

HERITAGE POSTING

MANITOBA
MENNONITE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



No. 88

November 2017

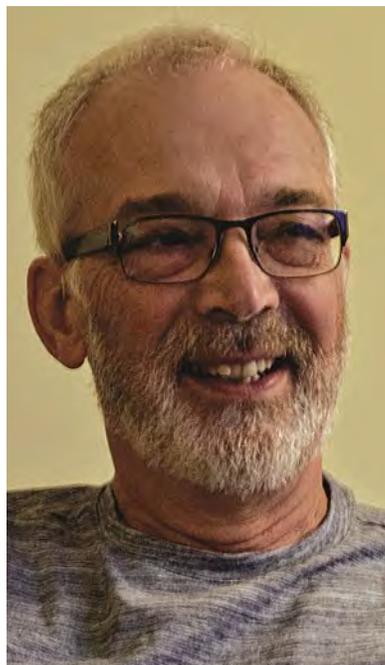
MHV Opens New Events Centre

by Barry Dyck

The most celebratory highlight of *Fall on the Farm 2017* at Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) was the ribbon-cutting which marked the official opening of our new events centre, the Summer Pavilion. A number of MHV's board members, staff, volunteers, and supporters gathered at the Pavilion at 11:00 a.m. to commemorate this event. Congratulatory comments and reflections of thankfulness were offered by Will Peters, MHV Board Chair; Michael Zwaagstra, City of Steinbach Counselor; Barry Dyck, MHV Executive Director; and Ted Falk, Member of Parliament for Provencher (who was unable to attend but had sent a note). After the cutting of the ribbon and a prayer of dedication, the guests socialized over coffee and cookies.



The official commissioning of our Summer Pavilion is a momentous event for MHV. Conversations about replacing our events tent with a permanent events centre go back as far as 2005. The subject became a serious topic of conversation in 2011 when the board chose it as its highest-priority project. Planning the project and raising the money to move forward took the better part of six years. Erecting our new building took only seven months.



Dennis Friesen, Project Consultant, recipient of an Honorary Life Membership in MHV. — Photo by Dennis Friesen

The building has already served us in a multitude of ways. All of our festival entertainment and most of our education program activities for our 2017 season took place in the Summer Pavilion. It has



Cutting the ribbon on September 4 are Rock Jerome – ft3 Architecture Landscape Interior Design, Michael Zwaagstra – City of Steinbach Councilor, Will Peters – MHV Board Chair, Barry Dyck – MHV Executive Director.
— Photo Steinbachonline.com

also been used for weddings, staff picnics, a birthday celebration, and a class reunion.

Dennis Friesen, a friend of the museum, donated his time and skills as project consultant. Dennis has recently retired from a lifelong career in construction and contributed in a uniquely significant way, bringing skills that did not exist on our staff team or board of directors. The board recognized Dennis' contribution with an Honorary Life Membership.

Penn-Co Construction also came to the table with a significant in-kind contribution by donating the entire project-management package. We have appreciated these and other significant elements of support from our community. It is our hope that this new building on our MHV grounds will continue to serve many and various community functions.

Village Locations on Google Earth — A Modest Proposal

by the Editor

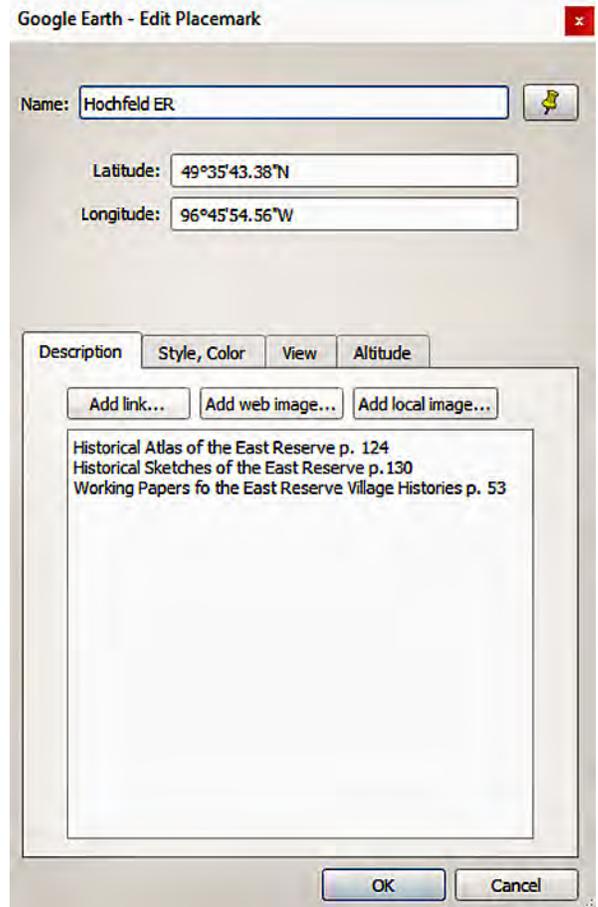
There seems to be some interest on both the East and West Reserve to gather information on all of the old *Strassendoerfer* and preserve this data in some way. The first thing to come to mind is the exact location occupied by each of those villages. Some still exist where they were founded but the majority are gone, and often the memory of where they were is gone too. I think it might be good to organize the information about each village geographically using Google Earth as a tool.

Google Earth (GE) is free and is maintained by one of the biggest companies in the world. It should remain viable indefinitely. Of course all the data would be backed up somewhere else.

