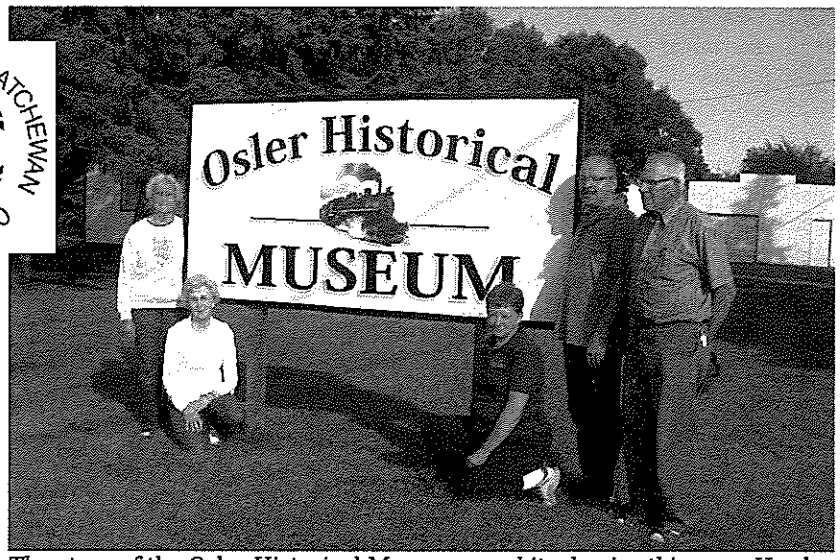
Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

Official periodical of the
Mennonite Historical Society
of Saskatchewan, Inc.

Volume XXII No. 3, 2016

Features:



The story of the Osler Historical Museum - and its demise this year. Hard-working committee members were: Hella Banman, Nettie Balzer, Susan Braun, Bob Peters and Jake Reimer.

Once Upon a Time . . . .
There was a Museum
- by Nettie Balzer

It all started in 1980 when the small town of Osler, Saskatchewan prepared to Celebrate Saskatchewan's 75th birthday. The people of Osler and area caught the mood and planned their own events.

At the time, one room of the old two-room school built in 1947 was being used as a Town Office. The idea of perhaps having a small museum to go with Celebrate Saskatchewan with Osler Artifacts displayed was accepted with enthusiasm, and the Jake W. Loeppky family began collecting and displaying artifacts in the second room of the old school.

After the celebration it was discovered that the folks who loaned articles for the museum did not want them back, so the display was moved into the basement of the two-room school. In part of the basement, an over-hang roof for a kitchen, a bedroom, and other displays were built. Materials used came from several places; windows and . . .

(*cont'd - page 4*)

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Volume XXII No. 3 2016
Cumulative number 56
(first issue of SMH published April 1996)
Published three times a year by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS)
Editor: Ruth Marlene Friesen
Advisory Committee & Proof-readers: Jake Buhler, Verner Friesen, Susan Braun, Esther Patkau and Linda Unger.
Distribution: Susan Braun
Mailing List: Hilda Voth
Printer: ProPrint, Saskatoon, SK.
Readers are invited to submit news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc., to MHSS at the e-mail or street address below.
MHSS Office and Archives:
110 La Ronge Road, Room 900
Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8 Email: mhss@sasktel.net
Archive Hours: Monday, 1:30 - 4 p.m.
Wednesday, 1:30 - 4 p.m. 7-9 p.m.
110 La Ronge Road, Room 900
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The Editor's Perspective

Ruth Marlene Friesen

We did not get such a flood of articles as last year with the Christmas theme. So this issue is only 24 pages. I'm grateful to those who sent in articles.

We do have some good ones for our current theme on Coming to Canada stories. We also have a good article by Henry Neufeld, who has worked in this field with MCC a number of years. He clarifies the terminology, so we know when to use immigrants, refugees, displaced persons, convention refugees, or asylum seekers.

You may have been puzzled about how to deal with this topic because you know more than one story of ancestors coming to Canada. That's my case.

My paternal Friesens came to Manitoba in 1874, and my maternal Friesens arrived there in 1875. The Neudorfs and Kroekers arrived in 1891 and came almost directly to the Rosthern area.

I'm not sure when the legendary Johan von de Veer arrived. His family, and the Spensts seem to have been in Manitoba by 1890, but went to Langdon, ND. for a while before migrating up to Saskatchewan.

Although I have some details and stories about them I don't really know their emotions about coming to Canada, but say, if I used my imagination, I could spin some yarns!

We are glad that Jake Buhler is recovering well from a stroke, and eager to do as much as he can. He has even arranged a grant for MHSS!

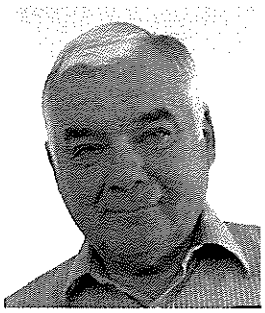
Our next issue will publish a special scholarly article about teaching in Russia in the 1800s. That special grant will cover costs for this project. But we have a few other things lining up for that issue too.

May you and your loved ones have a very blessed Christmas, and a New Year filled with hope.

Blessings & Thanks,
Ruth

MHSS President's Corner

by Dick Braun



The change of the person writing this may seem strange to you. The reason is that Jake Buhler has had a stroke, and has given up the position as president of MHSS. Jake is recovering and being helped with rehab.

We pray and hope that all will be back to normal with Jake's health in the near future. Jake did a lot of work for MHSS and so will be missed, but we will carry on.

In this issue of the Historian we are talking about refugees; there are many stories to be told about receiving refugees and being a refugee. Our own Mennonite people have been refugees at some time or another as time has gone by.

We are members at Osler Mennonite Church, and in the early 80s our church sponsored a refugee family from Laos. There was another refugee family in Osler that was sponsored by a different church in Osler.

We lived in the country and had pigs and other animals. We butchered a lot of pigs back then as the market price was very low. One day I decided to pick up the man from the other refugee family to help with butchering. He was very happy to come with me, but his English was almost non-existent. With such poor communication one does not know how much is understood.

From the start of the 'pig butcher' I knew that he had done this work before. Back in that day we still cleaned the intestines for sausage casing. My mother was helping us, and so he and my mother were cleaning intestines. This is a job that works the best when two people do it together.

I was busy doing other parts of the butchering when I went past where they were working, and I overheard them talking. I could not believe my ears; my mother was talking Low German, and Mr Dithawon was talking his native language and it looked like they perfectly understood each other. They worked in such harmony that it looked like they had worked together for a long time.

This proved to me that he did things very similar to how we did this work here in Canada.

Later when their children learned English we could ask questions about their culture.

The day came when that refugee family wanted to treat us to a meal that was part of their culture.

I got a good idea of what they did with certain parts of the pig. The meal came and the people ate and enjoyed.

We hope that we receive many refugee stories, for people to research in our archives.

I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and hope to see you at our AGM in March-2017

D B

Mennonite Calendar in Saskatatchewan

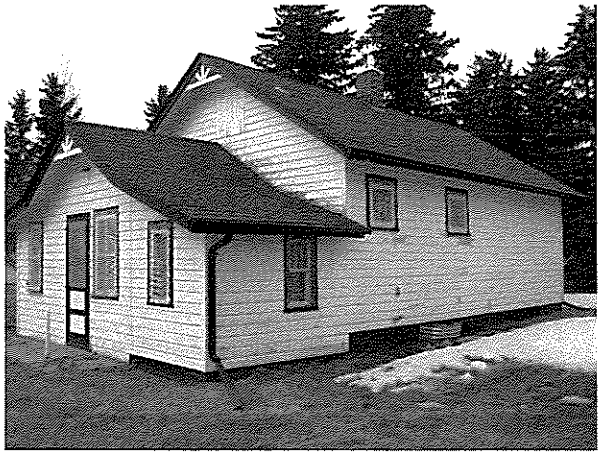
Our next MHSS event will be our **Annual History evening and Annual Meeting planned for Friday and Saturday of March 3 & 4, 2017**. Our guest speaker is going to be ***Wesley Berg from Edmonton***. He has worked as a musicologist, teacher and administrator. He joined the teaching faculty at the University of Alberta in 1974 and served as Chairman of the Department of Music from 1989 to 1995. He has done extensive research on Mennonite hymnody, musical institutions and choral singing and authored Mennonite articles about these subjects. He is an active member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta.

At the MHSS AGM, Wes Berg will be making presentations on his research on Old Colony Mennonite singing, its origin, history and present state by providing examples both written and recorded. He will also share similar examples of the Old Way of singing from around North America and Europe. Everyone is welcome to come to listen and learn more about the history of the music that has shaped us and our communities.

