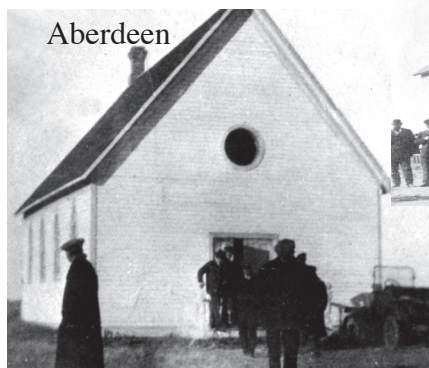


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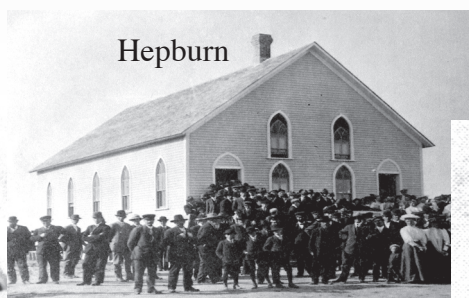
Official periodical of the Mennonite Historical Society of
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Three More Churches Celebrate Their Centennials

See their stories, beginning on page four. Below are all six Saskatchewan Mennonite churches that are 100 years old in 2010.



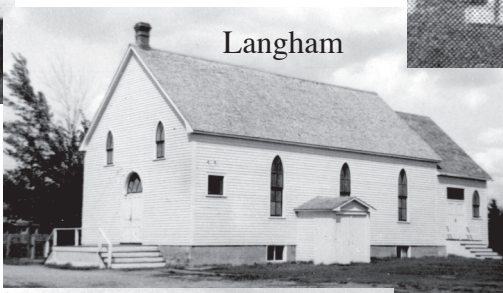
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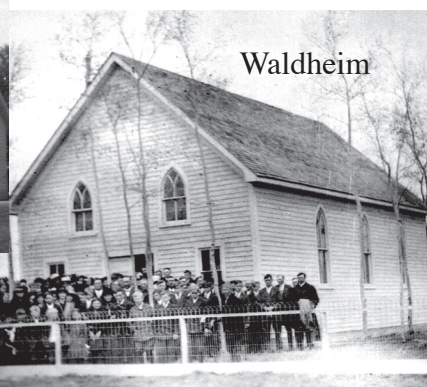
Laird



Langham



Tiefengrund



Waldheim

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Editor: Victoria Neufeldt

Story Scout & Contributing Editor: Verner Friesen

Advisory Committee: Esther Patkau, Jake Buhler

Pictures Editor: Helen Fast

Typist: Hilda Voth

Proofreaders: Ernie Baergen, Verner Friesen

Columns:

Book Page & Archives Page: Victor Wiebe

contact info: 934-8125 victor.wiebe@usask.ca

Genealogy Page: Rosemary Slater

contact info: 955-3759 r.slater@sasktel.net

Distribution: Erna & Elmer Neufeld

Printer: University of Saskatchewan Printing Services

Readers are invited to submit news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc. to MHSS at the e-mail or street address below. For material related to either of the columns, please contact the respective editors; see above for contact information.

MHSS Office and Archives:

110 La Ronge Road, Room 900

Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8

Tel: 242-6105

E-mail: mhss@sasktel.net

Archives hours:

Monday, 1:30–4 p.m.

Wednesday, 1:30–4 p.m., 7–9 p.m.

ERRATUM

In the article on the Langham Zoar Church centennial in the last issue, Rev. Rempel's first name is given incorrectly. The correct name is John G. Rempel. We apologize for the error.

From the Editor's Desk

By Victoria Neufeldt



In this issue, we have, among other features, three more church centennial celebrations to tell you about, two memorable people stories, a description of an intriguing item in our archives, and a description of a former social pastime. If you are intrigued by these tantalizing bits of information, I encourage you to dig right in and find out what it's all about.

The MHSS and this journal are about history and one cannot help thinking how this summer will go down in the records and e-mails and diaries, to be marvelled at by still-to-come generations. A remarkable spring, it certainly was, for rain and storms, and not only in Saskatchewan. One wonders whether people of future generations will shake their heads and not quite believe it.

But Saskatchewan has some spectacular records. The current issue of the newsletter of the Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, *Sparks off the Anvil*, lists the following (see page one of the WDM newsletter for three more):

In 1893, the temperature plummeted to -56.7°C in Prince Albert, the coldest temperature ever recorded in the province.

In 1937, it reached 45°C in Midale and Yellow Grass, a Canadian record high.

In 1973, Cedoux received a gift of Canada's heaviest hailstone, at 290 grams. 

MHSS Board of Directors, 2010

Jake Buhler, President

836 Main Street

Saskatoon, SK S7H 0K3

Tel.: 244-1392 jakelouisebuhler@sasktel.net

George Dirks, Vice President

Box 235, Hepburn, SK S0K 1Z0

Tel: 947-2158 gtdirks@sasktel.net

Vera Falk, Secretary/MC Sask Archivist

Box 251, Dundurn, SK S0K 1K0

Tel: 492-4731 Fax: 492-4731

Elmer Regier, Treasurer

142 Haight Street

Saskatoon, SK S7H 4V9

Tel: 373-0606 earegier@sasktel.net

Kathy Boldt, Archives

Box 152, RR #4, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7

Tel: 239-4742

Margaret Ewert

Box 127, Drake, SK S0K 0H0

Tel: 363-2077 m-ewert@hotmail.com

James (Jim) Friesen

6005 5th St., Box 381

Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0

Tel: 232-4977 jamesfriesen@sasktel.net

Erna Neufeld

512 – 351 Saguenay Drive

Saskatoon, SK S7K 5T4

Tel: 975-0554 ewn.esn@sasktel.net

Victor G. Wiebe, Archivist & Book Review Editor

11 Kindrachuk Cres., Saskatoon, SK S7K 6J1

Tel: 934-8125 victor.wiebe@usask.ca

Other Positions

Cemeteries Project — Helen Fast, coordinator

Tel: 242-5448 rhfastlane@shaw.ca

Cemeteries Project web site — Al Mierau, webmaster

almierau@shaw.ca

MHSS web site — Ruth Friesen, webmaster

MHSS President's Corner


By Jake Buhler



The Bible is full of numbers. Some favourite ones are 3, 7, 10, 12, 70, and 10. Daniel prayed three times a day. The seventh day was for resting. There were ten commandments and twelve disciples. Seventy times seven is the forgiveness number. And sheep come in hundreds.

Our history is also full of numbers. This year six Saskatchewan Mennonite churches are 100 years old. Rev. J.H. Pauls was 95 when he died a few weeks ago. The Dennis and Margaret Boldt farm and the Buhler-Driedger farm — both near Osler — are 100 years old. Fifteen years from now, the Mennonite Church will be 500 years old. Farmers in the Hague-Waldheim-Rosthern area have had 12 inches of rain this year.

