



HERITAGE POSTING

Newsletter of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

No. 42 September 2003

House's Hotel 130 Years Later

by Edwin D. Hoepfner

Readers of *Heritage Posting*, interested in the early history of Mennonite settlement in Manitoba, will undoubtedly be familiar with the House's Hotel incident of July 1-3, 1873. This involved the land delegates Klaas Peters and Heinrich Wiebe of the Berghthal Colony, and Cornelius Toews and David Klassen of the Kleine Gemeinde, guided by William Hespeler, Canadian immigration agent, and a small group of Métis inhabitants of what was then known as White Plains, approximately 50 km west of Winnipeg.

Research by the author a few years ago indicated that the site of House's Hotel was on the same river lot at Pigeon Lake as that of the present Schönfelder Mennonite Church. One hundred and thirty years ago both Pigeon Lake and St. Francois Xavier were a single community known as White Plains; still earlier that settlement was known as Grantown, founded in 1824 by Cuthbert Grant. Many Métis settlers relocated there from their earlier residence at Pembina, North Dakota — just a few kilometres south of the site of Fort Dufferin — north of Emerson, Manitoba. . . . Various accounts of that encounter have appeared in our historical literature. All of these



House's Hotel exterior, Lawrence Klippenstein and Ed Hoepfner at entrance.

— Photos by Ed Hoepfner

accounts are brief and a few are factually inaccurate and confused,^{2,3,4} the best and most useful versions have been produced by William Schroeder^{5,6} and Lawrence Klippenstein.⁶

On June 17, 2003, Lawrence Klippenstein hosted a bus tour of the West Reserve Post Road. The group consisted of members of the St. Francis Xavier Historical Society and friends from the White Plains area. Rudy Friesen of Pigeon Lake, a member of that tour had previously suggested to Lawrence Klippenstein that they believed that the House's Hotel building was still in existence and that the original House's Hotel site was on the lot now occupied by the Schönfelder Mennonite Church.

As a result of this exchange Lawrence Klippenstein and the author, with keen anticipation, drove out to St. Francis Xavier on Friday June 27, where by prior arrangement, we were met by Rudy Friesen of the St. F. X. H. S. at a replica log house not far from the site of Cuthbert Grant's former log "manor". Mr. Friesen conducted us on a most interesting tour of the entire area. Our central object was to view the putative House's Hotel structure and in due course Mr. Friesen took us to see it.

The structure is a large log building of at least 2½ - 3 storeys high. At present it is on a crumbling concrete foundation. We were able to enter it and view the interior in the dim light coming through a gaping hole in the roof. All interior partition walls, floors and ceilings had long since been removed and the interior wall surfaces were completely covered by ¾ inch plywood sheets — as were the entire exterior wall surfaces — so it was impossible for us to determine whether any windows had been present originally. Tie rods, of thick steel rebar joined by expertly smithed loops crossed the interior space and braced all walls against the outwardly-directed pressure of the grain that was formerly stored in the building. There had been two upper floors in addition to the main floor. As the photos indicate, a lumber lean-to shed on the north end



Log house next to the House's Hotel.

(Continued on page 3)

Oregon Genealogist Visits Winnipeg

by Bert Friesen

Tim Janzen, Mennonite genealogist from Portland, Oregon, visited Winnipeg in the first week in July 2003. He was on a cross-continent tour, combining family vacation time with some genealogy seminars and research in the Canadian cities of Calgary, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg.

While in Winnipeg, he met and talked with various individuals and had a meeting with representatives of the Society. A wide range of topics was discussed. Two main points emerged.

First, there is a great need for more volunteers to do genealogy work. This stems in part from the ongoing availability of new source material as well as a backlog of material, which needs processing. Some of the work in transliteration, some translation, and other is data entry work. If there are any individuals interested, please contact the editors.

Second, there was discussion about the best way to make genealogical information accessible. Currently, the provincial historical society sites make such data available. Our site, mmhs.org, is one of the most heavily utilized. Then there are other sites for specialized data. A proposal is on the table to have one Canadian based site for Mennonite genealogical data. Janzen favours this

proposal. It was emphasized that the site should have data in two formats. First, the format that reproduces that of the original source. Then, second, a searchable report format. Researchers want to be able to see the original form and context of the data because this often assists in interpreting the data. Searchable data makes the work easier to process.

Janzen had a wide-ranging discussion with many individuals about particular projects. He welcomes contacts. He remains supportive of our society and continues as a member.

There was one sad note to his visit to Winnipeg. Shortly after arrival his family vehicle was stolen. He spent many hours and days trying to recover the vehicle and make alternate travel arrangements. This took time away from other planned activities. In the end the vehicle was recovered but alas it was not road-worthy. Fortunately, not many family and personal belongings were left in the vehicle so not too many replacement things will need to be purchased. However, it was nevertheless a complicated process because being a foreigner in Canada presented some hurdles but more was the fact that he was having to deal with his American insurance company that was having to process the incident which happened in Canada. Therefore, for example, he could not rent a Canadian based vehicle and take it to the USA and leave it there; this was not covered by his American insurance company. So part of the family vacation time had to be sacrificed. Winnipeg, at least for the Janzens, will be known as the theft capital of western Canada. The trip will be remembered for possibly unintended reasons.

