
HERITAGE POSTING



Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No.26 September 1999



The reenactment of the 31 July 1874 landing of Mennonite arrivals at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers was part of the 125th anniversary worship service held on Sunday, 1 August 1999 at The Forks in Winnipeg. Photo: Courtesy of Bill Stoesz, Altona, MB.



About 1800 persons gathered for the 125th anniversary service at the Mennonite Heritage Village museum, also on 1 August 1999. Many people attended both this and The Forks service. Photo: Courtesy of Isbrand Hiebert, *Der Bote* editor, Steinbach, MB

The 125th Anniversary of Mennonite Arrival Celebrated at The Forks and Museum

by Bert Friesen and Elmer Heinrichs

On Sunday, 1 August 1999 Mennonites from across the former East Reserve and West Reserve, and from Winnipeg, interested in their own history gathered to celebrate the 125th anniversary of their forefathers' arrival in Manitoba. Over 1000 people attended the Forks event and many more were at the worship service held at the Mennonite Heritage Village that same morning

The Forks event featured a reenactment of the landing of the first group with the S.S. International on a Friday evening, 31 July 1874. In this reenactment a local touring boat, the Paddlewheel, brought a group of period-costumed Mennonites to land at the Forks for 08.00 hr. All those on board were descendants of Mennonites arriving during the 1870s. Some, including Janet Warkentin and her daughter, were direct descendants of people arriving on the first boat load. The two, and some others told the story of the agonizing choices they had made in leaving Russia, the hardships of the trip, and the anxieties they faced pioneering in this new land.

It was a story based on actual experiences recorded in family diaries, oral stories passed on, and official documentation of this immigration. Several hymns of choice were sung by this group under the leadership of Rudy Schellenberg. Henry Fast gave a short meditation in which he praised the pioneering spirit of his ancestors, their faith in God and their optimism in the future of this province. Dr. John J. Friesen of CMBC led the service.

Written greetings were conveyed from the Governor-General of Canada, His Excellency the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, as well as the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, and personal greetings from the Member of Parliament for Provencher, David Iftody. As well, greetings were conveyed on

behalf of the province by the Honourable Jack Reimer, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba for Niakwa; and on behalf of the City and The Forks corporation by Mrs. Janice Penner.

Finally, all direct descendants of the 1870s migration were invited to board the river boat for a photograph to duplicate a well-known photograph taken of that original group landing 125 years ago.

At Mennonite Heritage Village, in Steinbach, another heritage service marked the 125th anniversary of the former Mennonite East Reserve settlement and the municipality of Hanover. Along with congregational singing, including "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty", the Southeast Manitoba Male Choir sang several numbers. Kristel Peters sang several solos and Dr. Royden Loewen with a talk titled "Remembering", recalled the family arrivals, early settlement, and the difficult years at the beginning. Rev. George Feenstra of the Steinbach United Church led the service and Karen Siemens Peters was the accompanist for the morning.

The readings included Deuteronomy 8:7 "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land flowing with streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley . . ."

In his sermon on the topic "To This Land Has The Lord Led Us!", long-time church worker and professor, Dr. Archie Penner of Kola, spoke about the Mennonites' search for a country and peace. From Prussia to Russia, to Canada, it was always a quest for a place where Mennonites could live and worship God faithfully. An offering to assist the MCC ministries in Ukraine, the area from where the 1870s immigrant families came, raised nearly \$5000.00. The whole service was aired by CHSM. ■

Ältester Gerhard Wiebe: A Strong Bergthaler Immigrant Leader

by Irene Enns Kroeker

Our earlier story of those who "made" the Mennonite migration of the 1870s would not be complete without clear reference to the role of three Ältesters, Peter P. Toews, Gerhard Wiebe, and Johann Wiebe of the Kleingemeinde, Bergthaler, and Reinländer groups respectively.

We were glad to get Delbert Plett's article on Toews for the previous issue, and now are equally pleased to present this feature on Ältester Gerhard Wiebe. An article on Ältester Johann Wiebe is scheduled for an upcoming issue in 2000.

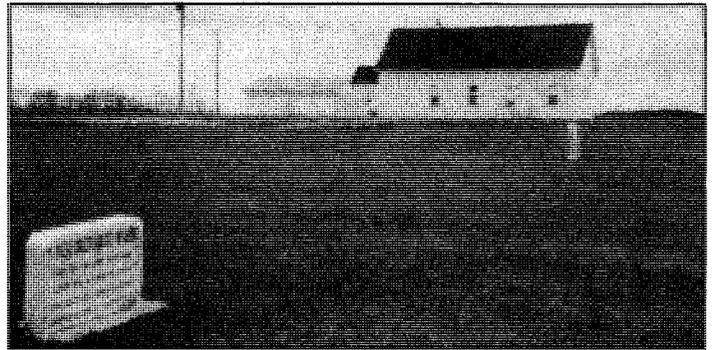
As I grew up in the Chortitzer Church, the name Ältester Gerhard Wiebe was always a familiar one. I heard about his life, his teachings and his struggles, both personal and political. The comments made about him were always in connection with a discussion about the vision of the Chortitzer (Bergthaler) Mennonite people and a reflection about what happened to them within the last 150 years.

