



Newsletter

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

Volume XIX Number 3

October 2016

Coming to Canada: Hans and Charlotte Wiehler

by Harvey Wiehler

Editor's note: *Harvey Wiehler tells the story of how his parents, Hans and Charlotte Wiehler, left their homeland and came to Canada. Charlotte, her parents (Gustav and Louise Andres), and some others left her childhood home in Reichfelde (present day Poland) on January 25, 1945 barely a day ahead of the Russian army. After spending a few years in Oppendorf, West Germany, Hans and Charlotte emigrated to Canada. They arrived in Herschel, Saskatchewan on June 21, 1951 along with their two children Astrid and Hartwick (Harvey) and Louise Andres.*



Harvey Wiehler

The sounds of cannons firing could be heard, and they were get-
(Continued on page 11)

The History of Springridge Mennonite Church: Congregational Life and Leadership 1928—1978

By the late Henry Koop

On the east side of the foothills of the majestic Rockies, a few miles east of Pincher Creek, is some of the most beautiful and fertile farmland in southern Alberta. It was in this area that Mennonite families settled (1926-1928) and built the Springridge Mennonite Church, formerly known as “Blumenthal Mennoniten Gemeinde”.



Springridge Mennonite Church (top left) with the cemetery to the left of the church (present Day)



Henry Koop

The Early Days

Springridge was a school district that became the central meeting place for worshippers from Standoff and Fort Macleod (20 mi.), Glenwood (12 mi.), and Cowley (25 mi.). The early settlers were mainly immi-

grants from Russia, representing the Mennonite Brethren (MB) and General Conference (GC) churches. The majority of the families had nothing but “Reiseschuld” (travel debts), faith in God, and hope for the future. Their faith gave expression to a desire for fellowship and worship. Among those who attended were two Canadian German-speaking families, the George Wollmans and the Andreas Kunkels, who were of great assistance to the “Einwanderer” (the homeless refugees). Services were held in homes except for those involving large gatherings, which were held in the Springridge school. Getting to services meant many miles of travel by horse and buggy. For special occasions held in out-lying areas such as Coaldale, a neighbour, Mr. Hansen, would take people to services by truck.

The need was soon felt for an organized church. On July 29, 1928, under the leadership of Elder C.D. Harder, Rosemary, the Blumenthaler Mennonite Church was organized. When the church was incorporated in 1938,

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Editorial Reflections:

by

Dave Toews

It is with heavy heart that I share the sad news of the passing of my friend and former colleague with this publication, Lorne Buhr. Lorne was co-editor of the MHSA

Newsletter from 2007 until October 2015 and long time supporter of the historical society. Lorne passed away Sunday Oct. 2, 2016 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease.

We are happy to announce that Carolyn Wilson has joined the volunteer staff of the newsletter as copy editor. Carolyn replaces David Jeffares in this capacity. We are



Dave Toews

thankful for David's years of service in these duties. David continues his role on the board of directors with the MHSA.

Carolyn Wilson is a longtime member of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton where she has served in a number of volunteer capacities. For many years she was an adult literacy instructor at NorQuest College (formerly AVC). Now mostly retired, she enjoys spending time reading, writing, playing her flute with community groups, and exploring her own genealogy online. Although she does not personally have ethnic Mennonite roots, she is happy to have this new opportunity to read and reflect on Mennonite stories.

I enjoy sharing with you how some of the articles are conceived and then gathered to become part of this newsletter. Last Easter Sunday morning at breakfast at Len-



Carolyn Wilson

drum Mennonite Brethren Church, Edmonton, my wife Marion and I were sitting at a table where some of the people were unknown to us. They were Elsa Sawatzky, Calgary and her young relative Harry Sawatzky from Germany. As is often the case in my conversations with people I first meet, I ask about family history and origin. The story sounded very interesting and Elsa readily agreed to write the piece that appears on the pages of this issue.

We are grateful for Harvey Wiehler's family story and to David Friesen for sharing his CO experience with us. Peter D. Janzen, has contributed the late Henry Koop's Springridge Church history. Kathy Ma continues the immigration journey of Hermann and Katherina Klassen and Henry Dick tells us of the uprooting of the Japanese Canadians during WWII.

The MHSA welcomes your feedback, emails, letters to the editor and articles. Contact dmtows@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is Feb 1, 2017. ❖

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Chairman's Corner

by
Dave Neufeldt

I returned from my uncle's funeral in Ohio a few days ago. It was a wonderful celebration of his life, and I'm really glad I was able to attend it and hear many stories about his life.



Dave Neufeldt

He was my mom's only sibling, and she passed away a little over a year ago. They were both in their nineties. Theirs was the earliest generation of my mother's family that I really got to know. I never knew their parents (my grandparents) as they had both died before I was born. My uncle's death therefore represents the end of an era for our family.

Eighteen years ago my brother and I took the opportunity to videotape my mom and uncle talking about their lives. I'm so glad we did this. I watched the video again today. I had forgotten some of the stories they told. Not only did they talk about their own experiences, they also related stories that their parents had told them. I've done lots of work tracing my family history and recording names, dates and places. What this video did was document stories that reveal more about the personalities of my ancestors. Recording my mom and uncle together allowed them to feed off each other's stories. It also captured how they related to each other and the affinity between them. Although they lived far apart for most of their lives, they were very comfortable together.

This was not the only time I

recorded family members sharing their memories. I also recorded my mother-in-law and her three siblings talking about their childhood. At the start of the recording I identified the date, my name, and the names of the people being interviewed. While it is important to do this, the way I did it was rather formal. Unfortunately this created a formal and unrelaxed atmosphere that remained prevalent throughout the recording. People were quite reluctant to talk very much. After the recording was over the siblings went out for lunch together. The process had triggered memories, and once they were relaxed again without the camera they apparently had a wonderful time talking about their childhood. Alas it was not recorded.

The recordings we made were not of great quality. The pictures are somewhat grainy. On one recording there was a fan running in the background. Although it was hardly noticeable when we were recording, it was very loud on the final product. If I were to do it again, I would do many things differently. But I'm just glad we did it. We used the technology we had at the time, which was a camcorder using tapes. We have since had the recordings digitized. Given the current capabilities of cell phones, almost everyone has the ability to do some type of video recording. Other equipment could produce better results, but if you don't have that equipment, don't let that stop you. Technology can solve some imperfections. We were able to remove much of the fan noise.

If you are interested in video or audio recording yourself or a family member, I encourage you not to delay. Perfection is not as important as getting something docu-

mented while it remains possible. If you have questions about how to proceed, contact our office, and we will do our best to help you get started. ♦

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Do you want to make a contribution to Alberta Mennonite history, but do not have the patience to write history or volunteer in the archives? Do you want to support Mennonite historical research projects or help in the long-term preservation of records that document the Mennonite experience in Alberta? Then please consider making a donation to the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta. Our address is:

Mennonite Historical
Society of Alberta
2946 - 32 Street NE
Calgary, Alberta
T1Y 6J7

Not only will you receive a charitable receipt, but also the satisfaction of contributing to the long-term survival of Alberta's Mennonite heritage.

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the name was changed to Blumenthal Mennonite Church. The membership during the first few years remained at fifty-six.¹

Rev. David P. Janzen, an ordained minister from Russia, was elected as leader. Helping in the ministry were Rev. F. Gietz² and Rev. J. Goerz. Since the group was so widely scattered, it was felt that more ministerial help was needed. On July 29, 1929 Mr. John Poettcker, already elected as minister in Russia, was ordained. Two years later Mr. Klaus Janzen of Cowley was also ordained to the ministry. In 1930 Mr. Abraham Poettcker was ordained as deacon. Within a few years the church joined the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as well as the General Conference (Canada and U.S.). The majority of the Pincher Creek group were Mennonite Brethren. In the early years joint M.B. and G.C. services were held frequently. Rev. David Durksen shared the pulpit with Rev. David P. Janzen. However, the M.B. group began having their own services as they got larger.³

The 1930's

Many will remember the years of the depression, when eggs sold for \$.05 - \$.07 a dozen, beef for \$.01 a pound, and wheat for \$0.25 a bushel. Though there was not much material wealth, there was a bond of unity and love. ("Wie war doch die erste zeit so schoen.") Due to difficult times, some of the families from the Macleod and Cowley areas left to settle in Coaldale and Rosemary. Nonetheless, God blessed the hard labour of our early settlers. Though prices for farm products were low, you could see progress; some of the families were proud owners of model T Fords as well as a few trucks. Spiritual blessings were also evident, and young people followed the Lord in baptism.

The spiritual growth of the church was apparent. However, there was no one to perform the functions of an elder, and it was difficult and costly to get Rev. C.D. Harder for such special occasions that required one. On May 29, 1932, through Rev. Harder's services, Rev. David P. Janzen was ordained as our elder.⁴ Elder Janzen was often asked to serve with communion, baptism

and ordination in other churches. He also spent much time in visiting different areas for Bible Study

("Bibelbesprechung") and attending and chairing various conferences.

As it became more difficult to accommodate all the families for church services in homes, the need for a church building as a central place of worship was keenly felt. After much deliberation and prayer, an old, partially burned hotel was bought in Fort Macleod for \$300.00.⁵ During the winter of 1934, it was broken down, and the lumber was hauled to Springridge for the building of a church. In early Spring the work began, and on July 20, 1935 after the tireless efforts and hard labour of young



Dedication of Springridge Menn Ch July 21, 1935

and old, the building, including the pews, was completed. There was great rejoicing the next day when people from far and near gathered for the dedication service.

With great enthusiasm, the fellowship worked and grew together under the leadership of Rev. D.P. Janzen. October 27, 1935 was a special occasion; eight young people were baptized in the morning, and the John P. Janzens were ordained to the ministry of deacons in the afternoon by Elder Wm. Martens. The same day marked the

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Building Springridge Mennonite Church 1935

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beginning of religion classes ("Religionschule") taught by Rev. John Goerz. Fifteen students enrolled for the winter months.

It seems the church was well organized. A constitution had already been drawn up on March 3, 1931. A recorder was elected for each meeting. Rev. Janzen taught Catechism, performed the duties of an elder, and chaired the meetings. The preaching of the Word and house visitations were shared by all the ministers.

The deacon was in charge of the church treasury as well as the record books (to the present) and also assisted the ministers in their various functions, always bearing in mind the physical as well as the spiritual welfare of the members. Until the late 40's, he would also make the coffins for burial of the deceased.

A board of trustees (Kirchenrat) was responsible for the business transactions. To meet Conference levies, resident members were asked to pay \$1.00; non-resident members paid \$.50. The budget was met by a levy of \$.05 per bushel of wheat. A few years later, it was raised to 2% of the gross income. The church janitor, Mr. Peter P. Janzen, received \$30.00 a year. A church seal was also made with the inscription of I Cor. 1:23. ⁶

Music, then, as always, was a vital part of the worship program. The songbooks used by our parents were the "Gesangbuch" and "Dreiband" without notes. The minister would read a line, and then the congregation would sing. When services were still held in homes, they would frequently gather to sing after the dinner dishes were done. Mr. Raabe would often

lead an orchestra of guitars, violins, auto-harps and mandolins. A male quartet sang quite regularly and a mixed double quartet or choir, led by John Koop and later by his brother Abe, sang on special occasions. Some of their favourite books were Perlenchoere, Kleine Palme, and Palme I and II. Later, the Evangeliumslieder, Gesangbucher (with notes) and the Mennonite Hymnaries were used. Very early on, D. P. Janzens donated an organ to the church. In 1944 a piano was bought. The same piano, after some repairing and with occasional tuning, is still serving its purpose today. In 1967 an electric organ was purchased.

In later years, due to the many young people leaving for the cities for further education or to establish their families, our church has not always had a regular choir. However, under the direction of Mrs. Ella Froese assisted by Mrs. Lennie Koop, the choirs and special singing groups have certainly enriched the services. A male quartet has also served quite



Male quartet, Nick Dyck, Peter Koop, Peter J. Janzen, Peter Poettcker, pianist Ruth Poettcker

faithfully not only in church, but also at community programs. Occasionally, the children playing in school band would bring their instruments home and play in church under the direction of Mrs. Ruth Poettcker or Mrs. Lennie Koop.

Though all were concerned about the young people, Mr. Peter Boldt had a major role in their welfare. The "Jugendverein" (Youth Group) was organized on September 1, 1935. In the beginning, programs were rendered once a month, usually on a Sunday afternoon. The theme of the first program was "Heimat" (Homeland) and consisted of 22 items. Old and young partook. Enthusiasm and talents were rated high. In 1939, a committee of younger men took over with Abe Koop as leader assisted by Jacob Poettcker, John Koop, and John V. Poettcker. With enthusiasm and love for their assigned work, they carried on. Many others have also taken their turn.

