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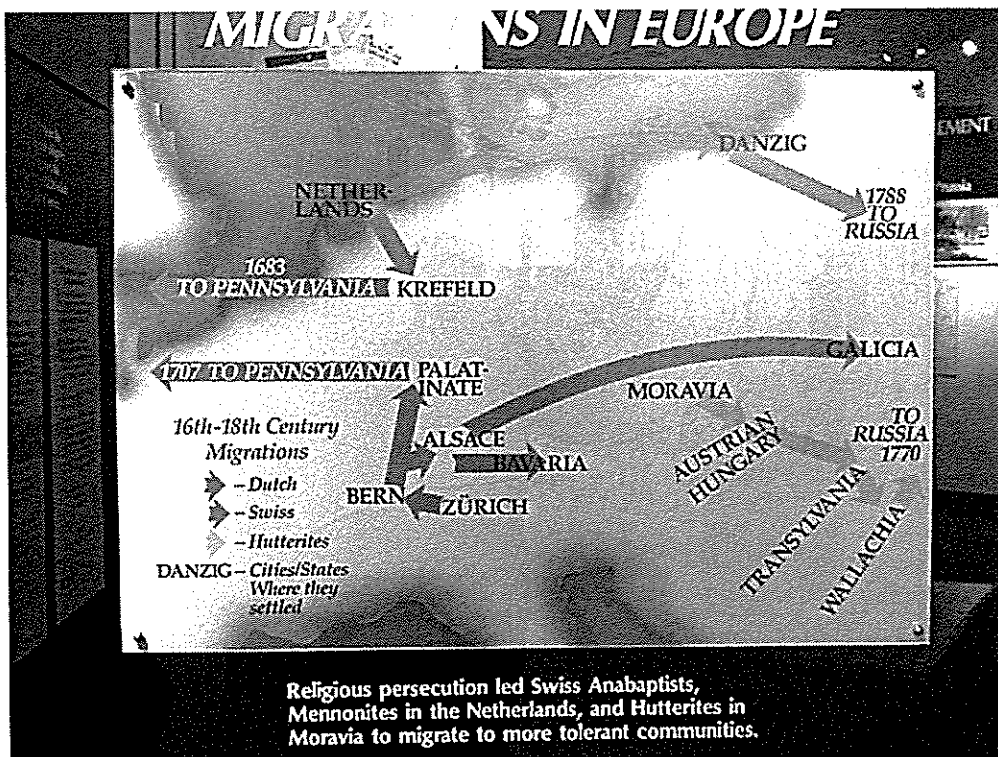
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## Mennonites on the Move Part 1 The Swiss Mennonite Story By Ken Bechtel

Throughout our history, we Mennonites have had to be somewhat mobile. Key factors pushing us out of our original homelands have included actual severe persecution, political and religious pressure, and demands for military enlistment. New destinations offered opportunities to earn our livelihood, some measure of tolerance, and sometimes even a written "Concession" or "Privilegium" that spelled out certain guarantees and conditions. This pattern was true for both the North German and Dutch, and the Swiss and South German groups of Anabaptists. Frequently as well, more settled or prosperous Mennonites came to the aid of those from other groups that were needing to relocate.

Here in Saskatchewan, there are far fewer (cont'd page 4)

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**The Editor's Perspective**  
**Ruth Marlene Friesen**

This issue of the Historian has sort of grown like Topsy. Some articles were held over from the previous issue, so I was off to a good start.

We brainstormed up a fine list of ideas shortly after the 2nd issue went out, and some of those articles have come in as expected, but there have been a number of surprises. At the end I had to increase this issue to 28 pages to get them all in.

We get a good history lesson in easy to understand terms with Ken Bechtel's first article of a series on the major migrations of Mennonites over the centuries. This one starts with the Swiss Mennonites.

Henry A. Friesen continues his series on the different denominational currents in the Swift Current area over the last few decades. This one is about the Pentecostal movement. (The next one will be about the Sommerfelders).

You may find yourself giggling too, at the hijinks of some boys in Rosthern back in the 1940s. What Eric doesn't tell us here, is that he went to medical school and became a doctor. He worked for many years on the sunshine coast of BC in a lovely rural area. He's written a book about his life, which is very easy to read. In our email conversations he offered to send me a copy, and once I finished it I just had to donate it to the archives for others to get a chance at it. Since it is not for sale you'll have to visit the archives a few times. But that's okay. You'll get to meet and know some of the volunteer staff better, and will be enriched for that, too.

Dick and Kathy Braun were sent to Brazil by the Plett Foundation to attend the 100th anniversary of the death of Johann Wall, who led a huge migration from here in Saskatchewan in the 1920s to South America. Dick was back in time to submit his report with photos of that event. You'll almost feel as if you were there!

Have a safe winter, a Blessed Christmas and a Bountiful New Year!

RMF

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

John Reddekopp

In June of this year my wife, Deanna, passed away at home after having been designated as 'palliative' a little more than a year prior to her passing. It was suggested that I may want to use this column to pay tribute to her.



After almost fifty two years of marriage there is much that I could say. I would like to share just a part of her story, which, although unique, probably has many elements in common with others throughout history that have had to deal with health-related challenges.

Deanna's parents were Jacob and Anna (Janzen) Friesen. Challenges were not new to them. In their dating years they were separated by the South Saskatchewan River and yet managed to find ways to get together. Anna's father was an Old Colony minister and Jacob's family were part of the Bergthal denomination. This also presented some challenges in the planning of their wedding. Again these issues were resolved and they did get married.

Nothing could have prepared them for the first major challenge they faced after their marriage. Deanna was their first child. Shortly after her birth it was discovered that she had a complex heart defect. This is called tetralogy of fallot. One of the symptoms is that persons with this condition have a bluish complexion; they are often referred to as 'blue babies.' This blue coloring is the result of the blood not receiving the proper amount of oxygen. She was only able to walk very short distances and definitely did not have the strength to run. Special arrangements had to be made to get her to school. A large part of this was accomplished by her brothers pulling a wagon or sleigh in order for her to get there.

Medical appointments were very frequent as a result of her condition. So her parents made sure that she learned English as her first language. That disappointed her grandparents since they had little or no English skills.

As a result of her heart condition Deanna was

not expected to live more than five or perhaps ten years. Doctors said that if by some chance she made it to age fifteen things might have advanced to the extent that something could be done for her.

Miracles happen! She made it to fifteen and her parents were told that they could take her to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota; they could perform the open heart surgery which could help her. I believe the success rate for this surgery, which was in the beginning stages at that time, was around 50%.

Nowadays, making the trip to Rochester and remaining there for a few weeks would not seem as formidable as it was then. Also, this was before universal medical care which came in shortly after. But to make a long story short, they were able, with the help of the Red Cross and many generous supporters, to get the necessary funds to make this happen. Deanna and her mother made the trip to Rochester by train in February, 1961. Her father came to spend the week of the surgery there as well.

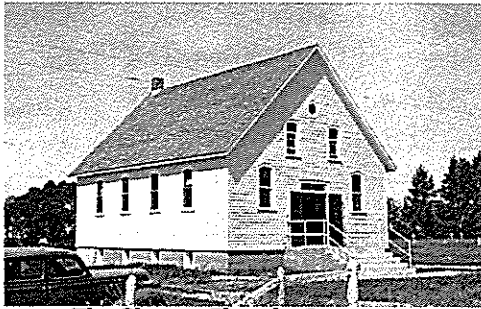
The surgery was a success and Deanna was able to finally take part in activities that she had not been able to prior to this, such as singing, which she just loved.

I first met Deanna in 1964 and we were married in 1967. For the most part I considered her quite normal. We have three children and seven wonderful grandchildren. Deanna loved family and travelling to see family.

Shortly after the year 2000 heart issues again cropped up. She required medications, various procedures and another open heart surgery. After each one, her condition improved for varying periods of time. There came a time, however, when there were procedures that she would not be able to survive. The odds this time would be much less than 50%.

I am so thankful for Deanna having been a part of my life. I am especially thankful for having been able to be her caregiver and for all the support that came with that role.

I am going to give her the last word. In 1989, she wrote her story for the Hildebrandt Reunion book. (Her grandmother was a Hildebrandt). She finishes the story with the following paragraph; *We have learned how God sustains and carries his children through difficult times. We have* (cont'd page 8)



The Sharon Church, Guernsey

(cont'd from pg 1)

Mennonites of Swiss background than those of Dutch/North German/Russian heri-

tage. The group

best known to most readers would be the Sharon church near Guernsey (1904-2004). Then there are the Swiss surnames in many of our congregations and in more conservative groups. These Mennonites have historic family travel-ogues starting in Switzerland and South Germany, moving to Pennsylvania, then to Ontario and other parts of Canada. In many ways, the push and pull factors impelling these moves by both Dutch Russian and Swiss groups have been variations on similar themes.

### The Dutch Russian Migration History

Most readers have some familiarity with the Dutch Russian migration history. Starting in the 1530s, Anabaptists fled severe persecution in the Spanish controlled lowlands, present day Belgium and the Netherlands, for somewhat more tolerant Polish realms around Danzig (Gdansk). Their ability to reclaim lowlands for farming, not to mention other skills such as their architecture and engineering, often outweighed demands that they conform religiously.

In the later 1700s, when the more militaristic Prussia took control of this area, increased military enlistment pressures, religious and economic restrictions coincided with Catherine the Great of Russia seeking settlers for her recently acquired Ukrainian lands. Her 1788 Privilegium offered guarantees of religious freedom and exemption from military duties, as well as fertile land. Some 8,000 Mennonites from Prussia moved to Russian lands between 1787 and 1870.

By the 1870s, Catherine's heirs began qualifying those guarantees, including the total military exemption. That, and the pressures for the landless among the colonists, led to groups looking to move elsewhere. From 1873 to 1884, some

18,000 left for North America, 7,000 of them settling in Manitoba. They came at the invitation of the Canadian government whose 1873 Privilegium offered land, "an entire exemption from military service," as well as other guarantees. The Russian revolution, civil war and anarchy resulted in over 20,000 Russian Mennonites coming to Canada between 1923 and 1929.

First, however, one major obstacle had to be removed. A 1919 Canadian Order in Council specifically banned all Mennonite, Hutterite or

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 1922.

## Mennonites Now Free To Come Into Canada

Order-in-Council passed by Union Government Forbidding Mennonite Immigration Into This Country Has Been Annulled By King Government As Result of Steps Taken By W. D. Euler M. P.

WAS INJUSTICE TO DESIRABLE PEOPLE

(Exclusive to Record.)