There were the good old days, the difficult days, the heated discussions of what he did and how he did it; how he led his people and what country was/is the best place to live. This would follow with discussions on how perhaps we should have been more evangelical, less evangelical, more like our neighbours, separate from our neighbours, be educated by the government or by our own kind. I eventually acquired a sense of this powerful man, our "Ältester", the highest position one can have in my community. This was the man that led my grandfather and many others to this country.

Ältester Gerhard Wiebe was a man driven by a sense of morality and a strong desire to do God's will. Couple this desire with a strong personality and a clear sense of vision to follow the direct path that God had laid out for him, and it follows that this man would have a powerful influence on the Bergthaler Mennonite people.

The mission, derived from his traditional past, was clearly perceived - lead the people to the country that best served the goal of the Mennonite people - to be free to approach God as they felt was best, stay separated from the state, and adhere to the statements of faith and peace that they and the generations before them had been taught. In one sense, Gerhard Wiebe had little choice. He had been elected by the Bergthaler members to act on their behalf. He had the skills that would make him an excellent choice; a strong sense of vision, a devout man who could not be swayed from his faith, and an innate sense of organizational skills and persuasive skills. It is clear that he needed to draw on all of these skills throughout his lengthy term in office.

Marrying Elizabeth Dyck in 1857, Gerhard Wiebe and his new wife lived in Heuboden, a village of the twenty-year old Bergthaler settlement in south Russia. They had ten children, of whom five would later have their own families. Wiebe began his service in the church as a deacon in 1854 and in 1861 was elected as minister.



The headstone of Gerhard Wiebe in the Chortitzer church cemetery in Chortitz (now Randolph), Manitoba. In the background is the church building of this congregation. (See also the Jacob Doerksen story in the June HP, p.7). Photo: Courtesy of Orlando Hiebert, Tourond, MB

Five years later, in 1866, he was elected as the Ältester, replacing Ältester Jacob Braun.

To accept the office of Ältester was no simple decision. Difficult issues abounded, and it was clear that the Bergthaler people would need a strong leader to face the future.

The Molotschna Colony congregations were experiencing strife among themselves. One group of Mennonites (Old Colony) was filing accusations against other groups, and Mennonite Brethren were spreading in the area, boldly stating their point of view with a fever and zeal that would at times result in families and church communities being torn apart. Ältester Wiebe set the tone for his people¹. Confident that the example of peace that Menno Simons had set forth was the right one, Wiebe kept his vision clear and the Bergthaler Gemeinde listened. Consequently, they remained free of strife at this time.

Every Mennonite has heard the story of the 1870s immigration. Russia was not the place to be for anyone who believed that a non-confrontational solution to conflict was the answer. Ältester Wiebe was unshakable in his conviction that Mennonites were not to go to war. He was willing to express this to the Russian authorities in no uncertain terms, and my former neighbours tell me that "you have to have known him to understand" just how unshakeable he was. A person with a vision backed by his faith, religion and a following of people who had some power within the Russian community due to their skills as farmers, was a formidable person to contend with. In the end Ältester Wiebe would organize the Bergthaler people into a solid group and lead more than 500 families to Canada.

Upon arrival in Manitoba, the Wiebes settled in Chortitz (of the East Reserve), Manitoba. Wiebe continued to serve in the church, his ministry now an even busier and involved appointment. The Chortitzer Church was the place where congregational meetings, weddings, and important ceremonies were conducted and Ältester Wiebe continued to lead his people.²

Then a dark period followed in the history of this revered leader. It is true that a "great pall" falls over the Chortitzer people as they speak of this time in their church history. Everyone remains mysteriously silent about something that saddened our Ältester deeply.

(cont. on p.4)

The Andreas Schrag Mennonite Delegate Diary of 1873

by Lawrence Klippenstein

The story of eleven Russian Mennonite delegates travelling to Canada and the USA in 1873 is quite well known. We touched on it again in the June issue of *HP*.

Much of the data giving us the account of that trip comes from diaries kept by several members of the delegation. All the ones extant (Leonard Sudermann, Paul Tschetter, and John F. Funk) have been published, except the Andreas Schrag document. This one we want to feature here.¹

Schrag was one of the two delegates (Tobias Unruh being the other) who represented the Volhynian Mennonites on that trip. He was a layman who left south Russia with the third group of delegates in late April of 1873.²

Schrag's diary-journal, extant now only in portions, was translated into English by Orpha V. Schrag from a transliteration made by Lydia Unruh Schrag.³ The section dealing with the Manitoba portion of the trip is brief and does not offer much that is new. Still, it is relevant and **Heritage Posting** is pleased to publish the section here.⁴

At night we came to Fargo. A boat was waiting at Moorhead the next morning so we boarded and sailed on the Red River toward Manitoba.⁵ We were on this ship for four days until we came to the English Province and the city of Winnipeg. Here we stayed one day until the officials had five wagons prepared to drive our 25 men into the plains and prairies. Two wagons were sent ahead with tents and provisions.

