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George Klassen, inventor of the low-tech rower pump in 1978, watches as young enthusiasts at Mennonite Heritage Museum demonstrate how it works. George, an agricultural engineer, was with MCC in Bangladesh when he worked out the dynamics of the pump which has been deployed to 500,000 locations in Bangladesh. It made possible dry-season cropping with irrigation, thus allowing farmers to plant two crops per year. Read about it at <https://mcccanada.ca/centennial/100-stories/advent-rower-pump>. George's most recent book, about the pump project, is being published by Lulu (lulu.com).

— Photo Credit: Abe Warkentin

New Director Named



Patrick Friesen is the new Director of Development at Mennonite Heritage Village. He will explore new initiatives, raise funds, and take care of Museum publicity. He is standing under the oak tree at MHV that grew from a seedling taken from the famous Chortitza Oak in Ukraine.

— Photo by Glen Klassen

Volendam wins a Winnipeg Real to Reel Film Festival Award

Volendam is a film written and produced by Andrew Wall (with the help of producers Kyle Bornais and Corey Dyck) that was selected as the best feature documentary for 2020 by the R to R Film Festival. In 84 minutes it tells the Mennonite story from the Dutch martyrs to the Paraguayan immigrants after the second World War. Most of the action concerns the escape of



some 10,000 Mennonite refugees to the Americas, much of it involving the liner *Volendam*. Wall is a leading Mennonite film producer known for a number of recent documentaries, most notably *The Last Objectors*. He is also the founder of his own production company, Refuge 31, which released this film. See Waldy Ens' review on page 16

A Message from the Heritage Posting Team

After HP was offered on-line some years ago, we promoted the online version, believing that there were definite advantages: colour photos, savings on printing and mailing, ecological factors, convenience, etc. Many of you agreed and dropped the print version.

We believe that the results have not all been positive. Some of you would print the issue out on your own printers — thus not saving paper and expense. Some of you would glance at the issue when it arrived on-line and then forget about it. Very few subscribers passed it on to family members and friends. Readership was pretty well limited to individual members.

The main advantage of the print issue is that it increases readership and awareness of MMHS. When it's lying on your coffee table, your family and friends might just pick it up and read some of it.

The lack of colour photos is offset by Ted Barg's excellent rendering of the pictures for black and white printing.

So, as an experiment, this issue of HP will be mailed out in print to all the subscribers for whom we have a mailing address. We are working to get all the mailing addresses. We know that some of you have opted for 'email only' but we hope you do not feel that we are disrespecting your decision. It's an experiment. Your feedback is very welcome.

— The Editor and Team

Headlines. . .

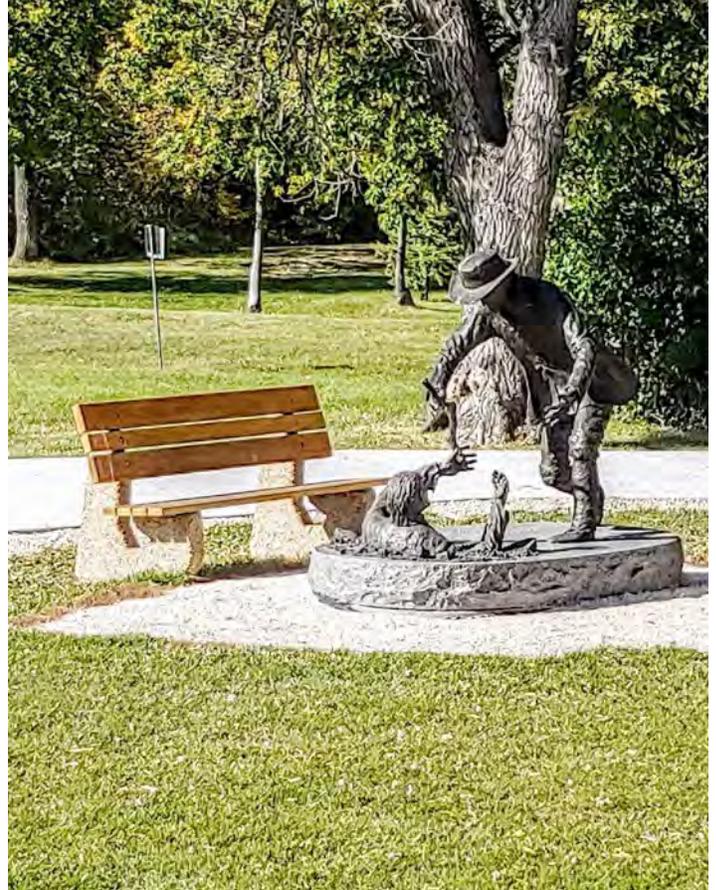
Lawrence Klippenstein, contributing editor of HP, has just celebrated his 90th birthday!

The dedication of the **Shantz Immigration Sheds** cairn near Niverville is on hold because of the pandemic.

Andrew Unger, host of *The Daily Bonnet* blog, has just had his first novel, *Once Removed*, published by Turnstone Press.

What happened to **Mennonite Heritage Week**?

Monument Receives Upgrades



The development of the **Dirk Willems Peace Garden** is progressing well. The cement base for the pergola has been poured and the oak beams that will be used to build the pergola have been sawn on MHV's own saw mill. The oak was locally donated. The story panels will be mounted on the inside the pergola. MHV has just launched a *Kickstarter* initiative to finance the construction of the pergola. Go to <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dirkwillems/the-dirk-willems-peace-garden> to see how you can become involved.

— Photo by Glen Klassen

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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Mennonite Historian

The September issue has the following interesting stories:

A Mennonite Girl, an American Soldier, and Green Farm on the West Reserve by Bruce Wiebe

An Old Document Sheds Light on the Origin of Mennonite Surnames by Glenn Penner

Making a Wooden Kroeger Clock by Harold Neufeld

Mennonites and Dancing: Historical Pirouettes by Arnold Neufeld-Fast

Documenting the Famine in Ukraine, 1932-33 by Colin P. Neufeldt

Mennonite Village Photography now on sale!

by **Graham Schellenberg**

Dozens of fragile photographs, some salvaged from dusty barns and others gathered after decades scattered among relatives, have been scanned and brought to life through the Mennonite Historic Arts Committee's book and exhibit, *Mennonite Village Photography: Views from Manitoba 1890-1940*. The exhibit and 104-page coffee-table book feature photos by four Manitoba Mennonite photographers: Johann E. Funk of Schoenwiese, Heinrich D. Fast of Gruenfeld (now Kleefeld), Peter G. Hamm of Neuberghal, and Peter H. Klippenstein of Altberghal.

A physically distanced crowd celebrated the launch of *Mennonite Village Photography* outdoors at Altona's Gallery in the Park on July 23, 2020. Beverages and snacks accompanied a brief period of catching up among friends, quite often for the first time in several months; followed by speeches from committee members Susie Fisher, Andrea (Dyck) Klassen, Frieda Klippenstein, Conrad Stoesz, and Roland Sawatzky. Committee member Anikó Szabó also attended the launch. Staggered groups of ten subsequently took in the exhibit before departing.

As those in attendance heard, these photos challenge our assumptions, illuminating a richness in the lives of earlier Manitoba Mennonites we do not always consider in reflection. Their presentation in the book and exhibit is a beautiful examination of the meaningful moments we all experience, irrespective of our birthdate. Committee member Conrad Stoesz told the crowd: "When many people think of the past — of family members we may never have met but are long gone — often a black and white image will come to mind. A stiff image of people



standing in front of the camera with a neutral expression on their face. This book has examples of this. We tend to think of the past as black and white. At a time when things were less complicated — when life was more black and white.

