

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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Builder of Musical Instruments Randy Letkeman

"Before I build, I look at the raw wood in front of me. I see in my mind a finished musical instrument." So says Randy Letkeman, a 46 year-old vocational training supervisor who works at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council in Saskatoon. Randy's passion is making musical instruments and he has made lutes, guitars, mandolins, dulcimers and a hurdy gurdy.

"Each instrument has a personality all its own," says Letkeman. "My job is to develop it as I put all the pieces together."

Indeed, Randy's instruments are carefully crafted. It all begins with the selection of quality materials: sitka spruce from British Columbia; ebony from Africa; boxwood from Europe; maple from Ontario; coniferous sap to make varnish, and; hardened bone from the leg bone

of a beef steer to make keys. These are but some items needed.

Randy believes he inherited some of his creativity and abilities from his grandparents. His grandfather George Letkeman was a musician and choir director in the Great Deer Mennonite Brethren Church. His other grandfather, David Martens, who founded Martensville in the early 1950s, was a man of many talents – carpenter, welder, and designer.

Today, Randy lives in Martensville, a town 15 kilometers north of Saskatoon, in an adequate bungalow with his wife, Christel (Leola and Edgar Epp's daughter) and children, Samantha and Loyal. In Randy's backyard is his beloved workshop. It is there that that he spends his time designing and building.

Randy's first building project, at age 12, was a model airplane. By age 25, he had built a crude dulcimer. A guitar and banjo player, he got interested in how they were put together. Soon he joined the Luthiers Guild and began to craft other instruments. It was the hurdy gurdy that challenged him most. "It has a stubborn personality," he observes, "that makes it hard to play. It is a complicated instrument with various characteristics that must all work together. The guitar responds more easily and has a mild temperament," he notes.

Randy believes that as he gives life to wood in the form of instruments, they respond by giving him immeasurable pleasure.

What is next for Randy? "I dream of building a harpsichord", he notes. "That would be the ultimate challenge."

SASKATCHEWAN MENNONITE HISTORIAN

2326 Cairns Avenue
Saskatoon, SK. S7J 1V1

Editor: Dick H. Epp

Book Editor: Victor G. Wiebe

Genealogy Page Editor:

Rosemary Slater

Production/Design: Betty

Banman, Diana Buhler, Helen

Fast, Deanna Krahn, Rose-

mary Slater, Hilda Voth

Proof Readers: Ernie Baergen,

Betty Epp, Verner Friesen,

Advisory Committee:

Jake Buhler, Verner Friesen,

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The Editor invites readers to participate by sending news, articles, photos, church histories and other items to him by email at dhepp1@shaw.ca

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

Vice-President
Verner Friesen
1517 Adelaide St. E
Saskatoon, SK S7J 0J2
Tel: 373-8275
vafriesen@sasktel.net

Secretary/Archivist, MCSask
Vera Falk
Box 251
Dundurn, SK S0K 1K0
Tel: 492-4731
Fax: 492-4731
r.v.of.thodeandshields@sasktel.net

Treasurer
Margaret Snider
Box 35
Guernsey, SK S0K 1W0
Tel: (306) 365-4274
sniderwm@sasktel.net

Archives
Kathy Boldt
Box 152, RR #4
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7
Tel: 239-4742
keboldt@sasktel.net

Abe Buhler
Box 1074
Warman, SK S0K 4S0
Tel: 931-2512

Margaret Ewert
Box 127
Drake, SK S0K 0H0
Tel: 363-2077
mewert@canada.com

Eileen Quiring
Box 2
Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0
Tel: (306) 945-2165
eileenajq@sasktel.net

Ed Schmidt
Box 28
Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0
Tel: (306) 945-2217
ewschmidt@sasktel.net

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

Board Committees

Photographer SMH
Susan Braun
Box 281
Osler, SK S0K 3A0
Tel: 239-4201

Cemeteries/Archives
Helen Fast
146 Columbia Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7K 1E9
Tel: 242-5448
Fax: 668-6844
rhfastlane@shaw.ca

Cemetery Project MHSS
John P. Nickel
General Delivery
Battleford, SK S0M 0C0
Tel: 937-2134
johnpnickel@sasktel.net

Advisory Committee SMH
Esther Patkau
2206 Wiggling Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 1W7
Tel: 343-8645

Genealogy Page Editor, SMH
Rosemary Slater
111 O'Neil Crescent
Saskatoon, SK S7N 1W9
Tel: 955-3759
r.slater@sasktel.net

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS)

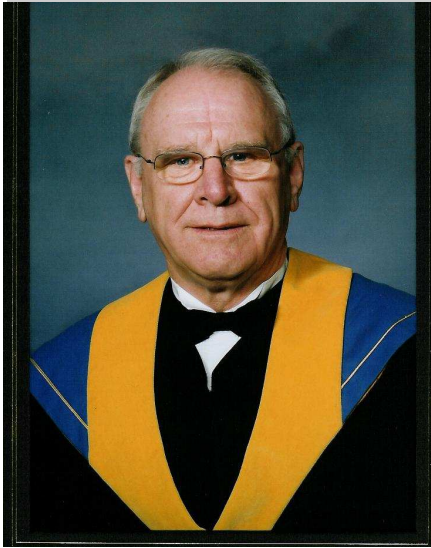
Room 900-110 La Ronge Road
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 7H8
(306) 242-6105
mhss@sasktel.net

Archive Hours
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To add a name to the Honour List, nominate a person in writing. Candidates must have made significant contributions to the preservation of Mennonite history, heritage or faith in our province.

Is your membership paid up?

President's Message



President's Column

I have in front of me a small *date marker*. It looks like a nail with a big head on it. In earlier years, these *date markers* were used to date railway ties. As they were put into the rail-bed by hand, a crew member would nail these small metal spikes into the wooden rail ties. Section bosses could then monitor their health and condition. Between Osler and Hague, the oldest railway tie still in use has a 1940 *date marker*.

The *date marker* I have contains the number 37. The railway tie it came from was removed from the Osler area about five years ago. Since 1937, in sun and snow, in drought and rain, this marker has served as a record of the life of one railway tie.

We, like the railway tie, have our own life. Our families, our institutions, our churches, and

our communities, are also like railway ties. If we choose to tell our stories, we leave our date mark – a record of who we are, what we did, and why we did it.

Old Testament records urged the Hebrew people to mark the great deeds of Jehovah, by erecting stone cairns. "When your children ask what these stones mean, you shall tell them how Israel crossed over the Jordan." (Joshua 4: 21 paraphrased)

The Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan is a collector of *date markers* and recorder of stone cairns. Our task is to gather the stories of our people and to make them available for all to see. And that is why we conduct Genealogy Days...why we have Artisans Exhibitions...why we collect the letters and books of our people...why we document cemeteries, why we invite historians to interpret our journeys...and why we have volunteers who serve those looking for information.

I encourage you to put your *date marker* on your life. Write the story of your life, or of your community or church. Not only will you be acting in a biblical tradition; you will give your children and their children a living heritage.

Jake Buhler

MHSS President Gets Master of Theology Degree

We extend congratulations to our Historical Society Board President, Jake Buhler, who graduated from St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon on May 5, 2005, with a Master of Theology degree. St. Andrew's at the University of Saskatchewan is a United Church of Canada seminary that trains persons for the ministry. Jake majored in pastoral care.

Before enrolling at St. Andrew's, Jake and his wife Louise had spent twenty-one years overseas, first working for MCC in Thailand for six years, then for the Canadian Embassies in Thailand and Vietnam for fifteen years. Currently Jake works as a lay minister at Osler Mennonite Church but has no immediate plans for more than that at the present time.



Passing the Comfort Quilters from Calgary L to R, Katie Penner, Elsie Sawatzky, Paulene Sawatzky and Lil Bartel.

Editorial

Saskatchewan Turns 100

By Verner Friesen

It was on September 4, 1905 that Saskatchewan officially became a province in the dominion that stretches from sea to sea. The first Lieutenant Governor of the province was A. E. Forget, who appointed Walter Scott to be the first provincial premier. Walter Scott took office on September 12, and selected three other persons to be sworn in along with him as the first governing body in the province. The three were: J. H. Lamont, Attorney General; W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture; and J. A. Calder, Minister of Education.

On December 13 of the same year the people of Saskatchewan went to the polls for the first time in 25 constituencies. The electorate endorsed the Liberal government of Walter Scott with 17 seats in the legislature. The opposition party at that time was the Provincial Rights party under F. W. G. Haultain, former premier of the North West Territories.

The member elected to the first legislature in the Rosthern constituency was Gerhard Ens. Ens had come with his family to Canada from Russia in 1891, and his family was one of six Mennonite families who settled in the Rosthern area in 1892. Ens soon began vigorously promoting immigration to Canada and settlement on the western frontier.

Canadian government census figures indicate that in 1901 there were 3,787 Mennonites in Saskatchewan. The following decade shows a substantial increase in that number; by 1911 there were 14,586.

