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Highlights of the 2004 MMHS Annual Meeting

by Elmer Heinrichs

Members of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society met at two locales in Winnipeg Sat., Feb. 5, first in the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church on Simcoe to hear about Sommerfeld Church history, and then at the nearby Home Street Mennonite Church for its business sessions.

Vice-president Roland Sawatzky reported that the board met in Winnipeg, in Steinbach and in Gretna. He then went on to mention the shared responsibility board members needed to assume since it lacked a president. He highlighted the processing and management of the Society's records.

Some of the Society records may still be in personal holdings of past board and committee members. Also receiving consideration were MMHS-Heritage Village connections, and it prudently decided against buying liability insurance.

Several steps are in process to ensure ready access of

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Nathaniel and Norman Plett receive award on behalf of their brother Delbert Plett.

MMHS recognizes lifetime achievements

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society recognized the work of two men for their service to the society, and for their work in advancing, publishing and promoting Mennonite history.

The Society recognized Gerhard Ens, a teacher and founding member of the society, with an honorary lifetime membership award for his significant service to the Mennonite community.

Delbert F. Plett, who died last Nov. 4th at age 56, was recognized posthumously with a Certificate of Recognition for his significant contributions to the preservation of Mennonite history.

Both men were historians. Ens was a long-time teacher at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, and Plett, former society chair, was a Steinbach lawyer.

Lawrence Klippenstein, retired Mennonite Heritage Centre archivist, paid Ens tribute by recognizing him for his significant service to the Mennonite community. Ens worked to found the MMHS, and his 10-year presidency was a capstone of his work with Mennonite Heritage Village.

Acting president Roland Sawatzky presented Ens with an honorary life membership for his service to the

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Gerhard Ens receives award from Roland Sawatzky.

— Photos by Elmer Heinrichs



Society members hear reports and plan for the future.

— Photo by Bert Friesen

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the society's records for future generations. Conrad Stoesz and Donovan Giesbrecht have made an inventory of MMHS records, now held in two places, and it has planned to bring the collections together to make one record.

Past board and committee members are urged to deposit any MMHS files still in their possession to the MHC Archives. The Society is considering hiring a summer student to process the collected Society records.

While noting the joint beginning of MMHS and MHV and that separate organizations were needed to better attend to the needs of each, Sawatzky mentioned it would be in the best interest of each and the larger Mennonite constituency if the organizations complemented and assisted each other.

Mavis Dyck, local history chair, reported that Henry Unger and David M. Friesen had retired from the committee; the recruits for 2005 are Mary Bueckert and Adolf Ens. Dyck also highlighted the publication of the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch.

She added that a spring event is planned for Macgregor EMC, and if there is sufficient interest, bus transportation to the area will be available for this April 16 event.

Membership and Publicity chair Elmer Heinrichs

reported on MMHS membership, its quarterly publication, Heritage Posting, and board approval of an MMHS logo it helped prepare.

Genealogy and Family History committee chair Bill Schroeder highlighted its Family History Contest and Family Roots Day, and noted Glenn Penner's talk on the use of DNA at CMU March 19.

Publishing and Marketing chair Jake Peters highlighted the submission of the John J. Friesen manuscript *Creating Communities: A History of Manitoba Mennonites* for a new book, the upgrading of the MMHS home page, and the inventory made of MMHS publications.

Monuments and Historical Sites chair Conrad Stoesz reported that Lawrence Klippenstein leads a group overseeing repairs and relocation of the Altbegthel School, that lecterns along the Post Road are to be refitted, and that the Ens Heritage House in Reinland may soon become a historic site.

Stoesz, who also chairs the Conscientious Objector Monument committee, indicated that the CO website had brought much attention to the CO cause and new interest may now be drawn to the idea of a permanent marker.

Oral History chair Donovan Giesbrecht noted the interviewing of 12 participants. The committee's goal is to record audio interviews with post-WWII Mennonite immigrants to Canada. He described transcription and translation of the interviews as a slow and tedious project.

For Finance, treasurer Bert Friesen reported two major transactions last year: the transfer of the remainder of the funds raised for the Mexico archives and museum, and the publication of the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch. In a special project, \$2,000 will give support to a summer student.

Colleen Epp and Anna Ens were re-elected to the MMHS board. The committee representatives for 2005 were approved (see Board and Committee listing on page 11).

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Mennonite community in fostering its faith and preserving its history through teaching in the classroom, in church, on the radio and in writing, editing and publishing.

Plett also had a passion for history and turned to his own roots and heritage in about 1978. He studied the history of the Mennonites who immigrated to Manitoba in the 1870s, as well as the history of Russia, Polish-Russia and Flanders.

Plett organized the first of five Mennonite heritage tours which retrace the steps of Mennonite ancestors in Europe. He also wrote and compiled 14 books on conservative Mennonites, namely Kleine Gemeinde, Old Colony and Old Order Mennonite.

Sawatzky presented posthumously a Certificate of Recognition to Delbert, received by Delbert's brothers Norman and Nathaniel, for his contributions to Mennonite history through the collection and preservation of historic documents, research, writing, and publication.

