



Heritage Posting

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Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

MMHS and MHV: Fifty Years Together (1958 – 2008)

By Lawrence Klippenstein

Fifty years ago the Mennonite Heritage Village was simply a dream, a wish far from coming true. Today it is a visible reality. Thousands of people have experienced it, have heard the story it has had to tell, have worked hard to make it happen and keep it going. The vision to continue remains strong.

Fifty years ago a small group of individuals met to see what could be done about the dream. They gathered together in April and November of 1958 and talked about an organization that could help to make the museum dream come true. The group called itself the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. It continues its work to this day, and here too, the vision to keep it, and various auxiliary programs going, is alive and well.

On 15 March 2008 Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg hosted a celebration of the 50th birthday of MMHS, and to recognize the building and contribution of its sister society, Mennonite Heritage Village(Canada) and its museum at Steinbach on the former East Reserve. A number of papers were read to recall how the historical society had progressed, and more specifically how in the early 1960s, the first buildings of the museum came into existence, and how in subsequent years the project developed to where it is today.

On June 22 an interested audience met to hear the choirs of the Crystal Springs Hutterite Colony and the Sommerfelder Mennonite churches choir of Manitoba. We heard about the contribution of a key founding member of MHV, John C Reimer. Ken Reddig, vice chair of MMHS, led the program. Celebration was in the air.

Some deep concerns remain, however. At the AGM of MMHS, it was noted that board members to carry on Society work were getting difficult to find. The museum has struggled with major staff and financial problems in recent years. All sensed a need to once more rally around in order to cope with these difficulties and to overcome the crises in some way. Both organizations, with their 13-member boards, and auxiliary committees and helping groups, are now moving on to see if another forward thrust can be made to happen.

The August issue of the MMHS newsletter, *Heritage Posting*, published plans made for 2009. The MHV *Village Review* in its fall issue recalled work done in 2008 and projected some goals for the coming year as well. There is a good record of achievement for both organizations, but this is not the time to rest on laurels. Not every goal set over the years has been achieved. There have been failures along the way. However, as well put recently by MHV board chairman, Al Hamm, "We must just move on and do better".

In this very special commemorative moment, we must certainly not forget the hundreds, indeed thousands of individuals and groups who have stood by MMHS and MHV over the past fifty years. We do not know really what we owe them. We simply cannot identify them all, and say it to each one separately. But again to all "Thank you very, very much."



Conrad Stoesz of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. Conrad is also chairperson of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society board.

Photo credit: Dan Dyck, The Canadian Mennonite, Winnipeg, MB.

The work of both organizations has been a vast communal effort within and surely, also outside of, the Mennonite community which MMHS and MHV seek to represent.

We hope that the efforts of both organizations have had, and will continue to have, really significant meaning to a constituency which has been there from the beginning, and we are hoping, may continue to grow and flourish in the years ahead.

We would want that to be true not only in the material aspects of all projected programs and events, but more importantly, also in the spiritual, indeed Christian Mennonite, dimensions which we have wanted to highlight in some way all the time. God bless everyone and all – much more yet is waiting for us to do in the years to come!

These comments were adapted from an article appearing in the MHV newsletter, Village Review, October, 2008.

Circle Game Celebration "Rocks"

by Conrad Stoesz

Thirty people came together for an evening of anniversary circle games in Winkler on 21 November. Marlene and Werner Ens hosted the occasion. People, ranging from 5 to 85 in age came together from Altona, Winkler, Haskett and Winnipeg.

It was a big time of activity and laughter. After half an hour MMHS president Conrad Stoesz brought greetings from the Manitoba

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Circle Game Celebration "Rocks" (continued from page 1)



Circle games brought joyful celebration for the 50th anniversary at Winkler.

Photo credit: Conrad Stoesz, Winnipeg, MB

Mennonite Historical Society and the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum. Dr. Adolf Ens spoke about the history of the games as a way of passing on culture and knowledge. Then it was back to more action and fun and games with song such as Dusty Miller, Here comes Topsy and Bingo.

Circle games, accepted more in some communities than others, were often part of summer activities like weddings. It was a fun way for young people to meet and interact.

Corrections

Our apologies for glitches in the August, 2008, issue of HP:

Page 4: Top left photo cutlines should say Kathryn Boschman, left, and Brett Smith, right.

