

IT'S BEEN 150 YEARS!

HERITAGE POSTING

MANITOBA
MENNONITE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



No. 107

February 2024



(Graphic by Neil Klassen, based on a photograph of the 1974 re-enactment by E.N. Braun)

August, 1874

Immigrants landing at the junction of the Red and the Rat Rivers near Ste. Agathe, Manitoba, after a trip of 15,000 kilometers from South Russia (now Ukraine). They travelled by horse and wagon, river steamer, train, ocean steamer, laker, and finally by paddleboat down the Red River from Moorhead, North Dakota. At the Landing Site they met the Métis who transported them and their baggage to the immigration sheds just south of present-day Niverville.



The route taken by the early immigrants in 1874-76. For the *Kleine Gemeinde* and some Old Colony emigrants it started in Borosenko: *Nikopol* > *Odessa* > *Breslau* > *Berlin* > *Hamburg* > *Hull* > *Liverpool* > *Cork* > *St. Johns* > *Halifax* > *Quebec* > *Montreal* > *Toronto* > *Collingwood* >

Duluth > *Moorhead* > *Winnipeg* > *Landing Site*. For the Bergthalers it started in Bergthal: *Mariupol* > *Taganrog* > *Khar'kov* > *Koenigsberg* > *Berlin*. After that their route was similar to the above.

Editorial

When I started editing Heritage Posting in 2017 I was very grateful for the legacy left by Maria Falk Lodge who had been editor since 2010. I tried to emulate her and managed to survive thus far. Now the task goes to Graham Schellenberg, who has been the contributing editor of HP and in whom I have full confidence. I am also grateful to Andrew Klassen Brown who has faithfully administered the mailing list and has contributed greatly as Assistant Editor. Then there's Ted Barg who has done the iconic HP layout from before my time. I have had wonderful contributors, too many to mention by name, but I must give a shout-out to Erin Unger whose spirited words have appeared in HP many times. I will look forward to each new issue and hope that you read it from cover to cover.

HP is an informal publication that seeks to inform members of MMHS with short, well-written pieces. This issue is a bit different -- with long fairly academic articles. I think they are an important and new contribution to the story of Mennonite immigration to Manitoba, so I will not apologize for their length. Manitoba is at the heart of the Mennonite Story in Canada and I hope that HP will boldly tell that story.

— Glen Klassen



John Wesley Dueck has been hired as the new editor of *Die Mennonitische Post* after Kennert Giesbrecht stepped down. Dueck is originally from the Menno Colony in Paraguay. He began this position in mid-October. *Die Mennonitische Post* is published in Steinbach, Manitoba, for subscribers in Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay, United States and Canada.

2024 MMHS Annual

General Meeting on April 27th at the
Mennonite Heritage Archives at CMU.

Come for the reports and a special speaker.

Program details will be emailed shortly.

Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society

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Please renew your membership or join MMHS!

You can check your expiry date at the top of the address label on the mailing envelope.

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If joining for the first time please include your mailing address and your email address.

Please also make a generous donation to MMHS!

MMHS is a registered charity and will issue tax receipts for donations above the \$20 annual fee.

MMHS needs the support for its program of book publication, membership in the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, *Heritage Posting*, educational activities and other projects.

Report of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society (MMHS)

by Ed Krahn

January 2024

As noted by the president of MMHS at our annual meeting in April "At this time of writing it feels like we are coming out of the fog created by COVID". This year we continued to move forward out of the fog. In an attempt to energize our efforts, we held our annual meeting outside of Winnipeg at Neuberghthal in the West Reserve. An excellent turnout of many in the region along with good representation from Winnipeg and the East Reserve, to hear member updates, a lecture and a film viewing.

The MMHS continues to meet regularly and we see some of the changes which COVID brought about such as most of our meeting still occurring online with the odd in person meeting to develop camaraderie among the members.

The past year MMHS members have continued to research, organize, collect and write the Manitoba Mennonite story. Which included the Heritage Posting team as they continued to put out a high-quality magazine. We celebrate the release of the 100th issue. The long-time efforts of editor Glen Klassen are noted as he has been mentoring team members to take over the editorship as he continues with other heritage projects. The February issue will reflect on the 1870s immigration to Canada.

Andrew Klassen Brown and Graham Schellenberg have updated our communications strategy with a revamped website and Facebook page. We look to play an enhanced role as a clearing house for Mennonite Heritage Events and projects in Manitoba.

MMHS helped the committee working on the Russlaender 100th Anniversary and served a major role in the administration of the funding for the *Saengerfest* portion of the celebrations. We look forward to continue to play a similar role when needed for the 150th of the 1874 arrivals to Manitoba.

MMHS is also undertaking a similar role with Dale Hildebrand, award winning producer, director, writer, for a documentary on the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of Mennonites to Manitoba. We have also received funding from the Plett Foundation for sponsored bus tours for the 150th anniversary along with funding for a book by Ralph Friesen, "Prosperity Ever – Depression Never: Steinbach in the 1930s" (working title), further work will be needed for funding of the proposal.

The Historical Trails portion of our Society has been revitalized to help with the updating of the Post Road Trail in the West Reserve and the new Peace Trail in the East Reserve. With this emphasis the MMHS has become a full member of Trails Manitoba. Applications are being submitted for grants, (the Plett Foundation has generously provided funding for interpretation panels for the Peace Trail and the Post Road Trail), further a submission has been made to Trails Manitoba for funding for the Peace Trail, and we await word on our proposal. The trails members are starting to address due diligence related to safety, permitting, web site development to be compliant with Manitoba laws and regulations. Due to the requirement to enter into MOUs (Memoranda of Understanding) with the land managers along the Peace Trail, EastMenn has developed a Driving Tour of the trail (copies are available),

until such time as the MOUs are in place. The MMHS had a board member attend the one-day Trails Manitoba: *Trails Talk* in fall. (See Page 16.)

The WestMenn Committee has also applied for Plett Foundation to move towards production of an Atlas of the West Reserve. The EastMenn Atlas has seen its fourth printing and discussions are taking place in regards to options such as digitization or use of Amazon for the costly venture. The East Reserve Atlas is the basis of developing trails and other future interpretation of the East Reserve.

It is noted that the MMHS recognizes the importance of land recognition of the First Nations and Métis Peoples of Manitoba, so in that regard the interpretation portion of waypoints on trails will be building that into the interpretation panels as one way of recognition and acknowledgement.

The Peace Trail is a working sub-committee of the EastMenn Historical Committee and WestMenn for the Post Road Trail are under the MMHS which is the legal entity, having charity status. We note several challenges for the future. Many of our organizations are reliant on volunteers and we see an aging volunteer base, with a need to energize new volunteers and bring them onboard and mentor them to take on important projects. A good model to look at is what the Heritage Posting team has done. This might be a future topic for discussion.

