Beyond Ditsied Yantsied The Manitoba Diaspora

HERITAGE POSTING

MANITOBA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No. 102 June 2022

Friends of the Mennonite Centre in War-time Molochansk

by Michael Wilms
(Thanks to Alvin Suderman for arranging this article.)

Nothing can prepare an individual or an organization for a violent invasion. No one can imagine the explosions, the tanks or death until it is in front of you. But in the months and days leading up to February 24, 2022, Friends of the Mennonite Centre (FOMCU) were listening and waiting. We didn't know there would be war, but by listening to locals, our staff, and the news reports and listening to God, we knew we had to begin to prepare for the worst.

We ensured that the Mennonite Centre in Molochansk was double, even triple-stocked with nonperishables. We made sure the generator was working and that the staff vehicle was always full of diesel and in good repair (the decision to buy diesel turned out to be a good one as all Russian tanks run on diesel, making fuel readily available). We made sure our local project manager and her children had an exit strategy. It didn't mean that it wasn't terribly frightening when that time came, but they knew what they had to do.

Townspeople coming for food during occupation. **— Photo by Natasha Tutyk**

On May 12, 2022, Manitoba Day, the cairn making the location of the 1874 immigration sheds was unveiled. As Donald Thiessen led in the singing of "Nun danket alle Gott" in both English and German, Ernie Braun, representing the EastMenn Historical Committee, and Armand Jerome, representing the Métis community, unveiled the plaque that tells the story of this phase of Mennonite immigration. About 90 people were in attendance on this sunny spring day as the story was celebrated. Jacob Y. Shantz, builder of the sheds, was honoured by the presence and words of Dale Shantz, his great-great nephew. Armand and Kelly Jerome brought the same historic Red River cart to the event that had been used in the 1974 enactment of the trip from the Landing Site to the sheds, where in 1874, Métis freighters helped the Mennonites get to the sheds and beyond. **— Photo by Glen Klassen**

When reports of war began on that frightful Thursday, our listening and preparation turned into action. We had built a strong foundation. We were still frightened for our people, our centre and the country but FOMCU's whole team and board of directors were comforted that we were able to provide food and supplies. It felt as if we were helping our ancestors from earlier generations.

The volunteer Board wondered if internet and phones would be cut. Would we be able to send funds overseas? How would we be able to distribute supplies in a war zone? But very quickly we realized the advantage we had.

FOMCU is small – we seem to fly under the radar. The Board operates by email from all over North America. We can pivot, turn or steer the ship quickly in a different direction. We operate by wire transfers – no need to deliver real cash into the country. We transfer money right into the bank

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Editorial:
Beyond Ditsied/Yantsied

by Glen Klassen

In 1918, at the end of WWI, Mennonites in Manitoba were still largely confined to the East Reserve, the West Reserve, and the Rosenort area. The block settlement pattern that was fostered by the federal government in the late 19th century was successful in establishing viable and sustainable communities, especially for the Mennonites. The creation of instant multi-generational settlements ensured success in these fully organized populations. Other patterns, such as that of individuals attempting heroic but doomed outposts on the prairies or the mega-farming experiments of men such as John Lowe could not compete with the family farm supported by a community of mutual dependence.

But as more farmland was needed for growing families, Mennonite populations spilled out from the ancestral Reserves to occupy neighboring tracts on newly-drained land or purchased from previous owners such as the Métis (Lowe Farm, Kane, Prairie Rose, Greenland, etc). Others moved to the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta while others left Canada entirely. Then came the influx of Russländer, many of whom were found in communities outside the Reserves, forming a new kind of diaspora. There were even deliberate departures motivated by visions of spreading the gospel (Interlake, Reston, Whitemouth, etc.). Not to mention Winnipeg.

MMHS members are found mostly in the areas of the former Reserves. We need to pay more attention to the other Mennonite Manitobans who practice their traditions in a highly pluralistic and secular society. Much can be learned from this experience.

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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

Editor — Glen Klassen

Assistant Editor — Graham Schellenberg

Layout Editor — Ted Barg

Distribution — Email: Andrew Klassen Brown
Print: Peter R. Klassen

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mmhsph@gmail.com

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accounts of businesses and people that need it. Our roots into the Ukrainian soil run deep and the local connections we have cultivated in this radiating gold and blue country make us a trusted voice. Because of this our humanitarian channels remain open.

Since the violence began in February we have been able to provide 350 daily meals to people of Molochansk. We provide weekly food hampers. We have purchased and negotiated the acquisition of much needed medications for people from Kyiv to Melitopol.

Local grocers who have closed their doors have turned to us to distribute food to the hungry.

We used our connections and expanded our reach to the hard-hit regions of Kharkiv and Kherson. We helped repair a well in Krasnogoravka to ensure they had water and electricity.

We provided funds for warm clothes, the simple necessities of life: socks, long underwear and jackets.

We provided funds for food to be driven into Kharkiv. We funded a local mission to bring food in and bring people out to safety, an underground railroad so to speak. We see the faces of our relatives that fled the violence 100 years ago from the photos that our contacts send to us. Our family and our hearts remain on our sleeves.

Sometimes we feel helpless. When we receive reports of the explosions, executions and rape we wonder how we are to help. When refugees show up on the Centre's steps and they look more like ghosts than humans all we can do is provide a place to sit, a meal to fill their stomachs and an ear to hear their stories. Stories like the mother who almost lost her small diabetic child because she couldn't get her insulin. When they left their hiding spot in Mariupol she covered her daughters eyes with a jacket to prevent her from seeing the corpses. All we can do is listen.

In Canada and the United States we are also listening, listening to our donors. We hear their desire to keep updated. We provide weekly updates from our long-time cook in Molochansk to the living room-office of our board treasurer to the computer screens, iPhones and kitchen tables of our donors. We won't stop this important part of our mission.

