



HERITAGE POSTING

Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No.34 September 2001

Plum Coulee Centennial, 2001

by Cleo Heinrichs

The Plum Coulee Centennial celebrations are over, but the memories will linger on and on in the hearts and minds of the well over one thousand people who attended this well-planned event. Phone calls, personal comments and letters of appreciation for the celebrations are coming in to committee members on an almost daily basis.

The three-day event July 13-15 was indeed a successful occasion. Nearly one thousand people registered, plus there were hundreds of folks who came for a segment of the celebrations and therefore didn't register. It is estimated that around 1,200 attended the Sunday morning worship service. Rev. Peter Wiebe, son of the late Rev. B. P. Wiebe of Plum Coulee, was the main speaker, with all the local churches participating in the service. Shirley (Hiebert) Bestvater of Steinbach directed the 80-voice volunteer choir in songs of praise and worship.

A crowd that filled the large tent and spilled over onto the grass enjoyed the Saturday evening stage show. Featured were the eight queen contestants give their speeches, followed by entertainment with the Giesbrecht Band. Jaymee Giesbrecht soloist, and Dinah Elias, stand-up comedy. MC's Wayne Rempel and Reuben Schulz performed like a pro-team. Saturday evening's highlight was the crowning of the Plum Coulee centennial Queen, and this title was bestowed upon Jessica Wiebe. Judges July (Fehr) Janzen, Sandra (Reichert) Clark, and Helen (Diamond) Kahane, all former Coulee girls, had the tough job of making that final decision. The queen contestants also put on a delightful fashion show during the Saturday afternoon stage show. Cherished fashions were lent by ladies of the area featuring dresses from the early 1900s to the present era.

Time was allotted for reminiscing at the various stage shows. Guests who shared in this offer included Joan McGavin, grand



The tent was filled to overflowing for the Sunday morning worship service. Photo credit: Bernice Heinrichs.

daughter of the late Dr. McGavin; Phyllis Lambert, grand daughter of the late Sam Rosner; Rod Stewart, son of the late Russell Stewart; Laura Wiebe, daughter of the late John Wall, and many others. The opening night rain didn't stop the guests and hosts from enjoying the wiener roast in the park. Spectacular fireworks thrilled the onlookers at the close of the day. Side events during the weekend included para-glider rides, with long lineups waiting for a ride to get an aerial view of Coulee! Model plane demonstrations, a mud bog and demolition derby all took place on Saturday and Sunday. The history books, cookbooks, and souvenirs sold well. Anyone still wishing to purchase one of these items may contact the town office at 829-3419, or stop in at the town office during office hours 9-4 Monday through Friday. People enjoyed the new Pathway, the Pond, De Ole Lumberyard antique and craft shop, and the museum. Memory Lane in the school gym drew hundreds of appreciative comments. And who can forget the homemade rollkuchen and cold watermelon served on Sunday afternoon? Hosts and guests carried away warm memories to sustain through the coming winters!



The Plum Coulee float for the Centennial parade, a replica of the CPR station, complete with waiting passengers and their suitcases, cream cans, and the engineer ready to whistle his "all aboard"! Photo credit: Bernice Heinrichs.



Reinland celebration parade for 126th anniversary celebration. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

Reinland Homecoming

by Helen Ens

"Thou shalt love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself." was the text of Rev. Abram Wiebe's message on July 15 at the Reinland Homecoming. He was speaking from the same pulpit that his great-grandfather and his great-uncle had preached from some 120 years ago, to a large gathering of past and present Reinlanders and friends/descendants of them. Three churches: Reinland Sommerfelder, Reinland EMMC and Blumenort of Rosetown had all gathered under the large tent set up on the Reinland Community Centre yard in order to praise God and thank him for his guidance throughout 126 years and for his presence today and in the future. "It is dangerous when tradition becomes a religion", said Abram Wiebe.

Exactly here in Reinland, where the main meeting house of the Reinland (now known as the Old Colony) Church stood, the decision was made that the entire church would emigrate to Mexico, Wiebe explained. The reasons for the emigration were not without justification, but the danger to make a religion out of tradition was there, he said. Some people have had the attitude, that all those who emigrated at that time were "lost". "Not true!" said Wiebe. And many of those who emigrated believed that all the other Mennonites were "Weltmenschen". "Not true again!" Wiebe said. The measuring stick for true Christianity is love, love that manifests itself in the love of the neighbour.

It was a successful celebration, the Reinland Homecoming, which started on Friday night. The weather cooperated beautifully, as did all the people involved in the planning and executing of it. The historian, Peter D. Zacharias, an "old" Reinlander, mentioned that the Reinland people had always been good at working together. Harmoniously descendants of immigrants of 1874, 1923, 1948, and now 1996+ and those who returned from Mexico, live and work together. Matthew Friesen, a Reinland youth, said that was exactly why he liked living in Reinland. "Here we work together, help one another, laugh and cry together, eat together very often, (breakfast once a month at the Community Centre, prepared and hosted by the men of the village) maintain the cemetery, Community Centre (what used to be the Old Colony Church), and yard, have Low-German plays every February, and we young people feel we are being accepted and understood by the older generation."