Numbers are usually adjectives. How can there be an anniversary without a descriptor? A 25th or a 50th or a 100th anniversary are worthy occasions. When we tell our stories of faith and ordinary life, we use numbers. Numbers give meaning to the narrative. My father-in-law, John G. Wiebe, embellished his stories with inflated numbers.

So as we think back on our lives, let's write down our stories and include lots of numbers — and may most be true! 

Saskatchewan Mennonite Churches Celebrate Centennials

In the last issue of the Historian, we told you about three Mennonite churches that were commemorating their 100th anniversaries this summer: Aberdeen, Langham, and Waldheim. In this issue, we bring you three more: Hepburn, Laird, and Tiefengrund. In addition, on p. 9, we have a report on the 50th anniversary of the Carrot River Mennonite Church, held on the 18th of April this year. — Ed.

Hepburn Mennonite Brethren Church

Several Mennonite Brethren families had moved into the Hepburn area by 1910. To attend church, they travelled to the Brotherfield or the Dalmeny church which, in the days of horse transportation, was quite an undertaking. There was a felt need for a building in Hepburn. Records show that the first meeting to discuss the matter was held on March 19, 1910. It was decided to ask the Brotherfield and Elim (Dalmeny) churches to release the members concerned to the proposed new church at Hepburn. Both churches obliged, wishing them God's blessing. Two acres of land were purchased in the Village of Hepburn and the first church was built in 1910 at a cost of \$2623.60.

At a meeting on August 13, 1910, Rev. P.J. Friesen was chosen as the first leader and minister. Mr. Friesen was a local farmer who had received his seminary training in Rochester, New York and had been ordained in Dalmeny.

The first Sunday morning service was held on August 21, 1910. It was a great day to celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness. The church was dedicated on October 9th of that same year, in connection with the district conference. Seventy-eight charter members were formally received into the newly formed Hepburn Mennonite Brethren Church on October 23, 1910.

With the rapid expansion of the church through membership transfers and baptisms, talk about expanding the church began as early as 1913. The

1910 sanctuary was expanded to the north in 1917, with an addition measuring 32 by 42 feet with a full basement and balcony. An electric plant was also purchased and the total cost was \$14,000. Within a decade the church had completed two major building projects. The congregation now had a very stately building.



Hepburn MB Church ca. 1920, shortly after the major addition was built; for a photo of the original church, see page 1.

Photo courtesy of Kim Bushman

For many years the Hepburn Church was the largest church in the Saskatchewan MB Conference (both North and South districts). The membership had increased from the 78 charter members in 1910 to over 320 in less than 15 years.



The 1967 church as it looks today; photo taken 8 July 2010 by Kim Bushman

In January 1966, a decision was made to build a new sanctuary. H.M. Willems served as building chairman. At the time of completion, early in 1967, the cost of the sanctuary, including furnishings, was

reported as \$117,070. Each family was expected to contribute 32 hours for painting or varnishing, or to pay for that time at \$1.25 per hour. Among other things, the sanctuary provided for much more interaction in its spacious foyers and effectively eliminated the traditional ladies' and men's sides of the church. Once the new sanctuary was ready for occupancy, the old building beside it, which had served the congregation well for 57 years was sold for \$500 and dismantled by the buyer.

Rev. P.J. Friesen served until 1926. During the 16 years of his leadership, he baptized more than 150 people, with large baptisms of 24 in 1914, 27 in 1918, and 63 in 1924. By that time the membership had quadrupled to 320, making it the largest MB Church in Saskatchewan. At the inception of the Hepburn MB Church, there was a distinct emphasis on missions, education, music and youth activities, which continue to be important to this day.

The Hepburn MB Church has had 28 interim and full-time lead pastors. In 1989 the first full-time youth pastor was hired. Five youth pastors have served the church since that time. Currently, the membership is at 230 members and the senior pastor is Jeff Peters.

— Jack Braun

Hepburn Church Celebration

Dates: July 30–August 1, 2010

Friday, July 30: 6:30 p.m. Registration begins; 7:30 p.m. Reminiscing Session; 9 p.m. Visiting time

Saturday, July 31: 8:30 a.m. Registration; 10 a.m. Brunch; 11 a.m. Historical tours + children's and youths' activities; 2:30 p.m. Choral reunion practice + historical tours + activities; 5 p.m. Supper; 7 p.m. Key-note speaker Tim Geddert

Sunday, August 1: 8:30 a.m. Breakfast; 10:30 a.m. service + choral presentation + session with Tim Geddert; 12:30 p.m. Lunch; 2 p.m. Garden tours (annual community event); 4:30 Faspa at church

Meals at Bethany College, except Sunday faspa

Contact:

Hepburn MB Church, Box 237, Hepburn, SK S0K 1Z0 Tel: 306-947-2085 office@hepburn.com

Laird Mennonite Church

The first part of the article below, up to 1967, was condensed by Verner Friesen from an article by Wilmer Froese in the July 2007 issue of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian. The story from 1967 up to the present was contributed by Don Regier. — Ed.

The story of the Laird Mennonite Church had its beginnings in 1892. It was in that year that Henry Epp, David Berg, David Friesen, Abram Dyck, and Peter Klassen, and their families came to settle in what became the Carmen area between Laird and Waldheim. Later that same year, David Epp and his wife Justina (nee Wiebe) and brother-in-law Heinrich Warkentin and his wife Margaretha (nee Epp), and David and Margaretha's parents arrived.

David Epp wrote in his memoirs of how he and his family arrived in Rosthern in July, 1892. Rosthern then consisted of a water tower and a small shanty with some small wares and a lumber yard. With a pair of oxen, a cow, a wagon, a plow and harrow and some kitchen utensils, all purchased during their stopover in Manitoba, they made their way across the prairie from Rosthern to the place they would call home in the Carmen district.

From the beginning, these early settlers met in homes for worship, usually in the Henry Epp home. As more settlers came, they also gathered for worship in homes in the Springfield and Snowbird districts. Elder Peter Regier had arrived from Prussia in 1894 and settled to the north of Laird in the Tiefengrund community. He helped to organize the groups. Heinrich Warkentin, who had been chosen as a minister in Russia before coming to Canada, helped with the preaching, and served the church faithfully till his death in 1935. Two others who served the church in those early years were Jacob Janzen and Cornelius F. Sawatzky.

House churches had served them well, but soon the need was being expressed for a more permanent place of worship. Although it seemed at first that the church might be built in the country in the Carmen district, the final decision was made to build the church in Laird. On May 10, 1910, the cornerstone was laid for the new place of worship. This first church building had separate entrances for the men

and women, which was the tradition at the time. Some members living farther away continued to meet in homes, especially in the winter months, but most met in the new church, which became the hub around which their lives revolved. There they could meet friends and neighbours after a week of relative isolation. There they found they were not alone in their joys and struggles. Together they shared faith in one God who would guide and sustain them. David Epp was ordained as a minister in 1911, and served in that capacity till his death in 1942.



Laird church with the 1926 addition; for a photo of the original church, see page 1.

