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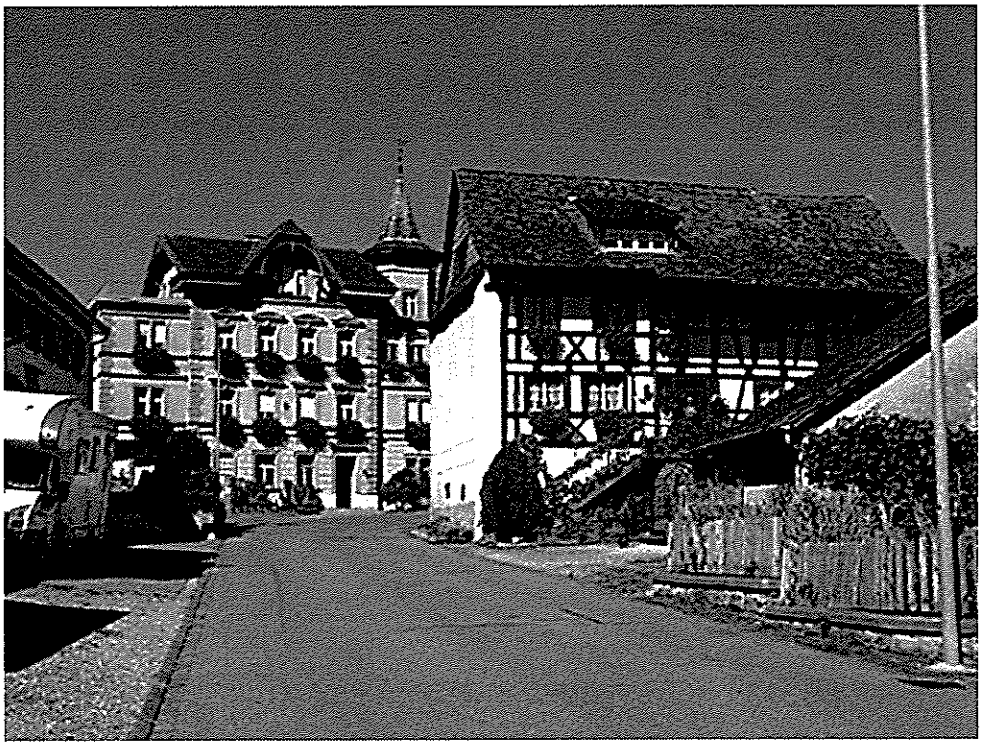
Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

Features & Articles



The Village of Schleitheim in Switzerland, a kilometer from the German border.

The Schleitheim Confession of 1527: "We Are United as Follows..." by Ken Bechtel

In September 2018, Audrey and I, together with my nephew Dale from Switzerland, had the privilege of spending a day in Schleitheim, the original homeland of my Anabaptist Mennonite ancestors. This was also the village where Anabaptist leaders had met in February 1527 to craft the first Anabaptist faith statement, the so-called Schleitheim Confession.

Schleitheim, the Village and Municipality

Schleitheim, or Schlaate in the local Swiss German dialect, is both a picturesque village with some 1700 residents, and a 21 square kilometer municipality. The village itself is about a kilometer from the German border.

Schleitheim's history is told in three quite different museums - the Gipsmuseum (a gypsum mine which operated from the 1690s to 1940s), Thermenmuseum Juliomagus (the impressive ruins of a 1st to 3rd century Roman spa), and the Museum Schleitheimertal. This third one *(cont'd page 4)*

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The Editor's Perspective

Ruth Marlene Friesen

First, we want to express our heartfelt condolences to John Reddekopp, the President of our Mennonite Historical Society. His dear wife, Deanna passed away on June 18th after a long period of failing health.

Her funeral took place on June 25th at the Osler Mennonite Church. It was heartwarming to see the packed church - so many came to pay their respects.

John told me that he would like to share a tribute to Deanna in the Historian, but that may not happen until the next issue. I'm sure we all understand that sometimes after a loved one has died, we need some time to adjust.

By no means do I think I can identify with John's loss, but my younger brother Tom Friesen passed away on April 12th. It was a busy time because our brother Ernie's wife, Penny, had died the week before in Winnipeg, and her funeral was two days before Tom died. Since I was the only close relative Tom had here in Saskatoon, I felt I needed to stay here. He had been in St. Paul's Hospital since March 6th with a tear in a major artery the full-length of his upper torso.

My two sisters flew to Winnipeg from Abbotsford and New Hamburg, ON. However, they felt they could not afford another flight for Tom's Memorial so soon. As siblings we agreed that we could put it off. We have now planned it for July 31st, at 3 pm at Westgate Alliance Church. Burial will be in Chortitz where our parents and grandparents are buried.

Tom had made me his Power of Attorney and then also Executor of his will, so I had lots to do. My first priority was to empty and clean his apartment by the end of April. He had collected a lot of stuff over 18 years. In fact, before the month was done I cracked a vertebrae in my back and hobbled around in pain.

Praise God, my brother Ernie arrived that very same day and stayed a week to help finish the packing and conducting a three day estate/garage sale in Tom's apartment. Then I gave myself May and June to recover from my cracked back!

RMF

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

John Reddekopp

The MHSS Board and Volunteers wish like to express our condolences to our President, John Reddekopp, on the passing of his dear wife, Deanna (Friesen) Reddekopp, on June 18, 2019.

Deanna suffered much in her early years until she had a successful heart operation at the Mayo Clinic. Then things were better for a number of years. Now in the last few years she had begun to experience serious health issues again.

John was her faithful and devoted caregiver. We honour him for that loving service.

He has been quite busy since her funeral, but John hopes to be able to tell us more about Deanna in this column in the next issue of the Historian.

Gott ist die Liebe

1) Gott ist die Liebe, lässt mich erlösen,
Gott ist die Liebe, Er liebt auch mich.

Refr.: Drum sag ich noch einmal: Gott ist die Liebe!
Gott ist die Liebe, Er liebt auch mich.

2) Ich lag in Banden der bösen Sünde,
ich lag in Banden und konnt nicht los.

3) Ich lag im Tode, des Teufels Schrecken,
ich lag im Tode, der Sünde Sold.

4) Er sandte Jesus, den treuen Heiland,
Er sandte Jesus und macht mich los.

5) Er ließ mich laden durchs Wort der Gnaden;
er ließ mich laden durch seinen Geist.

6) Jesus, mein Heiland, gab sich zum Opfer,
Jesus, mein Heiland, büßt meine Schuld.

7) Du heilst, o Liebe, all meinen Jammer,
Du stillst, o Liebe, mein tiefstes Weh.

8) Du füllst mit Freuden die matte Seele,
Du füllst mit Frieden mein armes Herz.

9) Du lässt mich erben die ewge Freude,
Du lässt mich erben die ewge Ruh.

10) Dich will ich preisen, Du ewge Liebe,
Dich will ich loben, solang ich bin.

Upcoming Events in Mennonite Communities of Saskatchewan

July 21 - 2 - 5 p.m.. Watermelon Fest @ Mennonite Heritage Village, Swift Current, Sk.

August 10, 2019 - The Spruce River Folk Festival is a cultural event held annually to raise awareness of Landless Indigenous Bands in Saskatchewan. Proceeds and donations will go to Mennonite Central Committee's Stoney Knoll Fund. Come, enjoy the good music and food and learn more about Landless Bands in Saskatchewan!
Admission: $10 at the door; $20 for families

Aug. 16 - My Mutual Insurance, (formerly Mennonite Mutual Fire Insurance) will be celebrating its 125th Anniversary at Waldheim. More details about this event will be coming in the future.

Aug. 18 - 3 - 4 p.m. - Acappella Sing Along @ Mennonite Heritage Village, Swift Current, SK.

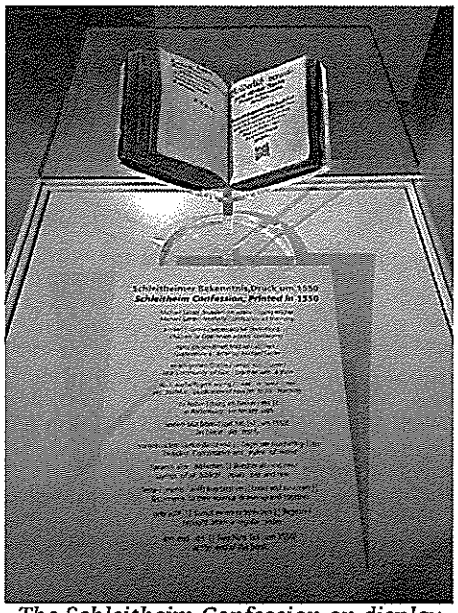
Sept. 21 - Thresherman's Day is taking place just north of Hague. It all starts with a pancake breakfast at 8 am. This is a chance to watch how harvesting was done a few decades ago. [UNCONFIRMED]

Summer Intern - Harris Ford Returns

Harris Ford, the intern from the History Dept. of the University of Saskatchewan will be working with MHSS again this summer, and will be interviewing people who can tell him stories about our Mennonite heritage and culture.

If you would like an opportunity to talk with Harris, please contact Dick Braun, who is again in charge of taking him around and introducing him to Mennonites who are willing to share oral stories that will be preserved in a special online archives at the university.

(cont'd from page 1)
documents their history, geology and folklore from Roman to recent times. Since 2004, its Täuferzimmer, or Anabaptist Room, has been home to a rare 1550 print copy of the Schleitheim Confession. The Täuferzimmer tells the stories of this document and of the Anabaptists, local and beyond.



The Schleitheim Confession on display in the museum.

The Anabaptists

The 16th century Reformation meant new Lutheran and Reformed churches. Yet, like the original Roman Catholic church, these were what we would call state churches. The difference now was that citizens were to belong to whatever church their political powers chose.

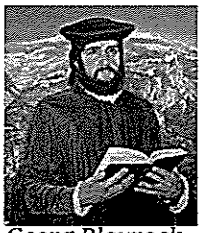
It seemed a seamless package. Infant baptism was also a way of registering births. The registry of citizens told them who to tithe, tax or conscript. Church and state supported each other, the church enthroning and blessing potentates and the state using even lethal force to root out divergent thinking or acting from the church. God could be invoked to bless wars, and rulers could demand a God-laced oath of allegiance. This had been the way almost since the time of Constantine (Emperor 306-337 AD). The new Protestant state church simply replaced the Roman Catholic one in certain regions.