Co-editors

Gilbert Brandt & Bert Friesen

Editorial Committee

Ed Hoeppner (chair), Gilbert Brandt, Elmer Heinrichs, Bert Friesen

Layout

Ted Barg

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 Gilbert Brandt, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2L 2E2, or e-mailed to the editor at: editor@mmhs.org

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The *Heritage Homestead*, owned and directed by Abe E. Ens, provides a look into community life of years gone by. It is one of the few remaining "house-barn" combination buildings in North America. Abe Ens is a retired farmer and community leader in the Winkler area. On July 18, 2003, Ens received special recognition for his past accomplishments. He was inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame, Brandon.

— Photo by L. Klippenstein

FIRST MANITOBA MENNONITE TEACHERS' SOCIETY

(Part II)

by Lawrence Klippenstein

The name of this article ought really to include the words "of the West Reserve", as the first article in the series made clear. (*Heritage Posting*, June, 2003, p3). A similar teachers' society, or conference had been active in the East Reserve before the West Reserve organization began. Here we continue the series with some minutes from the first meeting of the western group.

At the time of the outset of meetings for the Western Local Conference of the District School Teachers in the Mennonite Settlement of Manitoba, Edenburg village, a few miles east of Gretna, was a lively centre of education and church life in the West Reserve. Its school, built in 1883, and numbered S.D 330, was probably the first school to become a public school in the West Reserve. Benjamin Ewert had come to the school in 1892 (1). The Teachers' Society held its first session in Edenburg on 27 October 1893.

Seven teachers were present for this meeting (see the *Heritage Posting* No. 41, June, 2003 for a list of all teachers involved in the first year). Present in the first meeting were: Bernhard Friesen, John M Friesen, G. Limprecht, Henry Graff, C.B. Fast, Abram Friesen and Benjamin Ewert (the person who took down these minutes). Heinrich Graff of the Blumstein School chaired this session.

In the forenoon Mr. Ewert taught his pupils in several subjects including German reading, arithmetic, English reading and visual aids (2). These lessons were then critiqued in the afternoon session.

One concern was the fact that

some school trustees were strongly opposed to "sounding out" words. The Conference did not give serious consideration to "sounding out" in English, because it was felt by some teachers that this method of learning to read worked better in German than in English. Others insisted on using only the Bible as the reader. This was an essential feature of the private schools of that time.

Regarding the use of visual aids, teacher Graff suggested that fairy tale pictures would prove most effective as reading aids. All teachers indicated that they used visual aids.

Johann Friesen and Bernhard Friesen were expected to give the closing presentations, but declined with silence. No reason for doing so is recorded. It was decided that another meeting of the conference should convene at the Blumstein School on the last Friday of November. Benjamin Ewert would make a presentation, and again a critique would follow. The Edenburg teacher (Mr. Ewert) was thanked for hosting the session of the evening.

Notes

1. See John Dyck, "Edenburg", in Adolf Ens, Jacob E. Peters and Otto Hamm, eds. **Church, Family and Village: Essays on Mennonite Life on the West Reserve** (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2001), 280-82.

2. Mr. Ewert began his first year of teaching at Edenburg with 39 pupils and finished the term with 45. Ibid, 282.

Request for Materials for Virtual Exhibit

The Mennonite Heritage Centre is seeking materials documenting the experiences of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors (COs) in World War Two (1939-1945). If you have photographs, letters, interviews, audio recordings etc. relating to this important time in Canadian history, please contact the Heritage Centre. We are proposing to create a new interactive web exhibit to highlight this experience.

During WW I people could simply claim their CO status but during WW II each person wanting CO status had to be questioned by a judge. It is estimated that there were 10,000 men who made the decision to object to taking up arms against the enemy on grounds of conscience. Some spent time in jail for their refusal to take up arms. Most COs were permitted to do alternative service which meant being assigned to work in lumber camps or work in mental hospitals, farms, and factories.

The goal is to have a site that will be both a tribute to the contribution that the COs made to Canadian society, as well as a witness to the way of peace for our world today.

Contact the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3M 0P4, 204-888-6781 or e-mail at archives@mennonitechurch.ca for further information.

Hutterite Colony Bus Tour Visit the James Valley Colony, Elie, MB

Date: Saturday, September 27, 2003

Time: Begins at 12:00 Noon and continues to 5:00 p.m.

Cost: \$30.00 (includes a coffee break)

Tour leaves from the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. at 12:00 noon sharp (please be there by 11:45 a.m.)

This is your opportunity to ask questions of the Hutterites:

► Their theology ► Their history ► Their community lifestyle, etc.

To register, please call Bert Friesen,
Mennonite Heritage Centre, 204-888-6781

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

September 21, 2003

(Sunday): *Mingling, Memories, Memorabilia and Memorials.* The 115th Anniversary Reunion of the Burwalde School District and Community. For details call Ike Froese at 204-452-6529 or Marjorie Hildebrand at 204-325-8644.