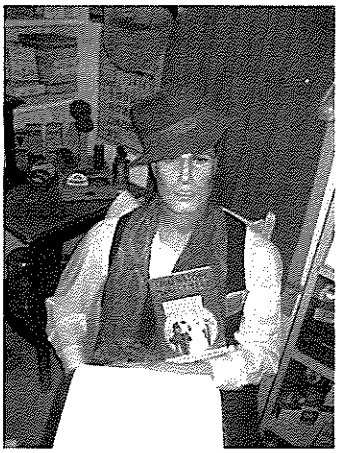
As has been our custom for a number of years, we will be meeting in the Fellowship Centre at Bethany Manor, at 110 LaRonge Road.

In case you are not aware, our MHSS Archives are located directly below the Fellowship Centre in the basement. It is a large, spacious place with many treasures for those who wish to research their Mennonite history and heritage.

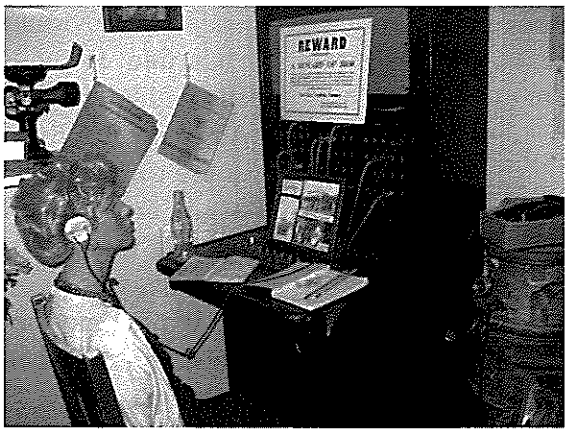
(cont'd from cover)
doors from John Wieler's Store; the ceiling from an old Neuanlage church; two-by-fours from the old Diefenbaker house. Shutters were built locally and Osler volunteers worked hard in putting up the display. More artifacts were added, until the year the basement flooded and continued to flood each spring. Another site was needed.



In 1990 the old George Rempel property owned by the J. J. Neudorf family was made available to the Town for purchase. This house, built in 1942, seemed the perfect place and eager volunteers began the task of taking the house back to the early days, with wall paper, linoleum and furniture. It took several years of hard work to complete the antique look they desired.

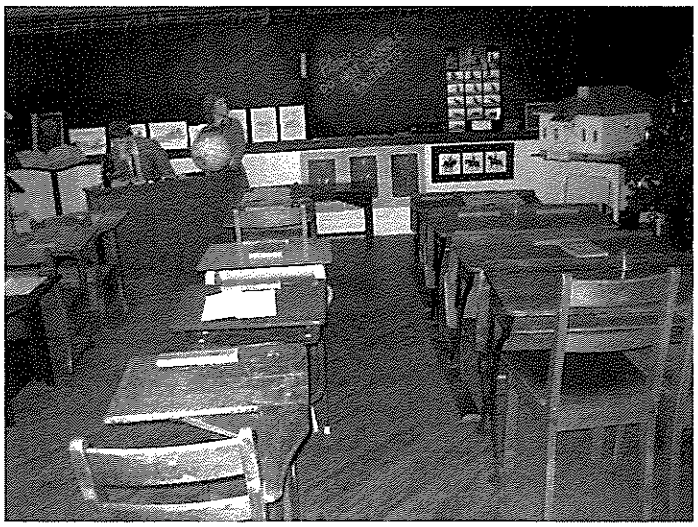


To the right of the house entrance was a store featuring antique tobacco cans, cardboard chocolate bar boxes, cloth flour bags, clothing dye, and many more items along with a very old adding machine. To the left of the entrance, a telephone switchboard, as well as old fashioned mail boxes, was set up reminiscent of the Post Office/Telephone office run by the Herman Dyck family over many years.



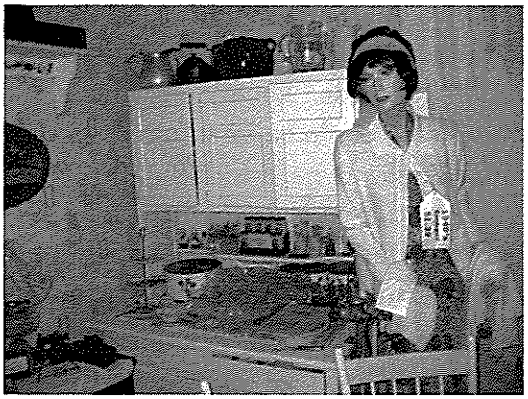
There was a bedroom with an old fashioned metal bed frame and handmade quilts; the living room held a Schlopbenkj, antique cabinets, chairs and an old pump organ; the kitchen, with its coal and wood cook stove, water pump, antique china cabinet and old fashioned cupboard brought back memories for many of how it used to be; a toy room and pantry were also included.

In 1993 the Museum Heritage Committee was formed with bylaws drawn up. The following year the fire hall and the old one-room school, built in 1925, were moved onto the site and gas and power was hooked up to the two buildings.



Over the next few years more hard work ensued as the old school wood floors were re-done to look like they were when classes were held there and the rest of the inside was slowly brought back to the way it looked in the beginning as well, with a cloak-room, blackboards, student desks, teacher's desk, the Union Jack flag, maps and Royal Family photos. The old bell and bell tower was again raised to the top of the school roof and during special events the sound of the ringing bell brought back memories to the older generation.

Meanwhile a family of mannequins, purchased from the Western Development Museum,



gradually moved in to occupy the house. Grandma made the back bedroom her place where she looked after several babies in a carriage; Momma stood in the kitchen, near the cupboard and table, facing the old fashioned cook stove. A teenager, modeling a bridal gown, posed at the old pump organ. Papa ran the store and sister manned the switchboard and post office.

In the refinished schoolhouse, Mr. Principal checked a student's work while the pupil waited; two more students, one in an Osler Monarch uniform and the other standing at the library, joined the school nurse who waited for an opportunity to check the student's health.

Of course, being that Osler has been mostly a Mennonite community where very large families were common, it was only fitting that the little family in the museum also kept growing as the toy room filled with more babies - doll people of different sizes, along with their cribs, high chairs and other toys of by-gone days.

In 1995 the first fire truck the Town of Osler had used was brought to the museum site. And also in 1995 – on June 15th, Osler celebrated the Grand Opening of the new Museum Site. It was a big event featuring rope making, butter churning, wool carding, soap making, sewing with a treadle machine, and many other activities that drew many people to take part in the festivities. The Rempel family, who originally owned the house, were also present and involved in the opening.

Displays donated by former Osler residents were added to the Museum and grounds; CNR displays, with the original desk from the Railway Station along with lanterns and helmets were placed in an enclave in the schoolhouse. Railway ties and rails were laid for the jigger, and an outhouse placed near the shed.

In 1998 the Museum committee, along with other volunteers, worked hard at putting together a history of Osler, by publishing the "*Osler, The Early Years and the One Room School*" book. At the 2001 Osler Home Coming (100 years) Celebration, the book was a

popular item for the many folk who "came home" to Osler. For this celebration, many volunteers worked hard to make the Museum grounds attractive. Flowers were planted and the grounds well kept around a new Museum sign. The streets and events were filled with people, and the Museum was a special place of interest to many.

Special events at the Museum through the years included Girl Guides and Grade three school classes visiting. Groups were divided so that half the group spent a half hour in the schoolhouse taking part in an old fashioned class, while the other half spent the time in the house, learning how people lived in by gone days.

A special Christmas Celebration in December during the town's Midnight Madness was enjoyed by many. Carol singing around the old pump organ, with the ambiance of coal oil lamp light and candles followed with hot chocolate and goodies, brought feelings of warmth and community to those who came.

In the earlier years of the Museum, there was a lot of enthusiasm in fundraising for the site; Amateur Hours; Low German Dramas; Pie & Coffee; Elephant Ears; Soup and Pie suppers with church ladies in the area helping out; Raffles; Craft Sales; Mother/Daughter Teas; Cashback concerts, and the July First Parade Floats.

Maintaining the Museum was a big responsibility, and there was never enough money for the needs. One year the north wall of the basement of the Museum house caved in. This was renovated and a display again set up, however in the ensuing years, the basement flooded each spring and displays were moved to the shed. Each spring it seemed the schoolhouse stood in water during spring runoff.

New siding, new shingles, painting, cementing – again local volunteers donated time and materials. Accessioning new artifacts and the general upkeep of the place through the years kept the Committee trying to find ways to continue to fund the museum. Grants were applied for; however except for TIP grants for artifacts, no large grants were forthcoming.

Vandalism started early on with windows broken, attic entered and damaged, jigger and fire truck windows smashed, and lots of evidence of drug use on the grounds. Local enthusiasm seemed to wane, few people came to check out the Museum and help was hard to find. The Town supplied a summer student to help during the school holidays with yard work, accessioning, and showing guests through the museum, which was helpful.