As the war enters its third month we continue to listen. We are still providing meals and medications or simply a shoulder to cry on, but we are listening for what is needed next. What will be the next important step in caring for our family overseas? What does that look like? The blessing is that we have learned to adapt, to pivot, to ensure what is needed now gets done.

Former school room used for food storage during occupation.
— Photo by Natasha Tutyk

Lawrence, We Will Miss You

by Graham Schellenberg and Glen Klassen

Lawrence Klippenstein (1930-2022)

Lawrence Klippenstein was born on July 16, 1930, in Altbergthal, Manitoba, and grew up on a farm along the banks of Buffalo Creek. As one of a select few students from the area to pursue higher education, he attended Canadian Mennonite Bible College (B. Chr. Ed., 1954) in Winnipeg and Goshen College and Seminary in Indiana (B.A., B. D., 1962).

Lawrence and schoolteacher LaVerna Reimer married in 1956. As their family grew, he worked with Mennonite Pioneer Mission, then taught at Canadian Mennonite Bible College and served as a pastor before pursuing graduate studies at the University of Minnesota. Here he earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in Russian history.

Between 1974 and 1997 Lawrence directed the Mennonite Heritage Centre (now Mennonite Heritage Archives) in Winnipeg, and was significantly involved in Mennonite historical efforts, writing numerous books, as well as academic and non-academic articles in books, journals, magazines and newspapers. He was also instrumental in the publication of historical resources and helped guide many historians and genealogists as they completed their own research projects.

Among Lawrence's works included: *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* 1874-1974 (1977), *That There Be Peace: Mennonites in Canada and World War II* (1979), *David Klassen and the Mennonites* (1982), *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia: The Story of Abram Dueck and His Colleagues* 1911-1917 (2002) and *Peace and War: Vol. 1: Mennonite Conscientious Objectors in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union Before World War II,* and *Other COs in Eastern Europe* (2016).

Lawrence later lived in Winnipeg and was actively involved in historical work, serving as contributing editor to Heritage Posting, volunteering on committees, writing books and publishing articles on a wide array of historical topics pertinent to Mennonite history. Of particular interest was always his home: Altbergthal. He was recently working on his memoirs; maybe we can look forward to their publication.

Lawrence left a footprint on our community which will far outlive his time on earth. He was defined by his friendship, generosity and kindness and will be greatly missed.

Lawrence was always involved with Heritage Posting. In fact, according to Bert Friesen, he named the newsletter. On many occasions he came to its rescue, sometimes as editor, or assistant editor, and lately as contributing editor. (See Heritage Posting #100 for the dates.) Writing was his passion, whether it was about one of his trips to Russia or down Buffalo Creek with a friend. He once told me (GK) modestly that a list of his publications ran to a hundred pages.

My (GK) brother Bernie once started to write a small book entitled "David Klassen and the Mennonites" for an educational series. He had barely started when his illness prevented him from continuing, so Lawrence took over and finished it. Lawrence was always a bit apologetic about "stealing Bernie's thunder" but I reassured him on that score. He was a truly humble man in spite of his many accomplishments. After each HP issue he would request a bunch of extra copies for distribution to his friends and those who might be interested enough to join MMHS. He was a true ambassador for the Society.

Lawrence at his very busy desk at the Mennonite Archives.

Glenlea Mennonite Settlement

Many historical writings about Mennonite immigrations and settlement in Manitoba focus on either the East Reserve or the West Reserve. While Glenlea is west of the Red River, it is considerably north of the West Reserve and is located just ten miles south of Winnipeg along Highway 75. Mennonites first came to the Glenlea area in 1925 as immigrants having fled the revolution and unrest in South Russia. Sadly, at time of writing this region (Ukraine) is once again embroiled in war and emigration almost 100 years later.

Members worshipped in the school house for 23 years.

Most of the migrants who settled in the Glenlea area originated in two villages — Steinbach and Schoenfeld. A small number of the settlers came from other villages. It should also be mentioned that there were other European families who settled in the Glenlea area who were not of Mennonite origin.

Steinbach (stony brook) was a village within the Molotschna colony. Schoenfeld (beautiful field) was a village within a daughter colony of the Molotschna colony also called Schoenfeld. This colony was located about 90 kilometres north of the Molotschna colony and was founded in the mid 1800's in response to population growth and the need for more land. The Glenlea pioneers who came from Schoenfeld were predominantly from the 'Kirchliche' backgound later known as General Conference Mennonites. The pioneers who came from Steinbach were from the 'Brueder Gemeinde' or Mennonite Brethren. The entire group had one thing in common: "uprooted, homeless and destitute, many having lost members of their families through starvation, murder and disease; they came empty-handed with few earthly possessions to their new home in Canada." (1)

When the two groups first came to Canada they were received by Mennonites already living in Canada and spent the first winter of 1924-25 mainly in Altona, Manitoba and in the Kitchener-Waterloo district in Ontario. Soon they became aware of farm land for sale in the Glenlea area and in February and March of 1925 they settled there. Two groups of ten families took over farms along the Red River immediately north of Glenlea and to the west of Glenlea. Much of the land for sale was owned by a large American land holding company, the Emmert Foundation. H. L. Emmert was a wealthy banker from Silby, Iowa and he had large holdings east and west of the Red River. The land had been farmed by American managers since 1908 but since farming was not very good at the time, and after Mr. Emmert became terminally ill in 1922 it was decided to dispose of the properties. Numerous farmsteads with some buildings on them were made available at $50 per acre at 6% interest. Not only did the new immigrants have a major land debt but they were also responsible for the significant travel debt 'reiseschuld' which had to be repaid to the Canadian Pacific Railway. In his reflections Abram D. Warkentin captures the hopelessness of their situations: "The 1927 harvest was so poor that we couldn't even pay the land tax. Paying interest and principal was out of the question. We were totally discouraged. However, our company did not leave us by the wayside and again gave us seed grain and feed for our cattle. In the year 1928 interest arrears were cancelled by the land company, a fresh mortgage drawn up, and payments began anew. When we look back we have to confess that we owe the Companies (Emmert, Intercontinental, National Trust) much thanks , for they treated us well."(2) Faith and worship were vital aspects of early life at Glenlea. Songs and prayers of praise and adoration were central to their worship as was

First Glenlea church bought and moved to this site near the school.