September 27, 2003 (Saturday):

Hutterite Colony Bus Tour. See boxed ad in this issue of *Heritage Posting* for details.

October 18, 2003 (Saturday):

Mennonites and the Challenge of Multiculturalism, presented by the Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg. This Symposium also celebrates 25 years of Mennonite Studies at the University. Besides the keynote address by the Hon. Jean Augustine, Sec. of State for Multiculturalism, the lectures will focus on the life of Mennonites as they teach, study, sing and write. For conference details contact Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg (r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca or Phone 786-9391)

October 30 – November 1, 2003

(Thursday – Saturday): Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) meets in Winnipeg. This event should attract many hundreds and provides a glimpse into the on-going work of Mennonites today. Contact the MEDA office in Winnipeg (ph: 204-956-6430 for further details)

December 6 -Touch of

Christmas. Experience the warmth and joy of a simple Christmas by participating in this event at the Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. The day includes children's choirs, home baking, sleigh rides, activities for the whole family.



Above: Interior of House's Hotel.



Left: Rudy Friesen examining wagon wheel at House's Hotel.

— Photos by Ed Hoepfner

(Continued from page 1)

was added later.

The provenance and history of the building are not known at this point. It is old, and certainly large enough to have served as a hotel and tavern but neither we nor Rudy Friesen can definitely say that it was House's Hotel. However on that day, Friday, June 27, 2003, we were very conscious that it was 130 years, almost to the day, since July 1/3, 1873, that our Mennonite land scouts had been literally "on the spot", protected by William Hespeler who was prepared to use his revolver and hunting knife, where, by one of those ironies of history, a Mennonite church stands today.

Endnotes/Bibliography

1. Margaret MacLeod and W. L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown* (Toronto, Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1963, 1974).
2. RM of St. Francis Xavier, Council and Local History Committee, *Our First Hundred Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba: RM of St. Francis, 1980) pp. 308-309.
3. Klaas Peters, *Die Bergthaler Mennoniten* (Hillsboro, Kansas: 1922-1925, reprinted by Die Mennonitische Post, 1980) pp.12-15 in the original and pp. 13-14 in the reprint.
4. H. J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith* (Altona, Manitoba: Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1970) pp. 54-55.
5. William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony*, rev. ed. (Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMBC Publications, 1980) p. 70.
6. William Schroeder and L. Klippenstein, "The Land Scouts" in Lawrence Klippenstein and Julius G. Toews, eds., *Mennonite Memories - Settling in Western Canada* (1977, Winnipeg, Manitoba) pp. 18-19.

Memorial Stone Unveiled at Lena Cemetery

by Jake Peters

On July 20th the Lena Mennonite Church descendants gathered at the old church cemetery to witness the unveiling of a memorial stone. This was a special homecoming for about 200 former residents and family members tracing their roots back to this church community. It was windy with a mixture of sun and cloud, a near-perfect day for the service.

We parked our cars where the former church building stood, now used as a grain unloading and storage area. Our immediate attention was drawn to the new cemetery fence, a carefully groomed cemetery, and a large field stone on the east side draped with a white cloth. Several family clusters were already gathered around cemetery stones introducing family and friends to their ancestors. Others sat in their lawn chairs facing the cemetery waiting for the service to begin.

Shortly after 2:30 Jake I. Friesen, a member of the planning committee, welcomed former members and descendants of the Lena church community to this special celebration. This was followed with a responsive invocation by Margaret Enns Peters, and the first of several hymns led by John J. Neufeld. The highlight of the afternoon for me was listening to the memorial service address brought by Ana Epp Ens, who spend her early childhood years in the community. As she traced the history of the church we were reminded of the struggles of pioneer families, and the enduring faith and hope revealed by grandparents and parents who decided to build a community around the church near



Anna Ens, writer of the history section of the Lena Mennonite Church book produced for the occasion, giving a well developed and interesting address.



Mrs. Mary Friesen (member of the first baptismal group, 1928) and Jacob Enns (member of the last baptismal group, 1966), with the unveiled plaque.



Former Lena Mennonite Church members Mrs. Louise (Gerhard) Martens aged 98 and Mrs. Mary (Isaac) Friesen aged 95, represent the women of this faith community who through the years gave selflessly in service to family, church and community.

— Photos by John and Ellie Dyck

Lena. Ana acknowledged the contributions of committed church leaders who had served the community over the years.

This history lesson underlined the need to remember the past. Today we are placing a historical marker in this cemetery to remember a pioneer church community. John J. Dyck invited two long-time Lena residents, Jake Enns and Mary Friesen (age 95) to assist with the unveiling of the memorial stone. The inscription on the bronze plaque reads as follows: ***Lena Mennonite Church 1926-1968. Psalm 26: 8 "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." This plaque is placed here by the descendants of the Mennonite immigrant pioneers of 1926-1928 who left strife-torn Russia to settle in Canada, a land of freedom and opportunity, and who with the establishment and nurture of this church left a legacy of faith.***

After the service many would capture this moment on film. Friends of heritage buildings will be pleased to hear that the old church building later was moved to Mather, where it is still used by the United Church congregation today.

