



Winter Projects at Mennonite Heritage Village

by Barry Dyck

This winter will find Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) busier than usual with a number of significant capital projects. Our Foundations for a Strong Future initiative is approaching the \$2,000,000 mark so we are delighted to start putting those funds to good use.

Last week we had a sod-turning ceremony to initiate construction of our Summer Pavilion. This building will replace the big white tent and will provide many new opportunities for MHV programs and community activities. The project is underway and Penn-Co, our general contractor, is pushing hard to get the concrete work done before the ground freezes and to ensure that the new building will be ready for use by May 1, 2017.

For almost a year, we had been looking for a contractor to do log-wall repairs to the Waldheim House, our oldest building. Both exterior and interior walls need to be refurbished. We are pleased that Myron Hiebert and Michael Klassen have come forward with considerable passion for the restoration of this 1876 house from the former village of Waldheim. Their project is currently underway and will be completed for our 2017 season. We are now looking for a qualified craftsman to put a new thatched roof on that house next summer.

Our iconic windmill is undergoing some restoration this fall. Bob's Woodworking will be installing new louvres on the main sails of the windmill. These louvres allow the



Sod-turning ceremony initiating construction of the Summer Pavilion; (L-R) Barry Dyck, MHV Executive Director; Chris Goertzen, Steinbach Mayor; Willie Peters, MHV Board Chair; Jason Plett, Penn-Co Project Manager; Jerald Peters, ft3 Architect.

operator to adjust the sails according to the amount of wind available and the amount of power required to grind the wheat. Additionally, Broesky Painting has just completed painting the new louvres, the railing around the main deck and a few other critical areas of the windmill.

We are grateful for the support of our constituency which allows us to maintain and develop the work of this museum.

Report on the NHF Bergthal School Project

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Progress on renovating the Altbergthal school building has been significant during the summer months. Lights are in with globes on, the wainscoting, painting, trim, floor cleanup and miscellaneous items have been completed.

The main space has already proven its utility with committee meetings held there, a yoga lesson given recently, programs for Culture Day on September 10 were hosted at the school, and earlier on, an all day art work exhibit.

Plans for doing repairs in the smaller space (former teacherage) are being finalized. Ongoing work has now been shifted to be part of the larger Schmidt property development, while the Bergthal School Committee continues to plan for uses of the first floor and assists with fund-raising. We are thinking \$20,000.00 may complete everything on the first floor with a good portion of this total already pledged and otherwise in prospect.

Discussions for a ribbon cutting have been broached but not brought to conclusion.

History at the Corn and Apple Festival in Morden

by Lawrence Klippenstein

I know the annual Corn and Apple Festival in Morden is not a gathering for historians. My visits to this much appreciated event occurred only occasionally, and the 2012 Festival was one of those. I was not sure we would get to the corn and apples because I knew the line-up to get either one can be very long, and if you are quite hungry you may not be able to tolerate the wait.

But the fact was I had other things also on my mind than the good food. Right – they had to do with history mainly, and not horticulture. (I do recall our family visiting the experimental farm in Morden when I was a child, and we usually did buy some apples).

My appointment though was with a fellow historian, Henry Unger. One day at some other event he mentioned that in his project of helping others write community histories, especially of their schools, he had collected a large pile of old text books students used long ago, and he was giving them away to anyone who came to pick them up. Since I was involved with renovating the old Altbergthol school building, I hoped to get some of these books to keep on our memory shelves at the school.

We met at the Kopper Kettle restaurant on the west side of Morden, quite close to where Henry resides at present. We had a good chat, coffee, of course, and arranged for a pickup of some of those books. He promised to pack up some (turned out to be about sixty, we learned later) and I promised to find someone to take them off his hands, as it were.

But I remembered also that just a few years ago Henry had written a book about his one-time home village, Neuenburg, south of Winkler, with emphasis on the Birkenhead school district. The village was an old one once established by mainly Reinlaender Mennonite church families. It is the village where Jewish families of Winkler at one time had set up a special farming estate. They called it the *Judenplan*, similar to such a settlement of the nineteenth century in south Russia. That one did not succeed very well, so was closed after some years. When these local families left Winkler, the land was sold to neighbours, and that *Judenplan* too existed no more.

