



# The MHSA Chronicle

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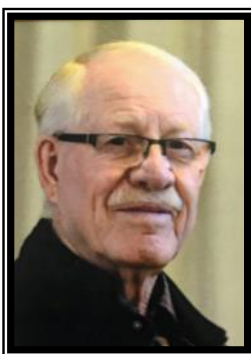
October 2021

## From Oxen to Tractors and Combines

By Peter A. Dyck

My Grandparents, Johan J Dyck (b. 1861 in Russia) and Helena (Klassen) Dyck (b. 1863 in Russia), would not have known a great deal about the hardships their parents had endured before they came to Canada. Johan was seven, and Helena was about five years old when they arrived in Manitoba, where they grew up on a farm. Only recently did I learn that Johan's parents, Aron and Elizabeth (Wolf) Dyck from Burwalde, had fled Russia in the 1870s to avoid compulsory military service, higher

(See Oxen on page 8)



Peter A. Dyck

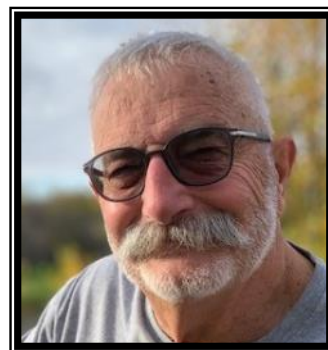
## Viking Descendant Gets a Menno Dunking

By Doug McLaughlin

The history of my paternal family, the McLaughlins, can be traced back over 1,200 years to the time of the Norse settlements in the British Isles. In fact, the very name Lochlann has Gaelic roots, 'loch' or lake, 'lann' or land; together, they refer to the inhabitants of settlements around the fjords of Norway.

The first person of that name, which history records, arrived on the northern shores of Ireland sometime in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these raiders, the Vikings, were, in a sense, political and economic refugees from Scandinavia, where decent land and resources along the fjords were becoming limited.

Although the Norse did not leave much in the way of written records, the Irish certainly did, and we can pick up the story of the family in 848 when an Irish army defeated a force of



Doug McLaughlin



Viking Gotstad warship, credit Wikipedia

(See Viking on page 6)

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## Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

### 2021 "Virtual" Fall Conference -

### THE ALBERTA AUTHORS

Date: Sat. Nov. 6, 2021, Time: 2 - 4 PM

- Launch of Bill Franz's book:  
*Mutti and Papa, A Love Story*, and
- Agnes Langemann Thibert reading from  
*Pathway Through Peril, A Journey of Hope*  
and *The Farewell Years*

see the poster on the back cover for more details

## Editorial Reflections

by Dave Toews

*The further back you can look, the further forward you are likely to see.* Winston Churchill.

There are always those detractors who don't want to look back and own our history and past mistakes. Looking back on history often allows people to get a clearer picture of what's wrong with the world today.

MCC has released its research findings on its historical entanglements with National Socialism. The research highlights the complicated and painful parts of MCC's institutional history.

Regarding Indian Residential Schools, Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Canada's executive director, said, "We lament the pain experienced by residential school survivors and intergenerational survi-



Dave Toews

vors. We are committed to walking alongside Indigenous peoples seeking justice and will co-operate fully with any investigations."

I commend MCC on dealing with these challenging, painful situations in an open and forthright manner.

I had no intention of writing on the above subject, but after staring at a blank screen for 30 minutes and using the Churchill quote, it happened.

As I am writing this, fellow MHSA board member Brent Wiebe is in Ukraine touring and photographing former Mennonite homes and villages. Below is Brent's quote from a Facebook post.

*I am in Upper Chortitza and Chortitza Island with Max Shtatsky and John Ensz. What did I learn from my time in these places today? Our history is not dead in Ukraine. There are many beautiful, well-preserved Mennonite buildings in Upper Chortitza. Let's honour other's history the way Ukrainian researchers such as Max Shtatsky are honouring ours! More than I expected. The tombstones in the cemetery made me sad.*

*Although still standing, they looked awkwardly out of place, uncertain whether they should stand in a row, move into a fenced area and out of the walkway, or politely disappear altogether. To see them repaired and standing together in the memorial helped restore equilibrium.*

Max Shtatsky is the Ukrainian Department of museum communications senior researcher at National Reserve "Khortytsia." Max was the leader of Ukraine (Mennonite) Headstone Project, designed by Brent Wiebe.

As always, I would like to thank all the authors and contributors to this issue. Your articles are always appreciated. It is a pleasure to work with you. The MHSA welcomes your feedback, emails, letters to the editor, and articles. Contact Dave Toews at [dmtoews@gmail.com](mailto:dmtoews@gmail.com) with any questions or comments. ♦

## Chairman's Corner

by Ken Matis

### The Life of My Church - The Alberta Mennonite High School

On the whole, it has always been the concern of Mennonite parents to give their children a good education. When our people first settled in Canada, they were grateful that education was free and that all children had the same opportunities in this regard. Still, the lack of religious instruction and spiritual concern was soon felt. Therefore, it was not long before Bible schools



Ken Matis

(See Chairman on page 3)

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### MAID Representative:

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(Chairman from page 2)

began, and high schools were not far behind. At the Alberta Mennonite Brethren Conference of 1944, the question arose if Alberta too should try to establish a high school where Mennonite children could receive an education under the supervision and influence of Christian teachers. As a result, the Alberta Mennonite Educational Society came into being.

A commission was appointed to investigate and contact the provincial government on the feasibility of such an undertaking. A small farm north of the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church was purchased, and a building, which had served as a meeting place for the Readymade district, was moved to this site. After a few renovations, the hiring of two teachers and a cook, the word went out that the Alberta Mennonite High School (AMHS) was ready for operation. It was a small beginning. The first fall/winter, there were forty students in grades eleven and twelve. Those who came from outside of Coaldale found lodging in the town and had to

walk to school wherewith their education they also received their meals.

It was not long before the AMHS experienced growing pains. It went through various stages of growth until at its peak in 1961, and six teachers were employed and close to one hundred students were registered. The increase was possible because of the teachers' dedication and that of the parents who sent their children from far and near throughout the province. This involved financial sacrifices and much voluntary labour and hard work for everyone concerned, but the benefits and blessings were soon evident. The influence of Christian teachers, systematic Bible teaching resulted in changed lives and commitments to Christ. There were other benefits to the community, such as the beautiful singing, the performance of Handel's Messiah, and drama nights, such as Uncle Tom's Cabin.

The going was rough, though. One obstacle was that the constituency was not united in support of the school. Another problem was the great distances some students had to travel from other Alberta points to attend the school. In time these problems loomed too large, and the financial burden became too great. It had been hoped that the provincial government would see the advantage of such a school sooner or later and actively support it, but the support never came. With a heavy heart on the part of the Board and much regret by faculty and students, the closing day of AMHS came in June 1964.

The whole school complex was then taken over by the Coaldale MB Church, which covered the Society's debts. Today the only remaining evidence of the school is the large quonset, which was used as the gym. The Rehoboth Society now uses it to operate a greenhouse and training center for mentally challenged individuals.

Graduates of this school can be found in all walks of life - teachers, nurses and doctors, professors, engineers and missionaries etc. During the eighteen years of operation, 287 students graduated from the AMHS. Only eternity will reveal how many blessings resulted from the short operation of AMHS. ♦

## Alberta Mennonite Churches Update

Since the June 2021 issue the Chronicle Abe Janzen has determined that there are approximately 140 Mennonite Churches in Alberta up from about 128.

- Old Colony 18 - no change
- Reinlander 10 - increase of 1
- Old Reinlander 1 - no change
- Sommerfelder 7 - no change
- Evangelical Mennonite 10 - increase of 2
- Evangelical Mennonite Mission\* 1 - no change
- Bergthal Mennonite Conference 7 - no change
- Friedensfelder (Peace Valley 2 - no change
- Kleine Gemeinde 6 - no change
- Nationwide Fellowship (Whitecaps) 8 - no change
- Pilgrim Mennonite 3 - new
- Eastern Mennonite 1 - new
- Church of God in Christ (Holdeman) 15 - no change
- Mennonite Church\* 12 - no change
- Mennonite Brethren\* 21 - increase of 4
- Northwest Mennonite\* 15 - increase of 4
- Independent Mennonite\* 4 - no change

\* Includes churches of African, Asian and South American heritage



## In Search of My Great-Uncle, Peter Franz

*By Bill Franz*

I've always been intrigued by the story of Peter Franz, the uncle of my father, Johann Franz. On February 5, 1893, Peter was born on the Steinbach estate in the southeast part of the Molotschna colony to David and Katherina Franz, née Fast, the third of six children. All I knew from my father was that Peter died a bachelor in Saskatchewan in 1937.

