

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE HISTORIAN

*Official periodical of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Inc.
Volume XVI No. 1, April 2010*

A grain windmill in Russia, the inspiration for a remarkable building project by Bruno Neufeldt of Saskatoon. See the story, beginning on page 4.

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Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

Volume XVI No. 1 April 2010

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From the Editor's Desk

By Victoria Neufeldt



The oldest surviving building in Saskatchewan is a church. That is the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Stanley Mission, on the Churchill River in northern Saskatchewan. This year marks the 150th anniversary (sesquicentennial, for word buffs) of Stanley Mission, originally an Anglican missionary complex. Completed in 1860, it is the oldest wooden church in Western Canada. Today, only the church remains, an extraordinary, beautiful, steepled sentinel rising in splendid isolation above the surrounding forest. It is lovingly maintained by the present-day community of Stanley Mission Cree Nation, across the river.

The Mennonite church in Saskatchewan also has a long history. We know of six churches that are celebrating their centennials, in Aberdeen, Hepburn, Laird, Langham, Tiefengrund, and Waldheim. All have planned celebrations, taking place in June and July, each on a different weekend, so one could take in all of them, if so inspired. Many readers will have close connections with more than one of these churches; my own family alone has direct connections with three of them: Tiefengrund, Laird, and Langham; and four of my great-aunts, who were sisters, had a close association with Waldheim. Stories on the three churches whose celebrations come first (Aberdeen, Langham, and Waldheim) are included in this issue, beginning on page 10. The remaining three will be treated in the next issue.

We hope you will enjoy all the other stories found in these pages, as well. 

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At right is a photo of the 2010 board:

Front, left to right: Vera Falk, Jake Buhler, George Dirks;
Back, left to right: Jim Friesen, Margaret Ewert,
Erna Neufeld, Kathy Boldt, Elmer Regier, Victor Wiebe

MHSS President's Corner


By Jake Buhler



The Mennonite Historical Society of this province lost two very fine people in 2009. Reg Rempel from Laird was an avid genealogist who contributed much information to the GRANDMA software program. Saskatoon's Dick Epp was a founding member of MHSS and led that group for 16 years. He also edited *The Historian* for many years. Two separate funds were set up in their memory. To date, \$2,785 has been donated. These funds will be used to expand the archives.

We ask your kindness in considering the MHSS in your giving program. We also ask that you consider including us in your will. Your generosity will ensure that we can expand and develop our archives.

Vic Wiebe has just returned from British Columbia, where he collected the 15-box collection of Low German expert, Reuben Epp. Dick Epp had also donated his collection to the archives. Please consider donating your personal collection to the MHSS where it can be made available to everyone.

Have a good summer. 



A Passion for Windmills

By Victoria Neufeldt

Bruno Neufeldt has long had an interest in windmills. Ever since he was a boy, he has been intrigued by these simple but large machines, operated only by the wind. He had learned about the windmills of Holland. He remembers the windmills on his grandfather Peter Neufeldt's farm in Tiefengrund. There were two windmills — one for drawing water from a well and one for grinding grain. Windmills on wells were common, Bruno says, but grain-grinding ones were not.

Today, Bruno has a windmill of his own in his backyard, built by hand over about 10 years, including the initial planning stage. It stands about eight feet high to the top of the dome.

The story of Bruno's model windmill goes back to conversations he had about Russia with his wife Elsie's father, Peter P. Sawatzky, in the early 1970s. All this Russian information, Bruno says, was new to him, and he drank it in. In a box of photographs that Peter Sawatzky had brought over from Russia was a photograph of a windmill in Neuhorst, near Sofievka, reproduced on the first page of this issue. Bruno was very taken with this photo; it planted the seed in his mind of building a model. The people in the picture are family members. The man standing on the ground at the left is Peter P. Sawatzky, Elsie's father; standing beside him, on his left, is Jacob, Peter's brother. Up on the platform, from left to right, are Peter J. with his wife, Agatha (Rempel), daughter Agatha, daughter Lena, and an unknown person.

The mill was built on the Sawatzkys' land; it was an unusual thing, thought of as adding value to the land. The builder was probably Jakob Peter Rempel, the father-in-law of Peter P.'s father, Peter J. There were other connections with mills in Elsie's family. Her maternal grandfather (Jakob Schellenberg) was a miller with his own mill, in Tiegerweide.

Peter P. had grown up on his parents' estate in Neuhorst. In 1918, the family left Neuhorst because of the anarchy, fleeing to Tiegerweide in the Molotschna Colony, which was Peter J.'s original home. They moved into the backyard of Peter Wiens, whose wife was a sister of Peter J.'s. Peter P. told Bruno that on that journey, they travelled by horse and wagon for three days. They never went back to Neuhorst and never saw the mill again. The windmill photo was taken in 1918, just before the family left for Tiegerweide.

The mill does not exist anymore. It was destroyed by the Communists in the late 1910s or early 1920s. The bricks were used to build buildings for collectives.

All this family history, added to Bruno's longtime interest in windmills, made the windmill in the photo all the more important. One day, Bruno and his father-in-law were sitting in the living room and looking at the picture. Bruno said that he would like to inherit it, even though he was not actually a son. What Peter did was have very good enlargements made, which he gave to all of his children, and Bruno got one too. This photo hangs on the wall of the den in Bruno and Elsie's home, an important memento.

Bruno had said to his father-in-law, "When I retire, I'm going to invite you over and we're going to build a mill." Unfortunately, that did not happen. Peter died November 4, 1978, at the age of 77.

Bruno continued to dream of building a mill. He says he often studied the photo, thinking "I wonder how big those mills were?" Using a ruler to measure the people standing in front in the picture, he calculated the height of the structure: "Holy smoke! It must be 80 feet!"

Using his calculation for the original mill of about 80 feet to the top of the vane at its highest point, and a scale of 1:8, he built his windmill to stand about seven feet tall to the top of the dome.

Bruno finally began working on the project seriously in 1997. The materials for the mill did not cost Bruno very much, he says. Besides the lumber (2x4s), all he bought was copper for the roof and hardware (hinges, ball bearings, etc.). He built the entire thing in his workshop, which is attached to their garage. With his close study of the photo, what he had learned from his father-in-law, and the information he got from books about windmills in the library, Bruno waded into his project. The project was a challenging one. The mill had two smaller propellers set at right angles to the big vanes, to keep the big vanes turned to catch the wind. Earlier mills had a pole which was used to manually turn the vanes into the wind.

The original mill was a structure of brick, but Bruno built his of wood, except for the copper dome.

"The first thing I did was the vanes," Bruno says. He constructed them of wood, four feet long, with each vane having 16 movable wooden louvres.

Bruno thought the dome of the mill in the photo looked as if it was copper, so that is what he used for his model. The first attempt did not work, he says, because the angle of the dome was wrong, but he succeeded on the second try.

The bottom section is a cylinder of bevelled wooden strips, about three inches wide.

The tapered upper part of the body was more of a challenge, because each board had to be both precisely bevelled and precisely tapered. He says he experimented with it first. "I had to get the idea into my head of how to do it." He admits that "some stuff sat for a while in my shop and nothing happened to it. I had to be moved by the spirit to get moving!"

The windmill is a working model, complete with inside stairs and a shaft to turn the grindstone, but it has no grindstones. In 2000, when the construction of the mill was already far advanced, a cousin of Elsie's visiting from Germany told Bruno he knew where he could get some grindstones for the windmill. Bruno and Elsie were supposed to visit the cousin and get the grindstones to take back with them. But that visit never happened.

However, besides being an an amazing structural accomplishment and a stunning backyard ornament, the windmill has served as a playhouse for one of their granddaughters. A section of the wall above the platform is removable and when the granddaughter was five or six, Elsie says, she would climb inside, with her dolls and tea set, and play for hours.

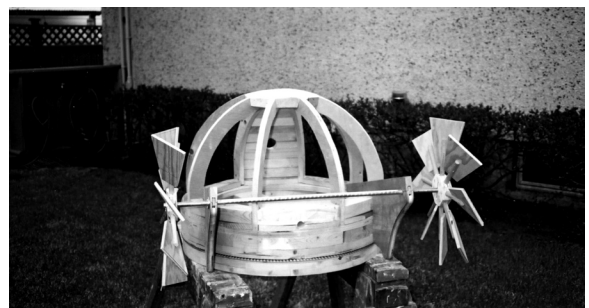
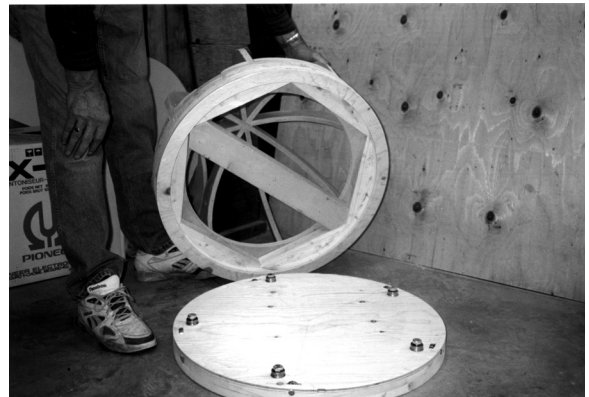
In 2008 Elsie's sister Edna and her husband travelled to Russia, where they visited the site where the windmill had stood. They picked up rock fragments that remained from the mill and brought them back home. Then Edna presented Bruno and Elsie with a framed picture she made, in the centre of which the stone pieces are arranged in the shape of a mill. An appropriate remembrance.



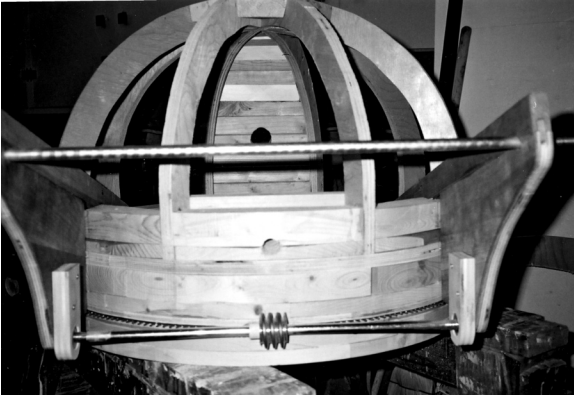
Bruno putting the finishing touches on the vanes component. All photos in this article, plus the first-page photo, are courtesy of Bruno and Elsie Neufeldt.



The bottom cylinder, almost completed.



The upper photo shows the the dome section under construction. The base is stationary; it will be attached to the top of the main body. The upper part rotates on the five ball bearings, visible in the photo, attached to the top of the lower part. In the lower photo, the small propellers have been installed.