Henry had taught for many years and had a special interest in education and schools (and gathered a lot of related data on that theme). I told him I had not yet really had a good look at the book, and he immediately offered to bring me a copy, which he did before we said goodbye to the Kettle. Henry is in fact directing a project aimed at getting school histories of rural schools that once flourished in the former West Reserve, written.

The book deserves a regular review and perhaps my notes here can introduce one at least. It is titled *The Survival of a Community The History of Neuenburg and the Birkenhead School District*, and is a good looking 8 x 11 sized volume with 250 pages including a quite large number of good black and white photos. Outstanding too is the amount of detailed information offered in the book – I have seen nothing like it for a community and school district history written in recent years. I sense a complete set of school registers, for one, must have been at the author's disposal. Really, it is a model of a school district history which others trying to write one should look at carefully.

It was a good meeting, but I still had a question not connected to this project. I was wondering how things were going with Peter Klippenstein, my dad's uncle, who has lived in Morden for quite a few years. I had hoped to see Peter also – now well into his nineties and I was not sure how his health would be by now. You are right, said Henry. He is presently in the hospital and it is not clear when he may be able to come home. So I sent some historical materials to read, and greetings which Henry said he would pass on at his next visit. Peter comes from a large family, in which all but one or two siblings have passed away.

While in Morden I was of course also thinking about an extinct town to the south called Mountain City which closed down when the railway did not go west through it, but instead took a course somewhat north of Mountain City. This small town was always the last point west on the Post Road Mennonite trail which began in Emerson and ended at Mountain City – serving the entire former West Reserve that way. It has also disappeared, but markers have been set up for anyone wanting to trace where it went on its course through the one-time reserve. Try it sometime – start in Emerson and go to Mountain City and stop in Morden on your way back!

Published in 2012

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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

Editor — Maria Falk Lodge

Circulation Manager —

Layout Editor — Ted Barg

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

Correspondence can be mailed to: mmhsph@gmail.com

HP Circulation Manager: heritage.posting@gmail.com

Website: www.mmhs.org

ISSN 1491-2325

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— The editors.

CO Cairn Unveiling at Mennonite Heritage Village

by Jack Heppner

At 11:00 a.m. on November 12, 2016 a cairn honouring Mennonite Conscientious Objectors (COs) during World War II was unveiled at the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV).

This cairn is a welcome addition to the grounds of MHV. Over the years, the museum has done a good job of telling the story of Russian Mennonites immigrating to Manitoba and settling here, including the articulation of the spiritual and ethical impulses involved. This new cairn will enhance the telling of that story to all visitors to the MHV grounds by focusing attention on the more than 3000 Manitoba Mennonite COs who paid the price of their convictions in the 1940s.

The impetus for this new project came from the Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship Manitoba Inc. (EAF), an organization dedicated to preserving a peace stance within Mennonite churches in this province. Before this project came to fruition here in Steinbach, EAF had already initiated

the erection of CO cairns in Altona and Winkler.

A long-time member of EAF, Harvey Plett, was joined by other local persons interested in erecting this cairn in Steinbach, including

Lawrence Klippenstein, Abe Warkentin, Evelyn Friesen, Al Hamm, Elbert Toews and Jack Heppner. Together, and with the cooperation of the MHV Board, they have seen this project through to completion.

The present location of the monument on the main street of the village near the saw mill is considered to be temporary. A

permanent location will be determined over the next few years as part of an overall site plan the MHV Board is presently developing.

The Peace Position has historically been one of the defining characteristics of Mennonite identity. When it emerged in the 16th century, Mennonites were convinced that if the scriptures are read through the lens of Christ it becomes clear that the way of peace is the way for all Christ



The large boulder coming to rest at the Mennonite Heritage Village.

— Photo by Al Hamm

followers. "Love in all relationships" became their motto and it informed all areas of life, including personal and public.

Throughout their 500-year history, Mennonites have at some critical points struggled to maintain this peace position. Sometimes intense persecution served to limit their resolve. At other times Mennonites began to question whether the way of peace was in fact central to living out the gospel of Christ. And, from time to time, certain Mennonite communities have dropped the peace emphasis entirely.