New church built in 1975 by the grandson of one of the early settlers.

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teaching from the Scriptures. At first the group gathered in homes and around 1927 permission was granted to use the local one room school for Sunday worship. Lay ministers were soon elected and the congregation established during those pioneering days continues today as the Glenlea Mennonite Church. After 23 years of worship in the school the congregation purchased a used church building from a Rosenort Holdemann group which was then moved and set on a new basement at Glenlea in 1949. In 1975 a new building was constructed which continues as the gathering place for the congregation to this day.

The Glenlea community has had its share of challenges but also many blessings over the years. In terms of church membership it probably reached its peak in the mid nineties with over 130 members from the surrounding area and from Winnipeg. As has been the case with many rural congregations increasing farm size and lack of local employment opportunities has led to declining populations. Today the congregation continues with an average Sunday church attendance of 60-70. The story of the Glenlea church and community tells of a movement from large families sharing crowded homes to smaller families in spacious homes, from volunteer bi-vocational leadership to paid pastoral leadership, from German to English services. It tells of vibrant Sunday schools, youth programs, social events, choir programs and mission and service efforts. It tells of small, mixed farms growing into large grain farms; of a transition from draft horses, hay racks, and threshing machines to auto-steer tractors and combines. At the same time the spirit of compassion and neighborliness continues as farmers in the community still representing the two original immigrant groups and other neighbors work together at a community grow project (CHIPIN-Creating Hope In People In Need) in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

In 2007 the History Book Committee published: ***Glenlea Mennonite Chuch*** since 1925, Stories from the Congregation. This well illustrated, well written 332 page document provides a detailed account of the background, beginning and history of the Glenlea Church and community.

To conclude this short posting a reflection from a former Glenlea pastor/farmer Rev. John J. Friesen is appropriate:

"Learning from our history, we realize the truth that God is faithful. He never abandoned us in spite of our shortcomings or our doubts. May our past encourage and bless us. May the Lord bless us and make us a blessing to future generations!"(3)

From page 2, Frank F. Wiens in" Glenlea Mennonite Church, Stories from the Congregation".

From page 56, Abram D. Warkentin in "Glenlea Mennonite Church, Stories from ths Congregation".

From page 315, Rev. John J. Friesen in "Glenlea Mennonite Church, Stories from the Congregation".

Submitted by Ernie Wiens, La Salle, MB. – now retired, a former farmer and pastor from Glenlea and a descendant of the Schoenfeld group.

The Peace Trek

by Gary Dyck,
Mennnonite Heritage Village

As we all know trail use and support is booming. Increased development is good because it prevents overuse and overcrowding. At the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) we are excited to see the development of the Peace Trail by the EastMenn Historical Committee and team. We love their purpose statement: "*to create a new initiative for enhancing recreational, ecological, historical and spiritual awareness in southeastern Manitoba*."

In that spirit, MHV is excited to christen our first annual Peace Trek (even before the Peace Trail is fully completed). The purpose statement for the Peace Trek is: "*to enhance recreational, social, and spiritual well-being by trekking the historic Peace Trail while raising funds for the Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) and Eden Health Care Services*." Read them again. Did you notice the overlap between the two purpose statements? The Peace Trail and the Peace Trek have a lot going for them. We are confident that the trail combined with an annual event will be quite successful.

The Peace Trek will promote multi-generational health with cycling, running, and walking. It will deepen community connections and appreciation of the land. Finally, as a fundraiser, it will support MHV's vision for well-being as a museum and experiencing the Mennonite story as well as Eden's vision for all people to experience hope, healing, and community. Gone are the days of a golf tournament fundraiser for MHV; instead of walking around hitting a white ball with metal sticks, this peer-to-peer fundraiser will engage all generations to experience and reflect on their heritage while promoting physical and emotional health. It is time that Manitobans have another opportunity to experience history with a recreational pilgrimage or as a mid-distance cycling adventure.

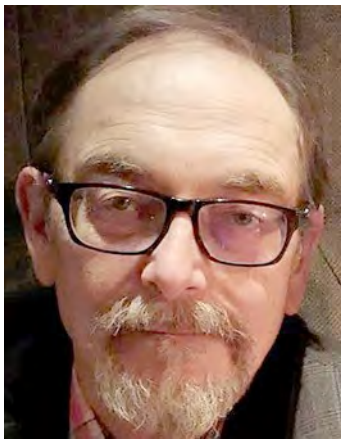
The first Peace Trek will take place this August 20th. To sign up contact MHV or check their website. For 2022 and 2023 it will be a one-day cyclathon and marathon with shorter relay options. In 2024, the 150th anniversary of the first Mennonites arriving in Manitoba, a two-day walking pilgrimage will be added, led by Oxen and a Red River cart.

MMHS President's Report.

by Conrad Stoesz, President.