For those early Saskatchewan pioneers, life was often very difficult - hard work, financial woes, severe privations, etc. We, their descendants, have reaped many of the rewards of their sacrifices. As someone (author unknown) has written:

*"We drink from wells we did not find;
We eat food from farmland we did not develop;
We enjoy freedoms which we have not earned;
We worship in churches which we did not build;
We live in communities which we did not establish."*

Saskatchewan has been good to us. "The boundary lines have fallen for (us) in pleasant places; (we) have a goodly heritage". (Psalm 16:6)

**CARROT RIVER CONGREGATION
HONOURS 75 YEARS**

From the September 6, 2004 issue of the Canadian
Mennonite
Used by permission

"The Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5) was the theme for the 75th anniversary of Carrot River Mennonite Church, August 7-8.

Approximately 200 people registered for the weekend celebration. Current members were joined by former pastors, teachers, family members and friends from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Indiana.

Acquaintances were renewed and new ones made as stories were shared. Several former teachers who taught in the rural schools of the area during the 1950s made connections with former students. One person remembered being hosted by a church family when he was in a conscientious objectors' camp during World War II.

Histories, photographs and regional maps on the wall created considerable interest. Some found the homesteads their parents or grandparents came to in 1926 and in the years following. Others found the location of rural schools that have long since disappeared.

In 1925 the first three Mennonite families came into the area south of what is now the town of Carrot River. Abandoned shacks became their temporary homes. More people arrived - by 1931, over 100 families. Participants celebrated the beginning of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church south of Carrot River in 1929 and the establishment of the Petaigan Mennonite Church, north of Carrot River, in 1937. The two congregations joined in 1960 when a new church was built in Carrot River itself.

Three original charter members of the Hoffnungsfelder congregation - Tena Andres, Catherine Schapansky and Mary Gerbrandt - attended the celebration. Three former pastors, Peter Peters from Manitoba, Abe Buhler from British Columbia, and John Wiebe from Manitoba, participated in the Saturday evening program or Sunday worship. Current pastor Craig Hollands shared moments from the life of the church and led the choir on Sunday morning.

Although inclement weather curtailed outdoor activities, the atmosphere inside was warm and hospitable. As the celebration ended we were reminded that the Lord has been, and is, good. We claimed God's enduring love for the future of this church, in this community.

Membership and attendance has fluctuated over the years. Presently the church is on an upward trend, blessed with a large group of young children.

From reports by Audrey Bechtel and
Trudy Fast

Carrot River Church 1928



70th Wedding Anniversary of

Jacob and Margaret (nee Kornelsen) Pankratz

The 70th wedding anniversary of Jacob and Margaret Pankratz, Watrous, Saskatchewan, was quietly celebrated by family members in their home June 15, 2005, on the eve of their actual anniversary.

The atmosphere was one of joy and gratitude.

Deep into the depression of the 1930s, Jacob Pankratz of Truax, Sask. was compelled to move out of that area to find employment. He found it at Watrous. There he also found his life partner in Margaret Kornelsen. They married June 16, 1935 in the newly organized Bethany Mennonite Church at Watrous.

Jacob had come with his family from Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, via Datum and Mexico to settle in Truax in 1926. Margaret arrived in Canada with her family from Kusmitzky, Russia, via Moscow and Germany, to make her home in Watrous.

The Lord sent showers of blessings in an all-day downpour of rain upon this couple who would begin their married life in the drought-stricken southern town of Truax. Four of their five children - John, Justina, Nettie and Jake - were born in Truax. Isaac was born after the family's move to Watrous in 1943.

Both Jacob and Margaret have been entwined in their love of farm life, Jacob with a deep attachment to cattle and Margaret with a flair for gardening. Even now, at 93, she maintains the reputation of being the first to have lettuce in spring.

Jacob and Margaret have been active and supportive participants in the life and work of Bethany Mennonite Church. Margaret was the first to be baptized there. Margaret and Jacob's wedding was the first to be performed there. Their 70th wedding anniversary, too, is a first - the first couple in the congregation to have reached such a milestone.

"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." Isaiah 46:4.

Submitted by Helen Kornelsen



Nutana Park Mennonite Church Turns 40

Nutana Park Mennonite Church began from a church planting initiative of First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. Edward Enns, pastor of First Mennonite Church at that time, described the starting of the new congregation in these words: "We will separate in a non-traditional way - not because of internal strife or cliquishness, not on the basis of age or difference of purpose, but because of unity of purpose. We will go to one or the other of the two congregations for various secondary reasons, but our need for two groups will give us new opportunities to live out the definition of the church - the 'called out' ones, whose witness will broaden and call out more into the fellowship of the church".

The first worship service in the new Nutana Park congregation took place on April 4, 1965. 103 charter members became the nucleus of the congregation, 76 transferring in from First Mennonite, the rest from other area congregations. Most of them lived in the Nutana Park subdivision where the new church was built.

On the weekend of May 13 to 15, 2005, present and former members of the congregation gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Nutana Park. Friday evening was reserved for registration and greeting former members who had come back for the special occasion. Ernie Baergen, the first chairperson of the congregation, had prepared a detailed account of the 40-year history. Dick and Betty Epp, with the help of many volunteers, had then produced a comprehensive time line portraying that history in words and pictures. This time line created a good deal of interest.

Saturday afternoon brought young and old together in a variety of intergenerational activities - like assembling a giant puzzle in the shape of a church, and a jeopardy-style game in which various persons in the congregation were to be identified on the basis of clues provided. One question that stumped everyone

was "Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha." The answer - the four members of the Ha family, the first refugee family sponsored by the congregation in 1979.

A highlight of the weekend was a beautiful and inspirational concert presented by the current Senior Choir joined by former choir members. The choir was led by Duff Warkentin, the present conductor, with two former conductors, Jake Ens and Alf Dahl, contributing as guest conductors.

The weekend concluded with an intergenerational Sunday morning worship service. Both the children's and adult choirs participated. In Pastor Vern Ratzlaff's sermon he shared his vision of what the congregation is meant to be - a church "seeking to heal rifts; signing covenants with fellow congregations; recognizing the larger church and our sisters and brothers there - Mennonite World Conference, inter-church friendships and worship that run deep and wide, marriages that recognize love does not limit itself to denominational lines, bible studies and prayer groups that bring Catholics and United Church and Presbyterians and Mennonites together; - - - All generations, represented here in the communion of saints, where women and men, young and old, people of all classes, prophesy, speak God's word. That's God's way of doing things in the history of the church. That's God's work in us; that's God's intent and promise for us. All generations".

In between the various weekend sessions, of course, there were also coffee breaks and delicious meals, with lots of reminiscing and visiting and warm fellowship.



Nota bena: mark well and observe

Our Reader's Page: Announcements and Questions

MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SASKATCHEWAN INC. GENEALOGY DAY

**REGISTRATION OF \$15.00
(OR \$25 PER COUPLE)**

INCLUDES THE NOON MEAL

**AT THE
FELLOWSHIP HALL - BETHANY MANOR
110 LaRonge Rd., Saskatoon, SK**

NOVEMBER 12, 2005—9:30 AM—12:00 NOON
(DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 AM FOR DISPLAYS, BOOK
SALES, ETC.)

**PRESENTATION OF GENVU
HARVEY MARTENS**

(COFFEE, WATER, COOKIES AVAILABLE)

**SHARING HISTORY PROJECTS FROM
VARIOUS GENEALOGY PLATFORMS**

CONTACT ED SCHMIDT AT
EWSCHMIDT@SASKTEL.NET OR (306-945-2217)
IF YOU HAVE A GENEALOGY PROJECT THAT YOU
HAVE DONE OR ARE DOING ON COMPUTER AND
ARE WILLING TO SHARE WITH THE ATTENDEES
AND HARVEY MARTENS.

NOVEMBER 12, 2005 – 12:45 P.M. – 3:45 P.M.
**PRESENTATIONS BY THE VICTOR WIEBES
AND VINCENT REMPELS**
**About their May/June Tour of Northern
Europe—Short Break to Reorganize—
Applied Demonstrations Of Application
Of GenVu**

Mennonite Hosts And Refugee Newcomers: 1979—The Present

A Weekend History Conference
30 September—1 October 2005
Eckhart Gramatté Hall,
University of Winnipeg

Sponsored by:
the Mennonite Historical Society
of Canada.

For more info contact Royden Loewen at
r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca
or 204-786-9391.

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Winnipeg, Manitoba
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When your membership expiration date on your address label is underlined you know that it has expired. Send your membership fee to Treasurer, Room 900-110 La Ronge Road, Saskatoon, SK S7K 7H8 so that you will not miss the next issue. Single memberships are \$25.00, families \$40.00. Gift subscriptions are available for friends, children, and grandchildren. We include a gift card with the first subscription. All subscriptions and donations to the society are eligible for tax deduction receipts.

Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church of Carrot River

Beginning of the South Church

In the fall of 1925 the Peter P. Miller family from Aberdeen, Saskatchewan, and two other Mennonite families settled in the Carrot River area (Township 49 - Range. 11). In the following years more families moved here.

The Mennonite settlement did not increase too rapidly at first, but over the years this changed dramatically. By June 1928 fifteen Mennonite families had settled here. In the next year this number had doubled. Five years after the first Mennonites arrived here the count had risen to fifty families, and steadily kept increasing as the years went by. In the fall of 1931 the count had risen to one hundred and ten families.