The dome, showing the lower rod with the gear mechanism that turns the dome. The upper rod joins the propellers.



Another view of the tapered body. It now has the platform attached and sits on the cylindrical base.



The tapered section of the body, with most of the wooden strips in place.



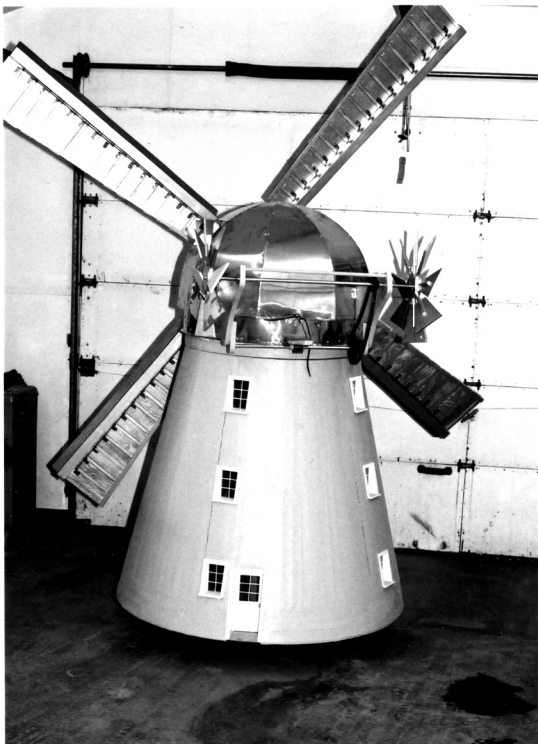
The dome and propellers have been attached to the body. Note the "door" standing to the right of the opening.



Bruno and Elsie with the almost-completed windmill in the workshop — minus the platform and the cylindrical base.



Top and bottom pictures: the completed windmill in Bruno and Elsie's backyard, with Elsie standing beside it in the lower photo, showing the scale of the model.



A view of the back.



MHSS Annual Meeting Focuses on Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference

By Verner Friesen

For several years now, our annual meetings have focused on the major Mennonite Conferences in Saskatchewan. This year the emphasis was on the Rudnerweider Mennonite Conference, now known as the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference. The sessions were held on March 5 and 6, 2010 in the Warman Gospel Church. Two former leaders of the Rudnerweider Conference were honoured on Friday evening.



Henry Neudorf and Ruth Buhler shared a tribute to their father, Rev. Abram M. Neudorf. Abram Neudorf served first as deacon, beginning in 1947, and then as pastor from 1959 to 1966. Johanna van Kuik talked about her father, Rev. John D. Friesen, who was first minister and then bishop of the Saskatchewan EMMC. He was ordained as minister in 1944 at the young age of 24, and as bishop when he was only 31. Rev. Friesen served the EMMC for over 50 years, not only as pastor but also as Conference leader, evangelist, and radio speaker. (Biographies of these two leaders are available in the MHSS archives.)

Friday evening's program included special music as well, provided by the Evie Friesen family trio, and later, the Sutherland Gospel Church Quartet. Martha Martens, who had come from Winkler, Manitoba to serve as resource person, gave a slide presentation featuring the history and leaders of the EMMC.

The Annual General Meeting of the MHSS took place on Saturday morning. President Jake Buhler called the meeting to order. Host pastor, Ed Martens, opened the meeting with a fitting devotional based on Psalm 78, where the Psalmist makes an appeal to "tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord". The purpose of the Historical Society is to preserve and pass on the stories of God's deeds among and through our Mennonite people.

Financial receipts for 2009 totalled \$17,400, with \$6,860 of that coming in from membership fees and \$8,266 from donations. Len Andres was again appointed as auditor.

Victoria Neufeldt and Verner Friesen reported on our publication, the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*. In 2009 we have again published three issues, distributed to 340 members. To encourage members to renew for three years at a time, a motion was passed to change the membership fees as follows: one year, \$30; two years, \$55; three years, \$75. The "family membership" category has been discontinued.

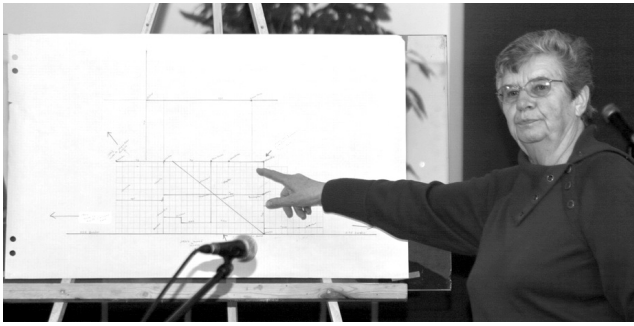
Victor Wiebe reported that our archives have received four major collections in the past year: from the families of Dick Epp, George K. Fehr, Johannes Driedger, and Rueben Epp. In 2011 MHSS will be hosting the annual sessions of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. Additional space is urgently needed for our archives and all permits have now been issued for our expansion into the vacant area in the basement of Bethany Manor.

Jake Buhler and Victor Wiebe were re-elected to the Board, and a new member, Jim Friesen from Rosthern, was elected, all for three-year terms. Forty-three people attended the annual membership meeting.

After a coffee break served by ladies from the local church, those present came together for a second presentation by Martha Martens, in which she shared more details about the beginnings and history of the Rudnerweider Mennonite Conference.

The story of the Mennonites, particularly in southern Manitoba, has been characterized by fragmentation. As a result, in the early 1900s there were numerous Mennonite groups and Conferences in southern Manitoba, among them the Bergthaler, Sommerfelder, and Reinländer. Other groups had moved in from Russia more recently: the Mennonite Brethren, "Kleine Gemeinde," and "Kirchliche" (General Conference). In the early 1930s, as the Depression hit the Prairies, a spiritual awakening was manifesting itself among some of the Mennonite congregations and leaders in Manitoba.

In 1934, Rev. John D. Adrian, a public school teacher and minister of the Blumenort Mennonite Church, invited Rev. Isaac P. Friesen from Rosthern, Saskatchewan, to



Martha Martens, speaking on the history of EMMS
All photos in this article by Linda Doell

conduct a series of evangelistic meetings in the public school at Reinfeld, Manitoba. As attendance increased, the meetings were moved into the Bergthaler Church in nearby Winkler. People came from every denomination and every walk of life. After another week, the meetings were moved into the local Mennonite Brethren Church, the largest church in the community. Local Jewish merchant Mr. Sirluck commented that, "What Rev. Friesen did here in Winkler was something that all the policemen put together could not have done." People had been coming in to confess to stealing and to pay old debts.

Those involved in the renewal hoped that the whole church would catch the vision they had caught. In fact, many of them stayed in their own congregations to live out their new call to faithfulness there. However, eventually nearly 1,100 members left the Sommerfelder Church under the leadership of four young pastors, and the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church was born. The organizational meetings of the group that broke away were held in the Sommerfelder Church in the village of Rudnerweide, hence the name Rudnerweider Mennonite Conference. On February 4, 1937, the new Rudnerweider group elected Rev. Wilhelm H. Falk as their first *Ältester*.

The four main Mennonite groups in the Saskatchewan River Valley were the Old Colony, the Bergthaler, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Rosenorter (General Conference). Many of them had initially come to Saskatchewan from Manitoba. As they heard about the renewal among their relatives in Manitoba, they asked for visiting speakers to come and share about the blessing of God they had experienced. This was encouraged by Rev. Isaac P. Friesen.

The first visits were held in the Hochfeld School west of Hague. The following week's meetings took place in the two-room school at Gruenthal, a few miles to the south. Then resistance was encountered as the Gruenthal School Board forbade religious meetings in their school. The response of this determined group was to band together to build their own community meeting place in the nearby

village of Chortitz. Baptisms had been taking place in Hochfeld and Chortitz.

In May of 1944, John D. Friesen, on behalf of the Chortitz group and other like-minded people in the area, sent a letter to the Manitoba Rudnerweider Ministerial, requesting help to formally organize a Rudnerweider Church in Saskatchewan. The Manitoba leaders responded wisely by asking the Saskatchewan group to consult with the leadership of the established Mennonite churches in the area regarding the advisability of starting a new denomination. The leadership of the Bergthaler, Mennonite Brethren, and Rosenorter churches considered the matter and agreed that a new church might best meet the needs of the new group of converts. Only the Old Colony *Ältester* was opposed, fearing disruption in his own denomination. As a result of the survey of area leaders, the decision was made to forge ahead and establish a Rudnerweider Church in Saskatchewan.

The organizational meetings and ordination services were held in the community church in Chortitz. The first two ministers elected were John D. Friesen and Henry B. Zacharias. A second church was started in the village of Neuhorst in 1946, when the old Dalmeny Mennonite Brethren Church building was purchased and moved. In 1952 John D. Friesen became the first bishop of the Rudnerweider Church in Saskatchewan.

A third congregation was established in 1958 in the Blumenthal district east of Hague, with Bill Stoesz as pastor. Also in 1958, a congregation was begun in Saskatoon (Westmount Evangelical) under John D. Friesen's leadership. In the early 1960s the Chortitz and Blumenthal groups amalgamated in the village of Hague, and in 1964 the Chortitz Church building was moved to Hepburn as services began there. In the same year the Neuhorst Church building was moved to Warman. Those four — Hague, Warman, Saskatoon, and Hepburn — constituted the EMMC churches in the Saskatchewan Valley for the next few decades.

The name change from Rudnerweider to Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference happened in 1955. Two emphases of the EMMC have been a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and sharing the faith with others.



Part of the book display at the annual meeting



Saskatchewan Mennonite Church Centennials

The Historian has information on six Mennonite churches that are observing their centennial in 2010. They are, in alphabetical order, Aberdeen Mennonite, Hepburn Mennonite Brethren, Laird Mennonite, Rosenort (Tiefengrund) Mennonite, Zoar Langham, and Zoar Waldheim. All six are planning celebrations this summer, between early June and late August. This issue features stories on the three churches with the earliest celebration dates: Aberdeen, Zoar Waldheim, and Zoar Langham, beginning on this page. The next issue will cover the remaining churches. The articles appear in chronological order of celebration. — Ed.

1 ABERDEEN MENNONITE CHURCH



The Mennonite Church in Aberdeen was organized in 1907 as part of the Rosenort Mennonite Church. The charter members were settlers with family names such as Epp, Dyck, Neudorf, Schroeder, Heinrichs, Schellenberg, and Ens.