A photo taken in Russia during World War 1 shows Peter with his two older brothers, David (my grandfather) and Nikolaus. Peter and Nikolaus are in uniform. Nikolaus is an army medic in the Imperial Russian Army, judging by the crosses on his cap and epaulets. Peter, I think, served as a soldier. Grandfather David is not in uniform; he had a withered arm and was unfit for military service.

Both David and Nikolaus perished in the Gulag during WW2, but Peter emigrated to Canada in 1928. The younger sister of the Franz family, Maria Grunau, had already relocated to Saskatchewan with her children in 1923. Maria's husband had to stay behind in Germany as he did not pass the medical examination, and he subsequently died there. Maria later remarried, this time to a Peter Unruh of Waldheim.

According to Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization records in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Peter's last place of residence in Russia was Einlage, one of the largest villages of the Chortitza settlement on the right bank of the Dnieper River. In 1927 Einlage was moved because the construction of the Dneprostroi power dam put the village underwater. On July 24 of that year, Peter left Einlage to begin his journey to Canada; on July 26, he arrived in Riga, Latvia, and on August 1, he sailed on the steamer SS Baltara to Southampton, England. On August 14 he arrived in Montroyal (Montréal), Québec. (The SS Baltara was built in Belfast in 1909 for the Royal Mail. It was renamed twice, and on January 11, 1929, it was wrecked at the mouth of the Vistula River off Danzig Harbour.)

Once in Canada, Peter spent some time in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, with the combined families of Maria and Peter Unruh. Then he moved 150 km away to the district of Rabbit Lake north of the Battlefords. By this time, the community was booming. On March 1, 1905 (the year Saskatchewan became a province), the land had been granted there to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and by 1928 there was a Canadian National Rail-

way (CNR) station onsite. Rabbit Lake's location on the CNR line and the available, affordable land for homesteading made it attractive to Mennonite immigrants from Russia.

Peter homesteaded on the NE quarter of Section 13, Township 48, Range 14 W3 (NE 13-48-14 W3). Although Northern Saskatchewan was spared the worst of the drought during those years, I understand it's a tough place to make a living farming. This land was railway land, and Peter may not have been the first or the last to try his hand there. According to George and Melita Hildebrand, the current owners of Peter's property, the land probably changed hands many times. If you couldn't make the payments because of crop failure, ownership reverted to the railway. There were several homesteaders on the section of land, each on their own quarter. This land was always under grass, so clearing the bush wasn't required. However, there were lots of boulders.



Bill Franz



(L - R) Peter, David, and Nikolaus Franz, Imperial Russian Army, WW1, ca 1914



Peter Franz, undated ca 1928?

(See Search on page 5)

(Search from page 4)

For a while, Peter may have participated in Mennonite church life in the area. GAMEO (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online) makes this mention of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Bournemouth, Saskatchewan:

*Mennonites began gathering for services in the Bournemouth, Saskatchewan area in 1927. The Bournemouth congregation was part of the Hoffnungsfelder congregational group and thus affiliated with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. This section of the group collapsed in the 1930s because of the Depression. The language of worship was German.*

In 1937 Peter died. The last entry on the Canadian Board of Colonization card states, "Hat sich vergiftet! gestorben am:" (He poisoned himself! Deceased)

In August 2020, needing to know more of Peter's story, I went to Rabbit Lake with a friend looking for his grave. (We were camping at Dilberry Lake on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border). We found the municipal cemetery for Rabbit Lake and walked every inch of it but couldn't find the grave. We explored the former village of Rabbit Lake as well with no result.

Subsequently, I was provided with the names of some local contacts and learned that, yes, Peter Franz was buried in the Rabbit Lake Cemetery, and his grave was well maintained. I knew I needed to make another trip, and so this past July, I returned with my friend Alan Stewart and my wife, Pearl. We camped at Meeting Lake and made arrangements to meet with Alan and Shelly Laughlin, Cornie, and Marlene Martens. On Sunday, we were invited to attend the

Fields of Hope Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Glenbush. This is the only church of the original five still operating, although both the Rabbit Lake and Mayfair churches still stand and are maintained. After worshipping in Glenbush and looking at the cemetery there, Alan Laughlin led us past the Bournemouth site and its small graveyard to the Rabbit Lake church and its cemetery where Peter was buried. It was only a half a mile west of the Rabbit Lake

municipal cemetery that we had explored the year before!

We had been so close last year, but we got to meet and share more valuable information with the Laughlins and Martens on this return trip and with George and Melita Hildebrand, who took us the following day to

see the land that Peter had farmed. We learned that Peter had taken a poison pill, and speculation was that he might have had this pill (perhaps cyanide) from the Great War. Did he suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)? He was a bachelor, times were hard, and communication with family in the Soviet Union had been cut off in 1935. Waldheim was some 150 kilometres distant, so family



Bill Franz on the land his great-uncle Peter Franz farmed in the 1930s, NE 13-48-14 W3, July 2021



Bill Franz (author) at the grave of his great-uncle Peter Franz, Rabbit Lake Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church cemetery, July 2021

(See Search on page 6)



(Search from page 5)

support from Maria and Peter Unruh's families would not have been readily available either.

After taking the pill, Peter seems to have had a change of heart and made his way across the field to Henry Stobbe, his closest neighbour who farmed on the next section to the northeast. This could not have been an easy undertaking in the winter of January 1937. After Henry brought him to The Rose Gill Hospital in Rabbit Lake, some ten miles away. The hospital was under the direction of Dr. John H. Storry, the staff tried to save him, but too much damage had been done. Three days later, on January 19, Peter died at the age of forty-three. Apparently, he had a deathbed conversion before he passed away.

The people of the Fields of Hope Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church maintain their cemeteries, and Peter Franz's grave was one of several that had maintenance work done in 2020. I certainly appreciate their kindness. We also enjoyed their hospitality very much! They, in turn, appreciated learning more about Peter Franz, part of the history of settlement in the Rabbit Lake area. ❖

(Viking from page 1)

Vikings who were attempting to settle a bit of land near the present site of Dublin. By 857, Olaf Lochlann finally established the previously attempted settlement, and it existed as a distinct Norse enclave for two hundred years – the first documentation of the family's notable stubbornness.

By now called the O'Lochlanns, the family was gradually assimilated into the Irish population and even became part of the establishment, closely allied with the O'Neills, a powerful lineage of Irish kings, on the west coast of the island (modern County Clare). Indeed, the matrilineal line of our family descends from the 5<sup>th</sup> century O'Neill family.

Some-where in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a particularly



Started in 1252, the MacLachlan Castle guarded the east shore of Loch Fyne until it was knocked down in 1746, a reprisal for the family's support for Bonnie Prince Charlie. It was one of 23 castles on the saltwater loch.

restless branch of the expanding family crossed the Irish Sea to Scotland and settled on the shores of Loch Fyne in Argyll. The first recorded member of the family was a chap named Lochlann Mor. As they adapted to their new Scottish home, their name also evolved to become MacLachlan.

(On the subject of names, there are 121 recognized forms and derivations of the name of our family – a people who have traditionally believed that those who insist on spelling words the same way every time really lack imagination.)

These folks appear to have done well enough to have built a modest castle, looking out over the loch: it was first inhabited in 1252 and remained the family seat until it was destroyed in 1746. There is a village down the shore from the castle, called Strathlachlan, and right behind the castle is an old stone church, Kilmorie Chapel, with graves of family ancestors that go back centuries. Loch Fyne, by the way, is known as a fantastic fishery.

