

# HERITAGE POSTING



Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No.27 December 1999



The Polk Station home of the Franz Kliever family at Dallas, Oregon.  
Inset: Franz Kliever. Photos: Courtesy of K. Kliever, Peoria, AZ

## Franz Kliever: Molotschna Pioneer on the West Reserve

by Claire and Kenneth Kliever

Franz Kliever (1845-1898) grew up in the strong Mennonite family of Susanna Kroeker (1811-1862) and Peter Kliever (1786-1860) residing in the village of Rudnerweide, Molotschna settlement, south Russia. He was the twelfth of fourteen children, and one of five siblings to emigrate to North America during the 1870s<sup>1</sup>.

Franz and Maria (Unrau, b.1841), and his sister, Susanna (Mrs. Cornelius Voth), along with David and Anganetha Schellenberg, and six other families travelled on the S.S. Borussia, and arrived in Québec City on 25 July 1878<sup>2</sup>. They will have found their way to the East Reserve, Manitoba, in mid-August, and made their first home with Franz's brother Gerhard (m. to Helena Buhr), living in the Schantzenberg area near Niverville at the time<sup>3</sup>.

In Russia Franz had farmed and taught school. There is speculation that he was sent to Puchtin to teach Mennonite farming methods to Jewish families. His son Jacob was born there in 1874. During the first winter at Schantzenberg, Franz taught his own children, and those of several other families. Almost immediately, however, he began to consider moving to the West Reserve, which was reputed to have better land.

The records suggest that Franz and Maria joined a number of other families (including most of those who came with them on the S.S. Borussia) to found the village of Neuanlage near Gretna in 1879<sup>4</sup>. It was originally situated on the SW quarter of section 9, Township 1, Range 1W, and then moved south across the Post Road to the homestead property of Franz Kliever, i.e. the NW

quarter of Section 4, Township 1, Range 1W, in 1885.

The families listed on the village roster also had homestead properties in Sections 4,5,6 and 9 of Range 1W, and Section 1, Township 1 of Range 2W. According to Document #8246 in the Morden Land Titles Office, Mr. Kliever "sold" the ten lots to the village for the grand amount of \$1.00. This agreement was dated 15 July 1885. Franz's application for Homestead Patent indicated that he had 50 acres in crops and built a 12' x 32' dwelling in 1879, as well as a 16' x 36' stable in 1880<sup>5</sup>.

Early life in Manitoba was difficult but also blessed. From Franz's writing in *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* we catch a glimpse of the struggles and victories of the time. One article, dated 1 June 1881, noted the Red River being so high that houses in Emerson and West Lynne had to be tied down to keep them from floating away. He also wrote of "rampant sickness among the children, causing some deaths". In a later article he mentioned the "exceptionally good fruit...because of good rain." He added, "Now we are seeing a blessed harvest that is coming and our plea is, 'O Lord, guard the same.'"<sup>6</sup>

A grandson would later comment on Franz's hard work, and his strong desire to make ends meet. In 1880 he began to work as a clerk, and do carpentry work at a small store owned by Otto Schultz and Erdmann Penner in Neuanlage. The store was later moved to Gretna. He continued to work there while his wife and children looked after the farm<sup>7</sup>.

Franz also became active in community affairs. He began to serve as the secretary treasurer of the newly-formed RM of Douglas in 1884, with the council meeting regularly in the home of another Neuanlage family, the Johann Klassens<sup>8</sup>. In 1888 Franz became a member of a five-man committee which was appointed to prepare for opening a secondary school (*Fortbildungsschule*) in the area. A year later the Mennonite Educational Institute with sixty students, and a six-man board which also included Kliever, was a reality. The school was later moved to Altona, and a new one built in Gretna in 1908 continued as the Mennonite Collegiate Institute. It has functioned for more than ninety years (over 100 if we add to it the Gretna years of the MEI) with distinction<sup>9</sup>.

Poor health forced Franz to resign from Council in 1889. At about the same time he also decided to sell his farm and move to Oregon, along with many other farmers who were supporters of the MEI. Oregon had a better climate, as far as these people were concerned<sup>10</sup>.

Franz sold his original homestead, i.e. the NW quarter of Section 1, Township 1, Range 1W, to six other members of the Neuanlage community: Peter Abrams, Jr., Peter Abrams, Sr., Albert Unrau (Franz's brother-in-law), Johann Schellenberg, David Schellenberg, Sr., and David Schellenberg Jr. Today the SE corner at the intersection of Highway 30 and Highway 243 (the former Post Road) is often thought of as the Schellenberg property. Cairn Corner, mentioned earlier is located here<sup>11</sup>.

