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Features & Articles:

Mennonites and Softball: The Osler
Monarchs & the Early Years

- John Reddekopp 1

Mennonite Board Games

- Jake Buhler 9

Rosenorter Mennonite Gemeinde -

Own Home - Eigenheim -

- George Epp 10

Peter P. Friesen, Trachtmoaka

- Victor Carl Friesen 14

Another Page in Mennonite History -

Book Review - Jake Buhler. 15

Ice Cream Flavours & Theology

- Tony Funk 16

Mien Easchtet Malkjen/My First

Milking - Jack Driedger 18

"The Lord has been my guide through

life - Esther Patkau

- Donna Shultz [reprinted from

Canadian Mennonite] 19

Long "I" Sounds in Plautdietsch and

English - Victor Carl Friesen 20

Päpa Nät - by Jacob M. Fehr

Book Review - Jake Buhler 21

Workers Together With God -

Book Review - Jake Buhler 22

MHSS March Weekend of 2018

by Editor 23

Esther Patkau (1927-2017) God's

Servant for Many 26

Emigration & Immigration

- Esther Patkau 27



A Saturday evening softball game in Osler between the Senior and Junior Monarch teams

MENNONITES AND SOFTBALL: The Osler Monarchs and the Early Years by John Reddekopp

Introduction

The year was 1953. Louis St. Laurent was the Canadian Prime Minister and Tommy Douglas was the Premier of Saskatchewan. In sports, the Montreal Canadiens won their seventh Stanley Cup and the Hamilton Tiger Cats won their first Grey Cup. What was likely most significant, however, to many people in the villages and towns of the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve was that their team, the Osler Monarchs, won the Saskatchewan Provincial Men's Softball Championship that summer by beating the Regina Imperials in the final game. Since joining the Saskatoon Senior Men's Softball League 14 years earlier, the Monarchs had been aiming to accomplish this particular feat. This was the goal of all the teams. This meant you were the top team in the province and that you now had the opportunity to compete against teams from other provinces.

The Monarchs now travelled to Lethbridge, Alberta for a best-of-three inter-provincial series against the local Shaughnessy Cadillacs, who had won the Alberta Senior Men's Fastball Championship. The games were played during the first week of September in 1953. The home team easily defeated the Saskatchewan champions in the first game. The following is part of an article that appeared . . . (cont'd on page 4)

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The Editor's Perspective

Ruth Marlene Friesen

First, some feedback on Issue #3 of 2017. Remember I had asked about font size?

I had one phone call about fonts, and I was asked that we not go to anything smaller. Those present at our planning meeting agreed.

However, since then I've installed a new system on my computer, and I have yet to find out how to install the particular font I was using before. I've had to settle - for now - for a font that is fairly close to the "DejaVu" font I was using so far. This "Liberation" font is a shade smaller, I think. So I want to let you know that I SHALL solve this installation problem yet, and get the other font.

My sincere apologies if this seems too small to read.

Now, as for other feedback, Dick Braun heard some very positive comments about the recipes.

One subscriber sent in a support gift of \$500 - for which we are thankful!

If you have not heard already, you will learn in this issue that our dearly beloved Esther Patkau got her wish: She wanted to be Home in Heaven for Christmas when she learned she had cancer. The Father kindly took her home on Dec. 18, and her funeral was the Wednesday after Christmas. I really wanted to be there, but I had car troubles on Christmas Day and the two days after, so I missed it.

We have tributes to Esther in this issue, but I would love to hear more stories of what Esther has meant to those who knew her. So I would invite you to send your memories and stories of her to me. I'll try to work in as many as I can over the next few issues.

As Editor, I also appeal here and now for people to submit their experiences and memories of certain topics and then, if need be, I'll work them into an article. Of course, if we can find those willing to write more complete articles we will be glad to see them too!

Topics we are looking for are: Mennonite gardening practices, recipes for preserving, the traditional way of preparing bodies for burial and conducting funerals at home, changes over the decades in wedding gowns, or about Mennonite midwives, and also chiropractors.

R M F



The President's Corner 'Playing The Mennonite Game'

This edition of the Mennonite Historian contains articles related to games that have been popular with Mennonites through much of our history. Jake Buhler has an article about two board games and I have written about Mennonites and their involvement with the sport of softball up to the 1950's.

But the game that is most commonly played by Mennonites is simply called 'the Mennonite Game'. Have you played it? I am guessing that we have all done so. This is when two or more ethnic Mennonites are talking and trying to figure out how they may be related to each other, or how someone else that they are talking about may be related. Playing this game can produce some surprising results. There was an occasion a number of years ago when my father in law, Jacob Friesen and my grandmother, Anna Giesbrecht (Derksen), were together and trying to figure out connections. They discovered after some time that they had a common ancestor, a Mr. Wiebe whose house burned down. What it meant was that my wife, Deanna, and I were related not only by marriage but are also seventh cousins. It doesn't get much more Mennonite than that!

It has been suggested that since I am just starting a term as President of MHSS, there may be readers who may want to know more about who I am. Therefore let me tell you a few things, some of these may help us to play 'the Mennonite Name Game' some time.

I grew up in the Warman/Osler area and attended a one room country school called Saskatchewan School. Bob Wall has written a book about the earlier years of this school district. I am a retired educator. I worked as a teacher and principal at schools in Martensville and Warman for over 30 years.

Following retirement in Saskatchewan, I served as a principal of an English as a Second Language School in Calgary for 6 years.

This is my third year on the MHSS Board. I served as the secretary last year. My other experience on the board of a non-profit agency was with the Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. I was on that board for 5 years and served as the chair for the last 3 years.

My father grew up in Blumenheim. The grandparents on his mother's side, David Friesens, were the first to settle Blumenheim around 1900. That means that I am connected to a lot of Friesens but not nearly all Friesens that I meet. I am also related to quite a few Reddekopps but from my experience, it



seems they need to have either Blumenheim or Blumenhof (near Swift Current) connection.

My wife, Deanna and I now live in Saskatoon. Many people got to know of Deanna because she was born with a serious heart condition, and had surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota when she was a teenager.

We have a son, Darren, who lives in Minneapolis. He and his wife have 3 children. Our daughter, Kendra and her husband live in Saskatoon and have 4 children. Our daughter, Lorenda, is a reporter for CBC out of Toronto.

We have made a lot of connections through the churches that we have been a part of over the years; Warman Mennonite, Mayfair Mennonite, Osler Mennonite, and Foothills Mennonite. We are currently part of Osler Mennonite, where I serve as a Sunday School Superintendent.

Many people have gotten to know me through my involvement with the sport of softball, mostly as a coach. This was over a period from the late 1960's to around 1990. I coached Senior Mens 's teams in Saskatoon. I started with Warman Gems which became K and K Olson, which became All-O-Matics which became Arnie's Angels. In addition, I coached various ages of youth softball from Pee Wee to Junior Men's and was a coach with Team Sask. Men's Softball team at the 1989 Canada Summer Games.

I probably said more than I planned to. It should give us a lot to talk about and a lot of opportunity to see how we may be connected. We may be distant cousins or we may have a common cousin, or we may know some of the same people. Of course another way to play the Mennonite Game is to utilize the resources which we have in the Archives that are located in the basement of Bethany Manor. Here you can find out who may be in your family tree or even in someone else's tree. Check it out if you haven't already done so!

JR

EVENTS of Interest to Saskatchewan Mennonites

April 13 – Bethany Film Night @ 7 p.m. "And When They Shall Ask" at Bethany Manor Fellowship Centre, Saskatoon. All are welcome. Bethany is sponsored/promoted by MHSS and held at Bethany Manor, Fellowship Centre.

June 8 & 9 – MCC Relief Sale, Saskatoon

Check our MHSS website events' page for dates and details of the upcoming Canadian Foodgrains Bank Auction, MCC Spruce River Folk Fest, etc. <http://mhss.sk.ca/events/>

You can also subscribe to the E-Updates mailing list to be notified by email as the dates get closer. <http://mhss.sk.ca/E-Updates.shtml>

(cont'd from page 1)

in the Lethbridge Herald the day after the second game had been played:

"Carl Ens Spins Four-Hitter in 4-2 Win

Local fans whipped out to Henderson Stadium last night to watch the Cadillacs move into the Western Fastball finals and those that stayed at home with the same thought in mind got the shock of their lives when the Osler Monarchs from Saskatoon forced a third and final game in the best-of-three semi-finals by tripping the Shaughnessy crew 4-2. Strong-armed Carl Ens was the push behind the Monarchs' thrilling comeback victory pitching a masterful four-hit ball while striking out 10." Al Friesen and John Braun each had two hits for Osler."



Unfortunately for the Monarchs, they lost the third and final game by one run and thus their chance to travel to Vancouver for the Western Canadian Championship finals. The Saskatchewan champions might have prevailed but a number of their players were unavailable due to either work commitments or injuries after a hard-fought provincial series. One key injury was that suffered by the regular catcher, Alf Driedger, in the fourth inning of the first game. As a result of Driedger's injury, Danny Ens, the regular shortstop, was forced to perform the catching duties for the rest of that game and the rest of the series. As Bill Braun, who played third base for the Monarchs, indicated to me, "This not only affected the catching position but also weakened our infield."

That series with the Alberta champions marked the end of that particular team of the Osler Monarchs. A number of their players joined Saskatoon teams after 1953. A new version of the Monarchs, including some of the original players, was formed and played in the Saskatoon Senior Men's "B" Division in the second half of the 1950's. The



Senior Osler Monarchs, 1930s - 1940s: Back: Jake Braun, Carl Ens, Aron Braun, George Miller, George Guenther, John Braun, Steve Evanacio. Front: Bill Ens, Bill Braun, Alfred Driedger, Dave Loewen, Frank Berg, Henry Ens, George Braun.

games were still played at Cairns Field, and later at Gordon Howe Park.

In addition to playing league games in Saskatoon, the team also took part in several tournaments in Saskatchewan and one in Minot, North Dakota.

Also, for many of those years when the Monarchs played in the Saskatoon league, there was a Junior Monarchs team.



Junior Osler Monarchs

This team continued to compete closer to home. They played in tournaments and also served as a kind of farm team from which players could be called up to play with the main team.

In the late sixties through the eighties, when I was involved in softball in Saskatoon, it was a well-known fact that a significant percentage of the players and fans of the Senior Men's league, as well as other divisions came from the villages and towns north of Saskatoon. I have often wondered, however, how this all started. How was it that the Osler Monarchs, a team made up largely of young Menno-

nite men became a well organized team that achieved prominence at the highest level of this particular sport?



Neuhorst School, 1938, Warman Sports Day Champions

IT STARTED IN THE SCHOOLS

According to Wikipedia, softball is, “a variant of baseball played on a smaller field with a bigger ball which is pitched underhand from a shorter distance.” It was a very affordable sport. If you had a bat and a ball you could play the game. Bats were often homemade.

As part of the commemoration of Canada’s Diamond Jubilee in 1927, each school in Saskatchewan was given a softball. This certainly contributed in large part to softball becoming the chosen sport in schools during those months that the weather was favourable. During the late twenties, Abe Driedger, the reeve of the Warman Municipality, along with school representatives from Warman and Osler spearheaded plans for what became known as the Warman Municipal Sports Day. It became an annual event on July 1, 1930. The highlight of the day was a carefully handicapped softball tournament pitting town, village, and country schools against one another.

In ‘*Safe at Home: A History of Softball in Saskatchewan*,’ Carl Ens is quoted as saying that this event was similar to the Saskatoon Exhibition in many ways and was a major factor in getting Mennonite youth involved in softball.

TEACHERS WERE AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

The majority of the teachers in these Mennonite community schools were also from Mennonite backgrounds. Many of those teaching the students the game of softball were themselves either players or coaches with organized teams. This likely gave them a high degree of

credibility and would have inspired and motivated their students. Members of the Osler Monarchs at various times included teachers John and David Loewen, Carl Ens, Alvin and Art Friesen, Alfred Driedger, Leander Hildebrandt, and George Miller. Dennis Fisher, in his book, *It just doesn’t get any better...*, suggests that the school teams coached by Carl Ens were very successful because he taught his students all the finer points of the game, like stealing and bunting. George Miller, who taught in some of these schools, would later become the coach of the Monarchs. Teachers such as John and Dave Loewen, along with Leander Hildebrandt, helped with team management.

WERE THERE CONFLICTS WITH MENNONITE BELIEFS AND VALUES?

Mennonites became involved in organized softball not long after many Old Colony families started to allow their children to attend English/public schools. This was also shortly after the last group of Russian Mennonite immigrants settled in the Hague-Osler Reserve. Many parents and church elders were opposed to these boys becoming involved because they saw it as worldly. Carl Ens, who played along with his brothers Danny, Bill, Henry, and Jake for Neuhorst teams as well as the Osler Monarchs, reported that his dad never saw them play because he was opposed to their getting involved.

