



HERITAGE POSTING

Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No.39 December 2002

Settlements beyond the Mennonite West Reserve

by Elmer Heinrichs

Beginning with Rosenort-Rosenhoff-Riverside, a local history workshop by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society at Lowe Farm looked at the start, the growth and relationship of four Mennonite communities west northwest of Morris, north of the Mennonite West Reserve.

Historian Lori Scharfenberg told 60 people curious about the past about the Scratching River settlement of Kleine Gemeinde (KG) farmers, who were mostly born on the Molotschna Colony. Led by David Klassen, a business leader born in Prussia - who chose Manitoba as home.

Most were quite wealthy, though with the KG model of helping all in their fellowship, several poorer families came along as well. The villages of Rosenhoff (now Riverside) and Rosenort were founded on the banks of the Scratching River slightly northwest of Morris. Klassen chose this land due to its proximity to Winnipeg, and the richness of soil.

Thirty-one Russian Mennonite families, roughly 80 people, moved here in 1874. Rosenort and Rosenhoff were so named because of the abundance of wild roses here and these were also traditional village names in Russia. But only 19 families stayed; nine other families relocated to Nebraska and Kansas, says Scharfenberg.

Only two years earlier the first farmers settled in the Morris area. The first permanent doctor came in 1877. Dr. R.F. McTavish contributed all his life to the town and district including the Mennonite people.

The Mennonite villages grew alongside the town purchasing supplies and helping it grow.

Ralph Groening, (see photo on p.2) a Morris RM councillor, traced the story of Lowe Farm (southwest of Rosenort) from the early 1880s when three Englishmen, J. Lowe, Mr. Rose, and Mr. Hope obtained large tracts of land, and set up farms known as Lowe Farm, Rose Farm and Hope Farm.



Front table includes Adolf Ens, Irene & Abe Kroeker, and others interested in Mennonite history attended Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society local history workshop at Lowe Farm, 2 Nov. 2002.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs

Mr. Lowe, listed in Canada's 1910 book "Who's Who", and the founder of Lowe Farm, attempted to set up a model farm, and to see how he could develop his farm very much like the Mennonites, whom he was familiar with from his term as secretary of Agriculture, says Groening.

"Lowe's farm struggled with drainage for four years, and then George Burland essentially became the owner of all this land," says Groening, "and it was his farm manager Wm. Stevenson, with an inventive mind and mechanical inclination, who brought modern farming to Lowe Farm.

The railway was built in 1891 and with other land scarce, men were willing to try farming the higher sections. J.J. Wiens was hired to take over the Lowe Farm, and that was the beginning of the Mennonite presence in Lowe Farm. Heppner, Groening, and Wiens purchased lots.

By 1898, says Groening, "Lowe Farm had a hotel, and it was known as a town where you could have a drink. There are also reports that there was somewhat of a red-light district."

The first worship services in Lowe Farm were held in 1900 with Baptist and Presbyterian ministers from Morris conducting services in the recently-built school. By this time Mennonites, who settled nearby, had set up private schools, and Kronsweide district held worship services.

(cont. on p.2)

Annual General Meeting of MMHS

2002 February 1, Saturday, 16.00 hr.

Kleefeld E.M.C. Church, Kleefeld

Followed by banquet, music, and readings by Henry Fast

Details to follow in the mail

Kane, The Bunch at Sperling

(cont. from p.1)

The local history workshop at Lowe Farm explored the start-up, growth and relations among four Mennonite communities west and northwest of Morris. (see p.1)

Kane historian Dora Hildebrand told about the early days of this community just west of Lowe Farm.

According to the story as pieced together for Kane's history book and reunion in 2000 it all began when John Henry Kane, an American businessman and land broker from Odell, Illinois, began to purchase newly-drained land in the Kane area in 1906.

"The first grain storage facilities were built at the railroad siding by Kane in order to transfer local production to market. Kane apparently anticipated a business opportunity due to the increased demand for high-quality Manitoba wheat at the conclusion of World War I.

"Kane's long-term goal was to promote the sale of his farmland to American immigrant farmers. He built a model farm one mile north of St Jean, Man. in 1918 to provide these novice farmers with the opportunity to practice the skills to farm heavy clay soils in southern Man."

Hildebrand says most of the new settlers were from the United States and Ontario, and all were "English". The Mennonites came mostly in the 1930s with names like Toews, Suderman, Blatz, Hyde, etc. Most immigrants came to farm, but a few opened businesses serving the farmers.

The Interior Elevator Company built the first elevator in Kane in 1918, and so was a general store "important to all." It was a meeting place for all ages, the hot stove league in the morning, the barber shop in the afternoon and a drop-in centre for the younger crowd at night.

A school opened in 1920 - G.G. Siemens and C.W. Wiebe, later a well known physician taught here - so did churches, and the Kane Mission Sisters formed a sewing circle. W.W.II came, some enlisted, others went as COs, and a community centre operated for 24 years to 1998.

John Martens, who hails from "The Bunch", reported on the Russländer Mennonites who settled north of Sperling in the mid-20s. Coming from Russia, this district with names like Olfert, Martens, Quiring, Schmidt, and Falk was also termed as "Little Moscow".

Recent immigrants from various Mennonite colonies in Russia, they came through the help of the Mennonite Board of Colonization and Immigration, and formed a new community.

After they bought land at \$45 an acre, plus additional amounts for buildings, livestock and seed, the spring of 1927 saw much activity as houses and barns were built, and crops were planted. But it wasn't until a few years later that they harvested their first Canadian



Ralph Groening making a point during presentation about Lowe Farm, 2 Nov.2002.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs

crop.