The congregation met in private homes until 1910. The church was built that summer, with a dedication service held on June 12, 1910. The cost of the building was \$1,600.

The first pastor was Cornelius C. Ens. The church was also served by lay ministers from the Rosenort Church. Later resident pastors included J. J. Nickel, Peter Koop, Henry Neudorf, B. H. Fast, and Frank Koop.

In 1974, the salaried pastor became a reality. Included here were Ferd Ediger, John Krueger, Verner Friesen, Rod Suderman,

David Neufeld, and Henry and Erna Funk. Vern Ratzlaff is serving the congregation at present.

Aberdeen hosted the Rosenort Church Conference in 1958. Soon after this, the Rosenort churches each became autonomous and we became the Aberdeen Mennonite Church.

Over the years, the Mennonite Brethren, Bergthal, and United Churches closed and were moved away, leaving Aberdeen Mennonite the only church at Aberdeen. A few members of each of those churches are worshipping with us at the present time.

The church building has undergone a number of renovations and improvements. The congregation has also changed over time, but we continue to be a welcoming church, worshipping and serving together.

Centennial Program, June 5–6, 2010

Saturday, June 5th: afternoon tours leave from the church at 2 o'clock (area cemeteries, church sites, etc.)

Faspa to follow

Volunteer choir rehearsal and tea Saturday evening at the Church 8 o'clock

Sunday June, 6th: worship at the church at 10 a.m.

Noon meal and afternoon activities at Aberdeen Hall — bring your memories...

Everyone Welcome!

Contact information: Kathy Klassen at (306) 253-4447 or kathv@bitlink.ca

— Kathy Klassen



Clockwise from top left: the original church; with first additions, in the 1930s; with new front entry in the 1950s; with a wing added to the NW corner, in 1964; the church today, with new, larger front entry, built in 1989. Photos courtesy of Kathy Klassen.

2 ZOAR MENNONITE CHURCH, WALDHEIM



Zoar Mennonite Church, Waldheim, circa 1914
Photo courtesy of Ed Schmidt

Waldheim resulted from the intersection of culture, commerce and community where the Zoar (place of refuge) Mennonite Church now celebrates a centennial presence on a plot of ground.

By the fall of 1910 a school building was erected east of the railway for the new Waldheim S.D. #2546, following the official letter dated December 11, 1909. Residents from the surrounding areas and in the developing community of Waldheim, who had previously assembled for Sunday school and related meetings in the Heinrich A. Dyck home, now relocated to the new school building.

Some Mennonite farmers homesteading south and west of what would become Waldheim were meeting in various schools. Rev. J.C. Peters, assistant teacher from Hague, had begun gathering these people into a congregation at Schmidtsburg, where missionary Rev. H.R. Voth officiated at a first baptism in the spring of 1910. On November 10, 1910, Elder Nicolai F. Toews at Langham chaired the first meeting to consider establishing a Zoar Mennonite Church in the Saskatchewan Valley area. Communion was served by Nicolai F. Toews at the Carson school on November 14, 1910.

The second baptism in the Waldheim area, for twelve candidates, was held in the spring of 1912 in the Waldheim school. In the summer of 1912 the recently built school was relocated across the municipal road to the east side, where it was enlarged into a two-room building. A new church building was constructed by a congregation of 58 members on the original school site and dedicated December 15, 1912 by Rev. Peter Regier, who had been invited by Rev. David Toews. There was such a large attendance they feared the balcony might collapse.

The first separate Waldheim Zoar Mennonite Church or-

ganizational meetings began in April 1913. Elder Nicolai F. Toews officiated at the local congregational meeting in July 1913. The two outpost Sunday schools continued.

Many in the next generation heard a story from the years when the Zoar formed. Helen E. Nickel (1901-1957), who later became a missionary and established the Annie Funk memorial school in India, had come to Waldheim, Saskatchewan, from Mountain Lake, Minnesota with her parents in 1912. In less than four years she returned to the United States to Berne, Indiana to stay with her sister while she completed her high school and college to become a teacher. Anna C. Funk had in 1906 gone with support from Pennsylvania to join the NAGCMC mission work as a teacher in Janjgir, India. She became an inspiration to the Nickels when she lost her life on April 15, 1912, in the sinking of the Titanic while returning to America on furlough. The Mountain Lake presence in the developing community of Waldheim was concurrent with some of the original Mennonite missionaries who had Mountain Lake roots. The history of evangelism and missions has been an ongoing presence in Zoar.

A new four-roomed brick school building was built in Waldheim in 1916. In 1917 Langham formed its own independent congregational status. In Waldheim, the Mennonite Brethren assumed independence from the Zoar; a new church was built north of the new school. The school and these two churches have remained in this close relationship over the decades.

Centennial Program, July 2-3, 2010

Everyone interested is invited to participate.

Friday, July 2: Afternoon open house
Barbecue supper 5-6:30 p.m.
Concert 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 3: Brunch 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Official celebration ceremony at 2 p.m.
Catered supper at 5 p.m. (\$12 charge per plate)

If you plan to attend, if possible please advise the Zoar office before June 1st.

There will be opportunity for reminiscing all weekend.

Sunday, July 4 is not officially part of the centennial celebrations. However, all are invited to the 10:30 a.m. worship service, which will include Communion.

Contact information:

Mail: Box 368, Waldheim SK S0K 4R0
e-mail: zoarwaldheim@sasktel.net
phone: (306) 945-2271

— Ed Schmidt

3 ZOAR MENNONITE CHURCH, LANGHAM

Zoar Mennonite Church Langham, in 1946
Photo courtesy of Elmer Balzer

The first Mennonite church, called Bethesda Mennonite Church, was built in 1907. These congregants, General Conference people, came from Nebraska, the Dakotas, and Kansas.

Another group of restless Mennonites immigrated to Saskatchewan, from Mountain Lake, Minnesota. They settled in the region from Langham to Waldheim. An organizational meeting was held on November 20, 1910. The congregation's first baptism and communion service was held December 11, 1910. There were now 55 members.

Construction of the Langham Zoar Mennonite Church began in the spring of 1911. Rev. Toews acted as draftsman and building foreman. Gravel, donated by the C.N.R., was brought in from the Warman pits. The lumber was fir and was priced at \$20 per 1,000 board feet. The furnishings were shipped from Winnipeg.

The name Zoar for the church was selected from Scripture (Gen. 19: 20–30); Zoar was the small town in which Lot and his family found refuge after fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah. Zoar Mennonite Church of Langham has been a place of refuge and comfort to many, both members and visitors, throughout the last 100 years.

The dedication service for the church was held August 16, 1911. The diary kept by Mrs. Jacob Boehr (Anna Harder) records that some of the men from the church went to the river and cut poplar trees, which they inserted in holes dug around the church, to enhance the occasion.

When the Zoar Mennonite Church Waldheim was built in 1912, many of our friends to the north transferred their membership to that new congregation, for convenience.

The Christmas concerts of Zoar Mennonite and Bethesda Mennonite were held on different nights: Bethesda's on Dec. 24th and Zoar's on the 25th. There was a good relationship between the churches, and people generally went to both concerts.

The ladies' aid group at Zoar was started very early, but it is not known exactly when, because a house fire in 1920

destroyed the records. It is thought that they probably began the year the church was built.

Very early, Zoar felt the need to affiliate with other churches of similar faith. They joined the General Conference of Mennonites of Canada at the conference sessions held at Rosthern, Sask. in July 1914.

In 1923 Rev. George Rempel, pastor, was called to serve the church. He was paid \$400 per annum, plus the use of the manse. These wages were supplemented with gifts of meat, vegetables, canned foods, etc. from the members of the congregation. It was decided in 1926 to plan a shelterbelt of evergreen trees to enhance the church building and the grounds. Rev. Rempel had acquired some expertise in the tree industry in Russia. They travelled to the Carlton area for the needed trees. Mr. Isaac P. Derksen and Mr. Frank Kroecker located some very healthy little spruce trees growing in a lush shaded grove. They were elated at their find. It was at this point that the tree knowledge of Rev. Rempel came to the rescue. He informed the enthusiasts that it would be a major folly to transplant trees from a swamp to the semi-arid soil in Langham. They found some sandy hills and took trees from the very top, where the soil was so dry that it fell away from the roots while they were dug. About 60 saplings were trucked home. Each little tree had been marked with a ribbon before digging so that it could be replanted at Langham with the same branches to the south as when it was growing in the forest. Most of the trees took hold. All of these trees are living monuments to the labours of our forefathers, who planned so well.

An important part of our church life has always been good harmony singing, which we hope will never be given up.

The Bethesda Church, our sister church, was disbanded in 1948, 40 years after its dedication service and 45 years after its organization by Hutterite and Mennonite settlers.

Here we are, 100 years after the church was established. We hope and pray that the original faith on which we were founded will continue until Jesus returns to gather up his faithful servants.

— Elmer Balzer, with excerpts from *Our Heritage Our Treasure, the story of Langham*

Highlights of Celebration July 16–18

Friday, July 16th, 7 p.m.: registration

Saturday: 8–10 a.m.: breakfast. Noon: lunch in tent

Afternoon: old-fashioned mission auction

3 p.m.: mass choir practice. 5–6:30 p.m.: supper

7:30 p.m.: coffee house

Sunday: 10 a.m.: worship service

Sunday dinner right after service

Zoar Mennonites along the North Saskatchewan River

Compiled from various sources by Ed Schmidt

More than seven decades ago, visiting as friends and peers of my grandparents and parents, Benjamin Ewert and David Toews would share time in our living room. Their Low German accounts of much descriptive and frequently very humorous expression whetted the inquisitive mind of a young child. In the past decades many compilations of notes have been extracted from too many boxes of letters and newspaper clippings saved over more than a century by our family. Several shelves of books in a personal library related to these histories have also been used. The following is a compact extraction of how the leadership given by the General Conference of Mennonites and more specifically its Western District Conference set out to gather divergent people into what became Zoar Mennonite congregations. There would be many hundreds of similar stories as the General Conference of Mennonites fulfilled a common purpose in its formation.

Expanding toward the western American frontier, the first Mennonite church service west of Ohio took place on April 27, 1856, just east of St. Louis, Missouri, in the Christian Baer home at Ridge Prairie, between Summerfield and Lebanon, Illinois. The Bavarian immigrants who began arriving in Iowa, Ohio, and Illinois following 1830, together with others, bearing names of Swiss and Palatine origin, such as Krehbiel, Hege, Hoch, and Ruth, had formed the roots of the Ohio–Central Canada Conference, including the Wadsworth Ohio schools. This Conference threads through to the Kansas Halstead College and Seminary and then splits between many other points, including the Bible School at Mountain Lake and, in Kansas, the Western District Bethel College in North Newton.