Carl, on the other hand, believed that his faith could be integrated into all aspects of life, including sports. In later years, as a pastor, he often used sports analogies to explain different aspects of faith. In a feature about him in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix during his time as a pastor, Carl agreed with the interviewer that his current activity could be described as, “in there pitching for Christ.”

There were those Mennonite young people who heard their parents refer to softball and other sports as, “*daut schadje sports*” or those useless sports.

My uncle, George Braun, who also played with Neuhorst and the Monarchs, indicated that his parents did not mind him and his brother playing as long as they got their work done.

This brings up an interesting topic - namely, the Mennonite work ethic. I would think that there were many that opposed playing ball because it interfered with work. On the other hand, I would also think that the fact that most of these boys had learned how to work was likely the reason they became such successful baseball players.

NOT ONLY AT SCHOOL

Players learned and developed their ball playing skills on the school diamonds. Especially important in this regard were the interschool competitions. Lea Hildebrandt, writing in the Sports Section of the *Hague Osler Mennonite Reserve*, indicated how the game became very popular and was commonly played for enjoyment by different ages and by both male and female participants.

It was also at this time that the Mennonite towns and villages fielded their own teams of young adult men along with some teenage boys to compete against other towns and villages during after-school hours. Lea Hildebrandt noted that villages such as Neuhorst, Hochfeld, Gruenfeld, and Neuanlage, all fielded teams. Since there was no league, the games were not regularly scheduled. Some towns and villages would also host Saturday tournaments. In some cases, tournaments either were held on or extended to Sundays, although playing organized sports on Sundays was frowned upon by many.

In addition, from time to time, some of the more competitive teams would enter tournaments in towns or villages outside the Saskatchewan Valley area.

PITCHING WAS THE NAME OF THE GAME

Pitching has always been perhaps the most important aspect of softball. Peter Froese was a left-handed pitcher whom I coached in the late '60s and '70s. He used to baffle the opposing hitters with a blazing fastball and a change-up. He also attracted hundreds of people to games at Gordie Howe Park in Saskatoon. In his humble manner, he would suggest that the only reason he got the attention he did was because the pitching mound was in the center of the diamond. The many games his team won by scores like 1 to 0 would suggest that there was more to it than that.

Some of the game scores when those village teams played against each other in the '30s and '40s were quite high. There were, apparently, some strong hitters among those Enses, Brauns, Guenthers, Driedgers, Boldts, Millers, etc.

But when it came right down to it, the teams that were most successful had either one or more strong pitchers. Pitching at that time was all done in an orthodox manner. This meant that the arm could be brought back before coming forward and then releasing the ball with the palm facing up. Neuhorst was fortunate in that they had two of

the best pitchers, Bill and Carl Ens, throwing for them.

It was not until 1950, while playing with the Osler Monarchs, that Carl Ens was taught the windmill pitch. The well-known King and his Court touring softball team from south of the border were in Saskatoon playing the Monarchs. After the game, the King, Eddie Feigner taught Carl how to throw the windmill pitch. In this pitch, the throwing arm is rotated prior to the pitch being delivered with the palm facing up. And so Carl became the first pitcher in Saskatchewan to use the windmill pitch. This pitch produced more speed, but, especially in Carl's case, also resulted in more wild pitches.

For the most part, most of the other pitchers who were established orthodox throwers stuck with that method of delivery.

A number of the younger up-and-coming pitchers, however, started to learn this new method. One of these players was Pete Guenter who joined the team in 1953 as a seventeen-year-old. By the later 1950s the windmill method was the most common form of pitching in the Saskatoon Senior Men's Fastball League, as well as on the diamonds where ball games were played in the Saskatchewan Valley towns and villages.

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Beginning in the middle of the 1930's it was not unusual for Mennonites from rural areas to go to Saskatoon and watch the top softball teams play. The games were played at Cairns field. This was considered a first-rate facility - one of the best in Western Canada. It was located on Avenue A which meant easy access to those coming to Saskatoon from the north. The field had lights and so doubleheaders (two games a night) were played.

Many of these fans who were coming into Saskatoon to watch games were ball players themselves. Their games back home in their towns and villages were usually played on school diamonds. They often wondered what it would be like to play at this type of facility. How would they do competing against these city players who were considered to be among the best in the country?

Back in the Valley area, the quality of play had greatly improved since the first teams were formed. Many players had become stars. As far as teams were concerned, there were two powerhouses. There was a team from the village of Neuhorst with a number of Enses, Brauns, and Guenthers. The team from Gruenfeld were known as the Osler Tigers. This team also had a family of Brauns, along with Boldts,

Guenthers, and Millers.

Spearheaded by David Loewen and George Guenther, the Neuhorst team amalgamated with the Osler Tigers. They became the Osler Monarchs.

Although there was a Monarch Lumber Company located in Osler, the name was not chosen for that reason. A few years later, Monarch Lumber did donate a ton of coal to the team to be used for fundraising.

This newly formed team joined the Saskatoon Senior Men's Softball League in 1940. This league usually had six teams competing against each other. This was ideal for the players. They were playing their games in one of the

Monarchs. Not nearly all the names that appeared on the first team picture were still there when they won their first provincial championship in 1953. Through the years some players moved on to other places or other activities. New players took the place of those who left. The Monarchs, it would seem, were very effective at integrating new players and thus remaining competitive. Some of these players were local and some were from Saskatoon. Some had one or more siblings already playing on the team.

Some were of Mennonite background but others were not. Even Gordie Howe of hockey fame, played for the Monarchs one year.

In the early fifties the team was playing a team of inmates at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary. One of the inmate players inquired whether he could play with the Monarchs after he had served his time. He did indeed join the Monarchs when he got out. He fit in well, and was part of their 1953 championship team.

In order to reach the provincial playoffs against Regina, the Monarchs had to first eliminate the heavily-favored Saskatoon Royals. The following story appeared in the Sports section of the Saskatoon Star Phoenix on August 25, 1953, and is a good summary of that series and of the Monarchs as a team:



Osler Tigers amalgamated with the Neuhorst team: (Late 1930s) Ike Braun, John Braun, Jake Braun, Harry Boldt, George Guenther, Pete Miller, Dave Boldt, Bill Boldt, George Braun. Photo Courtesy; George Guenther, Warman.

best ballparks, and they had great fan support. In addition, they could plan their work activities knowing exactly when their games would be.

The Monarchs were always competitive. Many of their players made headlines and won individual awards as well. Carl and Bill Ens were two of the top pitchers in the league. Carl, in addition to winning top pitcher awards, was also voted the most valuable player in the league and even received the top hitter award one year. Al Friesen was one of the top hitters each year. The question as to whether this group of rural players could compete successfully with some of the top teams and players in the country was answered with a resounding, "Yes!"

CHANGE HAPPENS

Over a fourteen year period the makeup of a team can change significantly. It was that way with the Osler

MONARCHS RULE AS CITY CHAMPS



Monarchs, the Provincial Champions in 1953. Back: John Loewen, John Fedrau, John Braun, Danny Ens, Carl Ens, Ron Doud, Al Friesen, Paul Kuzma, Spero Lealos, George Guenther. Front: Alfred Driedger, Bill Braun, Abe Fedrau, Wayne Johns, Lloyd Bourassa, Harold Milavsky, Pete Guenther. Bat Boy: Kenny Robertson

Osler Has Chance to Celebrate

Impatient moments during 13 lean years were quickly forgotten when the town of Osler and people in the surrounding farmland districts rejoiced over the success of their battling Monarchs in Monday's windup of the Saskatoon Senior Men's Softball playoffs.

Monarchs nipped the favored Royals 4-3 in the deciding game of a best-of-seven series and won the right to enter the provincial final against Regina Wednesday.

Monarchs had a tough assignment. They were beaten in the first two games and were one inning away from losing the third when they rescued the verdict in the final frame. They gained the upper hand in Wednesday's fourth tussle but then the tide swung back to the expected direction as the Royals won easily 8-0.

The Osler crew did not stop battling and behind the leadership of their game and tireless Pete Guenter, they cleared a mighty stiff obstacle. Even when the final man stepped to the plate in the final inning, the Royals were still very much in the issue. They have a lineup which can explode with base hits and they can beat you with the long ball.

The bulk of the Monarch crew got their diamond start around Osler. The list includes the Ens boys, Carl and Danny, the Braun brothers, Johnny and Billy; and Alf Driedger. From nearby points are Al Friesen of Hepburn and Pete Guenter and Abe Fedrau of Hague.

The club has done much to give the young fellows a chance to play, as witnessed by the fact that rookie awards the last three years have gone to Harold Milasky, Lloyd Bourassa, and Guenter - all Osler players.

Working hard behind the scenes to provide Osler with a good ball club have been Johnny Fedrau and George Guenther while Spero Leakos, in his first coaching attempt, had his club hustling and playing smarter ball each time out.

There were also some interesting dynamics at play in that series. Bill Ens, who had been with the Monarchs in their first few years, had been enticed a couple of years earlier to play with the Royals. In this series he faced his brothers, Carl and Danny, and came out on the losing end. Monarchs won the best of five series against Regina three games to one and were presented with the Simpson trophy. Their two throwers, Carl Ens and Pete Guenter, both pitched effectively, and even brilliantly at times to help them win the series.

There were two stories in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix

on the following Monday about this provincial series victory. One was titled, "**More Honors For Osler**" and the other headline read; "**Billy Braun Hot.**"

The hitting was steady throughout their lineup with one exception. The article goes on to say that Braun was the only standout. He hit safely 9 times in 17 times at bat and demonstrated flawless fielding at the hot corner. This was indeed a memorable series for him and definitely for the Monarchs as a team.

Less than a week after they finally won the Saskatoon championship they won the Saskatchewan championship. They had only a few days before they would be off to Lethbridge to meet the Alberta champions. The 1953 season was a great season for the Osler Monarchs and their many fans.

THE MONARCHS LIVE ON

There are currently three former players of the Osler Monarchs who are still alive. They are Alfred Driedger, Bill Braun, and Danny Ens. They and their teammates blazed the trail for others. In subsequent years, many other teams and Mennonite players from the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve/Saskatchewan Valley area took their lead and became well known in softball circles at the local, national, and international level. Many of these players were influenced in some way, either directly or indirectly, by the Monarchs. In the early 1980s the Osler School, in honour of this historic team, chose the name 'Monarchs' for all their school teams. They will not be forgotten!

Sources:

- *The Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve: 1895-1995.* (Pages 554-559)
- *Osler...The Early Years And The One Room School #1238.* (Pages 310-317).
- Morton, *Safe At Home: A History Of Softball In Saskatchewan.* 1997, (Pages 6-109).
- Fisher, Dennis, "*It just doesn't get any better!*" 1997. (Pages 77-78).
- Bill Braun. (Interview and scrapbook).
- Genevieve Ens. (Interview and articles about Carl Ens).

JR

Meet and hear **Journalist and Historian, Harold Jantz:** **On Friday, April 20 at Bethany Manor at 7 p.m.** you are invited to hear about the plight of Mennonites in 1928-9 in Russia. Harold Jantz, an outstanding journalist and historian will promote his book called FLIGHT. It is a translation of articles that appeared in the Rundschau detailing gripping events in the Soviet Union. This is an event not to be missed.

Mennonite Board Games – by Jake Buhler

Over the centuries, Mennonites have developed their own board games or have adapted games from other sources. One such example is **Crokinole**. In Plautdietsch it is called **Kjnippbrat**. A Lutheran woodsman in Tavistock, Ontario, Eckhardt Wettlaufer, made the first board in 1876.

But, very quickly, Mennonite artisans made their own boards, and continue to do so to this day.

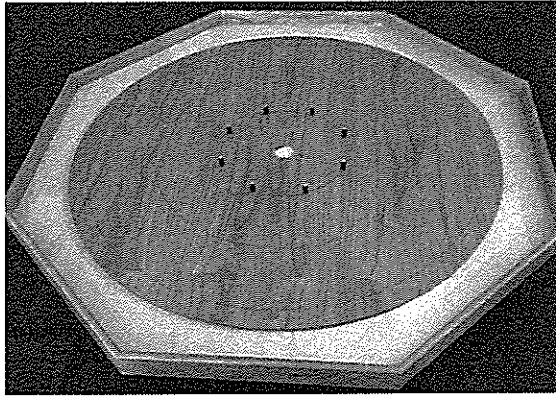
Peter Guenther of Saskatoon has built a number of octagonal boards. He copied the dimensions from a board he received as a gift 40 years ago. He says there is an official tournament board that is circular.