All photos for this article courtesy of Gordon Nездoly

In 1926 an addition was built at the front of the church, with a single entrance door. In 1959 a larger, two-storey entrance replaced the 1926 addition, with two Sunday School rooms on the second floor. After the older ministers, Heinrich Warkentin and Jacob Janzen, passed away, three new ministers were called to help with the preaching, namely Isaac I. Penner, Art Friesen and Art Pauls. C. F. Sawatzky continued to preach well into old age. David P. Epp served as deacon from 1923 till his death in 1942. He was followed by P. S. Epp, who served until 1967.



The 1967–2010 history of the Laird Mennonite church has been graced by God's faithfulness and multiple blessings.

While every member is important, leadership has its responsibility, especially in ministry. After some good changes with the coming of Peter Funk, the church was served by Gary Giesbrecht from 1978 to 1981. He brought blessings and outreach with his youthfulness.

The leadership of Irvin Schmidt was appreciated as the congregation focused on a new church building, which was dedicated in 1985. His love of music was evident as leader of the choir.

The congregation acquired as dual pastors Barb and Wilmer Froese who after a one-year trial stayed on for 14 years (1990-2005). They introduced chorus singing, and under their guidance, the Conference L.I.F.E. program (Living in Faithful Evangelism) was initiated and care groups started. The slogan "committed to Christ and my neighbour" was introduced.

Presently the Church is under the pastoral care of Bruce Jantzen, who has come to us with the blessing of his Horse Lake Mennonite congregation.

Interim pastors who have blessed the congregation over the past 40 years were Leonard Enns, Verner Friesen, Erna and Henry Funk, and Benno Klassen.

Two important changes made since 1967 were the use of individual glasses for Communion, in place of the common cup, and the use of grape juice instead of wine.

The vital arm of the church is the Sunday school, sowing the seed of God's word early. The succession of superintendents to date has been Don Regier, Stuart Epp, Steve Epp, Gordon Nездoly, and for many years, Diane Dueck.



Top photo: the new church building, dedicated in 1985

Bottom photo: the current church

God has blessed this church through a whole century with countless blessings. Jesus promised, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst". As the Laird Mennonite Church and its congregation look to the next centennial and the Lord's return may it ever be a place where Christ is Lord and hungry souls find refuge.

Laird Church Celebration

Dates: August 28th & 29th, 2010

Saturday, August 28: 2 p.m. Registration; 5 p.m. supper; 7 p.m. service + a time of reminiscing

Sunday, August 29: 10 a.m. morning worship service; noon lunch & time of visiting

Contact (celebration committee):

Stuart Epp (tel: 223-4395), Don Regier (tel: 223-4368), Grant Peters, Alice Nickel, Box 84, Laird, SK S0K 2H0, Laurie Jepsen Martens <jepsenmartensl@gmail.com>

Advance registration is appreciated for Saturday supper

Tiefengrund Rosenort Church



Peter Regier, first elder of the Rosenort Mennonite churches in Saskatchewan
All photos for this article courtesy of Sylvia Regier

Early in 1910 a meeting was called at Abraham Funk's farm to plan the building of the Tiefengrund Church. There were fourteen families that warranted the building of their own church: the families of Peter Regier, Abraham Funk, Widow Margarethe Friesen, Peter P. Neufeldt, C.W. Regier, Widow Emilie Wieler, Ernest J. Friesen, Johann A. Fast, Johannes Klaassen, Isaac Klaassen, Johann Fieguth, Jacob H.

Friesen, Johannes Regier, and Gerhard Dyck. Johann J. Dyck and Charles F. Krack Sr. were not

church members but heartily assisted in the building of the church, and many of their family members later became church members. It was decided at this meeting to go ahead and build. A total of \$2,250 was pledged and was nearly all paid in one year. Mr. Thomas Wood was the master carpenter, with P.P. Neufeldt and John Fieguth as foremen. The contract to build the church was given to Mr. W.B. Bashford of Rosthern for \$2,100.

Rev. John R. Friesen states in the report of the 50th Anniversary of the Tiefengrund Church that the building committee was made up of Abraham Funk Sr., Johannes Regier, P.P. Neufeldt, and John Fieguth, and that the cost was \$2,600.

The basement and foundation were built soon after seeding that spring, using large rocks and cement. The walls being one and a half feet thick, a good bit of dynamite was needed to break it up when the new church was constructed in 1958.

In the old church register (*Gemeinde Chronik*), it is stated in German, "This work was a joyful work, of which all those who participated will think back with joy to their oldest age."

On October 30, 1910, with very beautiful weather, the church was officially opened and dedicated. Rev. Peter Regier officiated, with N.F. Toews from Langham also present.



The new church in 1958; it was dedicated on August 24th of that year

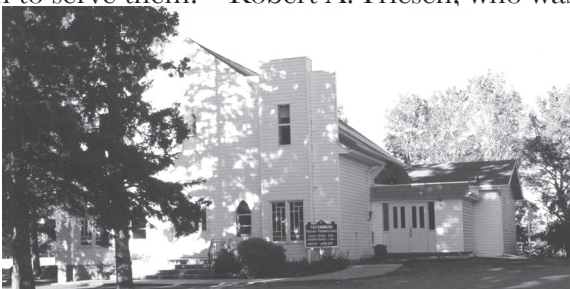
In 1958, a new, larger church was built on the same site. The original church building was moved to Horse Lake, to serve as that congregation's church, a position it still holds.



The church on the move! The original Tiefengrund church building was moved to Horse Lake in 1958, when the new Tiefengrund church was built. See page 1 for a photo of this church on its original site.

Between 1957 and 1967, worship services gradually changed from German to English, progressing from English services Sunday evenings to English being used for the Sunday morning services. German hymns were still sung.

The Tiefengrund church became Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church in 1962, when the Rosenort churches divided into two separate units, each with its own elder. Arthur E. Regier served as minister and elder of the Tiefengrund church until 1967, when he accepted a pastoral assignment in Rosemary, Alberta. There was no one to take his place, and, as the Tiefengrund history book notes, “for the first time in the history of the Tiefengrund Church they did not have a minister of their own congregation to serve them.” Robert A. Friesen, who was



Tiefengrund Church today

All photos for this article courtesy of Sylvia Regier

working in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan at the time, was invited to take the position of pastor. He was given the opportunity for training and after graduating from Bethel College, he was ordained and assumed full-time service in 1969.

The current pastor is Lorne Epp.

Tiefengrund Church Celebration

Dates: July 24 & 25, 2010

Saturday, July 24: 1:30 p.m. Meet at Horse Lake Mennonite Church; 3:30 p.m. Gather at Tiefengrund Mennonite Church; 4:30 p.m. Supper; 6 p.m. Mass choir rehearsal; 7 p.m. Evening variety program; 9:30 p.m. Informal campfire singing

Sunday, July 25: 10 a.m. Worship service with guest speaker Waldemar P. Regier; 12 noon Catered meal; 1 p.m. Visiting, displays, etc., 4 p.m. Faspas

Contact:

Tiefengrund Mennonite Church Celebration,
Box 102, Laird, SK S0K 2H0

e-mail: jenjanzen@yourlink.ca

Church office: (306) 223-4340



MHSS “Occasional Papers” Available

The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan has some new publications available for sale. These are papers presented at three recent annual meetings, which may be obtained for \$2 each, plus mailing costs.