We have started to plan for our upcoming Annual Conference to be held in Winnipeg in an attempt to alternate between rural and urban settings. Adding lectures, films and workshops to these annual meeting is our attempt to attract a larger attendance and start to build a new generation of volunteers and from whom support can be sought for our efforts. We note that we are most successful when we work in collaborations with others and share resources be they human or financial to make the lifting easier.

In closing we wish to offer encouragement and a heartfelt thankyou to committee/board members, volunteers, and staff who have worked the past year to collect, preserve and present our collective cultural heritage of the Mennonite people in Manitoba. Please be sure to pick up a Peace Trail Driving Tour and hopefully you will find time to enjoy discovering the trail.

Thank-you/Danke Schoen

MMHS Executive

Chair - Conrad Stoesz

Vice chair - Andrea Klassen

Secretary - Hans Werner

Treasurer - Sean Goerzen

Website Administrator - Andrew Klassen Brown

Member - Ed Krahn

Member - Graham Schellenberg

Introducing 2024: A Sesquicentennial Jubilee of the 1870s Mennonite Migration to Manitoba

by Royden Loewen

Sesquicentennial jubilees are a bit tough. First, the word 'sesquicentennial' itself is so much more difficult to master than the simple word 'centennial' or silver, golden and diamond, or the more common markers of 25th, 50th, etc. Second, 150 years is the time in-between, between the centennial and the bicentennial, both events that have drawn a great deal of attention in Canada's Mennonite communities. Witness the remarkable success of the Russlaender celebrations of 2023, anchored by a trans-Canadian train re-enactment, and the Ontario bicentennial of 1986, with its MennoVan, Toronto Harbourfront concert, book publications, commissioned music, etc. And third, it seems the real celebrations relating to the 1874 migration have already happened: the 50th in 1924, the 75th in 1949 and especially the 100th in 1974, as demonstrated in Jeremy Wiebe's recent work;¹ they drew large crowds to full-day events featuring dozens of speeches, from historians to politicians, and even an occasional Saengerfest.



Royden Loewen

But all of these celebrations matter: including a sesquicentennial jubilee. They are central to one of history's main reasons for being: they provide, enhance, and sharpen our identities as individuals and as communities. They provide fodder for our quest to understand who we are: what we believe, how we act, whom we are drawn to, how we imagine the future. In so far as such celebrations hone our story, they are crucial to the very well-being and resilience of our communities.

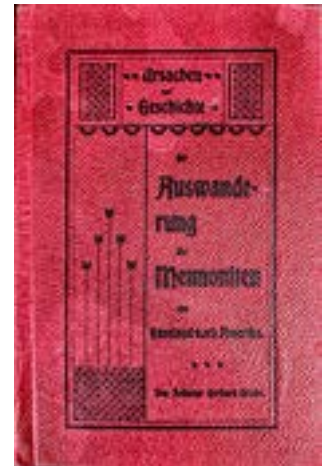
Consider the planned events for the 150th anniversary in Manitoba: a special exhibition at the Mennonite Village Museum in Steinbach, bus tours of historic sites in southern Manitoba, another Mennonite Studies conference at the University of Winnipeg, a movie, directed by Toronto's Dale Hildebrand, and, of course, this very issue of *Heritage Posting*, with its pieces on leaders – spiritual, political, economic – by Ernie Braun and Eleanor Chornoboy. Certainly more could have been done and we should give Dr. Gerald Gerbrandt, for one, a shout out for envisioning a bigger event that would have drawn the disparate Bergthaler, Chortitzer, Holdeman, EMC, EMMC, Sommerfelder, Old Colony and Reinlaender church branches together for a unique inter-conference celebration. Such a project might have had its challenges, given church border crossings and indeed secularization, making these so-called Kanadier churches simply one aspect of the demographic of our settler ancestors. But any endeavor at identity formation should be considered.

As we do prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the coming of the 7000 Mennonite settlers to Manitoba

between 1874 and 1880 it is instructive to also consider how historians have conceptualized the meaning of this migration. For it is in this timeline that we may find our own pathway of celebration.

Most of us may not be up for epic journey narratives. Perhaps the first book to be published about the event of the 1870s, *Causes and History*, by *Aeltester* Gerhard Wiebe presented the move in such proportions, akin to Israel leaving Egypt. It was a move, wrote Wiebe, that came from a people being faithful to a calling to stand up to encroachments of modernity and national assimilation. The move was a decidedly religious act of faithfulness.²

And we may want to pass on filio piety. The publications arising from the 50th anniversary in 1924 and the 75th in 1949 offered that story of survival and contribution of 'our' people. Indeed, the theme now was the success of the pioneers in a difficult land, giving them a sense of pride and accomplishment. The 1924 volume described, among other matters, the challenges of the transatlantic journey, the bitter cold of the first winter, and the deluges of rain and the plagues of grasshoppers, over the next two years, enough to push many of the newcomers south. The 1949 volume bears the memorable line from the sitting MP, René Jutras of southeastern Manitoba, for Mennonites to "hold their heads up high in your usual



This book has been translated into English with the title "Causes and History of the Emigration of Mennonites from Russia to America" by Gerhard Wiebe, translated by Helen Janzen.



René Jutras MP

unassuming manner."³ With their sobriety and hard work, Mennonites had made an invaluable contribution to Canadian society.

In the 1950s the examination of the 1870s migration took a dramatic turn to academic analysis with a focus now on distinction and resilience. Indeed, the Manitoba Mennonite community benefitted from research by two high profile doctoral candidates, both of which, rooted in scholarly fashion of the day, charted

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significant change overtime, but not before identifying the “transplanted” qualities of the Mennonite settlers. E. K. Francis’ *In Search of Utopia* focused on the astonishingly rigorous community institutions that allowed Mennonites to move as a cohesive group, keeping not only their pre-migration church structures but even municipal level councils and church-run schools, along with their inheritance bylaws, fire insurance and mutual aid systems. So effective was this social matrix that Mennonites, predicted Francis, would simply ‘acculturate,’ keeping the best of their social traits, rather than assimilate into some British-Canadian vortex of Anglo-conformity. Then in 1960 Geographer John Warkentin defended his York University Ph.D. dissertation,



John Warkentin

“Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba,” an ambitious historical geography of the East and West Reserves. It traced the lines of modernization – road networks, drainage canals, the rise of service centres. But, as importantly, Warkentin’s work focused on the transplantation of the ‘Strassendorf’ and open field system, allowing him to emphatically declare on page one that “nowhere else in North America has a peasant culture from Europe been so completely re-established.”⁴