Some of Zurich Reformer Ulrich Zwingli's keenest students questioned this alliance already in 1522. After a January 17, 1525 public debate on infant baptism, the city politicians decided to uphold this practice and to forbid further meetings of these questioners. Dissidents were ordered to conform, leave Zurich, face imprisonment or worse. Conrad Grebel was one of those refusing to have his infant daughter Isabella baptized.

Days later, on January 21, 1525, these Bible students gathered illegally at Felix Manz's house. After a time of intense study and prayer, Georg Blaurock asked


Conrad Grebel

Grebel to baptize him, and then Blaurock baptized the others. The "Swiss Brethren" form of Anabaptism had been birthed. They called themselves simply 'brethren' (and 'sisters'), but their opponents called them Anabaptists, Rebaptizers, Wiedertäufer or simply Täufer. This rebaptism was a politically dangerous act. Since 529 AD, Justinian's imperial code had stipulated death for such "heresies" as rebaptism.


Georg Blaurock

The movement and the repression spread rapidly. Within a few years there were Anabaptist groups throughout Europe, especially in Switzerland, Germany, Czechoslovakia (Moravia) and the Netherlands. Two years later, on January 5, 1527, Zurich drowned Felix Manz, the first of several thousand Anabaptist martyrs. The hard pressed Conrad Grebel had already died of the plague in the summer of 1526.


Felix Manz

Why Schleitheim?

Google the word "Schleitheim." The first sentence from Wikipedia will tell you its location, and the next its importance as the place "where the seven articles of the Schleitheim Confession were written." It then describes this Confession as "the oldest creed of Anabaptism, written under the direction of Michael Sattler."

The young Anabaptist movement was in danger of disintegrating under the pressure of violent persecution from the outside and sharp differences of opinion from within.

After the recent deaths of two of their co-founders, the movement was strengthened by new leaders such as Michael Sattler. Sattler, formerly a prior at St Peter's Monastery, joined the Anabaptist movement sometime before June, 1526. Seven weeks after Mantz's martyrdom, Sattler was apparently the key organizer and writer for a group of these leaders gathered in a house in Schleitheim.

Schleitheim was 66 kilometers north of Zurich, just a stone's throw from the German border, and thus somewhat safer if they were pursued.

Furthermore, there was an Anabaptist congregation in Schleitheim, the fruit of Conrad Grebel's February

and March, 1525, ministry in the nearby city of Schaff hausen. Though we do not know the name of the host for these meetings, nor the specific house where they met, a 1557 conference of 50 Swiss Brethren leaders meeting in Strassbourg mentioned that one of them was the brother in whose house the "Verdragh (agreement) of Michael Sattler" had been made.

The Schleitheim Confession

As C. Arnold Snyder points out, if we were to ask a 16th century Anabaptist for her statement of faith, she might simply recite the Apostles Creed. This second century summary did not, however, fully describe their faith and practice. Especially striking is that, in English, there is only a comma between "born of the Virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate." There is nothing about the life, ministry and teaching of Jesus so important for these early Anabaptists' understanding of faithful discipleship!

What we call the Schleitheim Confession, its writers called "The Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles." Six of these articles begin with "We have been united as follows concerning..." Several of those seven topics spell out specific teachings omitted with that comma.

The Seven Articles are as follows:

Article 1: Baptism

The Confession specifically denounces infant baptism as "the greatest and first abomination of the pope," and reserves baptism for those "who have been taught repentance... and desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Article 2: The Ban

Back in September, 1524, Conrad Grebel and others had written about forming "a Christian church with Christ's help and His rules, as we find them established in Matthew 18 and applied in the Epistles..."

Even an unrepentant deviant "shall not be killed, but regarded as a heathen and a publican, and left alone." The ban's private and public admonitions, rather than the state's lethal force, was to purify the church "before the breaking of bread."

While the ban was much milder enforcement than the state churches' use of arrest, torture and execution, it did become a divisive tool when used by some Anabaptist groups. The 1557 letter from the Swiss Brethren leaders to Menno Simons stated their objections to the Dutch leader's stricter application. The Dutch were requiring even the spouses of banned members to shun their partners. As a result of their objections, in 1559 Menno and other Dutch elders banned for a time the entire Swiss Brethren fellowship. In 1693, Jacob Amman's insistence on stricter banning and shunning resulted in the Amish split from the Swiss Brethren.

Article 3: The Breaking of Bread

For Catholic and various Reforming groups, valid communion meant correct beliefs about, or correct administration of, the sacrament. This document locates that validation within the body of believers who partake, their right relationships. The previous article on the ban had connected that practice with the intention "that we may all in one spirit and in one love break and eat from one bread and drink from one cup." Those wishing to partake "must beforehand be united in the one body of Christ, that is the congregation of God... and that by baptism."

Article 4: Separation from Evil

This article urges separation from "the evil and wickedness which the devil has planted in the world." This article asserts starkly that "there is nothing else in the world and all creation than good or evil..." Among the "evils" to be avoided are "all popish and repopish works and idolatry" (i.e. both Catholic worship with its statues, and Protestant worship which retained certain Catholic 'wrongs'). Such "church attendance" and "winehouses" are listed side by side! The final sentence of this article insists that likewise "thereby shall fall away from us the diabolical weapons of violence – such as sword, armour and the like, and all their use to protect friends or against enemies – by virtue of the word of Christ: 'you shall not resist evil.'"

Article 5: Shepherds

The first demand of the Peasants' War's Twelve Articles (1525) was that "Every municipality shall have the right to elect and remove a preacher if he behaves improperly." In that era, some distant Catholic or Protestant government or church authority would

appoint the pastor for a given parish. Pastors some times won their jobs through their connections, rather than their fitness for this calling. However ill qualified or disreputable, such a pastor could only be disciplined by that distant office. This was a concern shared more widely, including by these leaders at Schleitheim.

This fifth article asserted that pastors must be persons of good repute, were to be financially supported by the congregation and disciplined if they sinned. Pastoral responsibilities included teaching, disciplining, leading in prayer and in the breaking of bread. Especially pertinent in their day was the statement that "if the shepherd should be driven away or led to the Lord by the cross, at the same hour another shall be ordained to his place, so that the little folk and the little flock of God may not be destroyed, but be preserved by warning and be consoled."

Article 6: The Sword

This is the longest of the seven articles. It may well be that Wilhelm Reublin was among the leaders assembled there in Schleitheim. If so, this is the leader who in August, 1525, had escaped arrest in Hallau, Schaffhausen, because of the villagers' resistance, "weapons in hand." Such history would certainly add drama to their quest to become "united as follows concerning the sword."

This article opposes the use of violence in any circumstance. The article contrasts the sword, "an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ," with the ban, "the warning and the command to sin no more," a practice "within the perfection of Christ." The answer to the question about using force to defend the good is "unanimously revealed" by Christ's teaching and example. This nonviolence extends even to the role of magistrate. "It does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate" for such an officer rules "according to the flesh."

More frequently than elsewhere, this article appeals to the explicit teaching and model of Christ who "left us an example that we should follow in his steps." (1 Peter) Near the end, it concludes, "In sum: as Christ our Head is minded, so also must be minded the members of the body of Christ through him."

Article 7: Oaths

This article defines oaths as "confirmation among those who are quarreling or making promises." In short, their agreement is that "Christ, who teaches the perfection of the law, forbids His followers all swearing."

In that oaths were such an important part of the context in which they lived, the Confession goes to some lengths to dispute several of the state church objections to their conclusion. Their final sentence is "Christ is simply yea and nay, and all who seek Him simply will understand His Word. Amen."

The Swiss Brethren had come to this understanding somewhat later than certain of their other convictions. Several of the early leaders had themselves sworn legal oaths. In January, 1527, Georg Blaurock was severely beaten for refusing to swear an oath on his expulsion from Zurich. Somewhat later, in Strassbourg, refusing to swear an oath was deemed a telltale sign that this was an Anabaptist. The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) notes that "All the Mennonite confessions of faith without exception have included a prohibition of the oath."

After February 24, 1527

The Museum's rare 1550 printed copy includes several related items. Its label, in German and a stilted English translation, notes that this book includes "a short yet truthful publication of how he (i.e. Michael Sattler) to his teaching in Rottenburg am Neckar with his blood did testify."

Within days of the February 24, 1527 agreement, on their return to Horb in southwestern Germany, Michael and Margaretha Sattler were arrested. A copy of the Seven Articles was found on him.

The trial was held in Rottenburg with the judge returning the verdict: "Michael Sattler shall be committed to the executioner. The latter shall take him to the square and there first cut out his tongue, then forge him fast to a wagon and there with glowing iron tongs twice tear pieces from his body, then on the way to the site of the execution five times more as above and then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic." This was carried out on May 20; two days later Margaretha was drowned in the Neckar River.

This sentence and Sattler's demeanour evoked

powerful responses among the populace and even magistrates and reformers who opposed his teaching. A court officer wrote "It was a miserable affair, they died for their conviction." The Reformer Martin Bucer, no friend of Anabaptism, wrote that, "We do not doubt that Michael Sattler, who was burned at Rottenburg, was a dear friend of God, although he was a leader of the Anabaptists, but much more skilled and honourable than some."

The Confession's Role

Both friend and foe recognized this Confession's importance for unifying the fledgling Anabaptist movement. The Articles spread quickly through handwritten copies, especially among Swiss and South German Anabaptist groups.

This common person's handbook on Anabaptist distinctives contrasted their convictions with what they considered unsound teachings and practices of the state churches and other radicals. As the renowned Dutch minister and theologian, Samuel Cramer, wrote in 1909, "Through their formulation they drew the boundaries of their movement and made it possible that an ordered fellowship, an organization, modest as it was, came into being... Sattler and his fellow elders preserved it from diffusion, helped it through the somber days of bloody persecution, and assured it a future."[i] This document became "a platform from which to resist the bloody persecution of the Christian nations, the well-written slander of their state church opponents, and the deviation of fanatics trying to use the movement to their own ends."[ii]

By summer, Zwingli had obtained at least four copies seized from arrested Anabaptists, and prepared a Latin translation and refutation. That same year, the "Schwertler" (sword bearing) Anabaptist, Balthasar Hubmaier, published his "On the Sword", objecting to this teaching of nonresistance.

By 1533, print copies were also available.

Calvin used a now lost French translation for his 1544 refutation, and by 1560 there was also a Dutch translation. Over the next centuries, the issues addressed became normative for Anabaptists, including Mennonites, Amish, Church of the Brethren, Hutterites and Bruderhof.

Almost 600 years later, we no longer live in their 16th century context. Yet, when the Wildwood Mennonite Church adult class decided recently to spend 8 weeks studying this document and its implications for us, we almost doubled our attendance. Our context and the issues it raises may be different, but this 1527 brotherly and sisterly agreement urges us to explore more deeply our own discipleship.

