

# HERITAGE POSTING

Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No.36 March 2002

## Mexico theme for Manitoba historical society dinner, programme

by Elmer Heinrichs

A dinner with Mexican cuisine, Latino music, a programme with a report on the Mexico Mennonite archives and museum project, and a video on the Mennonites in Mexico celebrating their 75th anniversary were featured at the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society meeting Feb. 2.

The occasion was the annual meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Mexico theme seemed appropriate since for several years now the society has participated in fund-raising efforts for their archives and museum, and further co-operation is planned.

The day-long event for the historical society at the former Concord College campus in Winnipeg began with 75 persons at a morning and afternoon genealogy workshop, with Dr. Tim Janzen, of Portland, Oregon. The annual meeting, dinner and evening programme climaxed the day.

A delegation of MMHS vice-chairman Abe Dueck, Henry G. Ens and Adolf Ens, who visited the Mexican Mennonite Archives/Museum project last year reported on what they had seen and heard. "We told them we appreciated co-operating in this venture," said Dueck.

Henry Ens told 60 persons at the programme that they'd been impressed with the enthusiasm of the young men. "We had some very intense meetings with them, and found that they have a very active board chaired by Abram Schmidt, with Abram Heide as secretary."

Ens also introduced brothers Gerhard and Henry G. Rempel of Winkler area, former residents of Mexico, and who now spearhead fund-raising here for the Mexico museum project. "We were so happy that many people came ... greetings from Mexico to all of you," said Rempel.

At the Nov. opening, Peter Rempel gave a brief historical background of the Mennonites, going back to Jan., 1925, and



MMHS Annual meeting banquet, 2 Feb.2002.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs.



(L-R) Henry Ens, Abe Dueck, George Rempel, Adolf Ens, Henry Rempel with a display of the Mexican Mennonite museum and archives and 75th anniversary celebration. Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs

David Friesen gave a great account of Mennonite history in Spanish.

Ens added that those present including country, state and city dignitaries heard that the purpose of the museum was "to give present generations some tangible reference to our Mennonite past, to create interest in history, to inform about Mennonites and revive our heritage."

Financially, museum revenues came from the 75th anniversary, production and sale of 75th history book, from Manitoba through the showing of videos by Otto Klassen,

(cont. on p.6)

## Readers Respond

Dear Editor,

I recently read Richard Thiessen's review of Henry Schapansky's book, *The Old Colony (Chortitza) of Russia*, in issue #35 (Dec. 2001) of the *Heritage Posting*. I must state that I agree with all of the positive and negative comments made in that review. Rather than write a review that duplicates much of what is stated in Thiessen's review and that of Tim Janzen in the last issue of the *Mennonite Historian*, I would like to make two comments and an observation.

Although I strongly agree that the referencing by Schapansky is rather incomplete I would like to point out that in order for him to reference all of his sources Schapansky would have had to include hundreds, if not thousands, of citations for the numerous bits of information that have been fed to him over the decades.

I have one additional criticism of the Schapansky book. This is based on a strong personal preference that may not be shared by others. I found Schapansky's organization of chapters 12 to 25 of his book extremely confusing. Arranging villages according to year of founding, then grouping the families according to the time period in which they settled in the Chortitza Colony makes the book very difficult to use and results in too much duplication. I would have preferred a *Familienverzeichnis* type of approach, as has been used successfully in countless church records, civil records and genealogies over the centuries, but with the families arranged alphabetically. Relevant comments could have been added at the end of the genealogical information on each family. For me this methodology has made working with the *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve* by John Dyck and William Harms almost effortless by comparison. The latter book has no index except for wives maiden names.

Finally I would like to make an observation. While on page 8 Thiessen has justifiably criticized Schapansky for not properly citing sources, page 6 provides genealogical information on two former Aeltester without a single reference!

Glenn Penner  
Guelph, Ontario

## Call for Papers

### From Hill-Tout and Siddall to Harder and Harms: Settlers and Settlement in Yarrow and the Central Fraser Valley, 1890-1950.

An academic Conference examining the migration and integration of settlers in Yarrow and the Central Fraser Valley will be held at the University College of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford on 5-7 June 2003

James Hill-Tout was an early church and community leader; Eva Siddall a faithful and long time member of the Methodist church. Both were early pioneers of the Central Fraser Valley and witnessed the influx of Mennonite settlers in the late 1920s and 1930s. Elizabeth Harms was a Mennonite midwife who served the community for many years, while John Harder was the influential leader of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Yarrow. The conference will focus on the settlement experiences of these and other settlers in the Central Fraser Valley, but it will also examine the broader contexts of those experiences. Sessions are planned on the following:

- the experiences of First Nations peoples
- intellectual and spiritual pioneers
- educational institutions
- wartime experiences
- post-war resettlement patterns

- changing statistical profiles
- comparative settlement studies

The organizing committee welcomes paper proposals in the length of approximately 100 words. These should be sent as soon as possible to Ted Regehr, 39 Sierra Morena Circle S. W., Calgary, Alberta T3H 2W2; e-mail address - tregher@ucalgary.ca Papers accepted for presentation will also be considered for publication.

The conference is sponsored by the Yarrow Research Committee with the support of the University College of the Fraser Valley, Columbia Bible College, the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia, the Chilliwack Museum and Historical Society, and the Quiring-Loewen Trust fund.



H.S. Voth (1878-1953), leader in the Winkler M.B. Church. The photograph in *Heritage Posting* no.35, Dec.2001, p.3 was of his parents. It was incorrectly identified as H.S. Voth instead of his father, H.H. Voth (1851-1918).

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Conrad Stoesz (Book Reviews & Notes)

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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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## MMHS continues Mennonite heritage preservation efforts

by Elmer Heinrichs

President Jake Peters, presenting the executive board report to the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society (MMHS) annual meeting Feb. 2, said that in the wake of 125th anniversary celebrations it has continued to present and preserve the Manitoba Mennonite heritage.