On this route by Brukwerts⁶ and throughout entire stretches of prairie we saw thousands and thousands of grasshoppers. They were still small - up to an inch long. We looked at the land for four days. It was very flat and low and at places there was much water and it was so swampy that we had to drag out horses and wagons. It did not suit us here.

We then parted. I, the two Tschetters, Br. Ewert, Br. Unruh, and Br. Funk went back to Dakota so we could get a better look at it. The others stayed.⁷ We again boarded a ship to Fargo.

Endnotes

1. See Leonard Sudermann, *Russia to America: In Search of Freedom* (Steinbach, MB: Derksen Printers, 1974); "A Journey to America: Excerpts from Paul Tschetter's Journal," in Jacob Kleinsasser, ed. *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren, Vol. II* (Ste. Agathe, MB: Crystal Springs Colony, 1998), 706-754; and Kempes Schnell, "John F. Funk, 1835-1930, and the Mennonite Migration of 1873-1875", *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XXIV (July, 1950), 1988ff.
2. The first two groups, i.e. the Bergthal and Kleinegemeinde delegates had left in late February and mid-April respectively.
3. Orpha V. Schrag, translator and editor, "The Diary of Andreas Schrag in Historical Perspective", unpublished paper, 1974, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, USA.
4. A typed copy of the original German manuscript which has many pages missing is included as an appendix of Orpha Schrag's work cited above.
5. Translator Schrag designates the date of boarding as June 13, though Andreas did not mention the date as such. Sudermann gave the time of boarding as "On June 13 at quarter of eight in the morning". See *In Search of Freedom*, 13. Some diaries use the Russian Old Style calendar so entries there begin at June 1. Bill Schroeder in *The Bergthal Colony* (Winnipeg:

CMBC Publications, 1986), erroneously dates the departure on Saturday, June 14 (p.64).

6. Brukwerts seems to be the name of a locality which Schrag connects specifically with seeing many grasshoppers (other diarists tend to stress the swarms of mosquitoes). Brukwerts, as a place, has not been located. Conceivably it could also refer to a family with whom they made contact on the trip.

7. The ones staying would have included the representatives of the Bergthal Colony, Jacob Peters, Heinrich Wiebe, and Kornelius Buhr, along with Kornelius Toews and David Klassen of the Kleinegemeinde of south Russia, as well as government immigration agents, William Hespeler and Jacob Y. Shantz.

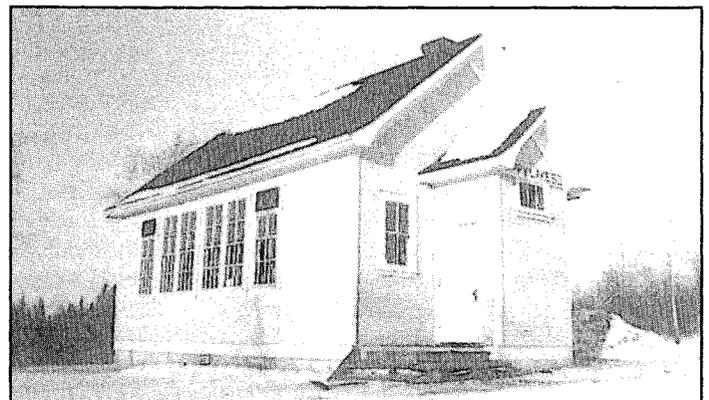
Mennonite Swedenborgian Research: An Update

In 1992 Leonard Doell of Aberdeen, SK, and Dr. Adolf Ens of CMBC, published an article in *Journal of Mennonite Studies* titled "Mennonite Swedenborgians". It brought together various scattered references to what may have been treated as a "fringe group" at the time. The Swedenborgian development was however a movement with a good deal of momentum in the heyday of its influence in Mennonite communities of Western Canada.

Both authors have continued their interest in the topic. Doell, for instance, has a list of several hundred Germans known to have had membership in this church. We are learning about new sources for study on this theme, particularly the work of Doreen Funk of Quesnel, B.C. We introduced her project in the March issue of *HP* (see p.4.) She has recently sent a number of photos including one of the Happy Lake school building where, incidentally, the recently retired Professor of Music at CMBC, Dr. George Wiebe, also taught in 1946-1947.

We established contact as well with Michael Hamm who works at Suite 202, 10816A-82 Ave., Edmonton, AB T6E 2B3. He submitted some very interesting articles from Swedenborgian publications, including one "A Visit to the Northwest" by Rev. F.E. Gyllenhaal. It describes numerous contacts with Mennonite families in the Happy Lake school district area, as well as the Rosthern, SK area where they visited the Wilfred Klippensteins and other Mennonite families, some from Manitoba originally. They went on then to Grande Prairie, Alberta as well as Dawson Creek, BC.

