



Conscientious Objector Film Wins Fifth Award

by **Conrad Stoesz**

On May 23, the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA) held its annual Manitoba Day awards to recognize exemplary projects that utilized archival resources and personnel. Andrew Wall's documentary film, "The Last Objectors" won in the film category. This is the fifth award the film has received since its debut in June 2016.

The film tells the story of the 10,851 conscientious objectors (COs) who served Canada without weapons during the Second World War. Men from 33 ethnic backgrounds from across Canada served as medics, orderlies, farmers, miners, tree planters, loggers, and forest fire fighters. Theirs is a mostly forgotten story among the myriad of memorials, books, documentaries, and days of remembrance for war veterans.

To tell the CO story Wall partnered with the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives in Winnipeg. This archival centre has been collecting since 1933, and has a niche collection of conscientious objector materials. "Without the smaller community archives, like the Mennonite Heritage Centre, this documentary simply wouldn't have happened. The story would've been lost," stated Wall. The government, and its archives, were concerned with the war project and collected extensive materials about the war and comparatively little from the CO experience. At the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (MHCA), Wall was able to utilize documents, photos, film footage, and an expert in the field, archivist Conrad Stoesz.

In addition to the MHCA, sixteen archives were consulted and Wall interviewed seventeen men from across the country who were there. Wall felt an urgency to tell this story now because the men are currently in their 80s and 90s, lending credence to the title "Last Objectors." Since their interviews, two have already passed away. Together with historic documents, interviews, and area experts, Wall has woven together a compelling narrative that educates and entertains.



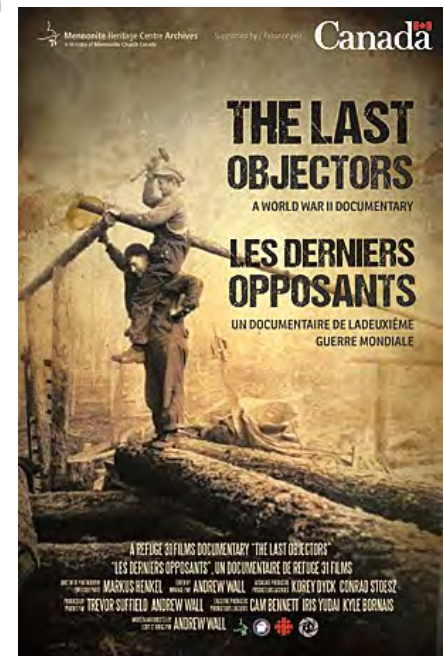
Andrew Wall

Wall has been taken aback at the interest in this story. "I'm blown away at how the general public has received this story. It is primarily a faith story and with three quarters of the conscientious objectors being Mennonite, it's even more of a niche. Instead the uniqueness of the story has been embraced and the universal themes have really connected with festivals and broadcasters." It has not only attracted awards from local organizations, but international as well. In late May, the film won the Silver Award in the documentary category at the Christian Life International Film Festival 2017. CBC will be airing the documentary for a third time in August 2017.

When asked why this story is important, MHCA archivist, Conrad Stoesz, says that the film reminds Canadians that saying no to war is part of the Canadian identity. For every war Canada is engaged in, there are Canadians who oppose involvement in war. Law makers in Upper Canada recognized the validity of opposing participation in war as early as the militia act of 1793. Canada has continued to recognize the validity of conscientious objection to war and used the promise of exemption from military service as a way to entice new immigrants to Canada in the 19th century.

Wall describes himself as an "archives rat" who revels in searching through archives and discovering fascinating stories. Wall and Stoesz look forward to further collaborative efforts in bringing archival stories to the big screen.

Andrew Wall is a Winnipeg film maker working under the banner Refuge31 Films. He is currently working on films about C. S. Lewis, Post WWII refugees, and forgiveness.



Family History Workshop

by Edith Wiebe, Winnipeg

On Saturday May 6, 2017, approximately 70 people gathered at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies for a Mennonite family history workshop sponsored by *TourMagination* travel agency of Waterloo, Ontario.

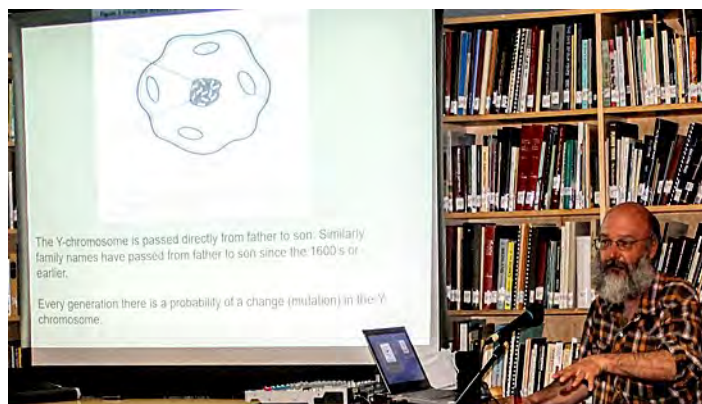
Archivist Conrad Stoesz began the workshop by providing an excellent overview of the methods and sources available for genealogical research. While many records — like published obituaries, church baptism and membership files, and family history books—are available at local Mennonite archives, these can be supplemented by consulting the websites of Mennonite historical societies, other Mennonite archives, and government agencies, such as the provincial offices of Vital Statistics.

Commercial databases and genealogical websites, too, may prove helpful for family history research. However, workshop attendees were reminded that care needs to be taken when referencing these popular online sources, as with most things online, the information still needs verification, and websites can vanish along with the information contain for a host of reasons.

Staying organized and maintaining a paper record of the information found, in addition to any online records that are created, is the most reliable way to ensure the information can be verified and available for future generations.

More details on the material presented can be found in Conrad's recent article published in the March 2017 issue of the *Mennonite Historian*, entitled "Explore your Genealogical History."

After a break for networking with friends and enjoying *fleisch perishky* and *fruit platz*, thanks to *TourMagination*, we were treated by genealogist Glenn Penner to an update on the Mennonite DNA project. Glenn explained why the genetic genealogy project focuses on the Y-chromosome unique to males. This is because the Y-chromosome is passed directly from father to son, just like traditional surnames, making it useful for genealogical studies. By looking at the repeated patterns in Y-chromosome marker genes in two male specimens (i.e., the string of assigned numbers), and by noting how close the patterns are to a match, the probability that the two are related increases



Glenn Penner explains how the Y-chromosome is useful for genealogy projects.

with the closeness of the match.

