



The MHSA Chronicle

Official Publication of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

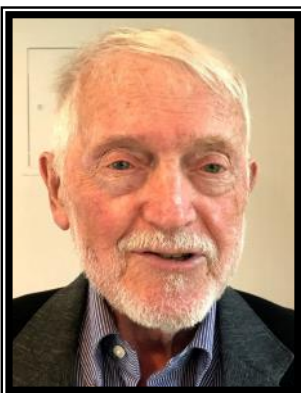
Volume XXII Number 3

October 2019

Coaldale Centennial Homecoming

by Dave Quapp

Known as The Gem of the West, Coaldale was incorporated as a village in 1919 and as a town in 1952. Its centennial homecoming



Dave Quapp

celebration, August 3-4, 2019, attracted former Coaldalites from all of western Canada, with a large segment consisting of 2nd generation Mennonites. This event afforded a great opportunity to renew acquaintances for chats and arguments. Many discussions centered on the arrival of Mennon-

(See Coaldale on page 8)

Mennonite Pilot

by Gerry Regehr

I, Gerhard (Gerry) Regehr, joined the Royal Canadian Air Force on February 12, 1951 at the age of 19. I had seen recruitment posters and found them appealing to my sense of adventure. As I was being signed up, the recruiting officer asked me if I spoke a foreign language, and I answered, "Yes. German." Then the officer asked, "How fluent?" I replied, "Fluent." Ten years later this would send me to Germany as a personal assistant to the base commander, a post I held for four years.

After joining up, I spent two years working as an airman on Sabre aircraft. Then I entered a pilot training program. In November 1952, I went before the Pilot Selection Board in London, Ontario. Of the 180 men present from all across Canada, I was one of five who were already in the Air Force. Following a battery of tests, 100 were sent home, 37 were selected for pilot training, 17 graduated, and seven became career pilots. Two, Larry Rodewolt of St Albert and I, are still alive.

I would fly for the next 26 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force

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Gerhard Regehr
1951 Age 19

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Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

Fall Conference:

Alternative Service in WWII, Crisis of Community

Date: Saturday Nov 16, 2019, Registration \$20, starts at 12:30 pm

Time: 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Q & A and Fasma lunch to follow

Place: The Gem of the West Museum, Coaldale, Alberta

Featuring:

Conrad Stoesz, Archivist,
Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg

See the poster on the back page for more details

Editorial Reflections

by Dave Toews

A lot has happened since I last talked to you on this forum. I have been to Saskatchewan three times and to Calgary twice. It has been a rainy, cool, but busy summer. From the beginning of June through the end of August we did not have two consecutive days without rain. I sincerely hope the farmers can get the crops in off the fields.

I am in my 12th year as editor of this publication, not in the 11th as I thought. I just double-checked. I shudder to think of what we put out in some of those early issues. Maybe some of you also do, shudder that is? Recently I spoke with Jon Isaak, director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in



Dave Toews

Winnipeg. He said, "When I first saw your name as editor of MHSA Chronicle, I thought I should know this man, but I couldn't place you." Needless to say I have been flying under the radar for years.

This summer I played in two fund-raising golf tournaments: MCC and Mennonite Mutual Insurance of Alberta (MMI). We raised a total of about \$127,000 between the two. The MMI tournament was for the Edmonton Mennonite Guest Home (EMGH), a home for out-of-town patients and their families being treated in Edmonton hospitals. The EMGH is a project of the Church of God in Christ (Holdeman) Mennonites. I met a number of interesting Holdeman people there including construction company owner Denver Eidse from Bowersville, Georgia, and building designer Galen Wiebe from Stettler, Alberta.

The Alberta Mennonite Heritage Cultural Centre (AMHCC) has occupied some of my time this summer as well. The AMHCC is a project of Ernie and Linda Wiens, Sherwood Park, Alberta. (See Ernie's article in this issue.)

Dave Dyck and I went on an

excursion to Manitoba and Saskatchewan recently to see all things Mennonite. (See my article *May the Borscht be with You* in this issue of the Chronicle.)

The Saskatchewan Roughriders' record is 9 and 4 so far this season, and they are definitely on track to win the Grey Cup!

If you know someone who is interested in the MHSA and is not yet a member, consider using the enclosed gift membership form to give him or her a Christmas gift.

Thank you to 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 dmttoews@gmail.com with any questions or comments. Hope you can all make it to the fall conference in Coaldale. ❖

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Send submissions and other correspondence to:
Dave Toews, Editor
(dmttoews@gmail.com)

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To join, send payment to:

MHSA
#223 - 2946 32 Street NE
Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7

Editor: Dave Toews

Copy Editor: Carolyn Wilson

Layout: Harvey Wiehler

Distribution: Bill Janzen

Membership List: Ellie Janz

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Chairman's Corner

by Ken Matis

With All Saints Day (November 1) and Remembrance Day (November 11) soon to be upon us, I want to share my grandfather Willi Schmidt's memoirs of his days as a Mennonite forced to fight in WW II for the Polish Army and then the German Army. The following are his own words as recorded in *The WW II Memoirs of Willi Schmidt - a Mennonite Soldier*.



Ken Matis

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(Chairman from page 2)

Our wedding date was November 12, 1932. Our meeting was not difficult as we lived in the same village of Zyck, Poland. The young people got together every Sunday at different places where we both joined in. The casual acquaintance became a serious relationship, and after some time we married. My wife received some land from her parents, and I received money from mine so that we were able to buy some additional land. We were able to make a good living on the farm having animals and fruit trees. The government at the time was favorable; we had our own German schools and had German services in our own churches.

We lived in peace and quiet until that terrible war came in 1939 between Germany and Poland, and everything was destroyed. I was forced to enlist as a Polish paramedic. I must say the Lord protected me in a most wonderful way. As an example, I will mention one time when I was near death. A bomb fell so close to me that I was covered with dirt. It was not too deep - at least I could get up. When the attack was over (the war only really lasted 18 days), I could go home again to my dear wife. At home everything was in good order, which was not the case for many others. The Poles had mutilated and murdered many families.

I was with my wife until 1943 when I was forced to go to war again, this time as a German soldier fighting against the Russians. This war did not end so quickly; I was away from home for two years. I must say, however, that the Lord kept His protecting hand over me in this war also. I was never wounded when so many

others lost their lives. On my side of the family I lost a brother, a cousin, and a cousin's son; on my wife's side she lost a brother, her mother, and a brother-in-law.

We can never thank God enough for His goodness and mercy to us.

When the war was over, we were surrounded by the Russian army. An idea came to me: I dressed in civilian clothes, and as a result I was not taken as a prisoner of war. The Russians sent me with all the German civilians to an area where each person was to receive their just due. It was quite near to our home, but when we got off the train there was a checkpoint. Our names gave us away as being German, so the Poles immediately took us to the prison where we were abused and beaten. It was so brutal that I fainted twice. When I awoke, I was completely wet. (The Poles had poured water on me to revive me because they had secretly beaten us even though the Russian soldiers had forbidden them to do so.)

God heard my prayer there too and helped me get out after eight days. A lady came wanting a worker for her farm and picked me. Her farm is where I was for three months. I asked her to allow me to train her fourteen-year-old son on the farm because I wanted to get back to my dear wife. She agreed to my idea and let me go. She was never unkind to me.

I went back to my village and found my wife and child at a Polish home where my wife was a maid and did handwork. The moment of our reunion we will never forget as long as we live, that emotional moment when we met our loved ones alive when thousands were not to experience that. I believe that is a grief one can only feel

through experience.

After eight months we received an order to go back to the place where we once lived in order to be reunited with other families. Whoever was guilty of anything would be punished, and there were guilty ones among the German people. However, the Polish lady where we lived didn't want to let us go since we were already together as a whole family. The village mayor told us to leave secretly: if they didn't catch us, all would be well; if they did catch us, he didn't know what would happen to us. Instead, the Polish lady made arrangements with the police for us to stay with her. However, the conditions in that area were very bad for Germans. On Sundays my wife had to work for the police. When the day was over, the police told us to come into the office and they would pay us. Instead, they beat us badly saying, "This is your payment."

The Lord kept his protecting hand over us, and we eventually came back to our own home safely. We went directly to our house, which was inhabited by our former worker. We then all lived together on the farm. Some of the Poles in the area made an effort to help by letting me practice my trade for them. Finally we were safe; no one harmed us anymore.

We lived together in our village almost three years. We did not want to stay there because Germans had no rights, and we were not willing to accept Polish citizenship even though it was offered to us.

One day the opportunity came that we could go to Germany. A certain Mr. Fast from the

(See Chairman on page 4)

(Chairman from page 3)

USA was in Poland in the port city of Danzig, and he was authorized by the MCC to go around and find all the Mennonites in Poland. So one day the Polish police came to pick us up and take us to the Red Cross Center. From there we went to Germany for eight months, and then we emigrated to Coaldale, Canada. We can never thank God enough for bringing us here where we are so richly blessed, both spiritually and materially. ❖

(Pilot from page 1)

(RCAF). My initial flying took place at Winnipeg. This was followed by a two-year tour at 418 Squadron Edmonton and a tour at Penhold, Alberta as a pilot instructor. I was then sent to Germany. After spending four years



Lockheed T-33 Silver Star, L-R Gerhard Regehr and Rollie Cook (Edmonton Eskimos 1955-56) CFB Edmonton (Namo) 1957 publicity photograph for the City of Edmonton Squadron #418

there, I was transferred to Summerside, P.E.I. where I flew the Argus Submarine Patrol aircraft as Captain with a crew of 15 for nine years. Following my service in the RCAF, I worked for a further 12 years as a civil aviation inspector with Transport Canada.

During the years in the RCAF my Mennonite upbringing came into play in many ways. People often remarked, "You don't ever swear!" I replied, "Swearing is just a weak mind trying to express itself forcefully." During my service I went to church or chapel regularly on Sundays. In Germany, Canadian airmen lived on or near the self-contained base, and Eula, my wife, accompanied me. She played the organ for both chapels (Protestant and Roman Catholic). As a family we always went to church and sang in the choirs. Our friends were also derived from the church setting.



