

MANITOBA MENNONITE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Advisory Council and Annual General Meeting

April 29, 2023 – Neubergthal, Manitoba

Meeting of the Advisory Council:

- 1) Call to Order and Welcome
- 2) Approval of the Agenda
- 3) Minutes of the April 9, 2022 Advisory Council Meeting
- 4) Reports from Affiliated Organizations
 - a. Mennonite Heritage Village
 - b. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
 - c. Mennonite Heritage Archives
 - d. Chair in Mennonite Studies
 - e. Plett Foundation
- 5) Reports from Standing Committees
 - a. EastMenn
 - b. WestMenn
 - c. Membership and Publicity
 - d. Heritage Posting
 - e. Media
 - f. Genealogy
- 6) Nominations to the Board
 - a. Terms Expiring
 - i. Andrea Klassen
 - ii. Sean Goerzen
 - iii. Andrew Klassen Brown
- 7) Other Business
- 8) Adjournment

Annual General Meeting:

- 1) Call to Order and Welcome
- 2) Adoption of the Minutes of the April 9, 2022 Annual General Meeting
- 3) President's Report
- 4) Financial Report
- 5) Adoption of the Affiliated Organization and Standing Committee Reports (as presented at the meeting of the Advisory Council)
- 6) Election of Directors
 - a. Nominations from the Advisory Council
 - i. Andrew Klassen Brown
 - ii. Sean Goerzen
 - iii. Andrea Klassen
 - b. Nominations from the Floor
- 7) Recommendations from the Advisory Council
- 8) Other Business
- 9) Adjournment

Minutes of the Mennonite Historical Society Advisory Council Meeting
Held via ZOOM
April 9, 2022

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Council Meeting
M/S/C Hans Werner, Jake Peters that the minutes of the March 20, 2021 Annual Council Meeting be adopted as circulated.
3. Reports from affiliated organizations and standing committees
 - a. Affiliated Organizations
 - i. Mennonite Heritage Village-Gary Dyck (see attached report)
 - a hard year, having to close part of the year
 - had a grant for the Chortitz House Barn, fund raising was stalled, went ahead anyway in 2021. Got some additional funding from the provinces' 150 Anniversary fund. That completed phase 1, phase 2 is underway.
 - Dirk Wilems project will be completed in June
 - Mennonites at War exhibit was very well received, won an award
 - now getting ready for Leaving Canada exhibit
 - "Stories we have Not Heard," an All My Relations initiative, project underway, relations with indigenous, Ukrainians.
 - financially ended up in good shape, 2022 looks good as well
 - livery barn, windmill, winter program on the radar for the future
 - database migration project has moved information to the Manitoba Museums database platform
 - there was a question about volunteers, have a core group, not yet tested the wider group of volunteers
 - ii. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
 - no report
 - iii. Plett Foundation
 - see written report
 - iv. Mennonite Heritage Archives—Conrad (see written report)
 - continue to be busy
 - Covid has meant people have picked up projects, while archives projects have been on hold or done from home
 - getting early documents from the Chortitza colony
 - books originally in Russian and German have been translated and placed on the website
 - MC Canada has been working at their materials, have received 25 boxes
 - have Young Canada Works Project grant and hired Sara Dyck
 - digitizing the Steinbach Post, using a grant from Plett Fdn.
 - creating a new digital platform for archival materials
 - have been digitizing audio cassettes, takes place in real time
 - home movies and reel to reel, are also being digitized

- have been transferring books to the historical library
 - Mennonite Historian* now has expanded readership—going to EMMC
 - Walter Schmiedehaus papers have been transferred to MHA from Provincial Archives
 - working on an exhibit of the Moving to Mexico story
 - slowly people are coming back to the archives
 - a question about how the Schiedehaus papers ended up in the PAM—Ernie Braun provided further information
- v. Chair in Mennonite Studies
- -no report
- b. Committees
- i. EastMenn—Ernie Braun (see attached report)
- May 12 formal ‘opening’ of the plaque for the Schantz cairn
 - annual lecture was in person, October 30th with Brent Wiebe, digital mapping
 - Rat River landing site contact person role has been transferred to Ernie Braun—working on a long-term lease, difficult to clear government bureaucracy
 - Peace Trail group met recently to plan next steps
 - Carillon News archives—trying to work with the Free Press to transfer the images to MHA
 - Jake Peters has retired, new Chair is Harold Dyck
 - Question about whether the damage to the cairn can be repaired
- ii. WestMenn-Andrew Klassen Brown (see attached report)
- West Reserve atlas project has picked up steam
 - looking to meet in person again
 - transitions: Graham Schellenberg stepped down, Andrew now the chair, Eleanor and Lawrence also stepped aside
 - there are sub-pages on the MMHS website for committees
- iii. Membership and Publicity
- Andrew, 125 members,
 - 18 free memberships with many renewing
 - have also created a Facebook page
- iv. Heritage Postings, Glen Klassen
- 3 issues, 40 pages
 - Lawrence K. resigned, Graham Schellenberg will be assistant editor
 - There was a discussion about tributes to Lawrence who recently passed away
 - printed the 100th issue in color
 - news, features, book reviews
 - have promoted the HP at events, June issue will feature the Manitoba Mennonite diaspora
 - raised the issue of electronic vs paper copy—varied opinions