One of Franz's first actions in Oregon was to dedicate one corner

(cont. on p.4)

## Reinländer Ältester, Johann Wiebe, 1837-1906 (Part 1)

by Peter D. Zacharias

*We are pleased to publish the third in a trilogy of articles on Mennonite Ältesters who helped "make" the migration of 1874-1875 to Manitoba. This article is a shorter version of a paper presented by the author in the Reinland Community Centre on 24 April 1993.*

It is important to look first at the background of this important Manitoba Mennonite leader. Ältester Johann Wiebe came from a pioneering family. His great-grandfather Jakob Wiebe (1723-1788) was a landowner in Prussia. Johann's grandfather Jakob Wiebe (1760-1804) settled in Neuendorf, Chortitza or Old Colony (Alt-Kolonie) in 1789 with his wife, nee Anna Fast, and two children.<sup>1</sup> One of the children born to Jakob Wiebe (1760-1804) in what was then Imperial Russia (today part of Ukraine) was Bernhard (1796-1852) who married Helena Wiebe. This couple became Johann Wiebe's parents. They, too, became pioneers, settling in the new village of Neuhorst in 1823. Their second youngest child, Johann, the seventh child of eight, who became Ältester Johann Wiebe, settled in Olgafeld, Fürstenland, as did his older brother, Abraham (1831-1900), a minister in Olgafeld almost since the founding of the settlement in 1864.<sup>2</sup>

Johann Wiebe was born on 23 March 1837, the year in which young Queen Victoria began the longest reign in British history. His wife was Judith Wall. He was baptized by Ältester Gerhard Dyck of the Chortitzer Mennoniten Gemeinde, i.e. the Old Colony Gemeinde in Russia.

At the age of 28 Johann Wiebe was elected to the ministry. At 33 he was elected Ältester of the Mennonite Church in Fürstenland, the young "daughter" colony of Chortitza. This far-reaching event took place in Peter Loeppky's implement shed in the village of Georgsthal in the afternoon of 13 September 1870. Johann Wiebe was only 38 when he led many Fürstenland and Chortitza families to America.

History has not always treated Ältester Johann Wiebe and other pioneer church leaders of western Canada very kindly. They have sometimes been dismissed as narrow-minded, obstinate, and tradition-bound vis-a-vis the so-called "progressive" Mennonites. One Mennonite encyclopedia article refers to "the extremely conservative Old Colony Mennonites led by Johann Wiebe". But what is meant by the word "conservative"? The least we can do is attempt to see Ältester Johann Wiebe as he saw himself.

In actual fact, Johann Wiebe did not consider himself to be a conservative. He saw himself much more as a reformer, trying to recover the New Testament vision of the church. In a penetrating sermon entitled "*Die Auswanderung von Rußland nach Kanada 1875*" (The Emigration from Russia to Canada, 1875), preached probably in the very early 1880s, Wiebe attempted to take his congregation's memory back to the migration movement and to examine its reasons.<sup>3</sup>

The sermon's message is not: Let's keep it the way we have it.

Instead Wiebe is saying in effect: Dear brothers and sisters - Things have got to change. We have gone wrong. And we must get back on track. We have gone wrong in Russia. We no longer confronted each other in love as brothers and sisters should. We no longer practised brotherly discipline. Instead we went the way of the flesh. We took disciplinary action that belonged to the state alone and used it against fellow believers. Wrongdoers, said Wiebe, were known to be whipped, jailed, put on a bread and water diet, fined, sentenced to wood chipping or ditch digging, but they remained in good standing in the church. The Scriptural three-fold admonition had gradually been abandoned, Wiebe felt. According to the Bible the transgressor would first be confronted privately and secondly before one or two witnesses, and thirdly, before the congregation. The ban would follow, if necessary, but the ban would be applied in love, and following repentance, there would be a complete restoration, not just externally, but spiritually as well.

To be sure, there were those who did not see things his way. "I must add," wrote Wiebe, "that the ministers themselves could not grasp all these things when the conflict grew so intense, because this was to be an entirely different order from the one they were accustomed to in Russia. To deal with everything according to the Gospel was strange to some. Some said that we were introducing a new teaching when it was only the teaching of Christ which the apostles had received from the Lord more than 1800 years ago."

Assurances from the Russian government that arrangements for forestry service could be made, albeit in uniform, in lieu of service in the military, placated many Russian Mennonite church leaders but these assurances did not satisfy Ältester Johann Wiebe<sup>4</sup>. He saw their acceptance as only one more sign of how far the church had drifted from its moorings in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Johann Wiebe was looking to the "mother church" in making the decision to emigrate, but was disappointed. He made one final visit to Ältester Gerhard Dyck, but found that there the option of emigration was being dropped. In fact, Dyck urged acceptance of alternative service as a reasonable compromise<sup>5</sup>. Wiebe's entire trip from Chortitza back to Fürstenland was spent in anguish of soul and prayer. That agony continued at home in the presence of his family until he finally found peace.

Ältester Wiebe gathered the brethren at their Alexanderthal meeting place (probably a school) and eventually an emigration plan fell into place. Wiebe found it hard to say farewell to those in the congregation who did not understand him and would not join him in the move. He found it especially hard to say farewell to the *Amtsbrüder*, to those in the *Lehrdienst*, his fellow ministers, who did not share his conviction about the necessity to emigrate. Not many members of the *Lehrdienst* of the Old Colony came to America. From Fürstenland also, there were only a few.