Gerhard (Gerry) Regehr

Courtship

In December 1953, after basic training in Portage La Prairie, I decided to drive to Ontario with my friends, Paul Schmidt and Doug Vann, to spend Christmas with their families. On the return trip we were in a head-on collision! Doug, who was driving, was unhurt, Paul had bitten off the tip of his tongue, and I suffered a concussion. The doctor said I would never fly again. As it turned out, the head injury was not too severe, but as a result of the accident I was rerouted from fighter to heavy aircraft pilot.

Had I not been rerouted, I would not have been in the right place on July 14, 1954 to meet my future wife, Eula. In June of that year I had just finished my pilot training in Saskatoon by taking an advanced flying course on B-25 bombers. I was immediately sent on a pilot survivor course. On completion of this course I came out famished, home to Tofield to Mom's cooking. I ate five pork chops at my first meal.

I was just beginning my 30 days of holidays before going to my next posting in Winnipeg. Wondering what to do I strolled around and happened into the bowling alley. There I saw Eula Haukedal. I was 22 and hadn't seen her for seven years. I spoke to her, and she told me she was going to the Edmonton Exhibition the next day. When I left her I thought what a klutz I was, not to ask to go with her! The next day was July 15, 1954. I went to the Edmonton Exhibition, hoping to see her there. I happened to meet Raymond McGinitie, who was also at loose ends, and together we

(See Pilot on page 5)

(Pilot from page 4)

went in search of Eula. We finally caught up with her at the end of the day, and I took her home from there. This started it all.

After the month was over, I started my flying out of Winnipeg, flying Beechcraft C-45s and Mitchell B-25s. We were told that the RCAF would like us to practice flying on airways on the weekends, so I began flying to Edmonton. Getting from Edmonton to Tofield was difficult because I always had to sign in the aircraft after landing and then phone Dad for a ride. We arranged a rendezvous point in Edmonton. On the flight into Edmonton I would fly off the airway, so I could fly over my parent's house, and this was the signal for Dad to pick me up. I found out later that Dad really enjoyed our drives from Edmonton to Tofield, and he definitely helped with the courtship.

Eula told of an incident she had at the hospital during one of my "fly-bys". She and Dr. Freebury were scrubbing for surgery when they heard the B-25 roar by on its way to Edmonton. Dr. Freebury, a quiet reticent type, commented "Are we expecting company this weekend?" Eula blushed.

We were married July 16, 1955.

A Major Emergency

I had been flying for three hours in a Beechcraft C-45 when suddenly the aircraft began to shake very hard. I went through my FMS (fuel, mixture, switches) check but couldn't see the instruments because of the shaking. I looked outside and saw the right engine was shaking more than the left, so I hit the right engine feath-

ering button to stop it. Although I was only shook up momentarily, this moment was significant for me. I really hadn't known before how I would react to an emergency.

During the investigation they found that the main connecting rod had broken in the engine. This caused it to flail around so that the inside of the engine looked like a hollow case. The interesting thing was that I had zero seconds left before the feathering system would have quit. It used oil pressure to feather, and the pressure was ebbing quickly! Had I not feathered in that moment, the engine would have broken off the wing, and the aircraft would have gone down immediately. All in a day's work!

My Second Emergency:

On July 24, 1957, Flight Lieutenant Gar Langford and I were scheduled for a trip to Las Vegas to pick up a ranking officer. We stopped at Malmstrom Air Force Base (AFB) at Great Falls, Montana to refuel. On takeoff, our starboard propeller struck the runway as the wheels retracted, and



B-25 Mitchell, Medium Bomber, Winnipeg Airport circa 1950, same aircraft model as was involved in the second emergency

we had to do a forced landing straight ahead on the runway. The aircraft caught fire and was destroyed.

At the time of the accident Gar Langford, who had not flown for three months, was assigned as Captain of the aircraft. Although I had the greater experience, he had higher rank. After refueling, starting, and taxiing out, I had received a very long air traffic control clearance and was writing it down with my flying gloves off. When Gar started the takeoff run, I put down everything to assist. The takeoff was routine.

I glanced down at my board to check the clearance again and didn't notice that Gar had let the aircraft do a slow descent while trying to get the all-important single engine speed. Suddenly the starboard propeller touched the runway. Unknown to me, the propeller tip broke off, went through the aircraft wall on my side just 13 inches behind me, and severed a fuel line that was used for the cabin heater in the nose of the aircraft. Also unknown to me, fuel was running into my foot tray below my seat.

While Gar was concentrating on bringing the aircraft down, I reached for the emergency hatch above us. On first touchdown I pulled the release handle and pushed the hatch out of the way. This turned out to be the only

(See Pilot on page 6)

(Pilot from page 5)

opportunity I had to perform this act because immediately on touchdown, the aircraft caught fire and started burning between my legs.

I tried to undo my seat belt to get out but couldn't because my hands were already so badly burned that the muscles did not have any strength. I felt I was doomed, but then by the grace of God I thought that if I wedged my right hand behind the buckle and swung my left hand against my right hand, the inertia would open the seat buckle. It worked! I jumped out of the emergency exit and landed on the ground.

My hands and face were badly burned, but my eyes were OK because of the sunglasses I wearing, and my ears were OK because I had earphones on. My flight suit was fireproof, and I only got a slight burn on my ankle. (The flight suit was quite brittle and fell apart later.)

The ambulance arrived as I was standing there with the skin from my hands hanging



Gerhard Regehr, U of A Hospital, Edmonton,
Aug 10, 1957, two weeks after the accident

down. The ambulance driver said, "What can I do?" I exclaimed, "Drive to the hospital!" My watch crystal had melted onto the face of the watch at two minutes to five o'clock. Everybody was driving home after work, and we had to drive across the line of traffic. People would not yield. Finally I shouted in the driver's ear, "Drive!" He jerked out the clutch, the traffic yielded, and we drove through.

At the time of this accident we had an acting commanding officer who was inexperienced at notifying people of accidents. He knocked on Eula's door and said, "Hi, Mrs. Regehr. Your husband has been in a serious crash, and we don't know his condition." In shock, Eula couldn't quite comprehend. She invited him in and had him repeat everything plus give more details. We didn't have a phone in those days, so she had to go to Olfred Moen (an old neighbour from the farm days who lived a short distance away) and use their phone to call the hospital.

I was back flying in three months no worse for wear.

Eula's Gambling

On August 5, 1961, we arrived in Baden Solingen, Germany, where I was to serve a four-year NATO tour. I would work as personal assistant to the base commander, Group Captain J.J. Jordan. When VIPS visited our base, my duties included escorting them and the base commander.

On one occasion we had an air marshal visiting. We decided to show him the local Spielbank (casino) in Baden Baden near us. It is a very classy place. Our visitor was playing roulette and won on odds of 35:1 on what-

ever he wagered. He took the chips and divided them between the ladies present (which included Eula) and said, "Have a good time."

Eula asked, "How do I play this?" I said, "Just put a bunch of chips all over the table and stand back." We were standing around the table four deep. The croupier turned the roulette wheel and took in the chips from people who had lost. Then he piled the chips up, looked Emma right in the eye and pushed them toward her. She had won! Eula said to me, "What do I do now?" (You have to remember that I was always "low man on the totem pole" so we couldn't have our visitor waiting for us while Eula played.) I said, "Play more and faster!" She won once more, took her winnings and offered them to the air marshal. He said, "You keep them, but don't let him (referring to me) get them."

King Hussein

In 1962 I met King Hussein of Jordan and Princess Munna when they visited West Germany. Two weeks ahead of time, I received word that the king would be using our airfield for his departure to West Berlin. The Berlin Blockade was in effect, and the only airline that had clearance to fly to West Berlin was Pan American Airlines. A Pan Am aircraft had been chartered for this purpose.

I contacted our government in Ottawa to enquire about protocol for this situation. They advised me to use the protocol for a king. I thereupon ordered a 100-man "honour guard"* to receive him on arrival. [*foot soldiers]

King Hussein was scheduled to arrive at 11:30 a.m. with a depar-

(See Pilot on page 7)

(Pilot from page 6)

ture time of 12:05 pm on the day in question. At 9:00 a.m. I received a phone call from the German Oberst (commanding officer, CO) accompanying the king's party. He wanted to confirm that we were indeed "mounting" (assembling) an honour guard for the king. Then he asked whether we could "dismount" (disassemble) it. I told him we had instructions from External Affairs in Ottawa to mount it.

At 9:15 a.m. I received another phone call requesting that the honour guard be dismounted. I immediately phoned Ottawa but was unable to contact anyone. Because of the time difference, they were not



King Hussein of Jordan and Princess Munna before departing Germany, summer 1962

at work yet. I then tried to contact our ambassador in Bonn, but I did not succeed there either.

At 11:10 a.m. Group Captain Jordan, Air Commander Bradshaw, and I drove to the aircraft for the departure. I had left word at the office that should Ottawa or Bonn call with any instructions, they should call the control tower who could relay the message to me in the car.

At 11:20 a.m. the car phone rang, and I was advised: "Dismount the guard." The commanding officer leaped from the

car, ran to the commander, and asked him to move them off as quickly as possible since the arrival of the king was imminent. This was done, and the guard marched directly across and off the tarmac.

A few minutes later we saw the entourage with King Hussein driving from the other direction toward his aircraft. The king's car suddenly veered left and to our surprise was heading in the direction of the honour guard. The commander saw the car coming, so he immediately stopped the guard and prepared them for the king's arrival. When the king arrived, the commander called "Guard, Royal Salute! Present Arms!"

The guard commander saluted the king. He approached him with "We didn't expect you here, Your Highness," whereupon, King Hussein replied, "But you have such a very fine guard." The King then fully inspected the guard, got into his car, and drove to the aircraft.