It is interesting to note that in the 21st century many thoughtful Christians in non-Mennonite faith traditions are beginning to discover and embrace a biblical understanding of peace similar to that of the historical Mennonite position.

By erecting this peace cairn honoring COs during World War II, the Steinbach Peace Committee is hoping to raise awareness of the centrality of the peace position in the Mennonite church of the past. As well, that it will help to strengthen the peace emphasis of Mennonite churches in the 21st century. And it would be a bonus if this cairn would encourage non-Mennonite believers who are currently embracing the way of peace.

Yoga in the Village



In the village of Neuberghthal, the old schoolhouse becomes the setting for an event called "Yoga in the Village", under the direction of Susie Fisher. The Bergthal School project is alive and well; the restoration of the schoolhouse nearly complete.

— Photo by Lois Braun

Christian (Chortitzer) Mennonite Conference *Waisenamt* Records Now at MHC

by Lawrence Klippenstein and Ernest Braun

In 1836 the Chortitza Mennonites of south Russia (later Ukraine) established a new settlement 150 miles east of the “mother” colony somewhat northwest of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. It received the name Bergthal, already familiar as a special pasture (*Schaeferrei*) for sheep in southwest Chortitza. Settlement of the newly acquired 30,000 acres (8500 good for cultivation) closed with the founding of five villages: Bergthal, Heuboden, Schönthal, Schönfeld and Friedrichsthal. A series of five settlement waves ending in 1852 brought a total of 145 original Chortitza and some Molotschna families to the new Mennonite colony.

Among the organizational institutions developed or brought along by the new settler group as a whole was one known as the *Waisenamt*, commonly translated as “Orphans’ Bureau”. Its specific purpose was the constitution of a trusteeship body to look after legacies, financial and otherwise, for surviving spouses and their minor children when a husband or wife passed away. This involved protecting the integrity of the estates, and assuring their disbursement in the stipulated manner.

When most of the Bergthal settlers of south Russia emigrated to southern Manitoba in Canada, they retained possession of the Mariupoler *Mennoniten Waisenamt* and its ongoing validity and application in their new homeland. By the time of the mass emigration of 1874 – 1876, it had accrued a significant collection of documents which remained vital to sustain the ongoing life of the community. In Manitoba these records were conscientiously and

carefully stored and maintained for further use in the Bergthaler villages of the East Reserve, now numbering thirty-eight with just under 3000 residents in total.

In 1877 the institution was reaffirmed in Manitoba, and in 1880 Rev. Franz Dyck adapted the wording to conform to Canadian law. The name was changed to

Allgemeine Waisen-Verordnung der von Russland in Manitoba eingewanderten und angesiedelten Mennoniten. Later editions added “*der Gemeinde Chortitz*” as new branches were established on the West Reserve.

Ultimately in 2002, it was decided to close the Chortitzer *Waisenamt* and commit business related to its function to current Canadian

institutions. After being located in several different venues over the years, these documents, still in the keeping of the Chortitzer (now Christian) Mennonite Conference under the direction of its current Bishop, David Reimer, have found a new home in the public domain.

This became reality when, on November 2, 2016, twenty-two bank boxes of materials, reorganized and carefully labeled by a designated committee, were brought to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, and ownership transferred with a ceremony designating the Centre, in consultation with the CMC creators of the material, to be the caring and servicing agency of the material from this time on.

Signatories of a special holding agreement included CMC Bishop David Reimer, Rev. Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada (owner of MHC), Jacob Doerksen, CMC archives representative, and Korey Dyck, Director, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives & Gallery. Several dozen guests heard an excellent presentation by Ernest Braun of Niverville on the contents of the boxes, received comments from several volunteers who organized the documents held in storage in Steinbach until now, and witnessed the signing of the agreement. Fellowship and refreshments followed.

An easy-to-read summary of the *Waisenamt* material lists inheritance documents from various years, financial ledgers including indebtedness records, the so-called *Brottschuld* lists of loans made to settler families at various stages, receipt books, co-signers lists, auction documents,

(Continued on page 5)



Signing an agreement for transfer of the Chortitzer *Waisenamt* records to Mennonite Heritage Centre (left to right) Jake Doerksen, member of the Chortitzer Mennonite conference, Willard Metzger, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, owner of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Bishop David Reimer of the Christian (Chortitzer) Mennonite Conference, overseeing the transfer of records, and Korey Dyck, director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, and coordinator of the transferring process.