"But really it wasn't. People have always lived in full colour with complicated nuanced lives. Of course on many levels we know this — we and our ancestors saw in colour. But I think the advent of black and white photography, while amazing, has also hindered our imagination of the past — confining it to black and white. Part of the beauty of this book is how — while the images are black and white — they help us see the past in colour — as complicated — as interesting. You will find the stiff image of people posing for the camera, but you will find images of ingenuity, joy, pain, loss, make-believe, adventure, beauty and nature. Thankfully these photographers took and kept images they created that show a fuller life experience than the typical portrait image.

Mennonite Village Photography was made possible by private donations and through the support of Friesens, Access Credit Union, Gallery in the Park, Mennonite Heritage Archives, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, WestMenn Committee, and Plett Foundation. The exhibit debuted at Gallery in the Park before moving on, while the book costs \$50.00 and can be purchased on the committee website at: www.mennonitehistoricarts.ca



The team that produced *Mennonite Village Photography*. L to R: Frieda Klippenstein, Conrad Stoesz, Susie Fisher, Anikó Szabó, Roland Sawatzky, Andrea Klassen.

— Photo Credit: Susie Fisher's camera

My Summer at Neubergthal

by Faith Enns

I can only imagine how my time as the Summer Host for Neubergthal Heritage Foundation has been quite different from the previous years. My summer in Neubergthal was quiet but definitely not boring. Simply having a conversation and sharing stories with a visitor, would be the highlight of my day. Visitors were not as abundant as they would've been during a "normal" summer, but I cherished the characters I met.

Due to the pandemic, and the encouragement of "staycations" visitors that went through Neubergthal were Manitobans who might not have otherwise come during their summer break. I had the opportunity to meet an eclectic group of people with many different backgrounds. All of them were able to make a connection or simply were able to relate to some aspect of the heritage site and its stories.

Some of the more unique experiences were the visits from Manitoba car clubs. The Manitoba Classic and Antique Auto Club stopped by for a tour. The village was flooded with old cars, which looked quite suitable along with the over 100-year-old buildings we have. The fleet of cars drove up and down the village road, creating an accidental parade. Once again in August, Neubergthal hosted an accidental parade when the Corvette Club of Manitoba rolled in. Having these pristine sports cars in the village was quite a humorous sight.

One of my favourite projects this summer was working on the Altbergthal Schoolhouse library. Neubergthal Heritage Foundation received donations of school books from previous local teachers and students. The books put in the Schoolhouse library follow the timeline on which the Altbergthal School operated. We accepted books from the early 1900s to 1965. These books hold the names and work of their previous owners. I was thoroughly entertained reading some 100-year-old scribbled gossip on the back pages of workbooks. Books both in English and German liven up and add an extra sense of character to the Altbergthal Schoolhouse.

The biggest event I was able to experience at Neubergthal was Lawrence Klippenstien's birthday. The Klippenstien family planned this 90th celebration, in none other than the Altbergthal Schoolhouse where Lawrence was once a student. I picture him being a perfect student, mostly because there was no gossip about him in the books at the schoolhouse. Apparently, during Lawrence's days at school, he took interest in reading and spelling. I imagine during his school days he would have taken interest in the school's bookshelf. Back in 1936 he started kindergarten at the Altbergthal Schoolhouse and studied there until 1945, having four teachers during his time there. He finished grade ten there but had to pursue the rest of his education elsewhere. The Klippenstein family gathered at the schoolhouse, in the room where their father, grandfather, and great grandfather spent their youth. They shared speeches, Faspa, music, and visited other places



90th birthday party for Lawrence Klippenstein in the Altbergthal Schoolhouse.

with significance for their family's history. Mr. Klippenstein spending his 90th birthday with three generations of family, in his old classroom, must have felt like some sort of time warp. It was wonderful to see the Schoolhouse being appreciated and used. This brought some spirit and excitement into an otherwise quiet summer.

The Face That Greets You At MHA

Selenna Wolfe began working part time for the Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA) in January 2018 and has been working full time as of September 2019. Selenna has quickly become the welcoming and friendly face of MHA. She is the one you email or call to make an appointment to visit the archives; she greets you at the door and helps you find research material and used books. Selenna also insures the website is kept up to date and processes your treasured financial donations. This spring Selenna took a course on archival processing and has begun to process

archival donations and creating finding aids for the collections.



In Winnipeg At Christmas

by Linda Peters

In December 2007 I went to hear the Winnipeg singers present their Christmas concert at Knox United Church in Winnipeg. The theme of their concert was "In Winnipeg at Christmas".

I kept this program and the other day I came across it and it brought a flood of nostalgic memories to mind.

I was born in Steinbach in 1927, probably before most of you were born. Being a child in those years was very predictable, ordinary, uneventful, peaceful and happy.

In 1939 when I was 12, Britain declared war on Germany, so I grew up during the "war years" 1939-1945. Canada, being part of the British Commonwealth, was automatically involved and great changes began to happen—the school curriculum dropped German as a second language, and very British patriotic songs were introduced into our school assemblies such as

"There will always be an England and England shall be free.

If England means as much to you as England means to me."

Another song was. . .

"Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves,
Briton's never, never, never shall be slaves."

The youth of Canada was conscripted into the armed forces and by 1940 certain commodities were rationed because they were considered essential to the war effort. The War-Time Prices and Trade Board on Main Street in Steinbach was where you went for your ration coupons which enabled you to buy these rationed commodities.

In those days you didn't go to Winnipeg for frivolous reasons or on the spur of the moment. Number one there was only a gravel highway to Winnipeg and added to that gasoline and tires were rationed, so as a child, if you were fortunate to go to Winnipeg around Christmas, that was about as special an event as anything you could imagine.

The T Eaton department store was absolutely the magnet that drew all of rural Manitoba to Winnipeg. Here you could buy anything!! And at Christmas for a child there was no place like it. It was like seeing the Eaton's Catalogue come alive in front of your eyes! The Toy department had Eaton's Beauty Dolls on display. . . to own one was the dream of every little girl.

In spite of war austerity the Eaton's store was beautifully decorated with garlands and trees and Christmas Carols were heard throughout the store and the clerks wished you a Merry Christmas! But the most special Christmas display was Eaton's corner window at Portage and Hargrave. It was the most beautiful Christmas scene in all of Winnipeg, depicting perhaps an animated family with moving figures or, closer to Christmas, the Nativity Scene.

When it was time to go home after all the excitement of the day there were three very distinct waiting areas you could go to.

You could meet at the large statue of Timothy Eaton on the main floor cordoned off by a thick red velvet rope, but there were a few chairs you could sit down and wait.

Or you could go to The Bus depot, right close to Eatons, not where it is today. At Christmas in 1940 the place was crowded with army personnel who were training at Camp

Shilo and were on leave to go home for Christmas to the many little towns and hamlets all over Manitoba and even across Canada. I remember the little man who ran the shoe shine stand in the depot and how busy he was shining the boots of the soldiers while they waited for the bus to take them home, maybe for the last time before being shipped overseas. The soldiers also plugged the juke boxes and for a nickel they played an amalgam of Christmas carols like "Joy to the World" mixed with patriotic songs like

"There will be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover tomorrow when the World is free.

There will be love and laughter and peace ever after just you wait and see!"

A time of mixed emotions even for a child.

The last and most popular place to wait was the waiting room in the Donald Street Annex of Eatons. This was probably known as the Mennonite Mecca for all of southeastern Manitoba. If you needed a ride to Steinbach, just wait a while and someone will be there to give you a ride. Eatons also sold Bulldog tires in the Annex and soon it was dubbed "Meet you in the Bulldog Department."

