

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

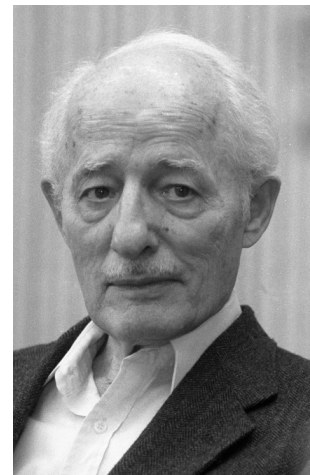


Official periodical of the
Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Inc.

Volume XX No. 1 2014

Cornelius J. Dyck 1921 - 2014

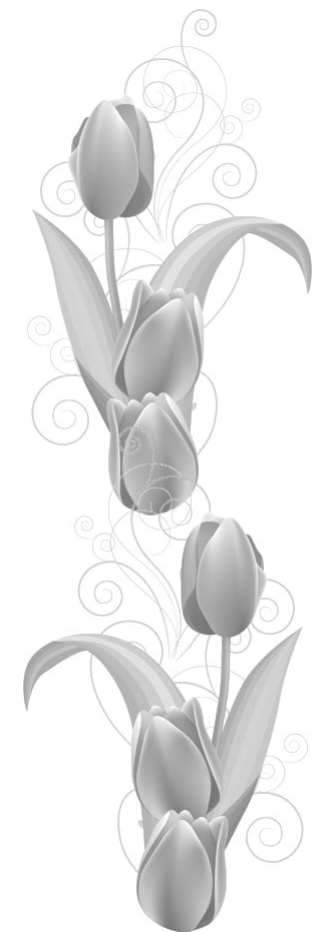
Passionate Advocate for the
Anabaptist-Mennonite Faith Tradition
by Verner Friesen



The people of Russia and Ukraine were experiencing hunger and starvation as a result of political upheaval and crop failure when Cornelius J. Dyck (he preferred to be called simply, "CJ") was born on August 20, 1921. In addition, the dreaded illness, typhus, was spreading and CJ's mother was very ill with typhus. CJ writes, "I think my family was surprised that I survived." In the midst of that crisis, baby CJ was 'consecrated to the glory and service of God'. As the story which follows will show, CJ's life was indeed committed to the service of people, especially his own Mennonite people, in the name of God.

CJ's grandparents had moved from Prussia to the Am Trakt colony in Russia in the year 1859. Am Trakt was east of the Volga River. CJ's parents, Johannes J. and Renate (Matthies) Dyck lived in the village of Lysanderhoeh in the Am Trakt colony, where CJ was born. CJ was the second youngest of nine children in the family; he had six sisters and two brothers. They were a devout Christian family; daily morning and evening devotions and singing and praying together were regular family practices.

Through the efforts of the newly-organized Mennonite Central Committee, relief supplies began arriving in Russia and Ukraine from North America in 1921. CJ's father, Johannes, soon became very involved in the distribution of that relief in the Am Trakt colony.



NEW in this Issue!

Die Plautdietsche Akj
**Mennonite Inventions
& Designs -Part 1**
& Use Your Archives
(and how to use it)

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The Editor's Perspective *Ruth Marlene Friesen*



As your newest editor I
should introduce myself.

Why my full name?

Because when I went on
the internet in 1999 and
wanted to publish my novel I
realized that there were
several Ruth Friesens out

there, and I might always be explaining which one
I was unless I started to use my full name
professionally, online and in print. In person I'm
content to be just Ruth Friesen.

If you use a computer, you can google my full
name and find more to read about me than you
have time for; if you do not use a computer, ask
me to send, or give you a copy of my testimony
booklet when I have it ready for print. (I'm
updating it).

More another time on my circus of activities -
besides being the MHSS website manager. For
now, one word sums me up; BUSY.

But then if you want to get something done
you ask a busy person, right? They are disciplined
and know to make sacrifices to get things done.

I want to invite your feedback on each issue. I
can't read your mind, so you must tell us what you
like or don't like, or of what you want more. (Con-
structive criticism helps us to become partners
instead of adversaries).

Most importantly, send in your stories for the
Historian! Much as I love to write, I don't have the
time to write a whole issue for you. But if you will
submit your photos and stories - your family
heros, memories of Mennonite culture, etc., even
if just a draft or rough outline, I'll be glad to
polish the writing for you.

Everything needs to be filtered by Jake Buhler
and the Historian Advisory Committee, so you can
give your submission to them first, or to me. See
bottom of back page for contact info. Or just
email: Ask-Ruth@mhss.sk.ca.

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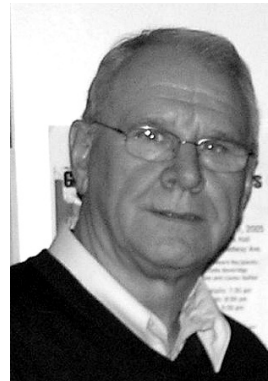
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MHSS President's Corner

by Jake Buhler



This edition of the Historian marks a significant change. Our new editor is Ruth Friesen.

But she is not new to our Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan. Ruth is our website

manager, and as such is very familiar with our overall work. We know Ruth will do well and pray for God's blessing on her.

A small group of people met several months ago to look at content for the Historian. We hope soon to introduce a new Plautdietsche feature as well as a literary page. Watch for these changes. We continue to solicit family history stories, articles about church histories, interesting people, and much more.

May we hear from you?

By this fall, we hope to install new computers. Have you thought about buying one for our archives? One thousand six hundred dollars will buy one for us. Contact me at 306 244 1392 or at jakelouisebuhler@sasktel.net .

Aulet baste!

Jake Buhler
President



...cont'd from page 1

CJ was five, almost six, when the Dyck family left Russia in 1927. He remembered the excitement of packing to leave for Canada. He also remembered that at the port of Riga his dad bought him his first pair of suspenders. He did not remember how his pants stayed up before that.

The Dyck family arrived in Rosthern, Saskatchewan on July 19. They found a farm five miles from the town of Hawarden. The nearest Mennonite Church was on the Sheldon farm near Hanley, too far to make regular attendance possible in the winter months. But Sunday worship services were sometimes held in the Dyck home for Mennonite families in the community. Regarding life in Hawarden, CJ wrote, "Hawarden was nice; a big house and barn, a lake to swim in, my Isaac cousins to play with, lots of gophers to catch." But the dry 1930s soon came, with poor crops, lots of Russian thistles and grasshoppers.

So in 1933, when CJ was twelve, the family found and moved to a very neglected half-section farm north and east of Laird. The land was better but the buildings were worse. This farm remained the home of the family for the rest of the lives of Johannes and Renate Dyck. They attended the Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church a few miles away. CJ was baptized in this church by Elder Johannes Regier on May 28, 1939. CJ attended school in Laird and for Grade XII he went to the Rosthern Junior College, (at that time known as the German English Academy). "Rosthern Junior College," CJ wrote, "was more social than academic; one teacher, P. Rempel, casually sitting on his desk, taught history so brilliantly that I was hooked for life."

Soon after completing high school in 1940, CJ received his call to report for military service. As a Conscientious Objector he was conveniently assigned to do alternative service on his father's farm and keep the home farm going because of his father's ill health. From 1940 to 1945 he helped raise "Bacon for

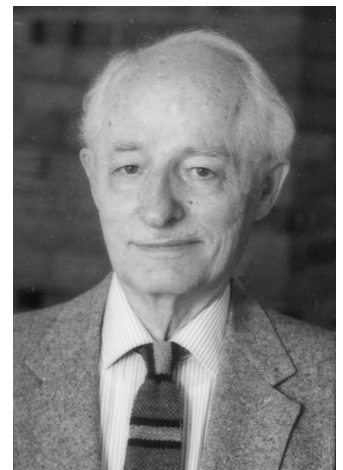
Britain."

When the war ended in 1945, CJ's sister Helene and brother-in-law Abe Funk were ready to take over the farm, while CJ's parents moved into a small retirement home on the same yard. CJ may have sensed that God was calling him to something other than farming, and volunteered for MCC work. His older brother Peter had gone to Europe in 1941 to do relief work under Mennonite Central Committee. The Dyck family had not forgotten that back in 1921 MCC had delivered relief from North America which had spared their own lives and the lives of many others.