"We celebrated with several communities and families that marked special anniversaries and homecomings. The Post Road tours gave visitors a new appreciation of life on the West Reserve, and noting Year 2001 was the 'Year of the Volunteer' we thank our volunteers."

Peters added that the board has undertaken a review of policies and procedures in the areas of distribution of publications, marketing and fund-raising. A revised distribution policy is now in place, and procedures for establishing a fund-raising committee have been established.

"We are proud of the work done by our standing committees. Their reports describe exciting projects, workshops and visions," said Peters, but added that to facilitate the work of standing committees the boards endorsed a review of their structure to increase their effectiveness.

Conversations have started with the Neubergthal Heritage Committee to explore ways on how the society could become a partner in the presentation and preservation of the Mennonite village. It symbolizes early settlement patterns in Western Canada and deserves broad support.

Year 2001 marked the 60th anniversary of the Canadian WWII Conscientious Objectors (Cos). The Society approved a proposal to erect a memorial to Canadian and American COs at a recognized site, and forwarded to Mennonite Historical Society of Canada for consideration.

At the annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, attended by Peters and member Bert Friesen, a two-person committee was appointed to examine the feasibility of setting up a CO memorial. Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online continues to be well received, it was reported.

In conclusion, Peters noted the



South American/Latin music at the Annual meeting evening programme, 2 Feb.2002.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs



(L-R) David Schroeder, Edward Enns in conversation, 2 Feb.2002.

Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

challenges facing the Society, and added that "we are anticipating the Mennonites in Manitoba publication, and another West Reserve Historical Series volume this coming year. We welcome suggestions for new ways of serving our community."

The Society's original purpose, as in the constitution, is serve the community by fostering "an understanding of and respect for the history and beliefs of the Mennonite people in the past and present, and challenge them to give new expression to this heritage in the future," said Peters.

Ed Hoepfner, historic sites and monuments, reported on 2001 endeavours, and proposed that it continue with the search for 1875 grave sites at Fort Dufferin - perhaps 50-60 - and set up cairns at Dufferin in conjunction with the Post Road history group working on an interpretive trail.

Adolf Ens, for chair Otto Hamm, reported that the local history committee, which has been concentrating on the West Reserve, has reviewed its mandate and is considering branching out to the west to the Crystal City/Boissevain/Brandon area, or up to Austin and MacGregor.

Bert Friesen's financial report showed expenditures exceeded revenue by \$1,990, but additional retained earnings of \$5,446 raised MMHS's assets to \$56,243. The meeting also approved a proposed \$5,050 deficit budget, drawing down assets with spending of \$50,450.





Genealogy workshop, 2 Feb.2002. Tim Janzen in centre with light shirt. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz



Genealogy workshop participants browsing at the book seller's tables, 2 Feb.2002, Winnipeg. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz.

## Mennonite Genealogy Workshop

by Glenn Penner

A Mennonite genealogy workshop was held at the former Concord College Campus in Winnipeg on 2 February 2002. This continues a tradition in which workshops on Mennonite history and genealogy are held prior to the annual meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. This year the guest speaker for the daylong workshop was Dr. Tim Janzen, a family physician from Portland, Oregon. The total number of participants was about 75, with around 60 people in attendance at any given time. The workshop lasted from 8:30 am until just before the MMHS meeting at 4:00 pm, with at least 5 hours of this time devoted to the presentation. Tim's years as a medical student must have come in very handy during this marathon session! The entire breadth of Prussian, Russian, North and South American Mennonite genealogy was covered, with emphasis being placed on Russian Mennonite genealogical resources. This made good sense since this is Tim's area of expertise and since an enormous amount of new Russian material has recently become available. The later development is the result of microfilming projects involving three Russian archives (Odessa, St. Petersburg and



(L-R) Glenn Penner, Tim Janzen at Mennonite Heritage Centre. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

Zaporozhye). Tim Janzen is one of the people who have been involved in searching these microfilm collections for files of genealogical interest and making this information available through the MMHS genealogy web page.

In addition to an overview of resources covering Canada, the United States, Russia, Prussia, the Netherlands, and Latin America, there was a session demonstrating the soon-to-be-released Grandma 4 database. It is expected that when the CD is released later this year it will contain about 600,000 names. There was also a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the database. Of interest to Canadians is the current lack of Canadian data. Data from most early Manitoba and Saskatchewan church records and, most importantly, the book 1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve by John Dyck and William Harms have not been integrated into this database. The organizers of the Grandma project are interested in finding Canadians willing to do this.

This workshop was well organized and Tim Janzen did an excellent job of bringing everyone up to date on the recently available Russian resources and on those resources yet to be accessed. The workshop did, however, try to cover too much material in too short a time with a single presenter. The pace was, at times, too fast and some topics that are less relevant to Canadian Mennonite genealogists could have been skipped. Fortunately a detailed 28-page handout was provided. This was a great help in minimizing some of the information overload. For those who were not able to attend this workshop much of the information in the handout is also available on Tim Janzen's web site: [www.pacinter.net/users/janzen](http://www.pacinter.net/users/janzen).

## MMHS News & Notes

### Summary of MMHS activities in 2001

by Jake Peters

Much of the work of the Society is done by standing committees. What follows is a brief summary of their reports in the Annual Report 2001. The Local History Committee used their Spring workshop in Altona to launch their third volume in the West Reserve Historical Series called *Church, Family, and Village: Essays on Mennonite Life on the West Reserve*. It was edited by Adolf Ens, Jacob E. Peters, and Otto Hamm. A well-attended fall workshop in Winkler featured presentations on the Berghal Colony and its Friesen leaders in Manitoba and Paraguay, and the Fuerstenland Colony and its Wiebe leaders. Committee members are also helping edit the Sommerfeld Gemeinde registers with the hope that they can be published in the near future.