Then it was time to go back to Steinbach. The war still raged on in Europe until 1945, a conflict that embroiled almost the whole world. There was no peace on earth in 1940 so I grew up as a 13 year old teenager longing for that "Peace on Earth" which the angels foretold to the shepherds so long ago. But that is a chapter for another day.

All these memories came back to me when I reread the theme of the Winnipeg Singers — "In Winnipeg at Christmas", which is actually a poem by Rose Fyleman. I memorized this poem in Grade 5 and it was part of the program of the Winnipeg Singers Christmas performance in 2007. Now you know the reason I kept this program and the nostalgia it evoked. Rose Fyleman was a British poet. In December 1929 she was invited to Winnipeg as a guest speaker at a Women's Club. She was staying at the Fort Garry Hotel and one beautiful winter evening she took a stroll to the Parliament Buildings to view the statue of Queen Victoria located on its front lawn. This inspired her to write this poem entitled

"In Winnipeg at Christmas".

In Winnipeg at Christmas there's lots and lots of snow,
Very clean, and crisp and hard

And glittering like a Christmas card
Everywhere you go;

Snow upon the housetops, snow along the street,
And Queen Victoria in her chair
Has snow upon her snowy hair
And snow upon her feet.

In Winnipeg at Christmas they line the streets with trees-

Christmas trees lit up at night
With little balls of coloured light
As pretty as you please.

The people hurry past you in furry boots and wraps;
The sleighs are like a picture book,

(Continued on page 6)

Interview with Andrea Klassen at Mennonite Heritage Village

Andrea Klassen is the senior curator at MHV

HP: Here we are in the Gerhard Ens Gallery at MHV, viewing the MCC exhibit. It's all very impressive and touching. You and your helpers created all this. What was your guiding concept in developing this tribute to 100 years of MCC?

AK: Throughout the exhibit the theme visually is blankets –the MCC comforter. We took that theme because I think people think two things when they say MCC. They think thrift shop like, you know, I'm taking this to MCC means you're taking something to the thrift shop not to the head office. Also the ministry of making blankets that's been around since the beginning of MCC and that's something that's still continues today. So we have that video there. I think it puts the number at 65,000 comforters on average per year. We actually have a real MCC blanket up there in that case that was donated to our collection.

HP: What do you mean by a real one?

AK: We don't know exactly how the family that donated it got it but apparently it belonged to a former soldier. He wasn't allowed into the refugee camps, but his family was stationed at a refugee camp in Germany. So his family had received the blanket and then when they received permission to emigrate to Canada, they gave it to the soldier who wasn't allowed to immigrate at that time because of his role in the war. He then brought it to Canada when he was eventually able to come in the 50s. So this is a very unique part of our collection.



Andrea at the Thrift Shop display .

HP: It's very well worn.

AK: Also what I like about the story is the involvement of women. It's mostly women doing the comforter making.

HP: And then there is the Thrift Shop phenomenon,

AK: It's a neat thing when you think about the thrift shop story and the comforter story –the involvement of women at a time when they couldn't have formal leadership in MCC taking on projects like that or even Ten Thousand Villages, the story of Edna Ruth Beiler. She started the organization that would become Ten Thousand Villages.

HP: I like this Fordson tractor with the red wheels. Where did you get it?

AK: It's usually on exhibit in our tractor shed and it has this panel beside it. It's the same model that was sent by MCC to Ukraine to help out Mennonite farmers in 1922 and 1923. In each of those two years 25 tractors were sent by MCC and that was because starving people were eating their horses. The horses were being requisitioned by the military. So suddenly you go the 50 tractors that did a lot but didn't replace the horses.

HP: How did you get it into the gallery?

AK: We got it in here with the help of six or eight volunteers. There was about a quarter inch on either side winding through the main Gallery. So it was a tricky thing to do. But yeah, I think it's central to the exhibit because it talks about the origin of MCC.

HP: I guess MCC has also been active in Canada.

AK: In this case we have a jacket made by indigenous women in Newfoundland-Labrador. Doris Penner loaned it to us for the exhibit. She taught there under an MCC program. MCC has also been active in the refugee sponsorship programs even at present, with people coming from the Middle East. And here are Bolivian wooden toys and artifacts from Ernie Braun, who worked for a time for MCC in Bolivia.

HP: Have you had many visitors already?

AK: It's an interesting year because of COVID. I mean Our intention had been to do a Big Spring Gala and exhibit

(Continued on page 7)



MHV's Fordson tractor.

— Photos by Glen Klassen

(Continued from page 5)

And all the policemen look
Like Teddy Bears in caps.
And oh! The smiling ladies and jolly girls and boys;
And oh! The parties and the fun
With lovely things for everyone-
Books and sweets and toys.
So, if someday at Christmas you don't know where to
go,
Just pack your bags I beg,
And start at once for Winnipeg;
You'll like it there I know.

— Rose Fyleman

Greenway and Grandpa P.H.

by *Lawrence Klippenstein*

History has so far not recorded any dealings between J. F. Greenway, deputy minister of education in Manitoba from 1917 until his death in 1930, and my grandfather, Peter H Klippenstein, long-time farmer from Altberghal west of Altona. That he did have such dealings is revealed now in correspondence between the two. Greenway was the nephew of Thomas Greenway, premier of Manitoba from 1888 to 1900.

Two letters from Peter Klippenstein to J. F. Greenway, recently retrieved from the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, offer a glimpse of discussions that may have extended well beyond their dates, both November, 1921.

The letters relate to financial exchanges between the two men, incidentally in offering generally unfamiliar information about farmer Klippenstein. Klippenstein's typed letter head advertised himself there as a "specialist in lathework and cylinder reboring". I recall clearly the wonderment we experienced when we, his grandchildren, first got a glimpse of an entire two-room machine shop, full of belts and engines and lathes and a huge quantity of small tools, where he had pursued these professions besides farming his acreage in the Altberghal community.

The topic of the letter had to do with reminding Mr. Greenway of money he still owed Grandpa for services performed. Those had to do no doubt with unspecified work related to the rather large problem of changing the private school system still prevailing in the community at that date, to a public school program which the Manitoba government was attempting to introduce in Manitoba. The issue generated considerable tension and conflict between the government and the parents of Altberghal, but was ultimately resolved in favour of the government, as such situations are wont to do.

It would seem that Klippenstein was part of a rather small community minority that felt more or less accepting of the proposed changes, and in the view of Mr. Greenway, Klippenstein was thus well positioned to assist him. Besides that he also had a growing family as well as a dozen or more grandchildren of school age, children who one year (1921?) made up half the school attendance (at that point around twenty) so that one historian has commented that "in reality it's the Klippenstein school!".

It might be added as an item of interest that Klippenstein's father, Heinrich, had in his day, as a sometime trustee, strongly opposed the change to public education, and even spent time in jail with several other local trustees at a time when Greenway and other authorities were feeling that "flexing muscle" might help to



J. F. Greenway 1865 –1930
(Source: *Manitoba Legislative Library, Dept. Education Annual Report, 1930*).

change the minds of Altberghal opponents. And quite likely it did!

This struggle persisted for about a 10 year period. The Greenway files may in due time offer more information on this involvement of local help in Altberghal to bring the government program to pass.

(Continued from page 6)

opening like we did last year with but that didn't happen. We ask ourselves what we can do when we have fewer visitors than previous years. So you really do see the impact of that when you're in the gallery here.

HP: Have you had any feedback from individuals who have visited?

AK: They've really appreciated it. I think there are some things that people don't know about MCC. Like its role in the refugee sponsorship agreements and things like starting the Canada Food Grains Bank. I think very few people actually know that MCC started institutions that we just take for granted.