How would it work? Once the location of a village is determined by exhaustive research, the site can be found on GE. Move your cursor (which now looks like a yellow placemark, which looks like a stick-pin) to the site and right-click. This brings up a panel which already has the longitude and latitude recorded (see illustration). You now enter the name of the village and when you click OK at the bottom, that name will appear on Google Earth next to the placemark. The more you zoom in before giving the name, the more accurate will be the coordinates.

Now you can start adding other data to each named location. Right-click on a village placemark and go down to "properties". This will bring up the panel you created earlier and you can now start filling it in. You can type anything you want into the 'Description' box and then there are boxes for links, images and web pages. Click OK. You could, for example, put in a link to a web page that lists all the people buried in the cemetery. You could put in references to books and articles. It's really a database for any kind of information about the village. This database can grow as different people contribute material.

How can this data be shared? By means of so-called KMZ files. You can again right-click on the placemark and go down to 'Save Place As. . .', and click on it. Save it to



— Photo by G. Klassen

your files (probably in a folder such as 'Village KMZs'. Name the file with the village name. Now when you want to see your data just click on one of the KMZ files in the Village KMZs folder. That will open up Google Earth if it is not already open and will show a placemark and a name for the village. Right-click on the placemark and go down to 'properties' and there is all your data!

The beauty of this is that you can email the KMZ file as an attachment (or the whole folder) to anybody else and after they have downloaded it, they can find all your villages on GE and see all the data by simply clicking on the KMZ file (if they have GE installed.)

Ernest Braun and I have created KMZ files for all the historical place names in the ER and other near-by villages. Ernie has done the exhaustive research required and the precise locations of the villages are now known with a few exceptions. We did the KMZ files because we had a request from York University Library for this information. They were tagging all of Prof John Warkentin's photographs in their archives with geographic information. We sent them the East Reserve files and are working on the West Reserve with the help of Dave Harms, Lawrence Klippenstein, and Harold J. Dyck. I can send you the ER files if you request them. grklassen@gmail.com

To create a massive GE database with village information could be a collaborative task. Many people could contribute to the database as new information becomes available. I guess we would have to have a central coordinator who would receive modified KMZ files and distribute them to subscribers. How about it?

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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

Editor — Glen Klassen

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

Why Museums Matter

by Barry Dyck

Manitoba's Minister of Finance, the Honourable Cameron Friesen, recently held a pre-budget consultation in the Steinbach area. Barry Dyck, Executive Director of Mennonite Heritage Village, was among those invited to address a panel of MLAs at that event. Following is Barry's presentation:

"Minister Friesen, Members of the Manitoba Legislature. My comments this evening will in part be influenced by my role at the Mennonite Heritage Village museum, and my role as a regional counselor for the Association of Manitoba Museums. Our association represents over 200 museums in our province.

Manitoba's Mennonites are only one small part of the global family. This means that Mennonites around the world do not share a common language or culture but are connected through their Anabaptist faith.

Inscription above the touch-screen display

Museums play important roles in our communities by way of preserving, teaching, and promoting culture and heritage. Many of us who have passed the age of 55 are beginning to develop a greater interest in our heritage. We enjoy the nostalgic experiences that museums offer us.

Museums are also common destinations for student field trips. At our museum we typically host between 3,000 and 4,000 students annually. Many of these students engage in the museum experience to the extent that they convince their parents to come for a visit in the future. Can the province be supportive of school bussing programs that enable students to experience museums and like organizations?

Museums also find ways to engage with students through projects. Today our museum has exhibits designed by three separate high school classes where we provide them with subject matter, a suggested format for developing the exhibit, and a theme on which to focus their work. We have engaged with one of these classes year after year, each year bringing us a new group of exhibitors. This is one of the ways museums become relevant at a new level in their communities.

Heritage and culture organizations are community builders. They enhance the quality of life in a community and thereby play a significant role in attracting residents to communities. MHV, for example, serves as a community meeting place where people can gather for meetings, social events, and just plain family recreation. Many museums offer

their community one or more festival events designed to bring people together to celebrate significant events like Manitoba Day, Canada Day, Culture Days, or a local signature festival - in our case, Pioneer Days on the August long weekend.

Museums are also tourist attractions, creating economic activity within our province, and attracting tourists from other provinces and other countries. MHV hosts guests from more than 50 countries every year. In many cases tourists who visit museums need a hotel room, meals in a local restaurant, gasoline for their vehicle, and various other necessities.

Most heritage, culture and arts organizations are not able to function without the support of significant numbers of volunteers. It seems that many similar organizations are struggling to maintain their contingent of volunteers. Aging volunteers who are stepping aside, having completed years of service, are not easily replaced. Our society desperately needs volunteers but seems to have difficulty placing a high value on volunteerism. Can the province create incentives for volunteers? The Hanover School Division offers students credits for contributing certain numbers of volunteer hours. While we have benefited by a few of these students volunteering at our museum, they are indeed few and far between.

Funding is, of course, a challenge in heritage and culture as it is in healthcare, education, infrastructure and so many other areas. Just in case it needs to be restated, our sector requires ongoing support from various levels of government to function. Can charitable giving be made more attractive to individuals and to businesses, thereby creating short and efficient revenue streams between donors and registered charities?

Mr. Minister, thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you and your colleagues. I trust my brief comments have convinced you that heritage and culture are important and relevant to the Manitoba economy and to the quality of life for Manitobans."