An itinerant pastor by the name of Benjamin Ewert from the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada visited the settlement from the very beginning. He served with sermons, baptisms and communion services, as well as using his leadership abilities to guide and direct this new congregation until they were independent.

His first visit was in June of 1926. His second visit was in November 1927, and after that for many years he came twice a year - in spring and in fall. In spring he usually stayed three weeks, and in fall two weeks or longer.

On May 20, 1928 the first baptism service took place. Seven people were baptized after receiving spiritual instruction, and on the same day the first communion service took place. (This was in a home.)

In the following years several other Mennonite pastors came to serve with Sunday morning sermons. One of these was Rev. David H. Neufeldt from the Bethany Mennonite Church in Lost River. He came frequently to visit, preach and serve.

In the fall of 1928 a small church was built. Dimensions were 26 x 30 feet. This church, with Rev. Benjamin Ewert officiating, was dedicated March 31, 1929.

November 29, 1929 a brotherhood meeting took place, under the leadership of Rev. Benjamin Ewert, with the purpose to organize the congregation. Here are the minutes of that meeting:

"It was decided that we, newly settled Mennonites at Carrot River, Sask. unite as a congregation, and that our foundation be the Word of God, the plumb line of our confession of faith and our lives. Therefore; Jesus Christ to be our cornerstone."

The name of the church to be: Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church of Carrot River, Sask.

It was decided that in spiritual matters to ask the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada for their help until we have our own pastors. We also want to be affiliated with this Conference in the future.

It was decided that the congregation elect three members as a church council. Their responsibility would be to give direction when needed. Of these three, one will act as secretary treasurer. Also two brethren were elected to lead the Sunday School, as well as worship services.

At the Brotherhood meeting June 25, 1931, a discussion took place whether the congregation was prepared to have an election for a pastor. The results were: 12 votes in favour, 11 against and 1 undecided. Therefore the conclusion was reached to postpone the election of a pastor until the fall of the same year.

At the brotherhood meeting November 21, 1931, once again the question arose whether to elect a pastor. Through a secret ballot, the result indicated 13 in favour, 2 opposed and 1 undecided. Hence it was decided that the election should take place. Four candidates were to be elected and from these two pastors were to be chosen.

Sunday, November 22, 1931 the four candidates were chosen by secret ballot. The result was: David

Dyck - 12 votes; John D. Litke - 11 votes; Johannes C. Matthies - 7 votes; Richard Friesen - 5 votes; Peter M. Epp - 3 votes; and the following each had one vote: Jacob Letkeman, Gerhard Matthies, Robert Friesen, Abram B.D. Friesen, and Isaac Neufeldt. The four with the most votes were declared candidates for the pastoral position. Thirty-four (34) brethren took part in the voting.

A second ballot produced the following results: David Dyck - 23 votes; Richard Friesen - 21 votes; J.C. Matthies - 11 votes; John D. Litke - 8 votes. Therefore David Dyck and Richard Friesen were declared elected as pastors. All of these elections took place under the leadership of Rev. Benjamin Ewert from Winnipeg, the itinerant pastor. David Dyck was elected church secretary.

On July 24, 1933 Elder Gerhard Buhler from Herbert came to Carrot River and the following week held evening services every day. On July 30 the ordination of three brethren as pastors took place: David J. Dyck, Richard Friesen and John Litke. The choir of the Hoffnungsfelder Church sang two songs. Attendance at the morning service was very good, filling the church to capacity. In the afternoon David Dyck, Richard Friesen and John Litke each presented a short message and Rev. Gerhard Buhler served communion. David Dyck was elected as the leading minister of the congregation. The afternoon service was not attended quite as well. After the services Rev. and Mrs. Buhler returned to their home in Herbert. This was the beginning of the Mennonite church at Carrot River.

Several events took place that are important to the life of the church. In 1930 a cemetery was established south of town (SE28-twp49-rge 11) which was our cemetery for many years; the land was owned by Wilhelm Toews. In later years the town of Carrot River and R M of Moose Range took over the cemetery. It then became a community cemetery; which is very good to see it taken over by the larger community. It is a very attractive place; very well

planned and cared for cemetery.

Decided that Isbr Toews and K. Quiring should bring the wood needed to build the fence for tying up the horses. A. Dyck took responsibility to build the fence.

There was also to be a barn for the horses which would be 26ft long 7ft high 7ft wide. Stalls to be 7ft wide.

Each family was expected to deliver two loads of fire wood to the church for heating the church which seemed to be very hard for every one to deliver the two loads.

There was a 25 cent levy for each member to be paid to the church; later it was raised to 50 cents which proved to be very hard to collect.

In the later 30s the Petaigan church was established; then those that had settled north of town attended there.

1937 the levy was raised to 75cents; then in 1938 the levy was raised to \$1.00.

1938 it was decided to put a basement under the church; then in 1939 the project got under way with gravel hauled by volunteers. P. Heppner was hired to take leadership in construction for the basement; the other labour was volunteer. The basement was to be 4 ft deep as well as above ground.

1944 the levy was raised to \$2.00. 1952 the levy was raised to \$5.00. Also in 1952 it was resolved that every third Sunday message be in English.

Also pastors were to be paid travel expenses when taking a ministers course or attending a conference.

Easter 1960 was dedication for the new church in Carrot River; this was the beginning of the Carrot River Mennonite Church; with the south and north churches together.

Herman Enns.

Hoffnungsfeld Mennonite Church, Petaigan, Sask.

It was in the year 1925 when the first Mennonite families arrived and took up their homesteads in townships 49, Range 11. Other families followed coming from Rosthern, Laird, Waldheim, Aberdeen and other places and also settled there and further north in Townships 50 and 51, in the Petaigan district. The large Cornelius Boschman Sr. family from Aberdeen took homesteads along with 5 of their sons.

Cornelius C. Boschman Jr. was married and was an ordained minister. He very soon started to get people together for Sunday School and Church service. In the beginning they came together in the homes. Ministers from southern and central Saskatchewan also came to help with the special services and marriages.

In 1934 the group decided to start to build a church. It was built with squared timbers and was all volunteer work. Progress was very slow, but in 1937 the building was dedicated to the Lord. Elder Benjamin Ewert officiated. About the same time they organized as a church, calling it Hoffnungsfeld Mennonite Church at Petaigan, Sask. with a membership of 58.

Rev. Benjamin Ewert served this church as well as the Carrot River (South) church right from the beginning as Elder and with occasional Sunday sermons and for other functions. Rev C.C. Boschman was the congregation's first minister, and under his leadership the church grew in number and in spiritual life. However, as Rev. Boschman was a farmer as well as a minister, in 1942 the church decided that the work was getting too much for one pastor so they held an election. Brother Bernard J. Andres was elected and on August 25, 1943 was ordained as pastor. Rev. G.G. Epp officiated.

Since both of the church ministers were also

farmers, and at times felt somewhat inadequate for their ministry tasks, the church invited other ministers and evangelists for special services. These services were provided by ministers such as Rev. G.G. Epp from Eigenheim; Rev. Johannes Regier from Tiefengrund; Rev. C.F. Sawatzky from Laird; Rev. David Toews from Rosthern. The church also had the joy and blessing of visits from missionaries from foreign fields, travelling ministers, evangelists and young people's workers. Also, several of the teachers who taught in this area were a welcome addition to the teaching and music life of the church.

The inspirational meetings and teachings reaped a harvest of dedicated church and mission workers; Paul W. Boschman, son of Rev. C.C. and Agatha Boschman became a missionary. After obtaining his BA. at Bethel College he was ordained as a minister of the gospel, at his home church in Petaigan, in July 1948. He worked as Missionary Candidate for some time by preaching in different churches. Then on Sept. 2, 1951, Paul and his wife LaVerne were ordained as missionaries by Rev. J.J. Thiessen of the General Conference Mission Board, and commissioned by the church to go to Japan. They spent about 20 years as missionaries there.

In



Paul & Agatha Boschman and family.

the spring of 1951 Henry Schroeder was ordained as Missions Minister after having finished Bible School at Carlea, Sask. His work took him to various places in Ontario.

On July 31, 1955 Martha Boschman, daughter of Rev. and Mrs C.C. Boschman was ordained as missionary nurse to Taiwan. She received her nurses training in the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, Sask. and her Bible training at the Bible College in Winnipeg. Rev. J. J. Thiessen, and Rev. Andrew Shelly of the General Conference Mission Board officiated at her ordination. While in the field, she met and married Han Vandenberg and together they served 30 plus years as missionaries in Japan.

September 5, 1958 the church had the privilege of ordaining another church member, Abe L. Froese, as a Mission Minister. He is a son-in-law to Rev and Mrs. C.C. Boschman. Abe and his wife Lynda spent several years doing Mission work in Northern Manitoba and then pastoring churches in other areas of Manitoba.