- discussion about how being hired under a grant has often led to a beginning of a career in heritage
 - v. Media Committee
 - no report
 - vi. Genealogy Committee
 - no report for provincial activities
 - national committee working digitizing source material, Glenn Penner and Bert working together with Grandma to upload original source material
 - will be tackling the Hutterite genealogical database and their original source material
 - public access to digital records tends to be a sensitive matter; demand for access has become a bigger question during Covid; on the other hand privacy is also a big issue
4. Nominations to the Board from Council members
- a. Terms expiring
- Conrad Stoesz
Hans Werner
Jake Peters
Peter Priess
- Nominated by Council:
- Hans Werner
Conrad Stoesz
Ed Krahn
Graham Schellenberg
- M/S/C Jake Peters, Ernie Braun, nominations cease
5. Other Business
6. Adjournment: M/S/C Gary Dyck, Hans Werner that we Adjourn.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
Held via ZOOM
April 9, 2022

1. President's Report (see attached)
 - in a season of anniversaries, Lawrence loved anniversaries. He will be missed
 - membership continued working on the Mennonite story
 - new initiative—Peace Trail
 - new communications initiative, website, Facebook page
 - Thanks to MMHS Board and outgoing members Peter P. and Jake P.
 - Thanks to the staff and volunteers of the various organizations
2. Adoption of Minutes of the March 20, 2021 Annual General Meeting
M/S/C Hans Werner, Andrea Klassen that minutes be adopted
3. Financial Report (see amended written report)
 - There was one change from the distributed financial report

- mostly a break-even year
- EastMenn is using up their reserve funds
- membership push has been helpful; some people still on the \$5 track which will end soon, everyone will then be paying \$20
- donations are continuing to come in
- special project monies—left over from the Vollandam project, will be folded into the General Fund
- Schantz cairn event will have a table for donations
- there were a few questions about where the contributions to MHSC and GAMEO were recorded

M/S/C Sean Goerzen, John Giesbrecht that the Financial Report be adopted as amended

M/S/C Sean Goerzen, Andrew Brown that Jeremy Wiebe to continue to informally review the books

M/S/C Ernie Braun, Ed Krahn that the reports be adopted

2. Election of Directors

Nominations from the Council:

Conrad Stoesz

Hans Werner

Ed Krahn

Graham Schellenberg

3. Elections of Board

Nominees elected by acclamation

4. Recommendations from Advisory Council

- there were no recommendations from the Advisory Council

5. Other business

- is there a committee that offers prizes for essays ie. Plett Essays; Sean and Andrew were involved, no applicants this last year
- it was suggested we could possibly do this together with the Hutterites; would need to consult with Plett Board
- could also coordinate with Heritage Fairs

6. Motion: Gary Dyck that the meeting be adjourned

MMHS President's Report 2022

The past year was another successful year for the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Our member organizations, committees, and individual members have made contributions to the preservation and sharing of historical knowledge important to the Mennonite community. As we move out of pandemic restrictions, we are able to resume more of our activities. This included the unveiling of the monument south of Niverville on May 12. The large stone with a full color plaque marks the buildings that Jacob Shantz built to house the Mennonite pioneers for the first weeks as they prepared to build new communities east of the Red River. Our society magazine *Heritage Posting*, under the creative and energetic guidance of Glen Klassen rolled out issue numbers 101, 102, and 103. Since the pandemic this is the first year that MMHS representatives attended the national Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (MHSC) meetings, this year held in Saskatchewan. Graham Schellenberg represented MMHS at this event. MMHS and its activities have been supported through the online presence and promotion that Andrew Klassen Brown has done as webmaster.

MMHS has active standing committees such as the EastMenn and WestMenn committees with their projects. This year the Society's Media Committee is working with a film project under development that aims to consider the 1870s move from Imperial Russia and the early years in Manitoba.

We are in a period of time when there are a number of important anniversaries our communities need to recognize. This past year (2022) we marked the 100th anniversary of the move of 7,000 Mennonites to Mexico because of heavy handed assimilation policies of the provincial governments in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. MMHS members were active in helping Mennonite Heritage Village, MHSC, and the Plett Foundation bring to fruition a traveling exhibit marking the anniversary. The exhibit is currently on display at the MHC Gallery in Winnipeg and will spend the next two years traveling Ontario and western Canada.

MMHS is supporting the MHSC led initiative of the 2023 Russlaender centennial project with a train trip that goes from Montreal to Abbotsford with stops in centres in each province. During the stop in Winnipeg, open for the public, will be a history conference, Saengerfest at the Centennial Concert Hall, and drama by the Mennonite Theatre Company.

Next year, in 2024 is the 150th anniversary of Mennonites in Manitoba, 2025 is the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism, and 2026 the 100th anniversary of Mennonites in Paraguay. MMHS is encouraging congregations, conferences, families, and communities to consider marking the Manitoba Mennonite 150th. Some ideas include planning a special service, or reunion, producing a publication, website, dramatization or play, establishing a cairn or plaque. For more ideas visit the Mennonite Heritage Archives at <https://www.mharchives.ca/how-to/churches/#bringing>

Commemorating anniversaries and important events within a community is crucial for preserving and understanding the shared history and values that shape its identity. It provides an opportunity for community members to come together, reflect on the past, and consider the legacy they wish to leave for future generations. It also helps to keep the memory of key moments and individuals alive, which can be a source of inspiration and pride. Additionally, community commemoration can also serve as a way of educating and engaging the public, and can be an effective tool for building stronger and more connected communities. Overall, community commemoration is an essential aspect of preserving and celebrating the heritage and identity of a community.