The current chief of Clan MacLachlan is Euan John MacLachlan of MacLachlan, Chief of Clan MacLachlan, 25<sup>th</sup> Earl of MacLachlan and Baron of Strathlachlan. The chief's seat is new Castle Lachlan, built about a quarter mile inland from the original, completed sometime around 1790. My wife and I have visited the old castle and look forward to adding the new one upon our return.

In case you are intrigued about the old castle being wrecked. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the MacLachlans were part of the Jacobite movement that supported the Stuart lineage of Scots kings, suppressed

(See Viking on page 7)

(Viking from page 6)

in England because of their Catholic faith. The head of the clan was Lachlan MacLachlan, an aide de camp to Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Falkirk Muir in 1645 and marched to the fields of Cul-loden with 136 men the following year. Only six survived the battle and the subsequent executions – Lachlan was not one of the six.

The English then sent warships to Loch Fyne, where they used their cannon to knock down some of the walls of MacLachlan Castle and the family kirk (church), giving rise to yet another enduring family tradition: home renovations. When the smoke cleared, they sent ashore their marines, who scattered the relations of poor Lachlan, in retaliation for the family's opposition to English rule. Later that year, the MacLachlan colours were burned in Edinburgh, on the orders of that charming imp, Prince William, Duke of Cumberland, son of King George II, in an attempt to destroy all trace of the family. I think we know who had the last laugh, don't we, Billy?

Aye, there were, indeed, some survivors, and they have not only retaken their ancestral lands but have fanned out to the four corners of the world and populated every continent above water. At least one of the survivors made it to Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, as recorded in the 1660s. Another spelling change – MacLaughlin – occurred, possibly because whoever recorded his appearance simply wrote down what he thought was the correct spelling. The illiterate refugee was just relieved to get off the stinking, miserable, rat-infested boat they came over on. But who knows ... maybe

it was a witness protection thing.

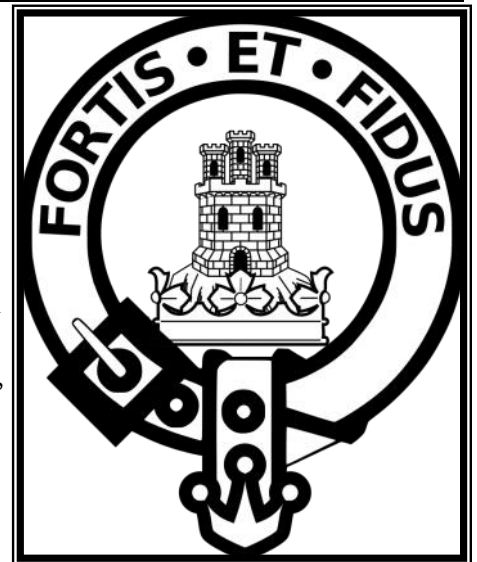
The dates are unclear, but a male descendant is recorded as moving down the coast to settle on Iron-bound Island, south of Halifax, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. (When he unpacked, he seems to have lost one of his 'a's.) That branch of the McLaughlins eventually migrated to the great city of St. John, New Brunswick, somewhere around 1860.

My paternal grandfather, Harry Royden McLaughlin, was born there in 1875, the second son of a family who built boats (now, there's a surprise!) for the fishing industry. Of course, his older brother was assumed to be the one to inherit the family business, so, somewhere around 1895, the young fellow packed his hammer and saw and took the train to Wolsley, Saskatchewan, land of promise. Instead of farming or building boats, he started building grain elevators along the rail lines between the Ontario border and the Rocky Mountains. He met and married Mary Ethel Mitchell, and they started a family – their firstborn was yet another Harry Royden, who, in the fullness of time, became my father. But back to Grandad: in 1910, he moved his family to Winnipeg, secured vacation property on the Lake of the Woods and built a couple of boats.

His eldest son, my father, caught the aviation bug early and became a licensed pilot in 1918, at the age of 15. Eventually, he made his way to Edmonton, flying into the Arctic Circle for Canadian Airways and using his skills as a radio engineer to develop navigation systems. During World War II, he commanded the Test and Development unit at Rockcliffe, Ontario, among other assignments, several connected with the development of radar. As the war wound down, he married Elizabeth Christian Evelyn Fletcher, a former neighbour, now an officer with the Red Cross whose job was processing prisoners of war (primarily handsome German pilots!)



The ruins of the family church, Kilmore Chapel, at MacLachlan Castle, Argyle, Scotland.



Clan MacLachlan Scottish Crest Badge **Fortis et Fidus** (Strong and Faithful), credit Wikipedia

(See Viking on page 8)



(Viking from page 7)

Dad returned to Winnipeg after the war and built a few boats; it was there that I was born. My son, Andrew, and my grandchildren will be carrying on the name and some of the better traits of the family, I am sure.

We are all still stubborn, still love boats and islands, and most of us can't spell worth a darn.

I am a dedicated and grateful member of Lendrum Mennonite Church in Edmonton. Obviously, my family heritage was not Mennonite, but I decided to be baptized into the faith at a youthful

65 years of age. I have been granted the privilege of serving on the LMC Board, the Caring and Facilities Commissions and have worked on the Church and Sexuality Committee.

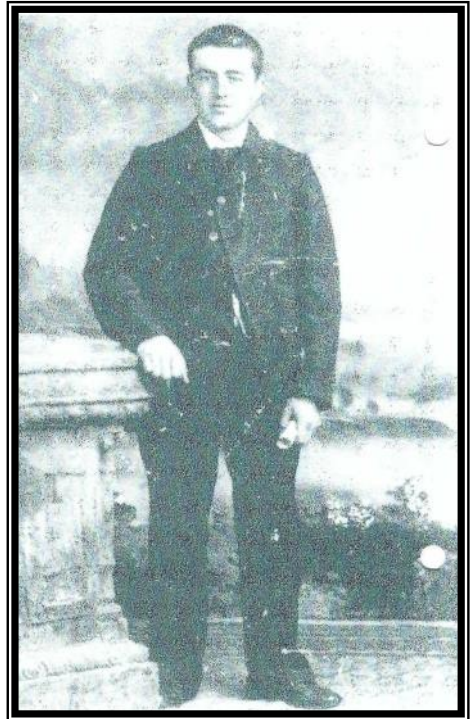
Oh, and I have no immediate plans to change the spelling of my name – but you never know.



Doug is genetically compelled to build boats. This is his latest, named Muffet, after the childhood nickname of his wife, Cathryn Heslep.

(Oxen from page 1)

taxes that only landowners could afford. Above all, to escape the insult of having to send their children to Russian schools. The migrants numbered about 18,000 of the 45,000 Mennonites in South Russia: 10,000 settled in the USA and 8,000 went to Canada where Manitoba had guaranteed exemption from military service, free land grants, German schools and a cash grant for passage from Hamburg, Germany, to Winnipeg, for \$30 per adult, \$15 per child under eight years old, and \$3 per infant.



The author's maternal grandfather Dietrich Bergen, teacher in Aberdeen and farmer in Great Deer, SK ca 1922

*Just before the midpoint of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Doug McLaughlin was born in Winnipeg, a quaint settlement, best known for its location, just 45 minutes from Steinbach, Manitoba. He began his career in communications at the Winnipeg Free Press, taking tangential paths into canoeing, ballet, advertising and public relations, affordable housing and hospice care but always returning to storytelling. True or otherwise. He is a proud father and grandfather, husband to the lovely and patient Cathryn Heslep, world traveler and a serial boatbuilder. In the best tradition of the Scots, Doug is an enthusiastic golfer: nobody told him that you must be good at it. ❖*

My maternal Grandad, Dietrich Wilhelm Bergen came from Neuendorf, Chortitza, South Russia. He married Maria Dyck. She was born in Schanzenfeld, West Reserve, Manitoba. Dietrich and

(See Oxen on page 9)



(Oxen from page 8)

Maria later moved to Great Deer, Saskatchewan, and Grandpa Johan J. Dyck, with his wife Helena (Klassen) Dyck, settled on a farm near Clarkboro, Saskatchewan.