In 2014 the committee became members of the *Museum Association of Saskatchewan* and the *River Valley Network of Museums,* and meeting with them was encouraging, however the difficulties remained.

The museum Statement of Purpose reads: "Osler Historical Museum exists for the purpose of preserving the history of the town and surrounding area as well as to educate the present generations of the importance of remembering our history."

By 2015, as the condition of the property continued to deteriorate, with the school house roof caving, the walls bowing, the north foundation of the house sinking, it was hard to find a way for the Statement of Purpose to be fulfilled. Contractors didn't want to touch it and the prices were beyond what the museum could afford.

Something was needed to preserve at least some of the museum and an idea was born. With the help of videographer Rick Zarowny, a DVD "Tales of a One Room Schoolhouse" was produced of the history of the old school building and all that it had been used for through the years. It was well received and many copies were sold.

At the last committee meeting on August 5th, of 2015, the committee felt they were spinning their wheels and had no options left. A decision was made to have an auction sale, and it was necessary to contact some donors who had loaned articles to the museum.

A lot of hard work over the winter and spring went into contacting people about artifacts, deciding how to keep really important things that pertained to our town and preparing for the auction. The Railway Museum at Pike Lake retrieved the jigger, rails and ties; archive records

were picked up and stored; the mannequins travelled to Waldheim Museum to begin a new life there, and the Osler items were stored for a possible future display in the Town.

June 4th, 2016, Bodnarus Auctioneering took over and auctioned off the many artifacts and articles. It was a beautiful sunny day with many people coming to check out the items for sale. The auction went well, with good financial results.

In reviewing the museum history via the records of 36 years, it was noted that there were at least 30 folk who served as committee members throughout that time and many, many more folk volunteered their time and ideas over the years. Instead of trying to name all of them and possibly miss a few folk, a big **Thank you** is offered to all of you who were there, who encouraged the committee, who served as members. It is because of you that the Town of Osler's history was displayed over a long period of time.

At the last official meeting, it was decided that the proceeds, along with the bank balance, would be donated to the local Fire and First Responders for new Jaws of Life equipment. That equipment has been received and so the Osler Historical Museum now lives on in equipment that will be used to save lives in the future.

NB

Book Review - continued from page 8:

The book is available from the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan for only $20. Check the book list.

JB

Use Your Archives -

to Research Mennonite Migrations

- by Ruth Marlene Friesen

Mennonites have a history of many migrations; it must be embedded in our DNA by now.

As early as 1530 Dutch and Flemish Mennonites moved to Danzig, Prussia, to escape persecution in the Low Countries.

A century or two later their descendants moved on, in several waves, to the Steppes of Russia at Catherine the Great's invitation (1763).

In the second half of the 19th century their descendants emigrated to North America in waves. Most of those from Russia ended up in the prairie provinces of Canada and the prairie states of the United States in the late 1800s.

While the 1920s brought fresh waves from Russia, escaping war and starvation, large numbers of the most conservative Mennonites already settled on our prairies, picked up and moved again to Mexico, and Central and South America, looking for more religious freedom.

On the other hand, some Mennonites made a daring and unusual trek around via the Silk Road, from Russia to some Asian locations. Many died along the way, but some made it back, and then to North America, too.

About 35,000 Mennonites were brought out of Russia by the German army during the Revolution. Of these some settled in the Vistula area, and others migrated on to South America or joined others here in Canada and the USA.

Do you find this all very fascinating?

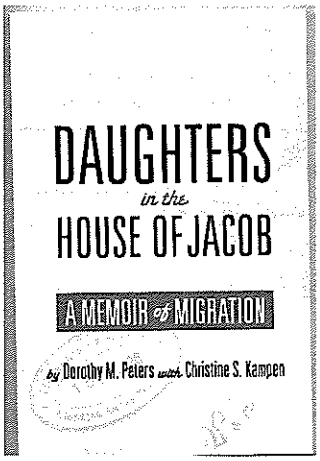
The place to find more stories and detailed historical records is your Archives in the basement below the Fellowship Centre of Bethany Manor. We have many books and records, photos and tapes that tell these stories.

You can find out what ship your ancestors came on and other details. We have those records, too. Just make arrangements to visit the archives and ask the volunteers to show you where to start.

RMF

Daughters in the House of Jacob: A Memoir of Migration

– by Dorothy M. Peters with Christine Kampen (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2016, softcover, Non-fiction, 275 pages. Price $20.00 **Book Review: by Jake Buhler**



The cover of this book gives us early clues about its contents. We observe two female writers utilizing the word daughters in the title and we guess that space will be given to women who are often forgotten in family memoirs. Jacob is the name of their grandfather and also their great grandfather and the book is indeed about them and the women related to them.

Dorothy and Christine are cousins, the former a biblical scholar and the latter a seminarian. They begin the book as an autobiography of their own lives in which they discuss with piercing honesty the conflicts they dealt with growing up with conservative values inside their Mennonite Church. But in the tensions that are described, the authors never once denigrate the faith they hold dear, even though the structures are challenged. As we read their stories, we discover the book is more than a description of historical events. Both authors want to describe, how in a man's world, each would find her own vocation. Not just any vocation, but a vocation smack dab within the church. Both accounts describe how life moved from guilt and subservience to acceptance and fulfillment. One became a professor and the other a pastor.

The original idea for a memoir was to write the summary of the Doerksen family. But no, the authors turn this model upside down. Instead of moving from the ancient ancestors to the present, they begin with the present and move the narrative outward. Dorothy proceeds to tell her father Leonard's story, and Christine tells her mother, Betty's, story of Leonard. Leonard is Dorothy's father, and Betty is Christine's mother. We are given vivid snapshots of a disciplined but loving family in which the father is totally devoted to prayer, teaching and preaching, and the mother to family care and nurture.

It is when the story moves to South Russia that the narrative takes twists and turns that forever change the way the authors, Dorothy Peters and Christine Kampen, will understand their family. The authors' Doerksen lineage begins in Holland where 16th Century persecution necessitated a move to Prussia, and after 1789, to South Russia.

The book's center of gravity occurs when the authors' great grandfather, Jacob Franz Doerksen, having lost his wife, goes in search of a new partner. He discovers an eight month pregnant unmarried girl named Agatha Krause, and the two marry on May 28, 1906. The baby, Anna, is born a month later, but dies within the first year. Eleven children follow.

The authors, who knew nothing of this hidden story until they began research, conclude Agatha was probably impregnated by the owner of an estate where she was employed as a maid.

Authors Peters and Kampen come to the conclusion that had Jacob and Agatha not married, and had little Anna, the Doerksen family would not have turned out as it did. A more than one hundred year uncovered secret had made all the difference.

The authors could have helped this reviewer with a proper chronology of events and a simple family tree copied from the Grandma genealogy program. This very well researched book took 3 years to write and its many photographs make it a must-read for people who want to combine Mennonite history, faith, and some unexpected drama.

In Judges chapter 11, the unnamed lost daughter of Jephthah is remembered annually by the Hebrew women. In a sort of sacred way, Peters and Kampen discover a lost daughter that can be celebrated by all the Doerksens, and indeed all of us. *(continued - page 7)*

Canada, the Land of Peace and Freedom

- by Nelly Rempel

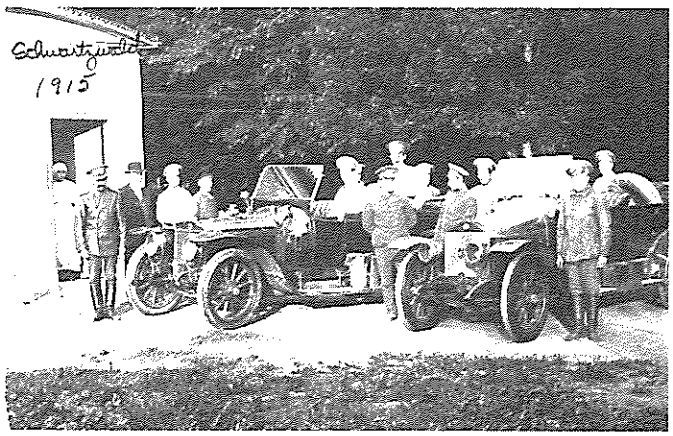
l-r George, Katharina (nee Martens) (Mother), Nickolas, Olga, Father Nicholas Isbrand, Henry, and Vera in front. The Rempels in 1918

My Dad, Georg Nickolas Rempel, was born on September 15, 1895 at Taschenak, a cluster of Khutas north of Melitopel, on the Molotschna River, Molotschna, South Russia, now Ukraine. This cluster of Khutas was physically not part of Molotschna, but they counted themselves as such.

