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ELISABETH PETERS – Onse Lied En Ola Tiet

by Cleo Heinrichs

Does this phrase ring a bell to you? Elisabeth Peters was a person who could tell about people, ancestors of years gone by – in the colorful Low German language. Or what about “Eena Mott Friejen” a Low German drama in which Elisabeth Peters played the role of “Auntje Mum” arranging dates for her bachelor nephews. Or how about “Dee Bildung”, another Low German drama, capably directed by Elisabeth Peters. These are just two examples of her involvement in community activities during her teaching career in the Horndean School, 1947-1954. Fifty years after her tenure in Horndean School, her former students organized a reunion held in Winnipeg, in her honor. Students came from across the continent to share with one another, how much they appreciated Mrs. Peters as teacher, though often the fruits of her teaching sprouted and reached out to others after the school years! They celebrated her life with her while she was able to be a part of the ‘party’!

Comments like “I can’t remember her getting angry” or showing anger, even when she was displeased with something the particular student had done or failed to do. Another student expressed her “warm, human touch” in everything she did, while another one commented “real teaching took place in Horndean School.” The accolades included heartfelt appreciation for Elisabeth Peters’ “compassionate and understanding way of dealing with us.” In another tribute, a former student stated, “I was fortunate to have Mrs. Peters as my teacher. She played the piano every morning when we sang ‘O Canada’, and again for the closing song ‘God Save the King’”

Another highlight of this Tribute to Elisabeth Peters was when three young men performed the reading/reciting of a German poem on “Hoffnung” that Mrs. Peters had taught them in grade school! Among the many Horndean students, there was one who proudly proclaimed that not only was Elisabeth Peters his teacher in grade school, but years later also his instructor at University in Winnipeg!

Elisabeth Peters also brought the ‘treasures’ of art, music and culture into the Horndean School curriculum. This came about through Low German drama, Christmas Candlelight Choir concerts, and many other activities.

Having laughed, smiled, and wiped a few tears from her eyes after hearing so many of her former students share about those years, Elisabeth Peters responded with a few brief but emotional comments. “My 11 years in Horndean School were happy years,” she said. “The people of that community were easy going people, friendly and helpful. We felt at home there.”

Teaching and interacting with the students was the passion of her heart. But there is another side to Elisabeth



Elisabeth Peters (circa 1975)

Peters’ life that was felt not only in schools, but in a larger sphere. And that was in writing, and in holding high the story of her people, the Mennonites. She was actively involved in the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Back in 1984 she was one of four featured speakers at a Thanksgiving Festival held at Mennonite Heritage Village, in tribute to Mennonites and others who could escape the terrors of wars, revolution and reprisals by emigration from the former Soviet Union.

She assisted George K. Epp in choosing materials for, and editing the final, i.e., the fourth volume of Arnold Dyck’s works. It was published in the series, *Collected Works of Arnold Dyck*, as a hard cover 504 page volume in 1990.

During the mid 1980’s Elisabeth helped to translate a volume of the Echo Verlag series on Mennonite history, *Unser Auszug nach Mittelasien*, which was published as *Our Trek to Central Asia* in 1993.

She was given an honorary life membership in the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society on March 2, 1985. In her response on this occasion Elisabeth recalled an occurrence in 1956 when she met with Gerhard Lohrenz, Gerhard Ens, and her husband Victor, to discuss the formation of a provincial Mennonite Historical Society,

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Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Annual General Meeting

March 26th, 2011 at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship,
150 Bayridge Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba

by Bert Friesen

The members heard the reports of the activities of the past year. They are available to be studied at the URL mmhs.org/reports.

No major decisions were made at this meeting. Committees reported on a number of projects in progress. Several publications will likely be completed this year.

Two ongoing concerns are that so much of the work of this society is done by a small group of dedicated volunteers and that the membership base and general finances remain weak.

