

MANITOBA MENNONITE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Advisory Council and Annual General Meetings
March 20, 2021 @ 10:00 AM via Zoom

The meeting will be a combined meeting of the Council Meeting and the Annual General Meeting. All members are welcome to attend and stay for both portions of the meeting.

AGENDA

Advisory Council Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of the April 14, 2020 Advisory Council Meeting
3. Reports from affiliated organizations and standing committees
 - a. Affiliated Organizations
 - i. Mennonite Heritage Village
 - ii. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
 - iii. Plett Foundation
 - iv. Mennonite Heritage Archives
 - v. Chair in Mennonite Studies
 - b. Committees
 - i. EastMenn
 - ii. WestMenn
 - iii. Membership and Publicity
 - iv. Heritage Posting
 - v. Media Committee
 - vi. Genealogy Committee
4. Financial Report – Sean Goerzen
5. Membership Fees
6. Nominations to the Board from Council members
 - a. Terms expiring
 - i. Andrea Klassen
 - ii. Sean Goerzen
 - iii. Andrew Klassen Brown
7. Other Business

Annual General Meeting

1. Adoption of Minutes of the April 14, 2020 Annual General Meeting
2. Nominations for the Board from the membership at large
3. Elections of Board
4. Recommendations from Advisory Council
 - a. Membership fee and Heritage Posting proposal
5. Other Business

Zoom meeting with the previous board and newly formed board

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society **Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting**

Due to social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic there was no in person AGM for the MMHS. The old and new Boards met via Zoom on April 14, 2020.

Present: Conrad Stoesz, Eleanor Chornoboy, Conrad Stoesz, Andrew Klassen Brown, Sean Goerzen, Andrea Dyck, Bert Friesen, Jake Peters, unable to connect Peter Priess.

Advisory Council Meeting

1. Board Chair Eleanor Chornoboy welcomed everyone to the ZOOM meeting.

Moved by Bert Friesen, seconded by Andrea Dyck that the Minutes of March 16, 2019 Council Meeting held at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba be adopted. Carried

2. Reports of from the persons in attendance to advise the meeting on how their respective organizations/lives/ communities are faring with the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - MHA is closed with Conrad working somewhat from home. Selenna has been laid off until August.
 - Andrew just finishing school. Has finished his own work and is marking. He will soon begin on his thesis. Has received a grant/fellowship from Plett. Thesis is looking at apocalyptic scenes in the 16th century led to peace positions.
 - Sean Goerzen is a teacher and school is cancelled. Teaches music, which is a little difficult. Has tons of time to work on his Goerzen book.
 - Bert is quite concerned about the GAMEO since they cannot meet in person as they have in the past. Personally he has been trying to update the Hutterite material with challenges for some of the sub groups. Hutterites are using more and more of the material on GAMEO
 - Hans reported on the work he is doing editing JMS
 - Andrea, museum closed March 19, Andrea is working four days a week on the MCC exhibit; now working on a virtual opening for the exhibit.
 - Jake Peters reported on the EastMenn. In the process of finishing the plaque. The frame has been received. May set up the plaque and have an opening sometime later. Social distancing is working at Bethel Place.

- Eleanor has been going through photographs, sorting them and getting them ready to take to relatives. She has been annotating them. She is also writing people about the photos she finds in her albums. Susie Fisher's book is ready for preordering.

3. Nominations to the MMHS board have occurred by email and a new board is in place.

Slate was sent out and no additional nominations were received.

4. Adjournment

Moved by Eleanor Chornoboy, seconded by Bert Friesen that the advisory council be adjourned.

MMHS AGM

1. Welcome

2. Hans Werner moved, Bert Friesen seconded that the minutes of the March 16, 2019 Annual General Meeting held at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba be adopted. Carried.

3. Reports from membership committees – these were distributed and if anyone on the call wishes to add information, they are welcome to do so

3.1. EastMenn (see above)
WestMenn

Working on an exhibition at Fort Dufferin. The work has to happen largely by email. The exhibition was supposed to happen at Heritage Days in June, the deadline for the exhibition is September due to funding. Sean indicated he would be able to devote more energy to the project. Atlas project is very quiet.

4. MMHS Board

4.1 Finance

Moved by Bert Friesen, seconded by Sean Goerzen that the financial report be adopted. Carried.

Moved by Bert Friesen, seconded by Jake Peters that we appoint auditor Randy Friesen subject to the new treasurer and Board being able to work it the details of the arrangement with him.

Moved by Sean Goerzen, seconded by Bert Friesen that the proposed budget be adopted as circulated. Participants were asked to note that the bottom line projects a deficit. This is due to EastMenn and WestMenn deliberately drawing down their funds.

4.2 Acceptance of reports

Bert Friesen moved, seconded by Jake Peters that reports be accepted as circulated .

4.3 Nominations and elections to the MMHS board – this has occurred and the new board consists of:

Hans Werner
Peter Priess
Jake Peters
Conrad Stoesz
Andrea Dyck
Andrew Klassen Brown
Sean Goerzen

Outgoing members are:

Bert Friesen
Eleanor Chornoboy

5. Discussion of issues regarding upcoming celebrations and commemorations.

Most of these are on hold:

MCC's 100th has been postponed from its June date

Thought has been given to Latin and S. America migration celebrations

Working on a cross country train to commemorate the 1920s migration. We will be expected to participate for the 1920s. We have no representative on that committee and hence have been somewhat out of the loop w.r.t. possible involvement. Andrea agreed to follow up on our possible involvement.

