

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian



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With God From East Germany to Chilliwack

Shared by Ruth Quiring Heppner October 17, 2014
at the SWM Fall Retreat, Shekinah Retreat Centre



Features:

With God from East
Germany to Chilliwack -
by Ruth Quiring Heppner

Saskatchewan Made
"Russhi Klocken" - by
Tony Funk 7

Redemption, Fifty Years
at Warman Mennonite
Church - by Pastor Josh
Wallace 13

Three Authors Launch
New Books 16

Mennonite Migrations
& AGM (report) 23

Profiles/Tributes:

Three Authors & Books . . 18

A Mother's Prayers -
by Mary Janzen 11

Mennonite Archival Image
Database (MAID)
Now LIVE! 20



Front L-R: Otto, Annemarie, Walter, Dorothy, Grandma & Grandpa Bartel, Ruth, Inge, and brother Reinhardt at far right. Back L-R: Mom, Dad, with family and friends come to say farewell from the Refugee Camp at Gronau, Germany.

continue reading -page 4

CONTENTS

Use Your Archives:

Gemeinde Bücher 12

Mennonite Migration Stories &
Annual General Meeting 20

A Survey for Readers 27-28

Cookie Recipe (120 yr old). 6

Die Plautdietche Akj:

No Saskatūn Foaren -
by Jack Driedger 10

Mennonite Inventions & Designs # 4:

Julius Klassen - Inventor of
Many Machines - by Dick
Braun 21

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The Editor's Perspective *Ruth Marlene Friesen*

Well, Dear Reader, here we are into year two of this relationship. Do you feel more comfortable with me now?

I'm here to give you good reading materials related to our own Mennonite history in a way that is helpful, encouraging, and hey, so that we can tell each other some funny stories, and feel safe with one another.

At our last planning meeting for the *Historian* one of our writers wanted to know if there has been any feedback? Do our readers like what we are producing? Are we on the right track? Or should we try something different?

Now, I've heard that for every ONE person who writes or comments about something to those in charge, about anything - there are ten others who feel the same way, but didn't bother to speak up, or write in. Since a few of us have heard some positive comments about the *Historian* in 2014, we tell ourselves that 40 -50 people must feel that way.

Still. We figure that after a year's worth of issues, - four, if we count this one, our readers should have a sense of Yay! Na-a? or Blah!

The Group warned me that many people hate surveys, (and I really dislike phone polls!) - but, I said, "I'll be brave; I'll send out a survey!"

See, if only 10 people send it back to let us know they like what they read, we'll know we have 100 readers on our side. Ah-ha!

If 20 people send us a good report card, we KNOW over half of our readership loves us. Hoo-boy! How hard we'll work to keep you happy!

Dare I hope for 30? Oh jauma-staunt! 100%?

Please, would you look for the survey sheet at the back, fill it out and send or give it back to us? Blessings & Thanks,

Ruth



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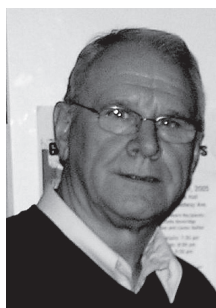
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MHSS President's Corner

by Jake Buhler



The Old Testament is the story of God, the Hebrew people, and those they encountered. The story contains poetry, prophecy, visions, law, heroic deeds, and much more.

There is love and violence, there is faithfulness to God, and there is unfaithfulness. It is their story. Much later it would become part of the Christian story.

The story of the Mennonite people was brought to life March 6-7 when Dr. John Friesen told how Mennonites moved from Poland/Prussia to Russia, and after 1874, to Manitoba.

Dick Braun and Leonard Doell completed the storytelling with stories about the move from Manitoba to Saskatchewan in 1895. If you missed it, check the MHSS website.

You can participate in another story for the December issue of the *Historian*, that, for the first time, will have a single theme: **Christmas**.

Is there a diary in your family of times past, where someone described how Christmas was celebrated? Do you have a special Christmas that you can describe? Do you know a missionary who described how Christmas was celebrated in a foreign country? We want your stories.

Send them to our editor, Ruth Friesen. It should be an enjoyable edition! [Check bottom of page 26 for how to reach the editor].

Jake Buhler

With God from East Germany to Chilliwack - continued
from page 1:

I was born in 1946 in East Germany, as the sixth child, and later had one younger sister. Our father and grandfather on both sides of the family were preachers. We had a wonderful heritage. At all three meals throughout the day, we would have a Bible reading, sing a song, and pray.

There were several Mennonite families who lived in Mulmke. East Germany quickly became a Soviet socialist system. In school the teachings were what good role models Stalin and Lenin were. Our parents did not want us to be brought up in that kind of environment. When 3 Mennonite families escaped in 1951, the police started patrolling our property.

Mom writes, God's ways are different from our ways, and in January of 1952, a tailor who sewed a suit for our grandfather had ties with the Russian patrol. We paid the tailor a large sum of money and were to also give him a working cow, and his deal was to tell the Russian patrol to turn his back when we crossed the border. There were 9 of us now – and in order not to be spotted when crossing the border, we divided into 5 separate groups. My oldest brother, Reinhard, aged 17, left first, by bicycle several months earlier.

My younger sister Inge, and I, aged 4 and 5, were the second group to cross the border with our Grandparents, Otto and Marie Bartel.

My siblings, Walter, Annemarie, and Dorothy, ages 11-9, were the third group; and my mom, dad, and brother Otto, 13, were the fourth and last group to leave our home in East Germany.

My mother says that on the morning of our escape, they found the daily Bible verse on the calendar to be Acts 18:10, *"For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you."* Our parents were deeply thankful for the assurance that the Lord gave us. My mother praised the Lord for this and kept repeating this verse softly to all those near to her during the escape.

My older siblings attended school in the morning as usual. They came home for lunch, said their good-byes and walked to the train

station, to take the train as far as it went to the last East German station. They purchased return tickets, so as not to be suspected of wanting to escape.

When they got on the train, to their dismay, there their teachers from school sat right across from them. The teachers asked where they were going? My brother, Walter, replied "to the city." (One aunt lived in the city of Wernigerode and another aunt lived in the city of Seesen). The city of Wernigerode was exactly the place the teachers had a conference.

At the city (Wernigerode) Walter, Annemarie, and Dorothy, exited the train with the teachers, and, praise the Lord for the crowded station, quickly got onto the same train, only a different rail car.

At the final destination of Stapelburg, a pre-arranged meeting was made with a lady who was wearing what my siblings had been told. Of course, she had been told what my siblings were wearing, so they could identify each other.

She told Walter, Annemarie, and Dorothy to window shop, while she started to walk to her home in the forested area. She did not want to be followed too closely. She lived right on the border. My siblings were invited into her kitchen, until she had established that the East German guard finished his shift; and before the new guard came on duty. She then took my siblings to a shed and pointed the way to go, through a creek and then to turn left to where the guard station was. This last distance for my siblings to cross over to West Germany was about 500 yards. There was a log across the creek. Walter and Annemarie balanced their way across the creek, but Dorothy fell in. Walter helped her back out and comforted her so she would not cry. It was January; my siblings were cold and wet but happy to get across safely to Eckertal, West Germany. Here they were to meet our parents in a restaurant. But our parents did not show up.

My parents' group was delayed because our father had to deliver our working cow for ransom money. My dad and the cow were picked up at a

disclosed area. However, the truck driver, being an alcoholic, stopped at every pub along the way, thus causing a big delay in getting the cow to its final destination. My Dad did not tell the trucker the urgency of the matter.



Front: my parents, Erica & Erich Quiring. Back: Otto and Grandma Marie Bartel.

When Dad returned home he, together with my mother and Otto, were able to leave our home in East Germany.

The laundry was left on the line, the animals fed, and the house lights were left on. Down the road they met up with Uncle Rudy, Aunt Elsbeth, Aunt Irmgard and Uncle Paul.

They only went a short distance together

when my brother's bicycle chain broke, so they all had to push their bikes to the prearranged destination where a truck was to pick them up. The truck driver took them for a good bit of the way and then told them from here on they were on their own. He pointed them in the direction to go.

However, the direction was wrong and they encountered deep snow, the end of the road, and a forest. Thankfully they saw a light in the distance, and checked it out for further directions. Praise God, they could walk the rest of the way to cross the border without being caught.