Dad's parents were Nicholas Isbrand Rempel and Katharina (Johann) Martens. They had 10 children, but only raised 5 to adulthood. The children went to school on the estate and later Dad attended the School of Commerce in Halbstadt.

Grandpa Rempel farmed the estate, but also had an International Farm Equipment Dealership.

In 1914, WW1, my father was conscripted, and since his family already had a car, Dad was placed as a Red Cross ambulance driver, picking up the pieces on the Austrian Front.



Dad standing front right, as chauffeur

In 1917 the rest of the family fled the Khuta and moved to Melitopel.

In the 1917 Revolution, Dad was again conscripted and this time he was made chauffeur for the White Army officials.

In the late fall of 1920, the White Army collapsed, and Dad and his two brothers fled to Constantinople, Turkey, where Dad found Orrie Miller and his group, who were running the Home for the fleeing Mennonite Boys.

The Men's Home in Constantinople. The 3 brothers are in the front row, on the left side, #2- Georg, #3 (on the knees) Heinrich and #4 Kolja in the white shirt.

On April 26, 1921, the three Rempel brothers Nickolas, Georg, and Heinrich boarded a ship to Danzig, Germany, where grandfather had a business partner. The boys stayed here until fall of 1923, when they went to the Peter P. Epp family in Drake, Sask. Mrs. Margaret Epp was their second cousin and she and her extended family had sponsored them.

My Mom, Elisabeth Dyck Rempel, was born on August 11, 1905, (old Calendar) in Chortiza, South Russia, now Ukraine. She was the daughter of Jakob Martin Dyck and Elizabeth (Kornelius) Hildebrandt. She was one of five children: Kornelius, Annie, Martin, and Gerhard

Krahn – adopted. She attended the local schools, including the Maedchenschule, where she was able to complete two of four years training to be a teacher.

The Dyck's abandoned "Big House" became the American Kitchen, M.C.C.

The Dyck's abandoned "Big House" became the American Kitchen, M.C.C. This is where Orrie Miller had set up in Chortiza, in 1921–1922.

Grandpa Dyck ran a lumber mill in the village. On July 24, 1923 the family boarded a train for Canada, the Land of Freedom.

They came to the Heinrich Wieler family in Rosthern, SK. Mrs. Wieler was Grandma Dyck's second cousin.

Mom was hired on the train when they arrived in Rosthern, Sask. Mr. Peter Epp had boarded the train and picked Mom out, and asked her to come and be their domestic help. Mother said she did not know what to say! Some folks on the train, who apparently knew the Epps, said, "Go, that is a nice family."

Mom had lived a very sheltered life in the close knit village of Chortitza. She had visited relatives, by train, (they had no car), but had never been very far afield, never mind on her own with a strange family, country and language.

They were right. Mom said they treated her as one of the family.

Dad's parents and two sisters, Olga and Vera arrived in Canada in 1925 from Lichtenau. The Rempels settled in Lockwood, Sask.

Mom & Dad on the prairie at Hanley, SK.

That winter Dad was hired by this large Epp family, to cut wood for the stoves of their large house. Dad did more than just cut wood. Our parents met here at the Epps.

Dad and Mom's marriage was the first wedding in the new Hanley congregation, on January 1, 1926.

I asked Mom why would anybody get married on January 1 in Saskatchewan? The answer, "That was the first day we could get married after Advent!"

They first rented a farm in the Hanley area the crops were good. There was ample rain to provide a good harvest for a few years, so they then bought a farm. That was when the Dirty Thirties struck. There was little rain, lots of wind, which picked up the dry dusty prairie soil and the tumbleweed, which would get caught in the fences. This was also a big problem; not only were the fields devoid of top soil, but the soil was driven in drifts over the padded fences, eliminating the effects of fences.

Due to no income they "lost their shirt" and horses, which they had bought on credit. Dad then purchased a cheaper team, an older unimmunized, untrained, stallion, Monster (he had a face only a mother could love), a mare, Mary, with a colt named Polly.

Dad was very creative; he built a covered box-wagon for moving to "The Bush," at Struan.

In the summer of 1931, he went to build a small one-room log cabin – a real McCoy - and cut hay in the sloughs for the animals for the winter.

Grandpa Dyck had purchased a whole section of bush, and gave each of his sons-in-law, Jake Dyck (not a typo) and George Rempel families, a quarter section. It was amazing, here in "The Bush," the sloughs were full of water and ducks, and lots of rabbits around.

Later in the fall, Dad packed up his family in the covered box-wagon, with two cows tied behind and a pig (don't know where he put it!), and moved north into the Aspen belt, at Struan.

Dad said the prairie horses snorted in frustration; all they could see was trees!

the log house in the Bush

I marvel at all our parents accomplished in 11 years in "The Bush." They doubled the size of the house, and Dad built 2 barns. As children we never complained to our parents, that we were bored. Dad had the solution, he would get old faithful Mary, hitch her to the stoneboat, and we would pick up rock, rocks, and more rocks. Then, in 1942 they pulled up stakes for Ontario.

Why? Dad wanted his children to be able to get an education. Also, his siblings had gone to Ontario, where life was much easier, and they beckoned him to come.

Our parents had a strong faith and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. He was with them in the very trying times in Europe. He was with them now.

They were very grateful to be able to come to Canada. Mom called it the Land of Freedom. If there was a knock at the door, it was just a neighbour or someone asking directions, not the police. Dad was also very thankful to be in Canada, after experiencing WW1 and the Russian Revolution in Europe. We children were sad to leave our neighbours, our Dyck grandparents, (Lakeshore Nursery) but felt secure with our capable and dedicated parents.

Our families will also be celebrating, with the rest of Canada. We are 150 years young in 2017.

NR

Merry Christmas!

A Correction Notice -

from Author Dr. Timothy Epp

Please note the following corrections to the article on Blacks and Mennonites in Saskatchewan from the 2016 no. 2 issue of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian. In the article, the term "great-great-grandfather" should read "*great-grandfather*"; only the Mayes family should be identified as having Freedmen background; finally, the name Roy Moore should be changed to Andy Moore, as Roy has been a good friend to the LaFayette family. The author, Timothy Epp, takes full responsibility for these errors.

An Invitation

as a Result of the Peace Event on November 12, - from Dr. Timothy Epp

Following a very exciting event at Bethany Manor on November 12th, I'm extending a ***general invitation to readers*** of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian to send in any stories or information about Black-Mennonite interaction (no matter how trivial they may seem) including friendships, neighbourly relations, working relations, etc., to

Timothy Epp at tepp@redeemer.ca
or to my mailing address at:
Redeemer University College:
777 Garner Rd E.,
Ancaster, Ontario, L9K 1J4

(phone: 905-648-2139 x4247).

I will be most grateful for any and all contributions to this research. For example, one person mentioned that their cousin had married a Black man who worked as a porter on the railroad. I need to contact the person who provided that information.

Thanks to all who attended on the 12th!

Farm Machine Shops

- by Dick Braun

The Henry Hamm Family

Many of the talented people from the farms and villages found their way into the towns and cities. The larger shops were more than happy to have some of these talented people working for them even if they did not have the formal training.

In 1939 Mr. Isaac Babbitt invented the metal which we call babbitt today. He was a goldsmith and so was familiar with mixing metals. He came up with a mixture that would be a good bearing surface. He kept some of this information a secret for some time.

In years past there were many little machine shops on the farmyards and in the villages. It seemed like the people that could build and machine and fabricate also had another source of income. The early years some such side income came from doing custom threshing and other custom work. It took a special person to keep the machines running during harvest time. There were many pieces of equipment involved in the operation, including horses. The weather could also throw a curve into the operation of the machines.

Pouring babbitt at Davis Machine

There seemed to be a trend of this kind of expertise in certain family lines. The small farm shops ran their time and as machinery progressed so did the way they were built. With the ball bearing way of running shafts and replacement parts coming into the farm machinery the need for rebabbitting bearings became a lot less needed. The little farm and village shops closed and work was done in the larger towns.

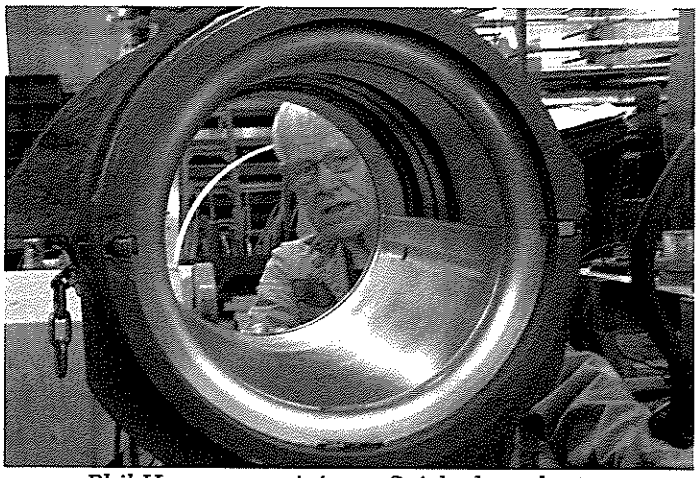
Back in that day there were two kinds of babbitt, one being a lead-based and the other a tin-based. Today we use mostly tin-based babbitt as it is more environmentally friendly. Babbitt usually contains 86% tin – 7% copper – 7 % antimony.