The parade Saturday morning was testimony to this co-operation. Old and young took part. The Braun family had their own float and with a three/four generation representation on it, went along the village street. The P.P. Zacharias family went singing through the village. The five surviving brothers also sang on the Saturday and Sunday programmes. Conspicuous was the representation of the Peters clan. Peter and Johan Peters, twin brothers and early pioneers are

both buried on the Reinland cemetery and a great number of their descendants had come to this homecoming. Reinlanders from Florida, Minnesota, North Dakota, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and of course many parts of Manitoba had come and much "spaziering" visiting took place. But not all Reinland people leave the home front. One couple, Abe and Helen Ens, has always lived in Reinland, now almost 50 years! And both of them were born in Reinland. They are the only living couple to attain this status. That is why the Community Centre Board deemed it worthy of special recognition and a certificate to this effect was given to them.

During Sunday morning worship the hastily organized but very good choir, under the baton of George Wiebe, sang the "Reinland Song" written by Menno Wiebe and music composed by George and Esther Wiebe. The song prompted many recollections of long ago.

Also the Heritage Homestead, across the street from the Community Centre and visited by probably all present at the Homecoming, sparked memories. Which former Reinland pupil does not remember "Taunti Marie" who lived in that homestead for so many years and always shared with others! When school started in Fall, there were always those "Aupilkjis" and always a helping hand for the neighbours. Yes, "Taunti Marie" and many others have exemplified "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

Years ago almost everyone in Reinland was a farmer, now only three, someone said four of the households are farmers. Lifestyles change, even in Reinland. But the commandment of love does not and may not change. This Homecoming helped everyone to remember that. To God be the Glory!

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The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Newsletter, *Heritage Posting*, welcomes letters and reports pertaining to the historical interests of society members. Correspondence can be mailed to Bert Friesen, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 2E5, or e-mailed to the editor at editor@mmhs.org

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Ältester Abraham Doerksen, 1852-1929

by Jake Peters and Lawrence Klippenstein

Abraham Doerksen, a minister, then the first Ältester of what would become the Sommerfelder Mennonitengemeinde, came from the village of Schönthal in the Bergthal Colony, south Russia (later Ukraine). He was born on 11 September 1852 as the oldest son of Abraham and Katherina (Friesen) Doerksen. His baptism took place on 5 June 1872, and his marriage to Maria Dueck, on 16 July 1872.

The Doerksen families arrived in Canada on 27 July 1875, and moved to Manitoba to settle in the village of Schönthal, East Reserve, that same year. Abraham and Maria moved to the village of Sommerfeld at the time of its founding in the West Reserve around 1880. The Rempel and Harms lists them as owners of the land on NE31-1-1E.

In 1893 Doerksen was elected minister in the nearby village of Neuberghal. The division of the West Reserve Lynne Bergthal Gemeinde was underway during this time. Doerksen was thus elected to serve the majority part of the Gemeinde which chose not to follow Ältester Johann Funk, leader of the group which would now separate from the main body.

Later in 1893, on 18 November in the village of Rudnerweide, Doerksen was elected to serve as Ältester, and ordained there to this office by Ältester David Stoesz of the East Reserve Chortitzer Mennonitengemeinde, on Palm Sunday (18 March 1894). That year, 1894, would later be seen by the Sommerfelder Mennonitengemeinde as its founding year following the 1890s secession under Ältester Johann Funk.

Doerksen's task as newly-elected Ältester had to include attention to a number of major issues in the next two decades or more. One of these was the movement of Sommerfelder members to other provinces of Western Canada, mainly Saskatchewan, but to some extent Alberta also. Doerksen made numerous trips to a number of new places of worship to provide services of communion and baptism as well as other kinds of ministries and aid.

Education also became a significant area of concern for Ältester Doerksen. Although his congregation generally was unwilling to support the moves toward higher education promoted by Ältester Doerksen (an a major issue in the secession), Doerksen realized that education as such needed to be improved in the schools of his ministerial jurisdiction.

The Public School Attendance Act of 1916, calling for adherence to government regulations and standards in all Manitoba schools, and also abolishing bilingual curricula (meaning a severe cutback of the use of the German language in the schools), brought matters to a head. Efforts to change public schools back to private schools led to head-on clash with the governing authorities. Families were forced to conform or face fines or imprisonment, or both.

A third issue arose in the World War I period as well, as the church sought to deal with military registration and conscription concerns during the war years. Doerksen became a member of a five-member delegation sent to Ottawa to negotiate military exemption terms for Mennonites in Manitoba. They were able to sustain this privilege, but filling out the special cards for all wanting such status (this also included unbaptized young men) led to much discussion and uneasiness in the process.