My sister, Annemarie, continues her story: "At eight o'clock the guard station was closed. Dorothy, Walter, and I were taken to a bus depot – but at midnight, when it

closed, so we were put on a bus to the next stop, Gosslar.

There, at the train station, we were handed over to the West German police. Our uncle and aunt lived in Seesen, and that was our destination. At 6 a.m. our train left and we were happy when the West German police officer shared some of his breakfast sandwich with us.

When our train arrived in Seesen, we were told that our parents had made it over the border safely and had asked us to remain at the train station until they arrived to get us.

Later that morning we were reunited with our parents. It was Sunday. Our first priority was to attend a church service to thank and praise God for his guidance and deliverance, just as He had promised the morning of our escape. Acts 18:10, "For I am with you and no one is going to attack and harm you." Our joy, as you can imagine, knew no bounds.

During our six months in West Germany, we were in a refugee camp in Gronau. God protected us. Then in July 1952, we crossed the Atlantic to come to Canada, with the help of MCC.

Mom reports that early on, on the ship, she was not feeling well, she withdrew and lay down. A stillbirth ensued. Mom was 39 years old.

She continued to find comfort in scripture, such as: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Ps. 23:4. She says, this has indeed been her experience. As mom lay in the hospital with terrible headaches and fever, she prayed: "Dear Lord, should you decide to take me, then I am ready. However, if possible, spare me for the children's sake, for I know, from personal experience, how difficult it is to grow



Back L-R: Walter, Dorothy, Aunt Helena, & Annemarie. Middle/seated: grandparents, Marie & Otto Bartel, parents, Erich & Erika Quiring. Front: Inge & Ruth Quiring. 1954 at Agassiz, near Chilliwack, BC.

up without a mother.”

The day before our landing in Quebec City, my mom was released from hospital. She was delight-ed. And the phrase, “God will be with you,” was her solace.

From Quebec our family boarded the train to Canada’s west coast; our destination was Mission, B.C. There some members of the East Chilliwack Mennonite Church welcomed us and took us to Chilliwack, where we were given free housing for one year by Jake & Mary Barg.

The church had sponsored our family on the condition that we pay back the cost of the trip within one year of arrival, which we were able to do. We worshiped with the East Chilliwack Mennonite Church.

My brother, Walter, reports how encouraged he was to see that when we would walk into church some women would get up and hug Mom. He had not seen that before.

There were also Russian Mennonites in the church in Chilliwack who still spoke German and that was very helpful for our transition. We could understand the messages.

Our parents placed importance on tithing. Living in our first home in Canada, Mom and Dad had an empty shoe box that was kept in the bedroom closet on a shelf into which they faithfully deposited their tithe. From this they gave each of the children offering money for that Sunday, and they gave the remainder offering to the Lord.

My brother, Otto, remembers gathering pears from a nearby farmer for free and Mom making delicious pear soup. He also remembers going on the family bike to pick up cracked eggs from a chicken farm.

I thank God, our loving Heavenly Father, for helping and nurturing us and family, and friends. All we needed, He did provide. Thanks be to God! Psalm 107:1-9

Sources:

“Unsere Flucht im Januar 1945 von Daubel-Westpreussen” by Erika Quiring, October 1971

“Three Chapters from the life of Mrs. Erika Quiring and Family” translated by Walter Quiring, August 2001
“Testimony of What the Lord has Done in my Life” by Annemarie (Quiring) Travers

“Nazis, Communists, Refugees, and MLK” by Eric Travers

“Family History” by David Rand, 1986

“Family History” by Nielsen Rand, 1988

“Bartel 60th DVD”

Email from Walter Quiring, November 21, 2014

Email from Naomi Unger - Sept 26, 2014

~ ~

Over the Easter holidays we often end up doing extra special cooking and baking. Perhaps you would like to try out this very old Mennonite recipe.

Cookie Recipe (120 Years Old)

(now 165 years old!)

½ cup shortening	2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs	1/3 cup water
4 cups flour	1 tsp. baking soda
pinch of salt	

METHOD: Cream shortening. Add sugar, then eggs and water. Beat. Sift flour, soda and salt into first mixture Mix. Roll out thin. Cut. Place a liberal tsp. of filling on cookie and cover with another cookie. Bake in moderate oven.

Filling:

2 cups raisins	1 cup water
1 cup brown sugar	2 Tbsp. flour

Cook until clear.

(Mrs. Dave Klassen)

[Taken from "Mother's Pioneer Recipes" Also known as the Aberdeen Ladies' Aide Cookbook. It was their 70th Anniverssary issue in 1970].

Saskatchewan Made "Russhi Klok(en)" by Tony Funk

A lot of us are familiar with a large wall clock having hung in a parental home or in a grandparents' dwelling, as we were growing up. If we are very fortunate we may even have one in our own home.

These clocks have a naming problem in the English language. They are sometimes, erroneously, referred to generically as Kroeger clocks, however when we realize there were many others also producing similar clocks, it then does a disservice to the others. For this article we will refer to them by the Low German term, "Russhi Klok(en)"

(Trans. Russian Clock(s). The dominant South Russian Mennonite producers were Kornelius Hildebrandt, Peter Lepp, and two generations of the Gerhard Hamm family. The more prolific producers were numerous generations of Mandtler who were already making them in Prussia and then later continuing in the Molotschna Colony of South Russia. The other multi-generation family clock producers were Kroeger who also started manufacturing in Prussia, followed by later producing in Chortitza Colony, South Russia. How many clocks were made by any of these is unknown. There are no known existing records.

Some of these Russhi Klok(en) were taken to North America as families moved there. The families that moved to central USA in the 1870's, and then some of them later moving into western Canada in the early 1900's, might have brought Mandtler or Kroeger clocks. The 1870's families that moved to Manitoba directly from Russia

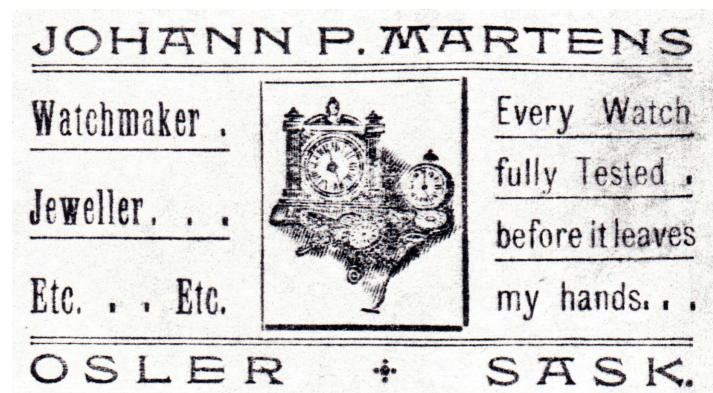


tended to have Kroeger, Lepp, Hildebrandt, or Hamm, a result of many of those families originating from Chortitza. The 1920's emigrants did not bring as many with them, as they were discouraged from taking them out of South Russia, however if they did bring some they tended to be Kroeger.

A lesser known fact about these clocks is that there were a few pioneer craftsmen in Saskatchewan that also built some of these timepieces. All of them were patterned after original Russhi Klok(en) to which they had access.

One of the earlier Saskatchewan producers was Johan Martens, who died at age 48, in 1918. Martens lived in the village of Gruenfeld, some distance north west of Osler. He was a farmer and also a blacksmith. He obviously had an inventive personality. Not only did he build and repair clocks, he also dedicated time to designing and building a perpetual motion machine. That was not successful!

It is not known how many Russhi Klok(en) he made, nor how similar, or dissimilar, they were to



Publication and date of advertisement is unknown

the original. None are known to exist today. The production probably took place in the latter stage of his life. We do not know what kind of tools he had to work with, although it is recorded that his son, Peter, who it was hoped would continue the family tradition, later sold some tools to another Saskatchewan clockmaker. One source claims that Martens imported the internal clock parts from the USA and then built and assembled the rest of the clock. A different source maintains



Peter J. Elias, age 80 (1957)

that he did his own machining.

Another Saskatchewan Russhi Klok producer, about whom we have more information, is the Peter J. Elias family from Rosthern. He was a successful farmer, blacksmith, craftsman and philanthropist.