The 1970s brought a new development, placing the story of migration in broader context. Leading the way in this respect, James Urry’s Ph.D. anthropology dissertation, “The Closed and the Open,” later published as *None but Saints*, introduced the transformative idea that the 1870s emigration from the Russian Empire reflected the global phenomenon of modernization, that inexorable world-wide shift from communitarian to individualistic concern. There was also a new focus on the nation-state’s perspective. Consider, the first volume of the *Mennonites in Canada* series, with its national focus, offering an overlapping Canadian story, a network of social associations, from east to west, and all, despite the historic north-south run of church boundaries. In that volume, Frank Epp, offered a sprightly, engaging overview of settlers arriving in Manitoba in the 1870s as part of great sweep of settlers, linking the arrival of anti-militaristic Swiss American Mennonites in Upper Canada in 1786 to the landing of war-resisters from the Russian



E. K. Francis

Empire in the 1870s, a toehold to expand even farther westward in time. But this was also the decade of a volume arising from the 1974 centennial, *Mennonite Memories: Settling in Western Canada*, edited by Lawrence Klippenstein and Julius G. Toews. It, too, put the story into a national framework, with more than 30 authors, most writing short pieces, covering many of the themes seen in Epp’s work. But it was more personal and even missional, linking the pacifism of the 1870s settlers to that of the later COs and even MCC volunteers. And it was ahead of its time in two respects: first, in a section titled “Tributes”, it recognized women and health, and second, in “Native Neighbours” it openly raised the question of “Whose Land?”



Julius G. Toews

The last quarter of the century saw three new developments, each meritorious in its own way. First, came new denominationally based interpretations that made the migration of the 1870s central to a rediscovery of faith. Henry Gerbrandt’s 1970 *Adventure in Faith* focused on one of three main church groups that came to Manitoba in the 1870s, the Bergthaler Mennonites that would divide into three groupings – the Chortitzer, Sommerfelder and Bergthaler – each engaged in its own way of “finding their faith.” A decade later Delbert Plett issued the first of his many volumes on the smallest of the 1870s migration group, the Kleine Gemeinde. He had a pointed argument: this small group was engaged in nothing less than a “triumphant” recovering of the “Anabaptist Vision” with its emphasis on non-resistance and community cohesiveness. In 2000 Plett produced a fulsome history of the third migrating group, the Old Colony or Reinlaender Mennonites, announcing it as nothing less than a commitment to the “restoration of the apostolic order.”



Delbert Plett

Intersected in these broad denominational accounts came a second surge of scholarship, that is, the microstudy of village society. Far too rich a discourse to do any justice to in this limited space, this scholarship ranged from holistic narratives, such as Peter Zacharias’s 1976, *Reinland: An Experience in Community* and to collections of primary sources such as John Rempel and William Harm’s collection, *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve*. It also included histories of both the R.M. of Hanover, almost commensurate with the East Reserve, and the R.M. of Rhineland, overlapping the east of the West Reserve. By the turn of the century few of the original villages founded in the 1870s were without some form of published record.

But the turn of the century also provided new engagements with broad academic themes, now driven by a “bottom up” approach to history, especially propelled by interdisciplinary studies and social history methodology. In 1999 both the annual Mennonite Studies conference at the University of Winnipeg and the Menno Simons lecture series at Bethel College were dedicated to the 125th

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anniversary of the 1874 migration, with resulting publications in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The 2000 issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* reflected deeply this new approach, with foci on hitherto marginalized groups – the late Kanadier, women, the Kleine Gemeinde – but, more importantly, with a new commitment to interdisciplinarity. Overshadowing a theology of the migration, for example, was a revisit to Warkentin's geographic analysis, but now intersected with themes from the burgeoning field of Mennonite literature. Then a decidedly eclectic exploration of economic, linguistic, gender, material culture and inter-ethnic themes furthered this approach. Building on such themes was my own *Hidden Worlds* from 2001, a reproduction of the Menno Simons lectures of 1999, with chapters on everyday worlds of diarists, household economies, and women and agriculture.

The last generation and indeed, the last few years, has seen yet another turn in this historiography, one that takes us into 2024. This scholarship comes with a reflection on current concerns about the land writ large, including land justice, colonialism, Indigeneity, and environmental relations. A remarkable 2015 historical atlas of the East Reserve edited by Ernest Braun and Glen Klassen pays tribute to "Indigenous People" intersected with the pre-settlement geology of the region. But a new generation of young scholars have shown a determined commitment to making these themes central to their scholarship. Consider three doctoral research initiatives: Susan Fisher's 2017 Ph.D. dissertation, "Seeds from the Steppe," Shelisa Klassen's, 2016 MA thesis and 2023 Ph.D. dissertation on settlers and Manitoba newspapers, and Jonathan Hildebrand's Ph.D. dissertation in progress, "Land, Water and Memory." Fisher's sophisticated work interweaves themes of botanical life, myth-making and emotional history to provide new understandings of settler mentalities that linked homeland ideas on plant life with Indigenous horticultures in Manitoba. Klassen's painstaking review of newspapers, and especially her MA and post-doctoral work focus on the disparate ways that the marginalized Metis and the dominant British Canadian peoples viewed settlers like the Mennonites within a colonial project. Hildebrand's work more intentionally examines Mennonite-Indigenous relationships within an environmental context, from an examination of Mennonite archaeological interests in Indigenous worlds alongside the West Reserve's waterways to mythmaking that position Indigenous neighbours in racialized ways.



Suzie Fisher

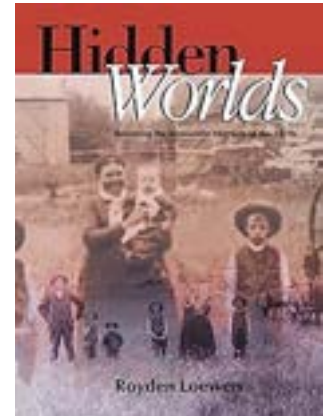
(Photo by J. Neufeld)

These themes have generated more than significant interest in the community. And they will be at the forefront of historical enquiry as we commemorate this sesquicentennial. Historical enquiry, after all, is driven by questions that societies ask of the past to illuminate the present. Especially as we pursue pathways of reconciliation in this post-TRC era, we need to commit ourselves to writing Indigeneity into our historical narratives. It's no easy

task as my own close reading of letters by Mennonite settlers in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in the 1880s yielded but two mentions of interaction with Indigenous peoples, both alluding to them as respectful, but absolutely quiescent people. Over the last few years I have been asked about oral traditions that suggest that a secret treaty outside of Treaty One between Mennonites and the Indigenous may have existed or that Indigenous meeting places meshed with village life on both Reserves. For starters let us acknowledge the seven Indigenous signators of Treaty One as historical figures – fathers, brothers, husbands, friends – that once lived sustainably on these lands and recite their names with the same ease we do those of Mennonite leaders. I end with a note of profound gratitude to Miskookenew, Kakekopenais, Nashakepenais, Nanawanawanaw, Kewetayash, Wakowush, and Oozawekwun. They were flesh and blood people who witnessed our ancestors' arriving in 1874.