The Research and Scholarship Committee is coordinating the preparation of a manuscript on Mennonites in Manitoba by John J. Friesen. It includes text boxes and side bar material. The committee received a request from, and negotiated an agreement with, Eastern Mennonite Publications to reprint Gerhard Wiebe's *Causes and History of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia to America*. This was the first publication of MMHS and now out of print. Several new manuscripts were reviewed, and publication alternatives suggested.

The Post Road Tour developed last year by the Historical Sites and Monuments Committee has attracted several tours this year, and more refinements are being planned. Efforts are also underway to find and mark the grave sites of Mennonites buried at the Fort Dufferin site. This committee coordinated the memorial service of eightieth anniversary of the death of William Hespeler at his grave site in St. John's Anglican Cemetery. A shortage of historical site signs has been noted in the West Reserve, and now efforts are being made to correct this situation. It is estimated that it will cost \$800.00 per sign.

*Heritage Posting* is produced four times a year by our Membership and Publicity Committee. This publication is well-received by our membership, and keeps our membership informed about special events. The committee hopes to increase the number of pages of HP in the coming year. Some free copies of HP are also distributed as a way of connecting with various selected groups in our communities. All publications now carry a new logo, look for it. The paid-membership of the Society was 197 at the end of the year.

The Genealogy Committee continues to work on volume two of the Russian Mennonite Genealogy Series involving the second part of B.H. Unruh's 1955 publication. They also processed the submissions to the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award, and selected two very deserving family history papers. The first place winner was Melissa Schroeder of Altona, and the second place winner was Andrew Redekopp of Winnipeg. Congratulations! A February 2002 workshop was planned that featured Tim Janzen from Portland, Oregon. This was held in conjunction with our annual meeting.

Finally, the past year activities of the executive committee and the Board are described as housekeeping. The Board has undertaken a review of policies and procedures in the areas of distribution of publications, marketing, and fund raising. A revised distribution policy is now in place, and procedures for establishing a fund-raising committee have been accepted. For the first time MMHS has purchased comprehensive liability insurance to cover activities, particularly the Post Road tours and workshops. With 2001 being designated as the Year of the Volunteer, I, on behalf of the Board, want to thank all our volunteers. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

#### Appeal for information

• Descendants of Elizabeth Mayer and Jacob Dinges, who arrived with their daughter Pauline Dinges in the Plum Coulee area at around the turn of the century, 1900, would like to find some information about their ancestors. The daughter, Pauline, worked as a hired girl with Mennonites in the Plum Coulee and Altona area. If anyone knows of these Russian Germans, arriving with other Russian Mennonite immigrants and settling in the West Reserve around this time, please contact Annette Krayetski, 1253 Gillmor Crescent, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 6A8

### MENNONITE GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

**SAT. 4 MAY at 9:30 am at BRANDON UNIVERSITY**  
4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, BRODIE SCIENCE BLDG. South Entrance on Louise 18<sup>th</sup> & Louise Ave.,

**Featuring LOCAL DISPLAYS OF GENEALOGY RESEARCH**  
**A B C'S OF SEARCHING YOUR FAMILY ROOTS**

REGISTRATION FEE \$10.00 (lunch not included) . For more information contact: Peter Letkeman 204-725-0343 Email: letkeman@brandonu.ca

#### BOOK NOTES

- The **Winkler Historical Society** has just released the first issue of a **newsletter** which provides much news about the heritage scene in the Winkler area. The editor is Sally Harms who is expert at gathering coloured photo material for publication. She can be contacted at harms681@mb.sympatico.ca or c/o Winkler Heritage Society, 301-185 Main St., Winkler, MB R6W 1B4.
- An organization calling itself **Plautdietsch Freunde** has just released the second 20-page issue of **Plautdietsch FRIND**, (Low German for friend) also very colorful and "slick". The editor is Peter Wiens. Many of the people involved are of *Aussiedler* background in Germany. To reach Peter email info@plautdietsch-freunde.de or write to him c/o Plautdietsch FRIND, Robert Hanning St. 14, D-33813 Oerlinghausen, Germany.

## Genealogy

### Ancestors and descendants of Heinrich Voth

A. Johann Voth, b. 1800 in Wernersdorf, Prussia, d. 12 Feb. 1829, Gnadenheim, Molotschna

m. 1823 in Prussia

Maria Flaming b. 30 May 1801, Wernersdorf, Prussia, d. 20 May 1875, Gnadenheim, Molotschna

B. Heinrich Voth, b. 25 May 1824 in Wernersdorf, Prussia, d. 27 August 1887, Bingham Lake, Minnesota

m. 10 December 1844, Gnadenheim, Molotschna

Helena Fast b. 12 July 1823, Sparrau, Molotschna, d. 21 December 1884, Bingham Lake, Minnesota

C. Heinrich Voth, b. 19 February 1851, Gnadenheim, Molotschna, d. 26 November 1918, Vanderhoof, B.C.

m. 12 June 1873, Klippenfeld, Molotschna  
Sara Kornelsen, b. 29 March 1853, Pordenau, Molotschna, d. 25 April 1939, Winkler, Manitoba

D. Heinrich Voth, b. 28 January 1878, Bingham Lake, Minnesota, d. 23 October 1953, Winkler, Manitoba

m. 28 August 1904, Winkler, Manitoba  
Susanna Warkentin, b. 15 October 1882, Winkler, Manitoba d. 20 December 1972, Winkler, Manitoba

E. Sara Voth, b. 9 April 1909, Dallas, Oregon,

m. 17 July 1938, Winkler, Manitoba  
Bernard Klippenstein, b. 18 November 1904, Altona, Manitoba

F. Timothy Klippenstein, b. 29 October 1946, Winkler, Manitoba

m. 20 April 1974, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Ruth Koop, b. 15 January 1951, Winnipeg, Manitoba

#### Source

Genealogy of the Voth Family, 1800-1974, compiled by the family, 1975.