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i Cramer, Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica, V. 1909, p. 593 as cited by http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/1527-Schleitheim/footnotes. Retrieved May 16, 2019

ii home.mennonitechurch.ca/1527-Schleitheim/gleysteeen. Retrieved May 16, 2019

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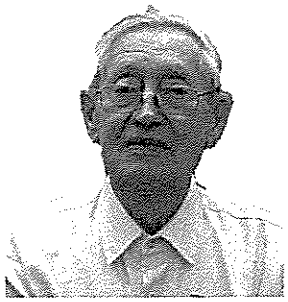


James Henry Friesen

October 3, 1930 – May 23, 2019

Our MHSS Board members wish to honour the memory of James Friesen, a former Board member, who became a good and gentle friend.

His creative and inventive mind, and his high regard for others inspired us and made us proud to know him.

For those who would like to get to know him better, look for the presentation by his daughter Bernice, provided at his funeral - full of insights, on page 19 of this issue.

Also - if you save past issues of the Historian, the first issue of 2016 has an article that Dick Braun wrote after visiting James and being introduced to his many inventions.

The Russlaender Centenary Committee, a subcommittee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada Announces . . . .

The largest Mennonite immigration in Canadian history took place in 1923 and following years. During these years some 20,000 so-called Russlaender Mennonites arrived in places across Canada from the war-torn Soviet Union.

To commemorate this migration, a national Russlaender Centenary Committee has been finalized. It is charged to provide leadership in the national reflection on this important event in Canadian Mennonite history. The committee consists of 11 representatives, at least one from each of the six provinces that constitute the members of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. They include: Richard Thiessen and Cheryl Isaac from British Columbia, Ted Regehr from Alberta, Jake Buhler and Judie Dyck from Saskatchewan, Ingrid Riesen, Aileen Friesen and Royden Loewen from Manitoba, Marlene Epp and Henry Paetkau from Ontario, and Luke Martin from Quebec.

An inaugural meeting of the committee was held on November 15, 2018 in conjunction with the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada AGM. The committee at that point chose the name Russlaender Centenary Committee (RCC), and spoke about the vision for the 2023 commemoration.

The RCC at that point committed itself to remember this migration in all of its dimensions. Those aspects include the suffering from war and famine, the horrific uprooting and stress-filled transplantation, the reliance on and testing of religious belief, the joy of finding a new homeland. But the committee will also consider this migration with respect to Canada in the 1920s. This will mean an acknowledgment that the immigrants came as settlers and thus farmed lands once the homeland of indigenous nations. It will also mean an acknowledgment that other would-be immigrants – African Americans, Chinese, Jews – were not welcomed at the time. Finally, the RCC will also remember those who stayed behind in the Soviet Union and endured the terror and uprootings of the 1930s and 40s.

The RCC will give oversight of events in 2023 from across the land, with events planned for places such as Montreal (Quebec), Vineland and Kitchener (Ontario), Winnipeg (Manitoba), Rosthern (Saskatchewan), Taber (Alberta), and Abbotsford (British Columbia).

The Committee, under the leadership of Ingrid Riesen of Winnipeg, plans a special train trek from Montreal to Rosthern, with stops in Ontario and Manitoba, and a possible extension to Abbotsford. Initial conversations have been held with VIA Rail and future talks are planned with CPR on how to operationalize this historic re-enactment. Talks have also been held with MCC Canada on how to use this year of celebration as a way of paying forward, with a special linked campaign for MCCC's refugee program.

The RCC's next meeting will take place in Montreal in January, 2020, on the occasion of the AGM of the Mennonite Historical Society.

- Royden Loewen, Interim RCC Chair

RL

Süara Komstborscht - by Jack Driedger

Fonnonjefäa tachentichj Yoa trigj auss ekj twalf Joa oolt wea hauden miene Elren Jast fe eene Moltiet. Mame haud süare Komstborscht opp däm Desch. De Maun waut be onns spatsiad schapt sichj noch eene komm süare Komstborscht enn.

Sajt siene Frü, "Na, heea, ekj docht dü jleist nich süare Komtsborscht."

Frachjt ea Maun, "Oh, ess DIT süare Komstborscht?"

Ekj wunda waut fonn Komstborscht siene Frü müak!

Miene Mame müak scheenet Äten!

Jäap Driedja

Subscriber/reader Helen M. Derksen writes:

With best wishes to everyone at the Historian. Also to the many who contribute their interesting stories.

One Day in Renfrew School
by George Dyck

Well, I'm from Saskatchewan.

We always knew we didn't have it as good as our relatives in Manitoba. In the dirty thirties they shipped us straw so our cows wouldn't starve. The soil was not as good and there was less rain, and this brought the dust storms and the grasshoppers. We learned to be thankful if we got just 10 bushels an acre of wheat – it was more than we put in.

We figured it was the cross we had to bear because of Foda Panna's decision to move on to Saskatchewan after coming over from Russia. Foda Panna was my step-grandfather who died before I was born.

Peter Lepp - 1945-46, 46-47

Renfrew School students with teacher Peter Paul Lepp 1945-47

Afterwards my grandmother was remarried to Gerhard Ens, a rather famous man who was a friend of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Since I was the first grandchild born after she married him, I was named after him. Yes, my official given name is Gerhard, but I was always called Jeat.

When it came time to go to school my sister Helen told me. "Wann de Lehra die fraugt 'What's your name,' dann sajst, 'George Dyck.'" That was it then. In World War II it was better to be called by the King's name than Gerhard.

But I wanted to tell you about my school, Renfrew SD No. 4116. It was two-and-a-quarter miles south of where we lived between Hague and Osler, just a mile north of Blumenheim where Shorty's store was. So it was a long way to go in winter. I had to hitch up Prince to the caboose, and when it was cold I made a fire in the little stove in front of my feet. I put a sheaf of oats in the back for Prince to eat at noon and away we went. I had it better than my older brothers and sister who used to have to go in an open sleigh before the Reiseschuld we owed the Canadian Pacific Railway was paid off, and we could now afford a caboose.

When the war started the price of wheat went up, and we then had enough money to make up for all the thirties years when it was gaining on us because of interest. But I digress.

The first year we had a teacher just out of school whose name was Miss Elsie Andres. She was real nice, and she would read us Anne of Green Gables right after lunch. Jacob Loewen, the school bully, found out I could already do arithmetic at the beginning of school, so he didn't give me a hard time and instead bragged on me to Miss Andres.

He sent me to the blackboard to show I could add 88 and 88. And then in March she promoted me to the second grade, ahead of Gertie Wiebe and Margaret Schmidt, the Fehr twins and all of the other first-graders, because I was ahead of all of them after Helen and Frank had taught me at home how to read and write the year before. I was supposed to start that year when I turned six, but the trustees found that the kids who had started the year before did not know anything. Mr. Kroeker, the teacher that year, was a drunk who had hangovers in the morning and could not get to school on time. It was hard to get teachers during the war.

The trustees hired Miss Andres and told her to teach the kids from the year before first grade again. And the kids who were supposed to start could stay home another year. I was one of those,

so I had to wait until I was seven and only had Miss Andres for one year.

I think the trustees did not like her because when she left after two years they decided to get a very strict teacher who was born in Minnesota. The parents in the district were not all that interested in school anyway, because after Renfrew School was built in 1922, none of the kids came until the parents could no longer pay the fines on account of keeping the kids at home. The only thing school was good for as far as they were concerned was to teach the kids to behave, and learn arithmetic, German, and some Bible stories.

Mr. Peter Paul Lepp was the man they were looking for, but they had to dig deep into their pockets to get him. They raised the annual salary about 50% and gave him all of $2100. Mr. Lepp changed the curriculum a bit. All the subjects were reading, writing or arithmetic, no matter what they were called. Writing was just penmanship, where we had to recite the letters we wrote over and over again, a whole page full for each. But there was also a half hour of Bible stories in the morning and a half hour of German in the afternoon. One day when he taught us about Jesus on the cross he showed us his appendix scar to explain how the soldier stuck his sword into Jesus' side. He took a few liberties with his teaching, but generally the parents liked him for his strictness. With his 26 years experience he was not a man to be crossed. And on days when his ulcer was acting up he could be real unpredictable. He kept a goat in the barn for milk to soothe his ulcer, but sometimes the goat ran dry, and he came to our farm to buy some cream.

I was now in third grade, and I tried hard to stay out of trouble, having noticed he brought with him three hickory sticks which he kept handy on some hooks above the blackboard. Why three? A strap made out of a threshing machine belt he kept in his desk drawer.

But it happened one day when everything seemed to be going fine, me sitting in my desk in the middle of the school when Mr. Lepp was teaching the second-graders something. Renfrew was your ordinary one-room school with a stove in the back that had a big black skirt around it. It sits at the Hague Museum now where it was dragged after the school closed.

Maybe Mr. Lepp held out for $2100 because that year the enrollment was 69 in that one-room school. There weren't many desks in the building, probably because it could not hold many. So the first-and second-graders had to share two to a small narrow desk. I had a little trouble keeping my mind on my assignment that day and I was watching what Mr. Lepp was doing with the second-graders sitting in the next row.

All of a sudden he noticed I was looking, and he called me on it, asking sarcastically if I wanted to go back to second grade. I think he knew Miss Andres had promoted me ahead of the rest. He also had it in for me because my sister Helen had painted my little fingernail red once. He got really mad and told me he was going to spank me for not doing my work.

My heart jumped into my mouth when he said that, because I had seen how he spanked kids. One time when Jacob Loewen did something naughty to Gertie Wiebe on the playground Mr Lepp caught him in the act. He ran inside the school to get his strap. When he came running out Jacob Loewen just stood there for a moment, and then just when Mr. Lepp got to him he tried to take off. But Mr. Lepp caught him and bent him over. Each time he whacked him with the strap Jacob Loewen would struggle and jump forward, and Mr. Lepp would take a step forward to give him another whack. It went real fast – whack, whack, whack. And because Mr. Lepp was also bending over and whacking so vigorously, papers and envelopes started flying out of his vest pocket. Before long there was a trail of envelopes and papers where he had been whacking Jacob Loewen.

I happened to be standing nearby with some others kids, too scared to move. But when we saw all the papers on the ground we didn't know if we should pick them up or just pretend we didn't see them. When Mr. Lepp was finally finished whacking Jacob Loewen, who was crying as loud as he could, we quickly picked up the papers and handed them to Mr. Lepp, so he would be sure to knew

we were on his side and not Jacob Loewen's. That was what I knew about Mr. Lepp's strappings.

