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Presenters at the Anti-Modern Pathways Conference, gathered around the buggy which stood in front of the building at the UW where the conference was held.

— Photo by Hans Werner

Anti-Modern Pathways, Oct. 21-22, 2011

by John J. Friesen

On October 21-22, 2011 the chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, together with the D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation hosted a conference at the University entitled “Anti-Modern Pathways: Horse and Buggy Mennonites in Canada, Belize and Latin America.” There was strong interest in the topic, with more than 125 people attending. The co-chairs of the conference were Roy Loewen and Hans Werner, representing the two sponsoring organizations.

The key note address was presented by Donald Kraybill from the Young Centre for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies in Elizabethtown, PA. His topic was “Contesting Modernity: the Old Order Struggle with Modernity.” Kraybill spoke out of his long personal and scholarly contact with the Old Order Amish, but he contended his observations could equally well apply to Old Colony Mennonites.

Kraybill, a sociologist, presented a model which he proposed could help in the understanding of horse and buggy people. He said that modernity can be characterized by technology, specialization, mobility, rationalization, individuation, discontinuity, and choice. Old Orders, in contrast, he said, can be characterized by community over

the individual, separation from the world, tradition, and resistance to change. But the Old Orders’ rejection of modernity is not absolute, nor static, but always dynamic – constantly being negotiated. In his model, Kraybill proposed that Old Orders accept, reject or adapt to modernity in the areas of ideas, ritual, social organization, economics, and technology.

Five presentations at the conference were by scholars from the Netherlands, and one each from Sweden and Norway. These scholars had done extensive field research in the Old Colony communities in Latin America about which they presented, and thus brought fresh, outsiders’ eyes to bear upon the subject. A number of younger Canadian scholars also presented, thus indicating a continuing interest in the horse and buggy people.

Christopher Cox, a young scholar from Edmonton, presented an interesting paper on the use of language by Old Colonists. He pointed out that they use three languages, and each serves a particular function in their communities. Low German is the language of everyday household discourse, High German is the language of faith, and used in church, and the third language is that of the host society. In Russia the host language was Russian,

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Detmold Museum Opening

Friday, July 22, 2011 marked the official opening of the new Museum für russlanddeutsche Kulturgeschichte (Museum for the Cultural History of Germans from Russia) in Detmold, Germany. The date of July 22 was selected to commemorate the 248th anniversary of the Manifest issued by Catherine the Great inviting Germans and other western Europeans to settle in Russia.

Three months earlier, at the April 19, 2011, Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) Board meeting Lawrence Klippenstein had advised that this event was being planned. He further suggested that it would be desirable if a MHV Board member were to attend, should they happen to be in Europe at that time. I determined that my own plans to visit Europe in July, 2011, could be adjusted to allow me to attend. First I contacted Katharina Neufeld, the Director of the Museum in Detmold to request the opportunity to bring greetings at the opening event. She quickly confirmed their delight in having me attend and advised that an official invitation would be sent. I then contacted Roland Sawatzky about the possibility of selecting a gift to present to the Museum, preferably a Mennonite artifact from the MHV collection. Roland responded positively and eventually provided a number of options. Discussions involving John Rempel, Barry Dyck, Roland and myself resulted in the selection of a child's pair of socks as the focus of the gift presentation. To promote a strong relationship with the Museum in Detmold it was proposed that we present one sock to the museum and to display the other at the MHV, both displays to acknowledge each other and the relationship between the two museums. Roland arranged for the one sock and its description to be beautifully framed and then packaged for the journey to Germany.

On July 21, 2011, both the package and I arrived safely in Frankfurt and I immediately boarded the ICE Train to Bielefeld where I was received by relatives. After some confusion about if and when there was to be a program on July 22, 2011, I was able to determine that an "invited guests" only program to which I was invited was to take place that evening, and that there was to be an "open house" event for the public the following day. The Friday evening program which took place in the new Aula

Das Museum für russlanddeutsche Kulturgeschichte, Detmold, Deutschland, anlässlich der offiziellen Einweihungsfeier am 22. Juli 2011 geschenkt vom Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Kanada. Eine freundschaftliche Beziehung ist wie ein Paar Strümpfe – es braucht zwei. Der dazugehörige Strumpf ist im mennonitischen Museum in Steinbach, Kanada auf ähnliche Weise ausgestellt. Dieses Paar soll die ersten Schritte in der Beziehung unserer zwei Museen darstellen.