I joined the RCAF at the age of 19 and had no thought of ever meeting King Hussein or Princess Munna. Since this was such an unusual occurrence, I thought you might be interested in this one day in the life of this most admired man.

I was brought up on a farm near Tofield, Alberta. My family was part of the local Mennonite church, and as a part of the family, my formative years were spent in this church. The Mennonite habits I acquired stayed with me throughout the rest of my life. I always took pride in my Mennonite heritage.

Eula was also brought up on a farm in the vicinity of Tofield. We are both 88 years old. We have been married 64 years and are still in good health.



Aug 4, 2017 front page of the Edmonton Journal retired pilot Gerhard Regehr poses with the B-25 Mitchell that flew in WWII 1944 in Corsica (Maid in the Shade-restored under a canopy in Arizona)



Eula and Gerhard, Waterton National Park, Alberta 62nd wedding anniversary July 16, 2017

(See Pilot on page 8)

(Pilot from page 7)

Gerhard Regehr retired from active service in 1991 having served 26 years in the RCAF and 12 years with Transport Canada as a civil aviation inspector. He lives in Sherwood Park, Alberta with his wife Eula. He hopes to fly again at age 90! Gerhard and Eula attend Glory Lutheran Church in Sherwood Park. ❖

(Coaldale from page 1)

ites from south Russia in the late 1800's, 1925, and the post-war 1950's. These Mennonite immigrants, our people, were determined to start anew in agriculture, re-establish their churches, cultural practices, businesses, and societal associations on a common basis, remember the huge losses experienced in Russia, and weather the terrible dirty-thirties here.



John Pauls directing the choir

Noted directors John Pauls and Henry Jantzen directed a volunteer choir of 100 singers for the general assembly and the Sunday Service. Officials spoke and even preachers had their say. The attendance of 1000 people had been expected. Coffee from McDonalds was plentiful, but, alas, cream was very scarce.

Reflections on Coaldale History

Big attractions to Coaldale during the settler years were available new land, existing irrigation systems, (contributors to southern Alberta's wealth second only to petroleum), and favorable 1925 loans from the CPR for travel from Russia and for farmers. The CPR, in its self-interest, had certainly evaluated the Mennonites as worthy and honest people for purchase of its numerous land holdings and was forbearing during subsequent hard times. Read Ted Regehr's article in Mennonite Life, Dec 1977, page 13 on the link below. <https://mla.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/pre2000/1977dec.pdf>

Until Calgary surpassed it, Coaldale town was the major Mennonite center in Alberta. Its main street, still narrow with angle parking, has most of the very old buildings still in use. Remember the Del Monte store? There you cut your own wedge from the 30-inch cheese wheel and

filled your own glass jug with vinegar, hopefully not into the empty kerosene jug (Ugh!). John and Peter Martens voluntarily ran tabs on unpaid purchases, a book for each family. The smoky pool hall was forbidden to us kids. There I had my first carbonated pop, a shared quarter bottle's worth, at the advanced age of 10.

A large brick building in Coaldale, formerly a bank but currently still labeled "Greer's Hardware," became the town's first hospital in 1934/45. It was started by Mennonites and included a health insurance plan that later was made available to all people in the wider area. The building of this first hospital continued efforts Mennonites had begun in 1925 to re-establish in Canada services and co-operative ventures abandoned in Russia Our Japanese doctor, Dr. Oshiro, was impressed by the Mennonites and referred to our B.B.Janz as the Mennonite patri-



Aerial view of historic Coaldale,
Photo credit, Google Photos

arch. I was born in this hospital. This building was also where I purchased at age 15 my 22 rifle and promptly, through careless-

(See Coaldale on page 9)

(Coaldale from page 8)

ness, shot myself through the shoe and toe. (Needless to say, that shoe was never again polished, and the hole was forever covered with mud. My siblings were told about this mishap 20 years later.). A second hospital was built and served the area until 2004. A new third hospital served until it was closed under Ralph Klein's progressive and enlightened policies.

Other cooperative Coaldale ventures evolved also. The cemetery at the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church became an Alberta-wide facility. A Co-operative cheese factory was built and provided cash to the farmers who shipped their milk in the famous iron milk cans, no refrigeration required! An interesting process was used to produce low-fat cheese from the whey left over from cheese production. It was sold at perhaps half price. Eggs were candled and shipped elsewhere. A High German (not Plautdietsch/ Low German) library served the original settlers.

As time went on, however, Coaldale became less of a major hub of Mennonite culture. Two big Mennonite churches were constructed in the 1930's, and these assemblies were of major influence and importance in Alberta, but eventually leadership shifted to Calgary. The Alberta Mennonite High School was opened in 1946 and blossomed favorably, but both it and the Bible School closed within two decades due to diminished attendance. Many new adults left farming behind for further education and entry into academia, professional and trade jobs, nursing, teaching, and mission endeavors such as MCC. Some brave souls

even embraced engineering. Coaldale's agriculture is now dominated by professional Dutch farmers who came post World War II.

It seems to me that there is a resurgence of Mennonite historians analyzing and clarifying the Russian/Prussian eras of which our forefathers had incomplete and biased information. One of the celebrants at the homecoming suggested that in Canada and the USA we are now in the last "real" Mennonite period.

Wonderful glimpses into the common past of Coaldale residents are available at The Gem of the West Museum, located in the former MB Church. The museum is a multi-ethnic organization with great community support. Community members of Hungarian, Japanese, German, Dutch and other backgrounds have provided display material. There are exhibits of tools, music, musical instruments, writings, photography, creameries, and a working blacksmith's shop. There is also a remarkable exhibit of Indian artifacts from the collections of Armin Dyck, Bill Quapp, and me, all curated by Duncan Lloyd, who has over 1000 such items. (See the related article by Dave Hubert in this issue of the Chronicle). A mural, painted by local artist Judith Nickol, details the Indian lower buffalo kill and camp sites. Nickol also displays wonderful paintings of Alberta's prairie scenes showing the Rocky Mountains in the background with the Chinook arch in the sky above.

The museum's architecture and furnishings are now almost exactly as they were when built 90 years ago, with only a floor change for strengthening purpose. The original wainscoting, fir flooring, wood paneling and trim, window details, and stairwells have been in place since the 1940's. Even the old pendulum wall clock hangs there. How we kids hoped that B.B. Janz would cut short his 5 to 10 minute closing prayers way back then! And of course, the view of the pulpit area brought forth the memory of "Hatch" Siemens preaching at the time of my baptism, listing the strictures for Mennonite Christian girls: no lipstick, earrings, bobbed hair, short sleeves and dresses, slacks, smoking and dancing, alcohol, and what else. Amazingly he had nothing to say to the boys, or if he did, I do not remember. How things have changed.



A working blacksmith at the Coaldale Gem of the West Museum

(See Coaldale on page 10)

(Coaldale from page 9)

The Gem of the West Museum was also the site of The Alberta Mennonite High School's (AMHS) BBQ get-together on this occasion. Over 150 former students and spouses attended. There were chat groups everywhere. Some friends I noticed were John B. Toews, John Pauls, Rudy Wiebe, Alfred Klassen, Ted Regehr, Werner Schmidt, the Hubert clan, and Bill Baerg. Absent but remembered were nurse Helen Toews, engineer Rudy Kornelsen and Heidi, and others whose names I only dimly remember. Howard Dyck of CBC music fame attended with his AMHS spouse. I left the school after one year in grade 10 since teacher Peter Dick failed miserably to teach me to sing, and the cost of tuition was a factor.

Now a few family details. My parents, Peter and Margaret (Klassen) Quapp, came to Coaldale from Russia in 1925. Dad died in 1942 leaving mother with 10 children aged 3 to 19. Rheumatic fever struck, with Edgar dying after grade 12, Agnes dying in grade 3, and Johnny suffering from major heart problems and other complications. Bill and Ernest farmed together after Dad's death. I was startled to recently discover that Bill did all the hard work in farming from a very young age because Dad's endless frail health would not allow hard labor. If you can believe it, being without a dad helped us to develop initiative, great independence, and stubbornness (ask my wife). Those characteristics began to develop at an early age: When Mother was chasing us kids with a switch to punish transgressions, we could outrun her.

I enjoyed all three days of the celebration. It was a rare opportunity to become reacquainted with almost-forgotten friends, and to remember the town as it was 50 years ago. Meeting the former Mennonite High School students was a highlight.

Dave Quapp worked for the Alberta Transportation Department's Bridge Branch Design Section. After an initial period of detailed bridge design, he wrote computer programs for engineering, design, and management applications. He also worked as Assistant Registrar for several years for The Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta and installed an in-house computer for registration purposes. Dave and Mary attend Lendrum Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Volunteer time in charitable organizations is important to them. Most of their time is currently spent in Ottawa with their grandchildren and daughter, who is unable to drive. ♦



Gem of the West Museum

Peter Bergen's Service Story

by Neil Bergen

My Dad, Peter Bergen, voluntarily enlisted in the Canadian army at the X District Depot in Winnipeg, Manitoba on November 5, 1943. He was 23 years old.



Peter Bergen, 23 years old, Nov 5, 1943, Winnipeg

Dad wished to be of assistance in wartime without bearing arms. In his words, "I entered the medical service because I felt it enabled me to do my part as a citizen yet did not violate my Christian convictions".

He served in the Restricted Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. Opportunity for this restricted corps was made possible by a national Order-in-Council in September 1943. This corps required battlefield duty, but recruits did not have to train with arms. The regulations regarding this corps also specified that recruits could not be transferred to another unit without their consent. In Dad's platoon there were 43 men, 25 of whom were Mennonites.

Dad was never sent overseas but became an instructor in Advanced Medical Corp Training in Camp Borden, Ontario. He did not apply for nor was he directed to the "alternate service" choices (e.g. forestry, road construction) available to conscientious objectors.