Although programs were delivered in the German language under the leadership of Mr. Boldt, as the years passed, there was a gradual transition to the English language. On March 5, 1960 the Jugendverein, the Recreation Committee, and the Young Peoples Group amalgamated to form a Christian Endeavour Group. Programs for the youth were spiritually refreshing for everyone. Many films were shown, and stirring messages came through very clearly. Many of the young people attended Bible School and Mennonite High Schools as well and became a great assistance in local

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church work. Yes, we certainly feel that our youth programs have played a very important part in the development of our church. May God bless each one richly for their efforts.

Amidst the joys there were also sorrows and challenges. Within a few years four children died in infancy. A great loss was felt by the fellowship when on August 11, 1934, Deacon Abraham Poettcker passed away at an early age. In January of 1938, Rev. J. Poettcker, a faithful servant, became sick. The internal discomfort and pain was later determined to be cancer. Two years later, he died of intestinal gangrene and went to be with the Lord.

Though our area has never experienced a crop failure or major disaster, over the years some families have been hard hit by hailstorms, and some have experienced severe fire or lightning damage. On September 1, 1939, the church was struck by lightning although not much damage was done. On January 30, 1938, a severe fire broke out in John P. Janzen's garage, burning the garage as well as two cars. Rev. D. Janzen, was walking from his home to his brother John's place to catch a ride to Coaldale for Bible study, he happened to see the fire in the garage through the window. Rev. Janzen received burns as he was carrying out a container of anti-freeze that had caught on fire on the stove. There were no car block heaters in those days so people drained the anti-freeze, put it on the stove to heat, then poured it back into the radiator so the car would be easier to start. Since the Janzen trip was to have served a dual purpose, John Koop was asked to get Mrs. John Froese from the Coaldale hospital. On their way home in the Lethbridge hills, they were struck by an on-coming car (drunk driver). Peter, son of J. Janzen, caught a cold at the time of the fire, came down with rheumatic fever a week later, and was bed-ridden for two years; it was only slowly that he regained health and strength for work.

The 1940's

Some of the spiritual highlights during the next years were the Bible studies and evangelistic meetings held by J.J. Esau, A.G. Neufeld, P. Sawatsky, and J.W. Wiebe, and the lectures by D.D. Klassen and J.J. Nickel. Although some families moved away, others moved in from Coaldale and Rosemary and new homes were established when young men realized that it is not good that man should be alone.

Again there was the need for ministerial help. Five candidates were elected: Wm. Raabe, John P. Janzen, A.B. Koop, Peter Kruger, and Jacob Poettcker. On December 27, 1942, A.B. Koop and Wm. Raabe were ordained. Although this was a great help to our elder, the next year Mr. and Mrs. Raabe made their home in B.C., and in the following years A. Koop was asked to teach at Bible Schools during the winter months. In 1948, the Henry Poettckers and David D. Janzens were ordained to the ministry. They rendered only brief service at home, but gave a good deal of time and talent to Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) and conference-related work in Canada and the U.S.A.

There were other changes as well. Up to this time, all the services had been held in the German language, and little work was, or could have been,

done with other English-speaking churches. Now the question arose whether the English language could be used in Sunday School. Permission was given to do so. Also, since the church was not built on a full basement it was decided to enlarge the basement and to install a furnace.

The travel expenses were paid to church members for getting visiting ministers from the train or bus station and taking local ministers and delegates to the bus or train to attend conferences. Seven cents per mile was allowed for this travel, later raised to ten and then further to fifteen cents.

The 1950's

In 1950 a house, 18 x 22, was built on the church yard to house the Franz Froeses, who served as church janitors for \$60.00 a month. In the same year, A.B. Koop was installed as church leader as Rev. Janzen was finding it difficult to perform all the church duties required of him. It was also agreed that the ministers were free from local church levies. Since Mr. Peter Boldt was not able to give too much help in the building, cleaning, and other general church maintenance work, he offered to teach German school during the summer months. He kept this up for a few years.

1953 marked the 25th Anniversary of the organizing of our church. Much time was spent in sanding, varnishing, and general cleaning within the sanctuary as well as new siding installed on the outside. More Sunday School rooms were also built in the basement. July 12 was the highlight of the year when a large number of people, including many of the old

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settlers who had been gone for years, gathered for the jubilee program.

There were several changes in leadership during this period. In 1954, Elder D. Janzen expressed the desire to retire from active service, so that 'Juengers Kraefts' ⁷ could take over. The fellowship felt that his service in the various areas of church work would be greatly missed. Elder Janzen suggested that two new ministers be elected. Shortly afterwards, three candidates were elected: Isaac Penner, Peter J. Janzen, and Henry Koop.

Some of the senior members had already gone to their rewards; others were planning to retire to Coaldale. In 1956, the Aron Koops and J.P. Janzens moved. This left a need not only for a minister, but also for a deacon. On November 18 of that same year, the Henry Koops were ordained to the ministry, and the Peter J. Janzens were ordained as deacons.

Since A.B. Koop spent a few winters teaching at the Swift Current Bible Institute (SCBI), it was agreed upon to elect a ("Gemeindeleiter") church leader annually at the annual business meeting.

With the resignation of Elder Janzen, the church was faced with the problem of getting someone to serve with communion and baptism. C.G. Neufeld, Herbert Peters, J.D. Nickel and Peter Schellenberg were among those who served for these occasions during this interim time.

In the fall of 1959, after many years of service, the A.B. Koops moved to Chilliwack, B.C. This left A.B. Koops brother, Henry, in charge of the duties as pastor.

The 1960's

During the winter months of the early sixties, Henry Koop conducted short Sunday School (SS) courses. These courses were well attended by the S.S. teachers. It was also during these years that Henry Koop was approached to give a sermon in the English language occasionally. The transition was slow and difficult, with pressure from both sides. In June of 1964, our church took an active part for the first time in the Crowsnest Pass Ministerial.

On November 30, 1964 the last resident senior member of the early settlers, Mrs. Margaret (John) Poettcker, was laid to rest. Due to church renovations that same year the treasurer's report indicated both high income of \$7,517.84 and high expenses of \$6,391.10.

It was no easy task to take over the full spiritual responsibilities of the church. To help with this challenge, Henry Koop attended various seminars and short courses at CMBC, Menno Bible School, Didsbury, Calgary Pastoral Institute, and churches in larger centres.

June 10, 1965 stands out as a historical moment in our church's history. At a special meeting, chaired by the deacon with the minister absent, it was decided to give the pastor a remuneration of \$65.00 a month. No previous minister had received such a token.

For some time it had been felt that our minister should perform the functions of an elder because it was difficult for outsiders to perform wedding ceremonies and baptisms for young people when they were strangers to each other. Under the leadership of Rev. C.G. Neufeld and after much deliberation and prayer, on June 20, 1965 Henry Koop was installed to perform these duties.

At the annual business meeting of 1966, it was decided to meet our financial needs on a voluntary basis. This has worked well enough that it has been carried on till the present (1978). The proposed budget for that year was set at \$4,770.00.

On May 14th of that same year, after having lived in Coaldale for almost two years, David P. Janzen went to be with the Lord. We all need to remember Hebrews 13:7. ⁸



**Norma and Henry Koop ordained as pastor by
Rev. D.P. Janzen**

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Around this time, Henry Koop asked to be relieved from church responsibilities as he felt the strain and pressure of church and farm work as



Brothers John P, Rev David P. and Jacob P. Janzen at Peter P. Janzen's funeral

well as the need for further study if he wanted to continue working as a pastor. He felt that a change of ministers would benefit the church.

Up to this time the meetings had been brotherhood meetings.

(“Bruderberatungen”). At the annual meeting on January 16, 1967, a motion was carried to extend female members equal rights and privileges with male members.

At the same meeting, a motion was carried to look for a minister and church chairman. In June, Nick F. Dyck was elected as church chairman, and the church council began looking for someone to replace Henry Koop. David Adrian, a C.M.B.C. graduate who had served the Vauxhall church for one year, was contacted and interviewed, and David and Lynda consented to come and serve our church for one year. Since no house was available in Pincher Creek, they were moved to a house on the farmyard of the Nick Dycks. Lynda had a teaching position in town, and the church paid them \$100.00 a month plus utilities. They also enjoyed many products from the farm.

On August 27, 1967, the installation service took place. This was also a milestone in our history because up to this time no one from outside the church group had served as minister. This new experience proved to be good for both. Though David was a bit hesitant to take over the full responsibilities of the church, he soon realized that our group was well organized in the various areas of service. Since Lynda was away during the day, David spent much time in house visitations, “having dinner with friends” and preparing for the church study course, “Introduction to the Bible”, which he taught during the winter months. He was also one of the team that made a study of Medicine Hat to determine the advisability of establishing a church there.

1967 marked also the arrival of our newly revised Constitution. 1967 was also Canada’s Centennial, a year for retrospection as well as projection and celebration. Pincher Creek was no exception. During the days of the annual fair and rodeo, our group had a large display of the history of our church as well as Mennonite history in general. This was a time for answering questions and making comments in reference to our Mennonite heritage. C.J. Dyck’s book was added to the Pincher Creek library.

In the earlier years, due to language barriers our church had never really become a “community church” and was sometimes misunderstood. However, since the removal of this language barrier, good relationships have been established, pulpit exchanges have taken place, and visiting speakers from other denominational churches have spoken to us on various occasions. Our second generation of church members have become involved in community affairs and have taken on responsible jobs such as chairman, director, manager, and president of organizations such as the United Grain Growers board, Alberta Wheat Pool, local gas Co-op, Unifarm, School board and Credit Union. Others have been engaged in the Junior Forest Guides and Wardens, hospital auxiliary, Napi Friendship Association, and minor hockey organization.

In 1968 we were again faced with the problem of getting a pastor. With the help of the Canadian Conference Executive Secretary, many avenues were explored, yet without success. Henry Koop was approached to take over the ministry until replacement could be found, allowing one Sunday a month free (“family Sunday”) and \$100.00 per month remuneration. He accepted with the understanding that there would be a search for a minister who would take over the pastorate permanently.

On July 14, 1968 we celebrated the 40th anniversary of our church. It was a special day. Among the guest speakers were Rev. C.G. Neufeld, Didsbury; Rev. John Goerz, Vancouver; Rev. Dick Hayward, Pincher Creek and Mr. John P. Janzen, Coaldale.

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We are a church that tries to make a positive impact on the wider world. We are living in a "Sports Age". It gives us a thrill to watch our young people display their physical fitness and sportsmanship in the various activities. However, since the Sunday morning time of worship was beginning to be taken up with hockey, ball games, etc., an appeal was made to the Pincher Creek recreation board to try not to schedule games for Sunday mornings.

While our church has always been interested in finding solutions for concerns within the community, on December 16, 1969, we went even further by sending a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau appealing for a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Nigeria.

Though our church has not sent out "missionaries", some of our young people have been engaged in V.S. work. Mary Koop helped in the Grace Children's Home in Nebraska; Mary Janzen served as a R.N. in Matheson Island and La Crete; Nick A. Dyck worked in the Wheatridge State Home for the intellectually disabled in Denver for two years. Linden Willms, though already having transferred his membership to Saskatoon at this time, has served with his wife Deloris in Kikwit, Zaire under Mennonite Central Committee since May 1974.

Though our group has never been large, it has been a joy to render spiritual help and programs in locations such as the Seven Persons (Alberta) Mennonite Mission, various Coaldale churches, Coaldale Senior Citizens Home (Altenheim), the Pincher Creek Crestview Lodge, the Lundbreck Elementary School and the Blood

Indian Reservation. Some of our members have also been active on Provincial Conference committees and the Canadian Conference Board of Missions.

In 1969 Nick A. and June Dyck accepted a call from the Bloomfield Mennonite Church in Montana to become their pastors and requested our church to ordain them. Nick was the pastor and June was very active in the ministry. After prayerful consideration and planning with the Bloomfield church, the ordination took place on May 17, 1970 under the leadership of our Conference Pastor, Rev. Abe Neufeld.

The 1970'S

Adult baptism has often been a topic of discussion, but in April 1972 a lengthy discussion took place in reference to child baptism. It was decided to write to Rev. H. Gerbrandt, the Conference Executive Secretary, to ask for information and Conference views on this matter. Soon a lengthy letter was received giving answers and information to our questions. At this meeting it was also moved that we have child dedication upon request of parents.