#### Correction in HP, No.25, Dec.2001:

The photograph caption on p. 1 includes Lorraine Wolk, not Woelk

### Ancestors and descendants of Ältester Abraham Doerksen

A. David Doerksen, b. ca.1740, Tiegenhagen, Prussia, d. ca. between 1797-1801 in Russia where he had emigrated in 1789

m. ca.1764 Prussia

Maria Derksen, b. ca.1736 Prussia, d. June 1801, Neuendorf, Chortitza

B. Jacob Derksen b. 21 December 1767, Neuendorf, Prussia, d. 20 February 1806, Neuendorf, Chortitza.

m. ca.1790, Chortitza colony

Susanna Klassen, b.1 December 1770, Montau, Friesland d. 2 November 1817, Osterwick, Chortitza

C. Abraham Derksen, b. 10 October 1805, Neuendorf, Chortitza d. 4 October 1871

m. 18 January 1827

Regina Hoeppner, b.1804, d. 2 February 1831

D. Abraham Doerksen, b. 1 November 1827, Russia, d. 20 September 1916, Niverville, Manitoba

m.11 September 1851, Russia

Katarina Friesen, 12 April 1832, d. 28 May 1851, Russia

E. Abraham Doerksen, b.11 September 1852, Schönthal, Bergthal, d.25 January 1929, Mexico

m.16 July 1872, Russia

Maria Dueck, b.26 February 1855,

F. Abram Doerksen, b. 7 January 1875

2.m. ca.1895

Anna Friesen, b. ca.1876

G. Abraham Doerksen, b.15 February 1898

Source: Bergthal Gemeinde Buch, Grandma 4, HP, No.34, September 2001, p.3.

#### Mexico Theme

(cont. from p.1)

300,000 pesos raised locally, and the Mexican government adding double that sum toward the \$25,000 U.S. cost.

The museum aims and objectives, based on 1 Peter 3:15 "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have", include developing a typical museum village, and creating a Mennonite information centre.

The Mexican government is really interested in the venture since they feel it will promote tourism, which would be good for the country, added Ens.

Adolf Ens added that the purchase of an 11-acre tract of land on the main highway 10 km. from Cuauhtemoc reflects long-range thinking, supported by a widely-based group on the board. "They would like a visit by an archivist, training, and an exchange of archival materials," said Ens.

President Jake Peters, for the executive committee, reported that a new agreement was signed between MMHS and the Mexico museum declaring its further interest in assisting museum and archive development recording immigration, settlement and development of the community.

Elected to new two-year terms were John Giesbrecht, Lawrence Giesbrecht, both Altona; Evelyn Friesen, Royden Loewen, both Steinbach; Donovan Giesbrecht, Roland Sawatzky, William Schroeder (Sutton), Conrad Stoesz, all of Winnipeg. Winnipeg board members Paul Friesen, Ed Hoeppner, Jake Peters and Hans Werner were re-elected to the board.

A Mexican menu including Chicken Enchiladas with rice, with musical accompaniment by Lacotia specializing in Central American music was enjoyed. One of the evening's highlights - which followed the report on the Mexico museum/archives - was watching Otto Klassen's video on the Mennonites in Mexico celebrating their 75th anniversary in 1997.



## Diary excerpts of Maria Schroeder, b. 27 October 1907 and living in the Morden area

25 October 1926

..... Sunday morning found us up bright and early. Preparations that could be done the day before, had all been finished. Dad, Mom, Susie, Tina, and I left for church in our car. The married-to-be's and Maggie left in Will's flivver(?) coupe. Several Plum Coulee folks arrived in church for the wedding ceremony. That done, we proceeded home for dinner consisting of "Pluenmos" and boiled veal and bread. Then we all gave them presents. There was pretty much, considering the number of guests there were. Then we sang two songs and then served a lunch of chocolate drops, home-made ginger snaps, and cookies, and buns, with sugar and coffee. Then somebody played the organ and we sang. Then we did our chores. They have to be done whether we celebrate weddings or no. Then supper by the dinner menu. That cleared away, we sat around for an hour till we sang hymns, accompanied by the organ. Then K & I played some lively pieces on the organ. This was followed by a fun dance and was the end. Today we threshed some flax and the floors had to be scrubbed. There was so much dust. I must go to bed as it is pretty late already.....

27 October 1926

Today is my birthday and a real sunshiny day it was. If the following year will contain as much sunshine, I need not dread it. I hope it does. Tina Dyck went back to Plum Coulee today. She was tired of us - mostly because she had no on to romp around with I suppose; because Willie is married now and things have changed somewhat. She gave me a very pretty buffet set (three-piece). Susie gave me a lovely hanky; one she had embroidered herself. I have a strand of imitation pearls from Betty Fehr. And a hanky from Cathy. They brought the presents Sunday night. Susie had a shoulder and ..... her arm in a sling now. Not very comfortable. I know for I have experienced it myself.....

I love to write and have a secret hope that I may write things that have a real worth someday; things that are worth printing, and things that other folks would love to read and pay for. Yes - that is only a hope, but I do so wish it may be realized. Sometimes when I work about the house or outside perhaps, I long to take a pen or pencil, then and there, and jot down my thoughts. But I can't then, and afterwards - my pencil is not as eloquent as my thoughts were. If anybody knew I was writing this, they'd think me silly and near to losing my senses. Perhaps I am, but then I certainly can't help it.....

