

# Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian



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

Volume XI No. 2, 2015



## Features:

Living Side by Side  
- by Berny Wiens . . . 4

A Death in the Family  
- by David Toews . . . . 8

Superb Mennonite Church  
- Little Oasis on the Prairie  
- by Linda Unger . . . 13

Transcribing & Translating  
German from the Gothic  
Script - by Ruth Marlene  
Friesen . . . . . 20

## Profiles/Tributes:

In Memoriam: Abram Janzen -  
by Jake Buhler . . . . . 1

Book: Katie Funk Wiebe; *My  
Emigrant Father, Jakob J. Funk* -  
reviewed by Jake Buhler . . 17  
Honour List . . . . . 24



## In Memoriam: Abram Janzen by Jake Buhler

Abram Janzen was an ordinary but also an exceptional man. When he died on May 21, 2015, at the age of 94, he left behind the footprints of someone who walked in several worlds. He had been honored by our society for his considerable contribution to the Mennonite community of which he was a part.

Born (1920) and raised in Neuanlage, he lived on the scenic banks of the South Saskatchewan River with his wife, Gertrude Wiebe, before moving to the Wiebe homestead in Blumenheim where most of the 12 children were raised. Later they moved to Warman. Abram Janzen died at the Nursing Home in Rosthern, outliving his wife by 3 years.

If Abram's occupation was farming, it could be said he always had time for his calling: faith-based community service combined with a love . . . . . [continued on page 4]

## CONTENTS

### Dee Plautdietche Akj:

Koa Foaren Learen  
- by Jack Driedger . . . . . 18

### Mennonite Inventions & Designs # 5

Julius Klassen - the Man Who  
Knew How to Work with Metal -  
Part 2 - by Dick Braun . . . . . 22

### Use Your Archives:

Community History Books . . 16

### Announcements:

MHSS Fall Book Launch . . 3  
Christmas Issue Coming! . . 16  
Plett Foundation Grant . . 19  
Katie Funk Wiebe Research  
Grant . . . . . 19  
Mennonites, Medicine & the  
Body . . . . . 23

## **Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian**

Volume XXI No. 2 2015

Cumulative number 52

(first issue of SMH published April 1996)

Published three times a year by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS)

*Editor:* Ruth Marlene Friesen

*Advisory Committee:* Esther Patkau, Jake Buhler, Verner Friesen, Jim Friesen, Elmer Neufeld

*Proof-readers:* Verner Friesen, Jack Driedger, Susan Braun, Esther Patkau and Linda Unger.

*Distribution:* Erna & Elmer Neufeld

*Mailing List:* Hilda Voth

*Printer:* ProPrint, Saskatoon, SK.

Readers are invited to submit news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc., to MHSS at the e-mail or street address below.

### **MHSS Office and Archives:**

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

Email: mhss@sasktel.net

### **Archive Hours:**

Monday, 1:30 - 4 p.m.

Wednesday, 1:30 - 4 p.m. 7-9 p.m.

## **The Editor's Perspective**

*Ruth Marlene Friesen*

### **Survey Results**

Big thanks to the seven individuals (or couples in some cases) who responded to our survey in the last issue.

That was most encouraging reading!

As I mentioned in the last issue, for every response ten others feel the same. If I use such math these 7-9 represent 70-90 (or 20-25%) of our readers. Here is a summary. All but one checked that they liked the recent changes. That one, plus a few others, indicated that they have their favourite pages, and one added, "But that's okay!" (I would be surprised if our readers didn't have favourites).

They all liked the larger font, more photos and the new headers. Hurray, no negatives!

Your favourite columns? Two checked off everything! The rest - nearly everything. Four did not check off 'Die Plautdietsche Akj', and one of those wrote in the margin, "I can take it or leave it." Another said, "I especially enjoy the German and the Inventor sections."

One, (or 10 readers?) really liked Ruth Quiring Heppner's article, "With God from East Germany to Chilliwack."

For the sake of space, I will sprinkle the encouragement notes and practical suggestions into those little gaps at the end of columns that don't go quite to the end of the page.

Types of articles to include? One asked for a mix of Russian and more recent North American Mennonite history.

Another asked for; 1. Articles on music and Mennonites, 2. Personal experiences in the time of conflict and exodus, 3. stories from people who have visited the "homeland." All excellent ideas! Now to find those who will write them.

One offered her name and email to volunteer. I'm so thrilled.

Send your stories of Christmas in the old days, the Mennonite way, now in September, please?



## **MHSS Board of Directors, 2015**

**Jake Buhler**, President

836 Main Street, Saskatoon, SK. S7H 0K3  
306-244-1392 jakelouisebuhler@sasktel.net

**Dick Braun**, Vice President

Box 184, Osler, SK. S0K 3A0  
306-239-4765 dkbraun4@yahoo.com

**Vera Falk**, Secretary /MC Sask Archivist

Box 251, Dundurn, SK. S0K 1K0  
306-492-4731 Fax: 306-492-4731

**Elmer Regier**, Treasurer

142 Haight Street  
Saskatoon, SK. S7H 4V9  
306-373-0606 earegier@sasktel.net

**Kathy Boldt**, Volunteer Coordinator

Box 152, R.R. #4  
Saskatoon, SK. S7K 3J7  
306-239-4742

**Susan Braun**

Box 281, Osler, SK. S0K 3A0  
306-239-4201 susan.braun@hotmail.ca

**Leonard Doell**

Box 364, Aberdeen, SK. S0K 0A0  
306-253-4419 ldoell@mccs.org

**Elizabeth Guenther**

635 - 120 LaRonge Rd, Saskatoon, SK.  
S7K 7Z9  
306-979-0605 candeguenther@shaw.ca

**Erna Neufeld**

222 - 305 Pinehouse Drive, Saskatoon, SK.  
S7K 7Z4  
306-975-0554 ewn.esn@sasktel.net

**James Friesen**

Box 381, Rosthern, SK. S0K 3R0  
306-232-4977 jamesfriesen@sasktel.net

**Other Positions**

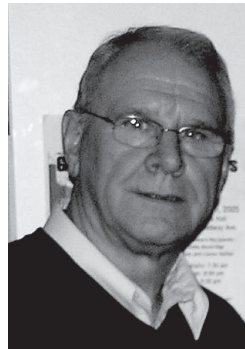
*Archives Committee:* Kathy Boldt, Vera Falk, Helen Fast, Elizabeth Guenther, Hida Voth

*Cemeteries Project:* Helen Fast, coordinator  
306-242-5448 rhfastlane@shaw.ca

*MHSS.sk.ca webmaster:* Ruth Marlene Friesen  
306-956-7785 Ask-Ruth@mhss.sk.

## **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!

*JB*

### **PS:**

### **MHSS Fall Book Launch - October 18**

We are planning another Three - Author Book Launch/Promotion for Sunday, October 18, from 2:30 pm. to 4:30 pm. on October 18 at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon. One confirmed author is Martha Martens of Winkler MB., who wrote a history of the Rudnerweidner/EMMC church of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. All are welcome.

**In Memorim: Abran Janzen - Continued**

for history. As the administrator for the Weisenamt for the Old Colony Mennonite Church, he listened carefully before meting out measures that assisted many who were in need. He was a mediator who could get disagreeing parties to come to peace. As a Sunday School teacher, he combined his love for history and his respect for *de Schreft*; his students respected him. Respect is earned, and Abram worked with Old Colony, Bergthaler, Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Rudnerweider, and other groups. He was held in high esteem by all. He was baptized in the Old Colony Mennonite tradition in 1940 and remained a part of that conference until 1976 when he joined the Neuanlage Grace Mennonite Church which was part of the "Conference" Mennonite Church.

Abram and Gertrude held education in high regard and encouraged their children to pursue learning beyond the country schoolhouse. As a school trustee, Abram partnered with others to ensure that basic teaching and learning took place at Renfrew S.D. to the best of their abilities.

Abram appreciated history. He wrote about trying times and times of joy. He wrote about his experiences with the Weisenamt. He wrote a history of Aeltester Johann Loeppky and of his mother-in-law, Gertrude Bueckert Wiebe. He wrote about the history of Neuanlage Grace Mennonite Church. Abram contributed stories used in Low German radio broadcasts by John D Friesen and Ed Martens. He wrote hundreds of articles for the *Mennonitische Post* and *The Valley News*.

At Abram's funeral in Neuanlage on May 26, Abram returned to the village where he had been born. From oldest to youngest, the surviving eleven children and their families entered the church and took their places. Twelve granddaughters sang. The eldest son, Bill, did the meditation, George and Mary gave tributes, and Henry (host pastor) led the service. Abram Janzen is survived by 32 grandchildren and 41 great grandchildren. He now rests with the ages.

*JB*

## **Living Side By Side -by Berny Wiens**

### **Our Relationship with the LaFayettes and Their Relatives and Friends**

In the mid sixties, I was sitting in my Dad's 1949 one-ton Dodge grain truck, that held about 100 bushels of wheat, on the driveway to the Pool B (the second elevator owned by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool) in Herschel, in a long line-up of trucks all trying to get access to limited sales opportunities when a middle aged gentleman (who I thought was old) came up to my truck and said, "And who might you be?"