First, the pool of individuals doing so much of the work needs to be expanded. We need individuals to get involved. There are ongoing projects, and new ideas need to be brought forward. We need risk takers, willing to suggest ideas with others, and then work together to bring those ideas to fruition.

Secondly, our membership base and with it the finances of the society have been in decline in the past few years. The older generation needs to be replaced by energetic new members. Since our society has functioned as a federation of small activity-based groups, namely committees, with their own finances, we have few discretionary funds to finance more broadly-based activities. Each group attempts to be self-financing for its activities. We have pools of funds which are being held for lengthy time periods, often for projects yet to be articulated. How to better address this issue did not get discussed at this meeting. It has been on the agenda in the past, and will, of necessity, come on the agenda again.

The society does good work. It is also part of something bigger, the national society, which is a federation of provincial societies. There, we participate in national projects. We have been actively involved, with good experiences. May each of us feel good about the work of the society and our part in this work.

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

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Discussing the issues at the annual meeting.

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which ultimately came into being two years later. She felt a strong motivation for sustaining such a society; for her it was a concern to keep faith alive, and she encouraged all persons present to do so in the future. She stepped down from the Board membership after serving three consecutive terms.

Elisabeth served as a member of the Research and Scholarship Committee and the Arnold Dyck Project Committee of MMHS ca 1985-1987. She was also a member of the Mennonite Monument Committee, which completed its work with the erection of a memorial at the Mennonite Heritage Village in 1986.

"My Memories of Arnold Dyck," were published in the *MMHS Newsletter of December 1989* by Elisabeth, and in the Fall of 1991 she organized a public reception to celebrate the publication of the four volume *Collected Works of Arnold Dyck*. The family of Arnold Dyck was honored at this event.

You will no doubt, have memories of your own that should be added to this Tribute. Like Elisabeth Peters, let's take a vital part in keeping the faith alive, as was her concern. Now, get out your copy of *Collected Works of Arnold Dyck*, and read about "Onse Lied En Ola Tiet".

Heritage Posting Goes Electronic!

Last November we offered you the choice of receiving your copy of *Heritage Posting* by e-mail in PDF form, thereby giving you the advantage of speedier arrival and full colour. At the same time you would save MMHS postage and handling.

About 65 subscribers chose this option. If you want to receive your next copy in electronic format, please respond by e-mail to our address in the box on page 2. Thank you. The editors.

Kohmt Äte!

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society gathered at the Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg on March 26, 2011 for its Annual General Meeting. Such an annual gathering is of course very important and necessary. What gave this gathering special meaning was the social aspect of the meeting. Seven well-qualified individuals shared their memories on a range of topics, the over-riding focus being on food, but also on personal and social experiences under the captivating heading of *Kohmt Äte!* (Come and Eat!).

Reminding her audience of home remedies of a time long gone, Eleanor Chornoboy used words such as *Kaumpfott Saulw* and *Trachtmoaka* that still resonate with so many in her audience. Eleanor also made reference to her grandfather, Johann Sawatzky whom people from miles around came to see for blood letting to reduce their blood pressure. With a small instrument called a Flett, he cut the vein and let blood flow from the vein into a bowl until he deemed the patient was "cured."

Judith Klassen took her listeners on something of an academic exercise as she discussed the many meanings of chicken noodle soup. She set the stage by describing a scene at her parental home in southern Manitoba in February, 2008, that of a pot of chicken noodle soup, a bowl of buns and a jar of raspberry jam on the dining room table. On the surface it may appear to be a readily recognizable scene for a Mennonite family in Manitoba but Judith reminded her listeners of variations even among Mennonites, depending on the perspective and preferences of the individuals, as well as various life experiences. Suddenly it becomes apparent that something even as seemingly simple as chicken noodle soup can contain elements of conflict and possibly personal pain and struggle.