Crokinole can be played by 2 persons or by 4 persons. To play, rules are agreed upon before the games starts. Usually the objective is to get 100 points. When two persons play, each gets 12 shooters. To start, players place their shooters on either the 15 or the 10 point circle. If a shooter ends up in the middle hole, it counts as a permanent 20 points for the round. At the end of each round, each player adds up her/his score. The lesser score is subtracted from the greater score to determine the round score. For evenly matched players, a game can take up to an hour or more to complete.

When the game becomes serious, opposing players may criticize each other for moving the board, placing a shooter over the line, or for other irregularities. Twenty years ago, a tournament at Bethany Manor was cancelled when several players became very upset with each other.

In most cases, Crokinole is simply a fun game.

A second popular game is called **Mensch Oaja Die Nicht** in Plautdietsch, or **Mensch Erger**



Crokinole or Kjnippbrat

Dich Nicht in German, or **Mensch Erger Je Niet**, in Dutch. The game **Sorry**, has similarities to it. It is believed this game came out of Germany around 1800.

There are a number of different boards that have developed over the centuries. Ben and Diana Buhler of Osler made their own version of the game and drew it onto cardboard. They copied the

ideas from Ben's father, Bernhard, who drew a game onto plywood in the late 1940s. He, in turn, had remembered the game from his youth in Grigorjewka, South Russia.

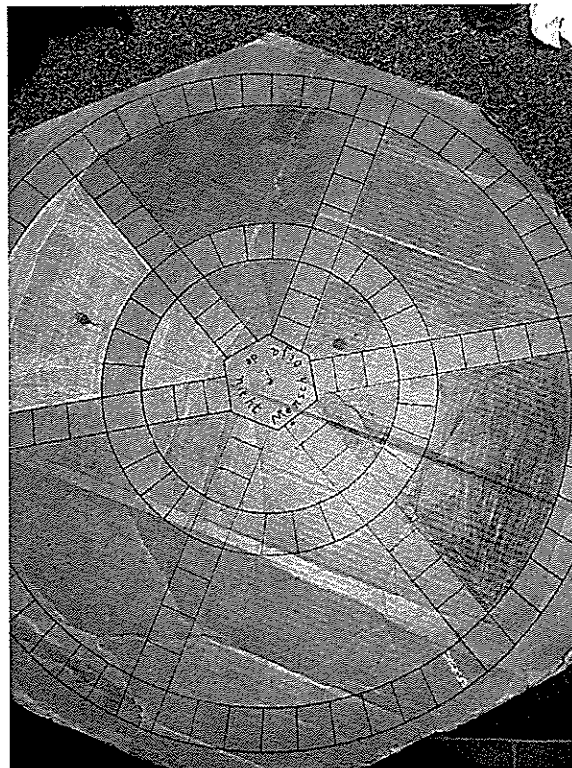
Ben explains that from 2 to 6 players can participate. Each gets 4 wooden coloured chips. Players can use either one dice or two. To get onto the squares, a player must throw a one or a six. Going clockwise, a player moves chips according to the number on the thrown dice. When a player throws a double, e.g. two 4s or two 5s, she/he can throw again. If a player's chip lands on another player's chip, the resident chip is sent home. This irritation is where the game

gets its name, **Mensch Oaja Die Nicht** (translation: Don't Get Upset, Buddy, or Don't Lose Your Cool). The first person to get all 4 chips around both circles and into the center, is the winner. The game may continue until all players reach the center.

This game was much loved in the 1940s, the 1950s and 1960s, by Rev. Jacob and Mary Pauls, and Bernhard and Maria Buhler of Osler. Jacob was the minister and Bernhard, the deacon.

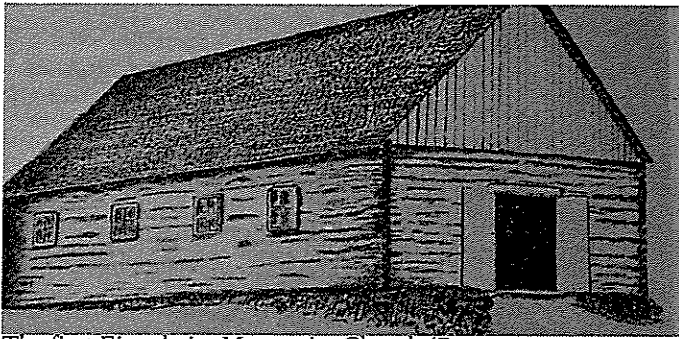
What are your experiences with these two games or other board games? You are welcome to write to the editor.

JB



Mensch Oaja Die Nicht

The Rosenorter-Mennoniten Gemeinde's "Own Home" at Eigenheim - by George Epp



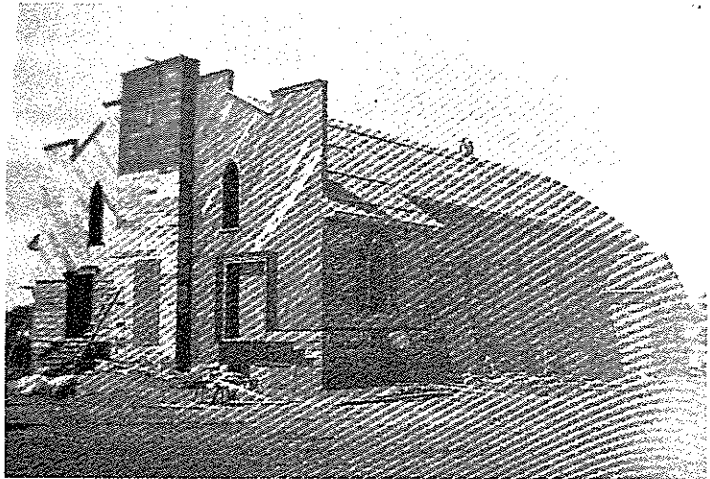
The first Eigenheim Mennonite Church (Rosenort Mennonitengemeinde) 1896. The church was constructed of logs harvested on a North Saskatchewan River island.

The name, *Eigenheim*, literally translated, is "Own Home." In Germany, *Eigenheim* refers to "home ownership" and is a real estate term. In any case, it was the name chosen for the central and first site of the Rosenorter Mennoniten gemeinde west of Rosthern, Saskatchewan in the early 1890s. The site of the Eigenheim Church remains the same as it was when a log church was erected in 1896: "Legal subdivision of 20 acres on the SE corner of the SE quarter of Section 3, Township 43, Range 4, west of the 3rd Meridian."ⁱ

It was the 1892 date that was used as EMC's beginning when in 1992 a Centennial celebration took place on the grounds and again in 2017 when the congregation observed 125 years of the church's existence. 1892 was the year of first Mennonite settlement in the general area when the John Andres family settled on the same section of land on which the church came to be located. Mrs. Andres was a daughter of Jacob D. Epp and their immigration and settlement in the area was instrumental in the immigration a few years later of the remainder of the family.ⁱⁱ

Under the leadership of Peter Regier, Gerhard Epp and others, scattered families in the Saskatchewan Valley were formed into a loose fellowship of house churches, and in 1896 a structure was erected as the Rosenort Mennonite Church (Rosenort Mennonitengemeinde) "home base."

The original 1896 log church was very soon too small, and in 1902 a new, larger sanctuary was constructed and the log structure removed. In 1954, the 1902 structure was enlarged considerably, and in 1970-71 a 30' X 30' education wing was added.



Renovation of the 1902 sanctuary in 1954.

High water tables following the drought of 2002 eventually rendered the basement unusable, and in 2007 - 2008, the current above-ground sanctuary replaced the previous structure. The 1954-71 structure was donated to

the Youth Farm Bible Camp where it now serves as chapel, offices and staff bedrooms.

That's the rough history of the physical structures referred to as Eigenheim Mennonite Church. Far more intriguing is the faith story.

By the time the Canadian government designated portions of the

area between the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers for Mennonite settlement, reserves for Mennonites were already well established in Manitoba as a result of a large immigration in 1874. When a second push for emigration from the Chortitz colony on the Dnieper River in South Ukraine began after 1890, the Mennonites of South Manitoba provided a stop-over point from which newcomers could assess their options, an important one being the current Rosthern, Osler, Waldheim, and Carlton areas.

The first order of business for Mennonite arrivals from



Eigenheim Mennonite Church today.

Russian Ukraine to the Valley was economic; most came from backgrounds of landlessness and relatively modest means and were not looking for much more than a place to prosper in peace. The Epps, for instance, had, in their search for a place to resettle in Russian Ukraine, opted to participate in the Judenplan projectⁱⁱⁱ of the Russian government, and so had experienced considerable hardship on small village holdings with little prospect of a brighter future. The area around Rosthern, Northwest Territory, Canada promised such a possible future.^{iv}

That Eigenheim should become the focal point of the Rosenorter Mennonitengemeinde was primarily a matter of geography; Eigenheim was centrally located. That this first Mennonite "conference" in Saskatchewan should have formed and prospered until it began to separate into locally autonomous congregations in 1929 was something of a major achievement; families from Prussia, the Russian/ Ukraine Mennonite colonies, from the USA and some from Moravian backgrounds meant that tensions, both theological and practical, were inevitable.

Birth and Growth of Eigenheim Mennonite Church by Rev. H.T. Klaassen provides a picture of a burgeoning community, scattered and dependent in their spiritual lives on a small cadre of ordained and lay ministers itinerating from community to community. By 1909, this was becoming untenable and the Valley was divided into local congregations with each of the larger ones responsible for "Home Mission" service to the smaller congregations and outlying members. The system that saw a bishop's overseeing and presiding at baptisms and communion was eventually modified so that an elder in each locality could perform all the required functions, and record keeping devolved onto the local church as well.^v

In 1929, Eigenheim declared itself an independent congregation and incorporated under the leadership of Johann Dueck. Shortly thereafter, Gerhard G. Epp (son of



A young David Toews family, ca. 1905

Rosenort pioneer leader Gerhard Epp, grandson of Jacob D. Epp, great-grandson of David Epp who negotiated along with others the Privilegium that exempted Mennonite settlers in Russia from military obligations) was elected as elder, and H.T. Klaassen, Johann Dueck, Jacob Klaassen as ministers with Jacob J. Epp as deacon. Informal ties with the remaining Rosenort community remained intact and remain so, by and large, to this day.

Under the pastoral leadership of G. G. Epp (1929-1963) and H.T. Klaassen (1929-1964) EMC enjoyed a lengthy period of stability. There were tensions, of course; WWII required that the question of enlistment or conscientious objection had to be faced and when a few young men chose to wear the uniform, their reinstatement was a point of contention. The transition from German to English proved difficult as well for ministers and teachers for whom it was a second language. To the credit of the congregation and leadership, this change was made gradually and without major upheaval or splits.

Describing the faith journey of EMC shouldn't be undertaken lightly. One can talk about the influence of Sunday School programs, a controversial innovation in Eigenheim in



Eigenheim leadership in 1929 after it became independent of the Rosenort group: Henry T. Klaassen, Gerhard G. Epp, Jacob J. Epp, Johann Dueck, Jacob Klaassen.

the early 1900s.^{vi} One could point to the Christian Endeavour program, also adopted from non-Mennonite origins. Of course, the German-English Academy and Rosthern Bible School brought in teachers who influenced theological trends in the Valley by bringing with them a variety of worldviews. And then there were the Mennonite Youth Farm and Vacation Bible School - overlapping programs heavily modeling a

combination of born-again evangelicalism and social gospel. Eigenheim Mennonites were strong supporters of, and participants in, these initiatives.

It's probably safe to say that Eigenheim Mennonite has always been subjected to a mild, undiagnosed schizophrenia pitting the more communal, catechetical, church-membership sensibility of historic Anabaptism over against more individualistic, more charismatic faith expression and practice. This can be illustrated by poring over Sunday School handouts throughout the years. In my middle school years (the fifties), the lessons were largely morals-based using Bible stories from both Testaments. At the same time, we were urged to be part of Youth Farm retreats and tent meeting evangelism where an important emphasis was on the choice between being born-again, or "saved," and risking eternal punishment. Eigenheim has always had enough interaction with the broader Canadian culture that the need to consider trends and encroaching ideas has always been a factor, even to the present day's challenge of gay and transgendered membership in the church.

The early leadership of Bishops Peter Regier and David Toews left marks on Eigenheim Mennonite that echo down to today. Toews, particularly, was instrumental in the formation of the German-English Academy in Rosthern. Despite ambivalence toward higher education on the part of many settlers in the area - not to mention reluctance to part with donation dollars - the fundamental need for education and the training of educators was made clear. The Eigenheim, Rosthern, and Tiefengrund congregations particularly provided mainstay support, funding, board participation and students through the GEA and early Rosthern Junior College days.