Page 10: Left column with MHV board should add for Veronica Klassen, Membership Committee chair, and say Elsie Janzen, Steinbach; bottom right photo should read Madyson...

Page 11: Under Book Notes, Klippentstein email address should read lawrenceklippenstein@mts.net

Page 12: Line 9 of the book review should say 1964, not 1958.

Guest Editor - Lawrence Klippenstein

Contributors - Ernie Braun, Dan Dyck, Mavis Dyck, Abe Ens, Adolf Ens, Bert Friesen, Kennert Giesbrecht, Elmer Heinrichs, Dr. Helmut Huebert, Noreen Janzen, Lawrence Klippenstein, Conrad Stoesz, Doris Penner, Ellie Reimer, Dr. Neil Voth

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society newsletter, *Heritage Posting*, welcomes letters, reports and historical notes from society members and other readers.

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This was the final and perhaps liveliest of the larger public settings of 50th anniversary celebrations. MMHS and MHV now look forward to 50 more years of research, writing and games!. For more info on MMHS check its website at www.mmhs.org and for the Mennonite Heritage Village, try www.mhv.ca

Bethel Heritage Park Plans in Winkler

by Ellie Reimer

On 12 September, Winkler's public was invited to join a discussion for planning a heritage park for the community. The business community had already assembled a financial package of \$700,000⁰⁰ of the sum of 1.2 million needed to complete the project. The public was now being encouraged to take a walk in the (proposed) park and decide how much it could contribute to make the dream a reality.

With architect's drawings in hand, it was not hard to imagine the beautiful entrance to the park via one of the gateways for which Russian Mennonite communities were famous in the Old Country. An outdoor concert stage is to be part of the permanent structure of the park. The park will encompass two cairns already existing in the area just south of the former Winkler hospital – one in memory of the Jewish community, and the other in memory of Mennonite pioneers in the area. Memorials to the CO experience, veterans' groups and Bethel Hospital itself are also planned for the project.

This will be more than just a park. It will tell the story of the people of the community, the crown jewel of the city of Winkler!



The park entrance (artist's conception) will create a warm and inviting atmosphere for the whole family. Photo credit: Heritage Happenings, October-December, 2008, p.2



A covered stage for groups will showcase talents and help to entertain the community. Photo credit: Heritage Happenings, October-December, 2008, p. 2

This report is adapted from a longer version prepared for Heritage Happenings, Vol. 2, Issue 4, October-December 2008, p. 3.

Local History

Schoenau: School District on the West Reserve

By Elmer Heinrichs

Schoenau was one of 20 or more villages set up on the eastern half of the West Reserve during the years 1878-1882 when about 400 so-called Bergthaler families relocated to this area from the East Reserve. The Mennonite name of the village area was transplanted from West Prussia to the Molotschna colony in New Russia, later Ukraine, then to the Alexandertal settlement, Samara region, and finally to Canada and beyond.

Schoenau village included the lands of Section 12, 13 and 24 in Township 2, Range 2, and Section 7 in Township 2 Range 1 West. The buildings of the village were likely situated more on the eastern side of the road allowance, separating Sections 13 and 14, and favouring the north end.

Thirteen landowners comprised the list of the village residences in the census record of 1881. Residents and homesteaders included the following: Abraham Dueck, Peter Harder, Peter Dueck, C Striemer; Franz Tiessen, J.Y. Shantz, absentee owner from Berlin, Ontario; Abraham Tiessen, Cornelius Dueck; Abram Friesen, Cornelius Reimer, Johann Harder, Abraham Harder, Abraham Neufeld, Heinrich Tiessen, and Derk Dueck.

Sixteen ratepayers in Township 2 Range 2 West petitioned council of the RM of Rhineland in 1900 with a plan to establish the school district of Schoenau, west of Altona, Manitoba. Ed P. Wiebe, son of Peter H. Wiebe, who grew up in Schoenau, attended the private school in its last year about 1929, with John Falk as teacher. He says he then went to public school for six or seven years with John Bock as teacher. At that point he moved to Altona.

The first teacher here in 1926-27 was Eva Hiebert, then John D. Falk, and by 1929-30 Mr. Bock was teaching there. Many others taught at Schoenau, such as P.A. Schellenberg in 1947-48.