To conclude the service Jake Peters brought greetings from the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, a sponsor of this project. He expressed appreciation for the vision of the planning committee, the successful completion of the project, and for wide support from the community. After a few announcements the service closed with a prayer by Peter J. Peters. A fellowship *faspa* and sharing followed at the Killarney Mennonite Church. The sharing around the tables, and at the mike, reflected the legacy that many treasured, and wished to share with others, even outsiders.

This historical marker stands as a reminder for all the descendants, those here today and those to come. Our hope is that other communities will be encouraged to undertake similar projects. May God continue to bless the scattered Lena Mennonite Church.

GENEALOGY

More on the Mennonite Hoeppners in West Prussia

by Glenn Penner

This is a short follow-up on the Hoeppner article published in the previous issue of *Heritage Postings*. Due to severe time constraints a few pieces of important data did not get into the previous article.

The Catholic church records of Tiegenhagen include the burial of a Mennonite Anna Hepnerin on Feb. 27, 1745.¹ Unfortunately no other information is provided. The question now arises as to where she fits in. There are two possibilities: a) Peter Hoeppner (170? – 1778) lived in the Tiegenhagen area before moving to Marienwerder and had a daughter Anna, who died there in 1745. b) Anna Hepner was the first wife of Jacob Hoeppner Sr. and he moved from the Tiegenhagen area to Klein Mausdorferweide after her death. The Tiegenhagen Catholic burial register usually mentions the father's name when a child's burial is recorded, whereas adult females are often (but not always) recorded without reference to husband (or former husband in the case of a widow). Therefore I suspect that Anna was the first wife of Jacob Hoeppner. He was baptized in Danzig in 1739. His marriage was not recorded in Danzig since he would probably have transferred to the Tiegenhagen Mennonite church when marrying Anna sometime in the early 1740's. After her death he would have remarried (around 1746-47) and it was likely that his second marriage precipitated his move to Klein Mausdorferweide. This is, of course, all speculation and it is likely we will never know for certain where Anna Hepner fits in.

The wife of Jacob Hoeppner (1748 – 1826), Sara Dyck (1763-1826), is believed to be the daughter of Abraham Dyck of Neustäterwald in West Prussia. The exact origin of this information is unclear. The only documented evidence I could find was the Bohnsack Lutheran church records which refer to her as Sara Abraham Dyck.² More recently I have found a concrete connection. The diary of Ältester Gerhard Wiebe of Ellerwald, West Prussia, contains a letter, dated Sept. 3, 1793, in which he (Hoeppner) wonders why he has not received any correspondence from his father-in-law Abraham Dyck of "dem neustädtischen Walde".³

Several books and articles discuss the journey of the first group of families, led by Jacob Hoeppner, from West Prussia to Russia. It is often mentioned that there was a farewell service held in front of the Bohnsack church. Many people have been under the impression that this was a Mennonite church. This was, in fact, the Lutheran church. Very few Mennonites lived in the Bohnsack area, and Jacob Hoeppner was one of only two Mennonites who lived in Bohnsack.

When the Hoeppner brothers moved to Russia they left behind two male cousins to carry on the family name in West Prussia. One was Anton Hoeppner (1737 – 1797) of

Marienwerder. The other was another Anton Hoeppner (b. 1740). He was living in Schottland, near Danzig in 1776 with his wife, 2 sons and a daughter.⁴ He is likely the father of Antonie, who was baptized into the Rosenort church in 1790.⁵ The Hoeppner name appears in the records of the Heubuden Mennonite church from 1809 to 1816.⁶ One record is the death of Anton in 1816. The births of his grandchildren, children of his son Abraham, are also recorded. The baptisms of two of these children are later recorded in the Gross Werder baptismal register.⁷ I have collected the information on the families of Anton and Abraham Hoeppner in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1

Anton Hoeppner (probably Schottland)	b. Aug. 10, 1740	Danzig area
	d. Nov. 20, 1816	Münsterberg
	m. 1760s	
Margaretha	b. about 1745	
	d. Aug. 27, 1809	Koczelicke
Children:		
Anton	b. ca 1770	
	bapt. 1790	
Abraham	b. ca 1773	see Table 2
daughter	b. 1770-76	
Heinrich	d. 1780's	m. Agatha Kroecker

Anton Hoeppner died at the residence of the school teacher Dirk Dueck. Nothing is known about son Anton Hoeppner after his baptism in 1790 or about son Heinrich Hoeppner after his marriage in 1811. It is possible that they appear in later church records that I have not yet seen.