Children were enrolled in the re-opened Lone Star School some miles away, but by 1939 the community had its own school, Cannon School District No. 2297, named for a government minister. By 1956 it consolidated with Lowe Farm.

Settlers came from two Mennonite churches, GC and MB, but they made an effort to worship together, at first in homes, with services led on an alternating basis. Peter Olfert's store was a gathering place for music, wrestling matches, sports and story telling, added Martens.

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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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Mennoville Evangelical Mennonite Church.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs

Bus tour to Manitoba Interlake Mennonites

by Elmer Heinrichs

Mennonites in Manitoba first settled on the East and then on the West Reserve in the 1870s. Later settlements developed in other areas including the Manitoba Interlake.

Travelling north past Gimli, through Riverton, over 30 tour participants arrived at Mennville EMC Church, the centre of a small but thriving rural Mennonite community.

Here they were welcomed by Leonard Dueck, last of the pioneers still residing here. He described Mennville, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, as a farming community, that is in grain, hogs, cattle, and turkeys, with a few small related businesses.

Dueck told the visitors that farmers generally from Blumenort and Morris-Rosenort area moved to Riverton area, the first ones about 1950-1951. But already in the late 1940s young men came here to clear land for farming, and then 15 families moved in.

He explained that this place was chosen because in the late 1940s a forest fire had gone through, and burned off a lot of the trees. And the land was cheap.

A brief news item in the Christlicher Familienfreund (Christian Family Friend) in August 1951 says visitors "...found the Geschwister [fellow believers] busy at work. Machines are going day and night. Where last year everything was wild under shrub and bush one now sees large grain fields."

Some of the land is part peat and susceptible to frost, but the farms are very good for turkeys and cattle. Canola too grows very well here. Hydro and telephone service arrived in the 1950s, and water comes from artesian wells just 20 feet down, says Dueck.

Mennville Evangelical Mennonite Church began services (in homes) about 1950, and formally organized in 1954. The first building was occupied in 1956. Peter P. Friesen is considered the founding leader.

The congregation sponsors Mennville Christian School, from kindergarten to Grade 10, and a five-unit senior's home, with space also rented to teachers. Affiliated with the EMC, the language of worship is English, changing from German in the 1970s.

Dueck says the church has a membership of 135-150, with 50 students in the private school, who have the option of continuing their education in the Riverton high school. But as elsewhere, farmers can't expand their holdings, and young people are leaving for the



Interlake tour participants in front of the Morweena E.M.C. Church, 28 Sept. 2002.

Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs.

city.

After coffee, the tour group walked about to see the small cemetery, the private school, and the Appledale seniors home.

The Mennville church-planting was an attempt at colonization, a popular work at one time in EMC church history. The effort had two main benefits: farmers could acquire land and Christians could witness in a new community.

After enjoying a hearty delicious lunch, the tour group left for the Mennonite community of Morweena, in the Arborg area, but stopped in at Cornelius and Dora Friesen's Integrity Foods - baking up to 80 loaves with one firing in an outdoor efficient wood-fired brick oven.

Morweena, a former Icelandic community, became a Mennonite settlement in the 1960s when Evangelical Mennonite Church people settled here.

The first stop at Morweena was the five-owner Pro-Fab machine shop, in the business of professional fabrication, of components, a subassemblies, or entire products.

Reynold Reimer and Jacob Dueck, two of the owners, say it all began in 1993 when the IMF Church pastor asked the five to carry on a small business while he was away for a time. They began making shop brackets, made some money, and decided to start Pro-Fab.

A new building was built in 1994, and as the custom fabrication business expanded, the plant was doubled in size in 1999, and a powder coating line was added two years ago.

Today the expanding company manufactures components as small as hinges and complete assemblies that range from heating products, such as outdoor wood furnaces, to agricultural and industrial equipment, and employs 48 people.

Next stop was the Diemo Machine Works, operated by the Jake Wiebe family, who returned to Canada and now operate a business making dies and molds for the fibreglas and plastic industry, with a large overseas market.

At the Interlake Mennonite Fellowship, Pastor Milton Loewen told the tour participants that the fellowship now consists of 140 members, with 300 attending services.

Begun 35 years ago by three church groups, it consists largely of immigrants, back from Paraguay, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Belize, and Mexico. Its unique appeal is toward people (many working in area shops) of German orientation and a more conservative view, says Loewen.

Also toured was Vidir Manufacturing, which has grown from a farm repair shop, to become a manufacturer of specialized equipment for large stores and warehouses, like Home Depot. From design to engineering, the firm produces motorized carpet display racks, to measure, cut and re-roll carpets; and various other display racks and bins.

Willie Dueck, who hosted the group through Morweena's industrial operations employing many people, stated that farming is no longer the only major emphasis.

At Morweena Evangelical Mennonite Church, the group met local people, heard about their history, and enjoyed a most nutritious and tasteful *Faspa* of a variety of soups, and bread. Tim Reimer, principal of Morweena Christian School, operated by the church, outlined church history, and a youth group presented music.

The Morweena EMC in Arborg area began services and formally organized in 1960. The first building was occupied in 1961. Henry P. Friesen is considered the founding leader of the EMC group, an outreach effort of the conference.

Church membership of 170-180, expands to 250-300 on Sunday mornings.