Our search for pastoral leadership continued to be a challenge during this decade. Leonard and Twianne Siemens, who were teaching at a local Hutterite Colony, shared the ministry for a short time, and later Peter Letkeman, Professor at the University of Lethbridge, visited us occasionally upon invitation to bring the Sunday morning message. We had contacted SCBI and CMBC to find a replacement for our pastor, but no one had been found. However, we became closer to SCBI when the Peter Poettckers accepted the challenge of cooking there during the winter months of 1972 as well as the following year, and an SCBI trainee, Gerald Klassen, helped us in our church work for one month. We also became indebted to CMBC and Ernie Hildebrandt and Leonora Retzlaff for coming and teaching a short course in Anabaptist history.

1974 began a new chapter in the history of our church. Through the help of the Canadian Conference Executive Secretary and Rev. A. Neufeld, we were able to get in contact with the Elwin Epps of Wymark, Sask. After prayerful discussions and exchanges of visits, they consented to take over the pastorate. August 25th will always be remembered not only as the day of installation for the Epps, but also for the program in which the church expressed its appreciation for the services given by the Henry Koops.

Though total church income had risen from \$7,441.43 in 1972 to \$22,917.15 in 1975, expenses had also risen in proportion, and the Canadian Conference was now approached for financial assistance. We have continued to receive this financial assistance up to the present.

Though we look upon Rev. Epp as our full time, salaried pastor, the church has allowed him to take on extra work to supplement their family income. He has had work with the School Division and driving the school bus. Besides two weeks holidays, he also has one Sunday free every two months. He leads regular Sunday morning worship services, instructs in catechism, and leads the monthly Bible studies. Pastor Epp has also been instrumental in the revision of our Constitution. Olga, his wife, also takes active part in various church and community activities. The Epps live in Pincher Creek and driving the twenty miles west to the church is somewhat

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difficult, Rev. Epp also renders service beyond our church group. He is a member of the Pincher Creek Ministerial, which meets on a monthly basis. The Ministerial provides regular counselling services, writes brief meditations for the local paper, is engaged in hospital chaplaincy, is responsible for guiding and counselling service at the high school one day a week, and also works out the programs for the annual Carol Festival.

Although statements in regards to the impact of a salaried ministry may be somewhat premature, members have made certain observations. The salaried ministry, while an established fact, is not necessarily an improvement. Traditional unpaid ministry was done out of dedication to God and man; salaried ministry is at a risk of being less dedicated. The salaried ministry has a tendency to make members feel that they can leave responsibilities up to the minister. Small churches find it more difficult to maintain their financial obligations to Conference projects at home and abroad when they have a salaried minister. However, we must keep in mind Scripture tells us that those under instruction should contribute to the support of those instructing.

The Present (1978)

What the future holds in store for our congregation is uncertain. Of the 22 families who now attend our church services, seven, mostly retired farmers, live in town, Some have taken on part or full time jobs. Of the others still on farms, some may retire soon. After graduating from high school, most of the young people make their homes in the cities. Ten of our members are non-resident.

Nonetheless, through the dedicated and united efforts of our leaders

and members, our church has grown spiritually, if not numerically. The power of the Holy Spirit has been evident in the lives and service of many in 'Jerusalem' and beyond. To be a witness in this world and build God's Kingdom was the goal of our parents. It is our goal also. We would like to be



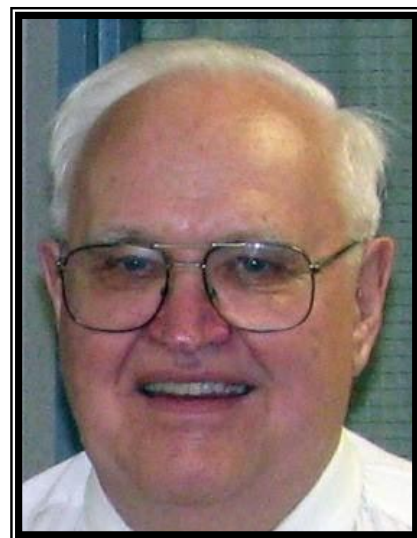
50th Anniversary Celebration at Foothills Park, speaker A.B.Koop

found in His will doing His work. May we be found faithful in the work entrusted to us.

1978 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Springridge Mennonite Church. The celebration was held outdoors at Foothills Park with Rev. A.

B. Koop as the guest speaker. A short thunderstorm interrupted the program – the picture below shows a piano in the box of a half ton truck with a tarp draped over the top ready for use. The congregation was ready for rain and for what the future would bring!

Henry Koop was born December 23, 1921 in Konteniusfeld, Molotschna, South Russia and came to Canada with his parents in 1925. He married Norma Epp on October 15, 1954 in Rosthern Saskatchewan. They raised four children and farmed one mile south and 4.5 miles East of Springridge Church. They moved to Pincher Creek after selling the farm in 1986. Henry attended Herbert Bible School and graduated at Rosthern Junior College in 1950. He taught at Menno Bible Institute in Didsbury from 1952 to 1955. He also played the guitar and harmonica, and enjoyed tennis, horse-shoes, and fishing. Henry taught Sunday School and served on various committees in church and also the AB Conference. Henry was pastor at Springridge from 1956 to



Peter D. Janzen

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1966 and 1968 to 1974 and served on team ministry from 1983 to 1988. Henry passed away on September 13, 2003.

Editor's note: *Peter D. Janzen, Lethbridge, Alberta provided the text written by Henry Koop, the photographs, and the biography of Henry Koop. He was consulted to confirm details within the text provided and contributed additional information relevant to the history.*

I believe Henry Koop wrote most of the above. This belief is shared by two present members of the Springridge congregation – Jim Dyck and Linden Willms – who have knowledge of the period beginning in the 1950s and have informed me that they believe Rev. Henry Koop was being 'humble' as that seems to have been his tendency. I believe this aspect of his character is evident in the text he has written especially where he refers to himself. Dan Jack

Footnotes

¹ Membership was counted by heads of families – husband and wife. The list included widowed mothers. From Glenwood-Ewelme there were 13 families. From Fort Macleod – Standoff there were 11 families. From Springridge there were 10 families. From Pincher Creek- Cowley there were seven families of which there were three widows listed.

² Rev. Fred Gietz is the grandfather of the current Chief Justice of Canada's Supreme Court - Beverly MacLachlan.

³ Peter Boldt (born 1892) was a teacher at Standoff Hutterite Colony, recorder of minutes, organist, and German school teacher at Springridge Mennonite Church during the 50's. When he and his wife moved to Coaldale in retirement in 1961, they attended the

M.B. church where his wife was rebaptized by immersion, but he refused to do so.

In 1985, at a conference session in Regina, Saskatchewan an apology was made by the M.B.'s for their policies related to baptism by immersion.

⁴ On August 5, 1928 David P. Janzen's daughter Barbara married Peter W. Martens, an M.B. from Coaldale. Rev. D. P. Janzen advised his daughter it would be better for her to be baptized by immersion to avoid trouble later on and so she joined the MB church in Coaldale.

⁵ The down payment was \$25 with \$125 due on start of the dismantling and the balance after harvest 1935. Each family was given a bucket of salvaged nails to be straightened and reused in the rebuilding.

⁶ 'But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: KJV

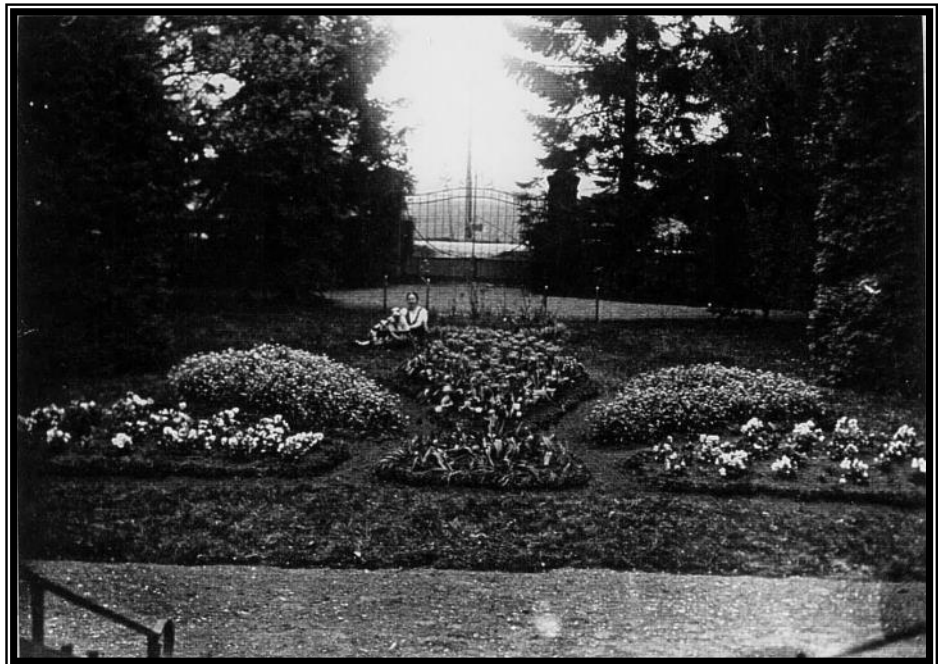
⁷ Younger powers

⁸ Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. KJV ❖

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ting closer. Fires were visible on the horizon. It was the fall of 1944, and Charlotte Wiehler was living with her parents on their farm in Reichfelde, East Germany, now Poland. Her husband, Hans Wiehler, was away at war, where he served in a hospital division.

Christmas in 1944 was celebrated, but the general feeling was suppressed and not very positive. Although you were not allowed to listen to



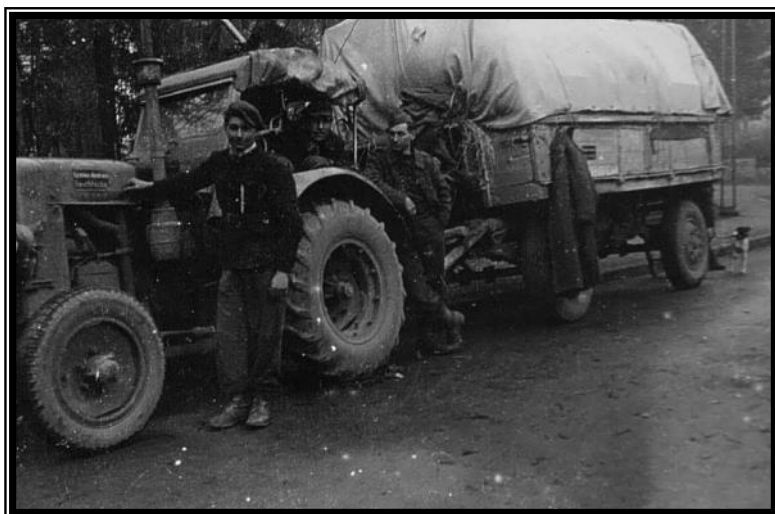
Charlotte's Sister Marie-Louise Froese with dog Nora in their garden in the village of Reichfelde

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any foreign radio stations, Charlotte listened to them secretly and quietly at night. People could not openly criticize the war effort nor talk openly about losing the war, but Charlotte's family were already beginning preparations to flee. In early January 1945 they secretly readied a wagon with belongings. It was hard to think of leaving everything that Charlotte's parents had built and worked for.

On January 24, 1945, German soldiers came to their house. They were amazed that they were still there as the Russians were at the doorstep. The family left their home in the night of January 25. They had packed all day. Food and gas and other supplies all had to be taken along as you couldn't buy anything. They loaded one chest, some clothes, some dishes, some jewelry (but not all), some bicycles and some bedding material into the wagon. Money and some gold were also taken. They had a small tractor with rubber tires to pull their wagon.



Tractor Used to Escape Showing 3 Prisoners of War

They did not tell anyone that they were leaving. Charlotte and her parents (Gustav and Louise Andres), John Penner and three workers, a Hollander, a French and a Ukrainian prisoner, and two house girls left together. They were going to Westlinken to the farm of Charlotte's sister, Hans and Irmgard Dyck. Westlinken was 11 kilometers from Danzig. The Western Allies attacked Danzig with a major bombing effort, and during the attack the earth shook. Nonetheless, the Nazi propaganda continued to say all people would soon be able to return to their homes. It took two days to get there. The streets were crowded with people fleeing. The roads were icy, and it was terribly cold. Their bicycles, which were at the back of the wagon, were stolen from them.

Hans Dyck's house was full of refugees. It was the beginning of February, and the Russians were getting closer. The streets were full of refugees and soldiers. You could see soldiers' bodies hanging from the trees. They were executed if they did not believe in a final victory. Telephone service was sporadic, but luckily Charlotte's family got a connection to Charlotte's sister, Christel, who was at the seaside and pregnant with her fifth child. Christel told them to come to get her and her four children, so Charlotte went to get them with a horse and a wagon.

