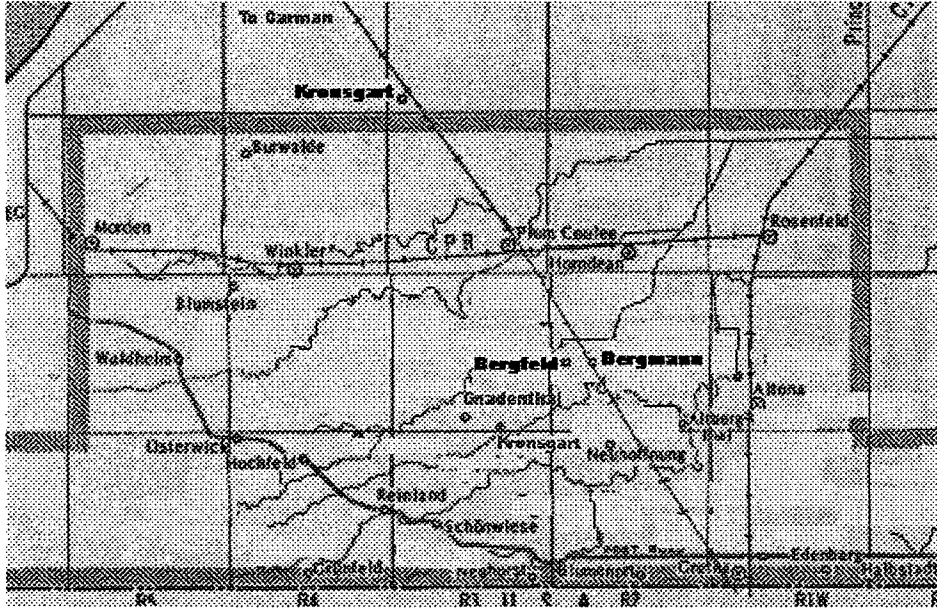


# Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No. 22

NEWSLETTER

September 1998



A map showing the Midland Railway, 1906-1925. Map adapted from *Mennonites in Canada, Vol. 1.*

The sisters were: Elisabeth m. Peter Labun; Katharina m. Jacob Penner; Sarah m. Jacob Wiebe; Maria m. Peter Born; Justina m. Peter Banmann; Susanna m. Abram Heide; Anna m. Cornelius Enns; Lena m. Henry Banmann; Margaret m. John Giesbrecht. They all owned land in this area where they farmed.

This became the village of Kronsart, the same name as a street village on the West Reserve which had disintegrated by this time. What gave it viability as a village was that the railway came through here from Plum Coulee. It was built by the Midland Railway Co. of Manitoba and passed through 3-4-6 which became the station of Kronsart in 1906. The Great Northern Railway from St. Paul and Grand Forks wanted to cross into Canada. It was decided to build the line to cross north into Canada at Gretna. From there it angled northwest connecting up with the line to Portage la Prairie in Plum Coulee. The Gretna station was built in 1906 by the Midland Railway Co. of Manitoba. This company was bought by the Great Northern Railway from St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1907. The Great Northern's first run to Portage la Prairie was in June, 1907. It operated the line until 1925 and then sold the line to the Brandon, Saskatchewan, & Hudson's Bay Railway Co. on 1 Oct. 1927.

Near the railway station, a general store was built. The first church building was erected in 1920. This was used as an M.B. church until 1954. However, families lived on their farm land, not in the village. Only two farm yards were in the immediate vicinity. The congregants had outgrown that building by 1954 so a second building was erected and this was used until 1972 when the village began to disintegrate. The railway had ceased to provide service there and members of the M.B. Church scattered to other churches in the area. Descendants of those original families still farm in the area although few live there any more.