Low German Nursery Rhymes found their way into this presentation as a sub-topic of the food theme, and were used as an introductory bridge between topics. Mary Neufeld chose Rhymes and a few German maxims on the subject of food to add humour and bring back fond memories. Obviously her presentation resonated with her audience as they volunteered their own choice of recitations.

Alf Redekopp gave the gathering a unique insight (at least for prairie folk) on what growing up on an orchard was like. His presentation provided awareness of how much of a family and intergenerational activity fruit growing was in his day, and of how many skills could be learned even by a child.

Sausage making never looked as entertaining as it did in Bill Stoesz's DVD depicting an inter-generational learning experience in pig-butcherer, complete with Low German singing describing the activities in detail, all of it accompanied by guitar playing. Anyone who has ever experienced such an event could surely relate to the minute details described and portrayed in this presentation.

As part of these interesting presentations, Ken Reddig addressed the issue of food adaptations, and shared a

personal experience about a lunch break in Kenora that he and his wife took during their honeymoon. They ordered a dish that presumably sounded exotic, namely *Egg Foo Yung*. Their order turned out to be bean sprouts, a dish that Ken's mother-in-law often made. Approximately a hundred years ago a great aunt of the family was a missionary to China and upon her return home introduced her family to various Chinese dishes that became family favourites. It was a good example of how food migrates from culture to culture.

No reflection on Mennonites and food would be complete without reference to funerals. Roland Sawatzky reminded his hearers of the importance of food and of its place in the context of Mennonite funerals.

Surely all of these presentations resonated with anyone growing up in a Mennonite community of times past.

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society News

The Board of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society has a new member. Carl Epp was elected to the Board by the membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 26th, 2011.

The returning members on the second year of their two-year term are: Eleanor Chornoboy, Abe Ens, Conrad Stoesz, Bert Friesen, Alf Redekopp, and Paul Friesen.

The members beginning a two-year term are: Maria Lodge, Mary Neufeld, Edwin Hoepfner, Hans Werner, Adolf Ens, and Lawrence Klippenstein.

The above were also approved by the membership at the AGM.

Ron Dueck, Judith Klassen, and Ken Reddig have resigned from the Board.

It should be noted that a new and improved website is now up and running at MMHS.org. Back issues of the Society's newsletter are available as is a list of books published and in print. Work is still on-going, and the project has received a new impetus by this exposure on the internet. Feedback with respect to the website will be much appreciated.

On a related note, we are saddened by the news of the recent passing of Judith Rempel, genealogist, historian, and active member of the Alberta Mennonite Historical Society.

Village Review

Order your subscription to *MHV Village Review* from Marigold at 326-9661 or info@mhv.ca now.

Roots Day at the Mennonite Heritage Village

April 9, 2011

by Bert Friesen

Roots Day has become an annual event held each spring at the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV). It is a jointly sponsored event by MHV and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society's (MMHS) Eastmenn Historical Committee and the Genealogy and Family History Committee.

The morning session was devoted to viewing genealogical exhibits. These included displays of family artifacts, charts, publications, and family memorabilia. Visitors perused, discussed, gave opinions, and asked questions. Some searchable databases were available for research purposes; these, too, generated much interest. "Who are my grandfather's siblings? My grandfather was Bruno Hamm." Followed by, "Give me the details you know about your grandfather, life dates? places of residence?" And so the conversation begins, research goes in unexpected directions as the quest for more knowledge continues.

The afternoon session consisted of presentations on three topics: Conscientious Objectors (COs) and Einwanderungszentrastelle (EWZ) files, and image storage options.

Conrad Stoesz, president of MMHS for the past three years, introduced the story of the COs in Canada during WWII. He illustrated some facts and statistics from the web site: alternativeservice.ca. He introduced two men who had done alternative service, Jacob K Bartel, over 90 years of age, and Abe Loewen, over 80 years of age, both from the Steinbach area. Bartel talked about his experiences working, mostly as a cook, in lumber camps across Canada. Loewen talked about his experiences working at the Psychiatric Hospital in Selkirk, Manitoba. Both mentioned their experience before the judge deciding on their status. They both had a strong spiritual basis for their decision to do alternative service instead of serving in the military.