OTTAWA, June 9.—The order-in-council promulgated by the Union Government during the war restricting all Mennonite immigration into Canada has just been annulled by the Liberal government as a result of the efforts of W. D. Euler M. P., according to information received by Record's press gallery representative at Ottawa. The Mennonites are now as free to enter Canada as the adherents of any other faith. This announcement will be received with considerable pleasure by the thousands of Mennonites in Kitchener, Waterloo and the county.

### MENNONITES PLEASED

The announcement of the repeal of the order-in-council restricting Mennonite immigration into Canada will be received with a great deal of pleasure by the Mennonite people of North Waterloo, according to a statement made in the Record today by D. B. Betzner of this city, who informed by the Record of the annulling of the restrictions. The news, Mr. Betzner said, will be a matter of extreme satisfaction to the Mennonites of Canada.

TEA AND SUGAR.

Doukhobor immigrants. In support of that restriction, Conservative MP John Wesley White had argued, "Whether they be called Mennonites, Hutterites, or any kind of 'ites,' we do not want them to come to Canada. We certainly do not want that kind of cattle in this country." He further urged that "we should deport from Canada others of the same class who were allowed to come in by mistake."<sup>1</sup>

Ontario Swiss Mennonite bishop S. F. Coffman was a key part of the delegation that obtained Opposition Leader Mackenzie King's promise to rescind that Order if elected. The election of Mackenzie King's Liberals resulted in the new government taking that action in June 1922. This paved the way for the massive resettlement program for Mennonite refugees from Russia. Following World War II, another 7,000 Mennonites from Russia and Prussia (by then Poland again) found their way to Canada.

## Swiss South German Migrations Starting in Switzerland

The Swiss and South German Mennonites have a somewhat parallel history. Swiss persecution continued and became more severe in the 1600s, especially in the cantons of Bern, Zurich and Schaffhausen. Advocacy by Dutch parliamentarians at the behest of Dutch Mennonites failed to persuade Swiss politicians to relent. Between 1650 and 1690, many fled to Alsace and the German Palatinate.

My ancestors' experience in Schleithem in the northernmost Swiss canton of Schaffhausen was typical. Local villagers valued their Anabaptist neighbours and shared resentments of the tithes and heavy handed punishments meted out by Schaffhausen canton officials and the Reformed Church. Occasionally locals were able to circumvent official demands to some extent. In 1595 when Schaffhausen decreed that Anabaptists could no longer use the common pasture for their cattle, Schleithem officials looked the other way. In several other Swiss areas, sympathetic "Half Anabaptist" ("true hearted" - treuherzigen) neighbours provided cover for Anabaptists, Christians they admired but feared to join. They offered harried Anabaptists food and shelter, and warned them of approaching Anabaptist hunters (Täuferjäger).

Several times, Schaffhausen troops occupied the village, trying to compel Anabaptists to attend the Reformed church and forcibly baptizing their infants. Leaders were arrested and sometimes deported. In 1641, the troops arrived again and arrested the Anabaptist men, taking them to the city of Schaffhausen in irons. The next May several of them, including my ancestor Christian Bächtold, succeeded in a dramatic escape. His recapture and

September 1642 interrogation resulted in his being whipped with a lash and an edict concerning the Anabaptists.

This "Mandate regarding the Anabaptists of Schleithem, 1642"<sup>1</sup> warned citizens against hosting or even talking with these "obstinate, unruly, wayward and cantankerous" heretics whose "harmful seductive sectarian teaching" would lead to "the destruction of all Christian authority and life."

"When one or more offer help and shelter, that person should be fined, as often as it happens, 100 Gulden, and those who speak with them be made to pay 20 Gulden as penance." According to my calculation, that's \$9,000 and \$1,800 in current Canadian currency.



In 1648, Anabaptist properties were confiscated and the Anabaptists were ordered to leave. Most, including my ancestors, fled to the south west German Palatinate, the area near Heidelberg and Mannheim.

A small remnant remained. In 1661 authorities discovered that Nikolaus Hess, his wife Margaretha Bächtold and his in-laws were Anabaptists, and they were ordered to leave. When Nikolaus returned to the Reformed Church, the order was rescinded. After Nikolaus's death in 1680, his widow and two children joined the 7 children already in the Palatinate, leaving behind just one son in Schleithem. She was probably the last Anabaptist in Schleithem. Bächtolds (Bechtels) can close churches!

## To the Palatinate

The Ukraine's and German Palatinate's openings to Mennonite settlers were in part brought about by the ravages of war. Catherine the Great's conquest of the Ukraine led to her seeking assorted Europeans for her recently "vacated" lands. The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) had left large parts of

south west Germany ravaged and depopulated. Given their desperate need for settlers, authorities were able to bracket their usual intolerance for religious dissenters.

1648's Peace of Westphalia marked the formal end of the Thirty Years War, one of the most destructive conflicts in human history. Eight million died as a result of the violence, famine and plague. What began as battles between Catholic and Protestant states ended as a vicious power struggle between the Kingdom of France and the Habsburg Empire. The Palatinate or Pfalz, a region in southwestern Germany, was particularly hard hit, almost completely depopulated and devastated. Two thirds of the Palatines perished.

Karl I Ludwig (Elector 1648-1680) was determined to rebuild his shattered territory. His utilitarian considerations outweighed even his Reformed religious preferences. He was generous toward Lutherans, Catholics and Mennonites. This toleration flew in the face of the Holy Roman Empire's long standing "Imperial Recesses," edicts requiring the expulsion or even execution of Anabaptists. Karl I Ludwig admitted Mennonites who had been expelled from other countries as he was especially interested in experienced settlers who could rebuild his country.

The Dutch Mennonites often assisted Swiss Brethren refugees, advocating on their behalf through Dutch parliamentarians and providing much needed financial support. One intriguing feature of the Dutch Mennonite records is that they made later notes on each family they had helped, annotating their possessions, whether cows or cloaks; apparently the Bechtolds had not needed their assistance as they made no notes on their holdings.

Zuzenhausen, 25 kilometers southwest of Heidelberg, became home for Christian Bächtold Sr (b. 1595) and Jr (b. 1622) and their families in 1648. Major battles in 1622, 1634 and 1643 had destroyed both castle and village; the armies gave

way to marauding bands of starving soldiers, spreading plague and murder. By war's end, only 9 families remained in the village. The landowners desperately needed experienced settlers to repopulate and farm their territory. In that travel by land would have meant going through territories of some hostile local authorities, these Anabaptists more likely would have travelled by boat. These centres were connected by rivers, and well paid boat captains could have provided cover. The next generations of Bächtolds/Bechtels farmed similarly (or more recently) devastated lands some 15 and 65 kilometers northwest of Zuzenhausen.

In the Palatinate, our ancestors joined other Anabaptists fleeing Switzerland, Alsace and Tran-



Zuzenhausen

sylvania. In the 1670s, those numbers swelled as Swiss persecution reached its climax.

Some important changes happened during their years in southwest Germany. It was in the Palatinate that these Swiss Brethren Anabaptists were first called Mennists, Mennonists or Mennonites, a term with less political baggage than Wiedertäufer or Anabaptist. They accepted this designation, despite their having had very little connection with Menno Simons. In fact, in 1559 the entire Swiss Brethren fellowship had been banned by Menno and his fellow Dutch elders for not being strict enough on the Ban! During their southwest German sojourn, they exchanged their Schweitzer Deutsch for the Palatine German dialect, the linguistic ancestor of Pennsylvania Dutch. Local pronunciation altered my Bechtold





surname to Bechtel. The “e” and “a umlaut” (ä) were used interchangeably as the second letter of the Bechtold/Bechtel surname throughout their time in Switzerland and the Palatinate.

Those were the days when the principle of “*cuius regio, cuius religio*” (“as the ruler, so the religion”) determined the faith of the state church, and supposedly all the citizens. Those with other faiths could, at most, be tolerated under certain conditions. In the Palatinate, that meant being Catholic (until 1544), then Lutheran (until 1559), then Reformed (until 1576), then Lutheran again (until 1583), then Reformed again until 1685 and then Catholic.

This was a limited toleration, however, and the Mennonite presence often sparked the ire of state church leaders advocating the “*necessity to stem the obstinate, fanatical stubbornness of such people and bring them under the discipline of the Reformed Church.*”<sup>iii</sup> It took Mennonite petitions, and urgings from influential British Quakers and the King of England before the Elector in 1664 finally granted them a written “Concession,” a document of toleration. This allowed them to “hold no public or private meetings or conventicles attended by others that do not live on the estate, much less attract and mislead others of our subjects.” They were required to pay an annual fee of six guilders (about \$560) per person as “Mennist Recognition Money.” A limit of 200 families was set for the total Mennonite population. The concern about “others” attending and being influenced is illustrated by a 1671 controversy in Ibersheim. A Jacob Weber had been baptized into the congregation, though he was officially a member of the Reformed Church. His grandparents had been Mennonite. The Ibersheimers were fined 100 Talers (over \$16,000) for

this contravention of the Concession, and were watched closely for any other violations.

This Concession was renewed by the succeeding Reformed Electors in 1682 and 1686, often with further conditions and fees. Their strictly Catholic

successor, Johann Wilhelm II (Elector 1690-1716), was very slow to renew the Concession. In the 1690s, this Elector’s confessor urged him to consider extirpating this “damned sect”, the Mennonites, as a work pleasing to God. A bloody roundup

of Mennonites in Rheydt happened one night in 1694. They were threatened with death unless they would become Catholics. Their property was confiscated, and only reluctantly returned thanks to pressure from the Netherlands, the King of England and the Emperor. Most members of this thriving congregation emigrated to the Netherlands.

When finally granted in 1698, his Concession included yet higher protection fees. His equally intolerant brother Karl III Philip (Elector 1716 - 1742) delayed renewing the Concession, forbade church buildings and then demanded a fee of 1500 florin (\$84,000) for confirming it. In the period after my ancestor left in 1717, the individual fee was doubled and a “right of redemption” law allowed state church members to claim property owned by Mennonites, simply by paying the original purchase price, no matter what improvements.

In light of these later Electors, it is understandable that Mennonites told much more favourable tales about Karl I Ludwig, 1648’s newly enthroned Elector. Antje Brons, the north German collector of Mennonite biographies and folktales, recounts a story



Mennoniten Kirche in Friedrichstadt



Johann Wilhelm II

about the Elector riding through the countryside and noticing a thriving farm. His companions declared that this Mennonite farmer must be a counterfeiter and the Elector demanded that the farmer show him his counterfeiting mint. The Mennonite farmer opened his calloused hands and said that, with God's blessing, these had found the resources in his fields. "If that is the way it is, may your coin remain," the Elector responded. And he urged the farmer to teach his children this way of minting.

