



Henry Goerzen receives award for preserving Alberta history

by Barb Draper

Henry D. Goerzen of Didsbury, Alta., received the Award of Excellence from the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC) when the society gathered for its annual meeting in Calgary on Jan. 20. He was recognized for his work in preserving the history of Mennonites in Alberta. A farmer by vocation, Goerzen worked as a volunteer archivist for the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta for more than 25 years; he helped organize and served as the first chair for the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta (MHSA).

In the early years of the Alberta society, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) building provided space to store archival material, but when that space was no longer available, Goerzen set up a steel grain bin on his farm, carefully sealing it against moisture and rodents, and housed the material until 2001 when space was available in the new MCC building in Calgary.

In the 1990s, Goerzen travelled throughout Alberta, documenting the stories of conscientious objectors. He sometimes spoke to school groups or to the press, believing that expressing his convictions about peace was an important witness to the larger society.

"I was not afraid to put my hand on the cenotaph," he commented about a public event remembering the war. "I also want to honour those killed in the war."

Goerzen also played an important role in translating letters into English and he was valued for his ability to read and write the German Gothic script.

"I wrote my first love letter with Gothic," he said. In receiving the award, Goerzen was quick to recognize the help he received from his wife, Erna.

Among the reports presented at the MHSC meeting was one from Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO). This online resource began as a project of MHSC in the 1980s and continues to grow. Among the new articles in 2017 was the first article from Africa, written by a historian from Kenya. In the past year, editorial oversight for the project was moved to the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism at Goshen College, although volunteer editors from Canada remain involved.

An upcoming project for MHSC is "A People of Diversity: Mennonites in Canada since 1970," to be held Nov. 16 and 17, 2018, hosted by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. This conference will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canadian society.



Henry Goerzen receives the Award of Excellence from Richard Thiessen, President of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada at the society's annual meeting on Jan. 20 in Calgary. — Photo by Bert Friesen



Youth from First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg visit the Mennonite Heritage Archives. See page 2.

— Photo by Erika Enns Rodine

Youth Group Visits the Mennonite Heritage Archives

by Conrad Stoesz, Archivist, MHA

Getting young people into the archives is a way of whetting their appetite for Mennonite history. Many thanks to those in our community who encourage and go out of their way to introduce people to the archives, such as Erika Enns Rodine. As part of Erika's studies at Canadian Mennonite University, she chose to do a practicum with us at the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Now, as a pastor to youth at Winnipeg's First Mennonite Church, she brought her youth group for an archives visit. I got to share with them some cool stories from the vault and we explored old photographic technology! I explained that archives preserve the evidence for the facts and themes found in the history books. But archives also hold the stories that are the exceptions to those themes!



From L-R in the photo with the panoramic print: Luke Townsend, Aiden Bock, Robyn Bock, Erika Enns Rodine, Lena Klassen, Rick Unger, Sara Dyck, Michelle Dyck.

— Photo by Erika Enns Rodine

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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

Editor — Glen Klassen

Contributing Editor — Lawrence Klippenstein

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

Heritage Posting To Your E-mail!

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

Many subscribers have chosen this option. If you want to receive your next copy in electronic format, please respond by e-mail to our address in the box on page 2. Thank you.

— The editors.

Bertha Mack Welcomes the Delegates in 1873

by Glen Klassen (from the *Historical Atlas of the East Reserve*)

On June 19, 1873, twenty-something Bertha Mack was home alone in the Clear Springs settlement when a number of wagons loaded with about two dozen men in black arrived at her doorstep. Her neighbour John Peterson stepped forward and introduced them as German-speaking Mennonites and Hutterites, looking for places to settle and farm. Bertha, herself of German ancestry, her maiden name being Stelch, was able to talk with them in German. She and her husband John had come to Manitoba in 1869 from Huron County, Southern Ontario, by way of Duluth and Moorhead, travelling by horse and wagon, with a cow in tow. They settled on unsurveyed land near a large spring, which turned out to be the north-west corner of SW 13-7-6E, where they were in the process of building a two-storey log home at the time of the delegates' visit. Bertha was very welcoming to them, doubtless eager to have more neighbours, and probably relishing the thought that they spoke her mother tongue.

Based on the *Diary of Paul Tschetter*, delegate, and on Ed and Alice Laing, *Pioneers of Clear Springs*.

