

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE HISTORIAN

Official periodical of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Inc.
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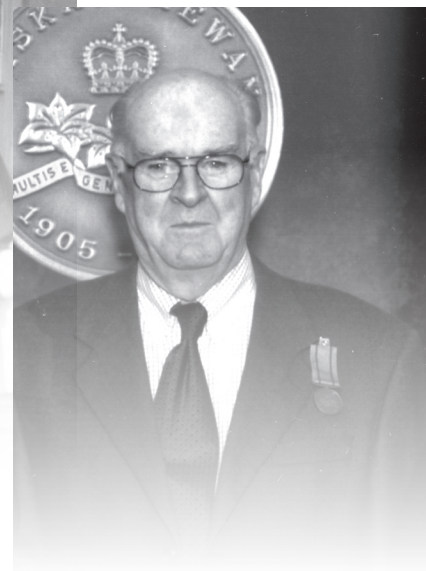
Dick H. Epp: A Life of Distinction

September 4, 1927 – June 28, 2009

By Victoria Neufeldt

Dick Epp, shown at right in two important life events: as a dapper new graduate of the German-English Academy in Rosthern in 1945, and in 2005, on the occasion of being awarded the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal

All photos in this article courtesy of Betty Epp



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The name Dick Epp must be known to all but the very newest of the readers of this journal. He retired as editor several years ago, but he was still around and involved after that. His name is welded to the structure of the history of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* and also the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan itself.

Dick died on June 28, 2009, at the age of 81. It is fitting that this issue of the *Historian* should be dedicated to him. He was involved with it from the beginning and he built it up and kept it going single-handedly until quite recently. So in this issue we will tell the story of the *Historian* and MHSS, and his involvement with them. We will also tell his own

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Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

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Editor: Victoria Neufeldt

Story Scout & Contributing Editor: Verner Friesen

Advisory Committee: Esther Patkau, Jake Buhler

Pictures editor: Helen Fast

Typist: Hilda Voth

Proofreaders: Ernie Baergen, Verner Friesen

Columns:

Victor Wiebe: Book Page and Archives Page
(contact info: 934-8125 victor.wiebe@usask.ca)

Rosemary Slater: Genealogy Page
(contact info: 955-3759 r.slater@sasktel.net)

Distribution: Verner Friesen, Erna and Elmer Neufeld

Printer: U. of Saskatchewan Printing Services

Readers are invited to submit news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc. to mhss@sasktel.net or to the MHSS address below.

MHSS Office and Archives:

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

Archive hours:

Monday: 1:30–4 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:30–4 p.m.; 7–9 p.m.


From the Editor's Desk

By Victoria Neufeldt



It is with great pleasure that we dedicate this issue of *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* to the memory of Dick Epp, who died in June this year. Featured are his life story and a number of personal tributes to him.

This also seemed an appropriate occasion to celebrate the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* itself, which for many years was synonymous with the name Dick Epp. Rosemary Slater, who has worked on the *Historian* in various capacities for a good number of years, was kind enough to undertake the writing of its history.

The article on the *Historian* includes details of Dick's love affair with computers and all they could do for the production of his journal issues. My own technical situation is a little bit simpler. As Dick did, I love Mac computers, and I have an iMac desktop, at which you see me working in the photo above. It is a Mac OS X Version 10.4.11, with an Intel Core 2 Duo processor. One excellent thing about it is that it has a wide screen (20.5 inches wide by almost 12 inches high), which I consider essential for editing on-screen. Also like Dick, I depend on the Adobe InDesign software for putting this publication together. For most scanning needs, I rely on Helen Fast, our pictures editor, who has much more sophisticated scanning equipment than I do. I should also mention that the *Historian's* relationship with the very pleasant and competent people at U of S Printing Services continues. Some things have changed, but I am happy to be continuing Dick Epp's tradition. 

ERRATUM

The first page of the June 2009 issue of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* shows the volume number as "XVI". This is an error. The volume number for all 2009 issues is "XV". The number is shown correctly in the masthead on page 2 of that issue. —*The Editor*

MHSS Board of Directors, 2009

Jake Buhler, President
836 Main Street
Saskatoon, SK S7H 0K3
Tel.: 244-1392 jakelouisebuhler@sasktel.net

George Dirks, Vice President
Box 235, Hepburn, SK S0K 1Z0
Tel: 947-2158 gtdirks@yourlink.ca

Vera Falk, Secretary/MC Sask Archivist
Box 251, Dundurn, SK S0K 1K0
Tel: 492-4731 Fax: 492-4731

Elmer Regier, Treasurer
142 Haight Street
Saskatoon, SK S7H 4V9
Tel: 373-0606 earegier@sasktel.net

Kathy Boldt, Archives
Box 152, RR #4, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7
Tel: 239-4742

Margaret Ewert
Box 127, Drake, SK S0K 0H0
Tel: 363-2077 m-ewert@hotmail.com

Verner Friesen
641-120 LaRonge Road
Saskatoon, SK S7K 7Z9
Tel: 382-2970 vafriesen@sasktel.net

Erna Neufeld
512 – 351 Saguenay Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7K 5T4
Tel: 975-0554 ewn.esn@sasktel.net

Henry Penner
Box 625, Hague, SK S0K 1X0
Tel: 225-4568

Victor G. Wiebe, Archivist & Book Review Editor
11 Kindrachuk Cres., Saskatoon, SK S7K 6J1
Tel: 934-8125 victor.wiebe@usask.ca

Other Positions

Cemeteries Project — Helen Fast, coordinator
Tel: 242-5448 rhfastlane@shaw.ca

Cemeteries Project web site — Al Mierau, webmaster
almierau@shaw.ca

MHSS web site — Ruth Friesen, webmaster

MHSS President's Corner

By Jake Buhler



On October 19, 2002, a wooden key was used to symbolically open the present premises of our historical society archives. Today, that key hangs above the archives door in the basement of Bethany Manor. In seven short years we have out-grown our space.

But there is good news! Bethany Manor has given us permission to develop more space. We will be adding washrooms, a coffee room, working space, storage space, research space, an education room, and more. The City of Saskatoon has granted a permit for initial renovations. This winter work will begin.

Increased space at the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan archives will permit us to archive hundreds of items, receive and store valuable collections, provide education, and to promote research.

You will hear from us soon. We will need your help!

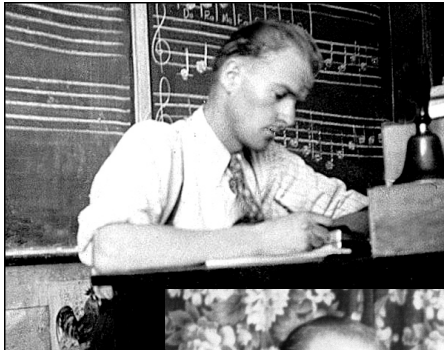


Epp continued from page 1



personal story, and include a number of notable photographs, some of which Dick, a dedicated photographer all his life, took himself. Also featured will be tributes and reminiscences from people who knew him.

Diedrich Helmut Epp was born September 4, 1927 on a farm west of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. He was the oldest of five children. When he was eight months old, the family moved to Glenbush, SK, which is where he grew up. Dick attended Avery School and graduated from the



German English Academy (now Rosthern Junior College), in Rosthern, SK in 1945. He attended Saskatoon Normal School (later



Teachers' College) and began his teaching career in 1946, in the Northvale S.D. near Mullingar, SK, not far from where he grew up. This was followed by teaching stints in other Saskatchewan village schools, in Yellowknife, NWT, and at Rosthern Junior College, where he taught for three years. On August 13th, 1955, he married Betty Berg and in September of that year, he began working for the Saskatoon Public School Board, beginning as an elementary-school teacher and later holding positions as vice principal and principal. While working and helping raise his family, Dick completed his Bachelor of Education and in 1977 was appointed coordinator of the Learning Resource Centre for the Saskatoon Public School Board, a position he held until he retired in 1986.

Among Dick's long-time interests was Mennonite history; in particular, that of Mennonites who had come to Canada from Russia. This was his own history. This interest led him to become a founding member of what is now the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, as described in some of the tributes in the following pages. He was also an active board member of *Der Bote* for many

Photos this page: top left: young Dick, aged two, driving the "car" his father had made for him; middle left: Dick, the teacher, hard at work at his desk in his first school, Northdale (1947); bottom left: Dick, looking professional but relaxed, at home (ca. 1952); right: Dick and his bride, Betty (1955)

years. With his wife, Betty, he was a charter member of Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. Here, he was always an active member, serving on boards and committees and volunteering for many other duties.

A great passion for Dick was photography. He had been a keen photographer since his youth, developing his technical and artistic skills over the years. He won numerous awards from the Saskatoon Camera Club; for example, in one banner year, 1964, four of his photographs won awards: "Outstanding Photograph in Show", second place in the general class, second place in the pictorial class, and third place in the portrait class. The year before, the club had honoured him for his photo, "Spring Splendor," shown here on page 8, which won the "Print of the Year" award.

After he retired, he could spend even more time on photography and on his new interest, the history of his own family, which he delved into with energy. He and Betty also travelled to many parts of the world, which gave Dick more wonderful opportunities for exercising his photographic skills. His collection of slides and photographs is huge — but carefully indexed and stored. He became known for the multi-projector slide shows he put on in many places in Canada and the United States.

Dick and Betty also cherished the happy and relaxed times they spent at their beloved cabin at Big Shell Lake. Some of Dick's best photographs were taken there, including the "Boat Dock" photo, shown on page 7.

In 2005, Dick and Betty celebrated 50 years of marriage by hosting a large gathering at the Circle H Ranch south of Saskatoon.



One interest that was completely new for Dick after his retirement was the world of computers. As mentioned here and in following tributes, he had been a writer and editor for years, but it wasn't until after his retirement that he took up this technological challenge. His learning curve must have been very steep, but he persevered and became extremely proficient in this technology, as described in the article on the history of *SMH*, beginning on page 12. These skills, acquired so late in life, even led him to expand to other projects besides the *Historian*. For example, he produced a family newspaper called *The Eppisode*; a professional-quality anniversary book for the 50th-anniversary reunion of the RJC class he graduated with; two books; and a timeline for Nutana Park Mennonite Church's 40th anniversary that covered the walls of the lounge and extended to a wall in the education wing.



Photos this page: top: the "Dacha Cottage" at Big Shell Lake (1980); bottom: Dick and Betty with dog on the lake-shore (1994)





Dick and Betty with their seven grandchildren; this photo was taken by their son David at their 50th wedding anniversary celebration in 2005

The following are tributes to Dick Epp by friends, family, and colleagues. —Ed.

Leonard Doell's tribute, given at the Celebration of Life service in Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, on July 3rd:

Today, we as a Mennonite community are gathered to mourn the loss and to give thanks for the life and work of our friend, teacher, author, historian, photographer, Dick H. Epp. As a Mennonite people we are greatly indebted to Dick Epp for his vision, his perseverance and dedication to preserving the history, culture, and faith of our people.

Dick had a deep passion for sharing the stories of our past and the creation of a Historical Society became a good vehicle for that to happen. In the early 1970s, a small group of individuals gathered in Saskatoon with a vision to create a Mennonite historical society. By June 1973, an organizational meeting of the Western Canadian Mennonite Historical Society was held; only four interested and dedicated individuals showed up at that first meeting and one was Dick Epp. The first annual and founding meeting was held here at the Nutana Park Mennonite Church on November 24, 1973. Ted Regehr became the first president of what became known as the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and Alberta, followed by Blake Friesen in 1976 and then Dick Epp in 1980, who began his long and distinguished tenure in that position.