### Further Ravages of War

Later in the 17th century, some Palatine Mennonites experienced further ravages of war. In 1674 French troops retreating from Holland to Alsace did significant damage in the Palatinate. Then, during the Nine Years War (1688-1697) between France and a Holy Roman Empire coalition, the French released troops into the German Palatinate for a sort of scorched earth approach, burning towns and villages, pillaging and destroying those supplies they couldn't carry off. They destroyed cities like Heidelberg and Worms. The wars were followed by marauding bands of German hussars (cavalry) and highwaymen.

Understandably some Mennonites began to consider migrating to a more peaceful place, and again sought help from the Dutch Mennonites. Dutch Mennonites sent shiploads of grain and clothing and helped some refugees resettle in the Netherlands.

In 1693, a series of letters from Mennonite ministers in the Palatinate to the ministers of the Flemish Mennonite congregation in Friederichstadt described their sufferings at the hands of both the French and the Germans. These stole livestock and extorted large sums of money by physical torture. Friederichstadt, a port city in Northern Germany, had been founded in 1621 by Dutch Mennonites and Remonstrants (Dutch Arminians). This city embodied religious toleration in its charter and welcomed Lutherans, Jews, Quakers and Catholics as well as Mennonites. A number of families were prepared to migrate to Friedrichstadt if farms could be found for them to rent, perhaps with financial aid from Mennonites in

Holland and Hamburg. They sought further information about farm rental and currency. My ancestor, preacher Christian Bächtel (b. 1622) was one of six cosigners of the October 26, 1693 letter on behalf of some 60 emigrants.

By the 1690s and early 1700s, there were plenty of push factors encouraging Palatine Mennonites to look elsewhere. Soon word would spread among them about a place beyond the seas with fertile lands and religious liberty - Penn's Woods or Pennsylvania.

In the second part of "Mennonites on the Move" we will recount their journey to the Americas, their experiences in William Penn's "Holy Experiment" and the changed circumstances which led my Swiss ancestors and others to Upper Canada (Ontario) and beyond.

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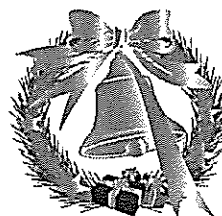
i Official report of the debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Second Session-Thirteenth Parliament, p. 1929.

ii Based on a transcription by Willi Bächtold, translated by Erika Janzen, volunteer at Mennonite Archives of Ontario

iii Hein, Gerhard. "Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany)." Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. 1959. Web. 21 Aug 2019

iv Rheydt is a borough of the modern city of Mönchengladbach. It is some 300 kilometers north west of the area where my ancestors farmed.

*KB*



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER - conclusion

(cont'd from page 3)

*experienced joy and known that God was there as He is today. We know not what the future holds but we know who holds the future*" are words from a well-known hymn that express my prayer and desire as we commit each day to God.

*JR*



## The Pentecostal Journey of Mennonites on the Swift Current Reserve

Part 3 in a Series on Churches on the Reserve

by Henry A. Friesen

When I was a ten-year-old boy (1960) our family lived on the northern edge of the Swift Current Mennonite Reserve,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile north of the village of Rosenhof, SK. At that time the families in and around our community attended four different churches although I scarcely knew the reasons for this. Some families attended the conservative, German language, Sommerfeld Church that stood in the middle of the village. Other families, including ours (Henry and Helena Friesen), all of my mother's siblings (the Rempels) and their families who lived in or near Rosenhof, attended the Christian Fellowship Church (CFC) in the nearby village of Rhineland. A third group attended the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC) church in Chortitz, a village that is located eight miles south of Rosenhof. And finally, there were a few families that attended the Church of God in Swift Current.

As I noted in my previous articles in the Saskatchewan Historian, the 1940s and 50s were a time of change in regard to spiritual matters and church attendance in Rosenhof and the surrounding Mennonite communities. From 1925 until 1940 the Sommerfeld Churches in the villages were the most common, having taken over some of the vacant Old Colony Churches whose ministers and leaders had emigrated to Mexico in the 1920s. One of the earliest signs of spiritual renewal/change among the Mennonites in this area was the popularity of the special, evangelistic meetings conducted by Rev. I.P.F. Friesen and Rev. George Froese of Manitoba that took place in the village of Schoenfeld in 1939.

Jacob (J.J.M.) Friesen, a nephew of the two evangelists, and his wife Margaret were among those who were deeply impacted by these services. At the urging of Peter and Elizabeth Wall, Henry and Lena Funk also attended the Schoenfeld meetings. These three couples were instrumental in starting an English language Sunday School for children in Rhineland in 1943, a ministry that grew to include evening services for adults. The establishment of the CFC there a few years later grew

out of these initiatives and was fortified by the pastoral leadership of J.J.M. Friesen. Fourteen years later, special evangelistic services held by Ben D. Reimer and Henry Toews in various Sommerfeld churches in the villages resulted in what is called "the Wymark Revival." Those whose lives were changed by this revival – including Sommerfelder ministers Dave Froese, Peter Schlamp and Abe Leiding – established an EMC Church in Chortitz in 1958.

In addition to these two major renewal movements among Mennonites on the Swift Current Reserve in the 1940s and 50s there was also a movement toward a more pentecostal or charismatic form of worship. Unlike the formation of the CFC in Rhineland and the EMC in Chortitz, the appeal of pentecostal theology and worship came from **outside** the Mennonite community. Two American healing evangelists, Oral Roberts and William Branham, became well-known across the USA and in Canada in the mid to late 1940s. People from the Swift Current area listened to their messages of revival, miraculous healing and charismatic gifts via radio or encountered these ideas through their magazines: *Healing Waters* (Oral Roberts) and *Voice of Healing*. (William Branham). Some Mennonites drove as far as Montana, Kansas, Medicine Hat and Regina to attend their popular healing services.

The meetings held by these charismatic preachers were different from the ones held by other evangelical churches on the Mennonite Reserve such as the CFC in Rhineland or the EMC church in Chortitz in that they emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit and encouraged prayer for physical healing, as well as personal salvation. The pentecostal preachers in that era called this the "full gospel".

Long before Roberts and Branham became well known in the Swift Current area, two different Church of God movements took root in communities close to but not on the Mennonite Reserve. One

began in Hallonquist, just south of the Mennonite Reserve, through the ministry of Brother Butger-eit, an evangelist affiliated with the Church of God of Anderson, Indiana. He held services in Ernfold and Hallonquist and helped to start a church in the latter, in 1913-14. In 1956 a "sister church" was established in Swift Current which at first was called Eastside Church of God. When it relocated to the west side of the city it took on the name Westmount Church of God. It does not appear that any Mennonites joined this church in the 1950s.

A second Church of God organization, this one originating in Cleveland, Tennessee had its beginnings southwest of Swift Current. The key figure for this group in Saskatchewan was Paul H. Walker, a travelling evangelist whose ministry gave rise to the establishment of churches in Goultdtown, Maple Creek and four small communities west of Shaunavon in the early 1930s: Senate, Consul, Robsart and Vidora. In 1936 the Church of God adherents from these small towns established a Bible School in Consul. The school moved to Robsart in 1938, then to Estevan and finally to Moose Jaw where it was known as the International Bible School (IBC).

Despite the early beginnings of these two Church of God denominations in southwestern Saskatchewan, it was not until 1952 that the Swift Current Church of God (Cleveland) began to take shape. That year John Wall from Herbert (perhaps more correctly Goultdtown as it had a Church of God dating back to 1933) and two ministers from Consul, Peter Harder and Pastor Case VanIepren organized a series of meetings in the city. The following year (1953) two graduates of the denomination's Bible School, Norman Holmes and Shirley Daniels together with an American pastor by the name of John Brost, conducted more services in a tent/tabernacle erected on what would later become the site of the church building. In 1953 the church was officially organized and Norman Holmes became its first pastor. Following a one-year pastorate by John Brost (1953-54), the church hired its first longer term pastor: Anton Meyers who led the church from 1954 to 1958.

It was during Pastor Meyers's term that a number of Mennonite families joined the church.

These included the Jacob and Eva Friesen and Bernard and Katharina Rempel families from Rosenhof. Other families from the Rhineland, Chortitz and Hamburg villages became strong supporters of the church too, and participated in the Sunday School programs as well as the music ministries. These included Henry and Lena Funk, John and Helena Rempel, Isaac and Mary Funk, Peter and Elizabeth Wall, Abe and Helena Funk and for a few years, John and Elizabeth Funk. Descendants of these couples speak highly of Rev. Robert Reesor who served the church from 1958-64 and then again from 1970-74. A number of the young people from these families attended IBC in the 1950s and 60s, some while it was located in Estevan and others after the school moved to Moose Jaw.

Even though the number of families from the Mennonite Reserve who attended the Church of God was not large, the appeal of the pentecostal faith was further evidence that the spiritual hunger of the Mennonites on the Swift Current Mennonite Reserve was deep, and was not limited to a "Mennonite only" kind of faith. It is also clear that the spirituality of the community grew deeper and broader through these Church of God movements.

### Sources:

Dixon Pentecostal Research Centre – Cleveland, Tennessee

Email conversations with Betty Funk, author of *Legacy* (2017)

Phone conversations with several other early members of the Swift Current Church of God.

*Paths of a Pioneer* by Paul H. Walker

*Hallonquist-A Light in the Window – a Local Community History*

*Our Side of the Hills. A History of Robsart, Vidora, Consul, Senate, Govenlock and Area – a Local Community History*

Western Tract Mission published a book by Carl Dyck that studied Branham, called, "Branham: The Man and His Message." It can still be found at [westerntractmission.org/T/Occ/WilliamBranham\(book\).shtml](http://westerntractmission.org/T/Occ/WilliamBranham(book).shtml)

HAF

## History Intern Returns to Record our Storytelling Mennonite Seniors

by Harris Ford

This was the second summer of a project with the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan. I was very fortunate to be welcomed back into the fold and to pick up where we left off last year. Last year Dick Braun and I spoke to eleven people. From this momentum we spoke to twelve people this summer for a total of twenty-three for the project. We went around Saskatchewan visiting people's homes and were welcomed into their lives as they recounted the past and we got to know the person in the present.