HP: Well, thanks for the tour and congratulations on this fascinating exhibit. I hope many more people come to visit it. It will be well worth their time.



The exhibit tells the MCC story in many well-crafted graphics and texts.

Making Hay in the 1940s

by Jack Klassen

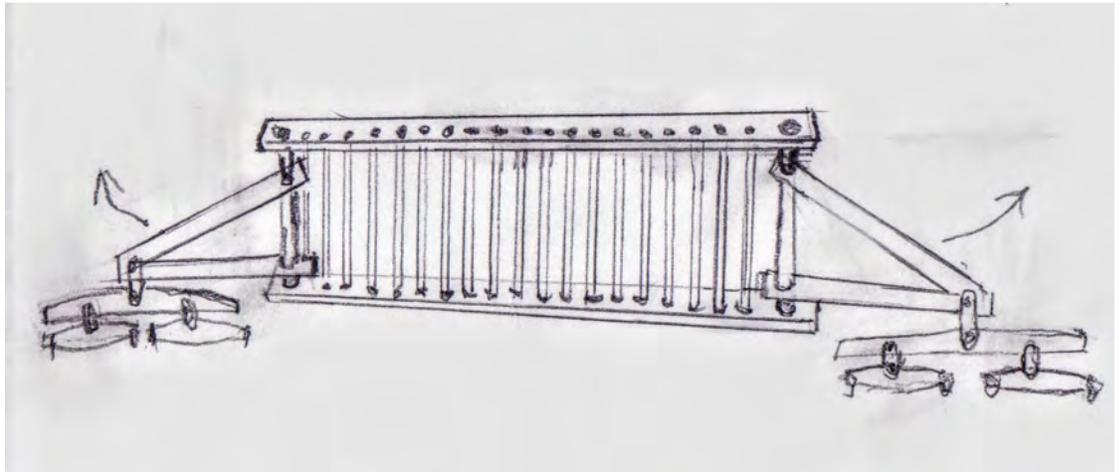
Haying in the forties was quite different. Today, with all the modern machinery it is a one-man operation. At that time it took three different types of machinery and a lot of man and horsepower. Some of the equipment was locally invented and constructed.

We lived about four miles northwest of Steinbach in the Twin Creek School district. Our hayfield was located on Hudson Bay land which we called "Hoodsen" in Low German. It consisted of approximately 40 acres and was located near a fairly large bush about half a mile north and half a mile west of our place. This site is under what is now the huge Steinbach lagoon.

When the grass was ready to be cut in early summer, father would go out there with a horse-drawn mower. He would take a picnic lunch and a quart jar full of *Prips* named after the home-made burnt barley drink later called "postum." Sometimes the jar contained real coffee. The mower would only cut a swath width of about eight feet. It took several days to cut forty acres of hay.

After letting the cut hay dry for a week or two in the swath, depending on the weather, a gang of us would gather equipment and horses and head out to the hayfield. One person would hitch a team of horses to the rake. He would start collecting the hay from the windrows into hillocks of hay, called *Kopitze* in Low German (a word coming from the Ukrainian language). Once there were enough *Kopitze* to work with the whole gang would get busy.

Now it meant starting on building the large haystack to be located in a sheltered area close to the bush. This is



A drawing of the *Schlap* by the author.

where the specialized homemade equipment would be put to use. It was a ladder-like affair which would collect a couple of hillocks and drag them to the haystack site. Once there were about five or six feet of hay collected on the haystack, three or four smooth and straight tamarack logs were laid up against the end of the stack to form a ramp. The contrivance called a *Schlap* (in Low German) was called into action. Two teams of horses were hitched to the device, one at each end. The hitch at each end swiveled all the way around. One team went around one side of the *Kopitze* and the other team around the other end. After they got to the ramp at the haystack, one team would go along one side of the stack and the other team on the other side. Thus they pulled the *Schlap* up to the top of the haystack. Once it was at the top the horses were turned around and the *Schlap* reversed, leaving the hay up on top. Now several men would tuck the hay at the top into a properly shaped haystack which would make it rain proof. They would finally hang some weights down both sides of the stack to make it more wind-proof.

Then came a late but well-earned supper at home.



Horse-drawn mower.



Horse-drawn rake.

FIRE! A childhood memory from the 1940s

by *Betty (Unger) Koop*

Not bothering to remove his skates, the young man dashed wildly up the broad steps of the Prairie Rose church, and shouted as he opened the door, "Fire! There's a fire at the Ungers' house!" Our venerable Pastor Henry Reimer (I only remember him as 'old' with a white goatee), quickly interrupted his sermon and said, "Here is a good opportunity to help your neighbor. . ." And respond they did. Soon there was a mile-long line of men struggling through the snowdrifts. Dad was the first out the door, probably giving Roger Banister some good competition for running the mile; unfortunately this wasn't clocked, so Dad didn't get into the record books!

Overnight there had been a huge blizzard, leaving the roads impassable, My dad and oldest sister, Rose, had walked the mile and a half to church over hill-and-dale, or I should say, over beautifully sculpted snowdrifts which made the road disappear.

Mom was at home with us four younger children. We had fun playing with the new toys we'd received for Christmas just a few weeks ago. I believe mine was a 'new' doll, which was actually my old doll with a little suitcase full of new outfits that Mom had somehow found time to sew before Christmas. How she found the time for that I don't know — and sewing was not her favorite thing to do, so I know there was a lot of love behind that gift! My sister Lil had received a set of little shiny aluminum pots

and pans which greatly helped as we played house.

With the extreme cold, the furnace was going full blast. Mom noticed a burning smell and suspected that maybe there was a chimney fire happening. She checked outside. Encouraged by the high wind, flames were billowing from the chimney, then rolling down the wood shingles on the roof. We had shavings in the attic in those days, and she was afraid the intense heat would ignite them and cause the house to catch fire.

Since the church had no phone, Mom phoned the family next to the church to ask if they'd get Dad to come home. Their teen-age son was skating outside and his mother called to him to get Mr. Unger. But he either lost his head in the excitement, or really wanted to cause some drama, thus the loud announcement to the whole church!

Lil and I huddled on the stairs, cradling our precious Christmas gifts, in case we had to flee.

Dad arrived and made a dash up the stairs past us (probably didn't even see us), and quickly stacked some furniture to reach the attic trapdoor. He checked the shavings but they had not yet caught fire. The chimney fire seemed to be subsiding also. He was very thankful that his family as well as our house had been spared.

And Mom almost died of embarrassment as the long line of men streamed into our yard and into our house, looking for a fire that wasn't there anymore!

Commissioned To Serve

by *Betty Koop*

It was Sunday morning. Actually the last Sunday we would spend with our dear church family at Maseru United Church in Lesotho. We had arrived in this tiny country in southern Africa two years earlier to serve as pastor couple of this international, inter-racial, interdenominational church under Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. On any given Sunday, there could be brothers and sisters from up to 25 different nations in the congregation, all united in a desire to worship the Lord together with fellow pilgrims.

When we arrived for the service, we were escorted down the narrow aisle to the very front pew. I was on crutches, with a heavy hip-to-toe cast on my leg following an accident almost six weeks earlier, and would have preferred to hide somewhere in the back. But this was not to be.

I remember little of the service that followed, and can't even remember what Glen preached on. But I do remember what came at the end.

Our church had decided that since we were leaving to go back to Canada, they would commission us as their missionaries to Canada! So Duncan Threshie, a white Zimbabwean missionary in Lesotho and a dear friend, led a service of prayer and blessing, as they corporately sent us out to our 'new' field of service. It was touching to see their love and willingness to pray for us.