Menno Funk, who grew up in Schoenau also recalls teacher John Bock as well as Jac Schroeder, both staying for five years. With Schroeder 4-H arts and crafts and garden clubs were organized. They also had study clubs, even for adults.

Since there was no church here, many people worshiped in nearby Schoenthal, an early Sommerfeld congregation. One of two cemeteries was on the Peter Harder property, now the home of the Harry Wiens family.

An interesting feature of the district is a place called "The Fahsting", located south of the village site near PR 201 Highway. It consists of a rise in an otherwise flat countryside, which legend has it was built by the aboriginals. They say aboriginal women built it up by carrying dirt with their aprons. The aboriginals apparently used it as a battleground as many arrowheads have been found at or near the site. Some archaeological work has been done there, but more study is needed.

An interesting account of teaching in the school in the 1940s is found in the autobiography of Jac Schroeder, teacher also in Altona, and long-time worker for cooperatives, now resident in Kamloops, B.C.

The writer seeks further information and pictures on the Schoenau school, its former teachers and community leaders. If you can help,

please call Elmer at 1-204-324-5281 or email eahein@mts.net

The author also has prepared a longer version of this article on Schoenau. It remains unpublished.

Kronsfeld: Gone But Not Forgotten

By Mavis Dyck

On Sunday 5 October 2008, family, friends and dignitaries gathered at the former village site of Kronsfeld for a memorial dedication. The Kronsfeld Cemetery Committee had planned this special event to share its findings on family and village history with the public, and unveil a cairn in memory of the community.

Kronsfeld village of the West Reserve was established in 1875-76. The senior families homesteading there were the Jacob Warkentins, the Peter Krahns and the Jacob Peters. By 1880, the year of the first census, thirteen families had established homes in this community.

The first English school, Number 1284, was established in 1905, with board members Isbrand Peters, John Giesbrecht and Jacob Warkentin in charge. Among early teachers were John Warkentin and Oscar Meckling. In 1909 the school was moved to Haskett, a railway town established around that time.

The celebration of 5 October focused on the cemetery cairn, unveiled by Arther and Alan Warkentin, along with George B. Elias and Ernest Unrau. A total of 41 burials had been identified in the cemetery for the years 1884-1930. It was noted that 23 of the burials were children under the age of six. Still these parents received the courage to go on.

The Committee made a special presentation to John and Anne Peters who granted permission to the committee to place the cairn on the original cemetery location, which is now on Peters' yard. Everyone of the over 100 guests was asked to sign the guest book.

Further information about this event can be had from Alan Warkentin at ph. 1-204-325-8453 or kronsfeldecemetery@mts.net

This information is based on a longer report published in Heritage Happenings, Vol. 2, Issue 4, October-December, 2008, pp. 3-4.



Kronsfeld headstone unveiling by participants at the memorial service.

Photo credit: Abe E. Ens, Winkler, MB.

Committee News

MMHS Local History Committee

By Adolf Ens

The membership of the Local History Committee includes: Joe Braun, Altona; Mary Bueckert, Austin; chairperson Adolf Ens, Winnipeg; Henry Fast, Steinbach; Dave Harms, Altona; secretary Martha Martens, Winkler; John Penner, Winnipeg; Marlene Plett, Altona; vice chair Jake E. Peters, Winnipeg. These persons serve as a "working committee" now spending time on developing plans for an annual spring and fall "workshop", and several research and publication projects.

In 2008 the spring workshop was held at the Mennonite Heritage Village together with Genealogy-Roots Day on 5 April. Presentations on local village history by Ernie Braun on Friedrichsthal and Loren Koehler on Schoenwiese (both East Reserve villages) were well received. The fall gathering, held on 8 November at CMU, prepared on the theme of "Mennonite Social and Cultural Traditions", focused on such rites of passage as birthing, midwifery, courtship and marriage, as well as funeral and burial practices.

The Koehler and Braun studies will be included in the forthcoming Volume 4 of the East Reserve Historical Series. Several new papers have been added to manuscripts collected earlier by the late John Dyck under the auspices of the former Hanover Steinbach Historical Society (HSHS). This volume is being published jointly by MMHS and the EastMenn Historical Committee. It is hoped that the book can come off the press in the spring of 2009.