Mr. Lepp told me to go up to the front, open his desk drawer, pull out the strap, and bring it to him where he was standing at the back of the room. I tried desperately to figure how I could get on Mr. Lepp's good side, but I knew there was nothing I could do. It was too late. I had had it. I was going to get my first strapping in school and I wasn't sure I would get through it. I started crying for all I was worth, going as slowly as I dared without making Mr. Lepp madder. When I got to the front I stopped, but Mr. Lepp shouted for me to open the drawer. Mr. Lepp had a real loud voice that on Sports Days could be heard from one side of the schoolyard to the other. It was a voice you did not ignore. But I went as slowly as possible, crying all the time. After a while I slowly opened the drawer and slowly pulled out the doubled up strap with two fingers. I stopped and Mr. Lepp yelled louder. Slowly I brought it down the aisle as I put more effort into my crying. I inched along slowly, and as I got closer to him I got more and more scared. I slowed down more as I cried more. And then I began to notice that Mr. Lepp was getting a little quieter. He was weakening a bit, and eventually he let up, simply leaving it at a scolding. I was so relieved.

But I was also very embarrassed at having put on such a crying show in front of the 68 other kids. Would they think I was a scaredy cat for crying so much? Well, I learned a lesson that day, but I am not sure what it was.Maybe it was this: Try as you may, sometimes you just can't stay out of trouble.

GD

The Third Long I Sound in Plautdietsch

by Victor Carl Friesen

I submitted my articles on the two long i sounds in Plautdietsch and on Trajchtmoaka at the same time. Thus I incidentally showed there is actually a third dominant long i sound in this language (it occurs in the very word Trajchtmoaka). I thought it best, however, for clarity's sake, to discuss this third usage in a separate article. Again, I should say that what follows is somewhat an oversimplification. An expert phonologist, such as my friend Rueben Epp, no longer living, would be more specific in his description. (Incidentally, he spells Trajchtmoaka as Traichtmoaka, using ai.) I will continue to use Herman Rempel's *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch?* A Mennonite Low German Dictionary, 1984, as my authority as I did before, just to be consistent.

My first essay on long i's pointed out that the two sounds for long i were spelled ee and ei. The first sound, ee, is shaped towards the front of the mouth, while the second, ei, is shaped at the back. Well, the third long i, spelled aj, is shaped farther back still, with an open throat. It is as if a person were saying "ah" to start with and then slipped into a long i while still retaining an open throat. Try it a few times. It is definitely a deeper sound than the standard long Plautdietsch i, spelled as ei. This is spelled by the dipthong of aj, or Reuben Epp's ai.

Note that in Plautdietsch words having this "third" long i sound: if the syllable ends with a k sound, then the k precedes the j; that is, the spelling becomes akj within the word. Example, Trakjharmonie (a concertina or button accordion).

Here are further examples of this third dominant long i sound in Plautdietsch (25 of them to be specific), with English translations in parentheses. Marvel again at the richness of the Plautdietsch language (here Plautdietsch nouns are capitalized, the verbs are present tense, singular, third person).

Akj (corner)
Akjs (axe)
Akjschaup (corner cupboard)
Blajch (tin)
Dakj (blanket)
Flajcht (braid)
frajch (saucy)
Hakj (hedge)
krakjt (tidy, exactly)
Lakj (drop, n.)
Lajchakomm (colander)
Malkj (milk, n.)
Pajcht (renter)
Rajcht (right, privilege)
Saj (saying, slogan)
sajcht (says, v.)
Schajchte (spats)
schmakjt (tastes, v.)
schrakjlich (awful)
Stajch (footbridge)
Takjst (test)
trakjt (pulls)
Trajchtmoaka (chiropractor)
Trakjtrigj (drawbridge)
Wajch (road)

VCF

The Friesen-Klippenstein Connection to Blumengart

by Henry A. Friesen

(The Maria (Friesen) Klippenstein in this article was a sister to David L. Friesen who moved from Blumengart, MB to Blumenheim, SK in approx. 1900)

Author, Henry A. Friesen, where Blumengart was

It was September of 2001, and I stood on the deck of the MS Viktor Glushkov, keen for the next part of the Mennonite Heritage Cruise. As the ship glided into the dock of Zaporosh'ye in the heart of what was once the Mennonite Chortitza Colony, I was thinking about my ancestors who had lived there more than a hundred years earlier. Along with other tour participants, I anticipated the various day trips to the different villages in both the Chortitza and Molotschna Colonies. I was especially interested to take one that included the village of Blumengart in the Chortitza Colony, even though the tour guides told me, "there is nothing there anymore... it is simply farm land now."

Nevertheless, I signed up for a tour that took me in the direction of Blumengart and asked the driver to let me off at the nearest point to where it had once been so that for a few minutes at least, I could look toward the home of my ancestors.

I remember so clearly standing on a small hill overlooking the Lower Chortitza River valley and letting my eyes rest on the site of what was once the village of Blumengart. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I thought about my Friesen ancestors who had once lived and died there. I very much wanted to walk across the fields to stand where my great, great, great grandparents and so many of their extended family had lived, laughed, prayed and sang and visited their neighbours. That memory still haunts me. Now, more than ever, I want to be there again because recently I have heard stories and uncovered information which indicates a much longer Friesen connection to Blumengart than I had previously known.

The discovery I am talking about has come largely through my genealogical research into the life of a great, great aunt who never did come to Canada. I already knew from the research I did for my first book, Johann Friesen of Poland and His Descendants, that my great, great, great grandparents, Isebrandt Friesen (1797 - 1875) and Maria Loewen (1798 - 1875) lived their entire lives in the Chortitza Colony and that for most of their adult lives, they lived in the village of Blumengart. Their children's lives turned out much differently (underlined below):

Isbrand and Katharina Friesen – immigrated to Canada in 1875.
Katharina and Abram Dueck – immigrated to Canada in 1875.
Elizabeth and Wilhelm Dyck – immigrated to Canada in 1875.
Jacob – born 1839 but nothing else is known about him.
Maria and Bernhard Klippenstein – remained in South Russia.
Aganetha Penner – (widowed in 1874), immigrated to Canada in 1879.
Anna and Johann Giesbrecht – immigrated to Canada in 1878.
David L and Elizabeth Friesen – immigrated to Canada in 1875.

Only recently have I taken the time to explore what happened to this one sibling of my great, great grandfather who stayed in South Russia (Ukraine). That sister, **Maria**, and her husband **Bernhard Klippenstein** continued to live and

raise their family in Blumengart long after her siblings emigrated to Canada. As I examined the details of this family I found a much longer, deeper, and thus for me, a more poignant connection to the Friesens' "home village." At first my information came almost exclusively from what I found in the Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry (GRANDMA 7). It is this which provides the basis for the story that follows.

I begin **Maria's** story in Blumengart, a village that was established in 1824 along the banks of the Lower Chortitza River, on the very southern border of the Chortitza Colony. Her parents, Isebrandt and Maria (Loewen) Friesen, were one of the first families to settle in Blumengart and it was here that she and all her siblings, except her oldest brother Isbrand, were born. **Maria's** husband **Bernhard** was also born in Blumengart; after their marriage in 1851 this remained their family's home until well after her siblings left Russia. **Maria's** oldest brother Isbrand (Katharina Friesen) did live in the village until 1868 when they moved to the new Fuerstenland Colony southwest of Blumengart. Her sister Anna (Johann Giesbrecht) and her youngest brother David L. (Elizabeth Bueckert) and their families also lived right in Blumengart until the time of their immigration to Canada.

As for the couple who remained, **Bernhard** died in 1908 while his wife **Maria** died in 1920. Although the records do not say where they died, I presume that they died in Blumengart because the records indicate that a number of their children and their children's spouses died there too. Those who died in Blumengart, South Russia include their daughters *Aganetha* (1890) and *Elizabeth* (1915), their sons *Bernhard* (1917) and *Johann* (1936) as well as their daughter-in-law Katharina (Siemens) (1910), son-in-law Bernhard (Penner) (1920) and daughter-in-law Margaretha (Braun) (1932). Thus it became clear to me that members of **Maria** and **Bernhard's** extended family were living in Blumengart from *before* the exodus to Manitoba in 1875 *until* the First World War began in 1914, and even beyond.

It struck me then that for well over 100 years (from 1824 to 1936) a member of my (extended) Friesen family lived in Blumengart in South Russia! Fifty years after the exodus to Canada members of "my" Friesen family were still living in the "home village"! [As an aside, **Maria's** two brothers – Isbrand and David L. and her widowed sister Aganetha all helped to establish the village of Blumengart in southern Manitoba in 1875 and the years following. Then when Jacob Friesen (b. 1858), a nephew of **Maria's**, moved from Blumengart, Manitoba to Mexico in approximately 1922, he settled in a village in the Manitoba Colony which was also called Blumengart!]

The GRANDMA 7 records indicate, however, that not all of the Friesen/Klippenstein children stayed in the village of Blumengart in the Chortitza Colony. **Bernhard** and **Maria's** son *Isbrand*, for example, died in Voronezh Oblast, Russia in 1920; this region is approximately 500 kms north of Blumengart. In addition, a note attached to this *Isbrand's* genealogy record indicates that he "moved to Arkadak after WWI." Now Arkadak was the site of a Mennonite Colony so this may have been a voluntary move. *Isbrand's* son Cornelius (b. 1876) had moved to Arkadak in 1910 so it is quite possible that his parents and other members of the family moved there to join Cornelius and his family.

One other member of **Bernhard** and **Maria's** family who moved away from or was forced out of Blumengart and the Chortitza Colony was their son *David* and his wife Katharina (Zacharias). It isn't clear when they moved away from Blumengart but we do know that Katharina died in Siberia in 1930, and because *David* died in 1932, it seems probable that he was in Siberia, too, when he died. [Siberia is not a specific location; it is a vast geographical region east of the Ural Mountains to which the Communist government often banished those they wanted to punish.]

An intriguing piece of the Klippenstein family portrait shown us by GRANDMA 7 is that this *David* and Katharina's daughter, Helena (b. 1919), and her husband, Peter Peters (b. 1913) were baptized in 1942, in the village of Nieder-Chortitza which

was within five kilometers of Blumengart. How was it that Helena was this close to her "home" village at that time? Was it perhaps because her husband still lived near Blumengart and therefore she moved there after they were married? It is clear that even though her mother (and probably her father) died in Siberia twelve years earlier, she was in a village in the Chortitza Colony in the middle of the Second World War. Another fascinating detail about Helena is that she emigrated to West Germany in 1972 and died there in 1997.