Prairie People: A History of the Western District Conference, by David A. Haury, ©1981 by Faith and Life Press, is the thirteenth volume in the Mennonite Historical Series. There is a formational quote on page 16: “As the Mennonites migrated across Europe and Russia, they carried with them a special inheritance from the Reformation. They remained a unique people, separated from the surrounding cultures by their religious convictions. However, the Mennonites were not a homogeneous people.” A further observation from page 76: “the new arrivals were interested in missions, publications, education, and the Sunday schools, and many favoured the use of musical instruments during worship.” The Mennonite Historical Series is a good source of documented materials. It has been very useful for compiling a coherent story line.

Christian Baer’s (1820–1890) younger brother, Daniel Baer (1826–1905), was the secretary when the General Conference Mennonite church began in 1860. Christian Baer’s eldest son, John B. Baer (1854–1939), had extensive education in preparation to go into foreign mission work for the new General Conference Mennonite Church. In 1886 he was ordained by Rev. A. B. Shelly and became the first permanent, fully supported home missionary of the General Conference. John B. Baer during his early ministry travelled from Pennsylvania to Alaska and many points in between. He visited the North-West Territories, which still included part of western Manitoba and what later became Saskatchewan and Alberta. Included in his travels were the newly accessible areas between the future Prince Albert and Saskatoon, before the official land survey of the area was completed in 1888.

One of the twelve representative scouts for the European Mennonite migration in the 1870s and following was Jakob Buller (1827–1910), who had been ordained as *Ältester* in Alexanderwohl, Russia on February 19, 1869. He was distantly related to the Buller siblings later resident in the Saskatchewan Valley area. In the decade when nearly twenty thousand Mennonites from Prussia and Russia began arriving on the North American Great Plains, the South Germans from Iowa and Ohio were also moving west. Some of these groups, about 60 percent of whom were Mennonites, congregated in Kansas and organized the First Mennonite Church in Halstead in 1875.

Heinrich R. Voth (1855–1931), earlier baptized by Jakob Buller in Mountain Lake, in 1882 became the first fully supported Mission worker of the recently formed regional Kansas Conference of the General Conference of Mennonites from the Halstead area. His first assignment was the Hopi of Arizona and his ethnological work done there is respected to this day. The assignment was then expanded to include the Cheyenne who were becoming scattered from Oklahoma to Whitecap south of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Nicolai F. Toews (1857–1935) was baptized in 1878 by Wilhelm Ewert (1829–1936) in Mountain Lake, Minnesota and was ordained there as an elder with mission assignment under the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, alongside H.R. Voth. Heinrich H. Ewert (1855–1934), son of Wilhelm, married John B.

Baer's sister "Lizzie" Baer (1855–1925) in 1882. In the same year, H.H. Ewert launched a parochial school near the Alexanderwohl Church 10 miles north of Newton, Kansas. In 1883 the H. H. Ewerts and the school moved into suitable facilities at nearby Halstead, Kansas. In 1884 H.R. Voth married Daniel Baer's daughter Barbara Bertha Baer (1857–1889), a cousin of H.H. Ewert's wife.

John C. Peters (1871–1960) was less than three years old when his parents emigrated from Southern Russia to Mountain Lake, Minnesota in 1873. He was baptized in 1890 by Heinrich H. Regier (1855–1934), the first minister of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake. From 1891 to 1892 J.C. Peters was enrolled in the school in Halstead, Kansas and became familiar with the outreach in Oklahoma. In 1890 the Western District's itinerant elder (*Reiseprediger*), H.R. Voth, organized the Mennoville Mennonite Church in northern Oklahoma. Voth organized more congregations and in 1902 Deer Creek Mennonite Church joined the Western District Conference; this was just prior to the rush to settle the Cherokee Outlet (Strip) which was opened for settlement in September of 1903. Nicolai F. Toews, who later became the elder at Langham, Saskatchewan, was associated with H.R. Voth in these endeavours.

After J.C. Peters became involved in Oklahoma, he returned to be among the first students of the newly established Bethel College. Then in the fall of 1896 he attended the Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg, Manitoba and later also the Gretna high school; he graduated from the Teacher Training College in Madison, South Dakota. J. C. Peters returned to Halstead, Kansas where, on January 2, 1898, he married Elizabeth Dester (born in Iowa, December 25, 1872). On November 11, 1906 he was ordained in the Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Oklahoma as an itinerant elder. Rev. H.R. Voth organized a congregation of Mennonites of Polish Russian background at Goltry, Oklahoma, starting about 1909, and in 1911 the Zoar Mennonite Church near Goltry joined the Western District Conference after Voth agreed to settle among the thirty-nine resident families; as a well developed mission outreach, it moved to independence and in 1963 withdrew from the Conference.

A glimpse of the vision to organize new congregations comes from brief quotes from *The Vision and the Reality: The Story of Home Missions In the General Conference Mennonite Church*, by Lois Barrett, Faith and Life Press, 1983, pg. 113–119. "By 1908 a second generation of Russian Mennonite Immigrants, looking for land and opportunity, was moving away from the west reserve in Manitoba; from Goessel, Kansas, from Freeman, South

Dakota, and from Mountain Lake, Minnesota to places like Great Deer and Waldheim, Saskatchewan; Deer Creek, Oklahoma; Lake Charles, Louisiana; Arena, North Dakota; Ashley, Michigan; and Joamosa, California — places where no Mennonite Church had been before. Many of the migrating Mennonites were giving more thought to economic need than to spiritual need.... Concerned about the out-migration, the Western District (Kansas) Conference from 1910 to 1918 had a colonization committee which was to 'prevent the dispersion of the members leaving the settlements which already exist or to gather in new settlements'."

Somewhere in this early space of time John C. Peters relocated his family to the West Zion Mennonite Church at Moundridge, where his first wife, Elizabeth Dester, died February 24, 1913. It appears quite obvious that wives did not accompany their itinerant elder husbands on their extended teaching-and-preaching excursions. The name of J.C. Peters with the qualifier of Teacher appears in Hague, Saskatchewan early in the twentieth century. His familiarity with Gretna, the Ewert brothers, and in Saskatchewan with David Toews and Nicolai F. Toews were likely assets. He is said to have been an associated teacher in the Schmidtsburg and Carson school districts south and west of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. Another name that appears in this mix is that of John Funk Harms (1855–1945) who was present to the movements between Oklahoma, Kansas, Montana, the Dakotas, and Saskatchewan as publisher of the *Zionsbote* and by the early twentieth century also related to the Doukhobor reserve established west of the North Saskatchewan River. Various fragments of records relate all of these congregating people to each other.

The formation of an organization for the preservation of the German language in education in Kansas involved the sons of Prussian Wilhelm Ewert; the Baers as spouses; the Harms cousins, both named John; the young emerging teacher David Toews (1870–1947); and also, at arm's-length, David Dyck (1846–1933), who nurtured the formation of the Mennonite Brethren in Kansas, Manitoba, and the Saskatchewan River Valley areas. A newly arriving network of Mennonites was congregating with Prussian Peter Regier's (1851–1925) invitation for migration from the Rosenorter area in Europe to new homesteads west of the early settlement of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. The Ewert brothers, who moved to a Manitoba base, and Peter Regier from his Rosenorter European background brought variant views of pietism and nationalism but grouped congregational adherents into similar forms of Gemeinde. On the other hand,

David Toews was commissioned by the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1913 as the person in charge of Home Missions for Canada; in essence, David Toews followed the groundwork laid by H.R. Voth and Nicolai J. Toews. These brought a strong orientation to associated independent congregational polity for any Zoar congregation, whether in Oklahoma or Saskatchewan.


Just a side note: The Cheyenne Mission Church was moved into Hammon, Oklahoma in 1957; at the district conference in 1963, the Bethel Church was represented by Lawrence Hart and Norman Bartel, who grew up in the Zoar Mennonite Church in Waldheim, Saskatchewan. In 1909, Rev. N.F. Toews was sent to the Saskatchewan Valley area by the General Conference of Mennonites to identify groups meeting in scattered schools for purposes of organizing membership assemblies as well as conducting evangelistic events. Rev. John C. Peters had gathered a non-denominational congregation of various backgrounds, including Anabaptist-related farmers in the area south of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. In the spring of 1910 Rev. H. R. Voth came from his mission work with the Cheyenne Indians. Together with C. F. Sawatzky of Laird and N. F. Toews, H. R. Voth officiated at a baptismal service for nine candidates on the Henry Schmidt farm five miles southwest of Waldheim in the Schmidtsburg School district. Later the first Communion of this group was served in the Carson school.

In Saskatchewan a common membership book termed "Zoar" was taking shape in about a dozen school houses from Osler to Sonningdale (Langham) and going north along the North Saskatchewan River Valley area. In the first years of the twentieth century, Mr. J. C. Peters, ordained at Deer Creek, Oklahoma, came from Kansas to Hague. On November 10, 1910, Langham called their first meeting to consider a church for the area. Rev. N.F. Toews chaired this meeting and in December the Zoar Mennonite Church at Langham was formed. It included as members the baptismal candidates from Schmidtsburg. There was one Zoar Church Register, with Jacob J. Janzen and Henry Schmidt appointed as deacons in the northern area south of Waldheim. Isaac Goertzen and Frank Bergman were appointed as deacons at Langham. Ten members from Langham and thirteen from the Waldheim area became the original members.

The Langham Zoar congregation started to build their first meeting house in 1911 and dedicated it in the summer of 1912; N.F. Toews settled in Langham as leader. In 1911 the Waldheim core was regrouped to worship with an already formed Sunday school in a house owned by H.A. Dyck. The second baptism for the Waldheim area

for twelve candidates was held in the spring of 1912 in the Waldheim school, with Nicolai F. Toews officiating. David Toews invited Peter Regier to give the dedicatory address of the new Zoar Church building on December 15, 1912. J. C. Peters' first wife Elizabeth Dester died at Moundridge, Kansas on February 24, 1913. It is not recorded if he was there at the time but he did temporarily return to Kansas. The first separate Waldheim Zoar Mennonite Church organizational meeting was held in the spring of 1913. At this meeting John A. Funk and H.A. Dyck were elected to assist Rev. J. C. Peters, who was appointed as elder; J.C. Peters had by now relocated as teacher-elder to Waldheim. H.A. Dyck, in whose home people had previously gathered was appointed as the first Sunday School Superintendent.