His Canadian Army (Active)

(See Bergen on page 11)

(Bargen from page 10)

Discharge Certificate indicates that he was discharged with the rank of private on February 1, 1946 by reason of return to civilian life (Routine Order 1029(5a)). His discharge papers indicate that he was a recipient of the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal. Dad passed away Aug 25, 2004.

In a May 1952 *Liberty Magazine* article "Why I Am a Mennonite", Peter Bargen states why he taught at Alberta Mennonite High School in Coaldale.



Neil Bargen

My purpose has not been one of indoctrination, but rather one of persuasion. We do not close our eyes to the rest of the world. Rather, in spite of the world, our philosophy of life must be based upon high moral precepts and ideals. God has never rejected our faith but has answered it powerfully.

God has given me peace of mind, the greatest of all gifts. I do not fear life. It is a challenge. Nor do I fear death. It is a hope. As a Mennonite Christian, I have a dynamic way of life in which I can be both a good Christian and a good citizen. It is a life that has a meaning and answers the perplexing "Why?" of existence. It satisfies. Again, as a Mennonite Christian, I have the assurance of eternal life after death. With this faith, I hope to live creatively and die nobly.

This *Liberty Magazine* article by Peter Bargen regarding Mennonite Identity is mentioned by Nathan R. Dirks in his 2010 thesis submission to the faculty

of McMaster Divinity College for the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

The second major factor which renders identification of Mennonites enlisted in service to Canada difficult, is the question of what actually defines a Mennonite. That some people of Mennonite background were hesitant to officially state their adherence to the Mennonite faith or acknowledge their Mennonite heritage is an indicator to some that such people were, of their own volition, truly no longer Mennonites and should therefore not be included in the enlistment records.

War veteran Peter F. Bargen's 1956 article entitled "Why I am a Mennonite" describes the fact that Mennonites are not easily identified. A visiting professor at the University of Alberta expressed his disbelief that Bargen was an adherent to this group: "But how can you be? I always thought Mennonites wore black clothes and long beards, and certainly did not sanction higher education. You look like an average university student. You just can't be a Mennonite in good standing!" Bargen acknowledged that there were those who did match that description, but that there were many who were entirely different in thought and appearance as well.

While Mennonite beliefs are rooted in the Reformation-era teachings of the renegade Catholic priest Menno Simons, some debate the exclusivity of following the spiritual teachings of Simons as a cut-off point for Mennonite identity. To many, Mennonites are as much an ethnic people group as a faith-based denomination.

Editor's notes . ❖

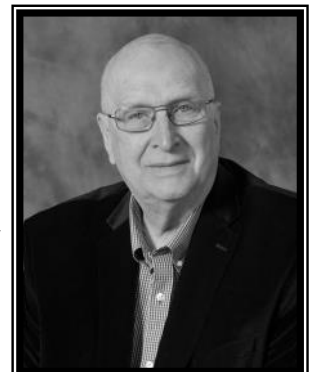


Peter Bargen, circa 1959, probably as the new Superintendent of the West Jasper Place School Board

A Mennonite Contribution to the Development of Archeology in Alberta

by Dave Hubert

One Saturday morning in May 1957, when I was 15 years old, a strange car drove onto the our farmyard north of Coaldale. The driver got out and introduced himself as Richard "Dick" Forbis, he wanted to talk to my oldest brother, Jacob [Jake] Hubert. Forbis, who had recently been hired by the Glenbow Foundation in Calgary, had been "informed by Dr. Earnest Reinhold of the University of Alberta, of a site along the Oldman River, northeast of the town of Coaldale. Immediately afterward, I went to Coaldale to see Jacob Hubert, who had reported the site to Dr. Reinhold. Dave Hubert escorted me [Dick Forbis] to the Ross Site and two



Dave Hubert

(See Archeology on page 12)

(Archeology from page 11)

other nearby localities, the Upper Kill and the Lower[buffalo] Kill. The Ross Site was originally discovered by David Quapp, who, like Dave Hubert, takes a vital interest in archeology..."

The Reinhold article went on to state, "...The Ross site and its environs reflect the heaviest prehistoric occupation in all of Alberta." (1)

The Ross site and the Lower and Upper Kill are located about 8 miles north and three miles east of the town of Coaldale. The Ross site itself lies along the south bank of the Old Man River, less than a mile east of the Lower Kill. The Upper Kill is at the head of the same coulee about two hundred yards above the Lower Kill and features a spring, which is currently used to supply a watering trough for the buffalo that roam freely within the confines of a fence that encloses both the Lower and Upper Kills. The land was leased by the Davidson family when we were digging for arrowheads, and is now owned by the Richards family, who have re-introduced buffalo to the spread. The Ross site is on land previously owned by Cleve Ross and now owned by the Nicholls family. When we were digging at all three sites in the early to mid-1950's an ancient cowboy, Herb Johnson, rode the range taking care of the cattle on the Ross property. Johnson recalled the indigenous people, then called Indians, and their "burial" practices. These practices consisted of building a platform on the trees, placing the body on this platform, and letting the birds and weather do what birds and weather did in such situations. Having placed the body on the platform, the indigenous people would break camp and move to another campsite.

When Dick Forbis arrived on the scene in 1957, we had already been active at the Lower Kill for more than eight years. My earliest recollection of the site was perhaps seven years earlier, when Jake took my Uncle Ben Janz to see the site. Uncle Ben was a science man, and I recall his trip with us "Hubert boys" to a fossil bed near the confluence of the St. Mary's and Old Man Rivers, just south of Lethbridge. I recall finding large petrified clams and ammonites (extinct sea creatures) on that trip. I was fascinated by the first ammonite I found, perhaps 1 ½ inches in diameter and 3 inches long with more brilliantly iridescent colors than a Christmas tree.

Jake introduced my brother Frank and me to digging for arrowheads at the Lower Kill. Dave Quapp, Jake's best friend, introduced his brother, Johnny. Subsequently, Frank and Johnny, in their explorations of the coulee, discovered some arrowheads at the Upper Kill and thereafter, we had the choice of digging and screening for arrowheads at two sites. Although it



Reintroduced buffalo on the Buffalo Kill
Coulee land now owned by the
Richards family

was Jake and Dave who initiated the digging for arrowheads, they were soon joined by others, including Art Wiebe, Harold Pankratz and Armin "Soupy" Dyck. As word got around, there were others as well, including Billy Meyers and the Davidsons.

I have a vivid recollection of Jake sitting in a red Radio Flyer wagon just outside the front door of our home, working on an arrowhead. In his left hand he held a supple piece of buckskin. The buckskin held a piece of stone being formed into an arrowhead. The buckskin protected his fingers from the sharp flakes that were being chipped off the stone. In his right hand he held the tine of an antler of a mule deer. He had discovered, by trial and error, that the hardness and edge of the tine, applied at the right angle, and with just the right pressure to the stone, was very effective in flaking chips of the stone and producing a very sharp point. and evidence his curiosity to learn as much of the culture of the indigenous people of the northern plains as he could.

On many summer Sunday afternoons, we would dig up some earthworms, load spades and screens and fishing gear onto the back of a corn binder (an International Harvester pick-up) and head north to the Old Man. We would first bait several hooks on leaders on a braided green fishing line, peg the one end of the line to the riverbank, and throw the other end, weighted with used spark plugs or some other heavy object, into the river. Then we would head for the Lower Kill to dig for arrowheads. We might be there alone, but sometimes we had company. The screenings for one after-

(See Archeology on page 13)

(Archeology from page 12)

noon might result in 10 to 20 or even more points. Many were broken but there were also quite a few whole ones, which were obviously prized more than those that were broken. If there was dirt on the complete points we would pop them into our mouths to clean them, and then admire our findings. (We didn't learn until much later that anthrax was endemic in pre-Columbian buffalo herds of the northern plains—and that the anthrax spore can be active for millennia. Fortunately, our method of doing this final clean-up never caused any problems other than muddy mouths.)

When it was time to get back to the farm to milk our 20 Holsteins, we would head back for the river, pull out our set lines, throw any fish attached to them into a sack, throw the sack onto the corn binder and head home. In fall we would stop at a chokecherry grove and break off some branches that were particularly heavily fruited and eat choke cherries while riding home in the box of the corn binder. By the time we got home, our teeth were black.

After one such excursion in September 1954, when I had a pocketful of arrowheads, I gave some to friends in my Grade six class in the John McDowell-Davidson School in Coaldale. Some of these schoolmates had come to Canada as displaced persons from Germany after World War II and they were fascinated by these artifacts of the indigenous people who had lived in the very place to which they had come.

Most of the arrowheads we dug up eventually ended up in Jake's collection. I found a perfect arrow-

head made of white chert (rock) with grey specks on the day of our annual church picnic on the third Sunday of June in 1953. That evening I traded it to Jake for a nickel and 80 postage stamps. The nickel would buy a creamsicle at Win Ke Yip's restaurant on Monday and the stamps would be added to the stamp collection that I started to emulate my oldest brother, Jake. Brother Frank had amassed a significant collection of arrowheads, many from the Upper Kill, and these also eventually also ended up in Jake's collection.

Jake was an inveterate collector, and kept his eyes glued to the ground wherever he was. This resulted in him amassing artifacts not only from the sites north of Coaldale, from the farms of our neighbors and our own, but also from many other locations in Alberta. A partial list of the places where his collection originated appears in the handwritten note on the following page.

Several years after we began excavating the Lower Kill, Dave Quapp and Harold Pankratz discovered some layers of bone and burned rocks in a cutbank along the south side of the Old Man about half a mile east of the Lower Kill, and our attention shifted to what became known as the Ross Site or simply "the campsite". There were three clearly identifiable layers in the cutbank, with the oldest going back some thousand years. The top layer was perhaps four feet below the surface and the bottom layer three to four feet below that.