Glenn reported that the Y-chromosome DNA project now has results for about 850 men with 165 distinct surnames. The sample is now large enough for him to draw some tentative conclusions regarding the family origin of a person based on the Y-chromosome match—something useful for a male being tested or for a female, if she has a close male relative tested. Y-chromosome testing can make connections where the documentary genealogical evidence is unavailable or nonexistent.

For example, data collected to date demonstrate that surnames such as Wiebe, Friesen or Dyck each originated from a single common ancestor. Other surnames, such as Janzen or Peters, however, can have several progenitors and, in other instances, names which were thought to be closely related such as Kroeker and Kroeger have no DNA match.

Glenn provided a list of rare Mennonite surnames for which he is still hoping to receive a DNA sample. In addition, to complete the DNA collection, the Mennonite DNA Project is offering to pay the DNA test cost (\$120-170 US) for the first male to come forward for testing from each of the rare surname groups. Contact Glenn at <gpenner@uoguelph.ca> for more information or to inquire if Glenn needs your DNA for his project.

Glenn, who is recently retired from the University of Guelph, has moved to Winnipeg and will be making himself available beginning in June for genealogical consultation at the new Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg. If you are interested in a conversation with him about your genealogy, contact him at the email above to set up an appointment.

The afternoon concluded with a presentation by Audrey Voth Petkau on tours available from *TourMagination*. They have been providing tours since 1970 that emphasize learning and faith. Touring Mennonite heritage sites in the Ukraine, Germany, Holland, South America and other places can be a natural outgrowth of an interest in Mennonite genealogy and history. She provided a handout listing all tours scheduled for 2018 to 2020. For a full list of the itineraries, see www.tourmagination.com or call 1-800-565-0451.

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AGM of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

by Eleanor Chornoboy

The Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. in Winnipeg.

The board had been left with a vacancy and a new member, Andrea Dyck was elected to the board to fill that vacancy.

Much activity was reported by the organizations represented at the Council Meeting. The EastMenn Historical Committee facilitated a local history lecture on the land on which the Mennonites settled in the 1870s. An event themed: *Family, Food & Spirituality* was also well received and afforded participants the opportunity to kindle memories.

Along with all the programs presented by Mennonite Heritage Village, they have been working on the Waldheim House. A master thatcher will spend a few weeks thatching the roof with reeds harvested at Dauphin Lake. The public is invited to observe a master thatcher at his trade.

Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg will be hosting a conference October 19-21, 2017 on *Uprootedness*, focusing on the Russian Revolution. In addition, their program on Transnationalism is expanding.

Effective June 1, 2017, Mennonite Studies, located at U of W, is partnering with CMU.

The Plett Foundation has published curricula for Low German speaking schools – both private and public. Eight books are currently in process and the books are being well received by the targeted school systems. *Preservings* continues to be published and the theme for the next issue is: kitchens, gardens, recipes and remedies.

While organizations are active regionally, the role of MMHS as an umbrella organization was discussed at length. MMHS was seen as a bridge between organizations. Smaller organizations regarded it as important to be part of a larger group and others added that MMHS is the conduit between other provincial bodies and MHSC.

The discussion considered the multiple milestone anniversaries in the 2020s that MMHS could be a part of. This will be discussed and planned for at future meetings.

The meeting recognized the need for volunteers to support the archives. Despite the fact that Manitoba is in an enviable position in that we have qualified personnel, additional help is required and the committees will reach out to potential volunteers.



2018 Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Board left to right: Bert Friesen, Conrad Stoesz, Peter Priess, Hans Werner, Jake Peters, Eleanor Chornoboy, Andrea Dyck.

WestMenn Report - 2017

by Lawrence Klippenstein

The WestMenn Historical Committee of MMHS was formed several years ago by merging the Historic Sites and Monuments committee with the Local History committee. It has continued work in these areas mainly with attempts to enhance the Mennonite Memorial Post Road Trail in southern Manitoba. This has involved preparing a new self-guiding map and repairing some pedestals. The enlarged committee has also sought to further publication of new research by encouraging the writing of former West Reserve village histories and publishing existing related manuscripts and other material. Several public celebrations highlighting the 140th anniversary of the former West Reserve were held last year. Some collaboration with work at the reconstruction

of Fort Dufferin near Emerson was celebrated on June 4 at the Fort.

The recent departure of several members from WestMenn has led to an effort now to reorganize and to fill vacancies in its membership. Lawrence Klippenstein has agreed to serve as interim chair for the next year. Other committee members include Eleanor Chornoboy, John Giesbrecht, Peter Priess, Jake E Peters and possibly others. Upcoming project work could include completing repairs on the Post Road Trail and looking at the possibility of publishing a short history of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Constructing a map (with new photos) of all existing historic sites and monuments on the former West Reserve is also under discussion. The work of WestMenn Historical Committee is also responsible for marketing old and new publications which it has collected in recent years. A committee which will carry out this work is being reorganized at this time.

Family, Food and Spirituality

By Barry Dyck

On Saturday, May 6, approximately 70 people gathered at Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) to listen to three presentations on *Family, Food and Spirituality*. This was the second annual lecture event hosted by the Eastmenn Historical Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. This year MHV was a co-sponsor. It was a privilege and pleasure to join the committee in offering these lectures to the community.



The first speaker was Val Hiebert, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Providence University College. Her topic was *Changing Perspectives of Marriage & Family Throughout the History of the Church to the Present*. The first part of her talk described the various models of family that have existed through time. She covered the eras of the Old Testament, New Testament, Early Church, Middle Ages, Protestant Reformation, Colonial Period, Nineteenth Century, Twentieth Century, and Twenty-First Century. It was

interesting to observe how family dynamics and values changed from one era to another. The place of children and the role of women in the family saw particularly significant changes over time.

In her discussion about the nineteenth-century family, Dr. Hiebert referred to research done by Winnipeg archivist Conrad Stoesz which explored unique Mennonite family values and practices of that era, some of which were rather startling.

In light of all of the changes in family values throughout the centuries, Dr. Hiebert pointed out that "traditional family values" has meant different things in different eras. She

encouraged us to consider the over-arching principles taught throughout scripture, particularly the two major reoccurring themes of love and justice.

Daphne Thiessen, a self-proclaimed homemaker, provided wonderful reflections of her joy in planting, growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing food as spiritual exercises. She spoke of her satisfaction with the way that preparing and sharing food causes her to slow down. To Daphne, the preparation of food is much more an art than a science, ensuring that each effort has a unique outcome. The fact that all plants and animals must die before they become food reminds her of the sacrificial gift of salvation.