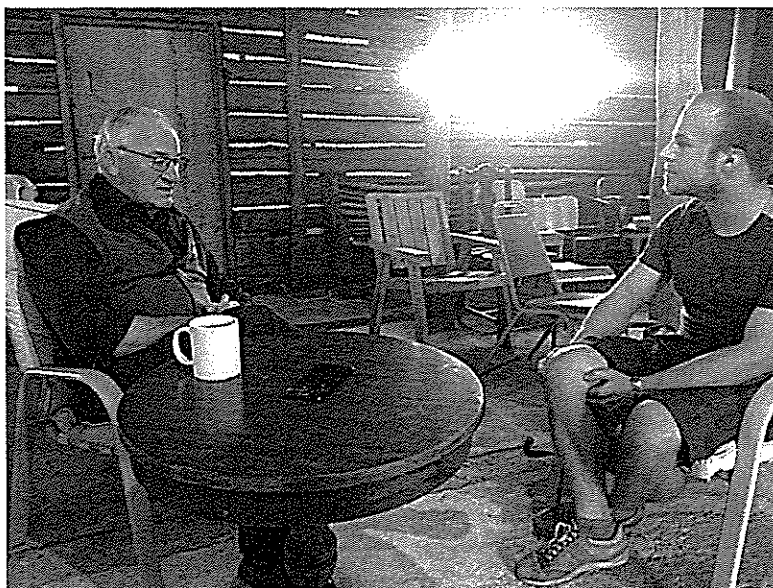
What sticks out the most to me is the generosity of people. Here I am, strolling up to people's homes as a twenty-three-year-old not knowing the volunteers and with no Mennonite affiliation. And yet people welcomed me with gratitude, with dignity, and with warmth. That is something I will never forget. We may have

been doing history work, but there is no denying the aspect of the now either; the present of the present, both combined effortlessly whenever we sat down to talk.

This summer we made a conscious effort to use the word "conversation" as opposed to "interview" to better showcase our intentions. We did not go into this work peppering people with questions or having it a one-way street. Quite the contrary. The best moments happened once the nerves wore away and the recorder was forgotten. This is where we were able to capture people's emotive realities, the little things they do to be unique, and the stories that have shaped their lives. It never felt like work; it was always an opportunity to learn.

Dick and I honed our craft from last year with the help of suggestions given to us. Dr. Keith Carlson and I presented at the AGM in March, 2019 and fielded questions. Many people brought up the desire to have a visual component as well as the audio. So we employed a video camera this year as well. Now we have audio, photos, and video from all twelve folks with whom we conversed. It is certainly a rich collection. We were also joined by Harold Loewen and John Reddekop for a conversation.

Ultimately, this project aims to preserve facets



Ray Funk with Harris Ford

of individuals that would otherwise not be accessible. Many people spoke about how they wished something like this would have been done with their parents or grandparents. The two most beneficial results of these conversations were collecting life stories and having something tangible for many years down the line. The knowledge will be useful now in

genealogical research, in community history, and for anyone who is interested in learning about Mennonite lives. It will hold those same strengths into the future, and it will also serve as a way for great-great grandchildren to see and hear their relative speak about life. I have no idea what my great-grandparents sounded like or how they told a story. This won't be the case for many people now. And that's special.

Every conversation was open for the person to take over and have their personality shine through. These were the best moments. The other aspect to know about all these conversations was the inclusion of laughter. Every single person shared in laughter at some point. There were some incredibly funny moments alongside life's more sombre episodes. The

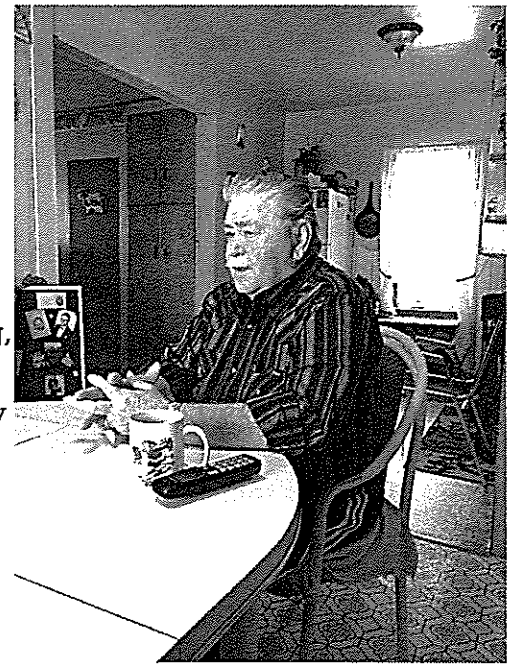


Jacob M. Fehr, Swift Current, & Harris

overall sentiment was expressed in one of the conversations as "although there have been difficulties, life has been rich." Something for all of us to carry forward.

We had many different topics come up as the hours quickly passed. Some folks talked more about

history and how it impacts the now as much as the past. I never imagined this would ever be something I would be doing, but now I cannot imagine my professional career without this wonderful collection of moments. We have sat in barns, in super soft chairs in care homes, drove through the Saskatchewan landscape and travelled to times long since departed save for the recollections of those who shared with us. It has been a most remarkable journey.



Richard Miereau, retired auctioneer

Ukraine, some addressed rural life in Saskatchewan. There were discussions of moving around, of staying put, of Paraguay migration and Manitoba. Everybody has a story to tell, and there is no one way to tell a story. Everyone told their story as they saw fit, and for that we are extremely thankful.

At the end of every conversation I would ask people how they would like to be remembered at this stage of their life. It was a nice way to wrap up and add any concluding thoughts, and people's responses were all fascinating, different, and thought-provoking. As someone just starting on this life journey it is always amazing to hear people reflect. That's not something young people do too often. I had this question flipped back at me a few times, and while I didn't have any concrete response it has made me think a lot. And that is wonderful. A little rejigging of the mind.

This has been an amazing project to be a part of. I am extremely grateful to the Historical Society for taking me on board and for fostering a deeper, richer, and more beautiful understanding of



Tina Friesen, Warman, SK

*Hf*



## How to Clean Headstones

Light colored marble or limestone tombstones can be cleaned with a cup of ammonium hydroxide or household ammonia mixed in a gallon of water to remove biological growth such as moss, mildew, algae, and lichen. Avoid using chlorine bleach, though, as it tends to result in light brown staining after some time.

For a granite headstone: mix a solution of 50% regular household bleach, and 50% water, and scrub the stone, using only a nylon or fiber brush (do not use anything containing metal because it can scratch or leave fragments behind that can damage the granite surface). Let set for 20 to 30 minutes, then rinse with plain water.

# Schmitt Family Genealogy

by Dick Braun

The Schmitt name has been known to me for many years. One of the earlier stories was about a certain Mr. Schmitt from Schlorrendarp who was a homebrewer. My great uncle Peter Loeppky told us how they as teenage boys had found his cooker (still) and helped themselves to the brew. Then there was a certain Mrs Schmitt who was notorious for listening in on the party line telephone.

Some 20 years ago we went to colony Shipyard, Belize for the first time and I met Peter Schmitt who was working for Kathy's cousin in the store. Peter and I got to know each other as we visited more often.

Then I met Abram Schmitt who had moved from Mexico to Schoenwiese, Saskatchewan. The next time we visited Belize, I talked to Peter about this Abram Schmitt and it turned out to be his cousin. We visited again in 2017. As per usual, I went to visit Peter, as he had gone to work in the colony seed and fertilizer store (Gemeinde Schpika). I again wanted to know more about his Schmitt family and he suggested that I go to visit his parents.

We went to visit the Cornelius Schmitts. We drove onto the yard and the old couple was sitting in front of their house enjoying the beautiful afternoon. We were introduced to the Schmitts, by Kathy's cousins, George and Mary Wall. It was such a beautiful sight to see, the old couple sitting side by side, that I asked to take a picture of them.

The request was turned down, but we started to talk about my burning question about their Schmitt family. I posed a few questions. Then I asked if he had any idea what his grandfather's name had been. The answer came quickly "Yes, and great and my great-great grandfather, too." He said he would show me something and got a book from inside the house. He brought out a book in which he had hand-written in great detail his

family's genealogy dating back to 1795.

I was so impressed with the wonderful work this man had done, and I praised him for this work. He then told us that he was going to make a book like that for each of his children.

When we talked about leaving, he called to his wife and said, "The man wants to take a picture of us." Now we have a picture and a book by which to remember Cornelius and Justina (Friesen) Schmitt.

We went home, and I told Leonard Doell about this book. He asked, "Did you make a copy of it?"

I had not, so when we went to visit in 2019 that was one of my missions, to find this book and make a copy of it. I asked George Wall if we could visit the Schmitts again, and it turned out that Mr. Schmitt had passed away.

I talked to his son, Peter, and he did not know what I was talking about. His mother's memory was

not clear enough to know, either. I described the book to Peter and asked if he had the books and papers that would have been his parents'. Peter said that he did, and that he would look for the book.

Two days later, Peter showed up with a book but was not sure if this was the right one. It was the book that I was looking for. I asked whether I could make a copy of it to take home to put in the Archives of the

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan.

Peter had no problem with that, and I copied all 73 pages of it. I was lucky there was a copier in the colony that I could use to make this happen. Peter was very happy that I had come to look for this book as you never know what might have happened. He was now going to make a copy for each of his siblings.

There are many treasures out there, but the trick is to find them and *seize the moment* when the opportunity presents itself.



Cornelius & Justina (Friesen) Schmitt,  
Shipyard, Belize

## Growing up in Rosthern (1938-1948)

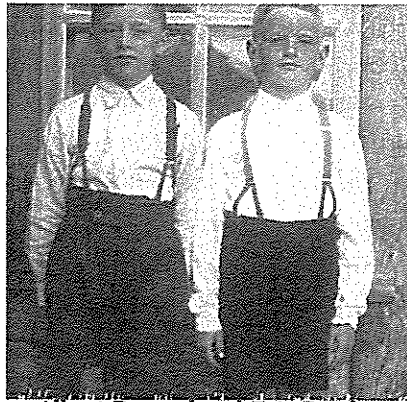
by Eric Paetkau (retired M.D.)

Albert Rempel and I were inseparable from ages five to fifteen (1938-48). David Paetkau (RJC music maestro) was my dad. Reverend John Rempel was Albert's dad. The church and the German English Academy were very much in our background.

It was a gentle era for us despite the war. Bikes were our mode of transportation and no matter where we left them, our bikes would always be there when we came back for them. It was nine miles to the Saskatchewan River where we would go to watch "Fisher Fast" catch his fish and then walk into town carrying his sack of goods.

Gophers were a big part of our lives. The municipality paid us two cents for each tail we brought in. Henry Friesen managed the Mennonite Youth Farm (previously an experimental farm, now a home for seniors), he offered us an extra penny per tail if we hunted on his farm. One summer we trapped and nurtured about ten gophers in a giant piano box. We obviously couldn't kill these pets so we released them into downtown Rosthern in the fall.

One spring while rafting on the local creek, we decided to dam the culvert under the road with logs and boards. The road led to the graveyard. That night the road washed out. In mortal fear we awaited the coming of the police. It seemed like an act of God; however, no one connected us with it. Speaking of the cemetery, one of our favourite evening pastimes was to spy on young couples "making out" in the cemetery. We made appropriately "ghostly sounds"



Albert Rempel and Eric Paetkau

which certainly upset the romance, but we could always outrun the angry boyfriend, especially when his pants were around his ankles.