MHV has recently installed a touch-screen display into its historical gallery. Visitors can touch locations on a world map and bring up information about Mennonites in that location.

— Photos by G. Klassen

Town of Rosenfeld history book in the offing

by Lois Braun

The village of Rosenfeld began on the banks of what was then called Buffalo Lake. As was the case with many Mennonite villages, the settlement's original residents eventually dispersed, with only a few farmyards remaining in their original locations. With the CPR creating a junction of two rail lines two km north of the original settlement, that is where the present-day town grew up.

Over the past decade, various people have been toying with the idea of publishing the history of these two Rosenfelds. Prompted and encouraged by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, and its plan to have the histories of all the communities of the East and West Reserves documented, impetus has been growing to make a Rosenfeld book a reality.

Finally, in December of 2016, after an earlier effort to organize the project collapsed, Glenn Friesen, descendant of one of the 1875 founding families, was able to form a committee that brings the necessary skills and a sincere dedication to the project. The cornerstone of the historical research on the topic of Rosenfeld is Art Wiebe, retired educator and Rosenfeld resident.

"Inspiration came from a series of events over the past 53 years," says Wiebe. "In 1974, when I accepted a teaching position at Rosenfeld Elementary School, I found a set of black-and-white photos in my classroom desk drawer left there by the previous teacher, Ken Hildebrand, showing a variety of Rosenfeld businesses in our community that were present in the 1960s, many of which had since disappeared.

"Then, in the late 1980s, I happened to meet two of Alexander Acheson's family – a great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter. Alexander Acheson was of Irish descent and owned the land on which our current village is located. He was the first teacher/principal in the Rosenfeld School District.

"Another incident was suddenly receiving a set of 20-plus black-and-white 8x10 photos from an estate being cleaned up in Saskatchewan, labeled "Rosenfeld 1909". Also inspirational were conversations I had with numerous long-time citizens of the Rosenfeld area, where they shared with me details of growing up in the 1920s and 30s."

Art goes on to cite other intriguing incidents, but possibly the most rewarding were those detailed on the Facebook site he manages: Rosenfeldhistory Westreserve. It is there that many Rosenfelders, past and present, have posted articles, photos, memoirs, anecdotes, tidbits of research, and comments.

The book will consist of writings collected from past local historians and from history scholars, research gathered from various sources, memoirs and anecdotes taken from the Facebook site, family histories that already existed as well as many that are being submitted



Aerial view of the Village of Rosenfeld, 1955.

specifically for this project and, of course, photographs. Besides the original village and the town, surrounding school districts will be included in the history.

A brochure has been circulated by several means inviting anyone connected to the Rosenfeld area to contact the committee if they have questions or material to submit. The target date for publication is fall of 2018.

Contact: rosenfeldhistory@gmail.com

Progress at Neuberghthal

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation (NHF) has developed a program developed to create a National Sites community feature in the village under the aegis of Parks Canada. The NHF program has been underway since about 1990. The reconstruction of the school building and the washrooms have been the work of the Bergthal School committee formed in 2010. The school building was once used as a one-room classroom in the school district of Altbergthal west of Altona. Then it was moved to Altona, where it served as a school museum. Recently it was moved to the Neuberghthal site.

The buildings and program at Neuberghthal have now been integrated with the school program. Significant community educational, music and other types of programming has taken place here, especially during the last 5 years.



The renovated Altbergthal school building, with completed washroom facilities.

— Photo courtesy of Albert Falk and Ray Hamm

The Persecution of the Anabaptists

by *Conrad Stoesz*,
Archivist at the *Mennonite Heritage Archives*,
Winnipeg

I pushed on the worn, stout, wooden door with oversized iron hardware and ducked as I stepped over the threshold and into the dim, stone-walled cell. A rough bed-like wooden frame, with iron chains, stocks, and shackles, took up most of the room. I tried to grasp what went on here at the Trachselwald Castle in Switzerland and why Anabaptists were imprisoned here. On the 500th anniversary of the Reformation I joined the TourMagination Anabaptist History Tour that wound through Southern Germany, Switzerland, and dipped into France.

Martin Luther's suggestions for church reforms in 1517 set in motion the wheels of religious and social change. Ulrich Zwingli in Zürich, Switzerland agreed with many of Luther's reforms, including the nature of salvation: that it was a gift; that the role of the Bible was central; that people did not need a priest to access God; and that icons and relics held no power. Anabaptists owe a great deal to these reformers and yet Anabaptists also were persecuted by the churches that Luther and Zwingli founded.

Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for his views in 1521. He hid in the isolated Wartburg Castle, where he translated the New Testament into German in 11 weeks. His work provided the scriptures in everyday language for anyone who could read and they spread quickly, thanks to Gutenberg's printing press.

In the city of Zürich Zwingli renounced his position in the Church, but he continued as the leading cleric in the Gross Münster and led the formation of the Reformed Church thanks to the support from the city council. He began to hold church services in German instead of Latin and people flocked to hear him preach.

With Luther in Northern Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland, they managed the reforms but kept the link between Church and State. They were able to gauge how far the city officials would allow changes to be implemented. However, some of Zwingli's students grew frustrated at the mediocre and slow-paced reforms and pushed for more reforms faster. Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and others began hold their own worship services in the countryside. On January 21, 1525 the Anabaptist movement was officially founded with Conrad Grebel baptizing George Blaurock. They became known as the radical reformers and continued to preach and baptize.