Local historian and author, Ernest Braun, rounded out the evening with an interesting discussion on the *Waisenamt*. This was a mechanism of the early Mennonite communities, going back to the time when Prussia/Poland was home to Mennonites, that sought to ensure that widows and orphans would have the economic means to care for themselves when a spouse/parent died. Braun suggested that this *Waisenamt* was one of the earliest forms of a Credit Union. It was particularly interesting to note that this

organization accumulated enough money over time to fund a significant portion of the migration costs for Russian Mennonites coming to Canada in the late 1800s.

Several of the sessions included a question-and-answer period following the lecture. The organizers intend to publish the content of these lectures sometime in the future to make them available to those who were not able to attend.

We at MHV are grateful to the Eastmenn Historical Committee for the initiative taken to plan and host these events.

(from the Carillon, *Village News*, May 11, 2017)

Contours & Contradictions:

Changing Perspectives
of Marriage & Family
throughout the
History of the
Church to the Present



Mennonite Heritage Archives Opened June 1, 2017

Earlier this year it was announced that a new three-way partnership involving Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Mennonite Church Canada, and the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies (CTMS) would assume ownership of the Mennonite Heritage Centre archives while the gallery would continue as part of CMU. The new partnership takes over the re-imagined Mennonite Heritage



Conrad Stoesz

Archives (MHA) on June 1st. In keeping with the transition to the new model, the Mennonite Heritage Archives is pleased to announce that effective June 1st both Connie and Conrad will be joining CMU staff. Conrad Stoesz will become the new full-time archivist and Connie Wiebe has been asked to continue in her role as administrative assistant with the archives and gallery.

Stoesz, will leave his half-time appointment with the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies on May 30, 2017, which he has held since 1999. "I feel privileged to have been part of two denominational offices and learn their unique cultures. I will miss the people and my work at CMBS, but look forward to the new challenges at the MHA," says Stoesz.

Jon Isaak, director at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies says, "We will miss Conrad a great deal at CMBS, but do celebrate with him the career advance that his appointment at CMU represents. His love for Mennonite history, people, and the church are especially remarkable; plus, his incredible memory for details, augmented by his storytelling gifts and good humour, make him very valuable as a historian and archivist. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with him on joint projects; and it is good to know he will be working only a few kilometers west of us."

Starting in June, the MHA will return to its usual Monday -Friday office hours, but visitors are encouraged to make appointments.

Taken from a CMU, MC Canada, and CTMS news release.



Connie Wiebe



The Waldheim House at Mennonite Heritage Village, built by Julius Dyck in 1876 in the Waldheim area south of Morden, is in its final stage of a major restoration project. Logs have been replaced and re-chinked, interior walls and the ceiling have been replaced, the roof structure has been reinforced. The roof is now being thatched with *Phragmites* reed to bring it back to its original condition. This house was the first heritage structure to be acquired by the museum.

A Visit to Siberia

by Eleanor Chornoboy

On November 18, 2013, my Siberian tour guide, Vladimir Lawrow, with *SibTours*, took me to the village of Rosenort, near Isilkul, Siberia, one and one half hours from Omsk by car.

We passed by ploughed black fields brushed with a soft skin of snow. Birch trees that acted as shelter belts while other stood in natural groves, blended into the snowy background. Despite the snow, a field of sunflowers about a quarter section in size, stood unharvested. Hay stacks dotted a few fields. The flat land, reminiscent of Manitoba's prairie reached for the horizon.



Svetlana

In Rosenort, we stopped in at the German cultural centre where Svetlana, director of the centre, gave us a tour. She explained that in the facility, Mennonite and German children studied German, women made crafts, and the community used the facility for cultural events. Then she took us to the local cafeteria where Maria Hildebrand and her staff served us *Komst Borscht*, buckwheat kasha and a beef stew. In a section of the cafeteria,

long tables had been set for a large group. We were told that a funeral meal of prepared meat, cookies and more would be served to the funeral guests. Maria said that at Mennonite funerals, they served buns, cheese and wrapped candy or chocolate. There appeared to be a sense of pride in the cooperation experienced between the cultures.

After lunch, we visited the Prayer House where we were greeted by 77 year-old Johann Hildebrand. Johann and I were able to talk in *Plautdietsch* without Vladimir's help. I estimated that almost half of the main sanctuary was dedicated to the choir. Musical accompaniment consisted of stringed instruments, two organs and an accordion.

Johann said that his forefathers had moved to Omsk not long after my forefathers had left Russia for Canada in 1874. They had settled on land rented from an absentee landlord, Sointsevskiy, and had turned the grassland into profitable farmland. Johann talked freely of the time when the Bolsheviks occupied the region, and added that things were better now. He was satisfied with his monthly rent (pension) and said that he had just enough to pay for his expenses and some food.

The following day, Vladimir and I visited the village of



Johan Hildebrandt



Lisa Toews with the director of the school.

Neudachino, 147 km. from Omsk with Lisa Toews and her husband, Borys. We visited the school and met the director who lamented the declining enrolment. She said it was due to smaller families and families moving to Germany.

We were invited to have lunch with Lisa's brother Peter Toews and his family in their modest village home. Peter rents out his land and cares for his cows, pigs and chickens. Although he was too young to remember the time of the Bolshevik's occupation, he took time to show me family photos and tell me stories about his family's experiences. Clearly, the young people in both villages that I visited, grew up on stories about the Bolshevik occupation – stories about hardship, family, hunger, and the occasional sparks of humour, long since reconciled with forgiveness.



Entrance to the school in Neudachina.



Maria Hildebrandt and her grandchildren.



by Ernest N. Braun

A Pentecost celebration held Saturday evening, June 3, at the Chortitz Heritage Church in Randolph saw the second chapter of Acts reread in a unique way. This well-known Pentecost passage was read by nine different people in nine different languages peculiar to the Mennonite people over the centuries of their wanderings. Close to one hundred people attended. They sang some of the old German songs *a cappella* under the leadership of Frank Wiebe, and then emcee Rev. Richard Martens asked each member of the reading team to introduce themselves and to describe how they came to speak the language they would be representing. Some interesting side stories developed: several readers had unique connections to the story of Mennonites, without themselves having any connection. For example, Stanislaus Flisak, who read a portion of the passage in Polish, grew up in the Elblag area of Poland, an area where Mennonites lived for almost two hundred years. Marcel Gauthier who read in French has ancestors who lived in the area in France occupied by Mennonites from early on. Karla Braun read a portion in Dutch, having learned the language in Amsterdam while working in the historic Mennonite Singelkerk through an exchange program. Kennert Giesbrecht, who read in Spanish, is a



Some of the crowd at the Chortitz Church Pentecost celebration in Randolph.

great-grandson of Rev Martin C. Friesen who also preached in this old church before going to Paraguay. Although historically few Mennonites spoke Greek, Dr. Harvey Plett, having learned that ancient language in seminary, read a portion of the passage in the actual language that Peter used that first Pentecost. David Esau now of Steinbach area read in Russian, his mother tongue while growing up in the Former Soviet Union. The more familiar languages were read by Frank Wiebe (Low German), Orlando Hiebert (High German) and Anita Funk (English). Rev. John Neufeld then gave a stirring Pentecost message and the evening closed with coffee and rhubarb *plautz*.