On June 7, 1914 J.C. Peters officiated at the first baptism in the new Waldheim Zoar Mennonite Church building. On April 4, 1915 J.C. Peters married Anna Toews at Hillsboro, North Dakota; Anna was 34 years of age and a niece of N. F. Toews. Anna accompanied J.C. Peters on his return to Waldheim and organized the first Ladies Aid but she strongly expressed her desire to be back in more familiar surroundings in the United States. Rev. Peters resigned from the Zoar in Waldheim on May 3, 1916 to relocate to North Dakota.

Nicolai F. Toews remained engaged in the Zoar's growth till 1916, when he also returned to the United States. His wife had died at Langham nine months earlier. Because the Zoar congregations were primarily English, these men carried with them official applications for membership, presented at the 1917 assembly of the North American General Conference of Mennonites in California. The Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada met in Langham that same year. At this time Langham Zoar assumed independent status under new leadership. There was a major fire in the town of Waldheim in 1919, in which all of the baptismal and membership records were destroyed. What is known is that for the next two years Waldheim and Great Deer remained under the oversight of David Toews, who was in charge of Home Missions for Canada under the North American General Conference of Mennonites, with Mr. Joshua Buller and Deacon John A. Funk giving ongoing leadership in the Waldheim Zoar Mennonite Church. 

Small Treasures

By Carl Krause

Given the nomadic nature that marks our Mennonite forebears, it is not surprising to find personal items that reflect their frequent moves. Unlike other cultures whose roots are fixed in one country, or even a specific location within a country, we Mennonites are essentially without a specific geographic base. In the case of my grandmother, Elizabeth (Nickel) Krause, her parents, Heinrich and Helena (Harms) Nickel were born in 1821 and 1842, respectively, in the Vistula River region of West Prussia (now Poland). In the early 1870s they moved to the *Am Trakt* region in Russia, settling along the Volga River north of the Caspian Sea. It was there in 1875 that Grandmother was born in the village of Hohendorf. In 1880-81 the Nickels became part of the ill-fated Claas Epp, Jr. trek in search of the *Bergungsort*, a haven for the chosen people that in reality turned out to be Turkestan. Upon realizing the folly of this venture, the Nickels, together with numerous other Mennonite families, moved to the United States, the Nickels settling on a homestead in Marion County, Kansas in 1885. Eight years later, in 1893, Heinrich Nickel participated in the final “run” for land into the Cherokee Strip in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). He was unsuccessful, but did find a homestead in West Central Oklahoma, there to die but a year later.

It was in Oklahoma that Elizabeth met Cornelius H. Krause and they were married there on January 1, 1898. Here their four sons were born. However, concerns about their oldest sons' eligibility for military duty prompted the Krauses to move to Saskatchewan in 1918. Here they purchased a farm ten miles northwest of Rosthern and became members of the Eigenheim Church community. The instability that had dogged Grandmother since she was a child was finally resolved. She was never to move again. She was now at liberty to settle down and to acquire a few possessions that had previously been denied her. But after her death in 1948, her family found that most of the possessions that she left behind were the very items she had carried with her for much of her life. And, with two exceptions — two large oval portraits of their respective parents — her possessions reflected three

practical considerations: they were small, relatively inexpensive at time of purchase, and easy to pack!

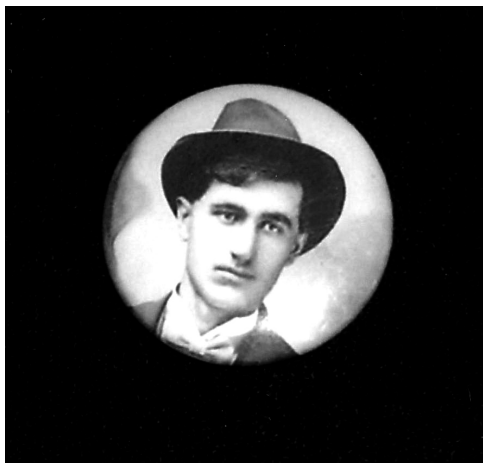
Among her possessions were a jewellery box, a collapsible drinking cup, and a button with an imprinted photograph. These are pictured and described below.

The jewellery box, measuring approximately 10 cm (4 in.), in diameter, is at least 150 years old. Its probable construction is papier maché, its surfaces heavily lacquered in black, and its lid embossed in an abstract floral design. It held only a few treasures: a brooch that Grandma wore on Sundays; two small metal combs with teeth that were springy and rather long and were used to hold the bun in her hair in place; the button; and little else. Except for a couple of paint chips, the box is in excellent condition. It bears no identification marks and may well have been hand-made.

The button, manufactured by Pin-Lock, the **American** company that had patented the design on May 31, 1898, was a gift from her husband Cornelius, whom she married on January 1, 1898. The button is only 2.4 cm (1 in.) across and features a picture, probably taken around the turn of the century, of Cornelius wearing his finest. The button is made of steel, its clasp still intact. I can't remember Grandma ever wearing it.

The collapsible cup is special. An Aluminum Star Cup, it unfolded like an accordion and held a half-cup of liquid. However, because the circular bands folded outward, the cup leaked unless folded very carefully. This kind of cup was first used during the American Civil War, but there is nothing to indicate that this cup was of that issue. Grandma said she received it when she was a child, probably shortly after arriving in the United States. I so wanted to play with it and drink from it, but Grandma really didn't want to clean up the mess.

There were also a few other things, notably a hand-woven woollen blanket that Grandma's parents had brought with them when they moved from West Prussia to Russia in the 1870s. And there were a few shawls and a few photographs and postcards. Given these few special possessions, Grandma never really struggled with downsizing. That concept was never part of her world.



Left, top: the jewellery box; the lower picture shows the inside of the box
Left, bottom: the steel button with image of a dashing young Cornelius Krause, without his customary mustache

Right, top: Elizabeth and Cornelius Krause in Oklahoma in 1918, prior to their departure for Canada

Right, middle: Elizabeth and Cornelius in about 1946 in their backyard on their farm, northwest of Rosthern, Sask.

Right, bottom: that special collapsible aluminum cup, with lid beside it; the embossed star is its only identification mark

Photos courtesy of Carl Krause



New MHSS Board Member


Jim Friesen



Jim was born on a farm three miles east of Rosthern, and lived there for the first 79 years of his life, before moving into Rosthern last fall. He retired from farming in 1995. His wife Margaret passed away in June 2008, after almost 48 years of marriage. They have a son and a daughter who both live in Saskatoon.

His grandfather Abraham Friesen came to Rosthern with the first settlers in the year 1891. His grandfather and Gerhard Enns and others from Rosthern and Hague started The New Jerusalem Church in Rosthern before 1900. It was the first church built in town. They now hold services in the first Mennonite church, built in 1903.

An article about the church was written by Adolf Ens of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Leonard Doell of Aberdeen, Sask. It appeared in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* Vol. 10, 1992.

Jim had asked his father about their ancestors and where they came from, but his father knew very little about it. His grandfather had written a diary about his life but nobody knew about it for a long time. When it was later found, it was translated into English. This, Jim says, started the search into their ancestry and has opened up a great family tree. Then Jim started to record his grandfather's descendents, who are many, and sent them to the GRANDMA program. They are included in GRANDMA 6. He has obtained GRANDMA 5 and 6 and has been doing a search for some of the people around town to see to whom he might be related. 

Writing Workshop

A session on "Writing Your Memoirs" was presented by Esther Patkau at a Workshop Day sponsored by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan on February 13, 2010 at Bethany Manor.

Esther stressed the value of telling your story. She said that writing your story will be a freeing experience. An experience which you may consider a total failure for yourself may have been used by God to teach a necessary lesson or may have become a bridge to a new beginning. In writing your own story you will also discover yourself and your values.

Esther stressed that there is a big difference between stating facts and describing a situation. Both are essential and important.

Some of the points she made are these:

Don't forget to describe details such as the lighting used in your home; e.g., high-test gas mantle lamp or coal-oil lamp.

Describe how water was brought in from a well, where it was stored, and how it was heated.

Describe rain water being recovered from a roof, how the water was stored, and the special situations where this water was used.

Remember, your grandchildren will not know this and will be fascinated by your story.

Think plain — think small — not everything is dramatic but is still worth recording.

Esther also presented a session on "Writing an Obituary".

She stressed that an obituary should be short, especially for the newspaper. A long obituary with several columns and including a colour picture could cost up to \$1,000. This is an unnecessary cost and you need to think about whether you really want to make all this information public?

A short obituary should contain the full name of the deceased, including the maiden name, and the date of birth and death; names of children, grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, brothers, sisters, and parents (including the mother's maiden name); the date, time, and place of viewing and the funeral. A longer version could be written for a church bulletin, for the family, and for those attending the funeral.

The booklet "Writing Your Memoirs" and the paper "Writing an Obituary", both by Esther Patkau, are excellent guidelines and are available in print at a nominal cost from MHSS archives.

— Erna and Elmer W. Neufeld

Restoration of Ebenfeld Cemetery

Two years ago, with the encouragement of several people, my husband, Art Quiring, started to restore an old cemetery located two miles north of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church, west of Rosthern. The first Mennonite Brethren Church of Saskatchewan was begun at that site on land donated by Abram Woelk. Records show that the M.B. Church was built there in 1899, together with the cemetery, and was used for several years. In 1911 the building was moved to Laird and, after that, people chose to use the Laird Community Cemetery, which was nearby.

We knew of two marked graves there but otherwise the cemetery was in a state of considerable disrepair. Art chose to clean up the entire yard and level it by removing several inches of soil. When that was done he found the clay soil of nineteen graves. After that, the whole area was levelled, fresh grass was seeded and a new chain fence with steel poles was built surrounding the area of the graves. The original small gate was included in the new fence. A small brass plate identifying the "Ebenfeld Cemetery" is now mounted near the gate. Some financial remuneration for the reclamation project came from the Saskatchewan M.B. Conference Board of Trustees.

Harold Jantz, our brother-in-law, who was born and raised in the Laird area, who still has many relatives there, and who is also a well recognized Mennonite historian from Winnipeg, conducted further research about this early church. Harold went to the M.B. Archives and read all the available early church minutes from the period 1899 to after 1911. He found the names of nineteen deaths in the church records. We think that these nineteen recorded deaths most probably represent the nineteen graves discovered at the site.