At the time of writing it feels like we are coming out of the fog created by COVID. Restrictions have eased, the weather is warming up, and people are gathering again. But we can't simply pick up where we left off in 2019, personally or for our heritage institutions. In some cases staff have had to be laid off and they may have found new employment. There have also been retirements and new hires. In our heritage institutions our volunteer base is largely made up of seniors and they are now two years older. They may have found new interests or feel hesitant to volunteer again. Some of our long-standing supporters may have passed away in these past two years. So life will be different. For MMHS, we lost one of our longest standing and ardent supporters in Lawrence Klippenstein. Up into his 90th year he was still helping out with MMHS by mailing Heritage Posting and providing content. He died on March 18, 2022 after a brief illness. Lawrence was an optimist who saw what could be done — and did it — and was not deterred by what people said could not be done. He was generous with his research, his time, and his friendship. He loved getting people together to mark special historical occasions and always had some materials to hand out. Lawrence served the community through his work at the Mennonite Heritage Centre as its first salaried archivist from 1974-1997. He received the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's Award of Excellence in 2017. This past year MMHS members have continued researching, organizing, collecting, writing and communicating the Manitoba Mennonite story. The Heritage Posting Team continued to put together a high quality magazine which celebrated its 100th issue this year. A new trails committee has been established to help with the Post Road trial and develop a new trail east of the Red River called the "Peace Tail." Andrew Klassen Brown and Graham Schellenberg have improved MMHS communications with a revamped website and a new Facebook presence. The annual Mennonite Historical Society of Canada meetings were held virtually again this year with Andrew Klassen and Andrew Klassen Brown representing MMHS. MMHS is supporting the work of the committee working on commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1920s migration to Canada from Russia. A national committee with provincial sub committees is working hard on a train tour from Montreal to Vancouver with stops in various provinces and special activities at these stops. Many of our member organizations are also involved. Looking at the reports from our member organizations and standing committees, it is gratifying what all has been happening. Thanks needs to be extended to the MMHS board for their service, with a special thanks to veteran board members Jake L. Peters and Peter Priess for their service to MMHS and the community, but who have chosen to step away from board responsibilities. Thank you to all the committee members, volunteers, and staff in our heritage institutions who have worked extra hard these past months to continue to collect, preserve, and tell the story of the Mennonite people in Manitoba.

Newly elected MMHS Board Members



Ed Krahn

Graham Schellenberg

New Board Members at Mennonite Heritage Village

Christian Peters

Kerry Fast

Neil Klassen

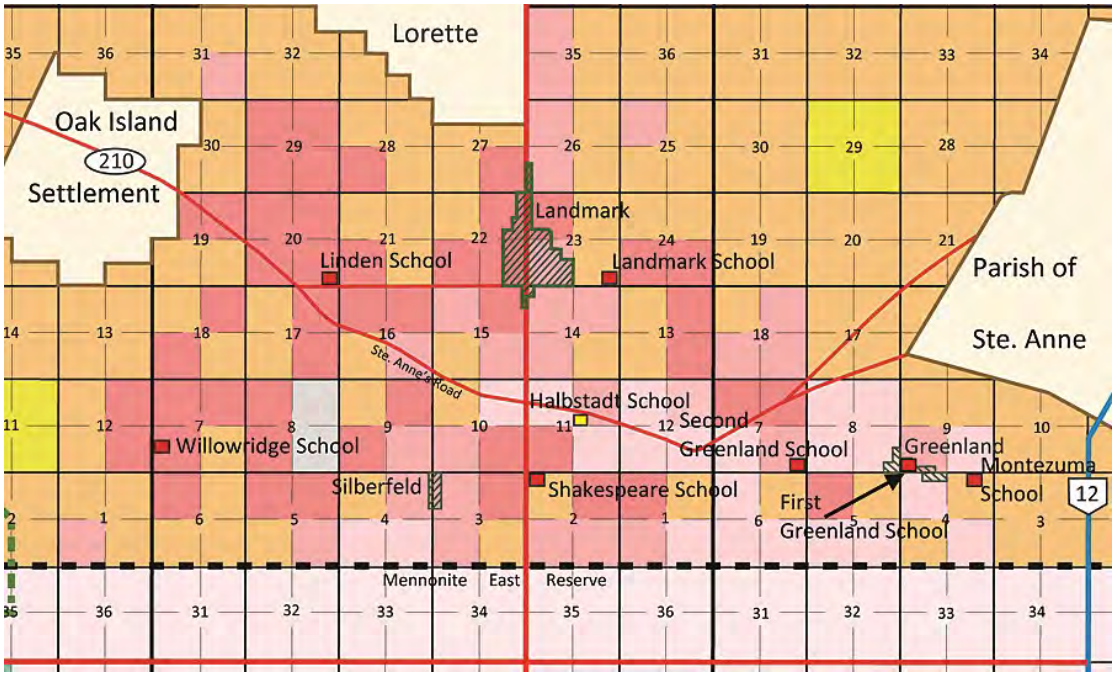
Kyle Friesen

The Story of Prairie Rose

by Harvey Plett

In 1874 and 1875 a large group of Kleinegemeinde (KG) and Bergthaler Mennonites moved to the East Reserve (ER), now the RM of Hanover. The KG settled in Steinbach, Grünfeld, Blumenort and Blumenhof. As families grew, land for the new generation became scarce. What would they do?

There was swampy bush prairie just north of the Reserve. The land was part of the R.M. of Taché and Ste. Anne, but it had been part of a Métis Reserve granted by the Manitoba Act in 1870. The Métis had sold their land to various individuals, to the Church, and to speculators and land companies. Few Métis retained land there, but the area was known as the "Brittestap" (Mixed-blood steppe) for historical reasons. It was used for haying by the Mennonites on the northern edge East Reserve, but the land was poorly drained.



The Prairie Rose/Landmark Settlers
Pink: **Northward Mennonite settlement 1890-1900;** ***Light red:*** **Mennonite Settlement 1901-1918,** ***Dark red:*** **Mennonite Settlement 1919-1930,** ***Brown:*** **Metis/French land,** ***Green:*** **School lands**
— Map designed by Harold J. Dyck, published in the *Historical Atlas of the East Reserve*, MMHS.