- “The 1920s Migration of Old Colony Mennonites from the Hague–Osler Area to Mexico,” by William Janzen; presented at MHSS annual general meeting in 2006
- The biographies of Saskatchewan Bergthaler Mennonite leaders John D. Reddekopp (born in 1925) and Abram J. Buhler (1903–1982); the Reddekopp biography by grandson Linsay Martens and the Buhler biography by son Abram Buhler; both presented at MHSS annual general meeting in 2009
- The biographies of Saskatchewan Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church leaders John D. Friesen (1920–2004) and Abram M. Neudorf (1901–1966); the Friesen biography by daughter Johanna van Kuik and the Neudorf biography by son Henry W. Neudorf; both presented at MHSS annual general meeting in 2010



Carrot River Mennonite Church Celebrates 50 Years

On Sunday, April 18th, over 150 past and present attendees of Carrot River Mennonite Church (CRMC) gathered for a day-long celebration of their church's 50th anniversary.

The Mennonite Church first began in the Carrot River, Saskatchewan area in the late 1920s, when families settling south of the community built a country church. In the late 1930s, enough families had settled north of Carrot River that another church was built there. By 1959, amalgamation of the two churches was being discussed and a building was erected in the town of Carrot River. The first church service was held Easter Sunday, April 17th, 1960. The new church building was dedicated Easter Monday, April 18th.

The day began with the morning church service held at CRMC. Current Pastor Ben Pauls led the worship service, which focused on praise, adoration, and thankfulness through congregational songs, choir numbers, special music, scripture readings, and a reflection of the church's history. Past CRMC pastor Phil Gunther, who served from 1990–1999, brought the message, encouraging "Thinking Back, Looking Forward". While it is good to reflect on what has been accomplished, he said, there will always be the Lord's work to do and all must keep working towards it.

A catered lunch was held at the community hall following the morning service. A time of visiting and looking at old photographs led into an afternoon program. Former CRMC pastor Craig Hollands, his wife, Amy, and daughter, Chandra, led congregational singing. A play written by Margaret Doerksen and acted out by various members of the current congregation highlighted areas of the church history from past to present. As well, anyone wanting to share their remembrances was invited to do so during an open mike. The afternoon ended with more visiting over fasma.

— Leora Sauder (adapted from the report published in the Canadian Mennonite)

Mennonite Brethren Book Launch in Saskatoon

On the evening of May 21st, approximately fifty people assembled in Bethany Manor, a retirement facility in Saskatoon, to participate in the launch of a very recently published book, *Canadian Mennonite Brethren, 1910-2010: Leaders Who Shaped Us*. The book's editor, Harold Jantz, former editor of the *MB Herald* and founder of *Christian Week*, was present at the launch, together with his wife Naomi. Harold was the evening's featured speaker and Naomi took care of book sales. Jake Froese of the West Portal MB Church introduced Harold to the assembled guests and later indicated that Harold had been pleased with the event.

The book features relatively brief biographies of twenty-five prominent Canadian Mennonite Brethren, including the stories of four women. Jantz himself wrote six of the articles. The majority of the leaders featured in the book are no longer living, with Dr. David Ewert being the latest to pass from the scene. As Jantz elaborated on the book, he gave members of the audience opportunity to share insights and experiences. One guest, Norman Jantzen of Saskatoon, shared an interesting story about David Dyck (1846-1933), who for some time was a leading minister in the Waldheim/Brotherfield area. Norman's parents were married in the Brotherfield Church in 1921 and the knot was to be tied by Mr. Dyck but although Dyck lived in Waldheim (less than ten kilometres away), he failed to show for the wedding. The wedding proceeded with someone else performing the ceremony.

After the conclusion of the service Jantz took time to autograph copies of the book. An informal spirit prevailed as members of the Bethany Manor community served coffee and baked goodies.

— George Dirks

From Russia to Saskatoon: an Odyssey

Melita Reimer's story, as told to Laura Kroeger

The following article is taken from the newsletter of First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Church Family News, October 1, 2006, with minor editorial changes. Used with permission. — Ed

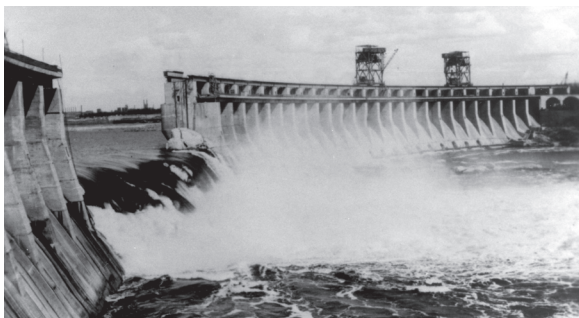


The story, as Melita Reimer relates it, begins in 1943. She was fleeing from Russia to East Germany with her mother, Mrs. Maria Peters, her sister Sascha and a co-worker, Luise.

During the German army occupation of the Ukraine area of Russia in 1941, a German construction firm called "Organization Todt" (O.T.) came in 1942 to rebuild the Dniepr Dam, which had been bombed.

Melita, her mother, and sister Sara (called Sascha) found work in a former kindergarten, which now was used as the dining hall for the O.T. workers. They prepared and served the meals for the workers. In 1943 the German army had been driven back at Stalingrad and it was not long before the O.T. also had to leave the Ukraine/Russia. None of the Mennonites in the Saporoshje area wanted to stay; they knew what would happen to them: exile to Siberia! So a trek began to the West — on trains, horse-drawn wagons and whatever was available.

The construction engineer, Dr. Stief, made arrangements so that Melita, her mother, sister, and her mother's co-worker, Luise, accompanied by two guides, found a place in a train car that was hooked onto a freight train, and the trip to the West began. This was



in October, 1943. Several days later, at night, they noticed the train was not moving. In the morning they found themselves all alone, their train car parked on a side line; this car had been disengaged from the rest of the train. There were several burnt-out trains on nearby rail tracks, and they were surrounded by forest — no people were visible. They disembarked and walked about one kilometre and found a little house, where the rail worker and his Russian wife were living. It was his task to switch the rails so that the trains travelled on the free line. How surprised he was when he saw four people approaching his house!

When these four told him their dilemma, he said, "Tonight you are staying with us; it is too dangerous to remain in the train car." He promised that as soon as another train came through he would not let them continue on until this car was attached. The next day a train loaded with German soldiers who were going home to Berlin on furlough came by; the car was hitched on to it, and so travel west went quickly. In Breslau, Niederschlesien, they had to disembark, according to the travel document they had been given.



The Stief family lived in Breslau; Sascha would stay there to serve as house maid; she was 14 years old, the same age as the Stiefs' oldest daughter. Melita and her mother, however, were to find lodging and work in a small town where the parents of the Stief family lived. Melita and Luise were assigned work in the train station hotel, the "Blue Angel". Her mother found employment in a household.