Alf Redekopp, chair of the Genealogy and Family History Committee, talked about the Einwanderungszentralstelle (EWZ) Anträge files. These files contain data about immigrants from outside of Germany, attempting to establish German ancestry for application purposes to become naturalized German citizens. These included many Mennonites from the 1941-1943 trek from Ukraine. The data is very extensive, and is a primary source since it is data produced by the immigrants, often in their own handwriting. This data was microfilmed by the USA government. There are many thousands of microfilm rolls; Mennonite data is found in

about 1500 rolls. These microfilms are available for purchase from the USA government. For details go to: [wiki-en.genealogy.net/Einwanderungszentralstelle_\(EWZ\)_Anträge](http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/Einwanderungszentralstelle_(EWZ)_Anträge).

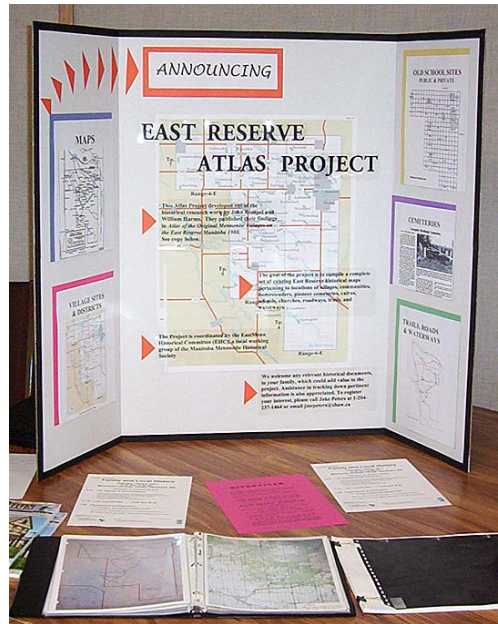
The microfilms are also available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, and at other Mennonite archival centres in North America and elsewhere.

Art Kroeker, member of MMHS, introduced the project he and Audrey Toews have become involved with recently. A website stores and gives information about Mennonite images. This is a way to preserve family portraits and other photographs in another format and in another location from the family. He introduced Janelle Martin, the webmaster of the site: mennoniteheritageportrait.ca.

This website provides a facility to store images and make them accessible. It also provides information about the images. To date, since its launch a few years ago, the content has been mostly about Swiss and Pennsylvania Mennonites. With Kroeker and Toews involved, the

content has expanded to include Prussian/Russian Mennonites.

It was a very informative day. About 100 people enjoyed the facilities, the good food provided by the MHV Auxiliary, and the interaction.



Voices for Non-Violence Anniversary celebration

by Maria Falk Lodge

On April 29th, 2011, Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba marked the 20th anniversary of its Voices for Non-Violence program. The event was held in conjunction with an open house at 159 Henderson Highway in Winnipeg to celebrate the opening of new program offices of MCC Manitoba on the second floor at this location.

Heather Block, the first coordinator for this program, served in this capacity for seven years. Heather was one of the guest speakers at this anniversary celebration, as was Alvina Block, the widow of Isaak Block who raised awareness of violence within Mennonite families some twenty years ago. It was in response to the need to take action with regard to domestic violence and abuse that Voices for Non-Violence was established in 1991.

The Voices for Non-Violence program serves as a resource to faith communities and individuals, promoting positive family life and empowering individuals and groups to respond effectively to domestic violence and abuse. It became a program of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba in February 2000.

MMHS President's Corner

May 2011

by Conrad Stoesz.