Die Kinderstrümpfe wurden von Susie Neufeld geb. Heinrichs gestrickt. Frau Neufeld, geboren am 2. Januar 1892 auf dem Gut Kornejeuka, Südrussland (heute Ukraine), heiratete im Jahr 1912. Ihr Mann wurde von anarchistischen Banden ermordet. Als sie 1924 mit ihren drei Kindern nach Kanada ausgewanderte, brachte sie die Kinderstrümpfe mit.

Kinderstrumpf 1912-1924
Geschenk von Susie Neufeld geb. Heinrichs
anlässlich der offiziellen Einweihungsfeier
des Museums für russlanddeutsche Kulturgeschichte



(auditorium) of the August-Hermann-Francke-Schule, a private Christian school, included greetings from various officials, dignitaries and politicians. The keynote address by Professor Dr. Dittmar Dahlmann, Bonn University, provided an overview of the history of Germans in Russia from the Middle Ages to the present. Also included in the program was a video showing students from the local Christian High School interviewing various people involved with the Museum as to how and why it exists, as well as musical presentations by violinist, Anatoly Wedel, and by the Chamber Choir of Music College OWL which ended the program with a very moving rendition of "Ich bete an die Macht der Liebe" in Russian and in German.

I was the last speaker, bringing greetings from the MHV Board, providing a brief description of our museum, and presenting several gifts to Dr. Katharina Neufeld, the most important one being the framed sock described above. The feedback suggested that my presentation was well received.

Excerpted from a longer report provided by Rudy Friesen

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in Canada English, and in Latin America Spanish. Low German, developed in their 250 year residence in Poland / Prussia, is the most important in this language mix. It carries the basic community identity, even though it can also incorporate new words from the different host languages: Russian, English and Spanish.

Probably the most moving, and powerful, presentation was made by Levi Fry, an Old Order Mennonite from Mount Forest, Ontario who spoke about his community's beliefs, practices and convictions. His presentation came at the beginning of the conference, and thus served to remind subsequent presenters that their comments were being observed through the ears and eyes of an insider.

The 23 presentations at the conference made a major contribution toward a better understanding of horse and buggy Mennonites, who collectively, are a large, dynamic, and growing part of the Anabaptist/Mennonite world.

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Reflect: A History of Steinbach Bible College

by Dr. Rob Reimer

It all started in the 1930s. After years of dreaming and planning, the first Bible School was introduced to the Steinbach community in 1931. Evening-only classes were offered at the Mennonite Brethren Church, and nine students were in attendance. Five years later, in 1936, the school opened its doors to students during daytime hours, and the historical clock of Steinbach Bible College (SBC) started ticking. At that time the college was owned and governed by a society of interested individuals from several churches. However, after operating for a few years, a board was formed and the school became governed by specific local congregations out of the Chortitzer Mennonite Conference (CMC), Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC), then known as the Kleine Gemeinde, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC), then known as the Rudnerweider, and the Mennonite Brethren Conference. Today three of those conferences, the CMC, the EMC, and the EMMC call Steinbach Bible College home.

The college was established with the purpose of training men and women to be equipped to teach the Bible in their congregations. Later, under President Ben D. Reimer, students were infused with a passion for world missions.



SBC Board of Directors 1954-61. Standing: Archie Penner, Abe F. Penner, Peter J. B. Reimer, Peter K. Bartel. Seated: Ed Loewen, Ben L. Reimer, George K. Reimer, Ben D. Reimer. — SBC archives photo

That original purpose remains at the centre of the college today.

Alumni of SBC can be found serving God in faraway places like Burkina Faso, Afghanistan, Germany, China, and Bolivia as missionaries, church planters, and aid workers. They can also be found closer to home serving as Camp Directors, Pastors, Youth Leaders, Sunday School

Teachers, Church Planters, and Board Members. Others have served the Church by being godly leaders in the workplace.

What makes an anniversary worth celebrating is not whether SBC has accumulated the correct number of years in the annals of time. What makes this anniversary worth celebrating is witnessing God's faithfulness through the years that SBC has fulfilled its mission. Students continue to be trained to serve the Church in order that the good news of Jesus Christ may reach around the world.