I said that I was Jake Wiens's son, Berny. He immediately started to laugh uproariously.

My father was known as a pretty strict man, and here was I with reddish hair flowing to my shoulders and a scraggly red beard. Homer couldn't quite imagine Dad putting up with such a thing.

That was my first exposure as an adult to our neighbor, Homer LaFayette, who was a descendant of a black family that had immigrated from Oskaloosa, Iowa around 1910. 15 years before our family immigrated to Herschel from Friedensdorf in Ukraine in 1925. So the LaFayette family was a well-established family in our community, during the entire life of our family in Herschel.

While they were not Mennonite, they were Christian, and as Pentecostals, were probably more expressively Christian than we. In addition to faith differences, there was a language difference, so we lived side by side and respected each other.

Homer was the oldest of three brothers who farmed in this area. He lived on the home place where his father, Jess, had homesteaded around 1911, after a short sojourn farming near Regina. Jess was a progressive farmer owning one of the first threshing outfits in the area.

Jess's children were all successful people in whatever endeavor they chose. Jess did well enough to send Homer to Bible school where he



met Evelyn, a white woman with whom he had seven children, 5 girls and 2 boys. While I never discussed their school experiences with the kids and while general appearances would suggest they were well-integrated socially, I can't imagine that there were not challenges for them as the only students of colour in the school system at the time.

Homer replaced the old farm house with a modern bungalow in the 60's. He sent all the girls away to school. One of the boys became a hair dresser in Edmonton; the five girls took up a variety of careers including nursing, social work and day care.

During their high school years several of the girls baby sat our five children from time to time. Harvey struggled a little more with his life work. Homer didn't talk much about his kids, but after he was over 90 years old, and living in seniors care in Prince Albert, near one of his daughters, he called Cheralyn and me to come to see him.

Homer was a gentle and stubborn man, and didn't speak easily about possible mistakes in his life but he talked that day about Harvey. He said that Harvey had spoken to him about getting married and starting to farm right after high school. Who knows all the reasons, but Homer denied that request and Harvey went off to the oil patch. Harvey never married. Ten or fifteen years later he bought some land from his Uncle Glen's estate and farmed quite well, probably better than Homer, but his operation was quite small and difficult to sustain, and ten years later sold that land and ended his farming career.

One of the reasons that Homer might have denied that request was that Homer himself had no sense of ever quitting farming. I remember being invited to his place to help him pour a pit (a cistern for pig manure), beside his Dad's hip roof cow barn converted to a pig barn. That was on his 67th birthday! Homer and I then bought a honey wagon (a vacuum tank for hauling liquid manure) together and shared that piece of equipment till I bought a larger one, quite a few years later.

Fifteen years later, I was elected to the Legislature and needed to empty my pig barn, and

Homer bought quite a few of my pigs. His goal was for me and him to haul a load of pigs to the stockyards on his 100th birthday!

When he got into his 90's his management practices began to slip, and the family eased him out of his cattle, and eventually out of his pigs. So his 100th birthday dream wasn't realized.

He died at 95 or 96, and I and two friends sang, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," at his funeral. Quite an emotional event.

Homer and Evelyn were two of the most dedicated social democrats I have ever met. In the early 70's, I was convinced to leave the Mennonite political party of that day (The Liberals), and join the New Democratic Party. That began a long and warm political friendship.

Homer was more dedicated to the National Farmer's Union than I was and he got me involved with many significant lobbying exercises. Before I joined he came to see me, and I said that I really could not stomach some of the tactics that the NFU had used.

He replied that therefore they needed someone like me to straighten them out. He was a determined man. Faith often entered into our conversations while we travelled to meetings.

One of his articles of faith was that speaking in tongues was the only true test of faith. I think this was a real challenge for his kids. So I'm pretty sure he never accepted me as a "real Christian" because I usually teasingly rebuffed his contentions.

So his next strategy was to get me to go to one of his church's family camps. His firm argument was that the Spirit was there. My counter was that the Spirit was everywhere so I could encounter the Spirit on my tractor as well as he could at family camp. We never convinced each other but neither was there ever anger in these encounters.

Homer's younger brothers, Earl and Glen both went to war in the 40's, and were stalwart members of the Herschel Legion. I don't know if the war had anything to do with it, or whether there were other factors at play, but neither were associated with Homer's church. Earl married and had a number of children - maybe 7 as well - and

a gathering of them ended up at our place one New Year's Eve, after they got their car stuck on the road near our place. Somehow I felt our family's judgment on them, (and I was quite young, maybe 6 or 7) because it must have been insinuated that they had likely been drinking and, heaven forbid, likely dancing as well. How judgmental we can be!

Earl and Jean (who was also black), lived across the road from Homer. I can imagine that differing faith practices must have contributed a little to family tensions.

Glen remained a bachelor all his life. He was a cook in the army. I wasn't often at his place for social events but was there for a house warming party when he built a new house, at which we were very well fed.

Glen was probably the best farmer of his generation of La Fayettes. Louis may have rivalled him - he was a nephew who lived next door to Earl.

Glen was a gregarious fellow who was well loved in the community. I remember a story about him being the first member of the Elk's Lodge in Canada who was black. So I trust that the local chapter must have had to do some ground work to make that happen. Homer told me a story about Glen in a moment of weakness, and he could never be convinced to tell the story again. This story involved our family in a negative light.

My Dad bought a quarter section of land right next to our home quarter in 1953. It was known as the garden quarter. Our son owns it now. He built a deer fence around it to keep out deer. We had planted several acres of sour cherries, a few more of Saskatoons and an acre and a half of haskap plus a small produce garden for the Farmer's Market. The deer fence was to keep out the deer who loved to chew down the small trees after they were planted. It had previously had 7 acres of raspberries, several acres of strawberries and about an acre of crab apples planted in the late 30's. Two enterprising young men, one of them an elevator agent in Herschel, ( Bill Lyons) and the fellow who owned the land, (Tiny Taft - so named because he was 6' 6" tall) decided to

initiate an irrigation project on the land. With the help of PFRA, (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) they started the second PFRA project in Saskatchewan by damming a spring that ran about 150 gallons per minute, and setting up flood irrigation in about 1935. So sometime in the late 40's or early 50's Tiny Taft sold the quarter to Andy Moore, an Orangeman that lived nearby. So now comes Homer's story. He asked me if I knew how Dad came to own that land. And I said that it was a good way to keep six kids out of trouble and an income source for Mom to buy furniture and new clothes for the kids when they headed off to RJC. He said that might be true, but Dad would not have bought the land if he had not been talked into it by Andy Moore. According to Homer, Glen had inquired about buying the quarter in order to build a house there. Andy, who lived about a mile from Earl and Homer, was not attracted to selling to a black man, so he frightened Mom and Dad into buying the land on the grounds that Glen was a drinker, and you could never tell when he might stumble into our place and threaten Mom's virtue.

So I'm guessing Homer knew a few more stories of racism they had encountered but felt community relations would not be enhanced by telling them.

Glen built on a quarter a few miles away and lived out his days there. His life was shortened by a stroke. He lived only a few months after that. He was a fine man. There always seemed to be a family glue that attracted the LaFayette clan to each other. It took quite a while to settle Glen's estate because some of the further away relatives that noted the romanticism of farming, didn't quite understand the challenges in promoting and starting a larger "LaFayette Farm" in which they could all participate. But that dream never materialized.

Back to Earl. Two of Earl's sons have farmed. One built a house near the other three yards. He eventually sold his land and moved his house to Rosetown where he has worked as a mechanic for much of his life. A younger brother is struggling to make Earl's farm work since Earl died.

But Earl's life also ties distantly into an international incident. A basketball coach of the Chicago Bulls was gunned down while jogging with his children while they rode their bikes. The gunman was a member of an anti-Semitic and white supremacist group who shot Jews going home from the synagogue and happened upon this black man.

In researching the death of his friend, the author of a book on this story traced the organization responsible for his death to a man who came from a Mennonite community in Herschel, Saskatchewan.

The man who started the organization had already died from a planned suicide a year after his wife had died. But he had started the organization after finding the KKK too tolerant. His name was Bernie Klassen. Bernie went to school with Earl LaFayette. His family arrived in Herschel a little later than the rest of the Mennonite group, who had already settled here in 1925, because they had first gone to South America.

The author talked to Earl about Bernie. Earl recalled the new kid walking onto the school grounds from a couple of miles away. Earl had asked him if he could catch a ball. He replied, "Ya" in his heavy German accent so Earl tossed it to him. He dropped it. Earl retorted, "You won't be much help to our team!"

On another occasion he asked Earl if all the kids at the school were related to him. Earl answered, "No, only the black ones."

Whether these incidents had anything to do with Bernie's hateful views we'll never know.

I should write a short note about Louis. I'm not sure whose son he was, (not one of the local farmers), but he was the most successful third generation farmer in the family.

A bachelor cousin Harold may have rivalled him and the two worked together in Harold's later years. Harold passed away several years ago and Louis is still farming at the age of 80 something. They raised a family of three kids before his wife died too young of cancer.