Rosenort leadership along with the Bergthaler Church of Manitoba, was critical in the formation of the first Conference of Mennonites in Canada, or Konferenz der Mennoniten im mittleren Kanada. On a photo of the nine men of the 1902 Conference planning group are - besides Peter Regier and David Toews - Johann Dueck and Gerhard Epp, both in leadership in Eigenheim.^{vii}

Sensibilities, of course, were carried to Eigenheim from many backgrounds: Chortitz Colony in present day Ukraine, the Vistula Delta in present day Poland, via a few Moravian families from the USA, as well as resettler families from Oklahoma. The variations did not simply meld in the new environment. To the credit of early lead-

ership, arduous and prayerful discussion (and intermarriage, of course) allowed EMC to be a functioning faith community while others were more likely to splinter.

Parents with a dozen children can't provide each with agricultural land enough to prosper, whether that be in Russia, Poland, USA or Canada. The land question remained a significant Eigenheim sensibility and the choices that were required helped shape the Eigenheim of today. What future will there be for the eleven children who don't take over the family farm? Education provided options, and in some families particularly, the professions became the answer. For others, trades that required less formal education (many young men had "apprenticed" in mechanical and carpentry skills on the farm) were a solution. Whatever choice individuals made most likely involved leaving, and besides it's history of exemplary agricultural practice, Eigenheim has contributed teachers, nurses, doctors, pastors, engineers, mechanics, carpenters, professors, etc. to the broader community in abundance, as did Valley Mennonite communities generally.

(An interesting side-note: on Thanksgiving Sunday 2017, Pastor Patrick Preheim of Nutana Park Mennonite in Saskatoon and Nutana Park members with Eigenheim roots joined the Eigenheim congregation for a Sunday morning service. The attendance that morning was boosted by about two dozen.)

To celebrate its 125 years as a congregation, EMC would decide on a low-key format compared to the Centennial in 1992. In part, the event was muted by the painful reality that some one-fourth of the membership had left the congregation and formed an alternate entity meeting, ironically, in the rental space on the Youth Farm Bible Camp that had been the EMC sanctuary for many years. The reasons for the split (an analysis I wrote as a remaining member can be had by emailing me at g.epp@accesscomm.ca) are far from definitive or objective.

In a letter to the council by departing pastor, Allan Friesen, he wrote: "... people on both sides of this divide have begun to express more boldly what they want or need from their congregation going into the future. Those wants and needs seem to be boiling down to the demand for a progressive and universalistic theology on the one side of the divide (in step with our Conference's own theological movement) and the demand for a traditional Mennonite and orthodox theology on the other side."^{viii} The meaning of "progressive and universalistic theology" and of "traditional

Mennonite and orthodox theology” may, in fact, be as indicative of varying perceptions as any in reiterating the reality of what has been a post-modern struggle at EMC and in North American Mennonite conferences. . . . although it hardly explains it. I leave it to historians to unravel this mystery.^{ix}

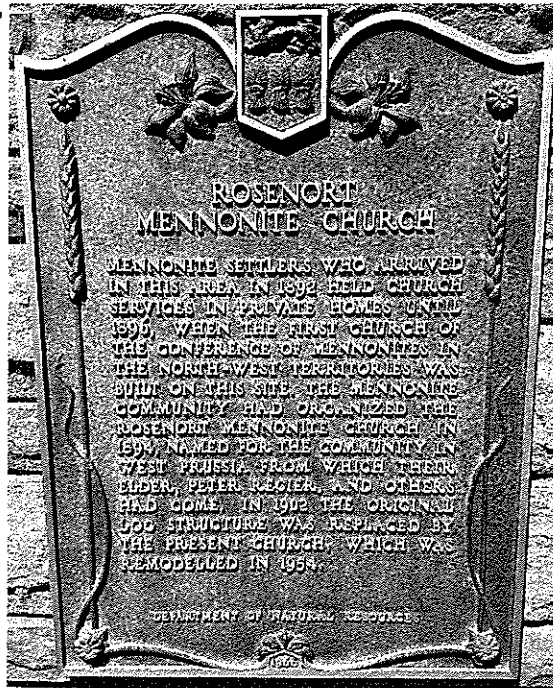
The rethinking of how Christ would have his bride’s presence be felt in the world in our age is a major preoccupation in the broader Mennonite fellowship and in varied and scattered congregations throughout North America. Eigenheim’s response following the 2017 split has been

to turn to essentials, including engaging intensively with Palmer Becker’s *Anabaptist Essentials and Community* and *Conflict: Realities of the Church in Corinth and in Our Congregation* by Dan Nighswander. Small groups have been formed with a first assignment of working through the Begin Anew curriculum published by MC Canada and MC USA. Engaging Pauline Steinmann as interim pastor is providing continuity of focus and pastoral care during a time of transition and the guidance of Ken Bechtel in reassessing structures and leadership needs has formed a basis for forward movement.

There will be a history written in future about the Anabaptist struggle with the post modern age, but struggle in Christ’s name is not new considering persecutions, wars, exile and displacement, and theological encroachments of the past. Eigenheim Mennonite is conscious of writing this history today, and that in this quest, it is not alone.

ⁱ Klaassen, H.T. *Birth and Growth of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, 1892-1974*. pp 11-12

ⁱⁱ The Epp name being synonymous with Eigenheim may be a bit of a stretch, but a listing on the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan website of the persons buried in the EMC Cemetery reveals 59 Epp names. (cf 15 Friesens, 18 Klaassens, 21 Jantzen/Janzens, for instance.)



Plaque erected on a cairn at the Eigenheim Mennonite Church in its centennial year, 1992.

<http://mhss.sk.ca/cemeteries/Eigenheim-Mennonite-Church-Cemetery.shtml>
retrieved January 5, 2018

ⁱⁱⁱ The Judenplan was an experiment in resettling Jewish and Mennonite villagers side by side so that Mennonites could mentor their Jewish neighbours in the basics of agriculture and village/ community administration. The hoped-for relationship didn’t develop as planned and inter-ethnic conflict could hardly be avoided.

^{iv} Dyck, Harvey L. *A Mennonite in Russia: The Dairies of Jacob D. Epp, 1851-1880*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Dyck’s “Introduction and Analysis” is an excellent source regarding the “Judenplan” while providing

also a sense of theological turmoil in Russia, the aftertaste of which would be carried into the Valley settlement by Epp immigrants.

^v Klaassen, 29-30

^{vi} Klaassen, 20

^{vii} Pastoral Leadership at Eigenheim over the years has been provided by the following, with Irvin Schmidt being the first paid, career pastor: Peter Regier, 1894-1913; Abraham Friesen, 1894-1901; Gerhard Epp, 1894-1919; Johann Dueck, 1919-1939; David Toews, 1919-1943; Cornelius K. Ens, 1911-1923; Jacob Klaassen, 1919-1943; Gerhard G. Epp, 1919-1963; Henry T. Klaassen, 1919-1964; Irvin Schmidt, 1964-1976; Arthur Regier, 1976-1977; Werner Froese, 1977-1986; Barbara & Wilmer Froese, 1988; Walter Braun, 1989-1992; Peter Janzen, 1992-1995; Benno Klassen, 1996-2005; Allan Friesen, 2006-2017; Pauline Steinmann, 2017-

^{viii} Email, Allan Friesen to Leo Schulz, EMC church chair, February 6, 2017

^{ix} As I write this, EMC is in the process of renewal with the help of Ken Bechtel and Interim Pastor, Pauline Steinmann. New members have been received on two occasions, structural reorganization is underway and the future looks bright with the return of some members who departed earlier for various reasons.

SE

Peter P. Friesen, *Trajchtmoaka*

by Victor Carl Friesen

My mother's father, Peter P. Friesen, was a *Trajchtmoaka* (chiropractor) though he also pursued several other callings. He was born in Russia in Nikolaidorf, Molotschna Colony, in 1867 (Canada's year of Confederation). Then his family emigrated to Mountain Lake, Minnesota, in 1875. Emigrating at the same time, also from the same colony but from the village of Alexanderkrone, was Sarah Kroeker. They married in 1890.



Peter P. & Sarah Friesen, immigrants to Rosthern from Mountain Lake, MN

Peter was a restless man, an outdoorsman, who wanted a freer life than that afforded by the closely-knit community where he had grown up. That he was born in the same year as Canada's becoming a nation has never been mentioned as his reason for moving his family north. But the largely unsettled Canadian Northwest, with a freer lifestyle, beckoned him, and he and his family settled east of the pioneer village of

Rosthern in 1899, on a quarter section farm there. My mother was born that summer.

There were many things to do, getting established in a new land, and Peter was in his glory. It seemed that farming itself was among the least of his trades. He liked making things, such as baskets and furniture. When a neighbor's house had its roof torn off by a tornado, he organized a crew to rebuild it. Later, he was foreman in the construction of a new school. He liked to fish at a site where Gabriel Dumont once had a winter hibernant on the South Saskatchewan River, now a historic site, and fishing soon became an occupation. (He made his own nets to catch goldeyes to sell in town.) He also mended shoes; practised dentistry, a steady business for several years; and provided veterinary service to his neighbours. As well, he taught

Sunday School and led a choir.

And, as already mentioned, he was a *Trajchtmoaka*. When my mother and I wrote *The Mulberry Tree*, published 1985 (reprinted 1997), we had so many things to say about her father's life that this activity got short shrift. All that was mentioned was the fact that he was a "bone-setter." But this was an important activity in a pioneering community. With all the rough work necessary in clearing land, sowing crops with olden-day machinery, chopping down trees and sawing wood for fuel, stooking and pitching bundles at threshing time, handling livestock and lively horses, there were always serious muscle strains, twisted ankles, swollen knees, sore backs, and out-of-joint shoulders and arms - and accompanying other ailments. Since doctors were not readily available, nor the money to pay them, local chiropractors working for practically nothing, became indispensable.

Peter, in fact, gave away any such earnings to charity. He just had a knack for treating his local patients - with his obvious concern for their welfare, a comforting voice exuding confidence, knowing hands that found the trouble spot, and endless patience in giving massages. I no longer have Mother to provide examples of his work, but I do remember a real doozy.

It was early afternoon when two strangers, a man and wife, came to his door. With them was their daughter of six or so, with one arm in a sling. No, it wasn't broken, they told him - she just can't use it. Well, Peter asked if they would take off the sling so that he could examine the injured arm. Therewith, the little girl responded; she wasn't shy at all, but rather well-spoken, and sure of herself. No! she wasn't going to have her

arm examined, certainly not by a stranger, and not one with a black beard. She emphasized those last words as though this stranger might be an evil man, and she had her dignity to maintain.

Peter was somewhat nonplussed. This was a most unusual case. Odd!

Her young parents were somewhat cowed by her: it was she, apparently, who ruled the roost. But should a six-year old patient



Bearded Peter P. Friesen, Trajchtmoaka, with two children on his knees.

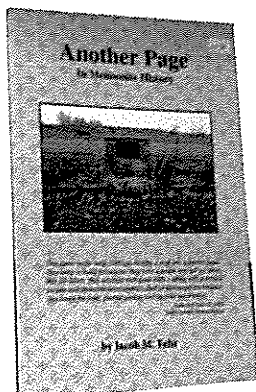
rule her chiropractor? Peter decided on diplomacy, although he had an inkling of what was wrong. He would make his "guests" feel welcome, bid them to sit down, including the girl with the sling (no, she'd rather stand), then entertain them with a few stories (being a master storyteller was another of his accomplishments). It was no time before he was yarn-spinning about his boyhood in Minnesota, particularly of the wild-life there, including the beautiful great egret, standing four feet high, taller than the little girl, with filmy feathers in springtime, hanging down like a bridal veil.

She was entranced, and at Peter's gesture, crawled onto his lap, sling and all, his recollections continuing as if there had been no interruption.

Finally, he was describing the lordly moose, treading through evergreen forests. His rough imitation of the animal's course, frightened the little girl. She jumped off his lap. With outstretched arm she pointed an accusing finger at him for scaring her, then suddenly looked aghast - not at what he had done but at her own reaction. For she had used her "injured" arm, which, it seemed, she had had covered with a sling by her unsuspecting, sympathetic parents. It was attention she'd wanted, more than she was getting.

My grandfather and her father smiled understandingly at each other. The mother, embarrassed, shielded the stunned little girl in her skirts. But my grandmother had a "faspa" ready - a pleasant lunch followed, and the guests left, with many thanks. Grandfather watched them leave, wondering if he had been too abrupt in disclosing the girl's "injury," but he consoled himself with the thought: "*Trajchtmooke* takes many forms."