More pictures from Siberia



Village House in Neudachino.



Lunch with the Peter Toews family.
Left: Steffen clocks.

New Home for GAMEO

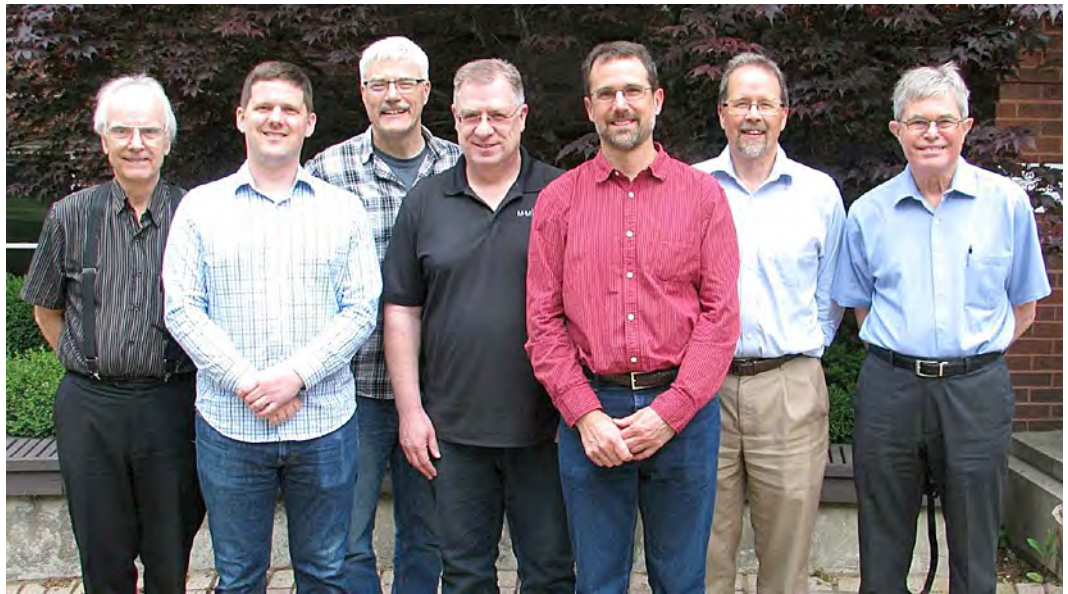
The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO), the most trusted online source for information on Anabaptist groups around the world, has found a new home. On May 19, members of the GAMEO management board voted unanimously to transfer oversight of the project to the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism (ISGA) at Goshen College. John D. Roth, director of the ISGA, will serve in a new position as the project's general editor.

The vision behind GAMEO emerged in the late 1980s at the initiative of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, as an effort to preserve database information gathered for its three-volume *Mennonites in Canada* series. In 1998 the vision expanded to transfer the content of the five-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia* into a digital format that would be accessible to internet users around the world. That project resulted in an online encyclopedia of over 12,000 articles. In the years since then, volunteer editors of GAMEO, along with regional committees around North America, have updated information on thousands of articles and added more than 4000 new entries. For the first 15 years, Sam Steiner, archivist at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario located at Conrad Grebel University College, directed the project; Richard Thiessen, director of the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Abbotsford, BC, who served in that role from 2012 to the present, has resigned in order to devote more time to other responsibilities.

Public interest in the site has steadily expanded. In the month of April, 2017, nearly 50,000 researchers visited the site seeking information on topics related to the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Today, GAMEO is routinely cited by news organizations, scholars, genealogists, and a host of other users. "As GAMEO has matured," said Thiessen, "we have increasingly felt as if it needed an institutional home. The ISGA, with its strong academic foundation and global perspective, is a perfect fit for the next chapter of GAMEO's development."

Roth, the founding director of ISGA, agreed. "The origins of GAMEO go back to the creation of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* in the 1940s and 1950s at Goshen College. As the scope of Anabaptist-Mennonite research here has broadened to include the global church, it is fitting that we could bring the long tradition of 'scholarship for the church' to support now the global vision of GAMEO in the digital age."

The ISGA recently published *The Global Anabaptist Profile*, a collaboration with Mennonite World Conference,



Left to right are: Sam Steiner, Jason Kauffman, Jon Isaak, Richard Thiessen, Eric Kurtz, John D. Roth, Bert Friesen

that marked the first survey of faith and practices of MWC churches around the world. The Institute also oversees the "Bearing Witness Stories Project" (martyrstories.org), manages the on-line resources of the Global Anabaptist Wiki (anabaptistwiki.org), and is a key partner in the emerging data-based of Spanish theological resources called the "Bibliotheca Digital Anabautista."

Sam Steiner, one of the founders of GAMEO and an on-going Associate Editor, said "this new institutional home, together with additional associate editors, will expand GAMEO on the good foundations shaped by Richard Thiessen over the past six years."

GAMEO will continue to be owned by its six institutional partners: Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, MC USA, Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, and the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism. A management board, composed of representatives from these organizations, oversees the operations of GAMEO.

To access the resources of GAMEO go to:
www.gameo.org

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— The editors.

MHV Annual General Meeting

by **Barry Dyck**

Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) is incorporated in the province of Manitoba and owned by its members. To comply with provincial law and our bylaws, MHV conducts an Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year at this time. This year's AGM was held on Tuesday, March 28.

MHV members can contribute to our museum in several ways, such as volunteering for tasks that need to be done, donating toward our annual operations and specific projects, encouraging friends to attend museum events and to become museum members, and helping to make decisions about the museum's future.

Before we ask our members to make decisions at the AGM, we provide relevant background information. The report book which is distributed at the beginning of the meeting contains reports that address MHV activities and highlights of the past year and also begin to cast some light on plans for the coming year. Both written and oral reports are provided, and members are invited to address questions and comments to both. This year members heard oral reports from Willie Peters, President and Board Chair; Barry Dyck, Executive Director; Linda Schroeder, MHV Auxiliary President; Allan Kroeker, Finance and Audit Committee Chair; Victor Bergmann, auditor with Deloitte; and Carol Kroeker, Nominating Committee Chair. The report book contained written reports from each of these areas as well as the various functional departments at MHV.