CJ first spent five months in England and nine months in Holland ministering to people who had suffered the ravages of war. Then he was assigned to the British zone in Germany helping people in need of food, clothing and immigration support. Mostly he was involved with Mennonite refugees from Eastern Europe and Russia. One project which he initiated, that gave him a good deal of satisfaction was the feeding of about 100,000 children daily in North Germany with food supplies sent by Mennonites in North America via MCC.

After over three years in Europe, CJ was hoping to go back to school. But then MCC came calling again, asking him to go to South America to help resettle Mennonite refugees from Europe who had gone to Paraguay and Uruguay. CJ yielded and went, and became director of all MCC work in South America, not only in Paraguay and Uruguay but also in Brazil and Argentina. One of his greatest rewards, he felt, was being able to help the Mennonites in the region found a hospital and treatment centre for lepers in Paraguay. Another rich reward of the MCC years was making many friends for life.

CJ spent three years in South America. In



1951 he returned to this continent and enrolled at Bethel College in Kansas, graduating in 1953. In the middle of the two-year stay at Bethel College he married Wilma Regier, a school teacher from his home church and community in Laird, Saskatchewan. In Kansas Wilma did some teaching and also was able to graduate from Bethel College with a Bachelor of Science degree.

From Bethel College CJ went on to Wichita State University, earning a Master of Arts degree in history, while also serving as pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church in Elbing, Kansas. Then, from 1955 to '59 he studied history and theology at the University of Chicago, and earned both a Bachelor of Divinity and a PHD degree. CJ had the capacity and opportunity to always earn his way as he studied. In Chicago he and Wilma first served as host and hostess at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in the beginning stages of its existence in Chicago, and then CJ became business manager of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary. As business manager, it became CJ's responsibility in 1958 to oversee the move of the Chicago Seminary to its new location in Elkhart, Indiana. He was then invited to become professor of historical theology, a position he held till his retirement in 1989.

Two daughters were born to CJ and Wilma while they lived in Chicago and a third daughter joined the family in Elkhart. While in Elkhart, Wilma continued to teach, and also completed her Master of Arts degree at Indiana University.

It is almost unfathomable that, in addition to his teaching role at the Seminary, CJ could

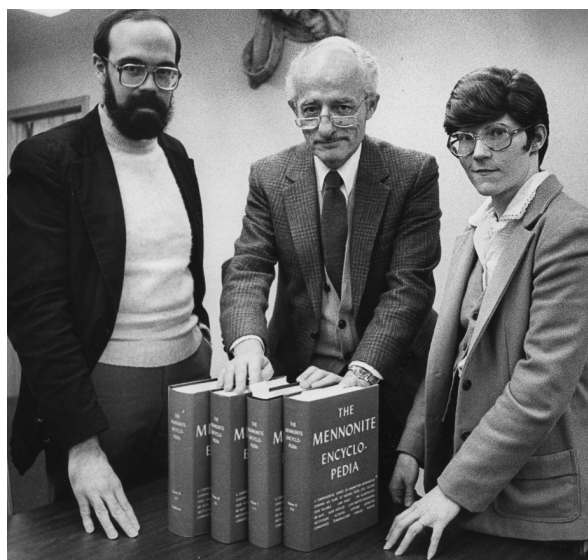
manage to be involved in so many other areas of ministry. From 1958 - 79 he directed the Institute of Mennonite Studies, a research and publishing arm of the Seminary. During his term as Director, no less than 50 books were published through IMS, including John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* and Millard Lind's *Yahweh is a Warrior*. Also, CJ did his own writing and publishing. In 1967 he published *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, which is still used as a text in Mennonite schools and colleges. He also edited *Mennonite Encyclopedia, Volume V*, a 960 page volume published in 1990.

From 1961 to 1973 CJ served as executive secretary of the Mennonite World Conference, a role for which he was particularly suited because he had extensive experience serving Mennonite people on several continents and because he could converse in a number of the languages which Mennonites speak in different parts of the world. This involvement with Mennonite World

Conference meant a lot of travelling. In the early 1960s, as a representative of Mennonite World Conference, CJ attended Vatican II. He was the only Mennonite present. With journalist credentials through *Mennonite Weekly Review*, CJ reported his observations about this council that modernized the Catholic church. Over the years CJ also served on the MCC Board and on a variety of General Conference boards, commissions and committees.

In all of his involvements CJ was passionate about

keeping alive the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition. He will surely have been encouraged to note evidence of a revival of the Anabaptist vision in many parts of the world where Mennonite World Conference has member churches and conferences. And in North America there are more and more churches made up of new



C.J. Dyck, (center) was editor of Mennonite Encyclopedia Volume 5, with assistance from Dennis Martin (left), assistant editor, and Carol Martin. Photo by the Elkhart Truth.

immigrants who want their churches to be founded on Anabaptist beliefs and principles. Mennonite World Conference reports that there are by now more Mennonites with colored skin than with white skin.

Last, but not least, CJ was a family man - a husband, father and grandfather. What is written above indicates that CJ's work and travels demanded a great deal of his time. In spite of this CJ and Wilma managed to fit quality family time into their schedule. Almost every summer the family would travel to Saskatchewan to see their families there. On these vacation trips they would take different routes so as to visit different states. Sometimes they would camp along the way. CJ's return from trips abroad became opportunities to tell of experiences which opened a world view for his family. Also he would bring home mementos from various countries - scarves from Rome, beads from Paraguay, a sari from India, Dutch wooden shoes, etc. In their new home in Elkhart the family had a large basement room which provided office space for both Wilma and CJ, and also a desk for each of the three daughters. There they all did their homework together. Yard work was also done together as a family.

Cornelius J. Dyck died in Normal, Illinois on January 10, 2014 at the age of 92. In our memories and in the ever-bearing fruit of his labors for the Lord he lives on. God had given him a tremendous capacity for hard work and bearing heavy responsibility. The Scriptures promise for those who "die in the Lord" that they will be granted "blessed rest from their hard, hard work. None of what they've done is wasted; God blesses them for it all in the end." (Revelation 14:13, The Message).

Sources:

- **A Pilgrim People**, compiled and edited by Cornelius J. Dyck and Wilma L. Dyck, 1987
- **Place of Roses**, by Helene Funk, 2002

- **Mennonite World Review**, AMBS professor taught history and lived it, by Mary E. Klassen, AMBS. January 20, 2014

- Obituary, A Living History Lesson, by Mary E. Klassen, AMBS. **Canadian Mennonite**, February 3, 2014

- Dr. Cornelius John (CJ) Dyck obituary, **Saskatchewan Valley News**, January 16, 2014

- **Three Score Years and Ten** (The History of the Tiefengrund Church) 1910 - 1980

- an email from Wilma (Mrs. C. J.) Dyck



Church of God in Christ

The History evening on Friday, February 28, 2014, featured the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Bob Goodnough, one of their members from the Swanson church, shared his own story and the history of this Mennonite branch, sometimes known as the Holdeman Church.

Over the last number of years, we have featured the historical story of other Mennonite churches, such as the Old Colony, the Bergthaler, the General Conference (now, Mennonite Church Canada), the Mennonite Brethern, and the Plains Mennonite.

Several families from the Swanson Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, came too, and sang some hymns acapella. Their singing was much appreciated, but at the beginning of the evening they requested no photos to be taken. (Afterward, Bob Goodnough graciously allowed a few informal photos to be taken).

Their first song spoke of, "Faithful landmarks our fathers placed with care...", the second one

was about the Peace that Passes Understanding.

Bob's Personal Story

Bob Goodnough's own early ancestors moved from Woodshire, UK, to Mass. USA, in 1638. Later, his father, born in Iowa, came to Saskatchewan to homestead. His father had attended a United church, while living in Edmonton, then, when they moved to Craik, SK., they found just three churches. They picked the Anglican church to attend.

As Bob got older he wandered away from the church, and developed a keen interest in history. From his studies there, he concluded that if there was a religious persuasion to get involved in, a Mennonite church would make the most sense. One night, coming back from a drinking party, he told a friend, he thought one day he'd be a Mennonite with a beard.

Interestingly, Bob joined the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in Ontario 35 years ago, and has worn a beard ever since.