After the service, I again stumped my way to the back. We stood at the big exit doors and received greetings from our parishioners. We had learned over our two years there that you greeted different people differently, according to their cultural backgrounds. Shaking hands took several



Glen and Betty Koop

different forms; there is an African way, as well as a Western way! A kiss on one cheek, or on both cheeks, or a set series of three kisses were also some customs. Some men did not shake hands with a woman. Some bowed as they greeted us. But all expressed their love and support in their own way.

As I reflect on our years of service since then, at Steinbach Bible College, at La Crete Christian Fellowship, at Ridgewood EMC, at Good News Community Church, at Birch River Christian Fellowship, at Steinbach Evangelical Fellowship Church, I wonder if we have fulfilled the mandate they gave us. Or was it, perhaps, just a preparation/continuation of our most important field of service in life: caring, loving and supporting our family!

[We served in Africa from 1990-1992, years that greatly enriched us and will always be dear to our hearts. . . Betty Koop]

The Exodus

by Ernest N. Braun March 28, 2019

(based on an oral presentation given in March, 2019)

Why did Mennonites leave the East Reserve (ER) and move to the West Reserve (WR) within a few years of arrival in Manitoba? The title "Exodus" comes from another world, but there are remarkable similarities; the move from the fleshpots of the ER across the Red/Jordan River — to the land of milk and honey, the WR.

To understand this move we will have to start at the beginning: We were invited to the 'Promised Land' by the famous Lowe Letter of 1873, and we arrived in Manitoba in 1874-76, with first groups landing on Treaty One land in August of 1874. We settled in dozens of little villages on the 8 townships reserved for us.

But it didn't last. Within five or six years over half of us moved to the WR. Why after moving heaven and earth to emigrate from Russia to the specially designated ER in Manitoba, and why after spending several years pioneering at great cost in human effort and even life, not to mention considerable debt to the Federal Government and the Ontario Mennonites, did we abandon everything on the ER and move to the WR within a few years of arrival?

My answer can be stated in one sentence: *The Promised Land had a surplus, or even a glut, of natural resources, a surplus that was not anticipated entirely by the new arrivals.* I know that sounds altogether counter-intuitive, and maybe ironic, but you will see shortly that despite that, it is probably as close to the truth as we will get nowadays, when we can no longer interview the migrants, and would probably not believe them if we could. What were those natural resources?

#1 Resource: Fresh water

Right at the Schanzenburg sheds our first concern was fresh water, and so the first thing we did was dig a well, only to have it collapse and very nearly kill two men, and water was desperately short there for a few weeks. However, in the long term, we realized that there was water aplenty everywhere. In some areas of the early ER settlements you needed only to go to the next artesian well and fill up whatever quantity of water you wanted.

So, we had what everybody needs and wanted, fresh water, but we had way too much of it. We had so much fresh water that it flooded our fields and ran into our semlins. And from 1876 to 1879 we had some of the wettest years in recorded history in this area. In 1876 we had accumulated precipitation of 29.2 inches: almost double what it was in 1875. Further in 1877 we received over 12 inches of rain in May and June alone. And since there was no change

in elevation from the centre of the Reserve to the north-west edge of the Reserve, the water just stayed right there, and stagnated, and stank until the middle of July and then it was too late to do anything except make a loan from the Government. Even with the improved drainage of today, it did this again in 2014 when we had a similar spring which saturated the land. In the 1870s these stagnant waters forced people from their homes, and in some cases caused entire villages to dissolve and move to the WR from 1877 - 1880. We had one township dedicated exclusively to raising cattails. Even the names on our reserve reflect this reality: *Reichenbach, Verennitje Lajch, Boare-lajch*. Only in 1906 would the Manning Canal make a good chunk of the grassland of the ER arable, but by then the original pioneers had largely left for the WR.

We are originally Dutch for the most part, and so drainage is in our blood, so to speak. In the Netherlands and in Poland we drained the land so that we could farm it. In Russia we had no swamps, so we planted trees to conserve water and create a micro climate. So after not having access to swamps for almost 100 years, and likely experiencing withdrawal pains, here on the ER we finally lucked out. Here was paradise: we had thousands of acres of excellent swamp: the only way we would be able to survive here would be to return to our old forte: draining the land.

The choice was clear: we could spend the next two generations just draining swamps, OR we could move away, and actually farm for a living. On a side note, today of course wetlands are much valued from their influence on water table, wild life, moisture reserve, etc. but those nuances escaped the first pioneers of the ER. We got there exactly 100 years too early.

#2 Resource: Trees

The second natural resource that we enjoyed in abundance was trees. Nowadays having a tree canopy is very desirable, but when you intend to farm large areas of grain for the market, trees become a handicap, or even worse they become a decided liability without a chain saw or bulldozer. In fact, in five years my great-great-grandfather cleared 12 acres on the ER and then after moving to WR he cleared over 100 acres in the next five years. The ER boasted tree cover on over half of all the sections. Three townships had open land and another two had 50% open land, and three had no open land at all.

Lest you think I am being ungrateful for this blessing of trees, let's make a distinction between "timber" and "bush/*Struck*". On its 8 townships or

(Continued on page 11)

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184,320 acres, the ER had a couple of stands of timber, mostly near modern day Kleefeld, where a significant stand of tamarack covering maybe 350 acres provided the timber for early post and beam barns. Mostly each original survey map has the following words: poplar and willow, thick brush, willow stands, marsh (of course), and occasionally small tamarack stands. One word that none of you on the WR even know should be on those maps, but the surveyors didn't know the word either: *Struck*.

As one who has dug out stumps in his time, I know whereof I speak when I say that without a steam or gas engine to pull a breaking plow, clearing land is a tedious job even if one has oxen to help out. I remember that on the ER even in the early 1950s I had to gather up roots and carry them to the edge of the field, throwing them into the bush there.

So, faced with the task of clearing 5 acres a year at hard labour, simple arithmetic makes it abundantly clear that a mere 25 years is all it will take to clear enough land to feed one's family. The choice was clear: spend two generations getting rid of surplus wood, and marketing cordwood to feed your family, or go somewhere else where there are no trees and farm instead. What would you choose?

#3 Resource: Rocks

Another natural resource that we encountered almost immediately was the result of something we didn't even believe in – glaciers. All we knew was that somehow a decision had been made that most of the rocks from Dakota Territories needed to be deposited in southeastern Manitoba, and we were not about to question that decision, but we certainly didn't like it. For every stone in the hand, there are three in the field. Moreover, stones are dangerous: one large stone will break your plow, and if you are not careful it will send you over the plow under the feet of the horses, and what is left of the plow will pull a furrow right across your back. On the ER we had an annual activity, really a ritual, called *Steena-lese*. And no, that does not mean reading rocks. Every spring we roam our fields for random rocks that were planted there like the Biblical tares over winter by the enemy, and you know who that is, and I don't mean the government. Every respectable farmer on the ER has piles of stones at intervals over his entire homestead. Our pre-occupation with stones is even detectable in the names we gave our village: Steinbach, Felsenton, Blumstein, Rocky SD, and just in case this is not clear, one of the earliest villages was called? Yes, you guessed it: Steinreich [rich in stones].

#4 Resource: Land

Land: the ER had lots of it, way more than we could use. I mean that. We couldn't use it! Because although we had lots of land, we had very little soil.