On 3 June 1875, Ältester Wiebe and his family and a large portion of Fürstenland's families cast eyes on their home<sup>6</sup> and villages for the last time and set out on a six-week journey across land and sea.

(cont. on p.3)

## The Doukhobor Canadian Centennial: 1899-1999.

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Doukhobor Canadians are among the minority ethnic groups which form important segments of the national society. In Manitoba the group is not known as well as in the other three western provinces. Saskatchewan was the initial location of their settlements after the first families arrived in Canada in 1899. Circumstances brought on several moves so that major additional settlements, totalling around 30,000 persons today, have emerged in Alberta and especially B.C., with others scattered across the entire nation.

Doukhobors are an offshoot of the Russian Orthodox Church, formed under certain western influences along with indigenous impulses in the Russian part of their story. The immigration to Canada of nearly 8000 persons at the turn of the century involved about a third of their Russian membership at the time.

The militant pacifism of this group has given them kinship with Mennonites in certain ways. A June, 1982, meeting known as the International Doukhobor Intergroup Symposium and held at Castlegar, B.C., included invitations to Mennonites along with Quakers, Molokans, and the Doukhobors themselves. The issue of disarmament and peace was an important agenda item for these sessions. Doukhobor peace manifestation, as they are called (we might call them demonstrations), have also included Manitoba locations in the past.

Russian Mennonite learned to know Doukhobors as neighbours when Alexander I allowed a group of them to settle in nine villages along the right bank of the Molotschna around 1802. Occasional frictions and some harassment led them to appeal to Johann Cornies for help on several occasions. Internal migrations and forced resettlements by the Russian government took them to new communities in the Northern Caucasus region, for one, and then more recently to regroup in the Tula area just south of Moscow.

A formative event in the renaissance of the Russian Doukhobor community came with the "burning of arms" incident on July 11-12 (NS) 1895, when about 7000 Doukhobor soldiers burned their arms in protest against military service. Harsh punishments and exile for many followed. A long series of celebrations in 1995 in various Canadian Doukhobor communities highlighted this important point in the struggles of their history.

A similar list of celebrations can be found for what has already taken place in 1999, with a final event scheduled for Dec. 31 at the Grand Forks Community Centre in Grand Forks, and the Brilliant Cultural Centre in Castlegar, both in B.C.

Publications form a significant aspect of these celebrations. The periodical, *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, published an entire volume under the title *From Russia with Love: The Doukhobors* in its No.3 issue of 1995. More recently Koozma Tarasoff and Robert B. Klymasz (both of Ottawa now) edited *Spirit-Wrestlers: Centennial Papers in Honour of Canada's Doukhobor Heritage*, in 1995 and then Tarasoff alone compiled and edited *Spirit-Wrestlers' Voices. Honouring Doukhobors on the Centenary of Their Migration to Canada in 1899* in 1998.

(cont. on p.8)

## Ältester Johann Wiebe

(cont. from p.2)

They arrived at Fort Dufferin near West Lynne just north of the Canada-U.S.A. border on 14 July that summer. They had travelled from eastern Canada west on the Great Lakes to Duluth and then to Moorhead/Fargo where they took a ship going north on the Red River. Some days after their arrival at Fort Dufferin, Wiebe held a *Bruderschaft* (Brotherhood) meeting at the immigration site where he was confirmed as Ältester of a church that was quite different from the one he had served in Russia. The new *Gemeinde* now included a large number of people, not only from his own Fürstenland colony, but also from the Old Colony. In fact the Reinländer Mennoniten Gemeinde, as the new group came to be called, was later referred to as the Alt-Kolonier i.e. "Old Colony Church", by many people.

There were unifying forces, of course. The immigrants were generally all opposed to military service and "Russification", favoured *en bloc* settlement, and settlement in villages, desired freedom to have their own schools, and wanted a total military exemption.

But Ältester Johann Wiebe saw several reasons to meet before settling down. There was the question of being one church. This was not a foregone conclusion. The fact that many came from Ältester Gerhard Dyck's congregation in the Old Colony was to become an ongoing problem for the new congregation. Secondly, would they be under one Ältester?

At the Fort Dufferin meeting Ältester Wiebe was confirmed as Ältester of the one church. Isaak Müller emerged as the Vorsteher of the pioneer settlement. A unity, however short-lived, was established, an important factor in the formative years.



**Western Canada's oldest Mennonite Church building was dedicated on 17 September 1876. This photograph shows the building before the exterior was remodelled in the mid 1940s. It is now a community hall. Photo source: *Reinland: An Experience in Community* by Peter Zacharias, p.188.**

Ältester Johann Wiebe, his wife Judith, and their family settled in the village of Rosengart, a mile north of the United States border and just west of Blumenort. During the winter of 1876, a year after their arrival, work was begun on the church building, the house of worship, in Reinland. That building is still in use though renovated now to serve as a community hall. Its dedication, on 17 September 1876, was a time of rejoicing for the young colony, for the young congregation, and for the Ältester.