Today, students are continuing to hear the call to follow Jesus in a variety of ways and in a variety of places and are choosing Steinbach Bible College as the place to get the training they need. It is here that they are challenged to pursue the interaction between foundational Christian education and practical ministry.

*Dr. Rob Reimer, President,
Steinbach Bible College*



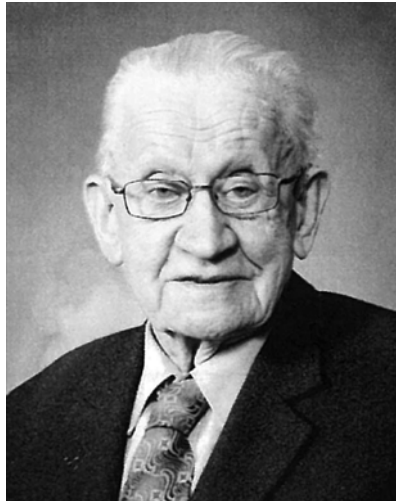
Current staff and faculty.

— Photo by Patrick Friesen

Henry H. Sawatzky (1920-2011)

A long-time Altona and Halbstadt, Manitoba businessman, Henry H. Sawatzky, 91, died Oct. 30, 2011 and funeral services were held in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church at Altona.

Born to Peter B. and Maria Sawatzky on April 15, 1920 in Halbstadt, Henry attended the Houston School up to age 14. Then he began to work in the Halbstadt General Store, owned and operated by his father Peter B. Sawatzky.



— Photo by Barry McGhie

In 1941 the Second World War interrupted his life, and he spent four months working as a conscientious objector (CO) in Riding Mountain National Park.

On May 24, 1942 Henry was baptized upon confession of his faith in Christ. In July he married Helena Rempel of the Edenthal district. They had five sons and lived in Halbstadt until 1984.

Brothers, Carl, Dave and Henry purchased the Halbstadt General Store from their father in 1957. They renamed it as Sawatzky Brothers Ltd. and it became a well-known and respected business in southern Manitoba, especially renowned for its quality appliance sales and service.

In 1978 Henry moved his appliance business to Altona, and operated as Sawatzky Bros. Ltd. until 1982, when a new building was built and the business was renamed as Sawatzky Appliances Ltd. Over time, people came to regard Henry as Altona's original Maytag man.

In 1988, this business was purchased by Henry's sons. They expanded it to Winkler, opening an appliance store in 1985, and a furniture store in Altona in 1996. Three locations are now owned by the third generation: Bill, Dave and Pete.

Henry and Helen resided in Halbstadt until 1984, when they moved to Spruce Crescent, in Altona. In 1996, they sold their house and moved into a Buffalo Plains apartment. They enjoyed life together here. His wife died in 2003, but Henry continued to live in Buffalo Plains.

He retired from active business at 90, and became an avid golfer.

Henry received a plaque from the Altona & District Chamber of Commerce in 2009 honouring his many years (75) of service to the business community. He also served on the Halbstadt and Altona Credit Union boards for many years.

Henry had a strong faith in God, and showed it quietly by serving as the Sommerfelder Church treasurer for 18 years. He was also passionate about his involvement with the Conscientious Objectors.

Of late he arranged for plaques of tribute to be hung in all the Sommerfelder Churches in Manitoba to honour, and remember the young men who chose a peace stance in WW II.

A family man, Henry is survived by five sons and their families.

*Elmer Heinrichs,
Assignment writer, of Altona, MB*

Altbergthal School Moving Update

by Lawrence Klippenstein

We are grateful that the project of moving and reconstructing the Altbergthal school building is no longer at a standstill. Several things have happened since we last reported to Heritage Posting in November, 2011.

First of all, we completed a grant application (in by Dec. 15, 2011) to receive funds (matching) from Manitoba Historic Resources. Obtaining about \$12,000 or so seems to be in the offing. We shall know around April, 2012, what will be coming our way to help the project. It will bring a possible total of ca \$25,000. together to prepare a foundation at the new site, move the building, and do some further exterior reconstruction – all we hope, to be completed in the spring and summer of 2012. Additional fund raising initiatives are also underway.