Victor Suderman's farm was a great source of adventure. They had a family burial plot near their house. One rather large grave was unoccupied so we enlarged it and turned it into a dugout in which we imagined the nearby dead trying to get us. For

several summers we raided an owl's nest and took the owlets before they fledged and kept them in the Suderman's hayloft until fall. I had a part-time job delivering meat for Charlie Spriggs, the local butcher on Main Street. He allowed me to help myself to "old meat" to feed the owls. In winter, Victor would rig up a harness and ride a horse all over the pasture pulling two skiers behind him.

Reuben Hamm's farm had a dugout water reservoir (the bare bum pool). We'd never been taught to swim, so we would just jump in the deep end, and flail our way to the shallow end which was always full of cow poop. Our parents had no idea what we were doing. The only rule we had to live by was to be home at meal time.

Occasionally we'd let some other boys join in the fun. They were a couple years younger and included Hans and Heinz Heese as well as David Toews, son of K.G. Toews, the teacher.

We also included George Loepke, an "English boy" whose dad owned a service station at the entrance to town. He had access to cigarettes; how he got them didn't bother us. So we tried smoking a few times. We used the small tin shack behind the Queen's hotel. We choked and gagged but were cool.



Victor & Abe Suderman (in suits), Albert Rempel and Eric Paetkau, with baby owls they tamed each summer



The smoke emanating from the cracks of the tin shed were noticed, and one day the door opened and there was the town constable. After an appropriate lecture, he told us that if he caught us again, he'd tell our parents. Worse still was that he was our hockey coach and said he would not allow us to play again... so we quit.

And all the time we basked in the glory of local sports heroes; the Rempel brothers in hockey (Albert's older siblings), and Carl Ens in softball.

Frequently we biked to Leonard Ens's farm three miles away. Although a few years older, he welcomed us, and we were exposed to all the animals and their activities. We learned about the birds and the bees.

And the music. . . RJC choirs were among the best in Saskatchewan. Dad's biggest one was at the Saskatoon Songfest in 1947 with approximately two hundred and thirty voices (twelve choirs massed together).

The fact that we were bilingual came upon us suddenly. We spoke German to adults and English to each other. Anne Ens, our German Sunday school teacher, was also our grade one teacher when we started school. She told us that in school we had to speak English and not German. We weren't sure why.

Teasing and chasing our fellow classmate, Dolly Stobbe, was one of our favourite pastimes.

It was the war years; my grade two teacher, Miss Luke, was very British and disliked Germans. In that year she gave me nine strappings. I had to hold out my hand to receive the hits. If I pulled back I got extras. Tipping her outdoor toilet on halloween gave us a great deal of pleasure.

Bishop Toews and his family were in our lives. Bishop Toews was known as the "Moses of the Mennonites" because he had convinced Prime Minister Mackenzie King to allow many thousands of Mennonites into Canada in the 1920's, despite parliament's disapproval. MacKenzie King had grown up among Mennonites in the Waterloo, Ontario area and was sure Mennonites would be good citizens.

We had little contact with English boys. Douglas Currie had comic books which were forbidden

to us. Warren Nolte would go home after school to milk and cookies. Our treats were roasted buns (Reeschkje) which we carried in our pockets.

And suddenly, we were teenagers. We put aside boyish pleasures and developed a liking for girls. Holding a girl's hand in the local movie theatre on a Friday night was the highlight of the week. At least it was for me. As for Albert, he leaned in a different direction and sadly our lives drifted apart.

*EP*

## **A Word from our Treasurer:**

Thank you for your past and present donations. They help to keep the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan's work going on.

### **REMINDER:**

To receive a 2019 Tax Receipt, your donation and/or membership must be received in 2019. The cheques must be dated on or before December 31, 2019.

Susan Braun  
MHSS Treasurer

### **MOVING?**

Regarding your Subscriptions to the *Historian*, Please let Susan know too, so she can change your address for coming issues of the *Historian*. Susan looks after the mailings, so please email your old and your new address to: ***mhss@sasktel.net*** or to ***susan.3braun@gmail.com***

## **A Word from our Editor:**

I also look after the email list, ***E-Updates***, when we have events to announce. If you have left your old email address behind and got a new one, would you please send both to me. If your old one is no longer a live email the E-Updates will bounce back and it gets deleted, but I need your new email to keep you on the list.

Check the back cover for my email address.



## Pioneer Cemetery Restored

*Clippings from: The Saskatchewan Valley News - Thursday, Sept. 21, 1972*

Possibly the oldest cemetery in the Rosthern area, and for many years completely forgotten, came into its own at a special unveiling service held Monday, attended by about fifteen people.

All were descendants of the Peter Siemens family, one of eleven families to come to the Rosthern area in 1889 and the first to homestead here. They settled in an area just west of the present town site.

The first death in this group occurred in the Jacob Friesen family in 1891 when one of their children passed away. No cemetery facilities had been needed and consequently none were available. Mr. Friesen donated a small plot of land on the southwest corner of the quarter on which he homesteaded, for that purpose, and the cemetery served the small community till 1919.

Since then families had moved away, a new cemetery was provided for the town, the old one fell into disrepair and for several years was almost forgotten.

In 1964, Mrs. Elizabeth Friesen (nee Siemens), of Aldergrove, B.C., visited the community and resolved to restore the pioneer cemetery which is the final resting place for many members of her ancestors. She enlisted the help of her brother Peter L. Siemens of Vernon, B.C., and together they spent countless hours of negotiations, the last three years of which were carried out with the Town of Rosthern.

The cemetery, which is located one half mile west of 4th Avenue along the road past the water reservoir, was purchased by the immediate family, surveyed, registered and vested in the Town of Rosthern. Recently a granite memorial with a plaque bearing the names of about 30 people buried there, was erected and the unveiling



service was held Monday afternoon. All this was done at a total cost of about \$1600. The responsibility of keeping the cemetery in repair now falls on the Town of Rosthern.

Both Mr. Peter Siemens and Mrs. Elizabeth Friesen (nee Siemens) were present at the ceremony which was organized with the assistance of

Mrs. Helen Toews (nee Siemens), of Mayfair, Sask.

They expressed keen appreciation to Mr. G. Epp and the town council through whose cooperation the project had been successfully concluded.

"The memorial is dedicated to the memory of our Siemens ancestors," they said, "as well as to others of the original eleven families, the first settlers in this community."

"We felt we owed them a respectable resting place and we trust Rosthern is enriched for it," they said.

### CELEBRATES 100 YEARS - MRS. HELENA FEHR

*The Saskatchewan Valley News - Sept. 29, 1986*

The only remaining pioneer of this district who settled in the Valley area before the turn of the century reached her 100th birthday on September 29.

Mrs. Helena Fehr (nee Siemens) arrived in Rosthern with her family and 10 other families in 1891. She grew up near Rosthern and settled east of Hague when she married Isaac Fehr during the early 1920's.

Mrs. Fehr has been a resident in the local nursing home for many years. Her family honored her on Sunday afternoon with a birthday party held in the dining hall of the Quonset on the Nursing Home grounds for approx. 100 relatives and friends. A program of singing and readings followed the meal.

Rev. Ed Martens MC'd the program and also presented a meditation. He was assisted by Rev. Herman Janzen who spoke in the German language. A buffet luncheon closed the afternoon celebrations. Guests came from Ontario, B.C., and many areas of Saskatchewan. Happy 100th Birthday! - K.H.

### **DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE EARLY PIONEER FAMILIES, 1891 - 1919**

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Siemens (1)

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Siemens (11) son of (1)

Mr. Peter Siemens (111) son of (11)

Mrs. Marie Friesen, daughter of P. Siemens (11)

Mrs. Tina Bergen, daughter of P. Siemens (11)

Miss Annie Siemens, daughter of P. Siemens (11)

Miss Elizabeth Siemens, daughter of P. Siemens (11)

Child Peter, 1st son of Mr. & Mrs. John P Siemens, son of P. Siemens (11)

Children, Jacob & Elizabeth of Peter Siemens(111)

Children, David & Helena of Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Friesen

Two Children of Mr. Herman Unger (Sr.)

Mrs. David Janzen (Sr.)

Mrs. David Janzen (Jr)

Mrs. John Wiens and One Child Wiens

Mrs. Henry Neufeld (Sr.) and One Grandchild Child Lentzman

Child Trippel

Child of Mr. Gerhard Enns

Children of Mr. & Mrs. John Rempel (Two)

Mr. John Hamm

The plaque bearing the names of the people interred in the pioneer cemetery.

### **Modern Technology could determine Location of Graves in Rosthern Pioneer Cemetery**

- Thurs. December 5, 2013 - Sask. Valley News

There is a graveyard in Rosthern that has at least 39 people buried there, but not one grave can be seen.

While there is a common marker indicating a gravesite, there are no markers for any individual graves.

Modern technology could possibly pinpoint the locations of the graves, says Mike Markowski,

heritage division manager/senior archaeologist with Canada North Environmental Services of Saskatoon.

Two weeks ago, The Saskatchewan Valley News published a story about how the technology, ground penetrating radar, was used to find additional unmarked graves in the St. Laurent Cemetery at the Our Lady of Lourdes St. Laurent Shrine Site this past summer.

Markowski was one of the researchers involved in the St. Laurent project. He was interested to learn of a completely unmarked gravesite in Rosthern that dates back over 100 years or maybe even more.

When informed about the little known Rosthern Pioneer Cemetery, Markowski said, "if there is any interest, the same technology could be used to identify the individual graves in Rosthern."

He said ground penetrating radar and other archaeological techniques could be used to find the individual graves, and there is a possibility that grants may be found to cover the cost.

Katherine Hooe of Rosthern said she is one of a few people who know about the gravesite, which holds the remains of her relatives.

She said the site was once the corner of her grandparents' garden that was used for family burials starting in 1891, and used until a proper community cemetery was created in town.

Hooe said in the early years of settlement many families in the rural area had small cemeteries on their land.

There could be the odd grave in a garden in town that no one even knows about, she pointed out.

"It would be nice to know where the graves are in the Pioneer Cemetery. I used to live on that land. I know the area well, but I have never seen a grave. It would be nice to know where the actual graves are located," she said.

Rosthern Pioneer Cemetery is located in the southwest corner of town, one-quarter mile from 4th Street, north and west of where in theory an extension of 10th Street would meet an extension of Herschel Road.

All that can be seen today is a metal sign marking the "Rosthern Cemetery 1891-1919" and a faded plaque installed in 1967 by family members.