Komt trigj nom Darp '17

by Jack Klassen, Altona

The *Plautdietsch* title above extended an invitation to those who wanted to relive some of the meaningful experiences of earlier times. It literally means "Come back to the village". So we're back to report on activities held on the Culture Day in Neubergthal Heritage Village on Sept. 9th, 2017. There were many volunteers to make the day a success. Shawn Friesen, the chair of the committee, Ray Hamm, another committee member and Ron Braun were kept busy making everything flow.

Culture Day offers a whole range of experiences that will remind visitors of their childhood experiences in this particular village or in a similar Mennonite village.

Tours of the Friesen house-barn and Ray and Marilyn Hamm's house-barn were free. A donkey cart ride was also offered on the side. This was especially enjoyable for the children who were also invited to a scavenger game and other similar activities.

There was no lack of music taking place all day. The "Schien" (hay mow) at Ray and Marilyn's barn was the setting for singing by Marilyn, Monique and Terry Mireau, Dennis Reimer sang *Plautdietsche* songs and Phyllis Reimer accompanied on the keyboard at the history presentation while Paul Bergman sang for the *Plautdietsche* presentations.

Mennonite history lectures were presented at



Ray & Marilyn Hamm's house-barn.

— Photos by Carey Kehler

the Bergthal schoolhouse. Susie Fisher did a talk called "Wartle" (Roots) and Conrad Stoesz spoke on the topic "Researching family history and genealogy."

Rose Hildebrand and Joyce Friesen told stories of village life in *Plautdietsch*. They were interesting and sometimes hilarious. At the 2016 Culture Day Joyce told a story about Mr. Klippenstein, the storekeeper in the village. The village men were sitting around in the store on nail kegs when a villager came in and asked for a bottle of cough medicine. Mr. Klippenstein reached up to a shelf and handed him a bottle. The villager took a big swig and left leaving the door wide open. One of the observers asked Mr. Klippenstein why he had given the villager a bottle of laxative. He replied, "Look out the door, do you see him holding onto a tree trunk and trying hard not to cough"?

A supper of soup and *plautz* came after all the afternoon events. In the evening there was a concert of contemporary music held in a tent on the Village Commons. The performers were Warren Friesen and the Lazy Creek Express.

All in all, the day was a big success with something for everyone, Low German readings and singing for some, Mennonite history for others, antique buildings and antiques for others, with lots of coffee and Mennonite food and a contemporary music concert in the evening.

An important project is underway right now. The Klippenstein house-barn is being restored and there is presently a fund drive to finance the project. Donations are welcome. It will be another interesting attraction at future Culture Days.



Top: The Klippenstein House-barn as it is now.

Below: Architect's sketch of the finished project.

How are the Mighty Fallen

by Ernest N. Braun

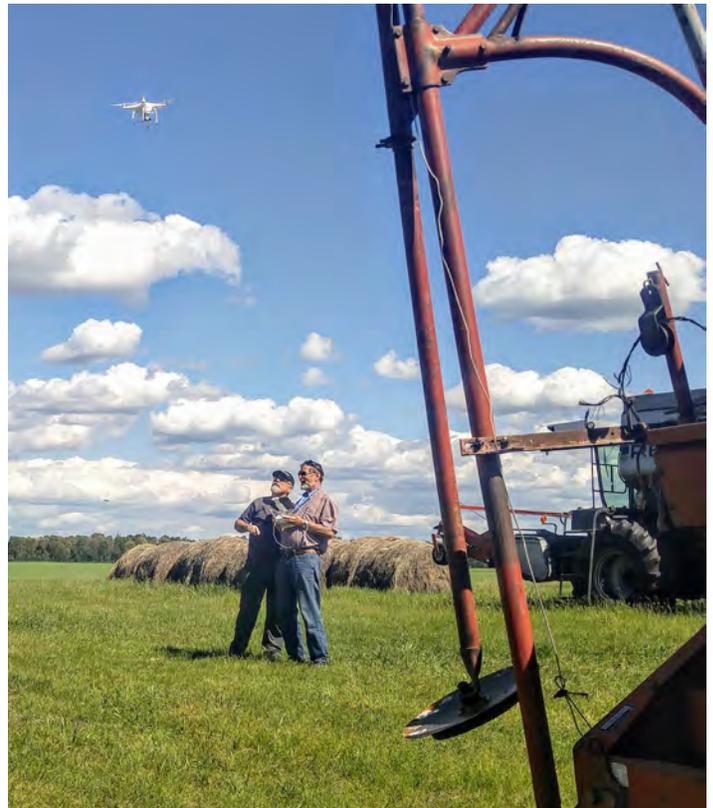
History Seekers has fielded a full slate of spring events again this year at The Gardens on Tenth in Altona. I was fortunate to be able to take in one session, even though I come from the wrong side of the creek.