He then married a white woman, Charlene, and they have had a long and happy marriage.

Louis was/is a saint. He lives to serve his neighbours. To enumerate his acts of kindness would take a very large book! They followed in Homer's faith footsteps - I believe attending the Alliance church at this time.

Tim had mentioned the Mayes family from Maidstone. I don't know the exact relationship but I met Murray Mayes through Homer. They either knew each other through a church connection or they were somehow related through marriage.

I only know Murray's story through his telling me of his life in a body shop in North Battleford along with the stressful story of his divorce. I know of two children, one a veterinarian in Elrose and the other a famed football star in the USA. Murray lives near, or with his veterinarian daughter in Elrose.

Every two or three years the LaFayette family holds a family reunion at the farm, and at Fiske. There are virtually hundreds of attendees and the whole Herschel and Fiske community is always invited to enjoy the food and the visiting.

While I know a number of Homer's non-farming siblings, I only know them through these occasional reunions so will leave their stories for someone else to tell. Suffice it to say that the family has made a significant contribution to their communities wherever they lived.

In conclusion, I would note that in many ways the relationship between the LaFayettes and the Herschel Mennonites and larger community was quite colour-blind, but given mankind's penchant for intolerance that may only be in our eyes (ie. The eyes of their white neighbours)! *BW*

---

## Survey Results

Reader: Most of the articles in the last issue did not identify the authors. Why?

Kudus to Ruth Quiring Heppner & Josh Wallace.  
(unsigned)

**Editor:** With a staff of one, it's awkward to have the editor's name on each staff-written work. I counted only 3 such articles in the last issue, and my usual Archives piece that did not have the author's name. Every other writer's name is under the title!



## **A Death in the Family - an Eye Witness Account** **- by Dave Toews (Editor of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta Newsletter)**

Friday June 23, 1950 dawned sunny and bright. There was no hint in the air of the tragedy that would descend upon this quiet farm setting before the day would end.

Our father, Peter John Toews, forty-eight, and mother, Helen A (Kroeger) Toews, forty-five, were up at 5:30 am, already hard at work milking the cows, feeding the horses and chickens.

Rudy, eighteen months, the youngest of four children, was up first, as he didn't want to miss helping father feed the pigs. He had his ten pound Rogers Golden Syrup pail that father would help him fill at the concrete stock watering tank. He would then empty the pail into the pig's slop trough. Stumbling along on uneven ground trying to keep up with father, slopping the hogs was one of Rudy's greatest pleasures.

We three older children - Anna Marie, six and a half, David, five and Ernie, three - would get up when mother came in from the morning chores with fresh milk and cream for breakfast. A large bowl of oatmeal and a pot of coffee bubbled happily on the rear of the wood-fired kitchen range that had been lit by mother before she went out to do chores. Breakfast of oatmeal, milk, coffee, homemade bread and butter was consumed right after father read the daily morning devotions from the Bible and the Abreiß Kalender (German devotional leaflets). Anna Marie had to help clear the table and dry the dishes, as she was considered old enough for these household duties. Ernie and I, (David), went out to play in the sandbox that was situated right in front of the ice cellar/house. There, mother could keep an eye on us from the north-facing rear dining room



*Ernie, Peter (dad), David, Rudy, Helen (mother), and Anna Marie Toews. Photo, March 1950.*

window.

Rudy, just back on June 18th, had spent three weeks with our cousins Beth and Henry Loewen, on their farm at Colonsay, and was very happy to be home with his family. To make it easier for father to cope with the three older children, Anne Letkeman, from the nearby district of Bluebird, had been enlisted to help with child-care

during this time.

You see, Mother had just returned home from the hospital in North Battleford on June 17th. She was recovering from hysterectomy surgery. The doctor bill was \$100.26, pills \$3.92 and medicine \$4.00. All this was meticulously documented in father's *Anschreibe Buch* (income and expense ledger Jan 1947 to Dec 1951).

The spring field work of seeding and cultivating the summer fallow had been completed, so father was working around the farmyard repairing fences, corrals and buildings. The family was all together again; it was the start of what should have been a wonderful summer.

The home quarter of the 320 acre mixed farm was situated at NW 13-46-12-W3, one and a half miles south of the hamlet of Mayfair, Saskatchewan. The land had been purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railway(CPR) in 1927.

Nestled in the centre of the rolling Thickwood Hills area of north central Saskatchewan, the Rural Municipality of Meeting Lake was not an easy place to make a living. It was a scenic area with many bluffs of trembling aspen and choking willow thickets surrounding ponds of tepid blue green water. But it also had large patches of non-arable alkaline soil and an abundance of rocks and stones to deter even the hardiest of pioneers.

This was where the seven remaining Mennon-



ite families of the Mayfair Hoffnungsfelder Gemeinde (Fields of Hope Congregation) had cast their lot after fleeing the anarchy of southern Russia in the 1920s. Thirty-three other families had moved away earlier seeking greener pastures, mostly going to British Columbia and Ontario.

The noon meal that day, as was so often the case in the Toews household, consisted of home-made egg noodles, Kloese, cooked then fried with onions in a bit of lard, and fried Schinken Fleisch (smoked, home cured ham). There was bread and butter, plenty of milk to drink and hand-picked home preserved Saskatoon berries for dessert.

After lunch, mother, father, Ernie and Rudy went for *Meddachslop* (afternoon nap) while Anna Marie and I played quietly in the parlour. After his nap, father went to weed in the garden and mother joined him there later. She took great pride in her large vegetable and flower gardens. We older three children were given a stern warning, "Watch out for Rudy, make sure he doesn't wander off and get into trouble somewhere."

Our Uncle John and Aunt Helen Toews with their family of eleven surviving children lived just half a mile south of us on their farm. Their children ranged in age from twenty down to two years; there was Bernie, Johnny, Art, Helen, Walter, Mary, George, Elizabeth, Hilda, Arnold and Dorothy.

Their youngest son Lawrence, born with a heart condition, had survived only two days and had passed away Oct 10, 1949. Lawrence was born at home on the farm, and when they realized he was in serious trouble they asked our parents to take him to the hospital. Aunt Helen was still too weak to travel, so father and mother took Uncle John and Lawrence in our car to Rabbit Lake. It was all in vain; Lawrence died in our mother's arms just as they reached the hospital. Some people said this was a bad omen, but Mennonites do not believe in omens - elements of superstition that conflict with faith in God.

At approximately three-thirty in the afternoon, the phone rang; it was Aunt Helen. Aunt Helen and mother could talk on the phone for hours,

they were true soul mates. They would review all that happened within our families, friends, Canadian and overseas relatives, church and community. Mother then shared all the updated news with all of us. It kept us in contact.

At about four-thirty mother said good-bye and hung up the phone. With an ominous intuition, she rushed to the front door with panic in her voice, "Where is Rudy?" she shouted. She looked at us. No one knew. Father came running from the garden. For some reason, she ran straight for the water trough, the rest of us behind her. Mother screamed! There, lying face down, motionless in a few inches of water was Rudy, his syrup pail floating nearby. Together they grabbed him, pulled him out and gave him artificial respiration as best they knew how.

I, in my naivety kept saying, "See if he can walk, see if he can walk", until I was told to be quiet.

Father carried Rudy into the house as mother ran ahead to call the John Toews' house. Aunt Helen made a long ring; at the sound of the long ring all the neighbours on our rural telephone line would pick up to hear what the news or emergency was.

Cousin Art with Aunt Helen and Uncle John were the first ones to arrive. Soon the yard was full of vehicles; everyone wanted so desperately to help. The men were working Rudy's arms and pumping his chest, mucus was running from his nose and mouth into a bowl on the floor, his head held extended over the small parlour table.

To shield us from this dreadful scene we were sent out along with our young cousins Elizabeth, Hilda, Arnold and Dorothy, to sit in Ed and Islae Johnson's new car, with Art to supervise. A squabble ensued in the backseat and Art had to mete out discipline. There were tears.

At one point in the evening mother was in the upstairs bedroom praying, beseeching and crying out to the Lord to spare her beautiful young son. It would be to no avail; her prayers would go unanswered that day.

Doctor James Lanskail and acting RCMP Corporal Francis Brien arrived together from

Hafford. This brought some calm to the chaotic scene. Dusk was gathering, no one had eaten, our young Toews cousins had gone home, friends and neighbours were leaving. Our kind next-door neighbour Mrs. Islae Johnson took the three of us to their home for a rare treat; store-bought white bread sandwiches with bologna and mustard. When we returned, Islae brought sandwiches and a clear Pyrex pot of coffee for all who were left.

Doctor John Storey from Rabbit Lake had arrived. His preliminary diagnosis for cause of death was shock because Rudy had bumped his head on the concrete trough when he fell in. This is inconsistent with cause of "death by accidental-drowning" as stated on the death certificate later signed by Doctor Lanskail.

Only Aunt Helen and Doctor Storey still remained; mother was inconsolable, father stone-faced, each bearing their terrible grief in their own way. Aunt Helen now encouraged mother to hold Rudy close and kiss him for as long as she wanted.

