

The President's Corner

— by Conrad Stoesz

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society succeeds because of the passion of its members. The late John Dyck had a passion for researching and writing about the early Mennonite period in Manitoba. He was generous with the information he collected, helping other researchers in any way he could, thereby making many friends. Some of these friends finished the project he had envisioned with a new publication *Settlers of the East Reserve*, which was launched in spring. This book can be purchased and for the first time a CD, with the entire book word-searchable, is also available. Without the passion and commitment of people like John Dyck and his friends much less would be accomplished by the Society. So thank you to all those committed people supporting MMHS.

This year the committees are reviewing their respective job descriptions to make sure they fit properly. This is a regular 5-year review with the executive reviewing the job description of the Membership and Publicity committee since this committee has fallen on hard times. Its functions have been picked up by Bert Friesen, Adolf Ens, and Lawrence Klippenstein. Thanks to them *HP* is coming to you today. But their involvement is on a temporary basis. We need some people to come on board the Membership and Publicity committee and take over the jobs of maintaining the membership list and overseeing and editing *Heritage Posting*. Could this be you? Why not consider this possibility that you or someone you know could be involved. Some shoulder tapping will be taking place in the near future. If you have suggestions please pass them on to me.

At its first working session of the fall in Niverville on September 26, the board discussed the 50th anniversary booklet of MMHS/MHV now in progress. Later MMHS will be hosting the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada at its annual meetings.

Plett Award Winners



Holly Goossen



Meaghan Giesbrecht

The Genealogy and Family History Committee annually makes two cash awards for best high school essays in family history. This year's winners of the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award are both Grade 11 students from Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI) in Winnipeg. First prize was awarded to Meaghan Giesbrecht for a paper on her paternal grandmother's Martens family who left Landskrone, Molotschna, South Russia for Canada in 1926. Second prize went to Holly Goossen who investigated what happened to her paternal grandfather when his personal commitment to Christ interfered with his loyalty to Canada and he found himself imprisoned for wanting to claim status as a conscientious objector to war in 1942.

This annual essay contest, open to any Manitoba high school student, aims to promote and encourage research and writing in family history. Students are encouraged to interview grandparents or older relatives, find original family sources such as old family Bibles, diaries and letters; and to visit specialized Mennonite libraries and archives.

MBCI teacher Paul Doerksen introduced this year's winners to the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, where they learned about archival resources and had the opportunity to examine some family documents. The competition details can be found on the web at: www.mmhs.org/plett.htm for any students who wish to enter next year.

From Cradle to Grave: a Look at Some Mennonite Rites of Passage

A Workshop sponsored by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

To be held at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, 150 Bayridge Avenue, Winnipeg, on Saturday, 31 October 2009.

Presentations on and discussions of the following topics are planned:

1. The setting: Manitoba Mennonites from settlement to early 20th century – by John J. Friesen, author of *Building Communities: The Changing Face of Manitoba Mennonites*
2. Birthing and Midwifery among Manitoba Mennonites – by Kathy Martens, co-author of *In Her Own Voice: Childbirth Stories from Mennonite Women*
3. Courtship and marriage traditions – A discussion hosted by Henry Fast, Steinbach, and Jacob Peters, Winnipeg
4. Dying, death and funeral traditions – by Roland Sawatzky, curator at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach

Registration and coffee at 9:30 am. Adjournment at 3:00 pm. Cost \$15 includes lunch.

Financial report

Income and expenses of the Society to the end of August have been more or less as predicted. Membership income is usually about 80% of projections by this time of year; this year it is only 55%. This is a concern.

A major project this year was the publication of Volume 4 in the East Reserve Historical Series. That came in well below (about 65% of) projections. Books sold to date will cover about 50% of the costs.

The projection is for the fiscal year to end with a slight drawing down of the Society's opening balance. It will be likely less than the projected budget..

— Bert Friesen, Treasurer

Interim Editors — Lawrence Klippenstein and Adolf Ens

Layout Editor — Ted Barg

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

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Hespler Plaque Unveiled

This plaque, dedicated to the memory of William Hespeler, was unveiled at the Heritage Park in Niverville on September 27. Hespeler is remembered for his help in settling Mennonites who came to Manitoba from 1874 to 1880. He built the first grain elevator of Western Canada in Niverville, known as Hespeler when it was established in 1879. The memorial is a project of the town of Niverville and Parks Canada, with support from the larger German community of the province, and the MMHS.