He and two of his sons, John and Jacob, built five clocks in the later 1930's. Apparently part of the reason for building them at that time was to keep the older teen-aged boys out of mischief! Their clocks were patterned after a very old clock, which they already owned. All five of the Elias-built clocks had a slightly convex, circular face, topped with a crown. The first one of the five had only the hour hand, no minute hand, which was identical to the original. The next four already had hour and minute hands. Additionally two of them even had second hands! Very

modern! Those extra hands required a lot more gearing to make them functional. The pendulum length on some of them was not standard, which meant there would have to be a lot of mathematics involved to figure out correct gearing ratios. The art of painting the faces was done by the Elias daughter, Anna.

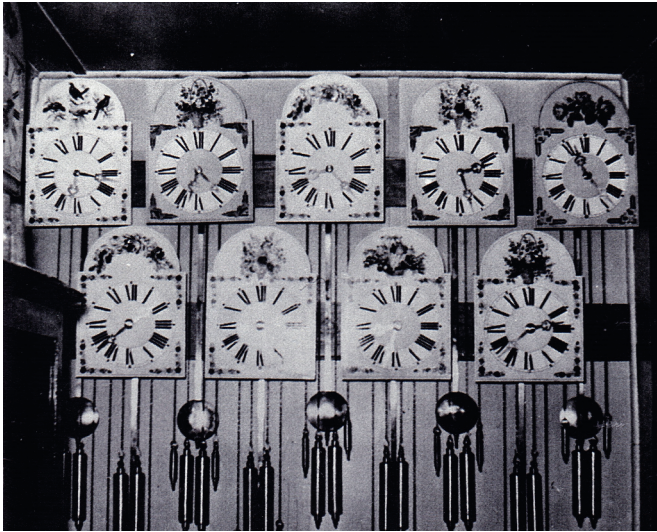
The Elias family by then had a wind powered generator which they could use to turn a lathe. Many of the hand tools needed were designed and built by the Elias family. It still required many days and weeks of patience and hard work to build these clocks. Of the five Elias clocks built, three are owned by various family members. One was later gifted into a Wiebe family, who were then in-laws to both John and Jacob. The fifth one is known to have been traded away for a cream separator at a country store eight kilometres west of Hague. Where it went after that has not yet been discovered.

Incidentally, Peter J. Elias was my grandfather. John and Jacob were my uncles. Anna was my mother.

A somewhat later, and more prolific, Saskatchewan based producer of Russhi Kloken was Cornelius A. Ens, from the village of Edenburg, which was somewhat northwest of Aberdeen. He built at least nine clocks, and perhaps as many as twelve, during the 1940's and 1950's. Before his clock-making endeavours he had been a farmer, an entrepreneur, and a rural store owner/operator. He bought some of his clock-making tools from the previously mentioned Peter Martens, who in turn had received them from Johan Martens. Ens is known to have had a manually powered lathe. His clocks have many identical features. The faces are all flat, square shaped, topped with a dome. All have a minute and hour hand. All chimed on



Cornelius Ens age 31 in 1925



Nine clocks built by Ens in the 1950s

the hour. The facial background and time ring are all hand painted. The corners and dome have various styles of decals. Perhaps the reason his clocks are so close to being identical is due to his manufacturing process. Apparently he would make twelve identical sets of gears, then twelve escapements, then twelve pendulums, etc. before he assembled any of them. Some Ens family offspring claim that their ancestor, C. A. Ens, even hand-made each individual chain link. If that memory is accurate then he would have made about 650 chain links for each clock. For twelve clocks that equals 7800 links! Other family members question whether he actually made the links himself. Regardless, it would have taken a lot of perseverance to make all of those clocks in a one-person operation in a tiny workshop.

Ens had a natural way of accessing other peoples' clocks. Since he also repaired clocks, neighbours would bring their Russhi Klok to him for repair. It would then take him a long time to repair that clock. Only after he had sufficiently copied it did he return the one he was to repair!

Since Ens had nine children it is believed that he wanted each of his children to have one. Perhaps because of health issues, or other circumstances, that did not happen. It may also be that the children did not really want one. Only one of the C A Ens' children is known to have owned one. He also did not seem to treasure it, as about

twenty years ago he had it packed away, un-assembled, in his basement. It is now owned by a C. A. Ens' granddaughter, who does appreciate it. Another one was sold by auction in Aberdeen in 1992 and purchased by a Wolfe family from LaCrete, Alberta. In 2008 a third one was owned by a Friesen family in Bolivia. A fourth one was gifted to Rev. Heinrich Martens, Bergthaler minister, probably in the late 1950's, presumably in appreciation for services provided. That clock was up for auction in 1983. Since my wife, Jacqueline, and I were then still in the honeymoon stage of our married life, she said I should buy it for my birthday present and she would pay for it. Later she told me that I had paid far more for it than she expected to pay! As far as I can tell, she has forgiven me for that! Then in 1995 we sold it to a grandson of the manufacturer. It is treasured by these owners. The locations of the rest of the Ens-built clocks are unknown.

There probably were/are other persons in Saskatchewan who built these clocks, however these are the only ones of which I am aware.

As a hobby I spend many hours researching Russhi Kloken. Should readers have any information on Russhi Kloken, whether they were made in South Russia, Canada, or elsewhere, I would enjoy hearing from you.

Tony Funk, Box 354, Hague, SK. S0K1X0
306 225 4550

Sources:

Personal research

Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve book

Preservings magazine No. 30 2010

Leonard Doell writings

Dick Braun verbal communication

Jake Peters notes, gathered from Peter Goertzen and Leonard Doell

Otto Funk verbal communication

Dennis Ens, Alvin Ens, Norman Ens, (all grandsons of Cornelius Ens)

Henry Ens (son of Cornelius Ens) verbal communication

Plautdietsch Akj - No Sasketün Foaren

by Jack Driedger

Enn'e dartijch onn featijch Joaren fua wie entwäda met Pead ooda met'm Motel T. Dee Pead worden toom korte Enja foaren onn toom Akren jebruckt. Wan wie met'm Model T fuaren, must wie dee Gauselien met boa Jelt betolen. Aulsoo bruckt wie däm blooss toom lange Enja foaren.

Ekj kunn mie jeweenlijch doaropp feloten, daut ekj eenmol daut Joa met miene Ellren opp dän Model T met no Saskatün kunn. Wan wie opp dän Wajch kjeen Trubbel hauden, diad daut 'ne Stund onn 'ne haulf, dee dartijch Miel no Saskatün foaren.

Wan wie dan enn Sasketün wearen, leet Foda dee Koa entwäda bie Eatons ooda biem Moakjplauts stonen. Fonn doa jinj we dan too foot.

Enn Sasketün wea aules oba soo schmock rein. Dee Lied bruckten aula sindäachsche Kjleeda, wan't uck nijch Sindach wea. Doa wea soo fäl too läsen, Jeschaftnomess, Gausse-nomess, Haundelsbekauntmäakungen, onn soo wieda.

Dee Stuaren waut mie daut dollste intresseaden wearen daut Feltian Ssent Stua, wua aules feltian Ssent ooda weinja wea, daut fiewentintijch Ssent Stua, wua aules fiewentijch Ssent ood

billja wea, onn daut Dola Stua, wua aulesseen Dola ooda weinja kost.

Mie kaun daut noch goot denken, auss ekj mie 'ne Koa koft fe säwentian Ssent. Jeweenlijch februckt ekj aul mien Jelt, waut ekj mie toopjespoat haud fonn daut latste Mol, auss wie enn Sasketün wearenn.

Enn Saskatün wea daut oba lüd. Too dee Tiet hauden see nijch daut Toobehea dee Jebieda auftookjeelen, so auss fonndäag. Wan daut de' Somma dan soo rajcht heet wea, haud aulemaun dee Däaren op. Daut hilt sikj dan jlikj auf eena büten ooda bennen wea, wan doa eene Gausse-bonkoa febie fua, kunn eena sikj met kjeenem fetallen bat daut Jedäwa äwa wea.

Wan wie met aul onnse Jeschaften derjch wearen, jing wie trigj no onnse Koa bie Eatons. Mutta haud onns een scheenet Febietsel met 'ne eengaloonje loftloose Kruck foll heeten Koffe onn Tweeback enjepackt. Foda koft noch 'ne fresche Schussnikjworscht, onn dan haud wie 'ne scheene Moltiet.