29 April 1928

..... Today being Sunday, Dad and four of the girls were at church. We always take turns, as we can't all go at once, and next Sunday is my turn again. Anne is joining the church this year and so has to go every Sunday. I suppose people think it kind of funny that I'm not, as I'm older, but I won't just because somebody else will. If its done in that spirit, I don't think it'll do anyone any good.....

Oh Annie, is Jacob Falk back in dear old Manitoba, already? I expect he is, as April is pretty near gone. I was so surprised when I read that, but I'm very very anxious to see him, should he really be back. Didn't we and those cousins of ours always have loads of fun though! I'll never forget it. I hope he comes to see us too, even if only for a day. Annie, you will see him sooner than I, so just "invite" him over to our house. As I would love to see some of that Mexican sunburn on him and ask him loads and loads of questions too. About Nettie and Aunt Nettie and the younger boys and girls too. We have not had a letter from any of them since last summer.....

Autumn, 1928

.....you are busy most of the time. So have we for that matter. At least for the last

## Diaries

two months. As we have done all the haying, harvesting, and threshing during that time. The busiest part of the farm year is over once again, I am glad to say. Not so much besides the plowing to do now, and I don't do that. Annie plows with horses. Sue or Dad with the tractor. I am planning to do some work after we have finished everything. Though I'm not quite sure yet. If I do I expect it will have to be domestic work as I am not qualified for anything else.

*Some poetry written about the same time*

May your life be like arithmetic  
Your joys added  
Your sorrows subtracted  
Your cares divided  
And your pleasures multiplied.

As you journey down life's pathway  
May joy each day attend  
And I trust that you will always  
Count me among your friends.

May there be just enough clouds in your  
life to make a glorious sunset.

Give a pleasant smile today,  
Bestow a cheery glance,  
Scatter sunshine on your way  
Whenever you have a chance.  
Someone else will smile maybe  
And cause a smile on two,  
And smiles will spread you'll see  
From that smile smiled by you.

In your chain of friends  
Consider me a link.  
Some friends may wish thee happiness,  
Some friends may wish thee wealth,  
My wish for thee is better far,  
Contentment blessed with health.

Good wishes for the future,  
Kind memories of the past,  
Remembrance in the present,  
And friendship to the last.

(cont. on p.8)

## Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

Presents

### Workshop on Colourful Characters of the former West Reserve

Saturday, 13 April 2002,  
at the Rosenfeld Good Neighbour Centre

#### Programme

9:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee

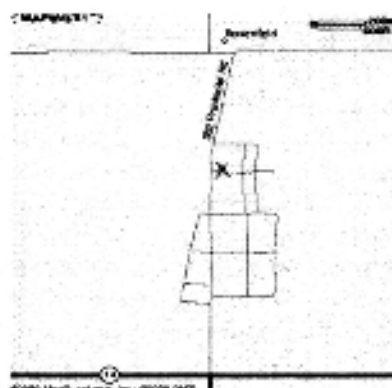
10:00 "Big Bill" Enns, author of *Das Verstossene Kind*  
by Edward Enns

11:00 The Funk Brothers: Musicians and  
Mathematicians  
by Ted. E. Friesen

12:00 Lunch served at the Centre

1:00 p.m. Peter Elias: Blacksmith and "Diarist"  
by Adolf Ens

2:00 Ohm Diedrich Toews of Reinfeld  
by Peter Hiebert



Discussion to follow each presentation. Displays and books. Registration: \$10 (includes the noon meal)

For more information contact: Otto Hamm ph.204-822-5292 (Morden), Bruce Wiebe ph.204-325-9082 (Winkler), David M. Friesen ph. 204-327-5587 (Gretna), Dave Harms ph. 204-324-8265 (Altona), or Adolf Ens, ph. 204-489-6044 (Winnipeg).

be entered.

Residential facilities at the MCI including those for the disabled, and food services for the weekend, are being reserved. Benno and Mary Loewen, who farm near Gretna about half a mile from the original homestead, will accept advance registrations by telephone at 204-327-5339 or by mail at Box 127, Altona, Manitoba R0G 0B0.

For more information, contact: Howard Loewen, 324 Victoria Crescent, Winnipeg, MB R2M 1X5 ph.204-253-0742 or 204-425-3449; email: loewphoe@mb.sympatico.ca or Dolores Harder, 36010 Spyglass Court, Abbotsford, B.C. V3G 2W7, ph. 604-557-0855; email: harder0855@home.com

#### You're Invited

Where - Chortitz, Manitoba

When - 28 July 2002, 2:00 p.m.

What - Cemetery Plaque Unveiling

Why - In Remembrance of our Forefathers

Bring your family history (charts, books, scrapbooks, etc.) for display. Bring your lawn chairs. After a short programme we will have coffee, dainties, Knackzoat, and lots of visiting under the big tent. If you have an item for "Open Mic" please write or call: Mavis Dyck, Box 1354, Morden, MB R6M 1B2, ph. 204-822-3304

#### Diary

(cont. from p.7)

Friendship is a silken cord  
That binds two hearts together  
So if you do not break this cord  
We shall be friends forever.

Remember this and bear in mind  
A constant friend is hard to find  
And when you find one good and true  
Change not the old one for the new.

Since life is a stormy and troublesome path  
And work is the portion of man  
We all should endeavour while passing along  
To make it as smooth as we can.

I wish you health, I wish you wealth,  
I wish you gold in store,  
I wish you heaven after death  
What can I wish you more.

As ripples follow a ship at sea  
So may happiness follow thee.

In the book of life, God's album,  
My your name be penned with care  
And all who here have written  
Have their name forever written there.