Martha Martens illustrating some data to Hilda Giesbrecht in the workshop in the Winkler Senior Centre, 19 October 2002. Photo credit: Mavis Dyck

Genealogy Workshop

by Mavis Dyck

An enthusiastic group of family historians gathered at the Winkler Senior Centre 19 October 2002. The workshop was sponsored by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Winkler Heritage Society. The quote Mavis Dyck shared in her opening remarks set the tone for the day, "People must know the past, to understand the present, to face the future" - McClung. Martha Martens of Winkler was introduced as the speaker for the morning session. She presented a step by step process for researching the 1870 immigrants. A highlight of the day was having Martha's computer set-up on site to give genealogists



Winners of the Henry E. Platt Memorial Award for Family history research and writing: Dustin Braun (on the left) first place prize winner, and Adam Braun (on the right), second place prize winner awarded in June 2002. Both winner attended W.C. Miller Collegiate in Altona at the time of the contest.

Photo credit: W.C. Miller Collegiate

immediate answers to their inquiries.

After a delicious lunch, Bert Friesen of Winnipeg was the speaker for the afternoon session. His detailed sequence of overheads guided us through the research steps to research the 1920s immigrants. The sources suggested included immigration records, ship lists, school lists, and church registers.

The displays of books, maps and scrapbooks provided everyone with an interesting, variety of information enjoyed by all in attendance.



Front row (L-R) Heinrich Loewen (Mexico) with Abe Peters (Winnipeg). Back row Ed Falk (MMHS member) and other participants at the Kanadier symposium.

Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

Return of the Kanadier

This was the theme of the symposium held at the University of Winnipeg on 4-5 October 2002. Two participants in the symposium from the Winkler area were Abe Wiebe, a descendant of 1870s Mennonite immigrants, now commonly referred to as Kanadier, as well as Ed Falk, a similar descendant. Wiebe is a descendant of Old Colony ministers and is a Sommerfeld Church minister who has spent 18 years serving his people in Paraguay. Falk has relatives in Mexico who he had kept in contact with to understand and know these people better.

Both agreed that the Low German language was
(cont. on p.9)



(L-R) Bill Janzen (Ottawa) and Abe Harms (Aylmer, Ont.) at the Kanadier symposium. Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz

MMHS News & Notes

Notice of Motion for annual general meeting

Proposed changes to MMHS By-Laws (1992 Constitution)

Purposes

3. The purposes of the Corporation shall be to foster an understanding of and respect for the history and beliefs of the Mennonite people in the past and present, and to challenge them to give new expression to this heritage in the future.

4. In particular the Corporation has the following objectives: [The order of these has been rearranged.]

4.1 to promote research, analysis and publication of essays, dissertations, books, etc., on various aspects of the Mennonite experience;

4.2 to search out and encourage the preservation of historical sites and Mennonite cemeteries and to establish markers, cairns and other monuments to the Mennonite events and personalities;

4.3 to organize public lectures and provide resources for schools and other organizations;

4.4 to encourage the expression of the Mennonite experience in various areas such as literature, drama, history, fine arts, music, geography, sociology, religion, and to foster interdisciplinary discussions;

4.5 in co-operation with various Mennonite archives and museums to collect, preserve and exhibit articles and documents of historical value;

4.6 to foster inter-Mennonite unity and understanding;

4.7 to interpret and promote the religious convictions of the Anabaptist-Mennonite people, past and present.

Board of Directors

7. Any person that is a member of good standing of the Corporation shall be eligible to be elected as a member of the board of directors. An attempt shall be made to have the board of directors include representation from various Mennonite groups and regions of Manitoba.

9. Thirteen directors shall be elected to a two-year term by the annual meeting of the members of the Corporation. The Board may appoint a maximum of 5 additional directors to ensure that each Standing Committee is represented on the Board through its chair (or vice-chair), for specific tasks, or to create broader representation. Each director shall be elected to hold office for the length of his term or until his successor shall be duly elected and qualified.

11. The office of director shall be automatically vacated

11.1 if a director shall resign his office by delivering a written resignation to the Secretary of the Corporation;

11.2 if he is found to be of unsound mind;

11.3 if at a special general meeting of the members of the Corporation a resolution is passed by two-thirds of the members present and eligible to vote at the meeting that he be removed from office;

11.4 if a director, as defined in #9 above, ceases to be chair (or vice-chair) of a Standing Committee;

11.5 on death.

A vacancy occurring in the term of any member of the board of directors may be filled until the next annual meeting of the members of the Corporation by a majority vote of the board of directors present at any meeting thereof. Such elections shall be effective only until the next annual meeting of the members of the Corporation. **Directors who have completed six years of service are ineligible to serve as standing committee representatives in the following year.**

15. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Society. It shall manage affairs of the Corporation between the meetings of the board of directors. **Following the annual re-organisation of the board, it shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of treasurer and 2 other members of the Society.**

Committees

25. The following standing committees shall be struck and composed of members of the Corporation:

25.1 Publication and Marketing

25.2 Membership and Publicity

25.3 Genealogy and Family Studies

25.4 Historic Sites and Monuments

25.5 Local History

The board of directors may at its discretion modify the mandate of existing committees and strike new ones as required. All standing committees and their terms of reference shall be subject to review every five years.

26. **New** members of the standing committees shall be appointed by the board of directors to 2-year terms at the first meeting after each annual meeting. The **Chair (or vice-chair)** of each committee shall be appointed to the board (unless already a board member). **Board members shall be invited to join a standing committee.** Other persons may be appointed to any standing committee by the Board from the members of the Corporation.

27. The members of the standing committees may be re-appointed twice for a total term of six years, after which they must be off the committee for at least one year before they may be considered for appointment to the same standing committee.

Submitted by Task Force 8 October 2002

Approved by Board 10 October 2002

Reviewed by Executive Committee 26 November 2002

Genealogy

This is the second in a series of articles on Prussian/Russian Mennonite families by Glenn Penner.