A large Elias family gathering this past summer heard a progress report by Henry Unger of Morden on the translation of the memoirs of the oft-quoted Peter A. Elias. This project is continuing under the umbrella of the Local History Committee with the aim of publishing the translated manuscript in some form.

This report is based on a slightly longer version presented to the MMHS board meeting of 20 October 2008 held at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, MB.

MMHS Historic Sites and Monuments Committee

By Bert Friesen

This committee has been involved in three projects during 2008. The first one is the updating and refurbishing of the Post Road site lecterns. They were completed in time for a tour by a family reunion group this summer. It was well received. It is hoped that the texts and a map of the route can soon be posted on the Society web site.

The second project is the work being done at the Fort Dufferin site. Some new signage has been erected, some buildings are in the process of restoration there, and a cairn is being planned. This site was important for the Boundary Commission, the North West Canadian Mounted Police which began a historic trek west here in 1874, and as an immigration landing and distribution site which was utilized also by the Mennonite immigrants of 1875-1880 who settled the West Reserve in those years.

A third project is ongoing. Its goal is to map and photograph as

many Mennonite historic sites, cairns and buildings as possible in Manitoba.

(Ed: It might also be noted here that the placing of a cairn in honour of Wilhelm Hespeler is a project in progress under the auspices of Parks Canada. Niverville's Heritage Park has been chosen for the site of the cairn.)



The cemetery at Edenburg east of Gretna, MB, with Post Road lectern in the front centre.

Photo source: Lawrence Klippenstein, Steinbach, MB.

EastMenn Historical Committee

By Ernie Braun

This committee is a successor to the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society which terminated its work as such a number of years ago. It relates to MMHS but operates independently of that organization. Its members currently include chairperson Dr. Jacob Peters, Winnipeg; Jacob Doerksen, Steinbach; Orlando Hiebert, Tourond; Henry Fast, Steinbach; Ben Funk, Steinbach; and Ernest Braun, Niverville.

The main project at the moment is to publish an atlas of historical sites and other data in the area formerly known as the East Reserve. Aerial photos are being put together for the eight townships of this region. It is also updating itself on progress with Volume 4 of the East Reserve Historical series which is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2009. A grant of \$6000.00 has been received from the D.F. Plett Foundation to help fund this project.

Another project relates to a concern about the disappearance of historic road signs in the RM of Hanover. These road markers have been important identifying markers of pioneer villages and communities. Some discussion is being given to erect new signs at parks and identification of local sites at a central location. Attention is being given to identifying locations of early schools, and promoting information related to these schools and other themes of Mennonite history.

The committee is inquiring about including the MMHS logo in its own letterhead. It is also checking plans for a spring, 2009, Roots Day at Mennonite Heritage Village, and goes on record as supporting continuation of this project, and initiates plans for its own workshop during Roots Day.

Archival materials belonging to the EastMenn Committee are currently housed at Steinbach Bible College where an inventory of the material is also available.

This report is based on minutes of the EastMenn Historical Committee meeting of 25 October 2008, and a memo from Chairperson Jake Peters.

Special Events

Fifty Klippenstein Cousins Reunion

By Lawrence Klippenstein

The oldest of them was 85 and he was not well enough to attend. Two dozen or so of the cousins did, in the end. They gathered on the bank of Buffalo Creek, almost across from where the grandparents, Peter Heinrich and Maria Dyck Klippenstein, had their farmstead home for many years in Altbergthal about three miles southwest of Altona. A final session of the gathering was held in town the next day on 2 August, the 76th birthday of one of the 50.

An outdoor fire pit near some tall trees drew some of them, and others wanted to see the modest landmark waterway (still flowing) again. Reunions for the Peter and Maria descendant Klippensteins had taken place several times in past years, most recently in Rosenfeld in 1995. But these were the "fifty" cousins and some of them had not met like since they were born sixty or more years earlier.

Actually there were no longer quite fifty (indeed there had been a few more once). Some had passed away in childbirth more than 60 years ago, and several others as late as 2004. The grandparents and some of the aunts and uncles were buried at the end of the still existing, indeed growing, village, in the creek bank cemetery of the Altbergthal community.



A framed depiction of Peter Heinrich and Maria Dyck Klippenstein about the time of their marriage in 1900. Photo credit: Dr. Neil Voth, Chilliwack, B.C.