The work of collecting, preserving, researching, and promoting history is central to who we are. Consider the ongoing war in Ukraine. This war is not only about land and resources, but it is also about ideas about the past and who gets to define it. President Putin's goal is to reconstitute the lands that once made up the Soviet Union and he claims that Ukraine and Ukrainian identity should be part of a powerful and expanded Russia. As part of this effort, cultural sites in Ukraine, including libraries, museums, and archives, have been targeted because they are powerful institutions that shape identity. According to a December 2022 report, since the start of the war, more than 300 state and university libraries have been destroyed.¹ And Russia's targeting of archives has continued. According to a March 27, 2023 report, "more than half of the documents from the funds of the State Archive of the Kherson region were stolen by Russian invaders and taken out of Kherson. The region contained key documents of the National Archival Fund of Ukraine from the end of the 18th century to the present day."²

It is a reminder of the importance of the work that we do in our historical societies, archives, libraries, museums, and institutes. We may be facing challenges such as a lack of volunteers, increased costs, and reduced income, but we must remember that the work we do is essential to the communities we serve. Together, we play a foundational role in shaping our communities' understanding of who they are, and we are creating the tools for our communities to move into the future. Let's remember that we're not just collecting dusty books, torn documents, or broken furniture, but we are helping our communities to define and understand their identity – our identity.

Thanks to the MMHS board members for their time, insights and support of MMHS and its activities. Thanks to treasurer Sean Goerzen for his work keeping the financial records in order. Thanks to MMHS' member organizations, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Chair in Mennonite Studies, Plett Foundation, Mennonite Heritage Village, and Mennonite Heritage Archives. The work of these organizations provides a strong basis for the Mennonite historical endeavor within the province.

Conrad Stoesz, President

April 15, 2023.

¹ To read more see Stephen Marche, "'Our mission is Crucial': meet the warrior librarians of Ukraine," The Guardian, December 4, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/dec/04/our-mission-is-crucial-meet-the-warrior-librarians-of-ukraine>

² Kharkiv Tribunal: Nuremburg 2022, Mar 27, accessed April 15, 2023, <https://www.nurnberg2022.org/en/post/russia-in-ukraine-stole-state-archive-documents-and-destroyed-kgb-archives>.

When a performing arts center or museum engages as a truly proactive, dynamic presence in its community, the results can build bridges, boost morale, and create opportunity... institutions are most impactful when they strive for deep and multifaceted connections with their communities. -Karen Brooks Hopkins

The year 2022 was Mennonite Heritage Village's busiest year ever! Beginning the first week in January with a new day camp for kids, each month was full of activity, with December seeing the first-time creation a lit-up village for winter activity. For years MHV has desired to be more than a seasonal museum and now we can provide outdoor activity in the village in addition to our two indoor galleries. Our festival days were also well attended with much engagement. People of all generations are learning about the faith, challenges, and heritage of the Mennonites.

A major highlight includes the official opening of the Dirk Willems Peace Garden. The sculpture and panels about the Mennonite value of peace at the pergola create a lot of interest in visitors young and old. For example, my own Mennonite father did not know the story of Dirk until he saw it there, when a mother taught her five year old son about Dirk he later pulled on the jailer's outstretched arm saying, 'Let's help Dirk!'.



In 2022, Andrea Klassen and the curatorial team put on the exhibit "Leaving Canada: The Mennonite Migration to Mexico" at

our Gerhard Ens gallery. Guests were impressed how well it showed the real and honest struggles of these people and time from a hundred years ago. 'I finally feel like my story is relevant and understandable', said a Mennonite guest who grew up in Latin America.

Our membership and donor base remains strong, however, in the past couple years we have lost a few major supporters and business sponsors. Overall, I feel the MHV board, staff, and Auxiliary are working well together. As described in the quotation above, each one make a special contribution that helps MHV be that dynamic presence in our community and beyond.

Submitted by Gary Dyck

CMBS Report 2022

by Jon Isaak

Below is an image showing a page from Anna Baerg's 1922 diary written on milk can labels. A hundred years ago, MCC sent relief aid, including food, to Ukraine during the time of the Russian Revolution and civil war. It was the reason MCC was organized: to bring North American relief aid to those suffering in Ukraine.

Anna wrote her diary on the only paper she could find, repurposing the fronts and backs of MCC milk can labels (several hundred) to write her experience of the wartime conflict in Ukraine. CMBS has these labels in its collection. (The one pictured below comes from Vol. 914, see https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/personal_papers/baerg-anna-1897-1972-2/.) They were translated into English and published in 1985. (The translation is for sale at Commonword Bookstore, <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/1180>.) Her diary is a testament both to the compassion of the faith community and the resourcefulness of individuals like Anna Baerg.

I enjoy my job as keeper of the CMBS archives in Winnipeg, helping people make connections from the past to current events—the past always has something to say today (e.g., Russian aggression toward Ukraine is not new nor are the humanitarian needs that MCC addresses).

While the COVID restrictions again meant that going to the archives for an in-person visit was limited, the number of Anabaptist-Mennonite online resources for historical research is extensive and expanding all the time. I spent the bulk of my time this past year promoting, updating, editing, and contributing to the many Anabaptist-Mennonite online resources available for historical research. I will highlight five.

First, there is the *Mennonite Historian website*, www.mennonitehistorian.ca/. The website has a searchable collection of over 40 years of Mennonite research and writing. This is the digital repository of the magazine you are reading right now, which I co-edit with Conrad Stoesz. Then there is the *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online or GAMEO website*, <https://gameo.org/>, which continues to grow with the addition of the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation as the latest managing partner.

In terms of acquisitions, CMBS received 10 collections of donated records since last year (e.g., 44 banker boxes of provincial church conference material, black and white photographs from the 1950s, bulletins from Linden MB Church, six banker boxes of personal papers of Bible school teacher, David Bergen [1929–2020], two boxes of Abe Dueck's research files, and digital files of provincial conference yearbooks). Processing,



describing, and making accessible via the CMBS website has occupied me when not working on various publication projects. (See page two of this report.)