The Early Mennonite Letkemann Family

By Glenn Penner

The earliest ancestor of all Mennonite Letkemanns is probably Jacob Letkemann, who lived in the village of Altendorf in the former West Prussia. This village is now called Starza and is part of present day Poland. The early fire insurance register, also called the *Brandregister*, of 1727 lists him as Jacob *Liedtkeman*, who owned about 21 acres of land.¹ Unfortunately the published version of the *Brandordenung* includes a typographical error whereby his name appears as *Lindtkemann*.² As a result the Prussian Mennonite historian Horst Penner makes the incorrect statement that the name was *low Germanized* over the next 4 decades to yield *Letkemann*.³ This mistake is surprising since Penner possesses a copy of the original *Brandordenung*.⁴

The village of Altendorf belonged to the jurisdiction of the Catholic parish at Thieghagen. Burial records for this church are available and contain many references to Mennonites.⁵ These records include the burial of Jacob *Lidkeman* in April of 1738 and that of a child of Jacob *Litkeman* in 1721. This is very likely the Jacob *Liedtkeman* of Altendorf. It should be emphasized at this point that there is no indication that he was a Mennonite. The burial register later records the death of a child of Jacob *Letkeman*, a Mennonite from Altendorf (Feb. 9, 1756). The death of Mennonite Jacob *Letkieman*, aged about 50, of Altendorf is recorded on Sept. 21, 1757. I would speculate that he was the son of Jacob (d. 1738), also of Altendorf.

The Mennonites of Altendorf belonged to the Flemish Mennonite congregation at Tiegenghagen, and the Letkemanns can be found in the records of this church.⁶ In addition, the 1776 census of Mennonites in Prussia includes two Letkemann families.⁷ The first is that of Jacob *Letkemann*, a farmer and landowner, who was living with

his wife, one son and one daughter. The other was Peter *Letkemann*, a laborer and renter, who was living with his wife and one son. Both of these Mennonite Letkemann families lived in Altendorf. These families can be found in the Tiegenghagen Mennonite church records. Rather than go through all of the Letkemann entries in these records, one at a time, I have summarized the information in the tables below.

I would like to thank Alf Redekop (Winnipeg, MB) and Henry Schapansky (New Westminster, BC) for additions and corrections to my original version.

Generations 1 and 2:

Jacob Letkemann

b. before 1685, probably in Prussia
d. Apr.??, 1738, Altendorf, Prussia

Children

Jacob

b. about 1707

child

b.

d. 1721

Comments: Jacob Letkemann lived in Altendorf in 1727.

Generations 2 and 3:

Jacob Letkemann

b. about 1707
d. Sep. 21, 1757, Altendorf, Prussia

Children

Jacob

b. about 1738
d. Jan. 26, 1807

Peter

b. about 1756
d. Sep. 12, 1796

child

b.

d. Feb. 9, 1756

Comments: Sons Jacob and Peter were possibly from different mothers.

Generations 3 and 4:

Jacob Letkemann

b. about 1738

Altendorf, Prussia

1st m.

d. Jan. 30, 1807, Altendorf, Prussia

(cont. on p.7)

Letkemann

(cont. from p.6)

[name unknown] b. before 1752
d. 1773-80, Altendorf, Prussia

Children

Agatha b. about 1772-3 m. **Heinrich Letkemann**
bapt. 1792

Peter? b. before 1781 m. ???

2nd m. Jan. 23, 1781

Helena Friesen b.
d. 1782-85, Altendorf

Children

Klaas b. about 1781 m. **Anna Hein**
bapt. 1800

3rd m. Feb. 23, 1786

Maria Dyck b. about 1762
d. about 1817

Children

Jacob b. Dec. 11, 1788 m. **Helena Pauls**

Comments: Son Klass was named after his maternal grandfather Klass Friesen.

Peter Letkemann b. about 1756, Altendorf, Prussia
m. 1773-75 d. Sep. 12, 1796, Tiegenhagen, Prussia

Sara Goosen b. about 1748
d. May, 30, 1814, Tiegenhagen, Prussia

Children

Heinrich b. about 1778
m. **Agatha Letkemann**
bapt. 1796

Peter b. about 1779/80 d. Dec. 2, 1804
bapt. 1799

Jacob b. Aug. 4, 1792 m. **Christina Goldschmidt**

Anna

Maria

Comments: Sara was likely the daughter of Heinrich Goosen of Altendorf. Son Heinrich was probably named after him.

Widow Letkemann, and her children were signed up to emigrate to Russia in 1803 (Feb. 2), but this did not occur.⁸ This was probably due to the advanced state of pregnancy of her daughter-in-law, who gave birth on Apr.30, 1803, and the possible ill health of her unmarried son Peter, who died the following year.

Generations 4 and 5:

Peter Letkemann b. before 1781
m. d.
b.
d.

Children:

Jacob b. June, 24, 1801

Peter b. Oct. 29, 1805

Klaas b. Nov. 4, 1809
d. Apr. 4, 1811

Abraham b. Apr. 4, 1811

Comments: Very little is known about this Peter Letkemann. His birth occurred before the Tiegenhagen birth register was started. It appears as if he married into another Mennonite congregation, and was probably baptized into that church prior to his marriage. This was not unusual. At the time of the birth of his son Jacob he was living in Tiegenhagen. His other children were born in Petershagen. He is not Peter Letkemann (b. 1804), who had no family in 1803. Nor can he be Peter Letkemann (1756 – 96). I can only conclude that he was the son of Jacob Letkemann (1738 – 1807).