After ten days, afraid that they were going to be encircled by the Russians, Charlotte, her parents, Christel and her children, their three drivers, and the prisoners left with their tractor and wagon for the west. They drove along the coast to Koeslin, stayed there overnight, and then went further the next day. There were many soldiers on the road who were also running from the Russians. The family still had fuel and food along in the wagon, and in three to four days they were in Wernigerode in the Hartz. This was still in the area of Germany that was being defended by German soldiers. A family Kroecker, a mission's family that Gustav Andres had supported in the past, received them warmly and let them live with them.

Germany surrendered at the end of May 1945. There was no fighting in the Wernigerode area as by then the mayor of the village had surrendered to the Americans who now occupied the town. There was no work, and there was no school. However, since the family still had some of their original food and money (the currency was still the Reichsmark), they always had enough to eat. They bought some supplies, but after a while it was hard to find things that you wanted to purchase. People looted stores and shops. There was a lot of bartering with the American soldiers (who gave chocolate bars to the kids and women). If you had something to trade, you could get supplies. If you didn't, it could be very rough.

Rumors that the Russians were coming to this area were being spread. The Russians had half of Germany, and the area where the family was living was in the Rus-

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sian half. At the end of June, the family decided to go to Hamburg, which was an area that was not controlled by the Russians. On the way to Hamburg, they had to go over the river Elbe. English soldiers were guarding the river. In order to allow the family to cross, one of them demanded a gold watch from them, even though he already had an armful of watches.

There was less to eat in Hamburg. The family bought and traded for supplies, but this was difficult. They made connections with Hans and Irmgard Dyck (Charlotte's sister) who were in a fruit district on the west side of the Elbe. Charlotte went there to visit them and to buy fruit. One time, she was locked up for a while because it was not allowed for people to cross the Elbe and to travel to another area.

In the middle of September, they moved to nearby Prissdorf. Here, Hans Wiehler finally caught up with Charlotte. Living in Prissdorf was the hardest experience after the war. There was no work. There was barely enough to eat. A meal would consist of cabbage soup with barley, but with no fat or meat. There was bread and skim milk, but no coffee. This was something that Opa Andres really missed. They had no oven and no stove, so they had to go next door to cook. They wondered how they would survive during the winter. There was no radio and, of course, no TV.

In September of 1945, friends of theirs, Hans and Lore Andres, came to visit them and told them to check out the village Oppendorf. Hans went and was referred to the family Steinkamps who had some room. So the whole family

took the tractor and the wagon and went to Oppendorf. They arrived there in the evening of September 24, 1945.

At Steinkamps, Charlotte's parents (Oma and Opa Andres), Charlotte's brother (Walter Andres), and Charlotte and Hans Wiehler each had a room. Hans worked at Steinkamps. He was not paid for his work, but he could eat his lunch and supper meal with the Steinkamp family. Charlotte could then sell his food stamps or keep them in order to feed the rest of their own family. They were given a plot of land for a garden and received milk and meat. The garden produced a lot of supplies. Other supplies had to be purchased with a quota card. There was no real coffee, but there was always enough to eat. The times were not the easiest, but the hardships were accepted.

At the end of 1946, Hans stopped working at Steinkamps

and got a job driving truck at the German Civilian Labor Organization in Osnabrueck. He stayed in some barracks all week and came home every weekend on the train. They now had enough money to live and always had enough to eat. However, there was no such thing as going out to eat. One pound of butter was worth 300 Reichsmark, and four pounds of butter would buy you one pound of coffee. A bicycle was worth 10 pounds of butter. The family already had obtained a couch and a living room cupboard. Clothes were purchased using a quota card. Charlotte bought a bathtub and a big pot this way. When she was five months pregnant, she brought these two items home from Rahden, about 10 kilometers away, on a bicycle.

There was no doctor in Oppendorf. In 1947, when Charlotte and Hans' baby was due, the fur dealer took Charlotte to the hospital in Osnabrueck because there was nobody else to drive her. At the women's clinic there in Bad Essen, a midwife delivered baby Astrid.

Around this time, in late 1946, care packages came from relatives from North America, and they were a real joy. The coffee was traded for four pounds of butter, which could be sold on the black market. They also got clothes and cans of horsemeat and lard from MCC.

On Jan 25, 1949 a second child was born in the afternoon but passed away by the next morning. She was called Ursula and was a blue baby who



**Oppendorf 1949, Otto Froese (brother-in-law),
Charlotte and Opa Gustav Andres**

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was missing some fingers and had a club foot.

Things were slowly getting better for everybody. The family did not have a car or a motorcycle and did not take holidays. Occasionally they went to Ritsch in Kreisstade to visit relatives who were within bicycle distance.

Charlotte and Hans went to the Evangelical church in Oppendorf. Occasionally, MCC came from Espelkamp, held Sunday school, and even put on a picnic with lots of American food.

Germany was a country without any room. By 1948 people were already emigrating, many to Paraguay. Charlotte's four sisters and her brother were all in agreement that they should leave Germany also. Shortly before he passed away, Charlotte's father, Gustav Andres, encouraged the whole family to emigrate to Canada and wrote to C.F. Klassen and to MCC to inquire about the conditions for doing so.

In 1950, Charlotte's sister's family, the Horst and Christel Wiebes, applied through MCC and went to Herschel, Saskatchewan, where the local Mennonite church sponsored them. The families of Charlotte's other sisters, Hans and Irmgard Dyck and Otto and Marie-Louise Froese, emigrated to Coaldale, Alberta in May 1951.

Hans and Charlotte first tried getting permission to emigrate to Uruguay, South America. They were already learning Spanish when they found out that this would not work out. They then applied through MCC to go to Canada. In order to apply, they had to travel to Bremen for medical tests. The first time, they were refused because they had spots on their lungs; however, the second time, they were accepted. Horst and Christel Wiebe who were already in Saskatchewan obtained the Canadian sponsors that they required. They got their travel visas and sold everything except for two big chests of belongings.

At the beginning of June 1951, Hans and Charlotte, their small children

Astrid and Hartwick (the author, born in 1950), and Charlotte's mother, went to an MCC camp in Bremerhafen. They were in the camp for one week before boarding the boat *Beaverbrae*. It was a terrible boat, which used to be a freighter, but



Entering Canada on the *Beaverbrae*—Charlotte, Oma Andres, Hans, Baby Hartwick and Astrid

it was good enough for the immigrants, and it did have very good food. The trip for the two adults and two children cost about \$800 Canadian. MCC paid for the trip on the understanding that it would be repaid in future. The trip took ten days, and it was not an easy trip. The weather was not good, and there was a bad storm. Many persons became seasick, but even when you were seasick, the rules were that you still had to go out to get fresh air. There were 80 women in one big room with only one toilet. Charlotte was lucky that they had a baby carriage for baby Hartwick. Charlotte's mother fell and had an open wound on her head, but there was no doctor to go to.

After ten days on the boat, the family landed in Quebec City and were given a friendly welcome by some local ladies who gave them food and diapers.

After the days on the boat, everybody was looking forward to the train. But the train was also terrible. When it started, it jerked so hard that they were just about thrown from the seats. The soot flew in through the windows. There was very little water. They took this train for three days and nights all the way to Moose Jaw, where they transferred to a real train, a public one. It was like being in heaven. Nobody could speak English except for a few school words, so the family couldn't communicate with the other passengers and remained by themselves. The train took them directly to Herschel, Saskatchewan.

On the afternoon of June 21, 1951, they arrived in Herschel where they were greeted by the Horst and Christel Wiebes who

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were already on a farm there, with their sponsors the Abraham Krahns, and by the Abraham Klassens.

Hartwick was very sick. He could not eat or sleep and cried a lot. Abraham Krahn drove his mother, Charlotte, to a Dr. Hooze in Biggar who spoke German. He could have driven just to Rosetown, which was closer, but he made the extra effort.

Charlotte and Hans and the family stayed at the Krahn's until the fall. The Krahns had a farm, and Hans worked for them, helping to milk the cows and doing other chores and farm work. Charlotte and Hans had a bedroom in the Krahn's house and lived and ate with them. Charlotte helped where possible. It was hard to get adjusted to this different lifestyle. From a life of luxury before the war, they were now in a life of hard work with no belongings.

In the fall, Hans and Charlotte



1991 Golden Wedding of Hans and Charlotte
(The author, his wife and his 3 boys are on the left hand side)

moved to a small house on the farm of John and Sarah Wiens. Hans worked on the farm and in exchange received \$1000, two free pigs, chickens, milk, and some land for gardening and the house. The second year, he received \$1200. They also got pig heads and some other supplies from the church congregation. The pig heads were used for food and for hamburger.

The house only had three small rooms. Charlotte's mother came to live with them, and she got one room. The other two rooms were for the rest of the family and for daily living. When you haven't got much, you don't expect much. Out of the \$1,000 salary in the first year, Charlotte and Hans paid the whole travel loan of \$800 back to MCC. That didn't leave very much money for other things. Hans had to work six days a week and had to do chores every day. On Sundays the family got the truck to go to church, and then they could go wherever they wanted for visiting.

From this beginning, the family moved to Rosetown and from there to Calgary. Over the years Hans and Charlotte received many blessings in this country. The family that came to Canada as a couple with two children has grown with the addition of two more children, many grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren. Canada is now home.



Charlotte with Hartwick and Astrid at the Wiens House

Hartwick Wiebler, usually known as Harvey, is the son of Charlotte and Hans. He and his wife Betty live in Calgary, where they attend First Mennonite Church. Harvey is the layout editor of this publication. ❖

The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians 1942 - 1949

by Henry M. Dyck

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in Canada in 1877, leaving their poor fishing villages and farms and settling in coastal British Columbia and the Fraser Valley. The existing widespread anti-Asian prejudice among Vancouver's community leaders was soon mobilized to lobby the federal government to stop Asian immigration. Laws denying Japanese immigrants the right to vote were soon enacted. Occupational restrictions resulted in the majority taking up fishing and farming. Other restrictions affecting their life style and habitation contributed to the ghettoization of the Japanese immigrant community. It developed its own institutions and in all things sought to isolate itself from its prejudiced white neighbours. Parents sent their Canadian born children to Japan for their education or enrolled them in private schools established by the Japanese Canadian community, providing instruction in Japanese language, customs and culture.

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 intensified the anti-Asian feelings. In January 1942 The Citizens Defence Committee, established by a group of 20 prominent Vancouverites, petitioned the federal government to remove the "enemy alien" Japanese from their coastline in order to prevent racial violence and bloodshed. The resulting Order-In-Council established the BC Security Council, granting it unlimited powers under the War Measures Act. Japanese Canadians, whether Canadian citizens or not, became subject to dusk-to-dawn curfew, were required to register with the RCMP and were denied the right of assembly and free movement. They were forbidden to have motor vehicles, cameras, radio transmitters, short wave radio receivers, firearms, ammunition and explosive materials. They had their businesses closed, their fishing fleets impounded, and their farms confiscated. Their properties were placed in trust with the Custodian of Enemy Alien Properties, with assurance that they would be returned in future (by the next year the Japanese Canadians had been uprooted and their fishing boats, farms, and homes had been sold at depression era prices, partly to ensure that the exiles would have nothing return to and partly to raise funds to pay for their incarceration).

The "Removal Plan" drawn up by the Security Council required the dispersal of all citizens of Japanese ancestry living within 100 miles of the BC coast to the BC interior or east of the Rocky Mountains. Able-bodied men were rounded up, placed on trains, and sent to work in lumber camps and sawmills in Ontario or to form road-building crews east of Hope and in the national parks in the Alberta Rockies. Those who resisted were placed in concentration camps in Ontario. The families of these men and the elderly were herded into the animal barns in Hastings Park (current Vancouver PNE site), where curtained-off stalls in the unheated, uncleaned animal shelters provided minimal privacy for families. Eventually most of these families were transferred to internment camps or ghost mining towns in the BC interior. Farm families in the Fraser Valley were allowed to relocate in-



Henry M. Dyck

tact if they agreed to work on sugar beet farms in southern Alberta and Manitoba, where the work was back-breaking, the housing was primitive, and the subsistence wages barely allowed them to eke out an existence. Families with means and social /political influence who were willing to provide for their own support were issued special permits allowing them to relocate anywhere outside the 100 mile protected area. By late 1942 about 22,000 Japanese Canadians had been relocated: 12,000 to interior BC detention camps and ghost towns, 4,000 to sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba, 1000 to work camps east of Hope, 700 to prisoner of war camps in Ontario, and about 1400 to other locations on special permits. (In the USA, 120,000 Japanese living on the west coast were incarcerated in barbed-wire camps. Families were left intact, and their properties were returned to them after the war.)