Other numbers since last year: \$787 of used Mennonite history books sold—for the list of books for sale, see <https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/used-books/>; 1,763 images linked to the online photo database, *Mennonite Archival Information Database or MAID* (total now = 11,821), <https://archives.mhsc.ca/>; three Mennonite Brethren books scanned and uploaded to the Internet Archive (total now = 111), <https://archive.org/details/@jonisaak/>, plus I scanned 52 issues of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, https://archive.org/details/pub_die-mennonitische-rundschau. Now most of the MR is viewable online.

Never before have so many searchable, Anabaptist-Mennonite resources been accessible to researchers anywhere with internet service. The past has always had something to say today—and now so much more of it is available for analysis and meaning making.

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Para beberages, pudi de mesa disuelva cc
Para niños, disuelva azucar en proporeion

MODE I
Pour du café, cacao tel que.
Pour boire, usage de délayer avec de l'eau
Pour les enfants, dé été bouillie et ajouter sucre ou de lait sucré l'enfant.

Recent Archival Accessions

To give readers a sense of the recent archival accessions at CMBS, here's a brief report. During the summer, I finished processing several donated collections and creating the online finding aids to help viewers identify what is in these collections, technically called "fonds."

Recent archival accessions include two sets of personal papers from individuals serving in the leadership in the Mennonite Brethren (MB) church, one in Bible teaching (David I. Bergen, 1929–2020) and one in music ministry (John C. Klassen, 1934–2016). In addition, there were two sets of institutional files that were donated after two churches ceased operations, Christian Centre Fellowship (1969–2021) in Thompson, Manitoba, and Northgate Community Church (1963–2021) in Dawson Creek, British Columbia.

David Bergen grew up during the Depression on a Saskatchewan farm. A member at Glenbush MB Church, he married Laurena Harms in 1954. While a student at Bethany Bible School (1948–1952) in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, David sensed a call to Christian ministry. After four years of farming, he decided to take further education in preparation for a life of Bible teaching and pastoral ministry.

His Bible teaching career spanned 21 years at Bethany Bible Institute (1964–1985) and nine years at Winkler Bible Institute (1988–1997). The three years

between these two postings, he served as pastor of the Richmond Park MB Church in Brandon, Manitoba (1985–1988).

In retirement, he and Laurena moved back to Saskatchewan, settling first in Waldheim and eventually in a Saskatoon condominium. David continued an itinerant preaching and teaching ministry during retirement. He also edited his teaching and preaching notes from his long career into books of collected meditations, totaling more than 900 meditations of 600 words each. There were seven such manuscripts, which he self-published for distribution among family and friends.

For a complete listing of the files in Bergen's personal paper collection, see https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/personal_papers/bergen-david-isaac-1929-2020/.

John C. Klassen grew up in the North Kildonan area of Winnipeg, Manitoba. While a student at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI), he met Bertha Pauls. They were later married in the Elmwood MB Church (1958), which became their home congregation and where they were active in music ministry.

John and Bertha spent many years in the radio music ministry of Gospel Light Hour (later MB Communications, then Family Life Network, now Square One World Media). John trained as a schoolteacher and spent most of his 30-year teaching career in Winnipeg School Division schools, teaching instrumental music, mathematics, and computer programming.

A gifted musician, John played viola with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and double bass in various other orchestras. After retirement (1992), he and Bertha made several trips to teach music in



Bertha and John Klassen at an MB Communications event in 1978. Photo Credit: MAID CMBS NP149-1-4993.

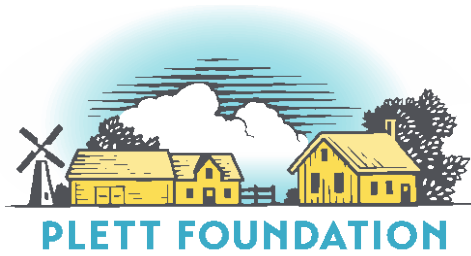
Paraguay and Russia. John composed and arranged music in many genres, both choral and instrumental. He published several collections of music, including a German hymnal, songs for a Russian Bible camping program (Kingdom Ventures), a collection of instrumental arrangements of sacred music, as well as two volumes of Low German hymns.

For a complete listing of the files in Klassen's personal paper collection, see https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/personal_papers/klassen-john-c-1934-2016/.

While church closures are often characterized with a sense of sadness and loss, not to be forgotten are the many lives that were shaped and nurtured over the years of ministry. This is where the archival collection of membership registers, congregational meeting minutes, bulletins, and photos proves to be valuable. Both the Thompson and Dawson Creek churches now have their ministry lives preserved, described, and accessible. For the file list of the Christian Fellowship Centre, see https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/inst_records/christian-centre-fellowship-church-thompson-thompson-mb/. For the Northgate Community Church, see https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/inst_records/northgate-anabaptist-fellowship/.



Laurena and David Bergen cut a celebration cake in 2019. Photo Credit: MAID CMBS NP215-01-02.



D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation
515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3B 2E9

2022 Report to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

Grant Program: The foundation accepts applications to its grant program twice a year. This year, the foundation awarded approximately \$64,000 in grants in support of book publications, research travel, and exhibits. This year, the foundation supported the publication of four books: *The Swift Current Mennonite Reserve, 1904–1926*, by Henry A. Friesen; *Ekj saj mau*, a book of Low German sayings, by Donald Thiessen; *The Mennonite Legacy of Heinrich Bergen (1879–1943) and Margaretha Rempel (1881–1951)*, by Hilda Dueck; and *Layered Histories: Perspectives on Colonization from the Chaco*, an artist's book by Miriam Rudolph.

Fellowship Program: The foundation continues to support a doctoral student (Jonathan Hildebrand, working with Ben Nobbs-Thiessen) and a postdoctoral position (Dr. Melanie Kampen for the 2021–2022 academic year, and Dr. Shelisa Klassen in 2022–2023). The foundation also has been supporting Nataliya Venger from Dnipro University (Ukraine) as a visiting scholar.