Klaas Letkemann b. about 1781,
Altendorf, Prussia
m. Feb. 23, 1808 d. Jan. 7, 1830,
Altendorf, Prussia

Anna Hein b.
d.

Children:

Klaas
b. Nov. 28, 1808 d. before 1811

Klaas b. Nov. 25, 1811 d. Oct.
25, 1894 in Altendorf
bapt. 1830

2nd m. **Agneta Andres**

Anna b. May 31, 1815

Agatha b. Aug. 28, 1819 m. **Jacob Thielmann**

(cont. on p.8)

Letkemann

(cont. from p.7)

Jacob b. Feb. 4, 1823**Martin** b. Dec. 27, 1825

Comments: Anna Hein was the widow of Johann Bruhn of Altendorf.

Jacob Letkemann b. Dec. 11, 1788, Altendorf, Prussia
m. d. RussiaHelena Pauls b. about 1774
d. Dec. 12, 1851, Nieder Chortitz, Chortitza Colony, Russia

Children:

Gerhard b. about 1809-10 m. Anna Loeppky**Jacob** b. about 1811-12 d. 1827 in Neukirch, Molotschna Colony

Agatha b. June 21, 1813

Maria b. about 1816Comments: This family lived in Laakendorf, Prussia in 1811.⁹ They moved to Niederchortitz, Chortitza Colony in 1818.⁸ They later moved to Neukirch in the Molotschna Colony, but returned to Niederchortitz in 1836.¹⁰ Two of the sons of Gerhard, Jacob (b. Aug. 22, 1836) and Heinrich (b. Sep. 8, 1845) moved to Manitoba in 1875 and 1876, respectively.¹² There is strong evidence that the first wife of Jacob Letkemann, and possibly mother of the children listed above, was not Helena Pauls, but another Helena, born about 1788 and died sometime between 1811 and 1817.**Heinrich Letkemann** b. about 1778
d. Feb. 24, 1835
m. Apr. 7, 1799
Agatha Letkemann b. about 1772-73
d. Feb. 9, 1816, Petershagen, Prussia

Children:

Jacob b. about 1800-02 d. 1833 Schönsee, Molotschna Colony**Heinrich** b. Apr. 30, 1803**Peter** b. Oct. 27, 1806 m. Helena Krop**Abraham** b. Mar. 13, 1810**Agatha** b. Mar. 2, 1813**Klaas** b. Feb. 8, 1816 d. 1819?2nd m. Oct. 6, 1816

Elisabeth Thiessen b. Jan. 13, 1792, Prussia

d. after 1836, Chortitza Colony, Russia

Children:

Franz b. Jul. 17, 1817 m.
Agatha Kasdorf**Johann** b. Nov. 11, 1818 d. Jul.
30, 1859**Klaas** b. Dec. 19, 1819 d. Nov.
19, 1872**Julius** b. Sep. 8, 1821 m. Anna
Neudorf**Elisabeth** b. Dec. 15, 1823 d. Jan.
6, 1855**Anna** b. Feb. 6, 1825 m.
Abram Redekop?**Aganetha** b. Mar. 2, 1827 m.
David Peters**Gerhard** b. Apr. 18, 1829 m. Sara
Martens**David** b. Sep. 29, 1831 m. Sara
Kasdorf**Jacob** b. Jan. 25, 1834 m.
Susanna NeudorfComments: This family lived in Petershagen, Prussia from 1799 to 1818. Elisabeth Thiessen was the daughter of Jacob (b. 1760) and Aganetha (b. 1764) Thiessen, who moved from Petershagen, Prussia to Einlage, Chortitza Colony in 1818.⁸ The Heinrich Letkemann family may have also moved to the Chortitza Colony in 1818.¹¹ It is known that they settled in Schönsee, Molotschna Colony and later returned to live in Insel Chortitz.^{10,11} Peter Letkeman (b. May 22, 1835), the son of Peter Letkemann and Helena Krop moved to Manitoba in 1876.¹²**Jacob Letkemann** b. Aug. 4, 1792,
Tiegenhagen, Prussia
d.
m. Christina Goldschmidt b. about
1791 d.

(cont. on p.9)

Letkemann

(cont. from p.8)

Children:

Catharina	b. about 1814/15	
Jacob	b. about 1815	d. 1820
Peter	b. about 1817	
Heinrich	b. about 1820	
Jacob	b. about 1823	
Maria	b. Aug. 28, 1828	m. Corn. Neufeld /2m. Joh. Rahn

Comments: According to B.H. Unruh this family moved from Tiegenhof, Prussia to the Molotschna Colony in 1818.⁸ The family is listed in Halbstadt in the 1835 census.¹⁰ This census lists Jacob's wife as Katharina. The census also includes a Peter Peter Letkemann (b. about 1811) who is listed as a nephew of Jacob Letkemann. This does not jibe since Peter the brother to Jacob died in 1804. This nephew is not listed in the immigration record of 1818.

According to the Tiegenhof (Prussia) Mennonite church records Jacob Letkeman, Peter Letkeman's surviving son was expelled from the congregation for marrying a Catholic woman. This happened on Jan. 20, 1815 (the marriage probably happened before that). The Catholic woman was probably Christina Goldschmidt. At some point they must have rejoined the Mennonite church.

A brief note about the Letkemans of Altendorf. The following generations of Letkemans lived in the village of Altendorf, West Prussia:

1. Jacob (16. - 1738)
2. Jacob (1707 - 1757)
3. Jacob (1737 - 1807)
4. Klaas (1781 - 1830)
5. Klaas (1811 - 1894)

The documentation I have seen indicates that the Letkemans lived in Altendorf from before 1727 until at least the death of Klaas (aged 83) in 1894, a minimum of 167 years!