Co-editors

Colleen Epp and Sarah Schwab

Editorial Committee

Elmer Heinrichs (chair), Gilbert Brandt, Colleen Epp, Bert Friesen, Marianne Janzen, Sarah Schwab

Layout

Ted Barg

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Beginnings of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church

from a lecture by Adolf Ens; excerpted by Colleen Epp

The story of Anabaptist-Mennonite history is full of migrations:

- from Holland to Prussia in the 1500s
- farther east in the late 1700s to New Russia, now Ukraine;
- in 1870s to Manitoba;
- in the 1920s and 1940s southward to Mexico and Paraguay.

The two strongest motives were to find a place where they could live out their faith and where they could make their living in peace. To ensure those conditions, they negotiated special agreements (Privilegium) with the local governments.

In Russia they prospered once the pioneering adjustments were overcome. Within 40 years of their first settlement in 1789 the originally allotted lands were full and overflowing. Already in 1836 the first "daughter colony" – Bergthal – was founded, far enough removed from the other settlements to develop traditions of its own.

When Russia gave notice that the privilegium was going to be modified during the 1860s, a third of the Mennonites, including the entire Bergthal colony, decided to emigrate. Coming as an entire community, Bergthal could keep all of its institutions intact: the church and its ministerial, the school, fire insurance, and the orphan bureau (Waisenamt). Indeed, Bishop Gerhard Wiebe and Oberschulz Jacob Peters were able to persuade the wealthier members of the church community to help the poorer ones, so that all could afford to make the move.

The Bergthal immigrants settled in the area east of the junction of the Rat and Red Rivers. Here the government had set aside an area of 8 townships for exclusive homesteading by Mennonite and other German settlers. From 1874 to 1877, virtually the entire Bergthal Colony was transplanted to the East Reserve.

Led by Bishop Gerhard Wiebe and other ministers, the church continued uninterrupted. However, in the first years it became clear that the weather could easily make many of the new village sites unlivable. Too much water, late seeding time, early autumn frosts, grasshoppers convinced many of the Bergthal immigrants that the government's choice of land for them had not been the best. By 1878 and

1879 some were looking for a better location.

The second large group of immigrants from the Old Colony in Russia had followed them to Manitoba, beginning in 1875. They had negotiated for a new tract of land west of the Red River. But the several thousand Mennonites who arrived here from Fürstenland, Chortitza and other colonies from 1875 to 1880 had not nearly filled the 17 townships of this West Reserve. This became the destination for many Bergthal people who had already homesteaded in East Reserve villages.

Thus, in about 1879-1881 a large number of families relocated to the west of the Red River and founded new villages here: Alt-Bergthal, Neu-Bergthal. It meant pioneering a second time, with all the hard work that entailed. It also meant that they were now far away from their church and community.

In 1881, the church took a second step toward dividing itself into two groups. It assigned Minister Franz Dyck to create a Kirchenbuch (church register) for the new group on the west side. He called it Kirchenbuch für die Gemeinde zu West Lynne. [West Lynne, a small town across the River from Emerson was the postal address for these new settlers.]

When Bishop Wiebe retired in spring of 1882, it was clear that his replacement should be from the western group, since Bishop Stoesz remained on the East Reserve. The choice fell on Minister Johann Funk of Alt-Bergthal. Together with Bishop Stoesz, Funk now served in the leadership of the large, geographically divided Gemeinde.

But Funk's half of the Gemeinde lived next to "Old Colony" settlers. Unlike their Kleine Gemeinde neighbours in the East Reserve with background in Molotschna Colony, their new neighbours on the West Reserve were quite similar to them. Many came from the daughter colony of Fürstenland which had maintained church practices much like the Bergthal congregation. Indeed, Bishop Johann Wiebe had agreed with the Bergthal Bishop Gerhard Wiebe to continue with these practices in Canada. In 1880 Johann Wiebe had begun the first register on the West Reserve for the Reinländer (or Old Colony) Church. Not all of the settlers had joined. Some of them now joined the "West Lynne" Gemeinde. They paved the way for others to switch affiliation: some because they were being disciplined by the Reinländer for things that were acceptable to the West Lynne group; others who wanted more changes than even the West Lynne group had adopted.

With the coming of the railway and with it railway towns – Gretna, Rosenfeld, and later Altona – an even greater variety of options became available. Soon the supply of teachers who had come from Russia was too small to provide for each village school. Some community members saw the need for a secondary school to train new teachers. Opening such a school soon involved educators from the USA Mennonites and cooperation with the Manitoba Department of Education. Gradually, it seemed to some leaders, the church and community were losing control or

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Did you know . . . ?

submitted by Marianne Janzen

- Winkler is named after Valentine Winkler, one of the original settlers of the area who owned land near the townsite.
- April 7 is a special day in Winkler's history. On that day in 1906 the village was incorporated. Then on that day in 1952 Winkler became a town. In 2002 on that same day Winkler was named a city.
- Thousands of years ago the area around Winkler formed the beaches of Lake Agassiz.
- In early 1900's Winkler had 7 elevators with a capacity of 276,000 bushels and was the largest grain market in Western Canada.
- In 1899, before Winkler was incorporated, the RM of Stanley passed a by-law that the residents of Winkler could keep pigs in the village from November 15 to April 1.
- On a Saturday in April 1900 one thousand people were in the village of Winkler to see off the people who were moving to Saskatchewan to start settlements in the Rosthern area.
- In 1911 85% of Winkler's population considered their ethnic origin to be German, but in the first census after World War I it was just over 2% while 86% indicated they were of Dutch origin.