When the river was in flood, typically in mid-June when the snow was melting in the headwaters of the Old Man in the Rockies to the west, it was impossible to access the face of the cutbank. Of course, the river kept eroding the layers of the campsite and carrying away the very artifacts we were looking for. After the spring runoff subsided, we carefully examined what was left in the rocks on the shore of the water to see if we could find artifacts.

Dave Quapp and Harold Pankratz found the campsite in spring just before the river went into flood. A couple of weeks later the river was in flood and access to the cutbank was impossible. Undeterred, Dave Quapp and his cousin Waldemar, got a rope, looped it under Jake's armpits



At the time of his death, Dec 3, 1960, Jake Hubert was a teacher at the Alberta Mennonite High School, Coaldale



Left to right: Dave Quapp, Shawn Bubl, Leta Pezderic and Dave Hubert at the Lower Kill, April 30, 2019

(See Archeology on page 14)

(Archeology from page 13)

and lowered him over the edge of the cutbank, keeping him just above the flooding river. Jake immediately found an arrowhead in the cutbank and handed it up to the rope holders. This maneuver demonstrated the dangers associated with excavating the cutbank. One Sunday afternoon when I was alone working the site my digging undermined the cutbank above me. Suddenly a big chunk of it gave way and almost knocked me into the river.

We learned quickly to look for hearths in the layers of bone and stone, as these yielded the highest returns for our efforts. It was clear that these hearths had been the focal point for the activities of the inhabitants of the tipis that had once provided shelter for the people of the plains. These hearths yielded many stone chips that were the by-products of the manufacture of arrowheads and other stone implements. In addition, the hearths yielded a lot of pottery, unfinished arrowheads, knives, awls, scrapers to remove the fat from the insides of animal skins and even the bowl of a pipe. One of the most fascinating finds was a small piece of sheet copper. This, and the obsidian (black glass) stone from which some of the points were made, indicated a fairly wide-ranging trade network of the people who populated the Ross site.

All of this information and the attendant material culture that accompanied it were of vital interest to Dick Forbis and his associate, Dr. Timothy O'Leary, from Columbia University in New York. This interest was both positive and negative. On the one hand, they were delighted to see the artifacts, and deeply impressed by the work that had gone into finding them. This delight extended to the catalogue of all the artifacts collected by Jake and his brothers. This catalogue is an important part of the collection and documents where each piece was found, from Coaldale to Waterton Lakes to Rocky Mountain House and Edmonton. On the other hand, Forbis winced at the primitive methodology used to acquire the collection. This method of collection, which destroys a great deal of significant evidence about how this material culture was produced and used, could justifiably be called looting. For example, when working both the Lower Kill and the Upper Kill, we covered what was a very rich part of the site with our screenings.

After 1957 and the arrival of Dick Forbis, this all changed, as Forbis taught us proper archeological methodology. He did this by hiring both Jake and Dave, Art and John Quapp to assist in his excavations. These excavations included a site on the prairie overlooking the Upper Kill, the Ross site and the Lower and Upper Kills. Eventually David Quapp and Jake would



Catalogue of the collection surrounded by various artifacts. The author found the knife blade, in the blue/gold box, to the left of the catalogue, in a hearth at the Ross site. "J.H.-artificial" at top RH denotes points manufactured by Jake Hubert



Buffalo Kill Coulee, Northeast of Coaldale, Upper Kill on the left and Lower Kill at the centre of the photo

work on excavations farther afield, like the Old Woman's Buffalo Jump at Cayley, Alberta.

The time of wholesale looting ended with the arrival of Dick Forbis and led eventually to the protection of these sites in 1973 by the passing of the Alberta Historical Resources Act. Unauthorized and unsupervised digging at these sites became illegal. Moreover, to protect the Ross site from further erosion by the Old Man River, the Government of Alberta has placed rip rap (rock rubble to protect shorelines) along the entire edge of

(See Archeology on page 15)

(Dyck Archeology page 14)

the site. The Ross site and the Lower and Upper Kills undoubtedly have a great many artifacts of archeological value that could be excavated, but these will be excavated only using appropriate archeological protocols.

Most of Jake's collection, is now in the home of Leta and Tyler Pezderic, 100 meters south of the Old Man and three miles west of the sites. The collection is available to the University of Lethbridge for teaching purposes, and has been viewed by Dr. Shawn Bubel, Professor at U of L. Leta is the niece of Dave Hubert. Other parts of Jake's collection are located at the Glenbow and the University of Alberta, where I saw them when I attended the institution in 1963. Jake died at 24 in a hunting acci-



The complete collection, much of it boxed in the original containers used by Jake Hubert

dent at Chin Lake in 1960, and until it was taken to the home of the Pezderics in December 2018, the collection was in the care of Jake's brother, Dave. The extensive collections of David Quapp and Armin "Soupy" Dyck, along with some artifacts collected by Bill Quapp, David's brother, are housed at the Gem of the West Museum in Coaldale, which has an impressive display of David and

Armin's collections.

Note about the display: In 1973, I was appointed President of Portage College, in Lac La Biche, Alberta. One of the significant mandates of Portage was to meet the post-secondary needs of northern Alberta's indigenous people, and many indigenous people attended the college. At this time the best parts of the collection were mounted in five display cases and displayed at the college.

Born in Coaldale, Dave Hubert and his wife Martha live in Edmonton, Alberta. He has been a teacher, college administrator, has served with the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers and MCC Canada. He was the founding Board Chair of both the Edmonton Recycling Society and the Edmonton Affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. Dave enjoys reading, grand parenting, volunteering and currently works as the Executive Director of Canadian Peacemakers International.

- (1) Some Sites in the Oldman River Region, Alberta.

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- **Alberta Plains Prehistory: A Review** by J. Roderick Vickers, by the Archeological Survey of Alberta, Alberta Culture
- **Record in Stone Familiar Projectile Points from Alberta**. Shawn Bubel, James McMurchy and Duncan Lloyd; Archeological Society of Alberta, Lethbridge Centre.



Jake Isaac, from CO to PhD

by Ernie Wiens

Jake Isaac was born August 25, 1924 in Drake, Saskatchewan shortly after his family had emigrated from Russia. The following year they relocated to Arnaud Manitoba, where many other Mennonite farms were being established.

Jake was a shy boy, slight of stature, but learning came easily. His last two years of high school were at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. Here he met Peter Bergen, and their lives would intersect frequently. (See Peter Bergen article, this issue) After graduation in June 1943, Jake received his draft notice from the Canadian military. Along with his church minister, H. P. Toews, he travelled to Winnipeg to answer the call. With his Mennonite upbringing and his pastor at his side, he was granted conscientious objector (CO) status and assigned



Jake Isaac, Montreal Military Hospital 1945

(See Isaac on page 16)

(Isaac from page 15)

to the Jasper CO camp.

Jake found camp life "boring and useless". Felling trees and cutting mine timbers were not his calling. He was reassigned to the Banff Camp, where he volunteered as a kitchen "flunky".

Still feeling useless and unfulfilled he enlisted in the non-combatant medical corps of the Canadian military. There he thrived. After a month-long accelerated course he became a "certified" nursing orderly. He worked in various military hospitals in Quebec, including the Montreal Military Hospital, while awaiting deployment overseas. Before this could happen, the war ended. Jake was reassigned to Vernon where he eventually received an honorable discharge. Jake's time in the military was short and seemingly insignificant, but it changed his life and opened a door that had seemed impossible before: education.

With financial and administrative help from the Canadian military, Jake enrolled in the Faculty of Arts at University of British Columbia in September 1946. He did well at university and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts three years later, majoring in chemistry and math. He was able to get another year of support from the military and switched to education. Through his short career in the Canadian military he was able to start on his long journey: education, something he was good at. Subsequent credentials included a Bachelor of Theology, a master's degree in education, and finally a PhD in mathematics.

Institutes of higher learning where Jake taught include Alberta Mennonite High School, Jasper Place High School, and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Not bad for a shy Mennonite immigrant boy from Arnaud, Manitoba, and it all started because of his involvement in the Canadian military.

Jake Isaac lives with his son on an acreage in rural Sherwood Park, Alberta. His wife Irene passed away in 1996. He enjoys his grandchildren and great grandchildren, yard work, and coffee time at Tim Horton's. Jake attends Sherwood Park Alliance Church. ❖

A Mennonite Farm

by Ernie Wiens

Where do ideas come from? Do they originate in the brain, or is there some vast collective consciousness where ideas wander around waiting to enter a selective or arbitrary mind? I don't know.

What about dreams? Are they just random synaptic firings along a complicated network of dendrites?

Could they not be some predetermined blueprint waiting for predetermined individuals to fill predetermined spaces? You decide.

The year was 1978, in the springtime. We were restless - "I Know Not Why". We had been married for nearly 12 years. We

owned a large house in the city, half paid for. We had a three-year-old son on whom we doted. Our futures seem secure. Then why were we restless?

We both come from a rural background of large Mennonite families living on busy mixed farms. Nothing unusual. Along with most of our rural contemporaries, we had spent a decade and a half in the city getting educated, choosing our professions, and starting our careers. So why were we restless?

Every spring we would scour the 'acres for sale' ads, chasing down wonderful-sounding leads and coming home disappointed. Strange, I don't remember a discussion on why we were looking for rural properties.

And then it happened! As we walked along a tree-lined lane toward a small older farmhouse, we looked at each other knowingly.

Someone said, "This feels right." The other concurred, "Yes it does." A twenty-acre property that felt like a farm, like home, and it was only 30 minutes from the heart of the city where we worked for a living. Home was for recuperating, for creating, for building, for planting, for entertaining, for sharing, for dreaming.

Now four decades later we look back, and it feels like a dream, a good dream, an idyllic dream.