Finally there was the emigration to Mexico in 1922. Wartime issues related to education, the use of German language, and the military service question, as noted above, left deep scars of pain, and strong senses of feeling unwelcome in Canadian society. Attempts at seeking an accommodation with the government had not really succeeded, so the emigration question, it seemed, would now need to be actively explored.

Options of Paraguay and Mexico were given special attention. The latter became the choice of Ältester Doerksen and those who supported his leadership on these issues. Doerksen, with about 550 people (about 8% of the total body in Manitoba, and joined by some families in Saskatchewan) left Canada in the fall of 1922.

Doerksen led the home group to elect a new Ältester, Heinrich J. Friesen of Blumental (east of Altona), and then spent six more years with his new congregation in Mexico. Doerksen passed away on 25 January 1929. In his Canadian and Mexican ministries he had baptized 3,656 persons, married 361 couples, and preached in 2,075 regular worship services, while also conducting 852 funerals and eight ordinations of other Ältesters. He missed church services only twice during this period, due to illness.

There is strong evidence that Ältester Doerksen was a much-appreciated leader among his people, not only in Manitoba but in Saskatchewan, Mexico, and even Paraguay as well. He had sought always to give special attention to the views of the brotherhood, although the Mexico move was made with minority support only. The issues of principles versus compromise had to be squarely faced a number of times during his tenure of office. He had served his people for more than three decades and made his mark on the history of the Sommerfelder Mennonitengemeinde. Historians and others will be remembering him for years to come.

Sources:

1. Adolf Ens, Jacob E. Peters, and Otto Hamm. *Church, Family and Village: Essays on Mennonite Life on the West Reserve* (2001). See especially the Jake Peters article on Ältester Doerksen, pp.109-124, and Chs. 7-15 focussing on Sommerfelder history more generally.
2. Henry J. Gerbrandt. *Adventure in Faith: The Background in Europe and the Development in Canada of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Manitoba* (1970), pp.78-118.
3. Peter Bergen. *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church: Background and First Hundred Years of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church* (2001). Comments on the division of 1892 attempt to take the perspective of this new volume into consideration.
4. Adolf Ens. *Subjects or Citizens? The Mennonite Experience in Canada, 1870-1925*. (1994).

Altona EMMC Church history unveiled

Dave and Gladys Penner, *Celebrating God's Faithfulness*, (Altona E.M.M.C., 2001), 8 ½ x 11 hc., 136 pages, \$35.

The Altona Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference Church marked its Jubilee 1951-2001 with the publication and unveiling of a history book in festivities July 20 in conjunction with its hosting of the annual EMMC Convention here.

The Rudnerweider Mennonite Church, the forerunner of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, was formed in the mid-1930s when spiritual renewal was sweeping through the entire West Reserve, and also through the Sommerfelder Church.

In a realignment 1,200 baptized members and 1,600 unbaptized young people and children joined four younger ministers from the Sommerfelder Church advocating revival and reform.

On Feb. 4, 1937, Wilhelm H. Falk was ordained as bishop of the new flock, and since the ordination took place in Rudnerweide, the name chosen for the new church was "The Rudnerweider Mennonite Church."

New job opportunities brought additional younger families to Altona - some from neighbouring Rudnerweider churches at Neuberghthal, Rosenfeld and Eigenhof. A new church building was purchased and a Rudnerweider congregation was formally set up in Altona in 1951.

For 22 years the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church operated under the familiar bishop system, but by the fifties early optimism had begun to wane, localization concerns were raised, and a move was made for Rudnerweider congregations to join together to form a conference. The name chosen was "The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC) of Canada."

Gradually in the next 20 years, the rural EMMC congregations at Neuberghthal (March 1969), Eigenhof (Dec. 1969), and Rosenfeld (Feb. 1972) decided to close their doors, and later became part of and contributed to the life, ministry, and helped to shape the Altona EMMC.

At a special service in the park July 20, spokesmen for the rural churches and then fledgling Altona church recalled memories of those early days, of the leaders in those days, and the difficulty they had felt in closing their rural home church.

The book was dedicated in loving memory of Rev. Jacob H. Friesen, described as a quiet friendly man, who worked with the EMMC as a minister and bishop, and who after he moved to Altona in 1965, was a great encouragement to the newly established Altona EMMC.

Mathilda (Lawrence) Klassen, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Friesen, accepted a book on behalf of the family from history book chairperson Anita Kehler.

David and Gladys Penner, who had been commissioned to write the book, were also presented with a copy of the Altona EMMC Jubilee book.

Kehler also paid tribute to Rose Hildebrand, Lawrence Giesbrecht, Steve Voth, Jerry Toews and Carolyn Voth, other members of the history book committee, for their contribution.

Pastor Allen Kehler led in a dedication prayer.

Summer Sojourn

by Bert Friesen

In July 2001 I had occasion to visit various congregations in southern Manitoba. I visited the following: Westside Community Church (M.B.), Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Morden, Morden Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, Old Colony Mennonite Church (Chortitz meetinghouse), and Morden E.M.M.C. Church

From these visits I would conclude that there are many similarities and some differences.