My memories of spring 2011 are littered with flood watches and radio warnings. I spent many afternoons glued to my radio, listening for the latest updates from the field. As the rivers rose the threat of flooding made national news. Mennonites (and others) scattered across the country watched the unfolding drama as the threat of flooding became more and more imminent. As the government announced compensation packages for affected families to help re-build, I couldn't help but be reminded of the early settlers and their struggle with nature to establish homes and communities from which we now benefit. While today we have flood forecasters and weather predictors, the forces of nature remain powerful and uncontrollable. We would not be here today if it were not for our Mennonite ancestors who persevered in settling the land in spite of these elements.

The David Stoesz diary chronicles the move from Bergthal, Russia to Manitoba and the early Manitoba years. While the entries are short and generally factual, there are nuggets of information contained in the old entries including information on weather.

On Monday July 29, 1874 they tented on the banks of the Red River. On August 4th they drove to the shelters provided by Jacob Y. Shantz. On August 9th David Stoesz wrote "... we went out to look over the land and soon found a spot that seemed to hold promise for us." They built their sod houses, broke land and prepared for the winter. By 1876 they were settling in but the spring weather was harsh. On April 28th there was "... fairly heavy frost with a strong N.W. wind. On the 29th and 30th of May it started raining, and kept on raining almost day and night for a week. On June 1st the water started rising. . . the night of June 16 - 17th we had a light frost.

On the 19th of June I started breaking prairie again and stopped on the 30th, had only ploughed [2.7] acres in all." There was frost again during the night of August 19-20th. During the summer of 1876 there were only about 35 frost free days!

Two years later, in 1878, another harsh spring fell upon the fledgling community. Stoesz records that on April 12th, 1878 there was frost and on May 2, as he was planting peas, a snowstorm "... the like of which we had not seen this winter. . ." sprang up.

In 1881 some areas succumbed to flooding. April 19th, 1881 "On the last day of Easter we had to surrender our home to the waters, and we left by boat. . . for 2 days and 2 nights before we were able to return... On the 19th too, the grey cow freshened dropped a spotted bull calf."

Stoesz also records wind storms, tornados, lightning strikes and fires crashing through the pioneer settlement. Food shortages, travel debts, and epidemics were other issues dealt with by the community.

Today we are fortunate to have systems and structures in place to warn and help channel some of the extreme weather. We live in warmer, higher, and sturdier dwellings. Insurance and government aid programs are available. Such was not the case for the early settlers of Manitoba. Because of their resiliency, these men and women provided a base for subsequent waves of Mennonite immigrants to Canada. Without their sacrifices there would have been no community or support network for people like David Toews and B.B. Janz who engineered the migration of tens of thousands of Mennonite immigrants to Canada. As we, the descendents of those tens of thousands of Mennonites watch the floods on TV and radio today, let us remember those who endured similar forces of nature and not only survived but eventually flourished providing a foundation for the rest of us.

Discovery of Burial Site of Helena (Martens) Hildebrandt (1838 -1896)

The Hildebrandt clan, descendents of Heinrich and Helena Hildebrandt, gathered for a reunion on August 8 and 9th, 2008. As part of that event, the group went on a tour of the Mennonite West Reserve Villages, Farms, Cemeteries and Post Road. It was during that trip that the family discovered the burial site of their great grandmother, Helena (Martens) Hildebrandt (1838-1896) in the Neuendorf Village Cemetery.

The location of the Neuendorf Village Cemetery had been discovered by Mark Braun, the current owner of the property, only days before the group arrived, the village itself having disappeared. As a result of this momentous finding, the family held an impromptu service of remembrance and thanksgiving for the life of their great grandmother, Helena (Martens) Hildebrandt, one of the pioneer women of the Canadian prairies.

Upon further research the family determined that two

infants born to Peter and Maria (Peters) Hildebrandt are also buried in this cemetery. Peter was the third son of Heinrich and Helena Hildebrandt.

The family decided to install a memorial stone at the burial site, with plans for the dedication to occur on August 6, 2011.