Table 2

Abraham Hoeppner	b. about 1773	
	d. May, 17, 1857	Tiegenhof
	m. unknown	
Children:		
Justina	b. June 2, 1810	Caldow
Wilhelmina	b. May, 28, 1812	Caldow
	bapt. 1831	
Abraham	b. Mar. 7, 1814	Caldow
	bapt. 1836	
Agatha	b. about 1817	
	Bapt. 1837	
Margaretha	b. about 1820	
	Bapt. 1840	

This family probably left the village of Caldow (Kalthof) in the Heubuden area after 1814. Between 1831 and 1840 they lived in Marienau and belonged to the Rosenort Mennonite church. Sometime after 1840 Abraham Hoeppner (Sr.) moved to Tiegenhof, and belonged to the Tiegenhagen Mennonite church, where he died in 1857.⁸

(Continued on page 7)

GLANCES AT OUR MANITOBA CHURCHES

by Bert Friesen

Whitewater Mennonite Church

The Whitewater Mennonite Church was organized April 18, 1927 by Mennonite families from the Soviet Union who settled in south western Manitoba. The first elder was Franz F. Enns of Lena, Manitoba, who had been elder of the Terek Mennonite Church in Russia. On June 16, 1938 G.G. Neufeld succeeded him. In 1958 the church had 565 members and a total population of 1209 persons in 257 families.

It was a multi-congregational church with the following affiliates or local congregations: Whitewater (162 members), Rivers (96 members), Ninga (63 members), Lena (80 members), Crystal City (135 members), Manitou (29 members). Five of these groups had their own meetinghouses. In 1958 all worship was in German. In 1936 a meeting house was built near Boissevain. A larger meeting house was built in the town in 1960. In 1947 this church was merged into the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.

The leaders of the congregation were: Franz Enns (1931-1939), Gerhard G. Neufeld (1930-1995), Peter Janzen (1931-1942), Abr. Neufeld (1931-1936), another

Gerhard G. Neufeld (1931-1949), Jacob Born (1932-1964), Peter Harms (1950-1957), Bernhard Neufeld (1950-1974), Ed Cornelsen (1958-1965), Jacob Harms (1958-1970), Jake Neufeld (1967-1994), Peter Peters (1971-1989), Werner Neufeld (1972-1973), Henry Harder (1982-1983), Reuben Siemens (1985-1986), Valery Isbicki (1987-1989), Al Rempel (1995-2000), another Peter Janzen (2001-).

Lena Mennonite Church

In the 1920s Mennonites, consisting mostly of immigrants from Russia, began settling in the Lena area of Manitoba. A group began to meet for worship in 1926 and became part of the Whitewater Gemeinde. The congregation grew to about 75 members just before dissolution in 1968. Many of the members joined the Killarney congregation.

The leaders of the congregation were: Franz Enns (1926-1931), Hermann Sawatzky (1933-1934), Heinrich Epp (1934-1945), Jacob Peters (1946-1956), and Abram Neufeld (1956-1968).

(Continued from page 6)

Since the village of Klein Mausdorferweide was the parental home of the three Hoepfner brothers who emigrated to Russia, I have included a detailed map of this village. Presumably this is where the Hoepfner brothers spent their formative years, and where their parents spent most of their adult lives.

1. Tiegenghagen Catholic Church Records. LDS film #462757.
2. Bohnsack Lutheran Church Records. LDS #
3. The diary of Gerhard Wiebe can be found in microfilm #279 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC), Winnipeg.
4. An electronic version of this census is available at the MMHS web site www.mmhs.org
5. Adalbert Goertz, "1782-1795, Baptisms in Rosenort, West Prussia" in Mennonite Family History, 1986, pp. 138-143.
6. Heubuden Mennonite Church Records. MHC microfilm #284.
7. Gross Werder Mennonite Baptisms, 1814-1840. LDS film #491566.
8. Thiegenghagen Mennonite Church Records. MHC microfilm #289.



NOTES FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

Saskatchewan Annual Meeting

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan held its Annual General Meeting, February 9, 2003. Bill Janzen, Liaison Staff Officer for MCC in Ottawa, was the guest speaker. Using examples from the Bible, Janzen spoke about the relationship of Mennonites with governments. Janzen stated that Mennonites (and others) are able to lobby governments and affect change. The role of Mennonites in government, according to Janzen, remains a very complex situation.

At the AGM, two new Board members were elected—Ed Schmidt, of Waldheim, SK and Jake Buhler, of Saskatoon. They join Leonard Doell, Dick Braun, Vera Falk, Gladys Christensen, Kathy Bold, Verner Friesen, Eileen Quiring and Victor G. Wiebe.

— from *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*, (April, 2003).

Karen Doell inducted into Manitoba Softball Hall of Fame & Museum.

Long-time Winkler resident, Doell, played Little League baseball and by age thirteen had graduated to Senior Women's softball with the Winkler Skylarks. She helped lead Smitty's (Winnipeg) to several Canadian senior women's championships. She played for Canada in the Pan Am Games (1991) and the Summer Olympics (1996). Karen Doell is presently employed at the Pembina Valley Physiotherapy Sports Injury Centre, Winkler.

— from *The Winkler Heritage Society 'Legacy Links...'* (July 15, 2003).

Celebrating Yarrow's 75th Anniversary

This June 5-7, 2003, the Yarrow Research Committee and the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) collaborated on a conference entitled "First Nations and First Settlers in the Fraser Valley (1890-1960)". Marlene Epp, Waterloo, keynote speaker at the conference, held at the UCFV Abbotsford campus, focused on "The Yeo-women of Yarrow — Raising Families and Creating Community in a Land of Promise."

