would throw its leg out instead of inward.

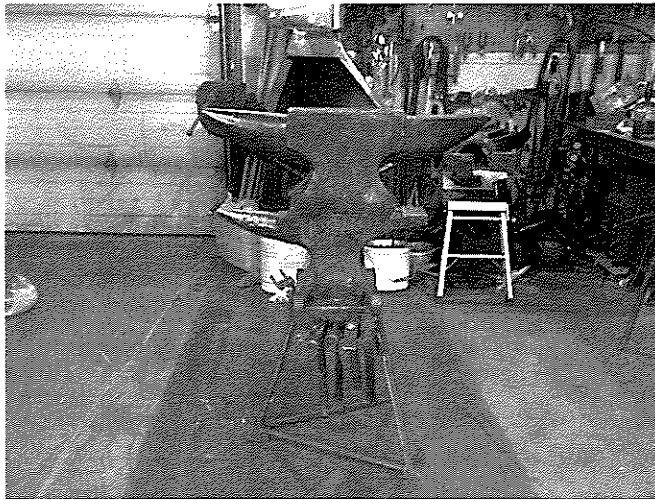
Mary tells me that there was always a pile of scrap metal beside the shop. This is so common, as anybody who has done any repairing knows, that you need some scrap metal as a resource.

I have done a lot of repair work back in my day and always had a pile of scrap. Not every person who looks at the pile sees it in the same way because to a repair man it is a pile of treasure.

The Peters yard was a busy yard. If there was not someone needing something fixed, it was someone needing to get fixed.

Mrs. Helen Peters was a very gifted bone-setter (trajchtmoaka), and so many people came to her when in need.

Mr. Peters also made washing machines, all kinds of tools, and was a good knife maker. Mary tells me that there are still some of his knives around today.



The Double anvil Jacob Peters brought to Canada is still in the family, and still in use.

Mary talks about how as a young girl she had to turn the fan on the forge for her dad. She recounts that many times people would come to her father to make a very customized item. She remembers how she would hurry out of the shop when he would start the trip hammer.

Bentley Wiebe, a grandson, tells me that there still is a divider tool around that was made by his grandfather. The black-smithing, metal work, repairing, mechanics genes run very deep in the Peters family.

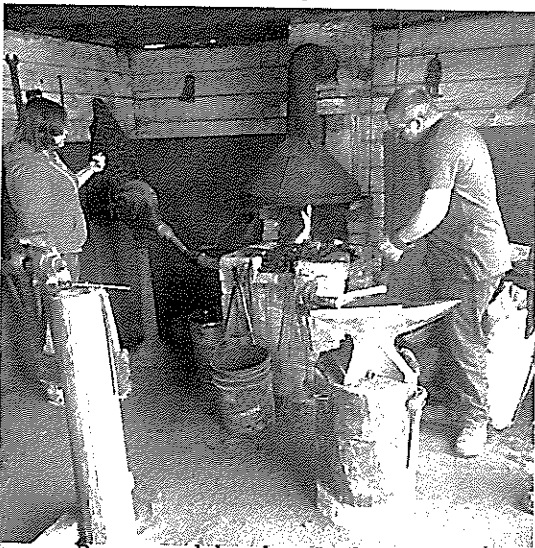
The larger Peters family is also well known for their ability to work with metal and repairing and building almost anything out of metal. Jacob Peters had a brother Peter who lived at Osler, and his son Henry was the snowplow man I wrote about in an earlier edition of the *Historian*.

Peter had a son Johnny, (we all knew him), who built a self-unloading haybale trailer from scratch. Johnny even made the main frame rails of this 50 ft trailer. The trailer had the right arch in it so it could take the bounce of the load when going down the road.

Jacob's sons, and grandsons, and great-grandsons have inherited those genes.

That double horned anvil is still around and in the family.

When visiting with the descendants of Jacob Peters it is very evident that many of them are, or were, involved in the building, or repairing of machines, and tools of many kinds.



Eugene Penner and daughter Katherine, doing a demonstration at Hague Threshermans's Day

DB

Mennonite Archives a gold mine for local history buffs *By TERRY PUGH, Clark's Crossing Gazette (reprinted by permission)*

With literally thousands of periodicals, books, school, church and family records on its shelves, the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS) Archives is one of the best resources in the province for local history researchers. Located in the basement of Bethany Manor on LaRonge Road in Saskatoon, the MHSS Archives is staffed by volunteers and is open Monday afternoon, and Wednesday afternoon and evening.

"It's a tremendous place for researching your family roots or community history," said MHSS Board member Leonard Doell of Aberdeen, author of *"Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve,"* the definitive history of Mennonite-founded communities north of Saskatoon. "You'd be surprised at the kind of things you'll find."

The MHSS Archives current location dates back to 2002, but the records stored and catalogued there are much older. Doell notes that there are many old newspapers in both English and German that are accessible either in bound copies, digitally or in microfilm format.

"We have all the bound issues of the *Saskatchewan Valley News* dating back to 1975," said Doell. "As well as old issues of the *Village Press* and, more recently, the *Clark's Crossing Gazette*." Doell said the volunteers who work at the Mennonite Archives are knowledgeable resource people that are able to guide researchers. "Victor Wiebe, for example, is a librarian who worked at the University of Saskatchewan for many years, and he has helped train a lot of our volunteers."