State officials deemed the radical reformers to be in error and ordered them to submit to the will of the city council. When they refused, city leaders felt threatened and were determined to keep control of the situation. On January 5, 1527 Felix Manz was executed by drowning in the Limmat River in Zürich for his beliefs.

The Anabaptists scattered and some gathered in the town of Schleithem on February 24, 1527, where former

Benedictine prior, Michael Sattler, took leadership in drawing up what became known as the Schleithem Confession. The new believers agreed to seven points that built on some of the reforms implemented by Luther and Zwingli. This Anabaptist confession understood that baptism was for adults who repented of their sins and committed themselves to follow Jesus in everyday life; that church membership was voluntary; that violence had no place in the life of a Christian and that communion was to commemorate the suffering and life of Jesus.

Anabaptist nodes sprang up in the Netherlands, Northern Germany, and Moravia. With no official structure, there were many leaders with various beliefs. In 1536, the Dutch priest, Menno Simons, left the Catholic Church to give leadership to struggling Anabaptist groups. Simons was adamant that even in the face of persecution, disciples of Jesus must be nonviolent. Through Simons' role and his widely distributed writings, he became one of the best-known Anabaptist leaders. Many Anabaptists began to be known as followers of Menno, or Mennonites. Persecution of Anabaptist-Mennonites was heavy until the mid-1600s. Between 2,000-3,000 Anabaptists were executed and thousands more exiled, imprisoned, or tortured.

I thought of this persecution as I stood in the dimly lit cave in a remote area of Switzerland, where Anabaptists would come secretly for worship, fellowship, and prayer. Four people from the nearby Reformed church welcomed us to the cave and worshiped with us. They invited us to their church for refreshments and explained that joining us in worship and hosting us was a small but important gesture of reconciliation for how the Anabaptists were treated in the past.

There were other signs of a willingness to acknowledge this painful history. In 2004, a stone was placed along the Limmat River acknowledging the drowning of Felix Manz and other Anabaptists. In the same year, a memorial stone was placed near Schleithem, along the newly created Anabaptist trail, in recognition of the inhumane way the Anabaptists had been treated. I was touched and moved by these gestures of reconciliation.

Like some Reformed churches, the Lutheran World Federation has made significant strides towards reconciliation. After it was brought to their attention that the Augsburg Confession explicitly condemned Anabaptists, an interfaith dialogue was established. In 2010, an official apology was made by the Lutheran World Federation to Mennonites for the persecution their ancestors endured. At the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in 2015, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr. Martin Junge, said "we cannot commemorate the 500th anniversary without remembering your forgiveness. We cannot commemorate without you. You have given us a gift – the gift of reconciliation." He went on to say that the Lutherans learned that reconciliation is not the end – it is not the goal. Reconciliation is the beginning of repairing relationships so we can work together. He saw this in action when MWC donated funds to the Lutheran World

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Phase II of District School Signs Around the East Reserve

By Ernest N. Braun

Former Lister East student Albert Unrau and his son Kyle pounded in the post for the commemorative sign placed on the site of the school on Wednesday, August 23. EastMenn Historical Committee completed Phase II of their District Schools commemorative signs project, placing another 15 stainless steel signs. The aim of Phase II was to include those District Schools that lay outside the RM of Hanover. Phase I had placed signs for those schools within the RM of Hanover, supplementing the six signs already placed by the Willow Plains group some years ago. Three schools already had a cairn raised by local groups, and schools continuing within larger communities were not part of the project. In total, EastMenn has placed 36 signs in the area.

Orlando Hiebert quarterbacked the project, ordering the signs and enlisting the assistance of Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Telephone System for marking gas and telephone lines. He contacted all the owners of the sites, most of which are now private residential properties, to discuss the project and obtain consent. The signs were placed on the property line of each site, where mowing or weed control would not be an added burden, but where the sign would be visible from the road without infringing on the privacy of the home owners. On Wednesday August 23

EastMenn chair Jake L. Peters and secretary Ernie Braun accompanied Hiebert on the 185 kilometer round trip, part of it in the rain, and pounded in 13 posts, while Albert and Kyle Unrau hammered in the ones at Spencer South and Lister East.



Ernie Braun and Jake Peters showing how it's done.



Orlando Hiebert and Jake L. Peters installing the school sign at the site of Ridgewood North School.

- Photos by Ernest N. Braun



Orlando Hiebert, Albert Unrau and Kyle Unrau finishing the sign at the site of Lister East School.

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Fellowship for refugee aid programs.

Today, Mennonites join in marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and value many of the ideas brought forth. Today, our memories about the persecution have been soothed by time and the reconciliation. Today we can work for God's glory together.

Reprinted from *Rupert's Land News*, News organ of the Anglican Church. October, 2017

Life in Kansas in the Dust Bowl of the 'Dirty Thirties'

This is an excerpt from the unpublished memories of the Gerhard D. Doerksen family, based on writings by Gerhard Doerksen, translated by grandson Gerry Doerksen of Blumenort (ER), and stories by son Ben Doerksen, compiled by Athena Thiessen, great-great grandchild of Gerhard. Generously submitted by Gerry Doerksen.

Life in Kansas, while not exactly easy, was going OK until the Dust Bowl, or the "Dirty Thirties" hit. Seven years went by with no harvest and some years the combines hadn't even been taken out. Once one of the Doerksens shipped a load of wheat only for it to come back with a bill - the sale of the wheat hadn't even covered the cost of transporting it.