Reminiscences, stories about uncles and aunts, photo albums, cemetery maps, a new book on the grandparents, Peter and Maria, with new pictures taken by Melissa (a cousin's daughter) of family groups that were completely or even partly present – you could find all these items and more. There will be souvenirs to help recall this time together.

Participants seemed uncertain when someone asked about having another gathering sometime. It appeared that 75-year olds were hesitant to commit – who knows where we would all be in ten years or even five?

Right – why not ask Melissa if she has photos to share? You can reach her at Melissa@vothphotography.com. The 40 page paperback

Klippenstein book, specially prepared for the occasion, can be ordered from lawrenceklippenstein@mts.net. Alvin, at 1-204-324-6516 has a new professionally-prepared Altbergthal cemetery map – showing where a number of Klippenstein forebears were laid to rest.

All, I believe, found it meaningful to connect again. From a hospital bed, cousin Dave asked me about impressions. I said it was a rather quiet affair, all things considered – activity not absent but low-key, visiting, sitting about, eating, talking, sharing stories, thanking God for the treasure of being family and having a lot of caring cousins who could still make such an event very worthwhile.

Mennonites and Money Conference

By Kennert Giesbrecht

On 9-10 October 2008 an academic conference on the theme of Mennonites and money was held at the University of Winnipeg under the direction of Dr. Royden Loewen, professor in the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the university. Speakers included a number of international participants from the USA, The Netherlands, New Zealand, and others from across Canada.

A brief review of Mennonite history recalled periods and places of both poverty and wealth. In Holland and Russia, and more recently also the US, Canada and Paraguay as well as elsewhere, some Mennonites have become very wealthy. The fact that Mennonites generally seem to belong to the class of the wealthy, or at least the well-to-do, gave rise to heated debate and discussion.

It was observed that Menno Simons was concerned that wealth might draw people away from God. One speaker stated plainly that "individualism and capitalism are contrary to the teachings of Jesus". It is for many Mennonites a topic they would rather avoid discussing.

Dr. Loewen spoke of Mennonites who migrated as an expression of humility and rejection of excessive wealth. From the writings of leaders of such groups in Canada, Mexico and Paraguay he cited concerns that Mennonites should not be lured away to unfaithfulness by an accumulation of money.

About 300 people attended the gathering. People left wondering whether wealth might mean demise in the end, but reminded also that much good in the world can be done with money wisely invested and used for someone other than ourselves.

This report is adapted from a longer report which appeared originally in Mennonitische Post, was then translated into English by Alf Redekopp of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, and provided for this somewhat abbreviated version by Doug Heidebrecht of the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg.

Low German Media Supporters Pass On

By Elmer Heinrichs

The use of Low German as a communication medium has been a part of Dutch and Russian Mennonite life and expression from the very beginning of their existence as a separate and distinct Christian community. Hundreds of thousands of individuals continue to use the language in many countries of the world today.

Herman Rempel of Morden, and Rev. John J. Neufeld of Winnipeg, gave special attention and made big contributions not just to the

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Mennonite Heritage Village

MHV Happenings - Fall, 2008

By Staff and Board

Activities tend to slow down somewhat after *Fall on the Farm* programming at MHV. Still, that has left October to December 13 when the museum closed down for the Christmas holidays.



Maria Falk Lodge book signing at MHV. Evelyn Friesen (right) Photo credit: Doris Penner, The Carillon, Steinbach, MB

Early in October MHV hosted Samuel Wayne Reimer with a launching of his book of poetry *Grey Matter Graffiti*. Other launches have included the work of Maria Falk Lodge, reading from *Tales from the Gravel Ridge* (Rosengard) as part of the *Touch of Christmas* weekend, and a final book presentation by Dr. Helmut Huebert on December 10 of a work

entitled *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia. Vol 2*. The annual Grey Cup celebration dinner in November went over well as it has in past years. Around 280 guests were hosted by the MHV Auxiliary for this Sunday meal.

Touch of Christmas is a traditional program for MHV but the Living Nativity theme, taking visitors from place to place on the campus to "walk through" the Christmas story, was new this year. About 250 persons came to try it out. Various groups like one of professional business women, the Tractor Club, the people of the



The Living Nativity at MHV, December 5-7. Photo credit: Doris Penner, The Carillon, Steinbach, MB

Craft Sale, and others could obtain rental space, as did a new group of evangelical ex-Hutterites who now worship at MHV every Sunday.