Left to right are Greg Fehr, Mayor of Niverville, Vic Toews, M.P. for Provencher, and Kelvin Goertzen, MLA.

— Photo by Ernest N. Braun

Conscientious Objectors “Wall of Remembrance”



— Photo by B. J. Fehr

The brick work is well underway on the “Wall of Remembrance” in Winkler to commemorate the 3,021 young men from Manitoba who served in a variety of placements as part of the Alternative Service Program of the Canadian Government during World War II. The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship are co-sponsors of the project. Donations may be made directly to the local committee [EAF Box 323 Winkler MB.R6W 4A5] or to the MMHS. The committee is still collecting names of those who served. It is helpful to have the name and the home church and/or home community. Contact Bernie Loeppky (bloepky@mts.net) for further information.

Glencross Book Launch and Anniversary Celebration

by Alan Warkentin

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon - July 19, 2009 - a special event was held at the school yard site at Glencross MB. This event had three different aspects. There was a Glencross history book launch, the 40th anniversary commemoration of the closing of the Glencross school (#71, founded 1878), and a community picnic. Glencross is located about 6 miles south of Morden. It is one of the settlements where in years past a one room school house acted as a sort of "glue" that bound the community together. The school unfortunately burned down in 1990, but an event like this shows that even if the school is gone and times have changed, there still is a community spirit. Since there is no building at the school site - now called the "Glencross Community Centre" - a tent was set up for the occasion, and was filled to overflowing with the over 170 people attending.

The program at 3 pm had a common theme: Thanks to God, thanks for a great country, and the importance of faith, family and community. A part of the program - passing of the torch - signified the importance of passing on values and history from one generation to another. The program was co-chaired by Ed Warkentin, a former resident, and Mavis Dyck, a current resident of Glencross and a member of the Book Committee.

Other people with Glencross connections contributed with poems, singing, and other items on the program. A special speaker was Candice Hoepfner, current Member of Parliament for Portage-Lisgar. Both she and her husband have Glencross connections.

The book *Remembering Glencross* was put together by



Book Committee members, L-R: Walter and Doris Warkentin, Henry and Betty Guenther, Julie McNeice, George and Mavis Dyck.

— Photo by Alan Warkentin

the Glencross Book Committee: George & Mavis Dyck, Walter & Doris Warkentin, Julie McNeice, and Henry & Betty Guenther, with technical support from Gaylene Letkeman. Months of research and hard work produced an excellent book with many photos and articles giving an overview of the history of the school, church and community. It covers a lot of history, but also includes photos and names of the present residents.

The community picnic that followed included refreshments, baseball, horseshoe and bean bag games, draws for donated prizes, and lots of good visiting.

For copies of the book contact George & Mavis Dyck at 822-3304.



— Photos by Ernest N. Braun

An estimated 250 people gathered at Randolph on September 13 for a homecoming to bid farewell to two venerable community institutions: the Neufeld Garage and the Randolph outdoor skating rink. Planning committee members, Victor Neufeld, Karen Peters, and Ron Neufeld (l to r) may be contacted for further information.

Current owners of the property, Michael and Geraldine Robson, were concerned about the safety of the rink building, but indicated that they were reluctant to tear down the place since it was such a significant part of Randolph history. They suggested that the community first have a chance to say goodbye to it in some official way.

Mennonites and Bicycles

by Adolf Ens

In our day of ecological concern for the size of our “carbon footprint” using a bicycle for personal transportation is seen as a positive thing. Recreational riding is seen as healthy exercise. It was not always so in our history.

Peter Elias, Hochfeld’s blacksmith and keen observer of the Mennonite church scene, wrote that

around the beginning of the 1900s when bicycles were first introduced among the Reinländer on the West Reserve, the Church strongly prohibited their use by church members. For a time any youth owning a bicycle who wanted to be baptized first had to get rid of it.¹ In the Kleine Gemeinde communities on the East Reserve there were similar concerns.

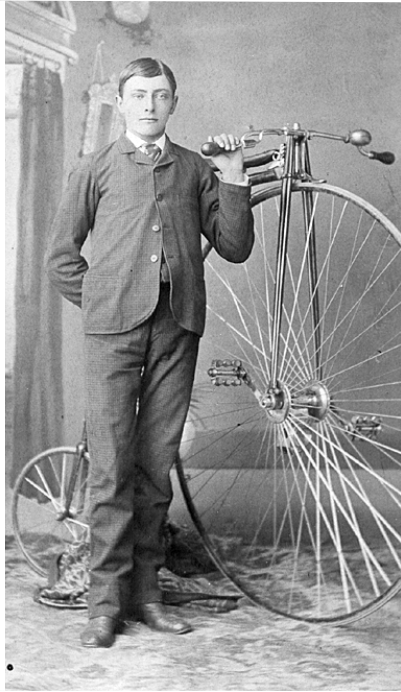
According to a report in the *Nordwesten*, some people took matters into their own hands by driving over bicycles and thereby bending the wheels out of shape.²

Both groups considered the desire to have a bicycle as “worldly,” similar to having bells on the harness of buggy horses or dressing too fashionably.