The most recent addition to these research files is a book **As I Remember It**, just published by Peter Letkemann who grew up in the Arrow Lake district of the Renata, B.C. area. He includes a chapter on his experiences in the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) congregation of that community. A Winnipeg member of the group and an excellent resource for research, Tom Eidse, passed away in Steinbach a year or two ago.



The Happy Lake School building in the Boggy Creek area near Roblin, MB. Photo: Courtesy of Doreen Funk, Quesnel, B.C.

My Grandfather's First Store in Steinbach

by John C. Reimer

In 1998 the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society really came of age. It celebrated its fortieth birthday, though possibly largely unnoticed by its members and the general public.

One of the founders of the Society was John C. Reimer, a long-time teacher in the Steinbach area. He had a special interest in founding a Mennonite museum which was the first major project of the new Society.

In 1979 the museum was taken over by a separate organization created to maintain and develop Mennonite Heritage Village. The organization is called Mennonite Heritage Village (Canada) Inc. It is 20 years old this year.

To heighten awareness of these "birthday" developments, Heritage Posting plans to publish several articles related to the museum's history. We are indebted to MHV board member Arnold Reimer and his siblings for sharing materials prepared by their late father, John C. Reimer, who has left us first-hand accounts of events which are central to this story.¹

I shall start with my grandfather Klaas Reimer's first store building in Steinbach². It was built in 1884. The business actually began in his home, a log house built in 1877. After the log house became too small to include a store, he built a frame house and barn together, adding the frame building to the log house as the first store building in Steinbach. In later years after grandfather and his sons had built a new store in 1905, fronted on the street as K. Reimer and Sons, the first store building was sold to a farmer south of Steinbach.

After it had served different purposes at different places it came back to town again. Some years later I discovered the building which I knew so well, in Steinbach. One end wall and the door, and the floor were missing. I went to the man who owned it and asked what he wanted for the building. He said, "I have sold it to my son."

Since it had been my grandfather's store and the first store in Steinbach, I wanted to buy it. So I went to the son to ask if he would sell it to me. He thought he had a chance to make some money so he asked for \$200.00. I thought that was about four times the value of it, at best. I did not want to displease him. "Is it worth that much?" I asked.

He said he wanted to make a chicken barn out of it. I thought he might change his mind and not sell it at all so I paid the price. I had been in my grandfather's store as a child, I had worked in there for my uncle when I was twenty-one, and again after I got married.

I was interested in history and in antiques. I had saved some of my childhood toys and had gathered some antiques. When I bought the old store in 1951 I had it moved to our lot on 7 Main St. and had it restored as much as possible to its original state, paint and all.

I left the brackets in there to put on the shelves. I had found an original counter of that very store in a different store in Steinbach and purchased it for \$30.00. I moved that into the store, and added my other collection of other store fixtures from the pioneer period. I had a till of the 18th century and a scale, and ribbon show case, as well as a number of other store-related items.

I had also gathered some home-made household furniture pieces

dating to pioneer days. I displayed all of these things in a presentable manner and put a big sign on the outside of the building. It said: This building is the first store of Steinbach. The three by four foot sign also stated that the store was built by Klaas Reimer in 1884.

The historic building was soon familiar to people far and wide. It was kept locked but I told the people that I would open it to show them around if requested. Bus tour groups would make appointments and came to see it, as would many other people.

The building remained here from 1952 to 1965 when it was closed and moved to the back of the lot. The collection was sold and donated to the Mennonite Heritage Village museum which opened in the spring of 1966³.

Endnotes

1. John C. Reimer, a long-time teacher and local historian in the Steinbach area was born in 1896 and died 19 March 1990. His obituary was published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *The Carillon*. In 1959 he edited *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Klaas und Helena Reimer mit Biographen der ersten drei Generationen* (Steinbach, MB: Reimer Reunion Committee), pp., 404 pp. He also began a diary in 1915 and kept it up for over 70 years.

2. For the life story of Klaas Reimer cf. Royden Loewen, "Klaas R. Reimer: From Rags to Riches but not from Village to World," in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve, 1874-1910* (Steinbach, MB, 1994), 304-312, along with excerpts from Reimer's diary in Loewen's recent book *From the Inside Out*, pp.134-145 (review on p.8).

3. The collection is said to have had 300 items at the time. Cf. Victor Schwartzman, "Mennonite Way of Life Lingers Beside the Windmill," *Globe and Mail*, May 2, 1987. The old store remains a favourite spot for visitors to the MHV even today.

Ältester Gerhard Wiebe

(cont. from p.2)

It was as difficult a time for his members as it was for the Ältester. Forgiveness for himself, his actions and feelings were slow in coming. Depression set in and he resigned from his position in 1882.

Then he remarried, his first wife having died in 1876. This became another source of contention among the Chortitzer members. He had chosen to marry an outsider, something which he had long preached against and had been adamant about. However, according to his family members, he had felt the forgiveness of God and was at peace with himself at the end of his life.