1924 Manitoba

1925 West Reserve and 500th of Anabaptism

Someone will be needed to lead the charge for some of these events.

6. Future and direction of MMHS

- records management. Bert noted that there are a lot of corporate recollections and Bert indicated he has considerable hard copies and many more digital records. Looking to the Board to adopt a records management policy. Anna Ens and Adolf and many others would have additional records. We need a records retention and archiving policy for the society.

It was suggested that Bert head up an adhoc committee to draft the policy. Bert agreed provided Conrad work with him. It was agreed.

- MMHS website update
What do we expect from this site?
What could it do for the members and others

Andrew suggested that we need to define what we want to share. Right now we seem not to have additional content. We would also have to raise our level of awareness via other social media. Could we pull the articles out of HP and make them web friendly. Andrew suggested we start a Facebook page to promote our website and share quick and ready material. Andrea asked

whether our communication would then be mostly through Facebook. Conrad asked about e-commerce capability. It was pointed out that this facility has recently become available. Hans suggested that the MMHS website be the portal for everything about Manitoba Mennoites. Bert suggested that we launch it. Andrew suggested he would give it more thought and would take the initiative in setting it up. Will also raise the issue with the HP Committee. Andrew thought he could head this up if he did not have to write the content.

7. Other business

Eleanor noted that it has been an honor to work with a very knowledgeable Board and thanked the Board for its support. She noted that she plans to continue to be involved and is looking forward to volunteering in the archives.

She also showed the Board the Honorary Life Membership certificate for Bert and thanked him for the many years of service. Bert indicated he would also be continuing to be involved with most of his energy going to GAMEO and the national genealogy efforts.

Conrad thanked Eleanor on behalf of the Board

8. Adjournment

Moved by Hans Werner that the meeting be adjourned.

Meeting of the New Board

Reorganization:

Hans Werner nominated Conrad Stoesz for Chair

Jake Peters nominated Hans Werner for Secretary

Conrad Stoesz nominated Andrea Dyck for Vice Chair.

Sean Goerzen, nominated for Treasurer previously

Elected.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, May 19th at 1:00 by Zoom.

There was a brief discussion about membership.

Hans Werner Adjourned.

MMHS President's Report

March 2021

Our current situation has me thinking in two opposite directions. “On one hand” there is no doubt the COVID -19 pandemic has affected us all. There is real pain with the loss of freedoms, health, livelihoods, and loved ones. Our heritage institutions have been closed, staff and volunteers laid off, and plans for events cancelled, or put on hold. While there have been some extra financial supports for heritage institutions during the first portion of the pandemic (2020), I suspect 2021 will also be a financial test for many.

How often have we heard the phrase “unprecedented” in relation to our current situation, which brings me to “on the other hand.” If we look outside our bubble of personal experience – to history - we will see that pandemics and disease are part of the human experience. Contagious diseases were common in the past typhoid, tuberculosis, smallpox, cholera, scarlet fever and the list could go on, but few of us have experienced this. This is not to try to downplay the effects of our current situation, like I said there is real pain that people are experiencing, but this has happened before. (Perhaps what is new is the speed to which a remedy, in this case a vaccine, has been produced.) In these mixed feelings and thoughts lies a role for our heritage organizations. During these stressful times heritage organizations can remind people about the past - to learn from it and take courage. Part of what we do as heritage organizations is to help people look beyond their personal bubbles and see “others” of the past and “others” today and to help us see that the “others” are people much like us.

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is made up of people, committees, and institutions that are passionate about the Mennonite story. Reading over the reports you will appreciate the efforts and activities our heritage organizations and committees are undertaking. The MMHS committees of WestMenn, EastMenn have exciting projects they are working on. Glen Klassen is the editor of our magazine, *Heritage Posting*, and continues to produce a quality product covering a host of activities, themes, and events all related to Mennonite history in our province. Our affiliated organizations of Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Mennonite Heritage Village, Mennonite Heritage Archives, Chair in Mennonite Studies, and Plett Foundation have found opportunities amid the challenges.

As a MMHS board we held a check-in via zoom with some of our Mennonite heritage organizations to see how they were doing. MMHS has also partnered with the Manitoba Russlaender Centennial Committee to help organize events in 2023 such as a song festival, tours, and a drama in conjunction with a train trip. The train will start in Quebec City and end in Vancouver stopping in each province for a series of commemorative events. MMHS also nominated Helena F. Reimer (1905-1993) of Steinbach for the Manitoba Trailblazer Award. See below for her successful nomination.

Looking ahead, the next few years we will mark significant milestones for the Mennonite community:

- 2022 - 100 years since Mennonites started moving to Mexico
- 2023 – 100 years since the Russlaender migration to Canada started.
- 2024 – 150 years of Mennonites in Manitoba
- 2025 – 500 years of Anabaptism
- 2026 – 100 years since Mennonites started moving to Paraguay

The marking of milestones is an opportunity that holds great potential for a community. The role of commemoration is one of not only remembrance but has the ability to create energy. The role of celebrating an anniversary is not just to celebrate an event, but it is a platform for engagement. It gives people a reason to care. The large outlay of energy celebrating the 100th anniversary of Mennonites in western Canada spawned interest and support for a host of heritage activities including the establishment of Mennonite archival centres in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. But for this kind of momentum, work needs to be done in the planning and executing of creative commemorative events. How can you get involved to help build this momentum?