But the concern was also that a bicycle provided greater mobility, allowing young men to go out of their own community for social events. In a recently published article in the Ontario Genealogical Society’s journal, *Families*, John Becker writes that the advent of bicycles in Britain “helped to expand the gene pool” by providing “faster and easier transportation modes” and thereby allowing “a young swain to court a heart-throb miles away from home.”³ The Reinländer church leadership was especially concerned that its young men not go courting in the more lax Berghaler church communities.

Church opposition to bicycles did not last very long. Steinbach merchant John Esau sold second hand bicycles as early as 1900.⁴ Blacksmith Johann F. Barkman included bicycle repair work in this shop.⁵ The Reinländer Church found it difficult to enforce its ban, according to Elias.

Apparently the community’s attitude also shifted to the practical and economic benefits of this more efficient means of travel. Already in 1900 Martin K. Friesen made



Erdmann Penner III with his “unseemly” bicycle.

— Catharine Brown Collection, MHCA, 517-81

the trip from Steinbach to Winnipeg in 6 hours – no paved roads, no ten-speed bikes, just sheer persistence.⁶ The following summer, E. Giesbrecht’s son, Cornelius, of North Dakota biked to Steinbach for a visit. He reported that the roads were very bad.⁷

Of course, once bicycles became a general mode of travel, accidents were bound to happen. Among the more unusual was a collision of a cyclist with a horse-drawn vehicle in the dark. The horses stampeded, dragging the bicycle the length of the village. Its rider, Johann S. Koop, needed stitches to close a few head wounds.⁸

Apparently none of the reported accidents happened to riders of “stunt bicycles” like the one Erdman Penner III owned. G.G. K[ornelsen] recalled that Old Klaas Reimers’ Gerhard of Steinbach had owned a “high wheeler” from 1892-1894. The village boys were amazed that “he could hoist himself up unto the dangerously high saddle and ride along the village street with a confident bearing.” Some of the elders saw the matter as unseemly or really inadmissible.⁹

Descendants of East Reserve Chortitzer now in the Paraguayan Chaco have certainly capitalized on the versatility of the bicycle. Statistics for Menno Colony indicate that in 1993 there were 902 pickup trucks, 952 cars, 2,024 motorcycles, and 2465 bicycles.¹⁰

When the Mennonite Board (Elkhart, Indiana) organized a bicycle trip from Winnipeg to Wichita, Kansas, in connection with Assembly 10 of Mennonite World Conference in 1978, a number of Manitobans joined the *Outspokin’* tour. Cycling had almost become a “church activity.”

¹Elias memoirs, Unger ms, 17.

²*Der Nordwesten*, 7 June 1900. My thanks to Ralph Friesen for sharing this reference and other bicycle items from his research into Steinbach history.

³*Families*, February 2007, 34. Thanks to Conrad Stoesz for drawing my attention to this article.

⁴*Der Nordwesten*, 13 December 1900.

⁵*Der Nordwesten*, 23 December 1908.

⁶Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the Rural Municipality of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach: Derksen Printers, 1971), 257.

⁷*Der Nordwesten*, 19 June 1901.

⁸*Steinbach Post*, 9 November 1921.

⁹*Steinbach Post*, 10 April 1929.

¹⁰Gerhard Ratzlaff and Philip Roth, *Robert and Myrtle Unruh: A Legacy of Christian Service and Goodwill in Paraguay, 1951–1983* (Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 2009) 194.

Reinland Community Centre receives Heritage Homestead

by Abe E. Ens

Over the past dozen years hundreds of visitors to Reinland have toured the homestead across the street from the Community Centre. In the past year the status of this house-barn homestead changed significantly.

On June 26, 2008, the Council of the Rural Municipality of Stanley designated it as a Municipal Heritage Site, known as The ENS Heritage Homestead. Subsequently owners Abe and Helen Ens donated it to the Community Centre at Reinland Inc. A separate committee, consisting of a representative from the R.M. of Stanley, the chair of the Community Centre and representative grandchildren of Gerhard and Margaretha Ens administers it.