We have strengthened our conversation with Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation (NHF) and W. C. Miller High School's principal, Jonathan Toews, on the possible use of this facility, when relocated, for enhancing an environmental studies program with W. C. Miller High School in Altona. Other uses for the building regarding education and heritage preservation in the region are also under discussion.

Energetic volunteers have virtually completely cleared the site chosen for the new location of the building in Neuberghthal – on the lot of the former Eddie Schmidt property in the village (NHF National Site development).

Local media (CFAM and Golden West Radio) have given further information coverage for the public in late fall and early winter. Photo material is available from hiebertc@mymts.net We are looking for photos related to the Altbergthal building and school yard for the years 1905 – 1940. If you have something to send contact Wilf at hiebertc@mymts.net We just found a good one for the rear view of the building, along with hockey rink nearby for the late 1940s.

The Klippensteins of Russia Then and Now

by *Lawrence Klippenstein*

During my travels in the Soviet Union some years ago I would sometimes tell people that I too had "Russian" roots. In Ukraine I would make that "Ukrainian" roots. Sometimes I would add that my great-great grandfather Johann and his family emigrated from the Bergthal settlement to Manitoba, Canada, over a century ago. Their home village of Bergthal, somewhat north and west of Mariupol, has been renamed "Respublika".

But when someone would then ask if I still had relatives living in Russia, I used to say, "Not really – as far as I know." Now I don't say that anymore because I have come to see that it was not true, and it is not true today. My comments here will show what I mean.

In 1992 during an MCC orientation for serving in Moscow, someone gave me a story from Neues Leben, which was published for many years in the Soviet Union. It had to do with one Father Vladimir Klippenstein serving as a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church of Kyrgyzstan. I knew of no such person, though have more recently learned to know more about the family. Some of my friends in Saskatchewan have visited Anna, his mother, active in a Baptist church, in Germany. His father, Jacob, originally from Arkadak, a member of the Communist party at one time, then a believer also, worked as principal in a high school in Leninpol, and then Orlovo, in Kyrgyzstan for many years.

From the work of the late Herman Schirmacher I learned about at least six Klippenstein families resident for years in the Chortitza colony village of Blumengart until its Mennonite evacuation in 1943. How many of their relatives living at the time joined the emigration, or remained in the Soviet Union is not known.

One more episode will

need to suffice for this brief note. In 2010 I attended an early June conference on Germans in Siberia held in Omsk, Siberia. A brief tour following the presentation sessions included the village of Apollonovka (founded by Mennonites as Waldheim around 1905) near Issyl Kul, somewhat west on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Here we attended a church service and met members of the Andreas and Valentina Pauls family. In a brief conversation Andreas mentioned to me that his mother had been a Klippenstein. It was something I wanted to follow up to see if we had an actual family connection. It turned out we did.

Elizabeth, if I understand correctly, had been the third child of six, a daughter of Johann Klippenstein, (1898-1985), whose father, also Johann, b.1865, had brought his family (he had 10 children) from the Slavgorod (?) settlement south and east of Omsk to Waldheim where he became the choir director of the local (possibly MB) church. He was arrested there in 1937 during the Stalin purges, and executed in March, 1938 (?).

Elizabeth married J. Pauls. Their son, Andreas, is now the local church choir director, and a son of Andreas directs the church orchestra. I am waiting for more information to give us a clearer picture of the Pauls/ Klippenstein family story in modern times.



Andreas and Valentina Pauls family.

Mexico Mennonites to Celebrate 90th Anniversary

by *Adolf Ens*

On March 1, 1922 the first chartered trainload of Manitoba Mennonites departed from the Plum Coulee station for the Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua. By 1926 the emigrants from Manitoba numbered some 3,200 from the Reinländer Gemeinde (Old Colony) and another 600 from the Sommerfeld Gemeinde. By now many "daughter settlements" have been founded by descendants of the Manitoba pioneers, both in Mexico as well as in other Latin American countries.

The Board of the Museo y Centro Cultural is planning a weekend of celebrations of the 90 years of settlement in Mexico for this summer, near the end of May or early June. Included will be historical presentations, music and singing, and a tour of the Hacienda Bustillos.

The Museum and Cultural Centre, with which our Society has a "dotted line" relationship, focuses on preserving artefacts and documents relating to Mennonite history and life in Mexico as well as on educating both Mennonites and the general population.