In February 1945, with the Russian army advancing into Poland, thousands of refugees fleeing to the West camped at the train station and the Hotel Blue Angel at Schweidnitz in Niederschlesien (which now is part of Poland). Melita and her mother fled once

Photos this page: *left top:* Melita and Peter Reimer at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon, 2007; *left bottom:* the Dnieper Dam, dynamited by the Russians in 1941, when the Germans were advancing into the region; *above:* Melita in 1946
All photos for this article courtesy of Melita Reimer

more, leaving East Germany for Austria. Their new employer, a woman with two children, had left earlier and suggested they get on the train and take with them the eiderdown quilts, as the Russians would confiscate them when they arrived. They had been looking after the refugees in the hotel, and heard the bombing as the Russians came nearer. There was no transportation other than the train, marked with the Red Cross, which was accepting only injured soldiers from the hospital. Thousands, mostly older people or mothers with little children, were at the station hoping to board. Greta, the cook, one of their party, filled a basket with bottles of wine, and ran alongside the six-foot-high wire fence between them and the train. She held up the basket for the male nurses to see. When they indicated an interest she asked that her group be helped over the fence, and the six were helped over. Since the train cars were full, they remained in the tiny compartment between cars, and made up a bed where two at a time could rest for the two days they travelled. They heard that the train station at Schweidnitz, Niederschlesien was levelled by a bomb an hour after the Red Cross train had left.

When they arrived in Austria, they disembarked at Scharding train station. From there they travelled by truck, spending the night in a hostel where people had been notified of their arrival. The farmers had indicated they would accept quite a few refugees.

Melita and her mother found themselves on a small farm with a family with seven children. Outside the door were wooden clogs, neatly lined up. They removed their own shoes before they entered, closely watched by these serious faces. A little girl of nine was churning butter. Speaking in German, they asked whether they might help. The family was surprised because they had expected Russians! Melita worked outdoors, helping with milking and hauling heavy containers of water.

Melita and her mother were anxious about Sascha. They did not know that Sascha had gone from Breslau to southwest Germany with Mrs. Stief and her three children. The Austrian officials were not helpful in locating her.

The Second World War came to an end May 8, 1945. They continued to look for the missing sister. They came to Germany, to Almgau in Bavaria, and found employment, again in a hotel and at a dairy farm near Munich. Here Melita was a "maid of all work". Although Swiss employees did the milking, Melita had to

rise at 4 a.m. to cook their porridge; then it was off to feed the pigs.

Across the street from the hotel was the mayor's house. They asked for assistance in finding the sister who had been missing for two years. They knew that all Germans who had entered Germany had been required to register. With further help, two weeks later she was found to be in Tyrol. She had gone southwest to Coburg and was working in a bakery. Finally they were reunited. What joy!

In the meantime they had learned of a camp near Munich for displaced persons, which had earlier accommodated wireless-communications trainees. The place was known as the Wireless Barracks. It now housed about 300 displaced persons who wished to emigrate to Canada; they feared being returned to Russia. Peter Dyck, an MCC staff worker, was working in Holland to pave the way for emigration for the displaced persons, but Canada was not accepting refugees.

Finally, arrangements were made and the train on which they were loaded began the trip west. They remained at the Belgium/Holland border near the Rhine River for four days. One evening, returning from a walk to the river around 11 p.m., a group of three girls was accosted by some Russians. The Russians surprised the girls and when one of them said, "You understand Russian," one of the girls promptly answered, "*Njet!*" (No!) Oh, what had she done! The Russian officers accompanied them to the train car, where the American protectors and the American captain were. After all, the Russians and the Americans were now friends, for together they had defeated the enemy, the Germans.

A panic broke out on the train: now certainly they would all be returned to Russia! Many SOS prayers were sent heavenward! Lord, help us! After the Russian officers had spoken and enjoyed drinks with the American officers in the first car, they left the train. The three girls waited till the Russians left the train; then they were going to run to the captain and ask that these Mennonites, all from the Ukraine, not be returned to Russia. The train began to move eastward before they could carry out their plan. However, when the train stopped again, the girls ran to the front car and requested to speak with the captain. The soldiers laughed: Come on up. You likely wanted to have a change! When the captain came from his compartment, he asked what was going on, and insisted the girls be helped onto the train if they wanted to speak

with him. One of the girls, who knew a bit of English, explained that no one on this train wanted to return to Russia. All of them came from the Ukraine, but they were Germans, and had suffered much in the 1930s; fathers, brothers, uncles, and many family members had been arrested and sent into exile in the north or into Siberia or had been fatally shot, and none had ever been seen again. They begged that no one be sent back to Russia. No one was laughing anymore. The girls were taken back to their families on the train. Now an American soldier was ordered to stand as guard at the door of each car. The train began to move again, and at 4 a.m. stopped at a place called Allendorf in West Germany, where these refugees were greeted by Red Cross officials who had been alerted to their arrival.

They were told that several trucks would soon come and take them to a large living complex not far distant. They were told that if they cleaned the rooms they could live there until further information came. Where should they go? The Red Cross served the more than 300 people coffee and crusty buns, and soon the trucks arrived to take them to the housing complex. Here they cleaned the living quarters. Apparently the workers who had lived here repaired airplanes underground during the war. Food was brought twice a day. Guards kept them under surveillance. They lived here for two weeks.

Then one day two American soldiers who had been their protectors on the train came to say they were still at the train station and were waiting for further word from MCC through Peter Dyck as to what they should do with these people. Then the news came: return to Munich!

Melita and her mother returned to Munich. The camp had ballooned to 900 or 1,000 people, including Jews, Hungarians and Bulgarians, living in barracks. Here they enjoyed worship and choirs, and celebrated birthdays; they cooked, cleaned, and worked outside.

Mr. Wiens taught catechism. Melita was baptized at Pentecost in June 1946 by Rev. Heinrich Winter. They stayed here about a year and a half till January 1947. They had been assigned a small room to house 12 people. About forty young people, ages 17 to 20, kept the atmosphere festive. Young men were few, but Melita's friend, Peter Reimer, was also in camp.

Then C. F. Klassen notified the camp that Canada was not letting in refugees, but there was opportunity to go to Paraguay. They could not remain at this camp any

longer. He advised them that if there was an opportunity to leave for Paraguay today, they were not to wait for a chance to go to Canada tomorrow! They chose Paraguay.

By train they were taken to Bremerhaven, where they were assigned to the ship, the *S.S. Volendam*. Among the 2,000 people on board were the people from Berlin, including Peter Dyck and his wife Elfrieda. Younger people were given work cleaning, making beds, and more. Many passengers were seasick during the three-week journey across the Atlantic to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

From Buenos Aires the first 150 persons went by small river boat up the Paraguay River to Puerto Casado. Melita and some of her relatives were in this group. From Casado they travelled by the narrow-railed train to the end, called End Station. The train did not go beyond this point.