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oversight of their own schools. Ältester Funk lived right in the midst of all this change and bore the burden of giving wise Christian leadership to the church. Very soon he was caught in the middle, between those who wanted even more changes, more rapidly, and those for whom there had already been too many changes in such a short time: from Russia to Manitoba; from Bergthal to the East Reserve; from the East Reserve to the west.

Only a few years after Johann Funk was ordained as Ältester, two new church registers were begun in the larger West Reserve Mennonite community. They are dated 1885 and 1886 and neither is as comprehensive as the two "official" ones. It is not clear who produced these new

registers, but they ended up with Johann Funk, as did the majority of the people listed in them. They include some Bergthal people but also some "Old Colony" people. Gradually, it seems, Ältester Funk was drawn more and more to this smaller group and gradually he lost the confidence of the majority of the West Lynne Gemeinde. This larger group then asked to be served by Ältester Stoesz of the East Reserve rather than by Funk.

Ältester Stoesz could not serve so large a group, divided by the river and a long journey by horse and buggy. Hence, by the early 1890s he began to work toward electing another Ältester on the West side. When Abraham Doerksen of the village of Sommerfeld was ordained to this position in 1894, the separation of the West Lynne Gemeinde was more or less complete. About 7/8th of the members remained with the West Lynne Gemeinde. The Church Registers begun in 1881 by the East Reserve minister Franz Dyck now became the property of the group under Bishop Doerksen. That group eventually took the formal name of Die Mennoniten Gemeinde zu Sommerfeld.

A much smaller group of some sixty families left to form a new Gemeinde with Bishop Johann Funk. Only about twenty of those were of Bergthal Colony – Bergthal Gemeinde origin. Yet this group eventually formally took the name Bergthal Mennoniten Gemeinde.

Although they were now two separate church bodies, they continued to cooperate in significant ways. As the Manitoba government became increasingly involved in elementary school education in the Mennonite villages, Sommerfelder and Bergthaler made common cause, frequently sitting on the same local school board and members of the same larger Schulverein. During World War I they worked jointly on delegations to the Manitoba government regarding education and to the federal government in Ottawa regarding exemption from military service.

Austin/MacGregor

Bus Tour

2005 April 16

Tour group will leave Winnipeg with the first stop at the MacGregor EMC Church. Payment for the tour will be collected there. Individuals travelling in private vehicles must join the group at the EMC Church.

Features: a brief history paper on the 7 Mennonite congregations in the area a tour of these congregation meeting houses, MCC store, Manitoba Agricultural Museum

**Price is \$40.00 pp inclusive.
Meal and registration only \$12.00.**

Family Roots Day – March 19, 2005

by Bert Friesen

For many years the Family Roots Day has been held in Steinbach. Since the Society became more directly involved through its Genealogy Committee, they decided to hold it in Winnipeg again. It was held at the Canadian Mennonite University campus and the Mennonite Heritage Centre on a typical Manitoba Saturday in late winter.

The day consisted of networking with many individuals interested in genealogy through discussions around tables of displays of those who illustrated their research work. There was a keynote address on the Mennonite DNA project, and a series of lectures on the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch project including a brief history of the Gemeinde and a brief 'how to' on using this genealogical tool.

The keynote address was given by Glenn Penner on the Mennonite DNA project. This project attempts to establish how many Mennonite progenitors there are, to determine the number of progenitors for each Mennonite family name, to look at the ancestry of Mennonites before the 16th century, and to use DNA data as an aid in making genealogical connections within families and between families. He described how DNA can help in establishing these facts. From textual records it is estimated that about 300 family names survived from the Dutch-Prussian era and it is hoped that DNA can help to group all the descendants from these progenitors and maybe help establish what happened to the others. In making connections, he gave an example of how some families may be unexpectedly related. Let us say, he suggested, that in the early 17th century a Jakob Penner had two sons, Jan and Klaus. At this time last names were not yet commonly needed, accepted, or standardized. When they had descendants each family decided to adopt their father's name as their last name, Jan's son adopted the surname Jansen, and Klaus' son adopted the surname Klaussen. So in this family a Penner, Jansen, and Klaussen are directly related. DNA would conclusively establish that since the DNA of up to third cousins would



Glenn Penner explains DNA project.

be identical or nearly identical to establish that fact. Then more distant relatives would have a diminishing identical DNA. For this to be useful, the pool of data must be significant. Therefore Penner is appealing for many people to become involved in the project. The procedure is simple and the cost as of today is about C\$300. For more information, contact Glenn Penner directly.

The other lectures centred on the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch which the society published and launched in November 2004. Lawrence Klippenstein gave a brief history of the Sommerfeld Gemeinde from its beginnings in Manitoba after the 1870s immigration. Over a process that began in 1881, the Sommerfeld Gemeinde was formalized in 1894. The Gemeinde register covers the years for 1881 to 1935. It is still being maintained by the Gemeinde. Martha Martens gave a description of the process of preparing the register for publication. Alf Redekopp then illustrated how to use the register as a genealogical tool.