Historical information about the Rosthern Pioneer Cemetery, published in The Saskatchewan Valley News in the past, reported that the first person to be buried was a child of the Jacob Friesen family.

It was Friesen who donated the land for the burial, which was in the southwest corner of his property.

It was reported that since there was no other cemetery in the area, it is likely that some non-family members are buried there as well.

The plaque reads: *Dedicated to the Memory of the Early Pioneer Families 1891-1919*, and lists the 39 people buried there.

The Town of Rosthern has no records in its archives about the Pioneer Cemetery. All the records that the town is concerned with are the currently used cemeteries.

The Saskatchewan Cemeteries project lists the following as being buried at the site, located at NE 34-42-03 W3: Bergen, Tina (nee Siemens) daughter of Peter Enns; (unknown) child of Gerhard Friesen; David son of Jacob Friesen; Helena daughter of Jacob Friesen; Marie (nee Siemens) daughter of Peter Hamm; John Janzen; (unknown) wife of David Jr. Janzen; wife of David Sr. Lentzman; (child) Neufeld; (unknown) Neufeld; (unknown) wife of Henry Sr. Rempel; (unknown) child of John Rempel; (unknown) child of John Siemens; Annie daughter of Peter Siemens; Elizabeth daughter of Peter Siemens; Jacob son of Peter Siemens; Peter Siemens; Peter son of Peter Siemens; Peter (infant) son of John P. Siemens; (unknown) wife of Peter Trippel; (child) Unger; (unknown) child of Herman Unger; (unknown) child of Herman Wiens; John Wiens (child); (unknown) wife of John.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan states the cemetery is located at NE 33-42-3 W3rd, and does not call it a cemetery.

"This is not a cemetery as such. The gravesites are overgrown with trees; however, it has been turned into a mini-memorial park with a gate which carries the name. It also has a bronze memorial plaque with the names of the people buried there. The grass has been mowed around the sign

and cairn giving it the visibility it deserves," states the MHSS, pointing out that the "approximate number of burials" at this non-cemetery is 26.

(Clippings submitted by Susan Braun)

## Upcoming Events in Our Mennonite Communities in Saskatchewan & Canada

### MHSS - Annual General Meetings

- **March 6 & 7, 2020** - Reserve the dates.

(The program is being worked on. Announcements will be via website and the E-Updates email).

### Mennonite Celebrations & Anniversaries

(Keep in mind as you plan vacations and trips).

#### 2020: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)

**turns 100 years old.** Various celebrations including a conference in Winnipeg in October.

#### 2021: Indigenous Mennonite Relations. A

Conference at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo.

#### 2022: Mennonite Migration to Mexico

**Centennial.** Various celebrations including a conference in Winnipeg in October.

#### 2023: Russlaender Mennonite Migration

**Centennial.** Various celebrations including a conference in Winnipeg.

#### 2025: 500th Anniversary of the Beginnings of the Mennonites. No formal plans yet.

### A Tip for Researchers:

Here is a website for reading old newspapers:  
Google Newspaper Archives

<https://news.google.com>

It has all Newspapers, search alphabetically,  
( A - Z ) e.g. S - to find...Star Phoenix

## Aeltester Ernst Regehr and the Mennonites of West Prussia - Uprooted and Resettled by Verner Friesen

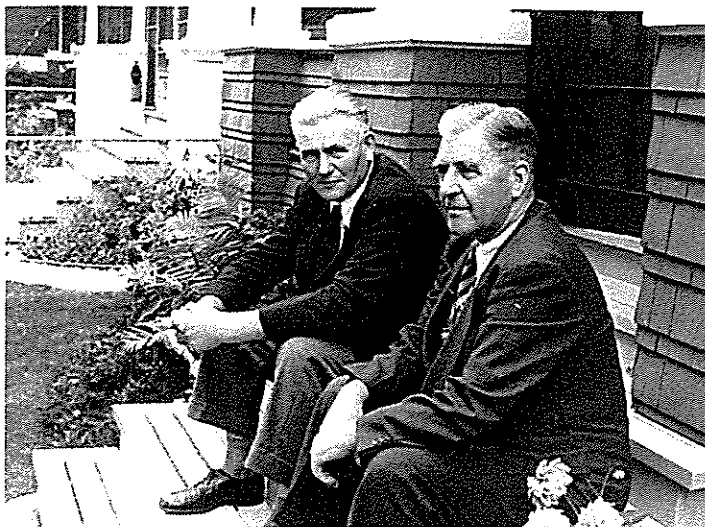
The Mennonites moved from the Netherlands to northern Poland in the 16th century, beginning in the 1530s. At that time the Netherlands was controlled by Spain, and under the Spanish kings the Mennonites were severely persecuted for their Anabaptist faith. In the Vistula delta of Poland there was a relatively tolerant attitude towards religious differences.

Furthermore, Polish authorities welcomed the Mennonites because, being from the Dutch lowlands, they were known for their expertise in draining marshland and reclaiming land from the sea. That expertise was put to good use in what later became West Prussia as they built dykes and canals to drain swamps and produce more farmland. Among the Mennonites were also skilled craftsmen and merchants.

Over the years many of them became quite prosperous on their farms and in their businesses and professions. They were able to organize their own schools and the church became central to their Christian faith. In the first years they met in homes, but eventually were allowed to build churches. The two congregations in Danzig also built hospices for the elderly and needy; from the beginning the practice of mutual aid has been important for the Mennonites.

In 1772, the part of Poland in which most of the Mennonites lived came under Prussian control. In return for the privilege of military exemption the Prussian authorities demanded a large annual cash payment. Also, the Mennonites were forbidden to buy additional land, resulting in many of them becoming landless.

This made the invitation from Catherine II of Russia to settle the newly-conquered steppes of



*Aeltester Ernst Regehr and Johann Entz (photo from MAID)*

Ukraine very attractive. From 1788 to the 1830s thousands of Mennonites moved from West Prussia to Ukraine. Some others moved to Canada and the United States. However, in the 1940s there were still approximately 10,000 Mennonites in West Prussia.

These Prussian Mennonites had survived the First World War, and were hoping to remain

intact through World War II as well. But in the last months of 1944, as the Russian armed forces were advancing rapidly into Poland, the grim prospect of being displaced became ever more ominous. In fact, already by January of 1945 the evacuation of Mennonites began in earnest.

Ernst Regehr was the Aeltester of the Rosenort group of Mennonite churches in West Prussia at that time. He had been elected minister in 1930 and as Aeltester in 1934. In the early 1940s the Rosenort group had over 500 baptized members and almost 300 children. In addition to the Rosenort group, there were three other groups of Mennonite churches in West Prussia. Gifted as a poet, Aeltester Regehr, in January of 1945 wrote a poem describing the severe agony of having to leave his home and homeland, chased out by the Russian armies. Below is a translation of that poem:

*"Thy will be done" was easy to say when trouble and sorrow were far away. We were content and satisfied in our homes, and it seemed to us that things would always remain this way.*

*Then came the morning when the horses were hitched up for the trek that was to take us away from our loved ones and our beloved home, out into the terror of cold and night. Then I could not say "Thy will be done, O Lord."*

*I could only say, "Lord, does it really have to be this way? No, not this, my Father." I walked through the rooms of our house. It seemed that everything looked at me, and I could not break myself away. The furniture, the pictures, the full cupboard, the beloved corner, the stove bench.*

*Here I experienced the wonderful years of my youth. Here stood my parents' coffin. Here I have lived, and loved, and worked with joy and with all my strength. Here I wanted to stay till the day I die and then pass everything on to my children.*

*Then the old clock began to strike, somewhat hesitantly, to be sure. In fulfillment of its solemn duty it admonishes us to acknowledge that the hour has come, the hour of our flight.*

*I feel severe agony. "My God, my God, can it be possible?" My heart rebels against what is happening. It can no longer understand the Almighty God.*

*The old linden trees near our house reach their bare branches out to us. The gardens and fields along the lane, so very familiar, hide their faces in ice and snow, pale as death from the pain of separation.*

Regehr's faith was being severely tested.

Helena (Andres) Friesen, married to Erich Friesen, describes their sad departure in these words: "It was so very difficult to be torn away from our home, where Erich had lived since his childhood, and for me it was 30 years of marriage. Now we had to move out and leave everything behind - our beautiful farm and household; 22 dairy cows chained in the barn; five horses were hitched to the wagons, the rest were left behind. And then the people - four French prisoners of war; one came with us to drive one of the wagons, the other three stayed behind. Erich entrusted the management of the place, especially the cows, to them. Then the two Russian servant girls who helped outside, and the Ukrainian girl in the house. What has become of them all? We were not allowed to take them with

us. The house was left open and everything looked so untidy. The rubber-tired wagon was heavily loaded with our possessions. Our family sat in the covered wagon, and a sleigh with feed for the horses followed. Erich led the trek on foot. It was January 25, 1945, a frosty winter day. The trees glittered with beautiful hoarfrost, and as we left the yard, our big dog stood at the gate and watched us leave."

So where did the fleeing Mennonites go? Many fled to West Germany. About 1800 were brought to 34 refugee camps in Denmark.

A huge tragedy, said to be "the worst maritime disaster in history," happened enroute to Denmark. The former German cruise ship, the Wilhelm Gustloff, was built to hold 2000 people, but was carrying close to 11,000 refugees to Denmark - West Prussian Mennonites, but also refugees from Germany and other countries. On January 30th, about 20 miles off the north Polish coast, the ship was struck by three Russian torpedoes, and in less than an hour sank into the Baltic Sea. In spite of rescue efforts, over 9000 people, about 5000 of them children, perished by drowning. Three Mennonite children were plucked from the frigid sea waters by Polish people and were subsequently adopted and raised by Polish families.

In addition to those who perished by drowning, other refugees succumbed to starvation or were frozen to death during the January flight and still others died in the Danish refugee camps. Many of the Prussian Mennonites spent up to three difficult years in Denmark, experiencing hunger and very

poor living conditions.

After that, many returned to West Germany, while many others chose to find new homes in Paraguay and Uruguay in South America.

During his last years in Germany, Regehr's ministry focussed on visiting and gathering his scattered flock, seeking to encourage and comfort them through very difficult times.. He was able to identify 150 from his former congregation who had ended up in refugee camps in Denmark. Most others lived in



*Residence of Aeltester Regehr in 1956*

West Germany.

On October 7, 1948, a shipload of about 1700 passengers set sail for Paraguay and Uruguay. Aeltester Ernst Regehr and family (a wife and three children) were among the 751 passengers enroute to Uruguay. 942 were destined for Paraguay. The group going to Uruguay included 283 refugees from the camps in Denmark and 275 from West Germany.

One day aboard ship on this twenty day journey Ernst Regehr was asked to lead the evening devotions. The following is quoted from *"Up from the Rubble"* (Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, page 324 and 325).