Around 1896, immigrants from Russia and the United States settled in an area stretching from Rosthern to west of the Brotherfield area. They often needed to travel a good distance to attend church. Art and I both have strong and deep roots in this early church development, since several of our ancestors were part of that congregation. Art's grandparents, the Johann Quirings, had emigrated from the USA in 1899. They settled on land southwest of Rosthern, later farmed by a Kreiter family. Grandfather Johann Quiring was the first elected deacon of this fledgling M.B. Church. The Quirings later moved to the Mennon, Saskatchewan area.

My great-grandmother, Minnie (Kroll) Hinz, is buried in this Ebenfeld cemetery. They had come to Manitoba in 1891 and then to this area in 1893. Stories are told of

her being an excellent mid-wife. She would go and help wherever she was needed.

We would appreciate hearing from readers about any knowledge people might have of those early pioneers who were part of this congregation.

— Eileen Quiring



Art Quiring in the restored cemetery
Photo courtesy of Eileen Quiring

Cambria Cemetery est. 1870

By Mary Lou Brannon

This is a cemetery.

Lives are commemorated
deaths are recorded
families are reunited
memories are made tangible
and love is undisguised.

This is a cemetery.

Communities accord respect
Families bestow reverence
Historians seek information
and our heritage is thereby enriched.

Testimonies of devotion, pride and remembrance
are carved in stone
to pay warm tributes to the accomplishments and the life
not the death of a loved one.

The cemetery is homeland
for family memorials
that are a sustaining source of comfort
to the living.

A cemetery is a history of people
a perpetual record of yesterday
and a sanctuary of peace and quiet today.

A cemetery exists
because every life
is worth loving and remembering -
always.

(The above is inscribed on a large stone at the entrance
of the Cambria Cemetery, Cambria, California)

Jacob Lepp, 1873–1968: Pastor, Farmer, Leader

By Waldo Lepp, son

Reverend Jacob Lepp, as he was known in his day, was a born leader, an innovative and energetic farmer, a supporter of educational efforts, and a strong, active Christian minister. He was a man of vision, generous, and respected.

He also knew about suffering and loss. He learned from his experiences and esteemed the gifts and abilities of others. He carried a song in his heart and Holy Scripture on his lips.

John Lepp, Jacob's father, had his roots in Prussia where he ranked highly as a soldier. He was born in 1820, later in life moving to Russia, where after a time his wife passed away, leaving him with three children. Then in 1866 he married Susanna Thiessen. She became the mother of nine children, of whom Jacob was the fourth. He was born October 7, 1873 in the village of Kleefeld in southern Russia.

In 1878 the John Lepp family moved to the USA, settling southwest of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Here Jacob received about three years of schooling in the German language. His family was poor. They raised some grain and kept a flock of sheep.

A revival movement swept the area where the Lepps lived and through some godly evangelists, many people were converted to Christ. The whole Lepp family found new life in Jesus Christ. Jacob, at the age of 17, also made his decision and was baptized and became a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church. He learned much from his mentor, Rev. Henry Voth, a former school teacher and now the leader of the church in Mountain Lake.

Jacob married Helena Wiens on March 24, 1895. Soon his leadership abilities became evident and he was asked to become the local teacher. He taught for three winters, in the German language. After four years of marriage, Helena died, leaving two children.

On February 11, 1900, Jacob found a second wife, Maria Sperling. Then in September of 1901 they came, together with his mother (his father had died in 1892) and other family members to settle in the area of Dalmeny. Their first home was in the lean-to of the barn they had built. Some years later they built a larger house with a T design.

An MB church was organized in 1902 with about 42 members. They also built a modest church building. In the first year, people grouped together for spiritual nurture and fellowship in the homes. Jacob was in the

first committee that wrote to Regina asking for a school district to be organized in the area. It was founded on November 20th, 1902 and in 1904 they had their first school building.

The church site was donated by a local farmer, Henry A. Thiessen, and Abraham Buhler was the first lead minister, having been ordained in Minnesota. In 1907 a larger building was added. When Abraham Buhler left, Jacob Lepp became leader, having been ordained as a minister of the Word. He held this position until 1941, when Rev. Henry J. Baerg became the leader.

In 1912 Jacob's second wife passed away, after a lengthy illness. It was another very difficult experience. She had borne eight children, of whom two died as infants and two more passed away by the age of two years. So now there were six children without a mother.

Providentially, through God's goodness and grace, Jacob found a courageous lady, Tina Klassen from the Borden MB church (where her father was the minister), who was willing to become his wife and the mother of his children. They were married on April 13th, 1913. He was 39 and she was 28.

With his family growing up, Tina felt she needed more space in the house. Could she have an addition added to the main building? But Jacob had done some planning of his own. "We must plant some trees", he said. "Spruce trees to decorate the farm, which have a longer life span, and indicate new life." There had been so many deaths in the family, two mothers and five infants. So they planted trees around the house and garden.

Tina (my mother), was a strong and capable woman. Eleven children were added to the home, of whom three passed away at an early age. She did get her addition built before long and all the rooms were used, especially during the time when hired help was needed on the farm. Dad believed in keeping up with his work, so Mother often had to bake seven or eight loaves of bread every other day, either white or whole wheat, and especially *Zwieback* for Sundays.

At the breakfast table Dad liked to sing short songs. It is amazing how songs sung in your youth stay with you over the years. Dad read a Scripture passage and prayed for the needs of the day. For our prayer we stood around the table even when the bench next to the wall pinched us. But when Dad got to be in his 70s, he felt sitting for prayer was okay.

With our “tripartite” family, Dad had some humour at times. While Dad was sitting on the well-worn bench in the Eaton’s store one day and conversing with an acquaintance, suddenly Cornelius, the oldest son in the family, showed up. Dad said to his friend, “This is my oldest son.” They shook hands. Then soon after, Jacob, the fifth in the family, appeared. “This too is my oldest son,” he said to the gentleman. Moments later Ernest approached. Again Dad said, “This is also my oldest son.” By this time the friend kind of scratched his head. Dad had to explain the “trinity” as he called it in his family. It was fairly obvious later on that these three were to become the executors of the estate.

Experiences sometimes come full circle. One of Dad’s pupils, whom he had taught in Minnesota, later became



Jacob and Tina Lepp in Dalmeny in 1950
Photo courtesy of Waldo Lepp

our neighbour. Another one of his students, who had created some trouble in school, met Dad. At that time he had hidden something from the teacher and now with some prodding confessed that he had hidden the article in his boot.

Though Dad was a man of prayer he also showed his practical side. When going to a conference in Herbert in the earlier years he had several men travelling with him in his Model T Ford. The roads being poor, they got stuck in the mud. One saintly man suggested, “Now we have to pray!” “No,” my Dad replied, “Now we have to push!”

In the earlier years Dad was much in demand to help newer churches with preaching and baptizing. He sacrificed much of his time through the years attending conferences both in Canada and the USA.

Later he was in charge of building the first MB church in Saskatoon, which was situated on the corner of 25th Street and Avenue C. Later, in 1937, he gave leadership in building the Warman MB church. His heart was also

in the founding of the Bethany Bible Institute at Hepburn Sask. With his limited formal education he felt this school could make up what he lacked. Nine of his children and many grandchildren attended this school. By the grace of God all their children became believers, serving God according to their gifts and abilities.

Highlights for the church and for Dad were the years when many conversions and baptisms took place. In the 1940s, during the time of the evangelist David Hooze, from the USA, there were 52 candidates who asked for baptism. There seemed to be an awakened spirit for the need of repentance and accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, which was followed by a surge of baptisms, and people choosing to make Jesus the Lord of their lives. At these large baptisms, Dad was still strong enough to assist Rev. Henry J. Baerg in the baptisms in the North Saskatchewan River.

In 1947, at the age of 74, Dad left the farm and built a house in the town of Dalmeny for their retirement. They kept a garden, well watered, and also helped plant trees in the town, which was only a small village at the time.

In 1963 our family was blessed in celebrating our parents’ 50th anniversary, or golden wedding. Dad had a short message on this occasion in which he spoke of the importance of “Forgiveness”. In 1968, he was able to attend the dedication of our new church building in town. It seemed to crown his experiences with God. Shortly after this, his strength began to wane. He said, “I can still be thankful.” After a long and eventful life he kept the faith and entered into the presence of the Lord, whom he loved and served, and was laid to rest in our local cemetery. He was held in esteem by the many who knew him.



Dalmeny MB Church congregation in front of their church in 1967, just prior to the building of the new church in 1968
Photo courtesy of Waldo Lepp



Peter J. Dyck, 1914–2010

The following is adapted from an MCC news release, January 5, 2010, written by Linda Espenshade (MCC news coordinator) and Ed Nyce (MCC media and education coordinator). The dateline of the news release is Akron, Pennsylvania — Ed.

Peter J. Dyck, described as a “storyteller, Mennonite pastor, author, and lifelong servant to people in need around the world”, died of cancer on Monday, January 4, 2010, at the age of 95.

Dyck, who lived in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, was well known in Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, and Amish communities throughout Canada, Europe, Paraguay, and the United States, especially for his work with Mennonite Russian refugees and with MCC.

Born in Lysanderhöf, Am Trakt, Russia, on December 4, 1914, Dyck was a child when the Russian Revolution ushered in the start of the Soviet Union. At six years old, he almost died of typhoid and hunger that accompanied the Russian famine of 1921.

Dyck and his family were rescued by food shipments sent from Mennonites in Canada and the United States, a kindness he would not forget. Six years later his family, including eight siblings, fled Russia and settled in Saskatchewan.

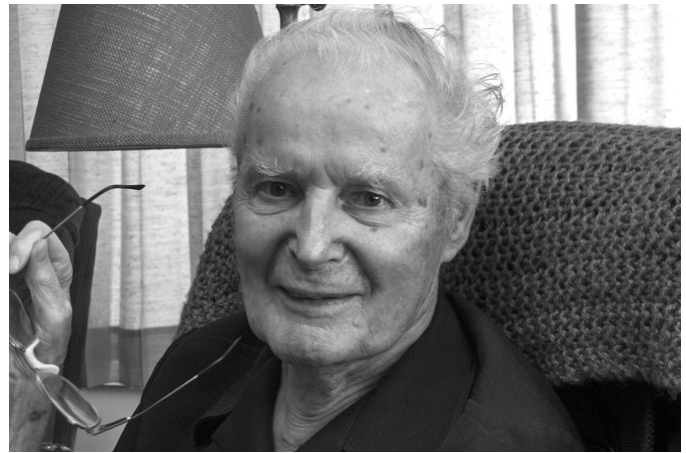
Dyck attended the University of Saskatchewan and Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, and graduated from Goshen College in Indiana in 1950 with a bachelor's degree in English. In June 1968, he completed his Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Theological Seminary, Chicago.