(to be concluded, with endnotes, in the next issue)

*Peter D. Zacharias is a minister of the Blumenort Mennonite Church, residing in the village of Blumenort west of Gretna, MB.*

## Founding a Mennonite Historical Society

by John C. Reimer

In 19\_\_ (the date is in my 1940s diary) I wanted to start a Mennonite Historical Society. I phoned some people I thought would be interested. The following came to the first meeting at the G.G. Kornelsen's place in Steinbach: G.G. Kornelsen, Rev. Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, K.J.B. Reimer, Peter Braun, Kleefeld, and Gerhard F. Wiebe, Kleefeld. I was there also and C.F. Barkman was a member too.

We did some planning. We made G.G. Kornelsen an honorary member of the Society. The membership fee was one dollar per member. The money was put in the Steinbach Credit Union in a savings account. Then I wrote a letter to the Manitoba Historical Society and asked them for advice. I still have their reply.

The second meeting was held in the Credit Union building boardroom. Later John P. Friesen, a banker in New York and Jacob Wesley Loewen, then in the U.S., became members too by sending in their membership fee. I do not remember any more meetings.

In August, 1958 a Mennonite Historical meeting was held in the Morris High School. I think it was called by the Rhineland Agricultural Society represented by Paul Schaefer and Peter Rempel, the authors of *Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten*. People from both the West and East Reserves and Winnipeg were invited. One item of discussion followed when Victor Peters mentioned that Mennonites should build a Museum for the centennial year of their immigration to Manitoba.

All the directors agreed that the building should be a house and barn unit of the pioneer village type. The big question was whether to locate it in the East or West Reserve. At a later meeting the directors decided that in order to get started they would have to develop the collection that already existed in Steinbach, provided a building could be found there.

Fortunately the late G.G. Kornelsen property was still to be had. It was just the right type of building, and what was just as important, was still standing in its original location. If we had had this building we could have opened the museum in spring.



The original Klaas Reimer store used for the John C. Reimer museum project. Photo: Courtesy of Mary Reimer, Winnipeg, MB.

## Franz Kliever - Pioneer

(cont. from p.1)

of his newly-acquired land to the building of a school, and a place of worship. It has been noted, again by the grandson cited earlier, that Franz and Maria had made a new commitment of faith before leaving Manitoba. In Oregon Franz often served as worship leader, began a Sunday School, and served as a lay preacher - all of this an evidence of a tender heart for God. The lovely house he built for his family in Oregon still stands today.

Franz passed away at the early age of 53 on 12 December 1898 at his home in Polk Station, Dallas, Oregon. His importance to the development of the village of Neuanlage, and his work for Gretna and the RM of Douglas has been virtually forgotten. But still, in spite of his poor eyesight and frail health, he was used by God.

His character greatly influenced his children. Among his descendants some have become farmers, others homemakers and educators, business men and women, missionaries, doctors, nurses, and engineers. At least one became a well-known public figure, General Paul. A Kliever, who became Oregon's Adjutant General under Governor Mark Hatfield. Franz was a worthy pioneer of the West Reserve and a productive citizen of Oregon where he finished his life's work with honour.

### Endnotes

1. Nettie Neufeld, "Gerhard Kliever (1836-96): Emigration Journal", *Preservings* No. 11, December, 1998, 92-93. On the Puchtin background of the Kliever family see John Dyck, "Puchtin: A Molotschna/Chortitza Community with Bergthal Connections", in *Documents of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, MB 1993). This is Vol. IV of the East Reserve Historical Series.
  2. See "Québec Passenger Lists" in John Dyck, ed. *Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch* (Steinbach, MB, ), 330.
  3. "Gerhard Kliever", 92. See also Regina Neufeld, "Schantzenberg", in John Dyck, ed. *Working Papers of the East Reserve Village Histories 1874 - 1910* (Steinbach, MB, 1990), 99ff.
  4. John Rempel and William Harms, eds. *Atlas of Original Mennonite Villages Homesteaders and Some Burial Plots of the Mennonite West Reserve* (Altona, MB, 1990), 17-19.
  5. Morden Land Title Office records in the files of the author.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. F.G. and Gaile Whelan Enns. *Gretna: Window on the Northwest* (Gretna, MB, 1987), chs. 1-2.
  8. John Dyck and William Harms, eds. *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve, Manitoba, Canada* (Winnipeg, MB, 1998), 96-97. Details on the development of municipalities of the West Reserve, including Douglas, are found in Gerhard J. Ens. *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland: Volost and Municipality 1884-1984* (Altona, MB, 1984), 45ff.
  9. Gerhard J. Ens. "Die Schule Muss Sein". *A History of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute* (Gretna, MB, 1990), 9ff.
  10. Morden Land Title Office records in the files of the author.
  11. John Dyck, "The Oregon Trail of Manitoba Mennonites," *Mennonite Historian* Vol. XIV (September, 1988), 1-2, and (December, 1988), 4,8. Details of the story of the Oregon movement appeared first in a four-installment series of articles in *Mennonitische Rundschau* from 17 July - 7 August, 1889, with news on Oregon Mennonite developments appearing frequently then in the *Rundschau* for the next five years.
- The relocated headstone of David Schellenberg Sr. to Cairn Corner says, on an attached plaque, that Schellenberg homesteaded the NW property on which the cairn and two headstones (Heinrich Wiebe and Schellenberg) are now situated.
- Claire and Rev. Kenneth Kliever are descendants of Franz residing in Peoria, Arizona, U.S.A.