Today, we credit the success of the Chortitzer settlements and community to the foresight of Ältester Gerhard Wiebe. As Mennonites slowly assimilate into the larger Canadian culture, men like our leaders will not soon be forgotten.

Endnotes

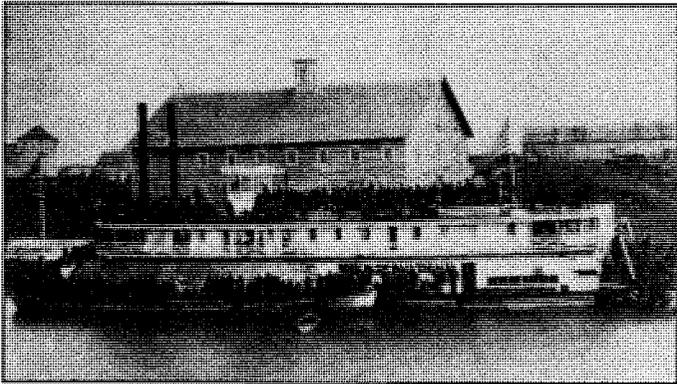
1. Delbert Plett, "Gerhard Wiebe Biography," *Preservings* No.6 (June, 1995), 2-5.

2. Chortitz is called Randolph today. A map of the 1920 residents is found in Plett's article cited above. Cf. also Jacob Doerksen, "The Chortitz Church is now 102 Years Old" in *HP*, No.25, June, 1999, p.7.

3. For another recent research article on Ältester Wiebe see Adolf Ens, "Ältester Gerhard Wiebe," in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve 1874-1910* (Steinbach, MB, 1994), 313-321.

Irene Kroeker, a member of the MMHS Membership and Publicity Comm. is a teacher and local historian residing in the Steinbach area.

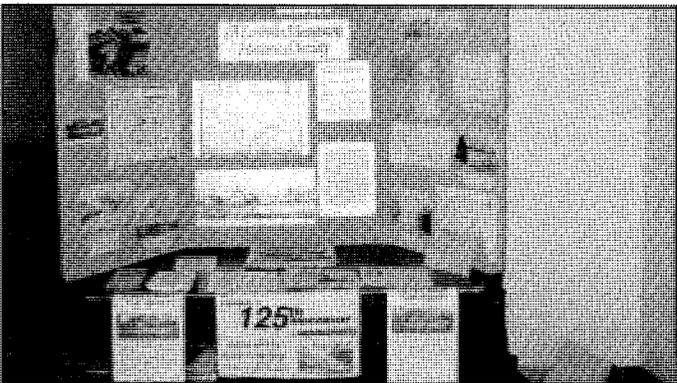
MMHS News & Notes



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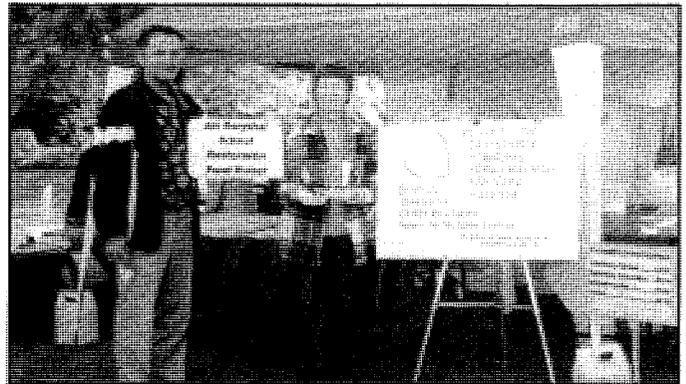
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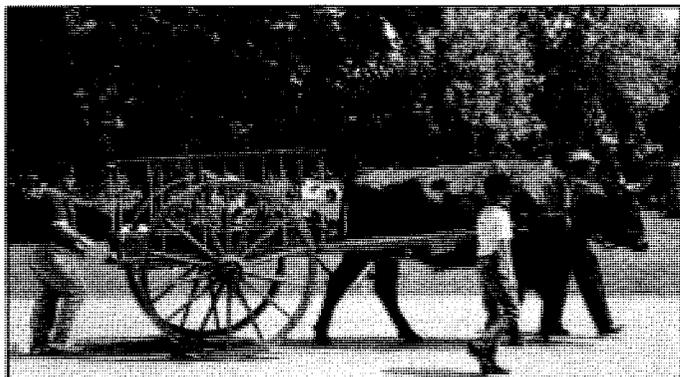
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1. The S.S. International brought the first Russian Mennonite families to settle in Manitoba on 31 July 1874. The families had come via Québec City, Toronto, the Great Lakes, and Duluth, with rail connection to Moorhead-Fargo because the newly-opened (1871) Dawson Trail from Ontario to Winnipeg was still considered unsuitable for immigration travel. Photo: Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.
2. The 1 August 1999 reenactment of the arrival of the first Mennonite families in Winnipeg. Wilmer Penner of Steinbach wrote a drama for this occasion. Photo: Courtesy of Bill Stoesz, Altona, MB.
3. An MMHS exhibit on the Post Road story and the migration events of 1874, mounted at the Sunflower Festival in Altona on 31 July 1999. Photo: Courtesy of Elmer Heinrichs, Altona, MB.
4. At the 125th anniversary worship service of 1 August 1999 held in a big tent at the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB. See p.1 for the full story. Photo: Courtesy of Isbrand Hiebert, Steinbach, MB.
5. The MMHS Historic Sites and Monuments Committee sponsored an Altberghthal School Renovation fund-raiser with a Mennonite Strawberry Extravaganza at the Altona Sunflower Festival, 30 July - 1 August 1999. Anne and Ray Klippenstein of Rosenfeld were in charge of the booth. Photo: Courtesy of Elmer Heinrichs, Altona, MB.
6. A view of Castle Klippenstein located at Radeberg near Dresden, Germany. Initial information about the castle was submitted by Dr. Glenn Penner of Guelph, Ontario, and the photo came from Art and Justina Voth Dyck of Renton, Washington, USA, who visited the castle recently. For further information on the castle try <http://www.radeberg.de/sehensw.htm>