Conrad Stoesz, MMHS president
March 12, 2021

Nomination for the Manitoba Trailblazers Award
<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/women-trailblazers/>

Purpose

This is a call to nominate Manitoba women who were Trailblazers: women who were first in their field or who through their work, had a significant impact on their field or community.

Eligibility

A woman, or a collective of women, who have made an impact on the development of Manitoba.

Nominees must have:

Worked or volunteered or played a role that was first in their field or had significant impact or outcome on society in Manitoba

Demonstrated leadership and acted as a role model

Reflected the spirit of Nellie McClung

Worked/lived for a significant part of their lives in the territory that is now called Manitoba (please verify this in the application)

Nominee (if alive) must agree to nomination

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society nominates Helena F. Reimer. Helena F. Reimer: nurse, educator and administrator; born 27 January 1905 in Steinbach, Manitoba was the first child in a family of six sons and five daughters. In 1928 Helena obtained the highest marks in Manitoba in the Department of Education Entrance Examination, and taught for several years thereafter. In 1937 Helena completed training as a Registered Nurse at Winnipeg General Hospital and dedicated herself to the service of humankind. At Winnipeg General Hospital Helena held several positions during her career as general nurse, instructor, supervisor and Assistant Superintendent. During the Second World War, Helena was one of the first nurses in Canada selected to participate in work overseas with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. "Helena brought to her new task a wide experience in the tactful management of nursing staff, a delicious sense of humour, and an intense compassion for the victims of war."

Her first assignment in 1944 was as Matron a refugee camp in the Middle East. In 1946 Helena was transferred to Taiwan/China and worked there to implement proper nursing care and training until 1949. She resumed work overseas in 1951, this time under the World Health Organization, and was stationed in Cambodia as a nursing consultant. Helena spent two years in Cambodia before she was transferred to Egypt where she was instrumental in the founding of the Higher Institute of Nursing, a part of the University of Alexandria. She served there as an administrator from 1953-1956. Historian Susan Armstrong-Reid stated that "Reimer had a voracious appetite for hard work, and besides her nursing duties, quickly launched some relief programs until welfare members of her could arrive." Helena's creed was "adapting yourself to your environment, improving conditions when possible, accepting those that could not be improved, then doing what could be done cheerfully."

In 1957 Helena accepted the position of Secretary Registrar of The Association of Nurses of the Province of Quebec, where she worked until her retirement in 1970. Helena F. Reimer spent her retirement in Winnipeg, Manitoba, volunteering with the elderly, teaching English to refugees, and taking courses.

Reimer valued higher education, and demonstrated this through her work as an educator, and as a student. In 1951 Helena earned her Bachelor of Nursing from McGill University, and in 1957 she obtained a Master's degree in nursing administration from the University of Chicago. Others recognized Helena's commitment, accomplishments and standard of excellence. In 1974 she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Winnipeg, and in the same year, was named to the Order of Canada for over 30 years of service and dedication in the field of nursing in Canada and abroad. In 1977 Helena received the Queen's Jubilee Medal. Helena F. Reimer was a skilled administrator and a passionate humanitarian. She was a lifelong member of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church. Her faith in God informed all she did. Helena died in 1993.

Written by Conrad Stoesz

Sources:

Erica Enns Rodine, "Helena F. Reimer", Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia online
[https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Reimer, Helena Friesen \(1905-1993\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Reimer,_Helena_Friesen_(1905-1993))

Armstrong-Reid, Susan and David Murray. *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years*.
University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2008.

Helena F. Reimer fonds at the Mennonite Heritage Archives. <https://archives.mhsc.ca/helena-f-reimer-fonds>

Erika Enns Rodine, "Helena F. Reimer fonds recently Received," in *Mennonite Historian*,
December 2009 p. 4 <http://www.mennonitehistorian.ca/35.4.MHDec09.pdf>

Reimer's Order of Canada is at the Mennonite Heritage Village.



Mennonite Heritage Village (Canada) Inc.

231 PTH 12 N. Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada R5G 1T8

Phone 204-326-9661 Fax 204-326-5046

Web www.mhv.ca Email info@mhv.ca

MMHS Report by Executive Director Gary Dyck

At the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV), our 2020 first quarter was actually pretty good. The budget we had made in January even surpassed expectations. Schools were coming for our programming. Admission to our February Winter Carnival grew from 176 in 2019 to 507 in 2020. We had been awarded a grant to repair our Chortitz housebarn and planning for our Spring Gala and MCC 100 Years Exhibit was well under way.

On March 13 we closed for eight weeks. On May 13 we were one of the first museums in Canada to reopen. We wanted our outdoor village to be available to those who needed to get out of the house. In the meantime, we learned how to do all things virtual. Our social media use expanded in those first weeks when everyone was at home. The Spring Gala, Manitoba Day and AGM were all done online for the first time ever. It didn't take long for us to realize that digital meetings have their limits. Digital cannot replace onsite contact.

In June COVID-19 was still a threat, but we decided to go on with our Tractor Trek. It would be easy to keep the tractors distanced and the heritage tractor owners could use a good cause to bring them together. It ended up raising spirits and \$18,000 for Eden Health Foundation and MHV.

The rest of the summer saw our major events of Canada Day and Pioneer Days replaced with Family Day events and Pioneer Demonstration Days every other Saturday. The stream of people was slow, but steady. Volunteers were happy to have more meaningful connections with the guests instead of doing crowd control. Visitors also found it special to have more time to talk with the interpreters.