The dust was so bad they would empty dust out of the house with a shovel. People would wake up and see dust outlining the silhouette of their head on the pillow. Margaret Bartel mentioned they would set the dining room tables with the plates turned upside down so they could wait until the moment they began eating to turn them over. They, and the rest of the *Kleine Gemeinde* people buried four small children in the tiny church graveyard who were victims of dust pneumonia.

Rain too could be an issue. Gerry translates from a story by his parents, Ben and Marie, in which they told of a night in the summer of 1935 when there was a very heavy rain. "Dad went outside to check and all seemed well, but just when he turned to go back inside, a flash of lightning revealed that the creek had overflowed and the yard was flooding right up to the door. He went to wake Grandfather



Doerksens and friends at the dug-out.

and Uncle Peter, who were sleeping in the granary. They had two kerosene lanterns to light the area near the door and so, barefoot, with pant legs rolled up, they built an earth dam around the door. After an hour they realized that the force of the water was eroding the dam faster than they could build it up. Water at that point was four inches above the door entrance so they went to tell the others to get dressed and move things that were on the floor. They prayed and the rain subsided, otherwise the whole basement might have filled up."

But they also had fun. "We'd get the whole gang together and everybody would be on the porch." And beyond normal good clean fun too. Gerry recalls going through pictures with his Dad and seeing a picture of Ben and a few of his buddies dressed up in different costumes on their parent's yard in Satanta. Ben was dressed as a pregnant woman, with a big stomach and wearing white long-johns.

Gerry said his father simply said, "*na dan weare de Ellre sejcha wada nijch tus*". (I guess the parents weren't home once again.)

There was some dancing, some playing of instruments, and maybe even some alcohol--but all eventually came to God. There was one day when the four brothers, Johan, Dietrich, Jakob, and Cornelius, all were baptized on the same day, and their mother sat in the pew and cried, she was so happy.

Katherine Plett remembered an old song they used to sing and Alice and Linda Doerksen immediately remembered and sang along when they heard it:

*I walked to Satanta and I walked around the block
I walked right into a baker shop
I picked three donuts right out of the grease
I handed the lady a five-cent piece
She looked at the nickel and she looked at me
She said this nickel's no good to me
She said there's a hole in the middle and it's all the way through
I said I know, there's a hole in the donut too*



Doerksen brothers and cousins. Ben is front center.

— Photos courtesy of Garth Doerksen

What's Happening at the Landing Site? The Trans Canada and the Crow Wing Trails.

by Ernest N. Braun

New Signage at Mennonite Landing

Two new developments have occurred at the Mennonite Landing Site at the confluence of the Rat and Red Rivers. Both developments are in the form of signs, but although both happened in the summer of 2017, they are not connected. The one that will be noticed first is a blue Trans Canada Trail sign on St. Mary's Road, placed by the Crow Wing Trail Association from funds provided by the Trans Canada Trail and installed by Manitoba Infrastructure. This sign points to another new sign with the Trans Canada Trail logo, also an initiative of the Crow Wing Trail Association, posted on the Mennonite Landing Site gate, which identifies the site as a Trans Canada Trail access point to the Crow Wing Trail.

The second development is a large new sign placed right at the water's edge of the Rat River as it debouches into the Red River. This sign is a guided canoe map created by the local artist Réal Bérard in 1971.

Trans Canada Trail

The Trans Canada Trail, also known as The Great Trail, was begun in 1992 to commemorate Canada's 125th anniversary, with the expectation that by the 150th anniversary, namely 2017, it would be complete, extending from the Atlantic to the Arctic and Pacific oceans. The Trail consists of many local or provincial trails pieced together to span the country. In other words, in each province the Trail consists of segments of other trails, connected in sequence

to bridge the province. In Manitoba for example the trail enters the province from Ontario via the Whiteshell Trail, and exits into Saskatchewan as the Crocus Trail. In Manitoba the TCT includes about 1200 km of trails, include a dozen other trails, one of them being the Crow Wing Trail, also known as *Chemin Saint Paul*. This historic cart trail ran south from Fort Garry along the east side of the Red River to Crow Wing in Minnesota and on to St. Paul, providing a route for freighters serving the fur trade and the beginning of European settlement in southern Manitoba.



Crow Wing Trail

Although the Trans Canada Trail ostensibly follows the Crow Wing Trail along that segment which runs on the east side of the Red River from Winnipeg south to the international boundary, that is in fact not the case entirely. Since the actual Crow Wing Trail crosses private land, and would incur all kinds of issues of permissions, liability insurance, and maintenance, the segment referenced as part of the Trans Canada Trail follows municipal roads, pastures, and road allowances in a route that roughly parallels the actual historical trail, but deviates to include parks and existing trails.

The Crow Wing Trail itself has three segments: St. Norbert Heritage Park to Otterburne; Otterburne to St. Malo, and St. Malo to Emerson. The middle section of the official trail arrives in Niverville via Krahn Road, passes near the site of the Niverville Heritage Centre and meanders through Hespeler Park, where a sign was erected some years ago. Then it doubles back west beside Crown Valley Road to the Mennonite Landing Site at the confluence of the Rat and Red Rivers. From there it jogs

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The Gate at the entrance to the Mennonite Landing Site at the confluence of the Red and Rat Rivers near Niverville, Manitoba. — Photos by E. N. Braun



The Trans Canada Trail sign installed by the Manitoba Recreational Trails Association on the gate. The Crow Wing Trail logo means that this is the CWT section of the TCT.