The Ministers' Conference of the Saskatchewan and Canadian Conferences suggested that churches in the area elect their own Elder. Two churches, Lost River and Petaigan, agreed to elect one Elder between them and invited Rev. J. J. Nickel to lead the election. The candidates were: Jacob J. Enns, Lost River; Cornelius Enns, Nipawin; Bernhard J. Andres, Petaigan and Cornelius C. Boschman of Petaigan. As a result of that election, Rev. C.C. Boschman was ordained as Elder for the Lost River and Petaigan Churches on September 6, 1953. The Rev. G.G. Epp officiated.

Much of the worship service was conducted in German, but at some point in the 1950's the congregation recognized that some English was needed in order to hold the interest and loyalty of the young people. Therefore a decision was made to have about 1 sermon a month in English. Rev. B. J. Andres was selected to do the English preaching. "Young People's" meetings were also in English as that generation was more comfortable with English than

with German. Youth meetings were held regularly and included events together with the South church and Lost River as well as with the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization.

In the 1950's church membership began to decline because the young people were leaving the community to work elsewhere, and some of the older people were selling their homesteads and moving away. The membership slowly went down from a high of about 90 to 30, when the church amalgamated with the South church forming a new church in Carrot River.

The Carrot River Church (South of Town) was needing to build a new church, so the church at Petaigan and the South Church agreed to build one together in the town of Carrot River. Building started in early summer in 1959 and on Easter Monday in April 1960 the new church in Carrot River was dedicated to the Lord. The Rev. J.C. Schmidt of Rosthern officiated in the dedication.

It had been agreed between the two churches that the new church should have a new name and that the membership would be comprised of the members of the two founding churches. A new church register was purchased, and all the names of the members of the founding churches were entered into the register of the "Carrot River Mennonite Church".

Written by Trudy Fast & Len Andres –
from various sources including a report by Rev.
C.C. Boschman



Petaigan Church

Helen Kliewer Bergman

"I have been through so many changes in my life. I did not think I would have to live through another one."



These were the words spoken by my great grandmother when she was moved from the independence of her small house on Louise Ave. in Saskatoon to an assisted living unit in Bethany Villa. As it turned out, this was not yet her last move. Before her death on March 14, 2005 at the age of 99, of necessity Great Grandma had been relocated a final time to a nursing home in Dalmeny. Impending death held no dismay for her. She was prepared and welcomed moving on. Through the years, Great Grandma was known for her love of things green - her carefully tended fruit trees, her vegetable garden, and the deep pleasure she derived from the blooms she nurtured. At the age of 85, being a firm believer that soil turned in fall retained the moisture for the coming year, Great Grandma still spaded her entire garden by hand. As well she presided over the kitchen with accomplished skill. Her experience as a young woman serving in the homes of others contributed to her reputation as a fine cook and baker, with a deft hand for presentation, always laying out a beautiful table. During the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-1796) Mennonite farmers were encouraged to emigrate from Germany to Russia in order to teach the Russians efficient farm-

ing techniques and improve Russia's economy. The Mennonites came and farmed successfully. Some became very wealthy and acquired large estates. Instead of disseminating their agricultural expertise among the local populous they hired the Russian's as cheap labor. This was a cause of great resentment among lower class Russians.

Helen Kliewer was born in Friesental, South Russia on December nineteenth, 1905. The Mennonite area of settlement in which she lived was known as the Molotschna. Her family was not wealthy. They did not own land and lived in a rented house. Her parents were Sara and Johann Kliewer. In the year 1913, when Helen was eight, she and her younger brothers Vanya and Franz became ill with scarlet fever. Helen survived the fever, though her brothers did not. They were two and five years old. It was in this same year that Helen's mother died of "de Rose", a poisoning of the blood. She died only four days after the first signs of illness. My great grandmother spoke of too many changes. The changes of 1913 were to be the prelude of a great many more.

Helen's father was conscripted shortly after the death of her mother. As Mennonites are pacifists, Johann served the military in the medical field. Helen and her sisters, Neta and Sara, stayed with their grandparents for three years while her father was in service. When he returned home Johann married a wealthy widow in possession of the large estate, Gut Rosenheim. The girls were not overly fond of their new stepmother nor she of them. She favored her own children above her new husband's.

The children's schoolteacher stayed in a tutorage on Rosenheim, but due to the revolution and unrest she requested to stay in the estate house where she shared a bed with Helen. One night Helen was awakened by noises in the house. She sat up, startled, but was immediately pulled back down by the schoolteacher. In that instant she felt the breeze of a saber swishing above her head. The house was being pillaged. The bandits slashed the pillows and poured syrup into the holes. Not only did they take whatever they wanted, they destroyed that which they did not want.

Russia was in such chaos that bands of robbers and anarchists were able to loot, rape, and kill

without any opposition. A band took Helen's father in 1918. His family did not find out he was dead until a month after his death when some Russian acquaintances told them. They found his body where the Russians told them it would be and gave him a proper burial. It is probable that Johann Kliever would not have been killed had he not remarried and acquired an estate. One man in particular became notorious throughout the Molotchna. His name was Makhno. He called himself an anarchist but to the Mennonites he was a bandit. My grandmother was forced to serve him and his bands when he invaded and took over Rosenheim. The older girls were kept hidden for fear of being raped and Helen was dressed in rags and dirtied to make herself less appealing. She described Makhno as, "a little man, strutting about in his stolen blue-velvet coat." Due to the revolution and unrest Helen and what remained of her family moved to Waldheim.

In 1924, when Helen was eighteen, saying goodbye to her brother Julius who remained behind, she and her sisters Neta and Sara immigrated to Canada. It was on the suggestion of their Aunt and Uncle Klassen, who were living in Swalwell, Alberta, that they decided to leave Russia. They could not see any future for themselves or freedom of religion in Russia. It cost Helen and Neta two hundred and forty dollars each to travel to Canada. Sara was able to travel at half the cost because she was considered a child. On July 23 Helen's uncle, John Friesen, drove the girls to the village of Lichenau where they boarded a train to Moscow. They continued traveling by train to Peucuuja where they were given their C.P.R (Canadian Pacific Railway) pins. Their journey through Russia took one week. From Peucuuja they took a train to Liebau, Poland, stopping at Riga on the way. They took a midsize ship called Baltra across the North Sea and arrived in London, England. From London they were transported to the city of Southampton by train. There they boarded the ship that took them across the Atlantic Ocean to Quebec City where they arrived on August 15. From there they traveled to Cal-

gary and then to Swalwell where their aunts and uncles Klassen and Harder were waiting.

Helen and her sisters stayed in Swalwell for three months, separated, and working for local families to pay off their traveling debt. Sundays, when everyone gathered for church, were the only times in which they were able to meet and share their experiences. They worked very hard for their employers in the house, the barn, and in the fields. Helen's relatives then decided to move to Dundurn, Saskatchewan. There they purchased a large farm on credit with a number of other Mennonite settlers. They divided the land into sections to farm. Helen and her sisters moved to Dundurn along with their relatives where they, again, were hired to help on the farms. In this way they were able to pay off their traveling debts within a year. They moved, eventually, to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and worked as domestics for their room and board and a small wage. Helen was hired on by Professor Grieg and then later by W.P. Thompson of the University of Saskatchewan.

Helen met Rudolf Bergman at a wedding. Not much is known of their romance. They were married on July 16, 1931 at Pleasant Point church in Dundurn. The reception was held in Helen's Aunt and Uncle Harder's barn. They moved to the small community of Elbow, Saskatchewan and farmed there for many years. Farming was tough, especially during the depression. Despite the hardship these were good years for my great grandmother because she and her husband lived on their own land. She felt rooted. It was there that she felt, finally, safe from change.

Written by her Granddaughter Becky Riekman



From Passing on the Comfort Quilt Show

Passing on the Comfort

By Alma Elias

By now, many of you have heard about the quilt show and matching book called 'Passing on the Comfort'. The purpose of the book and the show was to feature fragile and faded, yet beautiful, quilts made by women in North America and sent to Europe by MCC. These were then used by Russian Mennonite refugees in the Netherlands just after World War II.

My first impression was that the quilts were more beautiful and more intricate than I had expected. One nine patch was made of 1 inch squares nicely color matched. Generally, the pieces of fabric were quite small, the color co-ordination was good and some quilts also had a lot of hand quilting. In other words, a great deal of effort and time went into their creation.

To me, a handmade gift involving a lot of time and effort communicates love. I'm sure these quilts did more than warm tired, travel weary bodies. I think the love and caring involved in their making spoke to the refugees and helped heal their broken hearts. That is what makes them so special.

I had the privilege of taking a grade one class through the display at the MCC centre. Those students who had special blankets had brought them along. I noticed how lovingly they handled their quilts or blankets as I read 'The Quilt Story' by Tony Johnston. Then they talked about their quilts before gluing on a nine patch fabric square onto paper. It was very clear that the children felt the love of the person who had given them their quilts. These six and seven year olds had no trouble understanding why the quilt show was very important.

These quilts in the display brought healing in another way. For some people the sight of the quilts in this special show gave them permission and an openness to share their stories about the war. In the sharing, there was healing. As a volunteer at the display at the MCC sale, I had the privilege of listening to a

tearful young woman tell me how her father never talked about his wartime experiences until he saw a performance of 'The Diary of Anne Frank'. Then he opened up and talked all night.