The day was attended by nearly 100 for the key note address and most were able to stay for the afternoon session on the Sommerfeld Gemeinde Buch. There were over 15 displays which generated a lot of interaction, ideas, and wonder at the mysteries solved.



Participants listen intently to the Roots Day presentation.

— Photos by Bert Friesen

GENEALOGY — The Bergthal Colony Schroeders — Part II

Johann Schroeder (1807–1884) and
Johann Schroeder (b. 1763)

by Glenn Penner

A. Introduction

Whereas there has been very little written about the family of Simon Schroeder (1817 – 1876) and his ancestry was unknown until recently (see Part I), there is a considerable amount of information available on Johann Schroeder (1807 – 1884), his family, and his ancestry. Much of this information comes to us via an unpublished Schroeder genealogy compiled and distributed by Katie Peters in the 1970's.¹ Since this genealogy is not widely available, and since much new information on the ancestors of Johann Schroeder has, in the meantime, become available, it is worth presenting genealogical and family history data on this family again.

B. Johann Schroeder (1807 – 1884)

Johann Schroeder was born on Nov. 11, 1807 in Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony, Russia, the son of Johann Schroeder and Katharina Kasdorf. An excellent biography of Johann Schroeder can be found in the June, 1996 issue of *Preservings*.² From this article one can see that Johann Schroeder lived a rather exciting life. According to this article he was one of the original settlers in the Bergthal Colony. On the other hand documents from the Odessa State Archives indicate that he may not have moved until about 1846. According to these documents Johann Schroeder entered into a contract to purchase the property of the late Johann Leyke (who died on Sep. 22, 1845) of Bergthal village from Jacob Martens and Wilhelm Rempel, guardians of Leyke's children, for 571 Rubels.³ Although a Bergthal Colony voters list for 1847 shows that he was living in the village of Bergthal Johann Schroeder was still registered in the village of Kronsthal in the 1850 Russian census.⁴ Various village lists and censuses are currently available for the Bergthal Colony up to the year 1869 and Schroeder is found in Bergthal village in many of these.⁵

C. Johann Schroeder (1763 – ?)

According to Katie Peters' genealogy of the Schroeder family, Johann Schroeder was born on Sep. 25, 1763 in the village of Klein Lubin, West Prussia.¹ He was the son of Isaak Schroeder. He was baptized into the Frisian Mennonite church at Montau, West Prussia in 1779.⁶ According to Benjamin Unruh's book he immigrated from Krebswald (actually Kerbswald), West Prussia, to the Chortitza Colony in South Russia in 1789.⁷ He was about 26 years old at the time and likely a landless, single man. The Mennonites of Ober- and Unter- Kerbswald belonged to the Frisian Mennonite church at Thiensdorf. The records of this congregation, which were started in 1777, do not mention Johann Schroeder (i.e. no mention of a marriage or births of any children).⁸

A Chortitza Colony list of 1793 has Johann Schroeder in the village of Neuendorf.⁹ A census of 1795 finds him in

Rosenthal, age 32, with wife Katharina, 21, and her parents Isaak (age 60) and Anna (age 53) Kasdorf.⁷ In the census of 1797 his family consisted of 2 males and 3 females.⁹ At the time they had 8 horses, 20 cattle, 2 sheep and 2 pigs. The Chortitza Colony census of 1801 lists Johann Schroeder, carpenter (Zimmermann), 31 years old, wife Catharina, 26, daughters Anna, 6, and Katrina, 4, together with his wife's mother Anna Kasdorf (age 60) and a servant Aron Lepp, 21. At the time the family had 7 horses, 18 cattle, 2 sheep, 4 pigs, ½ plow, 2 wagons and 1 spinning wheel.¹⁰ According to the farmstead lists of 1802 and 1806 the original owner of their property was Nathaniel Gertzen, who moved to Schoenwiese.^{7,9} The next mention of Johann Schroeder is in the census of 1808, which states that he was a Mennonite carpenter originally from "Krebswald". He was 42 years old, his wife Catharina was 33, his children were: Johann (½), Anna (13), Catharina (5), and Magdalena (4).⁷

Johann Schroeder appears to have left Rosenthal for the newly founded village of Kronsthal sometime between the founding of the village in 1809 and 1812. Vaccination lists, available from the Odessa State Archives, show that his son Johann was vaccinated in Rosenthal in 1809 and his daughter Sara was vaccinated in Kronsthal in 1814.¹¹ Other documents from the Odessa archives (see later) mention him in Kronsthal in 1812. Indeed, an 1814 village list for Kronsthal gives the following family: Johann (50), wife Katarina (30), children Katarina (12), Helena (9), Sara (3), Johann (6) and Margaretha (1). At this time he owned 7 horses, 15 cattle, 53 sheep, 2 pigs, 1 plow, 1 harrow, 2 wagons and 2 spinning wheels.⁷ The census of 1816 gives Johann Schroeder (50), wife Catarina (30), children Johann (8), Catarina (14), Helena (12), Sara (5), Margareta (3) and Anganetha (1), with servant Maria (16) and father-in-law Olfert (77).¹² As can be seen, sometime between 1808 and 1814 Johann Schroeder remarried to Catharina Olfert. Catharina Olfert came to Russia from Petershagen, West Prussia with her father Abraham Olfert (b. ca 1740), sister Agatha (b. ca 1787) and brother Johann (b. ca 1776) in 1803.^{7,13} At the time she was 18 years old. According to the 1808 census she was the 21 year old maid of Isaak Kasdorf of Rosenthal, Johann Schroeder's brother-in-law and neighbor at the time!