Every Thursday evening, we hosted a new event called 'Rhubarb Jam' that featured live music from local musicians and delicious wings and nachos from our Livery Barn Restaurant. Each week the numbers grew until we were filled to the capacity allowed by COVID-19 regulations. It was great seeing people enjoy the village atmosphere in our Summer Pavilion near the windmill.

In October we had two events which were quite successful. Our 'Farm to You' fundraiser banquet had the option of 50 people in our auditorium with a catered meal and program. At the same time, an unlimited amount of people had meal kits delivered to their door by a 1949 Chevy and watched the livestream from the comfort of their home. Finally, before Manitoba hit Code Red, we hosted our annual Christmas market. The

local artisans were grateful to have at least one Christmas market to sell their precious wares and people of all ages came to check it out safely.

At MHV we have more plans for 2021. It will be a rough first quarter to 2021, but hopefully the following months improve steadily. Look forward to strolling our new Dirk Willems peace garden and checking out our new exhibit for 2021: “Mennonites at War”.

Oral Interviews Digitized

by Jon Isaak <jon.isaak@mbchurches.ca>

Recently, I completed a media preservation project. It involved the digitization of audio recordings from analogue cassette tapes to digital mp3 files.



This is a photo from the 1930s, showing a group of women from the Mary Martha Home, Winnipeg, posing for a photo in their uniforms. Photo credit: MAID CA CMBS NP066-01-20.

In 1987, Frieda Esau Klippenstein interviewed 34 Mennonite women for an oral history project, documenting the experience of Mennonite domestics associated with the Mary Martha Home in Winnipeg. The interviews ranged from 60 to 75 minutes each. These women—usually for a year or two, but some longer—had worked for wealthy Winnipeg families in their homes during the 1920s through to the 1950s—cooking, cleaning, and child minding.

For many years, the women were under the supervision of Anna Thiessen (1892–1977), matron of the Mary Martha Home, a house at 437 Mountain Avenue and ministry of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba.

The Mary Martha Home functioned as an employment agency and living quarters for the women between or during jobs. It was also a place for the women to gather

on Thursdays, when their employers gave them the afternoon off. The women were mostly young, new to the city, and from recent immigrant/refugee families, all doing what they could to help their families resettle in Canada.

When the Mary Martha Home closed in 1959, more than 2,200 young women had benefited from its services.

The digitization of the interviews ensures that researchers will be able to access all 34 interviews, even as the original cassette tape recordings deteriorate with time.

To listen to a 3-minute excerpt from one of Frieda Klippenstein's interviews, see <http://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/oral-interviews-digitized/> and follow the prompts. There, you will also find links to photos and other documents related to the Mary Martha Home.

And if you are interested in digitizing your own cassette tapes, this can be done quite inexpensively. See the setup I used in the photo below. Here are five steps I followed. 1) Connect a basic cable from the headphone jack of the

cassette player to the microphone jack on the sound card of a computer. 2) Open the Audacity software program that you have installed on your computer. The program is free (<https://www.audacityteam.org/>). 3) Start the tape player (set the levels) and the Audacity recording software at the same time, and let them run for the duration of the cassette. 4) Use the “noise reduction” feature in the “effects” menu of Audacity to take out some of the “hissing” sound. Essentially, you select a section of the playback with

Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



only hissing (no voices), save it, and then get Audacity to strip that frequency from the whole digitized recording. 5) Export the cleaned-up tape as an mp3 file to a folder on your computer, and you have a digital copy of your analogue cassette tape. For more information, send me an email.

I am happy to have the digitization project done. Last year, in pre-covid times, there were two CMU students that came to listen to Frieda's Mary-Martha interview cassettes for a social history research paper. In future, students will be able to listen to the mp3 files. The interviews are now preserved, even if the original cassettes get damaged or degrade.

In other CMBS news, Shirley (Penner) Bergen sent in a donation of some family history writings relating to Sarah (Enns) Peters (1903–1994). Shirley's mother, Ida (Hiebert) Penner, roomed with Sarah while the two young women attended Normal School (teachers' training) in Manitou, Manitoba, in 1921. The collection of papers includes diary excerpts, describing Sarah's first year of teaching in Rosenbach, Manitoba. There are also glimpses of life in the 1920–1930s recorded in two articles narrating Sarah's life with John J. Peters (1901–1995), one presented at their 50th wedding anniversary and the other at their 60th. The papers are now preserved at the CMBS archives (Acc. No. 2020-06, Vol. 941).



Mennonite Heritage Archives
Annual Report to the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
March 12, 2021

COVID-19:

The COVID-19 virus has affected the archives with closure, layoffs, working from home, and uncertainty. During the work from home period, the Archives' website was updated, writing projects were undertaken, meetings via Zoom were attended, and new ideas were considered. As people are spending more time at home, some of the "one day I want to" projects were started including sorting through family materials and starting family research projects. The MHA is supported by three official partners including Mennonite Church Canada, Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies, and Canadian Mennonite University. Funding from these bodies has been stable. Funding from the constituency has been also stable for the first portion (2020) of COVID.

Personnel:

During her work from home period and her lay-off time Selenna did some online professional development from the Archives Association for British Columbia where she was introduced to archival processing. Due COVID-19, CMU has repurposed the Gallery for student study space. That has meant that Selenna's 30% work with the Gallery ended. Until July 2021 we have hired Selenna full time. Her expanded hours, together with her new training, will be focused on processing archival materials.