Chairman Joe Braun introduced featured speaker for the session on March 8, Dr. Gordon Goldsborough, whose CV is too long and impressive for me to reproduce here in any detail. In short, he is Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Manitoba, with a special interest in environmental sciences, a member of various scientific societies, but also the webmaster of the Manitoba Historical Society website and MHS journal editor. In addition, he is a radio personality on CBC, and an author. Anyone who has taken the slightest interest in Manitoba history recognizes the name, and for good reason. Moreover, in the last few years Dr. Goldsborough has taken an interest specifically in abandoned buildings/sites in Manitoba, and written an illustrated book on the topic: *Abandoned Manitoba*, which was available at the session.

As an introduction, Dr. Goldsborough gave a short history of his interest in abandoned buildings and sites, beginning with a stone bank vault that he found in a farmer's back yard some years ago, and other instances of abandoned sites in the province. The presentation itself was cast somewhat more specifically than that, particularly in the first part, where Dr. Goldsborough featured his work on grain elevators, those mighty sentinels of the prairie, which are rapidly disappearing, one just the day before the session. Fabulous aerial shots of various elevators and anecdotal background to each made up part one of the session. In 1960 there were 700 elevators in Manitoba, and now there are about 130 left. MHS has a Grain Elevator Countdown on its website, created and monitored by Dr. Goldsborough. In the presentation he told the story of several of the latest casualties, and highlighted a few that are in imminent danger, as well as some that have been repurposed, not only by the individual farmers who now often own them, but also by communities that have seen their value and taken steps to preserve them as in the case of the Inglis group of five elevators in a row.

The story of elevators, as he pointed out, is the story of the history of our province. They showed the development of agriculture, and formed a central part of every farmer's life. There always was an elevator within reach of a horse-drawn wagon of grain in the early days, and later easily accessible by the small trucks that farmers could afford. Today, few of the older ones exist, and huge commercial elevators built of concrete have taken their place. Roads have improved, trucks are larger, and rail lines have been dismantled, making the gigantic but somehow unromantic concrete silos the grain destination of today.

After the break and a short Q & A period, Dr. Goldsborough took us on another trip, this time to other abandoned sites, particularly Port Nelson on Hudson's Bay. This almost inaccessible site bears evidence of the



Dr. Gordon Goldsborough and Ernie Braun operate Gordon's drone during field research at the historic Davidson Farm near Marchand, Manitoba.

— Photo by Glen Klassen

attempt by the Feds to establish Port Nelson as the harbour of the north in 1915. The war interrupted the construction, but by that time millions had been invested in the project to dredge out the channel which was too shallow for any ocean-going vessel, to build an artificial island with a kilometer-long causeway to it across the open water, and to build a town site. After the war, an expert in oceanography was brought in to confirm the suitability of the site. He had some choice words for the competence of the men who made the initial site selection, and the project was abandoned exactly as it stood. New construction began at Churchill instead. Today, the island, the causeway and the specially designed dredge are among the greatest spectacles of a government boondoggle in Canada.

Other abandoned buildings received attention as well: stone houses, and old concrete bowstring arch bridges, but one of the more significant was York Factory III, the first two having disappeared into the Nelson River by erosion, and even today artifacts can be retrieved from the bank of the river. Dr. Goldsborough brought all this to life with strikingly sharp images taken from his drone.

History Seekers has been active since 1999, when Prof. Adolf Ens, Joe Braun, and Dave Harms initiated the program to highlight Mennonite and local history. The room was full as usual.

Book Review

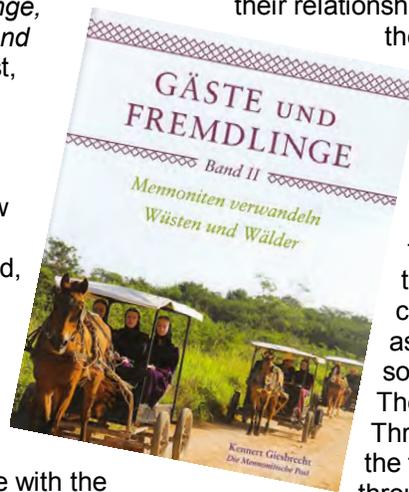
Kennert Giesbrecht, *Gäste und Fremdlinge, Band II: Mennoniten verwandeln Wüsten und Wälder* (Steinbach: Die Mennonitische Post, 2017), pb. 303 p.