For the next 16 years Dick would serve as the president of this organization, faithfully carrying and nurturing it through some very lean years. It was always hard to attract members from distant places as long as Alberta and Saskatchewan were together, since few Alberta members attended the Saskatchewan meetings and vice versa. Eventually the societies split. The Saskatchewan society remained small and fragile but held together by a few committed people, including Dick. The annual membership fee to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada was \$500 and because the Saskatchewan society's coffers were often empty, Dick would graciously contribute most or all of the fee from his personal money in order to keep the society afloat for another year. Had it not been for the commitment and perseverance of Dick Epp, the society would probably not have survived these tough years.

In January of 1996, I was elected as president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan to replace Dick Epp. I was very humbled but also apprehensive about taking this position because Dick left a legacy that I knew I could not fill. It was also difficult for Dick to let go of the position as president and to now sit in on board meetings as the editor of the *Historian*. Over time, Dick took me under his wing and in kind and helpful ways he began to mentor me in my role as president, for which I am very grateful to him. I developed a deep respect and appreciation for Dick during the 12 years we served on the board together.

Then for the next 11 years, Dick turned his attention to being the volunteer editor of the first-class *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*. He poured endless time and resources, including many Mac computers, into creating a newsletter that was the envy of other societies across the country, plus it was enjoyed by many people who had no connection to the Historical Society. It highlighted local histories and genealogies, which provided intimate insights into the lives of our people, putting flesh and blood on to the people whose stories then came alive and were preserved for generations to come. In April 2006, the Historical Society honoured Dick for his many years of commitment and leadership to this organization.

Dick recognized his shortcomings in these tasks and often acknowledged his loving wife Betty for her tremendous sup-



“Big Shell Lake — Boat Dock”, photographed by Dick in 1993; this was one of Dick’s favourite photos. He had it blown up and hung on his office wall at home.

port and the way she complemented him. Betty was always there to encourage him and to gently remind him of things he forgot, she helped to edit and became known as the lady with the Red Pen, as well as to host many guests and meetings and through this we had the good fortune of experiencing the genuine hospitality, generosity, and kindness of their home.

Today we mourn with you as a family the tremendous loss that we have experienced in the death of our friend Dick. We are very grateful for all that he contributed and accomplished in the time that God granted him life on this earth. In closing, I want to quote Dick’s words from a 2004 issue of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*: “When I look back, I’m glad that I did not throw in the towel during those hard years because what we have now is something that



Dick receiving the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal from Lieutenant Governor Lynda Haverstock, October 26th, 2005, “to honour you for your exceptional dedication to your community and to our fine province”. Her Honour also presented him with The Lieutenant Governor’s Celebration of the Arts Pin, “in recognition of your talents as a writer and photographer.” To Dick’s left in the photo is MLA Judy Junor, who had nominated him for the Centennial Medal.

should make all Mennonites in this province proud, because we are preserving our history for future generations”.

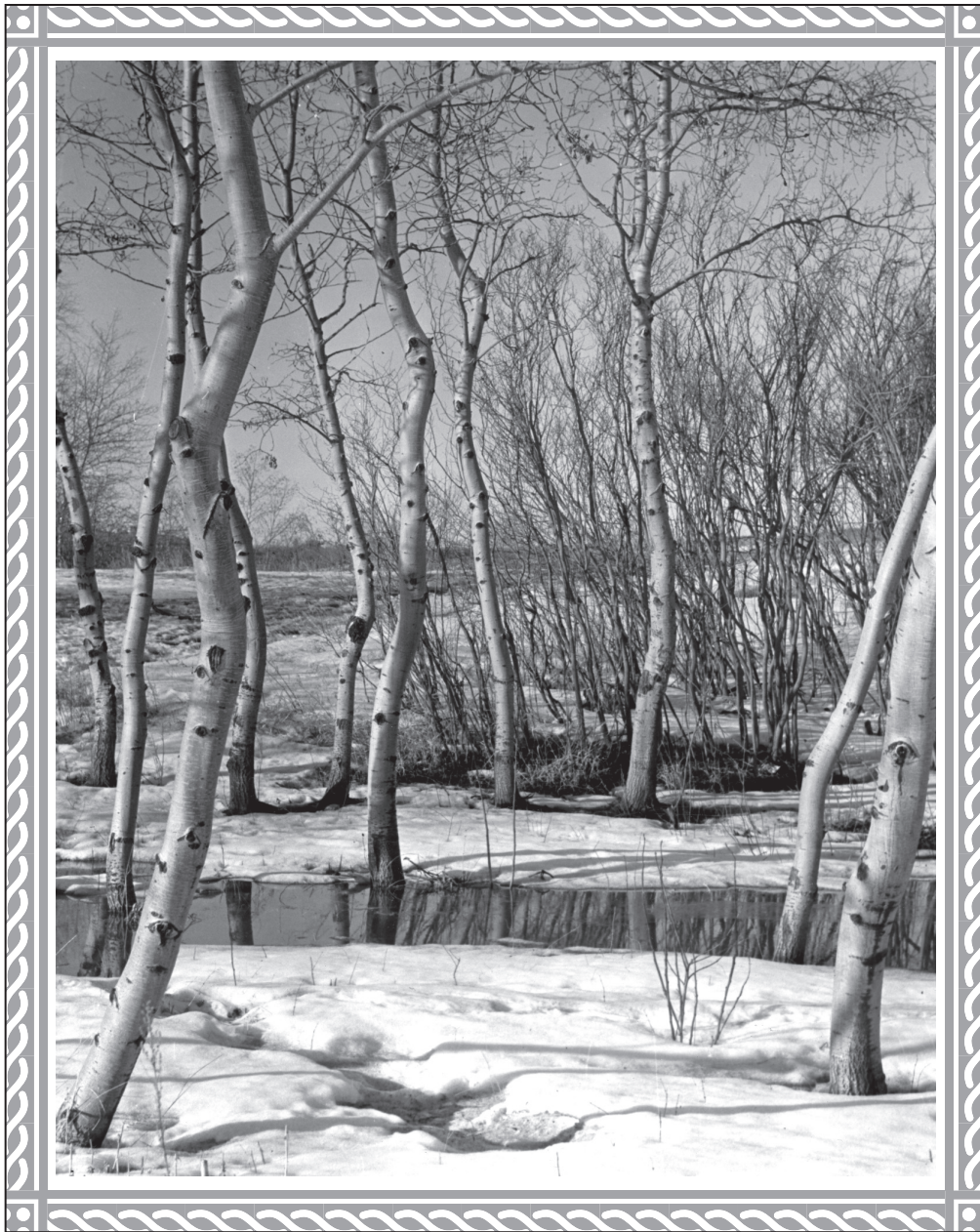
Thank you Dick for the things that you have done for us and for those yet to come; may you rest in peace.



Ted Regehr’s tribute, delivered on behalf of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, at the viewing in the evening of July 2nd, at Nutana Park Church:

Dick Epp, in one of his books, tells of the time when the railway wanted to build a track right through the middle of the Epp family house in Glenbush, Saskatchewan. Was that the jolt which got him started as a story-teller and writer? It is, in any case, only one of the many stories he told of his own experiences and those of family members and friends.

Stories shape their identity and help people when dealing with the vagaries of life. Not long ago, many Mennonite stories were told in Low German to the accompaniment of Knaksoat, (sunflower seeds), or in High German if they



Dick's black-and-white photo, "Spring Splendor," shown above, won the "Print of the Year" Shield award from the Saskatoon Camera Club in 1963; it was taken near Saskatoon

dealt with the loss of the beloved Russian homeland. In the 1950s, younger writers like Dick Epp began to tell stories in English of their Canadian experiences. Initially Dick apparently had no coherent plan about any future use of his stories. He simply enjoyed writing and telling stories about interesting people and events. He cherished times together with others who shared his interests and therefore became an immediate and enthusiastic founding member when a society dedicated to the writing and promotion of Saskatchewan and Alberta Mennonite history was formed. The society began with a small group which met alternately

in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Dick was one of those who made special trips, took photographs, gathered stories and participated in the Alberta meetings. He and Betty also hosted visiting Albertans when they came to meetings in Saskatchewan. But it soon became evident that there was sufficient interest to have separate Mennonite historical societies in Saskatchewan and Alberta. So the former Saskatchewan and Alberta society became the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan.

Dick Epp served as chairperson of that Society for 16 years, and as editor of its official publication, the *Saskatchewan*



Dick and Betty in Toronto in about 1966, posing in front of Casa Loma; photo by son David

Mennonite Historian, for eleven years. He, with Betty's help, made that publication one of the best of its kind, publishing numerous stories and providing a wealth of local historical and genealogical information. At his retirement as editor in 2006 it was noted that "No one person has invested as much time and energy in the work of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan as has Dick Epp."

The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, together with other Canadian Mennonite historical societies, also supported and sponsored a larger project. Canadian centennial celebrations created interest in the writing of histories of different Canadian ethnic and religious groups. That prompted a small joint committee of the established Ontario and Manitoba Mennonite historical societies to promote the writing of a single-volume history of Mennonites in Canada. They had already missed the Canadian centennial, but hoped their history could be published in time for the centennial of the coming to Canada of Mennonites from Russia in 1874. That small committee then encouraged the establishment of Mennonite historical societies in all the western provinces and invited their participation and support in the writing of the history of Mennonites in Canada. Dick Epp embraced the project with enthusiasm and offered many interesting insights as the writing of the Mennonites in Canada book proceeded.

The proposed one-volume project, not unlike some government bureaucratic programs, eventually grew to encompass three volumes. The first one met the 1974 target date but only covered the period up to 1920. The third and final volume was published in 1996. When it came time to launch that last volume, Dick Epp served as the key organizer, promoter, and supporter of that event here in Saskatoon. He used his many contacts and persuasive powers to attract not

only many key Mennonite leaders and historians, but also civic, university, and community leaders and even the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan. He also prepared an exceptionally fine photo and audio collection of that event. He was a true and generous friend of Mennonite historians and of the many and varied programs of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan.

Dick and Betty Epp were and Betty remains Sylvia's and my cherished friend. When Dick autographed our copy of his book *From Between the Tracks, 1927-1952*, he wrote "For Sylvia and Ted for many years of friendship. Enjoy!" We had many similar interests, and join with all of you as we mourn Dick's passing and, at the same time, celebrate his very productive and well lived life.



Joan Katherine Berg's tribute, read at the viewing at Nutana Park Church, July 2:

I feel very honoured to be here today with all of you to pay tribute to Dick.

In 1955, I was the luckiest nine-year-old in the world when Dick married my sister Betty. I was incredibly proud to acquire this dashing new brother-in-law, who already had established a reputation as an excellent teacher and photographer.

Right from the start, I found Dick easy to talk to. He actually seemed interested in what I was saying. I felt like a real person, a somebody. And I think that was one of Dick's great qualities — his empathy toward and respect for children.

This quality carried him through 40 years of teaching, during which hundreds of kids from all backgrounds benefited from his wisdom and caring attention.

Betty asked me to tell you this story. One late summer day, when Dick was teaching at Mayfair Public School, where I was also a student, I was helping him in the office. He was getting ready for a teachers' meeting to prepare for the fall session, and I was helping print documents off the Gestetner machine (this was before the days of Xerox). He asked me to go to the staff room and make tea for the meeting. Off I went, eager to show him that I knew how to boil water and pour it into a teapot. Dick came into the staff room and asked me if the tea was made. I proudly showed him the teapot full of steeping tea. "Oh Joan, this won't do," he said. "This is green tea." I had inadvertently used some teacher's personal stash of green tea to make the staff tea. I had no idea what green tea was. I was totally mortified. But all ended well. He gave me a couple of dollars and I ran off to the Safeway to buy some regular tea and the situation was saved.

His love for children also made Dick a great father and grandfather. It was always a joy to see the faces of his grandchildren light up when Grandpa told them a story or joke, or got them to help him with one of his many projects.