Besides the geographical question as to where my **great, great Aunt Maria** and **great, great Uncle Bernhard Klippenstein** and their extended family lived and what connection they had to the village of Blumengart in the Chortitza Colony, I wondered how they were impacted by the political events in South Russia after 1875. Mennonite historians write glowingly about the prosperity, educational opportunities, large churches and progressive institutions that Mennonites established in the years from 1875 to 1914. It is sometimes called the "golden age" of the Mennonites in Russia - there were prosperous communities in the two main colonies, accredited high schools and post-secondary institutions, as well as numerous, large, and flourishing Mennonite estates that were established across South Russia during these years.

Maria, Bernhard and their children surely experienced some of the benefits of these developments through the readily available markets and good prices for their products as well as the educational opportunities that were available to them. The forty years of peace and prosperity probably did not give them any reason to wish they had emigrated to Canada. Unfortunately that all changed in 1914 when Tsar Nicholas led "Mother Russia" into the First World War. Mennonite leaders and bishops opposed the "call to arms" negotiating alternate service such as forestry or Red Cross medical work. Perhaps some of the Klippenstein grandchildren participated in these non-combat initiatives for a year or two, hoping to return to a more peaceful life back in their village and colony.

Unfortunately, much worse was in store for the extended members of **Maria** and **Bernhard's** family after the Tsarist leadership collapsed and the Bolsheviks initiated the Russian Revolution in 1917. During the early years of this revolution, anarchists – Nestor Makhno being a leading figure – took control of large parts of Ukraine including the very areas in which many Mennonites lived. From 1918 to 1921 it was "normal" for residents in the villages to be terrorized and abused by either Makhno's henchmen, members of the Red Army or soldiers from the conservative White Army. They commandeered food and animals, violated women and girls and forced men to assist one power group or another.

Those were chaotic and terror-filled years. Even though the unpredictable violence did diminish somewhat after 1921, Mennonite families in South Russia were hardly in a state to overcome the devastating typhoid epidemic which began even before the years of revolution were over. This illness took the lives of approximately 1,500 people (approximately 11%) in the Chortitza Colony alone between 1918 and 1923. And those who survived faced desperate famine. The continuous military conflict had made growing food and raising livestock nearly impossible and many more villagers in the colony succumbed.

Bernhard, who died in 1908, was spared these tragic years but surely his wife **Maria**, who died in 1920, was not so fortunate and probably died either directly or indirectly because of the violence, hunger or disease that affected their entire community in those years.

The death dates for their children suggest that similar catastrophic events affected them as well. **Bernhard** and **Maria's** daughter, *Elizabeth*, died in 1915 while their daughter, *Maria*, and son *Bernhard*, died in 1917. Their son-in-law, Bernhard Penner died in 1920 and daughter-in-law, Maria (Siemens), wife of *Bernhard*, died in 1922. All of these died either in the home village of Blumengart or a nearby village in the Chortitza Colony. Some may have died from natural causes, of course, but it is more likely that they were subject to the

diseases and random acts of violence that became part of village life during the shifting political developments in Moscow after 1917.

The deaths of *Isbrand* (1920) in Voronezh and *David* and his wife Elizabeth (in 1932 and 1930 respectively) in Siberia suggest that at least some from the Klippenstein family were victims of forced displacement. These members of the family not only suffered through the turbulent war years – perhaps in their home villages – but then faced life far from home and most probably in a hostile and unfamiliar location. It may even be that they spent time in one of the *Gulag* camps (forced labour) which were introduced by the Soviet government as early as the 1920s and increased in number from 1930-1953. Here millions of Russians, Ukrainians, Mennonites and other ethnic groups, perished in some of the most inhumane conditions that the Soviet Government designed.

It is sobering to imagine what these ancestors of mine endured in the years during and after the Russian Revolution. While the stories from my more immediate Canadian ancestors that cover these same years (1914-1942) include the difficult prairie, pioneer experiences and the fear of encroaching government regulations, these seem mild in comparison to what our more distant relatives experienced in the Soviet Union.

There is one final note I must add, one which is a "good news" story. As I looked through the GRANDMA database and examined the names of some of **Maria** and **Bernhard's** descendants, I discovered that at least three of their grandchildren came to Canada and settled in Saskatchewan. All three were sons of their son *Isbrand* and his wife Katharina (Siemens): Bernhard, Johann E. and Dietrich Klippenstein. Johann E. and his second wife Helena (Redekopp) as well as Dietrich and his wife Elizabeth (Isaac) came to Canada in 1924 and settled in the Herbert/Main Centre area, whereas Bernhard and his wife Maria (Peters) immigrated to Canada a year later and settled near the other two families.

Added to that good news is the story of the Klippenstein Family Register. At his Grandmother – my great, great-aunt **Maria** (Friesen) Klippenstein's auction sale held the year she died (1920), Dietrich picked up this Register and brought it to Canada four years later. Twenty years after that he gave it to his brother Johann E. who carefully rewrote all 29 pages. In addition, Johann E. recorded his memories of his grandparents, uncles and aunts as well as his siblings. In 2019, Dick Klippenstein, son of Dietrich Klippenstein (above) gave this Register to me. I was very pleased to receive and read this remarkable document and family treasure!

Knowing what I do now, I long to go back to Ukraine and should I do so, I would walk if I had to, to get to the place where Blumengart once stood. And there I would weep once more.

The online Mennonite Encyclopedia has this entry re: Blumengart:

"Blumengart was one of the last three villages of the Chortitza settlement, established in 1824 by 14 families. In 1918 the village complex consisted of about 2,700 acres of land with a population of 213. Of these, 44, mostly men, were exiled and evacuated by 1941 when the Germans occupied the Ukraine during World War II. The remaining population was evacuated to Germany in 1943. About two thirds of these were repatriated by the Russians and one third found new homes in Canada and South America. Its church record covers the period 1796-1901. In 1942 the village had a church building, a school with 45 pupils and two teachers, and a kindergarten."

Krahn, Cornelius. "Blumengart (Chortitza Mennonite Settlement, Zaporizhia Oblast, Ukraine)." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. 1953. Web. 27 Oct 2018

The following URL will take you to a historical entry that concerns Blumengart as well:
http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/blumrpt.htm

HAF

My Adoption and Reunion Story - by Annie Schapansky

(submitted by her son, Larry Schapansky,
and edited by Ruth Marlene Friesen)

In 1922 there was a famine in Russia when I was given away for adoption. I guess I wasn't supposed to know, as my adoptive parents never talked about it – not until George asked to marry me. Then Dad told him I was adopted.

We had arrived in Canada in November 1925, and in 1926 settled in Dalmeny, SK. The following year, 1927, I started school at the Willow Lake School. There it was that a schoolmate told me I was adopted.

I went home and told my Mom. She said, "Well, you wouldn't give your sister Nettie away, would you?" Well, no. So I went back to school and told them I was not adopted.

But some of the families were from the same village in Russia and they knew all about it.

Later, when grandmother came to live with us, she asked my Mom in the summer kitchen, "Do you ever hear from Annie's folks, the Goertzens, right?"

Mom didn't answer. So I walked out so they could talk.

In 1936 we moved from Dalmeny to Coaldale, AB., where Dad's only brother, Uncle Isaac and Aunt Mary lived. One day their son showed me a picture of my own oldest sister Mary and my brother John. But I didn't dare mention this discovery at home.

I sometimes heard bits from others, but since I didn't know my real parents' names, I didn't know how to find out more. So I'd tell myself, "Oh forget it. This is my family now, and Nettie is my sister." But I couldn't help wondering.

In 1982, after the family George and I had were grown, we were living in Saskatoon and our daughter Luella was in and out of the hospital, fighting cancer. On Sunday, December 2nd, we had a couple of phone calls that three of George's brothers were sick and one had had a heart attack. That Sunday was not a good day for us.

That same Sunday afternoon we went to visit Luella. The Salvation Army had been around to bring Christmas cheer to patients. Luella had received one of their magazines, but she was too sick to read, so she passed it on to me.

I told myself I wouldn't bother to read all those short stories about strangers, but out of habit, I scanned for names like Goertzen or Berg. I came to a page about "Missing Persons." I skipped over those little letters, but then I found myself turning back to that page again and again. But the names were all strange.

The next morning George brought in the mail and handed me a letter, "Who is this?" he asked. The return address was a Susie Neufeld in Vancouver.

Not thinking, I replied, "It must be your cousin – oh, she lives in Clearbrook, and her name isn't Susie. Susie lives in Saskatoon." Then I added, "Oh, the one in Clearbrook has passed away already." Feeling confused I handed the letter back to George.

He opened it. "This IS yours; it's in German." and he handed it back to me.

I started reading, "Dear George and Annie, and children...." (What does this lady know about my children?) She greeted us with Philippians 4:4, *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say rejoice.* "Maybe you have gone through hard times in your life. If not, so much the better, but at least you didn't have to flee like we did those hard times. It took us three months travelling by horse and wagon in rainy, muddy and cold weather, till we reached Poland. When the Russians came and invaded Poland, they were in front and behind us! There was no way out. We had to stay nearly a year and work for the Russians."

Then she wrote, "If I could talk to you in person I could tell you a lot more."

Then it hit me. I said to George, "You know, this could be my sister." But again, I told myself, "It just can't be!"

This Susie went on to ask if I was born in 1919. Well, she was out by one year. I was born in 1920.

She went down the line, writing down the family names and what year they were born. The

oldest two, Mary and John, were the ones I'd seen on a photo. And I knew I was the youngest.

I said to George, "This is my sister!"

Susie went on to write that it was a year ago in November that she came to Canada, and she had stayed a while at her half-brother, Aron's in Kelowna. Now she was in Vancouver at Henry's place. Just a bit before, she wrote, a bachelor suite became available in the Menno-Court in Vancouver. She was happy – she wanted to stay there until she died.

Susie Neufeld & Annie Schapansky

Then she came back to "...when a Mr. Berg came and got you from us."

Yes. My dad, Peter Berg, and his brother had a mill there (like they have in Holland with a Dutch windmill). There they ground wheat into flour. When they had some flour, they made bread and he had gone around with a loaf on a plate, offering it to the poor like the Goertzens.

Well, my first dad had died when I was six months old, leaving my mother with six children, and then the famine came so they had nothing.

I was two years old by then, and usually two-year-olds are running around the house. But I was so starved I couldn't walk any more; I just lay in the cradle.

Susie wrote how Mr. Berg had gone home and told his wife what he saw. Oh, and how Frieda remembered that their mother had promised God that if He would send someone to care for me, she would let me go.