Reviewed by **Mary Friesen, Winnipeg**

Through pictures and stories of "adventures, forest clearing, joy and sorrow of the families, setbacks and progress, humour, experiences of the miracles of God, economic and spiritual changes," Kennert Giesbrecht introduces us to the way of life of Low German-speaking (*Plattdeutsche*) Mennonites in many of the colonies of Latin America. His book, *Gäste und Fremdlinge, Band II* (Strangers and Pilgrims, Volume II) is a sequel to a volume with the same title, published in 1987 by Abe Warkentin. The earlier book introduced us to the first groups of Canadian Mennonites who settled in Latin America, which were from the Old Colony, Sommerfelder, and Kleine Gemeinde churches. At that time, there were about 50 colonies in Mexico, Belize, Paraguay and Bolivia. Now, 30 years later, in this sequel Giesbrecht documents the history of the 110 additional settlements through stories, maps, and photographs. *Gäste und Fremdlinge Band II* is written in German with an English translation appearing shortly to make these stories available to a larger audience.

According to the author of the first volume, the title for the book, *Gäste und Fremdlinge*, is taken from Hebrews 11 where the writer speaks of biblical heroes who as strangers and pilgrims on earth were promised a better home in heaven. The colony Mennonites in Latin America identify with this passage when they look back on their long history of migrations in order to preserve their faith and way of life (Warkentin, 1984, dust jacket). While describing the wanderings of the colony Mennonites, Giesbrecht confirms that preserving their way of life has been one of the reasons for many of the migrations, but he also mentions other factors which have motivated colony Mennonites to move in recent years, such as the search for more land and increased economic opportunities for their families.

This book is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter Giesbrecht includes a brief summary of the 500-year history of Mennonites and their wanderings from the Netherlands, Poland, Prussia, Russia (1789) and then to Manitoba (1874) which provides the historical context of the migrations to Mexico and Paraguay. In chapters two to six the author records stories of new colonies in Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Belize with a brief introduction to the history of these settlements in each of the countries. The many colourful photos with fairly detailed descriptions add to the value of *Gäste und Fremdlinge, Band II* and will make this an interesting book for a large number of readers. In chapter seven the author introduces the most recent Mennonite settlements which are in Colombia, Peru and Brazil. The last chapter is a short description with anecdotes and photos about the colony Mennonites and



their relationship with their national neighbours in some of these countries. Giesbrecht dedicates some space to the discussion of the impact colony Mennonites have had on the economy of their countries, how they have provided development support to their neighbours and what outsiders say or write about colony Mennonites. Considering the title of the book, it is interesting to note that their neighbours in these Latin American countries still refer to the colony Mennonites as "foreigners" even though they have lived in some of these countries for 80 or 90 years. They are still perceived to be "strangers." Through letters, photographs and reports from the files of *Die Mennonitische Post*, as well as through reference to his conversations with colony Mennonites he had while traveling to many of these colonies, the author provides valuable documentation and descriptions of the numerous challenges and successes of the 110 newest colonies in Latin America (settlements in Canada or USA are not included in this volume). Through the 31 anecdotes interspersed throughout the book, the reader gets a glimpse of the day-to-day life in the Mennonite colonies. These human interest stories describe some of the natural disasters they experienced, farm accidents or other tragedies and also some of the suffering as a result of tensions with non-Mennonite neighbours.

The full-colour photos of people, farms, roads, buildings and many mundane activities the author included are representative of colony life. Although there is no section specifically addressing the questions of education and spiritual life, these threads are woven into the descriptions of the photos in the book. For example, the reader will come across numerous pictures of a new church or a new school built soon after the colony was founded. It shows that for colony Mennonites, church and school are at the centre of community life. One will also conclude from the photos that colony Mennonites are mostly an agricultural people.

One such book cannot provide a complete history of Mennonite colonies in Latin America, but this volume provides much needed historical documentation for these 110 settlements. The numerous maps and statistical charts are very helpful in providing some of the information that pictures cannot convey. As the editor of *Die Mennonitische Post*, the author has travelled extensively and gathered information, stories, data and many photos which he makes available here to readers, which will foster a fuller understanding of colony Mennonites and their way of life.