An Advisory Council meeting put us in touch with a number of representatives from the wider public on November 27. A delicious

supper hosted by Powerland Computers preceded the discussion. On a partly-related theme, every fall we are also privileged to host thousands of migrating Canada geese in our convenient little lake sanctuary. This year was no exception!

We invite you to get a copy of our newsletter, *Village Review*, and to follow our weekly report, *Village News*, in *The Carillon*, a widely read newspaper in southeast Manitoba and beyond. We hope we can stay in touch with you.

The Dr. Helmut Huebert Book Launch

By Lawrence Klippenstein

On December 10 MHV completed its 50th anniversary celebrations with a final book launch for the year. A fine presentation planned by Dr. Helmut Huebert of Winnipeg introduced his new book, *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia. Vol. 2*, and brought to the attention of the audience his donated Soviet combine model constructed by Abe Friesen of Winnipeg.

Dr. Huebert issued an earlier volume on this topic, and the nine cities covered in this second volume complete his research on this theme. We are hoping the book can become available in the MHV book store after Christmas. It covers the subject for nine cities of Russia before the October Revolution of 1917.



A group of staffers having tea at the Moscow Mennonite Centre in 1926. A small Mennonite congregation functioned in the city at the time. It was closed soon after this meeting. Photo source: Helmut Huebert, *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia. Vol. 2, p. 282.*

The combine model relates to the theme insofar as it was two Mennonite engineers, Peter Dyck and Gerhard Hamm, from Alexandrovsk who helped to design the first combine built in the Soviet Union in 1929. Hilda Epp, daughter of the late Peter Dyck, provided a good sketch of the life and work of her father and provided context for the project. Dyck and Hamm received the Order of Lenin for their work, but later, in 1937, were arrested and executed during the Stalin purge. Biographies of Dyck and Hamm are included in the second volume of Huebert's work.

The model combine will be on display at MHV after Christmas. Such donations are highly valued by the museum, and we are pleased to look forward to the ongoing work of curator Dr. Roland Sawatzky, who will direct ongoing exhibits and displays after his return to MHV in February, 2009. Dr. Huebert has shared plans to do some research on the 1937 Stalin purge for his next book.

Book Notes (continued from page 8)

A Low German version of the Bible, *De Bibel*, published in 2007, by Kindred Productions and the United Bible Societies, can be purchased at MHV also. The New Testament was translated by the late Rev. Johann J. Neufeld. Note elsewhere in this issue comments on the work of Rev. Neufeld in Low German ministries.

John E. Hildebrand has published memories of his life as a farm boy in southern Manitoba in *Rappelling of the Mennonite Mountain. Good Kid in Bad Overalls* (Belleville, ON: Epic Press, 2005), pb., 246 pp. Call MHV noted above.

Maria Falk Lodge of Winnipeg, MB has recently launched a new book, *Tales from the Gravel Ridge* (Rosengard village in the former East Reserve – pb., 89 pp., \$8.95). Maria has written a column on the subject in *The Carillon* for seventeen years. The launch was held at MHV, on December 7. For copies call the MHV bookstore at 1-204-326-9661 or email marigoldp@mhv.ca.

Also new is another volume on Paraguay, *Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay*, written by Edgar Stoesz, and published by Herald Press (Kitchener, ON and Scottdale, PA), pb., 280 pp. \$24.99. Contact www.heraldpress.com. For a new English-language tour guide publication on Paraguay contact Mennonitische Post at 1-204-326-6790 or mpeditor@mts.net

Jubilaeumskomitee. *Quellenkolonie: 60 Jahre gemeinsam auf dem Weg 1948-2008* (Mexico: Jubilaeumskomitee, 2008), pb., 210 pp., \$34.95. Also CD: *60 Jahre: Bilder Quellenkolonie Jubilaeumsfest mit Jubilaeumslied*, \$19.95, as well as a DVD on the same topic. To order contact Mennonitische Post at mennopost@mts.net or 1-204-326-6790

Betty Barkman has published Landmark and Giroux memories in *Annie: Through It All* (Pansy, MB: self published, 2008), pb., 108 pp, and in 2006 put out an earlier book titled *Laina*, 258 pp at \$12.95. Both are available at Mennonitische Post, address above.