Mennonite History for Young People: The Mennonite History for Young People four-volume series of education materials is now available for free in electronic format, as well as workbooks and worksheets designed to complement social studies curricula in public and private schools. The books are still also available for purchase.

Mennonite Heritage Archives: The foundation continued to fund the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies' partnership with Canadian Mennonite University and Mennonite Church Canada in administering the archives.

Plett Library Access Network (PLAN): PLAN supports literacy and historical knowledge among Mennonite communities. This year, the foundation provided support for four libraries in Latin America: two in Mexico, one in Belize, and one in Colombia.

Preservings: Our entire spring issue of *Preservings* magazine was devoted to the English translation of Ältester Isaak Dyck's memoir about the 1920s emigration of Old Colony Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan to Mexico. The theme of our fall issue was also the 1920s migration, with stories about what happened to families and communities who decided to make the move to Mexico and Paraguay.

Migration Centenary Projects: In addition to themed issues of *Preservings*, the foundation commemorated the emigration to Mexico with a series of historical webinars, co-hosted with Mennonite Heritage Village, and saw the premiere of the documentary *Conform: The Mennonite Migration to Mexico*, produced with Plett Foundation support by Refuge 31 Films.

Website: The foundation revamped its website at www.plettfoundation.org, which hosts a growing collection of resources.

Submitted by Aileen Friesen, Executive Director

Mennonite Heritage Archives Annual report to MHSC

December 31, 2022.

Summary:

MHA continues to be a busy place with visitors, projects, and materials supporting the constituency. The number of visitors fluctuate as COVID restrictions were put into place. Financially we are on budget with another year of strong support from our owners and constituency. Digitization, processing, and providing access to materials continues to be primary activities of staff, project workers, and volunteers.

Researchers:

The past 12 months we have been up and down with the number of in-person visitors due to COVID restrictions. (See appendix for graph) November 2021 saw 43 in-person visits, then a sharp decrease from December to March followed by a steady upwards climb in April to October. Currently, there are no mandates or restrictions on people in the archives. We are continuing to encourage people to book appointments when coming to the archives so we can best serve them. In October we had a wide variety of guests including from Edmonton, St. Catharines, Mexico, Netherlands, and Ukraine. I overheard a novel version of “the Mennonite game” when non-Mennonite researchers from Amsterdam and Ukraine met for the first time, they talked back and forth trying to see which Mennonites they knew in common.

Digitization:

An exciting development for MHA is a new digital platform. In November 2019 MHA consulted focus groups and heard the call for more online access, which the pandemic has only heightened. As one response, we have embarked on a large digitization project – providing online access to digitized archival content with word searchable capabilities for printed materials. While MAID is ideal for descriptions and jpg images, this system can house large file sizes and a wide variety of formats such as pdf, wav, mp3, tif. We are posting materials on the site and you can sign up for a free account. Newspapers and community magazines are currently being posted. Titles include *Steinbach Post*, *Conference of Mennonites in Canada Yearbook*, *CMBC Alumni Bulletin*, and some books by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Specialized software was used to recognize the gothic German script. While not 100%, the results make using these resources much easier. You can watch our progress and start your searching at <https://collections.mharchives.ca/>. An official launch is yet to come. The new platform will be able to pull descriptive data from MAID where applicable. MAID will continue to be used for photos and descriptions. This past year we added a number of new fonds level descriptions and many edits to MAID.

We are now into our second full year of digitizing our collection of audio cassettes and have now finished 873 tapes. We have made less progress than usual on scanning, describing, and uploading images to MAID because of reduced volunteer engagement due to COVID.

Connecting with constituency:

MHA continues to aid in the development of the Mennonite Historical Library in collaboration with the CMU library. Each month, books that have been checked against the library catalogue and are needed (primarily in the Mennonitica genre) are brought from MHA to the library for cataloguing. This year approximately 900 books have been added to the collection via MHA.

MHA’s involvement with the *Canadian Mennonite*’s “Moment from Yesterday” and *Die Mennonitische Post*’s “Ein Bild aus unserer Geschichte” features continues. Conrad supplies a photo and text for these publications. In the case of the *Canadian Mennonite* half come from MHA and half from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. For *Die Mennonitische Post* I have been getting help from one of our volunteers, Dan Dyck, to do some of this research and writing. Our partnership with the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies remains strong and we continue to jointly produce the *Mennonite Historian* magazine. This year we have again been featuring EMC and EMMC content, and with these denomination's blessings, have been sending the *Mennonite Historian* to EMC, EMMC, MB, and MC

Canada congregations. To mark the centennial of the second wave of Mennonite immigration to Canada from Russia, we have produced a 12 month calendar with CMU's design help.

In addition to print media we also continue to be active on the Facebook and Instagram social media channels. From September -November 2022 we have reached 69,000 people via Facebook and have 4,654 followers. Via Instagram we have 585 followers, growing 13% in the past 90 days.