After his body began to cool they took it and placed it on the ice in the ice cellar. A terrible pall was cast over our home and farm.

The next two days, Saturday and Sunday, June 24 and 25, were a blur. Mother's single, very close, and only sister, our Aunt Mary, as well as Grandmother, Maria Kroeger, arrived Saturday shortly after lunch. They were picked up from the bus at Fielding by Johnny Toews. Aunt Mary was a great comfort to mother; she also helped with the cooking, cleaning and child care.

The funeral was scheduled for Monday as funerals did not take place on Sundays and there was much to be done. Food had to be bought and prepared; journal entry \$4.33 for bread, coffee and cheese; relatives in British Columbia and Ontario had to be notified; journal entry \$3.65 for telegrams. The coffin was built and donated by

John and Justina Balzer, members of the Mayfair Mennonite Hoffnungsfelder Gemeinde.

The finishing touches to the coffin and lining were done by mother's oldest brother and his wife - our Uncle John and Aunt Mary Kroeger from Hanley. With all this activity around us, Ernie and I still found time to play in the sand box.

Every two to three hours, mother and Aunt Mary would pass by and go down into the ice cellar, where they applied rubbing alcohol to Rudy's body. This was the simple and the only method of partial embalming available to us at that time.

I was surprised when I looked down at Rudy's pale waxen form on the ice. In my childish ways I had already forgotten what had happened in the last thirty-six hours. Today at age sixty-three, Monday, June 26, 1950, still looms large in my mind. I have relived the experience a hundred times as I write this. I may be mourning more now than I did as a five year old child.

Shortly after breakfast Rudy's body was brought up

out of the ice cellar and prepared for the funeral by mother, Aunt Mary and Aunt Helen. He was dressed all in white, "as an angel," mother always said, and laid out in his coffin in the back yard in the bright sunshine.

The coffin was tilted forward slightly on its bench to allow a better angle for pictures to be taken.

Once the rest of Mother's Kroeger relatives had arrived from Dundurn, Hanley and area and we had lunch, a short service was held in the back yard led by Aeltester (Bishop) Gerhard Warkentine.

After everyone else had left for the funeral service at church mother took some pictures of the three of us children on the farm yard. And as usual she reminded me to try to smile, something that has dogged me all my life and can be seen



*18- month old Rudy Toews*

here on our family picture. Always looking contemplative? After that we followed the coffin, which was transported in the back of John Toews' truck, driven by Johnny, with Aunt Helen and Uncle John in the cab.

The obituary contains most of the details of the funeral service.

**The obituary of Rudolph Gerhard Toews,** from Der Bote July 12, 1950 edition. Translated from German by Mary (Kroeger) Loeppky.

Job Chapter 1, verse 21: *"The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."*

Great sorrow entered the Peter Toews' home the 23rd of June. The mother was working in the house and the father was in the garden. The children were playing in front of the door. The mother was only home for several weeks after she had a serious operation and still needed to have a lot of rest and do only light duties.

The children were to keep an eye out for their little brother, Rudy, who was only home for a week after being away. Relatives had cared for him so that his mother would have an easier time to recuperate. All were happy again, mother was at home once more and also little Rudy.

When the question was asked, "where is Rudy?" Mother immediately ran out and found him in the water trough that had a few inches of water in it. The pain that a mother has to suffer in finding such a situation is almost unbearable and impossible to describe.

Every attempt to revive him failed. Two doctors were called out but could not come for two hours because of the very poor roads. They diagnosed his death as shock.

Monday, the 26th of June, the small body was placed in the ground. The funeral service took place in the Church of the congregation at Mayfair. Loving friends, acquaintances and relatives came to take part in the grief of the sorrowing family.

In the home of the parents they sang the hymn, *"Wirf Sorgen und Schmerz ins liebende Herz des mächtig dir helfenden Jesus"* (Throw all of your sorrows and pain into the loving heart of

Jesus, the powerful helping Jesus).

After the song Aeltester Gerhard Warkentine, Dundurn, used the text found in Job Chapter 1, verse 21, quoted above, for a short sermon. When Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son it caused him much turmoil. Here also the parents were deeply sorrowful, yet the Lord had spoken and they wanted to be quiet before Him and obey.

In church Reverend Frank Enns from Mayfair spoke on the text taken from Mark 10, verse 13-16, after singing the song, *"Wenn kleine Kinder sterben, so büsst man sie nicht ein."* (When small children die, they do not have to repent). With moving words he showed the sorrowing parents the way to the true friend of children and that their small child would have been taken up away from all sin. He also warned us to take advantage of the time at hand, and to use the time wisely to be ready when the Lord would call us away.

Pastor Duerksen read a portion from Revelation Chapter 21. His message was in English. He spoke from his own experience to give comfort to the parents. Two small children, and one adult child had been taken from them.

Heaven has come closer to them through this. He emphasized that only those that have their names entered in the Book of Life will be able to go through the doors of the New Jerusalem. Nothing unclean or unrighteous will be tolerated there.

When the coffin was being carried out they sang the song, *"Lasst mich gehen"*, (Let me go).

At the cemetery, (referred to as God's Acre), Aeltester G. Warkentine blessed the grave and prayed with the mourners. "Lord teach us to consider that we also have to die, so that we become knowledgeable."

Little Rudolf Gerhard was born the 1st of September, 1948 and died the 23rd of June, 1950. He leaves to mourn, his parents and three siblings.

Signed, John Kroeger

After the graveside service had concluded, Johnny Balzer and Art Froese were helped down into the grave to nail the outer coffin box shut;



each hammer blow rang with the finality of the circumstances. Almost everyone was in tears as the first shovels full of earth thumped down onto the coffin box.

Realization of what was happening finally struck my five year old soul to the core, and I broke into uncontrollable tears, sobbing.

Lawrence and Rudy, the two young Toews cousins, now lay side by side in the cool damp earth. There was lunch in the church basement for all, and everyone offered their heartfelt condolences to our family.

After the funeral, relatives and friends gathered back at our home on the farm. The regular chores of milking, gathering eggs and feeding the animals still had to be done as always. Mother's brothers helped our father with these duties.

As is often the case during difficult times, talk turns to the mundane; farmers will talk farming and business. In the fall of 1949 we had had an excellent crop; the oats was especially of high quality. The ledger shows two entries where father sold seed oats to our uncles, Henry Kroeger (June 26th: \$25.00) and to Peter Kroeger (June 27th: \$15.00). Father also sold 35 chickens to Aeltester Gerhard Warkentine, (June 26: \$21.77). Income was very hard to come by in those years and these opportunities could not be passed up.

I find it strange that there is no reference to Rudy's death or funeral in the ledger. Of course, the ledger was not a diary, or was father in denial?

By Tuesday, June 27, everyone had left except for Aunt Mary. She stayed on for a few days to help and to comfort us. Our whole family took her to the bus on June 30 (\$1.75: car gas to Fielding).

Our mother was never quite the same after that. For a long time she was in such deep mourning that she had difficulty caring for the family's everyday needs. One day as she was hunched over crying beside the kitchen range, she saw a vision of an angel enter the room leading Rudy by the hand. Instantly her inconsolable sorrow was relieved and she could function again.

Mother remembered Rudy's birthday and

death date every year until the day she died. She had total assurance that she would see Rudy again in our heavenly home. *DT*

~~~~~

By Dave Toews, with contributions by Anna Marie (Toews) Boyes, Ernie Toews and Mary (Kroeger) Loeppky. Written March 2009. Some of the details are a composite of memories and may vary slightly from what actually took place.

### **More Survey Results . . . .**

I liked the article re: *Russhi Klocken*. My husband, Peter loves these kind of clocks. His grandmother Wollf had a clock like this hanging in her living room. Her husband, Mr. Jacob Loeppky, was my great-uncle, so I remember it well too.

Just a note of interest, regarding your editor: Peter taught in the Gruenthal School in the 50s-60s - Principal Gr. 1-8. Ruth, you were in the lower grades and my sister Betty was your teacher. One often wonders where, & what are these former students are up to-- We are so proud of you! Keep up the good work, and may God bless you in your important ministry! We enjoy the Periodical! So many people we recognize from by gone-days!

Sincerely, Peter & Helen Neudorf

**Editor's Reply:** Wonderful. How about an article about those school years?

~~~~~

I am impressed with the "Whole Thing." Your format, obvious passion, your work, and commitment. Probably with minimal encouragement (as is usually the case). Thanks.

Suggestions: My father, (David H. Paetkau - R.J.C. teacher '35-'51) wrote extensively about teaching in the Ukraine. I could send you these - and you could take interesting snippets from these stories??

Cheers, Eric.

**Editor's Reply:** Sure! Send them along!





## **Superb Mennonite Church ~ the Little Oasis on the Prairie**

**by Linda Unger**



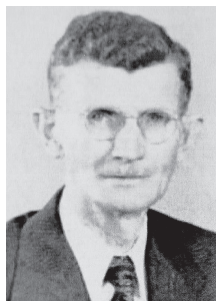
*The current Superb Mennonite congregation  
at the 70th anniversary - May 2015*

On May 31st, 2015, an estimated 150 people filled a little country church near what used to be the hamlet of Superb in western Saskatchewan. Superb Mennonite Church was celebrating 70 years since the dedication of the original church building. The "Little Oasis on the Prairie", as someone from a neighboring town had once called it, having undergone many highs and lows, now has a membership of only 18, but how well they work together was evidenced by the well-organized day of worship, singing, eating, and reminiscing.