Auss wie onns dan noch een Bät enjekofft onn enn'e Stuaren 'rommjekjikj hauden, wear't Tiet nohüss to foaren.



Foda enn onns Model T

A Mother's Prayers

by Mary Janzen



Many years ago, a young man, born in 1887, in Russia, wanted to go to university to study medicine. He wanted to become a doctor.

With his mother's blessing, Nicolai left for Moscow. It was several days' journey by train. As they did not provide meals on the train he took food with him.

He arrived in Moscow and went to find a room where he could live, then off to university.

The political climate in Moscow was not the best, and one day a government official was assassinated. This, of course, caused more unrest, and the Russian law enforcement went in search of the wrong-doer. It was supposed to have been a young man who was guilty, so they brought in many young men of the city and imprisoned them.

Slowly these men were questioned and most were set free, but some were put back into their cells for further interrogation.

After days of questioning, they kept three or four men, and all the rest were set free. Nicolai was one of the three or four.

Nicolai was in a cell with nine other inmates.

One day one of the men came to him and told him, that the night before, they had planned to escape, but first they were going to kill him. When they came to the act of killing him they had seen him sleeping soundly and they couldn't do it.

But, he went on to say, "Today we have clothes for you too, and we are going to escape tonight, and you are going with us."

This was very frightening to Nicolai. He felt, if he did not go with them, they would certainly kill him the next night. If he went with them and they got caught, it also meant certain death.

What could he do?

He heard his name called for more interrogation and questioning. Was this his moment?

Nicolai told them he would not go back to his cell; they could shoot him right now but he would not go back into that cell.

The officials conferred a bit more and then they told him he could go; he was free!

Without hesitation he hurried out into the street, quickly went to his apartment, grabbed his things, and ran to the train station, and got on the first train out.

It was several days' journey, and he had only a few apples that he had taken from his apartment, and these had to do for the trip.

Nicolai arrived at home. When he walked into the house, his mother looked at him and turned pale.

What had happened that night?

She had not been able to sleep so she spent much time praying. God answered that mother's prayer and saved her son's life.

This is a true story, as best as I can remember it. The young man became my Dad.

"Thank you, Grandmother, for your prayers, and thank You, God, for Your intervention."

Mary (nee Thiessen) Janzen



Author's Notes:

The young man, Nicolai Thiessen became her father, born September 8, 1887 and died December 8, 1959.

His mother was Mary Janzen's grandmother, and admired as a queenly lady, with a finely cut dress and jewelry. The head piece was made of lace and ribbons. Newly-wed women wore white the first year.

USE YOUR ARCHIVES: Gemeinde Bücher



A very good source for your search for ancestors, if you have a few starting clues, are the denominational church records known as the *Gemeinde Bücher*. These church records methodically list their members, AND their spouses, parents of each (if known), and their children and their spouses. There are also code numbers to take you to the page or section where the married children got a page or section of their own. The key is the birth, baptism and death dates given (with the odd discrepancy).

Of course, these church record books were in German originally, but have now been translated, and become a great boon to our research.

If you know that your parents or grandparents were Old Colony Mennonites when they immigrated to Canada, then you would study the *Reinlander Gemeinde Buch 1880-1903* (edited by John Dyck and William Harms, and published by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society).

You would also want to see the *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve* (edited and published as above), which has many of the same people, but it is organized according to the villages in the Mennonite West Reserve. It also has photos of some of the people.

If your ancestors come from a Bergthaler background, you will want to study the red *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch*. It has a similar layout of the records. But this one includes those who lived in Russia 1843-1876. You will need to read the explanations carefully.

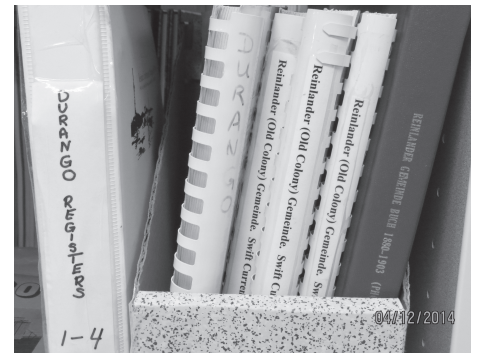
Not only that, but it includes the Passenger lists for the various ships that brought the Mennonites over to Canada.

Yet another one is the *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874*. It is by Delbert Plett and lists the Kleine Gemeinde (today the Evangelical Mennonite Church, or EMC denomination) and had copious historical notes added.

If you come to our archives, you will find copies of all these Gemeinde Bücher, (Bücher is the plural in German for "books"), although they have different names. These cover the Old Colony Mennonites in the Swift Current area, and also those that moved on to Mexico.

When you find that some branches of your genealogical tree moved to Mexico, you will be pleased to discover that we have their church record books in our archives too!

See, there are countless resources for your research right here, in your archives, and this is just one small category.



Notice: A Certain Volunteer Wanted

If you like to work with very precise details, spreadsheets, etc., and have patience, to check and double-check for errors,

Then, Elmer Neufeld would like to introduce you to his volunteer job and see if you would be suitable to take it over.

Call him at the archives on Wednesday evenings to talk with Elmer. **(306)242-6105**

Redemption: Fifty Years at Warman Mennonite Church by Pastor Josh Wallace



Warman Mennonite Church met first in the former Pembroke Schoolhouse. This is the second schoolhouse that was their meeting place.

On November 8, 1964, about forty people crowded into the old Pembroke Schoolhouse, recently moved to Warman, to worship God. Reverend Jacob Pauls, until recently lay minister at Osler Mennonite Church, led the service. This was the start of Warman Mennonite Church.

A few months earlier, in August, fourteen women and men had gathered to investigate the possibility of starting such a congregation. Some of them attended then at the Warman Mennonite Brethren Church, but couldn't submit to rebaptism for full membership. Others were members at the Osler church, five miles away, troubled by their congregation's choice to end the tradition of lay ministry by hiring a paid pastor. All came with a desire that the children in their large families grow up knowing the stories of Jesus.

The men drew up plans. The women started sewing quilts to sell for seed money for a building. That was WMC's beginning.

I came to WMC in its forty-eighth year, just two years before we would mark its fiftieth anniversary.

I am a young pastor, inexperienced in many areas: grand 50th Anniversary event planning might have topped that list. A weekly sermon and visiting over a coffee I could pick up pretty quick - even funeral planning wasn't too difficult to learn. But somehow I found myself chairing the Anniversary committee. I lived in fear of that steadily approaching date: November 8, 2014.



Warman Mennonite Church today

As I scrambled to figure out how congregations mark these big number anniversaries, two resources offered a lot of help. Going through the sparse filing cabinet of material bequeathed me by previous pastors, I found a copy of *Heritage Celebrations* by Wilma McKee published by Faith and Life Press in 1992. HC offered the step-by-step guidance a congregations like ours needs as it approaches a big anniversary. Alongside the "what to do when" material, HC expanded our range of vision to many other ways we could mark the anniversary. We weren't bound to a roster of old pastors sermonizing and a slide show followed by faspas downstairs. HC suggested dramas, quilts, weekly snapshots from our history in the run-up to the big day.

Some Internet hunting surfaced another very helpful resource: *Constructing Your Congregation's Story* by James P. Wind made available by the United Methodist Church's Vital Congregations Movement

(<http://www.umvitalcongregations.org>). More than a how-to manual, CYCS encouraged our committee to grab hold of this anniversary as a chance to first hear and then tell WMC's story. What had happened? What had we done? What had God done over these five decades?

We set out as archaeologists, archival researchers, interviewers - as listeners.

Unearthing WMC's story turned out to be

more difficult than we initially thought. No one wanted to talk. With few exceptions, I would phone to set up a visit to talk about the congregation's history, and I'd be turned down. Or I'd get an appointment, but the conversation would stall out at the level of generalities about the past - "We used to have a choir," "Sometimes we would hold revival meetings." The specifics that would make these fifty years our fifty years were all but completely missing.

So we turned to archival research.

"Archival" makes our congregation's paper trail sound much more organized than it was. The reality was two jumbled filing cabinets in the church basement with old bulletins, board minutes either in triplicate or missing, a few photo albums, haphazard Sunday School attendance records, and a long-but-spotty list of baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

As I sorted and read and filed, a story began to show up. Almost by accident, the Anniversary committee had landed on "Fifty Years of God's Goodness" as a theme for our celebrations. But it would be hard to call this story "good," at least at first pass. There was pain here. Pride, vindictiveness, ruptured relationships, near splits, nasty letters, strong-arming and malicious rumors.