Third Annual German Christmas Carol Event at Chortitz

by Ernest N. Braun

On Saturday evening, December 10, approximately 150 people filed into the Chortitz Heritage church at Randolph, quietly serenaded as they came by the strains of Christmas music played by the Esau Brothers family and friends ensemble. The main feature of the evening was the congregational singing of favourite German Christmas carols, led by five *Vorsänger* under David Wiebe's direction. Although the weather remained unusually cold, the church filled up and resounded with glad voices singing the old favourites, including a special rendition of *Der Friedensfürst*. Mrs. Helen Harder read the famous Luke story in Low German, and Reverend Cornie Martens told the audience what Christmas was like in this area in the 1930s. Special strings music by the Esaus evoked an aura of sound and sentiment that was probably new to the building yet already part of the faith tradition for hundreds of years. The evening closed with *Stille Nacht*, sung to



— Photo by E. N. Braun

lantern and candle light, and accompanied by the Esau group. Afterwards, home-made cookies and coffee encouraged people to stay and visit. The event was the third annual German Christmas event hosted by the Chortitz Church Heritage Committee. Dr. Corneil Blatz, chair of the committee, provided an update on the status of the restoration of the Heritage Site.

Memories of my Life in Altbergthal, West

by Mrs. Jacob Koop (Susana Banman)

(Translated by Mrs. Koop's daughter Susana and edited by Martha Martens, used with permission, as submitted by Martha Martens of Winkler, Man.)

Today it is May 15, 1966

I will mention some of my life's experiences about how the world has changed. I remember my first teacher, Johan Guenter, who was my teacher for the first winter. In 1889 my parents had moved from the East Reserve to the west side of the Red River 3 miles west of Altona. The village here was Altbergthal, running north to the south. The road was along the village on the west side of the homes. On the west side of the street there was a 'Ritsch' (ditch) which we always called a river or a "läacht" in *Plautdietch*. Some people had a corral between the street and the *Ritsch*. The garbage was always carried across the street where we had a fairly big pile. When we slaughtered chickens the feathers were also taken there.

My parents had the corral on the yard across from the house and barn. The house and barn were built together. The roof of the barn was a few feet higher than the house. The house had a veranda on the south side which had a door so that the cold did not penetrate into the house so

much when it was very cold. We often had a three-day snow storm when we did not go to school. The village school was on the west side of the *Ritsch*. The *Ritsch* flowed along the village street, from the south to north. I don't know where it came from.

From our place there were three yards to the north. At the north end lived the Johan Wielers, and north of the Wielers there was a road going east and then north where there was a dam. The dam allowed the *Ritsch* to hold more water. We got all of our water from the *Ritsch*; there was no other water. At that time we did not know about eaves troughs. Our roof at that time was made of logs with bundles of reeds tied together because this was much cheaper than wood. I know that when my father added a lean-to to the north side of the barn, it was done with boards and covered with shingles. I and my brothers Franz and Peter helped very much and we enjoyed it very much.

Now I want to list the names of the people that lived in the village starting from the north end.

1) Johan Wielers, 2) Peter Duecks, 3) Gerhard Martens, 4) Julius Banman, my parents, 5) Gerhard Duecks, 6) Abram Schroeder, 7) Wilhelm Zacharias, 8) Johan Funk, 9) Heinrich Klippenstein, 10) Johan Dueck, 11) Jacob Dueck

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Then there was a road going east and west with a big bridge crossing the *Ritsch*. On the other side of the *Ritsch* was the school we attended. In winter we often ran along the ice to the school. The playground was between the *Ritsch* and the school building. It was a long house – at the east end there was the dwelling for the teacher and the west end there was the school. Abraham Enns was the teacher for four years. For Christmas we had to memorize two long verses and a Christmas song from the Hymnal as well as a New Years song. I always enjoyed memorizing. I found learning easy except for arithmetic which I had a hard time grasping. When Abraham Enns stopped teaching and moved away from Altberghthal I was 11 years old. Franz Siemens became the teacher and he had a few other methods in teaching. That was my last year in school. In those days it was a custom that the girls went to school until the age of 12 and the boys until they were 14 years old.

South of the road crossing the bridge were the following homes: 12) Thomas Sawatzkys and their children, 13) Peter Sawatzky, 14) Peter Dueck, 15) Isaak Giesbrecht.