Susie wrote that she was six at the time, but she remembered clearly how Mr. Berg came back the next day to take me home; how he had wrapped me up in a shawl and took me in his arms.

I thought, "In the next line I'll read how they all stood and cried." Instead, she wrote that it was such a great joy, because Mr. Berg had given them each a slice of bread with crackling lard on it. (They gave me a roasted bun.)

When I finished this letter I didn't know if I should be happy or cry. I had such mixed feelings.

"If only she had written down her phone number!" I exclaimed.

After a while I jumped up and went to the phone and called the operator, and asked for the Vancouver operator. I told her the name, Susie Neufeld, and gave her address. The operator didn't have a Susie, but Susan Neufeld. "That will be her." I told the operator.

Then I started dialing that number. I had to keep it up until 10 o'clock. Then she was home from Henry's where she had been at a Tupperware party.

I had wondered to George whatever would I say? But when she answered, I said, "This is your sister, Annie."

"Well, did you get my letter already?"

"I got it this morning." My tongue went loose. "If we have half-brothers, then mother must have got married again...."

"Yes, she had six from the first marriage and then five, so we were a big family, but two of our right sisters, and two of our right brothers are still in Russia – and we don't know where."

As soon as Luella got out of the hospital, she phoned the airport. Then she phoned me. "Mom, there's a cheap flight beginning in February, but you have to book it now."

That's what we did.

When I phoned Susie again, she said that Henry had said that if we came we could stay at their place, as Susie had just a bachelor suite.

So I phoned Henry. His wife Frieda answered, but I didn't know if it was one of their girls, or if they had any. When I introduced myself, Frieda

said, "Oh Hi! I want to welcome you into our family."

Then Henry was on the phone and he said, "I want to welcome you into our family."

After that – that's when I got excited.

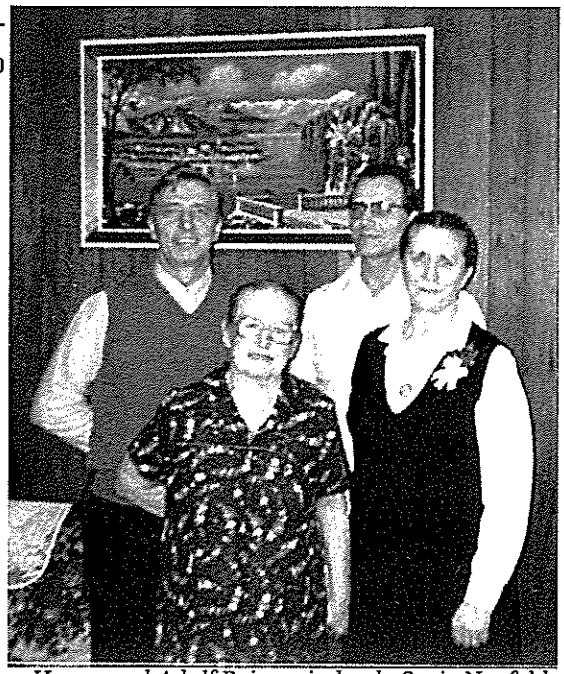
One day our niece in Saskatoon phoned to say the radio station might come and interview me.

I said, "How come?"

She confessed that she had told them about our meeting my sister Susie whom I hadn't seen in 57 years.

When the radio station called and found out that we were going to Vancouver, not Susie coming to Saskatoon, they said that was too bad or they would be at the airport to record our meeting.

Without thinking, I said, "Well, can't they be out there, too?"



Henry and Adolf Reimer in back, Susie Neufeld and Annie Schapansky reunited.

Well sure, they said, and promised to call the Vancouver radio station. By evening they phoned to ask if it was okay if they came with TV cameras. I said, "Okay, go ahead."

Susie had said that someone had sent our mother a photo of our family when we had Raymond (5 1/2) and Luella (1 1/2). There I had braids around my head. I promised to take off my kerchief when we got there so she could recognize me.

We made a wrong turn when we got off the plane in Vancouver, ending up near a lineup buying tickets, but someone turned us the right direction. We were busy looking for our suitcases when someone hollered, "There they are!"

When they opened the gate, Henry came straight at me, so I threw my arms around him. I looked at his face, "You are Henry?"

"Yes," he answered, and I gave him another hug.

Then Frieda came with a bouquet of flowers, and Susie also had an armful of flowers. It was as if the Queen was arriving!

The TV cameras were taking pictures. The cameraman said I should take Susie's arm and talk with her as we went through the gate.

The media people had asked me to bring photos, and I tried to show them to him first, but they wanted us to walk through the gate. Then I realized that Susie didn't understand English, so I had to explain everything in German to her. I felt a bit mixed up, but it all looked good on TV that night.

I learned that in 1947 my sister Susie and my three half brothers had come to Canada, but they were not allowed in, so they went to Paraguay instead. From there my relatives had come one person at a time to work and save up; gradually they brought each one over here. Aron and Edna had lived in Canada for 20 years already, Henry and Frieda for 15 years. After Susie's husband died in Paraguay, Canada had let her come to Vancouver, too.

My mother and youngest brother had gone back to Germany and my mother passed away there at 82 years of age.

When we got back to their home from the airport we sat in their living room, and they showed us pictures of my mother and all the rest. (All the while Frieda was making noodles for the chicken noodle soup).

After dinner they took me to the Queen Elizabeth Park.

Aron saw us on TV, then he and Erna came from Kelowna to meet us there for the weekend.

A number of times when I did or said something – like I usually do – they would say, "Oh, you're just like mother!"

Sunday morning we were all in church together, and while singing, Susie stopped singing. Oh-oh, I thought, she is listening to me singing.

At the dinner table she mentioned that when she heard me sing, it sounded just like mother.

Well, I'm sorry to have to conclude with this bad news. In February I met my dear sister. Then in May I phoned her to wish her a happy birthday, and she complained about having pain. In July George and I went by bus to see her in the hospital, and on the 9th of August I was back for her funeral.

Ah... but at least we got to see and know each other yet in this life!

Yes. With God all such things are possible. I have often had to ask the Lord to forgive me for not having more faith in Him.

AS

James Henry Friesen

October 3, 1930 – May 23, 2019

- by his daughter, Bernice Boyd

James Henry Friesen was born in 1930 to Henry and Sarah Friesen on their homestead, and lived there, three miles east of Rosthern, until the age of 78.

He grew up with his brother Bob and sister Betty, hunting gophers, falling into barrels of water, getting driven over by tractors, and rolling old tires across the prairie with a multitude of cousins. He traveled in the winters with his family when it was impossible to get off the farm, spending time in Saskatoon, Toronto, Texas, California, and British Columbia.

He gradually took over the family farm, marrying Margaret, his first girlfriend, at the age of 29 and bringing her home to have a son, Russell, and a daughter, myself. He loved to travel across North America taking pictures and movies, and kept meticulous records of the weather and the movements of the sun as the year went by.

He was a profoundly gentle man, an autodidact, an historian, and a photo columnist who contributed *"A Peek into the Past"* in the Rosthern Valley News. Above all, he was an inventor who had to invent himself.

This was akin to a miracle. Born with dyslexia in an era when it wasn't recognized, he dropped out of school after grade ten, but every day of his life, he exhibited the brilliance the world couldn't measure with its percentages and standardized tests.

His mind was broad and open, his creativity and wisdom a local phenomenon. He became a local entertainer, playing clarinet in a band called "The Fascinators," in the 1950s, playing rhythm guitar in the University of Saskatchewan orchestra, and becoming an actor in his eighties, touring in a play, and reciting poetry, telling jokes, and singing songs, at the Senior Citizen's Centre.

He could make anything that could be made before the development of the microchip – radio-controlled aircraft, snowplows, a snowplane, ham radios, and not least, Saskatoon-berry pie. I remember one earnest discussion he once had with my Uncle Sig about how to make the best pie crust.

According to Stats Canada, we supposedly lived below the poverty level, but my father's mind was our material wealth. He made more things than can be listed here. He built our house, plumbed it, wired it, and restored old vehicles. He built a metal lathe, grinding each gear himself.

He made a truck out of a car. He made a tiny working bathroom sink for a camper out of an aluminum kitchen bowl. He made a miniature hovercraft with plywood, a fan blade, an electric motor, and a piece of inner tube. What a rare 16 year-old girl I was, who had his restored vintage 1965 Corvair to drive the moment I passed my driver's test.

My father looked after his parents and his aunts and our mother as they grew old and infirm, but it wasn't just his family who was blessed with him.

So often, I walked outside to find some neighbor's farm machinery waiting for Dad's hands and wrenches, or yet another one of Wes Lehmann's tragic kitchen chairs. These chairs seemed to hobble to us of their own volition and wait like forlorn broken deer outside the garage door for my father to mend their poor legs.

Dad also contributed to his community by sitting on

boards and committees, including the local Co-op and the Provincial Mennonite Historical Society. There will soon be an exhibit on him and his inventions in the Mennonite Museum in Rosthern, where he devoted much of his time. This will include his collection of indigenous stone tools he preserved from his fields including a projectile point archeologists have deduced was used in the hunting of mammoths ten thousand years ago.

Until recently he was well known for filling his yard with igloos and snow sculptures in the winter and creating changing storylines with teddy bears and lawn ornaments – which his neighbors sometimes secretly rearranged at night. Once, he received a piece of fan mail from a child to whom he passed his secrets to and who now carries on the igloo tradition.

We all knew the strength of his honesty and sense of justice. He was a self-taught feminist and if a system "treated women like second-class citizens," he crumpled it up and threw it away. He couldn't fathom the idea of going along with any crowd.

One of his favourite stories was of attending a meeting at the Golden Sheaf Restaurant. The waitress asked for everyone's order, and the word coffee was spoken all the way around the table, until, at last, my father said, "I'll have milk." Then someone else said, "Oh, you know, I think I'll have milk, too," and then that word made its way around the table. Everyone drank milk that night.

He was full of humour of all kinds. He played pun tennis across the table with my husband. Once, a few years ago, by special request, in a suit made for him, he dressed up to play a clown at an event at the Senior's Centre, hanging the tail of a recently butchered pig on the behinds of unsuspecting folk – just as was done in former times during butchering on the farm.

In these last few days, things have happened that I know he would have laughed about. He'd be amused to know that he missed his dentist appointment on Monday. I can almost hear him comment about what a good excuse he had.

He gave up hunting as a young man, preferring to see the wild animals alive in his fields. He mourned the loss of the birds and the spring chorus of frogs in their struggle against the farm chemicals. He chose his crops to do the least harm to the nature he loved.