— Photos by Ernest Braun, Niverville, Manitoba.

Editor's Note

It has been a pleasure being involved with editing Heritage Posting for some six years. I have become much more aware of current Mennonite history events in a Manitoba context in this process, as well as having learned a great deal about the numerous groups engaged in historical research at many levels.

I have had the pleasure of working with many individuals who were invariably willing to provide materials for our newsletter. They have contributed greatly to recording Manitoba Mennonite history in diverse ways, and have made compiling Heritage Posting a true delight.

Now it is time for me to explore other projects, and to leave our newsletter in the capable hands of others.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute in a small way to the work of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

— Maria Falk Lodge

(Continued from page 4)

annual account books, correspondence, estate records and other related materials. Most of the ledgers and correspondence were digitized by Peter K. Reimer and can be examined without resorting to the hard copy.

Many family references offer rich materials for genealogists. Financial records provide insights into the day-to-day lives of the pioneers, and on the functioning generally of the Bergthal communities in Russia, the East Reserve, and the Chaco (Paraguay) later.

A detailed inventory is available at the MHC archives, as a finding aid to the actual documents or to the digital images. MHC archivist Conrad Stoesz, who helped to host the gathering, will be on hand to aid researchers from here on. Close contact will be maintained with the CMC.



Left to right: CMC Bishop David Reimer, Jacob Doerksen, CMC representative, and Korey Dyck, MHC director: overseeing the transfer of Waisenamt documents on Nov. 2, 2016.

Archival Material Lost, and Not Yet Found

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Three collections of archival material are currently the subject of a search that is ongoing. One relates to the administrative records of the *Gebietsamt* in Chortitza at the time of the German retreat from Ukraine in 1943. No one seems to know where those records were taken to at the time of that retreat. One Johann Epp was the last mayor of Chortitza is said to have supervised the moving and hoped for preservation of that document collection.

Werner Toews and associates here of Winnipeg have been trying to trace the movement of those materials and have prepared an article detailing that so far unsuccessful search. It is scheduled to appear in the upcoming issue of *Mennonite Historian*. Watch for it.

The other two items are much smaller. They include a number of lost school registers created over the years in the former rural school of Altbergthal, No. 1296, located west of Altona at that time. Part of the set is lodged at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. A number of the earlier ones from ca 1920 on have not been found so far.

Also missing are copies of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute alumni newsletter called *Ich Sende Euch* (I am Sending You) from the 1940s. No complete set (needing 1947 issues especially) seems to exist anywhere. If you have information about the possible location of these items contact lawklippenstein@shaw.ca Thank you very much.

Next Tour to Siberia in Russia

Tour Guide: Len Loeppky of Steinbach, Manitoba, with more than a dozen tours to Eastern Europe in his resume.

Date: May 30 – June 15, 2017

Places to visit: Including Omsk, city of Slavgorod, Barnaul settlement area, Saratov (not very far from Omsk), Pashnay and Glyaden settlements, and the city of Moscow.

More information: Contact Len at aloepky@mymts.net, or 1-204-326-2613 or Canada Travel at 1-800-376-1303.

BE OUR GUESTS AND SIGN UP AS SOON AS YOU CAN TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT!

Open-air Concert at Chortitz

by Ernie Braun

The Chortitz Heritage Church in Randolph hosted a first-ever open-air concert on August 14, 2016. About 125 people braved the hot sun on a Sunday afternoon to enjoy a variety of music by two ensembles, ably emceed by Harold Giesbrecht of One-Hope Canada, host of Heart of the South radio program on CHSM. The feature group was Ronni Wiens: Family and Friends. This group led the event with the unique tones of the Paraguayan harp, played by Ronni Wiens himself, accompanied by his wife Lilian as lead singer and bass guitarist, as well as Perla Wiens on the drums, and Ray also on the guitar. This group led two sessions, the first with gospel and the second with South American folkloric music of various genres. Between the two sessions, a second group formed by Maria Blatz and Kathy Penner with Lorne Derkatch on guitar provided an interlude of gospel songs, and then Lorne and Shirley Derkatch entertained the audience with some Ukrainian songs in Ukrainian. This was likely the first time this church site heard the Ukrainian language since



Ronni Wiens with his new ornate Paraguayan harp, played for the first time in public at this event.