Altbergthal School Building Rehab Project

The long-vacant former Altbergthal school building may be moving soon. Originally built on the banks of the Buffalo Creek, the structure now stands in Altona. Discussions are underway with a another nearby village, Neuberghthal, to determine if that would be a suitable new home.

Reconstruction has already begun. Monies to make the move are in place. Your support for further development is most welcome. More details will follow. More data is available at: owltree@sdnet.ca

Forty-Seven Tractors participate in the 2nd Annual Tractor Trek Event

by Ken Reddig

The second annual Tractor Trek fundraiser hosted jointly by the Mennonite Heritage Village and Eden East, both of Steinbach, Manitoba, was a resounding success. Forty-seven tractors, all of them 40 years and older, participated in the event held on Saturday, June 4, 2011,

Beginning with a hearty breakfast at the Mennonite Heritage Village Livery barn, the trek began promptly at 10:00 AM, starting at the Heritage Village Main Street. Following a route that was 56 kilometers long, the trek wound its way through the Manitoba villages of Blumenort, Mitchell, Kleefeld, and then south and east of Steinbach ending up back at the Mennonite Heritage Village. All except two tractors completed the trek.

One participant noted the beauty of driving tractors along country roads. "I frequently drive some of these roads and never see the nice gardens, flowers, and the beautifully kept homes. But from a slow-moving tractor, feeling the wind and sun, it gives me a new perspective and appreciation for the lovely countryside around Steinbach. A tractor just feels like it belongs to the land."

The stop in Kleefeld at noon gave local residents the opportunity to see the tractors up close, many of which had been beautifully restored. Trekkers had lunch in the local park and then resumed their journey.

Along the way people stopped their cars to watch and

take pictures of the line of tractors. Some pulled out lawn chairs to view what amounted to a summer parade.

Some might find it an unusual marriage that a heritage museum teamed up with a mental health service in a fundraiser, Ken Reddig of Eden Foundation noted at the wind-up event. "The Mennonite Heritage Village represents a faith community that came to the Manitoba prairies to build a new life. As the community matured it created a variety of organized services for its own people and the larger community within which it lived. One of those organizations is Eden Health Care Services, a group of mental health services which operates in Winkler, Winnipeg, and Steinbach. Eden is an outgrowth of the kinds of communities that the Mennonite Heritage Museum commemorates."

Back at the museum, the trekkers were joined by family and friends for a banquet and a number of awards including those given for the smoothest running, quietest running and best restored tractors.

The event raised over \$34,000 to be divided equally between both organizations.

Anyone wishing to obtain further information may contact Barry Dyck of Mennonite Heritage Village at 204-326-9661, or Linda Driedger of Eden Foundation at 204-325-5355.



— Photo courtesy of Eden Foundation

Rosengard Again: Two Books and a Bash

by *Lawrence Klippenstein*

Rosengard of the former East Reserve likely never was a household word - or rather, a place everyone knew about. We know now it once was a modest Mennonite village community "on a gravel ridge", about fifteen kilometers southwest of Steinbach and less than half as far from Kleefeld – if that helps. (In fact, I am told there is still a Rosengard "on the gravel ridge", near the original village, and I know there is also a "living" village by that name spelled Rosengart some miles to the south of Winkler on the Canada-US border – correct us where we are wrong!).

About twenty years ago Maria Falk Lodge, a former resident of Rosengard near Steinbach, now resident in Winnipeg, began to write weekly columns in a local newspaper, *The Carillon*, of her memories of decades of living in that community. Now, approaching 1,000 columns, and two volumes of collected writings later, Rosengard has gone public, as it were.

We again celebrated, as we had done for the first of the two books, the "coming out" of Rosengard at the Mennonite Heritage Village during "Spring On The Farm" Victoria Day weekend. Maria again read some of her fascinating write-ups on a number of interesting people, incidents, and everyday experiences which she has never forgotten, and now preserved for posterity. Fifteen or more of us were delighted to enjoy the reminiscences. Without trying hard many of us added to them our own; we had grown up in very similar communities many years ago.