## MMHS News & Notes

### Board and Committee Reports

The **Local History Committee** is now working on Volume 3 of the West Reserve History Series. It will be published in the coming months. The committee is also helping to plan the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary events.

The **Genealogy Committee** is nearing completion of Volume 1 of its Russian Mennonite Genealogy series. This volume is entitled *Mennonite Migration to Russia: 1789-1828* by Peter Rempel.

Plans are underway for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the coming of Mennonites to the former West Reserve. Some ideas being explored by the **Historic Sites and Monuments Committee** include having some special Mennonite events when the Trans Canada Trail programme gets underway next year. Some type of re-enactment of the landing at Fort Dufferin is being explored. There will be celebratory events at various West Reserve villages such as Reinland and Neuberghthal. An anniversary insert in a local newspaper, similar to what was produced in the Winnipeg Free Press, is in the planning stages.

The Altberghthal School Renovation project in Altona is progressing. Ideas on how to use the restored building are welcome. There is also some discussion about putting up a monument in the memory of Ältester Johann Wiebe somewhere on the former West Reserve.

The plans for a Mexican Mennonite Museum and Archives have been on hold for some time. The **Board** agreed to send a delegation to Mexico in the next few months to see if the project can be moved forward.

The **Research, Scholarship, and Publications Committee** will oversee a project to publish a popular history of Manitoba Mennonites. It is envisioned that the project will be a number of years in duration with the proposed author being Prof. John J. Friesen, CMBC, in Winnipeg.

### Neuberghthal Notes

by Ray Hamm

*We are pleased to share with you some notes from the latest (October) issue of Neuberghthal Notes, a village newsletter edited by Ray Hamm residing there. To become a subscriber contact Ray at Box 1887, Altona, MB R0G 0B0 or call 204-324-5438.*

- A homecoming event has been proposed for the July 1 weekend for next year. This could be a two-day event, Friday and Saturday or Saturday and Sunday or just one day event.
- Also, there need to be discussions about long range planning for the conservation and presentation of heritage aspects of the village. The next step toward receiving some funding from Parks Canada is to develop such a plan.
- One of the major questions is about a location for a visitor

centre. Should it be at the present community centre, or near the intersection? What are the options?

- Parks Canada will erect a plaque in the village next summer. Because the whole community has been designated a National Historic Site, the plaque will be larger than usual. It could be 6 feet by 4 feet. Where should the plaque be - at the intersection? near the cemetery? other places?



This is one of the photos found in a large glass plate negative collection once owned by photographer Peter G. Hamm of Neuberghthal, MB. About 450 of these plates have recently been found in the holdings of Jake Hamm, son of the photographer. This photo depicts a group of mummerters (Brummtupp singers) who would traditionally make the rounds of the village homes on New Year's Eve, singing the New Year song, "stringing" the horsehair of the drum, and inviting hosts to give gifts to the singers.

### Readers' Responses

- The post featured in the photo of HP of June, 1999, p.4 is most likely a remnant of a bridge on the Post Road at Reinland, MB and not one of the road posts itself. *Adolf Ens*, Winnipeg, MB
- I am looking for descendants of Gerhard Jacob Goossen, b.1778 (or 1779) m. to Margaretha Enz b.1780. Their children: Helena, b. ca.1802, Gertrude, b. ca.1804, Justina, b. ca.1807, Gerhard, b.1811 m. Minna Plett, (we have descendants of them), Maria, b. ca.1803, Katharina, b. ca.1819. Please contact *Victor Goossen*, P.O. Box 160, Rosenort, MB R0G 1W0 ph. 204-746-2375, fax.204-746-2667. Thank you very much.

**MMHS Annual Meeting**  
**Saturday, 29 January 2000**  
**19.00 hr.**

*Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach*

Special Programme with refreshments following at 20.00 hr.



## 125<sup>th</sup> Manitoba Mennonite Anniversary

### West Reserve 125th Anniversary Plans

Communities on the former West Reserve of southern Manitoba are now going into high gear on anniversary planning for the year 2000. Hoepfner, Bergen and Wiebe family clans have already made reunion plans for the summer at Steinbach (also Waldheim village?), Gretna, and Otterburne respectively. Neuberghthal has placed a community reunion for July 1 on the calendar. Altona and Winkler have both created new heritage societies, and Plum Coulee has recently upgraded its museum. The village of Chortitz celebrated this July, and Reinland placed a new heritage plaque in the village - more about that later.