One of the highlights of the meeting was Victor Bergmann's report that our museum had no bank debt at the end of 2016. It was very exciting to see that positive number after many years of seeing a negative



Willie Peters



Matt Wieler

number there. Our constituency has really stepped up to the plate and made a big difference. We do still have access to our line of credit for those times when operations and project expenses may require temporary cash-flow support.

Lawrence Klippenstein, well-known and respected Mennonite historian, has served our museum as a director on the board for approximately 15 years. At our AGM last week,

Lawrence was recognized for his contributions to the work of MHV. He also provided some insights about AGMs in general, about the MHV Board of Directors, and about story telling. History is so much about story telling.

The members attending this meeting made several decisions on behalf of MHV. After reviewing the audited financial statements for 2016, they decided to accept the statements and the auditor's report. Following that, they decided to accept the 2017 budget presented by Allan Kroeker and to appoint Deloitte as the auditor for the current calendar year. One of the most important decisions the members made was the election of board members. Matt Wieler and Jeremy Peters were elected as

new board members - one to fill the vacancy created by Lawrence Klippenstein, and the other to replace Scott Reimer who resigned from the board after the previous AGM. Will Peters and Marlene Reimer were reelected. Our board now has a full slate of members, with a healthy range of ages and professions represented.

Membership in MHV is a real and interesting way to serve our community. There is more to be learned about membership by checking our website or by calling 204-326-9661.



Jeremy Peters



Marlene Reimer, Mennville

The Saga of the *Piepdink* (whistle)

April 25, 1920 - Sept. 20, 2014

by Henry Fast

The diary entry of Maria Dueck of Gruenfeld (now Kleefeld), on April 25, 1920 ranked the news of her little sister's swallowing a whistle as 6th in importance of the entries for that day. She writes as concerning the last item of the day as follows: "In the morning Greta swallowed a whistle nearly as big as a penny and immediately became sick. She could not eat and was choking".

Maria, the oldest child of the Heinrich Dueck family of 12 children, certainly did not realize the gravity of the situation. Little Margaret or Greta, as she was called, was only 3 years old and the whistle was as big as an old Canadian penny. However, Greta got top billing in the entries of the next 5 days.

Mon. 26th. Nice day. Greta was very sick and could not eat and was choking.

Tues. 27th. Nice day. Today in the morning Greta was very sick. The doctor from St. Pierre came in the afternoon. He said she would get better without going to Winnipeg. Today in the evening she for the first time drank a little soup.

Wed. 28th. Nice day. Greta was a little better but she could not eat solids, only fluid.



1920 X-ray done by Dr. Hiebert.

Thur. 29th. Nice day. Greta slowly improving
Fri. 30th. Nice day. Greta is walking around, but cannot yet eat. It hurts too much.

Maria does not report on Greta's condition in her diary entries for the next 12 days. It seemed that the St. Pierre doctor's prognosis was probably correct. However a later entry suggests that there was considerable anxiety in the Kleine Gemeinde pastor, Heinrich Dueck's family. Maria continues with two more entries.

Wed. 12th. Today early morning the parents went to Winnipeg with Greta by train. Father phoned late in the evening that they had removed the whistle. They had put her to sleep.

Thur. 13th. Today in the evening the parents came home. Greta was quite alert. It had not been pleasant (Sehr Schlecht). She had had this whistle in her esophagus for 17 days. The whole thing cost \$100.

Evidently the operation was a success as the diary entry of May 17 indicates that Greta is improving. No further mention is made of Greta till May 26, with the following diary entry, "I and Anna went to Chortitz and at the same time to Abram Klippensteins to get the picture of Greta which they had taken of her in Winnipeg. They had brought it along."

Could this refer to an X-ray? Ninety four years after the episode I checked this bit of information with Greta's daughter, Marion Dueck Warkentin. Coming from a family that saves everything of sentimental value, Marion informed me that she was the custodian of the X-ray. She graciously allowed me to digitize the "picture".

One notes from the X-ray that it was not a referee's whistle that Greta swallowed, but a small washer sized toy. Also, it was doctor Hiebert that had taken the X-ray in 1920, but it is not indicated in which hospital Greta was relieved of the "*Piepdink*".



Marion Dueck Warkentin, Greta's daughter.



The Dueck siblings — Greta is the one with the hat. The diarist, Maria, is in the centre of the back row.

Remembering David Schroeder as Part of a Saskatchewan Story

by Jake Buhler

(Reprinted with permission from the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian, Vol XXII, No. 1, 2016.)

This gigantic Bible teacher with a soft voice died September 27, 2015 in Winnipeg. Born in 1924 in Altona, Manitoba he was called up to serve in WW2. Rather than have the Aeltester represent him, he faced the judge to testify that Jesus' message of love was his reason not to enlist in the army. He went on to receive advanced education and taught at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now part of Canadian Mennonite University). Pastors and students sought him out. One pastor said of Schroeder, "his master was Jesus the Christ, the Word made flesh".

And what was his Saskatchewan connection? A number of people will remember David Schroeder for an unusual event that took place in the Warman area of Saskatchewan.

In 1975 Eldorado Nuclear announced it would build an enormous uranium hexafluoride refinery east of Warman. A local group that eventually had a membership of 500 opposed the plan. For 5 years there was a struggle during which Eldorado pulled out all the stops to win over the hearts and minds of town councils, city councils, rural municipalities councils, all levels of governments and community leaders. They flew hundreds of people to Port Hope, ON to see how safe the nuclear industry was. Eldorado acquired the necessary lands east of Warman (nearly two thousand acres). All was ready. Only the federal environmental hearings remained. These federal hearings consisted of a panel of 10 experts. In total three sets of hearings were conducted. During this time the Warman group stepped up and testified their opposition. Hundreds spoke.

The panel had a problem. They sensed strong opposition. But they also determined the nuclear industry to be safe. At the urging of the Warman and District Concerned Citizens Group, David Schroeder was called in to explain who the Mennonites were, their history, and their views. The Group was led by Ernie Hildebrand, pastor of Osler Mennonite Church. Later it was led by Edgar Epp. The panel was very interested in the quiet demeanour of Schroeder and they trusted him. He was brought back again to speak to the panel later.

Schroeder was never the only person who made a difference. Hundreds of others including many experts and ordinary people, spoke. But what Schroeder did that no nuclear scientist could do, was to convince the panel that before any nuclear facility was built, it had to study the people of the area. Indeed in spring of 1981 when the panel released its report, they said that before the nuclear refinery could be built, it would have to do a "people", study. Eldorado sensing that would not be in their interest, pulled out and abandoned their plans.