*Bert Friesen is a member of the MMHS Membership and Publicity Committee*

## Settling A New Kronsart near the West Reserve

by Bert Friesen

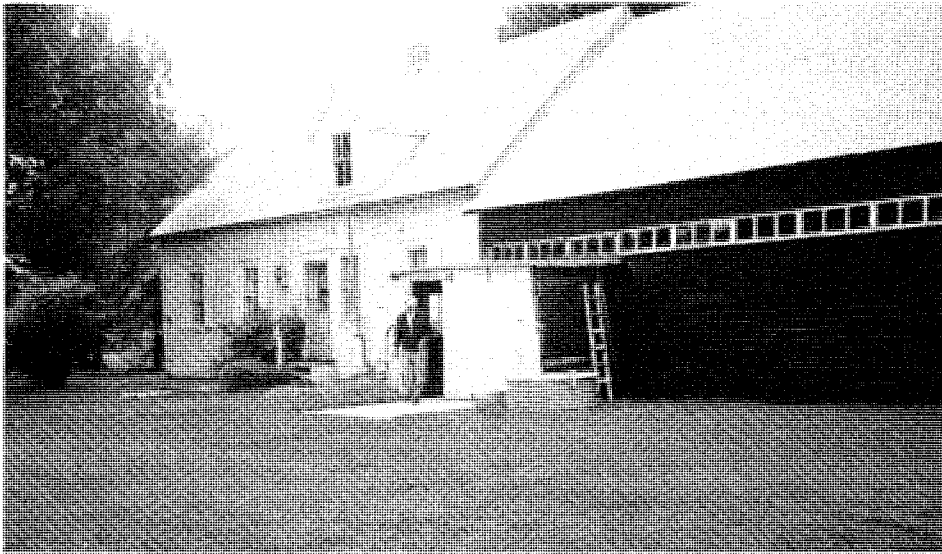
Anna and Gerhard Dyck arrived in Manitoba from Russia and homesteaded in the street village of Blumstein on the West Reserve in 1877. They acquired title to the quarter section NW 1-3-5w. They had twelve children who reached adulthood, nine daughters and three sons, and one daughter who died at age eight. All the children were born in Manitoba.

As the children grew up and married, they started their own lives, but often not close to their parents. There was just not enough land available in the area around Blumstein from the mid 1880s on. Some found land on the reserves in Saskatchewan. However, Anna and Gerhard longed to have all their children close by. So they started looking for a suitable place where more land would be available.

Gerhard finally settled on land 3-4-6. He moved here in 1897. This was land just north of the northern boundary of the West

Reserve, so it was actually not in the West Reserve. Their youngest child, Margareta, was the only child born here. That same year the Rosewell School was built in this area. This building was used as for church services until 1920. Over the next ten years from 1897 on, he continued buying land for his family. Eventually all of them lived in the area. His son Peter married Lena Sudermann from Vanderhoof, B.C. His youngest son, Abram, Peter's brother, was going to marry Lena's sister. The two brothers travelled to B.C. in 1918 for the wedding. Both caught the flu there, and in that epidemic, both died there in July. Abram (1894-1918) was 24 years old, and his brother, Peter (1889-1918) was 29 years old. So, instead of a wedding, there were two funerals in B.C.

Peter had already settled in the area near his parents before he died. His only surviving brother, Gerhard, also settled in the area after his marriage to Katharina Bueckert. Gerhard's son, grandson of Anna and Gerhard, still farms on this land.



Heritage House in Reinland, Manitoba. The building is about 90 years old. Henry Ens stands in the doorway.  
Photo: Courtesy of Marianne Janzen, Winnipeg, MB

## Mennonite Heritage House in Reinland, Manitoba Open

by Henry G. Ens

*After our June 20<sup>th</sup> MMHS tour visit to Reinland, we received some notes on "Heritage House" which we visited with tour guidance from a local resident and tour guide of that trip, Henry G. Ens. Henry sent us specific information on the house that we would like to share with our readers. The fact part of his brochure is a history of owners who have lived in that house. More information to follow in the next issue.*

Records indicate that Isaak Dueck (Dyck) and Susan Vaehr (Fehr) were the ones who "homesteaded" NW 13-1-4W in 1877 and resided on this lot. 1886 records indicate that John Wall married to widow Susan [Fehr] (Dyck) lived here at that time.

Abram Rempel, farmer/blacksmith, purchased the place in 1893/94 and probably constructed the house around 1910. In all likelihood the barn predates the house.

In the fall of 1923 Gerhard and Margaretha (Rempel) Ens purchased this property and for a short time, lived here together with the Abram Rempel family,

who later moved to Mexico. Abram Rempel had been about eleven years old when he had come to Canada in the 1874/75 migration and was around 59 years of age when they moved to Mexico. He lived to be approximately 83.

Purchase of this property included seven horses, as well as three (?) cows and a hog for slaughter. The farm also had two ploughs, two drills, two binders and some other equipment. The land consisted of 480 acres. Total purchase price was \$14,000.00 to be paid in ten years at an annual interest rate of 6%. Since the Enses had just come from Ukraine, and the C.P.R. had totally funded their passage of \$120.00 per person, they had no money for the down payment. This was then borrowed from Abram Rempel's brother, Franz Rempel, of Blumenort. The agreement was that they would first repay the "Reise Schuld" and then start payments on the farm and equipment.