The interesting circumstances surrounding the death of Johann Schroeder's first wife, Katharina Kasdorf, and his remarriage to Katharina Olfert are found in the records of the Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in South Russia which, in turn are found in the Odessa State Archives.¹⁴ What follows are rather approximate translations from the German of 8 reports made by the Chortitza Colony Gebiets Vorsteher (Oberschultz) Peter Siemens to the Guardianship Committee.¹⁵

To the New Russian Guardianship Department of the Foreign Colonies of the Chortitza Regional Council.

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Report #1

The Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Department reports that on the 17th of October last, a tragic event took place in the Chortiza Colony in the village of Kronsthal. The wife of the aforementioned householder, Johann Schroeder hanged herself in the shed. Although that woman often showed signs of weakness of mind and insanity which she alluded to shortly before her death, the Regional Council was suspicious as to whether she had been given reason to have taken this terrible step. Her husband has admitted at times to having agitated and offended her.

And what raised even more suspicion was that Schroeder immediately after the death of his wife, entered into a marriage relationship with his maid-servant Katharina.

The necessary investigations were undertaken by the Regional Council's Chairman Siemens, after his return from Jekaterinoslaw on the 26th of the said month, together with the two Elders, Johann Wiebe and Jakob Dueck. Thus Schroeder, together with his maid-servant were called in for a hearing/interrogation on October 30 before the Regional Council and both times it was evident that the unfortunate woman was subjected to many agitations and insults in her weakness and therefore it is thought she took the step in despair.

After the worship service in the church on the 10th, Schroeder and his maidservant were called forward before the Elders and the Ministers/Teachers and had to separately give statements re the death of the woman. When questioned whether they were not guilty of the death of the woman, both answered with 'Yes'.

When however, they were questioned about their unbecoming behavior towards the unfortunate woman, they both screamed like mad animals against the Regional Council as well as the Elders, charging them with wanting to ruin their lives. Because of their gross behavior, they were banned from the Church.

The Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Department hereby reports how the Council has dealt with these two.

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer — Redakopp
Beysitzer — Neufeld
No 142
November 19, 1812

Report #2

Pursuant to an order of the Guardianship Bureau dated the 13th of this month under No 2579, which the Regional Council received on the 22nd, re the Householder Johann Schroeder and his maid servant Katharina, the Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau arrested and kept the above under secure watch, so that the Office of the Netherlands Court may proceed promptly with the investigation.

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens
No 165
Dec 28, 1812

Report #3

The Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau reports that on the 3rd of this month, the investigation by Mr Sasidetel Nikolai Gestemavitsch in the case of householder Johann Schroeder and his maid servant of Kronsthal was carried out and according to his examination of documents, declared that the above was not guilty of the violent death of his wife, and thus in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau and requested the Council to further deal with Schroeder and his maid servant.

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No 29
March 7, 1813

Report #4

Upon orders of the Guardianship Bureau of the 13th of the previous month, under No 747, in the case of Johann Schroeder of Kronsthal, the Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau, has received the above order on the 20th of the same month in its Council.

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer - Leycky
No. 69
June 8, 1813

Report #5

According to the order of the Guardianship Bureau of the 27th of this month, under No 1241 in the case of the Mennonite Schroeder in Kronsthal and his wife who hung herself, reports that the Regional Council has fulfilled all the requirements of the Sandatels Mosganawa, in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau, having received the order on the 27th and promptly carried out by the Council.

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Redekop
No 106
July 29, 1813

Report #6

The Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau states that Mr. Sasertal Muchanowa on December 22, 1813, in the case of Johann Schroeder and his Katharina in Kronsthal, at the Regional Council according to his order, demanded a signature from the Regional Council, which was given to him, that Schroeder in the Ekaterinoslaw Netherlands Court on the 12th of this month should take place. Since however, the roads were impassable, the Regional Council requests the Guardianship Bureau that it be postponed with the Netherlands Court until the roads are better.

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Gebiets Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No 6
January 10, 1814

Report #7

Pursuant to the Regional Council order of February 17, under No 393 which was received on the 27th of the same month, in the case of the Mennonite Johann Schroeder, the Regional Council herewith presents to the Guardianship Bureau, that if Schroeder is ordered before the Jekaterinoslaw Netherlands Court re investigation about his wife who hung herself, the Regional Council will promptly place him before the aforementioned Council.

Gebiets Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No 33
Mar 7, 1814

Report #8

As a result of the order of February 11 (No 209) to the Regional Council in the case of Johann Schroeder, that the same is not found responsible for the hanging and death of his wife and can be acquitted, the Guardianship Bureau in compliance with? received on the 27th of the same month and conveyed to Schroeder.

Council Chairman — Siemens
March 2, 1815

One can only speculate as to the true cause of the suicide of Katharina (Kasdorf) Schroeder. At the time she took her own life she left behind 4 young children.