This year Conrad's research activities have included:

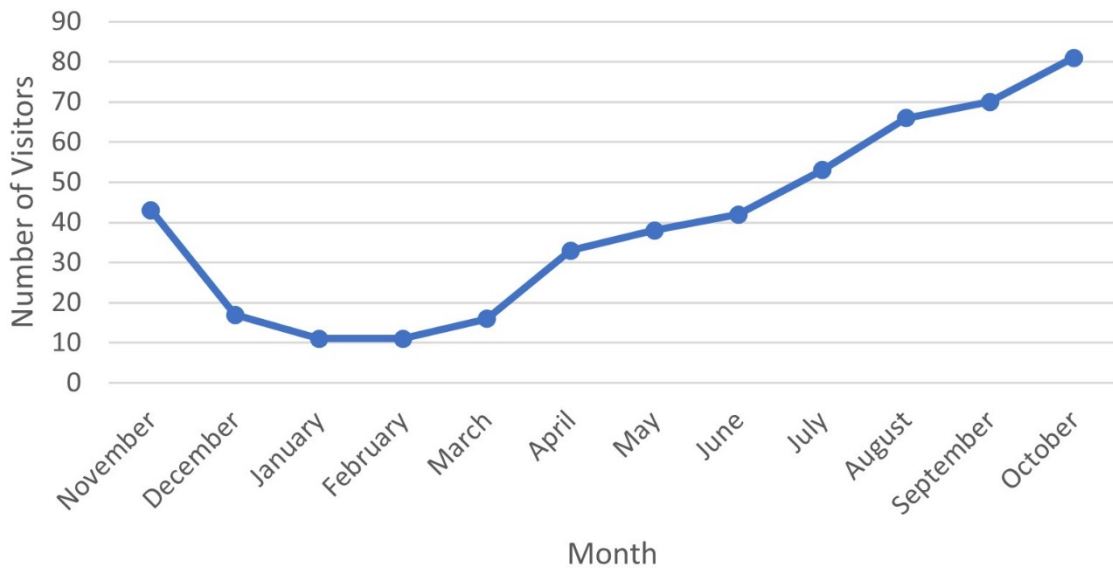
- Presenting a paper entitled "Was it Really About Education? The Sommerfeld/Bergthaler Split of 1893 Re-considered," at the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies Conference "Departing Canada, Encountering Latin America," held this past October at the University of Winnipeg.
- An article "The Ties that Bind, Letters of Maria Neufeld" in *Preservings*, December 2022.
- "Packing for Canada" zoom presentation with CTMS March 15, 2022.
- "In Memoriam: Lawrence Klippenstein," in *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July 2022.
- Interview with broadcaster U-Multicultural, aired July 5, 2022.
- Interview with broadcaster U-Multicultural Feb 15, 2022

- Book review of *Blessings and Burdens* by Ian Kleinsassr in *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, November 2022.
- "Shaftesbury Campus at Canadian Mennonite University Marks 100 Years," in *Mennonite Historian* September 2021.

Our website mharchives.ca continues to grow with resources. Additions this year include:

- A Guide to the Genealogy of Prussian Mennonites - Glenn Penner
- Glenn Penner's Y-DNA Wish List As of 1 Sep 2022 – Glenn Penner
- 1789 Statistical Census of Mennonites in West Prussia – Extracted by Rod Ratzlaff, Modified by Glenn Penner
- 1842 Description of the Mennonite Colonies in Russia
- JOURNAL OF THE MINISTRY OF CROWN PROPERTIES, Volume 2, Part 1, 1842 - This version was typed by Selenna Wolfe with editing by Selenna Wolfe and Glenn Penner
- Orenburg in the Urals by Peter P. Dyck English Translation - Machine translated using Abby FineReader software and DeepL. A scan of the Gothic script original was run through optical character recognition (OCR) and converted to Latin script by Conrad Stoesz using the Abby FineReader software. Glenn Penner then put this through the DeepL translator. Reformatted and edited by Erika Epp Marand, followed by editing by Glenn Penner.
- Autobiography of Johann Donner (1771-1830) English Translation - Translated and Edited by Timothy H. Flaming (Cypress, California) and Glenn H. Penner (MHA, Winnipeg, Manitoba)
- A Small Chronicle of the Mennonites in the Molotschna from the establishment of the colony until my 80th year by Abraham Braun - Translated by Elfriede Rempel and edited by Glenn H. Penner
- Peter Keppen's 1837 Report on Mennonites and German Colonists in the Taurida Governate, Russia – English - Translated by Wilhelm Friesen (Detmold, Germany) and Glenn Penner (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
- Settlement of Mennonite Dutch in the Vistula Delta from the Middle of the 16th Century until the Beginning of the Prussian Period by Horst Penner - Translated by Elfriede Rempel, Edited and Formatted by Glenn H. Penner
- The "Gnadenfelder Gemeindechronik" from the "Mennonitisches Jahrbuch" 1908 and 1909 - Translated by Elfriede Rempel, Edited and Formatted by Glenn H. Penner
- The Molotschna Mennonites by Franz Isaac - Translated and edited by Timothy H. Flaming (Cypress, California) and Glenn H. Penner (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

MHA Number of Visitors November 2021 - 2022



Ben Nobbs-Thiessen
CHAIR IN MENNONITE STUDIES
Jan.15, 2022

It was a busy year for the Chair in Mennonite Studies in terms of teaching, research, events, and publication. Increasingly our events, previously promoted as “Chair’s Fall Conference” for example, are now being delivered through our Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies (CTMS) which is a collaboration between the Chair and the Plett Foundation. My colleague Aileen Friesen (Plett Foundation) and I serve as co-directors of CTMS.

Teaching:

Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg continued to offer our regular survey courses and upper level thematic courses in 2022 and 2023. In Jan. 2022 we offered Indigenous-Mennonite Relations for the first time at UWinnipeg along with Mennonite Studies II. This fall I taught an honours-grad course cross-listed with Mennonite Studies, “Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada and the US” while Jeremy Wiebe taught Mennonite Studies I and 2021-22 Plett Foundation postdoc Melanie Kampen taught Peace and Nonviolence II. This term (W2023) Aileen Friesen is currently teaching “Conflict and Mennonites” and I am teaching Mennonite Studies II to a full enrolment. We have also been happy to welcome Shelisa Klassen (PhD UofM) as a CTMS postdoc for 2022-23.