People didn't want to tell these stories because they hurt. Our history hurt. Telling it was like pressing on a wound that had never healed quite properly. Who wants to tell that kind of story? Who wants to open that can of worms once again?

I really began to wrestle with the idea of marking this anniversary as a "celebration." The people of WMC are wonderful, and we are in a good space today - healthy, happy, growing in discipleship. I could celebrate today. But could I celebrate the years of

pain that had brought us to this season? Weren't we living in more of a story of survival than of triumph?

I'm one hundred percent confident that WMC is not the only fifty-year-old congregation to have walked a stony path and earned some scars, many self-inflicted. Most of us walk with a limp.

But remember the story of Jacob (who was far from entirely innocent). His injury was testimony to the way God had blessed him, *redeemed* him. His life was following the same trajectory as his godless neighbors, his godless brother, his godless uncle. But God interrupted him, and used the struggle to work something good in his life.

I brought the word *redemption* to our committee and the congregation. How has God redeemed our wounds and even our sins? How has God taken the broken places in our story and worked something good from them?

If we could tell those stories of redemption, we would have something to celebrate. We would be able to tell "Fifty Years of God's Goodness."

Beginning several weeks before the scheduled celebrations, WMC dedicated its Sunday morning worship services to remembering its story of

redemption. Certain themes showed up over and over in the various minutes and annual reports: our children and young people, our building, our conflicts, our Mennonite identity. With a couple of Sundays to bookend and frame our story, we gave one morning to tracing God's work in each area.

Redemption doesn't imply that *everything* is *bad*. The prophet may say there is *no health in her*, but everywhere we see glimmers, shards of



*Jacob & Mary Pauls,
First Pastor couple*



Warman Mennonite after the 1979 renovations

God's good shalom. For instance, the people of WMC have given thousands of hours to children's clubs and youth programs. We first met in worship on November 8, 1964. Three weeks later, just before Christmas 1964, the Sunday School teachers were preparing *one hundred twenty* Christmas gift bags. That energy in children's ministry has carried through to today.

But there's also pain. Youth have often borne the brunt of WMC's mistakes and selfishness. In the late 1960s a group of Swift Current Bible Institute students returned to WMC with new habits of Bible study and worship songs set to folk music. These non-traditional forms of devotion crossed lines in the minds of some of the deacons and board members. There were resignations from the board, accompanied by an exodus of young people from our congregation, some from Christian faith altogether.

Redemption means God picks up the shards of our stories and makes something good. In the wake of this conflict (WMC's first major conflict), this congregation redoubled its efforts with youth. In the early 1980s WMC hired its first of many youth directors as well as started a kids clubs program that endured until the early 2000s. The leadership of Pastors Norm Janzen, Abe Regier, Bob Jones, and Henry Block, as well as many, many volunteers, enabled this redemptive work of God.

Another example redemption: Conflict. How we fight and disagree reveals a lot about the state of our hearts. WMC has not been good at conflict: shouting matches, sudden resignations, anonymous letters - even a near fistfight over whether to continue with German services. I hesitated to tell this part of God's redemption

story at WMC.

After a particularly difficult season of conflict in the late 1980s (one that saw many exit the congregation), WMC witnessed God's redemption



Present Pastor Josh Wallace with past pastors, Bernie Wiebe, and Henry Block at Anniversary.

in the ministry of Abe & Marie Regier. Pastor Abe came as an interim at the end of 1988 and ended up staying nearly five years. His first step in addressing the conflict: he led the congregation in apologizing to all they may have wounded in the past. Official letters of apology went out; many one-on-one meetings were held. Later he drew up a series of church growth goals for handling conflict in a

healthy and faithful way.

When the weekend of November 7-9 finally arrived, I felt ready. WMC was a redeemed people, a people with stories to celebrate. We could tell of God's work changing us in regard to how we fought, how we cared for youth, how we used our buildings, how we related to other Mennonites. Given time, we could tell even more stories.

The weekend featured many times to visit with past ministers and members - coffee on Friday, supper on Saturday, *fasha* on Sunday. People traded stories about what has happened in their lives over the last ten or twenty or forty-five years. I heard from many people that these were times of "healing," "reconciliation," "redemption." People who had left hurt by WMC heard how God had changed us, healed us, made us new.

My hope? I prize the thought that redemption can become WMC's lens for understanding not just our past but also our present as we look to the future. Whatever remains broken, I pray that we can see in faith that God will redeem and heal us, giving us stories that will praise God's name.

Three Authors Launched New Books



Brisk book sales - from here the buyers went to the authors' desks for signing

The afternoon of Sunday, February 22, 2015, the Fellowship Hall at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, filled almost to capacity, with about 150 people, despite very cold temperatures outside. They wanted to hear three Saskatchewan Mennonite authors introduce and launch their new books.

Jake Buhler, the president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS), which sponsored this book launch, welcomed the good crowd, and gave each author a few minutes to describe their slides. (Author Bob Wahl was set up to manage the pictures from his laptop).



Henry A Friesen

Then, each author had about 15-20 minutes to talk about their book, why they wrote it, the process or journey this was for them, and to read some passages from their book.

Johan Friesen of Poland and His Descendants

Henry A. Friesen, Regina, talked of his earliest ancestor (also of a number in the room!), Johann Friesen of Poland, formerly known as Prussia. Henry has traced this ancestor's descendants through their immigrations to Blumen-gart, a village in the Chortiza Colony, in the Ukraine, then to Blumengart in Manitoba. Some of them moved on to Mexico and founded another village named Blumengart, in the Swift Current Colony there.

In 2001, Henry Friesen went on a Heritage Tour, and though the original Blumengart village in the Chortiza Colony is no longer there, he was deeply moved to stand on the land where it had been, and think about his ancestors.

He also made a visit to Mexico and found his grandfather's grave, which touched him, too.

A short Question & Answer time followed. Questions were asked about the Mennonites that have returned from Mexico. There are clusters of them here in Saskatchewan today.



Saskatchewan School # 99 in 1962

The Story of Saskatchewan School # 99

Bob Wahl, Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, referred to his first book, *Contending with Horses*, which is autobiographical. However, his early life was spent in the country school near the Clarkboro Ferry. So Bob went through the historical stages, from when the first early pioneers settled there, then moved to the area that became Saskatoon. Next the Old Colony Mennonites arrived, and others followed.

It was obvious that Bob has studied and understands this history quite well.

This was the only Protestant English school in a large territory. It stretched from the ferry to Blumenheim, and to Neuhorst, then south to Osler, and Warman. A total of 32 sections or 20,000 acres.

Bob was able to review the school trustees, and some of their personalities, also the teachers. Sometimes there was a problem in finding them,



Bob Wahl

so parents were pressed into service.

While he attended, the student body jumped to 64 (making it crowded). However, when 95% of the Old Colony families moved to Mexico, it made a big difference.

His book has some genealogies too, particularly of the orphaned Old

Colony families left behind when their church leaders went to Mexico.

Bob Wahl desires a plaque to be set up in that area to honour this school, so there is something to show for the 75 years this school existed.

Another Q & A time followed. Jake Buhler asked those who had attended the Saskatchewan School #99 to stand. A surprising number

stood.

Other former students spoke up, and some asked about what happened to the building.



Nettie Balzer

Raising Eight on 80

Nettie Balzer referenced her earlier books by way of introduction. She has now written a book about her parents raising 8 children on a farm of 80 acres. To avoid embarrassing her siblings, she fictionalized true events as short stories.

Her brother Julius, who later became a well-known educator, used to write for a Young People's column in the *Western Producer*. She was able to visit their archives and get some of his writings of the ventures he tried, for they make great stories.

Their family life centered on faith, work, and music.

Nettie thanked her three daughters for editing her book, then read two short stories; *Caught in a Snare*, showing Julius' imaginative enterprises, and *The New Washing Machine* illustrated the power of prayer when the wringer/washer didn't start. As a ten-year-old, Nettie herself suggested they pray, and did so. In minutes she persuaded

her mother to try the washing machine again. It worked!