Mennonite Heritage Village, 2011

by Maria Falk Lodge

As in previous years The Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) offered a rich and diverse range of events, activities and exhibits during 2011.

Early in the year, with the passing of Gerhard Ens, MHV celebrated the rich legacy left by Mr. Ens, who had been one of its founders and its longest serving board member.

A new art exhibit entitled *The Art of Cornelius Epp: A Restrospective*, was opened in March in the gallery named after Gerhard Ens. The exhibit displayed paintings and sketches by this well-known Mennonite artist, a conscientious objector who began painting in a Siberian labour camp, and continued to pursue his art in Germany and Paraguay, eventually making his home in Canada. These works of art provide a poignant documentation of the refugee experience.

In May MHV again opened its doors to the public. *Spring on the Farm*, this annual event at MHV was staged together with the Southeast Implement Collectors, and included a Tractor Show.

Canada Day celebrations included speeches by various dignitaries, and a prayer for peace. Entertainment by a range of performers set a celebratory mood, and cultural displays and foods helped to highlight Canada's ethnic diversity. Pioneer demonstrations, activities for children, and birthday cake all served to make for a memorable day.

The biggest event of the year, *Pioneer Days*, was held during the August long weekend. Highlighting pioneer demonstrations, threshing, entertainment, and plenty of home-cooked food, *Pioneer Days* was a truly memorable occasion, drawing a crowd of over 5500 people.

Notable too was the involvement of the community in this annual signature event of MHV, including a *Pioneer Days* parade planned and delivered by the Steinbach Chamber of Commerce on the opening day. This occurrence, coupled with other supporting community events helped to create publicity and momentum for the festival. Volunteers, some 500 of them, also made a substantial contribution to this celebration.

Fall on the Farm during the September long weekend once again provided the last opportunity of the season to

experience demonstrations of life during the pioneer era, along with activities of various sorts, entertainment, and food, all of them so characteristic of festival days at MHV.

The MHV Auxiliary served waffles and vanilla sauce, and fresh apple fritters. Indeed, the function of the Auxiliary cannot be over-estimated both in regard to its fundraising projects, but especially in its role as an ambassador for MHV.

A Touch of Christmas has become an annual occasion at MHV. Held on December 2 -3, 2011, the event once more enjoyed by many, provided a suitable reminder of the reason for celebrating Christmas. It, in essence, brought the year to a close for the Village.

Mennonite Heritage Village continues to highlight its core values, including providing for activities and events in a spirit of integrity, respect and excellence, all conducted in a financially sustainable manner in the context of environmental responsibility, and in a visitor and customer friendly manner.

The 2011 Family History Essay Contest Winners



The 2011 winners of the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award for writing a family history essay, as announced by the Genealogy Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, were Brett Rempel and Olivia Peters.

Rempel's paper focused on the life of his great grandfather, Johan F. Krahn (1911-1999), and Peters concentrated on an analysis of how different and yet similar life was for three generations in her family. At the time of the announcement both students were in Grade 12 at the Steinbach Christian High School.

The winners receive a cash award of \$350 each plus a year's subscription to the Society's newsletter *Heritage Posting*.

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.

The competition details can be found on the Society's web site at: www.mmhs.org.

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Many subscribers have chosen 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.

Book Reviews

Reviewed by John E. Martens, Winnipeg

Lisa Weaver, Julie Kauffman, and Judith Rempel Smucker. *On the Zwieback Trail*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMU Press. 2011.

Not only a Zwieback trail placed on an alphabet trail awaits the reader, in this attractive, hard-cover, 9 1/4" square coffee-table book, but also a trail of Dutch Anabaptist Mennonites from Russia, encompassing almost five centuries of shared beliefs, unexpected migrations and cultural adaptations, as well as a scattering of their favourite recipes. Though the cottage-cheese Verenike and Borscht recipes to be found in this book may well have been adapted from neighbouring cultures, the double-decker Zwieback featured on this book's cover surely must be "Mennonite," as the authors claim. The German Zwieback, which is made with eggs and sugar, baked in a loaf, and then sliced and roasted — hence, double-baked - is not the Mennonite Zwieback. The Mennonite Zwieback is not sweet, nor is it baked twice. Rather it is a double-bun, made by pressing one bun on top of the other. In many homes these were baked on Saturday, filling the kitchen with a beautiful aroma while the kitchen linoleum was being washed, and were served at Sunday Faspa, a festive occasion, with jam and pieces of cheese, all accompanied by coffee, or, in leaner days, by Pripps, a drink made from ground available grains such as barley and rye. Left-over Zwieback, though, were sometimes sliced and roasted. These could be dunked in coffee and eaten with a dab of butter, jam, or honey. Delicious. Their durability and reasonable nourishment made them a staple on extended trips — though an ancestor of a friend of mine, when encountering deep water, is said to have used his bags of Zwieback as a flotation device!