Nevertheless, almost nothing is the same. The trees are taller, much taller. The house is large and spacious. Although it still has cedar-planked box stalls, the barn now has a hard-surface floor, a stage, and space to accommodate a 160-seat audience. The muddy farmyard now passes for an all-weather parking lot. The front pasture is a

(See Farm on page 17)



Ernie Wiens

(Farm from page 16)

manicured lawn, and for a while it sported a putting green. The slough is a water feature complete with a fountain. Instead of grazing horses, sheep, and even goats, there are bridges, a water wheel, and a Candy Store. There are terraces, flowering shrubs, rose bushes, and flower gardens now.



Apples in abundance

The apple trees are laden with fruit, and the saskatoons, raspberries, and communal garden are as productive as we knew they would be.

How did this all happen? I have no idea.

There are memories everywhere: birthday parties; garden plantings and harvestings; outdoor weddings; Thanksgiving feasts; and New Year's Eve parties, some with midnight skating, some with fireworks. And then there are the annual Mennonite Heritage Picnics, eleven of them! Pig roasts, roast beef, baked beans, freshly baked buns, rollkuchen and watermelon, and half a dozen varieties of platz. Enough photo-memories that they can and do fill a book.

Children who once played in sandboxes, caught frogs in the pond, played with litters of kittens and puppies, rode horses, and chased sheep and goats now bringing their own children to do the same.

When we are young, we live in and for the future. We make plans, we formulate ideas, we dream dreams. When we are old, we live in memories.

In between lies the present where implementation occurs. And therein lies the rub! Where once there was strength, boundless energy, enthusiasm, and creativity, there now exists weariness, arthritic joints, backaches, and afternoon naps. So what happens now?

In 1978, the year we moved to "The Farm", the Cooper Brothers burst on the music scene with their big hit song "The Dream Never Dies". I've always loved that song although I was somewhat conflicted by its psychology. Now that I'm old I'm less conflicted, and I wish for the lyrics to be true.

The dream never dies
Just the dreamer
The dream never dies
If it's strong

The song never dies
Just the singer
So come on, everybody
Sing along

By the spring of 2018, it was clear to all that we and our friends no longer had the strength or the stamina for either the Mennonite Heritage Picnic or the communal garden. At the last Picnic we sadly announced it's demise.

Then two things happened:

A group of young families asked to take over the communal garden. And could they also have the raspberries? ... and the saskatoons?

The concept of a Mennonite Cultural Centre began to circulate.

- a steering committee was formed
- bylaws were drafted
- documents for a non-profit society were submitted
- politicians were canvassed
- bureaucracies and neighbors were consulted



Riders on the Mennonite Farm

(See Farm on page 18)

(Farm from page 17)

I suppose someone will ask, "Will such a venture succeed?" or "Can a metaphysical dream become a reality?"

I honestly don't know. This kind of implementation takes time. Discussions and debates will be needed; options will have to be explored. Dreams and ideas must eventually give way to reality, to business plans, to budgets and grant applications.

Do dreams die or do they merely recede for a time? Who knows?

Although never fully articulated, our dream has been wonderful. Our focus on agrarian and Mennonite heritage and culture has been exhilarating and rewarding, especially when we shared it with so many others. Maybe the dream was never ours. Maybe we merely belonged to the dream?

What ever it was, it was a good dream, an idyllic dream. To those who lived it with us, and there were many, we say that you enriched our lives. To the Giver of Dreams and Songs, we humbly give thanks. ❖



Mennonite Farm and Heritage House

Jake was married in December 1966 to Susan Harder, whose parents farmed near Aberdeen Sas-



Jake Driedger

katchewan. They moved to Calgary, Alberta in 1968 as part of his employment. They have 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

Career

Jake attended Rosthern Junior College for grades 11 & 12 and then the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. He graduated in 1967 with a degree in engineering. He became employed in the oil industry and worked as a senior reservoir engineer. In 1983 he began working at a bank as a reservoir engineer and remained there until receiving an early retirement package in 2001. Then he provided part time consulting services to the banking industry until his final retirement in 2016.

Jake and Susan started their married life as members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) also known as the Alliance Church. There Jake took on

(See Driedger on page 19)

Get to Know Your MHSA Board Members Biography of Jacob (Jake) Driedger (Secretary)

Great Heritage

Jake Driedger was born in September of 1942 at a small farm located 3 miles north of the village of Blumenheim, Saskatchewan. His parents, Henry and Sarah (Wiebe) Driedger, were also born in Blumenheim.

Jake's great grandfather Peter Driedger was born in 1857 in Burwalde, South Russia. He and his family emigrated from there to southern Manitoba in 1875. They were part of the "Old Colony Group". In 1895, they moved again, this time to a newly opened tract of land in the Territories called "the Hague-Osler land reserve", an area now located in the province of Saskatchewan.

Jake's grandparents Wilhelm and Gertrude Wiebe, also came from South Russia and lived in Blumenheim.

Family

(Driedger from page 18)

various ministry roles. With a heart for leading and teaching young boys, he became very involved in Christian Service Brigade. His activities included leading boys, recruiting men, doing administration, directing activities in the Calgary area, and teaching leaders through various courses. He enjoyed bible study groups, and taught for many years using the “precept-upon-precept” methodology. He also served on the church elders board. In addition, since prayer became a personal cornerstone in his ministry, for a period of time he led the church prayer ministry teams.

In 2010 both Jake and Susan transferred their membership to Centre Street Church (CSC), where they participate in a bible study group and are on a hospitality team (greeting). Jake is also involved in compassionate ministry and often interviews individuals who have difficulties in their lives and seek assistance.

Jake and Susan have found the time to go on many short-term mission trips to places such as Mexico, Nicaragua, China, Jordan, and Kenya. In addition they have spent time serving at the Wycliffe center in Arizona.

Faith and Ministry

In Jake's opinion the book of Romans teaches that salvation is a free gift. However, the letters of Peter teach that faith without works (ministry) is dead. In his early years and even into university, Jake dealt with this problem of the assurance of salvation. He now believes that both faith and ministry have been very important parts of his family's life journey, and he urges us to focus on both. ❖

Letters to the Editor

Dear Dave,

Aug 18, 2019

Thank you for the quality articles in the June 2019 Chronicle. I especially appreciated reading about the recent recognition of Rudy Wiebe and Dave Hubert. The announcement of the formation of the Russlaender Centenary Committee under the leadership of Winnipeg's Ingrid Riesen Moehlmann was of special interest. She is the great granddaughter of David Toews of Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

David Toews was the head of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization during the 1920's and as such spearheaded the challenge of arranging the immigration of 22,000 Mennonites from Russia to Canada. Mennonites in Canada and Russia worked tirelessly to achieve this goal which included negotiations with Colonel Dennis of the CPR to arrange passage for many of these immigrants and refugees on credit. In the 1960's this migration was deemed important enough to be included in a course on the History of Western Canada at the University of Alberta.

The circumstances of the migration, both in the Soviet Union which was instituting its brutal policies of Collectivization, and in Canada where some in the Mennonite community were reluctant to commit financially to this effort, make for interesting reading, in such books as *David Toews was Here*, by Helmut Harder.

I hope you will continue to keep your readers informed on further developments from the Russlaender Centenary Committee, including the commemorative train journey to Rosthern and other celebrations. 2023 will be an interesting year!

Sincerely, Anne Friesen, Edmonton

To God be the Glory

by Helen Porter

Duchess Days: **Duchess Mennonite Church 100 Years Celebration 2017.**

Looking back on 100 years of Duchess Mennonite Church history, we feel a sense of accomplishment. To God be the glory!

Our 100th year at Duchess Mennonite Church focused on the following monthly themes: Grace, Remembering, Confession and Repentance, Surrender, Identity, Kingdom, Community, Celebration, Blessing and Benediction, Praise and Gratitude, Legacy, and Advent (Hope, Expectancy, Anticipation).

The celebration of our 100 years took place August 4-6, 2017 with all activities being held at the church. We were thankful for great weather. Approximately 350 attended. Thanks to all who participated. According to feedback, the weekend was a great success, and people commented that it was well organized. A few highlights from the feedback were the history book, youth activities, meals, singing of old hymns, reminiscing with old friends, archival display, and quilt display. The grand finale was the Christmas banquet and a production about our 100 years together.

Thanks to the following people who helped make our weekend celebration a success:

- Ronda Porter and her work crew for heading up the meals
- Ronda and Stephanie for the greatly loved pies
- One Tree Ranching for donation of the beef
- Alvera Weber for organizing the ushers
- Susan Mitchell for getting the song sheets printed and in the pews
- Gary Thiele for parking
- Mark Porter for making the advertising posters and church bulletins
- Kevin Dyck for videotaping the event
- Mary Burkholder for the history display
- Volunteers at the registration table



Helen Porter



Historical display table, historical photos in the rear, L-R Sunday School attendance books & old Hymnals, cranks or rappers to roll MCC bandages made from ripped bed sheets, ladies hats, dippers to eat soup from at conferences and ladies black boots

- All others who had a part in the programs and planning
- A special thanks to Randy and Shyla Lauber for the donation of our new church sign and cross in honor of our 100th year.

The program committee consisted of Alvin Penner, Nathan Ramer, and Helen Porter. Nathan was the contact person between the church and town. Alvin headed up our participation in the parade. Helen looked after advertising and many other details. We divided up contacting people for the programs. We met for the first time May 30, 2014 to start the planning. It seemed a daunting task and involved many meetings, e-mails, phone calls etc.