Church of God in Christ, Mennonite Story

Mennonites originally arrived in North America in Philadelphia in 1683, and spread to Iowa and Indiana, etc. Some moved up to Ontario, Canada. In the 19th century, Mennonites became splintered into various groups over modes of baptism, and degrees of conservatism or liberalism.

In this particular branch's story, the Holdeman family from Berne, Switzerland, came to Pennsylvania, and then moved on to Ohio, and to Elkhart, IN. A small group formed and started to have meetings. Most in that group came from an Amish background. In 1856, John Holdeman made a trip to Ontario, and 70-80 were converted.

From the diary of Levi Young, on fire for the Lord, during that era, we learn that he finally left his church, and was baptized, and began to travel with John Holdeman. Levi,

though a young man, was allowed to do some preaching too. Families like the Wingers and the Stovers came into the fold.

David S. Holdeman, of that family/group, moved to Hesston, Kansas, in 1823, shortly before a fresh wave of Mennonites arrived from Russia, especially around Janzen, Nebraska, and in Manitoba, there was also an area of Kleine Gemeinde. John Toews began to preach and draw interest in the Rosenort and Steinbach areas - so then they invited John Holdeman to come from the Kansas/Nebraska area to conduct special preaching meetings. As a result most of the Church of God in Christ Mennonite members in Canada are descendants of the Kleine Gemeinde that began at Rosesnort, MB.

Within Canada, small groups have spread here and there, but the one at Waldheim died out. In Linden, AB., there is a small group that is mostly of Polish roots, and people who moved there from Manitoba. Of the singers present at this history meeting, most were descendants of John Chartuse or Peter Janzen.

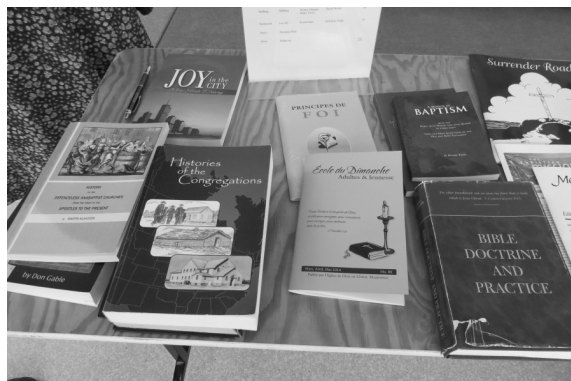
Globally, today, this church has 25,000 believers in 33 countries like, USA, Canada, Haiti, etc. (These are indigenous, not part of a mission board).

Leadership and Ministries

The Church of God in Christ Mennonite, has no fixed leadership structure. Each congregation is self-governing.

Before they have their annual communion service, two ministers are called from another church/congregation, to conduct revival meetings. They will wait until all differences between themselves have been made right, before they have communion together. Church discipline is meant to be restorative.

They are involved in Christian Service Aid International (with headquarters in the USA), humanitarian aid in Canada, Gospel literature work in 100 languages, Disaster Relief, and Guest Homes.



[Literature published by the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite]

Each congregation runs its own school, focusing on sound, fundamental education.

Questions & Answers

The floor was opened for questions for Bob from the audience.

Here we learned that their revival meetings usually go for two weeks, but have gone as long as five to six weeks. Their mode of baptism is by pouring.

Their congregations in Saskatchewan include Bradbury, Neuanlage, Swanson, Neilburg, Leoville and Spiritwood, and Porcupine Plain. Altogether they have 570 members in Saskatchewan.

Leonard Doell offered public appreciation for the members of this church who came to help in 1997 in the aftermath of the very strong plowwind that damaged many farm buildings in the area.

A free will offering was taken while the singing group sang *He Makes Me Worthy*. The singers included four men and six women, plus one little girl, quietly sitting on the arm of her daddy.

Coffee and cookies were available after the meeting, facilitating considerable visiting for a while.

[Condensed from report on mhss.sk.ca/reports/Church-of-God-in-Christ-Mennonite.shtml]

2014 Annual General Meeting

The MHSS 2014 Annual General Meeting seemed to draw a smaller turnout than usual, (40) but it was an effort for those who came, because of the extremely cold temperatures (ranging from -50s to -62 Celsius, depending on your sources). Nevertheless, it was a positive meeting with good reports.

President, Jake Buhler, welcomed all, and called upon John Reddekopp for devotional and inspirational thoughts.

Reddekopp raised the question often brought up at these annual meetings, from Joshua 4:20-22; "What do these stones mean?" He found the answer in Psalm 145:4, where one



generation is to praise God to the next generation. Then he introduced one 'stone of remembrance' in his possession, his grandfather, Jacob K. Reddekopp's German - English Dictionary, (c) 1906. His ancestors were Reinlander or Old Colony and came to the Hague-Osler Reserve, and his parents eventually settled in the Friesens' house-barn in Blumenheim. He shared a few more stories about his grandfather.

MHSS Business and Reports

Jake Buhler presided over the business meeting and oral reports to go with the printed ones.



Elmer Regier, treasurer, explained the blue pages in the report, noting that more accuracy was needed in the matter of book sales. The expansion costs for the archives have come in, except

for the computers, which are yet to be purchased.

Victoria Neufeldt, out-going editor of the Historian explained problems with the printer with this last issue just out, but that she had asked for University Press to reprint 250 copies,

which were available for members to claim. She said her work had been very interesting and rewarding.

No Cemetery report was available, as Helen Fast is away on a trip. It was agreed that we want to keep this work in Saskatchewan. Updates to the cemetery lists should still be sent in.



Elmer Neufeld, who is in charge of memberships and obituary databases, reported on publication sets that are complete, and that updated indices are passed on to Ruth Friesen annual-

ly, to be posted on our website, so that anyone may access them.

Current membership of MHSS stands at 335, but 400 copies of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian are printed.

Questions were asked about digitizing all those records, and what about the obituaries of people that are never published? Can they be obtained from funeral homes?

Kathy Boldt, Volunteer Coordinator, honoured the volunteers who spend many long hours in the archives, often on the phone, answering questions. She asked the



volunteers present to rise, and added that an Appreciation Faspera is planned for June. It was Helen Fast's idea to get compact shelving, which has turned out to be a great blessing. Victor Wiebe is missed as the archivist, but he is working at indexing Dick Epp's collection.

A recent donation of value in the Archives, is the Rosenorter Church Book from the Eigenheim church. Kathy would like to see more records from various denominations. While the archives is not a library and cannot lend out books, people are most welcome to come and read in the archives.

Ruth Friesen gave a quick report on the

website STATs and added to the written report, that she just had to increase the bandwidth assigned to the site, as the number of visitors was maxing out the previous amount. That's a good sign! There are well over 1000 webpages on the site, and it grows weekly.

Vera Falk reported that book sales have been doing pretty good. The book launches this past year have been quite successful, and boosted sales. Walter Klaassen's translation of his great-grandfather's book, has been published by MHSS, and to be launched on Sunday, March 9. *(See report on page 9)*

Board Elections

Dick Braun and Leonard Doell co-chaired this segment. Two Board positions were open. The incumbents were asked to stand; Susan Braun and Elizabeth Guenther. Both had agreed to let their names stand for re-election. It is a three year term as a Board member. There were no new nominations from the floor, so with a single motion the two Board members were re-elected.



GAMEO - by Richard Thiessen

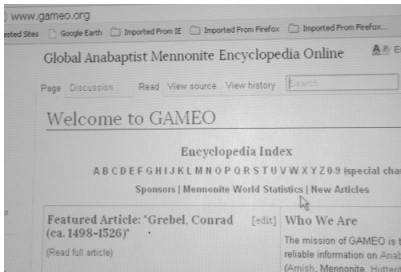
After a coffee break, all present, and others who had arrived, (65 in all) settled down to hear Richard Thiessen, currently a Librarian and Professor at Columbia Bible College in British Columbia, introduce GAMEO. This stands for *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*.



Richard shared the history of GAMEO, which began as a database of information gathered by Marlene Epp. Victor Wiebe was in from the ground level. Richard joined a

little later. It grew to include Harold Press, then all Mennonite churches and organizations, so now it is quite international, and has been around for 17-18 years. It is all accessible to the public online.