I am so thankful to be his daughter and to see echoes of him in my own children. I am never prouder of myself than when I fix a doorknob or a toilet like he might have done. I told him many times that he was my hero.

He was the chief blessing of my life, and it's up to my brother and I now to continue his traditions of wisdom and tolerance.

BB

The Orie O. Miller Diary 1920-21

by Orie O. Miller

Published by Pandora Press, Ontario

– Reviewed by Ruth Marlene Friesen

If you have read or heard anything about how the Mennonite Central Committee began in North America to help the Mennonites left in Russia after the war as they were starving and in great need, you may have seen or heard the name Orie O. Miller.

That's how that name rang in the back of my mind when I first saw this book. I felt like I should recognize that name, but couldn't recall any details about him.

Miller graduated from Goshen College in 1915, and three times was a candidate to be minister of Ephrata Mennonite Church but failed to be chosen in the lot. Six months later he volunteered to go to the Middle East as part of the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers. It was to be the first of many of his trans-atlantic crossings.

This slim 130 page paperback is a unique introduction to the young man who was sent to Eastern Europe and the Ukraine in particular to size up the situation and determine exactly what kind of help was needed there and how best to get it to them.

We get our insights by reading his very own diary of that particular exploratory trip, most of it on ships and boats and trains. Miller wrote his notes and observations in German.

Early in the 2000s John and Louise Miller, Orie's son and daughter-in-law, arranged with Miss Nelly Rempel of Ontario, to translate this early diary, and when she noted the historical value of this diary, they gave her permission to pursue the publication of it.

That first trip made a huge impression on Orie O.

Miller. He met many people of different faiths all trying to do something for the needy, from set-ting up orphanages, providing food, and sending clothing. Because he spoke to them graciously and looked for ways to help each other, many of them promised to help the American Mennonites (MCC) to get involved too, and to reach their own people in South Russia and beyond.

Actually, when I first started into his diary, it almost seemed he was on a holiday cruise. He described the people he met and the places he saw, for instance, in Italy, Greece, and Beirut, as if he were a tourist, and in great detail.

Then as he got closer to the Black Sea and arrived in ports like Constantinople, and Sevastopol, Miller began to move like one in charge. He made sure money was deposited in such a way that his coworkers could access it as needed, and he sent Kratz and Slagel to do some things while he did others, so they worked more efficiently.

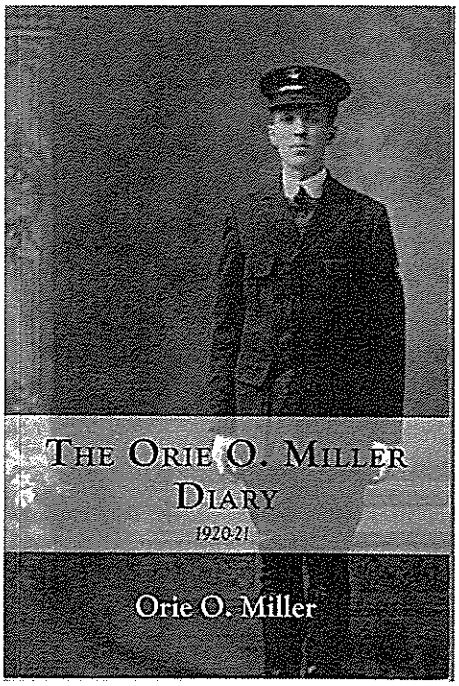
Miller had a knack for finding comfortable, although often quite plain and inexpensive rooms for himself and his companions. He also recorded what they spent on meals. We need to remember that prices were much different then, but Orie took some pleasure in getting a hotel room for $1.30 for the night, and a meal for .35 or less.

He always made courtesy calls on those in authority in any place, to make sure they knew why he and his companions were there and what they hoped to accomplish. This got him many offers of official assistance they might otherwise have missed.

Supplies, or warehouse space was offered by the Red Cross and Near East Relief (NER). One government official insisted on sending along a translator when they crossed by train from the Crimea to Russia proper, and they went looking for certain Mennonite villages that they had heard were especially hard off, such as Halbstadt.

While there, Miller asked for a meeting with the local leaders, and they quickly came together and listened gladly to his offer of help from America.

But Orie also asked them for their advice and what they needed most. These leaders responded that the Chortitza area had suffered much worse than they, so that area should be helped first. If they would continue to give them twice as much help as they brought to Halstadt that would be fine with them. He was impressed with their selflessness. I was, too.



For a slim book, it has many small incidents like that recorded very matter-of-factly in Miller's diary.

As they were leaving the Mennonite area by train they ran into a holdup because of scrimishes between the Red and White army. They felt it was still safe to leave Clayton Kratz with the supplies they had brought. He stayed willingly. But it was the last time Orie saw his friend and co-worker.

Later they heard he had been captured twice and then last seen at Fürstenwerder.

It is tempting now to try to retell many more stories, but it is wiser to urge you to read the book.

MHSS does not have this book for sale, but the Archives has the copy the translator contributed, which you may come in to read.

Of course, you may also order it from the publisher, Pandora Press, 47 Water Street North, Kitchener, ON. N2H 5A6, or, through their website; *www.pandorapress.com*

RMF

ATTENTION ZACHARIAS FAMILY RESEARCHERS: Luella Klassen set up; *https://zachariasfamilytree.com* to share her work in progress. "At present," she writes, "Included on the site are 2,278 names and details of persons who are descendants of Wilhelm Zacharias born 1700." She is looking for other Zacharias family researchers to contribute and help to expand the total work. Check it out if you are interested.

Mennonite Heritage Week
by Victor G. Wiebe

On the 29 May, 2019 The House of Commons of Canada passed the motion, M-111, to annually mark the second week of September as Mennonite Heritage Week. The motion was proposed by B.C. Conservative Member of Parliament, Ed Fast, a member of a Mennonite Brethren congregation.

This is the text of Ed Fast's motion:
That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that Canadian Mennonites have made to building Canadian society, their history of hope and perseverance, the richness of the Mennonite culture, their role in promoting peace and justice both at home and abroad, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Mennonite heritage for future generations, by declaring the second week of September as Mennonite Heritage Week.

It was placed on notice on 6 December, 2016 and received two seconders: Robert-Falcon Ouellette MP of Winnipeg Centre and Marwan Tabbara MP of Kitchener South - Hespeler.

In the House of Commons several Members including Sheri Benson, (Saskatoon West) and Jane Philpott (Markham-Stouffville) spoke in support of the motion. Philpott's speech is memorable since both she and her husband both came to the Mennonites from a different Christian tradition and they are now active members of the Community Mennonite Church in Stouffiville, Ontario. Her speech and more information on the Mennonite Heritage Week can be found through an Internet search.

Many Mennonites, but not all, are pleased with this recognition. Though Mennonites have differences over this motion, it sparked a rare moment of cooperation among political parties as the Conservative motion was supported by Liberals as well as the NDP.

Some Mennonites feel this week infringes on the Mennonites' historic separation between church and state. Other Mennonites traditionally want to be part of community and some feel this kind of recognition isolates them from many other cultural groups that have also made very valuable contributions to Canada.

However, I think that this is a way for Canada to say "Thank You!" to Mennonites who were invited in as immigrants and are still invited in because Canada wants immigrants, and that Mennonites in return, thrived and helped develop, improve and enrich Canada.

Now that we have a Mennonite Heritage Week - How do we and others celebrate?

Perhaps we should ask for suggestions for celebrations.

For me the heritage is not Mennonite food or language or family histories. For me "Mennonite" is a designation of our Christian faith and denomination and as such its core is Christ so that for me the heritage is getting to know Christ and living in his community. For me the core is worship and living a life dedicated to Christ and his teachings.

With this in mind, for me, this week, Mennonite Heritage Week celebrations could feature:
1. Joining in a Mennonite worship service.
2. Participating in a Mennonite community activity like MCC or volunteer at a thrift store.
3. Sponsoring an immigrant refugee family.
4. Participating in a restorative justice programme like P2P.
5. Donating funds to missions.
6. Growing food or make a item and donating it to a needy person.
7. Reading and following Matt. 25:34-36.

I realize these are NOT usual or expected "celebration" activities - but I would have difficulty thinking of other activities.

Do you have some ideas?

VGW

Hepburn's 100th Celebrations June 14-16, 2019

by Dick Braun

The town of Hepburn celebrated its 100th birthday on the weekend of June 14 -16, 2019.

There had been a lot of organizing and contacting of people before the event started. To get people excited for the week-end, there was a lawnmower race on Friday evening.

Hepburn celebrated its 100th Birthday - June 14-15

The Peters people have been into lawnmower racing for years. One of the spectators commented that Dave has been into taking apart and rebuilding and tuning little engines since he was 12 years old. Small wonder that he can keep the crowd entertained for the evening; he does have help from his sons.

Saturday morning started a little dreary with some light rain coming down but the parade participants were not discouraged. The parade was led by 3 horseback riders each carrying a flag.

The floats featured the newest vehicles with signs on them of what the community provides as services.

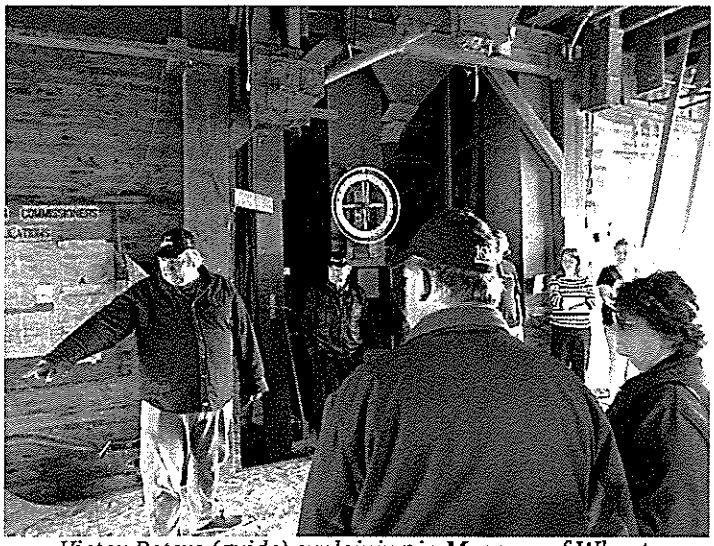
There were also vintage tractors - totally restored. There were quite a variety of vintage cars as well. The main street was lined on both sides with spectators.

After the parade was over the main street turned into a car show. There were a lot of neat vehicles that some people had put a lot of work into to making them look like they just rolled out of the show room even though they were 60 -70 years old.

At noon the weather cleared and the food booths opened up. The main food booth was operated by the Rosthern Youth Farm Bible Camp people.