125th Manitoba Mennonite Anniversary



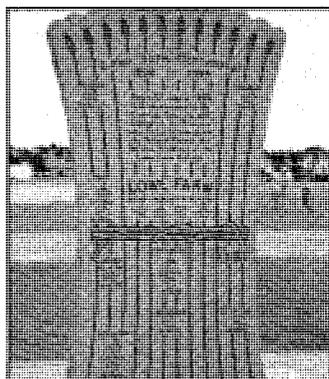
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*The Chair in Mennonite Studies and
The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Present*

1874 Revisited

A 125th Mennonites in Manitoba Anniversary Symposium

Friday, 7:00 p.m., 1 October 1999 at
Eckhardt Gramattè Hall, University of Winnipeg

Keynote Address:

Dr. John Warkentin

York University

“The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba Reconsidered”

Saturday, 08.30 - 17.00 hr., 2 October 1999 at
Mennonite Heritage Centre

1. A scene from the 125th anniversary celebration of July 9-11 in the village of Chortitz southwest of Winkler. The village was founded in 1875 with 32 landowners resident there. Photo and information: Courtesy of Anne Thiessen, Winnipeg, MB.

2. A Hutterite choir from the Oak Bluff (Morris) Colony offered a concert in song at the July 1 Canada Day service at the Mennonite Heritage Village museum. Dr. John J. Friesen of CMBC in Winnipeg was worship leader for the occasion. The programme was arranged by the Cultural Committee of MHV. Photo: Isbrand Hiebert.

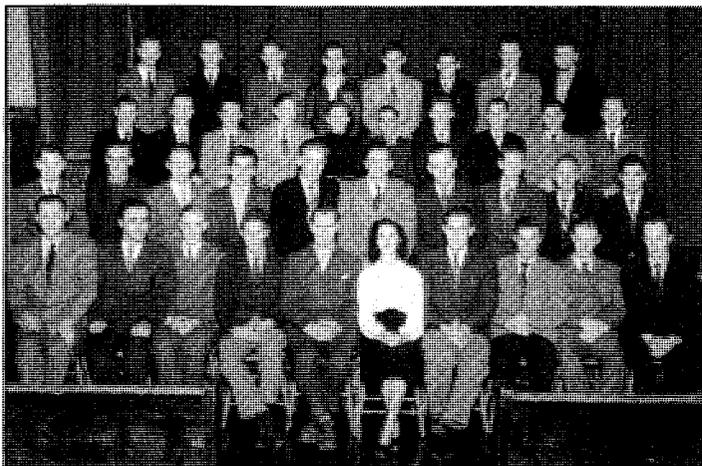
3. Great grand daughter Margaret Lundin of Gretna, MB is shown with the headstone of the late David A. Schellenberg which was relocated to Cairn Corner at Gretna as part of a family reunion held there on 24 July. The Schellenberg home was a regular stopping-off place for people using the Post Road in the early years of settlement in the area. Photo: Courtesy of Elmer Heinrichs, Altona, MB.

4. A centennial (1899-1999) cairn erected in the Lowe Farm community at a homecoming held on July 2-4. Photo: Courtesy of Bill Stoesz, Altona, MB. See full stories in the *Red River Valley Echo*.

5. An auction sale scene from the Peter D. Reimer family reunion held at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, MB, on 13-15 August 1999. Inset: Maria (Friesen) Reimer (1904-1994) and Peter D. Reimer (1899-1955). Photo: Courtesy of Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, and Jim Peters, Steinbach.