CVF



Another Page in Mennonite History:

by Jacob M. Fehr.
(Swift Current: Self
Published, 2014) 82 pages.
6 x 9 inch bound
paperback.

Another Page in Mennonite History

by Jacob M. Fehr

Reviewed by Jake Buhler

If you have a free afternoon, and you want to look back a hundred years ago to Mennonite life and culture in southern Saskatchewan, *Another Page* is exactly what you are looking for. *Another Page* is an attractive self-published paperback that brings together 81 photographs, stories and poems (in English and Plautdietsch), recipes, and a bit of history.

Jacob M. Fehr is an unabashed evangelical with a deep passion for Plautdietsch and Mennonite history. But a prude Fehr is not: Observe a line from his first poem on page one:

*Just any old nag, looking tired and glum,
He spruced them right up with a shot of rum!*

In *A Mennonite Journey* Fehr reminded me of Sarah Binks, the fictitious southern writer:

*They lived here in peace for many years,
When there were rumblings, threats, and fears.
Mennonites have always been known to roam,
And Canada was to be their next new home.*

Fehr describes the Mennonite Heritage Village in Swift Current and then proceeds to show vivid photographs of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church that was moved in from Goultdown, the house-barn combination from Reinland, and a hundred artifacts from a hundred years ago. His 1922 photo of Old Colony Mennonites boarding a train at Wymark for Mexico is a classic, as is the photo of the SS Peruvian which brought hundreds of Mennonites to Quebec City enroute to Manitoba after 1874.

Fehr devotes 19 pages to recipes that originate from his wife, Agnes's, kitchen. They include breads and rolls, cookies, pies and pastry, soups and moos, pickles, beverages (choke cherry wine), and main Mennonite dishes.

Fehr's rarest story is of a Manure Press (photo included) that was invented in the dirty 1930s when there was no money to buy coal. Fehr is old enough to describe how the Banman Manure Press produced fuel from cow chips.

Finally, Fehr writes a 4 page summary of the history of the Mennonites. He writes it as though he were speaking to you - having total ownership of the story.

At \$10.00 plus \$2.50 for shipping, this small book is a bargain.

JB

Ice Cream Flavours and Theology

by Tony Funk

Like most other small towns, the town of Hague has developed some rather unique patterns over the years. Historically, the surrounding area had numerous small villages, most of which did not have a post office, hardware,

grocery, or farm supply outlet. After a week of hard and dusty work, the farmers and village residents, and their families, were ready for a change. All the Hague businesses on Main Street stayed open till at least 9:00 pm on Saturday evenings. That allowed Father to pick up some baler twine, Mother wanted some apron fabric, and the child-ren were very much hoping for a tasty treat. That treat was often an ice cream cone. Vanilla was the one constant flavour, although a few other choices were available: chocolate, strawberry, neapolitan.

The stores were all in a three-block stretch on the west side of Main Street. Across the street to the east was the CN Station, which was connected by a wooden sidewalk with the well known, iconic CN water tower. Between these two buildings was a fairly large open area which was used for parking for the benefit of both CN and the businesses. On summer Saturday evenings this parking area took on a different look. Already in the 1940s, and continuing on, it was used for "Street Meetings." These were Christian outreach efforts presented by concerned citizens. This program was never officially driven by particular churches. Since the area was heavily populated with different *flavours* of Mennonites, it then was natural that a lot of the presenters were also Mennonite. The program usually contained a musical group, and a speaker. Some remember that in the 1950s there was at least one Pentecostal group that occasionally did the musical portion and presumably also had the message. During the 1950s, and continuing into the 1970s, the Salvation Army would do one entire Saturday



Circa 1952 Photo of Hague Main Street. Probably on a weekday morning.

On Saturday evenings the portable hay rack deck would be placed about where the circular cluster of vehicles is shown.

evening service at the season's opening. Those two examples suggest differing theological *flavours* being made available in earlier years.

The audience hearing the service was different from a church setting. The people were not captive, as they could unobtrusively leave at any time, or else they just heard snatches of the

service as they walked the sidewalk from the post office to the hardware store. The listeners were of a wide age range and came from varying faith and ethnic backgrounds.

In many ways the location was advantageous. The people were out on the sidewalks on summer Saturday evenings regardless. It was an opportunity to reach the unchurched. Also, the small coffee shops on Main got extra business right after the service ended. There were also problems. The vehicular traffic travelling right between the presenters and the listeners was disruptive, plus dangerous. At times the traffic seemed to be deliberately noisy! The other noise factor came from the CN train that happened to come through at the wrong time, just behind the presenters.

There was at least one incident where an intoxicated person tried to disrupt the worshipping atmosphere.

During the later 1950s and early 1960s, an activity which was not directly connected to the Street Meetings, often played out on the Main Street sidewalk. That is where Peter K. Penner had a "sandwich board" ministry. He would have a cardboard placard on his back and another on his chest, somewhat similar to modern day picketers. On these placards were printed very short Biblical passages imploring repentance and righteous living. He was not always favourably accepted by others on the sidewalks or in the stores. That however was his ministry.

In earlier years the Street Meetings were not as frequent or regular. That changed in the mid 1970s when a group of dedicated individuals committed to having it every summer Saturday evening. Other changes were also coming. The

unused CN Station had already been demolished when, in 1990 Sask. Valley Credit Union (now Affinity) started building a new facility on that former CN parking lot. The Street Meetings needed a new location.

At about the same time the Committee purchased a 1953 F500 Ford truck, for \$1,200, and built an enclosed cabin onto the back to use as a portable platform. Till then they had used the deck of a portable conventional hay rack.

The new choice of location was an open area adjacent to the main entrance into Hague from Highway #11. This was immediately west of the Village Inn, so people could easily go there for coffee later! Or ice cream! The atmosphere was somewhat different in this location. Now the listeners sat in their vehicles, with windows down, and were a more captive audience. The age range was not as wide, and it mostly attracted those people who had deliberately planned to attend. Not as many people spontaneously took in the service. Since this location was no longer in a street setting, the name of the program evolved to "Open Air Service." It was a



The 1953 Ford platform truck that is still used on Saturday evenings. With Museum Backdrop.

much safer location however.

For several reasons a third location was selected in 1998. The former location was somewhat restrictive, and washrooms were not readily available. The move was made to the roomy Hague Museum grounds, which was still further removed from heavier traffic flows. The 1953 Ford platform truck also made the move. Here the listeners also sit in vehicles. Average attendance numbers are about 100 people. They come primarily from the eastern portion of the Sask. Valley and stretching from

Rosthern to Warman and Martensville. The average age is probably 70+, and most of these people will be in their favourite home church the next morning. There are very few families with young children attending, unless Dad is preaching, or Mom is singing. The pool of people drawn from for speaking is quite small. It is believed that a female has never preached there!

The eligibility for musical groups is somewhat wider, and does include females. At secular concerts, the common response to showing appreciation for a well done musical presentation is with applause. In the Open Air setting the response comes from vehicle horns being used! Quite musical actually! It is ironic that many people who would never consider clapping for something in a church setting,



On Museum Grounds. Looks like the vehicles have already had their Saturday evening bath. Chances are all the horns are functional!

have no problems with honking car horns here!

These ministry programs have run almost continuously in the summer months since at least the 1940s.

When we go into a modern Ice Cream Parlour there is almost an endless selection of flavours available. It seems where the early versions of the Open Air Services had a few different theological flavours available, the 2017 choices have reverted back to almost a single flavour only.

Anyone for an Ice Cream? Lets meet at the Highway 11 Gas Bar and Food Court after the "Service"!

JP

Mien Easchtet Malkjen**My First Milking****by Jack Driedger (Translated by Jake Buhler)**

Daut Malkjen ess je leijcht jedonen,
 Wan Maun et eascht weet auntoogonen.
 Soo lang auss Maun daut nich festeit,
 Traft sikj daut ne Koo uk schleit.
 Ekj weet noch goot waut mie passead,
 Auss hia em Launt ekj malkjen lead.
 Nom Koostaul kjeem ekj met en Ama.
 Dee Kjiaj dee stunden schmock auss Lama.
 Onn onen ne lange Wol
 Saut bie de fäaschte ekj mie dol.
 Funk aun to drekjen onn too trakjen.
 Doch wul dee Malkj noch nich fuats lakjen.
 Trotsdäm ekj trock onn drekjt onn reet,
 Dee Koo nich eenen Dreppen leet.
 Ekj docht daut Rintbeest wea polietsch.
 Ekj räd aul Engelsch, Rusch uk Dietsch,
 Doch holp doabie kjeen bossijch woaren.
 Maun mott daut learen onn erfoaren.
 No langem Stripsen leet dee Koo
 Dan entlich doch de Malkj aul too.
 Mien Ama wea jewess nich kjlien,
 Doch weinijch troff doa mau enen.
 Ekj deinkj, de Halft dee stritst febie,
 Nich enne Ead, nä, äwa mie.
 Met emol kjikt dee Koo sikj omm,
 Bleef oba stell, müak kjeen Jebromm.
 Onn donn eea ekj mie rajcht fesach,
 Met ama toop; em Messt ekj lach.
 Onn too Jesalschofft hinjaraun
 Jeem fuats doaropp mien Bänskje aun.
 Na, docht ekj soo, dit sit aul nat,
 Toom Jlekj haud ekj mie nich jestat.
 Stunt opp onn säd too mie: Soo't jeit It
 wan eena Enjelsch schlaecht festeit."
 Mien Weat säd doch,
 Ess kjweiet opp Enjelsch dan, "Dee schleit?"
 Na, dauts krakt eendoont,
 waut kjweiet nü meent.
 Ekj weet soo fäl, see drascht mie eent.
 Dee Moot wea mie noch nich jesunken.
 Onn wan uk nich seea goot jelaunt,
 Soo funk ekj doch fomm freschen aun,
 Onn mollkj dan gaunss fein no dee Riaj

Milking is really quite easily done,
 If one knows how to go about it.
 If one does not have the skills,
 It might happen that a cow will kick.
 I know full well what happened to me;
 That here in the countryside, I learned to milk.
 I went to the cowbarn with my pail
 The cows were standing calm as llamas.
 And without a long debate,
 I sat down beside the first one.
 I began to pinch and to pull,
 But the milk would not start coming.
 Even though I pulled and pressed and yanked,
 The cow would not release a single drop.
 I thought the beast was dishonest.
 I spoke in English, Russian, and German,
 But getting angry was no help.
 One must learn from experience.
 After much pulling, the cow, finally,
 Allowed the milk to flow.
 My pail was surely not a small one,
 But little seemed to fall inside.
 I figured, half of it squirted astray,
 Not on the floor, but all over me.
 Suddenly, the cow looked around,
 Remained still, and made no moan.
 And before I could rightly see,
 I lay in the mess, pail and all,
 And to befriend me,
 My milk-stool joined me.
 Well, I thought, this looks rather pretty,
 Luckily I was not hurt,
 Got up, and said to myself: that's how it goes,
 when one doesn't understand English well.
 My boss said the cows are calm.
 The cows are quiet." "In English, "quiet".
 But then, "she strikes?"
 Well, never mind, what "quiet", might mean.
 I know this much: she whacked me.
 My courage had not yet left me,
 And even if I had not landed well,
 I recovered and began anew,
 And milked, quite well, the whole row

Dän Weat siene dree bunte Kijaj.
 Woo grülich sachet oba üt,
 Mie, auss ekj kjeem toom Staul erüt.
 Dee Ooweraulss, daut Hamd uk Metz
 Beschmäat, begoten onn bespretst.
 Dee Weat kjeem frintlijch mie entjääjen
 Onn früach, "Na Bill, wua hasst jelääjen?
 Waut hasst dü blooss soo lang jedonen?
 Woo haft daut Malkjen dan jegonen?"
 Doch säd ekj am, "Daut dead een Stoot.
 Doch doafää wort et dan uk goot.
 Daut jeft soo fäl opp dise Welt,
 Wan eenem daut uk nich jefelt.

JD

'The Lord has been my guide through life'

Esther Patkau Aug. 23, 1927 – Dec. 18, 2017

By Donna Shultz, Saskatchewan Correspondent

[reprinted by permission from Canadian Mennonite]

Esther Patkau would likely not have considered herself a remarkable woman, yet she lived a remarkable life. Born on Aug. 23, 1927, near Hanley, Sask., she knew at the tender age of four that she wanted to be a missionary. She never wavered from that goal.



After elementary school, she took high school courses by correspondence. She spent two winters at Rosthern Bible School and graduated from Rosthern Junior College in 1947.

That year she enrolled at the newly formed Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, graduating in 1950 with a bachelor of theology degree.

She earned a second undergraduate degree the following year from Bethel College in Newton, Kan., and received an elementary school teaching certificate, which she never used in a classroom setting.