Thanks to the Young Canada Works (YCW) program we were able to hire Andrew Klassen Brown for the summer (April-August). The program covers 75% of the cost of the project. Processing materials, digitization, and creating social media posts based on the materials processed were the areas of focus. Because of COVID, the YCW program provided funds to hire a student part time from September – March. We were successful in getting a grant to hire Sara Dyck. Because of COVID-19 MHA is closed to volunteers. In some cases, projects that can be done from home are being undertaken. This includes translating, transcribing, and some web work. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers.

Projects:

A major accomplishment this year has been the migration of 478 Rules for Archival Description (RAD) finding aids (along with the subdivisions - series and file lists) from static html pages into the database known as MAID. This improves the search capabilities and increases access to MHA's materials. A number of congregational records from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba have been processed this year.

We have been gathering primary sources on the Bergthal colony from Canadian, Russian, Ukrainian and South American archives. We have located 88 different pieces of correspondence related to the first years of the migration from Prussia to Russia and the establishment of the Chortitza colony. We are working on getting these pieces translated. We have also been digitizing microfilms from the St. Petersburg, Odessa, Zaporozhe archives.

A translation of Walter Schmediehaus' book *Die Altkolonier-Mennoniten in Mexiko* has been located which is being typed and edited for possible publishing. We have posted on our web site genealogy guides for the 1870s Mennonites and for research in Prussia.

This year has seen a lot of used books go to the Mennonite Historical Library jointly owned with CMU. The large-scale reduction at MCC's Sam's Place allowed MHA to acquire Mennonite books and on a monthly basis funnel them to the library collection or for resale. We were able to send a number of books from the EMC and Chortitzer communities to the library.

The twelve radio pieces MHA created under the banner "Still Speaking" were aired on Golden West Radio and were well received. Some episodes were used again by CMU's Sunday morning radio program. The materials gathered for "Still Speaking" formed an important base for other projects.

With new challenges come some opportunities. TourMagination pulled 12 North American Mennonite museums and archives together and created a virtual tour. On May 12 MHA was featured and over 150 screens were tuned in. After a 20 minute presentation there was a lively Q&A session. We received very positive feedback. After the event the video has been watched another 1095 times. In November a round two was initiated by TourMagination and the MHA was again featured, this time with 220 screens logged in despite being on American election day. To date there have been 455 views of this second video. In the videos viewers were introduced to the MHA, the archival process, users of archives, and stories lodged in some choice documents.

A second "COVID era" project is the Anabaptist History Today crowd-sourcing website project <https://aht.libraryhost.com/s/archive/page/Welcome>. It includes 16 participating Mennonite archives in North America and is led by Mennonite Church USA archivist Jason Kaufmann. The website invites Anabaptists around North America to share their stories related to COVID-19 and the remarkable historical, biological, and social events of 2020. Photos, poems, videos, stories, can be uploaded. MHA is one of three Canadian organizations involved.

MHA's archivist, Conrad Stoesz, is part of the Mennonite Historic Arts Committee. After three years of collaboration the committee has published its first book and display, *Mennonite Village Photography*. The first display was at Altona's Gallery in the Park and is scheduled to be at the Mennonite Heritage Village, and the Mennonite Heritage Archives and Gallery. More than half of the images come from the MHA and features photos by men who were part of the Chortitzer, Sommerfeld and Kleine Gemeinde communities.

The Mennonite Heritage Archives produces the *Mennonite Historian* (MH) together with the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS). With the closing of CP Printing, new options for printing the MH were needed. This year we have printed the MH with the photocopier at CMBS and thereby greatly reducing costs. The savings have been directed towards extending the reach of the MH. The MHA is the official archive for the EMC and EMMC denominations, but their involvement has been limited. For the next several issues the EMC and EMMC will provide a historic photo and caption for publication in MH and the magazine will be sent to each of the EMC and EMMC congregations. This is for a trial period.

MHA continues to provide photos and extended captions to the *Canadian Mennonite* and now to the *Steinbach Post*. We continue to get good feedback from the publishers and readers. Conrad also wrote the article "Tokmak Railway" for *Preservings*, and a review of *The Altester: Herman D.W. Friesen, a Mennonite leader in Changing Times* published in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.

The MHA and its staff serve as a resource to the community. Below is a list of selected projects that utilized MHA's resources. Of note is *Be it Resolved: Anabaptist & Partner Coalitions Advocate for Indigenous Justice, 1966-2020*. Quoting from the book, p. 433-434 "The staff at the Mennonite Heritage Archives – where so much of the source material for this

anthology is found – have been wonderfully helpful. Thank you, Conrad Stoesz and Selenna Wolfe, for all that you’ve done to support this project. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the Archives needed to close, Conrad made a special effort to hunt down a number of documents we needed but couldn’t access. Thank you.”

[Selected projects that have used MHA resources.](#)

Bohn, Eckhard W. Bohn from Gronau, Germany did a newspaper article on the Gronau refugee camp May 30, 2020 using MHA photos and MHA provided contact information to further his research.

Dyck, Harvey, Ingrid Epp, John Staples. eds. *Transformation on the Southern Ukrainian Steppe: Letters and paper of Johann Cornies Volume II 1836-1842*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.

Eicher, John Eicher. *Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age*. Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press. 2020.

Fisher, Susie, Roland Sawatzky, Frieda Esau, Conrad Stoesz. *Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba 1890-1940*. Winnipeg: Mennonite Historic Arts Committee, 2020.

Hamm, Blake. “Revisiting the Canadian *Privilegium*: The Lowe Letter, Good Faith, and International Law,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 94 (July 2020), 307-345.

Heinrichs, Steve. *Be It Resolved: Anabaptist & Partner Coalitions Advocate for Indigenous Justice, 1966-2020*. Winnipeg: Mennonite Church Canada, 2020.