In 1944, when the end of the war was in sight, Prime Minister Mackenzie King, though publicly acknowledging the innocence of Japanese Canadians, continued to force their removal and dispersal from the west coast. The alternative to moving east was to accept King's offer to be "repatriated" to Japan. Those accepting the repatriation offer (approximately 10,000 persons) would be allowed to stay in BC until they left and would receive free passage to Japan and a resettlement allowance. Public outrage forced the government to withdraw this deportation scheme.

After the war ended, Mackenzie King continued to enforce the dispersal of Japanese Canadians from the protected areas. In Alber-

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ta the Manning government insisted that all of the exiles be removed from the province in accordance with initial promises as they were deemed to be “unassimilable”. The churches, Tommy Douglas (Saskatchewan CCF), and the press argued this was unjust and unchristian. The Southern Alberta Sugar Beet Industry successfully appealed to Manning’s government to allow the exiles to stay as they were dependent on their labour. Even so, most of the uprooted Japanese decided to leave BC and Alberta and pursue opportunities in the more welcoming province of Ontario.

In 1948, in response to public pressure, the right to vote federally was reinstated to Canadians of Japanese nationality. A year later, BC also granted the vote and removed all restrictions, allowing those who wished to return to BC to do so. As their properties had been sold, they had nothing to return to, and many chose to remain where they were or to relocate to more hospitable regions. After lengthy legal wrangling, a 1.2 million dollar compensation package for the uprooted Japanese Canadians was approved by the Mackenzie King government.

In 1984 the Japanese Canadian Community, on the basis of archival evidence of the injustices they had suffered during and after the war, appealed to the federal government for redress. In 1988 Prime Minister Brian Mulroney acknowledged these injustices, apologized to the Japanese Canadian community, and approved a three hundred million dollar compensation package. \$22,000 would be paid in compensation to each of the 13,000 survivors, 12 million dollars were paid into a Japanese Community

fund, and 24 million dollars were designated to create and fund a Canadian race relations foundation to ensure such discrimination never happened again. In 2012 the BC government finally offered a public apology to the Japanese Canadian community for injustices imposed during and following World War II.

Reading about this event in Canadian history prompted me to reflect on my observations as a young lad during the war. I recall several Japanese students joining my class in school and the introduction of potato farming to the Rosemary area by their families. A partially built Mennonite Brethren church was sold to the Japanese and became a Buddhist meeting place. This prompted some comments from the Mennonite Church pulpit. I recall a visit to our farm from the RCMP, asking my father to give up his .22 caliber rifle (our Mormon neighbour returned it to us after the war), but I was not aware of any overt discrimination, rooted in nationalistic and ethnic prejudices, directed towards the Mennonites or the uprooted Japanese in my community.

In southern Alberta the response was more strident. The concern was that BC was exporting its “Japanese problem” to Alberta, which was already dealing with a “Hutterite problem”. These conscientious objectors (“shirkers of their patriot duty”)¹ who lived in communes, spoke German, and represented unfair economic competition as they expanded and commercialized their land holdings, were also deemed “unassimilable” enemy aliens.

Mackenzie King, the prime minister who was complicit in the injustices that befell the Japanese Canadians, enjoyed the gratitude of Russian Mennonites in my community for assisting them, despite public pressure to the contrary, in escaping Stalinist oppression and finding a new home in Canada. Indeed, the accommodation of the Mennonite non-resistant faith position, in allowing conscientious objectors alternative service, speaks to an acceptance of the Mennonites that was not accorded the Japanese immigrants in the BC lower mainland. In BC the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors were also stripped of their provincial voting rights from 1931 to 1948 to discourage their settlement in BC (Canadian Encyclopedia) but were not forced to give up their properties, leave their homes, or be subject to all forms of discrimination as were the Japanese.

The Japanese Canadians were remarkably compliant as their rights and properties were taken from them and their community was being dispersed. They feared that noncompliance would result in even greater injustice. Several generations later, their descendants would reflect on these events and see a silver lining. The dispersal forced the Japanese Canadians out of their ghettos into areas where there were better economic opportunities, and where most prospered. Many intermarried and became comfortably integrated into the Canadian mosaic. Their successes may very well be attributable to the fact that they were able to discipline themselves to look to their future, rather than to the injustices of their past. It is that same quality which allowed my parents’ generation of immigrants, having escaped Stalin’s Russia, to survive and prosper.

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Endnotes

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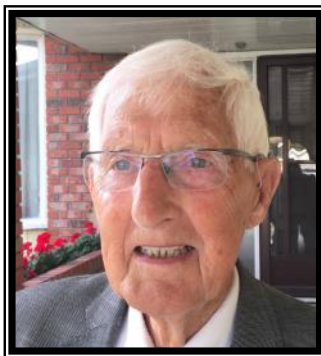
One Brick: My Experiences as a Conscientious Objector during World War II

by David Friesen

There are 3021 bricks in the Manitoba Wall of Remembrance located on 6th Street in the City of Winkler, Manitoba. Each brick represents one of Manitoba's conscientious objectors (COs) who served in some capacity as a CO during World War II. One of these bricks is mine.

In June 1940 I received notice to report for a medical examination in preparation for a call to military service. Following my thorough medical, Dr. C.W. Wiebe, our family doctor, smilingly said something like, "You are in excellent health, fit to join the Air Force." I was never quite sure what he really meant with that statement. As always he was very friendly and understanding. But I was aware of the pressure on community leaders to support the war effort. Later when I was enrolled in the pre-medical program at the University of Manitoba, I received my call to military service, with the provision to seek CO status should I wish to do so.

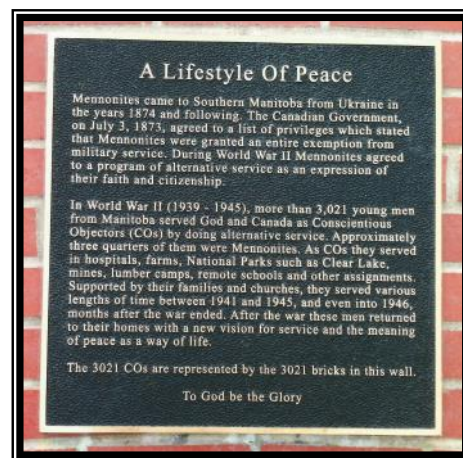
I decided to go this latter route and as a consequence was asked to appear before a Judge and tribunal, who would rule



David Friesen



Manitoba Wall of Remembrance in Winkler, with David's son Vincent



Wall of Remembrance Plaque

on my decision pending the hearing. When the day of my hearing approached, I walked all alone into the chambers where the panel held its hearings. When I reflect on those proceedings now I find it strange that I had no direct support from family, friends, or church. Alone I faced Judge Adamson and his awe-inspiring panel of military dignitaries of rank. I felt completely intimidated and very insignificant. Yet I stood bravely before the august panel, as my mother would say, "straight, confident, but not antagonistic." I must give full credit to the formidable judge and the jury of about twelve imposing dignitaries in full uniform who treated this inexperienced 20 year old with dignity and respect.

After a few preliminaries, Judge Adamson asked me directly for my reasons for not wishing to serve in the army. I did cite some of my beliefs that Jesus had taught us: "We should love our enemies" and "Turn the other cheek" as well as the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This apparently went well because there was no negative response to that, and the judge switched tactics.

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He continued to be direct in his questioning by asking, "What would your grandfather say if he were here today to see you studying at a worldly university?" For a moment I was a bit stunned, but after a short reflection I responded with what I thought was a truthful answer. "I think my grandfather, if he were here, would be proud of me for standing firm on my Mennonite religious convictions." The answer seemed to be quite acceptable to the judge for he quickly switched tactics again.

This time, rather than posing another question, the judge offered incentives should I consider joining the military after all. There were suggestions that if I joined I could continue my studies at the university, probably at little or no cost to me. Someone added that the war would be over long before I finished my studies, so I would not really have to take up arms. Another hinted that I had time to process this information and decide later.

These were indeed tempting offers for a novice university student. But at that moment I felt accepting would breach my statement of faith, so I declined. That ended the court appearance that resulted in the acquisition of my official CO status. Manitoba COs were assigned to a number of different programs. Some of them served in the military or lumber camps. Others were medical aides or coal miners. Often they served as farm workers. I must add that I had great respect for my friends who chose a different route and served the country with honour and sacrifice. I was also aware that even though I was declining active war service, the country saw farming and coal mining as key wartime

essentials.

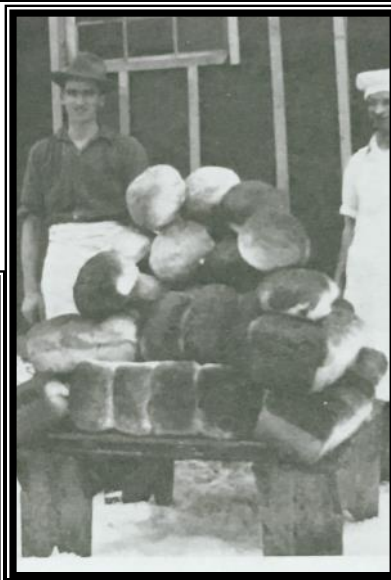
Probably the largest CO program was the Lumber Camp in Clear Lake. That is where my brother, Harry, served for a long time. Several of the pictures attached show some of the life in that camp: the lumber, the food, the pay, and the visitation. One thing made the Clear Lake Camp different from the other CO projects. There were so many COs in the camp that they could maintain both a social and religious Mennonite presence. That was not the case for the COs



COs working in the bush, Clear Lake, Manitoba



Harry among the Clear Lake COs in payday line, 50 cents a day

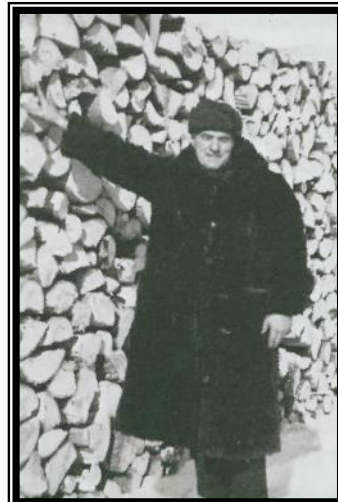


Left, behind giant loaves of bread, baker Harry Friesen, David's brother

working in the coal mines.

My first assignment after leaving the university was caretaking at the Winnipeg Armoury. I can still visualize the smart-looking soldiers marching briskly by as I slaved to polish the hardwood floor of the facility. I had that vague feeling that the judge wanted me to see the positive side of joining the military, so that I might change my mind. It was only much later that I realized that my hearing had been much more about recruitment than about granting CO status to me. That was already guaranteed to me by the privileges granted to Mennonites in 1873 by the Federal Government.

My next assignment was to work in the coal mines at Bienfait, Saskatchewan. I vividly remember boarding the train in Winkler and head-



Abram P Friesen at Clear Lake to visit sons David and Harry

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ing westward slowly through town after town until we arrived at our completely strange destination. How could a young farm boy suddenly become a coal miner?

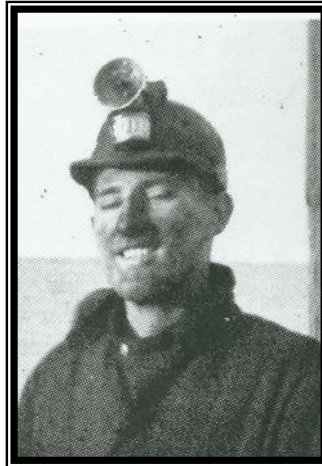
At Bienfait I was shown to a small room, which would be my home for the winter, and then briefed on the coal mining operations. Following that I was assigned to a specific task, which they called "trip rider." I had no idea what that entailed, but I was soon immersed in work.

The M & S coal mine was about 200 feet below the surface. It had at least two elevators, one for taking individuals up or down, and the other to haul the coal to the surface, where it was loaded onto railway cars. The seams of coal at the bottom were from eight to ten feet high. With the aid of high explosives, shafts were developed somewhat horizontally, but usually at some slope. These shafts spread out from the centre of the mine like spokes in a wheel. As these shafts deepened, small rail lines were built into the mine shaft and small trains brought in. Each train would be backed into the shaft as it deepened and the cars were loaded with coal. Once the cars were filled, the train would move them to the central elevator where the coal was hauled to the surface. And at the surface the coal was loaded into regular train cars and shipped to market.