Tour of GAMEO Online



Using a laptop and a large screen, Richard was able to take us on a tour of the site, and show how to search for various kinds of information on it.

In some ways it is similar to Wikipedia, but in December 2013, they switched to a new kind of software, which makes it more secure, but means that the Editorial Committee has to post any updates. Anyone may submit material, but it will be checked before it goes live on the site.

Besides searching for information, Richard demonstrated how to submit corrections and additional information on a particular article. More biographies are needed, and he showed the criteria for the info desired in a biography.

The majority of the articles are in English, but they hope to expand to more languages.

Regional Committees are sought as well. For instance, MHSS people could brainstorm for people from our area to be included and see that their biographies are written and submitted. Those from this area are more able to discern if information from and about this area and our history are accurate, or know with whom to check the facts, and to guard against an unfair bias. Richard urged MHSS to seriously consider setting up such a Regional Committee.

In the inter-active Q&A which followed, Jake Buhler was able to name several stories that needed to be told and he could name who would be best qualified in the room to write those stories.

Importance of an Archives

After a catered lunch with hearty soups and sandwiches, Richard Thiessen made his second presentation on the importance and use of the archives. He began with some clear definitions. Archives - *a collection of historical records, primary documents, church reports, diaries, letters, passenger lists, church minutes, newspapers, usually unpublished and unique materials, which now includes emails.* Secondary Sources - *include books, journals, magazines, and art galleries. An archives is not a library, and not a museum.*

An Archives should have a **Collection Development Policy**. Our MHSS Development Policy is stated on our website. Richard explained what that should include.

Then he went on to develop Archival Standards, Rules for Archival Description (RAD) - also known as finding aides, or "fonds." There are six levels. From there he went to the arrangement for archives, such as vault, library, journals, periodicals, genealogies, published and unpublished works, school yearbooks, table areas, computers, microfilm viewing areas, etc.

The GRANDMA database has been around for 15-20 years, and is available on CD or online, to any individuals. However, it is also available at Mennonite archives.

An open discussion took place about the importance of volunteers to the running of an archives, and brainstorming for ways to get more people involved. Also, about keeping original data, and not throwing it out just because the information is available online.

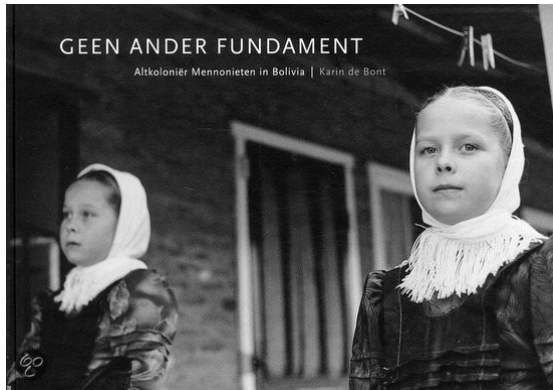
Leonard Doell pointed out that this past year was the 40th anniversary for MHSS, but we forgot to celebrate or mark it.

Dick Braun acted as tour-guide for any and all who wished to visit our new, state-of-the-art Archives. A number picked up coffee and cookies, and moved downstairs for this tour. It was good to see tremendous progress since the last Annual Meeting tour.

[condensed from Report on our website:

mhss.sk.ca/reports/2014-Annual-General-Meeting.shtml]

Book Reviews: **Geen Ander Fundament, Path of Thorns, and Great Grandfather's Diary**



Geen Ander Fundament

by Karin de Bont

Reviewed by Jake Buhler

This book about Mennonites in Bolivia is written by Karin de Bont, a young Dutch journalist and photographer who recently finished her theological studies at the University of Leiden. Fascinated by the Old Colony Mennonites that originated in 16th Century Holland, she spent considerable time in Bolivia, trying to understand who these conservative people are.

De Bont does for the reader, what she first did for herself: she presents the history of Mennonites and their migrations beginning in Holland, then Poland and Prussia, Russia, Canada, Mexico, and finally Bolivia. She has written a short abbreviated history of the Mennonites in three languages: English, German and Dutch. Her short summary is delightfully simple but her skills as a journalist and theologian are very evident: her story is easy to follow, is historically accurate, and takes little time to read.

But it is de Bont's 70 black and white photographs of everyday life in the Mennonite settlements that make the book very attractive. Each photograph tells a story: a Trajchtmoaka (bone setter) at work on a farmer's back; twenty children walking home from the village school; a mother and her six daughters dressed

up ready for church; a young woman readying a horse for travel; three shy teenage girls in their print dresses and immaculate hairstyles, and; three young girls plucking chickens.

De Bont is careful to contextualize the many Old Colony Mennonite villages and provides names of all villages and colonies that make up the 60,000 members. She has scanned an actual auction poster, several pages from the Catechism book, and an entry from the Aeltester's record book. She describes the importance of the school and teacher, and provides an explanation of how Old Colony Mennonites are organized in Bolivia.

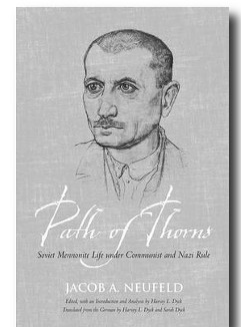
If any reader is interested in an easy-to-read overview of Mennonites in Bolivia supported by brilliant black and white photographs, this hard-back book may be the one to buy.

Published by Lecturis in 2010, *Geen Ander Fundament* (No Other Foundation) has 130 pages and can be purchased from the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan for \$30.00.

Path of Thorns Soviet Mennonite Life under Communist and Nazi Rule,

by Jacob A. Neufeld.

Harvey L. Dyck, Editor,
translator, analysis and
introduction, and Sarah Dyck,
translation. Toronto:
University of Toronto Press,
2014, X, 444pp.



Path of Thorns brings new life and vibrancy to Jacob A. Neufeld's largely forgotten German memoir, *Tiefenwege*, first published in 1957, as well as previously unpublished material. I know of no other surviving narrative, either in scope or depth that better articulates the Russian Mennonite experience between 1917 and 1948. The Civil War, attempts at reconstruction, the drastic shifts under Stalin's First Five Year Plan, the

terrors of the 1930s – Neufeld documents one man’s survival journey. He personifies the twenty percent of Mennonite family heads that survived imprisonments, labour camps and outright executions. In addition he joined the German and Mennonite colonists in the so-called “Great Trek” from Ukraine to Germany beginning in the fall of 1943.

Co-translator Professor Harvey Dyck is to be congratulated for his informative and incisive introduction that so aptly “sets the stage” for a better understanding of the memoir. In doing so he also provides the reader with a substantial bibliographic resource.

As a translation the book very successfully transitions the agonies of a Germanic/Mennonite soul into an idiomatic English that will deeply resonate with the reader. It is a masterful translation that at times appears to elucidate the text more clearly and graphically than its original counterpart. While not distorting the German text it frequently captures its essence and imagery more succinctly.

The reader might be struck by Neufeld’s pro-German sympathies. The Great Trek, via Warthegau in Poland, eventually brought Neufeld and his co-religionists into a rapidly collapsing Germany and subsequently to Germany’s post-war disasters. Readers, accustomed to western attitudes towards a defeated enemy capable of great brutality, may be taken aback by Neufeld’s deep empathy for things German. From his perspective the German Wehrmacht “rescued us from our oppressors” (p. 369) when they occupied Ukraine. Later in Germany people, amid great deprivation, shared their rations, offered sympathy and housed them. As a refugee who had found refuge, Neufeld writes “our deep sympathy for the Germans is probably understandable... yet we had never imagined that judgment [upon them] would be so pitiless” (p. 339). He was a man of two worlds. His homeland had rejected him; Germany had given him shelter and shown him kindness. Whereas

many were victims of Nazi atrocities, he experienced kindness at the hands of ordinary Germans. For him there was another side to the story.

Periodically Neufeld pauses in his memoir and struggles to make sense of his experiences.

A deeply pious Mennonite Christian, he seeks to come to terms with the countless assaults on his innermost being. For him Stalinism had battered traditional Mennonite identity in every possible way. During the Great Trek westward beginning in the fall of 1943 he observed how quickly the human being could change “under conditions of threat, affliction and severe poverty” (p. 285), yet amid all the failings there were the “matchless deeds of our women... not one of them collapsed.” (p. 287).