Ah, Dick's projects. Dick was always a creator and innovator, and always one step ahead of the game. In his book, *From Between the Tracks*, he tells how he bought his first 35mm camera after his first month of teaching. This purchase launched him into his second career and passion as a photographer and, later on, into multimedia productions. Do you remember the shows with the nine projectors? As early as 1947, Dick was producing filmstrips and slideshows with his students, projecting them onto a white sheet lent for the occasion by the mother of one of the students. The audiences for these shows were the somewhat startled — and very impressed — parents of the students.



Dick at his laptop at the lake, in 1996, wearing his favourite cap and intent on his writing.

When he retired from teaching, Dick developed his third passion, writing and publishing. He acquired a Macintosh computer, and with some advice from David, turned himself into a desktop publisher. He produced the family bulletin *The Eppisode*, edited the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* for 11 years, and was a member of the board for *Der Bote*. And he wrote — hundreds of insightful and frequently witty articles and editorials, all signed with the familiar *dhe*. He wrote the history of Avery School, edited my father's memoirs and pulled together countless yearbooks. Finally, he wrote his own story in *From Between the Tracks, 1927-1952*.

Dick lives on in all these works, and they reflect the nature of the man — kind, generous to a fault, devoted to his family and friends. He appreciated a good joke and always checked his facts — after all, he was a teacher.

And all along the way, for 54 years, Betty was there to support him and help him bring the works to life. He thanked her again and again in his writings, and his heartfelt thanks to her are among the last words he wrote in his diary before he died. His love for Betty, David, Donald and Robert and their families made him live and breathe. They were his truest and greatest passion.

I'd also like to say a special thanks to Don, Chris, Kyle and Michelle for their loving attention and support to Dick and Betty, especially during the last months of Dick's illness. David and Robert also remained close, and with their families, supported their parents.

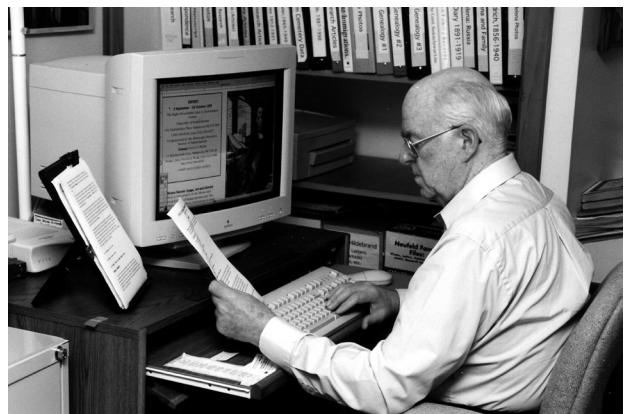
Dick was always a leader, one who fearlessly went ahead to face new challenges, and in his death he has once more gone ahead of us. Through his writing and photographs, he showed us how to remember. In the end he has also taught us how to move forward.

We will miss him every day, but we will always be grateful for lessons learned. Rest in peace, dear Dick.



Some personal memories of Dick

From Anita Froese: Dick Epp was my teacher for part of my elementary schooling at Rabbit Lake and also at RJC in 1952/53. He made every lesson special by using many examples and anecdotes from his childhood and youth. Making notes in his biology class was a must. I remember he stressed folding the sheet of foolscap lengthwise so that the notes would be brief and easy to review before the final exam.



At home in his study, at his main, big-screen computer; photo taken in 1999

Dick compiled *The Avery Years*. Since I attended school here I will always treasure this book and all the memories it brings to mind. I wonder if Dick has access to a computer or a camera up in heaven so that he can finish up the many projects he still had in mind?

Dick was also a wonderful friend. He and Betty hosted us for suppers and faspas. If you arrived unannounced they would not let you leave without a cup of coffee and a snack to go with it.

Thanks Dick, for being just who you were — we will always cherish your memory!



From Art and Elfriede Wieler: Dick had been asked by Ginn and Company to do a chapter in a new Grade 3 social studies book, "Canadian Communities". He needed to find a farm family with an ethnic background, so he called us one day and asked if we would let him use our family. So for a year, Dick and Betty and sometimes their boys came to our farm to take pictures of all the different facets of farm life. It turned out to be a great experience for us. We enjoyed welcoming the Epps to our home and the book Ginn and Company sent to us is a real treasure now, as are the memories. Dick also presented us with an album of all the pictures he took, many of which are not in the book. We are grateful to Dick for letting us be a part of this project.



From Fred Wieler: I remember Dick as a good teacher and a likeable person. But also a good hockey coach. He must have been because we (RJC) won the Sask Valley Cup when Dick was our coach.



From Kathy Boldt: It was the fall of 1952 at RJC. A new year, new students, and a new chemistry and biology teacher. At our ages of 16 and 17 the new teacher seemed rather old to us. Dick must have been all of 26 years of age. Maybe it was the slightly receding hairline. But I loved the chem and "bugs" classes.

Money was at a premium in my family as for many families. I realized this much later. Dick took our grad photos and gave them to us but never a bill. I still wonder if I ever paid him. He was such a kind person and as the years rolled by, the teacher became a friend.



From Helen Fast: During the 1952 -55 years while I (Helen "Lane" Fast) attended Rosthern Junior College, "Mr. Epp" taught chemistry, biology, and agriculture. He was a great young teacher and he loved a good giggle. Monday mornings were exceptionally great for us because we knew we could count on having fun at his expense and wasting a little time teasing him. We all knew he had a girlfriend in Saskatoon, and he would go to visit Elizabeth "Betty" Hildebrandt nearly every weekend. When we teased him he would laugh and blush, but we knew he was happy to let us know he was experiencing a growing love for his lovely "Betty". They were married in the summer of 1955 at First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. Thank you, "Mr. Epp," for being our teacher.



From Doug Porteous: In 1970, my second year teaching, I was appointed to the vice-principalship of Prince Philip School. The principal was Dick Epp, whom I had met at a 4H camp a couple of summers before, where he was the


photography instructor and I ran the waterfront. Dick was an excellent principal. I was with him for four years. He assembled a strong school staff, promoting basic skills, resource-based learning, daily physical education, outdoor education, the arts, music and drama, science, social studies, recognizing learning styles, being sensitive to special needs, and being, as he would say: "fair, firm, and friendly".

During his tenure, the open area classroom was built, as was a new gymnasium, the old gym becoming a learning resource centre. The open area classroom that once housed 120 students, some 35 years later became my wife Anne's kindergarten classroom for four years, and what a wonderful room it was: spacious and abundant with learning stations. Dick always said that the open area would be valuable for other educational uses some day. I phoned him in June to take him to Prince Philip to show him how right he was. Unfortunately, I was too late. Dick was a great mentor for me. He was a devoted, proud-of-his-family man, spiritual, with a work ethic and high values. He cared for his fellow human beings and the natural environment. He will be remembered well.



And, last but certainly not least:

From Sam Steiner, President, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada:

I met Dick a few times at Mennonite Historical Society of Canada meetings, and was always impressed by his dedication and determination to keep the Saskatchewan society going, even when that seemed unlikely. I believe he almost single-handedly published the newsletter, and funded a number of projects out of his own pocket. He was the sort of leader that every historical society needs to keep going. 



A History of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

By Rosemary Slater

A tall black cairn standing in front of the Rosthern Mennonite Church marks fifty years since the first Russian Mennonite refugees arrived in Rosthern in July of 1923. This cairn was the first project of the group that evolved into the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan. One of the members of that group was Dick Epp, President of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan for many years and later, editor of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*.

A newsletter outlining ambitious plans for the young society (then known as the Western Canadian Mennonite Historical Society and representing both Alberta and Saskatchewan) appeared in September, 1973. This was followed by another ten issues published sporadically over the next six years, the last one coming out in May of 1979. The idea of “the publication of a popular journal”, as outlined in the first newsletter, appeared to have died. Then in October, 1993, Volume 1–1 of *News Issue*, put out by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, made its appearance under the editorship of Heinz Bergen.

Volume 2 with three issues appeared in 1994, with Dick Epp’s name appearing as co-editor by November that year. In May of 1995, with Dick Epp as editor, the *News Issue* had expanded to twelve pages and included photos, graphics, a variety of fonts, and articles contributed by eight different writers. In January of 1996, the last issue of *News Issue* came out, announcing the annual general meeting of the Society, to be held later that month in Osler, Saskatchewan.

The AGM of 1996 proved to be an unexpected turning point for the MHSS and the newsletter. After an election process that *Robert’s Rules of Order* would not have approved, the new board found itself with no president, no Dick Epp and subsequently, one more board member than allowed by the constitution. Hasty consultation by new board members during the break resulted in Leonard Doell being prevailed upon to take over as president, Dick Epp being invited to attend board meetings as the editor of the official publication of the MHSS, and one board member stepping down for the good of the provincial government records, but continuing to attend meetings and work for the Society.

In April of 1996, Volume 1-No. 1 of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*, official periodical of the

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society, Inc. appeared with the front page feature article “Leonard Doell Accepts Presidency”. The dream of 1973 of the publication of a popular journal had been realized.

With the support of his son, David, who supplied ongoing computer support, and his wife, Betty, who supplied endless cups of coffee, encouragement, and help with proofing and mailing, Dick made his job as editor of the *Historian* into a full-time position. As the paper expanded and became more sophisticated, University of Saskatchewan Printing Services was engaged for the job of printing the *Historian*. This proved to be an excellent choice, because they also provided expertise and suggestions to help Dick improve the appearance and readability of the paper. Graphic designer Pierre Wilkinson in particular became Dick’s mentor and advisor.

As well as time spent actually putting the *Historian* together, Dick devoted considerable time and personal resources to acquiring the most up-to-date computer equipment and learning how to use it. Beginning with a Macintosh Classic and a Laser Writer purchased in the early ’90s, in the mid ’90s, Dick upgraded to a Performa 575 with System 7 and colour. He had also bought a Macintosh PowerBook 160 around 1993 to take notes at meetings. As technology advanced, Dick acquired a Performa 6360 about 1996, then moved to a Power Macintosh G3 about 1998, a Power Macintosh dual processor G4 around 2001, and finally a Power Macintosh G5 about 2003. To lay out the *Historian*, Dick acquired Adobe PageMaker and Adobe PhotoShop software. In order to include pictures in the *Historian*, Dick needed a scanner. The first greyscale Microtek flatbed scanner he acquired was later improved by the addition of a Nikon Coolscan film scanner for negatives and slides. Those first scanners were replaced by a more sophisticated Agfa colour scanner and a Canon film scanner. By 2004, he was running a very sophisticated desktop publishing operation on his Power Macintosh G5 computer, using Adobe InDesign and Adobe PhotoShop software.

Dick was constantly teaching himself new skills, improving and expanding the *Historian*, with the result that by 2004, the paper was consistently between 28 and 32 pages and was being sent out to over 300 subscribers and organizations across Canada and the U.S. Leonard Doell, as MHSS president, spearheaded the drive to build an

WCMHS NEWSLETTER

NO. I (September, 1973)

Finally the first Newsletter is on its way! With it we want to inform WCMHS members that our organization is alive and well and anticipating a bright future. The Newsletter is basically intended to convey information about the overall activity of the WCMHS and the individual projects of members as well as Mennonite history, but of course with special emphasis on Alberta and Saskatchewan history. Members are encouraged to send information about their own activities; historical materials available in their district; suggestions for possible areas of investigation and research; new books or private publications ' which need further publicity. Ultimately we can only be successful if we all make suggestions and all pool our intellectual resources.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEWS

An organizational meeting of the Society was held in the Calgary Foothills Mennonite Church on June 16. With Menno Epp as chairman and ten enthusiastic members present, it was a good meeting. The positive response to the Society's proposed programme was heartening. Everyone agreed that we should begin work on it, as soon as possible. Accordingly, nominations were made ' for the Executive Committee and the area representatives of the Society. (A list of these nominees appears elsewhere in this newsletter.)