Gerhard and Margaretha (Rempel) Ens continued to live here for the rest of their lives. Their daughter Maria was married to Heinrich Andres in 1924. Two years later he died of T. B. and Maria then moved

back to live with her aging parents whom she took care of with tender – loving care until both of them had passed on to their eternal reward, Gerhard died in 1949 and Margaretha in 1955.

In November of 1959 Maria Andres married Jacob F. Ens and they continued to live here until Maria died on August 10, 1995. About a year later widower Jacob Ens moved to the Heritage Apartments in Winkler. He sold the homestead to Abram E. Ens of Reinland.

Lot 9, complete with all buildings, was sold in order to settle the Estate of Maria Ens and thoughts are being given to maintain it as a 'Heritage House'. Its location and some of the building intricacies are unique to the earlier period of settlement of the West Reserve.

(To be continued).

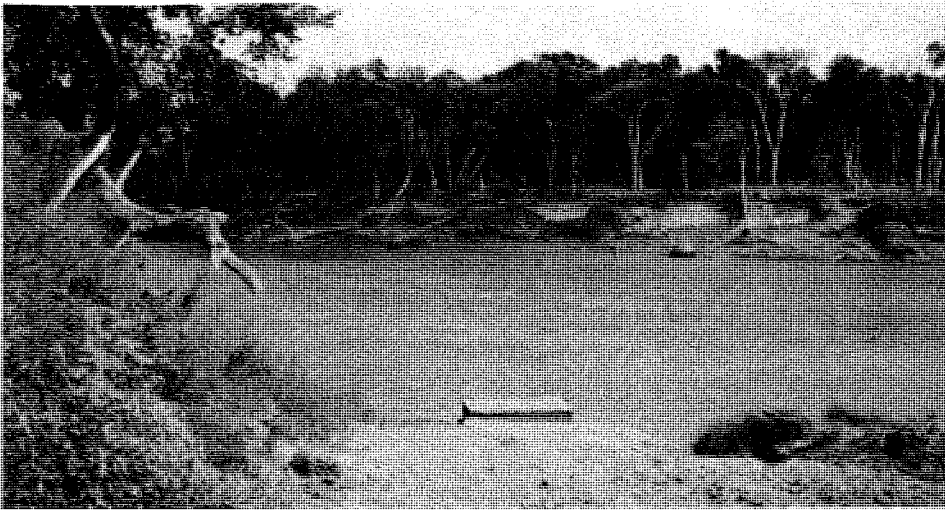
*Henry G. Ens is a member of the MMHS Historic Sites and Monuments Committee*

## Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Information Exchange Evening

The Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Committee announces an information evening on Wednesday, 14 October, 1998 at the Berney Theatre, Asper Jewish Community Centre, in Winnipeg. The theme is: "Profiles of Three Communities: Everything you wanted to know about Jews, Mennonites, and Ukrainians (or may not want to know)".

The three presenters representing their communities will be: Professor Rabbi M. Stern, Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein, and Dr. Stella Hryniuk. They will speak on the various groupings within their communities, the reasons for these groupings, the distinguishing features of these sub-groups, their institutions, and the challenges facing them.

Following their presentations there will be a time for questions, comments, and further discussion with refreshments being served. There will be no admission charge. Everyone is invited.



The landing site for Mennonites coming to the West Reserve from 1875 on. It can be seen at the old Fort Dufferin site on the Red River, just north of the Canada-US border and the town of Emerson. There are three old buildings left at this location. Plans are to have group activities here during the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2000. Photo credit: Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, MB

## More Mennonite-related Russian Documents Arrive

by Richard Thiessen

Recently members of the society have been busy acquiring and translating archival documents from the former Soviet Union. One project has involved the raising of funds to purchase documents acquired and prepared by Peter Rempel, an archival studies student in Moscow. A second project involved the hiring, for the second summer in a row, of a student from Ukraine to translate documents from the St. Petersburg microfilm collection, housed at the Centre for M.B. Studies and the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, as well as documents from the Braun (Odessa) microfilm collection, housed at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

The society received several documents from Peter Rempel during the summer, in addition to documents received from him last year. In all cases the documents are transcriptions of files located in the St. Petersburg archives. One set of files pertains to the immigration of Mennonites during the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many Mennonites migrating from West Prussia had to stop in the Russian city of Grodno, where they were processed before they continued on to the Molotschna. These documents include many Mennonites not included in B.H.

Unruh's *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe ....* The society currently has files relating to the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is expecting to receive a number of additional files for the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the end of the year. The society will also receive copies of the original files at that time.

A second set of files includes census documents for Chortitza for the years 1797 and 1806. A Russian transcription of the 1797 census was first brought to North America by Dr. David Rempel of California several years ago. Peter Rempel's transcription is clearer and thus more accurate. The 1806 census for all Chortitza villages has never been seen by researchers before. It contains a list of all heads of households when the property was first established, and the current head of household. The census is useful in that it gives researchers a clear indication as to who the original Chortitza settlers were.