First the similarities:

1. It is clear that these congregations are all part of the Anabaptist tradition in that they are all Biblicists. That is they strongly centre their congregational worship around the Bible.
2. Worship involves all members of the congregational family. There was something meaningful for all ages.
3. The summer schedule though meant that the Sunday School hour was simultaneous with the worship hour so not all children were present for the entire worship hour.
4. Singing of hymns, Scripture reading, and announcements about congregational life were all part



(L-R) Anita Kehler, Gladys and David Penner with the Altona EMMC Jubilee book. Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs.

of the worship hour.

Second, the differences:

1. The language of worship varied: English only for the M.B. Bergthaler, and E.M.M.C. The Sommerfeld church had some English, High and Low German. The Old Colony was mostly in Low German except for the hymns and some Scripture reading in High German
3. The hymnals were the conf. ones for the M.B. and Bergthaler. The E.M.M.C. used the Hope hymnal. The Sommerfeld used their own Gesangbuch, probably the same as the Herald Press publication for the Old Order people, and their English hymnal was a translation of the 1960 M.B. Gesangbuch. The Old Colony used the Herald Press publication Gesangbuch, as noted above.
4. Prayer was with kneeling for the Old Colony and Sommerfeld, and bowed heads for the other prayers as with the other congregations.
5. Only the Sommerfeld congregation had two sermons, one English and the other mostly Low German. The content was entirely distinct for both. The Old Colony sermon was almost entirely in Low German with only a few Scripture passages read in High German. The Old Colony sermon, preached by Ältester Johann Wiebe of Hochfeld, seemed to be a nineteenth century sermon with slight adaptations for the current worship hour. It was read. The Sommerfeld sermons by minister H.P. Dueck were either read or presented from very detailed notes. The other cong. had sermons that were preached from brief notes.
6. Only the Old Colony sang the hymns without instrumental accompaniment.

Impressions:

1. There appears to be joy and vitality in the life

(cont. on p.5)

MMHS News & Notes

The Historic Sites and Monuments committee is sponsoring another Post Road Bus tour on 6 October 2001.

The Genealogy committee is sponsoring another genealogy open house/workshop in October.

The Local History committee is sponsoring its autumn workshop.

All of the above committee activity details will follow.

The Board of MMHS continues to oversee the functions of the society and is now planning the annual general meeting.

Sojourn

(cont. from p.4)

of all the congregations except for the Old Colony and to some extent the Sommerfeld. These two gave the impression of a more liturgical type of worship and the extensive socializing and networking after the service in the foyer and parking lot. The others appeared to have more during the worship hour and less so after the service.

2. It struck me that very few individuals carried Bibles to the service. There were a few in the M.B. and Bergthaler, but very few in any of the others and none in the Old Colony; there a few carried their own hymnals. Only in the M.B. service did I notice anyone taking any notes during the sermon. (Personally, I needed my Bible in order to follow the service in the non-English ones because my Low German is not very good.)

3. All congregations are relatively affluent if one goes by the late model vehicles in the parking lot. It struck me that many of the drivers in the Old Colony lot were females.



(L-R) Isaac (1868-1892), my great grandfather; Helena (1866-1925), stayed single; Katharina (Bergen) Hildebrand (1834-1893), my great great grandmother; Anna (1877-1934), sitting on lap; Katharina (1864-1886); Isaac, Sr. (1828-1913), my great great grandfather; Kornelius (1873-1948), sitting on lap; Jacob (1871-1883); four children died in infancy.

Descendants of Katharina Bergen (1834-1893) and Isaac Hildebrand (1828-1913) married on 26 October 1857.

My great grandfather Isaac Hildebrand (1869-1892) came to Canada at the age of eight. He is the young boy on the left of the picture. He was married to Elenora my great grandmother for two years. He died on 5 April 1892 at the age of twenty-three on the West Reserve, Manitoba. My great grandmother is now a widow at the age of twenty-one with a one-year-old baby boy, my Grandpa Isaac Hildebrand (1891-1969). Three months after her husband's death she married his younger brother Kornelius (boy sitting on his father's lap). My great grandmother Elenora died at the age of 39 years in 1911. Isaac Hildebrand (1891-1969) married Sarah Neustäter (1872-1937) on 20 May 1918. Their son was Isaac Hildebrand (1920-) who married Margaret Krahn (1922-) on 3 May 1942.



Anne Oeters and Helen Hoepfner, representing former school board members, are seen here unveiling a special plaque placed at the Glencross cairn in honour of former teachers of the Glencross S.D. near Morden. the event took place in mid July 20001. Photo credit: Mavis Dyck.



Hank Hildebrand presenting to my dad Isaac Hildebrand a clock hand made by Roy Friesen. My great great grandfather, Isaac Hildebrand (1869-1892) homesteaded in Waldheim, West Reserve. The presentation was part of the Hildebrand reunion held at Miami, Manitoba. Approximately 250 attended from Canada, U.S.A., and Mexico.