As the ER got crowded, this area became a possible outlet for a new place to settle. The first settlers, the Penner Brothers, members of the the Holdeman chuch (CGCM), bought land there in 1905, 1906 and 1907, just north of present day Landmark. The construction of the Manning Canal and other ditches in 1906-08 made farming possible for them. As a result people began buying land and settling in the area.

Some of the early settlers from the ER were: C. K. Pletts in 1918; Peter Koops, Peter T. Kroekers, David K. Pletts, Isaac R. Reimers, Frank T. Kroekers, Erdman Peters in 1919; Henry R. Reimers, John K. Pletts, Peter F. Loewens, Isaac Giesbrechts, Frank Goertzens, John Koops in 1920; C. A. Pletts in 1921.

With so many people moving into the area the question about what to call the settlement came up. Henry R. Reimer, a preacher and teacher, was encouraged to move to serve there. He did. He suggested, because of the many flowers in the fields, that it should be called Prairie Rose. So that is the name the community accepted.

Very quickly a church and school were needed. So in 1920 the old school building from Blumenhof was moved to Prairie Rose and put in the place where the EMC church is today. The building served as school, church and hospital. Since then the church building has been replaced four times due to needed room and a fire.

The government established a school in the area in 1920. The people wanted to call it Prairie Rose but the government refused because there was a school in Cromer, Manitoba by that name and so it was called Linden School. In 1920 the Landmark school was also established. Classes for both schools were held in the church building with H. R. Reimer as teacher. In 1925 the Landmark school was built one and a half miles east of the church. That name was chosen by Peter M. Penner from a list of names in the “Farmer’s Advocate.” The Linden school continued to meet in the EMC church and then in 1926 a separate building for the school was built a mile and half west of the church.

Prairie Rose was flourishing community. Stores were set up in Linden and in Landmark. Two garages were established. One in Linden and one in Landmark. Other businesses emerged such Landmark Plumbing and Heating, and a lumber yard, Many good carpenters emerged as well as other skilled workers.

Church-wise things also developed. Three EMC churches and one independent church are currently active in Prairie Rose (Landmark). In the 1930s Sunday School was developed as well as youth ministry programs. The center of Landmark is a village.

Prairie Rose has developed into a thriving community and is also a dormitory village from which many drive to Winnipeg for work. Prairie Rose/Landmark has developed and continues to grow as a thriving, friendly community.

Moving North of the West Reserve

by Ralph Groening

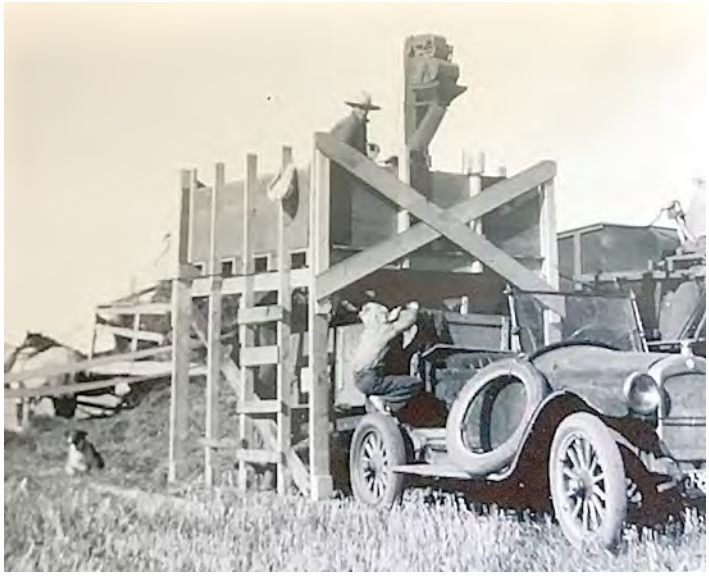
By the late 1800s the Mennonite farmers living in the West Reserve (WR) were considering options available for expansion of their family farm operations. Land was available to the north of the WR. The heavier clay soils located in townships 4-1 W and 4-2 W located south of Kane and Lowe Farm were less desirable because they were poorly drained. However the John Lowe and Rose Farm "bonanza" farms located in these 2 townships had shown the potential productivity of these soils.

In 1891 Diedrich Reimer of Plum Coulee purchased the original Rose Farm located on 17-4-2 W, and Isaak Dueck purchased the south half of section 7-4-2 W. Frank J. DeFehr of Plum Coulee moved into the Rose Farm area in 1895 followed by Gerhard Siemens and D.K. Harder of Rosenfeld in 1896.

Word spread quickly that good quality farm land was available and by 1900 dozens of Mennonite families had moved from the WR to the Kane, Rose Farm and Lowe Farm area.

Two factors added to the opportunities for agricultural development in the region. John Lowe's model farm project was failing and most of the 15,000 acres under his control became available for sale, and the province of Manitoba had passed the "Land Drainage Act 1895". These two considerations only added to the interest in available agricultural opportunities both to the North and South of the villages of Kane and Lowe Farm. Prior to 1900 virtually all of the land located north of present day #23 highway was uninhabited but the improved drainage initiative by the province of Manitoba now opened up additional land for development.

It is important to identify some of the very distinct communities that developed with the influx of Mennonite settlement in the region. The Kane district was a diverse mix of English, Scotch, American and Mennonite. The local residents established Queen Centre school in 1902 and educational opportunities were improved with regional consolidation and the construction of a modern 3-room school in Kane in 1920. This school offered Grade 1 to Grade 11 education. The influence of varied cultures and backgrounds had an impact on the local Mennonite community. Religious services in English were held in the Kane School for a number of years. There was also considerable overlap between the Kane Mennonites and the Mennonites living in the Rose Farm district. Education for the Rose Farm community began in 1897 and the school was officially established that year.