"Treaty 1 signatories Chiefs Miskookenew and Kakekopenais", Winnipeg Arts, Art by Rolande Souliere (Photo: Harold J. Dyck)



Endnotes

¹Jeremy Wiebe, "Performing Ethnicity in a Pluralistic Society: The 1974 Mennonite Centennial Committee," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 37 (2019): 285-304.

²Gerhard Wiebe, *Ursachen und Geschichte der Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Amerika* (Winnipeg, 1900), translated as *Causes and history of the Emigration of the Mennonites from Russia to America*, trans. Helen Janzen (Winnipeg, 1981).

³John C. Reimer, ed., *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitische Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada* (North Kildonan, 1949), 102.

⁴John Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (1960), (Steinbach, 2000), 1.

1875 Immigrants to the West Reserve

by Eleanor Chornoboy

The first Mennonites from Imperial Russia to arrive in Manitoba in 1874 had begun to settle on the East Reserve (east of the Red river). However, three of the eight East Reserve townships reserved for Mennonites were not fit for farming and by 1875, most of the available agricultural land on the East Reserve was occupied.

Fortunately, Article 4 of the *Privilegium* addressed this issue, saying: "That should the Mennonite settlement extend beyond the eight townships set aside by the Order in Council of 3rd March last, other townships will be reserved to meet the full requirements of Mennonite immigration."

The influx of Mennonite settlers peaked in 1875, the second year of immigration. Nearly half of the total number of the 1870s Mennonite immigrants arrived that year. Many came from the Bergthaler and Kleine Gemeinde and they moved into existing villages. The largest group in 1875 originated from the two Russian settlements, Chortitza and Fürstenland.

Prospects of increased Mennonite immigration from Russia in the summer of 1875 made a new settlement imperative. Before the 1875 immigrants arrived, Jacob Y. Shantz, his relative Abraham Shantz, and a Métis surveyor, a Métis driver, and three earlier immigrants, explored the land west of the Red River. They traveled thirty miles west of the Red River in the first three townships, and on the United States border between Emerson and the Pembina Hills, they found what they were looking for – prairie land with few settlers on it.

In July 1875, the earliest Mennonite villagers which would move to the West Reserve disembarked at Fort Dufferin a few miles north of Emerson, Canada, deviating from their usual landing site at the confluence of the Red and Rat Rivers.

Settlers destined for the West Reserve quickly crowded Fort Dufferin, originally the headquarters for the International Boundary Commission, and subsequently the gathering place for the newly-formed North West Mounted Police. In July, almost 1,000 immigrants, surpassing the intended capacity of 300, occupied the barracks.

The immigrants wanted wooded lands or river lots, but other settler groups, or native residents of the province, had staked out most of these already. So they were led to consider the grassy, and to a degree, swampy, open prairie region just north of the International Border, and lying between Emerson on the Red River and Mountain City near the Pembina Hills.

A team consisting of Jacob Shantz, William Hespeler, the immigration agent, and Mennonite immigrant leaders headed west to inspect the land. Shantz and Hespeler advised the immigrants that finding another tract for settlement was impossible and that the whole tract of land including timber areas along the Pembina Hills could be



Boundary Commission of Fort Dufferin, Spring, 1873 (Courtesy of Manitoba Archives)

reserved for them. The immigrants accepted the offer. It was six weeks before the Shantz group returned to Fort Dufferin where the remainder of the immigrants had been waiting.

Young Jacob Fehr (1859-1952) described the conditions at Fort Dufferin as, "There was little elbow room and many sick children. One after the other they passed into eternity. There was a funeral every day."

Frequent funerals were a grim routine, with infections spreading easily. The lack of recorded data makes it probable that cholera, diphtheria, and malnutrition were significant contributors to the high child mortality rate.

Thirty children, including Jacob Fehr's infant brother, Isaac, died and were buried at or near Fort Dufferin during the migrants' six-week stay. Jacob Fehr's journal noted, "We spent six weeks at this place of mourning till we could finally start out and set our foot on our own land."

During this wait, *Ältester* Johann Wiebe (1837-1906) of Fürstenland, organized leadership, calling a brotherhood meeting at Fort Dufferin. At the meeting, groundwork for church organization and colony administration was laid out; they recognized the challenge of integrating members from different colonies in Russia into a single church community.

Wiebe emphasized that the blending process should start immediately. Wiebe advised close collaboration between civic administration and the *Gemeinde*. Johann Wiebe was officially confirmed as *Ältester* at Fort Dufferin, leading the *Reinländer Mennoniten Gemeinde*, later known as *Alt-Kolonier*. Isaac Mueller was elected *Obervorsteher*, the top civic office in Mennonite self-administration.

From sixteen to thirty families were organized into groups, and assigned village sites. By mid-August 1876, sixteen villages had been started and most families were at their village sites. Despite the West Reserve lacking final approval by order-in-council, most families registered with the *Gebietsamt* (local government) rather than the Dominion Lands Office, despite the *Gebietsamt* lacking state government authority.

Mueller, during his 12 years as *Obervorsteher* (1875-1886), undertook key tasks: organizing settlement and government, building a church, establishing village schools, managing community loans, and transitioning to municipal government.

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By 1876, his directives, inspired by Russian practices, were implemented. They included a fire insurance levy, stubble field burning warnings, fire guard ploughing instructions, and the conduct of family census and village elections.

On February 1, 1876, Mueller issued a call: "Every homeowner should prepare a 30-foot timber, 6 x 8 inches, planed on all sides: it may be in two sections. ... We would be heartily pleased if the willingness to work would be like it was when Solomon built the temple. Then the Lord would have pleasure in it."

By mid August, 1876, 16 villages on the West Reserve had been started and most families were at their village sites. By fall of 1877 Mueller instructed each village to erect an actual school building the following spring.

In May 1878, Mueller outlined a plan for the Post Road: "The Schultze are instructed to prepare posts, ten feet long and six inches in diameter. for the new road to Emerson, one for every homestead. Blumenort shall start to erect them on Monday the 20th of this month, starting from Emerson. They shall be placed 15 rods apart and in a line with the mileposts. ... For every twenty miles of road they can send three wagonloads and ten men with spades and chisels. We want to improve the road at the same time. Be prepared to spend three days."