One such shop that still pours babbitt is Davis Machine in Saskatoon. The person doing it there is Phil Hamm, a descendent of Henry Hamm who had a shop in the Hague area. Phil has come by this talent naturally. It seems that babbit runs in the blood veins of the Hamm family.

You can put your imagination in gear and visualize a typical Saturday at the Henry Hamm farm in the blacksmith shop. The boys are home from school helping their father rebabbitting some bearings. Phil, being the youngest boy, gets to turn the crank on the forge where most things get heated. The father chases the boys out of the shop when he is about to clean and re-tin the bearing housing, because the acid makes the

shop completely filled with smoke and that is not good for the lungs. When the smoke clears the boys are called back in and the babbitt pouring begins.

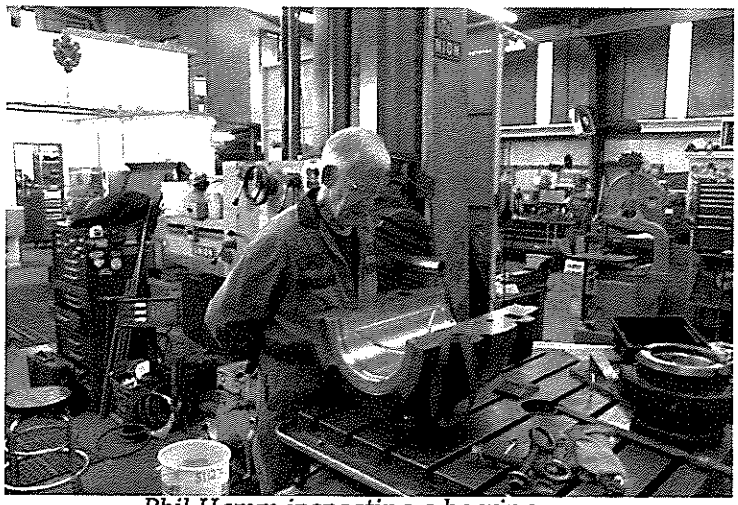
The father, Henry Hamm, had two threshing outfits going and so the maintenance on the machinery was an ongoing thing. Mr Henry Hamm died at the young age of 54, of lung failure. One can only imagine how those lungs looked inside from all that smoke and dust and fumes.



Phil Hamm examining a finished product

Phil did not lose his talent for working with babbitt as he went on to work for H and H Gravel, pouring big babbitt bearings on rock crushers. Then he went on to Blanchard Foundry where he just got deeper into pouring babbitt bearings.

In 1974, Phil Hamm began his work at Davis Machine in Saskatoon. Here he went to seminars and met many people from far and wide who were into working with babbitt. He has pictures of work he did 35 years ago. He learned more about babbitt and what it was made up of. He learned more about preparation work and patience when working with these big bearings that are supposed to run for 30-40 or maybe 50 years.



Phil Hamm inspecting a bearing

He tells of an engine which was built in May of 1912; they had redone the bearings for the first time in March of 2016! Phil tells me that one of the biggest bearings he has redone measured 167 inches in diameter.

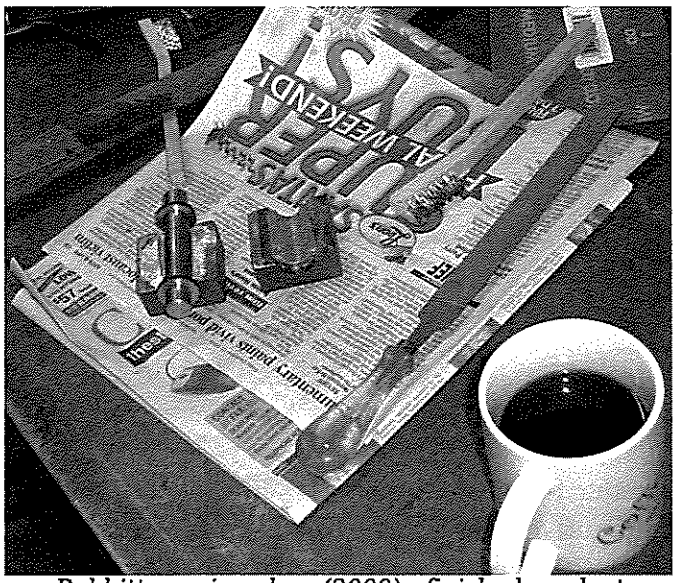
Babbitt pouring class in 2009 at Henry Dyck's Acutec machine shop in Hague

Our forefathers that worked with this ingenuity knew that there were a few things that were the key to a long running bearing. There needed to be perfect alignment; it could not pull in foreign material. There must also be a perfect bond between the babbitt and the bearing housing. Oil to a running bearing is a must; when you start to run it there needs to be lots of oil. Phil can show you very quickly where a bearing failed and some causes.

Phil tells me that there are about 28 different grades of babbitt and two different classes, which are the lead based and the tin based.

John Hamm, now living in Osler, and son of Peter Hamm, remembers working in the black-smith shop with his father and other members of the Hamm family. He was only a very young boy when he could already turn the fan of the forge. He said that they would redo the

crankshaft bearings of a Model T Ford engine. His father was well acquainted with the idea of things having to line up, and so it was with the bearings of a crankshaft. Mr Hamm built a machine that would line bore the bearings after they were poured in place. John Hamm still does a lot of fixing and redesigning, and so does his son.



Babbitt pouring class (2009) - finished product

There is a very interesting thread that seems to run in many family trees. In the Hamm family it would have started maybe way back at the time where the Hamm name came to be, and today we see it in Phil and his nephew, Henry Dyck, and one more generation in Henry's son.

Acutec Machine in Hague is operated by Henry Dyck and his son. Henry Dyck opened his shop to us for an evening of learning how to pour babbitt. Phil Hamm was there as a teacher and a resource person.

If on a cold winter night you would want to do some blacksmithing, Henry Dyck would be open to you coming and joining him.

D B

One way to help out the Poor in Crisis-torn places like Haiti . . . is to do your Christmas shopping at a Ten Thousand Villages shop. The gifts and crafts you buy provide support for an artisan and his/her family.

Our trip to Canada

- by Agatha (Warkentin) Wiebe

I was not born a Canadian. I immigrated as a six-year-old with my parents, Peter and Helen Warkentin, and four younger siblings from Ukraine, or Russia, as we called it.

It was in the summer of 1926. My Dad was quite anxious; he felt we should leave our home and emigrate to Canada. But Mom could not think of leaving their dear home, her mother and all her siblings; it was simply too painful to think of.

Then one day, a government official came to question Dad; among other things, he wanted to know what he had preached about, as Dad was a minister. Before the man left, he said to Dad, "Remember, you are being watched." What a warning!

Father: Peter Warkentin

After a sleepless night for both my parents, in the morning my Mom was able to say, with tears in her eyes, "Yes, we must leave."

So planning began. First, they told their families, some of whom could not understand. . . . "Why leave now, things are getting better and will continue to do so," was what they thought.

My folks knew that Canada was very strict about accepting anyone who had had the eye disease, Trachoma, if the eyes were not completely healed. I had contracted this disease as an infant, and my eyes were not completely well, so something had to be done. They heard of a doctor who treated eyes like this in some village in the "Molosch," so Dad took my grandmother, who also needed treatments, and me, by train to see this doctor. After our eyes were examined, Dad was told that it would take one month's worth of daily treatments to cure them, so Dad found a place for us to stay, then went home. Faithfully, Grandma and I walked daily to see this doctor for

our treatments.

After a month, Dad came back and, yes, Grandma's eyes were cured, but I needed another month of treatments. So the two of them went home and I stayed. By now, I felt quite at home and would run over to the clinic for my treatments. The people were so good to me; if there was a lineup, they would push me to the front so that I didn't have to wait. The next time when Dad came back, I was declared healed and could go home.

Passport: Mother & Children, back left-right: Abe, Pete, Agatha, Helen, Front: Anne & Mother (Helen)

Preparations continued. Finally, at the end of January of 1927, we were ready and boarded a train for Moscow. There we were held up for a few days; a mistake had been found in one of our passports. After that was corrected, we continued on toward Riga in Latvia.