Throughout the narrative Neufeld, amid calamitous situations, maintains a “Kingdom of God” perspective. In circumstances designed to generate despair and rebellion he clings to the notion that God is in charge (pp. 370-372). Throughout the memoir he provides a clear personal perspective on who he is and the world view he holds. Most moving for me was the letter he addressed to his wife Lene in September, 1947, while still in the Gronau, Westphalia transit camp.

A key contribution to the telling of an incredible story, In its scope, depth and presentation, no other book better articulates the bitter Mennonite experience under Stalinist rule. Beautifully written, masterfully translated and meticulously introduced, it belongs in every Mennonite home.

reviewer: John B. Toews
Professor Emeritus of European History
University of Calgary



Got a story to tell, but don't think you can write it well enough?

Esther Patkau has offered to listen to stories and to write them down for you. Give her a call at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon

Great Grandfather's Diary

written by Tobias A. Unruh, translated by Abe J. Unruh, Montezuma, Kansas, 1970, 12 pages, Lark Printing, Rosenort, Manitoba. Reviewed by Patty Friesen, Saskatoon, SK.

Memoirs and diaries are still popular reading today. They give us an intimate look into the thoughts and experiences of the writer, making history real for all of us. Abe Unruh's translation of his great grandfather's diary provides readers with a similar insight.

Pastor Tobias A. Unruh recounts his exploratory trip to the US and Canada with both brief detail and profound spiritual reflection. He came in the spring of 1873 looking for land for his colony in Russia. His diary reveals the terror of those early Atlantic crossings. Storms and seasickness and ship collisions were typical trials. The terror continued on land with speeding trains and poor tracks but Tobias' heartfelt and poetic prayers to God show this man's genuine faith in the midst of troubles. His awe of Niagara Falls, American cities and the fertile prairies give us a first hand view of what this land looked like 150 years ago. The bounty of fields and gardens lift his hopes that his community can succeed in this new land.

Tobias' religious and cultural values receive a shock when he realizes that his colony cannot settle together in villages as in Russia but will have to have individual "farms." He wonders how his strong sense of community will survive this kind of individualism. He realizes that the American Mennonites have already abandoned the German language in worship. Their concerns are somewhat relieved when the US president assures them their religious freedom and conscientious objection are protected under the US Constitution.

Tobias returns home and the immigration of Russian Mennonite colonies begins.

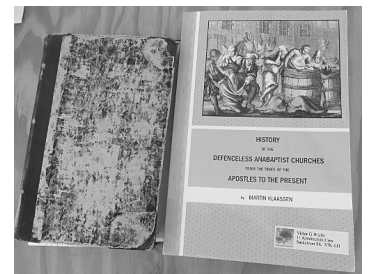
Reduced to poverty, many families rely on the settled American Mennonites for passage

and provisions during resettlement in Kansas. They endure smallpox, ship collisions, death and birth on the ships, and cold during their first winter in North America.

One hundred years later, Unruh reflects on the courage of his great-grandfather's immigration and subsequent success of the immigrants as they spread throughout the USA, building churches and communities. In comparison, the Mennonites who remained in Russia were reduced to a small collection of 20 families gathering for worship in private homes.

[Editor: this book is written and published from the perspective of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.]

Klaassen Book Launch:



A History of the Defenceless Anabaptists from the time of the Apostles to the Present

At 2:30 pm. on Sunday, March 9, about 80 interested people sat in the Fellowship Hall at Bethany Manor to hear about professor Walter Klaassen's translated book, just published. It is a fresh translation of Klaassen's grandfather's German book, published in 1873.

Guests drove in from outlying towns, and a number showed up who have not attended other MHSS book launches. Walter may have been remembered well for his presentation, just a year ago on Pilgram Marpeck.

Martin Klaassen (1820-1881), wrote, "*Geschichte der wehrlosen taufgesinnten Gemeinden von den Zeiten der Apostel bis auf die Gegenwart.*" It was published in Prussia in 1873 in German. Martin Klaassen was born in Prussia but moved to Russia where he became an

accomplished teacher who wrote his own curricula.

Dr. Walter Klaassen lives in Saskatoon, and has translated his great-grandfather's book into English. This book is now called, "***A History of the Defenceless Anabaptists from the time of the Apostles to the Present.***"

Victor Wiebe explained the history of the old book, and its binding, and then the process of publishing Walter Klaassen's translation of his great-grandfather's book. This was published by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS), something it does occasionally for very special books.

Jake Buhler, president of the MHSS introduced Pastor Vern Ratzlaff and Walter Klaassen, and explained that Vern would interview Walter to help the audience understand the content and value of both the original book and the new translated book.



Vern asked poignant, discerning questions. Walter replied earnestly and thoroughly. He also read a profound section from the book that revealed a very solid theology with a flair for literature.

Walter Klaassen's wife, Ruth, was noted as an integral part of the preparation of this new translation/publication.

After the interview, everyone was invited to visit the faspas tables for sweets, and the book table to purchase the new book. Quite a number were sold, and copies can still be ordered through the MHSS website book order form.

[from Report on mhss.sk.ca/]

Lives Lived - George Giesbrecht (1947 - 2014)

by Jake Buhler



When George Giesbrecht was laid to rest in the Osler Mennonite Cemetery on February 2, 2014, at the age of 66. It could be said of him that he had never been schooled, but that he had considerable education.

When he was born in 1947 with Down's Syndrome at the small Warman Hospital that was also Dr. Wilkin's home, George's parents were told that his life-expectancy could be ten years but likely not more than twenty. Not only did George exceed the age of twenty, but he went on to collect almost two years of OAS Pension benefits!

George's growing up years took place in the late 40s, 50s, and early 60s, just east of Warman along the Ferry Road in what once was the Mennonite village of Osterwick. Jacob and Helena (nee Guenther) Giesbrecht were dairy farmers, tilling the rocky soil, and planting oats for the twenty cows they milked. In earlier years, binders cut the oats into sheaves, and threshing machines separated grain from chaff and straw. Later balers, swathers and combines were the machines of choice.

Bert Lobe was just a teenager working for Lobe's Transport, when he picked up 8 gallon milk cans from the Giesbrecht farm. George would be there daily observing the cans being hoisted out of the cooling trough. Then quick as a whistle, Bert observed that George would sweep away the water on the cement floor, turn to him and wave as he left the yard.

When bulk tanks replaced cans, George would observe the Dairy Cooperative truck as its driver pumped the milk into the tank. George's six older sisters were part of the sustainable farm operation. They assisted their talented mother in gardening and food preservation. The legendary baking skills of Helena were all passed on to her

daughters. Most of the girls worked alongside George's five older brothers in all parts of farming.

George was the 14th and last child of Jacob and Helena. The first child, Katherina, died in 1929 at the age of six. She fell off her father's workbench where he was crafting furniture. She received a brain concussion and died shortly thereafter. Eva, the second child, died at the age of two weeks. Six daughters and six sons would follow. The amazing fact is that George's 11 older siblings, aged 70 to just under 90, are in reasonably good health, and all attended the funeral of their youngest brother. They had come from across the prairie provinces.

From the Giesbrecht side, George learned the strict rigor of the work ethic and the obedience needed to survive in a large family. His father was a deacon in the Old Colony Mennonite Church, and that brought additional scrutiny of all his children. From the Guenther side, George learned gentleness, acceptance, and wisdom. He attended the Old Colony Mennonite Church in Neuhorst where he learned most of the hymns in the German language hymnbook called the *Gesangbuch*. He was naturally musical, and knew the melodies attached to the hymns. A cousin of George was Mary (Wiebe) Friesen, who lived near the South Saskatchewan River.

When the Giesbrechts visited the Wiebes, George would sit down on the piano bench and invite Mary to play the piano. He loved music. There were times when George would even criticize the Vorsanger who led the singing in his church.

After George's cousin, Allan Guenther, also living with Down's Syndrome, had been baptized in the Osler Mennonite Church, George made it clear that he too wanted baptism. He met with Rev. Bill Kruger, and in the ensuing months developed a close relationship with him. Following a meeting with George's mother, who gave her blessing, George was

baptized by Rev. Kruger after weeks of catechism classes. Bill Kruger observed later that if half the people in the wider church had George's understanding of Jesus' love and the way to salvation, no church would be in trouble!