Due to overpopulation and unfavourable crop conditions in the East Reserve, settlers began migrating to the West Reserve. Adverse events like grasshopper infestations in 1875 and wet years from 1877-1880 prompted a large-scale westward migration.

Wagonload after wagonload with people, household items and farming supplies set out westward. Cattle were driven along. Sometimes even buildings were dismantled and taken to be reassembled at the new site in a village. By 1882, around four hundred families, representing an estimated half of the East Reserve relocated to the West

Reserve. By 1881, the number of villages had increased to 53.

Initially crucial for Mennonite settlers, villages fostered community and collaborative work. However, with time, the era was drawing to a close. Around 1900, the number of intact villages in the West reserve had dwindled to just 18.

Lawrence Klippenstein wrote in 1975, "*What the West Reserve, now the municipalities of Rhineland and Stanley, would be like a hundred years later no one in 1875 or 1876 could have possibly foreseen. Settlement had begun, however, and all the elements of vigorous community growth were there from the start. Pioneering is always hard, and much has changed in that regard. People came in good faith that Manitoba could provide a living for body and soul, and the intervening years have proven that therein the Mennonites of 1875 were not wrong.*"

Notes

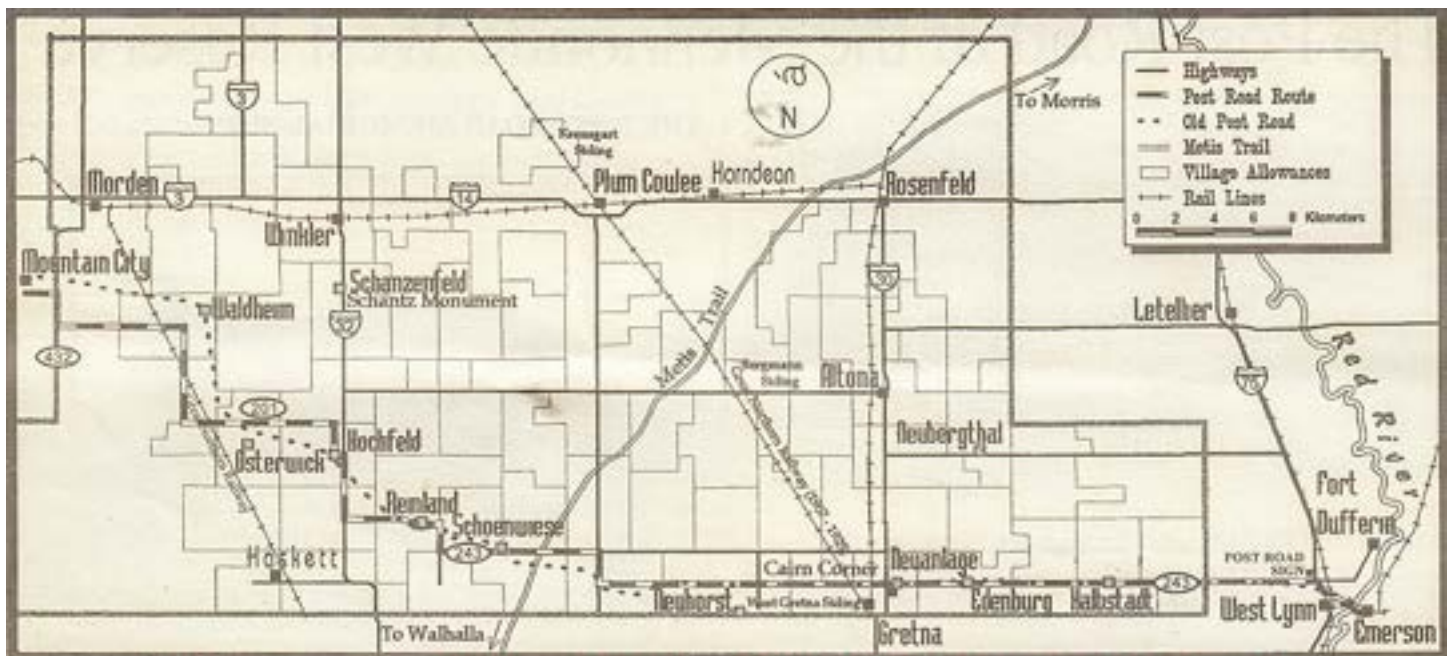
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Early villages, railroads and trailways of the Mennonite West Reserve.

Who's Who in the 1870s Mennonite

*Facilitators of 1870s emigration of
Mennonites from Imperial Russia (Ukraine)*

by Ernest N. Braun

When one thinks of the massive emigration of 17,000 Mennonites to North America in the 1870s, what comes to mind is the effort of specific people who made it possible. Most Mennonites can name those who were at the forefront of that migration, likely including Ontario Mennonite **Jacob Y. Shantz**, who built the immigration sheds in 1874; government representatives like Canadian immigration agent **William Hespeler**; key Mennonite leaders like **Berghal Ältester Gerhard Wiebe**, or maybe the names of the twelve delegates of 1873.

Mennonite Delegates 1873

Berghaler Mar 4

Jacob Peters (Oberschulz)
Heinrich Wiebe (Rev)
Cornelius Buhr (non-delegate)
Kleine Gemeinde Apr 26

David Klassen
Cornelius Toews
Hutterites Apr 26

Lorenz Tschetter
Paul Tschetter (Rev)

Molotschna/Berdjansk Apr 27

Jacob Buller (Rev)
Leonhard Suderman (Elder)

West Prussia May 10
Wilhelm Ewert (Elder)

Volhynia

Tobias Unruh (Elder)
Andreas Schrag (Rev)

Less known but still household names would be **Cornelius Jansen** (1822-94) the Prussian grain merchant and Prussian Consul in Berdjansk who was expelled from Russia for promoting emigration; **John F. Funk** (1835-1930), editor of the **Herald of Truth** in Elkhart, Indiana, who accompanied the delegates and helped them navigate half a dozen US states in the American West in search of suitable parcels of land; **Ältester Johann Wiebe** (1837-1905) of Fürstenland who shepherded the Old Colony settlers to the West Reserve in 1875; **Bernhard Warkentin** (1847-1908), the first Russian Mennonite to explore Manitoba in 1872 in the company of Jacob Shantz, and later was instrumental in settling 5,000 Mennonites in Kansas as well as in developing a popular strain of hard spring wheat on the Midwestern prairies; and of course **John Lowe** (1824-1913), secretary to the Minister of Agriculture J. H. Pope, who authorized the 15-clause Lowe Letter granting the "privileges" that persuaded Mennonites to settle in Manitoba,¹

There are degrees to which some of these individuals have been credited with facilitating the immigration of Mennonites in the 1870s. The most obvious, those noted first, are mentioned in every family history. The second group (above) has had less exposure, although is still known to many Mennonites interested in their history. However, there is a third category that also played roles in that migration, but has not seen much recognition except in official academic papers. These are the subject of this paper.