A volunteer choir sang during the morning service, as well as the afternoon program. The afternoon was begun with "Sunday School singing", led by a group of talented musicians. A highlight was a medley of well-known hymns sung by the choir, with the pitch being given by Dave Wiebe, using the tuning fork that had been used by his father, Henry, while leading the church singing.

In 1927, ten Mennonite families, all immigrants from Russia, bought land in the Superb area through the Mennonite Land Settlement Board. A Herman Hyndman of Chicago had bought 28 quarters of land from the CPR. He divided it into 10 farms, and sold it for \$50 an acre. Only one of the farms had buildings on it.

Mr. Hyndman supplied all the material to build a house, barn, two granaries, and an out-house for each farm. He supplied the paint for the buildings, machinery, harness, a well, a windmill, 3 cows, 25 chickens, 2 pigs and horses. The first year, he also supplied seed, and feed for livestock. The building took 2 years to complete. The first winter, some of the families lived in granaries that had been built first. Others lived in empty houses in Superb, or shared homes with people in town.



Klassen's until more houses were built. Later, others also offered their homes.

In 1934, when Rev. Peter A. Warkentin moved to Superb with his family, the two pastors

The first church services were held in homes. Because of distance and weather, families also organized smaller groups and held services. The first services were held at Rev. Peter J.



shared duties. For special occasions, the Kintail School was used. Rev. Warkentin built benches that were used there that could be disassembled and stored when not in use.

There were several families farming near Luseland who came for services occasionally. By 1944, when the people started driving cars, and membership was at 50, the size of the group indicated a need for a church building.



*Superb Menonite in 1952*

The church board bought the Citizen Dispatch building in Luseland, and the material from it was used to build

the church. Mr. Jacob H. Wiebe donated the piece of land on which it was built. Work began on July 17, 1944, with Rev. Klassen as head carpenter. All the labor was done voluntarily, except for the building of the chimney, which was done by a local man for \$11.25! The young women of the group were able to contribute as well, by washing the boards that were to be used for the ceiling in the church.

The church was officially dedicated on April 15th, 1945. However, the new building, though far from finished, was first used on Oct. 22, 1944, for the celebration of Rev. and Mrs. Warkentin's 25th anniversary. The first wedding in the new church was on April 22, 1945, and the first baptismal service was held on Aug. 12th, 1945.

After 1948, when Rev. Klassen and his family moved to B.C., Rev. Warkentin remained the pastor until his retirement in 1974.

Originally, services and Sunday School were all in the German language. When several people who did not understand German joined the church family, Rev. Warkentin, regretting the fact that he couldn't serve in English, asked English-speaking ministers to come occasionally from other churches, and men from the congregation read English sermons sometimes as well. In 1960, English Sunday School lessons were introduced

for the lower classes. Gradually, the older classes changed to English as well. In 1967, the minutes from the annual meeting were read in English for the first time. And in 1972, the decision was made to purchase half the adult Sunday School lesson books in English.

Another change that took place during Rev. Warkentin's ministry was, that, after some controversy, the women of the congregation were given the right to attend annual meetings and to vote.

In 1955, as the number of children had increased, and there was no basement for Sunday School rooms, an old house was purchased, moved onto the church yard, and used for three Sunday School classes. Rev. Warkentin conducted Sunday School for the adults in the church.

However, by 1957, as the church was becoming crowded, and the old house was no longer sufficient and very hard to heat in winter, the decision was made to add on to the original church building and to construct a basement. Electricity and an oil-burning furnace were installed, and the Sunday School rooms in the basement were made to convert into a dining area, with a kitchen including cupboards, a sink and a stove.



Then, in the early 80's, a new basement and an addition, with a larger entry, were built, and plumbing installed.

For many years, the women of the church gathered for Ladies Aid meetings. The group was organized in 1934, with the first president being Mrs. Helen Warkentin. However, as early as 1931, the women hand-made articles that were auctioned at a sale held in the fall, with the money raised going to support the projects of the Sask. Women in Mission organization. They also used money



from eggs they gathered on Sundays to cover the Missionary pension fund.

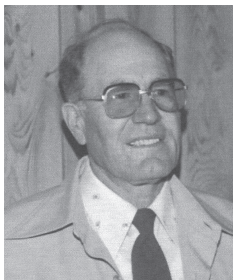
By 1954, the membership of the Aid was 23, and for the first time, delegates were sent to the annual Women's Conference. In 1958, the Superb Ladies Aid, together with the Aids from their fellow Ebenfeld Gemeinde churches at Herschel, Fiske and Glidden, hosted the annual Saskatchewan Women's Conference. In 1983, the conference was hosted by the Superb Ladies Aid in the Luseland Alliance Church.

Over the years, the ladies have made soap, gathered clothes, made bandages, quilted, sewed layettes and held "Self Help" sales.

Because of low numbers, the Ladies Aid disbanded in 2011. However, the women still meet with others from the community to make quilts in the winter.

Vacation Bible School was organized in 1947, and has been held every summer with teachers from the congregation or elsewhere.

A youth group was organized in 1973. The young people engaged in many activities to support various projects, including growing vegetables for the Montreal Lake Children's School, holding bike-a-thons, helping clean up highway ditches, serving Christmas dinners, with funds going to support a foster child or a camp-out in summer. They were also responsible for planting shelter belts around the church yard. The group disbanded in 1985.



After Rev. Warkentin retired to Saskatoon, Rev. Werner Zacharias from Fiske was asked to serve two Sundays a month, with the remaining Sundays to be led by lay people. In 1982, under the direction of Rev. Zacharias,

committees were organized to relieve the Deacon and Minister from all the planning responsibilities. In 1986, Rev. Zacharias resigned, and the congregation looked for a pastor who would be willing to serve on a half-time basis, as a salaried pastor.

Dave and Joanne Feick, a young couple from

Wymark, SK, agreed to come, and their ministry was much appreciated.

In 1994, Dave Feick resigned. After a great deal of searching and prayer, the group found whom they were looking for, in their midst, in the person of Eileen



Klaassen (Wiebe). During her time as pastor, she put a great deal of effort into organizing a Men's Choir. She also organized various Care Groups that met every week or two during the winter months.



After Eileen resigned in June of 1999, the church struggled along for almost two years with several different groups taking responsibility for church services, as well as having guest speakers from time to time.

In 2001, Grant Martens from Fiske was hired to fill the position of half-time pastor.



In 2006, when he resigned, Lois Siemens moved to Kerrobert and took on the role of pastor.

Throughout the years, music and singing has always played an important part in the church. In the early years, there was no instrument to lead the singing, so three men, Henry Wiebe, Jake Wiebe and Peter Heinrichs were elected to be "Vorsaenger", or song leaders. In 1950, a "pump organ" was purchased, with the hopes that someone would be able to play it. However, an organist was never found, so eventually, the organ was sold. Some time later, a piano was bought, and, though there were not always pianists available, it was played whenever possible.



When Rudy and Eileen Wiebe moved to Kerrobert in 1975, Eileen became the pianist,

with the assistance of several other ladies at times. Eileen also led a children's choir, a mixed choir and the men's choir. The choirs served at special functions in the church as well as in the community.

When Rudy and Eileen left, Barb Stefaniuk took over the position of pianist for a number of years. Since then, others have volunteered.

In 2001, the Superb choir, renamed "Simply Superb", produced a musical called the "Wheatbelt Gospel". Then in 2004, they presented "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", and in 2007, "The Wheatbelt Parables", featuring parables written and set to music by Grant Martens. The productions were presented in several different centres throughout the province. Then, in 2011, the group, together with the assistance of the Rosetown Community Theatre, and directed by Vicki Dyck of the Barn Playhouse, performed "Godspell".

Despite times of struggle and sorrow, as well as blessings and joy, the Superb church has continued on as a little oasis, a place of renewing and refreshing to those in the area.

Photos and documents of the 70th Celebration can be found at [SuperbMennonite.org](http://SuperbMennonite.org)

*LU*

Ed. Linda (Wiebe) Unger grew up in the Superb church, and had many relatives there. Rev. Warkentin was her grandfather. It has many happy memories for her.

## The Christmas Issue is coming Next!

The December issue of the Historian is to be wholly about Christmas. This is your chance to share your memories of how this special holiday was celebrated in your Mennonite homes and churches. However, you need to send them in to the editor, Ruth, in early September. If you are too late, your story or article may not be included. If you are not sure if your idea is suitable, please email or phone as per the back page of this issue. This is going to be very Special!

*RMT*



## USE YOUR ARCHIVES Community History Books



When a community reaches a milestone age – and this can vary from as short a time as a decade or two, all the way to 100 years or more since its founding – a committee is formed to put together a history of that community.