When Isak and Susanna [Vehr] Dueck arrived as immigrants from Russia in 1875, they settled on lot #7 of the village of Reinland, then in process of formation. Records indicate that in 1886 Johan Wall, had married widow Susanna [Fehr] Dyck and lived on this location.

Abram Rempel, farmer, blacksmith and dealer in gasoline motors and sewing machines, purchased this



— Photos by Werner Ens

homestead about 1893. The present house, the second one on this location, was built in 1910. The attached barn predates the house by probably some 20 to 30 years. The attached summer kitchen also predates the house.

In the fall of 1923 the Gerhard and Margaretha (Rempel) Ens family, refugee immigrants from the USSR, purchased the property from the Abram Rempels who were moving to Mexico. Rempel was Margaretha's second cousin and a former school mate of Gerhard back in Borosenko. Widowed daughter Maria (Andres) lived with them until their death.

In 1959 she married Jacob F. Ens from British Columbia. When Maria died in 1995 the estate was liquidated. This Homestead was purchased by her nephew Abram E. Ens who maintained it as a heritage museum site until the recent transactions.



A complete index to *Der Bote* (1924–2008) is now available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. The compilers of the 6-volume set posed at the September 2 launch of the final volume. From left: Peter Rempel and Adolf Ens (vol. 1), Helene (Friesen) Warkentin (2-5), and Bert Friesen (6).

— Photo by Alf Redekopp

Archaeological Excavations at Blumenhof

by Roland Sawatzky

A second season of archaeological excavation has been completed at the former village of Blumenhof, three miles north of Steinbach. The village was originally settled in 1875 by Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites and formally disbanded in 1887. It is now an agricultural field owned by Royden Loewen. The remains of the housebarn that are being excavated belonged first to Cornelius S. and Sarah Plett of Blumenhof, Borosenko, Russia. The farmstead was eventually abandoned around 1905 and the site has been used as farmland to the present day.

The purpose of the excavation is to recover any artifacts from this early habitation to get a better understanding of the material conditions of Mennonite lifeways and adaptation at the time. During this second season we discovered the cellar of the housebarn, which was full of artifacts, including, at the bottom of the cellar, at least 19 shoes which had belonged to men, women and children.

The excavation was coordinated by the Mennonite Heritage Village and the University of Winnipeg, with financial assistance from Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, Canada Summer Jobs federal employment program, and the Manitoba Archaeological Association.



Lydia Summerville and Candice Koblun excavate the west wall foundation and cellar of the Plett housebarn.

— Photo by Roland Sawatzky

RM of Rhineland Marks “125”

by Elmer Heinrichs

On Saturday, July 11, hundreds of citizens joined current and past RM of Rhineland councils as well as staff members to celebrate its founding 125 years ago in 1884. The big day was wrapped up with free entertainment, a barbecue supper and music.

This public celebration was preceded by a special June event bringing together dignitaries and guests from across the RM to give tributes on this important anniversary. A special 8- page supplement to the *Red River Valley Echo* appeared in early July to provide information on the occasion.

The RM of Rhineland lies along the Canada-USA border in south central Manitoba. It is a mix of rural and small urban communities with a population of just over 4200 residents.

The RM was officially formed in 1884 as the population grew. Boundaries were altered several times, with the RM taking on its present shape in 1917. From the time at the outset when “Kaiser” Isaak Mueller was elected Obervorsteher of the Reinländer colony prior to formal municipal government, the area has had capable leaders who headed up its council through the years.

The current leadership team consists of councilors Benno Loewen, Hans Enns, Paul Peters, Don Wiebe and Bernie Bergen with John Falk serving as reeve. “It is our diversity, our work ethic, our faith, our love of life, and the people who live here who make this a great municipality,” said Falk.

For its centennial celebration, the RM published a well-written history, authored by Gerhard J. Ens, to give the community its story in fuller detail. It is titled *The Rural Municipality of Rhineland, Volost and Municipality, 1884-1984*.

Book Reviews

Mary Neufeld, *A Prairie Pilgrim, Wilhelm H Falk, Winnipeg: by the author, 2008.*

Reviewed by John J. Friesen

In this book, Mary Neufeld discusses the life and contribution of her father, Wilhelm H. Falk. He was the founding bishop of the Rudnerweider Church, and served it as leader for 18 years. Neufeld bases her story on church records, correspondence, diaries, her own recollections, and many interviews with family, friends, and people who knew her father.