Apparently at least one man in every location where the quilts are shown points to a particular quilt and says, "I slept under that in Holland after the war".

The show legitimizes the experiences of the refugees and honors the loving work of quilters. It also demonstrates how giving to MCC comes full circle. I guess it's no accident that quilts are often called comforters.

Samples of Quilts



Our Readers Write



Well Digging

Helen Bergen sent us this photo in response to our article in the December issue asking for stories about pioneer wells.

The photo shows three Martens boys digging a well on their farm in Glenbush in about 1944. Left to right is Walter Martens, holding a willow fork commonly used by water witchers to find water, Abe is hauling up the dirt from below, and brother John is trying to find out how many feet they have to dig to find water, using the old rod system. (If it bobbed up and down forty times it would be forty feet to water!) The other brother was Corny, and he must be down in the well digging.

In the early days wells were dug by hand. Once you reached a certain depth a cribbing was built and slid down into the well to protect the workers. It was always a big event when the spade broke through the ground to a gushing stream of water. Helen and Sam Bergen live in Lacombe, Alberta. Helen is the elder sister to the well diggers shown in the snapshot. The parents were Rev. A.A. and Anna Martens. Thank you, Helen for sending us this interesting photo.

Cream Separator Incident

By Tony Krahn

In the December 2004 issue of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian you had a photograph of an old cream separator and you invited readers to write about their experiences with this equipment. The photo brought a vivid memory to me. My story happened shortly after my parents had come to Canada in 1927. We lived in Davidson, SK at that time. Our house was made of two granaries connected to one another by a doorway. Here is the anecdote.

My parents were in the barn milking and my brother had, what he thought, was a wonderful idea. We would all hide in the cellar and my sister would tell our parents that we had gone away to some place. In any case, the parents were not particularly worried about it. They placed the two full pails of milk right on top of the cellar trap door and continued with their chores.

In the meantime, we got worried being in the dark cellar and decided to go up. As my brother Ed pushed the trap door from underneath it upset both pails of milk. There was an ocean of milk all over the place. I don't remember how we cleaned it up but I recall vividly how father lined all of us up in a row and gave us a thorough paddling.

That is my recollection of the cream separator!



FROM THE ARCHIVES

From our Archives By Victor Wiebe, Archivist

Over the spring and summer Alan Guenther worked diligently in the Archives and finished cataloguing the major manuscript collections. Alan in his graduate studies at McGill University gained considerable experience in using archives. Now he could apply these skills in describing the contents of archival collections. For his considerable efforts the Society gave Alan a modest grant. The final products of his efforts are dozens of archival boxes filled with records and clearly labeled and a very functional printed "Finding Aid." The "Finding Aid" tell researchers the content of a manuscript collection. A preliminary aid will just note some subjects in the collection while a very detailed finding aid may describe every piece of paper in a collection. The descriptions by Alan Guenther are a little less than fully detailed and they provide a description of the contents of each file folder and in addition note individual items of significant historical value. The next step is to make these finding aids accessible through our internet web site.

We continue to receive significant gifts of books and records and we are always very pleased for these. The largest donation was the library of the Sharon Mennonite Church, Guernsey, Saskatchewan. This was a huge collection of over 750 books. These were books typical of a Mennonite congregational library and at first glance it seems that the library held few Mennonite works. Upon examining the actual books, however, we found over 100 books were relevant to our collections. Many of these were by Mennonite writers and dealt with such topics as devotions, adolescents, peace and social issues. In addition the collection also contained significant

resources on Sharon's Sunday School and women's groups.

As in the past the majority of the work is accomplished by volunteers. We are blessed by some who volunteer each week as well as those who come as time permits.

We would like to remind all our readers to keep the Archives of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan in mind when ever disposing of records, books, photographs and even sound recording. Many items that may seem to be worthless can in fact be extremely valuable in documenting the history and faith practices of Mennonites in our province.

Volunteer Appreciation Tea

Sunday afternoon, April 10, 2005, the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan honoured its many volunteers with an afternoon tea in the Fellowship Hall of Bethany Manor. The approximately 50 volunteers and former Board members enjoyed a Seniors' Band from Aberdeen who played a number of instruments including harmonicas and a variety of songs. Victor Wiebe formally thanked the volunteers for their many hours of work devoted to various MHSS projects. The group then enjoyed some delicious strawberry shortcake with their coffee or tea as a tangible token of appreciation.



Story of a Carpenter

By Wayne Dueck with assistance
from Ted Regehr

In 1942, my father, David J. Dueck, member of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church near Rosthern, Saskatchewan, chose Conscientious Objector's status and was sent to several different CO Camps in Alberta and British Columbia from 1942 – 1944. Together with other COs in Camp, his days were occupied with cutting down dead trees and removing them to a location where they were no longer a fire threat, clearing out burned trees and preparing the area for reforestation, tree planting, constructing National Park buildings (some of which remain to this day), working in the Camp Kitchen, publishing the Camp Newsletter, taking care of the Camp horse(s), organizing Men's Choruses and Quartets, organizing Sunday morning Worship Services, clipping hair (10 cents a haircut), keeping their tents neat and tidy, and writing letters to loved ones at home.

Prior to leaving for CO Camp, Dad had developed an interest in woodworking and, using thin cedar boards, he created fretwork, some of which he sold for 25 cents per piece, or he gave it to individuals whom he had come to appreciate. He continued that hobby in CO Camp.

Apparently, he gave away as many pieces as he sold! Because he was located in Camp Q3, near Black Creek, B.C. for sixteen months, most of the fretwork which Dad created while in Camp was sold or given away to individuals living in the Camp or visitors to Camp Q3.

In 1943 Reverend Edward Gilmore and two Mennonite ministers visited various Conscientious Objector camps, including those in British Columbia, to minister to the men working there. The two Ontario Mennonite ministers most involved in such visitations, and thus probably the two accompanying Reverend Gilmore, were Reverend J. B. Martin, pastor of the Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo,

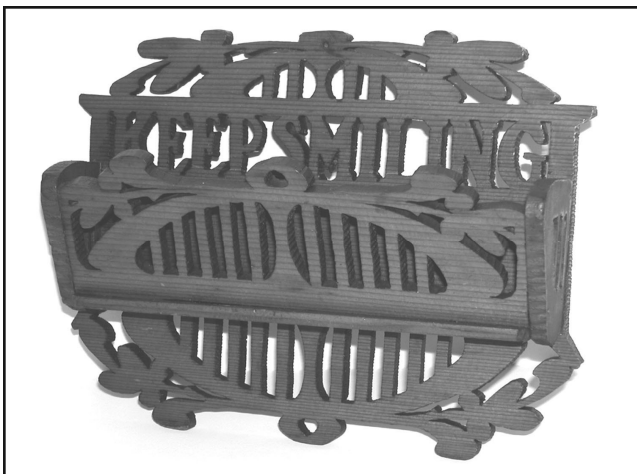
and Reverend Jacob H. Janzen, pastor of the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church. All Ontario ministers involved in such visitations worked in close co-operation with the Conference of Historic Peace Churches and, of course, the government appointed administrators of the camps. My father came to know and appreciate Reverend Gilmore. He gave Reverend Gilmore a piece of fretwork, a letter holder, on which was scrolled KEEP SMILING.

Nearly sixty years later, Carry and I arrived at home after work to find several messages on our Message Machine. One of the messages was most unusual! Mary Fretz, Beamsville, Ontario called to inquire whether I was David J. Dueck's son? If not, she apologized for the call. If so, I was asked to call her as soon as possible. I called Mary Fretz and identified myself as David J. Dueck's son. I told her that my father had passed away in February, 1992. Mary told me that, for many years, her parents had used a letter holder, attached to the kitchen wall, in which her father placed yet unanswered letters. As she looked at the letter holder, she remembered how her deceased father, Reverend Edward Gilmore, used to carefully place unopened letters in the uniquely designed letter holder. She removed the letter holder from the wall and noticed that on the back was inscribed David J. Dueck, 1943. She knew that the letter holder had been given to her father, but who was David J. Dueck? She called her daughter Sandi Hannigan, Erb Street Mennonite Church and asked Sandi for assistance in locating David J. Dueck. Sandi contacted Conrad Stoesz, Archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. After some research, it was discovered that David J. Dueck's parents, Reverend Johann and Anna Dueck, attended and ministered in the Rosenorter Gemeinde (later Eigenheim Mennonite Church) and had twelve children, the youngest of whom was David. In 1944, David married Lillian Roth and together they had four children, Wayne, Marilyn, Lyle and Lois.

On the telephone, Mary and I pieced together the story and she told me that she wanted to give the fretwork to me. I was truly grateful for her generosity as I did not have a piece of Dad's fretwork. I remembered how on cold winter evenings my father sat at the kitchen table and by the light of a small lamp, which is displayed in the Museum on our

acreage, he sawed out the designs which he had drawn ahead of time. I was not confident that the fretwork which Mary was giving me would arrive safely if sent via the mail or courier. I commented that our friend Doreen Janzen, Waterloo, would be in Rosthern for her Farm Auction Sale on April 11th. Perhaps the fretwork could be taken to Doreen's home in Waterloo or to Doreen's daughter Wendy Janzen's office in the St. Jacob's Mennonite Church near Waterloo. Mary was sure that her daughter, Sandi Hannigan, whose office was in the Erb Street Mennonite Church, the very Church in which Reverend Martin served many years earlier, knew Wendy Janzen.