There was a selection of thrills for the young children and those young at heart.

The Museum of Wheat was a hit as many people toured the Grain Elevator that has been set up so you can see what happened in an elevator. Victor Peters and other board members like Ben Goertzen were on hand to give tours and explain all the functions, and how the grain was moved from the truck or wagon to the train car. Other board members were also on hand to answer questions.



Victor Peters (guide) explaining in Museum of Wheat

The annex has a display of an almost complete set of "Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Calendars." The Hepburn elevator was a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Elevator that operated from 1928 - 1991.

When the elevator closed and the last load of grain was unloaded there was a ceremony; a 'ribbon tying' - a little different from a 'ribbon cutting'.

At the time of the transition people were on hand from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and the committee that was to take over the elevator and turn it into a Museum. Over the years they have collected other artifacts that are on display in the annex.

Bethany College also was open for touring. It has been a part of Hepburn for many years.

Ball games started as soon as the parade was over.

The main street had a car show and the seniors centre was open where people could look around and visit with others.

Long ago acquaintances also met in the middle of the street and visited on the spot.

This type of celebration is always good for renewing friendships with people whom you have not seen for a while.

The sights of a once familiar place come back to the mind on an occasion like a 100th birthday.

DB

Remembering the Pioneering Days 100 years ago

The Poetry of David J. Loewen 1885-1977

Submitted by Grandson, Harold Loewen

These were written into his "Anschreibebuch" (Debts/Loans Book). No attempt was made in the English translation to make the poems rhyme. Larry Loewen Rudgers, the translator, only attempted to flesh out David J. Loewen's meanings/feelings. Certain poems we are sure are written by David J. Loewen but some may be popular poems he put in the book. He did not sign all the poems.

Der Gebrochene Fluegel!

Einst ging ich auf rosigen Fluren,
War erweckt von der Vögelgesang,
Ach da fand ich auf moosiegen Spuren
Ein Vöglein am Flügel erlamt.

Ich heilte so schnell ihm den Flügel,
Das Vöglein sang froh wie zuvor
Doch weil ihm der Flügel gebrochen
Steigt's nicht mehr so hoch wie zuvor.

So fand ich in Sünden verkommen
Ein völlig zerschlagenes Herz,
Ich habs bei den Armen genommen
Und mit ihm getheilet den Schmerz.

Nun ist es ja doppelt gerettet,
Weil es sich dem Heiland erkor.
Doch, weil ihm der Flügel gebrochen
Steigt's nicht mehr so hoch wie zuvor.

Der Herr giebt das Leben ja allen
Wer ihm sich zum Artzte erkor,
Doch ein Herz das den Laster gefröhnet
Steigt nicht mehr so hoch wie zuvor.

D Löwen

The Broken Wing!

I. Once I was sleeping in a rose coloured meadow,
Was awaken by the song of a bird,
Oh but I found on a mossy path
A small bird with an injured wing.

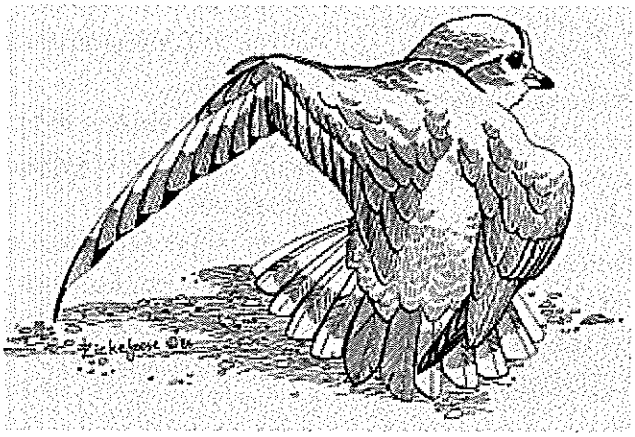
II. I healed so quickly its wing,
That it sang as happily as before
But, because its wing had been broken
It could not soar as high as before.

III. So I felt very guilty
I felt totally heartbroken,
I picked up the bird
And shared its pain.

IV. Now it was indeed doubly rescued,
Because it had chosen a saviour.
But, because it had broken its wing
It could not soar as high as before.

V. Yes the Lord gives life to everyone
Who chooses to follow Him,
But, if that person becomes a slave to bad habits
He does not soar as high as before.

D Loewen



Ich möchte Heim!

Ich möchte heim die Ufer seh' ich glänzen,
Der ew'gen Heimat, fern am Horizont,
O Schiffer fahr, fahr schneller zu den Grenzen,
Wo mein Herr Jesus und mein Vater wohnt.
Ich möchte heim, ich hör die Palmen rauschen,
Ich hör der heil'gen Engel Lobgesang.
O Schiffer fahr', ich möcht im Schatten lauschen,
Ich ruhe nach der Pilgerfahrten Drang.
Ich möchte heim ich seh das Boot schon nahen,
Wie es vom Ufer stößt, das dunkle Boot;
Mit schwarzem Segel, und mit schwarzen Rahmen
Und doch so hell, sein Name heißet Tod!
Ich möchte heim! Ich seh den Fuhrman winken
Mit seinem lieben, treuen Angesicht.
Ich steige ein, muß ihm zu Füßen sinken
Hier bin ich! Jesus, o verstoß mich nicht.
Ich möchte heim, o führ mich durch die Wogen
Und Todessee, die an dem Ufer bricht;
Ich komm zu dir, du hast mich nie betrogen,
Du Steuermann, voll Gnaden und voll Licht.

Löwen

I Want To Go Home!

I want to go home, I can see the gleaming shoreline,
The eternal home, far away on the horizon,
Oh sailor go, go quickly to the border,
Where my Lord Jesus and my Father live.
I want to go home, I hear the wind blowing through the palms,
I hear the holy angel's song of praise.
Oh sailer go, I want to rest in the shade,
I want to go on the final pilgrimage.
I want to go home, I see the boat coming closer,
The way it bumps against the shore, the dark boat,
A black boat with black sails
Oh, but so brilliant, it is called death!
I want to go home! I see the pilot nodding
With his loving, faithful face.
I get on board and kneel at his feet
Here I am! Jesus, Oh, don't kick me out.
I want to go home, Oh direct me through the waves
That break against the beach of the sea of death,
I am coming to you, you have never deceived me,
You the pilot, full of grace and light.

Loewen

Meet Another Archives Volunteer - Helen Fast

by Ruth Marlene Friesen, Editor

In 1992 Helen Fast thought it might be time to return to nursing.

Dick H. Epp, who was very involved with the Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society invited her along for their Annual meeting in Regina. While there someone showed her her own family genealogy. Helen was fascinated.

Among her many interests are writing, crafts, and setting up a filing system. She just loves to work with numbers! It didn't take long until they had her volunteering with the first Society and of course, by the time the MHSS was formed, she was in the thick of it.

Helen files the obituaries into big binders, after Deanna Krahn has clipped them. This applies to funeral bulletins as well, which sometimes come in by the boxfull.

Al Miereau put a database of cemeteries on the internet; Helen was asked to maintain it, keeping it updated. (That has been turned mostly over to me, the editor and web-master now, and I've moved it to the new site).

When people call or come into the archives for help with their family genealogy, she helps them with their research.

At Victor Wiebe's suggestion she now files articles about Mennonite authors and sports figures, too. Helen doesn't know when she will get to all the books she would like to write.

RMF

Mennonite Low German Dictionary - by Jack Thiessen

New Bothwell, Manitoba.

The Friends of Jack Thiessen. 2018. 550 pages. Soft cover. Nonfiction. Listed price: $39.99.

Reviewed by Jake Buhler

Until the release of this edition there were no Low German dictionaries in print. Even Herman Rempel's, *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch* is no longer available for purchase. Recognizing this situation, Friends of Jack Thiessen rallied to help Jack Thiessen to redo his out-of-print title, *Mennonite Low German Dictionary*. Ernie Braun and Gerhard Ens are the Friends of Jack Thiessen who enlisted the assistance of Glen Klassen and Harold Dyck to revise and update the 2003 title by the same name.

Jack Thiessen is to Mennonite Low German, what Wimbledon is to tennis. He is the pinnacle of excellence as a lexicographer of a language that he once said is the "entire way of life for Mennonites". Dr. Thiessen is now a retired professor of German of the University of Manitoba. He has devoted much of his life to collecting words, tracing their origins, and developing rules for their orthography and morphology. In his dictionary he presents them with gender denotations, High German equivalents, pronunciation codes, and, of course, the English meaning. For example, *hoolen* is translated as "to hold". It is described as a strong verb, with the High German translation of "halten". It gives a short maxim to describe its use in speech.

Jack Thiessen describes Plautdietsch or Mennonite Low German as a Low Prussian dialect that has borrowed words from Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Yiddish, Swedish, Old Prussian, and more recently English and Spanish. The language developed in Prussia sometime after 1600 and continued its development in Russia after 1789. Before 1600 Dutch Mennonites spoke mainly Dutch, but after their arrival in Prussia, changed gradually to High German and Mennonite Low German.

The dictionary contains 25,000 entries. The second part contains the English section. Here the reader can look up an English word and get its Low German translation. Thus, the book is a Low German-English dictionary.

Mennonite Low German can be described as having two strains of pronunciation and inflection.

Mennonites around Swift Current and the Hague-Osler Reserve would be Chortitza as they are descendants of the oldest Colony in Russia. The second strain are the Molotschna Mennonites, descendants of the second but larger Russian Colony. One difference between the two is that the Molotschna do not close their words with an "n", but the Chortitza or the Old Colony, do. The dictionary follows the Molotschna style but the difference between the two is small.

Jack Thiessen remains, possibly, the only academic alive today who is fluent in writing, speaking, and reading High German, English and Mennonite Low German. He recently translated *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* into Low German with the title, *Dee Erlawnisse von Alice Em Wundalaund*. He is the author of several Low German books.

Thiessen has contributed much to Mennonite Low German literature with an authoritative dictionary that will live on into the future for years to come. Serious followers of Low German can purchase a copy at *www.commonword.ca*, or by writing to *info@commonword.ca*.

Persons wanting a free online dictionary, with a less-rigorous discipline, can google "Herman Rempel Low German Dictionary".

JB

MHSS board member, Dick Braun, is seen at the July 15th Osler Parade with his brother Cornie's 1928 Model A truck. Dick drove the identical vehicle with the same sign in 2018 and 2019. Photo by Susan Braun

Websites

Our official MHSS site: *https://mhss.sk.ca*

Cemeteries: *https://mhss.sk.ca/cemeteries/*

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

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