But there will be even more, it seems. A group of eighteen community reps of the area met at the Winkler Senior Centre in Winkler on October 27 to discern what 'more' might mean. It was noted early on that a special anniversary photo exhibit was scheduled to open on 12 November 1999 (see report below), and that both Plum Coulee and Winkler were looking at centennial celebrations a few years down the road.

The group felt excitement about the idea of doing a "landing reenactment" recalling the first Mennonites coming on July 14, 1875 - like the Forks celebration this past summer on August 1. Two other ideas which emerged fairly quickly were a) the publication of a West Reserve historical info insert in local papers which would be similar to the one done on July 24 in the Winnipeg Free Press, b) erecting a memorial for the late Ältester Johann Wiebe of the [former] Reinländer Mennonitengemeinde - to be placed perhaps in Rosengart or Reinland village, both intimately connected with Wiebe's life and work.

A report from the Historic Sites and Monuments Committee suggested that series of other projects were already in the planning stages under that umbrella. Striking a new "central" committee did not seem like a priority for this group. A centralized web page for setting up running calendar of events was proposed, however. All persons present at the meeting will receive minutes, and another meeting is to be called when deemed necessary.

### Mennonite art show "kicks off"

by *Elmer Heinrichs*

An exhibition titled "A Celebration of Mennonite Art", hosted by the Pembina Hills Arts Council was opened Friday, November 12 at the Pembina Hills Gift Shop and Gallery.

This year marked the 125th anniversary of the arrival of Mennonites in Manitoba. The exhibition, in Morden, from Nov. 5 to 27, showcases a variety of different art forms spanning one and a quarter centuries of creativity by Mennonites who settled in the region. On display are photos, toys, quilts, embroidery, painting, furniture and more. The exhibit on show now features early scenes from life in the West Reserve, a photo collection from Mennonite Heritage Centre, as well as special aspects of two communities, Reinland and Neuberghthal.

Special credit for the Reinland photographs was given to Henry G. Ens, retired teacher and an active photographer. Frieda Esau Klippenstein as well as Otto Hamm, and Jake Hamm were thanked for making the Neuberghthal photos available for the exhibit.

The Neuberghthal photos have an interesting history. Capturing images of early life in Neuberghthal was both business and hobby of one of the villagers, Peter Gerhard Hamm, 1883-1965, whose father Gerhard was one of the village founders in the 1870s. Between his main livelihood - first as a village school teacher, then as a farmer - Peter carried on most of his photography from the turn of the century to the 1930s. Some 460 of Mr. Hamm's photographs, in the form of glass and film negatives, have recently been recovered from a long, undisturbed storage in the barn of Peter's son, Jake. Ten of these images are portrayed here. Portraits, weddings, funerals and family gatherings are well represented in the P.G. Hamm collection, but the images also give a glimpse of the less formal events - the unposed work and play of daily village life.

### 1874 Revisited Symposium

To commemorate again the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first arrival of Russian Mennonites in Manitoba, the Society and the Chair for Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, sponsored a symposium on 1 & 2 October 1999. The purpose was to have various subjects covered of different aspects of the immigration and its effect to this day.

The keynote address on Friday evening was given by Dr. John Warkentin, a retired geographer from York University, Toronto. He discussed the geographic setting of the Mennonites in Manitoba and how it had changed in the last 125 years. This included the progress in historiography among historians of this time period.