Doell added that an added bonus of having the archives located at Bethany Manor is that many of the residents of the seniors home are themselves excellent sources of first-hand information. "A lot of the people who live at Bethany come from small towns across the province," said Doell. "They have many interesting and colourful stories you won't find in any book."

In addition to operating the Archives, the MHSS also issues a variety of publications including the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*, books and pamphlets. The society also hosts educational events that focus on specific aspects of Mennonite history, culture and religion.

JP

How Canada Day 150 was Celebrated in Osler

(Photos by Sandra McArthur)



A bold and beautiful quilt created by the seniors of Osler to commemorate Osler, Saskatchewan and Canada at this big 150th Birthday/Anniversary. (We wish you could see it in colour!)

To the right are some of the seniors/ the creators of the quilt. They raffled it off on July 1 to raise funds for the Osler and area Library. (photo credits: Sandra McArthur)



Neuhorst entry in the Canada 150 Parade in Osler, SK. on July 1, 2017



The table had photos and items of Osler's past.



This table had Osler School yearbooks, R. J. Davison jacket and sweater from the 60s, and R J Davidson Graduation photos. All these things were on display at the Osler Community hall for the July 1st Celebration.

Story of the Fast Postcard by Jake Buhler



John C. Friesen and Cornelius M. Driedger had become friends as students at the German-English Academy (now called Rosthern Junior College). After graduation, Cornelius went to work at his father's (Johann) farm at Osler; John C. went to work at his father's (Johann A) store in Hague, Saskatchewan.

On December 21, 1912, John C. mailed a postcard he had written the day before to his close friend. The card was stamped and put onto the train. It was put into the special CNR mail-car, and by the time it reached Osler, just 11 miles south of Hague, it had been sorted and put into the Osler bag. Before noon it had been stamped in Osler and placed into the Driedger mailbox.

The card was mailed and received on the same day, one hundred five years ago! The one cent stamp shows British Head of State, King George V in his second year as King.

The text of the card, as translated by Esther Patkau, is as follows: Dear Friend, Because I didn't have much time personally to come to you, I will do so by mail, because better late than not at all. Also wish you a joyful Christmas. J.C.F.

The postcard's reverse side is a photograph of John C. Friesen. Both John C. and Cornelius M. were 21 years old in 1912.

The photograph (circa 1910) of the John A. Friesen store in Hague, shows what a well-stocked country store looked like approximately five years after Saskatchewan had become a province.

JB



The John C. Friesen General store in Hague, SK.



Wanted Hatchery Notice Cards by Jake Buhler

In the 1930s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, small Mennonite farmers would order chicks from Saskatoon, usually in the month of May.

Once the eggs had hatched, Millars' Hatchery or Early's Hatchery would send a postcard to the farmer announcing the pickup date of the chicks. On the assigned date, the farmer would appear on the railway platform, claim the card-board box with peeping chicks inside and take them home. The service was so good that mortality rates were very low.

Do any of you have any hatchery notices in your possession that you would like share with us?

Do any of you have stories about hatcheries in other towns or cities in Saskatchewan? - *JB*

P.S. Please send correspondence on this to Jake directly, or to the editor of the Historian, and your email will be forwarded to Jake.

A Tribute to Ed Schmidt

by Jake Buhler (with input from the official obituary)

Edward Dennis Schmidt died at his home in Waldheim on May 16, 2017. He was born in Waldheim, at his parents' home, on November 3, 1934. He and Waldtraut were a week away from celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary.

In some ways Ed was a *renaissance* man who explored multiple aspects of life: he trained, academically, as a teacher, as a pastor, as an electrical engineer, and as a psychologist. He used these skills working in many different areas as: a missionary and engineer in India; a high school mathematics and science teacher in Macklin, Blaine Lake, and RJC; a camp director in Arkansas, India, Pike Lake, and Rosthern; nursing home staff-person in Rosthern; and as a business owner of the Waldheim Hardware Store and the Fellowship Bookcentre. He brought creative vision to countless boards and committees relating to churches and missions, camping programs, community housing, refugee sponsorships, genealogical

associations, and historical archives.

Ed served on the board of MHSS. He contributed much research to the archives. He donated many documents, photographs, and articles. He engaged dozens of people in the discussion of Mennonite history.

Ed will be remembered for being the devil's advocate, or possibly a contrarian, in group discussions. Ed was headstrong, and dogged in his pursuit of excellence. Our condolences are extended to his partner and wife, Wally, and his family.

The Mennonite Historical Society has lost an important contributor and a fine supporter. *JB*



Websites

MHSS: mhss.sk.ca

Cemeteries: mhss.sk.ca/cemeteries/

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: (GAMEO)
gameo.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online

E-Updates Ezine (announcements email):
Subscribe by entering your email on our website page: mhss.sk.ca/E-Updates.shtml
Be sure to let us know when you change email addresses. Thank you!

MHSS Membership

If your membership has expired the date on your address label will be highlighted. To ensure that you will not miss the next issue of the Historian, please send your membership fee promptly to:

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Make cheques payable to MHSS
Memberships: \$35 for one year; \$65 for two years; \$90 for three years.

Gift subscriptions are available.

Membership fees and donations to the Society are eligible for tax receipts. Extra copies are available at the Archives for \$3/copy.

Send in Feedback & Stories

You are cordially invited to send in feedback, news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc., to be considered for publication. The editor is willing to help polish it up so it looks professional. See contact info to the right >

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