The Giesbrechts had a daughter Elisabeth who was the same age as me and we both had our birthdays on April 14 and sat on the same school bench and were good friends. Behind the Giesbrechts lived: 16) Heinrich Klassens, 17) Bernhard Schroeders, 18) the herdsman. The pasture for the cattle was at the south end of the village.

The herdsman lived close to the pasture. In the spring, when the cattle were put out to pasture, a few of the village boys went along to make sure that the cattle did not turn around and go back to the farmyards. After the cows got used to going to the pasture in the morning the calves were also sent along, and again a few younger boys had to go along to prevent the calves from turning back.

When the grain was tall enough so that the ground was covered, the weeds also showed up and whoever could had to go and pull the weeds and carry them to the end of the field and put it on the grass. There was *Tauschjekrut* (stinkweed), *Hadrikj*, *Schotenkrut* (*Munkrut*) (wild mustard) and some other weeds that I have forgotten.

One day when we, my two sisters Katharina and Maria, and I, Susana, and my brothers Franz and Peter went to the field, dark thunder clouds appeared. We were at the end of the field close to our house. My brothers and I wanted to run home, but my sisters would not let us so we had to turn around and continue to pull weeds. When we were at the far end of the field the rain came pelting down. We got soaking wet when we ran home!

When I was ten years old, my sister Aganetha married Peter Falk of Schoenthal (son of Peter P. Falk who had also come from Russia in 1874 and settled near Steinbach but moved to the Altona area in 1875). Schoenthal had a large church and all the people of Altberghthal went there.

Book Review

Eleanor Hildebrand Chornoboy, *Katarina: Mennonite Girl from Russia* (Self-published, 2017), pb. 372 p.

Reviewed by Anne Funk, Grunthal

Eleanor Hildebrand Chornoboy's historical novel, *Katarina: Mennonite Girl from Russia* presents Katarina Friesen whose 'voice' relates a young girl's right-of-passage to womanhood during and beyond the epic 1874 exodus of Russian Mennonites to Canada.

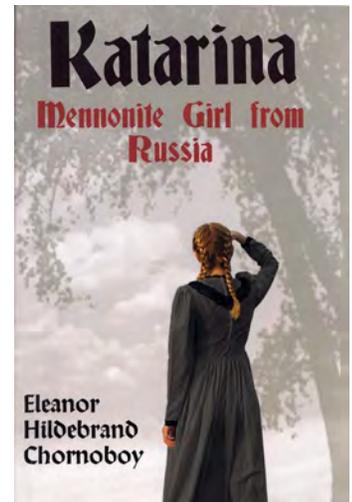
Katarina's transitioning from childlike trust in her parents to innocent pondering where babies come from, from sweet stirrings of young love to adulthood and old age are chronicled with sensitive story-telling.

Those familiar with Mennonite history and the persecutions endured by early Anabaptists as they observed a counter-cultural doctrine may discern in this narrative a like paradigm. When the Russian government of Czar Alexander II threatens to renege on pledged freedoms of military exemption and German language schools, Katarina's people are in a grave quandary. Mennonites, whose sole allegiance is to the Prince of Peace, are prohibited from using worldly force to protect their freedoms. So, like thousands of others, they choose the only option they believe open to them, immigration.

Though the novel may well mirror others from that migration, what makes *Mennonite Girl from Russia* unique is how the author shapes her heroine inside the experience. Hardships for Katarina surface early. Her grandparents and most of the family's possessions must remain in Russia. She watches as travel diseases cause many to die. The crossing of the danger-fraught Atlantic brings the hardest loss of all, the death of her beloved mother. Her poignant queries as to 'why' are soon overshadowed by another blow, her father's quick remarriage to a woman who has no love for Katarina.

In the era of *Katarina: Mennonite Girl from Russia* norms were not shaped by greater society. Community was family and neighbours working together, building a village in a strange land, sharing food and shelter, practising a mutual faith. Fundamental knowledge of God and His purposes were instilled in the home, in school and in church. It shaped governance and ethics in all matters in life and death. It preserved a mother's life during a difficult childbirth and forbade marriages with 'outsiders'. Katarina's people courted, married and populated the earth with their own sort, or faced severe censure.