Patterson, Sean. *Makhno and Memory: Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine’s Civil War, 1917-1921*. Winnipeg; University of Manitoba Press. 2020.

Redekopp, Magdalena. *Making Believe: Questions About Mennonites and Art*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press. 2020.

Wall, Andrew. *Volendam: A Refugee Story*. Refuge 31 Films. 2020.

Manitoba Museum – photo for exhibit
Canadian Museum for Human Rights – tongue screw
Mennonite Heritage Village – photos for exhibits
Margruite Krahn's research and exhibition on Mennonite floor patterns.
Preservings – photos in each issue

Interviewed for Archival Studies Masters theses by Jared Warkentin and Kristine Lehew (University of Manitoba)

Conrad Stoesz, Archivist
March 12, 2021

MMHS 2020-21 Annual Report

Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies

Aileen Friesen and Ben Nobbs-Thiessen (co-directors)

Overview: 2020 was an important year for CTMS. While there were some postponements to planned conferences and lectures due to the pandemic, we also saw the uninterrupted delivery of teaching, publications, and continued work with funding and archival partners. The composition of CTMS also underwent change. In July, Royden Loewen retired as Chair in Mennonite Studies after twenty-four years to be replaced by Ben Nobbs-Thiessen who serves, alongside Aileen Friesen as co-director of the Centre. Roy, along with Hans Werner, continue to be active as senior scholars affiliated with CTMS.

Website and Logo Redesign: A major step in promoting the research profile of CTMS members and engaging the public has involved a planned website and logo redesign for CTMS in collaboration with the Plett Foundation. After several summer and early fall planning and budgeting meetings with my co-director Aileen Friesen, Plett Foundation communications and finance officer Jeremy Wiebe, graphic and web designer Aniko Szabo, the redesign is fully underway with a new landing page expected to be available in early 2021.

CTMS Annual Lecture: A planned CTMS Spring 2020 public lecture, initially rescheduled for Fall 2020 has been delayed. When possible, Royden Loewen will present on his SSHRC-funded research program, Transnational Flows of Agricultural Knowledge (TFOAK).

Conferences: 1) The **MCC@100** conference, originally scheduled for Oct. 2020 was postponed to October 2021. Nearly all presenters confirmed their participation for this later date. In consultation with Alain Epp Weaver of MCC plans have been made for a hybrid virtual-in person format. Subsequently the planning committee decided to go with a fully virtual conference due to ongoing uncertainty about vaccine rollout and cross-border travel. 2) CTMS has produced a draft Call for Papers and secured funding for the **Departing Canada, Encountering Latin America** conference, a centenary exploration of Mennonite emigration from Canada to Latin America and its long legacies. A formal Call for Papers has been sent out in early 2021 with the conference planned for Oct. 2022. 3) As part of the Manitoba Russlaender Centenary Committee, CTMS is in the preliminary stages of planning a summer 2023 conference that will correspond with the arrival of this historical train tour in Winnipeg.

Community Outreach: 1) In 2020 the Plett Foundation has provided over \$100,000 in grants to individuals and community organizations. In anticipation of the centenary of Mennonite migration to Mexico, the foundation has provided funds for the 2022 UW conference, for an exhibit on the migration at MHV, for the digitization of the Steinbach Post at MHA, and for a documentary on the migration in partnership with Andrew Wall of Refuge 31 films. It also continues to provide core funding to MHA. 2) Ben and Aileen continue to represent CTMS on the Manitoba Russlaender Centenary Committee. The Paul Toews Professorship (PTP) has provided funds for publicizing the Russlaender train and has allocated funds for the 2023 Russlaender conference. 3) During this year, Aileen has represented CTMS on the Ukrainian

Gravestone Committee. Recently, the PTP fund purchased an interpretative panel for the Ukrainian Gravestone Project on the island of Khortitsa. 4) CTMS's KGB archival project continues to operate (although with reduced access due to COVID). Aileen will present findings from this project during TourMagination's virtual "The Anabaptist Story Lives On: Virtual Museums and Archives Tour."

Publications: 1) **Preservings** published two issues in June and December 2020. The June issue addressed Mennonites and the Railway in Paraguay, Mexico, Russia. The December issue explored Mennonite relations with their neighbours in Manitoba. 2) The 2020 issue of the **Journal of Mennonite Studies** was published this summer with a wide-ranging series of articles emerging from the 2019 "Mennonites and Anthropology" Conference. This was Jeremy Wiebe's first issue as the Managing Editor of JMS and the results of his work on the 2020 were excellent. The intention was to move JMS to a twice-a-year publication in 2020 to benefit from Canada Post pricing structures but the postponement of our fall conference (MCC @ 100) delayed these plans. 3) CTMS co-directors each published a scholarly monograph in 2020. Aileen Friesen's *Colonizing Russia's Promised Land: Orthodoxy and Community on the Siberian Steppe* was published by the University of Toronto Press and Ben Nobbs-Thiessen's *Landscape of Migration: Mobility and Environmental Change on Bolivia's Tropical Frontier since 1952* appeared with University of North Carolina Press. 4) CTMS, through the Paul Toews Professorship Fund, also provided funds for the newly released book *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, published by University of Toronto Press (UTP). This book includes chapters by Hans Werner and Aileen Friesen and was the first publication in the new book series at UTP, Transnational Mennonite Studies under editorship of Aileen.