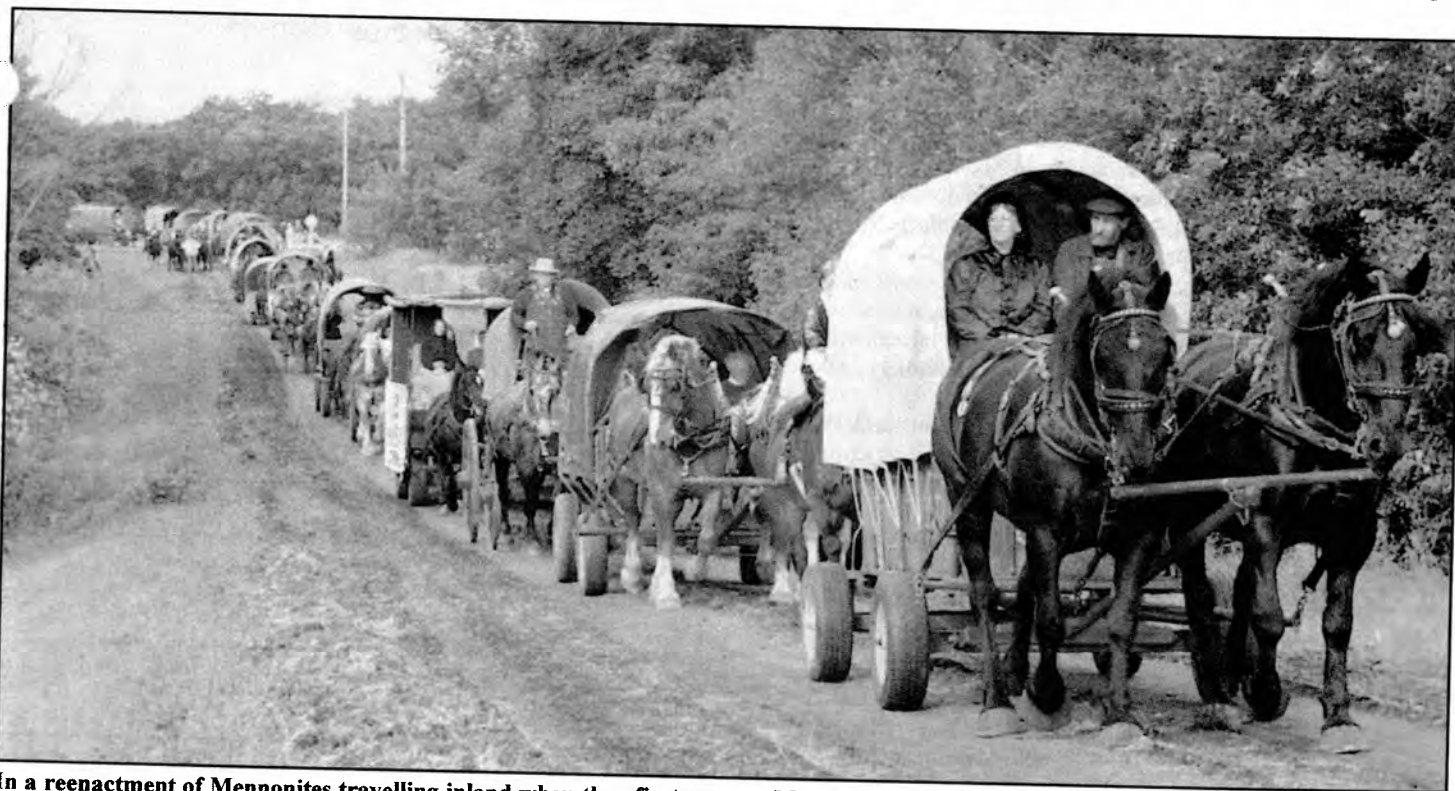
Many different subjects were covered on Saturday. Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein discussed the history of the Mennonites in Russia and the reasons for their emigration. Delbert Plett, Q.C., discussed the history of the Mennonites here in Manitoba and the economic influences they have had over more than a century.

The culture of Mennonites has changed a great deal in Manitoba. Dr. Wes Berg illustrated the changes in music with samples of styles of hymns and other type of music. Dr. Jack Thiessen illustrated the changes in language. He especially highlighted the development of the Low German dialect peculiar to Mennonites in their isolated communities.

Esther Epp-Thiessen looked at the 1870s migration through the eyes of five women as portrayed in their diaries and memoirs. Their words showed how hard they worked without sharing equally in the partnership.

Jake Peters gave some detailed accounts of the coming of the Fürstenland Colony people to Manitoba and how they had changed here. Frieda Klippenstein gave an illustrated account of a collection of glass negatives which have been discovered intact in Neuberghthal (see sample on p.5 and article above).

Many of the papers presented will be published in an upcoming issue of *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. It was a symposium rich in new facts and perspectives on the lives and contributions of Mennonites in Manitoba.



In a reenactment of Mennonites travelling inland when they first came to Manitoba in 1874, this wagon train took its passengers from the landing place at the Rat and Red Rivers through towns like Niverville, New Bothwell, and Chortitz (now Randolph) to Steinbach. The 10-11 September event of 1999 basically completed the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the East Reserve area of southeastern Manitoba. Photo: Courtesy of Frank Froese, *The Carillon*, Steinbach, MB.



A well-known German-language paper, *Der Bote*, now published in Winnipeg, and edited by Isbrand Hiebert of Steinbach, celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. In this photo of earlier staff members (ca. 1961 in the Saskatoon print shop) we see (l-r): Tina Epp, John Heese, and his mother Lena Heese, who was the wife of John Heese, of Rosthern and Saskatoon and a close associate of the first editor, Dietrich H. Epp of Rosthern. Epp, a Russian Mennonite immigrant of 1923, founded the paper in 1924. Helene Friesen has completed indexing the year 1990 for Vol.IV. For further information call Lois at 204-888-6781. Photo: Courtesy of Justina and Heinz Heese, Steinbach, MB.

## 'A Sharing of Diversities' Book Launched

by Bert Friesen

At 19.30 hr. on Monday, 4 October 1999 the Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Committee launched the book: *A Sharing of Diversities: Proceedings of the Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Conference, "Building Bridges"*. The event was held in the Rotunda of the Manitoba Legislative Building.

Ken Reddig, President of JMU Committee, in Winnipeg, led the meeting. The general editor, Prof. Fred Stambrook of the University of Manitoba gave a brief overview of the process for producing the book. Prof. Mildred Gutkin, the copy editor, briefly described the content of the volume. Dr. Stella Hryniuk described the effect this project and similar ones had had on the Ukrainian community. Bert Friesen similarly described the effect on the Mennonite community, and as co-ordinating editor, thanked the many organizations and individuals who had helped in the project.