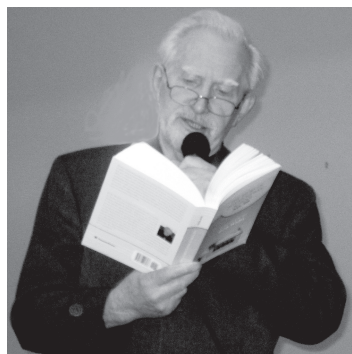
This third Q&A brought out questions about the airport near Osler that she had mentioned. It was a government project to train pilots for the war.

Jake Buhler opened it up to questions of any of the authors, and the one of naming a number of villages with the same name



was discussed.

Bob Wahl volunteered to read a short story from his book to illustrate how people would quarrel over very small matters. It was a story of a watermelon that caused church



Bob Wahl reading

conflicts!

It was time to let people get to the book tables to purchase the books of their choice and then go to the authors to have them signed.

All were invited to go by the faspas table and pick up the fruit plautz squares and other treats to have with a coffee or tea. The lineups were quite long for a while, but then people began to sit down in clusters to visit over their fruit plautz on the plates on their knees.

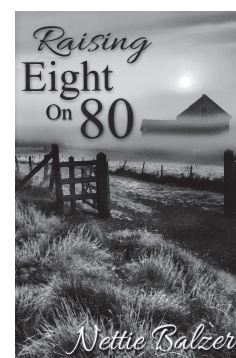
The goal of the MHSS in presenting new authors like this is to expose people to Saskatchewan Mennonite authors who have written about our history, culture and faith. Obviously, this is well-received by our people.

The three authors of this book launch, Nettie Balzer, Henry A. Friesen, and Bob Wahl, were very pleased with the opportunity to present their books, and to have such good sales.

For those who were not able to attend, (or did not have funds in hand), MHSS has more copies of all three books. You may order them from us via our website, or at the archives.

Author & Book Profiles

Raising Eight on 80: by Nettie Balzer



Nettie (Friesen) Balzer is a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Writing has always been a passion for her whether it was creating stories or preparing devotionals for Women's groups. She spent eleven years working as a church secretary and nearly five years as a Women's Ministry Director.

In 1992 she became the 'keeper' of her mother's life story and diaries written in her mother's hand. Helena, her mother, wrote in German, using old German script letters combined with English letters, which is how she wrote to her children.

In 1998 Nettie translated her mother's diaries entitled "*Life Story & Diaries by Helena Friesen Dyck*".

She hoped one day to bring the many stories of her mother to life for her grandchildren, and in 2012 published her first book, "*Helena - A Peek*

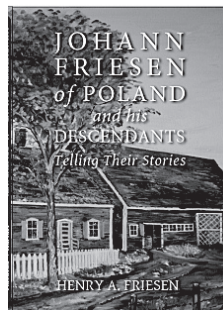
Into the Past" which chronicled Helena Banman/Friesen's first 41 years.

Nettie's new book, *"Raising Eight on 80"*, is a sequel to the "Helena" book and extends from 1939 with the depression and WW2 to 1959-60, concluding with an Epilogue. Helena lived to be 102 years.

As with the "Helena book", Nettie has again created background and conversation around actual events and memories of the Friesen family and local Osler area.

Nettie's hope is that as you turn the pages of this latest book you will be blessed by the stories of faith, humour and perseverance of the Helena and Jacob Friesen family.

Johann Friesen of Poland and His Descendants - by Henry A. Friesen



In writing this book the author went back as far as he could in his Friesen ancestral line and found a Johann Friesen who lived and farmed in Poland.

From that beginning he followed the succeeding Friesen generations as they moved from there to help establish the first Mennonite Colony in New Russia along the banks of the Dnieper River in what is now Ukraine. This colony, called the Chortitza Colony, or the Old Colony, is where the next 2 Friesen generations lived and died - living in the villages of Schoenhorst and then Blumengart.

The generation that came after that was born in the early 1820s in Russia but in mid-life brought their families to Canada and settled in Blumengart, Manitoba. The author includes a

chapter on each of these generations concluding with a chapter on the story of his grandparents, Jacob J and Justina (Wiebe) Friesen.

In the Foreward of Friesen's book, Dr. Michael Tymchak, Professor Emeritus, University of Regina, writes:

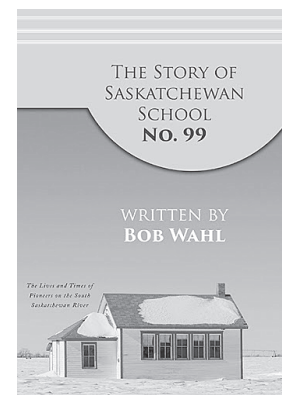
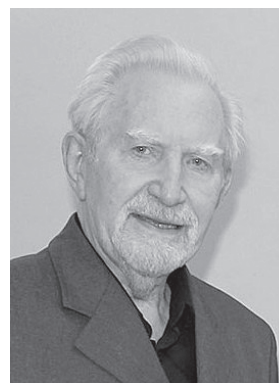
"In this remarkable account of a line of Friesen descendants, the author, Henry A. Friesen, offers us not only a family history but also a multi-themed study of cultural dynamics and the relationship between faith and the wider culture.

At every level the story will prove to be most engaging - not only for those with connections to the Friesen clan or even Mennonites in general - but also to the reader-at-large.

At one level we have a moving, even poignant family story; at another level we are introduced to the impact of social forces on a faith community: from agriculture and economics to transportation and political change; from war and peace, to leadership elites. By dint of his careful research and thoughtful reflection Friesen has in fact opened to us a window on life itself."

About the author: Henry A Friesen has been a teacher, plumber and pastor. He is currently the building manager for Regina Christian School. His passion for family history and family stories has led him to write this book.

The Story of Saskatchewan School No. 99 and The life and times of pioneers at Clark's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan River - by Bob Wahl



After publishing his autobiography in 2009 Bob has now published his second book.

This is a history of one of the very early public schools of what was once the North West Territories of Canada. The school was located near the South Saskatchewan River at Clark's Crossing, near present day Saskatoon, and established for the benefit of the children of the early pioneers of that area of Saskatchewan.

Bob believes strongly that historical narrative needs to be accompanied with biographies. He therefore writes about the experiences of the early pioneers and settlers of that area; the difficulties and challenges, the disappointments, the tragedies, disasters and failures, they encountered, but described also are the successes and accomplishments they experienced.

In the second part of the book the narrative moves on to the challenges facing the faith of his forefathers.

At the turn of the century many conservative Mennonites who had come to that area believed strongly in establishing and running their own private schools. They soon ran into conflict with provincial authorities.

How well or unwell this was handled is part of the story. Bob takes the Old Colony Mennonites to task but acknowledges a deep respect and admiration he had, and still retains, for these neighbors of his childhood.

The latter part of the book involves the families that lived in the Saskatchewan School District during that time. Much of their genealogical and historical background, including family members and locations are included.

This book will be of interest to anyone interested in a history of the area and particularly those who had or have family members, relatives or friends living in the Saskatchewan School District No 99.

Bob Wahl has lived part of the story told within these pages. He was born on a farm in Kronstal, Saskatchewan in 1934 and attended the Saskatchewan School No. 99 featured in this

book.

At age 17, Bob left home against his father's wishes to further his education. He had \$1.75 in his pocket and received no help from his parents, yet he managed to complete his schooling at Nipawin Bible College before marrying Beverley Peake in 1957.

Their life together has included living and working in various parts of Canada, the United States, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and other European countries.

They now make their home in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (not far from where life started for Bob) and have three children and four grandchildren.

Throughout his life, Bob has been deeply involved in ministry work and has helped establish several churches and church camps.

This is Bob's second book. His first one, *Contending with Horses*, is an autobiography of his remarkable life.

A Survey for Readers of our Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

You, our subscriber, have had opportunity to read three issues in 2014, and have a fourth issue in hand, since this periodical has come under a new editor. Our committee has some authors contribute on a regular basis, and we wonder what articles and columns you appreciate most.

Our editor and writers want feedback; are we on the right track? What shall we continue? What would you rather see published?

Please be so kind as to fill out the enclosed survey sheet and return it to us as soon as possible. It will make successive *Historian* issues better!

Thanks!