Quite new off the press is *A Prairie Pilgrim: Wilhelm H. Falk*, by Mary Neufeld (Winnipeg: by the author, 2008), pb., 461 pp., \$25.00. This biography is a detailed study of the life and work of a well-known minister, then bishop, who became a driving force in the formative years of a group that seceded from the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church in 1936-37 and is known as the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference today. We hope that a review of the volume will be forthcoming.

Ruth Derksen Siemens, from Vancouver, B.C. recently had a Winnipeg launching for her book edited under the title *Remember Us: Letters from Stalin's Gulag (1930-37). Volume One: The Regehr Family* (Waterloo: Pandora Press, 2007), pb., 407 pp, \$25.00. A DVD on the theme is available also. For copies contact Mennonite Heritage Centre, 1-204-888-6781 or email aredekopp@mennonitechurch.ca

A collection of stories titled *When War Came to Kleindarp and other Kleindarp Stories* (2008, pb., 192 pp) has been released by Dr. Al Reimer of Winnipeg. He describes it as a Steinbach-oriented Low German book written in English. For copies contact the MHV bookstore by emailing marigoldp@mhv.ca or calling 1-204-326-9661.

Low German Media Supporters Pass On

(continued from page 5)

maintenance of the language but to its continuing practical applications. Both men passed away recently, but their legacy remains

significant for many who retain the language as an important of their life even yet.

Herman, a long-time resident of Winnipeg before moving to Morden to retire, spent much of his life in civil service, then went on to running for political office and in retirement also devoting himself warmly to the family. He passed away on 11 October this year.

Many people came to know Herman best for his Low German-English dictionary *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdeitsch?*, which was published in two editions in 1984 and 1995. The work was well received by the general public, and, as Reuben Epp has noted, is repeatedly quoted in *Preussisches Woerterbuch* being compiled at the University of Kiel in Germany.

John J. Neufeld hailed from the district of Rosenheim north of Rosenfeld, attended the Winkler Bible School in the 1950s and, among other things, became a much-listened-to radio preacher in the Low German language. He joined the Gospel Light Hour produced in Winnipeg and broadcast on two stations at first, CFQC in Saskatoon, and CFAM in Altona.

His *Licht vom Evangelium* productions stretched over 28 years, with some 5000 programs. His translation of Bible texts into Low German then led to a project to translate the entire New Testament into Low German. On his 73rd birthday in May of 1986 Neufeld finished the last verses of Revelation. *Daut Niehe Tastament* became a significant spiritual resource to many Low German-speaking people for whom this could now become not only a language to speak but to read as well. The NT in Low German was published by Kindred Press in 1988.

Neufeld translated the Psalms and Proverbs as well. With the help of the United Bible Society the whole Old Testament could appear in Low German, with 3000 copies of the entire Bible selling in 2007 alone.

Rev. John J. Neufeld passed away on 25 October this year at the age of 95. His Low German translations carry forward his concerns for ministry, with *De Bibel*, along with CDs and cassettes, available today at the Mennonite Heritage Village bookstore, and in many other outlets as well.

This feature is adapted from several somewhat longer pieces researched for publication by the author.

The CO Story Retold

By Conrad Stoesz

The MMHS conscientious objector committee has been partnering with EAF (Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship) in creating awareness of the CO story. Through a series of *Power of Peace* programs such awareness is being heightened, and funds are being raised to help remember the CO story through education and setting up CO monuments. Such programs have been given in Winnipeg, Altona, Steinbach, Winkler, Rosenort and other places.

Story telling and choirs from Hutterite communities have been a big part of the project. Persons like Ken Reddig, Bud Kehler, Conrad Stoesz and Jerry Hildebrand have been serving as story tellers also. Some church conferences have been sending funds to help construct cairns, and special plaques are available to put up in churches. You may hear more about this project in the days ahead.

Book Reviews and Notes

Marlene Epp. *Mennonite Women in Canada: A History* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), pb., hdc., 378 pp., \$18.71, \$37.50.

Reviewed by Noreen Janzen

Marlene admits in her preface to this weighty work that she has at times felt it "presumptuous" to write a history to which every Mennonite woman in Canada could relate. This Mennonite woman reviewer's conclusion is, she need not worry. Hers is a most inclusive history and analysis of a wide variety of Canadian Mennonite women's experiences.