It should be noted at the outset that the emigration had its detractors from within the Mennonite community, and opposition from the outside, but that is another topic.

MANITOBA LAND OWNERSHIP

From a broader vantage point it becomes clear that the greatest facilitator of the 1870s migration ultimately was

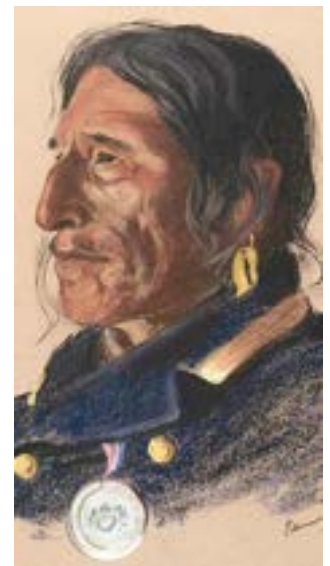
Louis Riel (1844-1885). He forced the issue of Métis land rights within the former Hudson's Bay Company territory with the Federal government, and transformed this part of HBC land into a new province in 1870. This opened it up as land that the Federal government could recognize as a province on par with the others in Confederation at the time, and thereby move one step closer to fulfilling the original Sea-to-Sea dream of 1867. That recognition allowed the federal government at least the political right to protect it from American expansionism which was poised to move into the territory. The way to protect that land was to settle it with farmers who would develop the land and forestall any American incursion.

Another absolutely vital player was **Auzawaquin** or Chief Yellow Quill (1832-1910), of the Anishinaabeg First Nation, and his six contemporaries who signed Treaty One in August 1871.² The treaty itself bluntly articulated its imperial purpose: "...that it is the desire of Her Majesty to open up to settlement and immigration a tract of country bounded and described as hereinafter mentioned, and to obtain the consent thereto of her Indian [sic.] subjects inhabiting the said tract, and to make a treaty and arrangements with them so that there may be peace and good will between them and Her Majesty..." By signing the Treaty, these leaders made settlement possible a mere two years before Mennonites obtained their charter in July of 1873. Within three years Mennonites would become one of the largest ethnic groups in Manitoba.

These indigenous leaders representing their peoples are entirely responsible for the Manitoba settlement option explored by the Mennonite delegates in 1873, an option eventually accepted only by the **Berghaler and Kleine Gemeinde Yellow Quill** delegates. Without those two agreements, every Mennonite emigrating from Imperial Russia would have ended up in the USA, where tentative inquiries had already been made by 1870 by Consul Jansen and others. Once Manitoba became a province, and First Nations signatories had ratified Treaty 1, the option of European settlement here became viable, and other players appear on various fronts



Louis Riel
(Credit E.N. Braun)



Auzawaquin or Chief Yellow Quill
(Credit Edmund Morris Collection)

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providing assistance critical to the migration in the 1870s.

IMPERIAL RUSSIA

Perhaps a bit surprisingly, a more critical player than one would expect was the British Consul in Berdiansk, **James Zohrab** [1830-91] who first apprised Secretary Earl Granville of the British Foreign Office of the desire of Mennonites to leave Imperial Russia, information that came from Mennonite leaders like Leonhard Sudermann of Berdiansk, likely via Jansen. Zohrab, having served in the military during the Crimean War, and intimately familiar with the area, was enthusiastic about the Mennonite emigration to Canada, sending Mennonite inquiries back to Britain, and endorsing the Mennonites as exemplary farmers. Only when Zohrab's superiors got wind of the initiative and ordered Zohrab to take a hands-off approach did he scale down his support. However, Canada did not get the memo, and had already sent Hespeler to Berdiansk. Only abrupt action by Colonial Secretary Lord Kimberley prevented an international incident, for Imperial Russia absolutely forbade any formal solicitation of its citizens by a foreign country. Hespeler's first intervention in the migration was to have a serious negative impact on Mennonites, for it was this intervention that ultimately caused the Canadian Governor General to bury the Lowe agreement without telling the Delegates that the education promise in Clause 10 had been nullified by wording changes.

The special commission in Russia which drafted the new laws that threatened the military exemption promise included **Count von Heyden** [Friedrich Moritz Reichsgraf von Hayden 1821-1900] who chaired the committee that enacted the conscription in Russia, and who adamantly refused to allow complete exemption, although he did already offer alternative service in 1871.³ His refusal to honour the Mennonite *Privilegium* prompted the Mennonites to seek emigration as the best option for full exemption.

As soon as the new reforms were formulated, Mennonites in Russia became aware of them, and immediately several key figures actively promoted emigration to America: Leonhard Sudermann and Cornelius Jansen in Berdiansk (as noted above), but also church leaders like **Älteste Diedrich Gaeddert** and **Isaak Peters** of Molotschna, **Jacob Wiebe** of Crimea and even **Jacob Mannhardt** of West Prussia who had already experienced what these new reforms meant for Mennonites. Mannhardt, the editor of *Mennonitische Blätter*, was himself content to accept alternative service, but his paper published information about emigration possibilities in the USA. At first, however, even Sudermann considered the USA merely as a place "interesting for adventurers, an asylum for criminals".⁴ Of Jansen it was written that the emigration "work began as a one-man campaign...and led to one of the greatest Mennonite voluntary mass migrations in recent



James Zohrab
(Credit: <https://www.zorabfamily.co.za/jamesenz.html>)

history".⁶ It was Jansen who in 1871 contacted Dr. Smith, the American consul in Odessa, who reported to the authorities in the USA.

QUAKERS

Perhaps a somewhat unusual support for the emigration came from Britain in the persons of **Thomas Harvey** and **Isaac Robson**, two British Society of Friends men who had visited the Mennonite colonies in 1867 as guests of Cornelius Jansen. It was Robson who, having visited the USA, first alerted Jansen to the existence of Mennonites in America in 1867 before conscription became an issue. Later when the *Privilegium* was threatened in 1870, he actively encouraged emigration and maintained contact with Jansen over the emigration years, providing information, encouraging and even raising \$10,000 for the Mennonites in the USA in 1875.⁶ The Quakers also greeted the Mennonites when they arrived in England on their way to Canada.