One of the interesting loves of George's life was the Saskatoon Blades. Friends and siblings would take him to many games. He would memorize the names of Blade players and recall their scoring statistics. When the Blades scored, George would still be cheering when all others had stopped.

George spent nearly 25 years in the Waldheim-based Menno Home of Saskatchewan. There he learned various skills related to wood-working and other manual skills. He loved his peers and they in turn loved him. George was affectionate, and enjoyed the many outings he was part of. The last year of his life was spent at Shepherd's Villa in Hepburn.

On a bitterly cold day on February 2, 2014, the real life of George Giesbrecht and his family became evident. More than 250 family members, relatives and friends gathered at Osler Mennonite Church to celebrate his life. There it became clear that all eleven of his older siblings loved him, and had spent time with him.

As one example (and there were many), the oldest brother, Peter, owned a business delivering fuel to farmers; George often accompanied him and developed a close bond.

Many nieces and nephews were present at the funeral and spoke of their close bonds to George. Some spoke of George's sense of humour and his uncanny skills at remembering the names of several hundred family members. George loved his family and in turn was loved by them. A moving moment came when more than a dozen friends from his respite home in Hepburn got up at the funeral and sang the Doxology. It was a song he always requested before a meal.

Rev. Kruger spoke about the miraculous healing by Jesus of the crippled man. He observed how Jesus asked the man to take up his bed and go home. "And now", Kruger said in his closing

sentence, "God has called George Giesbrecht to take up his bed and go home". There were tears in the eyes of most of those in attendance.

Around a table at the funeral reception, George's sister, Helen, quietly related a story that showed remarkable parental and family love. In support for George's baptism, his mother had a suit of clothing tailored for the occasion. Helen explained that persons with Down's Syndrome cannot buy suits off the shelf because of their body dimensions. George's mother had requested that the same suit be kept for the funeral. So it was Helen who ensured that the mother's request was honoured.

Note: For more information on the genealogy of George Giesbrecht, please reference GM 704520.



This is the record of a woman who has left her influence on many people, even though there is no mention of publicly acclaimed achievements and awards. But with trust in the Lord she has been faithful in living a life of service to others, of bonding a family with love and discipline, and has brought joy into the lives of family and friends alike.

Here is her story in her own words.
[Esther Patkau]

Anna (Rempel) Ens at 107

I, Anna Rempel, was born February 4, 1907 in an area around Osler, Saskatchewan. My parents were Gerhard and Nettie (nee Derksen) Rempel. My Dad writes that they lived in an old small log house. At night, if they had a light in the house, it shone through the cracks between the logs. We didn't live there very long because our father wanted to be near an English school for his ten children. I was one of the middle children.

We had plenty of chores on the farm and helped mother with the little ones. There was much love between us children. We played games and helped mother in the garden. We all loved and respected our dad very much. When we did something wrong or became too loud, he looked at us with his loving eyes and we promptly obeyed.

I loved school. I was usually a quiet hard-working student, but my seatmate liked to tell jokes. One day she whispered an especially funny joke to me, and I burst out laughing, which disrupted the class. The teacher placed me up on the platform to stand in front of all the children. I was so embarrassed!

In winter our big brothers took us to Richmond School (close to Mennon) in a sleigh, but in summer we walked the mile and a half. When we came home there was always a little treat like cookies or fresh baked bread. When our chores were done, I enjoyed reading and playing games.

Every summer our dad took us fishing. We loved it. We took our lunch for a picnic and had great fun.

Also, every summer he took us to the Exhibition in Saskatoon. Those were highlights for us. We had lots of music in our house. My sisters played the piano and our brothers trumpet and harmonica. Our dad loved to hear us sing and play. We had no Sunday School, but we had church services in the schoolhouse. At sixteen I gave my heart to the Lord.

I finished grade eight, and later went to Hepburn Bible School for three years. After graduating I stayed for three more years working in the kitchen. In the summer I taught Vacation Bible School and made many visitations. The people would treat us to nice cold watermelon. I like almost every kind of food, but not watermelon. I didn't want to hurt their feelings, so I would have some, but I have never learned to like watermelon. Even after working in the city of Saskatoon, I would take a month off to teach VBS. When I returned to work, my boss asked if I had converted all the heathen.

In Saskatoon I attended Central Mennonite Brethern Church that had a Girls Chorus. We sang on radio broadcasts on Sunday mornings.

I tried nursing at the little hospital in Borden. I had no training but the need was great. I lasted only one month because I had to shovel coal into the furnace in my white uniform. That, plus helping to deliver babies was too much for me. I asked for my old job back at Modern Laundry.

On May 7, 1949, I married Ben Ens, a widower with three young teenage children. The wedding was in Osler and the children were the attendants.

After a lovely honeymoon in Banff and Jasper, we settled in a little house at the back of his store. Becoming a wife and a mother of three children was a huge adjustment. My sister had passed away and left three children motherless. I had lived in a quiet apartment where everything was kept in its place. These children were used to being loud, sometimes forgot to tidy up and stayed up much too late. Slowly but surely I adjusted, and so did they. There was much love and cooperation in our home. I felt not only accepted but truly appreciated.

Our family attended the Mennonite Brethern Church in Warman. I was involved with the Ladies' Aid and also enjoyed teaching Sunday School. In those days we used a flannelgraph board, and had all the cut-out figures to help tell the stories. This helped to keep the children's attention. It has been my pleasure to meet some of these children, now grown up with families of their own, and reflect on some of those lessons from that long ago time.

As the children grew up and had families of their own, I knew the joy of being a grandmother. I was pleasantly surprised to see how capable these young mothers were. I was also always delighted to see them come for a visit. We celebrated many wonderful Christmas days and birthdays together. Family is so

important to all of us. My job is to pray for each one, and keep the cookie jar full.

Two very difficult times were when my husband passed away in 1983, and then also my son, who was a missionary, who died when he was so young. Norman had been my strong arm during the months when my husband was so ill. He had received permission to come home from France, where he was the pastor of a Cambodian Church, to help look after his dad. Then when he returned to France he sent me weekly tapes to encourage me in the faith. God helped me through those hard times. The Lord has never failed me yet.

Now that my husband was gone, it seemed best to sell the house and the car. The children helped me find a nice condominium at Circle Drive Place. I have been here for more than 25 years. My health has been remarkably good, and now that I'm 107 years old, Home Care nurses treat me kindly every day. I have many friends but no one my age. I have the joy of being a grandmother to 20 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, and 5 great-great-grandchildren. I love to have visits and phone calls from all of them, and I pray for them every day. God has truly blessed my life. I give Him all the glory.



Anna Ens celebrated her 107th birthday in the circle of family and friends at Circle Drive Place in February 2014. She lives in her own apartment and is in remarkably good health.

De Plautdietsche Atj

Onnse Kjikjel

fonn Jack Driedger

Ekj sie enn daud Darp Bloomenheim oppjeweissen. Wan jie opp Hüachwajch Numma 11 fonn Sasketün em nuaden foaren, woa jie bie dee Staut Osla 'ne Tofel aun'e rajchte Sied seenen waut wiest daud Bloomenheim tian Kjielomeeta em oosten ess. Doa sie ekj Auprel 26, 1926 jeburen.

Ekj freid mie emma toom Enj Auprel, wan't uck nuscht soont auss een Jeburtsdachjebott ooda Jeburtsjeschenkj bie onns jeef. Soont auss daud wea blooss waut eena fonn läsen deed. Ekj wisst daud, wan ekj joarijch wea, wudden dee Kjikjel 'romm ranen onn schiepren. Doatoo freid ekj mie.

Wan ekj Mutta früach, "Mamme, wannea ess mien Jeburtsdach?", säd'se emma, "Wan dee Kjikjel schiepren."

Au'fangs Auprel hold Foda dee Broodmaschien fomm Bän onn stalld dee enn'e groote Stow opp. Ekj jleew dee hilt 225 Eia. Dee haud 'ne Eeljlaump toom dee Eia woam hoolen, soo daud dee ütbrooden. Een Grodglauss enn dee Broodmaschien weess auf daud woam jenüach wea toom dee Eia ütbrooden.