During the Second World War, he served with MCC in England. Motivating his decision to work with MCC was his memory of the food aid he received as a child, when the organization was new.

“I knew these were people that do good.... They fed our family. They fed our community. Now they are asking me to go and do something like that for others? To me, it would almost have seemed immoral not to say yes,” Dyck told author Robert Kreider, editor of *Interviews with Peter J. Dyck and Elfrieda Dyck*.

His decision to go was fortunate not only for MCC, but also for Dyck. In 1944, he married Elfrieda Klassen, a nurse who also was serving with MCC in England. She too was a Russian refugee who moved to Canada.

Once the war ended, the Dycks moved to the Netherlands to direct a massive relief effort. Dyck was later



Peter J. Dyck in a recent photo, courtesy of Rebecca Dyck

knighted by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands in recognition of MCC's feeding and clothing program.

In 1946, the Dycks set up refugee camps in Germany for thousands of Mennonites who had fled the Soviet Union. Over time, they led 5,500 Mennonites by boat to South America, predominantly Paraguay. This experience provided content for Dyck's stories and was the basis of the book, *Up From the Rubble*, which he co-authored with his wife.

Dyck also recorded MCC's work in Europe and Paraguay with 8 mm and 16 mm movie cameras. He used the movie as he travelled around Canada and the United States in the late 1940s, educating people about the plight of the European refugees. “Peter was an exceptional and admired communicator who was also a pioneer Mennonite filmmaker,” said John A. Lapp, executive director emeritus for MCC.

“Peter was a key voice in helping MCC supporters in Canada and the United States become aware of need in the world,” said Herman Bontrager, chair of the MCC board of directors. “Peter and Elfrieda were bridges in that they built linkages and relationships across continents.”

From 1950 to 1957, Dyck served as pastor of the Eden Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kansas. From there, the Dycks returned to Germany with their two daughters, Ruth and Rebecca, to direct the MCC program there and in North Africa for the next ten years.

Peter Dyck then moved into an administrative position with MCC in Akron, Pennsylvania, where he was responsible for East-West relations in the midst of the Cold War. In this role, he made numerous trips to encourage Baptist and Mennonite congregations in Russia, Siberia, and Central Asia, Lapp said.



Elfrieda and Peter Dyck stand together at Bremerhaven, Germany, in 1948, preparing to escort the Volendam group of refugees. Bremerhaven was the port from which the ships departed. MCC photo

Dyck assisted Baptist World Alliance as the organization successfully negotiated with Soviet authorities for permission to make biblical commentaries available. "This project gave credence and moral support to all Russian-speaking churches," Lapp said.

"Clearly, Peter played a very important role in how Mennonites, Brethren in Christ, and the wider Christian constituency related to Christians in the former Soviet Union in a difficult era," Bontrager said.

For two decades after his "retirement" from MCC in 1981, Dyck travelled to speak at churches, schools, and retreats. He was well known among Amish and Mennonites for his inspiring stories and was popular among young people at Mennonite high schools and colleges in the 1970s and 1980s for his ability to engage them. At 90, he could still pack auditoriums.

Dyck authored five more books: three children's books, a collection of stories, *Leap of Faith*, and a meditation on growing old gracefully, *Getting Home Before Dark*. His spellbinding storytelling was captured on three videos produced by Menno-Hof in Shipshewana, Ind.

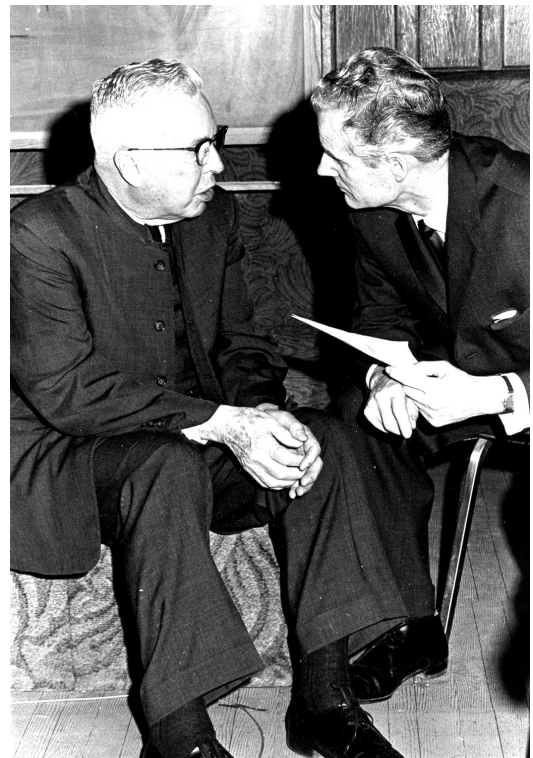
Arli Klassen, executive director of MCC, said Dyck was very effective, not only in his ability to bring hope to many affected by the Second World War, but in influencing hundreds of MCC volunteers to learn new languages, skills, and world views. Klassen continued, "I pray that MCC will continue to be blessed with leaders who have the ingenuity, initiative, and inspiration that Peter has modelled for us all."

Dyck believed that credit for his efforts should be directed toward God, not him. "It is gratifying and also humbling to think that [God's] purposes are accomplished through ordinary people," he told Kreider.

Surviving are two daughters: Ruth, married to Jack Scott of Scottsdale, and Rebecca Dyck, married to Peter Deslauriers of Montreal, Quebec; five grandchildren; and two great-grandsons. Dyck was preceded in death by his wife, Elfrieda.

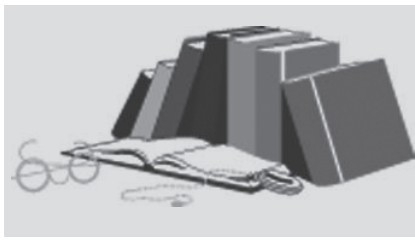
Dyck donated his body to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, the last service that he could perform for humankind.

A fellowship has been set up at Goshen College: the Peter J. Dyck Peace and Justice Scholarship (www.goshen.edu/give).



Orrie O. Miller, executive secretary of MCC from 1935-1958, talked with Peter Dyck in January 1970. MCC photo





Mostly about Books

Victor G. Wiebe, Book Editor

Lee Heide, *The Mennonite Saga (With Medics in World War II)*. Victoria, B.C. Trafford Publishing. 2008, 281 pp. Paper covers, Can. \$22.89. [ISBN: 1-4251-8520-7]

This is a historical novel, in which the author uses a device of alternating chapters to tell two different stories of the Mennonite van Haydon family, connecting these stories in the end. The odd-numbered chapters have the young man Paul Haydon as the main character. He grows up in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, forsakes his Mennonite pacifism, and joins the Canadian Army, where he serves as a Medic in the Second World War. The even-numbered chapters tell the story of many generations of the same van Haydon family. The family narrative is traced from the sixteenth century, when they are friends with Menno Simons and become Anabaptists, to their travels through the centuries and from Netherlands to Poland then Russia and finally Canada. This is an interesting way to tell the Russian Mennonite story.

The style of writing is rather simple and the character development is limited. Moreover, there is little in the way of Mennonite spirituality or faith described in the book. The Mennonite characters are nice people but other than saying they were farmers and persecuted there is not much of a Christian message or depiction of Mennonite distinctiveness in the book.

Heide, of Mennonite ancestry, has published several other books, including his autobiography. For those who don't know, Trafford Publishing is a company that assists writers in self publishing. Trafford provides little in the nature of editorial control or advice on style but will assist any writer in producing a book from a manuscript.

I found little of interest in the chapters on Mennonite history. They offer only a brief retelling of a basic Mennonite story line as found in books like C. Henry Smith's *Story of the Mennonites* (Newton, KS, 1957), listed as one of Heide's sources. The chapters describing the activities of an army medic in combat are more engaging and interesting. The author seems to know how the Canadian Army Medical Corps functioned. A warning: a section in one chapter may offend readers, for there is a very graphic description of the main character's copulation with a Belgian prostitute.

The work is illustrated with some photographs and drawings. There is a Saskatchewan connection, in that the author's grandfather, like the fictional van Haydon family, settled in the Rosthern area in the late 1890s and pioneered there, before moving to British Columbia after the First World War.

T. D. Regehr. *A Generation of Vigilance: The Lives and Work of Johannes and Tina Harder*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, CMU Press, 2009, xvi, 334 pp. Softcover, \$29.50.

A good researcher when working on a project will get the names, places, and dates correct. In addition to having that information correct, a good historian will also seek to answer questions of "why?" Why did a person act the way he did, or why do people believe certain ideas, or why did a family or group choose a certain direction or leader, or belief. The "why" questions are always the most difficult, the most open to interpretation but also the most interesting in any good history. With an outstanding academic background and excellent qualities as a historian, Ted Regehr seeks answers to the "why" questions about the Johann Harder family in his book *A Generation of Vigilance*.

The zealous, talented, and complex Harder family is described and analysed by Regehr in twenty chapters. The chapters are in a mixture of chronological order and themes. Mostly this arrangement works quite well. The first two chapters deal with the Johannes Harder and Tina Rempel family histories. Both Mr. and Mrs. Harder were from prominent and controversial families. Chapter three describes their marriage and the next chapter their difficult six-year migration journey that ends in Yarrow, B.C. The following nine chapters deal with the Harders' most productive years in Yarrow. Each chapter has a different theme, with titles such as: Breadwinners, Family Matters, Preacher and Teacher, Church Leaders, Spots and Wrinkles. One of these chapters details the diligent, but ultimately futile, efforts of Johannes Harder and others in the Yarrow Community to establish a Mennonite high school. Next are four chapters on Johannes's missions committee work, followed by two chapters on his work after leaving his pastor's role in Yarrow and his death. Finally, chapter 20, "A Generation of Vigilance,"

provides the evaluation and summation. Maps, a good bibliography, credits, and two indexes complete the scholarly apparatus of this well written and very readable book.

Ted Regehr tells us the story of Johannes and Tina Harder's work, faith, and service to the Mennonite Brethren community in Yarrow B.C. and Johannes's service in his denomination's international missions committee. The Harders came to Canada as an impoverished young family in 1924. The next six years were spent migrating from Ontario through Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, before finding a stable, permanent home in Yarrow, B.C. They always served in each Mennonite community in which they lived, but it was in Yarrow where they found a life purpose. Johannes was a gifted, intelligent speaker, a strong leader, generous to others almost to a fault, yet single-minded in following his vision of Russian Mennonite Brethren culture, pietism, separatism, and spiritual zeal. His wife Tina complemented him with her unwavering support and nurture, and her affection for women's issues. In the 1930s and 40s they led the Yarrow congregation to be the largest Mennonite Brethren congregation in Canada.