Once one cuts the trees down, burns out the roots, carries all the stones off the field, and goes to the chiropractor to correct the damage, one realizes that the soil is so shallow no wonder we only had scrub poplar. No self-respecting tree will lower itself to grow in that stuff. Our dream of doing what the Canadian propaganda said this land was ideally suited for, namely growing wheat, was doomed from the start. On our farm we never grew wheat at all - the best we could do was oats. And only in those years when we were not drowned out. Sure, when chemical fertilizers appeared, our land produced well, but that is no credit to the soil: basically we call it hydroponic farming, seed, fertilizer and a sterile medium-- in our case gravel.

The Delegates, no disrespect, but they saw only a fraction of the ER, and only on the three Townships that had open land, and even these they just barely skirted. They dipped into 6-5E only enough to show that there was bush there, and then hightailed it back to the Crow Wing trail, across my yard and back to Fort Garry. It took the settlers a while to realize that at least two of the townships were completely beyond redemption, and that two more could only sustain life in very random spots, and didn't realize that of the 8 townships, including small patches from various townships, only about 65% of the land would be worth farming at all even in an ideal year. It was clear within a year or two that we simply would not all be able to make a living here and find a farm for our children. So, some of us would have to leave to find land that would make that possible. The WR might be a good place to start.

#5 Resource: Wildlife

Oversupply of wildlife: True, this may sound a bit like sour grapes, but truly we had a surplus of wildlife. There was the good side to that: deer for meat, grouse for chicken, rodents for recreation, owls for rodent control, buffalo for nostalgia, and wolves for evening sound effects. You name it - we had it in abundance.

However, and more importantly, we also had more and better mosquitoes - in fact a serious oversupply. Mosquitoes were part of the conversation right from the start: the delegates mention them. I believe that Delegate Suderman chooses not to come to Canada at all largely because of his experiences with mosquitoes here. Every emigration story mentions them, letters back to Russia mention them - one letter compares them to Pharaoh's plague! I realize that even the WR has had some mosquitoes over time. I think there was mention of a mosquito bite in 2015 even, although that may simply have been one-up-man-ship. But for sheer quantity and for that matter DNA enhanced genetically modified Mosquitoes, the ER can only be surpassed by Churchill in July. Had

(Continued on page 12)

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there been a demand for dried and stacked mosquitoes, I think the entrepreneurial spirit latent in all Mennonites would have discovered a way to market them.

And, lastly, the great truth that nobody ever told you: we never intended to stay here on the ER. All we wanted was a foothold in Manitoba, and once we were here and more knowledgeable, we would find good land and we would merrily prosper away. It didn't quite work that way. The fact was that we had used up all of our resources just to get here, and since our money never arrived, without that money it was simply not possible for many of us to start over in a place with good soil but no wood, no water, no shelter, and no fuel. Within 8 years about half of us got away to the West Reserve, but with over half of all the ER population gone, suddenly life in the villages in general was not viable, and many villages simply disappeared. Life on much of the ER stagnated for an entire generation. Only at the turn of the century, when Saskatchewan opened to settlement, was there opportunity for penniless ER settlers to start over again, since good land was available almost for free again.

So, what were the PUSH factors that caused us to leave for the WR: no drainage (so repeated flooding), disappointment with the poor stony soil almost impossible to clear of trees and rocks, the coincidence of several unusual once-in-a-generation occurrences, inability to farm as we expected [lack of money], and the example of trendsetters and entrepreneurs who saw more opportunity on the WR.

New paradigm: the opportunity for a new start in a new area - which was also an ingredient in the original plan to emigrate from Russia in the first place. The new start had dynamics that were not apparent on the ER. For example, the old paradigm brought from Ukraine and transplanted on the ER was a communal-faith life-style where materialism was not an issue (poverty and privation characterized a large part of the ER), where progress of any sort was viewed an acceptance of the "world" and a betrayal of the Mennonite ethos, and individualism was specifically suppressed within the open-field village system. The new settlement on the eastern part of the WR created a different ethos. Here prosperity/materialism was actually attainable. Here progress/assimilation was increasingly normal as higher education began to dominate the intellectual landscape through the schools set up here in the 1890s. This trend resulted in the Bergthaler settlers subscribing to the Provincial School paradigm and beginning a new understanding of education. And here subsistence open-field farming was abandoned as a farming model in favour of commercial farming on one's own land. These changes in paradigm even expressed themselves in the administrative and church life of the WR Bergthalers, and may well have been a factor in the church split that not long after created the Sommerfelder group.

The factors that pulled farmers to the WR meant "goodbye" to the cattails, the waste land, the *Steenalese*, and "hello" to the land of milk and honey, or at least to grain and prosperity and a brave new world.

Book Notes

by Lawrence Klippenstein and Glen Klassen

The 1955 Grade X11 class of the MCI in Gretna has brought together a detailed list of where they are at in their 65th year after graduation. The paperback of 65 pages and coil bound is entitled *1955 Graduates 65 years later 2020*. Editor John Friesen, now residing at Lindenwood Assisted Living was assisted by Hans Funk, Gladys Penner and George Wall in creating the volume. To reach the editor contact 1-204-615-2726.

If you really want to follow all things Mennonite history, theology, and literature, here are the periodicals you should be reading!! I may have missed some (Ed).

Periodical	Organization	No/yr
Heritage Posting	Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society	3
The MHSA Chronicle	Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta	3
Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian	Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan	3
Roots and Branches	Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia	2
Ontario Mennonite History	Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario	2
Preservings	D.F. Plett Historical Historical Reserch Fdtn, Inc	2
Mennonite Historian	Mennonite Heritage Archives	4
Canadian Mennonite	Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, Inc.	biweekly
Anabaptist World*	Anabaptist World, Inc.	16
Journal of Mennonite Studies	Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg	1
Rhubarb	Mennonite Literary Society	3
The Messenger	Evangelical Mennonite Conference	monthly
The Recorder	Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference	bimonthly
Theodidaktos	Evangelical Mennonite Conference	occas.
Messenger of Truth	Church of God in Christ Mennonite	Biweekly

**Anabaptist World* is a new periodical (2020) taking the place of *The Mennonite* and *Mennonite World Review*.

Book Reviews

Menno Moto: a Journey Across the Americas in Search of my Mennonite Identity

by Cameron Dueck, Biblioasis, 295 pages.

Reviewed by Abe Warkentin

Mennonites are very familiar with books extolling the glories of the Mennonite settlements in Europe, North America and Latin America. And we know these stories well. But *Menno Moto* is not like that; it is something else entirely. Cameron Dueck, who grew up in an Interlake Mennonite community, takes a 45,000 kilometre trip on motorcycle through central and South America – 19 countries, across two continents – to “find out if he is still a Mennonite.” And to examine life in the Mennonite colonies.

Presently a journalist living in Hong Kong, Dueck wears no blinders. His assessments are hard — often brutally hard — but in keeping with a present global trend to question long-held beliefs/traditions regarding history, race and women’s rights.

Dueck grew up in Manitoba’s Interlake EMC setting without television or access to popular culture. His exposure to “*Weltmensche*” (world people) was the Watkins dealer and trips to the store and post office 20 kilometres away once a week. . . so he understands Mennonite separation from “the world.”

Dueck’s long journey begins in Manitoba and he frequently refers to his own experiences and compares them to colony life. His first major stop is in Mexico where some 7,000 Mennonites moved to Chihuahua in the 1920’s. He engages some inebriated colony young people, examines the drug smuggling and interviews a Mennonite who is excited about moving to Russia. He also learns about conflict with locals due to illegal wells dug by the Mennonites.

In Belize, he spends time in Lower Barton Creek, an ultra-conservative colony and the progressive Spanish Lookout Colony founded by Mennonites from Manitoba. He uses the story of Menno Penner, who was kidnapped on his farm in 1999, as a discussion point regarding pacifism in Mennonite history. (Penner’s kidnappers demanded US \$1 million for his release. The family refused to pay. Penner has never been seen again.)