*Ruth Marlene Friesen,
Editor*

Julius Klassen - Inventor of Many Machines

by Dick Braun

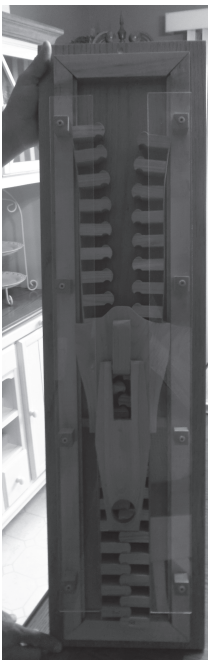
Doing research on Julius Klassen, who lived in Osler, Saskatchewan most of his married life, got a little confusing as his father and his grandfather were both named Julius. Stories have it that his father had invented a noodle machine so it seems that inventing was in their blood.

The amazing mind of the younger Julius started working overtime early. He grew up in the village of Gruenthal.

In conversations with Lorne Hildebrandt, who grew up as a neighbor in the same village, and later became his brother-in-law, Lorne recalled many of the things that Julius worked at. The depth of his visions fascinated Lorne.

As a young boy Julius carved a chain out of a piece of wood, the kind where each link remains connected as it is being carved. He would also carve heads and faces of people with exact reality. This fascination with wood continued into his later years.

He found that the worst tree that had been planted in Saskatchewan would yield some of the most interesting-looking wood. The Siberian Elm tree was planted as a shelter belt tree, but later many people tried hard to get rid of it. Julius cut down many of these trees and used his home-built band saw to cut them into boards. He made a complete set of kitchen cabinet door handles and pulls out of this wood.



Julius was a member of the Saskatoon Wood Workers Guild. The Wood Worker people knew that if they would challenge him to something he would prove that he could do it. One of those challenges was to make a working wooden zipper. Julius worked at it, and at one of the Guild's public display events he had one there to prove that it was possible to make a working wooden zipper.

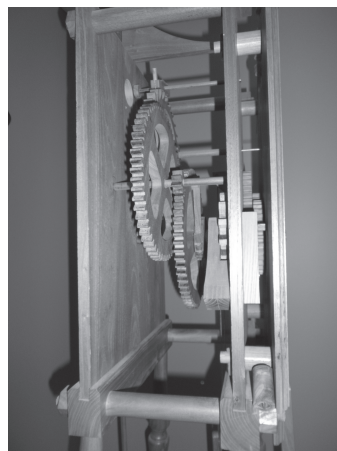
One major project that he took on was to build a wooden clock using Siberian Elm. He found a pattern

with some instructions. It was good to have the measurements but the instructions proved to be very incorrect. This project was going to be to build a clock totally out of wood - every gear, sprocket, shaft, nut, and bolt - all but the cable that the weights hang on. The sprockets and gears were relatively easy as they were round and it all worked in degrees of a circle.

The instructions talked about threading a wooden bolt like you would a steel bolt but this was wrong as wood reacts totally different from steel. When Julius tried to turn the die onto the

wooden bolt it just crushed the wood.

This situation of needing to work out a new idea was not new to him as he had built many other machines before. He was not about to give up because of a small setback like threading a



wooden bolt. Well, now Julius needed to go to the bank of knowledge that he had in his head.

People have different ways of doing some deep thinking, and Julius had his own way of going into his innovative brain. Julius smoked and it was the cigarette in a cigarette holder placed in a certain point of his mouth.

He had extensive experience with metal and machining steel so he simply built a tool for his metal lathe that would machine the wooden bolt with the threads on it. Next, he needed a tool to machine a wooden nut, so he built that, too.

The gears and sprockets needed to be cut very accurately so that the clock would run smoothly. If there was any one of these parts that did not perfectly match, the clock would not keep time or at worst not even run.

Julius was a man of an enormous amount of patience and in some of these projects he needed to draw on this attribute. He worked at this project and made every piece to his level of perfection.

The clock worked out very well and is a beautiful piece of art, now owned by his son. Evan Klassen, the youngest member of the family, ended up with the clock after the family auction. It is so good to see that the clock stayed in the family as too many times things that have such a sentimental value end up in some collector's hands.

Inventions and thinking 'outside the box' was something we had in common so I took many chances to talk to Julius about the different things he built in his life. In our next edition we will explore many other things that Julius was involved in designing.



Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID) Now LIVE!

After two years of design and development, the Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID) goes live for public use at archives.mhsc.ca. The new tool helps archives manage their photo collections and provides Internet access to the photos.

The online solution is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and includes Mennonite archival partners in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. Costs for the project are shared on a sliding scale. "We could not have undertaken such a large project on our own," says Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg director Korey Dyck. "By working with other partners we were able to pool our financial and intellectual resources."

Currently MAID holds over 80,000 descriptions of photos and over 9,000 images. These numbers will be expanding, explains Laureen Harder-Gissing of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. Having these photos searchable through one source will be a boon for genealogists, historians, and anyone interested in finding out more about Mennonite and Canadian history.

The software is an open source code developed by the B.C. company Artefactual, supported by the International Council of Archives. PeaceWorks Technology Solutions of Waterloo was contracted to customize the code for MAID. Patrons can search, view and order images for non-commercial uses. This digital tool ties Mennonite archives across the country together.

Susan Braun, a member of our MHSS Board is learning to use this MAID database for the purpose of helping you to make good use of it. Watch for more information so that you may both contribute photos, and obtain some that you will treasure.

In fact, there is no reason you can't go to this website archives.mhsc.ca right now and go exploring the coloured photos of life in the former Mennonite villages of the Ukraine.

Mennonite Migration Stories & Annual General Meeting



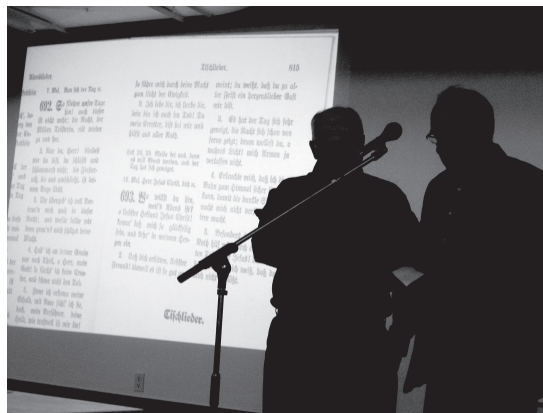
A good-humored crowd gathered expectantly in the Fellowship Hall at Bethany Manor on Friday evening, March 6.

The music group had cancelled, so Jake Buhler, president of MHSS, opened the meeting with a surprise. He said that Dick Braun had received a Gesangbuch at age 12, as probably had many others present at this meeting. We would sing a few stanzas of number 693, and at the end another hymn, usually sung at a funeral at the going out to the cemetery for the burial service.

He noted that there are meaningful spiritual concepts expressed in these hymns, for they were written by our Anabaptist ancestors, often while awaiting death because of their faith.

Bob Wahl, managing the overhead projector put the words on the wall so we could sing along. For some it had been many decades since they last tried to sing German, but it was good to see many taking part quite naturally.

Leonard Doell introduced the guest speaker, Dr. John J. Friesen from Altona, MB., who retired in 2010 as a professor of history at Canadian Mennonite University. Since then he has taught grateful Hutterites their own history. Leonard and Dr. Friesen are both Board members on the Plett Foundation, and Dr. Friesen is the editor of the annual *Preservings* published by that Foundation.



Dr. Friesen's First Presentation

He took up the Mennonite story in Poland and Russia. They settled in the delta at Danzig when they fled the persecution in the Netherlands, because the Polish king promised them exemption from military service.

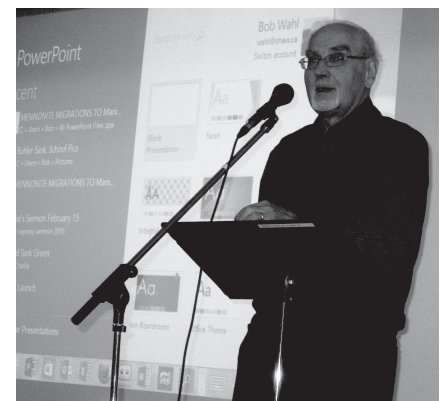
That changed when the Prussians took over Poland. The Mennonites lost their military exemption and could not buy any more land for

their grown children.

About that time came Russia's offer; free, plentiful land, and financial assistance for settling in the Ukraine. Representatives, Heppner and Bartsch went to check it out, and came back to the Danzig area with signed promises. This led to several waves of migration to Russia.