Upcoming Events

- The Hoepfner Reunion Committee is planning another family reunion for July, 2000. For further info call Ed Hoepfner at 204-896-3328.
- Saskatchewan Mennonites will hold a 125th Anniversary Service in Osler, SK on October 8, 1999.
- Dr. Royden Loewen will present *1874 Revisited* lectures at Bethel College in N. Newton, KS this fall.



This was the the Men's Glee Club Choir of the Manitoba Normal School Class of 1948-49. The class had a 50th anniversary reunion at Brandon, Manitoba, on June 11-13, 1999. Eighteen of the choir members came from Mennonite communities, at least eight being graduates of the MCI in Gretna (Diedrich Gerbrandt, back row extreme left; Henry Unruh and John Neufeld, back row, 4th and 3^d from right resp.; the late Henry Froese, third row 4th from left; Lawrence Klippenstein 2nd row, extreme left; Ernie Pankratz, 2nd row, 5th from left; Jake K. Klassen, 2nd row, 6th from left; the late David Wiebe, 1st row, extreme left). Director of the choir was Huntley Cameron, with Nancy McIlwraith as pianist (front centre, 2nd and 3^d from left). Photo: Courtesy of Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, MB.



Pier 21 is the name given to an immigration arrival centre in Halifax by way of which about a million people came to Canada from 1928-1971. Hundreds of Mennonites who came from Germany and elsewhere in Europe in the post WWII group known as DPs, recall this spot as the place they first set foot on Canadian soil. The Canadian government has recently spent \$9 mill. to renovate the premises, closed since 1971, as a commemorative centre to help one-time immigrants preserve their stories. In the photo above is a group of immigrants who arrived in those years. (Can anyone identify individuals?) Dr. Waldemar Janzen, recently retired Professor of O.T. at CMBC, (inset - a student at the Backnang refugee camp in 1948) and his mother, Helene, came to Canada via Pier 21 in 1948. Photo: Courtesy of *Rhubarb*, Spring, 1999, p.22, and *Globe and Mail*, June 28, 1999, p.A5.

MMHS News

(cont. from p.5)

- The Historic Sites and Local History Committees are meeting to discuss 125th anniversary celebraton preparations in the former West Reserve in 2000.
- Talks are underway to put up an MMHS exhibit in the Pembina Valley Art Gallery in Morden.
- Neuberghthal village is planning a homecoming on 1 July 2000.
- An autumn board meeting for MMHS is in the making.
- The MMHS photo exhibit at The Forks ends on 30 September.

Book Notes

(cont. from p.8)

Klassen Kroeker Dueck (1875-1939) (Steinbach, MB: John W. Dueck Book Committee, 1999, pb., 255 pp., \$18.95). It was translated and edited by Levi Dueck, and may be purchased at the MHV Museum, Box 1136, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0, ph. 204-326-9661.

- The story of the 50-year history of the Sargent Mennonite Church of Winnipeg will be told in an upcoming volume being prepared for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the congregation in early October. The writer of the volume is John Dyck. The book is entitled *Bless the Lord O My Soul: Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church 1949-1999*. For further information contact the author at 204-885-2425.

- The Lowe Farm community recently celebrated a centennial of its existence in the area. One of the projects was the production of a new history book to expand an earlier 75th anniversary edition. Its title is *Reflections of Lowe Farm 1899-1999*. (Lowe Farm, MB: Lowe Farm Centennial Committee, hdc., 320 pp.), and can be ordered from Paul Joyal, ph. 204-746-6697.

- A 125th anniversary of Mennonites coming to Manitoba twelve-page special insert of the *Winnipeg Free Press* was published on July 24. It was edited by Delbert Plett and Adolf Ens. The insert may be ordered from Mennonite Heritage Centre.

- Belatedly we note the publication of two items by Parks Canada on the Neuberghthal Historical Site (near Altona, MB): Peter J. Priess, "Cultural Resources of the Neuberghthal National Historic Site: An Archaeological Perspective," (pb., 77 pp., 1998), and Shelley Bruce, "Neuberghthal National Historic Site Fence Study," (pb., 32 pp., 1998). An article titled "Preserving Resources at Neuberghthal National Historic Site," by Frieda Esau Klippenstein was published in *Research Links*, Winter, 1997, pp. 6-7. For further information on these items, call Western Canada Service Centre at 204-983-5841, or fax 204-983-8187.

- Margaret Penner Toews, originally from Greenland, SD (St. Anne, MB), has published at least seven devotional books since her publishing "debut" around the early 1970s. Her most recent one is entitled *Through the Scent of Water* (Neilburg, SK, Praise Hymn Publishers, 1997, pb., 319 pp. (reprint of 1996 edition which sold over 6000 copies). It is described as a "devotional book for women". Earlier titles include *Five Loaves and two small fishes* (1976), *Fly High My Kite* (1982); *Fourth Watch* (1993), and *Paul of the Unfriendly Town*. For further information contact the author at Box 345, Neilburg, SK S0M 2C0, or ph. 306-823-4786.