As the authorities were deliberating what roles Johann Schroeder and Katharina Olfert played in the death of Katharina Schroeder, they were involved in another scandal. The following 5 reports deal with the attack on Kronsthal Mennonite Martin Siemens (b. ca 1780) by Johann Schroeder and Cornelius Balman (b. ca 1782), also of Kronsthal.¹⁷

To the New Russian Guardianship Bureau of the Foreign Colonists of the Chortiza Regional Council

Report #1

The Regional Council in compliance with the Guardianship Bureau reports that in the [meeting] of this Council of Dec 31 [No 185] last year, in the case of the two householders Johann Schroeder and Kornelius Balman of Kronsthal in their beating up of Martin Siemens of the same village, was conveyed to the Guardianship Bureau and that the two criminals on last New Year's more detailed description to the Guardianship Bureau in compliance with Instruction 20 S were provided. Because of bad roads these two could not be brought in, so it is reported that the two, Schroeder and Balman were? by Martin Siemens in 1812 and Balman was insulted in 1813. Whereupon according to Church practice he was fined with 6 days of church work.

For the 1813 insults done to Balman it was found that both had committed punishable offences which however,

because of lack of Church work was still outstanding...? In terms of punishment Schroeder and Balman were not satisfied . . . ? so that Siemens wanted to discipline himself, Schroeder did not want to agree, but on Dec 27, 1813, i.e., the following day of the aforementioned month Schroeder and his Katharina and Balman used trickery to invite Siemens to Schroeder's house for a friendly visit. Upon entering he was hit on the head with a fist by Schroeder and Balman caught him by the feet and they dragged him into the shed. This was where Schroeder's wife, Katharina, hanged herself. They hit Siemens so hard that he is still sick in bed. Siemens condition was so serious on the 4th and 5th days that it was feared he would die, however by now he is able to leave his bed.

Because of this the Regional Council reports to the Guardianship Bureau that because of bad roads it could not be delivered, as the Council could not deal with the two arrested as should have been.

Gebiets Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No. 8
January 10, 1814

Report #2

Geb. Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No 14
d. 16. Februar 1814

Pursuant to the order of the Regional Council of February 11 of last year, No 360, in the case of the two Kronsthal Mennonites Johann Schroeder and Kornelius Balman, the Guardianship in compliance reports that the above order was received and appropriate copies to the Schultzen (Mayors).

Report #3

The Regional Council issues to the Guardianship Bureau in compliance, that the householder Martin Siemens of Kronsthal, requests of the Regional Council and of both, i.e., Kornelius Balman and Johann Schroeder, who because of the beating of Siemens brought to court, is begging that both be freed and is evidenced by the following signature of Siemens. Because of this the Regional Council requests the Guardianship Bureau on the basis of Siemens' request as well as on the continuing appeals of Balman, that both be released as soon as possible, with the promise that they do not repeat these evil acts and after this behave as good and honest men towards all.

If these could be freed without further punishment the Regional Council requests that the Guardianship that punishment assigned to Kornelius Balman and Schroeder be removed.

Gebiets Vorsteher – Siemens
Beysitzer – Leycky
No 14
February 16, 1814

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Report #4

As indicated at the end of this writing, we give notice that we are heartily sorry for the beating of Martin Siemens and that we shall not commit such evils anymore, but will use all our strength in being peaceful and diligent householders for the rest of our lives. In pledge of the above, both Schroeder as well as Balman signed in the presence of the Regional Council on June 6, 1814:

[signature of Johann Schroeder]

Cornelius Balman marks this? XXX

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens

Beysitzer – Leycky

Beysitzer – Kopp

Report #5

Pursuant to the order of the Regional Council of February 2, , No 1265, which was received on the 22nd of the same month, in the case of the two Mennonites, Johann Schroeder and Kornelius Balman of Kronsthal, who beat up the householder Martin Siemens ...? That the same be freed from arrest and that, in the future they promise not to repeat such an action, which the Regional Council received from them in their own handwriting and ...?

Gebieths Vorsteher – Siemens

Beysitzer – Kopp

No 94

D June 18, 1814

There is one other, earlier, mention of Johann Schroeder in the Odessa documents.¹⁸ Sometime around 1800 Johann Schroeder and Peter Unger (1753 – 1818) entered into a contract to build a mill for a priest named Muransky in the village of Tomakovka. Since they were going to use Colony lumber the Guardianship Office prohibited the contract to be fulfilled despite a petition from the Chortitza Colony Vorsteher Peter Siemens, that Schroeder and Unger had promised to replace any lumber they used. These documents are dated between Dec. 27, 1800 and Mar. 7, 1801.

According to all of the information available to us Johann Schroeder was survived by 3 sons Johann, Abraham and Peter. All three appear to have been landless. The question arises as to what happened to the Kronsthal property of Johann Schroeder. As was often the case, Johann Schroeder entered into a second marriage with a much younger woman (about 20 years his junior). In these circumstances when the husband died he left behind a middle aged widow with young children. In such cases the widow remarried out of necessity and the property was purchased by her new husband. I suspect that was case with Johann Schroeder and Katharina Olfert.