Foda täkjend dee Eia aun eene Sied met 'ne Bliesteft aun, soo daud hee wisst auf hee dee jieda Dach ommjedreit haud. Ekj kjikjt emma wan hee daud deed onn wundad, woo dee Kjikjel feelden wan hee an ommdreid.

Dee Broodmaschien haud een langet Fensta wua eena beobachten kunn soo'ss dee Kjikjel aunfunge üt dee Eia 'rüttookomen. Eascht funk daud Ei aun too duckren. Dan kunn ekj met ee'mol seenen, daud daud Ei 'n bät

jeplautst wea. Entlich wea dee Schnowel 'n bät too seenen, onn dan 'n bät Dünne. Met ee'mol kjeem daud gaunsse Kjikjel met grooten Aunstrenjen äwadäl. Wan daud Oostren wea, kunn ekj fonn'e School tüss bliewen onn aulesse tooseenen.

Soo feksj auss dee Kjikjel ütjebroott wearen, sad Mutta dee dijcht biem Owen enn 'n Hock 'nen. Daud Hock wea fonn Bräda een Schoo hüach jemäakt. Oole Sseitungen worden opp'e Flua jespreeet toom daud Heenameest oppfangen. Ekj hab dee Kjikjel stundenlank beobacht soo'ss dee spälden onn 'rommkleiwden onn frauten.

Opp een Enj Hock hunk Mutta een Kodda opp,

soo daud dee Kjikjel sikj doa-unja fekrüpen kunnan. Wan ekj ornoa lüd "brrrrrrrr" säd, stüden aul dee Kjikjel hinja daud Kodda, auss wan se' sikj unja 'ne Kluck fekroopen. Dan wearen 'se muckstell onn horjchten, bat se'



dochten doa wea kjeene Jefoa. Dan kjikjten eent ooda twee Kjikjel een kjlienet bät fonn unja daud Kodda fäa, onn kjikjten onn horjchten auf doa uck kjeene Jefoa wea. Schliesslich wearen se' wada aula äwadäl onn krautsten onn frauten.

Joaren lota fetalld Mutta mie waut sea intressauntet. Dee easchta Dach auss ekj trigj no School jinkj, frauten dee Kjikjel nuscht. Dee rakjhaulsden blooss onn kjikjten enn'e Hejcht onn schlemmden. Dan foll Mutta daud bie, daud dee Kjikjel sikj no mie bangden.

Na, waut dan nü? Mutta wisst sikj aul boolt Rot. See wisst krakjt waut se' nü doonen musst. See jinkj opp'm Bän onn socht no dee jratste Popp waut see finjen kunn. Dan sad se' dee Popp em Kjikjelhock 'nen. Fuats wearen dee Kjikjel gaunss toofräd onn krautsten onn frauten wada.

Omm 'n poa Wäakj wearen dee Kjikjel groot jenüach, onn daud Wada wea scheen jenüach,

daut dee Kijkjel nijch mea bruckten bennen sennen. Wie müaken nü büten een jratret Hock. Dee unjaschte poa Schoo wearen Bräda. Bowa dee Bräda wea een poa Schoo Heena-drot.

Wan ekj 'ne Eadschock benna daut Hock aun dee Brädawaunt näageld, hackten dee Kijkjel oba jnietsch, bat se' dee Eadschock gaunss oppjefräten hauden. Wiel wie soo fäl met an too doonen hauden wiel dee Kijkjel klien wearen, wearen onnse Heena emma sea mack. See hauden kjeene Ferjcht fe Menschen.

Daut dead nijch lang, dan wearen daut nijch mea Kijkjel. Dee wearen nü ütjewossne Heena. Too nacht wearen see em Heenastaul onn äwa dach randen see frie opp'm hoff eromm.

Wiels onnse Heena kjeene Ferjcht fe Menschen hauden, kunn ekj ann irjents een Tiet opp häwen onn foodren.

Opp dit Bilt helt mien brooda Welm 'ne Schiew met äwajebälwne jebrodne Eadschocken. Ekj hool een Hon wiels hee dee Eadschocken met Scheesnmack oppfrat.

When jie sea kijken kjenn jie seenen, daut doa 'ne Han fer onns steit onn sea kijkt waut doa fäajeit.

many things here to absorb you for as long as you care to linger - or hang out at the archives.

You must understand that the volunteers that work there simply cannot do your research for you. They are busy with cataloguing and trying to keep up with filing the materials that come in week by week. However, all these materials are for YOU. So the volunteers are willing to help you find the books, the photos, the files, the magazines, obituaries, etc., whatever you need to do your study or research work.

Materials cannot be loaned out. You must plan to do your research right in the archives.

But the volunteer staff will share space at their tables for you to sit down to read books and make notes. You can also, for a nominal fee, do some photocopying.

You best plan is to check the fonds (finding aides, lists) on our website, mhss.sk.ca/A/ so you have a better idea of what you want to find, and then plan to come on Monday or Wednesday afternoons between 1 - 4 pm. Or, you might be able to make arrangements with a volunteer or Board member to let you in on a day that suits you better, if the regular hours do not work out for you.

Use Your Archives



Our photographer, Susan Braun, has offered to prowl about the archives and find things that will be of interest to you if you are researching Mennonite history, or your own family and community histories.

These resources are invaluable to you if you are planning to write a history book. But of course, you only need to be curious to find



In future issues we will explore and show you some of the interesting sections of books and materials - some of which you may never have expected to find in our archives.

We will also share some tips for research and getting the most value out of the archives - which belong to all of us.

Mennonite Inventions and Designs - Part 1

by Dick Braun, Osler, SK.



Arent Wiebe's Tramline

This kind of a subject bids that I start off a little before the time of Saskatchewan. There have been a lot of Mennonites involved with inventing and designing from a long time ago. In the articles to follow, I want to concentrate mostly on Mennonites from Saskatchewan that built or designed machinery of various kinds. The articles that I will write will for sure not cover all the people that were involved with inventing machinery and gadgets in Saskatchewan, but I want to bring forward some of them.

First I made a mistake in the name of the tramline inventor; it was Mr. Arent Wiebe and not George Wiebe, as I have said to some. In today's Mennonite circles we would most likely call him Aron Wiebe.

This subject is one that goes back many years as the Mennonites were the peasant people who drained the swamps in the Netherlands, and then in the delta area of Danzig in Prussia

This brings me to a Mr. Arent Wiebe who was living in Prussia and saw the need to move a lot of dirt from a hill to a low lying area. He built the world's first Tramline.

This was truly a remarkable invention with the buckets of heavy wood and the rope of hemp. The buckets were filled with dirt and

the weight of the dirt and the line going down hill kept the rope going round and round. With the pull of gravity there was no need for any mechanical power.

Mr Wiebe had such a good idea that it took 230 years before the Germans built one which had buckets made of iron and their rope became a steel cable.

He was also instrumental in constructing canals and dykes in Poland that are used to the present.

Henry L. Friesen's Tying Machine for a Reaper

The reaper was the machine that would cut the grain and lay it on the ground in little bunches. People would follow and tie the bundles by hand to make sheaves out of them. The sheaves would then be set up with the grain end up and with about 6 or so sheaves leaning against each other to dry.

The Friesen book "*Henry L & Anna Friesen Family Then & Now*" records that Mr Henry L Friesen from Rosenort, Manitoba saw the need for a self-tying reaper. He built a tying mechanism for a reaper.

When the Massey Company learned about this, they volunteered to mass produce this machine.

In 1889 the Massey Company built their first Binder with this tying mechanism on it. Mr. Friesen allowed the Massey Company to reproduce the tying mechanism without any claims or remuneration. The Massey Company must have made a lot of money selling binders, and not just reapers.

The Peter Friesen family from Colony Riva Palacio, Bolivia were proud of the grandfather that invented such a labour-saving device. Peter Friesen is also in the fabricating business building and designing machinery in Bolivia.

Isaac Loeppky's Improved Threshing Machine

Isaac Loeppky from Neuhorst, was a great uncle of mine whom I never did get to know. Isaac was a blacksmith and in today's terms a mechanic. He went to the "Saskatoon Exhibition" in 1912. At that time it was an exhibit of farm machinery and tools, more than a midway like today.