"We had all heard Regehr, especially his closing prayer, and knew that the whole ship was talking about it. 'We thank you, Lord, that you knocked us down,' he had prayed. 'We thank you, Lord, that we lost our beautiful homes and farms, our magnificent churches, that we lost our country.' People listening to Regehr did not know whether he was in his right mind. Nobody talked like that, and certainly nobody talked like that to God. But he went on in his prayer. 'We thank you, Lord, for taking everything out of our hands that were always so full of things. You made us poor, and weak, so that we could become rich and strong in you.'

People were restless during that prayer. Some shuffled uncomfortably, and a few women were weeping.

Brother Regehr continued: 'Thank you, Lord, for the new beginning you are offering us in Uruguay. We are going to start all over again, Lord, not only in agriculture and schools, but also in our families and in the church. Oh Lord, we are going to start all over again in new relationships with each other and with you, Lord. With all our heart we thank you that you are the God of new begin-

ings. Thank you for giving us this chance in Uruguay. And please help us not to miss this golden opportunity. Amen.'"

What a contrast to the agonizing experience of Aeltester Regehr described in his poem (referred to earlier) at the time he was torn away from his home and homeland! What a remarkable victory of faith over gloom and despair! We can't imagine the heart-rending soul-searching that produced such a change of heart.

About two-thirds of the 751 refugees who emigrated to Uruguay settled on an estate named EL Ombu. In March of 1952 the Danzig Mennonite Church was organized in the El Ombu colony, and again Ernst Regehr was selected as their Aeltester. This congregation, so named because many of its

founding members came from Danzig, along with congregations in Delta and Gartental, as well as a congregation in the capital city of Montevideo, joined in 1953 to form the Conference of Mennonite Congregations in Uruguay. A large part of Regehr's ministry continued to be encouraging and comforting his people who had experienced such very hard times and had big adjustments to make. Having experienced it all himself, he was able to be a strong support to them.

Church offices, including a lay pastorate, were organized according to the traditions in West Prussian congregations. However, some things were different in El Ombu. Instead of settling as individuals and families, they settled as a community based on Biblical commands as well as historical Anabaptist examples. This community focus was expressed, for example, in a strong emphasis on caring for one another, following the example of the early church. In a time of difficult new beginnings especially, Regehr saw this as a necessary spiritual discipline. A portion of every pay cheque, at first twenty five percent, and later, for a time, fifty percent, went



1956 General Conference Mennonite meeting; left to right: Gerhard Lohrenz, Ernst Regehr (Uruguay), S. Floyd Pannabecker photo pub. in *Der Bote*, Oct 17, 1956.)

into a fund to look after welfare needs in the community.

The constitution of the El Ombu congregation highlights the important Mennonite themes that remained constant for Regehr amidst all the changes experienced: Jesus Christ as the cornerstone (I Cor. 3:11), baptism of adults on confession of faith, discipleship, communion, church discipline, separation of church and state, and avoidance of the oath. Military service was acknowledged as a point of contention, and left open to individual choice.

In 1968 Regehr sold his farm, resigned from his office as Aeltester, and with his wife Anna moved to the Delta settlement in the south where their daughter Marlise and oldest son Ernst lived. The younger son Guenter had returned to West Germany.

Both Ernst and Anna's health began to fail, and Ernst Regehr died in February of 1970. He had reached the age of 66 years. A spiritual legacy of many years of faithful service and witness for his Lord, both in West Germany and Uruguay, remains. *"Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord. - they will rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them."* (Revelation 14:13)

### Sources

1. *Old Colony Mennonites in Canada, 2001*. Editor - Delbert Plett. Article by John J. Friesen on early Mennonite history, Netherlands and Poland.
2. *The story of Jacob and Anna (Neufeld) Friesen and Family, Ellerwald, West Prussia* (in German), 1998. Editor - Werner Janzen.
3. GAMEO - Information on Ernst Regehr and the Wilhelm Gustloff ship.
4. *Up from the Rubble*, 1991, Peter and Elfrieda Dyck
5. *A Homeland for Strangers*, 1989, Peter J. Klassen

VJ



## Introduction to the Johann Wall Story by Dick Braun

Johann and Anna Wall moved from Manitoba to Neuanlage, North West Territories in 1898. The Hague Osler Mennonite Reserve was only 3 years old. Life was not easy on the bald prairie. In one year Mr. Wall was deep into church matters and two years later he was elected into the ministry, causing him a great deal of soul searching. Next came World War 1 - with more soul searching.

The Education Act was forced on the Mennonites and looking for a new place to live was considered. The Reinlander Mennonite Church of Canada sent a delegation to South America to look for a new home. They went to Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina but no where could they make a suitable deal. Then... Ohm Johann Wall died!

## The Johann Wall Event in Brazil - September 28, 2019 by Dick Braun

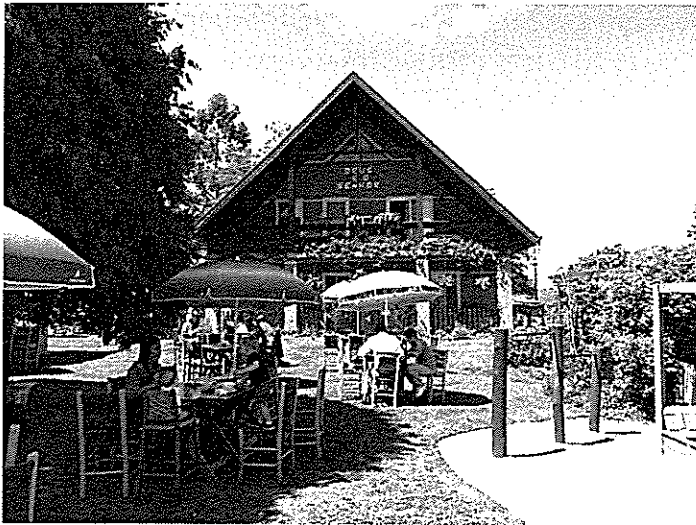
The commemoration of the death of Ohm Johann Wall started very innocently when Hans Kliever from Colony Witmarsum Brazil emailed me approximately one and a half years ago asking the simple question. "Do you know anything about the death of Johann Wall of Canada in Brazil?"

I replied, "Yes I do."

That was the beginning of lots of phone calls and emails to exchange information and ideas. In 1919 the Reinlander Mennonite Church sent a delegation of six men to South America to look for a new home: Johan Wall and Johan P Wall, both from Neuanlage, Saskatchewan; Julius Wiebe and David Rempel, both from Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and Klaus Heide and Cornelius Rempel of Manitoba. These are believed to be the first Mennonites to set foot in South America, and Johann Wall, a member of this delegation, the first Mennonite to die there. Armed with the information of the number on the burial plot, Hans was able to locate the place in the Curitiba Lutheran cemetery where John Wall had been buried on September 28, 1919. Hans noted this date, realizing that it would soon be 100 years since his death and wondered if this event should be marked in some way.



The first idea was to at least mark the grave with a proper stone but when Hans did more research, he found that it would not be possible as the plot had been resold. When I realized that the colony of Witmarsum has a Museum that tourists visit, I suggested to Hans maybe it would be an idea to set up a marker at their museum where more people were apt to see it.



*House of Hans & Gertrud Kleiwer, Witmarsum, Brazil*

Hans and the museum curator agreed with this idea and then also my suggestion that we commemorate this day. Since Saturday, September 28, 2019 was exactly 100 years to the day when Ohm Johann Wall was laid to rest in Curitiba, Brazil, the date was set. Hans worked with people from the museum and others to set up a program of events for an afternoon of unveiling at the museum and an evening program at a local church.

On September 25th, Kathy and I arrived at the Curitiba Airport where we were picked up by Hans Kliever. Hans, a retired school teacher, told us that he and his wife Gertrud sell 'a little coffee' on their yard! Well, it turns out that it is an established coffee shop/bakery that hosts upward of 1,500 people on a typical weekend - sells a little coffee indeed!

On the Friday a group of us wanted to get into the spirit of the event so we headed into the city of Curitiba which now is a city of three million people. Our first stop was the train station that has now become a museum. The telegraph machines and the old steam engine were all there. The

walls were covered with many interesting writings about the past of the train station. We were able to walk the halls and view the platforms to which the delegation of men would have come. We even imagined that it was the telegram machine from which the news of Mr. Wall's death would have been sent to his widow in Saskatchewan. The records show that the men stayed in a nearby hotel, and indeed,



*Two of Johann Wall's grandsons in foreground*

across from the main doors of the station was a hotel that was there 100 years ago and could have been the one.

Our next stop was the Lutheran cemetery where diaries show that the delegation was able to purchase a plot to bury Johan Walls' remains. We found the plot with the little metal plate with the number 1585 inscribed on it, but there are other names on it. We had prior information that for some years the fees for the plot had been paid, but after some time when payment was no longer made, the plot was resold. No one is quite sure who was paying, the Canadian Government or the Reinelander Mennonite Church. If any one out there has more information about this please send it to Kennert at the Steinbach Post.



*Richardo Phillipsen and Isaac Wall with the plaque*

For the Saturday event,

which began at the museum, the local organizers had chosen the theme "Building Bridges" or "Brücken Bauen." Hans Phillipsen gave us a wonderful overview of the Mennonite trek from the Netherlands to Canada and how the Mennonites ended up in Brazil. Those of us gathered in the front parlour of this small museum to attend this event were a true picture of building bridges. Besides us Canadians, there were local people and 23 members of the Wall family (three grandchildren and some great grandchildren), who had traveled from Paraguay and Bolivia to take part in the event.



*The headstone brought by Johann Wall's descendants from Paraguay*

The museum had a plaque made for the event which was unveiled by a grandson (79 year old Jakob Wall, colony Durango, Paraguay) and

Richardo Phillipsen, the curator of the museum. We were invited to browse through the museum.

The group of men from Colony Durango, Paraguay, descendants of Johann Wall, had brought a headstone with the Johann Wall information engraved on it which they had hoped to mount at the grave site. When it was realized that this would not be possible a discussion led to the decision that it would be placed on the Witmarsum Cemetery with an extra explanation as to why this headstone is there.

Then we were all invited to the Kliever house for coffee and fasma. Here we again had the opportunity to visit and get to know each other a little better.

It turned out that some of the Wall descendants are Wall from both sides. This came about because when the 1919 delegates returned home the wife of Ohm Johann P. Wall died, and he married the widow of Johann Wall. Then some of those children married, thus leading to 'double Walls.' While visiting, we discovered that a granddaughter and

her family had come from Bolivia for this event. We also heard that more people from Mexico and Canada might have attended had they heard about the event a little sooner. Who knows where the Wall family may all be living today?