Regrettably, Carry and I were not able to attend the Janzen Farm Auction as, due to a storm, we were unable to leave the Denver International Airport. We arrived in Saskatoon late in the evening of April 11th. The carefully wrapped fretwork eventually reached our home when Doreen presented it to us. I held the piece of fretwork in my hands and was overcome with memories of my father. The fretwork shall, at family gatherings, be rotated amongst my "Geschwister". Eventually, one of our sons will be given their Grandfather's fretwork. Perhaps they, too, will rotate it between themselves.



Another Well Story

By A.G. Janzen

In the year 1913, long before I was born, my parents moved to the village of Neuanlage, at the very south end and on the west side. The buildings were already there, but there was no well on the yard. All water had to be hauled from the east side of the village, where there was an ample water supply of good quality water and at a very reasonable depth of only 14 feet. So my Father wanted to try and get a well dug on his yard, even if it was not of good quality, but maybe it would be useable for cattle and horses.

So two men from the village of Blumenheim were hired to dig the well. They were Mr. David Friesen and a Mr. Heinrich Fehr. A wooden well cribbing was nailed together and let down as the work progressed, so that there should be no danger of the walls caving in. For their meals these men were always invited into the house to eat. These men took turns digging in the well and winching up the pail that was filled with dirt. It was slow going. They were now nearing the 100 foot depth, when it was lunch time. So the call went out, dinner is on.

This time David Friesen was down in the hole. So he had to unhook the mud pail and step into the loop in the rope and hold on to the rope with his hands on the trip up to the top, which he had often done before. But this time something went wrong, The winch that was being turned by hand suddenly did not turn any more. It was seized up, nothing could be done, it was stuck. So Mr. Fehr called to my father for help, but it was of no use. The winch just could not be moved. So my father said "We will take a rope, tie a ladder to it, and let the ladder down and David can step on to the ladder and we will haul him up that way. So several men were called for extra grip on that rope but they did not realize what had happened to Dave Friesen.

While he was hanging there, he looked up. It was about 50 feet to the top. He looked down. It was also 50 feet to the bottom and there were the tools. If he should fall, he would hurt himself on the tools lying there, so he froze to the rope he was holding on to, and when the ladder was dangling in front of him, he could not let go of the rope. My

Father said, "I never prayed as hard in my life. Here was a man's life at stake. If he could get onto the ladder it was easy to haul him up." So he told David, "Just let go of the rope and grab the ladder," but David said, "I cannot do that, then I fall and I will kill myself." And when Father realized what was wrong with David, he saw what a danger confronted them but he could not let on that he was also afraid. So he said to David, "There's no danger, just let go with one hand, grab the ladder and put one foot on the rung of the ladder. But to no avail, this man was frozen with fear till father suggested that he close his eyes, and then try it. It took a long time of talking, when finally he put one foot out and when it touched the rung on the ladder his fear vanished and he could grab the ladder and step on with both feet and they hauled him up. So when all the men walked into the house, Mother said David was as white as a sheet, and asked only "Where can I lie down?" She gave him a couch in another room; he needed no food that day.

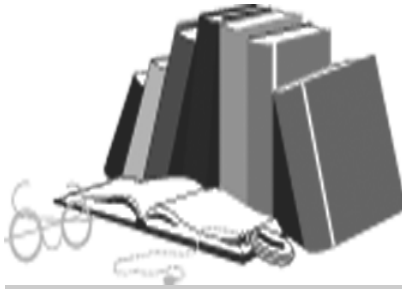
After the late noon meal, for the whole thing had taken over an hour, Mr. Fehr asked Father, "What do we do now?" My Father answered, "Take a rope with a hook and try to catch the pail standing there and bring it up. If you can, hook also the spade, but otherwise we are done, no one is going down there again. "What about the well?" Father said, "I will buy a six inch steel pipe and let it down all the way, then fill in the hole with the pile of dirt lying here." So that is what was done. Then a man was hired with a well drilling machine, and he put his drill into that pipe and worked down for another 10 feet and we had water. This was poor water, with a lot of iron in it, very hard, but livestock drank it. In 1928 when I was 8 years old, the crop was good, so Father had a windmill installed on that well. We dug a cistern inside the barn, and on windy days the windmill had to pump till that cistern was full. That way we had water in the barn for our cattle and horses. The barn is gone; the hole with the pipe is still there but abandoned.

More Pictures from the Appreciation Tea—April 10, 2005



Our "Thanks" go out to the many volunteers who spend countless hours working at the Archives , and on the Mennonite Historian, collecting and preserving our unique Mennonite History. Also we appreciate all the people who donate the stories and materials that tell the story of the Mennonites.





Mostly About Books

By Victor G. Wiebe
Book Editor

Building on the Past:

Mennonite Architecture, Landscape and Settlements in Russia/Ukraine

by Rudy P. Friesen / Edith Elisabeth Friesen

Published in 2004 by Raduga Publications,
200-2033 Portage Ave. Wpg, MB R3J 0K8
raduga@shaw.ca

List price \$45, 750 pages, soft cover.

Like many Canadians with Mennonite roots, I learned the stories of Mennonite Russia as a child in the 1940s, as my father and his friends shared their stories of life, hardship, and loss in the land of their birth. Having come to Canada in the 1920s, their experiences were still quite fresh and vivid; and I gleaned certain strong impressions: Mennonites were farmers – devoutly religious, hard working, and orderly; especially when compared to the Russian peasants. There were apparently also some rich Mennonite estate owners, but these were few and far between. Life in the villages was good, at least until the Revolution. There was not much travel beyond the boundaries of the colony, and little reason for it.

Mennonite History studies in Bible School in the 1950s did little to alter this perception. Life on the Canadian Prairies was similar – we were farmers and rural people. But then came the 60s, and with it the realization that not all *could* be farmers. There wasn't going to be enough land. Suddenly there was a rush to jobs in the cities, and to post-secondary education. There had been teachers before, and nurses, and a few doctors; but now suddenly the professions became acceptable – medicine, social work, political science, engi-

neering, architecture, and even law! I recall statistics that suggested that Mennonites moved from being 20% urban and 80% rural in 1950, to being 80% urban and 20% rural in by 1975! We thought we were a new generation, turning our backs on the land and striking out in the city; integrating into and contributing to the larger secular Canadian society. We were unique in Mennonite history!

Or were we? In his new book, “Building on the Past”, architect Rudy Friesen opens a new window into the Russian Mennonite experience – and gives us a view that is at times surprising and unfamiliar. This view comes from looking at 125 years of buildings that Mennonites constructed between their arrival in Russia in 1788, and the Russian Revolution of 1917. But this is not primarily a book about buildings, or about architecture. Buildings are windows through which we can see into the heart of the society that built them – and Mennonite buildings are no exception.

The book opens with a chapter on the Historical Context, briefly outlining Mennonite history from the Reformation in the 1500s to the present. This is followed by a chapter on the Evolution of Mennonite Architecture, which also parallels the evolution of Mennonite society. Five stages are identified:

Settlement – transplantation & adaptation –
1789-1835

Progress – reform and standardization - 1835-1880

Flowering – diversity and expansion – 1880-1914

Disintegration – dismantling and conversion –
1914-1999

Recovery – remembering and rebuilding –
from 1999

Through the first two stages, Mennonites developed an orderly, highly regulated pattern of village construction, beginning with the Chortitza and

the Molotschna Colonies, and expanding over time (by 1914) to include some 72 colonies or settlements, and over 450 villages. Development during this period was dominated by agriculture, but locally based manufacturing was beginning to emerge by the end of the period. A helpful chapter entitled "Directory of Settlements" provides a listing of all these colonies and villages; with the following thirteen chapters focusing on individual colonies, providing a broad array of photographs of buildings, maps and illustrations. Some of the photos date back to the early 1900s; while many more have been taken within the last five to ten years and document what remains of earlier Mennonite buildings.

The third stage of development, often called the "Golden Age", brings us pictures of a Mennonite society that we may have trouble recognizing. A few quotes from the book will illustrate the point: "The Mennonites who remained in Russia (after the emigration of the 1870s) were able to accommodate the sweeping governmental reforms aimed at Russification. They developed an elaborate system of institutions designed to preserve Mennonite society." "As Mennonites studied and traveled throughout Russia, Europe and even North America, they became more culturally aware and brought new styles and technologies back to the colonies, thereby influencing the style of Mennonite buildings" "...Mennonites now had their own professionally trained engineers and architects..." "By this time many Mennonites had moved to cities and become thoroughly urbanized. Thousands had established grand estates. Others had become industrial tycoons and some had entered civic and national politics." (p. 50) "As Mennonites outgrew their utilitarian and conformist approach to construction, their buildings expressed increasing creativity, sophistication and diversity. These were buildings that spoke the language of modernity, pride and grandeur." (p. 51)

The story of the fourth stage, "Disintegration", is probably more familiar to us. Some 15,000 Mennonites left Russia dur-

ing the emigration of the 1870s. Of the 100,000 Mennonites living in Russia in 1914, 21,000 left for Canada and South America during the 1920s. Some 12,000 more managed to follow in the late 1940s after having fled to Germany with the retreating German army. The remainder disappeared, either by death, exile or assimilation; along with much of the tangible evidence of their past.