A Canadian doctor was stationed there; he had the final say about our eyes, and he found my eyes needed still more treatments. We were put in a large building with many other immigrants. Daily, Dad took me by streetcar to this doctor for my treatments. Finally, after three weeks, I was declared healed and we could continue on.

We boarded a ship which would take us to Southampton in England. As soon as the ship started moving, Mom got very ill; she was seasick. But Dad was okay and could look after his little ones.

Then, my three-year-old brother, Abe, came down with the measles. When we spoke of it in later years, Dad remembered that there had been quite a discussion between the doctor and the ship's captain, whether we should be taken off the ship onto an island somewhere, but, in the end, we were allowed to stay.

After five days at sea, we landed in Southampton. Here we had another medical, but this doctor seemed in a hurry; we did not have to undress, and he did not see the measles still on Abe's body. The next day, we boarded the Minnedosa which would take us across the Atlantic to Canada.

Again, Mom was very seasick, but Dad re-mained well. I rememb-er him taking us to the large dining hall for meals.

Then I got pneumonia and was placed in the ship's hospital. I remember a large room with lots of beds, but I was the only one there. However, Mom would come and sleep in one of the beds at night to keep me company.

When, after nine days, we arrived in St. John, New Brunswick, Dad explained to me that he would help Mom with the kids off the ship and to where they were to go, then he'd come back for me.

So I just stayed in bed and waited. When he came back, he wrapped me in a blanket and carried me off the ship. I was taken straight to a hospital, where I stayed for twelve days. While I was there, I remember a kind nurse combing and braiding my hair. She said something in English. I didn't understand, but I thought she said she liked my hair! One day, Dad came to see me. Naturally, I wanted to go with him, but couldn't, so I cried. When I was finally discharged, we could continue on our journey.

The days while I was in the hospital had been quite difficult for my parents. Not only did they have a sick child, but in the building where they stayed, all the men were in a large room, and all the women with small children in a different one. The only time they could be together was at meal time, so especially Mom was very unhappy.

So now we were on the last leg of our journey,

.....continued on page 23

Bethany Retirement Community Celebrates 30th Anniversary

by Ruth Marlene Friesen

Bethany Retirement Community celebrated its 30th Anniversary on Sunday afternoon, August 28, 2016. The parking lot was the location, likely because experience had proved that a large crowd would come. They did, despite the cloudy weather, and winds that were rather discouraging. The residents took it in stride, bringing quilts, or lap afghans, and their walkers with their handy seats.

Various musical groups presented their songs for an hour. Jason Warkentin, a Bethany employee, was the MC. The musical groups came from; Warman Mennonite church – instrumentals, Langham Zoar Mennonite – a quartet of singing women, Nutana Park – The Saskatune Singers - three men accompanying themselves.

Then program speakers and dignitaries enthused about Bethany for another hour. The MC now was David Ratzlaff. Politicians with greetings were Roger Parent, MLA for Saskatoon, and Mayor Don Atchison.

Others spoke, such as Mennonite Church Moderator, Ken Warkentin, the architect, Charles Olfert, past Executive Director, Bill Siemens, and the current Executive Director, Glen Grismer, plus Dick Friesen and Nick Peters. Reference was made to the Geo-thermal design in Bethany's buildings, which is the underground heating/cooling system, and being in the flight path of the planes coming into the airport, which had intervened so the tower could not be built as high as first intended.

Interesting facts included; there were 70 units to begin, but now there are 291, including 25 assisted living units in the Villa and Bethany Place. The last building phase had too many stories to tell. More came out in a trivia quiz.

Esther Patkau, Bethany's Director of Spiritual Care, offered a prayer of blessing for the Anniversary BBQ picnic to follow.

Long lineups formed as guests waited to get hamburgers, hot beans, and Black Forest cake. A large number carried their plate into the dining hall. There they managed to find a place to sit and eat. (However, there were hardy souls that ate at the picnic tables outside, as if they didn't notice the wind at all). More musical groups entertained while the guests ate.

Finally, about 7 pm, to finish up, there was an auction of some fantastic cakes contributed by people from various Mennonite churches. You had to see them to believe them! Photos don't do them justice. Absorbed in taking photos, I did not get down the names of those who won the lovely creations at auction.

The auctioneer, Peter Friesen, raised $2,445 from the 6 cakes, which was to go to a resident activity room or centre in Bethany.

There is a long waiting list to get into Bethany, and Mennonites are not the only ones who feel that this is the ideal retirement community, and willing to wait for that prize!

RMF

The Deaths of my Parents

by Maria Pauls Driedger Buhler, as told to Jake Buhler

Note: This story was told to me in Plautdietsch by Maria Pauls Driedger Buhler in 1987. Maria was born in Grigorjewka, South Russia in 1907. By the time she was 12 years old, she had witnessed the death of three sisters and both her parents.

In 1925, at age 18, she and 11 year old Jacob travelled unaccompanied from Southampton, England, to Quebec City by ship and then to Osler, Saskatchewan by train.

At Osler she married Cornelius Driedger with whom she had 3 sons - Leo, Otto and Irvin. Following Cornelius' death, she married Bernhard Buhler with whom she had 4 children – Jake, Ruth, Wilfred and Ben. Maria Pauls Driedger Buhler died in 2002 at age 96. She spent a number of very happy years at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon. The following is her story about the death of her parents, Heinrich and Helena Pauls. - Jake Buhler

Heinrcih Pauls Family

I was eleven when my parents died. First my mother died; then a few days later, my father. My Mother [1] had tuberculosis and my Father [2] was suffering from Spanish Influenza. As both became weaker, they were bed-ridden. Mother had constant bouts of fever, so she was moved to the *Vaathuss* which was cool.

Father had chills so he was moved into the *Somma Schtow* which was warm. I helped look after both of them trying to make them comfortable, giving them food and water and other things. They spoke to each other through the opening of the central stove. "Are you still alive?"[3] each would call out to the other. Each was worried that the other might have died when there were long silences.

One day Father said to Neetta (Mother's sister), "which one do you want when we die?"

She answered, "I don't know but probably Ghreetchen, the youngest one."

"No," said Father, "she will go to Ghreeta, because she was named after her aunt."

I saw Mother die. She was very weak and did not even straighten out [4] after she died. She died at 8:00 p.m. on September 27, 1918. As she was dying she said "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus". She said "Jesus" four times. The last time she had just enough strength to whisper the name. My sister Leena and my Father also saw Mother die.

Taunte Marie was called immediately when it was clear Mother would die. As she neared our house she saw a stream of light in the night sky. "Leenche is on her way to Heaven"[5], she said. When Taunte Marie walked into the house, Mother had just died.

At Mother's funeral the congregation sang *Engel Oeffnet die Tore Weit*, [6] which was song #15 in Der Kleine Saenger. Mother requested this song be sung at her own funeral.

Father attended the funeral but he was very sick. He shivered as a result of his chills. He was very, very sad. Mother was "*betjeart*"[7] at the time of her death; Father was not. Father was a very loving person but a bit hardened. After the funeral he begged God to "Take me to the place where my wife is." Father struggled with these thoughts but in the end he was victorious.

A day after Mother died, friends and relatives brought butter, milk, and flour to the house. A large batch of dough was made. Then each family took a piece of dough home and baked buns which were then taken to the funeral for the

meal. This is how it was done in our village.

After Mother's death, a maid – a young girl of 18-20 years – came to help in our house.

Father died ten days later on October 7, 1918, at 2:00 a.m. Someone woke me up so that I could see Father. I cried bitterly. Father groaned [8] a lot as he was dying.

Taunte Marie told me later that I had said the following words after Father died: "Now that our Father is dead, what shall we children do?"[9] We surviving children were divided up and sent to live with 3 different families. Jacob and I went to live with Groszpa and Groszmama Unger where we grew up until we went to Canada in 1925. I can say we went through very much sorrow and loneliness but our God was always with us.

Endnotes:

1. Helena Unger
2. Heinrich Pauls
3. "laewst noch?"
4. rigor mortis
5. "doa foat Leenche nohm Himmel"
6. Angels, Open Wide the Gates
7. Had turned to God.
8. "Schtaened"
9 "Papa es doot. Waut sell wie Kjinja nu?"

JB

Mennonite Centeral Commitee is ready to help your church sponsor a refugee family.
They set out four simple steps;
1.Your church agrees to sponsor a refugee or family; so you connect with MCC

2. MCC workers will help you with all the paperwork. There are a number of documents to fill out. Your church/committee prepares a home for them to move into.

3. When your refugees arrive you meet them at the airport, and take them to the home you have prepared for them.

4. Help your refugee family become part of your church and wider community and become integrated into our Canadian society.