Threshing on the John Lowe Farm.

The district of Kronsweide was central to Mennonite immigration north of the WR and their first school was established on section 23-4-2 W in 1899. Almost all of the new immigrants to the region were of the *Sommerfeld* faith and church services were first held in the Kronsweide school. The Kronsweide Sommerfeld church building was constructed in 1905 on NW 24-4-2 W. It is interesting to note that regional loyalties very quickly developed. Although the Kane and Rose Farm community members mostly belonged to the *Sommerfeld* church, their allegiance to the mother church was muted. The Kronsweide Church and the Rose Farm community both established burial cemeteries. Rose Farm cemetery was created through a land donation by three local farm families and is still officially owned by these families although two of the three owners have since passed away. The Kronsweide cemetery is managed by the Sommerfeld

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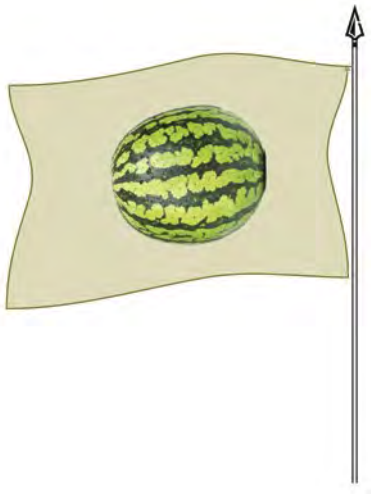
The John Lowe Farm.

Low German ABCs for those over 70 years of age

by Ernest Braun



A – is for Arbus, the emblem on the Mennonite national flag.
B – is for Borscht, the stuff of life for Russian Mennonites.
C – is for Catechismus – theology couched in Socratic method - which Mennonites learn before baptism.
D – is for Darp, the limit of Mennonite urbanization;
E – is for Eatje-nohme which every self-respecting Mennonite family has as a backup.
F – is for Fräjoah – where every Mennonite lives after age 50.
G – is for Groffbrot, which Mennonites never realized was healthy until they stopped eating it.
H – is for Heischratje, which sing catchy songs in Low German throughout the East Reserve.
I – is for Iekra, Mennonite caviar.
J – is for Jreewe, a greasy by-product of hog butchering that only Mennonites consider a delicacy.
K – is for Krüt, which Mennonites brought along from Russia.
L – is for Läpelkost, something Mennonites on the East Reserve could only afford on Sunday.
M – is for Moos which only Mennonites know is not a rodent.
N – is for Nätklos, who puts 9 peanuts in the bowls of Mennonite children every Christmas Eve.
O – is for Obramtje, the favoured youngest son, and so the sweetest portion of a watermelon.
P – is for Peeta-pust, innocent childhood way of turning lawns yellow.
Q – is for Quaulm, which of course Mennonites don't inhale.
R – is for rackere, the Protestant work ethic Mennonite style.
S – is for Settfleesch, the only meat Mennonites are forbidden to eat.
T – is for Tjressbäa, East Reserve fruit in keeping with the sweet nature of Mennonite demeanor.
U – is for Ütroop, a social event that meets both basic Mennonite needs, visiting and getting a bargain.
V – is for Veadel, something we never had in Russia, but every family got one here in Manitoba.
W – is for Wrennitje, which shorten our lives but are definitely worth it.
X – is for the unknown ingredient that distinguishes your mother's cooking from your spouse's.
Y – is for Yerba, a really cool beverage only Mennonites drink in Canada.
Z – is for Zodda, an enduring East Reserve drizzle without equal in the rest of the world.

Key for those under 70:

A: watermelon
B: borscht
C: Catechism
D: village
E: nickname
F: good-old-days
G: whole-wheat bread
H: locusts (associated with Wild Honey)
I: pickled salsa
J: cracklings
K: weeds
L: dessert
M: fruit soup
N: Santa Claus
O: diminutive for Abram
P: dandelion puff ball
Q: billow of smoke
R: work hard
S: patience (willing or able to sit still)
T: gooseberry
U: auction sale
V: quarter section
W: perogies
X: you tell me
Y: Paraguayan tea
Z: drizzle

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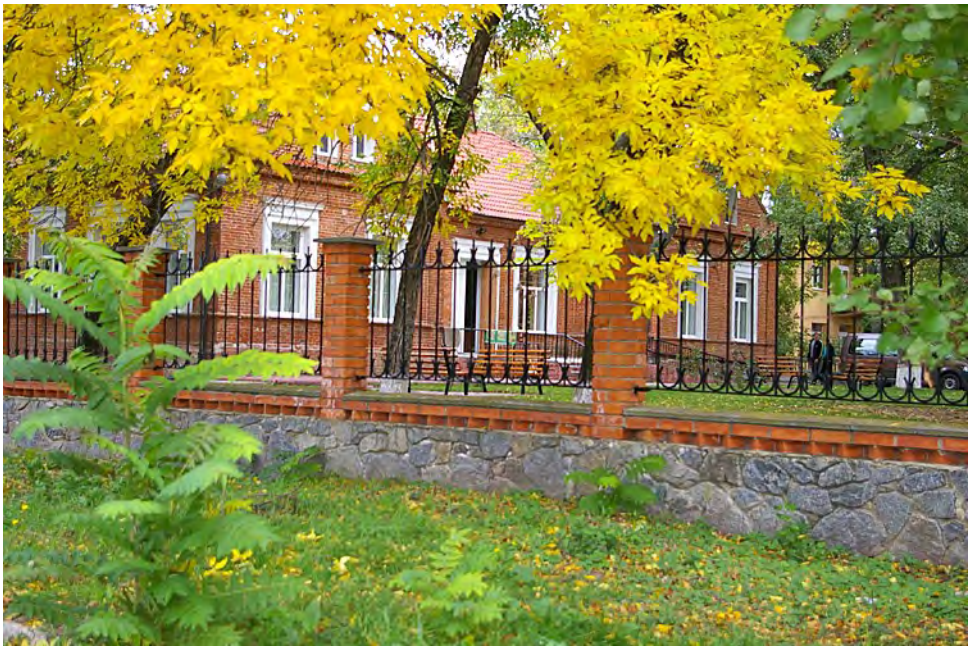
Mennonite Church. The Rose Farm community established an EMMC church in 1937 and it served the community until 1975.