## LOEWEN REUNION 2002

Descendants of Heinrich Loewen (1823-1908) and Sara Toews (1827-1889) who emigrated to Manitoba from Russia in 1876 are invited to a reunion on the weekend of July 13 & 14, 2002. The event will take place in Gretna, Manitoba at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute. Heinrich and Sara had five children: Anna (1850-1910) married Erdman Nikkel, Heinrich Jr.(1852-1937) married Aganetha (Dick) Loewen, Katharina (1859-1930) married Klaas Peters, Jacob (1861-1928) married Katharina Giesbrecht, and Peter (1869-1943) married Katharine Gerbrandt. A computer file in process currently contains 2927 descendants and an estimated 600 or more Nikkel descendants remain to



## Elizabeth (Isby) Bergen, 1908-2001

### A Tribute to an MMHS Honorary Member

by Martha Martens

Elizabeth was adopted by Gerhard and Elisabeth (Dyck) Bergen in March of 1908. The Bergens lived in Hague, Saskatchewan at the time. Isby spent her first years in Hague but her parents moved south to Osler and this is where she started her schooling. It was in these years that Isby made friends which lasted a life time. Isby would often talk about Mr. Bartel, her Grade three teacher and the impact that he had made on her. He told his pupils Bible stories and taught them many songs.

Due to her mother's health the family was advised to move to a different climate, so in 1916 they spent some time in Long Beach and Reedley, California. This did not seem to solve the problem, so they moved back to Hague, Saskatchewan, for a short time. In 1918 they moved again, this time to Engen, B.C. Mr. Bergen, being a business man, started a store and did a lot of business with the native people of the area. They developed a close friendship with them. This is evident when years later I was asked if it was Isby's parents that had had a store in Engen, because a native had talked about the Bergens.

During 1921-1922 Isby took her Grade 8 in the Hague school. Then in the fall of 1922 Isby and her parents moved to Blumenort, Manitoba, and later to Gretna. Isby thought she had finished school, but her father enrolled her at the MCI, where she took her Grades 9-12. The MCI became an important part of her life. Many friendships were developed, often lasting a life time. Students and teachers felt free to come to the Bergen home for fellowship.

In 1941, Isby found her career in life. On 7 January 1941 she started to work for the D. W. Friesen firm in Altona, the founders of a local newspaper, the *Red River Valley Echo*, earlier the *Altona Echo*. This involved phoning people for news items, and got her acquainted with many local people. The foundation for an interest in Mennonite history was laid by her father and developed later as she studied at the MCI in Gretna, and as she researched and wrote many historical articles. These articles are a source of much archival information.

The love of music was very evident in Isby's life. Her mother taught her many songs, and when her mother attended choir practice in her younger years, Isby would sit on the side, listen, and likely sang along. She attended many concerts, especially the Southern Manitoba music concerts.

Isby identified herself with the Bergthaler church in 1927 when she was baptized by Ältester Jacob Hoepfner in the Edenburg church just east of Gretna. Isby was active in the local church as long as her health and strength allowed it.

Isby was an individual who took time to talk to you and listened to sharing of life's dreams and activities. She always showed an interest in persons and to delay your departure of guests she would make a cup of tea. Isby had no generation gap. Isby knew many people and it seems that she had a knack of finding a common interest with anyone she met.

Isby cherished her many friends, coming from a variety of backgrounds, and from around the world. Her many scrapbooks of cards and letters show that she maintained these friendships.

Isby was a good example of a person who loved life, taking an interest in others, and making them feel appreciated.

## New Research and Archives Centre Opens Its Doors

by Lawrence Klippenstein

A new archival and research centre is now functioning in Altona. It is known as the Altona and District Research Centre. A 17 November 2001 open house brought more than 50 visitors to look in, and another similar event may be held this spring. The



Isby Bergen, 1999, in Altona, Manitoba.

Photo credit: Martha Martens

archives became a member of the Association for Manitoba Archives on 25 February 2002.

Al Schmidt, former high school teacher and mayor of the community, heads up the Centre. He is being helped by four volunteers attempting to learn the archival craft, and is responsible to a local board which oversees the project.

The Centre is located in Golden West Plaza on Centre Avenue. Recent deposits include papers from the late William Kehler, a translator of German materials, the late D. K. Friesen (many photographs), Friesen Printers, and materials from the extensive files of the late Elizabeth Bergen, long time reporter for the *Red River Valley Echo*, Altona, and well known local historian.

Researchers are asked to make appointments to work at the Centre by calling Al at 1-204-324-5542, or sending an email to [aschmidt@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:aschmidt@mb.sympatico.ca).



(L-R) Al Schmidt, Marlene Plett, and Marge Friesen at the Altona & District Research Centre. Photo credit: *Red River Valley Echo*, Altona, 12 Nov. 2001.

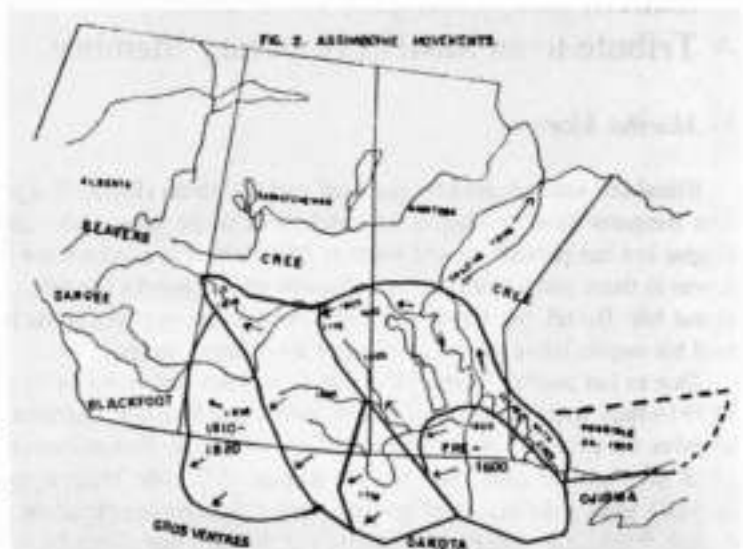
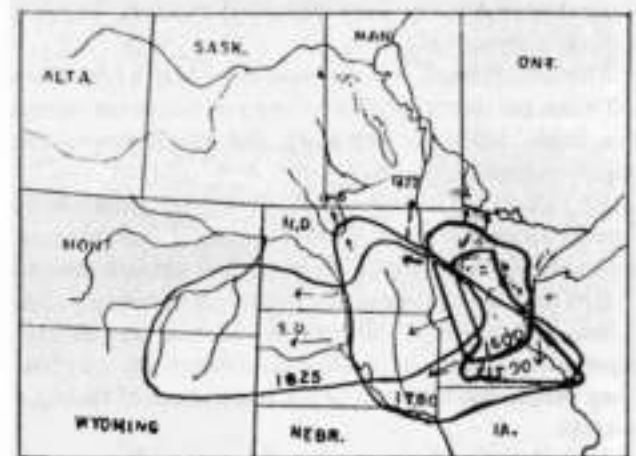