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south to the former orphanage at Otterburne before angling along Rat River Road to St. Pierre, where it crosses Hwy 59 and continues south to St. Malo. Here it crosses Hwy 59 again and jogs down to the Senkiw swinging bridge built in 1946 for children to cross the Roseau River on the way to school. From there it jogs back and forth until it reaches Emerson where it crosses the river to become the Rhineland Trail and continues west. Today's trail

The current welcome sign installed by the Parks Branch on the gate.

is 193 km long, has 65 points of interest and 11 access points, the Mennonite Landing Site now being one of those. Recreationally, the Trail invites hiking, biking, horseback riding and cross country skiing.

The provincial organization overseeing the construction of the Manitoba part of the Trans Canada Trail was founded in 1993 as Manitoba Recreational Trails Associations (MRTA), and later branded as Trails Manitoba. In June of 2017, the trail was completed across Manitoba, in time to meet the 150th Anniversary in July 2017. See <http://crowwingtrail.ca/downloads/heritage-landscape-study/> or www.trailsmanitoba.ca for additional information.

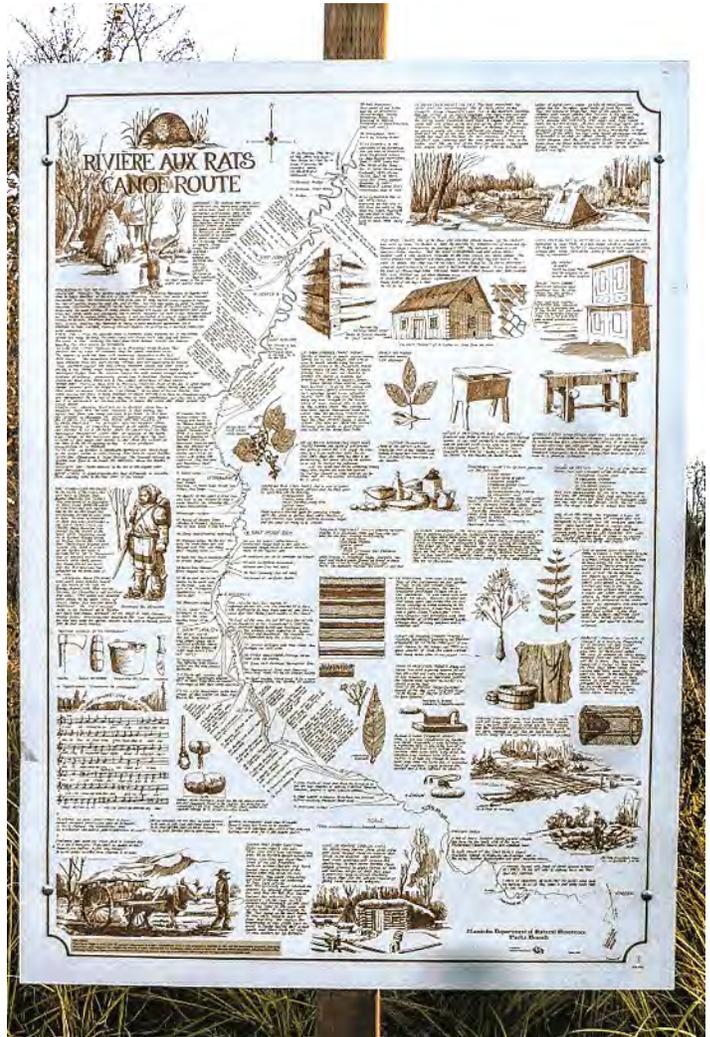
Rat River Canoe Map

The second new development is not connected to the first. It consists of a large sign placed on a spit of land right next to the mouth of the Rat River, with the title, *Riviere Aux Rats Canoe Route*. This sign is patterned after a Canoe Route map created by Réal Bérard in 1971. It was erected by the Seine-Rat River Conservation District this summer to draw attention to the heritage of the Rat River

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A close-up of an illustration on the Historical Information sign.



The Historical Information Sign installed by the Parks Branch.



The location of the Historical Information sign near the two rivers. Probably too close to the annually rising water and ice.

Schoenau: A Village on the Manitoba Mennonite West Reserve

by Elmer Heinrichs

We have been giving attention to village histories in the WestMenn Historical Committee of MMHS. Several more studies in this series are underway. Here we share excerpts from materials submitted by the author from work he has done on the Schoenau story. L. Klippenstein

Schoenau is an old Mennonite village name, transplanted from Prussia to the Molotschna Colony, the Samara settlement, the Barnaul region, and in Canada to both Mennonite Reserves, East and West. It is found in several Latin American Mennonite colonies as well.

By 1880 Schoenau was one of the 25 new villages that had sprung up in southern Manitoba when more than 400 families moved from the East to the West Reserve during the years 1878-1882. The town of Altona would be built up along the railway which arrived in 1882. It lay about a mile to the southeast of Schoenau.

There were 13 homesteaders listed on the village roster in 1881. These included Abraham Dueck, Peter Harder, Peter Dueck, C. Striemer, Franz Tiessen, J.Y. Shantz (for Abraham Neufeld), Abraham Tiessen (for Franz Friesen), Cornelius Dueck, Abraham Friesen, Cornelius Reimer, Johann Harder, Abraham Harder, Abraham Neufeld, Heinrich Tiessen, J.Y. Shantz (for Bernhard Neufeld), and Derk Dyck.

Most farmyards and buildings of the village were situated on the east side of Buffalo Creek. It seems that some villagers were inclined right at the outset to homestead outside of the village proper.