The committee members get quite keen as they research the history of the founding, gather photos and family stories, and so on.

Do you realize that some of that information could have been contributed by your own relatives while they were alive?

These books can give you a better overview of life with their neighbours and community for your relatives, and put their daily lives into context.

For those putting together a genealogy or a family history, the precious tidbits of information in these Community History books are terrific finds. You would be smart to mine for them too. Your archives has not only a good number of Saskatchewan community histories, but also for some places in Alberta and Manitoba.

*RMT*





**Katie Funk Wiebe.  
My Emigrant Father,  
Jacob J. Funk, 1896 -**

**1986:** (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2015) Soft cover. Non Fiction (memoir). 311 pages.

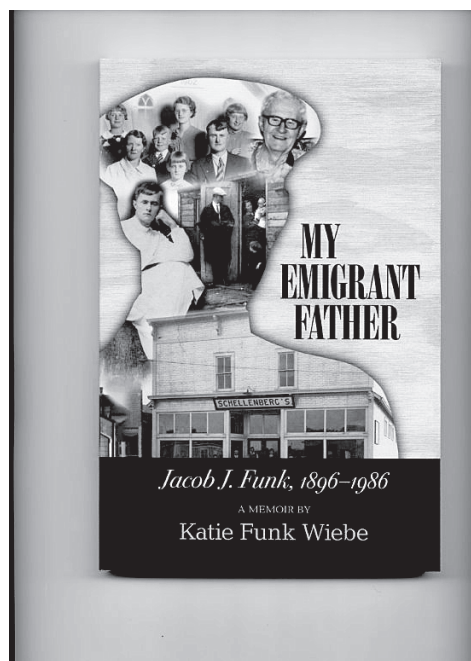
**Book Review:  
by Jake Buhler**

The accomplished storyteller, Katie Funk Wiebe, writes about her father as someone who left his European homeland, rather than someone who arrived as an immigrant. The distinction is important because the points of departure are Holland, Poland, Prussia, and Russia. Jacob J. Funk, then, is the emigrant whose people were always leaving rather than arriving.

Born in 1924, Funk Wiebe is able to reach far back to capture an oral history which she artistically weaves into a researched history. While the story of Jacob Funk (1896-1986) is by itself a noble project, Funk Wiebe embeds his story into that of a people, the Mennonite people, who tasted glory and bitterness as they emigrated one home in search of another for religious and economic freedom.

Having established an historical context, Funk Wiebe develops both a perceived and a researched protagonist who is as tender and as loving, as he is daring and calculating. The antagonists of Jacob J Funk's life in Russian-occupied Ukraine, include the much feared Makhnov, whose killings are told in the book. But Jacob J Funk rises above adversity, aided by his deep spiritual being in the context of a community of support.

Jacob J Funk and family emigrate to Laird, Saskatchewan, in 1923 and begin a new life, not without its challenges, including psychological depression, the Dirty Thirties, and what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Jacob J



Funk and Anna emigrate a last time to live in British Columbia. It is there they both die.

Finally, Funk Wiebe is aware that her father flourished in a time when women were secondary actors. To counter this she tells a parallel story of sustenance and food and their place in the time and life of Jacob J. Funk. Each chapter begins with a recipe for a food that is described contextually. Without admitting it, Funk Wiebe is a feminist who cleverly establishes that food was what helped to build family and community.

This is a must-read family memoir with its graphic photographs, a family tree and a chronology of events.

Available for a modest \$20.00. Check our MHSS order form.

Note: Katie Funk Wiebe was born in Laird, Saskatchewan in 1924. She is a prominent figure in the Mennonite Brethren Church having written 20 books on spirituality, on aging, on gender, and on storytelling. Her stories about women when women were not recognized for their worth, made her a leader. In addition to teaching English at Tabor College, Funk Wiebe has worked with and for Mennonite Central Committee and the former General Conference Mennonite Church.

*JB*

***Your Feedback is Welcome -***

to any issue or article. We will try to learn from it. If you have ideas for an article, feel free to contact the editor and discuss it.

Ideally, the editor should edit and not try to fill blank pages. We want a variety of good authors!

If an article has to wait for space in the next issue - that is okay too.

# Dee Plautdietsche Akj

## Koa Foaren Learen - by Jack Driedger

Onnse easchte Koa wea een 1927 Model T Ford. Auss't enne dartijch Joaren enn Saskatchewan opphead met Rääjnen, onn wie kjeene Arnt aun'e 1937 kjrieegen, sach Foda, daut wie onnse Koa mussten auntsied fiaren. Doa wea kjeen Jelt toom Foaberajcht ooda Gauselien kjeepen. Schliesslich musst wie soogoa dee Koa looss woaren.

Auss dee dräje Joaren entlijch äwa wearen, febätad sikj daut langsomm met onnse Wirtschoft. Nü daut wie nijch mea soo spoaren mussten, funk Foda doaraun too denkjen, woo händijch daut wea, wan eena 'ne Koa haud.

Ekj freid mie, auss Foda een 1927 Pontiac kofft. Wan daut uck 'ne Koa wea fonn'e 1927 soo auss dee Model T, fe mie too beseenen wea dee Pontiac 'ne fäl bätte Koa auss dee Model T. Dee Pontiac haud een Jedriewschwenjel, soo auss aundre Koaren. Soont auss daut haud 'n Model T nijch. Nü musst Foda sikj doamet weeten learen.

Wan ekj uck niemols selfst 'ne Koa jefoaren haud, haud ekj mie daut aul lang beobacht, woo aundre Koafora daut deeden. Ekj wisst krakjt waut eena met 'n Jedriewschwenjel doonen musst. Oba Foda wisst doa nuscht fonn. Oba haft mie daut scheen jegonen, Foda 'ne Koa met een Jedriewschwenjel foaren learen!

Met de' Tiet wisst Foda sikj met däm Pontiac goot jenüach, daut hee däm onen miene Help foaren kunn.

Een Hoafst Dach, auss wie dee Arnt em Spikja hauden, onn dee drocke Tiet soomea äwa wea onn daut eendoont wea, wan ekj dee Sseitung äwadach lauss, sach ekj, daut Foda enn Jedanken wea.

Hee wea jrotst trigj jekomen fonn met dee Koa

opp 'ne korte Reis foaren. Hee schräd han onn trigj, deep enn Jedanken. Eensjemol kijkt'a toom Fensta 'rüt, onn dan kijkt'a no mie opptoo.

Ekj festüak mie hinja dee Sseitung onn deed soo, auss wan ekj fonn nuscht enwort. Ekj wisst jewess, daut Foda waut too sajen haud. Mie feeld sikj daut soo, daut wudd uck waut Goodet sennen, waut Foda too sajen haud.

Foda wea nijch een frintelja Maun, oba mie leet 'et soo, auss wan hee ditmol too sikj 'n kjlienet Bät schmüstad, wan hee docht, daut ekj daut nijch seenen wudd. Bie mien Foda wea daut Kjinja optrakjen 'ne sea wijchtje Sach. Daut wea nijch toom Lachen.

Met eenmol früach Foda mie gaunss onnferhoffs, auf ekj 'mol selfst wudd jleijchen proowen dee Koa too foaren.

"Jo, ekj kunn e'mol proowen," säd ekj soo onnschulijch auss ekj kunn. Ekj wull nijch haben, daut daut soo leet, auss wan ekj too iewrijch wea. Ekj wull mie soo hanstallen, auss wan ekj kjeene

Angst haud, 'ne Koa too foaren.

Foda onn ekj sauten dan uck aul boolt beid enn'e Koa. Ditmol saut ekj aum Stia, onn Foda saut besied auss een Metfoara. Ekj neem mie fäa daut ekj Foda wudd wiesen, daut ekj een gooda, fäasejchtja Foara wea.

Mie wea daut uck gaunss leijch, dee korte

Reis onen Fäla foaren. Foda säd nijch 'n Wuat, oba ekj kunn daut goot feelen, daut am daut jefoll, soo auss ekj fua. Foda pausst sea opp, daut hee siene Kjinja nijch met too fäl Low fedoawen deed. Bie dee ooltkoloneasche Jemeent wea daut sea wijchtijch, daut 'n Mensch deemütijch wea. Foda wull daut nijch haben, daut wie onns met eenmol waut meenen wudden. Foda wea een trühoatja Jemeendejliet.



Daut näakjste Mol auss wie enn Sasketün wearen, noom Foda mie no daut Mootafoabera-jchtsaamt onn kofft mie een Foaerlaubnesschien fe feftijch Ssent. Ekj bruckt nijch e'mol eene Proow derjchmäaken toom bewiesen, daut ekj werkljich foaren kunn. Een Ellabewiess onn feftijch Ssent wea aless waut eena bruckt, een Foaberajcht too kjrieen. Nü wudd ekj boolt bat doa sennen, daut ekj een groota Jung wea!