J. J. Thiessen ordained Patkau at Hanley Mennonite Church on July 22, 1951. Three weeks later, she set sail for Japan, where she served under the General Conference Mennonite Church's Commission on Overseas Mission for the next 23 years. Her home base was the city of Miyazaki on the island of Kyushu, where she taught and cared for children, youth and adults, and helped establish the Oyodo Christian Church.

Although she was ordained for pastoral ministry, there were certain jobs she wasn't allowed to do because she was a woman. She could teach catechism and prepare candidates for baptism

Of the boss's three spotted cows.
 How badly I looked,
 As I left the barn and went outside,
 The pants, the shirt, and cap,
 Were smeared, and splattered and splashed.
 The boss approached me in a friendly way,
 And asked, "Well Bill, where have you been lying?
 Where have you been so long?
 How did the milking go?"
 But I answered him, "It took a while,
 But because of the experience, I improved."
 Lots of things happen in this world,
 Even if we don't enjoy them all.

JB

but had to call on her male colleagues to do the baptizing. Her brother Henry Patkau says she struggled with his double standard.

One of her jobs in Miyazaki was managing the Gospel Bookstore. While on furlough in 1962, she took an accounting course at the Saskatoon Business College in order to improve her management skills.

Furloughs weren't vacations for Patkau. During each trip to Canada she travelled across the country, making presentations in churches about the work God was doing in Japan. In 1974, on one of these visits her father died. Although she wanted to return to Japan, she felt she had to remain in Saskatoon to care for her mother.

She attended the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, graduating with a master of divinity degree in 1976. That year she also became associate pastor of Saskatoon's First Mennonite Church, a position she held for seven years. They weren't easy years for her, as many congregants weren't comfortable having a woman pastor.

After leaving the pastorate, she became a hospital chaplain, first to Mennonite patients and eventually to others. She also spent many years volunteering as a spiritual caregiver in the pediatric department of the Saskatoon Cancer Centre.

This work was very important to her. "I find joy in spending time with families and children who are under great stress," she wrote, "in the hope that they will find strength to cope with their circumstances."

She was a prolific writer, penning two family histories, a history of First Mennonite Church and a history of Canadian Woman in Mission. She also translated numerous works from German to English.

(cont'd on page 20 - bottom right)

The Long 'I' Sounds in Plautdietsch and in English

- by Victor Carl Friesen

To start, let me say that what follows is somewhat of an oversimplification. I'm referring to the pronunciation of the long i in Plautdietsch and in English.

Since Plautdietsch was the first language I learned to speak (although I'm now somewhat rusty in its usage), I already knew in my preschool days that there were two forms of the long i sound in its regular speech. Herman Rempel in his *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch?* A Mennonite Low German Dictionary, 1984, spells these as ee, as in leef (pronounced "life" but meaning "dear" - adj.), and as ei, as in Eid (pronounced "I'd" but meaning "oath"). Other writers in Plautdietsch, such as Reuben Epp and Jack Thiessen, use these same symbols, ee and ei, in their own work. (Epp, by the way, was a close friend, and Thiessen was the "silent" editor of my book, *The Windmill Turning*.)

The English language has both these sounds, too. (In fact, I can think of one word that has both sounds, first ei, then ee - "twilight"). But English dictionaries make no distinction - their editors list only one long i sound. Even *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, which I prefer using, is no better in this regard. For the long i (symbolized as \bar{i}), it gives four examples: "ice," "bite," "pirate," and "deny." A Plautdietsch speaker would say that in the first two words the i sound is shaped towards the front of the mouth, while in the latter two it is more of an open mouth/throat sound. Thus, the two symbols ee and ei, respectively.

Here are some more examples to illustrate my point. Say aloud "night" and "nigh," "sight" and "sigh." The first word of each pair has an ee-sounding vowel; the second has an ei-sounding vowel. Note that both the ee-words end with a t-sound, while the two ei-words have no following sound (despite there being a gh). So the ending can make a difference. No ending consonant makes for an ei sound of the vowel.

I went through the whole alphabet, a to z, to see what other final consonant sounds follow a middle ee. And I found that only k, f, and s, along with the t, are paired with a middle ee. The other consonant-ending sounds come after a middle ei. (I'm referring here only to ending sounds, not ending letters.) Here are some examples:

- for ee sound: wife, bike, concise, right

- for ei sound: bribe, tide, file, dime, dine, pipe, revive, size

Plautdietsch is a suitable language in which to find "twin"

examples of words, one with the ee sound, the other with the ei sound, where the consonants are exactly the same in each pair. But having one spelled with ee and the other with ei results in two words of completely different meanings. Here are a dozen such examples, with English translation, to illustrate this (Plautdietsch nouns are capitalized; the verbs are present tense, singular, third person.)

beed (bids, v.)	--	beid (both)
Feela (feeler)	--	Feila (arrow)
hee (he)	--	Hei (hay)
Heel (cave)	--	Heil (health)
jeet (pours)	--	jeit (goes)
Leew (love, n.)	--	Leiw (lion)
Meew (gull)	--	Meiw (sleeve)
Need (rivet, n.)	--	Neid (envy)
scheet (shoots)	--	jescheit (well behaved)
seet (sweet)	--	seit (sows, v.)
twee (two)	--	twei (broken)
weet (knows)	--	Weit (wheat)

CVF



Victor Carl Friesen

(cont'd from page 19 - Patkau obituary - D. Schultz)

In 2005, at 78, Patkau became the spiritual care coordinator at Bethany Manor, a Seniors housing complex operated by Saskatoon Mennonite Care Services, where she led worship and Bible study, and provided pastoral care to the 388 residents.

Patkau cared tirelessly for others. People would frequently stop by her office, even after lung cancer made her weak and reduced her voice to a whisper. Yet she continued to work at Bethany Manor until a few weeks before her death.

And, says Henry, on her deathbed she expressed sadness at not being able to do the work she loved. "There is no longer any purpose for me," she lamented. "I cannot serve."

In a 2001 letter to the Bethel College class of 1951, Patkau reflected: "The Lord has been my guide through life, and daily I see how he directs me into places and opportunities I would not have dreamed of. Life is a delight! It wonderful to trust the Lord for everything."

Esther Patkau died on Dec. 18, 2017, at the age of 90.

DS

Päpa Nät: by Jacob M. Fehr (Swift Current: Self Published, 2012) 75 pp.

Book Review: Jake Buhler



Päpa Nät is an attractive self published paperback that brings together 75 selected Low German short stories and poems from Fehr's ten previously published works.

The title, *Päpa Nät*, comes from the culinary delight by the same name, which Mennonites bake during the winter season, especially near Christmas time. Fehr insists that the crisp Päpa Nät baked without yeast are his favorite, but he allows that each of us is entitled to a favourite without having to quarrel over whether to use baking powder or yeast!

At age 86, Fehr, who lives in Swift Current, is one of a few remaining writers who can write effortlessly in a language that remains a favourite among a number of people. Fehr has used his own method to spell Plautdietsch (the Low German dialect that Mennonites use). The masters of standardized Plautdietsch spelling are Reuben Epp, Herman Rempel and Jack Thiessen. Fehr has developed his own hybrid methodology that reflects the 'en' endings of the Alt Kolonie (Old Colony) speaking traditions that developed in South Russia.

Fehr chooses common everyday topics and exploits their simplicity through poetry: "Stuk, stuk, han un trigj, dee velusde Stuk Maschien," (trans. Bump, bump, back and forth, that lousy washing machine). The active verb, "stuk" is repeated and supported by "han un trigj" which prolongs the action, and as the action heats up is given a final onomatopoeic interjection, "velusde." The reader can hear the sound of the thumping of the manual washing machine, while at the same time feel the disgust of the operator who must toil but does not want to.

Most of Fehr's poems use a simple pattern: each verse is a quatrain (4 lines). But his rhyming patterns are exciting and varied. Some are "a-b, a-b" with word endings like "finnja, kjand, kjinja, velang." Others are "a-a-a-b" ("Launt, Saunt, bekaunt, rein"), one even has an "a-a-a-a" form using words like "Prips, Jips, Jast and Kjast."

Fehr's poetry is not only of common items on the old farm. In *Hundat Joa Von Nu* (trans. Hundred Years From Now), Fehr asks how things will be a hundred years from now. In the last verse he concludes, "Hundat Joa von nu, woat Gott noch rechten," (trans. Hundred years from now God will still be ruling).

The short little narratives are delightful pieces that often begin with a small problem but are resolved at the end. In Fehr's retelling of the Creation story, God is lonely. By the end... "Gott freid sikj, daut wia aula goot waut Hee jemaakt haud," (God was happy with all He had made).

In a humorous account of a renowned Trajchmaaka Dikj (Chiropractor Dyck), Fehr describes a wealthy businessman from the huge city of Saskatoon who flies a plane to Chortitz to fetch the chiropractor to set the bones of his 8 year old daughter. He is successful and is introduced to the family doctor who was unable to help the little girl. The doctor asks Dyck what his secret is: Dyck tells him he must dress as he does in overalls (Schlaubekjsen) with a red handkerchief in the back pocket. The story ends with the wealthy businessman visiting a McDonalds (Mc Stua) and seeing the doctor dressed up like Chiropractor Dyck!

Päpa Nät is an easy-to-read collection of stories and poems for the beginning reader of Plautdietsch which will equally delight the fluent reader.

Available at MHSS for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

JB

Who Was Pete Siemon?

- by Victor G. Wiebe

Some time ago, while searching for information on Saskatchewan Mennonites, I encountered the name Pete Siemon who is described as a Mennonite from the United States. He is said to have come "to the Buffalo Narrows area to trap in 1914." This would make him an early Mennonite pioneer in Saskatchewan.

Here is a little more information from the note: "At first, he did a lot of trapping on Frobisher Lake. In 1943-44 he stayed with Hilda and Jacob Halvorsen. It was Pete Siemon who sold Halvorsen his mink to start his mink ranch. Pete died in 1954, at the age of ninety-four." This date information would make his birth in 1860 or '61. Please let me know if you can shed some light on this Saskatchewan Mennonite pioneer. I'm at: victor.wiebe@sasktel.net.

The Source of the information is a very short biographical note on: Biographical Sketches: Buffalo Narrows Residents Part Two: <http://www.jkcc.com/evje/sketches two.htm>.

VGW

Workers Together With God: by Ruth Marlene Friesen

(Saskatoon: Published by Impact Canada Ministries Inc. 2017)

Book Review: Jake Buhler

Workers Together with God has 348 pages. Soft cover, spiral binding, 8.5" x 11". Non Fiction.

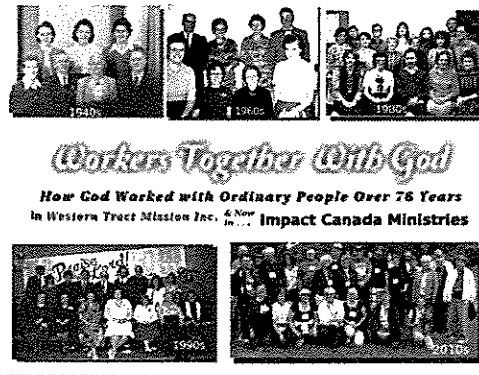
The full title as it appears on the cover page is *Workers Together With God: How God Worked with Ordinary People Over 76 Years in Western Tract Mission and Now in Impact Canada Ministries*.

The first matter this reviewer had to deal with was the nature of the book. It has no direct association with Mennonites or with Mennonite institutions. But, on closer examination, it has much to do with Mennonites. Although it is a non-denominational ministry, Mennonites have served as staff, as volunteers and as board members from WTM's beginnings to the present. No other denomination has participated and supported it as have the Mennonites. Specifically, the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church, now the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church, has been the largest single supporter. The author, who works at Impact Ministries, is originally from the EMMC Conference. Just over 50% of the 250 staff and board members who have served at WTM/Impact over 76 years are of Mennonite background.

The EMMC grew out of the evangelistic fervor advanced by Rev. Isaac P. Friesen, a "Conference" Mennonite Evangelist, first in Manitoba in the 1930s, which then spread to Saskatchewan in the 1940s. Rev. John D. Friesen became the Saskatchewan Aeltester. He supported and gave leadership to WTM/Impact Ministries for several decades. Other Mennonites have also supported WTM/Impact Ministries, including Mennonite Brethren members.

In this significant book containing over 200 photographs and more than 500 smaller head shots of individuals, author Ruth Friesen has brought to life the work of volunteers, board members and staff, who have worked with Western Tract Mission (WTM) since 1941. From its beginnings, WTM was a faith ministry, operating not with a budget, but with a belief that founder, George Elliot, described: "When we want money for the Lord's work, we ask Christians and they pray it in."