Genealogy

Ancestors of Richard Thiessen

A. Johann Neufeld b. ca. 1737, d. East Prussia?.

B. Dietrich Johann Neufeld b. ca. 1767, Memelniederung, East Prussia, baptised 4 Jun. 1781, Plauschwarren, Memelniederung, East Prussia, Dietrich d. Chortitza, Russia?.

m. in Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine, Katharina Martens, b. ca. 1752, d. 2 Apr 1817, Chortitza Colony, Ukraine.

C. Dietrich D. Neufeld b. ca. 1795, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine, Dietrich d. 10 Jun. 1833, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine.

m. (1) 1814, in Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, Eva Janzen, b. 1785, d. 1817,

m. (2) 19 Jun. 1817, in Schoenwiese, Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, Helena Martens, b. 23 Dec. 1798, Schoenwiese, Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, d. 27 Jun. 1832, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine.

D. Abraham Dietrich Neufeld b. 07 May 1820, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine,

m. (1) ca. 1840, in Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, Elizabeth Siemens, b. 09 Apr. 1813, Kronsthal, Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, d. 11 Mar. 1857, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine,

m. (2) 12 May 1857, Elizabeth Kasper, b. 13 Jul. 1835. One family source in Canada states that Abraham and his wife d. in Canada, having arrived in 1893. They can not be located in any immigration records, nor can they be located in any Manitoba Mennonite church registers.

E. Martin Abraham Neufeld b. 04 Apr. 1845, Insel Chortitza, Chortitza Col., Ukraine, Martin d. 26 Aug. 1925, Deyevka, Orenburg Colony, Russia.

m. ca. 1869, in Fuerstenland Colony, Ukraine, Justina Unger, b. 10 Sep. 1844, Einlage, Chortitza Colony, Ukraine, d. 22 Nov. 1925, Deyevka, Orenburg Colony, Russia.

F. Jacob Martin Neufeld b. 07 May 1878, Sergejevka, Fuerstenland Colony, Ukraine, Jacob d. 21 Sep. 1921, Kamenka, Orenburg Colony, Russia, buried Kamenka, Orenburg Colony, Russia.

m. ca. 1896, in Orenburg, Russia, Anna Penner, b. 02 May 1878, Crimea, Russia, d. 21 Jul. 1949, Kamenka, Orenburg Colony, Russia, buried Kamenka, Orenburg Colony, Russia.

G. Anna Neufeld b. 22 Dec. 1896, Kamenka, Orenburg Colony, Russia, baptised 07 Jun. 1915, Kamenka M.B. Church, Kamenka, Orenburg, d. 04 Jun. 1976, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, buried 08 Jun. 1976, Greendale Mennonite Cemetery, Sardis, funeral 08 Jun. 1976, Broadway M.B. Church, Chilliwack, B.C.

H. Anna Esau b. 06 Feb. 1934, Reston, Manitoba, Canada, baptised 27 Aug. 1950, East Chilliwack M.B. Church, Chilliwack.

I. Richard David Thiessen b. 24 Sep. 1962, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada, baptised 03 Jun. 1979, East Chilliwack M.B. Church, Chilliwack, m. 27 May 1989, in Bakerview M.B. Church, Cleabrook, B.C., Karen Anne Heidebrecht, b. 09 Feb. 1965, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, baptised 08 Jun. 1980, Greendale M.B. Church, Sardis, B.C.



(L-R) Lawrence Klippenstein, Margruite Krahn in her renovated art studio in the loft of the barn on the Krahn yard.
Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

Focus on Neuberghthal

by Ray Hamm

A TV crew, a "Mennonite Journey", a semlin, a house-raising, a picnic, a barn dance, tour groups - all those were in Neuberghthal along with the usual grass-cutting, gardening and other summer yard and farm activities.

Neuberghthal will be featured this year as one the series of programs called HistoryLands on History Television (cable television). Ted & Robert & Curt, from Whole Earth Productions, were here for four days, recording many conversations and interviews, many of the sights and sounds of Neuberghthal in the summertime. The program will be on the air some time this winter.

Neuberghthal will be featured in articles in the Canadian Geographic magazine and in Harrowsmith this winter.

Three scenes of the drama, "Mennonite Journey", took place on the yard of Ray & Marilyn Hamm. The drama was written by Wilmar Penner of Steinbach. It was based in part on the diary of Peter Hamm and his description of the journey from the Ukraine to Manitoba. The story followed the Mennonites from Prussia to Russia to Manitoba. One scene took place in front of a semlin on the Canadian prairie, and for this, an actual semlin was constructed on the yard of Ray & Marilyn Hamm. The final scene of that drama was a worship service which took place in the "schien" in the barn on that yard. The drama was part of the 50th anniversary celebration for the Altona EMM congregation.

The village has a semlin again. It stands on the back of Ray & Marilyn Hamm's yard. It was built by Dale Wiebe, Lin Loewen, Curt Hildebrand and many volunteers. A special machine was built to cut the sods. The soil and the sod was quite dry and this made the work more difficult. The semlin is about 15 x 25 (outside dimensions). It was dug down about two feet, and there is black topsoil all the way down.