### Ox Age

The Dyck migration could have ended in Manitoba, but the next generation went west to Saskatchewan. There the Johan J Dycks and Dietrich Bergen's would begin to farm each in their new neighbourhood in Saskatchewan, tilling the soil with oxen until they could afford to buy horses or tractors. They had large families, and it seems that new farmhands were born almost yearly. When my dad, Johann Dyck (later John L Dyck), and his brothers matured, they not only helped their dad farm but also began working nearby on Dr. Alexander's farm, hauling rocks off his land with oxen and a stone boat and piling them in the form of a fence around his farm. The income was small but welcome.

Before long, my dad John L. Dyck and his siblings were getting married and settling on their own land. Uncle Aaron farmed near Clarkboro, Saskatchewan. Uncle Peter moved to Weeks, Saskatchewan. John L had a temporary job on the railway near Northvale, where he met and later married my mom Sarah Bergen in Aberdeen. John L was baptized Pfingsten (Pentecost), 1912 and Sarah Pfingsten, 1925. Together, they joined the Rosenorter Gemeinde in Aberdeen.

Our family began with three boys. Alfred (1930) and Bill (1932) were born in Northvale, and I, Peter (1934) in Great Deer. At this point, dad knew he needed greater

stability and a better income. His solution was to file for a homestead near a school in Northern Pine, eighty miles north of Meadow Lake, where he could farm in summer and fish or work in a lumbermill in winter and the kids could walk to school.

### Horse Age

We rode in a prairie schooner drawn by oxen in the first stage of our trek to Northern Pine. The pace was too slow, so we sold our rig and hired a horse-drawn wagon. Even then, the trip north took two weeks at about 20 miles per day. We finally arrived at what appeared to be an abandoned farm. The house was quite livable, and only half a mile north of the school we would be attending, a small one-room log schoolhouse with water in a bucket, a gas barrel heater, a twin mantel gas lamp and an outdoor biffy. Our lifestyle became more regulated. There was the farm routine: gardening, canning, sawing firewood and going to school, to name a few.

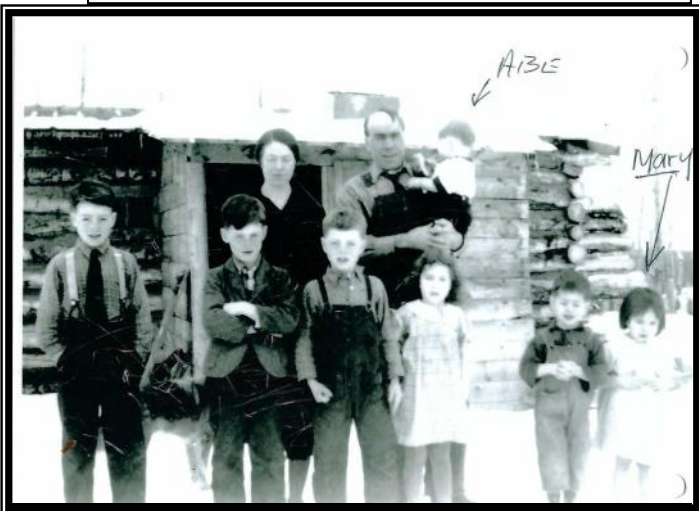
Of course, we became involved in the community. The first Sunday, we went to church, a small log structure about two miles southwest of our



Sarah Dyck with son Bill, Eva Isaak, Grandma Helena Dyck, Alfred Dyck, at Grandpa Dyck's farm near Clarkboro, SK ca 1933



Peter and Aaron Dyck with farm horses near Clarkboro, SK ca 1943

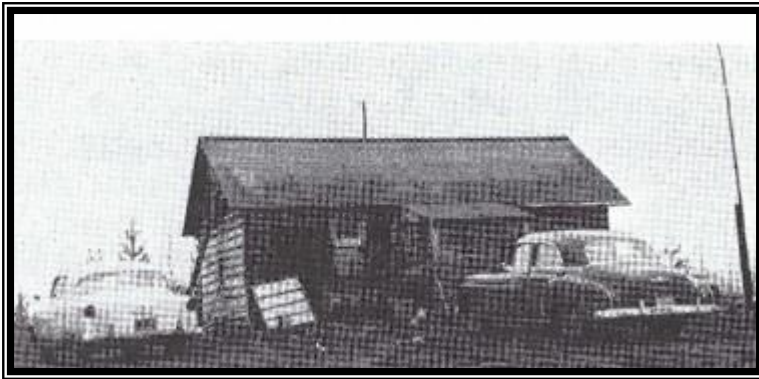


L-R rear Sarah, John holding Abe  
Front Alfred, Bill, Sarah, Peter, Helen, John Ernst,  
Mary Northern Pine, SK ca 1941

(See Oxen on page 10)

(Oxen from page 9)

house. Dad sometimes delivered the sermon on Sundays and attended prayer meetings every Wednesday. When the Mennonites decided to build a new church in Pierceland, dad served as secretary on the planning committee because he could read and write German and English. Later, he also became a member of the school board. These jobs did not prevent him from fishing or lumbering to supplement our meagre farm income. And whenever there was an emergency in our little community, he was usually there to help. When Peter Unrau's house caught fire, dad and Alfred rounded up a few neighbours and helped him rebuild. When Frank Harder got his first tractor, it had no fenders, and the trip rope from the plow caught a lug on the rear tractor wheel and broke his leg. Luckily one of our neighbours had a car and took him to the nearest doctor in Meadow Lake.



John and Sarah Dyck's homestead Silver Valley, AB 1961  
LH vehicle Mary and David Quapp's 1949 Chevy sedan

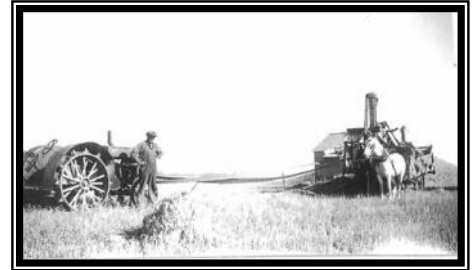
About two years later, we moved to our homestead, where we had built a new log house and a barn. We were now one and a half miles from school, so we took our school bus, yes, two dogs pulling three boys on a toboggan.

Our cattle herd was increasing, and we also raised sheep, goats, ducks, and geese. Now we tilled the soil with horses. Things were changing. Dad had been fishing on Cold Lake, and that spring, there was an election. With a new government in power, the price of fish jumped from 5 cents to 25 cents per pound, and when the fishing season ended, dad came home with a grain box full of fish on his sleigh. The next day, he and Mr. George Giesbrecht left for Meadow Lake, selling fish as they went.

Later that spring, Dad came home with a buzz saw. He had found yet another way to help all the neighbours who had been sawing cords of logs for firewood with a swede saw until that time. But now, with our community saw, dad was able to help our neighbours and us quite significantly. They just had to get a four-person crew for an afternoon on a suitable day, and their winter's wood supply was cut. Of course, they still had to split and pile the wood to dry it in time for winter.

But life was not all work. In summer, there were always a few Sunday afternoons that we would have a family picnic on the south

shore of Pierce Lake. If our Metis neighbours were fishing, they usually invited us to join them. But we had no boat, so we fished in a small estuary and cooked our fish over an open bonfire while the horses munched their oats.



Threshing oats in  
Silver Valley, AB ca 1951

### Motor Age

A new age was indeed dawning.

John L Dyck's baby sister Annie married Mr. David Thiessen, and they moved to Alberta. She kept in touch with her brothers during the 1940s and urged them



Rear L-R Helen, Peter, Mom Sarah, Dad John, Alfred, Bill  
Centre – John  
Front – Fred, George, Abe, Mary  
Lymburn, AB Mennonite Church ca 1950

(See Oxen on page 11)



(Oxen from page 10)

to come to Alberta. By spring 1948, the brothers John, Aaron and Peter had decided to move to Alberta. John sent his son, Alfred, on ahead to find a temporary place for our cattle, furniture, and machinery, which dad and Bill would bring by train. Before they left, John also hired a trucker from Pierceland to get the rest of the family by car when our temporary home was ready for Sarah and the kids.