The Lowe Farm community remained quite distinct from the surrounding region. The village supported a number of Jewish merchants with a very clear connection the town of Plum Coulee. The Rosner family operated a general store in Lowe Farm for many years. The village was also the site of the Grand Pacific Hotel which operated until the start of prohibition in 1918. The Lowe Farm one-room school was opened in 1899 and served only the residents of the local region. Approximately one third of the residents in Lowe Farm at this time were of Mennonite background and their connection to the Sommerfeld Church was distant. German church services were offered for a time by the local Baptist community. In 1905 the provincial Bergthaler Conference established an influence in Lowe Farm and a church building was constructed in 1928.

I conclude with comments on the influence of regional one-room schools and the variety of alliances that developed in the region and continued to influence the Kane and Lowe Farm area until the Province of Manitoba initiated school district amalgamation in 1966. The Kane and Rose Farm residents retained a distinct quality because of their early alignment with expanded educational opportunities. The rest of the region retained the one room school education concept including the school in the village of Lowe Farm until 1966. The strong loyalties and bond created by the one room school reality was sometimes in conflict with the emergence of a larger and more complicated reality of life outside the local community. The clear reality and influence of the smaller school districts remains to this day and add an interesting quality and character to our regional Kane and Lowe Farm community.

A bearded Franklin Rempel portraying Sarah Binks at Neubrgthal writers event.



The Mennonite Centre in Molochansk, Ukraine.

Lawrence chuckling at his friend's reading. Probably Koop en Bua.

Additional Photos from Recent Stories

Blind Creek - Part of the new Peace Trail.

Neil Klassen, one of the artists whose work appears on the Shantz Sheds Cairn.

Volunteers working at pond rehabilitation at MHV.

Book Reviews

Abe J. Dueck, *Mennonite Brethren Bible College: A History of Competing Vision*. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2021. Pp. xx + 220. Softcover, $22.95.

Reviewed by Brian Froese, Canadian Mennonite University.

In the 1920s a considerable number of Mennonites fled their homes in the Soviet Union for Canada in the wake of a decade of revolution, civil war, and anarchy. These Mennonite newcomers were known for being cautiously open to modernity, including formal schooling. In 1939 they began discussions about starting a school to strengthen the theological and general education of their Bible teachers. The eventual result of those conversations was the 1944 opening of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) in Winnipeg. Through the years 1966-1992, Abe Dueck spent much of his adult life at MBBC as a student, faculty member in historical studies, and academic dean and is well situated to write this history.

Dueck takes a chronological approach moving systematically through the years over fourteen chapters including a chapter devoted to each of MBBCs eleven Presidents. Among the near dozen administrations there were competing visions for the college, which navigated the wider denomination in its provincial, national, and even international considerations. Yet even beyond the Mennonite Brethren denominational matrix of interests there were competing visions from church laity, potential students, and public universities. While MBBC was always a small school, its successes and travails tell the story not only of itself but also of an immigrant people grappling with assimilation, cultural change, the pressures of urbanization, professionalization, and secularism.

Based almost entirely on archival research into institutional and denominational records, and published material including yearbooks, college catalogues, and denominational periodicals, Dueck explores the "vision or purpose of MBBC as it was conceived in the early 1940s and as it evolved and became an issue of intense disagreement and conflict through the years." (xi-xii) The overarching themes of MBBC's evolution were twofold: how to serve the church in training educators and leaders; and, how to interact with changes in the broader society. Along the way these themes often worked at cross-purposes as the latter often kept the college from ever establishing a stable identity: How to provide high quality education that is academically sound in the service of a religious group that both wants a school but also distrusts many contemporary cultural developments? MBBC attempted to thread this needle until its demise in 1992 and then more so when the successor Concord College joined the amalgamation of Mennonite colleges that formed Canadian Mennonite University in 2000.

From its start, MBBC sought to be more than a Bible school; it was always a college that soon sought to offer full degrees, including an early on short-lived attempt at a medical program designed for the mission field. By the end of the 1960s, declining enrollments became problematic, and strategies were attempted to stem the tide. They developed a seminary program, liberal arts program, a music program, and entered partnerships with Waterloo Lutheran University (now Wilfrid Laurier University), the University of Winnipeg, was a partner in the Winnipeg Theological Consortium, and joined lobbying efforts by Manitoban religious schools for some public funding. Most of this activity took place by the 1980s, most of it came with controversy, and all of it evidence of the commitment and investment made by college administrations and faculty.

Curriculum was a central denomination-college tension that bedeviled MBBC. For example, the strong music program became problematic as it challenged the Biblical and Theological studies with its growing prestige and strength and over what music should be taught. As church music shifted to folk styles and worship bands replaced choirs, how was a strong classical oriented music program to serve the church? There was also the perennial debate over the liberal arts. Faculty always saw its importance in a sound pedagogy for missions and church work and potential students increasingly wanted them and saw in it little friction with their Christian faith. However, the broader constituency often chafed at the idea of an encroaching liberal arts curriculum and at times professors came under scrutiny for "liberal" ideas.