Research:

1) With Plett Foundation support and a pending SSHRC application, Ben Nobbs-Thiessen is developing a second research project "Settlers, Braceros, Narcos" exploring Mennonite migrations between Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. 2) Aileen is working on two projects: a SSHRC-funded project titled "The Politics of Providence: Mobility, Modernity, and Mennonites," which explores the 1870s and 1920s migrations from Russia and a book project entitled, "Faith under Stalinism: The Thiessen Letters."

Undergraduate Teaching: During the winter semester, Aileen Friesen taught "Mennonite Studies II" as a video on demand course (with 100 students). During fall 2020 semester JMS managing editor Jeremy Wiebe remotely taught "Mennonite Studies I" while Ben Nobbs-Thiessen taught "Latin American Mennonites." In 2021 Mennonite Studies should be offering "Gender & Mennonites" and "Indigenous-Mennonite Relations." The latter will be taught for the first time and fulfils UWinnipeg's Indigenous Course Requirement.

Funding: 1) The \$600,000 **David Friesen Endowment Fund** is being transferred to the University of Winnipeg Foundation in spring 2021 and supports CTMS through the research, community outreach, conferences and publications of the Interdisciplinary Coordinator and Research Chair in Mennonite Studies. 2) The endowed **Paul Toews Professorship Fund** at the University of Winnipeg Foundation (\$640,000) supports the research and study of Russian

Mennonite history, including MA and PhD student scholarships, through CTMS. 3) The Plett Foundation continues to provide funding for MA and PhD scholarships in Mennonite history under CTMS. In 2020, the foundation introduced a visiting scholar fellowship at UW in support of 1-3 month research trips.

2020 EastMenn Year in Review

The year began with an organizational and planning meeting in February, with detailed plans for the Shantz plaque unveiling, a virtual tour proposal, and the Annual Fall Historical Lecture. Due to Covid-19, none of that materialized. The plaque for the Shantz Shed project is complete and ready to be attached to the granite rock on site. A public unveiling/launch is expected to be held next year when large groups can again meet without safety concerns.

We also submitted a nomination to Manitoba 150 Women Trailblazers: Maria Vogt. Ongoing involvement on the part of several committee members continues for the Mennonite Memorial Landing Site Association, which will be included in a Trans-Canada Trail project; and the Chortitz Heritage Church, which will be increasingly featured online at the RM of Hanover and MMHS websites. [Some brainstorming has been done by individual members of the committee for a new Peace Trail idea that would begin at the Mennonite Landing Site and end at the Dirk Willms sculpture. This is envisioned to be a bicycle/walking tour, a virtual tour, or maybe a car/bus tour. Since the committee itself has not met, this remains simply as an idea, one that may fit into the virtual tour concept or become a committee project once meetings can again be held should the group adopt the idea.]

Beyond that EastMenn has been forced to be largely dormant since no public events, such as the unveiling of the cairn or the Annual Historical lecture, have been possible. The committee met once.

Submitted by Ernest Braun, Secretary, EastMenn Historical Committee

WestMenn Report

The WestMenn Historical Committee's work continued throughout 2020, albeit slowed or postponed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our committee members are involved in many local projects, namely the Post Road Trail, Post Road Bicycle Tour, Altbergthal History Project, and a memorial at Fort Dufferin, along with several engaging historical studies pertinent to the West Reserve.

An ongoing point of interest for WestMenn is to sustain the ongoing research and presentation of West Reserve village histories and other projects it deems of importance through workshops and publications.

WestMenn is proud to have helped the Mennonite Historic Arts Committee publish *Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba 1890–1940*, a beautiful collection of never-before-seen photographs left behind by four Manitoba Mennonite photographers.

The committee met twice during 2020, once in February and later that summer in a hybrid virtual/in-person manner while case numbers were low. WestMenn welcomed one new member: Katie Lynch, while Jake E. Peters and Peter Priess departed the committee. We thank Jake and Peter for their many years of service to the committee and the broader Mennonite historical community.

WestMenn strives to forge partnerships with interested people and groups and facilitates connections between them when possible. Information about the committee, its projects, and minutes of past meetings are now available on the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society's website.

Heritage Posting Report for 2020

Three issues of HP appeared in 2020: March (#95), June (#96), and October (#97) for a total of 52 pages. The March issue was a special Manitoba 150 Celebratory Issue. The format continued to be: News, Articles, and Book Reviews.

There were 29 contributors from all corners of the Mennonite world in Manitoba and beyond. These include Hans Werner, Ernest Braun, Ron Friesen, Werner Toews, Dave Toews (Alta), Lawrence Klippenstein, Graham Schellenberg, Erin Unger, Andrew Unger, John J. Friesen, Gary Dyck, Jon Isaak, Royden Loewen, Eleanor Chornoboy, Dora Hildebrand, Andrea Klassen, Ted Barg, Linda Peters, Alf Redekop, Sarah Ens, Faith Enns, Jack Klassen, Betty Koop, Margie Koop, Harold Jantz, Waldy Ens, and Glen Klassen.

It is a pleasure to interact with so many interesting writers and I thank them for their efforts. The vision and the mission is to represent the Society to its members and to others who happen to pick up an issue and to increase their understanding of the contemporary Mennonite reality in Manitoba. I seek to also interact with many other Mennonite-themed periodicals. In 2021 the 100th issue of HP will be published.