There is one Letkemann mystery that I have not been able to solve. In 1852 the family of Jacob Redekop (age 52) moved from Schoeneberg to the Judenplan Colony. Included in his family is a foster son named Johann Letkemann (age 14).¹¹ I have not been able to connect him to the families listed above.

I would like to thank Alf Redekop (Winnipeg, MB) and Henry Schapansky (New Westminster, BC) for several important corrections and additions.

Footnotes:

1. Glenn Penner, *The Complete Brandregister of 1727*.
<http://www.mmhs.org/prussia/brand.htm>
2. Horst Penner, *Ansiedlung mennonitischer Niederländer in Weichselmündungsgebiet von der Mitte der 16. Jahrhundert bis zum Beginn der preussischen Zeit*. Weierhof, 1963.
3. Horst Penner, *Die ost- und westpreussischen Mennoniten*. 1978.
4. On May, 7 1990 Horst Penner sent me a photocopy of his complete copy of the original Brandregister.
5. Catholic Church Records of Tiegenhof: burial records 1721- 1757) LDS # 462757.
6. Mennonite Church Records of Tiegenhof (1782-1944). Microfilms #73 and 289 in the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg Manitoba.
7. 1776 census. Found as an appendix to reference 3.
8. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderung im 16. 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Karlsruhe, 1955.

9. Adalbert Goertz, *Mennonites in the Elbing Territory: Census of 1811*.

<http://www.mmhs.org/prussia/elbing2.htm>

10. *English Translation of the Russian 1835 Census of the Molotschna Villages*. Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1995.

11. Henry Schapansky, *The Early Letkemans*. Mennonite Historian. Vol. XV, no. 4 (Dec. 1989) p. 2.

12. John Dyck and William Harms, *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve*, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, Rosenort, 1998.

13. Odessa Region State Archives. Fond 6, Inventory 3 (1852 - 1856), File 15751.

Note: HP was informed that Horst Penner has recently died (2002).

Kanadier

(cont. from p.4)

key to keeping this Kanadier culture alive. The presentations, they agreed, reinforced this understanding of language. Not all though seemed to understand the Kanadier and in one presentation, they felt the presentation was demeaning to these people.

There are a number of efforts to assist these people. Various government agencies assist in literacy programmes. MCC is there to help people to learn to adapt to their new environment. Many of these Kanadier did not lose their Canadian citizenship but some need assistance to 'reclaim' it.

In Canada, one of the difficult adjustments is the non-existence of colony life. These Kanadier come from a life in which church and colony were one; their lives were orderly and routine as set and governed by leadership and tradition. That void in Canada brings tension. This fact must be taken into account by all who want to assist them.

Both Falk and Wiebe stressed that they do not see research projects helpful for the long-term future of these people. They need practical assistance in coming to terms with their new environment. For Wiebe, especially, this symposium did not present many new facts. He has lived and worked with these people for many years, both in Paraguay and Canada. He agreed that the biggest change for these people is the void of not living in a colony. He acknowledged that this is also changing for some in Mexico and elsewhere.

For those for whom many of these facts were new, Wiebe thought that the Kanadier story and situation in Canada was well portrayed, with a few exceptions. It was an event that will make many aware that in our midst in Canada we need to know more about our co-religionists in order that they can make a valid contribution.

Johann W Dueck and the West Reserve

by Lawrence Klippenstein

This column will provide the final item in a series of three dealing with references to the West Reserve in the book **Prairie Pioneers: The Writings of John W Dueck**. The earlier two items dealt with Gretna, notably the MCI, and this one has its focus on the nearby town of Altona, and its school, the MEI.

A very early reference to Altona appears in Dueck's diary entries for 1898 where he mentioned that his brother, Peter, who would later move to Spokane, Washington, with his family, was then teaching in the village of Neuanlage, near Gretna, where Johann had taught seven years earlier. Altona was then a new townsite just three years old.

A tragic incident was reported for 1914 in the death by heart attack of one Abram Loeppky who died on the day of his marriage to Anna Bergman "apparently following a dance" (p.93).

The Russian Mennonite emigration beginning in 1923 drew the interest of Dueck from the first references in the papers that this would be taking place. He attended several meetings in Altona, helping to discuss plans to receive immigrants. On 10 April, the H.R. Reimers from Prairie Rose (later Landmark) came to Dueck's home to join in a group trip to Altona to attend a meeting there on 11 April (or the 12th) A minister, Jacob R Dueck, from the East Reserve(?) was also in the group.

People gathered at the Altona Berghaler church where one Rev. P.P. Epp led the proceedings with singing and prayer. Among the speakers were a delegate from Russia (unnamed), A.R.(L?) Friesen from Gretna and H.H. Ewert, also from Gretna. Listeners were informed that the Russian Mennonites already had permission to emigrate, and that the CPR would send a ship directly to Berdiansk on the Black Sea for loading. The immigrants would be brought out for the cost of 100.00 per person, including meals. Churches were told that they would be responsible for making payments if the immigrants could not do it themselves.

Ewert suggested that local Manitoba Mennonites mortgage their land to buy land from the Reinländer Mennonites who were selling property before moving to Mexico. His idea was rejected, but the people gathered agreed to help, and would shortly gather money so that the poor people coming could be clothed (pp. 191-192).