Epp focuses on women of Russian or Swiss origin, but she also acknowledges those from other ethnic backgrounds. Most Canadian Mennonite women will be able to see the roots of their story written here.

Finding the historical female must have been a challenge, due in part to the custom of the day of identifying women without using their own names. Epp includes one example of this oddity from a 1952 source: "Among our women who are attending the World Conference...are sisters Allen Erb...Raymond Wenger, John Alger, Nelson Kaufmann." Her sources include women's diaries, denominational newsletters, and many "scraps of information" gleaned from everything from family genealogies to cookbooks and obituaries. The result is a most thorough and captivating record of the lives of our foremothers.

Epp bravely explores the way Mennonite theology has been both empowering and restrictive for women, even as the harsh realities of immigration and pioneering played a role in shifting the rigid gender expectations of behaviour and duty. Although occasionally academic in tone (it is after all a history book!) Epp has peppered her writing with honest, touching and sometimes humorous anecdotes which keep it fascinating.

A few overly-extended sentences, and an awkward phrase or two (e.g. "In 1961 she opened an art studio in her home, despite some criticism-one friend remarked, 'Have you forgotten James so soon?'" - something that gave her and her family financial stability"), take nothing away from this remarkably revealing and comprehensive study of the lives of Canadian Mennonite women.

Noreen Janzen is a public health home visitor and homemaker who lives with her family in Steinbach, MB.

Neill and Edith von Gunten, comps. and eds.. *From Paddles To Propellers: The History of Matheson Island: A Fishing Community* (Matheson Island, MB: Matheson Island Community Council, 2003), hdc., 619 pp.; *A Picture Book of Matheson Island Memories* (spiral bound, 2003), pb., 37 pp, and *Matheson Island Memories: A Celebration of Mennonite Pioneer Mission and Native Ministries Involvement at Matheson Island 1948-2003* (spiral bound, 2003), pb., 37 pp.

Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein

The first serious community encounter of Manitoba Mennonites and the Metis community at Matheson Island in the southern part of

Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba, dates back to 1948 and possibly earlier. That is when Mennonite Pioneer Mission responded to what they understood to be an invitation from the Matheson Island community to establish missionary leadership on the island. That contact has been significantly sustained through the past sixty years, and discussions to more permanently preserve historical memories and experiences of that time are still in progress.

Paddles to Propellers must be the absolutely most extensive history done on any northern Manitoba community. Given what one would think must have been a paucity of written sources, one is astounded to see the mass of data, and well organized too, which has come together in this study. Interviews were used extensively, and written sources were in fact dug up in surprising places, hundreds of photos were found, and with extensive family stories included this volume is also a most exciting story of community growth and sustenance, along with an amazing modern story of development. The reader will need to test these superlatives, but one cannot help using them here.

Matheson Island has always been a fishing community. Metis and Aboriginal families along with many other "outsiders" have formed the fascinating story that has been told here. One just cannot begin to summarize its details, to which one should add the numerous appendices and many more.

It is a great credit to the faithful work of Edith and Neill, and, we sense, many local people (notably the MI Community Council) and others who assisted them, that we have this outstanding "success story", documenting the resilience of a community, its creativity and energy, its local leadership and general spirit of making it in a setting which many may think of as backwoods and marginal. The book shows clearly that it has been anything but that.

The related album-volumes noted here seemed necessary to publish, if nothing else to preserve and put forward features of the story in surplus photos, and to give some special attention to the Mennonite Pioneer Mission and Native Ministries which have been the vortex of Mennonite involvement in the sixty years within which this interaction has occurred.

The Matheson Island Community Council and the printers, Country Graphics of Rosenort, Manitoba, have done an excellent job of getting these books into print. Possibly published in a limited edition, these books should, nevertheless, be available in public libraries and among those, quite a few in fact (including the reviewer's family), who have had casual and often most significant contacts with Matheson Island over the years. You may make inquiries about the books at 1-204-888 - 6781 or email nativeministry@mennonitechurch.ca

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Dr. James Urry's widely known study, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* has been reprinted with some corrections and a new introduction to update related literature information, etc. The book is also available in a German edition. The publisher of the new English edition is Pandora Press of Kitchener, Ontario. For copies contact Mennonite Heritage Village at 1-204-326-9661 or email marigoldp@mhv.ca

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