Readers are well advised to take a deep breath before reading the chapter on “Bolivia – secrets and silence.” Reportedly, sometime in 2005 a group of Mennonite men used a spray-based animal tranquilizer to incapacitate families in their homes at night and then raped over 100 women and children. They were caught in 2009, tried and given prison sentences of 12-15 years.

Dueck investigates and even visits the men in prison. Because some of the men were tortured, and because the justice system in Bolivia is weak and sometimes bribed and because of the level of incest in the colonies, the facts in this case will forever be in doubt; justice can never be served, he concludes.

Menno Colony in the Chaco, Paraguay is a stark contrast to the Bolivian story. Here, Mennonites from Canada settled in 1922 under extremely difficult circumstances to seek freedom from military service and run their own private schools. “They gave up a comfortable, safe and democratic home to search for the



Cameron Dueck on his bike in Latin America.

— Photo: DiscoverWestman

big dream in one of the most hostile environments on the planet.” Yet, today, “Menno Colony felt more like a town striving to match the rest of the world than one hiding from progress and integration.”

Schools in Menno Colony rival the best in the country, Menno Colony Cooperative produces revenue of US \$750 million per year and colony men sit in the boardrooms of national banks.

Menno Moto is a book of non-fiction. It is relevant to Mennonites in general as well as to Latin America Mennonite colonists. Dueck, for example, not only challenges Chaco Mennonites for embracing modernity in Paraguay after fleeing it in Canada but he questions even more basic traditional beliefs, like, whether Mennonites with their special privileges lived up to their responsibilities on different continents over hundreds of years where they found haven to live as separate societies.

And Dueck emphatically doesn’t buy into the long-accepted and familiar narrative of Mennonites as a wandering people, always unwanted and rejected and fleeing from one country to another. “We work so hard, we bring virtue and honesty to these places, but still we are rejected.” Nonsense! he says.

Dueck is an outstanding journalist who has written for Reuters and the Financial Times. His observations are harsh but convincing. His accounts of personal contacts and visits to communities and churches are compelling and represent journalism at its best.

Sean Patterson, *Makhno and Memory* "Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine's Civil War, 1917 – 1921"

Review by Margie Koop

Sean Patterson is a doctoral student at the university of Alberta, exploring historical memory in Ukraine's Zaporizha region over the 20th century. He has done extensive research on Russia and Ukraine. While doing his thesis work for his Master's degree his focus was on the years 1917 – 1921, the revolution, Mennonites, and the Ukrainian Anarchist, Nestor Makhno.

In his introduction Patterson writes:

"My research into Nestor Makhno and his movement's conflict with Mennonites of southern Ukraine has led me to confront a multitude of competing histories, memories, myths, and legends, all jostling to assert their own unique perspective."

The strength of this book is related to the courage of the author in exploring and engaging in telling a difficult story from various perspectives and experiences. This requires much patience, flexibility, and openness. A great divide keeps creeping into the hearts and minds of all who are trying to understand and know at least pieces of the truth of those revolution years.

Patterson speaks of his journey through this research:

"In certain ways, my personal relationship to the topic of Makhno embodies this narrative divide. As a young undergraduate I became fascinated by the philosophical writings of the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin. I was specifically attracted to his theory of mutual aid as a critical factor in human and animal evolution."

Who of us would argue against mutual aid to one another? That is a core principle that Mennonites attempt to live by, a way to be human. Mennonites often get high acclaim for their good works throughout the world, and yet we fall short in so many ways both now and in our history. At the turn of the 20th century in South Russia, Mennonites did own a disproportionate amount of land and there was a great divide between rich landowners and peasants.

Patterson's research showed that anarchist writings created Makhno as a hero of the peasants, the leader of a revolution that would save them from the exploits of the kulaks (the rich landowners).

The stories he heard from Mennonite descendants, on the other hand, painted a vivid picture of terror and destruction and Makhno as a vile villain whose murdering ways knew no bounds. For Mennonite descendants these stories were both shared and hidden in deep places of sadness, anger and cesspools of repressed emotions.

Patterson states:

"I was forced to quite radically recalibrate my assessment of Makhno's movement, but I also wanted to understand the motivations behind these attacks. This book, which attempts to tell a balanced story, is the end of that investigation. It is the story of a movement that involved the massacre of innocents in the name of liberty and justice, and the story of a historically pacifist people driven to distress in the midst of violence, some of whom took up arms to protect life and property."

Patterson further expresses his deep respect for Mennonites, Ukrainians and others, as well as for the Anabaptist faith and the Kropotkin value of human mutual aid.

Makhno and Memory is a well researched, well written,



Red Army commander Pavel Dybenko and Nestor Makhno, 1919.

(Wikipedia, public domain)

balanced work that takes the reader on a journey into the depths of shadowy history, human sorrow, tragedy and bravery. The author's ability to open his heart to listen to all the conflicting stories compels the reader to do the same. My travel companion as I read and reread this book was my reluctance to face the humanity of my ancestors. It takes courage to listen to another part of the story.

Personal note regarding my family: by Margie Koop

My knowledge of our Janzen ancestry was limited. That changed when my path began to weave intermittently with Sean Patterson. His interest in the Janzens was related to his study of the many narratives of Nestor Makhno, who was a child worker on the estate of Silberfeld, (my father's birthplace). Silberfeld was in the Schoenfeld colony and within 7 kilometers of Huliaipole, Makhno's birthplace and home.

The story we heard was that my grandfather, Abram Janzen and Makhno were childhood friends, that they played together and that Makhno later spared Abram's widowed wife and her two sons because of that friendship.

As I engaged with history and Patterson's work, other pieces of the story made me question everything. The description of the Silberfeld overseers abusing and beating Makhno when he was only a child, broke my heart open. Another part of me wanted to deny that this was true and to defend my ancestors.

That was the bumpy road that I walked with this book and its author. Patterson was diligent in the accuracy and truth of the information he provided and I am deeply grateful for the knowledge of the Janzen history that he has provided for our family.

Thank you Sean Patterson for the depth and sensitivity of your work.

Darryl G. Klassen *The Anabaptist Evangelical Puzzle: Discovering How the Pieces Fit*, Colorado Springs, CO: Equip Press, 2019. 168 pp.

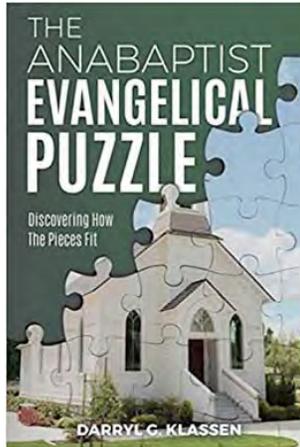
Reviewed by Harold Jantz

I liked this book. I especially enjoyed the persistent effort by Klassen to unravel the tensions between Anabaptists and Evangelicals and to clarify the common faith that should allow a fruitful dialogue to occur between them. Klassen would like to describe himself as an evangelical Anabaptist, but would be at some pains to explain that there are directions that evangelicals at times take — and Anabaptists also at times take — from which he would distance himself. So then the faith journey for people like himself in the Anabaptist world and, he suspects, a good many others, can be a puzzle. The book is his attempt to find a path forward.

What is refreshing about the book is the range of issues Klassen works at. Consider these topics: the definition of Anabaptism itself. Evangelicalism's fervour. How we read the Bible. How we understand the atonement and especially the increasing Anabaptist emphasis on Christ as victor on the cross. Popular evangelical eschatology and its "left behind" teaching. The challenge of the peace teaching and Christian non-resistance. The Evangelical vision for evangelism. The effort to change the world and political involvement. Reading the Bible together and the need for cooperation. Klassen ends with a word-play epilogue in which he argues for a "merging" approach to joining hands with Evangelicals but not adopting the "emergent" movement within Evangelicalism and some of the progressive notions this might imply. I was struck by Klassen's considerable skill with language: quite often he expresses a thought with a striking statement.