Glen Klassen
Editor

--

Glen Klassen

MANITOBA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2020

Assets

Current assets:

Cash	\$	3,244
Eastmenn Investment account		16,699
General Investment account		9,662
Book sales receivable		1,039
Book inventory		3,698

\$ 34,342

Liabilities and Equity

Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$	1,012
Unearned membership dues		1,090
		2,102

Equity 32,240

\$ 34,342

MANITOBA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Statement of Earnings and Equity

Year ended December 31, 2020

<hr/>		
<hr/>		
General Revenue:		
Donations	\$	1,720
Memberships		195
Interest		205
Net cash flow		2,120
<hr/>		
East Mennonite:		
Book Sales		750
Interest		353
Expenses		(999)
Net cash flow		104
<hr/>		
Genealogy		
Book sales		214
Expenses		(579)
Net cash deficit		(365)
<hr/>		
West Mennonite:		
Book sales		75
Expenses		(1,250)
Net cash deficit		(1,175)
<hr/>		
Net cash flow before expenses		684
<hr/>		
Expenses:		
Heritage posting		1,830
General office costs		529
Fees and donation		1,577
		3,936
<hr/>		
Loss for the year		(3,252)
<hr/>		
Adjustment for prior year stale dated amounts		702
<hr/>		
Equity, beginning of year		34,790
<hr/>		
Equity, end of year	\$	32,240
<hr/>		

Sheet1

Committee Retained Earnings							
	General	Memberships & Publishing	Westmenn HC	Genealogy	Eastmenn HC	Special Prj. (note 5)	Total
Opening balance – 2020 January 1	\$ 992.16	\$ (1,163.40)	\$ 18,187.57	\$ 434.93	\$ 13,836.76	\$ 2,499.00	\$ 35,577.02
Adjustments:							
Adjust for prior year stale dated cheques(note 4)	702.25						702.25
Adjust opening bank to agree to statements (note 4)	2,319.93						2,319.93
Adjusted opening balance	4,014.34	(1,163.40)	18,187.57	434.93	13,836.76	2,499.00	38,599.20
Income							
Donations	1,720.00						1,720.00
Membership dues (Note 2)		195.00					195.00
Interest	204.46				353.40		557.86
Book sales			75.00	214.50	750.00		1,039.50
Total Income	1,924.46	195.00	75.00	214.50	1,103.40	-	3,512.36
Expenses							
Dues & Subscriptions	1,577.12						1,577.12
Other printing and shipping		1,830.17					1,830.17
Professional fees	225.00						225.00
Special projects (Note 1)			1,250.00		999.06		2,249.06
Office & Storage (Note 3)	304.59			579.61			884.20
Adjustment to book inventory			68.35	53.33	1,054.53		1,176.21
Total Expenses	2,106.71	1,830.17	1,318.35	632.94	2,053.59	-	7,941.76
Surplus <Deficit>	\$ (182.25)	\$ (1,635.17)	\$ (1,243.35)	\$ (418.44)	\$ (950.19)	\$ -	\$ (4,429.40)
Ending balance – 2020 December 31	\$ 3,832.09	\$ (2,798.57)	\$ 16,944.22	\$ 16.49	\$ 12,886.57	\$ 2,499.00	\$ 34,169.80
Balances are comprised of:							
Cash and receivables/payables	3,832.09	(2,798.57)	15,207.91	(27.14)	10,390.85	2,499.00	29,894.14
Books (see schedule 2)(Note 4)			1,736.31	43.63	2,495.72		4,275.66
Retained Earnings	3,832.09	(2,798.57)	16,944.22	16.49	12,886.57	2,499.00	34,169.80

Sheet1

Note 1							
The special project expenditures in this fiscal year were the Behrends project, the Westmenn Photo project, and Altbergthal							
Note 2							
Membership dues are first credited to: Membership and Publicity to cover the regular costs of maintaining members							
Note 3							
Office and storage costs consist of: office supplies and storage costs							
Note 4							
There was an adjustment made to the opening balance to reflect the actual funds in the bank.							
Note 5							
The special project funds are funds left from the film project in the prior year. It will need to be determined what to do with them							

2021 Budget

	General	Memberships & HP	Westmenn HC	Genealogy	Eastmenn HC	Total
Opening surplus/Deficit	\$ 3,832.09	\$ (2,798.57)	\$ 16,944.22	\$ 16.49	\$ 12,886.57	\$ 34,169.80
Income						
Donations	1,800.00				200.00	2,000.00
Membership dues		250.00				250.00
Interest	200.00				300.00	500.00
Book sales				-	500.00	500.00
Lecture series						
Total Income	2,000.00	250.00	-	-	1,000.00	3,250.00
Expenses						
Meetings					100.00	
Dues & Subscriptions	1,500.00					1,500.00
Heritage Posting		1,350.00				
Office & Storage	300.00			-	700.00	1,000.00
Professional fees	225.00					225.00
EastMenn						
Lecture Series					1,500.00	
Atlas Reprint					700.00	700.00
Chortitz Church Support					750.00	750.00
Special projects					1,000.00	1,000.00
WestMenn						
West Reserve Atlas			\$200.00			
Post Road Trail			\$350.00			
Blumenhof School Marker			\$400.00			
Fort Dufferin Memorial			\$500.00			
Total Expenses	2,025.00	1,350.00	1,450.00	-	4,750.00	5,175.00
Surplus <Deficit>	\$ (25.00)	\$ (1,100.00)	\$ (1,450.00)	\$ -	\$ (3,750.00)	\$ (1,925.00)
Projected Ending Retained Earnings	\$ 3,807.09	\$ (3,898.57)	\$ 15,494.22	\$ 16.49	\$ 9,136.57	\$ 32,244.80