The committee that led the group consisted of Ernie Hildebrand as chair, Edgar Epp, Nettie Wiebe, Peter



David Schroeder (left), St. Boniface Hospital orderly during his term as a conscientious objector.

— Photo from Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Heritage Archives, Winnipeg.

Froese, Sr, Gary Boldt, Leonard Doell, Sam Rempel, Jake Buhler, Wilf Friesen, and several others. The testimonies are recorded in detail in federal government documents. Here are several examples (there were many). Kathy Boldt brought several jars filled with milk and wheat. She showed them to the panel and said "this is who we are. We are food people not nuclear people". Ben Buhler, dairyman, got up and said, "on behalf of my many cows, heifers, my calves, my dog and my cats, I oppose this industry". His mother Maria Buhler testified in German that the nuclear industry could lead to weaponry. Peter Froese testified that Mennonites were friendly people and he welcomed the Eldorado people to settle in the Warman area. But, he said, they would have to leave that "nuclear stuff" behind. Aeltester John Redekopp of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church said, "of the one thousand members of our church, I have not heard one speak in favour of this plant". Eldorado Nuclear abandoned its plans to build.

Fort Dufferin Heritage Day

by Ernie Braun

The Post Road Heritage Group, Inc. (PRHG) celebrated its annual Heritage Day on Sunday June 4th at Fort Dufferin, just north of Emerson. A feature attraction was



Past President of the Post Road Heritage Group, Dick Remus, addresses the audience during the program, providing historical details of the Dufferin site.

— Photo by Bert Friesen

RM of Emerson-Franklin gave a short presentation. Among the speakers to bring greetings were MLA Cliff Graydon, RCMP Inspector Rob Lasson of Division "D", and PRHG past president Dick Remus who also cut the ribbon at the restored building after the program.

After lunch, which could be purchased on site, the afternoon entertainment featured Highland dance students and two Hutterite colony choirs, one from Ridgeville and the other from Glenway, as well as other heritage activities which ran until about 3 p.m.

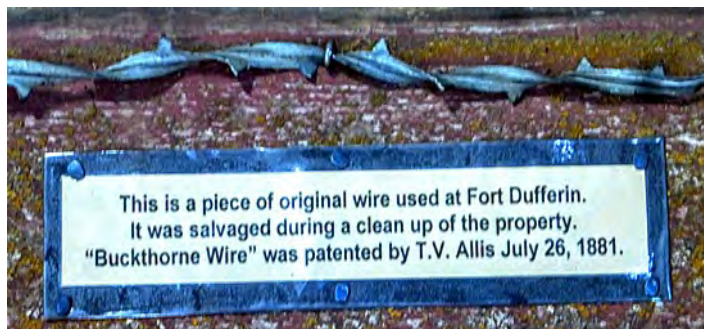
the official opening of the Interpretative Centre, an original 1873 structure now restored to house artifacts and information panels providing historical background for the site. Ladies in period costume and men in NWMP uniforms interacted with the visitors, adding colour to the event.

The day began with a church service at 9:30 AM in the tent erected there for the day. At 11 AM, the Heritage Group hosted the opening ceremonies, recognizing the history of the site in its several manifestations. Emcee Paul Barnaby introduced various presenters who provided background details about the site. Wayne Arseny, former mayor of Emerson and now Tourism Coordinator for the



Uniforms of the RCMP over time: left to right: Constable Bryden Tate of the Emerson detachment in dress serge; RCMP Inspector Rob Lasson in regular uniform; Wally Empson, member of the Post Road Heritage Group, Inc. in NWMP uniform standing in front of the restored structure housing the Interpretative Centre.

— Photo by Ernie Braun



Fort Dufferin was originally developed as the base camp for some 300 surveyors of the Boundary Commission in late 1872 and named after Governor General Lord Dufferin. While the Boundary Commission was in the field completing their work in the summer of 1874, Commissioner G. A. French gathered about 300 members of the newly formed North West Mounted Police at Dufferin as a staging area for the Great Trek west to Alberta. In late 1874, the surveyors, having finished their task returned to Dufferin and then vacated the camp just in time for Commissioner French and his cadre of NCOs to occupy the barracks upon their return from the West. In early 1875 they left for Fort Pelly and the site was sold to Canada Customs who housed thousands of Mennonites and other immigrants who arrived there by steamboat in 1875-76 until their homesteads were ready for them. The arrival of the railway in late 1879 spelled the end of the steamboat era. From then on most immigrants traveled by train, and Fort Dufferin's function as an immigration depot ended. The site was later used to quarantine livestock and then fell into disuse. For further details, see the Manitoba Historical Society webpage:

http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/23/dufferin.shtml.



The original customs house operating at the border and responsible for the thousands of immigrants that arrived at the Dufferin landing. — Photo by Ernie Braun



Original structure now restored to house a collection of artifacts and information panels. — Photo by Ernie Braun



Post Road Heritage Group members in period costume pose in front of the restored Interpretative centre, with a replica Red River cart in the foreground.

— Photo by Ernie Braun



Visually almost identical to the Mennonite Landing at the juncture of the Rat and Red Rivers near Niverville, the landing at Fort Dufferin features the same turgid waters and leafy shores, which in 1875 would have been bare of trees, all harvested to fuel the steamboats and the building boom on the tree-less prairies.

— Photo by Ernie Braun



Members of the Post Road Heritage Group prepare for the ribbon cutting: left to right - Paul Barnaby (emcee), Dick Remus (past President who later cuts the ribbon), Les Forrester and his wife Kathy (in the wheelchair), back row Jake Rempel and John Giesbrecht, Lenard Pappel and his wife Tina (back turned to the camera), Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Thiessen, and Donna Knutt. — Photo by Bert Friesen



Charlotte Johnson in period costume sits side-saddle on Henry, one of the fine horses used by the volunteers at the event. In NWMP costume is the owner of the horse Ken Sawatzky.

— Photo by Ernie Braun

Book Review

Rosabel Fast, *Discovering Mexico, a strange new land* (Winnipeg: D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, 2017, Vol 2 of the Mennonite History for Young People series) pb., 80 p.

Reviewed by Marlene Reimer, Steinbach

Rosabel Fast wrote this book as a historical textbook for middle school children. Her book covers the history of the Mexican Mennonites from the early 1920's to about 1960. We learn about the Mennonites seeking full freedom to follow their Christian faith in Mexico.

I was very pleased that the history of the Mexican Mennonites had been written. Prior to this, much to my chagrin, I knew very little about their history. The author must have done much research and thus wrote a very enlightening book. Having members of my family of Mexican Mennonite descent, I was interested to learn more about the history of these God-fearing people. After having read the author's first book, *Leaving Canada*, I was curious to read the second one in the series. I wanted to know more!