- The Peter D. Reimer clan gathered at Steinbach Bible College in Steinbach, MB, on August 13-15, 1999, to commemorate the 100th birthday of the late Peter D. Reimer of Steinbach. A book, compiled and edited by a grandson, Jim Peters, was prepared for the occasion. It is entitled *A Godly Heritage. A Lasting Legacy: Peter D. and Maria Reimer* (pb., 40 pp., \$5.00). For further information contact Jim Peters, % SRSS, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

Book Reviews

Royden Loewen, ed. **From the Inside Out: The Rural Worlds of Mennonite Diarists, 1863-1929** (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), pb. and hdc., 377 pp., \$24.95 and \$45.00 respectively.

Reviewed by John J. Friesen

In *From the Inside Out*, Royden Loewen continues his effort to illuminate the everyday life of ordinary people. The volume contains 21 diaries from ordinary Mennonites: women, men and youth. The diaries are taken primarily from the Hanover municipality in southeastern Manitoba and Waterloo County in Ontario. Their date of origin is the period between 1863 and 1929.

The diaries are not reproduced in full, but represented by sections from each of the diaries. The selections included here are usually a year in length so that they portray a broad range of daily life activity. All the selections are published in English.

Loewen notes that these diarists did not normally comment on the great events of their day, nor did they discuss major issues. By and large they recorded the events of daily life: illnesses, funerals, weddings,, childbirths, visiting of neighbours; the worship services, revival meetings, and the disciplinary actions of congregations.

In this book of diaries Loewen follows the emphases of his earlier book *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930*, published in 1993. There, as well as in numerous articles, Loewen stressed the importance of the household for Mennonite community life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although these diarists do not focus formally on households, much of the life revealed in them is also household-centred.

The strength of Loewen's published work is that he is able to draw attention to and illumine the life of ordinary people in a way that former histories, relying on official documentation and the contribution of leaders, often did not do. Here the significant community contribution made by people often overlooked is brought to the fore: women, ordinary men, and youth.

This volume is interesting reading and contributes to a better understanding of Mennonite life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Dr. John J. Friesen is Professor of History and Theology at CMBC, Winnipeg.

Elmer Heinrichs and Jacob Peters, eds. **Dit Sied Yant Sied: The Johann and Susanna Leppky/Loeppky Family, 1831-1998** (Winnipeg, MB: The Loeppky Reunion Committee, 1999), hdc., 380 pp., \$55.00.

Reviewed by Richard Thiessen

"Dit Sied Yant Sied" (this side - that side) is a Low German phrase used by Mennonites of southern Manitoba to designate whether Mennonites resided on the east or west side of the Red River. Thus this is an appropriate title for this book, which chronicles the story of the descendants of Johann G. Loeppky and

Susanna (Toews) Loeppky. The Loeppky family migrated from the Bergthal Colony to Manitoba in 1875, and its descendants settled on both sides of the river.

The book is divided into twelve chapters - one for each of the ten Loeppky children. An introductory chapter and a final one, which focuses on 1958 and 1995 reunions held by the extended family, are also included. Those chapters which chronicle the descendants of the Loeppky siblings are organized in a similar manner, with a brief outline of each family, biographical sketches of descendants, and numerous photographs and illustrations. Each chapter concludes with a genealogy section listing all descendants in each family group, including their dates of birth, marriage, and death. The book concludes with an alphabetical listing by surname of Generations Two, Three, and Four direct descendants and the pages on which they appear.

The book is very attractive. Country Graphics and Printing of Rosenort, MB, did a fine job reproducing the numerous photographs. Some may find the format a little hard to adjust to, since data on individuals is located in two sections, with biographical data on one page and statistical data on a different page. However, the alphabetical index at the back of the book is very helpful in locating most individuals. The committee is to be commended for putting together a fine genealogical study and presenting family members and other interesting people.

Richard Thiessen is Director of Learning Resources at Concord College in Winnipeg.

JMU Volume Launch Coming

A Sharing of Diversities: Proceedings of the Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Conference "Building Bridges" (pb., 264 pp., \$19.95), containing selected papers from the August, 1995 JMU conference in Winnipeg, is now off the press. The book was edited by Fred Stambrook, Bert Friesen, and Mildred Gutkin.

You are invited to the launch of this volume at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, 4 October 1999, in the Rotunda of the Manitoba Legislative Building in Winnipeg.

For further information contact Ken Reddig, Mennonite Heritage Centre, ph. 204-888-6781, e-mail krreddig@confmenno.ca

Book Notes

- Vol. 1, No.3 of *Rhubarb* is now in print. To obtain a copy contact Glenn Bergen, CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 at ph. 204-888-6781. Copies of Issue No.2 on the theme of *Immigration* are still available also. Rev. Frank F. Enns read excerpts from his story in Issue No.2 at an August 1, 1999, MHV Pioneer Days workshop.

- In the genre of journals and diaries is the book *Prairie Pilgrims: Peter Loewen Dueck (1842-87), Johann Wiebe (1865-1932) and Maria*

(cont. on p.7)