FIG. 5. DAKOTA MOVEMENTS.



The above maps were provided by the author from:

Walter M. Mlady, "Indian Migrations in Manitoba and the West" in *Manitoba Historical Society*, Series III, Number 17, (1961), p.24ff.

## Aboriginal People and Southernmost Manitoba With Particular Reference to the West Reserve (cont. from No.35 December 2001)

by Edwin D. Hoepfner

Historically it is known that the provision of firearms to the Cree by the English on Hudson Bay resulted in the Cree venturing southward and westward out of the boreal forest and onto the plains and pushing resident plains people southwestward. The Cree were allied with the Assiniboine tribes who seem to have been experiencing similar pressure from tribes further east in Ontario who had received firearms from the French in the St. Lawrence Valley. La Verendrye found the Assiniboine in northwestern Ontario near Lake of the Woods in the 1730s and already in possession of most of southern Manitoba. The Assiniboine had broken away from, and were in continual conflict with, the Dakota (Sioux) who were a woodland people in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Somewhat between these two but further toward the east were the Ojibwa(y) people, also known as Chippewa and/or Saulteaux from their location around Lake Superior and the falls at Sault Ste. Marie. All of these groups were under pressure from tribes further east still all of whom were recoiling westward, in a sort of domino-effect, from the more aggressive hunting practices, as well as hostilities, from the Hurons and Ottawas armed by the French and from the Iroquois in New York state armed by the English on the Atlantic U.S. coast. The eastern tribes hunted out their original areas in order to produce the furs needed to pay for the trade goods introduced by the Europeans and began to encroach on the hunting territories of their western neighbours - thus the domino-effect. The Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux) were pushed westward out of the woodland area and on to the plains of the upper Red River and westward and gave their name to the states we know as the Dakotas. The Cree's main area initially was north of the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers whereas the Assiniboines definitely predominated south of that.

The first trading forts on the middle Red River at the confluence of the Red and the Pembina appeared in 1793 with Alexander Henry the Younger establishing himself there on a "permanent" basis at Pembina in 1801. From here he travelled extensively across southern Manitoba and adjacent areas of Minnesota and North Dakota visiting his seasonal trading forts at Pincaweywinning (Dead Horse Creek) near Morden and at the site of what became first St. Joseph then Walhalla, N.D. The prototype Red River cart was first constructed by his men, many or all of whom were Métis (or became fathers of Métis descendants), at Pembina. Fortunately he left a journal which was first published in 1897.<sup>3</sup> It is essential reading for an understanding of early Indian life and other events in our area - it is one of the original sources referred to earlier. It is sources like these which have been used by archaeologists and "pre-historians" such as Chris Vickers<sup>4,5</sup> and Walter Hlady<sup>6</sup> to describe the tribal movements and inter-actions which have been roughly summarized in this article.

By 1817 the Ojibway were in possession of the Red River Valley as far west as the site of Portage la Prairie. When Lord Selkirk concluded a first treaty with the aboriginals west of the Great Lakes in 1817 the Assiniboines were gone from the Red River Valley and even the Cree admitted Ojibway ownership in this area. The Cree and Assiniboine made use of the Ojibway as a buffer between themselves and the Dakota (Sioux) but the Dakotas continued sporadic raids northwards. The area around Lake of the Woods and westward near the Pembina River and its tributary the Tongue River even then was an ethnic and political frontier - long before the European people decided on the forty ninth. The origin of the name of Warroad, Minnesota is related to these events and others in this area in the La Verendrye era in the 1730s. To the east-west frontier we must add a north-south inter-tribal frontier - or really a series of these - successively moving westward across both southern Manitoba and the Dakotas with the last one being the Assiniboine/Ojibway boundary moving across the Red River Valley in the first couple of decades in the early 1800s. Underlying this framework are the religious/cultural influences, probably coming into Manitoba from much further to the south and perhaps southeast, in early pre-historic times, which resulted in some 60 mounds, of several forms, being constructed in southern Manitoba. Some of these may have been constructed by aboriginal villages living at least partly by horticulture (corn, pumpkins, squash) similar to the Mandans on the Missouri. Considerable population plus discipline and organization, presumably based on religious concepts widely accepted by the population, must surely be necessary to build mounds such as the one west of Altona - which seems to imply a semi-sedentary community.