A number of folks then walked right up to the book table and bought copies of *Tales from the Gravel Ridge* (pb., 2008, 90pp) and *In Search of Memories: (More) Tales from the Gravel Ridge* (pb., 2010, 210 pp). Now we could all take a look at 100 or so of the columns – leaving only 900 more to go! And the stories still keep on coming week by week.

Space will not permit the review of this story storehouse here – too much is lost by summarizing, and one does not know where to begin and end. You simply have to take a look at the books yourself. The Village Bookstore at MHV (326-9661) will be glad to fill your order, as will Die Mennonitische Post in Steinbach.

Truly amazing, ...let's just say, this is the way in which ordinary life in a village where "nothing important ever happens", some would say, crackles with interesting people and stories that could only pop up, almost like meteors in the night sky, in a community like Rosengard. That happened, of course, in literally dozens of villages like it which once existed, and a number still do in the larger Mennonite community which emerged in those early Manitoba settlement years of Mennonites from Russia (now Ukraine) before 1900.

Storytellers out there, strut your stuff. You have stories like that of your own to pass on. Maria has led the way in sorting and getting them out there to enjoy for now and years and generations to come. Who will be next in telling it "like it was", and helping us to be a part of it all as you

were ("...all that I have met", a famous poet once called it), to remember wonderful times that we ought never to forget, or fail to share with others as well?

Book Notes

by *Lawrence Klippenstein*

Father's Well is a fine 52-page published collection of the paintings of Kornelius Epp (1911-1972), a Russian Mennonite émigré from the Soviet Union. The book was published in Richmond, BC by Kornelius Epp, Jr., and is available for \$59.99. The paintings and sketches depict Epp's journey from labour camps in Siberia, then flight to Germany with his young family and on to Canada. For copies, contact Mennonite Heritage Village (which now exhibits a number of these paintings) at marigoldp@mhv.ca

Frieda Martens has just released what she advertised as a "wild fruit cook book" titled *Precious Wild Berries*. Its paperback format wire bound and 5" by 8" size makes it a handy volume for the kitchen. Colored photos of the berries form part of the 2011 publication printed and bound in 123 pages by Art Bookbindery of Winnipeg. Mennonite Heritage Village bookstore has it available for \$17.00 Cdn plus postage.

Already a top seller at Mennonite Heritage Village Bookstore, *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, edited by Lovella Schellenberg, is a hardcover, 208-page volume. It is well illustrated with colored photos, and was published in 2011 by Herald Press, of Waterloo, ON, and Harrisonburg, VA. The authors' homes are spread across the continent, a number from B.C. with others from Manitoba and western USA. The foreword is by Lovina Eicher. Contact info@mhv.ca for more information.

In quite a different genre we note also *Tongue Screws and Testimonies: Poems, Stories, and Essays inspired by the Martyrs Mirror*, "the brain child of Jeff Gundy and Julia Spicher Kasdorf" and edited by Kirsten Eve Beachy. Forty-eight inspiring contributors from Canada and the US have aided the collection of this material. Short bios and an index of persons are included in this book. Herald Press published this 308-page paperback volume in 2010. It is available at Mennonite bookstores for \$20.00 Cdn plus shipping.

Miriam Toews, acclaimed Canadian novelist, has just added *Irma Voth* to her list of published works. It connects with her recent experiences among Mennonites and others in Mexico in the production of the film *Shtellet Licht* (Quiet Light), and is available at various outlets including the Mennonite Heritage Village bookstore and at McNally Robinson.

Book Review

Ronald Friesen, *Pioneers of Cheese: A Social and Economic History of the Cheese Industry in Southern Manitoba, 1880-1960*. (Self-published: Steinbach, 2010). 418 pp. \$12.00.