Thanks to our church council who gave the go-ahead to do a history book. A committee was formed consisting of Harvey Burkholder, Mark Porter, Mary Burkholder, Helen Porter, and



New cross & church sign donated by Randy and Shyla Lauber

(See *Duchess* on page 21)

(Duchess from page 20)

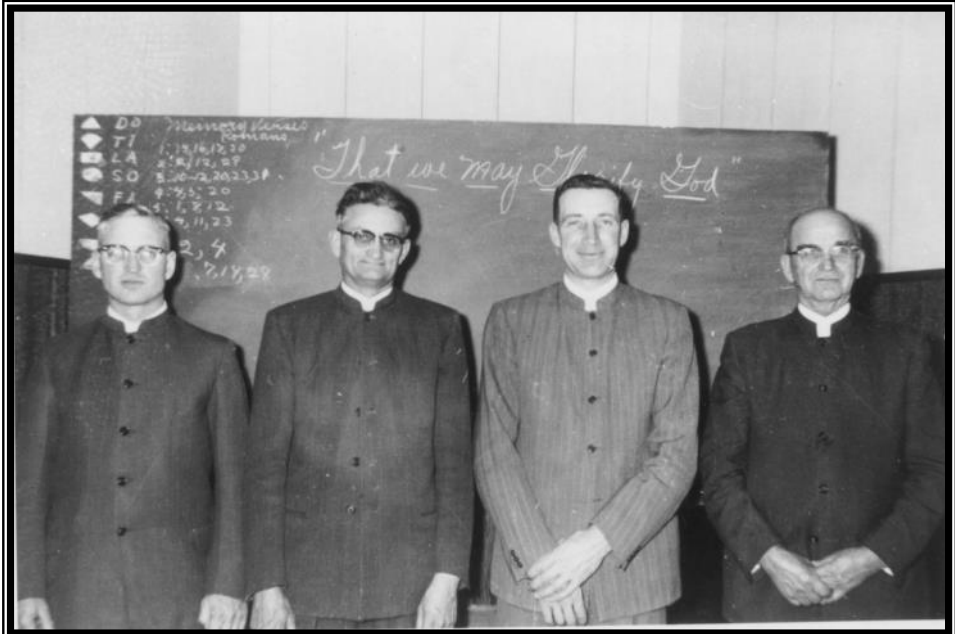
Arline Ewert to write our story. The job of locating past members was a huge task and getting family histories required many reminders. Digging through archives for information seemed insurmountable at times. Mary designed the first history book brochure to be mailed, emailed and posted on the website. The congregation was asked to submit names for the book, only two people responded and the suggestions just didn't seem to fit. Then Mary suggested that we take our inspiration from the old winter Bible School theme "That We May Glorify God", and the book's final title, "To God Be the Glory", was chosen.

Starting in late spring of 2017 we met several times to finalize programs and details. It became very stressful as the countdown was on. Some midnight oil was burned, and we met the publisher's deadline for the book with a few days to spare. Mark, with his experience in book publishing, was able to save the church considerable dollars by having the layout done, ready to print. We are thankful for the countless hours he spent doing this.

Council set the price at \$40.00 per book, a little above cost price to help with postage. 264 history books were printed and 143 were sold. Five books were gifted to the committee members. 13 books were gifted: five to the committee members, one each to Duchess and Brooks public libraries, the Alberta provincial archives, the Duchess Mennonite archives, The Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, and The Alberta Genealogy Society, and two to the Ottawa historical archives. In addition one



Arnie Weber presents history book committee members Mary Burkholder, Helen Porter, Mark Porter & Harvey Burkholder with first copies of the history book



Winter Bible School teachers, Stanley Shantz, Clarence Ramer & Milo Stutzman, Duchess Mennonite Church circa 1940

copy was gifted to each of 16 conference church libraries and as well as to missionaries Todd and Jennifer Miller. 91 books remain for sale.

Mary Burkholder is putting together a scrap book of all the events for the year 2017. It will be a great record for the archives. 2017 was a year of celebrating the faithfulness of God through the years.

This article was submitted to the MHSA Chronicle by Mary Burkholder.



May the Borscht be with You*

by Dave Toews

For the past year we had been talking about going on a road trip, a trip to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and some of Alberta. I dubbed it *The Dave Twins Menno Tour*, and so it was that Dave Dyck and Dave Toews embarked on a trip to see all things Mennonite.

Sunday Sept 15, 2019 at 7 am we left Edmonton. Four stops and 13 1/2 hours later, we were in Winnipeg.

Monday morning we began our itinerary with a visit to the Mennonite Heritage Archives and Art Gallery to see archivist Conrad Stoesz, artist Ray Dirks, genealogist Glenn Penner, and historian Lawrence Klippenstein. Conrad toured us through the archives and showed me where I might find



Dave Toews and Dave Dyck



Dave Toews and Artist Ray Dirks

some new information on my father. Alas, I could find nothing. Ray showed us the upcoming display of amazing art by Hutterite young people. After lunch with Lawrence at the CMU cafeteria, we went to meet Dave's boyhood friend John Schlamp at the Forks Market at the confluence of the Assiniboine and the Red rivers. The Forks was a great place to spend an afternoon in the unseasonably warm 30 C sunshine!

Tuesday morning we met up



Carving by Hutterite Young People



Painting by Hutterite Young People



Chortitza Mennonite Heritage Cemetery

(See Borscht on page 23)

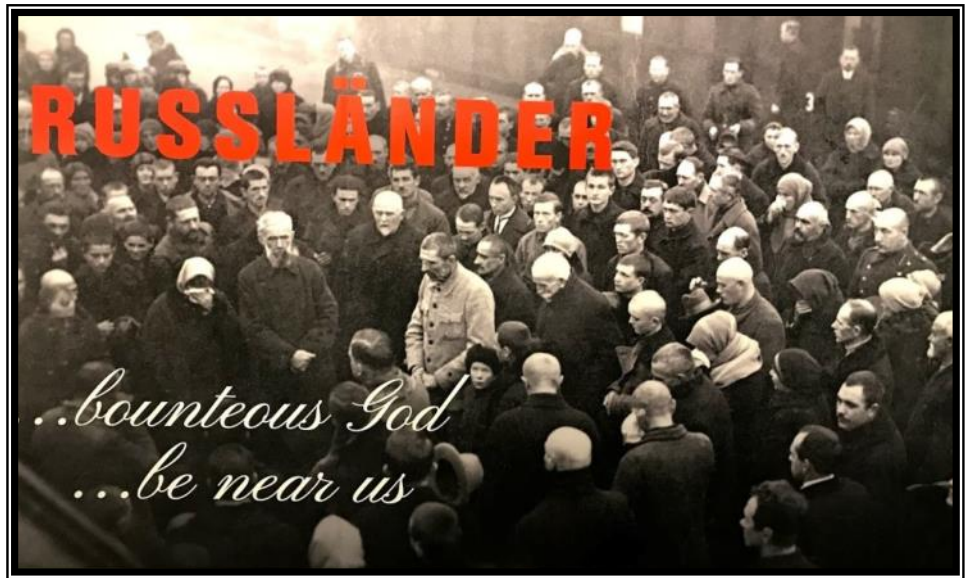
(Borscht from page 22)



Dave Dyck and John Schlamp

with John again and enjoyed brunch with him and his wife Kathy, who is Dave Dyck's cousin. More great boyhood stories! Then it was on to the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies to meet Director Jon Isaak. Jon showed us the archives and how to look for when my Toews and Kroeger families emigrated from Prussia to Russia in the 1790s. Next we travelled east toward Steinbach through various places of interest. Niverville was one of those places for me. In 1955 our family went on a big trip by train to Ontario and Manitoba, and we stopped in Niverville to visit the Johann Toews family. I felt compelled to seek out the graves of Johann & Mariechen Toews in the cemetery there. We also stopped at the Chortitza Mennonite Heritage Cemetery, across the road is the site of the first Mennonite church built in Canada in the 1870s, according to the sign.

Wednesday we set aside for a comprehensive visit to the Mennonite Heritage Village (Museum) in Steinbach. There is so much to see and read. You have all been there, so I will just mention a few highlights. The Russländer exhibit graphically displays the compelling story of the 1920s Mennonite migration from the Soviet Union. As a son of Russländer parents, I find



Russländer Exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Village

this story to be an emotional one and close to my heart.

After leaving the main building I saw in the garden a bronze sculpture by Bill Epp to honour Grandma Helena Klassen of Glenbush, Saskatchewan (SK). So close to home. I met both Bill Epp and Grandma Helena Klassen, as I was raised at Mayfair not far from Glenbush.

For lunch at The Livery Barn Restaurant I

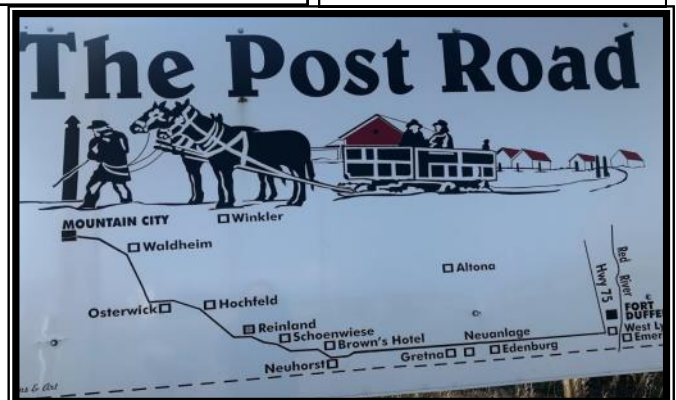


May the Borscht be with You



Grandma Helena Klassen by Bill Epp

had Komst (cabbage) Borscht, Foarma Worscht, (farmer sausage) two Vereniki (cottage cheese perogies) smothered in Schmauntfatt (cream gravy), a serving of coleslaw, a slice of stone ground whole wheat bread, and rhubarb plautz



The Post Road Billboard at Fort Dufferin

(See Borscht on page 24)

(Borscht from page 23)

(square).

The windmill, the buildings, the machinery row - so much to see and retain! But we were on our way again, this time to explore the Post Road Memorial Trail that stretches from Fort Dufferin in the east to Mountain City in the west. The Post Road (currently referred to as PR243) was a cross-country trail over the treeless plains marked by square wooden post markers erected a stone's throw apart. The posts allowed early settlers to find their way through all kinds of weather. From there we turned north to Neuberghthal, a National Historic Site of Canada. Neuberghthal is the best-preserved single street Mennonite village in North America. The Mennonite village layout, house barns, and architecture were developed over centuries of Mennonite life in Europe and Russia. We finished the day driving through Altona, Plum Coulee (love the name), Winkler, and Morden, just to say we'd been there.