As a practicing Winnipeg architect, Rudy Friesen has a keen interest in buildings, but also in Mennonite history. Since his first visit to Russia in 1978, he has returned numerous times to study and document the built history of the Mennonite people. He has also participated in the restoration of some of these original buildings; and has identified the final stage, "Recovery", as a time when, through the cooperation of Ukrainians and North American Mennonites, a process of restoring and refurbishing some of these original buildings has begun, as a way of recovering their shared social history.

The final three chapters of the book are entitled "Estates", "Forestry Camps", and "Urban Centres". Each is filled with interesting and relatively unknown details of Mennonite life during the "Golden Age". For example, "By 1914 there were well over 1000 Mennonite estates in all of Russia. Their total land area was estimated to be at least one-third of the more than 1,000,000 dessiatines (2.7 million acres) owned by Mennonites." The Forestry Camps, which provided a form of alternative service in lieu of military service in the Russian army, were constructed, paid for, and operated by the Mennonites through a special agreement with the government. As to the chapter on "Urban Centres", it appears that indeed, we were not the first urban Mennonite generation!

This book is an archive with a wealth of current detail about the Mennonite world of southern Russia that our forefathers left almost a hundred years ago. It provides a special insight into their lives by looking at the tangible evidence that they left behind – their buildings. Through the careful accumulation of extensive data, Rudy has left us much to enrich our understanding and appreciation of their legacy.

By Len R. Pauls, Regina Architect

Fonn Onjafaa:
The Recipes of Elizabeth Wiebe

Wiebe, Alma, editor,
 Generation 2 Publishers, reprinted 2005, 56 pp,
 \$15.00 (shipping, taxes included).

Available from Alma Wiebe,
 2337 Munroe Ave. S., Saskatoon, SK, S7J
 1S4.

Reviewed by Jake Buhler.

Fonn Onjafaa, was written out of necessity. As Elizabeth Wiebe's nine daughters were growing up and setting up their own households, they would ask their mother for recipes of dishes they had enjoyed on their farm four miles east of Warman, Saskatchewan. Mrs. Wiebe, speaking Low German, would always say, fonn onjafaa (trans = approximately) in answer to how many cups of flour or sugar were needed for a given recipe. She was never specific, choosing to add more of this ingredient, less of another, depending on the situation, who was eating, the number of eaters, etc. At long last, her daughters sat down with their mother and, as best they could, put specifics to the dozens of recipes Mrs. Wiebe carried in her head. The result: 95 of the finest recipes that can be called the core of prairie Mennonite cooking.

The recipes are laid out in seven groups – soups, breads, main courses, cookies, desserts, jams and preserves, and miscellaneous. A black and white photograph showing Elizabeth Wiebe in action, graces each food group. The recipes are laid out simply and clearly. Often they feature a food, the ingredients for which were found in the pasture or in the back yard. For example, the recipe for Zuaromps moos (sorrel moos) is:

1 1/2 cups sugar
 1 1/3 cups flour
 3 quarts milk

Combine ingredients. Cook 3 cups fresh sorrel cut into half inch pieces in 2 cups water for approximately 10 minutes. Add the 3 ingredients above and bring to boiling point but do not boil. Remove from heat and serve.

The recipes highlight the what's what

of Mennonite cooking. From Zomma Borscht to Kernell Rollen to Paapanate to Schmaunt Kuchen, the book features the traditional dishes that have sustained Mennonites for generations. The collection also demonstrates how Elizabeth Wiebe improvised and made her own recipes. Rather than throw away the rinds of watermelon (she grew them in her garden), she would turn them into pickles, using dill, vinegar, salt and sugar. There are no fewer than 22 jams and preserves recipes showing the utility, economy, and variety of Elizabeth's food making ability. In the middle of winter, her family of 15 children had a wide variety of preserves that were delicious and healthy.

Do the recipes meet today's standards of no-fat and sugar-free diets? In the 1930s, 40s and 50s, there were no fast-food outlets in the isolated farming communities. Home cooking was all there was. The emphasis was on quality, not quantity foods. The people who ate them were physically active. Few people were overweight. There was an appropriate balance of fat in-take and the number of calories burnt off. Ghriven (cracklings) were a winter staple food. It is possible that this food would not make it into today's Canada Health Food Guide! If you choose to make a great dish of Ghriven and potatoes, you will find it on page 27!

The 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 inch book is presented attractively with 56 laminated pages held together with a quality black spiral ring. An easy to follow table of contents provides an overview of the recipes. At the end of the book is a complete family tree of Elizabeth's children, grand and great grand children.

This recipe book does not follow a consistent Low German spelling pattern and a few foods must be guessed at. However, all have English names as well. While the book does have an interesting introduction, it would have provided the reader with valuable background, had even a cursory background into the development of the recipes in Prussia, Russia, and finally, the prairies of Canada, been included.

Fonn Onjafaa has collected a host of recipes, many of which came out of oral tradition. Its contribution to Saskatchewan Mennonite social history is a fine one.

The book is a must if you care for Bulkche

brot, Plumenmoos and Schinkefleesch, Kjielke, Rooda Zockakuchen or Kjrespaipplatz.

Elizabeth Wiebe is 95 and lives in a condominium in Bethany Manor in Saskatoon.

LEIDING/LYDING FAMILY REUNION

By Jim Lyding

The Leiding/Lyding family reunion was held July 26 to July 29 on the campus of Millar College of the Bible in Pambrun, Saskatchewan with just under 70 descendants of Solomon and Maria Leiding attending. This first ever event commenced with supper and a get acquainted evening on July 26. Wednesday was occupied with a crokinole tournament and other table games, much visiting and viewing photographs, and an evening of gospel singing followed by a bonfire. Thursday's highlights included a photo shoot, barbecue, and a variety program including singing (solos and duets), a skit, readings, and tributes. The program culminated with a humorous play "Wanted: A Housekeeper" which included some appropriate Plattdeutsch (Low German) expressions. The reunion ended with brunch on Friday.

Throughout the course of the gathering, the Leidings/Lydings enjoyed a bountiful array of savory food prepared and served by the college staff. Some traditional Mennonite dishes, like Worscht (sausage), Wrennetje(perogies), and Borscht (soup) certainly delighted the palate!

All members of the second generation are deceased; however, there are still three members of the third generation living, namely: Mrs. Margaret (Martens) Leiding, age 98, Mrs. Helen (Leiding) Funk, age 90, and Mrs. Marie (Funk) Leiding, age 86. Mrs. Marie Leiding, who resides in the Herbert Heritage Manor, attended on July 28.

The parents, Solomon and Maria Justina, resided for a time in the village of Neville, southeast of Swift Current. They eventually

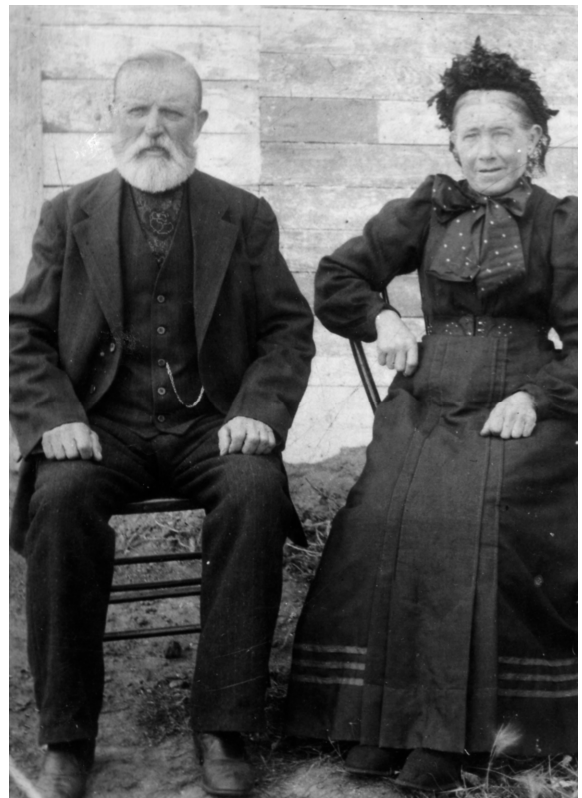
returned to Manitoba where both are buried at Winkler. Samuel is buried at Swift Current, Johann at Rosenort, north of McMahon, Jacob at Wymark, and Helena at Neville.

Descendants of Solomon and Maria Justina Leiding are scattered across Canada and the United States. Eleven of their thirteen children reached adulthood and of those eleven, six spent some time in Saskatchewan. Solomon and Maria Justina and ten of their children arrived in Canada from South Russia in May, 1892, and settled in Manitoba. From there, some came further west into Saskatchewan. The descendants of Samuel, Johann, Jacob, and Helena still make their homes in Saskatchewan.