By 1951 we had rented three different farms in the Lymburn area. The restlessness we felt as a family seemed to be present throughout the community. Some children dropped out of school, and those pursuing higher education had to attend high school in Hythe or Beaverlodge. Those planning to farm needed more land. Some chose to attend university, and others found careers in nearby towns. Many simply left to find employment or to get married. In our case, the siblings not seeking higher education decided to move to Silver Valley to find larger tracts of arable land. It was 1952, and rural electrification had begun. The



George Dyck's Massey Harris combine ca 1962

farmers, thank goodness, now had tractors and combines.

## Old Age

Looking back over the years, I remember the adage which claims that 'Behind every good man there is a good woman.' Mom and Dad also held to the biblical principle "Love thy neighbour as thyself." We planted a huge garden every year and always had an ample supply of vegetables, canned meat, and fruits to help those in need. Mom would sew clothing, curtains and bedsheets, knit socks, mitts and sweaters, card wool, and make blankets for the family. She often baked pastries and made quilts to help the ladies' club raise funds for community projects. I believe that what my parents had always done, and were still doing, was to follow the Christian principle of helping those in need.

I had not attended school since I completed Grade 10, but now I was sure that farm life was not for me, and I recall the Superintendent of schools urging me to go back to school. It was August, and the farmer whose crop we had threshed advised me that he had arranged with the hotel owner in Beaverlodge to hire me for the winter so I finish high school. Mom was pleased. The following year, I did enroll in the Education program at U. of A. and became a teacher, like Grandpa Bergen.

Mom and dad only stayed in Silver Valley a few years and then chose to retire in Spirit River. Before dad passed away in 1969, he had helped the community register a local cemetery on the NW corner of Herman Haugland's farm where he, Sarah, Helen, John and George are all laid to rest.

Alfred, the builder of sleighs, barns and maker of harnesses and breaking ploughs, sold his farm and attended Grande Prairie College, where he became a certified carpenter. He built houses and served as a handyman until he retired in Wembley. George stayed in the Savana area and worked to the very end in the Savana Rec-plex. They called him the Iceman: he spent hours on the Zamboni and helped children lace up their skates.

Helen was an active member of the Savana community and, in the end, went to Grande Prairie for seniors' care. John only farmed a few years in Wildwood and then retired in Spirit River. Abe attended Bible college in Winnipeg, did some missionary work in Paraguay, then worked as a carpenter in Vancouver and ended his days (2020) in Cawston, B.C. Fred worked in the oil patch until he retired in Edmonton, where he became a member



Rear L-R Alfred, Peter, Bill, John, Abe  
Centre Helen, Mary, Fred, George  
Front John and Sarah Dyck  
Lymburn, AB Christmas 1958

(See Oxen on page 12)



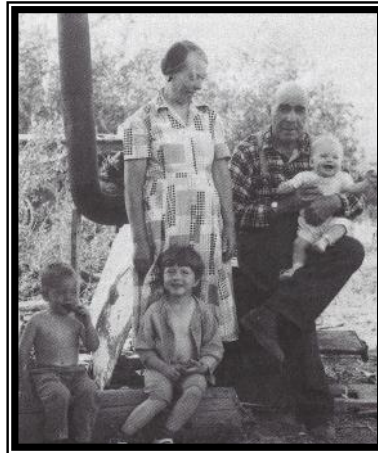
(Oxen from page 11)

of LMC. Bill had worked on a farm in Spirit River but was buried in the Lymburn cemetery. My sister Mary Quapp and I are the only remaining members of John and Sarah (Bergen) Dyck's family.

The above is a rather sketchy narrative of the nomadic life of the John and Sarah Dyck family. I mentioned at the beginning that their guiding principle was to treat your neighbour as you wish to be treated. The following anecdote is an accurate illustration of this principle. It happened one Christmas Eve at our Northern Pine home.

Louis Jamais, a French Cree Metis, was our closest neighbour. One Sunday in November, while we were in church, he had come to our house to borrow some flour, sugar and tea to take along on his hunting trip. He did not break in. Remember that no house was ever locked those days. But Mom was annoyed and a little afraid when she went into the house and smelled smoky moccasins. Dad said he was pretty sure it was Louis and that there was nothing to fear. So that was that. Now it was Christmas Eve. We had just gone to bed when we heard sleigh bells. We waited. A voice said, "Whoa." Then there was a big thump on our porch, and the voice said "Merry Christmas" as the sleigh bells faded into the night. Dad went out to see what had just happened. Well, surprise! There on the porch lay the hindquarter of a giant moose.

Louis and dad had both worked at Lepine's lumbermill east of Northern Pine. Dad and I paid a visit to Louis when he first got ill. His two adult daughters no longer lived with him. His wife may have predeceased him; he lived alone. Dad went to see him every day until he passed away. We think Louis died of TB, which was rampant in northern Saskatchewan in the 1940s.



John and Sarah Dyck with grandchildren Vincent Quapp, Beverly Morrison and Roma Quapp 1964

## A Tribute to My Mother Margarete Toews (1881 - 1941)

By the late Louise (Toews) Friesen

In earlier reports I [Louise Friesen] mentioned my dad [Bishop David Toews] quite frequently; however, in this report I would like to



Margarete Toews

concentrate on my mother [Margarete (Regier) Toews], her life and the positive influence she had in making my life.

Mother was born in Germany. She, with my grandparents, fifteen brothers and sisters immigrated to Canada from West Prussia in the late 1800's. They settled in the Rosthern, Laird (Saskatchewan) area as pioneers. They were extremely poor and Grandfather, with the help of neighbors and friends, built a small house mostly of stones and clay. By the time the land was broken, and they could farm in a reasonable way, Mother was off to school to learn the English language. She also helped her mother with household chores and as a result became an excellent homemaker and cook.

When she was in her teens, word got around that the local medical doctor in Rosthern was looking for someone to help his wife in their home. Mother applied for the job and was accepted. She did this primarily to help with the family finances.

*Peter and Kathy Dyck were born in Saskatchewan; they both became school teachers and completed their Careers in Edmonton. They were married in 1986 and are proud of their adopted daughter Angelina. Peter retired in 1991 and attended several summer fiddle camps at Emma Lake Sask. He learned to play Old Time Fiddle and won several Old Time Fiddling championships. He realized that Alberta had no provincial Fiddle Association and proceeded to gather relevant information. By 1992, the Alberta Society of Fiddlers (ASF) was registered and began holding its summer fiddle camps. In his retirement, Peter was motivated to write a brief history of his family's migration out of South Russia into Canada. ♦*

(See Tribute on page 13)

(Tribute from page 12)

At the early age of nineteen she was married to my dad, David Toews, who had come to the area from Kansas to teach the children of the pioneers who had settled there. They were married in a small country church not far from Laird in 1900.

They settled in Rosthern, and many difficult years followed. Nine healthy children were born to them. Mother's efficiency in the home was felt by all, as one by one the children were born and raised in this happy but poor household. Since most of us were girls, we were given our chores and as Mother had learned, so we too learned to cook, bake, etc. The atmosphere was one of "sharing", not only with family members but with others as well. No birthday was ever forgotten. There was always a beautiful, decorated birthday cake at the head of the table when we came for our evening meal. Sometimes a small gift would accompany the cake. Every family member would wish you a happy birthday. Christmas was especially special.

My mother was generous—sometimes we girls thought that she was a little too generous. Company tended to multiply especially around mealtime. At times, we wondered whether we children would be fed only bread, milk, and leftovers; however, this never happened.

She also had a keen sense of humor. This was apparent in the little ditties she taught us as children. As we became older and parties and dates were common, she would wait until we came home, and we would relate the events of the evening. There was no genera-

tion gap here, no barriers. We felt she was one of us, a friend, as well as a counselor, nurse, and teacher (we were taught to knit and crochet).

Not only was she involved with her family, she was also involved with the church and the ladies auxiliary. She would visit the sick and house-bound regularly and often we girls were sent to deliver meals to the sick and elderly.

She passed away at the early age of 59 – a victim of cancer.

She had a deep religious faith, which saw her through many difficult, as well as happy times. Her dedicated life was one of service to family, relatives, friends, and community.

In retrospect, I often wonder if we communicated our love and appreciation adequately through those years.