The herdman house on the yard of Paul & Margruite Krahn got a lift this summer. They raised the building, replaced the sills on the building and now it is standing on cement blocks. This is a great first step toward preservation.

The annual community picnic was held on August 26.

A barn dance is planned for September 15. It will be held in the loft of the barn on the yard of Paul & Margruite Krahn. There will be musical entertainment, Jake Chenier and others, for children and families beginning in the afternoon and the barn dance will begin at 9.

The Heritage Foundation is beginning the work of making plans for longer term fund raising. The Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation is already incorporated and registered as a non profit agency.

We are introducing a new feature in Heritage Posting. This page will be dedicated to giving excerpts of diaries of Manitobans. Please send any contributions to HP as noted on the bottom of page 2.

Excerpts of C. T. Friesen diary

C. T. Friesen was the leader of the Waisenamit in Manitoba, following in the footsteps of his ancestors. The diary reflects the time of the emigration of many to Mexico and Paraguay. Translation is by Ben Hoepfner and Royden Loewen. The original diary is in the possession of Irene Enns Kroeker whom we thank for making it available.

p.150 1922 July 16, Hein F. Schulz, Herbert, Mexico, arrived and July 17 a.m. he went again to Niverville to go by train to Winnipeg and from there at 3:10 p.m. home.

p.152, 1922 Jan.14, Cornelius Siemens and David Wiebe and C.F. Friesen came. My cousin C.F. Friesen brought them at 10 a.m. and after 12 p.m. we went to Blulmengart to attend a meeting dealing with emigration to Mexico. Had a fairly big storm. We came home for the night. David Wiebe got Peter F. Hiebert in the afternoon from Niverville. For the night both went to Peter Hieberts' place. Jan. 15 they went to Mart. T. Friesens' place and then Jan.16 to Winnipeg.

p.3, 1924 Dec.3, a brotherhood meeting concluded that land be bought, that MacRoberts give a guarantee and the trustees, Rosan, as surety.

Bishop Aron Zacharias [Note from HP editor: I think from Saskatchewan] appeared unexpectedly and also H. Bergen and gave a serious sermon, all to attend a brotherhood meeting. But without results, as the brethren were disinclined.

1924 Dec.4 he was at the brotherhood meeting in Grunthal, where he also gave a serious message that all attend the brotherhood meeting.

1924 Dec.8 Bishop Aron Zacharias again was in Gnadenfeld and called the Ohms together at Abram E. Giesbrechts' place and conducted a serious meeting with the ministers to come to a united decision to draw all into the brotherhood. The results were nil. It was not accepted. [Note from HP editor: I think this concerns emigration to Mexico.]

p.11, 1925 October 8, Election of a Bishop. Bishop H.J. Friesen and Hein. L. Friesen, Deacon Jacob Stoesz came here to conduct an election of a bishop. It took place Oct. 9 at 1 p.m. in Chortitz Church [ed. I think this must be E.R.]. Bishop Hein. Doerksen had 9 votes, Johan Schroeder had 3 and Martin C. Friesen had 147 majority. I got Bishop Friesen from Niverville, and he stayed at our place for the night. Oct. 10 he went home via Winnipeg.

p.12, 1925 Dec.7, Bishop H.J. Friesen from Altona and Peter W. Dueck upon request ordained the newly elected Bishop Martin C. Friesen. Thus he was in the Chortitz Church on Dec.8. H.J. Friesen to ordain the bishop. The church was filled to overflowing. Peter C. Friesen, Hein. A. Friesen and Cornelius P. Enns came by car at 10:30 a.m. Hein. J. Friesen went to Martin T. Friesens' place on Dec. 8, and Peter W. Dueck to our place for the night, and Jacob D. Wiebe took them in the morning to Niverville and from there they went to Winnipeg on Dec.10 and at 7 a.m. to Altona by train and then home. Peter C. Friesen, H.A. Friesen and Cornelius P. Enns went home by car. At 1:25 they arrived there. Hein. A. Friesen took his grandchild along. Jacob Fehr is the son of the deceased Abraham and his mother, the daughter of H.A. Friesens. Peter C. Friesen brought us 48 dozen shirt buttons from G. Duecks.

p.18, 1926 Jan.26, 4 a.m. the high school [MEI] in Altona burnt down. The teacherage remained standing. Elisabeth L. Wiebe at that time stayed overnight at the Widow Anton Heppner. Practically everything burnt. Elisabeth stayed at our place for the night.

p.25, 1926 June 13, We were at 28 places, and I was at additional 4 more places. Dinner we had at Peter Bergmans' place for one hour. From here to Franz Heppners' place for an hour, then to Peter Dyck's place, who had many visitors. Here we stayed for night. Then Peter Dycks took us to David Penners' place for an hour and from there to Peter C. Friesens' place, Rosenort. From here Peter C. Friesens took us to David Stoeszes' place, Kronsthal, for an hour, stayed overnight at Peter C. Friesens' place.