Both Dueck and Reimer were invited to the home of John Siemens (later of the coop movement?), and then, in the afternoon attended a "Proofing:" (a kind of oral exam for the students put on as a performance for guests, especially parents) in Altona (the date entries are a bit confused. One entry places this event on April 13, another a day earlier) (see p.164). An extensive programme had been prepared for the afternoon and the evening. It included numerous songs by the MEI student body, poems (including one very well recited by a 15 year old student, David Schellenberg, "just about the best one of them all"), readings, presentations such as one on Constantine by J. Suderman, presentation of a lesson on the sentence and its parts by Peter D Reimer (a teacher at the MEI at the time), as well as short speeches by several people including Johann himself.

Evening presentations included more songs, poems, and presentations, together with speeches by Ältester Jacob Hoepfner, of Winkler, A.E. Eidse, H.R. Reimer (both from the Kleine Gemeinde, it would seem), Jacob T. Wiebe, Martin Klassen, and others.

A discussion on teacher training followed the next day. On this topic, wrote Dueck, not all were agreed. He explained, "We are against instrumental music and the doctrine on the millennium, although most of those present advocate this" (p.193-194). Some questions, he added, remained unresolved.

Finally, Dueck included notes on the school life of his son, Peter, born in 1903, who wanted to become a teacher also, and had been making plans to attend the MEI in Altona. He began to do so in the fall of 1923, but would come home for the wedding of his brother, Jacob, on November 4. Peter's friend, H.R.A. Dueck, from his home community of Rosenort/Rosenhof was with him at school.

Peter came home for a visit in March the following year (1924), having enjoyed his Grade Nine studies so far but reporting that several teachers, Peter D. Reimer and Mr. G.

Schroeder had temporarily left the school, the former due to illness, and the latter, to pursue other personal interests (mission work in Western Canada). One Peter H. Neufeld had decided to take up work in the USA. There were also rumours of financial difficulties at the school.

Entries for the spring of 1924 included notes on a teachers' conference held at the MEI on May 31. Peter was intending to continue his education. A number of topics such as "Education for Obedience", "Pedagogical Travelling Library", "An Instruction Demonstration" by Anna Peters, and "A Demonstration in the Teaching of Bible Stories", by a recent immigrant teacher, Peter A. Rempel, were on the program.

An "old and faithful friend", J. Siemens, again hosted Dueck, and a fellow teacher from the East Reserve, G.B. Kornelson, who had come with Dueck to the conference.

By 1927 Peter had begun to teach, but his further training at the MEI is not discussed. In any case the school had burned down in 1926 and was not rebuilt.

Johann W Dueck passed away on 1 June 1932, with his funeral held on 3 June. His six sons were pallbearers at the service. Those mourning his passing included his wife, Maria, the sons, five daughters, a brother Peter with his family in Spokane, Washington, four sisters (in Manitoba) and many friends.

His written notes provide a most significant record of his work and involvements in which the segments shared here form only a small fragmentary portion. We thank the translators and publishers for making this material available to the public.



(L-R) Johann, Peter Dueck.
Photo credit: *Prairie Pioneer*,
p.54.

MMHS Board Meeting Summary

The MMHS board met on 10 Oct. 2002 at the Altona EMMC Church. Much of the meeting was spent dealing with the Report of the Ad Hoc Task Force to Review Standing Committee Structure of the MMHS. The report reiterated broad principles underlying the proposed revisions and definitions, as well as terms of reference for the MMHS standing committees. It included an attachment outlining background and job descriptions for each standing committee, as well as an attachment proposing changes to MMHS by-laws. The basic thrust of the report was that a de-centralized society structure be retained with the executive providing overall direction and co-ordination.

At the meeting a nominating committee was also appointed, committee reports were presented, plans regarding the annual meeting on 1 Feb. 2003 at the Kleefeld EMC church were shared and a draft of the CO Cairn Feasibility Report was circulated.

The next board meeting is scheduled for 25 Feb.2003 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

Correction from the previous issue of Heritage Posting, No.38, September 2002, p.8

The author was incorrectly identified. It should have been **Jim Wiebe**. In the second paragraph, the second sibling should have been **Alvina**. Finally, the photo credit should also have been for **Jim Wiebe**.

Heritage Day celebrated at Fort Dufferin near Emerson

by Elmer Heinrichs

The unveiling of a plaque by Parks Canada, and a ribbon-cutting to officially open Post Road Heritage Group's new Points West Trail were two special and exciting events celebrated at the Group's 11th annual Heritage Days, 8 Sept.2002.

In a large tent set up for the day, heritage celebrations began at Fort Dufferin (Emerson) with an 11.00 ecumenical church service, followed by a picnic lunch.

In the first of two afternoon events a plaque was unveiled at the Fort to celebrate the national historic significance of the North American Boundary Commission of 1872-1876.

Speaking at a public ceremony at the Fort near Emerson, William Neville, Manitoba representative to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, said the survey of Western Canada was one of the most interesting and the first in which Canadians took part.

Part of the plaque's inscription reads as follows: "For the first time, the young Dominion had an opportunity to influence the establishment of its borders and thereby assert its sovereignty over the West."....

"The newly delineated boundary paved the way for settlement and resource development in the Canadian West."

The second event at the fort happened at the start of the Points West Trail, identified by a sign prepared and erected by the Post Road group. Here Irene Milne, an instigator of the historical association, cut a ribbon (held by members, Les Forrester and Ian Milne) to open the new trail.

An informative brochure guides visitors along the 0.5 km. trail, an interpretative walkway through the grounds of Fort Dufferin. At "stops" along the way, historic photographs and drawings augment recorded detail on prepared signage to depict the history of the site.