We can construct the following family for Johann Schroeder:

Johann Schroeder	b. Sep. 25, 1763	Klein Lubin, WP
	m. ca 1794	d. Kronsthal,
		Chortitza, Russia

Katharina Kasdorf	b. ca 1774	West Prussia
	d. Oct. 17, 1812	

Anna	b. ca 1795	m. Bernhard Braun
Katharina	b. ca 1797	d. July, 1801
Helena	b.	d. Aug. 1801
Katharina	b. ca 1802	m. Gerhard Wall (BGB A53) ¹⁹
Helena	b. Nov. 5, 1806	m. Peter Funk (BGB A35)
Johann	b. Nov. 11, 1807 (BGB A56)	
Sara	b. ca 1811	
Elisabeth	b. ca 1812	d. before 1814
2 nd m.	1813	

Katharina Olfert	b. ca 1784	West Prussia
	d.	

Margaretha	b. ca 1813	
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Anganetha	b. Mar. 15, 1815	
	m. Heinrich Wiens (BGB A29)	

Abraham	b.	
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Sara	b. Jun. 7, 1824	m. Dietrich Rempel
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Peter	b. May 21, 1828	m. Susanna Dirksen
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Anna and Bernhard Braun lived on the Daniel Peters estate in 1852.²⁰ In the 1850 census he and his family were listed under the family of his brother-in-law Johann Schroeder (family #6 in Kronsthal)

Sara and Dietrich Rempel moved to the Schlachtin Colony where she died in 1882.²¹

Peter moved to the Yazykovo Colony in 1869, the year the colony was founded where they lived in the village of Nikolaifeld. According to the Yazykovo census of 1872/73 Peter Schroeder came from Kronsthal and was registered in the last census (1858) as living with his brother Abraham (family #9). At the time (1858) he was 30 years old, his wife, Helena Franz (Dirksen), was 20 years old. They had a foster daughter, Helena Bernhard Bernhard Braun. The latter was certainly a daughter of their nephew Bernhard Bernhard Braun.²²

Abraham Schroeder is listed in 1848 as a household head in the village of Kronsthal.²³ If we assume that he was at least in his early 20's at this time we can conclude that he was born sometime between 1816 and 1825. We also know that he was the head of household #9 in Kronsthal in 1858. He is not listed in the voters lists of 1847 and 1858, so it can be assumed that he was not a landowner.^{24,25} He is also not in the 1863 Chortitza Colony "grain lists" which accounts for nearly every household in the colony.²⁶ It is possible that he died sometime between 1858 and 1863. There is no further information on Abraham Schroeder.

References, footnotes and acknowledgements will appear at the end of the last installment of the Bergthal Schroeders series.

Note: The continuation of this article will appear in the fall issue.

Events

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the coming of the first Mennonite settlers to the West Reserve in the summer of 1875. This will be marked through events, programs and celebrations marking the Mennonite heritage. I'd like to give credit to historian Lawrence Klippenstein for bringing this to my attention in his recent issue of Windows on the West Reserve.

* * *

The celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Altbargthal community continues in 2005. Several events of celebration held in 2004 are to be followed by a larger reunion this year. The homesteaders of the community obtained their homestead papers in 1879 and 1880.

* * *

The 16th annual Back Forty Folk Festival will be held in Morden on June 5 from 11 AM to dusk. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$7 for students.

* * *

Halbstadt, comprised of the former school districts of Halbstadt, Strassberg and Blumenthal (Houston), is holding a Heritage Reunion Picnic with a book dedication and monument unveiling at the Halbstadt Community Centre, July 2-3. Register now!

* * *

Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church centennial

celebrations are set for July 2-3!

* * *

Now home to the Millennium Exhibition Centre and a fine aquatic centre is Altona's most beautiful Centennial Park, which will host the Manitoba Sunflower Festival on July 15-17. The annual event attracts thousands to Altona, the Sunflower Capital of Canada. The town of Altona is also working on developing a heritage area, perhaps located along the railway tracks that run through town. The town council and the town heritage committee have been invited to consider how the Altbargthal School might fit into such plans.

* * *

The Altona and District Research Centre is supervising the translation of some documents donated recently, and the indexing of genealogical materials found in The Altona Echo and its successor publication. For further info, contact aschmidt@mb.sympatico.ca.

* * *

Current projects of Neuberghal's national site program include the renovation of a house-barn located in the village. Chairperson of the local heritage board, Margruite Krahn, has exhibited her paintings titled "Village Life" at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. Mennonite Heritage Village, situated at Steinbach, will hold its biggest event of the year, Pioneer Days July 29 to August 1 - four days of pioneer activities, parades, steam power, threshing, milling, horse shows, petting zoo, crafts, Mennonite food, children's activities and music.

* * *

The Winkler Harvest Festival and Exhibition, full of free family fun, will be held Aug. 12-14. At the same time Stanley Agricultural Society holds a Light Horse & Pony Show.

* * *

The town of Plum Coulee dates back to the 1880s when commercial grain farming flourished and it was one of the trade centres that sprang up to serve this agricultural hinterland. This active community stages its 4th annual Plum Festival Aug. 19-21.

* * *

The 39th annual Corn and Apple Festival takes place between August 26 and August 28 in Morden.

* * *

Gretna will be the site of the 2005 "Hot Spot" Festival, Sept. 9-10th. Several significant donations have been received for the Heritage Gallery of the Buhler Performing Arts Centre. One is an old curtain from an early Gretna theatre, contributed by Peter Hildebrandt.