— Photos by Ernie Braun



Orlando and Sam with view of watermelon and rollkuchen.

the earliest settlement years when many of the Mennonite immigrants would still have had some fluency in the language of the land they had just left. Dr. Corneil Blatz, who is the chair of the Chortitz Church Heritage Committee, presented an update on the status of the restoration of the church.

The event was sponsored by the Chortitz Church Heritage Committee, which had erected some tent shelters for shade for the audience who provided their own seating. After the program, the committee provided refreshments suitable to the culture and the weather: watermelon and *rollkuchen*.

“Komt trigj nom Darp!” (“Come back to the village!”)

—Neubergthal Culture Day

by Lois Braun

On Saturday, Sept. 10, the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation hosted an afternoon of programs aimed at promoting Mennonite culture and history, in the form of music, story-telling, and short, educational presentations. These programs were spread among three restored buildings in the village. After registering at the community centre, and as the leaves on the Manitoba maples began to turn gold and poplar leaves turned bronze, visitors meandered about the village in calm, sunny, autumn weather.

In the *schien* of the Ray and Marilyn Hamm housebarn, Linda Hiebert performed music in English, and Dennis Reimer sang Plautdietsch songs accompanied on the keyboard by his wife, Phyllis Reimer.

In the Bergthal schoolhouse, writer Armin Wiebe reminisced about his experiences growing up in several *darps* in the West Reserve; Hans Werner of the U. of W. gave a brief lecture on the history of the Low German language; and local massage therapist and *tae kwon do* instructor Sergej Kanke described his life in Mennonite villages in Communist Russia.

Low-German presentations took place in the former H. F. Hamm house (now used by the village as a picnic shelter). There, farmer Shane Friesen spoke about the Plautdietsch club he has organized for youth in the Altona area; local author and Plautdietsch enthusiast Jack Klassen presented odd sayings and poems/song lyrics; Joyce Kehler Friesen and Rose Hildebrand shared their recollections about their childhoods in Neubergthal; and octogenarian Cleo Heinrichs told her story about achieving “fame and fortune” in the West Reserve, first as a columnist in the local papers, and then as a radio personality with Golden West Broadcasting.

Following the programs, visitors returned to the community centre for a meal of homemade soups and plautz, and bread baked in one of the village’s traditional bake-ovens.

The day was topped off with an evening concert in the Krahn barn loft, where many concerts have taken place over the years. Jess Reimer and her husband Jeremy Hamm performed with singers Keri Latimer and Vanessa Kuzina, and a five-piece band. The show was a tribute to the music of Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, and Linda Ronstadt, and was very enthusiastically received by a sold-out audience!

Organizers were pleased with how the special day unfolded, even though they had expected a slightly larger turnout for the afternoon program. As one visitor said: “It doesn’t matter how many people came. The fact that the event happened—the presenters, the venues, the setting—has historical value and is important to keeping the fabric of Mennonite culture intact.”

Book Review

Marlene Plett. *An Unhurried Journey: The Road from Edenthal* (Altona: by the author, 2016), pb. 387 pp.

Reviewed by David Rempel Smucker

The author of this autobiography was born in 1934 on a farm in a school district called Edenthal near the small town of Gretna, Manitoba. Most of her neighbors were fellow Mennonites. Later in life, she lived in Altona. She describes her life in vivid details, especially remarkable for memories of her earliest years, and also memories of her emotional reactions to events. Although some specific dates are provided, it would be helpful to have many more dates, especially in the table of contents.