Reviewed by Helene Warkentin

Before readers begin browsing the book's Table of Contents for a topic, notable figure, or cheese-producing village that immediately catches their attention, they may wonder, why stop at 1960? Surely, Manitoba's cheese industry did not end 50 years ago; New Bothwell and Grunthal cheeses are still so popular at funerals today.

Ronald Friesen offers an enormous quantity of information in this economic and social history perspective of the cheese industry in Manitoba. Its history is laid out in detail, and the administrative history and government directives are exceptionally well covered — perhaps a reflection of Friesen's specific area of interest. The chapter that briefly discusses seven notable figures includes one woman: the incomparable news-reporter E. Cora Hind. Three chapters cover individual Mennonite and Franco-Manitoban towns and communities where cheese factories were established, and brim with details.

Would readers be surprised to find the chapter "The Cheese Factory and the Role of Women"? Much of the manual labour involved in the dairy industry was provided by farm women, who did the milking, separating, churning, and much more. However, industrial cheese-making seems not to have leadership roles for women as managers or administrators.

Occasionally, regarding rural centres in which the dairy industry struggled, some phrases may be interpreted as somewhat patronizing and may eventually get on readers' nerves.¹

Friesen's use of hyperbole lends an unexpected glamour, but did the dairy industry really spread like "a prairie wildfire" (1)? An index could have been helpful, and footnoting for the immense number of details seems to dry up at times, but both oversights can be forgiven, for the tone is overall favourable toward the entire industry.

Friesen writes as an insider: his father worked at developing the industry in the 1930s and '40s (v). He sorted through biographies, newspaper reports and obituaries, archived records and legislative journals, and interviewed individuals who were directly involved in cheese-making. Friesen has traced the development of a prime agricultural industry that contributed to the well-being of individual consumers, as well as benefitted the general economy of the province.

Most significantly, Friesen's book documents in vast detail a record of impending change, the change that swept through North American and Western European farming

communities. In *Jorwerd: The Death of the Village in Late Twentieth-Century Europe*, Dutch journalist-historian Geert Mak wrote about the crisis that rural communities of Frisian villages in the Netherlands encountered in the face of modernity and global markets, post-World War II. Pressures of global economies swept aside small mixed farms and dairy herds tended by large farm families. Today, fewer but larger dairy farms dot the landscape of Manitoba, altering the cheese industry, local economies, and the face of the countryside.

Fortunately, Friesen's book recalls an era when things were done differently, when unpasteurized milk was consumed without dire consequences, and when squeaky-fresh cheese curds were the best treat children could have on a summer day.

¹J.H. Warkentin's 1959 study of the geography of Manitoba uses the term bushland to describe much of south-eastern Manitoba; perhaps this influenced his view.

Coming Events

The MMHS Publication and Marketing Committee announces the forthcoming publication of *A History of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church of Manitoba, 1874-1914* by Dennis Stoesz. We are pleased that Dennis granted us the permission to publish his 1987 Masters of Arts thesis (submitted to the History Department of the University of Manitoba) as Volume 5 in the East Reserve Historical Series. The thesis grew out of the writer's 1973 discovery of a diary of Aeltester David Stoesz. Together with material provided by the Chortitzer Conference archives, this source enabled Stoesz to research the impact that the migration to Manitoba had on the church that had been transferred intact from the Bergthal Colony in New Russia to Manitoba in the mid 1870s. The result is both a point-in-time description of the Chortitzer church and its institutions upon arrival, and an examination of the changes attendant upon the re-establishment of that church here in Manitoba up to 1914. Stoesz includes valuable appendices that will facilitate other research.

A book launch has been set for Saturday July 30, 2011 at 2:00 PM in the multi-purpose room of the Mennonite Heritage Museum [Pioneer Days] in Steinbach. The book will be available for sale at the launch on Saturday at a special price of \$15. After the launch, the book will be available at the usual outlets at the regular retail price of \$20.00. Special guests representing the author, the Chortitzer Mennonite Conference, MMHS, and other contributors to the project will be invited.