He bought a steam engine and a threshing machine. The first fall he used it, the threshing machine did not work well at all. The following winter he took the whole thing apart and figured out why it did not work. He changed things inside of the machine and got it to do a good job of threshing. The head company found out about Isaac's work and paid him a visit, and of course, saw what he had done.

The story in our family goes this way. The company offered Isaac Loeppky a job with them designing machinery. Isaac did not take the job, and we will never know why not, but one can speculate a little bit. The early Mennonite settlers would not have been easily lured to the big city, and maybe were a little skeptical of these big companies.

Isaac went on to serve the community by custom threshing and operating a blacksmith shop and repair garage. His nephews told me that he also built his own crystal radio set. If they were very quiet, they could sit and listen with him. This must have been a lot of fun as there were not TVs or iPads at that time. This was ground breaking technology.

There will be many stories like this of people who redesigned machinery, where it made a big difference in the operation of the machine.

[More stories in the following issues by Dick Braun].



Announcements

Celebrating 50 Years of Faith in Action

MHSS is collaborating with MCC Saskatchewan (MCCS) to celebrate their 50th anniversary. We do this by posting announcements of their monthly celebrations on our website.

MCCS is celebrating their 50th anniversary every month of 2014. Each month a different work or project of MCC in Saskatchewan is highlighted, an appropriate event is organized and the people involved are highlighted.

It is possible that you have not yet heard of these celebratory events, or perhaps just one or two. You can review those for January through April that have already happened, online here; mhss.sk.ca/MCCsk/index.shtml

Once the events have taken place, when reports are submitted of how the event turned out, those are added as well, to form a public record.

MHSS is rightly proud of the work of MCC - for we know it represents all of us working together - our faith in action!

You will also find an agenda for the whole year, and by now a date and location has been set for each month.

What are Your Memories of MCC?

Claire Ewert Fisher, Director of MCCS, would appreciate stories from anyone who has ever worked with MCC in the past, or has memories of some help or involvement - whether long ago, or in the more recent past.

You may submit them to us and we will forward your tributes and stories to Claire, or you may send them to her directly using a special contact form on this web page; mhss.sk.ca/MCCsk/cef/My-MCC-Story.php

Because these events are part of our Mennonite culture and historical experience in Saskatchewan we will highlight these events briefly here, (keeping in mind that not all our readers use the internet).

January 18, 2014 - IVEP

The International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP). Participants are placed in Canada and the United States, each country receiving on average 25 young adults a year.

Over 3500 men and women have participated in IVEP since its inception in 1950. The program was developed after 21 young men from Mennonite communities in Europe spent one year on farms in the US. By 1960 the program expanded to include Canadian farms. Since then the program has grown to include young adults between 18-30 years of age with various occupational skills, from Latin America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Placements include: agriculture, education, non-profit, and for profit businesses.

February - Thrift Shop Movement

This great idea started over tea in Altona, Manitoba. Used clothing became a cash machine to fund other MCC projects worldwide.

The second shop opened in Saskatoon after a visit from Justina Berg of Manitoba. She talked with the Women's Auxiliary of Mennonite Central Committee on February 8, 1973.

The result - the opening of the Mennonite Clothes Closet, later to become Village Green Thrift Shop. Some 27 years ago



Saskatchewan opened the first Furniture only Thrift Shop, which continues to thrive today! It spread to Rosthern, Herbert, Swift Current, Warman, and Lanigan. Regina also hosted an MCC Thrift Store for seven years.

March 21, Warman - CFGB

The Canadian Food Grains Bank began as the Mennonite Food Bank, born under the MCC Canada umbrella in 1974. It was meant

to alleviate hunger in third world countries. Farmers would stockpile extra grain as Joseph did in Egypt centuries ago, to help famine-stricken areas.



Farmers designated some grain to this bank when they delivered it to the elevators. Later the Canadian government provided matching grants, so it became more popular.

Other Churches observed what was happening and approached MCC about joining the Food Bank. In 1983, the Mennonite Food Bank was dissolved and replaced by the CFGB. MCC now became only one partner. It was joined over time by the relief and development agencies of the United Church, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Adventist, Baptist, Catholic, Salvation Army, Presbyterian, Nazarene, Christian Reformed, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Anglican, and Evangelical Missionary churches. World Relief is also a member. Headquarters are in Winnipeg.

Recently John and Helena Ens from the Bergthaler Mennonite Church visited Ethiopia and are reporting on what they have learned and seen. Public schools have used educational materials produced in Winnipeg to teach students about hunger. Saskatchewan churches raised 1.76 million dollars out of which Mennonite churches contributed just over \$534,000 and are the largest donor.

April 5 - Ten Thousand Villages - MCC Saskatoon

In the early 1970s, Edna Byler's plan to sell crafts in North American for artisans from

impoverished countries became Self Help Crafts, an official MCC program.

Today, thousands of loyal customers and volunteers have helped to build this program into the strong alternative trading organization that, in 1996, became known as Ten Thousand Villages. It is now the oldest and largest Fair Trade organization in North America, selling artisan-crafted personal accessories, home decor and gift items from around the globe.

The philosophy of helping build a sustainable future is based on the principle that trade should have a conscience. Through Fair Trade, artisans receive respect, dignity and hope from working hard and earning fair value for their work.

Products sold by Ten Thousand Villages come from 29 countries in the developing world. Ten Thousand Villages buys from more than 100 artisan groups which provides work for more than 60,000 individual people. About 70%



of the artisans are women. Some artisan groups seek to employ persons with physical disabilities. Ten Thousand Villages intentionally looks to work with people who are unemployed or underemployed. Products sold by Ten Thousand Villages are often made in small group settings or in homes where artisans also manage household responsibilities or farm work.

As we can see, any one of these strong arms of MCC are wonderful for the good work they do! But there are more to come!

Celebrations Yet to Come in 2014

May - Restorative Justice Anniversary Celebration - Prince Albert, May 4 - 3:00 -

6:00 pm, at Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert. SK.

June - Relief Sale - June 14 at 9:30 am, Anniversary celebration at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.

July - Refugee Assistance - July 13 from 1:30 - 5:00 pm Anniversary celebrations in Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

August - Aboriginal Neighbours/ Indigenous Work - August 17, Indigenous Work Anniversary celebration at Prince Albert/ Spruce Home.

September - Governance - September 13 at 2:30 p.m. Governance Celebration at the MCC Centre, 600 - 45th Street West, Saskatoon.

Come and meet former staff members, board chairs and board members. Learn about MCCS programs that have been discontinued and/or graduated to stand on their own. Join us for story telling and refreshments.

October - Peace and Justice Education - MCC Centre - October 3, at 7:00 pm, Anniversary celebration/coffee house at MCC, Saskatoon.

October - Musical Gala Anniversary celebration at Knox United Church on October 31 at 7:30 pm, Saskatoon. (Wait til you hear all the music!)

November 1 - Encounter and AGM at Cornerstone Church.

November 19 - MCC Day - meet me at the Leg! Saskatchewan Legislature is declaring November 19th MCC Day in Saskatchewan.

December - Material Resources Anniversary celebration December 4 or 5 at 7:00 pm. at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Honour List

This list recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions toward preserving Mennonite history, heritage, or faith within our province. To submit a name for the Honour List, nominate that person in writing, and forward to the MHSS Board.

The date in brackets is the year of death. The profiles of some of the honorees are on our website. <http://mhss.sk.ca/tributes/> (If you can provide the ones that are missing, the editor would be glad to hear from you).

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. Fehr (†2000)
Jake Fehr
Jacob E. Friesen (†2007)
John D. Friesen (†2004)
Jacob G. Guenter (†2013)
Gerhard J. Hiebert (†1959)

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 (†2011)
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: mhss.sk.ca

Cemeteries:

freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~skmhss/

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: (GAMEO)

gameo.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online

E-Updates Ezine (announcements email):

Subscribe by entering your email on our website here: mhss.sk.ca/E-Updates.shtml

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 LaRonge Road, Room 900

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Make cheques payable to: MHSS

Memberships: \$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 in Feedback & Stories

You are cordially invited to send in feedback, news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc., to be considered for publication. The editor is willing to help polish it up so it looks professional, she just cannot read your mind. See contact info ->

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or email directly to: Ask-Ruth@mhss.sk.ca