At the time of publication we were not yet sure of the exact status of the Saskatchewan branch of our Society. Apparently a lack of adequate communication on our part resulted in a small turnout at the June 16 meeting in Saskatoon. Wally Regier and Ted Regehr are presently

in charge of the matter. Some informal discussion has suggested that Saskatchewan members -could make their nominations for a joint executive as soon as possible. The following nominations were made by Alberta members at the June 16 meeting.

CALGARY- WCMHS BRANCH NOMINATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE

President -no nominations accepted
Vice-President - Ed Wiebe
Treasurer - Rudy Wiens (Local banker
Gilbert Epp has offered his assistance)
Secretary - Harold Hildebrandt

SOME PROJECTS TO CONSIDER

It is net too early to begin thinking about projects that could be undertaken either by individuals or groups. We would like to hear from members who plan to work on a study. Perhaps you are aware of studies in progress. If so, please let us know, and we will pass on the information in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, here are some suggestions: a) an account of a community, or a church, or an institution, or an individual; b) an introduction to a diary, or a journal, or a collection of letters; c) an account of an immigrant's first twenty-five or first fifty years in Canada; d) oral history on tapes.

Our Proposed Journal

If the work of the various members of our society, (and others) is to be made available on a broader basis we must give serious consideration to the publication of-a popular journal. Some members have already suggested articles dealing with the history of individual communities, churches, and special organizations. Other items might include biographical studies, stories, Low-German material, book reviews, English translations of materials published by Echo Verlag, etc.

Above is a photographic reproduction (about 70% of original size) of the first page of the first, hand-typed, two-page newsletter issue published by the Western Canadian Mennonite Historical Society in 1973.

Source for this and the images on the following two pages: archives of MHSS.

archive, which opened in 2002. With the publicity provided by the *Historian*, materials flooded in until further expansion was required. The *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian* was recognized across Canada as one of the best of its kind.

Two unexpected hospitalizations and advancing age had caused Dick concern about the future of the *Historian*. In 2005, he asked for an eight-month leave from editing the *Historian* while he worked on a book. A committee under the leadership of Verner Friesen put out the first two issues of Volume XI, using the templates and guidelines Dick had developed over the years and many of the materials he had collected for future use.

The last issues edited by Dick Epp came out in December, 2005 and April, 2006. The committee, with Verner Friesen as interim editor, continued to put out the *Historian*, following the pattern set by Dick Epp, until the fall of 2008, when a new editor, Victoria Neufeldt, took up the work begun by Dick Epp. 🍁





Aid society sparks prairie fire

by Ron

The following article is being reprinted with permission from Janice Montford, Advertising Co-ordinator for the magazine, *InsuranceWest*. Volume 4 Number 3, Summer 1999. We are happy to bring this historical review of Mennonite Trust, Waldheim, Saskatchewan to our readers. dbe

Earl Harder runs a very successful business. He has a staff of talented and loyal employees. The company uses the latest in electronic wizardry and has a smartly designed web site on the Internet. The head office is well appointed and comfortable.

Pretty much what you'd expect of a big city operation. Except this is not a big city company.

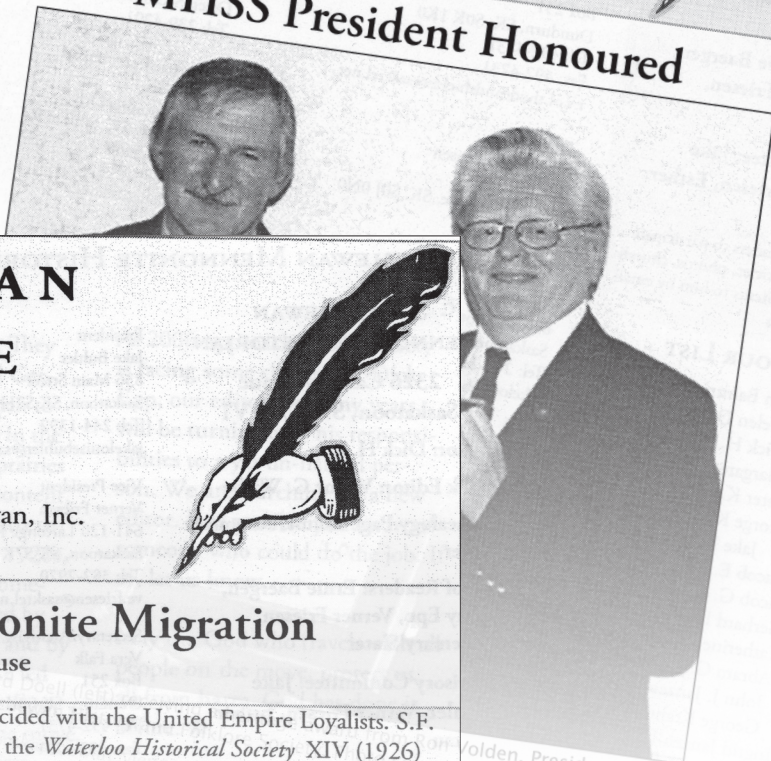
When Earl drives to work each morning, he

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE HISTORIAN

Official periodical of the
Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, Inc.
Volume X No. 3, December 2004



MHSS President Honoured



Golden, President of the
Dennis Fisher

ions working with little or no recognition
of their own." He went on to say

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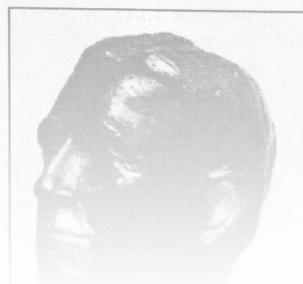
A Lesser Known Mennonite Migration

By Carl A. Krause

The migration of Mennonites from the United States coincided with the United Empire Loyalists. S.F. Coffman writes in an article, "The Adventure of Faith" in the *Waterloo Historical Society XIV* (1926) p.232 that: *The Mennonites coming to Canada had a deeper purpose, a religious loyalty which wavers not nor fails because of changing sentiments of political impact only.* Dr. Carl A. Krause, a long time teacher, principal and writer, Saskatoon, introduces our readers to one of the migrations to Canada in this article. dbe

A most interesting reunion took place in Rosthern in summer, 1921, in the yard of David and Margarete Toews. Members of eleven families, all with American and other ties and connections, met to renew acquaintances. For most of those assembled, three years had passed since their migration from Oklahoma to Canada, the majority settling, at least initially, in the Eigenheim community west of Rosthern. For David Toews it was a reunion of quite another kind, but more will be said of that later.

The story of the Mennonite migration of 1918 from Oklahoma to Can-



J.S. & Helena Friesen:

A Saskatchewan Mennonite Family with a Difference

Compiled and edited by Verner Friesen

This is the story of Jacob S. and Helena (Guenther Peters) Friesen and family, breeders of Arabian horses that won them more than a room-full of Canadian and international ribbons and awards.

Jacob S. Friesen was born March 9, 1911 in Manitoba, the oldest son of Isbrand and Maria (Shapansky) Friesen. He moved with his parents to Aberdeen, Saskatchewan in 1918. This is where Jake took his few years of schooling, in a private German school. In 1925, the family moved to a small village called Rheinland, a few miles north of Osler, Saskatchewan, where they farmed until 1934.

In 1932, at age 21, Jake moved with three families, the Jacob Unraus, the Isaac Wielers and the Isaac Hieberts, and one other bachelor, Abe Wieler, to Carcajou, in the



Jacob Friesen in 1930 in Rheinland village:
always a lover of horses
All photos courtesy of the Friesen family

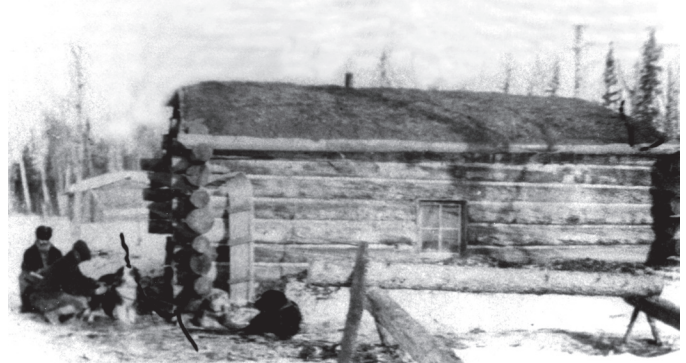
Peace River country in northern Alberta, about 175 kilometres north of the town of Peace River. At that time, Carcajou was the most northerly grain-growing area in North America. (*Carcajou*, another name for wolverine, comes from Algonquian.) Jake had been given the assignment of “preparing the way” for his parents and siblings to make the move later. Since there were no roads north of Peace River, the group spent two weeks at Peace River building a scow big enough to carry their farm equipment, livestock, furniture, and food supplies, as well as the passengers, down the Peace River. The scow was towed by a motor boat.

Because the river was quite low at the time, they ran aground on a sandbar just 19 kilometres short of the Carcajou Landing. It was late October, the temperature had dropped, and ice was beginning to form around the boat. To lighten the load, they were forced to wade into the

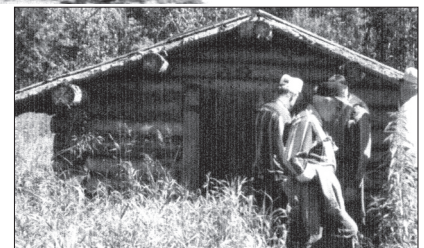
cold water to unload many of their supplies on the shore, before they were able to push the scow and get it moving along again. Altogether, the group spent 41 hours on the water before arriving at Carcajou Landing. Jake picked up the abandoned supplies after freeze-up, when he could drive to the site on the ice with horses and sleigh. The seed oats and some of the flour had been ruined by the rising water of the river. After the spring thaw, the scow was dismantled and the lumber was used for housing.

At first Jake lived with the Unrau family, but there was barely room for their own family, so Jake arranged with local store keeper, trader, and farmer, C. W. McLean, to live in a nearby log shack. For part of the winter of 1932-33 Jake batched in this shack. He had two horses and a cow, which he kept in an old log barn. He ate mostly rice. There was no meat except for some moose meat which the natives had given him in trade for some milk. At one time when supplies were running low, Jake and a friend went on snowshoes to Keg River, a distance of 48 kilometres, stopping for the night at a trapper’s cabin. Jake lived at Carcajou until the summer of 1933, when he returned to Rheinland.

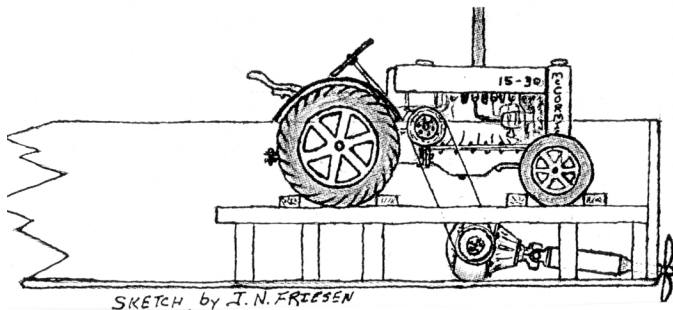
In 1934 he moved back to Carcajou with his parents and family. The family included six sons and one married daughter and her husband. Also part of the group were the David Fehrs, who had a family of ten, three of them



The log cabin in which
Jacob Friesen lived in
1932 – 1933
At right, the still-standing
cabin in 1996



married with families of their own. This time the families stopped at Peace River to build two large scows, 18.3 metres (60 ft.) long, to transport the passengers, farm equipment, livestock, and household belongings down the river. The two scows were tied together. A propeller was attached to the rear-end drive shaft from an old truck; this was driven by a 15-30 McCormick Deering tractor sitting backwards on the rearmost scow.