GERMANY

Emigration in the 1870s was a daunting experience, meaning not only that one had to sacrifice everything familiar, risk an extremely hazardous ocean voyage, and start in the unknown, but also that one had to pass through several different countries largely at their mercy. This was particularly apparent in Germany, where competing interests vied for the emigrant traffic, not least the destination countries, money changers, and shipping lines. Here both local German citizens and Canadian officials played a significant role. The Hamburg-Altona Mennonite church offered its help in the form of **Jacob Braun** (1819-1908), businessman in Hamburg, who is described by Jacob Buller as "a Christian...and is very interested in our cause, and is very sympathetic."⁷ Braun was also a deacon, church choir director and composer in his own right, later developing four-part harmony singing as an evangelistic outreach in eastern Europe, for which he was known as "the first master of the German singing-and-music mission".⁸ Ironically, Buller notes that Braun specifically warned against having the immigrants take passage on the Allan Line.⁹

Another significant German was **Heinrich H. Schütt**, a Mennonite merchant in Hamburg who advised the Mennonites passing through on finances and logistical matters. He served as a contact for the Mennonite Board of Guardians formed by the American Mennonites under Christian Krehbiel of Summerfield, Illinois, a parallel agency to that formed by Jacob Shantz in Ontario. Schütt was a leader in the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite church, and highly recommended by delegate Jacob Buller as the go-to person for migrants arriving in Hamburg. One man who played a critical role here in Hamburg was in fact a Canadian: **Jacob E. Klotz** (1840-1924), Canadian Commissioner of Immigration from 1872 to 1880. Klotz, from Preston, Ontario, who had personal connections with Ontario Mennonites, was



Jacob Klotz (Credit: The Canadian Album 1893, 246)

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appointed as Special Immigration Agent in Germany at \$100 per month in a few months before Hespeler was given the same task.¹⁰ Canadian-born 32-year-old Jacob, the son of well-known business-man Otto Klotz, spoke English as well as High and Low German and had previously worked in a family business.

As emigration agent in Hamburg, Klotz took special care to see to it that the Mennonites in transit were not taken advantage of, guiding them to their ships, often accompanying them right onto the ship in Hamburg, and helping them navigate the transition while protecting them against the lure provided by American shipping and railroad agents. He supervised the exchanging rubles to dollars, petitioned the Canadian government for more financial support and corresponded extensively with Mennonites both in Russia and Manitoba, actively promoting emigration and defusing rumours designed to scare them out of emigrating. Klotz was also given the task of determining which Mennonites needed financial assistance, although his source for that would necessarily be Shantz. Klotz's father provided the bond for the administration of this passage fund, the Russian Aid Committee which had various names—Mennonite Society of Ontario—later Committee of Management of Mennonites in Ontario. Klotz kept careful lists of Mennonites passing through Hamburg. He also served as an intermediary between the collection of monies from the sale of village land in Russia and the *Waisenamt* in Manitoba in charge of distributing it. A massive book on influential men of Canada, *The Canadian Album*, says in 1893 that "the extensive immigration of the Mennonites to Manitoba, a source of wealth to our country, is due to him."¹²

The *Kleine Gemeinde* group of 1874 had a guide by the name of **Spiro** who met them in Berlin and accompanied them all the way to Liverpool. Although no first name is given, he appears to be the son-in-law to Falck of **Messrs. Falck & Company**, a shipping agent in Germany, referenced by both the delegates and later groups as assisting with selection of shipping line and obtaining travel tickets. Their job was to fend off American agents and make sure the migrants got to Canada. When one early group had complaints about the treatment on a ship, Falck even undertook to investigate that. In some mix-up, Spiro and Falck end up sending most of the Mennonites to the privately owned Allan Line Royal Mail instead of the Dominion Line, causing a miscue in the original agreement by which the Mennonites were guaranteed passage from Hamburg to Fort Garry for \$30 in a deal the Feds struck with the Dominion Line. This caused an additional charge of \$5.66 to be levied on each fare in Canada. Only the Old Colony groups took the Dominion Line. Spiro later becomes a significant player in the massive emigration industry from Europe which spawned several steamship companies in the 1870s and 80s, all vying for the passenger traffic to America.¹³

ONTARIO

Many individuals among the Ontario Mennonites played significant roles directly with the newly arrived Mennonites, hosting them, supplying a welcome and a meal, and sending food along for the next part of the journey, and later supplying employment. Russian Mennonite leaders had early appealed to Shantz for financial assistance, with the result that money was collected, but it quickly became apparent that voluntary donations were not equal to the enormity of the need. Shantz then formed a **Russian Mennonite Aid Committee** in Ontario, the counterpart to the two similar committees in the USA. This committee is best known for the financial support amounting to almost \$100,000 in secured loans from the federal government, as well as other significant loans and support totalling tens of thousands of dollars. This support allowed a new word to enter Mennonite vocabulary, *Brottschuld*, meaning "bread debt", money used to buy food and essentials in the first few years.

Others assisted in committee work, in fundraising, in the purchase of goods and implements, as well as in accompanying groups to Manitoba. For instance, in May 1875, Ontario Mennonite **Simeon Reesor** accompanied a group that had over-wintered there to Manitoba, and toured the East Reserve villages, reporting back to the Ontario Mennonites on the conditions he encountered. This was important since repeated appeals were being made to the various congregations there for more and more support as additional immigrants arrived, for the money expected from the sale of Bergthaler villages was delayed and left many Bergthal without resources to start anew. Many new immigrants also accepted what amounted to liens on quarter sections of land in exchange for financial support from Ontario, to the extent that in the WR many liens needed to be paid off to the *Unterstützungs-Komitee* of Waterloo County before patent could be granted. Members of the committee were Elias Schneider, John Gascho, Samuel Reesor, John Koch, Philip Wismer, and secretary-treasurer Jacob Y. S[c]hantz.