#### GLOSSARY

Foaberajcht: license

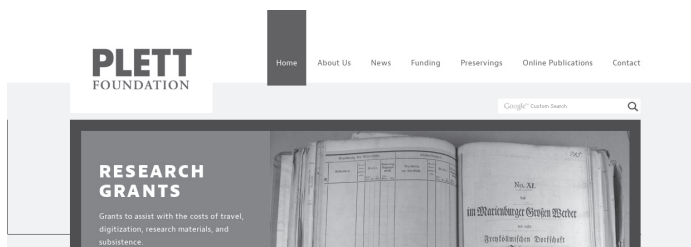
Jedriewschwenjel: gearshift

Mootafoaberajchtsaamt: motor license office

Foaerlaubnesschien: driving license

*JD*

## Plett Foundation Launches Renewed Website



Their site is now mobile-friendly, with a fresh look.

There are several additions to the site, but something very new is having the current issue of Preservings available as an online magazine. The full-text PDF versions of the magazine will still be available for readers, but the online version offers a full-colour view of the articles in the current issue and access to any linked content.

Preservings will still come in a printed version, which is widely distributed in North America as well as Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, Argentina and Paraguay.

Also new are online application forms for Grants and Fellowships programs. Pay a visit at [www.plettfoundation.org](http://www.plettfoundation.org)

*pz*

## Katie Funk Wiebe Research Grant to Rachel Twigg-Boyce



Winnipeg, Manitoba - The Katie Funk Wiebe Research Grant was given to Rachel Twigg Boyce, pastor of House Blend Ministries in Winnipeg, by the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission. This presentation was made at the

annual general meeting of the denomination, which was held in Fresno, California June 12-13, 2015.

Twigg Boyce's project is about her church, and their particular experiences with women in leadership. She feels there is much for other churches to learn from their experiments and their ways of living as an intentional Christian community in a city setting.

This pastor of seven years said, "I plan to write a comprehensive version of the House Blend story to be used in-house in our community. This would include the story of our development with direct reference and reflection on the work of others that have influenced us. This is a project I have been chipping away at for a number of years but the busyness of the creation of this ministry has not allowed for the focused time this project truly requires." Later she wants to publish the House Blend Story, making it available for others who desire to set up other intentional Christian communities.

Jon Isaac, Commission Chairman said, "Rachel's research will encourage us to pay attention to the different ways that men and women live out God's mission in our cities. It honors the path Katie Funk Wiebe has taken in reminding us of the gifts both men and women can bring to the church."

The Katie Funk Wiebe Fund is a research grant of \$2,000.

*pz*



# Transcribing and Translating German from the Gothic Script

"Grosz'mama, how do you make your h's?" I asked, my Gr'ma Elisabeth (Friesen) Kroeker, in Plautdietsch.

She was sitting in our recliner with a board over her lap, and the papers I placed in front of her. Even though her eyesight was about gone, she gladly obliged, and drew an H in the Gothic handwriting.

My New Year's resolution for 1985 had been to visit her often and get her stories down for a biography of my beloved Grosz'mama. (Or Gr'ma when I turned to English-speaking people). I hoped to have it done by her birthday on May 6.

However, dementia crept in, and at the end of April we brought Gr'ma into my parents' home where I was already caring for Mom. My book project was on hold, but her journals were now in the house and I wanted to read them. But my high school German was not up to that Gothic handwriting.

Gr'ma had a short attention span, yet a cheerful, trusting spirit. So I asked her to help me learn to recognize those Old German letters.

Nine months later an opening came for her to move into the Rosthern Nursing Home. By that time I could read her scribbles more fluently, and began my book project in earnest. It took me three years, and a great learning curve as well.

A few translation jobs presented themselves to me. Both Gr'ma and Mom passed on, and since Dad didn't need nursing care, I had more time. I'd even got a computer that could go online and I was learning like a house-on-fire. My confidence grew to where I was ready to put up a translator's shingle on the internet.

In 2000 - 2003, I found only three people advertising such services on the internet. (Today there are many more!)

20

Roman Type	German Type	German Script
Aa	<b>Aa</b>	<i>Aa</i>
Bb	<b>Bb</b>	<i>Bb</i>
Cc	<b>Cc</b>	<i>Cc</i>
Dd	<b>Dd</b>	<i>Dd</i>
Ee	<b>Ee</b>	<i>Ee</i>
Ff	<b>Ff</b>	<i>Ff</i>
Gg	<b>Gg</b>	<i>Gg</i>
Hh	<b>Hh</b>	<i>Hh</i>
Ii	<b>Ii</b>	<i>Ii</i>
Jj	<b>Jj</b>	<i>Jj</i>
Kk	<b>Kk</b>	<i>Kk</i>
Ll	<b>Ll</b>	<i>Ll</i>
Mm	<b>Mm</b>	<i>Mm</i>
Nn	<b>Nn</b>	<i>Nn</i>
Oo	<b>Oo</b>	<i>Oo</i>
Pp	<b>Pp</b>	<i>Pp</i>
Qq	<b>Qq</b>	<i>Qq</i>
Rr	<b>Rr</b>	<i>Rr</i>
Ss	<b>Ss</b>	<i>Ss</i>
Tt	<b>Tt</b>	<i>Tt</i>
Uu	<b>Uu</b>	<i>Uu</i>

Roman Type	German Type	German Script
Vv	<b>Vv</b>	<i>Vv</i>
Ww	<b>Ww</b>	<i>Ww</i>
Xx	<b>Xx</b>	<i>Xx</i>
Yy	<b>Yy</b>	<i>Yy</i>
Zz	<b>Zz</b>	<i>Zz</i>

## Modified Vowels (Umlaute)

Roman Type	German Type	German Script
Ää	<b>Ää</b>	<i>Ää</i>
Öö	<b>Öö</b>	<i>Öö</i>
Üü	<b>Üü</b>	<i>Üü</i>

## Compound Consonants

Roman Type	German Type	German Script
ch	<b>ch</b>	<i>ch</i>
sch	<b>sch</b>	<i>sch</i>
ck	<b>ck</b>	<i>ck</i>
ss	<b>ss</b>	<i>ss</i>
ß (SZ, SS)	<b>ß (ß)</b>	<i>ß</i>
st	<b>st</b>	<i>st</i>
tz	<b>tz</b>	<i>tz</i>
ph	<b>ph</b>	<i>ph</i>

One of the three was a woman born in Austria, who married an oilman in Calgary and moved to Texas, where she put up a poster in a laundromat offering to translate German to English for .10 a word. She told me that she got the occasional job. There was not a huge demand.

I also learned, in the 1920s Hitler had banned the Gothic or Suetterlein script, because he thought it came from the Jews. He wanted the whole world to learn German; he felt other nations would balk at their

difficult script. Therefore, generations of citizens in Germany have not learned to write that elegant German script, which was known as Gothic in earlier eras, actually, a derisive term meaning 'barbaric.'

The people who still use it are those who learned it in private German schools in the Mennonite regions of the world. Here in Canada, that is our Mennonites in their late senior years, and perhaps a few whose parents taught it to them.

I learned to read High German in Hague high school, but not enough to speak fluently. I understand more because I heard it in church during my childhood.

Gr'ma taught me the Gothic German script during those months when she had present-tense memory lapses, but still knew her handwritten alphabet. What a legacy!

From 1999 on I taught myself to build web sites. What could it hurt if I put up a few pages on my genealogy website offering to translate from the Gothic handwritten German at .10 cents a word. I made sure I put the right keywords into the meta tags so the search engines would bring me clients. I would not have to look for them.

Nothing happened for months, then in one week I suddenly had three requests for such work.



I pored over every letter and did my very best.

This has happened a number of times over the past 14-15 years. Someone would send a scan of a Bible's flyleaf from New York, or a man from the Netherlands sent several pages scanned from a Catholic church register because his ancestors had their births and marriages recorded there.

It is definitely not a consistent job. There is not enough demand to make a living. But history buffs and genealogists are digging deeper into the past. Now there are more people offering this service, some at rates that startle me.

In 2007, Dad died; my care-giving years were over. I had to support myself, and took on all kinds of projects and ministries. When these out-of-the-blue translation jobs came to me via my website contact form, I was caught with really no free hours to give to it.

After a few such instances, I changed the text on my website saying that I was now charging \$1.00/ word. That did not stop pleas for help. In time I took even that offer off, and just listed links to other translators they could try.

You might be one who has the skills and the time, but you need to know about the challenges involved, and how to go about getting paying clients.

### **Transcription and Translation Challenges:**

Not having my nose in Gothic script much any more, means studying the alphabet all over again to refresh my memory. Some vowels are similar so I have to bend over the text with a magnifying glass.

Usually the scans are clear and sharp, but since the writing was done years ago it could be quite smudged. Furthermore, the writer may not have been well-educated, and a poor speller. Or, the writer might be thinking in Plautdietsch, but trying to write in High German, because he had just a few years in the old private school.

It's a pleasure to work with beautiful writing such as my great-grandfather wrote. But it was a different story for me, when I spent two years in the 1990s translating Gr'ma's step-grandmother's journals. That was 700+ pages!

I got to know Katharina (Reimer) Neudorf Dyck, and her Plautdietsch mindset, writing High German, and making up words that borrowed from both languages. At many places I had to put down *[illegible...]*, even though I felt I became quite the intuitive detective after a while.