Sometimes we let appreciation go unspoken.

Sometimes we let our thanks go unexpressed.

Sometimes we can't find words to tell our feelings.

Especially toward those, we love the best.

## Louise Friesen

*by Gary Friesen, Grandson of Margarete and David Toews*

Louise Friesen (1912-2010) was my mother. She was the daughter of Margarete (Regier) and Alteter (Bishop) David Toews (1870 – 1947). David was the Chairman of the Board of Colonization, who, along with the CPR, brought over 21,000 Russian Mennonites into Canada in the 1920s. He assumed full responsibility for the repayment of a CPR transportation debt that was close to \$2,000,000. In April 1998, The Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian was primarily devoted to describing the life and contributions of David Toews as part of a Heritage Night '98 celebration. Louise and other family members contributed articles. Louise was often asked to make presentations about her father, which was recorded in this April 1998 issue. Still, she mainly chose to commemorate her mother in an article titled "Mother, Strong Pillar in Family." She described Margarete's prominent role in the life of the family. Later in life, she wrote the preceding tribute to her mother as part of a community college course on writing memoirs while she was retired and living in Phoenix, Arizona, for the winter.



Louise Friesen

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*Gary Friesen is recently retired from a career as an industrial and office ergonomist. He lives in Edmonton and enjoys travel, history, cycling, golfing, spending time with his two granddaughters, and following Canadian and US politics. Gary is involved with the Russlaender Centennial Committee (RCC), and he and his wife Anne plan to take the tour in 2023 from Quebec City to Alberta. Gary and Anne worship at Lendrum Mennonite Church in Edmonton. ❖*

## A Tribute to James Friesen

By Dave Toews

James was a recently elected MHSA board member, and most of us had not met him in person. The information for this article was taken from a biography he wrote for MHSA and from his obituary in The Peace Country Sun newspaper.

James passed away peacefully at the age of 70. He is survived by his loving wife Loretta of 27 years, nine children, 38 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

James was born in Herbert, Saskatchewan, on November 16, 1950, and raised in the three western provinces. He was an underground coal miner for 25 years, a dogsledder, a horseman, and had a farm in west-central Alberta. After graduating grade 12, James attended Lakeland College at Vermillion, completed a course in farm management and animal nutrition. He also completed a pastoral program at Peace River Bible Institute. He pastored a Quaker church in Grand Prairie for seven years and was currently attending the Mount View Bible Fellowship (Bergthaler Mennonite). James loved Bible study and was the lead organizer of the 2021 March for Jesus in Grande Prairie.

James was recently retired, had an active interest in history and felt he would be a good fit on the MHSA board.

On October 2, 2021, his life celebration was held outdoors at 2 p.m. at Mountview Bible Fellowship Church, Clairmont, AB. ❖



James Friesen

Ella Weber's family likely lived in the home of either Polish or Jewish civilians that had been forcibly evicted and were incarcerated in the ghetto.

The book is divided into four sections. Part one chapters one to 11 talks about the beginning: the Lutheran ancestors of Ella Weber from southwest Germany and the Mennonite/Lutheran family of Johann Franz from the Molotschna, Ukraine. During WWI, the Webers fled from Lemberg (Lviv) to Leipzig and ultimately wound up in the Backnang MCC refugee camp in West Germany. Johann was wounded towards the war's end and eventually wound up in the same Backnang MCC refugee camp as Ella. Here Ella and Johann fell in love and were engaged to be married. Ella received permission and immigrated to Canada; Johann was refused because of his service in the Wehrmacht. They were separated.

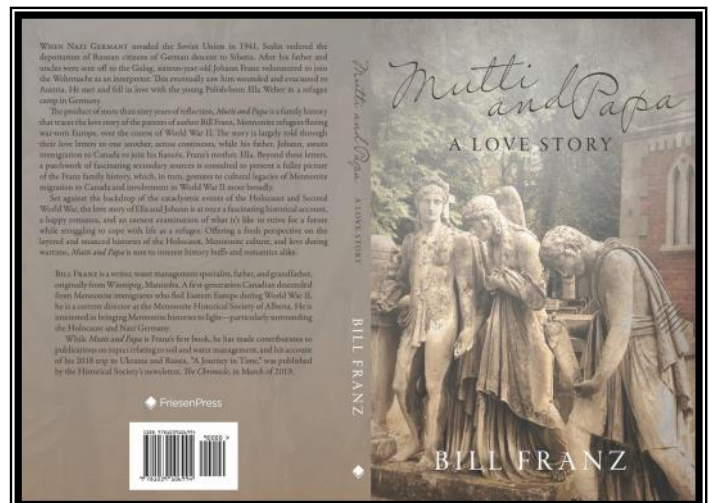
Part two, chapter 12, contains the over one-hundred notes, letters, postcards and pictures exchanged between Ella and Johann during their two years of separation. The letters give the reader an intimate view of the thoughts and

## Mutti and Papa, A Love Story by Bill Franz

Reviewed by Dave Toews

In *Mutti and Papa, A Love Story*, Bill Franz speaks of his family history and his parents Ella Weber and Johann Franz's love story, parts of which he has been reflecting on for more than 50 years. The book is a remarkable story of survival, love, doubt and devotion. In 2018 Bill wrote *A Journey in Time* for the MHSA Chronicle at my request, an account of his trip to Ukraine and Russia to retrace the footsteps of his forefathers. The article may have helped expedite this well-written, well-researched full-length publication.

There are two themes to this book, and the obvious over-arching one is, of course, the love story of Ella and Johann. The other underlying issue is the author's German guilt, something he has wrestled with for many years. The fact that his father, Johann Franz, was glad he volunteered for the Wehrmacht (German army) bothered Bill. Johann had his reasons, and "these were not normal times." Maybe even more troubling to the author was that his mother



(See *Mutti* on page 15)



(Mutti from page 14)

emotions, ups and downs, doubts and fears, loneliness and uncertainties that Ella and Johann experience at a distance through their letters. They exchange pictures: Ella has cut her hair; Johann doesn't like it. Has she become so English? Johann grows a beard; Ella doesn't think she will like it, calls him Hans-Bart (John-Beard!)

The third part deals with life after the love letters end. The letters end because Johann and Ella were finally reunited in Winnipeg. It is disappointing for the reader when the love letters end because one can no longer see into Ella and Johann's innermost thoughts and feelings. They were married on June 10, 1950, in First Mennonite Church, where they remained active members for the rest of their lives.

Part four contains the genealogy of the author and the military records of his father, Johann Franz. It also comprises the maps of the movements in Europe of the main characters in the book.

Bill Franz dedicates this book to his grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren and is clearly a labour of love. Mutti and Papa is sure to interest history buffs and romantics alike. If you enjoyed this book, like I did, you would also enjoy reading *Pathway Through Peril, A Journey of Hope* by Agnes A. Thibert.

The book is available on Kindle, paperback and hardcover from several sources, including Amazon, Common Word and McNally Robinson, which range from \$7.43 to \$66.04. ❖

## The Daniel Olfert Family Story: Our Heritage

by Ernest Olfert

Reviewed by Dave Toews

The book is divided into four main sections. Part one is the Olfert European ancestral history. The Olfert name is believed to have evolved from the Teutonic Christian Knights' name Wolfhart meaning wolf-strong or wolf-heart. The Olferts, like so many Mennonite families, migrated to South Russia from Prussia in 1803 and settled in the village of Schoenhorst and on to the West Reserve in Southern Manitoba in 1891. Then finally, to the village of Rosenbach on the Swift Current (Sask) Mennonite Reserve in 1918.

In Russia, before they immigrated to Canada, both the Olfert and the family of Helena Dyck lived in the village Schoenhorst. There is no indication that Daniel (b 1882) and Helena (b 1888) knew each other there.

Part two tells the story of Daniel Olfert and his three wives, Helena Wiebe, Helena (Dyck) Dyck and Susanna Dyck. As a blended family, there might have been as many as 19 people at the supper table.