p.30, 1926 Dec.21, ministers' election took place in the Chortitz Church. Three ministers and one deacon were chosen. The elected were: Abram L. Friesen, Gerhard K. Wiebe with 50 ballots and Peter F. Wiebe with 49 ballots as [ministers] and Abram F. Schroeder with 14 ballots as deacon. The ballots for the deacons were: G.K. Wiebe 43, Ab. L. Friesen 34, Pet. F. Wiebe 24 and Ab. F. Schroeder 18 ballots.

p.33, 1926 Nov.23, the first contingent embarked in Niverville and at 4 a.m. went off and arrived in New York Nov.26. They embarked and left. They reached Puerto Casado Dec.31, 1926.

Dec.1-20 of 1926, the second group set out from Rosthern, Sask., [under the leadership of] Aron Zacharias. They took a different line.

Dec.21 of 1926, the third group left at 9 a.m. and reached New York Dec.24 and embarked. Jan.26, 1927, the 4th group left at 11:30.

1927 April 13, the 4th group left Niverville at 3:33 a.m. and reached Emerson at 5:30 a.m. Some who had gone along to Emerson came back to Niverville. They reached Asuncion May 13 and Puerto Casado May 15.

1927 August 23, the 5th group left from Carey station at 6:30. We escorted Martin C. Friesens and Abram D. Wiebes. There were 8 cars in a row. In the 9th car were C.A. Hieberts. When we and all the children escorted them to the Carey station _____ there were only 3 cars _____.

Diaries

[There follows detailed information for all the groups with names and total number of individuals.]

p.40, 1927 Jan. There was a great farewell. Many people were present. Many took farewell from Martin C. Friesen and said, "Aufwiedersehn". And when not here then up there in eternity. Many tears of separation flowed and many well-wishes were extended until the train started moving and left. It arrived on the 24th in St. Paul, Aug.26 11 a.m. in Chicago, Aug.27 in New York at 7 a.m. Then they embarked on the ship, which was to leave at 12 o'clock from New York. Sept. 9 they arrived in Rio and Sept.23 in Puerto Casado, Paraguay. They came here January 25, 1927.

p.44, 1927, April 12, we and M.C. Friesen took Elisabeth to Niverville, and we, Jacob C. Friesen's took Gertrude with satchels to Niverville. We travelled over 2 hours. We had to clean the wheels several times. So muddy were the roads. We had 2 pairs of horses for one big wagon with little freight. The wheels clogged that they would not turn.

p.45, 1927 May 10, we received a telephone message from Buenos Aires from the last group and also letters from Peter T. Hiebert, Barbados.

p.46, 1927 June 18, Peter C. Friesens came here at 2 p.m. and stayed overnight at Hein. C. Friesens' place. June 19 they they had Communion and for dinner they came to our place. Right afternoon they went to C.C. Friesens' place. From Peter C. Friesen, C.C. Friesen and Hein. C. Friesen at once went to the doctor, Erd. P. Penner. Mrs. Penner at once said that she would not accept the case. Then they went to St. Agathe. E.T. Penner went along. He drove and the doctor gave an injection and applied hot water. In coming back they went to Hein. F. Toewses' place. June 20 they came here and to Joh. Neufelds' place, Schoenthal. For the night they were at our place. During the night we had a heavy rain which lasted into the morning.

p.52, 1927 Oct.18, I went along with Ger. Hildebrand to Altona to attend the funeral of Peter Friesen, my cousin. He was Oct.19. He got to be 62 years. minus a day. Twice he was stricken with a stroke. Oct.21 I went home by train via Winnipeg. I got there at 7 o'clock. I paid G. Hildebrand \$1.00 and \$3.95 for the trip from Altona to Niverville.

p.53, 1927 Nov.23, the Brotherhood discussed: 1) the annual account up to the 28th and Jan.2 the account of \$220.43; and 2) the levy of 50 cents from every eligible Communicant; and 3) the fire insurance re: the Russian which has not been settled; and 4) Mrs. Martens' \$10.00 to be sent to the West Reserve; and 5) the medical expenses of the son of Jacob W. Wiebes \$40.00 for the hospital and \$25.00 for the doctor to a total of \$65.00; and 6) haircuts; and 7) each one is to have a transfer letter when moving from one church to another; and 8) the request of Jacob Unger, Giroux, who wants financial assistance; and 9) wedding banns to be announce 2 times in church; and 10) the interest in the Waisenamit is to be set at 3%; and 11) no more brewing of wine; and 12) the ministers are to visit the private schools 2 times a year; and 13) no more _____; and 14) buying of _____ Bibles, and not to keep the desk nor the sports.

Book Review

Adolf Ens, Jacob E. Peters and Otto Hamm, editors, *Church, Family and Village. Essays on Mennonite Life on the West Reserve*, The West Reserve Historical Series Vol. 3, Winnipeg MB: The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2001.