Greetings were conveyed on behalf of Heritage Canada by Ms. Tisdale. The evening concluded with refreshments and presentations of volumes to the presenters who were present.

This was indeed a first. It was the first time that these three communities had co-operated in this way in such a project in Canada, and maybe even anywhere else. The results, we hope, will be greater understanding, co-operation, and friendships which contribute to greater social interaction.

To order this proceedings publication, please contact the MHC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. Price: \$19.95 + shipping, handling, and GST.

## Book Notes

• The fourth issue of *Rhubarb*, prepared on the theme of "Place" is now off the press. It was released at a meeting with the Steinbach Arts Council on Friday, 5 November, and a Mennonite Literary Society fundraising event held at Crossways Church in Winnipeg on 7 November. To order contact *Rhubarb*, MLS, 200 Lenore St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 2C5 or phone Glenn Bergen at 204 888-6781.

• Just off the press is Dr. Jack Thiessen's *Mennonitisch-Plautdeutsches Wörterbuch/Mennonite Low German Dictionary*, published under the auspices of Hanover Steinbach Historical Society (Steinbach, MB, 1999), pb., 518 pp., \$30.00. To order contact **Mennonite Books** or phone Gil Brandt at 204-669-4439.

• Items in progress include a book on the descendants of Jacob Hoepfner (delegate to New Russia in 1786), edited by Pauline Heppner of Sardis, B.C.; a translation of Gerhard Lohrenz's *Sagradowka* in the Echo Verlag series, by CMBC Publications; a book on William Hespeler by Dr. Angelika Sauer, Chair of German Canadian Studies, University of Winnipeg; a history of Plum Coulee, edited by Cleo Heinrichs; a book on special events and people among Mennonites of Russia, by Dr. Helmut Hubert, of Winnipeg; and Vol.III of the West Reserve Historical Series, edited by Adolf Ens, Otto Hamm, and Jacob Peters of our Society.

### JUST OFF THE PRESS!

John Dyck. **A Foundation Like No Other: Mennonite Foundation of Canada 1973 - 1998** (Winnipeg, MB, MFC, 1999), hdc., 176 pp., \$15.00. **To order contact** the MFC office at 1-800-772-3257.

Leonard Doell. **Homesteads on the Hague-Osler Reserve 1891 - 1999** (Saskatoon, SK, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, 1999), hdc., 535 pp. \$45.00. Many, if not most of these homesteaders came from Manitoba. **To order contact:** Leonard Doell, Box 364, Aberdeen, SK, S0K 0A0, or email wiebe@sklib.usask.ca

Rose Marion Hildebrand. **More Precious Than Gold: Our Heritage** (Altona, MB., privately published, 1999), pb., 71 pp. The story revolves around the descendants of Jacob and Helena (Kehler) Hamm of Neuberghal, MB. For further info **contact** Rose at Box 1887, Altona, MB., R0G 0B0.

## Doukhobors

(cont. from p.3)

The two latter titles are excellent sets of essays on various Doukhobor-related themes. One may note that the 1995 volume included an essay by Dr. Bill Janzen of Ottawa, entitled "The Doukhobor Challenge to Canadian Liberties" based on parts of his earlier publication *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1990).

Further information on the above-mentioned Doukhobor volumes, or the 1999 celebrations, may be obtained from Koozma Tarasoff, ph/fax 613-737-5778, or email tarasov@igs.net

**How have we done with the HP in 1999?**  
**We welcome your comments and suggestions**

**Please write us!**

## Echo Historical Series Report

### Annual Sales

Title	Press Run	Sales 94	Sales 95	Sales 96	Sales 97	Sales 1998
<i>Kuban</i> (1989)	1000	109	49	17	22	38
<i>Templers</i> (1991)	1000	106	54	16	24	13
<i>Crimea</i> (1992)	750	129	60	40	35	34
<i>Trek</i> (1993)	520	168	65	31	19	30
<i>Molotschna</i> (1993, 96)	1432	377	122	89	75	92
<i>Cornies</i> (1995)	750		104	61	31	50
<i>Am Trakt</i> (1995)	600		68	56	40	29
<i>Memrik</i> (1997)	570					138

### Current Sales

Title	Press Run	Stock end	Sales to	Stock	Total Sales
<i>Kuban</i>	1000	388	8	380	243
<i>Templers</i>	1000	419	9	410	222
<i>Crimea</i>	750	219	15	204	313
<i>Trek</i>	520	4	4	0	317
<i>Molotschna</i> (1993,96)	1432	450	59	391	814
<i>Cornies</i> (1995)	750	451	22	429	268
<i>Am Trakt</i> (1995)	600	370	9	361	202
<i>Memrik</i> (1997)	570	432	20	412	158

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mennonites in Manitoba 1874-1999 Reenactment

A 45 minute **Video** of the Celebration at the Forks, Winnipeg, 1 August 1999.

- Available for \$20.00 + shipping, handling, and GST
- For MMHS members who renew or new members, it will be available for \$10.00 inc. shipping, handling, and GST

To order contact the MHC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 or CMBS, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5