Marj Hildebrand has written, "My great-grandparents came from the Bergthal colony in South Russia (later Ukraine). My grandfather was Franz Tiessen, son of Franz, and my grandmother, Eva Dueck, was a daughter of Peter Dueck. My grandparents are both buried in the old village cemetery at Schoenau.

School began after the fall field work was done and ended by Easter, when seeding time came. Mother first began to read and write in German, with the *Fibel* (primer) and the Bible as main text books on the curriculum. She could read recipes and instructions for knitting and crocheting, and she sometimes read stories to the grandchildren.

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— The editors.

Breaking up soil for cultivation was done with a one-shear plough and a team of oxen. Oxen were still in use when Mother, born in 1892, was a little girl.

A complete manuscript for possible publication is in progress. The author will welcome any information, including photos, maps, etc., which could be included in the story. Send to eahein@mymts.net. Thank you all.

Note that information on writing a history of the village of Rosenfeld is available elsewhere in this issue. Some important new material has been discovered on the early years of Altberghal, courtesy of Martha Martens. Notes from an interview with family members of the one-time teacher there, Peter B Krahn, plus notes on moving the old school building of that district to Neuberghal for renovation, are available on request. Contact lawklippenstein@shaw.ca.

(Continued from page 9)

canoe route. The map shows the Red River and its tributary the Rat River, and along the course of the rivers it features a wealth of detailed historical information about the various places along the way. The sign also provides short vignettes of individuals, artifacts, events, and other elements from early pioneer times that characterized life around the Rat River. Réal Bérard was born in southeastern Manitoba, studied fine arts widely and worked as an illustrator in the Parks Department of the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs of Manitoba. See www.galerieriviereauxrats.com/artists-profiles/real-berard/?lang=en.

Funding for the sign was provided by grants from The Manitoba Heritage Grant Program and the SRRCD. The sign is only a short distance from the stone cairn memorializing the Mennonite Landing, but since the map was generated in 1971, there is no mention of the Mennonite connection to the site, which had not been developed at all at that point.



The cairn at the Landing Site. Installed 1992.

Thanks to the assistance of Murielle Bugera of CWTA, and Jodi Goerzen of SRRCD in compiling this information.

Review

Yellow Bellies

Presented by Theatre of the Beat
Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg
October 20, 2017

Reviewed by Harold J. Dyck

"Yellow Bellies," written by Rebecca Steiner and Johnny Wideman, played to an appreciative audience at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on Friday, October 20. With this performance by Theatre of the Beat, based in Stouffville, Ontario, the dramatic production completed its October tour at locations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The show opened with the ordeal of young men who must convince authorities during World War II that their religious objection to taking human life is personal and sincere before being sent away to perform alternative service far from home. Actors Joe McLellan, Kimberlee Walker, Benjamin Wert and Johnny Wideman advanced the narrative seamlessly through nine scenes from that initial test before a judge through a spectrum of struggles at work and to an eventual bittersweet homecoming. Making symbolic costume adjustments on the fly and employing a few simple props, the players impressed with uniformly convincing and sparkling performances. McLellan's musical renditions of hymns, gospel songs and popular tunes actually sung in the work camps added a delightful dimension to each scene.

Struggles with life in the work camps, including the challenges of loneliness, diet, boredom and uncertainty about being moved elsewhere were portrayed with pathos and humour. While specific place names were not given, members of the audience without prior knowledge of alternative service would have learned the COs were hard at work in parks, forests, forest fire locations, medical settings and even farming.

To the credit of the playwrights, the work experience itself was neither glamorized nor excessively disparaged. What the protagonists agonized about chiefly were instead questions relating to the meaning of the decision they had made to refuse military participation with all its

consequences. Was the work they were doing for the country meaningful or just something to keep them busy and out of the way? Was their decision really the right one when so many Mennonite young men had actually chosen to join up and were losing their lives? While others were being decorated and recognized, were there to be any rewards for them? Were they in any way heroic or were they in fact cowardly, "yellow bellies," as they were frequently called, content to let others fight for them? What does it mean to be a citizen of one's country, to be "in but not of" the world? Not left out from the scene was the experience of Mennonite women working as nurses as far away as England, subjected also to pointed questioning about the motives and stance of their young men working in alternative service.

Questions such as these were articulated both in the dramatic dialogue and in brief monologues introducing each of the nine scenes. Though the characters are fictionalized, much of the dialogue is taken verbatim from records preserved at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College and Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives at Canadian Mennonite University, where the underlying research for the production was done.

If the questions of meaning were not ultimately resolved in the play, it was clear however that the experience of alternative service left an enduring legacy in the form of friendships that would be cherished and in the abandonment forever of an isolationism that could not survive exposure to other types of Mennonites and fellow objectors, not to mention the larger world. In the end, somewhat enigmatically, according to a final monologue, we can only "meditate on the works of God...and be grateful."

Not too many are left who can give first-person accounts of alternative service in the 1940's. The questions raised in this play by those who did prove to be persistent should be restated and re-imagined in every age, as long as Mennonites and others find themselves between conflicting demands of the nation they are a part of and the God they serve.

Here is a group of seven members of the 1947 MCI Grade XII class who met for a reunion at Bethel Place in Winnipeg last month. The grad class had more than fifty members at the time although only 47 got onto a grad picture done at the grad program that year, and these seven made it to the 70th anniversary. They are (back, left to right) Dr. Paul Peters, Herb Peters, Lawrence Klippenstein, and (front, left to right) Helen Ens, Anne Schlichting, Anne Bergman (Mrs. Dr George) Froese, Susan Hildebrandt. A sharing time followed the meal served in the Bethel Place restaurant.