Lectures and Conferences:

CTMS ANNUAL SPRING LECTURE – was given virtually by Melanie Kampen in May of 2022 and will given in-person by Shelisa Klassen on May 4, 2023 in-person at the Mennonite Heritage Archives.

FALL CONFERENCE – From Oct.21-22, 2022 the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies welcomed two dozen scholars to campus for our first in-person fall conference since the pandemic began. Over those two days we heard presentations addressing the centenary of Mennonite migration to Latin America which included local presenters as well as those from the US, Bolivia, Paraguay, Mexico, and the Netherlands. Approximately 60 people were present in-person for each session (including some of our hosts here in Saskatoon!) with another 60-70 attending virtually.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE – From July 14-15, 2023 CTMS will host **The Russlaender Mennonites: War, Dislocation, and New Beginnings** timed to the arrival of the “Memories of Migration: Russlaender Centenary Tour” train trip in Winnipeg. Several CTMS members along with some Mennonite Studies undergraduate students will be taking part in portions of this historic train trip as well. Information available at <https://ctms.uwinnipeg.ca/events/russlaender-mennonites/>

Publications:

Journal of Mennonite Studies: The editorial team at JMS had a busy year in which we published two issues of the journal for the first time for a combined total of 500+ pages! JMS Vo.40:1-2 were dedicated to papers emerging from the MCC at 100 conference held

virtually the year before. We were also able to publish three regular research papers and a number of social science and literary reviews. If your membership has lapsed please re-subscribe as we will be publishing another two issues in 2023!

Concluding Remarks

Among the many activities that took place in the spring, summer, and fall of 2022 I am particularly thrilled to have hosted my first major in-person academic conference (and one directly related to my own research area at that!). I am also grateful that after amassing research funds that I was unable to put to use during the early part of the pandemic I have finally been able to resume research and travel. Pent-up projects, delayed during the pandemic, resulted in a peripatetic summer that saw me move in the space of a few months from Leamington, Ontario to Mexico City and Chihuahua (where I continue to develop a new book project about Mennonite mobility between Canada and Mexico), to Bristol, UK (where we took part in a panel on Mennonite environmental history at the European Society for Environmental History annual meeting). Though the pace was a bit exhausting at times I am thrilled to return to researching, networking, and traveling!

2022 EastMenn Year in Review

EastMenn Historical Committee

Harold Dyck - chair

Jake L. Peters - treasurer

Ernest N. Braun - secretary

*Glen R. Klassen - chair of Peace Trail committee; **Heritage Posting** editor;*

Edward G. Krahn - member-at-large

Orlando Hiebert - member-at-large

Ben D. Funk - member-at-large

Henry N. Fast - emeritus

EastMenn Historical Committee is a standing committee under the Manitoba Historical Society (MMHS) with representation on the Board and Advisory Council. The year began as committee representatives met with Derksen Printers regarding their Carillon photo archive, and with the Peace Trail group, both in early February.

EastMenn's work as a committee began with a Zoom meeting on March 16 facilitated by Conrad Stoesz of MHA which served as both the AGM for 2021 and as a tentative projection for 2022. Board chair Jake Peters relinquished the position to Harold Dyck, with other positions remaining as is. Ed Krahn as MMHS Board member will share Advisory Council duties with Ernest Braun. A new initiative launched in concept last year, the Peace Trail, was formally adopted as a project by the EastMenn Historical Committee and a subcommittee formed and encouraged to enlist broader representation from the community. On March 29 the Peace Trail executive met with the RM of Hanover to discuss the Trail and to enlist its support. On May 3 Ed Krahn and Ernest Braun transferred bound issues of the Carillon to MHA.

Finally after a two-year delay, EastMenn hosted the unveiling of the Shantz cairn on Manitoba Day, May 12. Métis cart-builder Armand Jerome and EastMenn secretary Ernest Braun spoke to the occasion, with a cart standing next to the cairn to honour the role the Métis played in the earliest Mennonite immigration.

Much of the activity of the year was dedicated to the development of the Peace Trail, with about 8 meetings, several work days installing tamarack posts and logos at way stations, and trial runs, as well as the first Annual Peace Trek on August 20, a joint fundraiser by Eden Foundation and MHV, a trek that covered part of the trail from the Tourond Discovery Centre to MHV. This initiative is a multi-phase project with buy-ins needed from the municipalities through whose jurisdictions the Trail passes. By the end of the year, all but one way-station posts were installed with signs, logos and QR codes which take the visitor directly to a new Peace Trail website: <http://peacetrail.ca/> where a map will be posted as well as overviews and hyperlinks to each way-station. Peace trail expenses to date total almost \$6,000, which will be repaid to the EastMenn reserve account as fundraising proceeds. The Peace Trail will create its own sub-budget, since funding will exceed the resources of the EastMenn reserve account. Additional funding options are being explored.

On October 22, EastMenn hosted its annual Fall Lecture at MHV, with Bill Redekop as main speaker, addressing the pre-history of the area, particularly Lake Agassiz and its impact on the East Reserve. A special appreciation presentation was done in honour of retiring Chair Jake L. Peters who has served as chair from the inception of the committee in 2006.



In November several meetings of the Peace Trail committee zeroed in on what needs to be done in 2023: refining the prospectus and the brochure, soliciting funding, determining way-station amenities, developing a sample way-station at Shantz cairn, improving Blind Creek, creating options for the Tourond Discovery Centre loop, upgrading the trail condition overview, establishing shorter loops for Niverville for example, and perhaps generating videos for educational and promotional purposes, among other details.

Further visioning on other project include a virtual trail, a Mennonite Hall of Fame, perhaps a local historical writing contest, and work on the Carillon photo-archive are pending.