After the loose coal was carted away, holes were drilled into the coal at the end of the tunnel. These holes were filled with high explosives. After everyone was cleared from the site, the explosion rocked the mine and loosened another batch of coal. The rail line was then extended and the coal removed. The cycle then continued.

As I already stated, my job during the entire time in Bienfait was to be a trip rider (train conductor). I had to oversee the switching of rails and, more importantly, the guiding of trains as they backed into the coal shaft or tunnel. I also had to ensure that the wheels of the train were tightly jammed when parked. Most of the shafts were on an incline, and that made it always a risky situation. If the train were parked and the brake were to fail, the train could crash either at the end of the tunnel or at the centre. In all my time at the mine my brake gave way only once, and the train moved on its own into the shaft with a thunderous crash at the end. Fortunately, no one was working in that shaft at the time. After all these years I can still remember how thankfully the engineer and I looked at each other when we realized that no one was injured.

Falling coal chunks from the ceiling was another risky problem. Of course, we frequently looked up to the coal seams above us to check that there were no imminent cracks. We had the occasional funeral as a result of unexpected chunks of coal crashing down. However, great care was exercised to ensure that this would not happen.



**Twenty year old
Bienfait coal miner,
David Friesen**

Another serious danger lay in the explosion of gases that accumulated in the coal shafts. Usually the gases kept burning off in small flames all over the mine, but occasionally the gas accumulated, and since it was lighter than air it would rise to the ceiling. I can still remember my first experience with this (I had not been briefed on this problem). It was early in the morning, and after switching the rails as required for the first train to back into the shaft, I signaled to the driver to back into the shaft. As a trip rider I was the first person to enter the shaft, which was in utter darkness, with only my faint helmet light lighting the way. Suddenly I felt a slight warmth around my head and saw an eerie glow above me. Intense heat and the smell of burning hair and skin followed. I heard my train engineer and others yelling, "Down, down, flat on the floor!" I dropped like lead and avoided the worst of the flames, but I spent the next few days in the hospital with severe burns and blisters.

The workers of the coal mine, except for the COs, for the most part were a rowdy tough crew, even though in a sense quite loveable. Language was so different than we were accustomed to in our homes, schools, churches, or farms. Initiation rites were shocking. We endured all this, but I had to be most shrewd and anticipatory to avoid becoming a target for these tough, rough guys, who appreciated a different kind of fun than I was used to.

Our pay was practically nonexistent, and the pay for the regular workers wasn't that great either. So one day the workers announced that they were going on strike, and

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they just went up the main elevator and left everything down below in complete chaos. What does a young CO do in such an unexpected predicament? I don't know how I dared, but I did not leave my job, and stayed with my train even though I was all alone in that huge dark coal mine. It was eerily quiet, and I was extremely uncomfortable because I just did not know how to proceed. As I waited for a solution, I suddenly heard the main elevators moving and watched the two managers, whom I had learned to like and respect, come down separately unaware of each other. Each ran toward a loaded train (not mine), started it, and headed toward the elevator. With the increasing noise they still were not aware of each other's presence until it was too late. Lo and behold they crashed into each other with disastrous consequences, though no one was injured. The explosion and the language at that point were awesome. That broke my resolve at last, and I quietly exited upward. There was nothing I could have done or could do to remedy the situation.

Next day we were all back at our regular work, as if the experience had sobered everyone. During the months that followed, I began to enjoy my challenging work. Today, I look back and see it as a real positive experience. I had a rich and eye-opening view of another world, far removed from the Mennonite world of my youth.

Following my service at the coal mine I was assigned back to our farm. My father suffered from a serious heart condition, from which he died before the war ended. He so much wanted to see the end of the war. My brother, Harry, who had to serve not only in the

coal mine, but also for a much longer time at Clear Lake, developed tuberculosis. He was sent to the Ninette sanatorium, where he stayed for more than two years. His treatments were successful, and he recovered fully. That meant that my mom and I had to run our fair-sized farm. I was fully occupied with that until the war ended and my CO service with it.

With some nostalgia I visited the Bienfait coal mines fifty-eight years later. The mines were apparently still in full operation, but had moved radically into surface mining. Sometimes I wonder about all those people who worked in the mines all their lives. I also wonder about the small cadre of Mennonite COs who served rather well in their capacity as temporary coal miners. They were noticeably different from the regular miners. Come Friday evening the regular miners were off to other larger centres to spend a night of revelry or a week-end of activities that we "puritanical" Mennonites refused to join. They could hardly understand that we did not join them. In those days Mennonites still had many activities designated by family and church as wrong. That may have kept us from yielding to pressures and may have also brought us favour among management.

The judge and his panel had played their cards rather well with me. Here I was moving from the farm to university, to the armoury, back to the farm, then to the coal mine, then back to the farm. I could have avoided all that by enlisting, with a practical guarantee that I would finish my university education while farming and never having to bear arms. How a 20-year old could resist doing just that can only be explained by claiming that a higher source empowered me to stay the course. The experience gained was wide-ranging and deeply enriching. As with all my experiences, I stand in awe of God who is able to create meaning and enrichment in all that we do.

David Friesen, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, lives in Edmonton. He keeps busy working with his family, his businesses, church and friends. David enjoys reading, politics, sports, music and cooking. ❖

Kathy's Korner

by Kathy Ma

How to use the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization card in conjunction with Canadian Immigration records.

Note: This article follows the immigration journey of Hermann and Katherina Klassen, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBOC) #5326, as previously published in the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta Newsletter, dated March 2016.

The immigration card of the Hermann and Katherina Klassen family states that the family left Southampton, England on September 1, 1929 via the steamship "Montrose" and arrived in the port of Quebec City, Canada, on September 6, 1929. For confirmation of their travels, one can turn next to federal records, specifi-



**Kathy Ma &
Daughter Olivia**

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cally the Canadian Passenger Lists.

There are two sources for the Canadian Passenger Lists: genealogy websites such as ancestry.ca, and Library and Archives Canada. Both are web based and therefore require access to a computer.

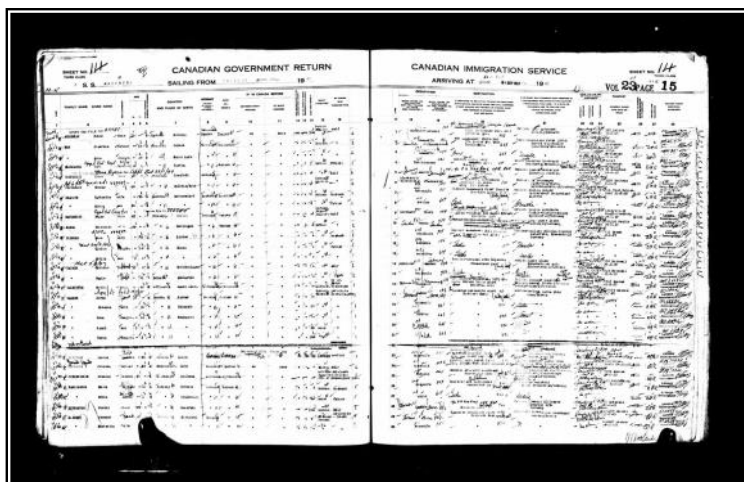
Having the ability to access a family history website such as can be found on ancestry.ca can make the search for the Canadian Passenger Lists easier, but these types of sites require a paid subscription. Occasionally, however, free access days are offered during the year.

One may search the Library and Archives Canada database from a home computer. The local public library may also have access to this database. The Central Library in Calgary and the Stanley A. Milner Branch in Edmonton each have a dedicated area for genealogy research. However, if one prefers, an "in person" search may be done at Library and Archives Canada located in Ottawa, Ontario.

The Library and Archives Canada database online provides digitized microfilm records of the Canadian Passenger Lists at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/microform-digitization/006003-110.01-e.php>. This database is archived, so it is not a "searchable" database. This means each record must be searched individually. Histories in the database are not organized by date, nor are they alphabetized. While searching individually through hundreds of accounts may appear to be a daunting task, CMBOC records can help to narrow the search by port of entry. Moreover, the search is free; one just has to have the time.

It is easiest to work backwards from date of arrival in Canada. Since The Hermann and Katherina Klassen family arrived on September 6, 1929 in the port of Quebec City, one would search for them in "Passenger Lists: Quebec City (1925-1935)". Some tips can help narrow the search. Most Mennonites were not wealthy and therefore would likely be found in steerage or third class cabins. Also, most of the ship lists are in alphabetical order, so Mennonite names are often grouped together.

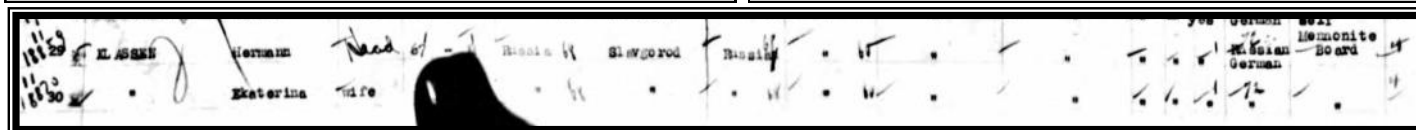
The record of the Klassens appears below:



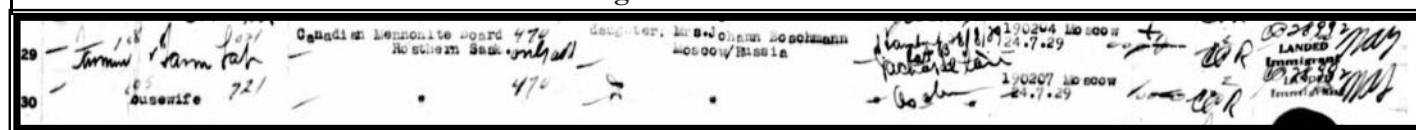
Left Side of Parents

Photo Credit: Canadian Passenger Lists database, 1865-1935. retrieved from www.ancestry.ca

Note: This is the entire ship list, cropped into smaller readable documents.



Right Side of Parents



Left Side of Children

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of whom I knew very little. This became my task, and because of this I belatedly connected to my "German" family. This then is their story.

My father, Dietrich Sawatzky, was born in 1905 in the Mennonite colony of Memrik, Ukraine to Heinrich and Sara Sawatzky. He was the second oldest of eight children. In 1925 he was baptized in the Memrik Mennonite Brethren church. It was in Memrik that he married Anna Buhler in 1931, worked with his father as a carpenter, and started his family. A son, Micha, was born in 1933, followed by a daughter, Elsa, in 1938.

It was during this time that threats to the Mennonite community were becoming increasingly grave. The Communists were confiscating prosperous German Mennonite properties for the collectivism agenda. Moreover, war against Germany threatened to erupt. Although the Molotov – Ribbentrop pact in 1939 delayed the war for a time, in 1941 Germany finally invaded Russia. This had a profound effect on my father's family.

In June 1941 my father, along with many other young Mennonite men, was dragooned into the tyranny of the Soviet forced labour camp system. These camps operated during the Stalin era from the 1930's to the 1950's. Food was scarce, and the work was physically demanding. Many died of starvation or were simply shot. Most were never heard from again. My father, however, survived the ordeal. He was fortunate to escape from the camps, and walking for many weeks he returned to his uncle's home in the German Mennonite Molotschna Colony.

Upon his return, my dad learned that his wife Anna and their two young children (Elsa and Micha) had vanished. The Memrik village where they had lived had been wiped out by Communist confiscation of property and the physical relocation of its inhabitants. During his absence, Anna and the children and most of the other families had been shipped like cattle in freight trains to Siberia. They had been given a very short time to gather what belongings they could carry and any food they would need for the journey. The trip took many days, after which they were dropped off at the end of the line in the middle of winter. At the time, Elsa was two and a half and Micha was seven. My father spent some time attempting to locate Anna and the children, but he was told that they had been killed on their way to



Dietrich Sawatzky Winnipeg 1956

Siberia.

In September 1941 as the German army pushed the Russian army east past Crimea, ethnic German Mennonite villages were rapidly evacuated by the German army. The inhabitants, my father among them, were transported by wagons westward towards Germany. After many weeks they arrived at a refugee camp in Poland. As luck would have it, my father was conscripted into the German army there and sent to the western front. He was captured by the British in 1944 and spent the remaining part of the war in Britain as a POW. In 1947 he was released to Germany, initially living in the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) refugee camp in Gronau, Germany, near the Dutch border.

It was here that my father met Susanna Janzen (née Klassen) and her two sons, Heinz and Kurt, another German Russian Mennonite refugee family. Thinking that he had lost his first family, he married Susanna on October 17, 1948. In 1949 they moved to Neuwied, Germany. It was there that I was born on January 20, 1953.