Tug drive built by Jacob Friesen's father, Isbrand Friesen; the tug drive could not be reversed

The trip from Peace River to Carcajou caused severe hardship. The scows became grounded on a sandbar. With difficulty they managed to free the scows and get them turned around, but in the process the front scow hit the bank. The impact damaged the bottom of the scow and water started coming in. They had no choice but to cut the ropes joining the two scows so as to save the rear scow, which carried the passengers. The front scow sank, taking with it household supplies, furniture, horses, cattle, and farm machinery. Only one horse and one pig swam to shore and were rescued. Later some of the furniture was spotted floating downstream and was retrieved and eventually returned to its rightful owners.

Upon arriving in Carcajou, they witnessed the flood damage that had been caused by an ice jam in late April. The families who had settled there earlier had not heeded the warnings of the local natives about settling in the flats. That spring they had had to move all their possessions and livestock to higher ground due to the flood. Because there were few roads, the people depended a lot on the Peace River for transportation, travelling by boat in summer and horse and sleigh on the ice in winter.

Jake Friesen came back to Saskatchewan in 1935, but his parents and siblings stayed in northern Alberta. They were planning a move to La Crete, Alberta where some other Mennonites had begun to settle, but before that came to pass, Jake's father died in February of 1937. He was the first Mennonite settler to be buried in Carcajou. Shortly after that, Jake's mother, Maria, and the whole family moved to La Crete.

Jake worked on several farms in the Osler area, one being the Corny Driedger place at Rosenfeld village near Osler. On March 22, 1936, he married Helena (Guenther) Peters, who had one daughter, Justina, from a previous marriage. The wedding took place at Helena's parents' farm in the Hepburn district.

Together Jake and Helena moved to the farm where Helena had lived during her previous marriage, in the Choritz district, nine miles west and south of Hague. They had three horses, two cows, and some young stock. The "Dirty Thirties" were hard years; money was scarce. They bought only the bare essentials, nothing extra. They worked their land with horses until 1939, when they purchased their first tractor. This farm is where Aaron and Mathilda were born.

In 1941 they moved half a mile west of the original farm. They rented one quarter of land with some buildings. There was a larger house here and a bigger barn as well. They milked up to ten cows and raised some pigs. In 1943 they built a new chicken barn and shipped hatching eggs for a number of years. Elsie and Shirley were born on this farm.

In 1947 they started a new yard on the same quarter and moved a large barn onto it. There was a lot of work to be done before it was ready to be used as a dairy barn. The first winter they milked seventeen cows and separated the milk and shipped the cream. In 1948 they started shipping milk which made life quite a bit easier. All the milk was shipped in eight gallon cans. There was no house on this location, so they lived in a car shed with their five children. It was here that they made room for another son, Alvin.

In 1949, they purchased a nearly new house in Hague and moved it to the farm. This was a very special time. The house had three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. Quite a change from the one-room car shed that they had earlier called home. In 1951 Ed was born. More land was purchased and the farm grew. They had the dairy farm from 1948 till 1960, when the cows were sold. The grain farming continued and Jake did some trucking on the side. Helena would help a lot with the outside work, including stooking sheaves, sometimes taking the children along to the field, where they entertained themselves. She always had a big garden and did a lot of sewing, making many quilts and layettes for MCC.

In Jake's younger years he would break horses on his father's farm. His love for horses was inherited by his youngest son, Ed. Ed says about his father, "My father loved horses. My friends have told me that when my dad

Following is Helena Guenter's story in her own words:

I, Helena Guenter, was born on June 25, 1910 on my father's homestead near Osler, Saskatchewan. My parents were Aron and Anna (Bergmann) Guenter. I was only two years and ten months old when my mother passed away on April 2, 1913, leaving my father alone to look after seven children ranging in age from infancy to fifteen years. Our father taught us to pray and to write and we learned to work together. He always worked together with us. He played with us and went visiting with us. We travelled by horse and buggy in summer and by sleigh in winter. My father liked to sing as we travelled. Two of the songs I remember are "The Great Physician" and "Nearer my God to Thee".

Four years later my father married Helena (Ginter) Harms. She had four children, so we were now a family of eleven children. We all had to pull together and work together. Times were very hard and money was scarce at times, but we always had enough to eat. We travelled six miles to church on Sundays and three miles to school. As a result, I attended school for only two years. We were taught only the basics in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Much of the teaching was done at home.

I liked working outside. We always had cows to milk and chickens and horses to feed. In spring I helped with the seeding. I plowed and harrowed with four or five horses. In the fall I stooked the sheaves. Then I hauled grain, by horse and wagon, from the threshing machine to the granary and sometimes to the elevator in Hepburn, which was nine miles away.

I experienced many joys, but also lots of sorrow and sadness in my younger years. First of all, losing my mother at a very young age; then when I was sixteen years old my older brother died at age twenty in a threshing machine accident. This was a terrible blow to the whole family, something we will never forget.

In 1931, I married Frank Peters. Our first little girl, Justina, was born in 1932. Our joy turned to deep sorrow when Frank became ill and passed away in 1934. I moved back to my parents' home with Justina. They shared my sorrow and made me feel at home. I will always be very grateful to my parents for doing this for me.

I married Jacob S. Friesen on March 22, 1936.

had a horse, it was always something special. They were inevitably pretty horses, matched teams and high-steppers. He had a real eye for them, so I guess it was only natural that he would eventually discover Arabian horses" (*Canadian Arabian Horse News*, August, 2008, p. 34).

During the grain and dairy farming years, horses were there to help with the farm work. They purchased their first "fun" horses in 1963. Jake encouraged Ed to become involved in 4-H. In 1966 the Friesens stopped purely by accident at the Canadian Arabian Nationals in Calgary on their way to a summer vacation. They ended up staying for the rest of the show and came home with an Arabian filly. A year later, they purchased "Wildwood Kochar++" at seven months of age, who eventually became an outstanding horse in the show ring and ensured the future of their stable, named Wunderbar Arabians.



Outstanding in their field: Helena and Jake in the 1960s

In 1969, they purchased 27 acres of land on Eleventh Street West, on the western outskirts of Saskatoon. A house, barn and quonset were built, and later a riding arena. This is where the breeding of Arabian horses began and the show ring became commonplace. Wunderbar Arabians was established.

"For the next several years Ed Friesen and Wildwood Kochar++ were a familiar sight in the winner's circle on the Canadian Arabian horse circuit. From Alberta to Manitoba, the big grey and the slender young man took many Championships, Reserves and red ribbons in the [categories of] Halter, Park, Pleasure and Most Classic. (Ed's dad was his greatest fan and supporter). In 1973 Wildwood Kochar++ was awarded his first Legion of Merit title. A year later, his success as a sire began to make a serious impact on the industry. In all, eighty percent of his offspring have won championships. 'We



The Friesen farm west of Hague, with the “nearly new” house from town; photo taken in 1950.

travelled all over looking at Arabian horses in those days’, Ed recalls. ‘Our first choice for bloodstock turned out to be the Gainey horses from the United States. We bought Gai Person Dream from Mr. Gainey to show and to breed. She was an ideal choice for a Wunderbar foundation mare’” (*Canadian Arabian Horse News*, Aug. 2008, pp. 34 and 35).

“If Wunderbar ever had a ‘Wunderkind’ it’s Mariachi WA. Here is a splendid example of the Friesens’ desire to create an Arabian horse with equal parts greatness in halter and under saddle. ‘We are very excited about the first Mariachi WA babies’, Laura (Ed’s wife) says proudly. ‘They are beautiful, with great Arabian type, and are already exhibiting trainability and athletic flare’” (*Canadian Arabian Horse News*, August, 2008, p. 37).

A number of other Friesen horses began winning awards and Wunderbar horses were soon attracting buyers

and breeders worldwide. The mare Precious Me was sold to Germany in 1991, where she won numerous awards, including National Reserve Champion of Germany. Another mare, April Danser, was sold to Italy and became Supreme Champion in that country.

The Wunderbar farm has always been a family affair. Jake and Helen continued to help on the farm, contributing well into their 80s. Helen always gave her support, and would even sew the horse blankets according to Jake’s specifications. Of Ed and Laura’s three children, Maegen, Stephanie, and Jeff, it is Maegen who was the “horse-crazy” child. “At six she was already arguing with us about breeding decisions”, Ed laughs. “She knows pedigrees backwards and forwards and is a great judge of horses. She’s only 21 but we’re already very comfortable with her decisions regarding buying horses on her own. Maegan’s personal focus is on performance horses and she starts many of Wunderbar’s youngsters under saddle.

Like her dad she is a talented halter handler and will someday no doubt be a national exhibitor. Like her grandfather, she loves athletic, beautiful horses and wants to make them her life. It would not have surprised Jake Friesen one bit” (*Canadian Arabian Horse News*, August, 2008, p. 37).

Jake, with the help of his family, took Wunderbar Arabians from a small farm operation with a few horses to an establishment that has won world recognition as a breeder of Arabian horses. Not bad for an ordinary Mennonite farm boy from Rheinland village near Osler, Saskatchewan. Not bad, considering his only formal education was several years of private German school. But the Wunderbar of today didn’t happen overnight; it has come about only through an investment of years of effort, time, dedication, and money.



The new farm west of Saskatoon, purchased in 1969. Photo from later years, when well established.



Jacob Friesen in the Pleasure Driving Class at Spruce Meadows, Calgary, in June of 1980

Jacob S. Friesen passed away on February 1, 1997 at the age of 85. Fittingly, it was a horse-drawn wagon that carried him to his final resting place in the Guenter cemetery in the Steele district. Helena Friesen passed away in 2001 at the age of 90.

At Jake's funeral, granddaughter Judy Thue shared this: "I think if you asked Grandpa what was most important to him, he would not have said it was the horses or the farm equipment or the new car. What he would have said was that most important to him was his family and friends. The value he and Grandma placed on family has permeated three generations, and probably many more to come.... Their door is always open, you don't need to call ahead, and if you happen to come at meal time — that's OK too. Grandpa always welcomed you with a handshake or a hug and a kiss. Grandma would get busy to make you comfortable.... Good-byes were never easy at Grandma and Grandpa's house. Grandma always has something to send along. Grandpa always had a little

more visiting to do. When the final farewell came, it was always 'We hope to see you again'."

Ed and Laura Friesen and family are still on the Wunderbar farm on Eleventh Street West, Saskatoon, and still producing championship Arabian horses.



Jacob and Helena Friesen on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary, March 22, 1996

Sources:

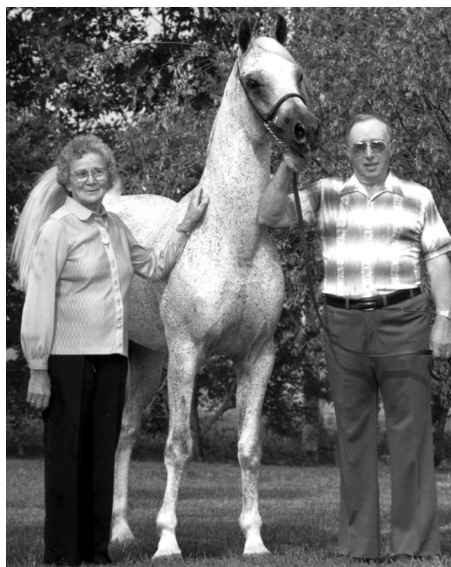
Shirley (Friesen) Klassen, daughter of J. S. and Helen Friesen

Justina (Peters) Derksen, daughter of Helen, step-daughter of J. S. Friesen

Jacob G. Guenter, brother to Helen (Peters) Friesen

The Carcajou story: taken from *A Heritage of Homesteads, Hardships and Hopes, La Crete and Area, 1914 – 1989*, published in 1989, and from "Homesteaders of the Great Peace", by Jacob G. Guenter in *Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve*, published in 1995.