MHA reported that the *Historical Atlas of the East Reserve* is now sold out. The editors will need to decide whether to reprint for the fifth time or go digital.

The committee as a whole met twice, once via Zoom and once in person. New committee member Garth Doerksen will be joining the committee in the New Year.

Several committee members who are also *ex-officio* members elsewhere continue to serve on the Chortitz Heritage Church Committee which has again begun to hold events, the latest a German Christmas Carol program on December 10 at the old church.

Also, the flood of 2022 occasioned considerable work for the Mennonite Landing Site, which also reports back to EastMenn. The site was clogged with logs and debris and a mud layer covered the limestone trail. Considerable cleanup ensued. New garbage and recycling bins have been installed by the RM of Ritchot.

Submitted by Ernest Braun, Secretary, EastMenn Historical Committee

WestMenn Report 2022

The work of the WestMenn Historical Committee over this past year has slowly begun to resume as restrictions have loosened, but time and energy for our projects is still emerging. The main projects that WestMenn members are involved in include the Post Road Trail and Bicycle Tour, the West Reserve Atlas project, and memorials at Fort Dufferin and Blumenhof, along with a few other historical projects related to the history of the Mennonite West Reserve. The committee met three times this past year.

Work on the West Reserve Atlas project has been moving along positively. We have had help in digitizing the text, updating maps, and working on layout of the atlas. Hopefully this project will get more attention this year as members begin to meet and work together more regularly.

The WestMenn Historical Committee also mourned the passing of former WestMenn member and chair, Lawrence Klippenstein on March 18, 2022. Lawrence was a much-loved historian, colleague, and friend and he will be deeply missed.

WestMenn seeks to forge partnerships with interested people and groups, and to facilitate connections between them when possible. For more information about the committee, its projects, and to contact, please check out the WestMenn page on the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society website: <https://mmhs.org/westmenn-historical-committee/>

Andrew Klassen Brown
Chair of the WestMenn Historical Committee

Heritage Posting Report, 2022
By Glen Klassen, Editor

Three 12-page issues were distributed to members in 2022 by e-mail and by print. Extra copies (30) were left for free pick-up at MHA, MBMC, and MHV. All were in full colour. Some of the extras were offered free to attendees at MMHS events. Printing was done by City Press and envelope addressing, stuffing and mailing were done by volunteers. The last issue was done by volunteers at MHA. The total cost of printing, envelopes, labels and postage for the year was \$1700.63. Subscription fees and donations covered this cost, but left very little for other projects of MMHS.

The format remained constant: News relevant to the Mennonite community in Manitoba, General Interest articles and Book Reviews and Book Notes. Articles were kept relatively short to keep within the 12-page allotment. Articles were written by Lawrence Klippenstein, Harold J. Dyck, Barb Draper, Gary Dyck, Ernie Wiens, Harvey Plett, Ralph Groening, Ernest Braun, Elbert Toews, Andrea Klassen, Eleanor Hildebrand, and Glen Klassen. Many others submitted news and book reviews. Assistant editors were Graham Schellenberg and Andrew Klassen Brown and Ted Barg did the layout. Thanks to all.

Feedback regarding content and format has been rare and more would be appreciated. Suggestions for new features are welcome. Letters to the editor would be most welcome: grklassen@gmail.com

MMHS Media Committee Report 2022

The MMHS Media committee is an ad hoc committee established to help larger media projects, that fit with MMHS mandate, secure funding, local experts, and aid in networking. The committee consists of Hans Werner and Conrad Stoesz. The Media Committee is working with Dale Hildebrand of Toronto with his film project to mark the 150th anniversary of Mennonites in Manitoba. Dale grew up in the Halbstadt area of the province and is an acclaimed film producer. The Media Committee has been helping Dale and his team apply for grants and finding other partners. The film will focus on the leaving, journey, and early years in Manitoba part of the story. The last documentaries of Mennonites in Manitoba were produced in 1974 and 1990.

Conrad Stoesz & Hans Werner

MANITOBA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2022

Assets

Current assets:

Cash	\$	37,330
Eastmenn Investment account		17,339
General Investment account		10,032
Book sales receivable		786

\$ 65,487

Liabilities and Equity

Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$	402
Funds held for Russlaender Centennial		40,000
Unearned membership dues		840

41,242

Equity

24,245

\$ 65,487

MANITOBA MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Statement of Earnings and Equity

Year ended December 31, 2022

General Revenue:		
Donations	\$	715
Memberships		1,445
Interest		640
Total General Revenue		2,800
General Expenses:		
Heritage posting		1,997
General office costs		176
Fees and donation		1,301
Total General Expenses		3,474
Net General Loss		(674)
East Mennonite:		
Book Sales		725
Cost of book sales		(1,118)
Special Donations		317
Community events		(803)
Chortitz Church donation		(750)
Peace Trail net loss		(3,245)
Administrative costs		(70)
Net Loss		(4,944)
Genealogy:		
Book sales		625
Expenses		(29)
Net Income		596
West Mennonite:		
Book sales		-
Book inventory writeoff		(1,609)
Net Loss		(1,609)
Overall Loss for the year		(6,631)
Equity, beginning of year		30,876
Equity, end of year	\$	24,245

GAMEO Committee Report

This committee has become dormant. Work continues on the project. Manitoba content is being added, but we need more volunteers. Possibilities for work include the updating of congregational articles, street village histories, individual biographies.

Submitted by
Bert Friesen

Genealogy Committee Report

Members: Glenn Penner, Bert Friesen

This committee is supporting the work for the MHSC's genealogy committee. The current project is to make accessible original source material. This is being done by linking individual records in the GRANDMA project with images of the original source. The project is just in the beginning stages. Volunteers are needed to keep the project moving.

Submitted by
Bert Friesen