The Western Tract Mission (WTM) began in Langham, Saskatchewan by the owner of a small Ford Dealership. In the



early 1930s, two evangelists came into town and George Elliot was "revived." He developed a passion for evangelism and began to distribute tracts (small leaflets with a gospel message). In 1941, 57 people gathered to found Western Tract Mission which would continue on for more than 75 years.

Ruth Friesen, and those who helped her, delved into an archive of preserved photographs and documents, to create a chronology of events, almost unheard of in the

history of faith ministries. She managed to create a diary-like record of all board members and workers over a period of 76 years.

Friesen has divided the history of WTM/Impact Ministries into 5 eras. Each era represents the leadership of a committed head: George Elliot (1941-1956), Russel Rice (1956-1978), Melvin Anhorn (1979-1993), Chuck Aney (1993-1996), and Arnold Stobbe (1996-2017). Each section is described detailing accomplishments and challenges.

The author is also the organization's archivist. As such she was able to access accurate records of all the activities over three quarters of a century.

The main purpose of WTM/Impact Ministries has always been to provide evangelistic tracts coaxing readers to repent and to become Christians. Over the years several thousand volunteers have provided tens of thousands of hours of free labor to stuff envelopes, mail tracts, do followup with respondents, serve on the Board, and to donate money. Later WTM/Impact Ministries sent "missionaries to win souls" in Canada and abroad. Indeed, there are records of many persons who were "saved" using the methods of the organization.

There are those who are critical of WTM/Impact Ministries. Its views, for example, of French Catholics are to be questioned. What cannot be criticized is that author Ruth Friesen has written a lucid and easy-to-read book about an enduring organization that has gone about its mission from humble beginnings to a mature movement.

Workers Together With God can be purchased directly from Impact Canada for \$50.00; <http://www.westerntractmission.org/76/> Or phone 306 244-0446. Impact Canada Ministries is located at 222 Ave C North in Saskatoon. MHSS has a copy of the book; anyone can come into the archives and read it at the reading table.

JB

The MHSS March Weekend of 2018 ~ History Night, AGM, Village Stories, & the Archives Come Alive

by Ruth Marlene Friesen



Each year the MHSS spends the first weekend of March to review some history, have our Annual Meeting, and report on the past

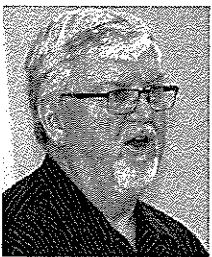
year. We have other treats such as workshops or lectures, which often turn out to be fascinating stories.

This year our History Night was a lecture by Dr. Gordon Jensen on the Reformation, for 2017 was the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenburg.

Because of scheduling conflicts, we met in the Dining room at Bethany Manor on Friday evening. We sat around small rectangular tables instead of in neat church-like rows as we would have in the Fellowship Hall.

Despite forecasts threatening lots of snow to fall that evening, we had a fairly good turnout.

Dick Braun, outgoing President, opened the meeting and asked Ben Pauls to lead us in some singing.



Ben Pauls

Ben told us that Martin Luther had wanted to give worship back to the people, so he wrote a number of hymns, some of them with popular tunes borrowed from the Ale Houses. (Luther didn't think the world should have all the best melodies.)

We sang *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, in both English and German. Also, *"He Who Would Follow Christ."*

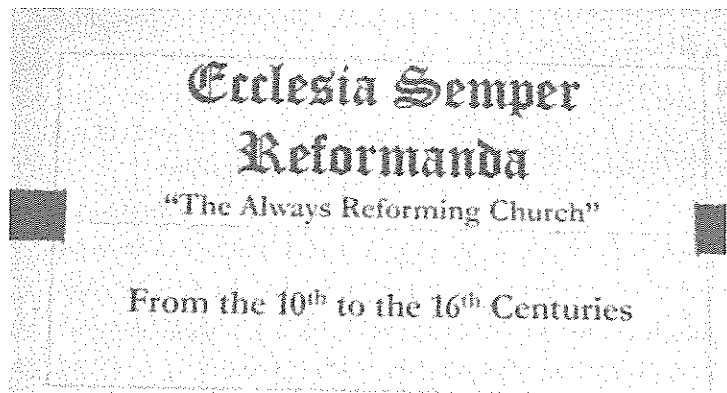
Jake Buhler introduced the Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen, the William Hordern Chair of Theology, Professor of Reformation History and Theology, and the Dean of Studies at the Lutheran



Dr. Gordon Jensen

Theological Seminary in Saskatoon. He served as a parish pastor for 14 years prior to teaching.

The large screen allowed us to see his slides; his lecture was entitled, *Ecclesia semper Reformanda*, or "The Church is always reforming," as quoted from the Huguenots. For over an hour, Dr. Jensen



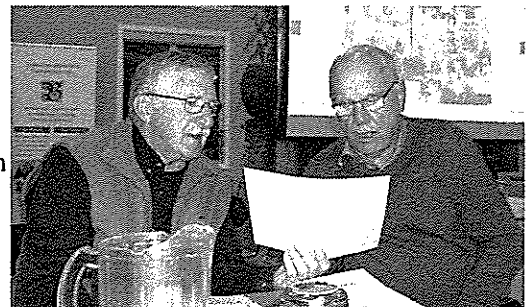
covered the history and stages of the Reformation from the 10th to the 16th centuries.

For those who have read or studied this history before, it was a succinct historical overview; for those who had not, this was an interesting string of stories. They included the lives of John Wycliffe, (1320-1384), Jan Hus (1369-1415) in Prague, (1452-1498), Giralamo Savonarola (1452-1498), Martin Luther (1463-1546), Huldrysh Zwingli (1484-1531), and Menno Simons (1496-1561). It is hard to pin the Reformation to one person or one event. All of the names mentioned, with others besides, were a part of the Reformation, and Jensen noted that the men named were primarily pastors.

In conclusion, Dr. Jensen told us that in 2010 Lutherans had formally apologized for persecuting Mennonites; a surprise to some of us.

A short period was allowed after the lecture for questions. Interesting stories came to light about Luther's wife, Katie, in that brief period.

Ben Pauls led us in singing, *"In the Rifted Rock I'm Resting."* Then those who were not Bethany residents hurried



out to see how bad Leonard Doell & Jake Buhler singing together the driving would be. (It was passable).

More snow held off until about 10 am on Saturday morning. The fluffy snowflakes floating outside the windows were quite pretty.

Our AGM started at 9:30 am with Lois Siemens, the new Spiritual Care Director at Bethany, showing us how she saw the symbols of Lent in colours and especially in dishes.

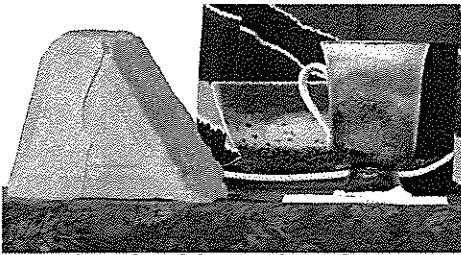
A purple table cloth represented Jesus, our King. A square blue



Lois Siemens

plate with a mosaic reminded her of the birth of the Church. A colourful ceramic bowl with rain at the top around the circumference brought out the flowers from the grass at the bottom rim; this told Lois that the unpleasant things in our lives usually provide the blessings later.

A white ceramic tile came from an abandoned Mennonite home in Schönhorst, Russia, where she and a friend broke in to explore while on a tour. Lois felt that the tile represented her ties to her ancestors, who might have lived in that house and worked in that kitchen.



The colourful reminders of Lent

A colourful mug stood for stories in the Bible; Lois briefly told about three of them. The business meeting with all the usual reports followed. The Minutes of the previous year were adopted, and the financial reports and budget were accepted also.

Jake Buhler explained that we have an Endowment fund at Abundance Canada (formerly Mennonite Foundation), but that we need to let it grow for a few years before we can start using the interest for expenses.

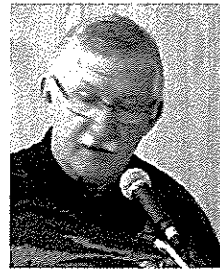
Kathy Boldt reported on the Archives work with incoming collections. Vera Falk stated that book sales have been very good! I, (Ruth) reported on the website visitor traffic (which is excellent!), and answered questions about the Historian.

Susan Braun reported that our membership has dropped to 255 (this includes some in the US as well as in Canada). We need to promote membership. She led in the Board elections. The terms of four Board members were up, and three were willing to let their names stand again: Kathy Boldt, Leonard Doell, and Vera Falk. There were no nominations from the floor, so the three were returned to the Board for another term.



At this time we stopped for a coffee break.

When we returned to our seats at 11 am, it was story time, particularly about past anniversaries in two villages, and the Dirty 30s.

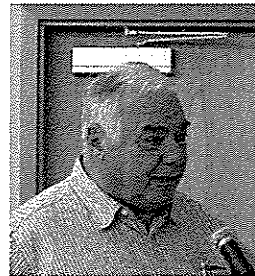


Leonard Doell

Leonard Doell told historical stories of Hochfeld, a village about 3 miles west of Hague. In 1895, land was set aside there for Old Colony homesteaders. He named various residents and how, in 1929, #4084 Paschen-dale School was built there. (In 1991 it was moved to the Hague Museum grounds; as well as the Letkeman's house-barn combina-

tion).

In 1926, young Johan Hildebrand, just newly married, died because of a horse hoof strike to his head. His funeral was a week after his wedding. Rev. I. P. Friesen told Johan's story in a poem, later published in "Im Dienste des Meisters."



Dick Braun

Dick Braun told stories of his birth village, Neuhorst. It was established in 1898 by the Bergen family, who brought seeds from Russia – even for trees. Villagers come and go, but the trees stay! These are well-rooted Burwalde Poplars.

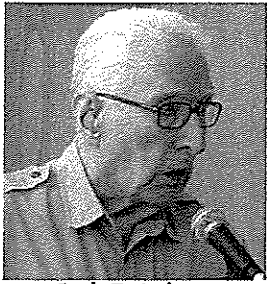
The founders decided to give every family 3 acres, and used a rolling wagon wheel to measure them off. This turned out to have been inaccurate when years later, Sask Power was laying lines, and the properties were surveyed to make sure they didn't put power poles on private property. This was when they discovered that some neighbours were sharing a driveway, but not as equally as they had thought!

In 1955, on the 50th anniversary of Saskatchewan, Neuhorst got a brand new school called Osler #2, so named by Osler Town Council.

Dick's grandparents stayed, but their neighbours moved to Mexico in the 1920s. Since then people of other cultures have moved into the village and it has become quite a blended community.

Last year, 2017, Dick was asked to organize a *Neuhorst Treffen*, a Faspa where many who had grown up in Neuhorst could come home to visit and reconnect. It was much appreciated, so may be done again.

Jack Driedger had been asked to talk about the Dirty Thirties. He insisted he could only tell us how it had affected him. It was from 1929 to 1939 and a time when jobs were scarce, dark clouds rolled in, but brought only dust, not rain, and hobos jumped on trains and rode on top of the cars to other areas in hopes of jobs.



Jack Driedger

Yet through all this, Jack felt unaware of the extreme poverty of the Dirty Thirties, for his family grew their own food in their garden, and had farm animals for meat, eggs, etc.

Later his father applied for welfare, and they got \$9 per month. His father

felt that was too much, as they didn't need that many groceries from the store.

When they needed clothes they would go to Saskatoon to the Salvation Army store and bring back a big bag of used clothing for 25 cents. They picked these over and his mother remodeled some so they all had enough to wear.

Leonard told some more stories of the migrations to Mexico and to Paraguay, the main reason being the war. Bergthaler people went mainly to Paraguay. On June 24, 1948, a reporter had been in Herbert at the train station, and told of a great sound of weeping as 300 people left.

Dick Braun had more stories of people moving to the sugar beet fields in Alberta, as a way to get work. Fortunately for them, they were able to work together in the fields as a family, and each one got paid. Some of his relatives moved there.

Finally, Dick told us of a recent contact from a man in Brazil, who has found a grave for a Johan Wall of Neuanlage, here in Saskatchewan. Next year will be the 100th anniversary of Mennonites arriving in Brazil, and ... well, this story is not finished yet.

This was the point where we stopped for lunch, and Mrs. Helena Enns, our repeat caterer, (and helpers), had prepared wonderful chicken noodle soup, large buns, biscuits, ham slices, and several very special desserts. Everyone could eat as much as they liked with their \$10 lunch ticket.