Neufeld's biography is written from the perspective of the family. She discusses the role and feelings of Falk's two wives (one died in childbirth three years after he was elected minister), and from the perspective of the 12 children. She brings each child into the discussion, indicating how her father's ministry impacted the children and how they in turn perceived their father. Neufeld does not shy away from presenting both the pride the family had in their father, as well as the pain, resentment, and conflicts his ministry caused within the family. Through it all, Neufeld tries hard to present her father in a positive light, sometimes straining almost too hard to defend him.

Wilhelm Falk was a towering figure in the church, and in the southern Manitoba community. Elected as a minister in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church at the age of 35 years, he found himself thrust into leadership when a group of ministers and members of the church advocated for change and modernization. The Sommerfelder church leadership was not willing to make the changes that the innovators wanted, and so the church decided to split. Falk was one of four ministers who went with the innovator group. When this group organized in 1937, and named itself the Rudnerweider Mennonite Church, it chose Wilhelm Falk as their first bishop.

So now Falk, a young man with a growing family, a relatively small farm and thus of limited income, had to take on the task of forming a new church. The huge amount of time he had to invest in this project frequently took him away from the family and the farm for days on end. Sons and daughters were not allowed to continue their education because they were needed on the farm. His wife had to make do with limited financial resources, and yet was expected to manage the farm and a household, and have the children be model children. After all, they were the children of the bishop, and were expected to be an example for others. These expectations were overwhelming and often more than could reasonably be expected of anyone.

Falk served as bishop from 1937 to 1955. He preached hundreds of sermons, served communion at least twice a year at all the various places where the church met, officiated at funerals and weddings, and chaired countless church meetings. He did much of this in the latter part of the Great Depression, traveling by horse and buggy. During World War II he was a member of the Committee of

Bishops formed to negotiate with the Canadian government for the exemption of Mennonite men from military service. He visited the young men in the CO alternative service camps.

The process of giving up his role of bishop was fraught with controversy. In the 1950s, the Rudnerweider Church was going through the same challenges as did all Mennonite churches in Manitoba: language change from German to English, new music forms, changes in leadership style, and public evangelistic campaigns, in English, that provided new religious language. Falk was moved out of leadership in 1955 in a way that felt to him, and to the family, as less than charitable. And yet it was also a son-in-law who was involved in bringing about the change in leadership.

Despite Falk's obvious disappointments at the way his career ended, he entered retirement with grace, acceptance and forgiveness. As Neufeld says, one of Falk's oft repeated sayings was "there is also another side." He had the generous capacity to see the other side of an issue, even if the controversy involved him.

Falk played a large public role in southern Manitoba. The significance of this role is not always evident in Neufeld's book, since her perspective of his ministry is from his family. This is not a criticism of Neufeld's book. She does very well the task she sets out to do. This is merely to note that there is another perspective from which one could write a biography of Falk which would analyze more fully the impact he made on the various institutions on whose boards he served: Elim Bible School and Mennonite Collegiate Institute, just to mention a few.

Neufeld's book is interesting, well written, and tells a powerful story. It is the story of a remarkable man, of a family struggling against great odds, and of the pride of a daughter. It provides a window not only into a family, but also into a community, and into an era in the history of southern Manitoba Mennonites. Above all, as Jack Heppner says in his tribute, the book is a love story.

The reviewer is an Emeritus Professor of History and Theology at Canadian Mennonite University. The author is a current member of the MMHS Board.

Eleanor Hildebrand Chornoboy. *Faspa with Jast: A Snack of Mennonite Stories told by Family and Guests* (Canada: Tartan Graphics, 2007), 277 pages.

Reviewed by Anna Epp Ens

A miscellaneous collection of 92 stories and anecdotes, illustrated with 39 relevant photos and expressive sketches, and complemented with a sprinkling of recipes, remedies, ditties, rhymes, prayers and proverbs, make Chornoboy's second collection of stories of an earlier time attractive.

The book is well organized into twelve chapters with

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Book Notes

by Adolf Ens & Lawrence Klippenstein

A MacGregor History Book Committee published a very substantial 2-volume history a few years ago (1998). *Through Fields and Dreams: A History of the Rural Municipality of North Norfolk and MacGregor* provides short family histories of the citizens of this area (pages 1-664) and a more narrative history of various community institutions such as schools, churches, businesses, etc. (volume 2, pages 665-1181). A copy of the books, now selling at a reduced price, is available at the CMU library.