This is an intergenerational book. Its glossy cover ensures that jam off children's inquisitive fingers will wipe off easily. Also the book lies flat for you to read while enjoying your breakfast without having to place a Zwieback on each corner to keep it open — a fine feature indeed!

After you open it, you will encounter the first subject, under the letter "A," which stands for Anabaptist. I dare not share with you all the subjects or bite-sized bits of information you will uncover as you explore what the authors have chosen for each letter of the alphabet. This is for you to discover. But you will encounter a collage of photos, recipes, prayers, and short stories that you can share with your children and grandchildren.

The beauty of this book lies not only in its attractive presentation. It lies particularly in its capacity to lead into further investigation of a subject presented. For example, under the letter "F," you will find a picture of seven people in 1926 in the home of Peter Froese in Moscow. He's the one at the head of the table, sipping tea. To his right, facing the camera, is C. F. Klassen. Your children or grandchildren can google the Mennonite online encyclopedia, "Gameo," and find information on both. Peter's picture, by the way, appears again in Victor Fast's

Voruebergehende Heimat, returning from a Siberian labour camp.

In addition, you might notice that the Moscow picture has a samovar, a Russian tea-urn, on the table. This, in my case, would lead to a story about Siberian tea houses in which drinkers would not pay for the tea, but rather for the number of towels requested to wipe the perspiration off their bodies as they drank cup after cup. In your case, it may elicit other unusual stories.

I half expected Pripps to be on the "P" pages. It isn't, but if it were, it could lead to another story. Have you heard of Pripps Latte? Well I enjoyed it in Novosibirsk, capital of Siberia, in 1983. Two pots, one with Pripps, the other with milk, were heated to boiling point and then poured together. This, served with Zwieback and home-made strawberry jam, provided an opportunity for community building and joy, an experience I will not forget. Stories like this, I believe, will be generated by this book. Parents can take a letter at a time with their children, tell them the stories surrounding the pictures and bits of information, and use them as a catalyst to share related stories of their own.

Rounding out the book is a Russian-Mennonite timeline as well as notes and credits for material under each letter of the alphabet to aid further explorations.

Oh, yes, do have a magnifying glass handy to read a very interesting ad in the "K" pages. Will you recognize the three languages used?

* * *

Reviewed by Abe Warkentin

Gerhard J. Ens & Erica Ens, editors. *Dee easchte Wienachten enn Kanada enn aundre Jeschijchten*. (RTP Archive Press, 2011. 128 pages.) Available (\$9) at Die Mennonitische Post, Steinbach.

The modest appearance of this book is misleading. It is a treasure, not only for its delightful Low German but for its accurate historical record in relating major movements in Mennonite history.

These stories were written for radio broadcast by Gerhard Ens between 1972 and 2003 and were, as the very thorough and informative introduction points out, intended to provide Manitoba Mennonites with a better historical context in which to understand the centennial of Mennonite settlement in Manitoba.

Although written as stand-alone stories, Ens, who passed away in 2011, later began thinking more along the lines of a unified narrative of Mennonite departures and arrivals on three continents over a century.

The stories in this volume are typically narrated by children and most are Christmas stories which teach a moral lesson.

Much credit has to be given to the author for using Low German to tell his stories. He did so at a time when that

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was not being done and he sought to retrieve Low German as a literary language among Mennonites. Many of the stories would simply not have the same authenticity written in any other language.

I knew Gerhard Ens only casually. I thought of him as the quintessential "Russlaenda": serious, focused and much concerned about "Ordnung" (order) in whatever he did. I never knew him well enough to detect the sense of humour in his persona tucked away under suit, tie and high-school principal veneer. That (the humour) and the incredible detail showing intimate familiarity with the subject material, helps make this book exceptional.