Ultimately, what defeated MBBC was its geographic mandate to be the national college for Mennonite Brethern. While this held for the first decades, as demographics shifted to British Columbia and Mennonites there increasingly expressed concerns and criticisms over MBBC's perpetual identity crisis, lack of appeal to BC students, and that their financial support was compelled through the membership levy. By the end of the 1980s support from BC ended, and with it MBBC.

Dueck presents this history in fine detail throughout. In following a narrative structure around presidents, he has admittedly presented a certain type of history, and acknowledges that he did not highlight some major aspects of college life, notably student life. Although not the purpose of the book, which is the exploration of the myriad of visions for MBBC, it would have added a helpful perspective if research into student experiences could be expanded, through student publications, student council records, and oral histories as one of the major drivers for the continuing search for stability was a search for students.

There are a few points in the book where further explanatory expansion is warranted. Early on, for example, in describing the founding president, Abraham H. Unruh, Dueck notes, "his favorite German theologian was Adolf Schlatter." (9) Who was Schlatter and what did this mean for Unruh, or MBBC? Or, how in the second presidency of

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Book Notes

by Andrew Unger and Glen Klassen

Flyway by Sarah Ens (Turnstone Press, 2022) After her award-winning debut *The World is Mostly Sky*, Landmark-raised Sarah Ens returns with her second work of poetry. *Flyway* is this an epic poem that explores themes of place and habit as it weaves the story of migratory birds with that of her Oma's immigration to Canada from Ukraine.

Shelterbelts by Jonathan Dyck (Conondrum Press, 2022) *Shelterbelts* is Dyck's debut graphic novel, a sophisticated and nuanced portrayal of small town Mennonite life. *Shelterbelts* juxtaposes beautiful images with thoughtful dialogue to explore southern Manitoba in ways we've never seen before.

Return Stroke by Dora Dueck (CMU Press, 2022) Dora Dueck returns with her first work of non-fiction. Filled with insights on writing, death, and a reflection on the author's time in Paraguay, *Return Stroke* is a lovely collection of essays and memoirs.

Hey, Good Luck Out There by Georgia Toews (Penguin Random House Canada, 2022) Set in a woman's rehab centre, *Hey Good Look Out There* is the highly anticipated debut novel by Georgia Toews, daughter of renowned Canadian author Miriam Toews.

Wonder World by KR Byggdin (Enfield & Wisenty, 2022) The first novel by former Niverville resident KR Byggdin, *Wonder World* tells the story of Isaac Funk, a young queer man who returns home to make a new life in Manitoba after the death of his grandfather.

To Antoine by E.J. Wiens (Gelassenheit Publications, 2022) A very big novel in advanced literary style which is the story of many Russlaender in the 20th century: A prolonged journey with a guilty conscience in Russia, Germany, Paraguay, and Canada, without hope.

Lost on the Prairie by MaryLou Driedger (Wandering Fox, 2021) (Finalist for the 2022 Eileen McTavish Sykes Award for best first book) – Exciting Young Adult fiction that follows the adventures of a Mennonite boy on his solitary journey from Kansas to Saskatchewan in the early 20th century. Well-researched by journalist and retired teacher MaryLou Driedger, this book will be appealing to middle grade readers.

The Best of the Bonnet by Andrew Unger (Turnstone Press, 2021) A hilarious collection of articles from Unger's popular Mennonite satire website *The Daily Bonnet*. *The Best of the Bonnet* also includes new articles, a humorous Low German glossary, and a brief discussion on the role of humour in Mennonite life by Unger, Armin Wiebe, and scholars Robert Zacharias and Nathan Dueck.

Never Come Back by Karen Jensen (Dorrance Publishing Co., 2019) A novel filled with anthropological detail about the Russländer experience of the 1920s. *Never* Come Back tells the story of Aaron and Susanna Rempel, who like many Mennonites of the region, suffered the horrors of banditry and communism to find freedom in America.

Spirit Wrestlers: Doukhobor Pioneers and Their Friends (compiled by Koozma J. Tarasoff, 2022) An extensive collection of photos, maps, and illustrations documenting the story of the Doukhobors. Tarasoff has compiled an impressive array of information on Doukhobor history dating back centuries with a particular focus on their contribution to 20th century Canadian prairie life.

Unpardonable Sins by David Saul Bergman (Born & Suderman, Resource Publications, 2021) Quite possibly the first work of noir fiction with a Mennonite protagonist, *Unpardonable Sins* dispenses with the familiar private eye protagonist and replaces him with a Mennonite preacher named John Reimer in this suspenseful mystery novel set in Chicago.

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John B. Toews, some new faculty "did not fit the dominant Russländer culture of MBBC." (15) What was Russländer culture in this context, or was it solely English fluency as intimated? Similarly, when the Board hired Victor Adrian as president in 1967 there were reservations about his "strong opposition to dispensationalism." (64) Some context regarding the significance of dispensationalism and why his opposition to it mattered would be helpful. Dueck gives a helpful reading of the concerns some had regarding Adrian's melding pietism with Anabaptism and his moderate pacifism that flows from it. These points may be mere quibbling as Abe Dueck's book is a welcome addition to Mennonite historiography that engages several significant themes.

Dueck connects the struggles of MBBC to larger cultural trends within society and the denomination making this a study into a changing Canadian landscape for immigrants and succeeding generations on the vital question of identity. MBBC struggled internally with itself, with the MB constituency, across generations and geographic regions, and trends in the world of education—religious and secular. It may have been a small school, but it was engaged with large historical forces.

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The 1920s Mennonite Immigration to Canada: Genealogical Sources
Elder Ordinations in the Conference of Mennonites in Canada
Tribute to Lawrence Klippenstein
June 2022 CMBS Report
Esther Goossen (1920–1997): A Real Zest for Life
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