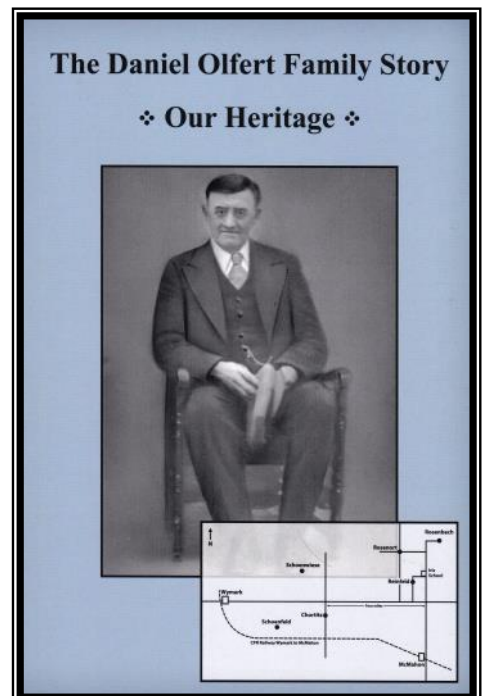
Part three is divided into three sections, a chronology of people and places, a description of what life was like in Rosenbach and the family contributions to their community and information about Daniel as a person.

The fourth part is the next generation, the photographs of the marriages of the 17 children of Daniel Olfert and his three wives. There are few details with the photos, only the names and the dates.

The appendices at the back of the book include the Daniel Olfert family's handwritten Christmas cards and New Years' greetings from the children to their parents in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Many of the cards are in beautiful handwriting in the German Gothic Script.

This review is based in part on an interview with Daniel Olfert's step-grandson Dave Dyck who grew up in the neighbouring village of Rosenhof. Though Dave Dyck's name does not appear in the book, his parents Peter A and Helena (Reimer) Dyck, are pictured on page 86. Because of Daniel Olfert's three marriages, it is a complicated relationship. The author Ernest Olfert and Dave Dyck are both first cousins and step cousins! Dave has many fond memories of visiting, playing games and having Sunday lunches with the Olferts and other relatives.

In Sept 2019, Dave Dyck and I toured the Swift Current Mennonite Reserve and saw all villages, including Rosenbach and the Olfert farm. The



(See Story on page 16)

(Story from page 15)

family legacy continues; three generations of Olferts have tended the farm for over 100 years. In 2019 the Olferts received the Saskatchewan Century Family Farm Award.

The Daniel Olfert family made a significant contribution to their community, which was a reflection of the personality and beliefs of Daniel Olfert. The family provided support for their neighbours in many ways. Many weddings and funerals were arranged and hosted in their home for their own family and other families who couldn't afford the expense of a more formal church wedding. The door was always open at the Olfert home; the family provided unofficial social services for families and less well-off individuals.

The book can be purchased by contacting Ernest Olfert in Saskatoon at 306-250-7929 (phone or text) or email at [ernest.olfert@sasktel.net](mailto:ernest.olfert@sasktel.net). ❖



Henry, on a tour of Poland, on the Martwa Wisła River, one of the branches of the Vistula River, flowing through the city of Gdańsk in northern Poland 2016

## Get to Know Your Board Members - Henry Wiebe, La Crete

Henry Wiebe was born July 25, 1951, in Fort Vermilion, Alberta. His father, Heinrich Wiebe, born in 1926, was a descendant of Russian Mennonites. They immigrated to Canada in 1875 and then moved from Manitoba to Mexico in 1922, returning to Canada in 1937, this time to the Peace River country of Northern Alberta. Henry's Mother, Anna Wieler, also a descendant of the 1874/75 Mennonite immigrants to Manitoba, moved to the Peace River country with her parents in 1934 from Hague, Saskatchewan.

As a child, Henry lived within ½ mile of the Mighty Peace River some miles North of La Crete in Northern Alberta and grew up on a mixed farm. He has five sisters and one brother.

He attended a German school near his home for two winters, after which he went to public school, where he completed grade eight. During his teen years, he became a believer in Jesus Christ and doing Bible correspondence courses helped him mature in his Christian faith. In 1991 he successfully wrote his high school equivalency test and completed one correspondence course in Basic Accounting. Through the years, he has attended numerous courses and seminars related to his work in accounting.

Farming with his father kept Henry busy until he married Agnes Dyck when they began farming independently. Since agriculture was complex because of a heavy debt load, he worked off the farm to supplement their income, first in building construction and then in bookkeeping and accounting. In 1991 Henry and Agnes gave up farming, and he worked in bookkeeping and accounting full-time until 1998.

In the Fall of 1998, Henry and Agnes went to Bolivia for vacation, resulting in them going on a six-month mission assignment to Bolivia in 2000. After returning to La Crete, Henry continued working in building construction and accounting until his semi-retirement in 2016. Currently,

he works part-time from his home office; he does some accounting work as well as business and personal tax preparations.

Travelling has been a wonderful experience for Henry and Agnes. While their children were growing up, they had a small camper on their ½ ton truck and travelled each Summer, seeing much of western Canada. Especially in later years, they have enjoyed the trips and tours that have followed the journey of the Mennonites, from the Netherlands through Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Ukraine to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. They have travelled to Bolivia several times and had the pleasure of visiting the East and West areas of Paraguay in 2017, seeing the gorgeous Iguazu Falls, and touring the spectacular Itaipu Dam. In November of 2019, they visited the small county of Belize in Central America for the first time and saw most of the colonies but didn't get to the tourist spots; hopefully, another trip to Belize is on the horizon! There are still some exciting items

(See Wiebe on page 17)

(Wiebe from page 16)

on the bucket list for the future if the Lord provides them with good health!

Five children were born to Henry and Agnes. They are all married and live in La Crete, Sexsmith and Sherwood Park (at least they are still all in Alberta). Spending time with their family, including their 11 grandchildren, gives Henry and Agnes much joy!

Henry hopes to be an asset to the board by representing the La Crete area, which is mostly the descendants of the people from the 1870's immigration. The 2020 MHSA conference is planned for La Crete, a great opportunity for many to visit this mostly Mennonite community in Northern Alberta! ❖

## The Murder of David Krüger

By Dave Toews

On Saturday, August 24, 1918, the Mennonite German-language newspaper *Friedenstimme* (Voice of Peace) "ironic"

reported that on August 13, 1918, in the Mennonite Village of Rosenthal, County of Chortitza, Russia/Ukraine, David Krüger was murdered.

"Chortitza District.

Murder. On August 13 [1918] in



David Krüger  
1899-1918



August 24, 1918, front-page header of the Friedenstimme newspaper, 16<sup>th</sup> year, number 45

Rosenthal,  
David  
Krüger, the  
son of Johann  
Krüger, was  
fatally shot by  
a girl. David  
Krüger, aged  
18 or 19, was  
in a love relationship with  
an ethnic  
Polish girl,  
the postmaster's daughter,

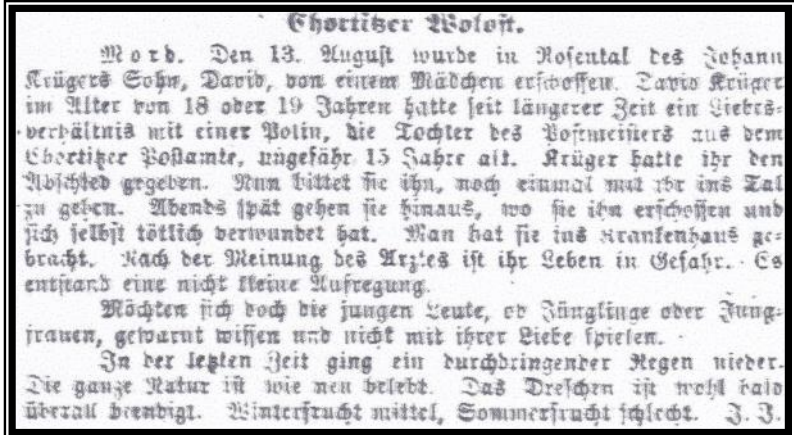
at the Chortitza Post Office. She was approximately 15 years old. Krüger first broke off her relationship; she begged him to go with her once more down into the valley. In the evening, they went out, and she shot and killed him, and then she shot herself. She was brought to the hospital. According to the doctor, she is in a fatal condition. The shooting resulted in more than a bit of commotion.