Thursday we drove to Regina to visit with Ben Friesen, another of Dave Dyck's many boyhood friends. (Dave comes from a family of nine, and when every family in the village has that many or more children, you gain a lot of friends. This was something that did not happen in my childhood, as Mayfair was largely non-Mennonite.) In Herbert, Dave was eager to show me the House Of Trinity, a huge structure on Main Street. A DVD available



Friesen Housebarn Interpretive Centre,
Neuberghthal



Ben Friesen and Dave Dyck



Trinity House, Herbert, SK note the craved
Biblical numbers 3 and 7 on the eaves and gable ends

from the Library and Archives Canada explores its story.

The DVD video filmed in 2007 in the quaint prairie town of Herbert, SK, "Heaven or Not" by filmmakers Zuzana Hudackova and Danijel Margetic is an intimate portrayal of one man's tireless journey to give his life greater meaning. John Gerbrandt, a WWII veteran, has been singlehandedly building a 7,000-square-foot house over the past three decades with nothing more than his pension and salvaged materials. With no formal training, he is fuelled by a powerful determination to prove his worth to his God, his family and his community. John's story transcends day-to-day life in a small town and reaches the realm of deep spirituality marked by an unwavering commitment. Now at the age of 84, suffering from health problems and the financial burden of property taxes, John might not be able to finish his lifelong endeavour. His desire to build the highest peak in the town of Herbert now faces the greatest obstacle of all - time.

This massive house, half completed, has been viewed by many in the community as an eyesore over the years - a constant construction site that is unsafe for visitors. Masterfully shot, replete with the nostalgic beauty of the picturesque surroundings, the film begins to reveal the house from the point of view of this small-town community. Gradually, we see the true nature of the townspeople's misgivings unfold. Credit - worldcat.org

Further details about John H. Gerbrandt's life are revealed in his obituary. From that we learn that he was born on Feb 14, 1923 in Niverville, MB and passed away on June 4, 2013 in Saskatoon, SK at the age of 90. His wife of 70 years Mary Dueck was by his side. John and Mary were married at the Gouldtown Mennonite Church. Time in the army taught John how to survive. Following that he worked hard to excel in music and

(See Borscht on page 25)

(Borscht from page 24)

carpentry, and he farmed for 30 years. For about five years he owned the Circle G Grocery Store in Herbert. He designed and built the House of Trinity on Herbert's Main Street all with his own two hands.

Credit - swiftcurrentfuneralhome.com

Friday was reserved for the Swift Current and Wymark areas, Dave Dyck's home turf. We drove around Wymark and saw that the Emmaus Mennonite Church had closed in Oct 2018. After 90 years in operation, the building was for sale. When we came to the skating rink, there were about six vehicles



Emmaus Mennonite Church
for sale

parked in front. Seniors have coffee there three mornings a week. We joined the conversation, and Dave soon found people he knew.

We toured the villages of Schoenfeld, Reinfeld, and Chortitz, and we visited several churchyards. Modern farmhouses and buildings are spotted between dilapidated old housebarns and sheds. The land is



Frank Dyck, Dave Dyck and Mr. Ginter in the Wymark skating rink



Old Housebarn in the Village of Schoenfeld

slightly rolling and mostly treeless. Looking in to the distance in all directions, we could see clusters of trees where the thriving villages once existed.

We then headed along dusty country trails and across



Bob Dyck and Dave Dyck

Dave's nephew Bob Dyck's combined wheat fields. We were looking for the Woolt läach (coulee) where Dave's maternal grandparents the Reimers had lived when they first moved to the area. Bob stopped his combine and pointed out exactly where the farm had been. The spot is now flooded as

(See Borscht on page 26)

(Borscht from page 25)

the current owner has built a dam across the coulee. On Dave's former home yard in Rosenhof there are only new farm buildings now. No original buildings are left, but we saw the site and could only imagine how it used to be. It tugged at Dave's heartstrings and left us somewhat melancholy.

Back in Swift Current we had supper with Dave's siblings, sister Anne and Jake Ginter and brother Peter and Elaine Dyck. I have now met all of Dave's living sisters and brothers except Marg in Saskatoon.

Saturday in Taber we marveled at the huge Lantic Rogers Sugar Factory. The plant produces 150,000 tons of sugar a year from sugar beets produced by 400 farmers in the area. There was a constant stream of semi trailers dumping beets onto an enormous pile in the front yard of the plant. There was no sign of Mennonite young people acting out on Taber street corners or Wal-Mart parking lots in contravention to Taber's recently enacted Community Standards Bylaw 4-2015 .



Dave Dyck pointing out the dammed off Coulee where his Reimer grandparents once lived



The Brooks Aqueduct a National Historic Site



Brooks Canal and Aqueduct



The Lantic Rogers Sugar Factory, Taber

On to Brooks to see my high school friend, Bob Speiser, recently relocated to Brooks from Watrous, SK. Bob was happy to see us. He toured us around and showed us his regular haunts including where he goes for his daily walks and where he golfs once a week with his friend, Swede. Of special interest was the gigantic, sometimes troubled, XL Foods Lakeside Packers plant. This facility processes a million animals per year! Also worth the

visit was the Brooks Aqueduct. A national historic site erstwhile unknown to me, it is an Alberta engineering milestone built in 1912 - 14. The three-kilometer structure carried water to irrigate almost a million acres of land for 63 years. It was replaced in 1979 with a lower maintenance earthen canal.

Our visit to Brooks concluded a very busy enjoyable week of driving, concentrated learning and observing, meeting new people, and seeing different places and things. We were home by 8 pm Saturday evening.

* May the Borscht be with You
- is a slogan on a tee shirt for sale at the gift shop of the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, marketed by redbubble.com. ❖

Mennonite Heritage Week

by Dave Toews

On February 27, 2019, Ed Fast, Conservative MP for Abbotsford BC, rose in the House of Parliament in Ottawa to move:



Ed Fast

That in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that Canadian Mennonites have made to building Canadian society, their history of hope and perseverance, the richness of the Mennonite culture, their role in promoting peace and justice both at home and abroad, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Mennonite heritage for future generations, by declaring the second week of September as Mennonite Heritage Week.

Credit website - openparliament.ca

Speaking to his own motion, Fast noted:

Why Mennonite heritage week? First, this is an opportunity for the Government of Canada to recognize the contributions that Mennonites have made in building our great country. The Mennonite community is incredibly diverse and has invested heavily in building a community that is tolerant and prosperous, where we care for one another and are generous with each other.

Portage-Lisgar MP Candice Bergen, who is a Mennonite as well, supported Fast's motion:

When the member from Abbotsford talked about bringing this forward, we sort of chuckled because we really weren't sure if he was fully serious because we're

Mennonites after all, we don't have Mennonite Heritage week... But you know what, I'm so happy, he was serious and we very much support him in this motion. So even though Mennonites are humble people I'm really happy that we can talk about Mennonites to the extent that we are today.

Bergen finished her comments by reading out headlines from the Mennonite humour website "The Daily Bonnet."

Credit: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mennonite-heritage-week>

Debate followed and the motion was carried on May 29, 2019.

Royden Loewen, Mennonite studies professor at the University of Winnipeg, recognizes the irony of setting aside an entire week to focus on Mennonites.

As a scholar of Mennonites and as a practicing Mennonite, it's nice if people say nice things about us. On the other hand...since [the times of] Menno Simons almost 500 years ago, humility or service or simplicity are values that the Mennonites aspire to...So how can Mennonite members of Parliament stand up and ask the nation to recognize Mennonites?

Credit: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mennonite-heritage-week>

The implementation of Mennonite Heritage Week has left Canadian Mennonites proud, celebratory, thrilled, humbled and confused. The headline in the June 24, 2019 issue of the *Mennonite World Review* reads, "Heritage Week Causes Division in Canada. Celebration goes against traditional values of diversity and humility, some say." Personally, like Candice Bergen, I thought at first it was a joke! Now I'm both proud and somewhat conflicted.

What did your church do to celebrate Mennonite Heritage Week?

At Lendrum Mennonite Church Edmonton, where we attend, the response was very low key.

Jake Enns of the Facilities Commission posted on the bulletin board in the foyer pages from the Aug 12, 2019 online issue of the Canadian Mennonite. The pages mentioned 12 organizations worth recognizing during Mennonite Heritage Week including MCC, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Project Ploughshares and nine others.

On Sunday Sept 1, 2019, worship leader Ernie Wiens referred to Mennonite Heritage Week when he asked, "What are Mennonites?" In response to this question he reminded us of the seven statements of Menno Simons including:

True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant. It clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it has become all things to all people.

During the benediction Wiens also quoted from Matthew 25:37-40

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' NIV

Pastor Paul Cumin stated, "In future years we may have a better understanding of how to properly celebrate Mennonite Heritage Week." ♦



***Mennonite Historical Society of
Alberta
Fall Conference***

**Gem of the West Museum
1306 - 20th St
Coaldale, Alberta T1M 1J7**

Saturday, Nov 16, 2019

Registration 12:30 pm

Conference - 1:00 - 3:30 PM

Registration: \$20.00 Faspa and Conversation to follow
For more information email: harderdk@xplornet.com
or kenmatis@gmail.com or call Ken at 403-929-3604

**“Alternative Service in the Second World War:
Crisis of Conscience, Crisis of Community.”**

Guest Speaker: Conrad Stoesz



Conrad Stoesz

In the Second World War Canadians were mobilized to support the war effort, but for some this support was contrary to their conscience and community values. Mennonites struggled how to respond, testing individual values and community relationships. “How did we get here,” “what happened,” and “why this story is important” are themes that will be discussed.

Conrad Stoesz has been the archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Archives since 1999, and is passionate about Mennonite history, archives and related stories. He has experience working at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, and is on the board of directors of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.