Yarrow was an impoverished immigrant Russian Mennonite Brethren community. From the beginning, the congregation recognized, used, and benefited from the leadership and pastoral skills of the Harders. Tina filled a traditional role as pastor's wife and took a leading role in serving the wives and daughters of the congregation while Johannes was the congregation's lead pastor. All service was in the traditional Mennonite unpaid voluntary or underpaid role. Much of the book describes the role and activities of a leader of a large vibrant congregation who tries to impose a strict code of Christian conduct on a somewhat unruly congregation. Johannes also served almost two decades as a member, then chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. This missions work took him to many countries of Latin America.

This is not a book exalting the unending triumphs of Johannes and Tina Harder and their family, but one in which we see that even leading churchmen are struggling human beings who make both good and poor choices. From one perspective this is a hard book to read, since the troubles and trials and even failures of the Harder family, and of the congregation they faithfully served, are explored in painful detail. We are informed of the complexity and detailed procedures of such things as church discipline — both successes and failures. In particular, I was intrigued by the procedures and explanations when, even after careful interrogation and prayer, the congrega-

tion fails. If your belief is that those procedures are guided by God and yet they fail, how can that be explained and rectified? In *A Generation of Vigilance*, one learns that these people are just like the rest of us struggling humans and that we can learn patience, care, love, and forgiveness from their example.

One feature I very much like is the author's incorporation into the text of the German words that the players in this story used. For example already on page one we get the word *vorberat* rather than the English term "church council". The German words are always explained; however, there is often a nuance of meaning in the German words that using only English would not convey. For example, the term "Bishop" gives a meaning to church leadership that is significantly different from the German term *Ältester*.

The pictures chosen by Regehr for the book are wonderful; CMU's insertion of many pictures is a very good practice and I strongly encourage this. For many of us, getting a visual sense of the history of people and places is as important as the text. The marvellous cover picture is of good size and clarity. We see the entire family, in their work clothes, earning their living together in bright sunshine with heads shielded in a variety of hats, children barefooted, and all harvesting the hops crop. The parents seem contented, the three oldest children look like they would rather be playing, and the youngest are happy. The illustration is large enough to get all this detail. However, I have a complaint with CMU Press pictures. In this book, CMU Press uses their standard thumbnail size pictures; that is, inserting into their books many pictures only slightly larger than one's thumbnail. These very small illustrations provide only minimal detail. For example, what are the different people doing in the wonderful baptism picture on page 123? This could be a highly informative picture if only we could see more details, or on page 165, the identity of all the preachers is obscured by the tiny size of the picture.

A Generation of Vigilance is one of the more interesting books on Mennonite History that I have read this decade. Regehr's use and interpretation of the great wealth of detail in church procedures and the intimate sources of information from the Harders themselves and from the congregation members and the minutes of meetings liven what could have been just another common church biography. The Harders with their fixation on rules and with their generosity of time and energy and unselfish devotion to the Yarrow congregation make lively reading. This is a very important concluding book to the Yarrow Research Committee publications. 



The Family Tree

Rosemary Slater, Genealogy Editor

Genealogical Resources at the MHSS Archives

Looking for your Mennonite roots? There is no better place to start than at the MHSS Archives located at 110 La Ronge Road in the basement under the Fellowship Centre. The Archives are open to the public Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4 p.m. and Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. Membership in the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan is not required to use the Archives and there is no charge except for a minimal charge to photocopy items or to print computer generated reports.

What will you find if you visit the Archives? You will be greeted by dedicated volunteers who will try to direct you to the resources that are most likely to help you in your search for your roots. They may also suggest a search strategy which could include checking out your family tree on GRANDMA6, a computer-based database which includes over one million names of persons of Mennonite ancestry. If you are not sure whether the Archive has materials that will be useful to you, call the Archive at 306-242-6105 or e-mail mhss@sasktel.net.

The GRANDMA program is not available online but many other Mennonite genealogical resources are. The MHSS website, found at <http://www.mhss.sk.ca> has links to other Mennonite Historical Societies across Canada with a wealth of information for your perusal from your home computer. As well, the Cemetery Project website found at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~skmhss/> includes lists of burials in Mennonite cemeteries across Saskatchewan. The volunteer staff can also point you to other useful computer websites that have been bookmarked as Favourites on the Archives computer.

The Archives resources are, of course, predominantly paper based and have been donated by many different individuals and organized by volunteers, although much work still remains to be done. An ongoing project has been the clipping and indexing of obituaries from *The StarPhoenix*, the *Saskatchewan Valley News*, *Der Bote*, and the *MB Herald*. A complete alphabetical index to all the obituaries found in *Der Bote* from 1924 to 2008 has just been completed. Indexes to *Der Bote* and the *Mennonitische Rundschau* will lead the researcher to the extensive collection of serials

and periodicals found on the shelves of the room adjacent to the public area of the Archives. This is where you will find school yearbooks for Bethany Bible Institute, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Rosthern Bible School, Rosthern Junior College, and Swift Current Bible Institute, among others.

Because the collection consists of donated materials, areas of coverage may be incomplete in certain areas, such as city directories and old phone books; but hidden treasures may also turn up, such as a 1974 List of Electors in Swift Current or a detailed set of maps of Friesland in Frisian. Archivist Victor Wiebe can help point to some rare and unusual resources. The Archives has also been the recipient of some personal collections, several of which are still being processed but which will be available to researchers in the future.

Church registers are another important source of family information for genealogists. The Archives has the *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch*, the *Reinlaender Gemeinde Buch*, the *Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch*, the *Old Colony Register Volume 2*, the *Reinlaender Gemeinde Swift Current Register*, the Durango, Manitoba and North Colony registers for Mexico and a four-volume register for the Old Colony Church that covers the period from 1903 to 2009.

The four shelves of individual family histories and the two shelves of town and local histories may include something relevant to your search. If your family has created a family history book, the Archive would very much appreciate receiving a copy. Although we have no budget for purchasing such items, a charitable donation receipt can be issued for books that can be priced.

Church histories, school histories, census records such as the 1835 Molotschna census, and Mennonite history books are among the other resources available to you at the MHSS Archives. The Archives of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan are also housed on the same premises as the Historical Society Archives and are available to researchers.

Although this listing is far from comprehensive, perhaps it has given you a taste of the feast that awaits you at the Archives and an idea of the types of materials we would like to receive from you, our faithful supporters and beneficiaries of the generosity of others.

Genealogical Help Needed

If you know the people in any of the three pictures on this page (taken about 1896 in Morden, Manitoba) or if you know how they connect with David and Anna (nee Neufeld) Friesen, who lived at Rosthern from 1896 to 1907, please contact Darlene Erho at:

808 Baker Drive, Coquitlam, BC V3J 6W6
e-mail: dle476@gmail.com

David T. Friesen operated a livery barn in Rosthern, and after 1907 operated a grist mill at Langham, together with Peter Wiebe and George M. Rempel. In 1909 the Friesens moved to Waldheim, where David Friesen bought a section of land. Anna (Neufeld) Friesen died in 1900 at the age of 44, shortly after her daughter Agnes was born. David married Helena Dyck two months later.


David Friesen's first wife, Anna Neufeld, was born September 27, 1856, and died January 6, 1900. She was the daughter of Peter Neufeld and had at least one sister and three brothers: John, Peter, and George. David and Anna Friesen married in Russia on May 12, 1875 and came to Canada in 1875. They farmed two and a half miles north-west of Winkler and moved to Rosthern in 1896.



The white-bearded man standing with his wife in the photo above is Henry Friesen. He is a cousin to David Friesen. Who were his parents and how is he a cousin to David Friesen?

Darlene is guessing that the two unidentified pictures below are family pictures of David Friesen's sisters, Aganetha Friesen Neufeld, and Margaretha Friesen Dueck, who moved to the Bergthal area east of Rosthern with the David Friesens in the 1890s.



What is known is the following: David Friesen's sister Aganetha married Johann M. Neufeld, who was born March 1, 1866 and died May 23, 1932. By 1896 they had three boys and three girls. His sister Margaretha married Abram Dueck and by 1896, two boys and two girls had been born to this family. 

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

The Back Page

Honour List

This list recognizes persons who have made significant contributions towards preserving Mennonite history, heritage, or faith within our province. (The date in brackets is year of death.)

To add a name to the Honour List, nominate a person in writing.

For information on the members of the Honour List, see the web site: <http://mhss.sk.ca>

Helen Bahnmann
Abram J. Buhler (†1982)
Helen Dyck (†2007)
Dick H. Epp (†2009)
Jacob H. Epp (†1993)
Margaret Epp (†2008)
Peter K. Epp (†1985)
George K. Febr (†2000)
Jake Febr
Jacob E. Friesen (†2007)
John D. Friesen (†2004)
Jacob G. Guenter
Gerhard Hiebert (†1978)

Katherine Hooge (†2001)
Abram G. Janzen
John J. Janzen (†2004)
George Krahn (†1999)
Ingrid Janzen-Lamp
Abram M. Neudorf (†1966)
J.J. Neudorf (†1988)
J.C. Neufeld (†1994)
John P. Nickel
David Paetkau (†1972)
Esther Patkau
John D. Reddekopp
Ted Regehr

John G. Rempel (†1963)
Ed Roth (†2008)
Wilmer Roth (†1982)
Arnold Schroeder (†2000)
Jacob Schroeder (†1993)
Katherine Thiessen (†1984)
J.J. Thiessen (†1977)
David Toews (†1947)
Toby Unruh (†1997)
Albert Wiens (†2002)
George Zacharias (†2000)

Web Sites

MHSS web site: <http://www.mhss.sk.ca>

Cemeteries web site:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~skmhss/>

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online:

GAMEO.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online

Electronic Bulletin Board

MHSS-E-Update@mhss.sk.ca

Use this electronic bulletin board to post information on upcoming events, programs, and activities, and other information that will be useful to everyone interested in Mennonite history, culture, or religion.

MHSS Membership

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

The Treasurer, MHSS

110 La Ronge Road, Room 900

Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8

Please make cheques payable to: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan or MHSS.

Memberships are \$30 for one year; \$55 for two years; \$75 for three years.

Gift subscriptions are available.

Membership fees and donations to the Society are eligible for tax receipts.

Send Us Your Stories

Readers are invited to submit news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc., to be considered for publication. Send them to us at mhss@sasktel.net

or to the MHSS street address below:

MHSS Office and Archives

110 La Ronge Road, Room 900

Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8