As Germany was rebuilding following the war, many German "refugee families" looked to emigration as a way to re-start their lives. Mine was no different. My father had a cousin, Herman Sawatzky, living in Fork River, Manitoba. He sponsored us, so we emigrated to Canada from Germany in August 1954. We lived initially with my dad's cousin on his farm near Fork River, Manitoba. Then in October of that year we moved to Winnipeg, so that my father could find work in construction.

Dietrich and Susanna lived in

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Winnipeg for the remainder of their lives. When I think of my father at age 50 uprooting his family to emigrate from Germany to an unknown country half way around the world on faith and hope alone, I must greatly admire their determination and courage.

At some point in the late 1960's, my father learned through the Mennonite "network" that his first family had indeed not perished, but had survived the war. They were alive and living in the USSR. As my father had believed for decades that his first family was gone, this revelation created considerable upheaval in my family. I can only imagine the clash of feelings my father must have had, but it boiled down to staying in Canada with his second family. Nevertheless, contact between my father and his first family had been made. Eventually, in 1989, my half-brother Micha and his wife Rita visited my father in Winnipeg. It had been 50 years since they had had any contact with each other. I did not meet Micha on this visit as I had moved away and was unable to travel to Winnipeg at the time. We did, nevertheless, have a short telephone conversation. I now had to start thinking about having other siblings.

My father Dietrich died in 2000. As mentioned above, on the death of my parents I was charged with connecting with my "German" family. My father's will had directed that some of his assets go to his long lost but now found first children. My half-brother Micha had already passed by this time, but I had one phone number and the name of Micha's widow, Rita. This enabled me to connect with her. She speaks Russian and

German, I English and a halting German, but we muddled through our first very short telephone conversation and agreed to speak again. It became obvious to me that my family circle had just become significantly larger than I could possibly imagine. At a minimum, I felt I owed it to myself to travel to Germany to meet them.

On June 1, 2011, I met my sister Elsa for the first time. It seemed strange to have a sister with the same name as my own. Growing up in Winnipeg I had been called "Elsie", as it seemed less foreign in our new home. So when we met, to avoid confusion



Micha (30) Elsa (25) Siberia, USSR

we agreed that I would be "Elsie" and she "Elsa".

In later conversations Elsa revealed that she had had some early reservations about meeting me – a younger sister who had experienced a very different life growing up in Canada. What could we possibly have in common? True, we shared a common father and surname, but was this enough? We decided to find out.

Since my first visit in 2011, I have learned much about my father's "German" family. Elsa has recounted their story to me, starting with their relocation to Siberia. Initially they were dispersed and housed with the residents in local villages. At first their life in Siberia was very difficult. There were food shortages as the majority of any food produced was diverted to feed soldiers in the war against Germany. Many died of starvation. Over time, however, circumstances improved. Working conditions became better, greater freedom of movement was allowed, and, when WWII ended, food production was no longer confiscated.

Fortunately, Anna's brother (Elsa and Micha's uncle) was a welder. Welding was a skill in very high demand, so the family was treated to relative comfort. Micha began working as a farm hand at the age of nine and when older trained as a tractor operator. Elsa attended school, eventually becoming trained as a childcare worker. While in Siberia, Micha married Rita Tiessen in 1952, and Elsa, at age 18, married Rita's brother, Hans, in December 1955.

In 1959, Micha and Rita moved from Siberia to Kyrgyzstan. Rita also qualified as a tractor operator, and she and Micha worked the fields together. It was hard physical labour. Here they raised their four children: Walde-mar (b. 1953), Andrei (b.58), Lydia (b.1955), and Anna (b. 1961)

In 1960, Elsa, Hans, and their son Peter (b. 1957) moved to Almaty, Kazakhstan, not far from the part of Kyrgyzstan where Micha and family

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were living. Here Elsa worked as a childcare worker by day while attending school in the evenings. She graduated four years later as a pediatric nurse. While in Almaty, Elsa and Hans also welcomed a daughter, Irina (b. 1961).

The German Mennonites worked hard to establish functional communities in Siberia just as they had before in the Ukraine. Nevertheless, religious and political freedoms were severely restricted under Stalin's Communism, and persecution continued. Many were imprisoned. While conditions improved somewhat after Stalin's death, life in the USSR remained difficult for many citizens.

In the late 1980's, the beginning of the democratization of the Soviet Union due to glasnost changed everything for the ethnic Germans who had remained in the USSR. This new openness made it possible for Russian citizens to emigrate legally to other countries. Germany was offering ethnic Germans from Russia immediate German citizenship and transition support programs such as language skills and other training. This helped them establish themselves in their new country.

Micha's and Elsa's families decided to emigrate en masse – it was either all or none. Micha, Rita, their four children and their grandchildren emigrated to Germany in 1989, hopeful for better opportunities. Elsa and her family joined them in 1995, settling in Germany's Bonn/Cologne region.

As mentioned above, it was during this period that contact was first made between my father and his first family, and that Micha and Rita made their trip to Canada. The two branches of my father's family lived very different lives, but we are now re-connecting. Unfortunately I never did get to meet Micha as by the time of my first trip to Germany to meet the family, he had passed away. His wife Rita and my sister Elsa, however, still live in the Bonn region of Germany along with their families. Since my first visit we have met numerous times, almost annually. I have also connected with many of my father's other descendants and close relations.

This is a personal story about one family's life journey through very troubling times of great upheaval,

but of course it has a much broader scope. It sheds light on unique experiences of the Mennonite people whose lives were uprooted and forever changed by events in revolutionary Russia.

The Mennonites persevered strengthened by their Christian faith and resilience to face their challenges and move forward. Although my father Dietrich died in 2000, his legacy lives on, and our lives have come full circle. My father has six grand children and 13 great grandchildren and six great-great grandchildren whom he has never had the opportunity to meet. As much as I love the two brothers with whom I grew up, I had always wanted a sister – it turns out I actually have one with a bonus, an extended family that has warmly welcomed me into their circle. Putting aside any differences, we have found unexpected relationships in new family bonds. We have been blessed.



Micha, father Dietrich, Heinz (author's Canadian brother-in-law) Winnipeg 1989



The author, her sister Elsa, Rita (Micha's widow) Germany 2011

Elsa Savatzky, grew up in Winnipeg. She attended Central MB Church with her parents and was baptized in 1969. It was a close-knit community, and many of her youth group contemporaries have remained lifelong friends. In 1974, Elsa moved to Alberta to work for the City of Edmonton. Then in 1979 she moved to Calgary. Elsa attends First Alliance Church in Calgary. She also enjoys frequent trips to Edmonton to visit her brother Kurt and his wife Frieda and attends Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church with them. Elsa is a self-employed consultant to the residential building industry and occasionally teaches an economics course at the University of Lethbridge. ❖

Ten Thousand Villages Celebrates in Edmonton

By Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

Who could have imagined that Puerto Rican crafts sold from the trunk of Edna Byler's car in Pennsylvania 70 years ago would result in a party in Edmonton in 2016?

30 years of successful storefront ministry in Edmonton is cause for a party! On September 9, the fellowship hall at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church was full as supporters of the Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) store gathered to celebrate an ongoing legacy of helping 3rd world artisans earn fair prices for their quality products. On September 10, celebrations continued all day long at the store with displays, prizes, chocolate tasting, a drum circle, and birthday cake.

Ted Rempel, one of 7 founding members in attendance, gave a personal touch to the presentation of the store's history, sharing highlights of activities and people as he remembered them. He recalled how, 40 years ago, a number of mostly Mennonites worked with the Mennonite Central Committee to bring the then-named "Self Help Crafts" to Edmonton. These crafts, which made life better for poor artisans, were sold from a kiosk in Southgate Mall during the Christmas season. They were popular, and dreams of a storefront to expand the ministry soon became reality. Rempel succinctly conveyed



Donita Wiebe-Neufeld

the amount and scope of the volunteer work involved in the start-up when he said, "...mall sales, meeting of like-minded people interested in establishing a Self Help outlet in Edmonton, finding a location to rent, connecting with MCC Alberta and Self Help Crafts nationally, forming a society, registering it with the provincial government, hanging out the shingle, getting product, displaying product, setting up volunteer schedules, opening the door and waiting for customers..." He described how volunteers even built display boxes that can still be found in the back of the store today.

The original location was a small rented space on Calgary Trail between 81st and 82nd avenues. "By the way, rumour has it that it was once home to public washrooms," Ted quipped. The space was quickly outgrown, and half of a building on Whyte Ave., owned by a Mr. Yuen, was rented. It did very well and was soon crowded again. According to David Jeffares, a founding member of the organization, Mrs. Yuen was a great admirer of the work of TTV. "Mr. Yuen always told TTV Edmonton that first refusal for purchase would be awarded to TTV should he decide to sell the property," Jeffares said. Eventually, TTV was able to purchase the whole building from the Yuens. After remodeling, a grand re-opening of the current facility was held May 15, 2010.

Two suppliers spoke passionately about the importance of Ten Thousand Villages and its practical work of social justice. Mr. Stacey Toews, co-founder of Level Ground Trading, complimented MCC, saying that TTV was their company's first customer. "MCC first started talking about fair trade when the North American Free Trade Agreement talks were in the news," Stacey said. Mr. Toews emphasized how sustainability for healthy communities and the environment flows from long-term relationships such as the one TTV has with its fair trade suppliers and farmers.

Tom Hanlon-Wilde is co-executive director of La Siembra Co-operative, TTV's supplier of Camino Fair Trade products. Hanlon-Wilde spoke about the current situation in the chocolate industry, an industry notorious for low wages and abusive child labour practices. "In the 5 years since the cocoa industry signed the Harkin-Engel Protocol, 300,000 more children are subject to the worst forms of child labour...33% more children are exposed to chemicals," he said. Hanlon-Wilde noted that the chocolate industry is slower than the coffee industry in applying fair-trade principals and organizing it-



Ten Thousand Villages, 30 Years of Free Trade

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self to benefit producers. TTV sells fair-trade chocolate products.

Current TTV Board Chair, Anita Lunden, read snippets from several letters written by suppliers to the store. Among them were anniversary congratulations from Indro Dasgupta on behalf of artisans and staff at the Craft Resource Center in Kolkata, India. Dasgupta noted that the work of TTV makes it possible for artisans to get two meals a day, live with dignity, and send their children to school: "While you need us, the artisans, to provide you the product, we need you to sell it for us. Together, we build a fairer and better world for tomorrow. For this, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and we wish you all the best for the future." ❖

Transformation on the Southern Ukrainian Steppe: Letters and Papers of Johann Cornies

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Harvey L. Dyck and John R. Staples, Eds., *Transformation on the Southern Ukrainian Steppe: Letters and Papers of Johann Cornies, Vol.1, 1812-1835. Translated by Ingrid I Epp* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 576 pp, \$90.00.

The more liberal policies of Michael Gorbachev and the fall of the Soviet government in 1990-1991 dramatically changed the political, social, and economic situation in what then came to be known as the Former Soviet Union. Among other things, it offered much freer access to archival centres all through the area.

Several Mennonite scholars, notably the late Dr. George K. Epp, one-time president of CMBC and Menno Simons College, and retired professor Dr. Harvey L. Dyck of the University of Toronto, along with Dr. Peter Letkeman, freelance historian, undertook significant searches for Mennonite documents in the collections of such centres in Odessa, Ukraine, St. Petersburg, Russia, and finally Zaporozhe, also Ukraine.

With the permission of local archivists and the aid of other assistants, they were able to locate tens of thousands of such documents and have them microfilmed, so they could be easily transported to several major Mennonite archival centres in Canada and the USA. Scholars such as Dr. David G. Rempel and this reviewer, as well as others, started off this movement some

decades earlier with materials found in the archives of Leningrad and of the University of Birmingham in the UK. Others, such as Dr. Walter Sawatsky of the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, and Dr. Andrei Savin, professor of history at Akademgorodok University in Novosibirsk, Siberia, have followed suit in these endeavours.

Understandably, many if not most of the documents were written in Russian, but among them were also numerous items written in German and occasionally English and French. The great majority required translation if they were to become researchable and publishable, as many hoped they could be, in North America and other English-speaking regions throughout the world.

The most ambitious volume of translation and publication of such items to reach our English public is the title being reviewed here. Dr. Epp and Dr. Dyck stood at the forefront of making this particular transfer of primary materials to North America and beyond possible. The inclusion in this work of documents from the voluminous personal correspondence collection of Johann Cornies (1789-1848) of Jushanlee in the Molotschna settlement of New (south) Russia, later Ukraine, is a coup of a very special kind.