Fast starts off the book by inviting her young readers to learn about people who really lived in the past. She explains about the short vignettes that supplement the narrative, which are written from a child's perspective. The author explains the reason why some words are written in bold letters or italics. She defines asterisks and obelisks. Although Fast inserts the odd German, Plautdietsch, or Spanish word in her writing, she assures the readers that all will be explained as they read on. I like the way she puts the readers at ease.

In *Discovering Mexico*, we read about Mennonites negotiating with the Mexican government. Numerous times, Walter Schmiedehaus, a German Consul in Chihuahua State, helps these new neighbors of his. The Mexican Mennonites wanted freedom to live out their Christian faith. The '*Privilegium*' was an agreement that the Mennonites made with the Mexican government, insuring that they could live in villages on colonies, and have their own schools and churches. Fast makes sure that this goal is at the forefront of her discussion.

As would be true of any immigrant to a new land, the Mexican Mennonites, being farmers, had to get used to a different climate. For her young audience, the author explains how the Mennonite children planted corn, like the Mexicans.

Business was also extremely important to the Mennonites. San Antonio became a bustling business town where there were banks, allowing them to save their money as they were had been used to do. I was amused at Fast's account of the Mennonites having counted exactly thirteen trees in all of San Antonio.

In *Discovering Mexico*, we learn about land disputes. Who owned the land? The Mennonites had bought their land in good faith, but the new socialist government said that those who cultivate the land own it. It seemed the Mexicans (*Agraristas*) and the Mennonites were both working the same land. However, this was all settled

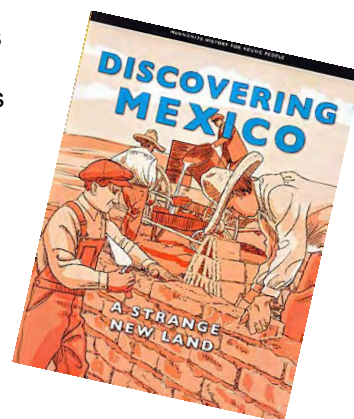
peaceably. Criticism of the Mennonites by the Mexicans was not based on facts, and so eventually everything was settled without the use of a gun. Usually the Mennonites conducted themselves in a very peaceable way during disagreements.

The author tells us about how economic depression caused great unease among the Mennonites. The Mexican government reneged on the agreement they had made with the Mennonites concerning their own schools and churches. Many became afraid and thought of moving back to Canada. The ministers challenged the people to put their faith in God. The Mexican Mennonites slowly achieved a new determination to stay in Mexico.

This book, *Discovering Mexico*, shows us that through continuing to trust God, the Mexican Mennonites could live in Mexico while keeping with their original goals, which were to have their own government, churches, and schools on their colonies.

Marlene Reimer is the author and illustrator of a series of children's books, known as 'The Molly Stories'

www.themollystories.com



From the editor. . .

When Ted sent the final proofs for this issue there was a little blank space so I thought I could fill it with some random comments.

Manitoba Mennonite history buffs have a lot to read. There's *Heritage Posting* three times a year, then that hefty issue of *Preservings* once a year (which pretty well takes care of your Christmas break), and then *Mennonite Historian* quarterly. What about the periodicals of our brethren and sistren of the other provinces? In this issue I picked up a fascinating article from Saskatchewan about David Schroeder, a Manitoba icon. Thanks, Jake Buhler! Most of this is also on line and then there is also Conrad's excellent web site at MHA. Don't worry, there are no plans to discontinue the print edition of HP although the web version is more exciting, being in full colour.

You may have noticed a fair bit of overlap in news and book reviews but the readership is somewhat different for the different periodicals and it is good to get different slants on things, especially book reviews. We welcome a new talent in this area, with Marlene Reimer submitting her first book review! Her books for pre-schoolers are excellent and original. Order them at once!

More stories and news coming in November! If you have something to share, send it in. *Jauma Lied*, there must be lots of interesting stories out there.

Book Review

Hedy Martens, *To and From Nowhere*, a biographical novel, a conclusion of *Favoured Among Women*, 2015. Winnipeg, MB. Published by CMU Press 2015, 481 pages. Available at McNally Robinson Booksellers at \$27.00.

Reviewed by Clara Toews.

This book is the conclusion to Hedy Marten's story based on the life of Greta Enns. The author describes it as being "as true as fiction can recreate it, as factually accurate as word-of-mouth accounts can shape it, woven with care out of personal interviews, diaries, journals, and letters." The story is indeed woven with care, much love and a real desire to understand Greta and the world in which she lived.

Greta's story is told chronologically, beginning at the point where *Favoured Among Women* left off. *To and From Nowhere* opens in October, 1941, with Greta and her family's deportation to northern Kazakhstan and concludes with Greta's death in Germany in 1985.

This second volume tells of the family's struggle during the unspeakably difficult first years of exile and then moves through the periods of improved conditions. Their arrival in northern Kazakhstan rather than the promised southern destination, sets the tone for the darkest part of the book, telling of their disorientation and their desperate circumstances. Martens effectively describes the starvation, cruelty, fear, and extreme cold that mark the family's daily existence in at Chudnoye, Kazhakstan, a *kolkhoz*. Up to 22 people sleep on lice infested straw on a hut floor. They share one pair of warm boots between them. One of Greta's sons doesn't get up during the day because he has no clothes to put on. A daughter is conscripted into the forced labour brigade known as the *Trudarmia*. Greta keeps the rest of them alive by being a very good milker and working at whatever comes to hand. Even within the context of unimaginable degradation, the author captures the courage and resourcefulness of Greta and the others. Acts of kindness, whether by fellow deportees or local Kazakhs, give moments of beauty.

A recurring theme is that of the forced separation of families and their longing to be together. Greta is haunted by the arrest and disappearance of her husband Heinrich in 1937, but that turns out to be only one of many separations. By early 1946 Greta has observed many deaths in Chudnoye and fears for the survival of her family. An opportunity arises for her to move illegally to a *sovkhoz* some distance away, where opportunities to earn support for her family are better. It also means she must make the heart-rending decision to leave behind two of her daughters. Her grief is compounded by guilt and threatens to destroy her. Small compensations in her new home are improved food and a real wooden outhouse. She needs only to be cautious that when taking pieces of newspaper to the outhouse, that no pictures of Stalin are included.

In time, with better communication, comes hope that somewhere there is a place in which they will find more safety, freedom, and economic security. This sparks a series of difficult and ultimately disappointing moves within

the Soviet Union, finally ending in their emigration to Germany.