Life was met with stoic forbearance, whether the times



(Continued on page 8)

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein

The Mennonite writers' magazine, *Rhubarb*, edited for most years since its founding in 1998 by Victor Enns of Winnipeg, has announced its termination with the final issue of 2017. It served for this period as a follow-up to *Mennonite Mirror*, founded by Dr. Roy and Ruth Vogt, in 1971. This issue may now be secured through the services of CommonWord Bookstore located in the Canadian Mennonite University. Further information may be obtained from the CMU library via 1-204-487-3300, or simply browsing through the latest issue in the CMU library. The final issue has appeared in regular book format featuring poems, stories, essays etc, as it has throughout its history.

Belatedly, HP notes the publication of Victor D. Kliewer (and Victor Janzen), *The German Society (Mennonitischer Sprachverein) 1952-2003* (Steinbach: The Mennonite German Society, 2014), pb., coil bound, 80 pp, \$10.00, CND. The minutes of this organization have been deposited in the Mennonite Heritage Archives, and copies of the book may be obtained at the MHA via 1-204-487-3300 ext 345. Inquiries about a set of vinyl recordings of the Men's Chorus of this society may be directed to the phone number given above. Victor Janzen was the outgoing recording secretary of the society when its terminated its service.

A New Home. Living in Mexico (2017) is Rosabel Fast's third volume in a series of children books sponsored by the D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Its paperback 92-page colorful format and practical vocabulary is well-designed to catch the attention of young readers. Its predecessors in the series are *Leaving Canada. Journey to Mexico (Vol. I)* and *Discovering*

Mexico. A Strange New Land (Vol II). Real life and pen sketches add an interesting facet to all the volumes. Several more are planned for the series. This volume sells for \$5.50 and can be obtained, along with more info on the project, at the Mennonite Heritage Archives bookstore via 1-204-487-3300 ext 346 or Mennonite Heritage Village bookstore via 1-204-326-9661.

The D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation has also released *Preservings* Issue 37, 2017. It continues its tradition of well-researched and written items about various aspects and personalities related to the life and work of Low German speaking communities in various world regions where they are still found. The editor, Hans Werner, has announced that he is going on to other projects and a new editor will be appointed in due time. The journal remains the richest journal of its kind in terms of basic information and also photos/illustrations, mostly but not only rendered in black and white. Some changes in board membership of the DFPHRF are announced here also. The annual issues are offered for \$20.00 per issue, and may be obtained in regular subscription or single issue format via the editor at 1-204-786-9352 or plettfoundation@gmail.com

Another well known journal, *Mennonite Historian* is now extant as Vol. 43, No. 4, December, 2017. It is a joint publication of Mennonite Heritage Archives and the Centre of MB Studies in Winnipeg, and is edited by Conrad Stoesz and Jon Isaak. This issue has a strong focus on conscientious objectors, especially among American Mennonites where serious difficulties in administrating the program during WWI come to the fore. Further information and subscriptions may be obtained through 1-204-487-3300, ext. 345 or 1-204-669-6575.

(Continued from page 7)

be good or adverse. Sadly, the commendable pacifism covers a grim flaw. Though frowned upon, abuse is mostly suffered in silence. Katarina's stepmother is the antithesis of all that is praiseworthy in the other mothers in the village, yet her cruel behaviour goes on, unchecked by the community and the church. Even Katarina's own father, who loves her deeply, is at first ineffective in coming to her defense.

In this narrative of much loss, sorrow and poverty, Katarina's heroine might have been embittered by her many struggles. Instead, the author, infusing counterfoils of cheerfulness and resilience, captures the significance of a plain life lived well. Katarina rises above present hurts as she applies the excellent mentoring of her mother, choosing to love and model forgiveness.

What her life might have become without the 1874 immigration, Katarina herself answers. She lives to hear of the horrors and suffering inflicted on the Mennonites of

Russia during the 1917 Revolution and subsequent communism and reflects: ". . . I was happy that we had moved to Canada."

As a third generation Canadian, surfeited with the good things this country provides and whose forebears partook in Katarina's experience, the author's vivid description of the first years' privations; starvation, extreme weather, disease and crop destruction generates uncomfortable reflection. Katarina could be my relative. Would my mettle have proven to be of like valour? The maxim 'Every beginning is hard' is palpable in *Katarina: Mennonite Girl from Russia*, nevertheless hope resonates throughout Katarina's remarkable story.

Eleanor Hildebrand Chornoboy bequeaths a legacy of courage and tenacity on the people encountered in her new historical novel. If they are modelled on her predecessors the author does well to be proud of her heritage!