The second project involved the hiring of Serge Chneiderman, a student who emigrated from Ukraine several years ago. Funding for this project came from a federal government summer employment grant, allowing the society to hire Serge for eight weeks. Last year most of the documents translated were from the St.

Petersburg microfilm collection. They include immigration documents from the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This year, Serge's work focussed on files from the Braun microfilm collection. Documents translated included school registers from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for a number of Molotschna village and forestry lists, also from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The society has plans to publish most of these translated documents. If you are interested in contributing funds to this project, please send them to the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg MB R2L 2E5, and designate them for the Genealogy project.

*Richard Thiessen is a member of the MMHS Executive Committee.*

## News and Book Notes

- It is anticipated that a new exhibition on exploitation of **child labour** will open on October 1 at the Mennonite Heritage Village at Steinbach. More information about this will be forthcoming. An exhibit currently open there deals with the life and work of Dr. and Mrs. Schilstra, both medical doctors, of Steinbach, Manitoba.
- CMBC Publications of Winnipeg did two book launches of a new book, **Memories of Grigorievka** (pb., 295 pp., 1998) on July 24 and 25. Its primary compilers and editors are Ted Friesen of Altona, and Elisabeth Peters of Winnipeg. The first event took place at the First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and the second at a Buhler family gathering held the next day at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, MB. The book can be ordered from the **CMBC Bookstore, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 (or call 1-204-888-6781).**
- The Hanover Steinbach Historical Society is sponsoring a series of **125th Mennonite-settlement-in-Manitoba-anniversary events** in 1999. Further information is available from Delbert Plett, 1-204-326-5464.
- Additional events are being planned for the year 2000 on the West Reserve which began in 1875. The Historic Sites and Monuments Committee of MMHS is in charge of these arrangements.

(cont. on p.4)

News and Book Notes (cont. from p.3)

• The family of the late Paul Klassen of Elm Creek, MB, has recently published a family history entitled **From the Steppes to the Prairies: A History of the Agnes and David Klassen Family in Russia and Canada** (pb. 303 pp., 1998). Contact the **Mennonite Heritage Centre** (1-204-888-6781) for further information and to obtain copies.

• A number of Mennonite Aussiedler families from the former Soviet Union families have begun to arrive in Winkler this summer. Their background and story is highlighted in a revised new edition of a book by Dr. Horst Gerlach (Weierhof) entitled **Die Russlandmennoniten: Ein Volk Unterwegs** (hdc., 184 pp., 1998), first published in 1992. For copies and further info contact Gary Waltner, Post Bolanden, 67297 Weierhof, Germany. The new archival facilities there were officially opened on September 5.

• The story of giving acute emergency help to a Manitoba Hutterite boy injured in an auger accident will be featured in the October issue of **Reader's Digest**. The surgeons were Dr. Norman Klippenstein and his colleagues of Brandon, Manitoba.

• The story of Mennonite COs serving in northern Manitoba as teachers under the auspices of the United Church during WWII will be told in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. Rev. Henry J. Gerbrandt of Winnipeg has provided some useful information already, and it is hoped that further interviews may enhance the story.

**Information Request**

A Halifax filmmaker, **Holly Preston**, is searching for personal stories, the experience of members of the Mennonite community in Canada who came through Pier 21 in Halifax between 1928 and 1971. She is interested in your story and also any documents, photographs, and film footage which you may be willing to share for a television documentary. Every story is significant. To contact **Holly** - email; [oceanview@navnet.net](mailto:oceanview@navnet.net) or telephone Citadel Productions at (902) 421-1326 ext.225.



The Langevin S.D. school house (left) and teacherage (right). The school was built around 1911, and has been dismantled this year. Among those attending were the photographer, Helen Friesen Adamik of Winnipeg, (1940-1941), and her mother, Susan Friesen Klippenstein of Altona, MB (ca.1918). Photo credit: Helen Adamik, Winnipeg, MB

**ENGENDERING THE PAST: WOMEN AND MEN IN MENNONITE HISTORY**

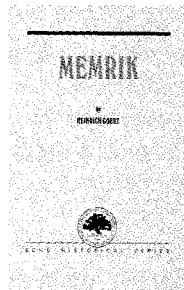
Oct.16-17,1998

A weekend symposium hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg in Winnipeg, Manitoba

**For further info** call Dr. Royden Loewen at (204) 326-2715 or 783-9391

*MMHS is a cosponsor of this symposium*

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