Der Bote, beginning as a newspaper for new immigrants from Russia in the 1920s, became the official organ of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. It ceased publication in 2008. Earlier this month the index of this significant periodical was completed. Bert Friesen compiled and edited the final volume (6). The entire set is available to researchers in various archives and Mennonite libraries and sells via the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Al Reimer, Syd Reimer and Glen Kehler, *The Berliner Kehler Clan: A History in Portraits* (Kelowna, BC: Rosetta Projects, 2009), 164 pages, is a collaborative depiction of the descendants (some 800 by now) of Jacob Kehler (1863-1923) and Elizabeth (Schultz) Kehler (1866-1943) by three grandsons. Writer and retired professor of English Al did the writing of the portraits of grandparents and their eleven children. His brother Syd collected the remarkable array of photos to accompany the stories and cousin Glen did much of the research. The Kehlbers were founding settlers of the village of Hochfeld in the East Reserve. Many of the descendants continue to live in the Steinbach area.

David Suderman, *Why Little Abraham Came to Canada* (Carman: by the author, 2008), pb., 167 pp., is a story told to his granddaughter, Marion Antonia Peters, of the life-long journey which took him from south Russia to Canada. The telling in down to earth language leads her through the long sweep of the Mennonite world-wide people experience, told in children's language.

Isaias J. McCaffery now brings us *Mennonite Low German Proverbs from Kansas* (2008, pb., 181 pp.). It helpfully supplements, from another community, Victor Carl Friesen's *The Windmill Turning: Nursery Rhymes, Maxims and Other Expressions of Western Canadian Mennonites* (hdc., 1988). It is actually a tri-lingual work, setting out eighteen proverbs in High German, Low German and English – very helpful in deciphering meanings for newcomers to Low German itself. The book was published by Mennonite Heritage Museum in Goessel, Kansas, USA.

Johann R. Reimer: A Family History (2009, pb. 256 pp), published by the family, was commissioned by a grandson, Stanley Reimer, and written by Marj Heinrichs and Dianne Hiebert. It is a well written family story which includes significant facets of Steinbach, and to some extent Rosenort/Rosenhoff history. Fourteen children were born to Johann and his two wives, Anna Warkentin and Aganetha Barkman. The latter included Klaas J.B. and Peter J.B. Reimer, perhaps somewhat better known publicly than the others.

(Continued from page 7)

introductory comments that suggest why the stories are placed where they are. Historical background, customs, values, practices, are woven into the stories. The many unique miniature genograms add interest in placing the characters into context of family, thereby making connections for many readers. Discreet use of Low German expressions provides a bonus for those who know the language; for others it probably serves as an incentive to learn some of that vocabulary (as cereal boxes with English and French motivate vocabulary learning). Hardship, celebration, humour, laughter, tears, sadness, anger, disappointment—all of life is descriptively, sensitively, warmly communicated. Embellishments are so integrated that all becomes believable. Authenticity is assured with the majority of the stories coming from relatives and friends, persons well known to the author.

As in her 2003 *Faspa* collection, Chornoboy unequivocally accomplishes what she set out to do, namely to preserve these stories so that they bring back memories to children and grandchildren of pioneers, as well as to inform generations yet to come—almost like the biblical injunction: so that when they shall ask they may know. While each book stands on its own, it is also helpful to read both, especially since *Faspa* includes a bit more introductory material not repeated in *Faspa with Jast*.

While the experiences come specifically from southern Manitoba, and are particular to Mennonite peoples descended from the 1870s immigration, many customs and anecdotes could be those of 1920s immigrants as well though with differences in the details. For example, many of the latter settlers would probably, at least on Sundays, have served Tweekak (buns or rolls) instead of bread for *Faspa*, though the latter would not be ruled out entirely. Too, not all families had Low German as their first language; for some it was High German.

Although particular incidents and experiences are narrated, many of the stories also carry a sense of universality in that these stories of pioneers are similar for other ethnic groups, as the author's father-in-law testifies (p. 12).

This is not bedtime reading and not a book to be lost among others on the bookshelf. Rather it begs for visibility, like on the coffee table, always available for a "Faspa snack." Best to have it there—on the coffee table—so that perhaps the younger generations will pick it up, read and learn to understand as the author so hopes will happen. It is also well suited to read to seniors in their retirement homes.

The author lives in Winnipeg and is a member of the Board of MMHS. The reviewer is a recent member of the MMHS Executive. The book is available at McNally Robinson in Winnipeg.