This is, generally speaking, a volume of high quality and very considerable breadth given the years' range of the material it covers and the well-established reputation of the publishers. As some fellow-experts in the field might observe, it is not without its glitches and certain stylistic shortcomings, but space is too limited here

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Lawrence Klippenstein



Johann Cornies
1789—1848

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to include these.

Readers will appreciate an extensive and footnoted contextual introduction provided by the editors and credited to co-editor, Dr. John Staples. The translation can claim to be clear and well edited. Accuracy of translation would require checking the originals, which would be a special exercise not possible here. Consistent dating and reference to writer and recipient of each letter and paper are as complete as possible, revealing, among other things, the astonishing breadth of Cornies' business and other contacts.

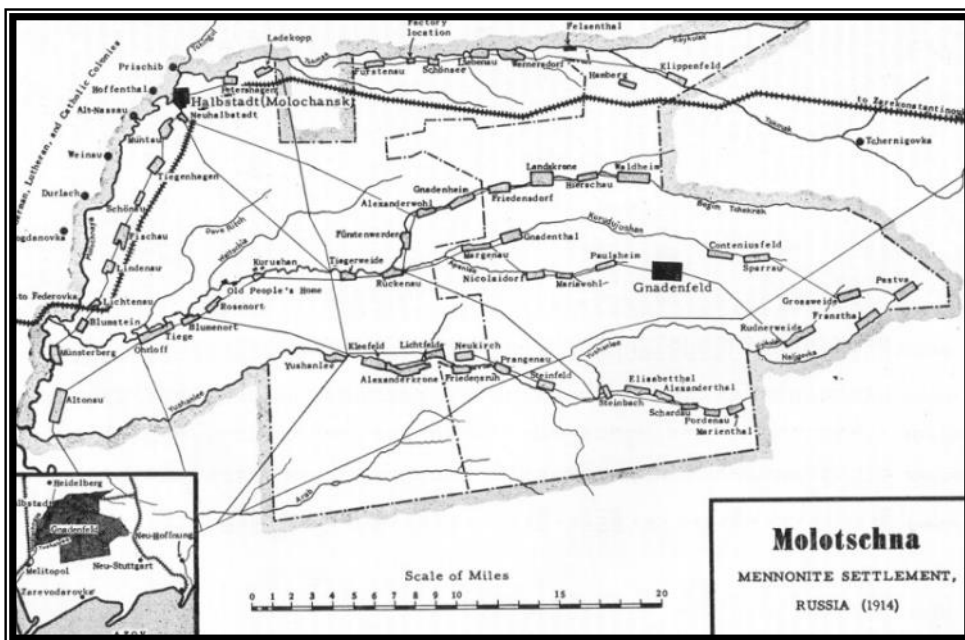
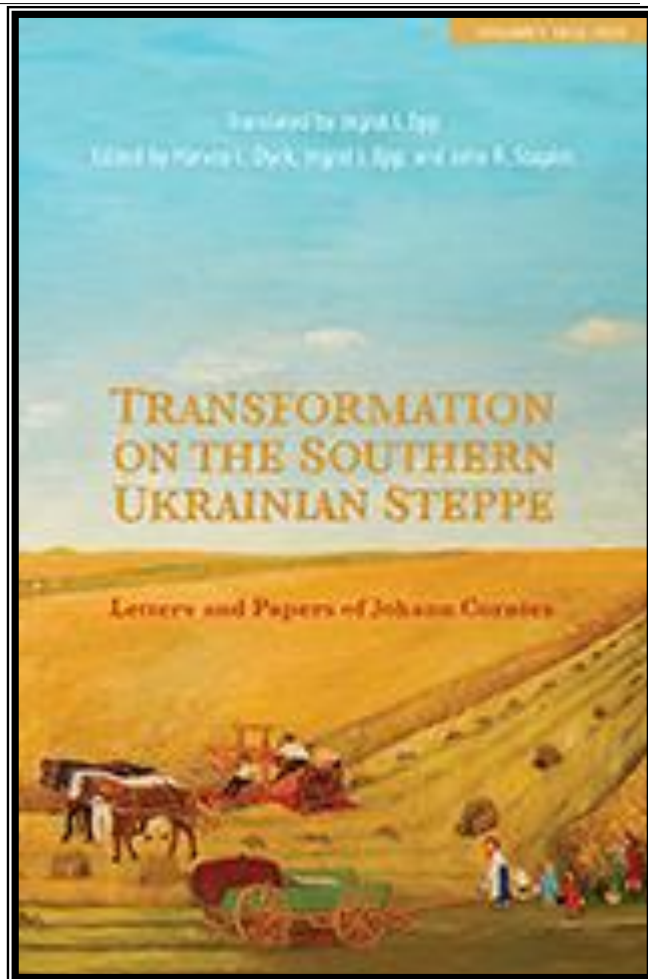
Although it is already, some could say, a heavy volume, some readers will be wishing for more footnotes on thematic matters, places, people, etc. Nevertheless, there is much new material to discover here. Mennonite studies have not done much in the past with Cornies' work with the Nogais, Molokan, Douhobor, and other neighboring people, but here are some new perspectives. It is useful to be reminded that, like many "uninhabited" regions Mennonites have settled, the region focused on in this collection was not as unpopulated as always assumed. The many little and larger windows on the "piety" of Cornies may also change the perception of many readers who have been given a picture of him as a hard-driving overseer and an almost secular person.

A few of the letters ought to be cited here as a small sampler, and then the ambitious student of Russian Mennonites must get the book and take the time to read it – very readable indeed, but with details that some cannot endure as well as others. The editors of the Cornies letters have arranged them in

"packages" of years: the first nine assembled for the period 1812 – 1823, the next eight as a packet for 1824, and then several hundred more over the years ending with letters #527-535 for 1836.

A look at the first packet is interesting. The first document is a letter from Inspector Sieter to JC, the second one is from the Molotschna District Office, the third is an agreement document between Johann Cornies and Molotschna individuals, and the fourth is an authorization for Johann Cornies by village mayors (*Schulzen*). The fifth one, from Johann Cornies

(referred to as JC from here on) to Ivan N Inzov, is addressed to "his Excellency Lord Head Curator and President of the Guardianship Committee for Colonists in Southern Russia, Lieutenant General Inzov..." (All letters to officials of this rank



Map of the Molotschna Settlement Jushanlee lower LH corner

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Jushanlee Johann Cornies' Molotschna Estate

begin with a quite formal style of address, and are written in very respectful and restrained language.) The sixth and seventh letters translated here are from Andrei M. Fadeev, the eighth is from one Werner (no further identification), and the ninth from Samuel Contentius (an inquiry about an ID for two Quaker visitors, William Allen and Stephen Grellet, who visited Russia in 1819).

It is clear the correspondence connects with dozens and dozens of individuals and groups on topics of almost any description – book sales, counseling regarding personal problems, sheep buying, tree planting, internal school affairs, etc. Also included here are half a dozen special reports on religious groups, local problems, agricultural matters, etc. One must browse personally as a reader to get the full sweep of the scope of involvement that Johann Cornies, as source and recipient of the letters, encountered and dealt with in his course of farm development, other work, guidance, counsel, instruction, etc.

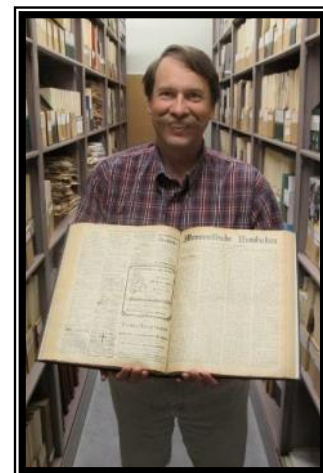
With two more volumes projected for this series, this material now offers inestimably important information on relationships, personal connections, areas of development, and the web of interchange that characterized Cornies' life and the life of the Russian Mennonite settlements over which he presided. His aim was to create progress and growth for the whole community in literally all aspects of their assembled life. The three-volume series, if and when completed, will make available to the generations of our time one of the most revealing source collections of data on this theme.

This review appeared in an earlier version in Mennonite Historian, edited by Jon Isaak and Conrad Stoesz, Vol. 42, No.2, June, 2016, 11-12. The translator, Ingrid Ilse Epp, died on June 25, 2016. Many mourn her passing.

Dr. Klippenstein is a retired professor of Bible and historian-archivist with the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. He resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba. ❖

“Facebook” of a Century Past: New Access to *Mennonitische Rundschau* Index Vol. 4

By Conrad Stoesz



Conrad Stoesz

The long-awaited volume 4 subject and author index to the internationally read *Mennonitische Rundschau* has been completed thanks to Bert Friesen, with financial support from the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation. The 1,394-page index provides simplified access to the German-language paper in the years 1910–1919. Friesen indexed the periodical with a fine-toothed comb, so that researchers could find the proverbial “needle in a haystack.”

The index represents an intellectual organization of the vast and varied contents in the paper. Friesen believes that providing an index was urgent because increasingly fewer people in North America have the skills to read the German language, especially in the Gothic script. This index is designed for the English reader, giving students, scholars, genealogists, community historians, novelists, film producers, etc. pointers to information they want. It makes working

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through the archaic font manageable.

If the index were taken apart and laid out, it would cover 820 square meters of space. In contrast, the paper that Friesen read was published once a week and had 16 pages and covers 5,491 square meters. The index is now the key to accessing the contents in the paper.

In 1910–1919, the *Mennonitische Rundschau* was published in Scottdale, Pa. The paper was first published in 1878 and ended in Winnipeg in 2007, making it one of North America's longest-running German-language papers.

It was the Facebook of 100

years ago. It was a forum where average people would write about their family and community so that relatives in the next province or continent could stay connected. As the Mennonite community spread from Russia to Canada and the U.S., the *Rundschau* kept the inter-Mennonite web of family and friends connected.

The creation of this index has been six years in the making and accompanies volumes 1–3, 5 and 6. Friesen has been the workhorse behind the indexing project that saw its first volume published in 1990, covering the 1880–1889 decade. He is responsible for volumes 1–4. The index itself shows the vast range of topics people were writing about: farming, war, weddings, anniversaries, courtship, health, births, deaths, earthquakes, blizzards, missions, worship, airships, dreams, Eskimos, insects and discipleship, to name a few.

—Conrad Stoesz is archivist at the Centre for MB Studies. This article first appeared in the *Mennonite Historian*.

For inquiries about *Mennonitische Rundschau* index volume 4, contact the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies. Digital copies of the other five indices can be found on the Centre's web site: <http://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca>. ❖

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Along the Road to Freedom

Mennonite women of courage & faith

a project of the MHC (Mennonite Heritage Centre) Gallery
Winnipeg, Manitoba

The touring exhibition consist of 26 paintings and 7 didactic panels

Along the Road to Freedom honours Mennonite women — mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, most without men — who found freedom in Canada in the 1920s and in Paraguay and Canada in the 1940s. In the 1920s journeying by train through the Red Gate to Riga, Latvia, from where they continued west by ship. In 1943, in the depths of World War II, 35,000 Mennonites fled Russia in what is called the Great Trek. Only 12,000, ultimately, succeeded in their quest for sanctuary across the Atlantic. Survivors who did not escape were shipped east in boxcars without facilities or food and dumped in the forests of Siberia, left to fend for themselves. Many did not survive. People who migrated to Canada prior to the Russian Revolution are recognized in the painting of Judith Epp who arrived as a widow in Saskatchewan in the late 1800s. Those who did not get out of Russia are remembered in the painting of Margarita Pankratz. For complete information go the website:

<http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/files/gallery/AlongTheRoadToFreedomTourInfo.pdf>

Along the Road to Freedom is scheduled to be in Edmonton, Calgary and Coaldale in late 2017 and early 2018.



Maria Elizabeth Newbold
born in Lithuania, Mennonite,
arrived in Canada, 1920s
and lived in Coaldale,
Ontario.

Maria came to Canada with
her husband, George, and their
children in 1920. She was
in Canada, where she lived for
many years.

The Mennonite church in Coaldale
was founded by Maria and her
family. They were the first
Mennonites to settle in Coaldale,
Ontario. She was born in
Lithuania and came to Canada
in 1920.

As a child, Maria was very
pious and devoted to her faith.
After coming to Canada, she
continued to practice her faith
and was active in the church.

As a woman, Maria was very
devoted to her family and her
faith. She was a very good
mother and a very good wife.
She was also a very good
friend and a very good neighbor.

Spent most of her life in
Coaldale, Ontario. She was
a very good mother and a
very good wife. She was also
a very good friend and a
very good neighbor.