Quote:

"Mennonites formed themselves in Holland five hundred years ago after a man named Menno Simons became so moved by hearing Anabaptist prisoners singing hymns before being executed by the Spanish Inquisition that he joined their cause and became their leader. Then they started to move all around the world in colonies looking for freedom and isolation and peace and opportunities to sell cheese. Different countries give us shelter if we agree to stay out of trouble and help with the economy by farming in obscurity. We live like ghosts. Then, sometimes, those countries decide they want us to be real citizens after all and start to force us to do things like join the army or pay taxes or respect laws and then we pack our stuff up in the middle of the night and move to another country where we can live purely but somewhat out of context." Author: Miriam Toews

CONSTITUTION

Proposed Constitutional Amendments:
March, 2017 Annual General Meeting

The constitution may be amended by a 3/4 majority of votes cast at any duly called membership meeting, provided that all members have been informed of the proposed amendments not more than 120 days and not less than 30 days before the meeting.

This amendment will replace the following **Constitution Amendment**: January, 2000

The constitution and the by-law may be amended by a 3/4 majority of votes cast at any duly called membership meeting, provided that all members have been informed of the proposed amendments not more than 50 days and not less than 15 days before the meeting.

[DELETE - and the by-law; - CHANGE - 50 days to 120 days; - CHANGE - 15 days to 30 days]

Refugees, Displaced Persons, Immigrants: Defining the Asylum Seeker - by Henry Neufeld

A refugee is an unwanted person. He or she makes a claim upon the humanity of others without always having much, or even anything sometimes, to give in return. If, after resettlement a refugee works hard or is lucky and successful, he may be accused of taking the work or the luck or success from someone else. If he fails or becomes resentful or unhappy, he is thought to be ungrateful and a burden on the community. (Bruce Grant, The Boat People, (Penguin Books, 1979, p.2) [1]

Tena Nefeld, Hong Ma (Cambodian refugee), & Henry Neufeld at Phonat Nikhom Refugee camp, Thailand

The history of people fleeing for safety is at least as old as that of the Israelites, who, as a people, left Egypt to escape the oppression of Pharaoh. Mennonites with their history of fleeing from one country to another have resettled under trying conditions. WWII uprooted over 20 million people in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The horrors of wars in recent history are too vivid: Cambodia, Chechnya, Serbia, Croatia, Rwanda, Congo, Afghanistan, Darfur, Iraq, Syria, etc.

The term "refugee" broadly describes almost anyone seeking to flee their home country more or less permanently. Asylum seekers, economic migrants, immigrants, displaced persons, Convention refugees. These words describe transient persons; sometimes we use them interchangeably, and sometimes inaccurately.

Asylum seekers do not always fit into one category. They might be economic migrants and also fleeing oppression and/or war. Their status could change while they are en route to somewhere. For instance, Mennonites leaving Russia in the 1920's left for a variety of reasons: economic (the need for more land), political (discomfort with the regime), religious (the fear of losing religious freedom), social (to be reunited with relatives). Many travelled to Germany to live in camps, becoming "displaced persons" and eventually they were processed as immigrants destined for North or South America. MCC's involvement with this group of displaced persons, many of them Mennonites from the USSR meant they were able to immigrate to Canada, USA, or South America.

There are different kinds of displaced persons (DP's):

Natural disasters: tornados, earthquakes, floods, fires result in people fleeing for safety. The Fort McMurray fires resulted in over 80,000 fleeing their homes and becoming displaced.

Migrants. A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another for a variety of reasons: employment opportunities (economic migrants), seeking reunion with relatives, unhappiness with the government, fleeing or famine. Their status in the host country is temporary with no right to remain. Mexican migrant workers can be found in various parts of the US and Canada, providing essential labour.

Immigrants. An immigrant has lawful permission to establish permanent residence in a country. Immigration to Canada usually requires an application to be made outside of Canada at a Canadian embassy or consulate. One cannot immigrate to Canada from within Canada. The "boat people" from Southeast Asia were all processed by Canadian immigration officials in Asia and were authorized to come to Canada prior to leaving Asia. They may have been asylum

seekers or refugees in Thailand, Malaysia or Hong Kong, but they came to Canada as immigrants. We tend to call them refugees in the broadest sense of that term.

War refugees. They flee the horrors of war, they seek safety (asylum) elsewhere, hoping to return home once peace is restored. In fall 2016 UNHCR reported over 4 million Syrians had fled their homeland, another 6.8 million are internally displaced: forced to flee due to bombing and a relentless war.

Convention refugees. Due to a flood of refugees from Soviet controlled Europe in the 1940's, as well as the migration between India and Pakistan and the problems in Palestine, office of the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950. This is where the term "Convention refugees" first emerged

The United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees signed at Geneva on July 28, 1951 and the Protocol signed at New York City on January 31, 1967 established the international definition of a "Convention refugee." This action was needed to cope with the large number of people displaced by and requiring resettlement after WWII.

The spirit of these documents is that every person is entitled to freedom from persecution and that recognition and assistance from the international community is available to achieve this freedom. To qualify as a "Convention refugee" the claimant must be outside his country:

A Convention Refugee is defined as any person who by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion,

a) is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protections of that country, or

b) not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of his former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country....

This internationally accepted definition of a Convention refugee means the person must have a well-founded fear of persecution. The onus is on the refugee claimant to establish for the authorities in the host country the well- founded fear of persecution, and due to that fear being unwilling or unable to return to his country.

There must be well-founded fear of serious intentional harm, which results in a person not wanting to return to their home country. The spirit of these documents is that every person is entitled to freedom from persecution and that recognition and assistance from the international community is available to achieve this freedom.

This definition is applied when illegal aliens arrive in Canada; by air, by land at the US/Canada border, or by sea at one our ports. They claim "refugee status," that is, they claim a fear of persecution if they were to return to their country of origin.

They are provided with legal counsel and have a hearing to determine if they are "convention refugees."

For example, in early 2005 Canada denied an American citizen's Convention refugee claim. This man had voluntarily enlisted in the US military, served with the US military in Afghanistan, but he did not want to serve with the US military in Iraq. He came to Canada and applied for refugee status. He was denied because it was not believed he would be persecuted - he would not suffer serious intentional harm - if he returned to the USA. He would be prosecuted. He might face prosecution for deserting the US military; violating a US law. The Refugee Board said the consequences of his action – prosecution - would not amount to persecution.

It should be noted that the Canadian government has legal provisions for people to remain in Canada even if their refugee claim fails: via an Immigration Minister's permit and/or due to humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Every refugee claim that is denied in Canada is reviewed to consider whether the person should be allowed to remain in Canada on humanitarian or

compassionate grounds.

Options for Asylum seekers

There are only three options for asylum seekers:

a) return to their home country,

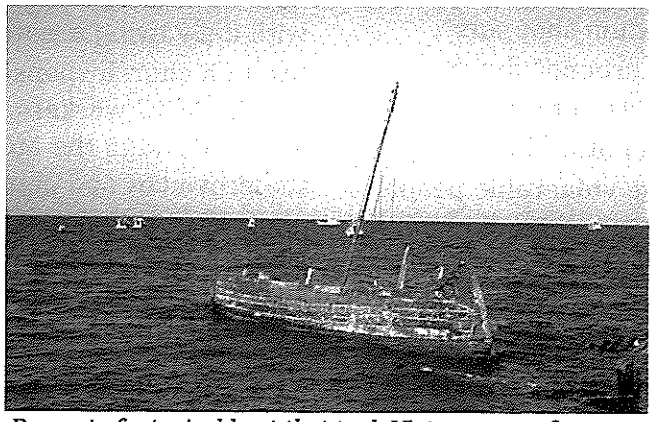
b) resettle in a neighbouring country, or

c) resettle in a third country.

These options are listed in UNHCR's order of preference – it is always desirable for asylum seekers to return to their homeland. If that is not possible, then resettlement in a nearby country should be considered, and the last option should be resettlement in a "third" country.

If a person cannot return to his country, it is easier for an individual to adjust and adapt to life in a neighbouring country with similar climate, linguistic, cultural and religious practices than to send them half way around the world to a foreign country with new language, religion, customs, climate and culture.

For most asylum seekers their past is shattered, their future uncertain. Many are deprived of the opportunity to return to their homeland and often they become pawns in political power plays of the ruling powers. They are victims, often voiceless.



Remant of a typical boat that took Vietnamese refugees to Thailand.

Boat People: The Asia situation

The refugee crisis in south east Asia in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, which ended in 1975, and the devastation wreaked on Cambodia by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge (1975 -1979) was essentially a crisis of western, not Asian, nations. Far more attention was given to this crisis and more aid was sent to assist less than one million refugees in south east Asia than to over four million refugees in Africa at the same time. The reasons for this need to be examined at another time.