Horse-drawn wagons from Fernheim colony in the Paraguayan Chaco were already waiting for this train of refugees. With the help of younger people, a soup was cooked, and since everyone was very hungry, this vegetable soup tasted very good. Melita and her mother were taken to a Peters family in Friedensfeld, or as they simply called it, Village No. 5, in the Fernheim colony. They helped wherever workers were needed — in the fields, with weeding, picking cotton or beans, or whatever.

They stayed in the Fernheim colony for six months, waiting for the others, but since a revolution had erupted in the capital city of Asunción, no boats were allowed to pass that city. That's why many remained in Argentina and others settled in East Paraguay, a settlement that was named Volendam, after the ship that had brought them to South America. The ones who had been waiting in Fernheim started a new settlement in the area and named it Neuland.

Peter Reimer and Melita Peters were married at Friedensfeld (Village No. 5) on May 10, 1947. Peter was living with a Loewen family in the village, who assisted with the wedding celebration. A calf was butchered for the wedding meal of borscht and meatballs. White flour was provided for buns. The bride was dressed in borrowed clothes.

Peter and Melita settled in Einlage, a village in Neuland colony, named after the home location in the Ukraine. Mother and sister helped. Grandmother, who was paralyzed, was also with them in Paraguay, as were four

aunts from both Peter's and Melita's families. All settled in Einlage, which comprised 23 family units, called *Wirtschaften*, or farmyards. The newly built Reimer house had three rooms. Initially, Bible studies were held there, as well as worship services. Eventually a school was built, which became the place for worship services. The Reimer house was the first to be completed; later they helped with building others. The Reimers' three daughters, Rosemarie, Irene, and Helen, were born here. On their farm they raised cotton, peanuts for oil, and "kafir". Kafir [sorgo, or sweet sorghum] is a tropical



Above, Melita and Peter with daughter Rosemary in Paraguay in 1950; their house is in the background; *Below*: Melita and a companion harvesting kafir in Paraguay

cereal grass; it was milled, mixed with some wheat flour, and used for baking bread. These products were traded for other necessary items, such as white flour, brown bread, and watermelon. MCC provided some tools and used machinery; the more established colonies provided assistance. An uncle from Canada sent them money. But times were tough. Crops were attacked by swarms of locusts and ant colonies. Snakes moved in.

Young Indians came to work for them and were paid in peanuts or beans. Some gave their children German names. Friends from Fernheim at times smuggled food to Einlage. A special treat was canned peaches, for they had no fruit trees as yet. Bananas and oranges were brought across the river from the east. They discovered a little wild lemon tree.

In 1951 Melita's mother and sister were able to immigrate to Canada, to her mother's brother (Rev. A.A. Martens) at Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan, and found



housework at a ranch. Her sister's fiancé, Jake Kroeger, was at Didsbury, Alberta; they were married in October of that year. Then her mother married Peter Dyck of Hanley, Sask., a widower with seven adult children.


Peter and Melita Reimer remained in Paraguay for three years longer. They, with their three daughters, required medical clearance. They needed to go to Asunción, a five-day trip, for the examination. Possessions were given away, some sold or traded. They sold their cattle to finance the trip to Asunción, and took a small plane from an airport in Filadelfia. In Asunción they stayed in the Mennonite guest home for a month. More x-rays were needed, so they went to relatives in Volendam for two more months. Then after a weekend in Brazil, it was finally off to New York. Due to plane propeller trouble, it required another stayover. Then to Miami, to Toronto airport, and a train ride to Winnipeg.

The children travelled with terrible colds. In Toronto, a kind policeman who noticed they needed help bought some milk for the children. The only English word they knew was "Thank you!" On arrival in Winnipeg, relatives who had earlier emigrated from Paraguay provided them with baths and a change of clothes. After a few days, the Reimers completed the last part of the journey by train to Saskatoon and arrived at the home of Melita's mother on 5th Street in Saskatoon in September, 1953.

Peter Dyck had sponsored them and provided the funds for the tickets, and the Reimers repaid it in full in 13 months.

Peter Reimer immediately found work with Tubby Construction; he had been trained to read blueprints in Russia. Melita again did housework, taking her three little girls with her. Weekends and evenings they cleaned newly constructed houses to earn enough for a down-payment for a new house for themselves in the Avalon district. The house on 5th Street was rented to students. In 1957 they were blessed with a son Hans.

Peter and Melita found a church home at First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, where the children attended Sunday school and Melita sang in the choir and participated as member of the Senior Ladies Aid.

Melita is a gifted storyteller and has written articles for the First Mennonite Church's newsletter, *Church Family News* and for *Der Bote*. She has told of her childhood experiences, of difficult times when she felt God intervened and protected her and her loved ones. 

German Circle Games

By Agnes Peters

From my very first recollection, *Jugend* and fun were synonymous with German circle games. In the days when entire families were invited to weddings, I enviously watched the young people playing games and I looked forward to the day when I would be old enough to join in.

The games had a certain order and *Schlüsselbund* was usually the game to begin with. There was always somebody who took on leadership and the game began when he took a partner and promenaded in a circle, singing a German folk song. The others joined in, in pairs, and soon wonderful singing in full harmony followed. When the first couple clapped, everybody had to squat down; the last person caught standing would have to start the next round — song and all.



The above photo dates from 1925. The author inherited it from an aunt and says, “I don’t know any of the people in the picture, and I don’t know the occasion, but I think they must have been lined up to begin a game of *Schlüsselbund*!”

“*Grünes Grass, Grünes Grass*” was another very popular game. For this game, all could join in by forming a circle — male and female alternating — with a few couples in the middle. Eventually, large numbers of people end up in the middle. At the end, a few stay in the middle, the others join the outside circle, and the game begins again.

These are the words:

*Grünes Grass, grünes Grass, unter meinen Füßen,
Hab verloren meinen Schatz, werde müssen suchen.
Suche hier, suche dort, suche unter allen,
Wird vielleicht noch eine sein, die mir wird gefallen.*

*Sagen tust du ja, ja; denken tust du nein, nein,
Drum will ich dich lassen steh’n,
Und zu einer and’ren geh’n.
Komm h’rein mein Schatz, dich will ich lieben
Du bist mir ins Herz geschrieben.
Du gefällst mir wohl, du gefällst mir wohl.
Drum ade, ade, ade, drum ade, ade, ade,
Drum ade, Schatz, lebe wohl.*

A rough translation: “Green grass under my feet, I’ve lost my love and must look for her/him. I look here, there, and everywhere. Maybe there’s another one who will please me. You say, yes, yes, but you think no, no. So I’ll pass you by and find someone else. Come in, my love, I want to love you. You are written into my heart. I like you very much. So goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, my love, farewell.”

At weddings, as the evening progressed, there was a song and game that accompanied the removal of the bride’s veil and the groom’s boutonniere. The group formed circles around the couple and, while the song “*Gib her den Kranz*” was sung, the veil and boutonniere were removed and placed on a tray. My son Ron wasn’t able to find the words for the complete song, but this is what he did find. The first part is sung for the bride:

*Gib her den Kranz, du brauchst ihn nicht.
Dich ruft nun eine andere Pflicht,
Da du den Ehestand dich geweiht.
Gott schenk dir Kraft und Freudigkeit.*

Then there is a verse for the groom, of which we found only two lines:

*O lieb dein Weibchen, treu und zart,
Nach frommer Ehemänner Art.*

The bride’s song translates roughly as: “Give up the [bridal] wreath; you don’t need it. You are called to another duty, now that you are dedicated to marriage. God grant you strength and happiness.” For the groom’s song: “O love your little wife truly and tenderly, according to the way of godly husbands.”