The story of Friesen's Wunderbar Arabians: taken from *Canadian Arabian Horse News*, March/April 1997 and August 2008; and *Show Trail*, Vol. XXII No. 4, 1995. 🍁



Jacob and Helena Friesen with their championship horse, Wildwood Kochar+++, in 1982

Pig Butchering in the 1940s: a Personal Account

By Victor Carl Friesen

Background

Pig butchering, as once practised by Mennonites, was a unique part of their culture. Some half dozen years ago, Dick Braun and Dan Martens presented a “workshop” on this activity at the MHSS annual meeting (see *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*, April 2002). This article complements their visual presentation.

In Plautdietsch, Mennonites referred to the event as a *Schwienskjast*, a pig-killing bee or pig-festival. In this, we are akin to our Anglo-Saxon cousins in Britain, who made much of celebrating the boar’s head brought in on a platter at feasts. It was so much a part of their culture that the phrase “boar’s head” became the name of several English taverns of early times, where feasts were held, and even of a song, “The Boar’s Head Carol”, still sung at the Christmas-day feast at Oxford.

Non-Mennonite farmers also butchered pigs, of course. But for Mennonites, the activity was a heralded social event, requiring many cooperative skills to produce many distinct foods, to be enjoyed that day and through the ensuing winter. All the foods had their Plautdietsch names: *Jreewe*, cracklings eaten at breakfast; *Jreeweschmolt*, lard containing a sediment of fine cracklings and used as a spread on bread; *Rebbspäre*, spareribs deep-fried in a *Miagrope*, a built-in cauldron found in every early Mennonite summer kitchen (otherwise used to heat water for washing clothes); *Lärwarworscht*, liver sausage cooked in natural casings; *Rüakworscht*, sausage cured in a *Räkjakoma*, a smokehouse; finally, *Siltkjes*, headcheese, *Kloppsfleesch*, ground meat, *Schinkjefleesch*, ham, and *Spakj*, bacon. A *Schwienskjast* indeed!

Personal Recollection

It was the butchering of a pig or two in late fall that put most of the meat on our table. This activity occurred in a single day. It involved the neighbours, usually one couple for every pig slaughtered, and was a significant social event, with husbands and wives visiting at work in a shed and over shared meals in the house. These same couples would meet again at other homes in the following days until everyone had his pigs butchered.

Socializing was the first order of the day, for the neighbours arrived early — in the dark of the night, it seemed to me — for breakfast! The sun would not rise for at least another hour. Very hearty they were as they stamped the

snow off their shoes at the door. Usually a skiff of snow had fallen by then, indicating that pig-butchering days were at hand. After the greetings the men stood around rather awkwardly; the women typically bustled about at once. Then all sat down to their meal.

A coal-oil lamp casting a ruddy glow on friendly faces, the people fell to, fortifying themselves with steaming bowls of porridge, fried eggs and potatoes, coarse brown bread thickly spread with slabs of butter, and strong coffee with thick cream. Meanwhile, Dad had things in readiness elsewhere: a hand-turned meat grinder and several newly whetted knives laid out on a long improvised table of wide boards and trestles in the summer kitchen, and a fire under the huge closed-in cauldron or feed cooker there with plenty of water in it beginning to boil (the cooker also heated this “kitchen”, where most of the work would be done).

After breakfast, with the rising sun now casting its rosy glow on the snow, the men walked out, one carrying a .22 rifle. Our pigs — that is, those few not sent to market — were still in their log pen (one corner roofed over and covered with straw). The sharpshooter did his job, and the most agile of the others leaped over the enclosure to quickly bleed the shot animal. Then the men caught hold of its legs and dragged it through the pen’s gate, where a horse in harness dragged it up to the summer kitchen. Spots of blood froze in the snow along the way.

It was at such time that an onlooker, a young boy, might feel some repugnance to the eating of the meat, find the soil and gore simply offensive. The courtly Normans, conquering England in 1066, called the meat “pork”, a more delicate term than the rural Saxons’ “swine’s flesh” (like our Plautdietsch *Schwiensfleesch*) and so seemed to distance themselves from the butchering process. But a 1940s farm boy like me could not escape the basic facts of life: he grew up with them.

I saw the pig dumped into a scalding trough, buckets of boiling water being carried out from the cauldron to soften the bristles. Then the men lifted it onto a ladder resting on two trestles, to be scraped sleek and white. They used Dad’s sharpened knives, or their own. Dad himself had a special tool for the job, a small concave disc, also extremely sharp, with an upright central handle for making expanding circular motions over the tough hide.

Now the men carried the animal, still on the ladder, to

the summer kitchen's open doorway, suspending it there with a block and tackle so that its snout was just off the floor. Usually at this juncture, I had to leave for school, but I knew what was happening (maybe we once butchered on a Saturday).

A final scraping and washing preceded the cutting off of the head and the disembowelling.

The man doing the last task was a specialist who knew how to slit the abdominal cavity, stick in his hands, and loosen the insides so that with a deft pull he could drop the liver and entrails neatly into a large kneading pan that a woman was holding against the pig.

The aproned women got busy right away, setting aside the liver, some for frying but most to be used in making liver sausage later. It was the cleaning of the intestines, as casing for liver and farmers' sausage that took up a lot of their time. First they scraped the fat from the outside of the entrails with their paring knives. Next, the inside had to be cleaned. One woman held an intestine with an open end hanging down. She turned back the edge of this open end to the outside, to make a kind of collar, and caught firm hold of it. Another woman with a pitcher of water poured a steady stream into the crease or collar. The weight of the water plus the slipperiness of the intestine turned the whole length of the entrail inside out. The open ends were tied shut, the casings then rinsed several times in water, in water and bran, and finally in brine.

Some men, meanwhile, were tending to the remaining viscera, which were hauled away by stoneboat and waiting horse to a distant field, where coyotes could tear off morsels and magpies peck away at the rest. Another man sawed generously down each side of the backbone of the still hanging carcass, and his helpers carried the portions to the tables inside.

Now the men and most of the women (one or two women had gone back to the house to prepare the noon meal) stood in rows alongside the tables and with trained hands and sharp knives cut up the meat. The hams and shoulders were laid aside to cool. Next day they would be rubbed with salt and packed with more salt into a wooden barrel. These would be smoked the following spring.

Then the busy workers cut all the fat meat into strips and sent them through the meat grinder so that the fat could be rendered into lard. The choicest meat, that surrounding the backbone, was also ground, for sausages. The backbone itself was sawed into short pieces and placed in a box to freeze. During the winter each piece would find its way into a pot of tantalizing soup. And the spareribs were sawed and sliced into sections of three or four ribs each.

Dinner was ready now, and the couples went into the house, leaving greasy doorknobs behind them. The meal was a regrouping of forces and replenishing of energy before a final afternoon's assault — there was still a great deal of work for everyone.

The first jobs, going on simultaneously, were preparing the lard and the sausages. For the lard, the ground fatty meat went into the cauldron, with the fire renewed underneath. A man or woman stood on duty alongside, stirring the melting fat with a long wooden paddle, taking care that the fire was just hot enough to keep the lard simmering. Otherwise, the hot lard could boil over and itself catch fire, or the bits of meat (cracklings) within it might burn.

As the lard simmered (for several hours), someone gently dropped in the spareribs, which cooked to a golden-brown. By that time the ribs could be turned inside the meat — another sign that the meat was done. The cooked spareribs were fished out with a huge fork and sprinkled with salt.

A couple of workers strained out the cracklings and stored them in crocks. For winter breakfasts they were fried crisp and eaten as bacon bits. The lard itself was dipped into large dishpans to cool. Before it solidified, the clear lard on top was poured off into crocks again; the rest, thick with meaty sediment, was poured into separate containers, to be used as a spread on bread.

Those people making farmers' sausage kneaded salt and pepper into the ground lean meat before sending it through the grinder a second time, now with a casing slipped over a nozzle fitted to the front. One person turned the crank and fed in handfuls of meat while another pinched the free end of the casing and pulled it away as it filled up. Such sausage would be smoked the next day in our log smokehouse.

The workers made liver sausage from one part liver to three parts of meat from the head and neck. The head, after being sawed in half lengthwise and having brain, tongue, and ears removed, was cooked first before some of the meat was used in sausage-making. Large casings were used here and only partly filled before the ends were tied together to form a ring and simmered in water for an hour. During the process the casings filled up completely as the meat inside expanded. They even needed to be pricked with a fork occasionally so that they would not burst.

Another job was picking the skull clean of meat with a fork. A quantity of rind, also cooked beforehand, was mixed with it, ground fine, then salted, peppered, and

patted down in a bowl. Set aside, it hardened or jelled into headcheese. Later, my parents pickled this in a crock of brine and vinegar (in even older times, whey). The feet, ears, and tongue, when cooked, received a similar pickling.

Very little of the pig went to waste. The brain, for example, was fried with a good measure of sliced onions and apple for supper on butchering day.


My parents also made use of any scraps of fat and skin and leftover bones, boiling them into soap a few days later. Lye and water now filled the heated cauldron, and they stirred the scraps into the solution. As the contents cooked, even the bones dissolved. When the mixture had a honey-like consistency, they dipped it into cardboard boxes to harden into soap.

Finally, the pig's tail, too, had its use, right on butchering day. One of the men secretly stuck an open safety pin through the top end. Soon another man, unknowingly, had a pig's tail swinging behind him as he walked about doing his work. A few meaningful glances passed among the others as they, sober-faced, enjoyed the humor of the situation. After a time the man sensed something amiss.

Soon he was busily working as before but now smiling inwardly to himself. Someone else was wearing the tail.


By about four o'clock in the afternoon, the sun had set, and all the work was done, except for the washing of greasy pans — the whole summer kitchen by now smelled of warm grease. The women did this last task by lantern light. The men had time to look about at the day's work: everything from ham to headcheese, either ready for further processing or stored safely away.

Inside the house Mother had already begun to set the table for lunch, another lamp-lit meal. Working with fresh meat all day had not sated the people's appetite for it. Spareribs, liver sausage, and fried brain were a real treat with buns and butter and hot coffee with cream and sugar lumps. I, home from school, joined in.

Shortly after lunch the couples prepared to go home, to an exchange of hearty farewells. As the visitors walked out, Mother and Dad handed each man and wife a paper bag containing some more spareribs and an extra liver sausage — a thank-you for the day of good fellowship and meat on our table throughout the coming winter. 

Christians in Kansas

By Victor Wiebe

Everyone in a town in Kansas was automatically a "Christian", because the name of the town was "Christian". The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) has an article on the town of Christian, Kansas. Oddly, the name is not religious, but derived from the given names of three landowners. In 1874, four Mennonites, Christian and Daniel Krehbiel, Christian Hirschler, and Christian Voran, purchased land, the corners of which joined. They laid out a small town and named it Christian, after their given names. The town did not last long, for in 1886 the railroad established a station one mile away and the entire town moved its buildings to the station and renamed itself Moundridge, Kansas. Though Christian lasted only 12 years, Menno Jacob Galle, who pastored the Hague Mennonite Church in 1912–1913, and who later taught at the German English Academy (now Rosthern Junior College), was born in Christian, Kansas. 

Langham Heritage Village and Museum

By Doreen Nickel

"Preserve the Past; Embrace the Present; Build for Future Generations" is the motto of the Langham and Area Heritage Village and Museum, located in the century-old train station, together with Langham's town library.

The Museum is located right in the town of Langham, SK, at Railway Street and 3rd Avenue. The Peace Pole planted in 2006 is out front and promotes peace in the world. "May Peace Prevail on Earth" is the message written in six languages that represent our area (English, Hutterite, Norwegian, German, Russian, and Cree). Our latest display promotes the railroad theme and is on the north end of the museum.