Sessions over the three days included lectures on Aboriginal life, British, Catholic and Sikh communities in the Fraser Valley; the impact of the swift growth and sudden demise of the raspberry industry; hop-picking experiences; pioneer diaries; Mennonite educational

institutions; economic initiatives; war-time and post-war developments.

In conjunction with the conference, Yarrow celebrated its 75th anniversary as a village. During Friday afternoon a number took a tour of the village, ending at the Yarrow cemetery. Then some 400, mostly former residents celebrated with a banquet at the Yarrow M.B. Church. The celebrations continued in the sanctuary, where Holda Fast Redekopp and a selected group of singers, all descendants of early pioneers, reminded all of the strong musical tradition. A number of individuals reminisced about the early years, while Leonard Neufeldt and Esther Epp Harder made a visual presentation combining story, poem and pictures from the past.

— from an article by Helen Rose Pauls, *Mennonite Historical Society of BC Newsletter*, Summer 2003.

Canada Day Tops all Expectations

The July 1 celebrations at the Mennonite Heritage Village had good weather, great volunteers and staff to help make this Canada Day a great success. The theme, "Menno Fest" was presented through various ways, including displays, activities for all ages, readings, and food.

— from *Preserving Our Heritage*, the Mennonite Heritage Village Newsletter.



Corporal Bill Richards, Steinbach RCMP, raises flag with MLA Kelvin Goertzen assisting.

— Photo courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village

Manitoba Society News

December 6, 2003 (Saturday): The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada meets in Winnipeg. This Association is a vital tool in the research and writing of Canadian Mennonite history. Support from the greater constituency is always welcome. Contact the MMHS office for further information.

Heritage Posting is a membership newsletter, published by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. The editors would appreciate receiving stories, articles and photographs that connect to Manitoba Mennonite historical events and interests. Send your submission to Gilbert G. Brandt, *Heritage Posting*, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E2 or email to editor@mmhs.org. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Looking for a Good Group Activity?

Join in a Bus Tour of the historic Post Road. Visit beautiful southern Manitoba and see traditional Mennonite street villages. The Post Road was established in 1878 by Mennonites to guide travelers along an almost featureless prairie landscape. This road was a major route

for early travelers between Emerson and Mountain City and the points between.

Contact Conrad Stoesz at 888-6781 or 669-6575, or Lawrence Klippenstein at 895-4421 for arrangements.

Cost is \$45. per person, with a minimum of 30 people required.



Call for Papers

Molochna 2004

"Molochna '04 Mennonites and their Neighbours, 1804-2004," an international conference commemorating the bicentennial of Mennonite settlement in the Molochna region of Ukraine.

Date: 3-5 June 2004

Host institution: Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

The Conference organizers welcome presentation proposals from across the humanities and social sciences that address all aspects of the history of the Molochna Mennonites and the region in which they settled as well as their interactions with their larger environment and their Molochna neighbours.

Mennonites played a unique role in the Molochna as engines of change and modernization, keen observers, who recorded fundamental developments in both their own communities and those surrounding them, and a litmus test for the Soviet system, challenging its all-engrossing principles. They are, today, searching for ways to create sustainable, locally led, development programs.

Conference conveners and organizers: Setline Bobyleva (Ukraine), Harvey Dyck (Canada), Alfred Eisfeld (Germany), Nikolai Krylov (Ukraine), Peter Letkemann (Canada), John Staples (11SA), Peter Klassen (USA), Petr Wiebe (Russia)

Deadline: Proposals for original individual papers, panels, or roundtables, including a brief (2-3 page) abstract must be submitted no later than December 1, 2003. For information and the submission of proposals contact:

N.V. Krylov - krylov@mpu.melitopol.net or John Staples - staples@fredonia.edu

The Conference will seek to cover the costs of tourist-class travel, accommodation and maintenance for participants from the CIS.

Honourary chairs for the Conference, additional Conference Conveners and a list of sponsoring institutions, will be announced at a later date.

Mennonites and Refugees: A 25 Year Retrospective

A history conference examining the interaction between North American Mennonites and refugees will take place on September 30 and October 1, 2005, at the University of Winnipeg. The conference is held on the 25th anniversary of the coming of the so-called Vietnamese 'Boat People' and other Southeast Asian refugees in 1979/1980. This was a time when many Canadian and American Mennonites became directly involved in refugee sponsorship.

Research papers are welcomed on one of the following four themes:

- 1) the historic, cultural and theological context which led North American Mennonites to take leading roles in refugee sponsorship programs;
- 2) the cross-cultural experience of both the refugees and the Mennonite hosts during the months of actual sponsorship and settlement
- 3) the organizational response by Mennonite institutions such as MCC Canada and other institutions to the coming of the refugees
- 4) the long-term inter-ethnic relationships – direct and indirect – between Canadian/American Mennonites and newcomers from the southern hemisphere, specifically those from Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia

The conference organizers also welcome submissions for storytelling by both hosts and refugees.