Then the bride was blindfolded, the young women formed an inner circle, and the bride presented the veil to one young lady. Next, the young men formed

the inner circle, the groom was blindfolded, and he gave the boutonniere to one of them. The bridal couple were then each seated on a chair, and the chairs were lifted up by married men to the song “*Hoch sollen sie leben*” (May they live “high”; that is, well). The bride and groom then got to publicly kiss and were brought down. The chair game was repeated for the pair who had won the veil and boutonniere, but this time, the chairs were hoisted by single fellows, and it got quite precarious if this pair didn’t want to kiss.

Circle games were also played at other social events. For us in the Nordheimer Gemeinde, the summer picnic, or *Gemeindefest*, always ended with a wonderful evening of games.

These games were a great way for young people to meet; many a romance began in such an evening. It was quite exciting when you were chosen for a game by someone who you thought was pretty “cool”! And then, if a little later he would ask you again — wow!



This is a 1947 photo from Rosthern Junior College. It is from the author’s own collection and shows students beginning a game of *Schlüsselbund*. The author can identify herself and her sister and a few other people in the picture.


One of the first weekends at Rosthern Junior College usually included an evening of circle games in a secluded grassy glade. By now, English songs were added to *Schlüsselbund* and English games were added to the repertoire. We played games like “Miller Boy,” “Captain Jinx,” “Bingo,” “K-K-K-Katy,” and many more. It was a wonderful way to get acquainted. All evenings usually ended with an activity called “The Grand March”, which included march music and a caller.

My late husband and I organized socials when our children were in their teens. We wanted them to expe-

rience some of the things we had when we were young. Last summer, Marlene and Dave Froese were invited to Shekinah to introduce circle games to the counsellors there. The counsellors, who were not familiar with the games, received them with enthusiasm.

The German circle games go back a long way. They must have been played in Prussia (Poland) way back because, while the Mennonites who emigrated to the Ukraine brought these games and customs with them, those who came to Canada directly from Prussia played the same games. According to Ingrid (Janzen) Lamp, former editor of *Der Bote*, who lived in Poland till the Second World War, the Mennonites remaining in Poland at that time also played these games. However, Lutherans from there had not heard of them. When my son, Ron, went on the Internet, *Grünes Grass* came under a list of “*deutsche Völkstänze*”. I can only conclude that circle games probably stem from many different sources and that the Mennonites accepted them early on as a good way to see their young people mix, mingle, and have fun.

At a recent 50th-anniversary celebration I attended in Saskatoon, held in the gardens of the Bessborough Hotel, circle games were a featured part of the entertainment. The games were new to the young people attending, but they were very intrigued with them.

The tradition of circle games seems a worthwhile one to remember, if not to revive! The SMH would welcome any stories about these games, such as personal anecdotes or more information about their history or more pictures. And if anyone knows more of the words to the wedding song or other songs, please send them to the MHSS office (address information on last page). If we get enough of a response, we may publish another article on this wonderful custom. — Ed. 

Syl Funk (1917 – 2009): A Gentleman and a Gentle Man

By Verner Friesen

A gentleman and a gentle man — yes. But Syl Funk was also a man of many skills and talents, a man of integrity in all his dealings with others, and, as his last years revealed most clearly, a man with great courage and determination in the face of life's challenges.

Sylvester L. Funk was born on a farm three miles from Drake, Saskatchewan on February 5, 1917. His parents were John and Mary (Gerbrandt) Funk. Syl attended school in Drake through Grade 11 and then went to Rosthern Junior College (called German-English Academy at that time) for Grade 12.

His Grade 12 year was a banner year for him in more ways than one. It was then that he met Anna Toews, daughter of Rev. David Toews. Anna became Syl's wife in 1940. While at RJC, Syl played hockey for the Rosthern Wheat Kings. The highlight of the season, he loved to relate, was when they beat out Humboldt in the provincial finals. With only 10 minutes left to play in the game, Rosthern was down by three goals. Then Coach Gabel sent out five forwards — two Duffys, two Dehmkes, and Syl. Rosthern ended up winning the game, leaving the hometown Humboldt crowd stunned and deflated.



The young hockey player, in 1935

After graduation from high school, Syl enrolled in the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. However, his plans for a

career in engineering were cut short when his father died suddenly on January 3, 1937. Syl then felt obligated to leave the university and, not yet 20 years of age, took over his dad's grocery business in Drake.

The grocery business in the late 30s and early 40s was a far cry from what it is at present. The farmers then were almost completely self-sufficient, producing their own meat, eggs, butter, potatoes, and other vegetables. They took their own wheat to the flour mill and exchanged it for flour. One winter after a severe snow storm, the country roads into town were blocked for three weeks. Finally a local farmer came into the store and said that it was high time that the roads were opened up because they were running out of groceries. Naturally, Syl was anticipating a large order of groceries, but the farmer purchased only 20 packages of yeast and walked out of the store.

Syl married his RJC sweetheart, Anna Toews, on July 27, 1940. Together Anna and Syl raised three daughters and a son. At present, their family includes: daughter Marilyn and husband Jack Janzen, daughter Doreen and husband George Reynolds, daughter Gwenyth and husband Richard Epp, and son Jack and wife Vera (Janssen), plus seven grandchildren. In addition to being a committed family man, Syl was very involved in the Drake community. He served as town councillor for 25 years, as school trustee, as president of the local credit union, and as treasurer of the church Sunday school.

Syl's interest in sports extended far beyond the hockey he played during his high school days. When in his 40s, he often went water skiing on Lanigan Lake with sports buddies considerably younger than he was. He also took up golfing, snow skiing, and tennis. Tennis became his favourite sport. When Syl and Anna went to Palm Springs in March, which became their custom, he would play tennis two or three hours a day. "Even in his 70s," son Jack maintains, "Dad would look fresh and I'd be sweating buckets." Syl was always generous in giving of his time to pa-

tiently teach his children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Nephew Bob Sawatzky says, "Uncle Syl taught me how to drive a motorboat and was the first person to teach me how to swing a golf club."

Eventually the small town of Drake was too small to contain Syl's business ambitions. Together with a business partner, Ted Klassen, Syl began to expand his grocery business to include, at various times, grocery stores in Nokomis, Strasbourg, Wynyard, Watrous, Lanigan, and Drumheller, Alberta. In Lanigan, Syl and seven business partners

built a shopping centre. In 1966 he sold his store in Drake to focus his time and energy on being president and general manager of the shopping centre.