— Photo credit : Susan Hildebrand. Submitted by Lawrence Klippenstein.

Book Review

Waldemar Janzen, *Reminiscences of My Father Wladimir Janzen: Teacher, Minister, Gulag Survivor, July 26, 1900—May 15, 1957*, Winnipeg: by the author, 2017. Pp 140, with illustrations. Softcover, \$15.00.

Reviewed by Hans Werner

A collection of letters is the basis upon which the son, Waldemar Janzen, retired Professor of Theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMU), reminisces in this short book about a father he never really knew in person. Janzen's father was a schoolteacher and minister in the Molotschna Mennonite village of Ohrloff, was arrested in the 1930s and like so many others, sent to the Gulag. Janzen would see his father for the last time when he was four years old in the prison at Dnepropetrovsk in present day Ukraine. The father survived the Gulag only to die in 1957 in a vehicle-pedestrian accident in the midst of earnest attempts gain permission to emigrate to join his wife and son who had come to Canada after becoming refugees during the Second World War and migrating in the postwar years. The rest of what the son knows about the father comes from his mother, a few other people, but more primarily from letters he received from him and the letters exchanged between his mother and her husband.

The letter exchange is divided into three quite different groupings: those sent to Janzen as a child, 1936-1941; those received by him and his mother when their husband and father 'reappeared' after the Second World War, 1948-1950; and those received after a break in contact in the mid 1950s, 1955-1957.

The theme that constantly emerges in the letters is the father's attempt to be a father in spite of the separation of vast geographic and ultimately language, national, and cultural distances. Some of the most poignant moments are when the father attempts to substitute birthday gifts he cannot deliver with drawings in the letters included for the young boy. Janzen's reception of some of the later letters from his father reveal a certain frustration with the impossibility of him understanding what a young student's and later Professor's life in Canada could possibly be like.

The relationship between his mother and her husband comes across as even more complex. Janzen's aim is to convey a sense of their absolute commitment to each other in spite of the almost impossibility of them ever seeing each other again. While the letters outline some of the attempts being made to reunite the family, the reader is left with the sense that the husband and father was possibly hopeful, but not confident it could happen. Nevertheless, the commitment of Janzen's parents is remarkable, particularly in today's context of seemingly less permanent marriage commitments.

Finally, Janzen also seeks to give us a sense of his father's faith. He goes to considerable lengths to portray his father as not only a Christian, but also an intellectual who had a unique combination of Anabaptist-centered Christianity, while tolerant and accepting of other streams of Christian belief. Here we may also be learning to know the son reflecting on his own intellectual journey.

This short memoir-like book certainly makes apparent the importance of fathers. Certainly sons, but also

daughters, have a 'father vacuum' that seeks to be filled. Janzen's book also captures the pain and sorrow of forced separation. It is both heart-warming and astonishing to become witnesses to the commitment of his parents. By translating and reflecting thoughtfully on a collection of letters, Janzen helps us understand a historic period, but also offers us a window into one family's coping with and navigating its pathos.

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

Grace, Ruth and Gwen Rempel, with illustrator Nita Wiebe, *My Name is Sush. The True Story of a Mennonite Family's First Winter in Manitoba. Colouring and Activity Book*, Steinbach: Mennonite Heritage Village, 2017, pbk, 36 pp. \$5.00. A most excellent resource for intergenerational historical study. Available at MHV, 1-204-326 9661.

Sharon Yoder and Jolyn Schroeder, *Annie Funk Lived to Serve and to Sacrifice*, Faith Builders Resource Group 2008, pbk. 52 pp. \$12.00. Annie (1874-1912) was a very effective missionary to India, and died in the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. Order from MHV at 1-204- 326 9661.

Helen Rose Pauls. *Refugees: A Memoir*, Chilliwack, B.C. self-published, 2016, pbk. 96 pp. She lived her life for 18 years as a refugee before she found safety and security in Canada.

Palmer Becker, *Anabaptist Essentials, Ten Signs of a Unique Christian Faith*, Harrisonburg: Herald Press, 2017, pbk., 182 pp. \$16.00. The author attempts, in lay person's language, to do what has been attempted before but not always with the clarity and precision of this author. Adaptable to workbook use. Available at Commonword Bookstore at CMU at 1-204-487-3300.

Royden Loewen, *Journal of Mennonite Studies Volume 34*. Winnipeg: Chair of Mennonite Studies, 2016, pbk, 372 pp. \$28.00. Theme: Mennonites, Medicine and the Body. Contact r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca for copies. Includes papers read at a recent conference on the theme with occasional other submissions. Sponsored by the Chair at the University of Winnipeg.

Waldemar Janzen, CMU emeritus Professor of Old Testament, is the author of *Reminiscences of My Father Wladimir Janzen: Teacher, Minister, Gulag Survivor, July 26, 1900-May 15, 1957*. The 145 page paperback was self-published in 2017, and sells at the Mennonite Heritage Archives bookstore (1-204-48-3300) for \$15.00. The author was separated from his father as a young boy in the Soviet Union during Stalinist times and so Waldemar and his mother Helena emigrated to Canada after WWII without him. Material is drawn from a series of letters and post cards which Dima, the father, was able to get to his son and wife during the time of their separation.