It tells the story of how Fort Dufferin was used as a staging area by three groups who changed the Canadian West, first in 1872 by the Boundary Commission, then by the North West Mounted Police, and as an immigrant centre.

H. Ritz Elevator

by Elmer Heinrichs

The photo in September's *Heritage Posting* of a Gretna elevator, was the H. Ritz Elevator built in 1917. Last of the old grain elevators - it was demolished last summer - which at one point made Gretna the third largest wheat market in the province with over 300,000 bushels of wheat shipped annually by 1889.

Gretna resident Alf Loewen, who at one time owned and operated the elevator, says it was built in 1917 after the Farmer's Elevator across the railway tracks, formed by farmers banding together co-operatively, failed. "The elevator was dismantled and rebuilt as the H. Ritz Elevator."

The familiar rectangular, pitched-roof country elevators appeared from 1881 when the first one was built by the Ogilvie Milling Co. in Gretna, Man. just before the CPR branch line from Rosenfeld reached Gretna, even before the town of Altona was begun.

By 1887 six elevators were buying grain at Gretna, reported the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange.

The timber elevators, perhaps the most distinctive architectural symbol of the Prairies, spread with the Canadian Pacific Railway across the Canadian West in the 1880s.

In the last decade of the 20th century, a revolution of sorts began and continues today. The wooden grain elevators, typical landmarks in many Prairie communities, are being replaced by fewer larger slip-formed cylindrical concrete and more efficient country elevators.



Emerson Mayor Wayne Arseny with other dignitaries and newly-unveiled Boundary Commission plaque. Photo credit: Elmer Heinrichs

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

● *Neu Samara: A Mennonite Settlement East of the Volga* (Edmonton: Jackpine House, 2002), pb., 196 pp., is a recent English translation of an original German edition published as *Neu Samara am Tock* by Jacob H Brucks and Henry P. Hooze in 1964. The translation was done by John Isaak, with editing and an epilogue describing a visit to the area several years ago, by Tena Wiebe. A glossary, bibliography, and several maps, as well as 23 contemporary photos enhance the original volume. It may be ordered from the editor via email at twiebe@oanet.com for 21.95 plus shipping and GST.

● Lawrence Klippenstein and Jake Dick are the authors of *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia: The Story of Abram Dueck and His Colleagues 1911 - 1917* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2002), pb., 170 pp., 20.00. It includes a large number of photos related to service in the Russian medical corps of WW I. An extensive introduction sketches the fuller story of Mennonites serving in the forestry camps (Forstei) and other areas of alternative work as a peace witness in Russia up to 1917. Pandora Press may be contacted at press@pandorapress.com

● On 26 May 2002 descendants of Jewish families who once lived in Winkler, Manitoba, commemorated the contribution of these people to the social and business life of that community. The book *Honouring the Pioneer Settlers of Winkler* (Winnipeg: published by descendants, 2002), pb., 106 pp., was unveiled on that occasion. It had been prepared by Arla Nitikman Strauss, Martin Buchwald, and Harold Buchwald. Further information, and the book itself, may be obtained from Arla Strauss at email address arla@strauss.ca

● Another commemoration of pioneer contributions, in this case Mennonite families, was held on 28 July 2002, in the village of Chortitz southwest of Winkler. It included the dedication of a cairn remembering people buried in the original cemetery of the community. A book entitled *Chortitz Memories 1875 - 2002* (Winkler: Chortitz Cemetery Cairn Committee, 2002), pb., 40 pp. was released at this celebration. It includes a short history of the community and the names of known burials at the cemetery. The editor was Mavis Dyck of Morden, MB. The book may be ordered from her by phoning 1-204-822-3304 or by emailing klippenstein@aol.com. The book costs 15.00 plus shipping and handling.

● An upcoming publication: *Heritage Posting* is pleased to announce the upcoming publication of a new book by Dr. Abraham Friesen of the University of California at Santa Barbara, CA, USA. It will be titled *In Defense of Privilege: World War I, the Russian Mennonites and Peter Braun's 'Kto takie Mennonity' (Who are the Mennonites?)*. Dr. Friesen recently delivered a series of lectures at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, and at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, drawing materials from the manuscript for this publication. For further information contact Dr. Friesen at friesen@history.ucsb.edu

● Just off the press! Author Ron Friesen of Beausejour, Manitoba, unveiled his new book, *Gruenfeld Chronicles* (Beausejour: privately published, 2002) at a book launch held at CMU held on Friday, November 22. It is a collection of anecdotes and interesting other historical data focused on the Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) community, especially the school story, for the period of 1920 - 1950. The hardcover volume of 335 pp. sells for 20.00. Order from the author at Box 1186, Beausejour, MB R0E 0C0. Ron is also the author of *John R. and Maria Friesen, Kleefeld: Pilgrims of a Mennonite Tradition* (Beausejour, 1999).

● *Jacob's Journey, From Zagradowka toward Zion, The Autobiography of J.M. Klassen*. In his book J.M. Klassen documents his growing up years in Russia, his education, family life, and professional life as a teacher, administrator, and church worker. Klassen was the first executive secretary of MCC Canada. This large, 450 page, soft cover book is self published.

● *Whatever it Takes*, by Dorothy Siebert. This is a dramatic book recounts the story of Albert and Anna Enns who served as missionaries in Paraguay. The book is 233 pages and self-published.

● *I am With you Always to the End of the Age, The Life of Believers and the Churches of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists and Mennonites of Karaganda and the Karaganda Region*, edited by Victor Fast. This Russian language book is the first in a planned series. It deals with the Stalin years of suffering and repression (1931-1946) in the Soviet Union. This 192 page, hardcover book is packed with illustrations.