This review will allow only a few examples of Klassen's approach to issues in tension. He has a chapter on how Evangelicals and Anabaptists read the Bible, for example. He writes that both affirm "a high view of Scripture" and the "foundation it presents for faith in Christ." The differences arise from the approach taken to the Scriptures. Evangelicals have tended to focus on study of texts, their context, interpretation and application, and, in terms of scholarship, while recognizing the movement toward Jesus Christ as God's ultimate revelation and response to a fallen humanity, pay less attention to what that might mean in our human context. A good deal of Evangelical effort has often been directed toward issues such as propositional truth, witness the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, for example. Most Anabaptists rejected the Chicago Statement.

Anabaptists, on the other hand, might have been led astray in their history by a reading of Scripture that was too literal and understood too little about context and rules of interpretation — the Muenster rebellion in the 16th century is an early example. But the strong Anabaptist emphasis on discipleship; reading the Scriptures through the lens provided through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and interpreting the Scriptures in community; these



provide an approach that does not leave us empty-handed, Klassen writes, and is the approach for which he argues. While this is a safeguard against the individualism of much of North American Christianity, he wisely suggests it also carries the risk of groups going astray and the need for voices who will warn when they see it happening.

On inerrancy, Klassen argues that "the Bible doesn't need to be inerrant to be a fully trustworthy source for the Christian faith." Or put another way, the Scriptures themselves make "no claim to inerrancy," writes Klassen, but as a Mennonite statement of faith puts it, "The Bible is the word of God. . . and without error in all it teaches. . . and the final authority in matters of belief and conduct." On that basis, he believes Anabaptists and Evangelicals can find common ground.

Klassen takes on some of the widely-accepted Evangelical notions on eschatology with a number of spirited counter arguments. The ideas about the rapture and return of Christ promoted by John Nelson Darby writing in the 19th century have no rooting in the early church, Klassen says. And the popularizing of a "secret rapture" promoted by Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, in books that have sold in the millions, he says, are subversive to Christian behaviour.

Klassen lines up some of the charges Anabaptists have made against both Darby and the later writers: their views don't allow Christians to see themselves in the book of Revelation; they try to create a wall to keep modernism at bay; the teaching has an escapist appeal; it is a denial that everything has its fulfillment in Jesus, and the writing tends to skip over the life of Jesus; it promotes an idea of a secret rapture that the Bible does not support; it doesn't read the Bible honestly; it treats ecology with contempt; it ignores the situation that believers have had and still experience in closed nations. The criticism suggests the direction these critics would offer: Anabaptists view the kingdom of God as both now and not yet; believers are not meant to look forward to a time when swords will be beat into plowshares, they are to work at it now; their understanding does not allow for date-setting; life in Christ calls believers to a life of following that takes us into deeper engagement with the world, not less.

A few examples, then, of the approach this EMC pastor and adjunct teacher at the Steinbach Bible College has taken in his refreshing book. There might be some points with which I might argue. I had expected, for example, when he wrote about reading the Bible with a "hermeneutic of trust," he would have argued for trusting one another. His focus was on trust in God. When he wrote about "changing the world" and political involvement, I expected he might include some thinking around a "theology of the common good." There wasn't. There were also a few typos, one quite egregious, (*Gallasenheit* for *Gelassenheit*, p32) since the word could easily have been caught by a knowledgeable editor. There other points I could make.

These notwithstanding, Klassen offers up a range of very helpful thoughts on both the challenges and the possibilities in the relationship between Evangelicals and Anabaptists. The spirit and the ideas can only be affirmed.

Harold Jantz was the founding editor of ChristianWeek, a national evangelical news and opinion periodical, and readily confesses that he has long identified as an evangelical Anabaptist.

Film Review

Volendam: A Refugee Story. Written and produced by Andrew Wall, Refuge 31 Films, 2020.

Reviewed by Waldy Ens

In 1948 my mother, (in her mid-twenties) together with her mother and sister, travelled across the Atlantic to Canada on the Volendam. This was not the only time that the Volendam carried Russian Mennonite refugees across the ocean. The first such voyage was in 1947, when the survivors of the Great Trek were miraculously allowed to cross through Russian-occupied Germany from Berlin to Holland. The story of these refugees is very effectively told in the new documentary Volendam: A Refugee Story by Manitoba filmmaker Andrew Wall.

Using archival footage and photographs, first-hand accounts, and historians' perspectives and re-enactments, Wall sews a grand quilt which tells a decades-long story. Starting with the First World War, Mennonites in the Russian colonies experienced numerous upheavals, including militarization, civil war, anarchy, famine, and collectivization. Some of this led to the birth of the MCC, created to feed the starving Mennonites in Europe. It also led to the mass emigration, in the early 1920s, of Mennonites (known as the Russländer) to Canada.

For the ones who stayed, more upheaval was in store,



Elfrieda Dyck
(MAID CMBS NP149-1-2410)

mainly at the hands of Josef Stalin, chief architect of the Holodomor, which killed millions in the Ukraine in 1932-1933. Mennonites were not spared the hardships of this time, and because many of the fathers and older brothers had been taken and killed or placed in work camps, they were simply biding their time, waiting for their situation to get better or for God to help them.

Much of this lead-up to the events of WWII is told through the voices of the historians and in ominous-looking black-screen dates and statistics, the latter becoming somewhat tiresome after a while. The film then takes us into the main part of this refugee story – the events of World War II and how they affected about 35,000 Mennonites in the Ukraine.

The film really picks up steam at this point, especially because of the first-hand witnesses, who tell their stories with candor, emotion, amazing detail, and grace. After fleeing west with the German Army in the early 1940s, they ended up in refugee camps throughout Holland and Germany. There was also a group that took the Great Trek and ended up in Berlin, helped and attended to by Peter and Elfriede Dyck of the MCC. The story of how they were able to find themselves on the Volendam, bound for Paraguay, is one for the ages.

It's about time that this story is finally told in such a comprehensive, accessible, and professional way. Apart from some of the re-enactments, which are a little stiff, and unnecessarily cut away from the first-hand accounts, the film is a moving account of an important part of Russian Mennonite history. In particular, the music, by Mitch Dorge (of Crash Test Dummies fame) finely underscores the emotional landscape. Wall's editing is clear and unobtrusive. And, of course, the faces of the witnesses as they tell their stories will linger, for so often they are left untold or minimized. As my mother sometimes said in regard to her own refugee experience: "Oh we did a lot of moving in those days."

CD Review

Buson's Bell

by Patrick Friesen and Niko Friesen

Reviewed by Glen Klassen

Patrick writes and reads the poetry and son Niko composes (or improvises) and plays the music. The effect is mesmerizing. The poems are about the wonder of the past dressed in earthy foliage and demanding to be heard. Family history interwoven with dreams and imaginations and "Buson's yellow butterfly lighting on the bell's shoulder."

"why not flee into the stories that come from something, a birth, an abrupt death, a rain squall, and then the stories, where the death grew into spring, and the storm a visitation, or intervention, the stories of the family tree of gods, their gestures on hillsides, in rowboats, their descent to earth, and abandonment, stories, something to hold us, to form a world, a flimsy structure of the unknown"

(excerpt from "Reciprocity")

The CD is available on "bandcamp and iTunes".



Patrick Friesen and Niko Friesen