Please send proposals to: Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. R3B 2E9 or email to: r.Loewen@uwinnipeg.ca

The conference will take place in Eckhardt Gramatte Hall at the University of Winnipeg on Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1, 2005

The conference is hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg. It is sponsored by the Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites subcommittee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada with funds from Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

Members of the Planning Committee include: Sandy Dooey, Ionka Hristozova, Larry Kehler, Royden Loewen, Ken Reddig, Stephanie Stobbe, Tim Wichert.

Friesens Dedicate New Headstone In Edenburg Cemetery

by Elmer Heinrichs

It was a reunion but much more. Many of David Friesen's descendants had not even heard of each other, let alone met. On July 5, 2003, over 100 Friesens gathered at the Edenburg Cemetery to salute their patriarch by dedicating a new headstone in his honour.

David Heinrich Friesen (1846-1915), formerly of the Bergthal Colony in Russia, immigrated to Manitoba in 1874 and homesteaded in Schoenthal in the Manitoba East Reserve, and Sommerfeld, Blumenthal and Edenburg in the West Reserve.

Besides farming, David also worked with the CPR, scouting sites for future Mennonite settlements. He was instrumental in erecting boarding facilities at the MCI in Gretna. Some area residents may remember David's grandson David M. Friesen, an Altona jeweller.

Married twice, David fathered 24 children; 16 survived. His first wife Barbara Klassen (1852-1888) died at 36, and in 1891 David married 22-year-old Anna Janzen (1868-1929). Anna blended her children and stepchildren with love and compassion. With her passing, however, the two families drifted apart.

In 2002, Lynne (Kroeker) Ward, daughter of David's 15th child Elizabeth (1909-2002), published a family history. Not until then did David's descendants discover the full extent of their family.

On July 5, Lynne realized her dream of reuniting the two families while replacing her grandparents' worn headstones. The Friesens met at the farm home of Helen and Jake Bergen, originally the 1891 Blumenthal homestead of David and Anna Friesen and therefore "hallowed ground."

A memorable service followed at the gravesite at Edenburg Cemetery as the gathered Friesens surrounded the draped stone. Following messages



Several of David's 31 surviving grandchildren pay tribute at the unveiling of his new headstone: Back: Tina Friesen, Bob Derksen, Helen Letkeman, Bill Janzen, David Kroeker; Front: Sue Neufeld and Friesen Family History author Lynne (Kroeker) Ward.

— Photos by Elmer Heinrichs



Tina (Friesen) Friesen (right), of Altona, oldest surviving grandchild in the Henry branch, and her sister Mary (Friesen) Penner attend the unveiling of a new headstone for David Friesen.

by Rev. Dave F. Friesen and Lynne Ward, young Josiah Derksen laid the family history at the foot of David's original stone as a tribute from the author and her mother. Lynne then read the eloquent and poignant words of Anna, David's widow, written on the day David died in 1915.

Rev. Friesen dedicated the stone, which carried three names: David and Anna and their daughter Susanna (1902-1912). The new stone was unveiled by Tina Friesen and Bill Janzen.

The author's brother, David Kroeker, read a message to the Friesen children – "The Importance of Family" – written for them by Conrad Stoesz, distant relative and archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

David's descendants from both his first and second families enjoyed a day of reconnecting, reminiscing, and meeting new cousins whom they had never known existed. Between the birth of her first child Helena in 1892 and her own death in 1929, David's second wife Anna, encouraged both families to stay in touch. Decades later, the headstone dedication day witnessed a renewal of that maternal wish.

Non-family guest Ted Friesen, Altona historian, commended the celebration for its significance in "arousing interest in the preceding generations . . . fascinating work."

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

A community reunion by members and their descendants of the former Lena Mennonite Church brought with it the publication of **Lena Mennonite Church 1926 - 1968** (Winnipeg: Book Committee, 2003) pb., 61 pp. The main authors are Anna Ens and John Dyck of Winnipeg, MB. The contents include a brief history of the Lena Mennonite community with a special section of leaders' biographies and a former membership list. For further information contact Anna Ens at 204-489-6044 in Winnipeg.

Neil and Edith von Gunten, long-time staff members of Native Ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada/Mennonite Church Canada have compiled and edited three volumes connected with the Matheson Island Centennial celebrations held in early August this year. The main volume is titled **From Paddles to Propellers: The History of Matheson Island: A Fishing Community** (Matheson Island: Matheson Island Community Council, 2003), hc., 619 pp., \$50.00. An extensive text and 1000 photos offer a fascinating story of this community from its beginning in 1903 to the present. Mennonite involvements feature strongly in the study. For further information, and copies to purchase, contact Walter Franz of Native Ministries at 888-6781. Two related photo (coloured) albums also published by the Matheson Island Community Council are **Matheson Island Memories: A Celebration of Mennonite Pioneer Mission and Native Ministries' Involvement at Matheson Island 1948 - 2003**, pb., 37 pp., and **A Picture of Matheson Island Memories 2003**, pb., 38 pp. It is hoped that a review of the set can follow.