While still in the grocery business, Syl became involved in selling financial investments. In 1975 Syl and Anna moved to Saskatoon where he started a new career. After a time he became a partner with Murray Johnson in the Assante group. Syl was a very successful salesman, so that he and Anna qualified for many trips and saw many countries in the world. When he was in his mid-70s, someone asked him if he had ever considered retiring. His reply was, "I am retired. I am doing exactly what I enjoy doing." He remained in the investment business until the age of 79 when he suffered a stroke.

The stroke was so severe that he lost the use of his right arm and right leg. The doctors did not expect him to ever walk again. But accepting defeat easily had never been a part of Syl's nature. He attacked the challenge of rehabilitation with all the energy and determination he could muster. He spent many hours and days at rehabilitation as he learned to walk, speak, write with his left hand, and drive car again. He eventually walked, though with difficulty, using a cane in his left hand. He once acknowledged that his recovery from the stroke was the hardest challenge he had ever faced. Still, throughout his rehabilitation, he remained positive and very determined, and he never complained. His fortitude and the progress he was making impressed his therapists so much that they invited him to share his post-stroke journey with a group of medical students at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon.

Syl's return to driving car deserves special mention. He had special controls installed in his car so that




Anna and Syl Funk in 2004

he could manoeuvre with his left hand and left foot. He faithfully took driver training, and eventually was successful in getting his driver's licence renewed. Over the last few years annual testing was required, and his persistence was rewarded with a restricted licence, which allowed him to drive in a limited area, including regular drives to Tim Horton's.

In April of 2006 Syl was honoured by the local chapter of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) for the good example he had set in connecting Christian faith and business. He was always generous in supporting causes that were important to him. He always treated people with respect and maintained a positive attitude.

Syl passed away on February 5, 2009, after just a few days in hospital. Instead of gathering around him to celebrate his 92nd birthday, his devoted family and many friends gathered to celebrate a life well-lived, and to bid him a sad farewell.

In all aspects of Syl's life and activities he always had the strong support of his caring and loving wife, Anna. This was even more the case during his very difficult time of rehab after the stroke. Syl and Anna were always great role models — a couple with strong Christian values, who lived out their faith, and were very committed to family and community.

Anna now lives in a seniors' home in Calgary, close to her children and their families and close to her only remaining sister, Louise and Louise's husband, Blake Friesen. 

A Mennonite Soldier in the First World War: A review of the “Diary” of Johann (John) Fast by Rosemary Slater

Among the treasures to be found in the archives of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan is the unpublished “diary” (actually a series of recollections) of Johann Fast. Johann was born in Rosenau, Prussia in 1879 and died in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1943.

The diary, an English translation of the original German, was donated to the archives in 2008 by Johann Fast’s grandson, Rudi Fast. It describes Johann’s experiences during the First World War as a conscript into the German army, as well as time spent in a prisoner of war camp. The events that followed Johann’s return to his family in 1919 resulted in his decision to emigrate to Canada in 1923. In February, 1943, twenty years after boarding the ship at Danzig, Poland and eight months before his death, Johann summarized the experiences of his twenty years in Canada and closed his diary with the words “May his [God’s] will be done!”



Johann with fellow German military officers; Johann is the man at the left. All photos for this article courtesy of grandson Rudi Fast

Who was Johann Fast? The GRANDMA program gives minimal and incomplete information about him. He was born in Prussia and his parents moved to Neudorf near Graudenz soon after his birth. Johann was baptized by Ältester Stobbe in Neudorf and married Agnes Kopper in November, 1904 in Neudorf, Gross Werder, Prussia. Johann’s father, Johann,



Johann is in the back row, sixth from the left, in front of the support column.

had a furniture factory, which Johann took over, rebuilt, and mechanized in 1909. The area where the Fast family lived was at this time part of Germany and when the First World War broke out in 1914, Johann was conscripted into the German army where he worked with the railway brigade. He left behind his wife and four children, whom he didn’t see again until October, 1919, after he was released from a prisoner of war camp in Belgium.

The diary begins in 1916 when Johann’s company is in Serbia and he describes some sightseeing he did while on a two-week leave. From Serbia, Johann’s company moved to Bulgaria and by February of 1917, transferred to Upper Alsace, where Johann took the opportunity to do some sightseeing when he was not building bridges or laying rail lines.

In November, 1917, Johann had a close brush with death. French grenades were fired at the company which Johann was in charge of while they were loading rail lines at 4 o’clock in the morning. Johann writes, “Today, after 26 years (1943), that moment remains vivid in my memory, and will remain so as long as I live.”

Johann Fast’s diary consists of two parts. The first fourteen pages cover experiences that took place between 1916 and 1920. The second, five-page section covers his departure from Germany in 1923, the arrival in St. John, New Brunswick, and a summary of


life in Canada for the next twenty years, with some highlights mentioned.

The original diary, written in German in 1943, is in the possession of Johann's grandson, Harold Fast. It was written at the end of Johann's life, when he was 64 years old and having some significant health problems. It consists of a series of recollections of the life events that were most important or memorable for him. Sightseeing in various European cities, being shot at while loading rail lines, being gassed, and a number of close calls from bombs and grenades are all described. Johann also tells of the experience of trying to get food provisions for his company of soldiers, and a road accident in November of 1918 that resulted in major damage to his left leg, with subsequent admission to hospital. In February of 1919, Johann was sent from the hospital to prison camp in Belgium, near the border of Holland. He doesn't explain in his account why he was sent there instead of being sent home. He describes life in the prison camp and several incidents that took place there.

In September, 1919, the prisoners were finally released. On October 1, 1919, Johann arrived at his home at Graudenz and was reunited with his family. Upon learning that Graudenz was to be taken over by Poland, Johann determined not to stay in Polish territory. As a former German officer, Johann could have emigrated to Germany but employment and living conditions in Germany were not favourable at that time.

Johann explored various alternatives but finally decided to move to Canada in response to a letter from a cousin near Rosthern, Saskatchewan by the name of John A. Fast. Johann related various interesting experiences on the trip from Graudenz to Danzig by train. From Danzig, the Fast family sailed to Hull, England on the Russian liner, *Smolensk*, and after three days in Southampton, they embarked on an eleven-day voyage over stormy seas, arriving in St. John, New Brunswick, on February 27, 1923.

On March 3, 1923, the Fast family arrived in Saskatoon and travelled with cousins John and Frank Fast to Rosthern. Finding employment in Canada was not easy and Johann describes some of the difficulties the family encountered in trying to make a living with a combination of farming and carpentry work. By 1942, Johann and Agnes were on a homestead near Rabbit Lake and his children were established and beginning their own families. In his recollections, Johann looks back on his life, reiterates his faith in God and wonders at the purpose of the tests God has sent his way.

Currently unpublished, the "Diary of John Fast", with some background information added to set the context for this "diary", would make interesting and inspiring reading for anyone who would like to know what it really was like to be a Mennonite soldier in Germany during the First World War, and a German immigrant in Canada in the twenties and thirties. 



Johann Fast is shown here in 1922 with family members and furniture factory workers; Johann and his wife are at the left. This picture is unclear because it was reproduced from a photo printed in a book; the original photo was not available.

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)
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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

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