The arrival of Alexander Henry the Younger in the middle Red River Valley in 1799 and his establishment of a post at Pembina in 1801 to trade with the Ojibway arriving there from the southeast was a business decision based on his awareness of this migration. His activities and Fort Pembina resulted in what scholar Harold Hickerson has ably described in an article "The Genesis of a Trading Post Band: The Pembina Chippewa".<sup>7</sup> This Ojibway group eventually moved farther west to the Turtle Mountain area. Henry's men, French employees with roots in the east were either Métis, or their children, born of Ojibway, Cree, and Assiniboine mothers, added to the existing Métis population which had its genesis with the arrival of La Verendrye and his men. A Métis community developed at Pembina, with an R.C. priest ministering to them throughout part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dead of this community were buried nearby. At the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations at Fort Dufferin, Ruth Swan, a Métis, told us about that community's aspirations to recover the field, now cultivated by farmers, where their ancestors graves are located at Pembina. Manitoba Mennonites can empathize with this endeavour for the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is committed to locating the graves of the deceased children of our first arrivals for the West Reserve in 1875 at Fort Dufferin only 3 or 4 miles north of Pembina. The descendants of some of the aboriginal people who sojourned in the area of the West Reserve have some concerns identical to ours - food for thought!

Those few Indians who made a brief appearance on the West Reserve in the 1870s/1880s, most likely were Ojibway - possibly shaking their heads in bewilderment at these strange newcomers who were turning their erstwhile home into a patchwork of squares and rectangles!

### Endnote/Bibliography

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6. Walter M. Hlady; *Indian Migrations in Manitoba and the West* (Man. Historical Society Series III, No.17, 1960/1961, pp.3-83).
7. Harold Hickerson; *The Genesis of a Trading Post Band: The Pembina Chippewa* (Ethnohistory Vol.3, No.4, Fall 196, pp.289-34) (Ethnohistory is a quarterly journal devoted to original research on the documentary history of the culture and movements of primitive peoples and related problems of broader scope, published by Indiana University).





The *Volkszeitung* was the first newspaper published in Canada by Mennonites who had come from Russia. It was printed in Winkler by Henry H. Neufeld from about 1902-1907 and its first editor was P.P. Kroeker. Its constituency was the Russian Mennonite population in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Russia.

The *Volkszeitung* was joined by other publications. The *Reisendiener* was published by A.A. Wolfe in Gnadenthal for a part of 1904. Der *Rheinländer* was published in Gretna by Godfrey Coblentz. A total of 13 issues was the life of Der *Rheinländer* which began and ended in 1908. The saddest portion of the history of these publications is that virtually no copies are known to exist today. The exception is an incomplete copy of the October 14, 1903 issue of the *Volkszeitung*. The original is at the Mennonite Library and Archives in North Newton, Kansas with a photocopy at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. If anyone has copies or knows where copies of these papers may be, please contact the Mennonite Heritage Centre (204) 888-6781.

## Book Review

Esther Epp-Tiessen, *J. J. Thiessen, A Leader for His Time* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2001), 344 pp.

Reviewed by John I. Friesen

In *J. J. Thiessen, A Leader for His Time*, Esther Epp-Tiessen gives us a detailed account of J. J. Thiessen, a man who has had a significant influence on Mennonite life in Canada as well as in other parts of the world. It is the biography of a man who devoted his energies and his time to improving the lot of his people in so many different ways.

The book gives us the sense that JJ was a man with seemingly boundless energy. He was always prepared to take on additional responsibilities even when his workload was already very heavy. Secretary for the Zentral Mennonitisches Immigranten Komitee, minister in Saskatoon, administrator of the *Mädchenheim*, chairperson of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Chairperson of the CMBC Board, leadership on the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, work with Mennonite Central Committee, and the General Conference Mission Board - JJ was involved in so many different aspects of work that one wonders where he found the time and the energy to carry out all the tasks as effectively as he did. Furthermore, as one reads the descriptive accounts of his work in all these areas it is clear that he did his work with insight and thoroughness.

JJ was a people person and a good mediator. He was a person who "treasured personal relationships highly and tried to stay on good terms with everyone .... who was committed to unity within the family, the church and the Mennonite peoplehood." (p.57) Examples, of this characteristic are his apparent middle-of-the-road position on the *Selbstschutz* or his position of moderation in the Braun-Friesen controversy in Rosthern, and his conciliatory approach to the young men who joined the armed services during World War II. At times one gets the impression that this characteristic to want to stay on "good terms with everyone" made JJ appear to be a person who was unable to make difficult decisions yet that is clearly not the case because the book gives ample evidence of successful and effective leadership in many areas.

The author has made the story J. J. Thiessen's life and work interesting and meaningful by providing sufficient background material to give a context for the issues being related and discussed. Numerous incidents of personal humour, specific interactions with others on a very personal level and a generally pleasing style add to the pleasure

## Fire in Neuberghthal

On Saturday evening, March 2, a fire took place in the village of Neuberghthal, Manitoba. A former hog and chicken barn, on the Marilyn and Ray Hamm yard, was lost in the fire along with the contents. It is believed that a poor electrical connection was the cause of the fire. The Altona Fire Department attended the fire and was able to keep the fire from spreading to other buildings.

Neuberghthal has been declared a National Historic site by Parks Canada and this building was one of two such remaining in the village. It is not known when the building was erected, but it was one of the earlier buildings in the village. The village was founded by Mennonites in the late 1870s. The construction style has led to some interesting speculation that it may have been first used as a house. The walls were double walls on 3 sides (north, south, and west) leaving the east wall to be attached to a barn. Windows were a combination of residential and barn style usage.



Neuberghthal building destroyed in 2 March 2002 fire. Photo credit: F. Klippenstein's book on Neuberghthal

of reading this book.

Esther Epp-Tiessen has drawn on a variety of sources to write this story: periodicals, books, articles in newspapers and journals, archival collections, and interviews. The "Sources and Bibliography" section at the end of the book provides a good starting point for anyone who wants to do further research on material related to this period of Mennonite history.

When I was a boy growing up on a farm in southern Manitoba I remember hearing my parents talk about "Yut Yut Thiessen" and I sensed that they did so with reverence and some measure of awe. The story told in "*J. J. Thiessen, A Leader for His Time*" helps me understand why they felt this way about