* * *

The Pembina Valley Threshermen's Museum holds its Pembina Threshermen's Reunion Sept. 9-10. It brings to life farming and harvesting practices of by-gone days.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I would appreciate it if your readers would respond to my request for information as asked below.

If anyone has any information pertaining to a "Bergthal Reserve", please contact me, Marianne Janzen at <bengel1@shaw.ca>. I would also like to know when the Mennonite settlements were first referred to as the "East" and "West" reserves. Was it known only to the Mennonites as such, or to others as well? Your help in answering these questions would be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Marianne Janzen

Editor's Note: We appreciate the comments and letters. Please feel free to submit your comments and we will publish all letters that are relevant to the mandate of Heritage Posting to Heritage Posting Editors 1310 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 3Z6 or e-mail: editor@mhmhs.org

MMHS 2005 Standing and Board Committees

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Werner Toews, vice-president
Anna Ens, secretary
Donovan Giesbrecht, treasurer
Conrad Stoesz, member at large

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MMHS Representative and Liaison Appointments 2005

Representatives

Journal of Mennonite Studies
Roland Sawatzky
Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites
Ken Reddig, Royden Loewen
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada
Gilbert Brandt, Bert Friesen

Liaison (Informal)

Manitoba Historical Society
Gilbert Brandt
Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach
Bert Friesen
Neubergthal Heritage Foundation
John Giesbrecht
Winkler Heritage Society TBA
Post Road Heritage Group, Emerson
Conrad Stoesz
Altona & District Heritage and Research
Centre
Lawrence Giesbrecht
Mennonite Memorial Landing Site
Royden Loewen
Steinbach Heritage Committee
Royden Loewen
Museo Y Centro Cultural Menonita, A.C.
George Rempel, Adolf Ens,
Henry Ens
Mennonite Human Rights Museum
Roland Sawatzky

Notes from the Board

by Anna Ens

One of the major agenda items of this meeting was the reorganization of the board. The board elected Gilbert Brandt as president; Werner Toews -vice-president, Anna Ens - secretary, Donovan Giesbrecht - treasurer, Conrad Stoesz - member-at-large. The Standing Committees slate was approved as were the MMHS reps and liaison persons relating to other organizations (see these lists above).

The meeting devoted a further good portion of time to review the February 5 annual meeting and to brainstorm ideas for the future of the society. Questions focused on how better to promote society memberships, how to find new people for the board, and how to build bridges with churches and other historical organizations. Opinions regarding the purpose of Heritage Posting were also noted. The "Mennonites: Rebels with a Cause" project (see HP January 2005, p11 "Notes from the Board") was not endorsed.

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4
1310 Taylor Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 3Z6

State of the Society

by Gilbert G. Brandt

Greetings from your new Society President. The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is filled with hardworking, creative individuals—people who volunteer much time and effort to make the organization function smoothly. How do I know? I have observed the members in action. But more than that—I have heard from others about the great work our Society is doing.

I recently spend a few days in British Columbia. As is my habit, I visited the BC Mennonite Historical society's archives.

While there, several individuals commented that they were envious of our Manitoba group. Why? Because we did so much, and seemed to move ahead continuously. One person asked, "How can your group do so much, and be involved in so many projects?"

I quickly responded, "We have many hard-working members, members who have spent many years working at seeing projects through to the finish."

As I begin my term as President, let me say a huge "Thank-you" to all of you in the Society—as members, as committee participants, as board members. You are the Society; you make the Society function effectively.

Not everything is perfect, not everything is completed. But, we are moving forward. I for one, trust that this will be a great year, a year in which the MMHS grows and becomes an even more enriching association, one that rings with excitement.



Book & Film Notes

by Sarah Schwab

Ed Falk of Winkler recently compiled a collection of letters held by the late Peter Hoepfner, who was once a resident of Waldheim. For further information, please contact Ed by phone 1-204-325-8929 or by e-mail at edfalk@mb.sympatico.ca.

Dr. Hans Werner, a lecturer at the University of Winnipeg, is currently writing a new history of Winkler, which is scheduled for publication in 2006. Additionally, an earlier history written by Frank Brown has been reprinted by the Winkler Heritage Society (WHS), and can be ordered by contacting sharms@mts.net. For further information regarding the projects of the WHS, please contact Ken Loewen at khloewen@mts.net.

Boundary Trails Productions is producing a documentary for CTV's "Manitoba Moments". This production company is also working on a film that will include documentation about Old Fort Dufferin and the work of the International Boundary Commission. For further details contact James McClelland of Emerson at 1-204-373-2773.

Hilton and Ralf Friesen have recently completed a book entitled Abraham S. Friesen Steinbach Pioneer. For further information regarding this publication, contact Hilton at 1-204-668-2960.

Meeting Schedules

The following dates have been set for both Executive and Board meetings. Please take note. If anyone has items for discussion contact editor@mmhs.org. The Executive and Board are here to serve all the members.

Executive Meetings

April 12
June 14
Sept 20
Nov 29
Jan 10, 2006
Feb 7

Board Meetings

May 11
Oct 20

Annual General Meeting (AGM) March 4, 2006