Brief descriptions of major events taking place on the world stage are interspersed throughout the book, giving historical context to the family's experiences. Perhaps the most moving and memorable of these historical commentaries are those presented in the form of lovely poems about unlovely subjects, always entitled "*Elsewhere*". The family members' daily lives are influenced by events in far off seats of power, but they have little confidence in leaders. Even as circumstances improve, they fear the possibility of state terror and they trust nothing they are told. Reality for them is the family, the community and God.

Greta's spiritual life is woven into the story. In the bleakness of her most difficult years there seems little external expression of faith, with the notable exception of some singing. As life gradually improves she becomes part of groups of worshipping Christians. Martens describes some of the pressures, including overt persecution, which these groups experienced. She also has Greta questioning some of the ideas which she was taught as a child about believers of other denominations or religions. Forced into a world with very different people than those with whom she was raised, she recognizes the beauty and authenticity of their faith. Although Greta is a person of high moral standards who is disappointed by some of the decisions made by family members, we get the sense of one who warmly gathers them all in her arms, always praying and welcoming them home from the far flung places in which they had ended up. She dies in peace, surrounded by loved ones. The family photos at the end of the book overflow with her descendants.

"To and From Nowhere" offers the reader a rich picture of the life of one Russian Mennonite woman and her family who lived through and survived some of the most horrific periods of the 20th century. In spite of her hard circumstances, Greta's story is filled with hope, courage, ingenuity and a deep and meaningful faith. Greta's appealing character and her story of life's many twists and turns kept this reader engaged.

NEW BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

Peace and War. Mennonite Conscientious Objectors in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union before WWII and Other COs in Eastern Europe
by Dr. Lawrence Klippenstein. (2016), 367 pp.

Paperback, CD and online versions available.
25.00 plus postage in Canada. 30.00 including postage outside Canada.

SEND NO MONEY. YOU WILL BE INVOICED.

Order from: lawklippenstein@shaw.ca

Book Notes

by **Lawrence Klippenstein**

Lydia Reimer, *Evelyn, A Woman Never Abandoned, Never Forsaken* (self-published and printed by Country Graphics and Printing, Ltd., 2015), pb., 137 pp., \$11.50. The retold life story of a faithful, intrepid woman, drawn from the family of Jacob K.L. Friesen and Anne Dueck who lived on the banks of the Morris River in the Kleine Gemeinde village of Rosenhoff (Scratching River settlement). Simply, but well told. Available at the Village Bookstore of the Mennonite Heritage Village, 1-204-326-9661.

Touching places like Niverville and other places in Manitoba, Peter Letkemann has put together *A Book of Remembrance, Mennonites in Arkadak and Zentral, 1908-1941*. (Winnipeg: Old Oak Publishing, 2016) pb., 462 pp. A detailed account of the creation and destruction of two relatively short-lived Mennonite villages of Central Russia. Available at the MHA bookstore 1-204-888-6781. It is an example of prodigious research and organization on a theme that has been long in the waiting to be treated as indeed "a book of remembrance" but also as a paradigm of the ups and downs of Mennonite life under the Soviets with survival of many families who managed to elude the virtually total destruction of this people group and to find new homes in Canada and elsewhere.

J.C. Wenger's edited 1986 production of Menno Simons' writing has been widely circulated. Here is nevertheless a very handy (size format) paperback reprint of *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons 1496-1561* (\$68.97 at the MHV bookstore, 1-204-326-9661), a compendium of 1089 pp. handy "non-threatening" version

that will tempt purchase and use. We owe it (in its purple cover!) to Mennonite Publishing House and Herald Press of Waterloo, ON, who are bringing this new printing to our book shelves. A brief biography of Menno offers a quick recall of a figure who took his remembered place on the Reformation stage and is getting fresh coverage in this 500th anniversary year of that event. He will be back no doubt when Anabaptist/Mennonites do their 500th in 2025.

The Anabaptist story is centre stage also for an unusually exciting and thoroughly researched study of how we got the book known simply as *Martyrs Mirror* and what has that work brought to the Mennonite community and indeed to the world church as a whole! David L. Werner-Zuercher, professor of American Religious History at Messiah College has done it for us in *Martyrs Mirror, A Social History*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), hardcover, 415 pp., \$49.95 US. With ongoing use and publication somewhat more narrowed down to more traditional Anabaptist/Mennonite communities (The Amish and Hutterites come to mind) it cannot enjoy quite the circulation of other more recent Mennonite writings, but has nevertheless remained in the awareness and indeed appreciation of less traditional groups whom Weaver-Zuercher refers to as assimilating-minded Mennonites (he has tried very hard to clean up "false imagery" by avoiding the long established nomenclature for these groups to side step bias and prejudice and highlight actual issues of concern in each group). The final chapter on Dirk Willems especially captures "essentials" for us to check in the "mirror" which remain most clearly as a martyr symbol for many people today.

Genealogy at the New Mennonite Heritage Archives

by **Glenn Penner** - gpenner@uoguelph.ca

As many already know (see the last issue of HP) a significant reorganization of the Mennonite Heritage Centre is taking place. The name will be changed to the Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA) and there will, once again, be a full time archivist. Conrad Stoesz has had an interest in Mennonite genealogy since his high school days (I still have a query written by him when he was a high school student). This reorganization also coincides with my retirement after nearly 30 years as a Chemistry professor at the University of Guelph and subsequent move from Guelph to Winnipeg.

Assuming that the agreement I made with the MHC is honoured by the new MHA I will have office space in the archives and will keep some sort of regular office hours for genealogical consultation and assistance. My office hours will be posted on the new archives web page and appointments can be made via email. I am hoping that, once again, we can organize annual genealogical workshops in collaboration with the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS) and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society (MMHS). One such workshop took place

at the CMBS on May 6. It is also my hope that a genealogy committee of the MMHS can be formed and that we can undertake projects as in the past. Anyone who is interested in this should contact me.

The archives has a subscription to the online GRANDMA genealogical database (with 1.3 million names and counting!), and we hope to, once again, have the capacity to directly add information to the database in the future. I also have subscriptions to ancestry.com and the Archion website. Archion allows one to view scans of Prussian church records.

There are many important genealogical and historical records which are in need of transcription or translation. Many of these do not require a knowledge of German or Gothic script. As in the past, we are in desperate need of people who are willing to do German and Russian translation. I hope to coordinate some translation projects, and any interested individuals should contact me.

I continue to be the Administrator of the Mennonite DNA Project, together with Tim Janzen of Portland, OR. I can be contacted for more information. The project website is at: www.mennonitedna.com.