The author quickly develops believable characters in his stories and sees situations through their eyes. He feels their hurts and shares their hopes and dreams. Every story has the kind of empathy and insight you find in his chapter on "Dee Oostaeia" where 19-year-old Peeta, having arrived in Manitoba from Russia in 1875, compares everything he sees with his old homeland and finds it wanting.

"Aules waut wie hia zeowenst hearen send Poggen em Farjoa enn Schirtjen em Hoafst."

Peeta even finds fault with the meadowlarks on the farm fields. "Na, du daumelje Aumsel, brukst je die nijch gaunz heesch bloaren waajens dee haulfnoaktje Tjitjel enn dem Nast."

The chapters are best read and enjoyed one at a time, rather than read as an ongoing story. That way the catastrophic and momentous events – war, revolution, emigration – so interestingly documented, can be absorbed separately. The Low German reads smoothly and has been edited very professionally.

The feel-good Christmas theme running like a thread through the stories and the happy endings might be a bit much for critical readers but in an age when much-acclaimed, newly-minted 'Mennonite' novelists and poets trash much of a Mennonite way of life they actually know little about, it is almost refreshing.

Hopefully, this book will be reprinted. A second printing should include pictures or illustrations and brief historical sketches to introduce the time period and setting of each story.

And Dee easchte Wienachten enn Kanaada should be considered for a new market: the conservative colonies in Latin America where new school curriculum material is desperately needed and these stories would be eagerly read or listened to.

As an introduction, these stories could be serialized in *Die Mennonitische Post*. That would create an instant market for over 100,000 Mennonites who, for the most part, are still not nearly as affected by intrusive modern technology, especially television, as we are.

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Dr. Gerhard J. Ens and Erica Ens have compiled and edited *Dee easchte Wienachten enn Kanada enn aundre Jeschijchten* (The First Christmas in Canada and Other Stories) authored by the late Rev. Gerhard Ens of Gretna and Winnipeg, (Edmonton, AB: RTP Archive, 2011), 128 pp., 9.00. The stories, all presented in the Low German language, were written for radio and transmitted by CFAM at Altona at various times after 1972 when Ens's Low German series was initiated. For copies contact the Mennonite Heritage Village bookstore (marigoldp@mhv.ca or 204-326-9661) or other Mennonite book stores.

We Must Adapt (Wir Muessen uns Schicken): The Schroeder-Fast Letters 1930-1988. Learning to Live in Stalinist Russia is a new family publication compiled, translated and edited by Dr. Peter Fast of Winnipeg, MB. Fifty letters from Russia written by members of the Peter Schroeder and Johann Fast families appear in their first translation into English in this volume. The book was prepared for publication by members of the David and Agatha Fast Family of Winnipeg, MB and London, ON. The volume is spiral-bound in a 293-page, paperback format published in 2011. Further information can be obtained from Erna and Egon Enns by emailing eensoj@mts.net or calling 204-233-6975.

In 2011 Arnie Neufeld, former pastor and director of the newly-opened Winkler Heritage Society museum, released his hardcover, 425-page family study titled *Family Trees: Milestones and Memories: My Family Story*. Its nine chapters include a study of eight families to which he and his wife Trudi relate directly: Neufelds, Wiebes, Heidebrechts, Epps, Klassens, Dycks, Peters and Toewses. The book is available for \$35.00 plus postage and may be ordered from 1060 Pembina Ave., Winkler, MB, R6W 1X4, or arnieneufeld@mymts.net.

David's Trip to Paraguay: The Land of Amazing Colours (Davids Reise in das Land der vielen Farben) is drawing increasing attention to its author and very able illustrator, Miriam Rudolph. This hard-cover 28-page bilingually-told story of Mennonites (of which the author's grandfather and inspiration, David Guenther, was one) leaving Manitoba and moving to Paraguay, then in another generation returning to Canada, is written in easy-to-understand prose (for children, some might say). However its art work has a folksy yet professional attraction far beyond the typical appreciation level of youngsters. It is also a 2011 publication, done with the careful attention of CMU Press and the printing prowess of Friesens in Altona. For copies contact the Village Bookstore at 204-326-9661 or marigoldp@mhv.ca.