The Mennonites claimed four major settlement areas; Chortitza on the Dneiper River in 1789, Molotschna, settled in 1804 Am Trakt, and Alexanderthal near the Volga.

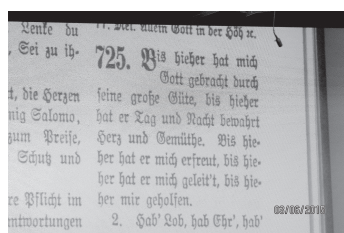
Dr. Friesen spent time on the formation of



various Church Groups in Russia – then also in Manitoba, as they became six churches or denominations.

[Ed. The detailed notes and slides will be available on our website around Easter, courtesy of Dr. John Friesen].

The evening was closed with prayer by Rev. Bill Kruger, and then Rev. Martin Friesen and Jake Buhler led us in another old German hymn, (Farewell World, in English).



Of course, coffee and sweets facilitated much visiting, and the book tables were open for sales too.

The Annual General Meeting

The annual reports and general business of the MHSS came Saturday morning at 9:30 am. First, John Reddekopp shared a devotional on remembering.

He began by sharing his own memories of the Saskatchewan School #99 as a student. He had slides, too, one of the students in 1950s, and another of the very first school – which rather looked as if had been built of sod.



Mr. Reddekopp reminded us of the importance of remembering the wonderful works of God. MHSS focuses on remembering well.

The Annual Reports and the discussion of the same went rather quickly, and were all positive. Vera Falk reported excellent book sales. Treasurer, Elmer Regier said we had done well,

but funds were getting tight again, and moved the appointing of an auditor. Ruth Friesen reported on a good first year as editor of the Historian, and what to expect this year. Elmer Neufeld gave the membership and subscription STATs, and Kathy Boldt recognized the volunteers who staff the archives.

Victor Wiebe's Unusual Archive Finds

The story of the two paintings on display was told first. Painted by Jacob E. Friesen, historian from Hague, he had given them to a friend in BC. When that woman passed away, her family sought a way to return the paintings to a place like our archives.

Victor Wiebe urged people to turn old documents and photos over to the Archives and let the staff there decide what is of value and what is not. Too often the best materials are thought to be rubbish and discarded or burned.

Victor also invited volunteers to work with him to post articles about pastors, churches, and Mennonites who have accomplished anything, on the GAMEO website.

Susan Braun introduced MAID, the acronym for **Mennonite Archival Image Database**. This is a website where all the provincial Mennonite historical societies are contributing their historical photos. These can be explored and seen by anyone, and if one wishes to download a copy of any, there is a fee to be paid through PayPal. It is minimal if intended for personal use, but is higher if intended for any for-profit use, such as publishing in a book, etc.

The Annual General Meeting was closed with a coffee break, and then at 11:15 a much-increased crowd sat down to enjoy Dr. John Friesen's second lecture.

The Legacy of the Prussian Mennonites

This time his focus was on the Legacy of the Prussian Mennonites. This refers to the period before they moved to Russia.

He named three good books on this topic; - *Mennonites in Early Modern Poland & Prussia*, 2007, - by Dr. Peter J. Klassen.



- *Mennonite German Soldiers: Nation, Reform, & Family in Prussia East, 1772-1880*, 2010 - by Mark Jantzen & John Thiesen.

- An English Trans. of H. G. Mannhardt's *The*

Danzig Mennonite Church, Its Origin and History, 1569-1919, 2007 - Mark Jantzen & John Thiesen, editors.

[Ed. Again, look for his complete lecture notes with slides, via our website by Easter. Perhaps by the time you read this.]

This lecture was followed by a hearty lunch of soups, buns, and vegetables, with lovely fruit plautz choices.

Hague/Osler Reserve

At 1:30 pm. Leonard Doell and Dick Braun gave a lively dual presentation, reviewing how 20



years ago a committee was formed to produce a book for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Hague/ Osler Reserve. The project grew and grew as they began to collect photos and stories of the earliest settlers. Eventually, 1700 photos went into the book, and the first printing of 750 books was sold immediately. Subsequent print-

ings sold out quickly, even though it was a large and expensive book.

The 100th anniversary was celebrated on August 4, 5 and 6, 1995. On Saturday at the Brian King Centre, 1500 people showed up, catching the ladies in the kitchen off-guard. But the volunteers worked together wonderfully and the event was a huge success, especially the bus tours of the villages.

Leonard re-told the story of the coming of the first Mennonite settlers on this Hague/Osler Reserve, including their relationships with the First Nations people, whose land the government had given them.

Jack Driedger was asked to tell the intense story of his grandfather, Johann Driedger, a business man who was excommunicated by the Old Colony church, and how he struggled with that all his life.

After this, Leonard told of the movement of many of the Old Colony families to Mexico, and some on to Paraguay.

Dick took a turn again, telling of the women and families of the villages. Many families also left to populate other areas in Canada and beyond.

The Q and A session brought out other interesting details, such as the moves were driven by poverty, or the hobo with the alias, George White, who was shot in Laird.

Dick observed that in the 1950s, because tractors replaced horses, many young men had to find a job and moved to the city. As they married and settled down these young families settled in Warman and Martensville, so they could have the benefits of a rural setting, rather than the city full of temptations. Today, these two places have become cities as well.

The afternoon flew. Everyone was invited for coffee, or fasma, and those who wished could tour the archives, with Dick Braun as the Guide.

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: transitioning to the above site, but still available at:
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 page; mhss.sk.ca/E-Updates.shtml
 Be sure to let us know when you change email addresses.

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

Saskatoon, SK. S7K 7H8

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. See contact info to right ->

MHSS Office and Archives, & SMH Editor

110 LaRonge Road, Room 900

Saskatoon, SK. S7K 7H8

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

If you would like us (or me, the Eidtor), to get back to you, or if you want to volunteer, please enter
Your name:
Your email or phone number:

***Thanks again, for filling out this survey!
I trust you will enjoy our heroic "Historian" better and better this year as a result.***

.....
When you have cut off this page, just fold it along the dashed lines, making sure this flap is tucked under the other end. Mail or deliver to the Archives in the Basement of Bethany Manor.

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Canada Post doesn't appreciate folded sheets of thin paper in the mail, so pop this into an envelope, and put this address on the front of it.

**MHSS
110 La Ronge Road, Room 900,
Saskatoon SK. S7K 7H8**

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Survey for Readers of our Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian - April 2015

You, our subscriber, have had opportunity to read three issues in 2014, and have a fourth issue in hand, since this periodical has come under a new editor. Our committee has found some authors to contribute on a regular basis, and we are wondering what articles and columns you appreciate most.

Our editor and writers want feedback; are we on the right track? What shall we continue? What would you rather see?

Please be so kind as to fill out this survey and return it to us as soon as possible. It will only make the successive Historian issues better!

General Impressions

[check which apply to you; ignore the rest]

☐ I really like the changes I've seen in these last four issues!

☐ I have my favourite pages, but I don't care for all of each Historian.

☐ I see room for improvements; are you really ready for my suggestions?

Yes, we are! Write them here:

More Specific Impressions:

☐ I like the larger and easier to read text!

☐ I see the text/font is larger, but I still have trouble reading it.

☐ I sure enjoy seeing more photos where appropriate! Keep it up!

☐ Your use of photos could improve.

☐ I like the new headers.

☐ I don't like the new headers. Try again.

Your practical suggestions, please;

Your Favourite Columns & Features:

Here are our more regular columns and features, please check off all those you like, and want to see more of.

☐ Profiles and tributes to Mennonite individuals who have lived interesting lives.

☐ Book reviews (only of books available through MHSS).

☐ Die Plautdietsche Akj. (by Jack Driedger)

☐ Mennonite inventors and designs (by Dick Braun and others).

☐ Scholarly articles about Mennonite history.

☐ Real family genealogies/sagas.

☐ Use Your Archives (practical ways to use the resources found there).

How about a word of encouragement to some authors whose articles you really liked in the last four issues? We'll pass them on!

Types of Articles - More Please!

[Tell us what YOU would like to see]

Themes!

We are going to try a Christmas theme issue for December of this year, 2015. Any suggestions? What would you be willing to write? It must be turned in to Ruth in September!

Many Thanks! Please cut off this page and follow instructions on the other side to send in.