Edward M. Ledohowski is the author and editor of **Heritage Landscape of the Crow Wing Study Region of Southeastern Manitoba: A Pilot Project** (Winnipeg: Historic Resources Board and Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, 2003), pb., 83 pp. This is a unique publication, with its 8½ x 22" format, and a most interesting set of charts, maps and photos describing historical and various socio-economic and geographical aspects of the southeastern Manitoba area. Data related to Mennonite communities (formerly East Reserve and now RM of Hanover, mainly) is scattered throughout the volume.

A family gathering of the descendants of Heinrich Fehr (15 Jun 1846 - 12 Sep 1911) and Sarah Neufeld (18 Jun 1847 - 4 Sep 1922), published this summer, has been prepared by Don Fehr of Port Coquitlam, B.C. It contains 145 pages and is available in paperback from Don at 782 Wright Ave., Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3B 5M7. The author can also be contacted at don_fehr@telus.net. The book includes the complete diary of the Jacob Fehrs, the first Reinland village family to arrive in Canada (on the S.S. Hiberian landing at Quebec City on August 27, 1874), and a chapter on the village of Hoffnungsfield (near Winkler), with a focus on its first resident families, by the late John Dyck of Winnipeg.

John H. Epp A Biography (Winnipeg: John H. Epp History, 1993), hc., 104 pp., features the life story of a man who has become widely known as the founder and long-time owner of Independent Jewellers in Winnipeg. The author of the book is John Mark Epp, grandson of John. The Russian Mennonite family background, business ventures and hunting safaris of John Epp are among the significant aspects of the story. For further info contact Ernie Epp, son of John, currently with the family business in Winnipeg.



For genealogists, a new volume, edited by Michael Penner, and already in its second edition, is **Of Russian Roots and Canadian Migration: The Illustrated Story of the Abram P. Bergmann and Katharina Wiens Family and Ancestry** (Landmark: by the family, 2003), pb., 115 pp. The Bergmann family was strongly instrumental in founding the Mennonite Brethren congregation at Steinbach, Manitoba. For further info contact Ruth Penner at 1-204-355-4074, or the editor at 1603-707 Seventh Ave., New Westminster, B.C. V3M 2J2.

Jack Klassen of Altona is making his debut as a novelist with **The Chiropractor**, also available in a Low German edition, **Dee Trajchtmoka**, 192 and 212 pp respectively. The book has been privately published in 2003, and sells for \$16.95. The story line is based on the life and work of a well-known self-taught chiropractor of the East Reserve, Trufje (Trudy) Klassen. For further information contact the author at 1-204-324-5309.

Gerd Froese, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the author of a unique work, **The Gate and other Pictures painted in the Gulag** (Winnipeg: privately published, 2003), pb., 51 pp., \$25.00. Postage is extra. The book includes about 80 paintings done by Gerd's father, Abram, during his time in Siberian exile in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The story of the family is woven into the text of the volume. The author presented his work at the recent workshop, Sketches from Siberia II, held at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg in June, 2003. A German edition of the work is also available. For further info contact the author at gfroese@ms.umanitoba.ca or 204-489-5077.

Review – “David Heinrich Friesen and Family 1720-2001”

Lynne (Kroeker) Ward, published by Lynne Ward, 2002, 442 pages.

by Edith Wiebe

Having worked on a branch of my family that has the name “von Riesen” later changed to Friesen, I was interested in whether this volume could provide me with any additional facts on the early bearers of this family name. As yet I have not been able to determine a link.

While a tremendous amount of information has been gathered by the author, including such potentially sensitive data as occupations of people listed, one searches in vain for footnotes or a detailed bibliography that might enable a new researcher to recheck books, articles, or diaries and follow up on potential connections. There is no mention of obituaries or census data as sources of facts and no specific names of family contacts who provided the anecdotes or facts recorded. The date of an interview and with whom would have great historical significance in the years to come. An index of names is included but no dates distinguish people by the same name, a frequent problem in Mennonite genealogy. Due to the absence of a bibliography it is not readily apparent which standard genealogical tools or lists were consulted.

The book includes a table of contents and the use of bold point for personal names is very helpful. The author's extensive use of photos (although of very uneven quality), computer graphics and varying layout designs contribute to this book's visual

appeal. The eye appeal makes one want to browse through the book. The short narrative articles make it more likely that a younger person might enjoy and benefit from a perusal of the book. On the downside, the great variation in style and layout can sometimes be distracting and some of the basic information included is repetitious for all but the most amateur of genealogists. The various tables and charts, for example the number of Friesen birthdays each month, reflect the many comparisons that are made possible with computer generated records.

No doubt this book is a family treasure that will be increasingly valued by members of the Friesen family as knowledge of the Mennonite Russian experience is diminished due to the passing of older generations.

Note: Edith Wiebe is a librarian in the Winnipeg Public Library system. She is also an avid genealogist and has published a volume on her Wiebe ancestry.



Friesen Family history author Lynne Ward and graphic artist Deborah Clague accept award from the Manitoba Historical Society.