This really amounts to two jobs. First, to decipher the imperfect handwritten letters. That is the transcribing part. Then, to translate into English.

If you know your English grammar well, you will see that transliteration, (word-by-word), does not read well. You need to phrase the translation so it flows with good English context and punctuation.

Some clients want a precise transliteration. They can read German if it is in English (latin) letters, and they want to get the original sense of what is written. Most like the English version to flow nicely.

If these challenges do not scare you off, you can get occasional employment as a freelancer. Here is how.

### **Prepare a Resume**

This just means that you need some proof to show that you are able to handle the work. Write up a little profile of yourself, with a focus on your experience with German, and in this case, particularly with the Gothic handwritten German. Show that you understand English well, too.

Indicate on the profile whether you can do transliteration, a full translation, or both.

Find a good page of German handwritten work, scan it, and do up a translation on a second sheet. This way the potential client can get a sense of the quality of your work.

Stock up on a good bilingual dictionary or two, as you are bound to run into words you have never seen before. If one of them is an extra old dictionary from the early 1900s, it may have words that the new ones don't.

Go online to find a good German to English dictionary site; bookmark it to use as a resource.

Decide on the rates for your service. Will you charge by the word or by the hour?

By the way, you can be easily ripped off if you eagerly rush to do the work, and send it back without asking the client for a deposit first. I know, I've made that mistake.

Once I've seen the scan and estimated how difficult or easy it will be, I send an estimate for my fee, and ask for a deposit to be sent to my PayPal email. Usually I ask almost half of what I think the total will be.

Then, when the work is done, I send a friendly email with a full invoice, and promise to send the finished translation work when I receive that last amount.

You should set up an account with PayPal, the most popular payment processor, but you can also get one with Payza, and Solid Trust, etc. Then when the payments arrive, you can just go online to your account and transfer the funds into your bank account.

Now to advertise yourself; a website is a great place to put up your 'shingle', but if you are not up to that, there are a number of places like Cyndi's List, and other directory sites where you submit your name and contact information, and sometimes more details from your profile.

You will need some basic computer skills, as most of this work happens there. If you are weak in this area, get someone to teach you a few basics, like how to send and receive attachments to your emails, how to work with scans as graphic images, how to print them if you need them on paper. You ought to design an invoice you can fill out in your word processor, save as a PDF and send to the client.

### **If You Want to Know More**

There are many tangents to this topic. You can learn much more on the internet. Here are a few links to get you started;

[feefhs.org/guides/German\\_Gothic.pdf](http://feefhs.org/guides/German_Gothic.pdf)

(has excellent instructions!)

[www.ggrs.com/events/handouts/handout\\_script.pdf](http://www.ggrs.com/events/handouts/handout_script.pdf)

(has a helpful chart).

[www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm](http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm)

(how to teach yourself to read and write it).

*RMF*

## **Julius Klassen - The Man Who Knew How to Work with Metal - Part Two - by Dick Braun**

[The previous issue of Historian told of Julius' woodwork inventions, clocks, etc.]

Julius Klassen grew up in the village of Gruenthal, Sask; and there were neighbours close who would have seen some of the unbelievable things that this young boy, later young man, could do and make.

One of those neighbours was Lorne Hildebrandt. He spent a lot of time with Julius Klassen in his growing up years, and later became his brother-in-law.

Lorne Hildebrandt recalls that Julius bought a motorcycle, and of course, as Julius would do things, the motorcycle engine needed to be taken apart and redone.

Well - you never know, there might be something that needed to be checked. They had all winter to do this, and it was done right. The crankshaft was polished so the bearings would fit just right. They polished the crank with emery cloth and by hand. Julius had a way of measuring to make sure that it stayed true.

Later on, this motorcycle made many trips to and from Saskatoon with Julius and many passengers.

I have visited with many people about Julius and his work and interests. Some of the same things keep coming up like, "He was a deep thinker," or, "He was a whiz at what he did," or, "Sometimes it seemed like you could hear the wheels of invention grinding in his head."

One other thing that all agreed on was what it looked like when Julius was in deep thought about an invention or fixing a machine. He would sit on a stool with a cigarette in a cigarette holder in the side of his mouth. He was also known for always having a short pencil with him so he could make a note or draw a model of his thoughts.

I was in conversation with Aron Fehr who also worked with Julius at Harding Industries. He

remembered things, like the shop bought a machine and it worked very poorly, so Julius took it apart and redesigned some of the inner workings, and then it worked just fine.

Julius set out to make life for a carpenter a little easier. He designed a machine, to make a metal corner that would finish the siding that people put onto houses. The machine was so complete; if you can visualize a roll of metal coming in on a forklift, then mounted on a shaft, and the metal fed into the machine. The operator turned on the machine, and the clanging and squeaking and the clunking would produce corners that were punched and bent, and at the end the machine would stack the finished product in piles of 100. All the operator needed to do was put the corners in a box. This machine could make a double brake and punch holes for the nails. The holes were placed so that they were from the bottom and you could not see them at first glance. This machine was built so that it could be set to make many different sizes of corners.

The machine was unbelievably tuned as every part of it worked so well with the other. As a result, Hardings got a contract to make three million of these corners for a company in Winnipeg.

Julius also designed a machine that made concrete snap ties. This new way of setting up concrete forms was a real saving of material and time. The tie was so designed that after the concrete set, with a bang of a hammer it would snap just inside the finished wall of concrete.

Then there was the machine that made joist hangers. This was also an invention that changed the way that carpenters would hang floor joists. This hanger idea has been used in many different ways in the building industry.

Talking to Alfred Leoppy, it was very evident that Julius made a lasting impression on him when he also worked at Hardings. I am sure that once Julius had the first machine figured out, then to build a second one that made a different piece, but functioned similarly, was not as painstaking as the first one.

Now it was time to make replacement parts for the combine.

There was also a machine that produced feeder chain slats.

I remember when Julius started to work for Saskatoon Radiator Sales. He had been there about one week. I stopped in to buy a radiator, when the owner asked me if I knew Julius Klassen from Osler, and I said, "yes." He had a question about his style of work.

Julius had sat on his stool, smoked his cigarette for a few days and been in deep thought, and this seemed to be of concern to him. Later the owner of Radiator Sales reaped a lot of benefits of this deep thinker, Julius.

There was a machine that produced radiator parts like they had not seen before.

I visited the workshop that Julius worked in at home a number of times. It was always interesting to talk to Julius about how he dealt with a difficult situation which involved building something he had not run into before. He had a very unique mind that could think through a progression of actions; what would happen if this happened, and this would continue on to the finished product.

Julius Klassen was married to Helen Dyck and lived in Osler almost all his married life. He was 79 years old when he suddenly passed away in 2002. He lived a life full of designing and building many creative, original ideas.

*D B*

---

### **Invitation to a Special Event:**

**Oct 23-24: "Mennonites, Medicine and the Body: Health and Illness in the Past and**

**Present"** an academic and community education conference hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at The University of Winnipeg.

Free admission. Register on site.

More info:

<http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/>



## 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).

<b>Helen Bahnmann</b>	<b>Katherine Hooge</b> († 2001)	<b>John G. Rempel</b> († 1963)
<b>Abram J. Buhler</b> († 1982)	<b>Abram G. Janzen</b> († 2015)	<b>Ed Roth</b> († 2008)
<b>Helen Dyck</b> († 2007)	<b>John J. Janzen</b> († 2004)	<b>Wilmer Roth</b> († 1982)
<b>Dick H. Epp</b> († 2009)	<b>George Krahn</b> († 1999)	<b>Arnold Schroeder</b> († 2000)
<b>Jacob H. Epp</b> († 1993)	<b>Ingrid Janzen-Lamp</b>	<b>Jacob Schroeder</b> († 1993)
<b>Margaret Epp</b> († 2008)	<b>Abram M. Neudorf</b> († 1966)	<b>Katherine Thiessen</b> († 1984)
<b>Peter K. Epp</b> († 1985)	<b>J. J. Neudorf</b> († 1988)	<b>J. J. Thiessen</b> († 1977)
<b>George K. Fehr</b> († 2000)	<b>J. C. Neufeld</b> († 1994)	<b>David Toews</b> († 1947)
<b>Jake Fehr</b>	<b>John P. Nickel</b>	<b>Toby Unruh</b> († 1997)
<b>Jacob E. Friesen</b> († 2007)	<b>David Paetkau</b> († 1972)	<b>Albert Wiens</b> († 2002)
<b>John D. Friesen</b> († 2004)	<b>Esther Patkau</b>	
<b>Jacob G. Guenter</b> († 2013)	<b>John D. Reddekopp</b> († 2011)	
<b>Gerhard J. Hiebert</b> († 1959)	<b>Ted Regehr</b>	

### Web Sites

MHSS: [mhss.sk.ca](http://mhss.sk.ca)

**Cemeteries:** transitioning to the above site, but still available at:

[freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~skmhss/](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~skmhss/)

**Mennonite Encyclopedia Online:** (GAMEO)

[gameo.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online](http://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](http://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**

**1 1 0 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](mailto:Ask-Ruth@mhss.sk.ca)