She describes a life of growing self-awareness, eventually facing and coming to terms with many challenges, including sexual abuse as a young child, struggling with the flood of her seven children from 1953 to 1963, and most impactful—a stressful relationship with her husband which ended in divorce in 2008. After decades of not honestly facing conflictual situations, the author received counseling assistance and began to realize the impact on her of certain relationships. For example, one chapter is entitled “Trapped in Confusion.” Of course, the reader receives only the author’s perspective of these events, but there is a sense of accuracy about the basics of her account. For example, a source of the chasm between the author and her husband could possibly be traced to their childhoods—hers a child in a stable marriage, ongoing church life, political continuity, and his in the anti-religious chaos of the Soviet Union of the 1930s and 1940s. His father was arrested in 1937 and disappeared forever into the Soviet Gulag. The once vigorous Mennonite church life survived primarily in private devotions without much openly public institutional expression.

She gives the reader a detailed and colorful description of a communal pig butchering (pp. 113-117), typical of that era. Even at the author’s age (ca. 13), she linked pig butchering to an important event which strengthened her community and a rite of passage for her, as she moved from puberty to adulthood. “Learning to distinguish between the different organs and cuts of meat, I helped the women who were working with the warm flesh—choosing cuts for farmer sausage, preparing the casings, trimming extra fat from the pork chops and spareribs and stirring the huge *miagrope* (Low German for the iron cauldron) bubbling softly with rendered lard, slivers of pork, and spareribs.” (p. 115).

The author and some of her siblings attended Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. A reader can obtain a sense of the situation of a female student during the late 1940s—fitting into the uniforms, dorm life, group devotions called *Abendsegen* (evening blessings), praying aloud in public, Christmas dramas, “crushes” on boys, and spiritual nurture from Deeper Life services.

At the end of the book one encounters three short biographies of her mother, her father, and her husband, a somewhat odd sequence. Especially the transition from third-person perspective for describing her parents, and

primarily first-person perspective by her husband, describing parts of his life.

One can admire this person, at an advanced age, for courageously sharing her challenging journey of self-awareness.

Workshop Explores West Reserve Mennonite Village Histories

by Elmer Heinrichs and Lawrence Klippenstein

Fifty or more villages were established by Mennonite families who moved to the former West Reserve from 1875 on. Several years ago the WestMenn Historical Committee began to organize writing histories of these villages in those cases where nothing had been published in writing before. About 45 people gathered in Altona on April 23 at *Gardens on Tenth* to hear a progress report on this history writing project. Henry Unger of Morden, author of a history of Neuenburg south of Winkler has been leading the project.

A history of Schoenthal village northwest of Altona was the book nearest to ready for publication, and has since then been launched as a completed volume, at McNally Robinsons bookstore in Winnipeg. Mary Neufeld, author of a biography of her father, the late Rev. Wilhelm Falk who served as first bishop of the Rudnerweide (later EMMC) Gemeinde, also completed the Schoenthal study. Marlene Plett read from her new book, *An Unhurried Journey: The Road from Edenthal* and presented a paper on the history of Edenthal next door to Edenburg when the villages still existed as neither one does now. An extensive collection of photos on Roseville (Rosenfeld) were presented by Art Wiebe.

Other village histories mentioned as in progress include Kleefeld, Rosenfeld, which started on the south shore of Buffalo Lake north of Altona, Schoendorf, south of present day Morden, and Johannesruh, northwest of Gretna, along with Evelyn Heide’s progressing digital record of public school records, many of them now available for further research in the Provincial Public Archives in Winnipeg.

The project fits well into celebrations related to this year’s 140th anniversary of the former West Reserve (1876-2016). Villages which already have complete or partial written (in a number of cases published) histories include Burwalde, Reinland, Blumenfeld, Altberghthal, Neuberghthal, Houston, Chortitz, Hochstaedt, Grossweide, Edenburg, Halbstadt, Neuanlage, Neuhoftung, Silberfeld, Sommerfeld, as well as others. A brief sketch of all known (around 50) school districts in existence, done by Jake Fehr in 1984 in the Altona Echo for the centennial celebration of the RM of Rhineland forms part of the research materials pool for this project.

It is expected that another updating workshop will be planned for the near future. Questions about the project may be directed to Abe E Ens, chair of the WMHC, at abeens@mymts.net

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Ernie Regehr's volume, *Disarming Conflict: Why Peace Cannot be Won on the Battlefield*. (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015), pb., 217 pp. notes that the world has been subjected to 99 wars in the last 25 years. That is a statement hard to comprehend, as is the cost and horror of those afflictions to unnumbered millions of involved and innocent persons – young, old, and middle aged, not to mention financial and many other kinds of losses incurred. It is a call to “stop this madness”, knowing full well that it will not stop. Then what? To get a copy check with the CMU Bookstore at 1-204-487-3300.