The organizing meeting for the museum was held in 1990. Attendees at the first meeting were Ewanda Boehr, Jim Peters, John Boehr, Doris Tarasoff, Aaron and Lil Epp, and



The century-old Langham train station, now home to the museum and town library

All photos courtesy of Doreen Nickel



Close-up view of the front of the Langham & Area Heritage Village & Museum, showing the Peace Pole


Marjorie Rempel. Wendy Fitch represented the Saskatchewan Museum Association and guided the meeting. These people felt it was the right thing to do to start a museum for Langham and area to preserve our past. The first officers were chairperson Al Sneddon, secretary Marjorie Rempel, and treasurer Shirley Kirkham. Organizing and getting ideas and starting to gather artifacts were in full swing by 1991. What to call our museum? The seniors from the area were encouraged to come up with a name. The name Langham and Area Heritage Village and Museum was selected and the museum was started in the old fire hall connected to the town office. Fund-raising events began and soon plans were made to display artifacts. Langham Museum had its beginning.

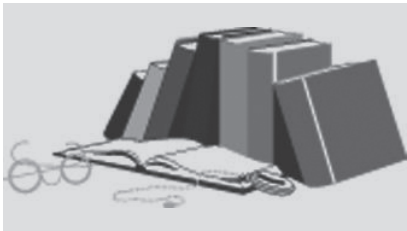
The museum moved to the present site in 2001 when we were able to obtain the old railway station. More space was needed because artifacts had been donated for display. We have an extensive collection that always likes visitors. Members continue to keep the program viable and we have a great group. Events such as programs, fund-raising, working on displays, and just getting together keep the museum hopping. All members take



Pies for sale during Langham Days last year; and they were all sold!

part in showing off their museum through the summer while we are open (May long weekend to Sept 30). The museum is open by appointment also during off hours. Our biggest event of the year is serving pie at Langham Days. Everyone comes after the parade for a piece of pie and a visit to see the museum displays and friends. Come for a visit too. The next Langham Days is June 5, 2010. The museum works with the community to promote Langham.

Coffee Hour served by our seniors is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:30–10:30 am. Appointments to visit the museum can be made by contacting Doreen at 283-4342, Rose at 283-4427, or Joyce at 283-4962. Find our Geo-Cache Site called Peace Pole Cache. 



Mostly about Books

Victor G. Wiebe, Book Editor

Friesen, Victor Carl. *The Gift of Country Life*. Toronto, Ontario, Natural Heritage Books. 2005, 112 pp. Paper covers, illustrated, some in colour. \$18.95.

Reviewed by Margaret Ewert

For anyone who grew up in rural areas before farming became as mechanized as it is at present, many nostalgic pictures are evoked by the author's blank verse descriptions of life in Saskatchewan in the 1930s and 1940s. The book is divided into seasonal sections — Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, and is enhanced with numerous pictures taken by the author.


Victor Carl Friesen reminisces about his youth, and pictures the young boy watering the cattle, noting that even horses and cows have an established order in which each may its their turn at the trough. The boy shares in the annual cutting of firewood, milking cows, and other chores that need to be done. But there are also the joys of

skiing down the straw stack on his home-made skis.

One of the longer summer poems is of a relaxing day at the river some six miles away. It was a dusty, dry day in 1941 when the father, who had been disking, decided the work could be continued another day, and invited his wife and son to go to the river. They had a relaxing time, and even caught some fish for supper.

The poem "Branched Out" begins with the Shakespeare quotation, "The evil that men do lives after them" and laments that the trees his father and brother planted in the early years are all overgrown and breaking down now. "If only they had planted spruce."

The final selection, "Afterward," tells a poignant story of his mother and lady's-slippers.

Victor Friesen's writing is clear, picturesque and understandable — an enjoyable read. 

Reg Rempel, 1938–2009



The following obituary was written with information from the funeral bulletin and from Leonard Doell. It is followed by Leonard's tribute given at the memorial service on September 26th in the Laird Mennonite Church. —Ed.

Reginald (Reg) Rempel died on Monday, September 21, 2009 as a result of a tragic accident; he had sustained severe burns two weeks earlier in a gasoline fire started by sparks from a neighbour's welder.

Reg was well-known in MHSS circles for his work in genealogy. He contributed a great deal of information to the GRANDMA genealogy project, says long-time good friend, Leonard Doell, and he "assisted many researchers along the way".

Reg was born June 6, 1938, just outside Laird at his grandfather's homestead and lived in various prairie towns, before his family settled in Drake, SK, when he was 12 years old. It was there he met his future wife, Myrna Ewert, and convinced her to marry him. They spent 48 years together. They moved to Regina for work and then to Lumsden. After 29 years at the Saskatchewan Department of Highways, he and Myrna retired to Jan Lake in northern Saskatchewan. They lived there for 15 years and spent most of the winters as snowbirds in the southern United States. Reg and Myrna built a new house in Laird in 2008 and sold their home at Jan Lake this last summer, as they moved on to the next phase of their lives.

Family was always important to Reg. His eyes lit up whenever his grandchildren were near. Reg and Myrna's

house at Jan was a relative haven for all who came. Reg loved fishing, but never fished as much as others, because he was their guide and filleted their fish. He enjoyed water skiing and had the patience to teach many of the family; he even skied last summer.

He started to work on genealogy after his retirement and became so involved in it that he amassed more than 50 thousand names in his files. He spent many hours on the computer and reading, while doing research on his Mennonite heritage and ancestors. The stories behind the names were especially interesting to him. His other hobby was woodworking. From building much of the house at Jan, to doing finer projects, he loved his time in the shop.

Leonard Doell's memorial service tribute:

It was about 14 years ago when Reg and I finally had the privilege of meeting in person. We shared a common Rempel ancestry and had heard about one another but had never met in person. This was the beginning of a warm and rewarding friendship, that extended beyond our mutual interest in genealogy and Mennonite history.

Reg had worked as a mapmaker and number cruncher for the Province of Saskatchewan throughout his working career, making him a person who was very attentive to detail and thorough in his approach. These are excellent qualities for any genealogical researcher. Reg took part in many Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan events, including a genealogy workshop he conducted in 2003. He missed many of the MHSS annual meetings because he and Myrna travelled south for the winter. While Myrna would be sitting in the sun reading, Reg was busy entering genealogical data into his computer; this was then shared with GRANDMA (a Mennonite Genealogy source) and many other researchers.

In 2004, he published a book on the Bahnmann family and helped to organize the Bahnmann family gathering held at Rosthern that year. He continued to gather information on the Rempel and Epp families and hoped to do more research on Myrna's family, the Ewerts and the Regiers.

In 2002, Reg was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which he faced with hope and determination. That winter while he was taking cancer treatments, he and Myrna

house-sat for Myrna's sister June and brother-in-law Bill at their home in Clavet. Reg volunteered to spend the winter putting together the Doell family history book, which was also his extended family. We spent many days together that winter at the trailer by the tracks, producing a beautiful book that was appreciated by our family.


After his retirement, Reg and Myrna moved from Lumsden to their dream cabin at Jan Lake, where they spent their time enjoying the peace and beautiful scenery with family and friends. He enjoyed fishing, watching the bald eagles, and taking his family out on the lake for rides or water sports. I often was a guest at their cabin, like many others who enjoyed their kindness and genuine hospitality, as I would be on my way to Aboriginal communities in northeastern Saskatchewan (as I did about three weeks ago). I would leave their place with a rested body, good food in my stomach, and their blessing.

Reg loved to fix, repair, and create things and had a healthy curiosity about how things were made and how they worked. The cabin at Jan Lake and the new home at Laird both had workshops so that Reg could tinker on these projects. He was good with his hands and was enjoying the challenge of renovating the basement in their new home.

This past year Reg and Myrna purchased two lots in

Laird for two dollars and built a beautiful new home. For Reg this was coming back home to the place of his birth and for Myrna it was returning to the place of her mother's family. They sold their cabin at Jan Lake and began to get reacquainted and involved with the Laird community. In fact, Reg had volunteered to digitize the Laird Church records and gather historical information for the Church's centennial next year.

Reg's tragic death has been a shock to us all, for he was healthy and enjoyed life. I am comforted by the words which he penned in his 2004 annual Christmas Newsletter, when he wrote, "There are times when we say that God works in mysterious ways and some of those times we wish He would do things differently but we have to remember that He is all knowing and we are not. So if we keep the faith we can be assured that the results will be positive."

So while we may not understand why Reg was taken from us so quickly and tragically, we can find comfort as Reg did, that no matter what happens, God is with us and loves us. I will miss Reg's visits, e-mails, and phone calls, his hearty laugh and teasing, but am very thankful for his friendship and for the kind and thoughtful ways he touched my life. 

Reuben Epp, 1920 – 2009


Reuben Epp, well known in Mennonite circles as a poet and storyteller in Mennonite Low German (Plautdietsch), died on June 20, 2009 in Kelowna, BC at the age of 89. He published books on the history of Plautdietsch and on its orthography.

Reuben Epp was born in Langham, SK in 1920 to Russian Mennonite parents. His earliest education was as a mechanic. He worked as an instructor in a vocational school for mechanics and in time became the director of a vocational school in Dawson Creek, BC.

He and his wife, Irmgard, lived in Kelowna.

Following is a list of his publications:

- *Biem Aunsiedle: When the settlers came: plautdietsche Jechichte een Resse ut'e Vergangenheit* (Winnipeg, MB 1972)
- *Plautdietsche Schreftsteckja: Jedichta, Jeschichte, Leeda, Spelkjes* (Steinbach, MB 1972)

- *Onse Lied Vetable: Stories our people tell; plautdietsche Jeschichte enn Riemsels* [Audio Archive] (Winnipeg, MB 1973)
- *The Story of Low German and Plautdietsch: Tracing a Language Across the Globe* (Hillsboro, USA 1993) ISBN 0963849409
- *The Spelling of Low German & Plautdietsch: Towards An Official Plautdietsch Orthography* (Hillsboro, USA 1996) ISBN 0963849417
- *Dit un jant opp Plautdietsch: This and that in Mennonite Low German* (Hillsboro, USA 1997) ISBN 0963849425
- *Dit un Jant opp Plautdietsch* [CD, 17 pieces by Reuben Epp, live recording, lecture on October 7, 2000 in Lage/Lippe, Germany], published by Plautdietsch-Freunde e. V. (Detmold, 2006) 

Mennonite Great Trek Tour 2010

Brief History of the Great Mennonite Trek to Uzbekistan and the Modern Tours

Five wagon trains of Mennonites from Molotschna and Am Trakt colonies in Ukraine braved hot desert sands and cold rugged mountains in the Great Trek of 1880–1884. They travelled the ancient Silk Road, seeking a new homeland where they could escape Czarist military conscription, find new economic opportunities, educate their children, and prepare for the imminent millennial rule of Christ.

They founded several stable communities in Uzbekistan (and Kyrgyzstan), where they shared new agricultural products and new technologies with their Muslim neighbors. More than a century later, Mennonites are remembered by villagers in Ak Metchet and Serebulak for their nonviolent practices, frugal economics, and generous wages. In the old walled city of Khiva, an emerging museum features the culture and craftsmanship of Mennonites, who helped build palaces and public buildings for Khan Muhammad Rahim II. In Serebulak, Mennonites enjoyed the hospitality of Muslim villagers, who shared their mosque for Sunday worship, baptisms, and weddings.



Now you can enjoy the learning from three prior tours to the region. You will interact with Uzbek villagers, savour local foods, explore the oasis cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva on the old Silk Road, barter for silk fabrics and carved wood in colourful bazaars, and imagine crossing the Kyzyl Kum Desert on camels, while riding in the comfort of an air-conditioned bus.

Jim Juhnke and Sharon Eicher led the first tour in 2007. Since then I have led tours in 2008 and 2009 for TourMagination. Juhnke and Eicher got me hooked and now I can't let go! Local guide Marina Allayarova knows what we want to see. She also knows the Mennonite story as well as the culture and history of Central Asia.

I hope this will be an annual event. The interest in this story is widespread, especially in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It is the most amazing Mennonite migration story I know!