From 1975 –1987 almost 2 million asylum seekers from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia arrived in Thailand. They were classified as "Convention refugees" by UNHCR.

When faced with a massive influx of asylum seekers, nations tend to panic and revert to "national interest" which readily translates into national selfishness. Part of the Asian host country's concern (Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong) is that they claim not to have the space or economic resources to allow a massive influx of people permanently. The other concern is that the camps often hold resistance fighters. Some Thai – Cambodian border camps became bases for resistance forces fighting against the Vietnamese-based government in Cambodia. These camps also served as a funnel of military and economic aid for these forces.

The Thai government allowed refugees to stay temporarily on two conditions: there must be financial aid to Thailand to care for the refugees, and the refugees must be resettled elsewhere, i.e., outside of Thailand. At half the size of Saskatchewan, Thailand had a population of over 60 million in the late 1980's and said it could not cope with a massive influx of asylum seekers.

The impact of thousands of asylum seekers entering a host country is a source of irritation, as is currently happening in some European countries. Large amounts of aid are needed to help resettle newcomers. In refugee camps aid can result in refugees in the camps having a better life than the local population just outside the camps. Goods and services such as medical treatment and English language instruction are sometimes available to refugees but not to local people. This results in resentment toward refugees by local people.

The three options noted above for dealing with refugees: return home, stay in a neighbouring country, or resettle in a "third" country can be applied to SE Asians. Returning home was refused by most; many said they would return

home only if it were safe to do so. Resettling in a neighbouring Asian country was not an option. They languished in refugee camps hoping that things would improve in their home countries so they could return. Resettlement in a third country - USA, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, etc. - was the only remaining option.

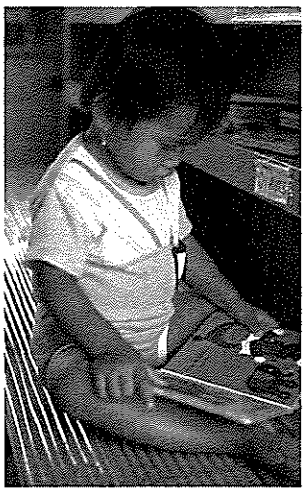
The "Pull" factor

Many Asian officials saw resettlement in the West as perpetuating the refugee problem because of the "pull" factor. Some asylum seekers came to camps because of stories about resettlement in western countries. Resettlement through the SE Asian refugee camps was a much faster way of getting to Canada than by regular immigration routes. The refugee camp system became an alternate and faster way of getting out of Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

The system produced "asylum shoppers", where asylum seekers "shop around" for the country with the best prospects in terms of health, welfare, education and other benefits. Today people smugglers move vulnerable people, at great risk and expense. This results in hundreds dying due to overcrowded and poorly maintained boats. Those who lack money to pay a smuggler remain where they are.

Refugee sponsorships

Canadian Mennonites sponsored about 5,000 Southeast Asians based on a precedent-setting agreement with the Canadian government. Recently representatives from more than a dozen countries have been examining Canada's private sponsorship program to see if it could be imple-mented in their countries. Canada's MCC net-work was invaluable in locating churches to sponsor SE Asians. Western countries took in many SE Asians, but it was China who took the most – over 300,000.



Cambodian refugee child

Southeast Asian asylum seekers sought admission to Canada in three ways: as government sponsored (based on an annual quota), sponsored by relatives, or sponsored by a church or group.

Canada wants people who will resettle easily. Canadian Immigration officials consulted us about specific families that would be rejected in the "government sponsored" category because they would likely end up in a large Canadian city and probably depend on welfare for years. However, if MCC could find a church sponsor for a family, they'd be accepted. The reasons for this are that churches and group sponsors are able to invest much more time and resources in helping newcomers than government officials can. English language instruction, jobs, and assistance with daily living are more readily available through church sponsorships.

For MCC workers in refugee camps to have access through the MCC network Canada to all the provinces and churches was a rare blessing and much envied by other refugee workers who often wondered how we could find sponsors for these families. We were grateful for the Canadian MCC/church network.

Syrian Refugees

At the start of 2011 Syria was one of the largest refugee hosting countries in the world. Five years later, according to UNHCR reports, Syrians themselves are the largest group of refugees with nearly 4.8 million forced to flee the country and another 6.6 million displaced within Syria. The bombing and destruction continue with major powers (USA and Russia) engaging in a proxy war at the expense of the people.

Media reports frequently focus on Syrian refugees in Europe; what is rarely mentioned is that neighbouring countries accept a lot of Syrian refugees.

Turkey hosts over 2.7 million Syrians.
Lebanon has over 1 million Syrians.
Jordan has over 600,000.

Iraq has near 25,000 Syrians.
Egypt has over 100,000 refugees.
Canada recently accepted 25,000, mostly from Lebanese camps.

Though life in exile is difficult, living in tents in refugee camps with winter coming, for Syrians life at home is even harder.

Conclusion

The mixing of cultures with western societies beginning in the last half of the previous century is a historically new phenomenon. As we experience new neighbours and friends we are forced to rethink our assumptions and enlarge our understanding. We need to remember our own history as a migrant people.

When people are uprooted from their homeland and separated from their families and friends, they lose their place, not only in their country, but in the world. Their travel documents might describe them as stateless. They lose a sense of history as a people, they lose their identity, and they are people without roots in their homeland. Mennonites, with their history of fleeing from one country to another, have resettled under these trying conditions.

We describe them generically as "refugees." Whether we call them displaced persons, asylum seekers, or refugees - and these distinctions are important legally and for precision - the challenge for us is to remember God's instructions to the Israelites: remember that you too were once foreigners in Egypt: treat the sojourner with compassion and justice.

Like sands shifted by restless winds, refugees spill today across the globe. They constitute a Fourth World, one whose inhabitants have no representation and over which they have no control. No one even knows how many refugees there are....(The Economist, March 11, 2000, p. 12)

HN

Have a Blessed New Year in 2017

cont'd from page 15 . . . **Our Trip to Canada**

travelling west on a train. I was with my family, and felt secure. Whenever the train stopped for a while, Dad would get off and buy bread and bologna. Those were the biggest, fattest sausages I had ever seen, and were they ever delicious! I could not get enough of them.

I have no idea how many days it took, but we finally arrived in Provost, Alberta, where Dad's relatives lived.

It was late at night, and there was no one to meet us. But Dad knew the name of the owner of the farm where his relatives lived; he spoke German and lived in town. Somehow, Dad explained this to the station agent, who then called the man, and he came and straightened things up. First, he called the Neufelds to let them know that we had arrived.

Then, he explained to my parents that it would take several hours to get there because they had to come fourteen miles with sleigh and horses. He also asked the agent to allow us to stay there while we waited, which he did. So Mom and Dad made up a bed on the floor so their weary little ones could sleep, while they sat and waited.

Finally, we heard sleighbells and a loud voice calling, "Ho!" We knew that Mr. Neufeld had arrived, and our life in Canada could begin.

Yes, that beginning was difficult, but it was nothing compared to the horrors those who stayed back had to endure.

We stayed with our relatives at Provost for one year. Then we moved to a farm near Luseland in west-central Saskatchewan, and lived there for six years. When the opportunity arose to rent land near the hamlet of Superb, fifteen miles to the southwest, my parents decided to settle there. That's where I grew up, married and, together with my husband, Henry, farmed and raised our family.

I will forever be grateful to my parents for making that difficult decision so many years ago. And I thank God for his guidance all those many years.

AWW

Jesus was a Refugee

- by Jake Buhler

"Now after they [wise men] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him". – Matthew 2:13

Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus, left Bethlehem out of fear for their lives. Herod the Great, a vassal king of the Romans, was about to kill Jewish males under the age of two.

They very likely travelled on the Via Maris to Egypt (Latin for the "way of the sea" trading route) along the Mediterranean Sea to an area near Memphis for refuge. This area was also under the control of the Romans. Other displaced Jews also lived there.

They stayed there until the death of Herod the Great in 4 BCE. They were very careful not to return to Judea, because a brutal son of Herod the Great, Archelaus, had been appointed king.

Instead they went to Nazareth which was right on the Via Maris Highway, and under the control of his brother, Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee. Jesus grew up in Nazareth where his father, Joseph, worked as a carpenter.

Jesus was a true convention refugee who with his parents fled Judea and found safe haven in a second country that would later become a Muslim state.

JB

Websites
MHSS: *mhss.sk.ca*

Cemeteries: Transitioning to the above site, but still available at:
freepages.genealogy-rootsweb.com/~skmhss

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

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MHSS Office and Archives, & SMH Editor
110 LaRonge Road, Room 900
Saskatoon, SK. S7K 7H8 306-242-6105
Archives: mhss@sasktel.net
or submit directly to: SMH-Ruth@mhss.sk.ca