Let this be a warning for young people that they should not play with their love, whether male or female. ... J.J."

In brief, A 15-year-old Polish girl (Ms. Romantschenko), the village postmaster, fatally shoots her 18-year-old boyfriend (David Krueger), son of the Johann Krueger clock factory owner and then tries to kill herself.

With assistance from Max Shtatsky (present-day Zaporizhia resident), the postmaster's name was Romantschenko. The family lived in an apartment connected to the post office on a side street near the hospital.\*

My mother, Helen (Krueger) Toews, mentioned several times during my teens that one of her cousins had been murdered by his Polish girlfriend. I, however, had no written documentation of this story, I accepted it as oral history. It is good to see documented history. David Krueger was the second cousin once removed to the author. Note the various spellings of the Krueger, Krüger, Kruger name.



The article in German, translated into English below  
by Arnold Neufeldt-Fast

\* The above article is based mainly on a Facebook post on the Mennonite Genealogy and History site by Arnold Neufeldt-Fast. ❖



## What's in a Name?

*By David Peter Toews*

Our names are an incredibly important part of our identity. They carry deep personal, cultural, familial, and historical connections. They also give us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong, and our place in the world.

What are the origins and spellings of the names Toews and David?

According to GAMEO, Toews (Töws, Toevs, Toeffer, Tewffs, Taevs, Taves) was a common family name among Prussian Mennonites. Toews is of Dutch origin, derived from the second part of Matthew (Mattheus) "Theus", and was found in Tiegenhagen, Ladekopp, Heubuden, Elbing, and Danzig.

According to our Toews family history, my 4x great-father Isaak Toews came from Tiegenhagen, Prussia, to South Russia in 1793.

The name David has deep Biblical roots and means "beloved." It is derived from the Hebrew name Dawid, which evolved from the Hebrew word *dod* (beloved). In the Bible, David is an important figure and appears as the Old Testament second king of Israel. The name has special meaning in Jewish culture, with the Star of David being the symbol of Judaism.

When my parents went to register me with vital statistics in Saskatchewan, they were pleasantly surprised that the clerk knew my first name David came from the Old Testament and my second name Peter from the New Testament.

In the Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry (GRANDMA), there are 16 variations of David and 23 of Toews.❖

### Equivalent Given Names (Abundance in parentheses.)

#### david

GM Code designation: **da**

David (22256)  
Dave (451)  
Davidt (22)  
Davit (6)  
Davi (6)  
Davida (5)  
Davy (5)  
Davie (3)  
Dawied (2)  
Dawid (2)  
Dawidt (2)  
Dauw (1)  
Dau (1)  
Dauve (1)  
Davied (1)  
Davey (1)  
**Total: 22765**

### Equivalent Surnames (Abundance in parentheses.)

#### toews

GM Code designation: **245**

Toews (10803)  
Toavs (218)  
Taves (210)  
Toevs (200)  
Tews (78)  
Thews (43)  
Tevs (17)  
Taevs (4)  
Teves (4)  
Teewes (4)  
Thoews (3)  
Teefs (3)  
Tewfsen (2)  
Tewes (1)  
Taws (1)  
Tefs (1)  
Tewsen (1)  
Toewes (1)  
Toeves (1)  
Tefsen (1)  
Theews (1)  
Teews (1)  
Tawse (1)  
**Total: 11599**

## Letters To The Editor

Good Afternoon Dave,

July 1, 2021

Just had a long chat with Agnes Thibert. She said she was featured in the latest chronicle. I immediately opened the envelope. Great Issue. Is it possible to get an e version sent to me?

Thanks so much

Doreen Lloyd

Coaldale, Alberta

(See Letters on page 19)

(Letters from page 18)

Hi Dave,

June 28, 2021

I'm taking advantage of a hot day to find a cool spot to read through this issue. I got so engrossed in reading the fascinating articles that I didn't get to the book review till just now. Thank-you so much for your well-written and kind review. It's much appreciated. I'm hoping my next book, *The Farewell Years* will be ready for distribution by the middle of August.

Congratulations to all the contributors of this issue. So many stories, all so unique yet all emitting that sense of familiarity.

Thank-you for your hard work in making this chronicle available to anyone interested. Even my grandkids are showing an interest in their undiscovered history.

Sincerely, Agnes Thibert

Lundbreck, Alberta

Dear Dave Toews,

June 30, 2021

Thank you so much for another interesting MHSA June 2021 Chronicle! I confess I, like you, have so many things to read and so little time. This most recent issue has many articles to grab my attention. I'd like to comment on two of them, "A Heritage of Horsemanship" by Russ Friesen, and "Mennonite Churches in Alberta: Creating a Mennonite Map", by Abram Janzen.

I think our reading choices are often based on some kind of connection. With Russ Friesen (who I haven't met yet), we crossed paths in Ukraine in 2018. He and his wife Melissa were part of the (last) Mennonite Heritage Cruise in the summer, which my sisters and I were considering joining. Instead, we embarked on TourMagination's Tour of Ukraine in the fall but visited many of the same places, including Insel Khortitza and Eichenfeld. One of our fellow tourists had an ancestor (a great-uncle) murdered in the Eichenfeld massacre and he was very moved to see the memorial, as were we all. One of our daughters attended Camp Evergreen after Russ's time there and enjoyed it tremendously! Finally, although I'm a city slicker, an uncle of mine is/was an avid horseman and introduced us to riding. I'm also a fan of Ian Tyson's music, which I think Russ must be familiar with as well. Russ writes his family story eloquently and passionately, which draws us in. Did I mention some great photos?!

As a relatively recent Albertan (we've been here 22 years this Canada Day), I really appreciate Abe Janzen's Mennonite Map and tables, and the text in his article. So many churches and conferences! And here I thought I was relatively well versed in Mennonite conferences having been raised General Conference in Manitoba and having been a member of the Mennonite Brethren Conference in two locations in BC. I now have to pick up the trilogy again, "Mennonites in Canada", before the 4th volume in this series is published. I confess I haven't been able to get through the series yet as I got bogged down with all that church history, but I think my interest has been renewed now. As many people might know, our own Ted Regehr (T.D. Regehr) was tapped to write the third volume after Frank H. Epp took ill (Mr. Epp wrote the first two volumes).

I know I'm biased, but The MHSA Chronicle is a treasure trove of stories from our personal family and collective Mennonite history. Thank you to those who contribute to the Chronicle. It's obvious that it's a labour of love.

Sincerely, Bill Franz

Red Deer, Alberta

Hi Dave,

June 19, 2021

Thanks for editing another excellent issue of the Chronicle. I read it with interest and pleasure. It was great to see the generous coverage you gave to my friend and former classmate, Agnes (Langemann) Thibert, regarding her recently published book, *Pathway Through Peril, A Journey of Hope*. Her next book *The Farewell Years* should be available this fall. All much appreciated.

Ted Regehr

Calgary



## ***Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta***

### **Virtual Fall Conference**

#### **MEET THE ALBERTA AUTHORS DAY**

**Saturday, Nov 6, 2021**

**Conference - 2:00 - 4:00 PM via Zoom**



### **Book Launch**

#### **Of Author Bill Franz's 2021 book**

##### ***Mutti and Papa, A Love Story***

Set to the backdrop of the Holocaust and WWII, the love story of Ella and Johann is at once a fascinating historical account, a happy romance, and an earnest examination of what it is like to strive for a future while struggling to cope with life as a refugee.

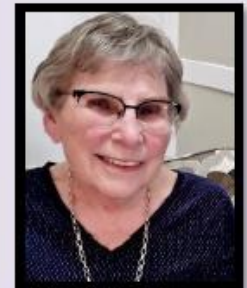
#### **Reading by Author Agnes Langemann Thibert**

**From her 2019 novel**

##### ***Pathway Through Peril, A Journey of Hope***

The future looked endlessly bright and sunny. It all changed at the beginning of WWI, the Russian Revolution and Civil War.

And her soon to be launched ***The Farewell Years***



**MC - Katie Harder**

**Q and A with the authors**

**Zoom coordinators - Dave Neufeldt and Marie Moyer**