—John Sharp, 2010 tour leader

Note: A detailed narrative account of the 1880 trek can be found on the Internet at:
<http://ketiltrout.net/asienreise/>

The modern and the ancient co-exist in rural Uzbekistan. All photos in this article courtesy of John Sharp.

Preliminary Itinerary of the 2010 Great Trek Tour

Tour leader is John Sharp, who led tours in 2008 and 2009; tour dates are May 23–June 3, 2010; cost is \$4,630 US (plus departure taxes and tips). See p. 31 for contact information.

Sunday, May 23: Tour departs Chicago or Toronto (depending on the preference of the traveller) on an overnight flight to Istanbul, Turkey via Europe.

Monday, May 24: Early morning arrival in Europe; connect on to Istanbul with arrival in late afternoon. (Richmond Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey)

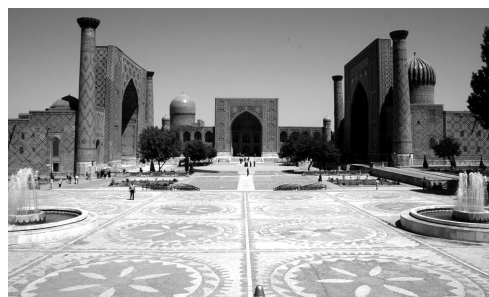
Tuesday, May 25: Visit Golden Horn, area of ancient

city of Constantinople; St. Sophia's Mosque and museum; Blue Mosque and an ancient underground cistern. Visit and dialogue with an Orthodox Church leader, see old Christian and traditional Jewish quarters, as well as the Bulgarian steel church. (Richmond Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey)

Wednesday, May 26: See Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent; Topkapi Palace; Kariye Museum; Enjoy an afternoon cruise on the Bosphorus; walk through Egyptian Spice Bazaar. Evening flight from Istanbul to Tashkent the capital of Uzbekistan.

Thursday, May 27: Early in the morning we'll arrive in Tashkent, where trekkers spent the winter of 1880-81. On our city tour we'll catch glimpses of Tashkent's 2,000-year history, including Independence Square. During dinner in a Kirgiz *dzurta*, Dilaram Inoyatova will speak to us about Great Trek Mennonites. (Markazi Hotel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Friday, May 28: Today we will travel the Silk Road to Samarkand, Pearl of the East, one of the oldest cities of Central Asia. In Tamerlane's capital, we will

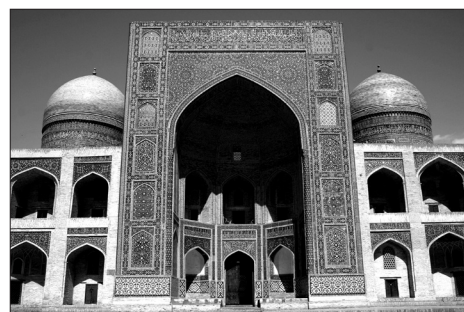


The famous
Registan Square
in Samarkand

visit Tamerlane's Mausoleum, Ulugbek's Observatory, madrassahs, minarets and a silk carpet factory. (The Regal Palace Hotel, Samarkand)

Saturday, May 29: We travel to Serabulak, where villagers shared their mosque with Mennonites during the winter of 1881-82. At the Kyk-Ota Mosque we will speak with the imam and his villagers about their uncommon Muslim hospitality. Then it's on to Bukhara, dinner, and our hotel. (Amelia Luxury Boutique Hotel, Bukhara)

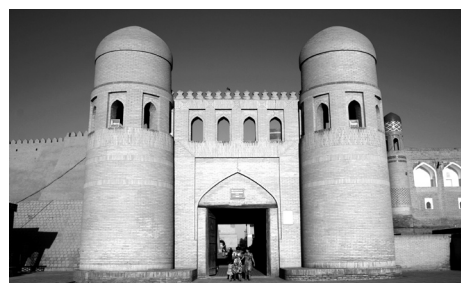
Sunday, May 30: Today we will visit the Citadel of Bukhara where Mennonite leaders petitioned the khan; see the Kalan Minaret, the Ismail Samani Mausoleum,



The Miri Arab
Madrasah, Bukhara

and ancient madrassahs and mosques. We'll shop in the domed Silk Road markets and enjoy an evening cultural show in an ancient caravansari. (Amelia Luxury Boutique Hotel, Bukhara)

Monday, May 31: Today will be a travelling day through



The western gate of
Ichan-Kala, Khiva


the Kyzyl-Kum Desert to the old walled city of Khiva, one of the most remote cities of the Silk Road. In the comfort of our air-conditioned bus, we will read of the Trekkers' cantankerous camels, skilled guides, sandstorms, illnesses, the birth of a baby, the Great September Comet of 1882, and more. We'll have a few hours to explore the city or to rest. (Hotel Malika, Khiva)

Tuesday, June 1: We will visit the quiet village of Ak Metchet where some 40 Mennonite families settled. Villagers and students dressed in their best will welcome us. We will hear the story of the devastating 1934 deportation of Mennonites. We'll go to the ill-fated Lausan settlement along the Amu Darya River and enjoy a rustic lunch overlooking the river. (Hotel Malika, Khiva)



Local guide Marina translates Emalie Enns' dramatic
portrayal of the 1935 deportation from Ak Metchet.

Wednesday, June 2: We will return to Khiva to visit the Ichan-Kala Mennonite museum exhibit, and the khan's palaces, which Mennonite craftsmen helped to build. We will take a flight to Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital, and have a leisurely afternoon for shopping, walking, resting, or swimming in the hotel pool. Over our evening farewell dinner with local cuisine, we will share reflections of our Great Trek experience. (Markazi Hotel, Tashkent)

Thursday, June 3: Very early Thursday morning we will depart Tashkent for Istanbul and our return flight to Chicago or Toronto. 

The Family Tree *Genealogy Editor Rosemary Slater*

A Searching Question: Can Anyone Identify These People?

By Rosemary Slater



The Peter and Anna (Wiebe) Pauls family of Vasilyevka, Naumenko Colony, Russia, in a photo taken about 1926. Parents Anna Wiebe Pauls and Peter Pauls are seated in the centre. Daughter Anna, holding baby Anna Bergen, is seated in front of her husband, Isaac David Bergen. Others in the picture are unknown but are likely children, grandchildren or sons- or daughters-in-law of Peter and Anna Pauls. Can anyone identify any of these people?

David Bergen of Saskatoon is looking for information about his mother's family. He knows virtually nothing about them but has the family picture, shown above, of his mother with her parents and siblings. The family picture was probably taken shortly before Isaac and Anna Bergen emigrated to Canada in 1926 with Isaac's Uncle Jacob Bergen's family.

My grandfather, Kornelius Pauls, son of Abram Pauls and Maria Penner, was married to Agatha Zacharias (daughter of Abraham Zacharias and Aganetha Friesen) and lived in Kronstal, Chortitza, in Russia. Their daughter, Agatha, born September 9, 1877, married Jacob Klassen and came to Canada in 1923 with her husband and family, arriving first at Brotherfield near Waldheim, Saskatchewan and then moving to Glenbush, Saskatchewan.

I met David Bergen in the fall of 2008, at the funeral of my second cousin, Cornie Klassen, son of Jacob and Agatha Klassen. David had been told that he was related

to Cornie Klassen through his mother, Anna Pauls Bergen. In 1948, as a young man, David Bergen visited a Mrs. Peters in Yarrow, BC who, he was told, was a Pauls and related to David's mother, Anna Pauls Bergen.

Anna Pauls, born September 2, 1905, daughter of Peter Pauls and Anna Wiebe, married Isaac David Bergen, born January 2, 1905, on September 28, 1924 in Vasilyevka, Naumenko Colony in Russia. Their daughter, Anna Bergen, was born August 28, 1925. In 1926, the Isaac Bergens immigrated to Canada with Isaac's Uncle Jacob and Tina Bergen and Isaac's widowed grandmother, Agatha Bergen (Mrs. Isaac Bergen).

The Isaac Bergens settled in the Glenbush area, where Anna died accidentally July 6, 1934, leaving four young children. Her husband remarried shortly after.

Her son, David Bergen, would appreciate any information about Anna's family. 

Calendar

Mennonite Church Centennials in Saskatchewan

A number of Saskatchewan Mennonite churches are celebrating their 100th anniversary next year. Below are notices for the scheduled celebrations of the five churches we know about to date. More information and/or reports will be published in future issues of the Historian. Please send us news of any other Saskatchewan churches celebrating their centennial next year. See back page for SMH contact information. —Ed.

Aberdeen Mennonite Church

The celebration will be held June 5–6, 2010. On Saturday, June 5, the organizers plan to conduct tours of the area, including cemeteries and former church sites of the Old Colony, Mennonite Brethren, and Bergthaler Churches. Other plans to date include a choir practice Saturday evening and a church service Sunday morning, beginning at 10 a.m., followed by lunch and an afternoon program.

Hepburn Mennonite Brethren Church

Hepburn MB Church invites all current and former members, attendees, pastors, and friends to attend the 2010 centennial celebration at Bethany College and Hepburn MB Church, July 30th–August 2nd. Pre-registration will be required for the weekend. The plan is for mounting a photography exhibit and preparing a cookbook. The speaker will be Timothy Geddert. On-site registration will take place Friday evening at the church. Various options for accommodation will be available,

including Bethany College residences, billeting, and nearby camping. Meals will be hosted at Bethany College. For more information or to be placed on the mailing list for the event, contact Hepburn MB Church at info@hepburnmb.com or call 1-306-947-2085. Contact person is Kim Bushman.


Laird Mennonite Church

Laird Mennonite Church is holding a centennial celebration, August 28–29, 2010. Join us in celebrating 100 years of God's faithfulness and blessings. Further information to come.

Rosenort Mennonite Church, Tiefengrund

The 100th anniversary celebration will be held July 24–25, 2010, at Tiefengrund church. Pictures & memories (a sentence or two or more) of the past 100 years at Tiefengrund are invited to be e-mailed to trmc@sasktel.net or mailed to TRMC, Box 57, Laird, SK S0K 2H0. Further information to come.

Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham


A centennial celebration is planned for July 16–18, 2010, beginning with registration Friday afternoon. Various activities are planned for the weekend. There will be a worship service Sunday morning. Further information to come. 

Mennonite Great Trek Tour 2010

The fourth annual Mennonite Great Trek Tour is scheduled for May 23–June 3, 2010. Tour leader is John Sharp, who led the tours in 2008 and 2009; cost is \$4,630 US (plus departure taxes and tips). A deposit of \$400 US is required by December 15, 2009. See pages 28–29 for a description of the tour, including the preliminary itinerary, and a short account of the original Mennonite Trek to Uzbekistan.

For more information or to book a place on the tour, contact information is at right:

TourMagination
9 Willow Street, Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6
Toll Free: 1-800-565-0451
Phone: 519-885-2522
Fax: 519-885-0941
Email: office@tourmagination.com

John Sharp
Box 3000, Hesston College, Hesston, Kan. 67062
Phone: 620-327-8248 or 0412
jsharp51@gmail.com 

Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian

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Honour List

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

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

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

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

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

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

Web Sites

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

Cemeteries web site:

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

Mennonite Encyclopedia Online:

GAMEO.org/news/mennonite-encyclopedia-online

Electronic Bulletin Board

MHSS-E-Update@mhss.sk.ca

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

MHSS Membership

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

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

Please make cheques payable to: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan or MHSS. Memberships are \$25 per year; \$40 for a family membership. Gift subscriptions are available. Membership fees and donations to the Society are eligible for tax receipts.

Send Us Your Stories

Readers are invited to send in news items, stories, articles, photographs, church histories, etc. to mhss@sasktel.net

or to the MHSS street address below:

MHSS Office and Archives
110 La Ronge Road, Room 900
Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8