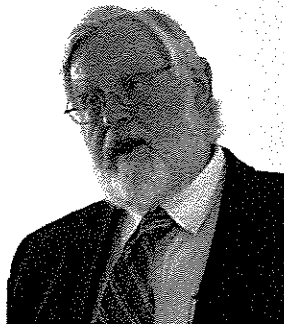
One more session came after lunch, at 1 pm.

Victor G. Wiebe is much appreciated in our midst for his enthusiastic introductions to marvels of the archives, true to his session's title, "The Archives Come Alive."

Any archive is in the business of answering questions - the questions we may have about our history, culture, etc.

There are four areas of archival work:

1. Appraising: what records are of permanent value? (Records Management).
2. Preserving: How to preserve records over a very long time?



Victor G. Wiebe

(Conservation).

3. Cataloguing: How can I find data in this mountain of paper records? (Finding Aides).

4. Using: What is of use to me? (Asking, Searching, & Note-taking). There is no need of an archive if no one is using it.

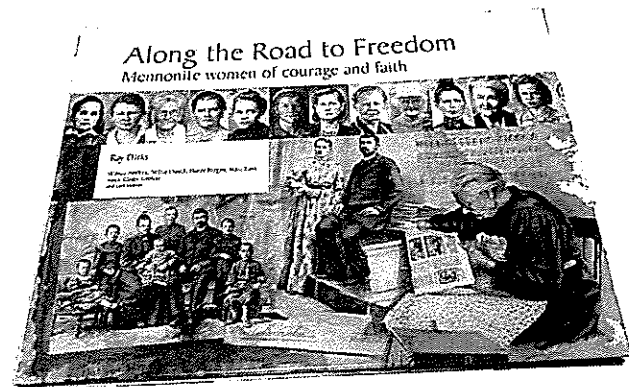
With pictures projected on the wall and stories, Victor explained about the various material types found in the archives; from realia (objects such as old signs), to books, serials (magazines), newspapers, sound recordings, photographs, reports, family books, and congregational family books, to ephemera (bit of passing value, such as notes, which turn out to have important clues).

In closing Dick drew three names for the book draws. Winners were Betty Epp, Leona Peters, and Melita Penner.

Jake Buhler announced that we can have access to historical government photos of all of Saskatchewan's land from years ago.

Leonard Doell asked that we recognize and thank Dick Braun who has been on the Board for many years, and is now stepping down.

R M F



Along the Road to Freedom: Mennonite women of courage and faith ~ is a collection of stories in paintings and words. This book follows the journeys of mothers and grandmothers, mostly widowed, who led or attempted to lead families out of the former Soviet Union to peace, freedom and safety in Canada - primarily during the chaotic aftermath of the Russian Revolution and in the midst of World War II. The book comes out of the *Along the Road to Freedom* exhibition which features 26 large, watercolour story paintings by Winnipeg artist and curator Ray Dirks. The exhibition continues to tour in Canada and the US.

You can now order this book through MHSS for \$30.00 (See the book lists for ordering details).

Esther Patkau (1927-2017): God's Servant for Many

a Tribute by Jake Buhler

In her lifetime, Esther was a scholar, a missionary, a pastor, a chaplain, an historian, and a friend to many.

Esther Patkau was born to Kornelius and Katharina Patkau on August 27, 1927 near Hanley, Saskatchewan. Following completion of elementary school in Hanley, she attended Rosthern Junior College and matriculated with a high school diploma. She remained at Rosthern for three more years and graduated from Rosthern Bible School. She pursued further education at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, graduating with a degree in theology, followed by a bachelor's degree in arts at Bethel College in Kansas.

She was then ready, she said much later, for her first job. That job, in 1951, was to be a missionary to Japan serving under the Mission Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Since she could not be ordained as a minister, she was commissioned as a missionary. Ordination for women would come a dozen years later. For 23 years she served as a missionary, learning a difficult language and working to establish a Christian Church. She was much beloved. Esther returned in 1974 to be ordained and installed as a minister for seven years at First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. Ever interested in learning, Esther obtained a master's degree in 1981 from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, majoring in pastoral care and counselling. From 1983 to 2005 she was a hospital chaplain in Saskatoon. Then from 2005 to 2017, she was the Spiritual Care Coordinator at Bethany Manor.

Esther remained single all her life. It was no matter to her, but it bothered many others. In a session at a Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Conference, held at her church, she requested to speak. She explained that, over a number of decades, she had been asked many dozens of times why she did not marry and thereby become a more complete person. In her statement she said completeness comes when there is reconciliation between God and man. She felt complete, she said. Marriage is a matter of choice, she said. The ever serious Esther concluded that in subsequent conversations she would welcome other topics of discussion. There was warm applause.

Esther was scholarly about Mennonite history and wrote a history of Aeltester J.J. Thiessen, as part of her graduate thesis. She also wrote a history of Rosthern Junior College, and the history of First Mennonite Church. She wrote a definitive history of the Patkau family. She was the go-to person when it came to transliterating hundreds of old Gothic German

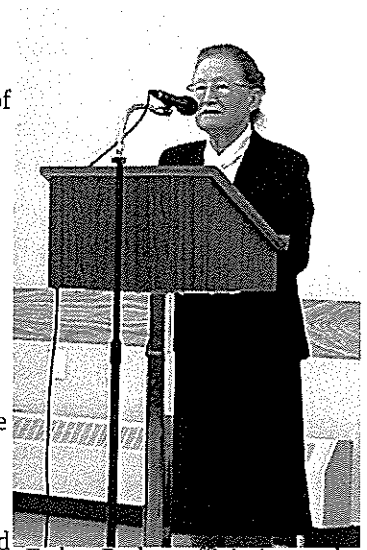
documents into [High] German, and then translating them into English. She contributed dozens of articles to GAMEO.

She was given awards for service and achievement by Canadian Mennonite University, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Governor General of Canada, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, and Mennonite Economic Development Associates. After the MEDA award, she quipped that she hoped God would one day at the end of her life, also give her an award.

Esther was admitted to hospital on November 23, suffering from cancer. Just one day earlier, I had asked Esther for a transliteration of an old document written by a 13 year old Old Colony Mennonite student in 1897. She sent me the translated "wuensch," and was admitted to hospital 6 hours later. Her last living act was one of service.

Esther died on December 18, 2017. She was ninety years old. We all believe Esther has received her "award" from God.

JB



Esther Patkau officiating at the funeral of Maria Buhler in Bethany Manor

Emigration & Immigration (by Esther Patkau)

(cont'd from pg 27)

tablespoons.

A few days after the wedding, the newlyweds and 20 month old Tina, left Herbert by train for Hanley and their new home on the Rowse farm eleven miles west of the town. They shared that house with four other recently immigrated families. After a two-year cooperative venture, the families separated and started their own farms.

Though the beginning was hard – learning Canadian ways of farming, paying off the debt of travel to Canada (Reiseshuld), enduring the drought of the 1930s and other difficulties - they were grateful to the Lord for allowing them to come to Canada and live their faith.

Kornelius and Katharina Paetkau were my parents, and Tina was my oldest sister.

EP

Emigration & Immigration by Esther Patkau

[Ed: Esther submitted this story for the Christmas issue of 2016, saying I should use it only if I had to fill an empty page. That time has come in this issue. Most appropriately! This is the story of how her own parents came to Canada].

Kornelius Paetkau grew up in Andresfeld, and later Einlage, Chortitza Colony in Russia (now Ukraine). During World War I he served in alternative service, the medical division, transporting military casualties, the wounded and dying from the war front to hospitals by Red Cross trains.

The years after 1918 brought tragedy. Bandits destroyed homes and property. Hundreds were murdered, widowed or orphaned. Disease epidemics took their toll. Kornelius and his wife, Katharine (nee Schellenberg), lost everything, and applied for emigration.

They were on the first transport to leave Chortitz on June 22, 1923, on a train of freight cars, improvised to carry people and baggage.

After several delays and a 5-day trip, the train finally passed under the Red Gate of the Russian-Latvian border.

At Rezikene, Lithuania, the emigrants were allowed a longer stop, a brief respite on their trip. Here Katherine gave birth to a baby girl on June 27. However, Katherine died five days later, leaving a new-born infant. With the setting sun, the emigrants, having just attended a brief graveside service, their train pulled out, leaving the burial of the coffin to others.

What to do with the new-born child, named Tina?

God, in His great compassion and mercy, provides. Earlier on the trip a Mrs. Dyck's infant son died and she had left the child at a train station for others to bury. Now Mrs. Dyck offered to nurse and care for Tina. That solved the immediate problem.

At Lechfeld, Germany, the emigrants were subjected to inspections by Canadian medical staff. Baby Tina was cleared and allowed to continue on to Canada with the Dycks, but her father was detained because of eye infection and had to stay for several weeks at Lechfeld until the infection cleared.

October 24, 1923, he boarded the SS Empress of France at Hamburg, Germany, and arrived in Quebec November 20. By train he continued across Canada to Herbert, Saskatchewan, and soon found employment as a farm hand.

The Dycks had earlier come to Herbert, and they had to find work. Taking care of a baby girl was not in their schedule.

The Andres family offered to care for her until her father could come. They became attached to her, and after several months, gave him an ultimatum: either he marry and take her, or they would adopt her as their own. Kornelius found Katharina (nee Harder) and they were married in February 1925.

Katharina Harder also came from South Russia. She had been married in 1917, and moved into her husband's home. Six weeks later he died because of the severe conditions, and she returned to her parental home in Eichenfeld.

Tragedy struck in October 1919. In one night all the men in the village were massacred – 86 persons, including her father, two brothers and a number of her in-laws.

The next morning the women and children fled, walking to the next village, never to return.

For the next three years Katharina, her mother, teenage brother Jacob, and widowed sister with a toddler son, moved from place to place, staying with relatives until they found an empty house where they could be together.

When the doors opened for emigration, they applied and were on the second train transport, leaving Chortitza on June 28, 1923.

They passed the medical inspections at Lechfeld, boarded the SS "Bruton" (a cattle ship improvised for passengers), crossed the Atlantic Ocean, to Quebec, then by train to Herbert, Saskatchewan.

The immigrants arrived in the forenoon of a warm August day in 1923. They were taken from the train to the church and served a noon meal. How good was the white bread they had not had for months and the soup!

It was harvest time. The farmers arrived and chose the families they would host for a few weeks. Katharina and her brother were single and would be good workers. That very afternoon they were sent into the field to do stooking!

Tired, weak, and undernourished, they were extremely weak at the end of the day, but grateful they were in a land of freedom.

The harvest work continued every day. When the grain was cut, stooked and dry, threshing began. 18 year old Jacob drove the farmer's horses, loaded sheaves and pitched them into the thresher. When the threshing was done the young man received \$8 for the whole month of work, and the farmer dismissed him, saying he had no more work for him.

Kornelius and Katharina were married in February 1925. Even though her mother, brother, and sister lived only 9 miles from the church, they could not attend the wedding; they had no vehicle of their own and no one offered to take them. Their wedding gifts were a laundry tub, two cereal bowls and 6 (cont'd on page 26)

Honour List

This list recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions toward preserving Mennonite history, heritage, or faith within our province. To submit a name for the Honour List, nominate that person in writing, and forward to the MHSS Board.

The date in brackets is the year of death. The profiles of some of the honourees are on our website. <http://mhss.sk.ca/tributes/> (If you can provide the ones that are missing, the editor would be glad to hear from you).

Helen Bahnmann († 2016)*	Katharine Hooge († 2001)	John G. Rempel († 1963)
Abram J. Buhler († 1982)	Abraham G. Janzen († 2015)	Ed Roth († 2008)
Helen Dyck († 2007)	John J. Janzen († 2004)	Wilmer Roth († 1982)
Dick H. Epp († 2009)	George Krahn († 1999)	Arnold Schroeder († 2000)
Jacob H. Epp († 1993)	Ingrid Janzen-Lamp	Jacob Schroeder († 1993)
Margaret Epp († 2008)	Abram M. Neudorf († 1988)	Katherine Thiessen († 1984)
Peter K. Epp († 1985)	J. J. Neudorf († 1988)	J. J. Thiessen († 1977)
George K. Fehr († 2000)	J. C. Neufeld († 1994)	David Toews († 1947)
Jake Fehr	John P. Nickel	Toby Unruh († 1997)
Jacob E. Friesen († 2007)	David Paetkau († 1972)	Albert Wiens († 2002)
John D. Friesen († 2004)	Esther Patkau († 2017)	George Zacharias († 2000)
Jacob G. Guenter († 2013)	John D. Reddekopp († 2011)	Gerhard J. Hiebert († 1959)
	Ted Regehr	

Websites

MHSS: mhss.sk.ca

Cemeteries: mhss.sk.ca/cemeteries/

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online : (GAMEO) gameo.org/

E-Updates Ezine (announcements email):

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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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