The evening program was held at the Evangelical Mennonite Church. The program started with some musical numbers by a local church group. Werner Braun gave a presentation about the countries that the Mennonites moved through before going to Mexico. I (Dick Braun) gave a brief overview of Ohm Johann Walls' life and what it would have looked like in Neuanlage, Saskatchewan at that time. Johann Wall and Anna Klassen came to Neuanlage in 1898 and he was elected as deacon that same year. He was elected to the ministry in 1900, the same year the first church was built in the village.

I brought greetings from the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and the Old Colony Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan. I touched on the reason for the delegation to go to South America to look for a new home. The Canadian Government had handed the education responsibility over to the province and the original agreement the Mennonites had for self-educating was no longer valid. The way the act was enforced was creating a very big hardship on our people. There was considerable effort

put into trying to come to an agreement with the Saskatchewan Government but it was not good enough, so a large group of Mennonites moved to Mexico. Hans Kliever talked about coming to Mexico and the many hardships that our people



*Dick receiving a plaque like the one in the museum.*

experienced there. There was also a short slide show of greetings from members of their colony who are out serving people in the name of Christ.

I brought two letters (one from the Old Colony Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan and one from the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan) thanking the people in Witmarsum for the work in preserving Mennonite history. I was given a plaque just like the one unveiled in their museum. The Wall family members were presented with a map showing the trek that the delegates took to get to South America. The evening wrapped up with more visiting.

The local organizers and especially Hans Kliever were very excited that the celebration turned out to be so well attended by their local people who had had no earlier clue about that early Mennonite presence in Brazil, also by the descendants of the Wall family that came out in such numbers.

A highlight was the attendance of 79-year-old grandson Jacob Wall who helped with the unveiling of the plaque.

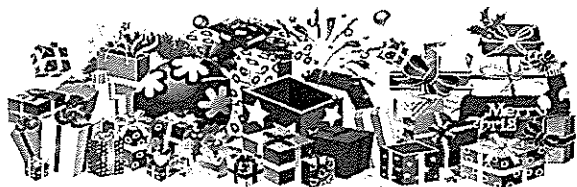
We were all invited to attend the Sunday morning church service at the EMB Church. We brought with us other letters and papers that could be printed in the Post or other newspapers at some time.

I want to thank the people of Colony Witmarsum and especially Hans Kliever for all the work that went into making the event so meaningful and such a success.

I want to thank the Wall family members that traveled a long distance and took the time to attend.

I especially want to thank the Delbert Plett Foundation for sponsoring me to attend the event. I found it humbling to represent the Mennonites of Saskatchewan and Canada.

*DB*



## Finding Mennonites in the Oddest Places

by Victor G. Wiebe

I am always curious and my curiosity takes me to odd places. Recently while watching TV a character used the drug Valerian. Now, on TV characters often are portrayed as mad scientists and one encounters them using substances with strange names. My curiosity kicked in and had me look up exactly what is **Valerian**?

In Wikipedia I found **Valerian** is a mild herbal drug and has been used as a sedative in olden times. How did they know this? Well here is what Wikipedia gives: "In the 16th century, the Anabaptist reformer Pilgram Marpeck prescribed valerian tea for a sick woman." Their source is a Mennonite Quarterly Review article.

Earlier I worked as a Science Librarian at the University of Saskatchewan. One of the computer journals that the library received for a time was titled *TASK Quarterly*. This is the official publication of the Academic Computer Center in Gdansk, Poland. Since most of the world's scientific writing in is English, this Polish journal is in English. Are stories of Mennonites found in computer journals?

Flipping through older issues I found that the journal publishes each year an article describing some aspect of the history of science in Gdansk, formerly called Danzig. In 2002 the article was titled: "*Fires and Electricity in Ancient Gdansk*". In about the middle of the article this information was given: "In the 17th century the famous engineer Wiebe Adams constructed a fire engine which could shoot water up to 100 feet high, which is nearly 30 metres. It was a two-wheeled suction and force pump powered by horses. To unburden the city's Treasury a special fire tax was introduced...."

This "Wiebe Adams" is actually the well-known Dutch Mennonite hydraulic engineer Adam Wiebe who died in Danzig in 1653. You can find an article on him in the online Mennonite encyclopedia *GAMEO.org*.

*VGW*

**Johann Driedger  
and  
Katharina (Martens)  
Driedger**

*of 1910, Osler, SK.*



## Things we Can Learn from an Old Photograph

**by Jake Buhler**

Menno Friesen, grandson of Johann and Katharina Martens Driedger, puts the date of this photograph at around 1910. In that year Johann was 51 and Katharina was 47. That year they moved from Clark's Crossing to Osler.

They had just purchased the Miller farm at Osler, that would later belong to Cornelius and Maria (Pauls) Driedger, then Bernhard and Maria (Pauls Driedger) Buhler, and then Ben and Diana Buhler & Wilfred and Ruth Buhler. In 2019 the farm still belonged to the last described owners.

Johann and Katharina Driedger likely took the train to Saskatoon for the photo. The developing and enlarging process is not known, but there are black ink-like stains on both the frame and the photo which would indicate frame and photo are of the same vintage. The clips holding the photo in place are similar to those used around 1900. There were several original copies made of this photograph, one for each of the children.

In the photo Katharina is wearing a quality traditional covering commonly used by Old Colony Mennonite women known as a Kruzhel Metz [frilled covering] with a tie done up in a bow. Her dress has black cloth buttons.

Johann by contrast is wearing a silk decorated shirt with a bowtie. His dress indicates his rebellious nature, whilst being totally loyal to his Church.

Katharina showed her independence by remaining totally traditional despite his nouveau tendencies.

The first owners of the photo were Johann and Katherina, then their daughter, Katharina Driedger Friesen, then their son, Menno Friesen, then Menno's daughter, Dawn, and then Jake Buhler.

The photograph has now been donated to Diane Driedger in Winnipeg who is the great granddaughter of Johann and Katharina Driedger.

*JB*



## Profiling and Introducing Another Special Archives Volunteer - Andy Neufeld

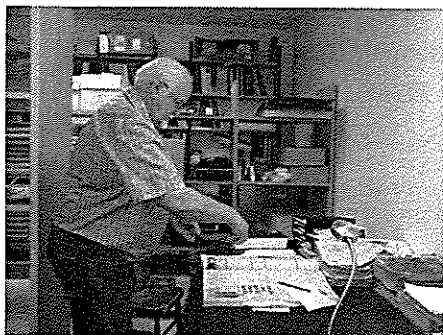
by the Editor, Ruth Marlene Friesen

Andy Neufeld has been a keen member of MHSS for a long time. He grew up three miles north of Love, SK., but has lived in Saskatoon for quite a while. In August last year, he and his wife, Marlene, moved into Bethany Manor, a well-known Mennonite retirement community here in Saskatoon.

In May of this year, while he was hanging out down in the Archives, he asked if he could volunteer. The staff rejoiced.

It did not take long for him to be pointed to the stash of Sask Valley News issues, and the need to scan the obituaries for indexing. Andy pulled out his cellphone and started snapping pictures of each obituary, one after another.

He still has his job as a bookkeeper for a business in Saskatoon, but he tries to come into the Archives late in the afternoon and get in about an hour sometimes two, just snapping photos of the obits, and carefully naming them with a sequence of numbers and the name of the deceased person in the obituary.

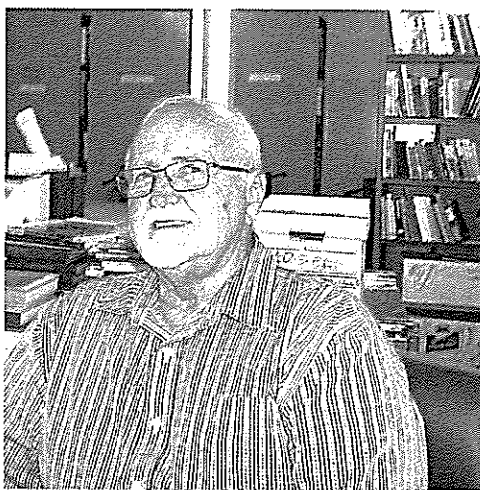


*Andy photographing obituaries*

We went into a large room with many shelves full of books, where Andy opened up a large bound volume of old Sask Valley News issues, with pages aged to a mellow

brown, and demonstrated how he takes the photo scans with his cellphone.

Then he goes home to his apartment in Bethany and spends another 4 - 5 hours, putting the photos on his computer, using PhotoShop to turn them right side up, changing them to black and white, cropping, and resizing them. Next time he is in the



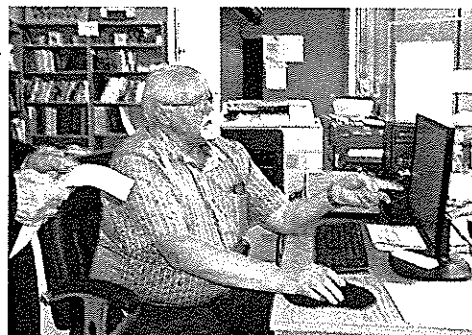
*Andy Neufeld, Volunteer*

Archives, Andy puts those prepared obituary photos into one of the computers there. They are ready to be searched when someone comes in to do research on a relative that they are trying to trace.

While I was interviewing him, a visitor was in the Archives, doing research, looking for a sister of her grandfather. Andy sat down at the computer and opened his collection of over

2000 scanned obituaries, but couldn't find one by the names the visitor had to go by so far.

In the past the obituaries were clipped out of extra copies of the Sask Valley News, and then put on blank pages in thick binders. This digital method has advantages, for collecting



*showing a visitor the obits on screen*

them and making them easily searchable.

So far Andy has processed over 2000 obituaries this way. He estimates that he will be doing another 8000 of them, judging by the volumes of bound issues of the weekly newspaper that are left to go.

The earliest dates are from 1930. There was a fire that destroyed all the issues before that.

Andy commented, "It would be a wonderful miracle if someone came in with some boxes full of issues from the 1920s that they had found in a hoarder's attic."

I agreed; It could still happen!

Andy's cheerful manner and earnest work is much appreciated in our MHSS Archives.

*RMF*

# Seasons' Greetings & Blessings



From your MHSS Board in 2019; (front left to right), Leonard Doell, Jake Buhler (Secretary), John Reddekopp (President), Susan Braun (Treasurer). (Rear, left to right), Elizabeth Guenther, Kathy Boldt (in charge of Archives Volunteers), Dick Braun, and Elmer Regier. (Unfortunately, Board member, Harold Loewen was not present.)

## 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](http://gameo.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online)

**E-Updates Ezine** (announcements by email)  
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 (Be sure to let us know when you change email addresses)

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

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