Just off the press also is a volume by Mary Neufeld of Winnipeg, titled *Prairie Pioneers: Schoenthal Revisited*. Schoenthal is a village founded by Berghaler Mennonite families who moved from the East Reserve to the West Reserve around 1880. It is situated (still there) northwest of Altona, almost a suburb of the town by now. Launches of the book occurred in Winnipeg on June 21st, 2016 and in Altona on June 23rd. The book notes that three Mennonite bishops (*Aelteste*) once resided in this village simultaneously. For further details contact Bert Friesen at bfrie@mymts.net or Abe Ens at abeens@mymts.net. To purchase contact Mennonite Heritage Centre at 1-204-888 6781.

Katharine Martens with Edgar G. Reimer have published *Reimer Legacy: A Compilation of Historical Voices* (2015), pb., 142 pp. It is a further commentary on an important chapter of Mennonite Brethren history viz a viz the story of Jacob and Wilhelmina Reimer whose headstone was located by the family in a Ukrainian farmyard, hidden behind rubbish, and placed on the Mennonite Heritage Village museum grounds with special ceremony in 2009. Further information may be had from Jon Isaak, director of the Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, at 1-204-669-6575. The book is available at MHV Books at 1-204 – 326-9661.

Just off the press is a significant study by Royden Loewen titled *Horse and Buggy Genius: Listening to Mennonites Contest the Modern World* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016), pb., 244 pp, \$27.95. It brings together a great deal of useful material straight from the telling in dozens and dozens of interviews of individuals who every day experience the manner in which Old Colony Mennonites live and worship in various parts of the world. To obtain copies contact John Toews at McNally Robinson bookstore at 1-204-453-0424 or johnt@grant.mcnallyrobinson.ca

The second and concluding volume of *Favoured Among Women* also by Hedy Lenora Martens and titled *To and From Nowhere: A Biographical Novel* (about Grandma Greta Enns) was published in 2015, again as a paperback, and with 502 pp. Both volumes, at \$25.00 each, can be obtained at McNally Robinson bookstore - call 1-204-453-0424 or email johnt@grant.mcnallyrobinson.ca. See a review of Vol.1 in this issue for more detail.

I Remember One Christmas

by Nick Schmidt

The year was December 1941. Japan had just entered the war by attacking Pearl Harbor. The war in Europe was expanding and I and eight other Conscientious Objectors were sentenced to Headingly Jail for not reporting to the Army Base in Portage La Prairie for basic Military training. Our refusal was based on what we believed the Bible taught.

All inmates were required to work and I was assigned work in the library. We lived and ate with all the other inmates in the institution and heard many incriminating stories.

Christmas was approaching and I had never spent it away from home. The Authorities allowed us to form a committee and plan a Christmas program (volunteers only). We were allowed to bring in musical instruments, if you could play it. An orchestra was formed and there were some talented musicians and singers in jail. One in particular had a beautiful tenor voice and had been on radio, but had become a victim to heroin.

We had a male choir and sang the old familiar Christmas carols in between readings relating to the season. The program was attended by most inmates. It was great to sing the songs of Jesus birth and the purposes of His coming. Most of the inmates joined in because it brought back memories of better times.

I remember my parents visiting me shortly before Christmas. Restrictions were relaxed somewhat at Christmas. My mother brought me a prepared duck and some home baking which was much enjoyed. At Christmas we had turkey with all the trimmings, enjoyed by all.

Other memories are the North Kildonan Male Chorus under Dick Friesen and William Falk preaching once a month. There was also a Mr. McCance who was employed by Eatons. He came once a month and always had an evangelical message. It was comforting to have a number of Christian guards. Some were from Calvary Temple and one from the Church of Christ.

God is everywhere and we are His people and we experienced Him there as well. These are some of my memories of events that happened 66 years ago.

**Shirley Bergen interviewed Nick Schmidt in 2007.*