Of the eleven children of Solomon and Maria Leiding, representatives were present from the John, Jake, Bill, Bart, and Sam branches with the largest representation from John's descendants.

The consensus at the conclusion of the reunion was that a similar get-together would occur in four or five years, with Manitoba as the location.

Any readers having any information about any members of this family are asked to contact Jim Lyding, Box 13, Vanguard, SK, S0N 2V0.



Solomon and Maria Leiding

THE OSLER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

By Lea Hildebrandt

The Osler Historical Museum had its origins in 1980 when a group of community minded individuals realized that Osler and area had innumerable artifacts that needed to be preserved immediately before the window of opportunity was lost forever. Since a permanent storehouse was not available at the time, the basement of the former two-room school-house, now the Town Office, was utilized as a temporary site for the various displays.

Unfortunately, this venue was far from suitable since the area was not roomy enough to display the artifacts in a manner appropriate for the public to view and appreciate. Articles were crammed into allotted spaces helter skelter, leaving scant room for people to move about and observe. Besides, the basement with its high humidity, was replete with the dank and musty odours so common in wet basements.

A one-storey dwelling that had recently been owned by J.J. Neudorf became available and Town Council, in its wisdom, decided to donate this building for use as a permanent museum. The four-room house had been built by the late George and Helen Rempel in 1942 on a lot adjacent to the school yard. Since that time, it had been purchased by J.J. Neudorf and subsequently rented to a number of young families and individuals in the early '90s.

The building dubbed "Osler Historical Museum" was now taken over by an organization of some half dozen members who thoroughly cleaned and renovated the entire structure, turning it into a typical dwelling of the 1930s and '40s. An enthusiastic membership headed by Hella Banman, Jake and Margaret Loeppky, Kathy Boldt and many other willing hands, gathered a great variety of furniture, pictures, toys, clothing, etc. Mannequins were procured to lend an air of authenticity to the displays.

With the aid of an Amateur Hour and numerous "Low German Nights", money was raised to properly furnish and display all man-

ners of materials endemic to the '30s and '40s era.

In 1994, the original one-room school that had formerly been located in the northwest corner of the schoolyard but was now resting on Third Avenue was relocated to the Museum site by movers Art Letkeman and Cliff Peters to a spot just east of the main Museum building. This building, Osler's first school, was constructed at the turn of the 20th. Century and used until 1947 when a two-room school replaced it. Since then, it had been used for a great variety of venues and most recently as the Town Office.

Refurbishing the entire building into the original one-room school was cost prohibitive, so it was decided to use the North Half of the structure as a classroom with the remainder slated as a storage facility. Old snapshots and photographs enabled the membership to recreate the classroom with old double desks, coal stove with extended stovepipes and, of course, original blackboards.

Also prominently displayed were two Sports Trophies, the Crough Trophy, emblematic of Championship Softball and the Dairy Pool Trophy for Track and Field Excellence. Both of these were annually presented at the Warman Sports Day when all the country schools in the Warman Municipality No. 374 plus the villages of Warman and Osler and occasionally Hague gathered for a day of sports related activities. It was one of the most notable days of the year in the pre-television era. A mannequin garbed in an Osler Monarch uniform accented the display.

In later years, Mrs. Lillian Pauls, a former Osler teacher, donated many school related artifacts, pictures, papers et al to add a degree of authenticity to the various displays.

As a part of Osler's Centennial celebration in 2001, the original school bell which had last rested on the two-room school was installed by Bob Neufeld, Bud Banman and others. Likewise, Bob Neufeld, our master carpenter in residence, was instrumental in obtaining and installing 6 inch dropsiding to both buildings which were then painted as the final step of the restoration. The basement of the main building has been upgraded to standard after suffering numerous wall cave-ins.

One of the most attended days of the year is the annual 'Midnight Madness' event held in early

December when, in conjunction with most businesses, everything is open until midnight. The Museum, which charges a nominal admission fee, is kept busy for a six hour period. If you long for a nostalgia trip, this is an excellent place to visit and enjoy the foods and comforts of a long ago era. If you haven't been there before, be sure to attend.

The Museum is also open Saturdays in June, July and August. Add these dates to your calendar!



On display at the Osler Museum is the baptismal dress of Anna Hildebrandt (nee Friesen). Frieda Teichroeb is shown with her mother's dress.



The Family Tree

Genealogy Editor—Rosemary Slater

Preserving your family history for future generations

A Woman Before Her Time

As told to Rosemary Slater by Betty Banman, Irene Hildebrandt and Frieda Teichroeb

June 22, 1907, Anna Friesen was born to Abraham and Anna (nee Klassen) Friesen in the village of Neuanlage near Hague, Saskatchewan. Anna was the second youngest in the family of seven surviving children and had a sister, Katharina, a year younger.

Abraham Friesen had come to Canada with his parents, Abraham and Justina (nee Ens) Friesen July 1, 1875 as an eleven year old child. The Friesen family settled in Schoenwiese in the West Reserve in Manitoba and are found listed in the Reinlaender Gemeinde Buch (p. 48-1). Anna Klassen had come to Canada with her parents, Peter and Anna Klassen (nee Wiens) July 13, 1875 as a year old infant. Her parents had settled in Blumenfeld, Manitoba also in the West Reserve. Anna and Abraham met and were married December 14, 1892.

Shortly after 1891, the Klassen family moved to the Swift Current area and about 1900 Abraham and Anna Friesen also moved west to the village of Neuanlage which had been founded in 1895. It was here that Anna grew up and attended the Neuanlage German School for five years, from about 1913 to 1918, under Johann Andres as her teacher. In 1919, the Pembroke School, an English school, was opened in Neuanlage against the wishes of the villagers but Anna never attended this school nor did her sister. Her sister Katharina's name shows up on the Pembroke School register for May, 1922 with an asterisk

behind the name and a record of zero attendance.

May 14, 1926, Anna's mother died and June 21, 1927, just over a year later, Anna was baptized by Bishop Jacob Wiens and accepted as a member of the Old Colony Mennonite Church in Neuanlage. We have a picture of Anna with some friends as a 17 year old dressed in traditional Sunday best clothing. Her baptismal dress is on display at the Osler Museum.

Anna Friesen standing on left at age 17 in Neuanlage in 1924. Later married name was Hildebrandt. With her..... standing is Suzanna Krahn (later married name was Peters) and seated Agatha Schmidt.



The dress is in excellent shape because it didn't get much wear after that time. In the 1920's, Neuanlage was changing. The introduction of the English school, the consequent immigration to Mexico of many Neuanlage families and the arrival of Russian Mennonite refugees in Neuanlage, settling in homes left vacant by departing Mennonites, all had far reaching, unforeseeable consequences.

The Russian Mennonites came with what they could carry in many instances so while the sons

stayed home to work the farm or work as farm hands, the young unmarried women went to the city where they found employment as household help in the homes of wealthy Saskatonians and sent money home to their parents. Word went round that the Mennonite girls were hard working, willing workers and soon there was a demand for young Mennonite women to work as housekeepers in mainly English homes. Her children were never told how Anna came to be working for a doctor in Saskatoon although they were told that their mother sent part of her wage home regularly to her father. As well, her niece recalls that she brought home clothing from the Salvation Army store for her aunt to make over for her children.

Another record we have of what Anna was doing during the years from June, 1927 until November, 1931, when she married, is a picture of a very attractive young Anna with short hair wearing a flapper dress. Her children remember seeing the black braid that had been cut off. The

flapper dress, like her wedding dress, was probably cut up to make dresses for her daughters in later years. That



Anna's family were displeased with her new stylishness, her children were aware of, but the extent of the repercussions they were never told.

From Saskatoon Anna moved to a job working for a family in Osler. Here she met her future husband, Wilhelm Hildebrandt, a widower who was farming at Neuhorst. We

don't know much about the courtship but in a cryptic note Mrs. Hildebrandt wrote,

"In October 1931 we joined the Osler Mennonite Church where we got married November 8, 1931. We lived on the farm by Neuhorst till 1965".

We are left with the story of a beautiful young, very intelligent Old Colony Mennonite girl who made an extremely daunting transition from the culture of the village where she grew up to the very different

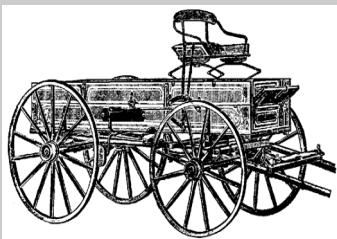
culture of the city and the English home where she worked. She very quickly developed a sense of style that never left her. However, she also didn't forget her roots, and the long, black baptismal dress now on display at the



Osler Museum was carefully preserved till the day she died in 1997 at the ripe old age of 90.



Ernie, Betty, Edna, Ed, Frieda, Linda, Anna Hildebrandt, Sylvia, Irene, Wilhelm Hildebrandt—approx. 1953.



From the Past

The best of prophets of the future is the past...Byron



These RJC Pictures were taken about 1916 . They were donated to the Archives by Ted Janzen. Can any of our Readers identify the occasion or any of the people on the pictures?



G. E. A. Easter Social 1916.