Reviewed by John J. Friesen

This new publication, *Church, Family and Village*, adds to a growing list of studies about early Manitoba Mennonite history. This book consists of twenty two articles which span the years from Russia prior to immigration, to developments in Canada and Mexico up to the middle of the twentieth century. Primary emphasis is on the settlement years on the West Reserve in southern Manitoba.

The twenty two articles are divided into four sections. Section one deals mainly with the Russian background to the immigration to Manitoba. One article tells the story of a little known Russian Mennonite settlement called Pukhtin. Located in the Ukraine about half way between the mother colony of Chortitza and the daughter colony of Bergthal, it consisted of five villages. In the 1870s, Mennonites from Pukhtin immigrated to both the East and West Reserves in Manitoba. On both Reserves, Neuanlage and Silberfeld were named after villages in the Pukhtin settlement. In 1919 Putkin was evacuated since it was close to Nestor Makhno's headquarters.

The articles are liberally footnoted and in many cases represent new research. In other cases the articles provide a new synthesis of material from various sources. A number of articles include maps. The book concludes with a helpful selected bibliography.

John Dyck, a businessman turned Mennonite historian, who died a few years ago, is credited with writing, or doing most of the research, for five of the articles. It is fitting that the book is dedicated to him and to William Harms of Altona, also recently deceased. The two together published extensive new, detailed, West Reserve research. Their work has helped to provide a more accurate picture of Manitoba Mennonite history.

This book also continues the process of providing a fuller and more positive picture of the so-called conservative Mennonites. It clarifies the extensive contribution made by them not only to the early history, but also to the continuing history of Mennonites in Manitoba.

The writers and publishers of *Church, Family and Village* are to be congratulated for providing this informative collection of articles about the history of West Reserve Mennonites.

Book Notes

- "Plum Coulee, A Century - Plus" is a centennial history book filled with family and community stories and good quality photographs. This hard cover, 368 page book is available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg (204) 888-6781 for \$45.
- The popular community history book, "Reinland an Experience in Community" has been reprinted for the 126th anniversary of the village. This book is a reprint of the 1976 version but with a supplement bringing the book up to date. The book with the supplement or the supplement by its self is available. Contact Abe Ens in Reinland at (204) 325- 4494. The cost for the book is \$40.
- The "Bergthal Gemeinde Buch", first published in 1993 has been republished due to popular demand. Cost is \$30 from the Mennonite Heritage Centre (204) 888-6781.
- "J. J. Thiessen, A Leader for His Time" is the biography written by Esther Epp-Tiessen. This soft cover, 345 page book, is filled with information and includes extensive footnotes. The book can be purchased for \$24 from the CMU book store (204) 888-6781.

MHV Windmill On the Way

by Lawrence Klippenstein

The windmill burning at the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum near Steinbach brought much consternation and grief when it hit the news last October. But the board was not daunted; plans to rebuild were launched immediately.

On Friday evening 31 August over 300 ticket holders to a fund raising banquet at the Windmill

Festival on the premises began to celebrate the completion of the project. A program of dedication for the new structure was announced for Sunday, October 21, a year plus a day after the disaster took place. Watch for details in the media.

The Festival was unique as a museum event because it represented the joining of a major community group in further celebrations to come. The Dutch community of Manitoba had let it be known some time ago that it was really "taken" by what had happened in the windmill saga for the museum. They wished they could join with the Mennonite community in heralding the return of the mill when it would take place. A bus load of them were now part of the dinner crowd, they agreed to take care of the entertainment, and had already said as well that they hoped some kind of "togetherness" around the windmill, as it were, could take place annually.

The program, chaired by CFAM's well-known Jim McSweeney, was opened by MHV board chairman John Peters, with the Dutch Harmonicats (a group of harmonica players) already introduced by their prelude performance. Early on the guests were given greetings from the Consulate General of The Netherlands in Canada by Honorary Consul Mr. Hans Hasenack who was also included among those receiving gifts later on.

The specific Dutch involvement in the windmill reconstruction had centred in the work of millwright Lucas Verbij, who has been a key person all along in making sure reconstruction could take place with the high standards hoped for by museum staff. His presentation highlighted the strenuous involvement of others who were with him in leading the project to its near -completion.

Doris Penner, MHV Cultural Committee chairperson and board member as well as fellow-board member Arnold Reimer did all the gift presentations to close the program. For Jackie Leevenhaas, director of Dutch entertainment for the evening (also including choir and dancers) there were specially made Dutch Canadian flag lapel pins and a copy of the portraits production, *Tracing the Steps of Menno Simons*, in the Dutch language, while Mr. Hasenack and Mr. Verbij each received a uniquely crafted sculpture piece of glasswork. The Menno Simons volume, in an English edition, was also presented to Gary Snider, museum director, and Julaine Penner, chairperson of the evening's planning committee.

A second day of celebrations followed on Sept. 1. There was more entertainment by the Dutch folk (with twice as many coming in to be around), other speeches were held, and the general public could get in on the Festival now as well.