In Toronto, a Department of Immigration agent in charge

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Waterloo County, Ontario,	
<i>1875</i>	Jan, 11 th 1875
Ich der Unterzeichnete John Doe	Mitglied der Mennoniten
Gemeinde von <i>Bergthal</i>	bezeuge hiermit, daß ich die Summe
von <i>Ein fünfundachtzig Dollars</i>	von der Unterstützungs-Komitee des Ontario, als Darlehen um innerhalb acht Jahren
empfangen habe von der Unterstützungs-Komitee des Ontario, als Darlehen um innerhalb acht Jahren	wieder zurück zu bezahlen sammt sechs Prozent Zinsen.
Wir als Kirchen-Aeltester und Lehrer der eben genannten Gemeinde versprechen für das Zurückbezahlen obiger Summe zu sorgen.	
Elias Schneider, Jacob J. Schanz, John Gascho, Samuel Reesor, John Koch, Philip Wismer,	Committee.
Jacob J. Schanz, Sekretär und Schatzmeister.	
<i>genhaend Wich</i>	Aeltester.
<i>Cornelius Hoock</i>	Lehrer.
<i>Heinrich Wiebe</i>	

Promissory Note

(Courtesy of Bruce Wiebe)

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of the Mennonite matter, **J. A. Donaldson**, assisted several groups late in September 1874, one group that he sent on to Manitoba and one group that stayed in Ontario.¹⁴ On receiving incorrect exchange information from a local broker, Donaldson inadvertently gave \$2,000 too much to Mennonites exchanging rubles. Before he could resolve the matter, the broker went bankrupt, and so Donaldson decided the Mennonites could make better use of the money than the broker's creditors.¹⁵

MANITOBA - LOCAL EAST RESERVE

The arrival in Manitoba would have been significantly more difficult and unpleasant were it not for the Métis who assisted at every turn. Family lore suggests that notable Métis school teacher and trader **Peter Garrioch** [1811-88] who, in 1844, had cut a new trail straight north from Crow Wing, Minnesota through a corner of what would become the Mennonite East Reserve, was himself one of the Métis carters that transported the luggage and the infirm from the Rat and Red River landing to the immigration sheds, which were also constructed by Métis men. Moreover, Métis guides assisted the men in their exploration of the East Reserve, and Métis surveyors laid out villages at sites chosen by Mennonite men while their families waited at the Shantz sheds. **Roger Goulet** [1834-1902], a Métis surveyor and prominent public figure from St. Boniface, was delegated to show the Mennonites their land.¹⁶ Although the surveyor who laid out Gruenfeld in later summer of 1874 is not named in any Mennonite record, it was most likely Roger Goulet, laying out the very first villages on the East Reserve. In general, Métis tradesmen were the go-to people for the early years for just about everything, until Mennonites could establish their own trades and resources.

Another group that played a little-known role in the final decision of the delegates to select the East Reserve was one they met on their short tour. **Bertha Stelck Mack** (1851-1914), a Clear Springs settler of German descent from Ontario, met the delegates in 1873, and impressed them with her warm hospitality, and positive report on their settlement. The two-storey house being built on the yard will have made an impression of success and prosperity after only four years of settlement. The Clear Springs pioneers were next door neighbours to Steinbach, Blumenort and Blumenhof, and were a great resource for the first KG settlers there.

MANITOBA - LOCAL WEST RESERVE

A little-known contribution is that of a young Waterloo County German-Canadian pharmacist, **Enoch Winkler** (1852-1928), whose random contact with Shantz resulted in his accompanying a Mennonite group to Manitoba as interpreter in 1874.¹⁷ According to family lore, he was persuaded to open a lumberyard in Emerson to serve the West Lynne Mennonite community, since the WR had no timber to speak of, and the arrival of thousands of Mennonites created an enormous demand for lumber. This resulted not only in his successful lumberyard but also in his role as intermediary between Mennonites and government at several levels, first as Reeve of the RM of Rhineland, and later still as MLA for the entire area.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

The original agreement known as the Lowe Letter of 1873 provided not only the well-known promises of military exemption, homesteading rights, etc, but also Clause #12

which put a ceiling on the travel cost from Hamburg to Fort Garry for each Mennonite over the age of eight years at \$30, and \$15 for children and so on, of which \$25 was roughly the ocean fare at the time, leaving only \$5 to cover the cost from Quebec to Manitoba, using the Dawson Route. However, two wrinkles changed that a little: in Hamburg, Mennonites chose the wrong shipping line, and so didn't pay the \$30 upfront, but only \$20-\$24 to the Allan Line, and that occasioned a repayment of \$5.66 in Canada. Secondly, Shantz had the Dawson Route changed to the Duluth-Moorhead route which cost the Mennonites \$2 more, so from Hamburg to Winnipeg cost around \$22-\$24 plus \$5.66 plus \$2 = \$31-\$33 per fare. The remaining cost was borne by the Canadian and provincial governments in subsidies that Pope estimated to be \$20 per fare federally, a total of \$110,000 by the end of the 1876 season, not including the quarantine and immigration agents salaries/expenses, nor the provincial costs incurred as Mennonites travelled through.¹⁸ A major facilitator of Mennonite migration therefore was the **Canadian government** who subsidized the immigration over several years, occasioning vigorous debates in the House of Commons, usually with Agriculture Minister J. H. Pope for the defense. These subsidies were granted to shipping lines and Canadian railways. It is not clear how the Canadian government navigated those costs or those that were incurred in the USA. A \$2 premium per immigrant was even offered to Canadian agents, but no record has surfaced as to who received any of that for Mennonite immigrants, a uniquely Canadian factor, since in the USA those premiums were \$1.50 a head, generating fierce competition and even some lawsuits. Canada was also distinct in that it acted as the primary agent for Mennonites who came here, whereas in the USA the prime movers were railroad agents, with Washington largely uninvolved.

Conclusion

Although all of the facilitators above are people, there is one other factor. One cannot but be struck by the quantum leap in technology coinciding with the migration. The tar on the railway sleepers on the Russian lines from the Black Sea to Western Europe was hardly dry when Mennonites boarded the new-fangled trains in complete comfort, and did in six days what took many weeks of arduous travel just a year or two earlier. Then, from Europe, 17,000 Mennonites boarded the hybrid steam/sail ships (which soon morphed into huge liners like the *Titanic*) and, although many infants died enroute, they crossed the ocean without a single casualty attributable directly to the sea. They usually spent about 12 days on the ocean, instead of months on sailing ships as did the immigrants who came just 20 years earlier.

The above gives a glimpse into the sheer complexity of the migration, which required the coordination of so many variables and input from individuals along the way. This is not an exhaustive list of individuals that played important contributory roles in the 1870s migration, but this paper does seek to be representative of those in various parts of the world who have often been omitted or forgotten. Hopefully this short paper will elicit other submissions of those neglected in our storytelling.

The sheer magnitude of the migration is staggering. Mass migration has been common throughout human history, normally a response to famine and natural catastrophes of various kinds, to pestilence, to war and

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The North end of the village showing the cheese factory at the extreme right, next to the windmill. The next home south was that of Aeltester Peter Baerg and beside him lived the Abram Loewen family.

Grünfeld Village

In 1957 Isaac Wiens displayed a scale model of Grünfeld which he had constructed from memory (Steinbach Post, July 19, 1957). The village was one of the first Mennonite villages to be established in Manitoba. It was a classic *Strassendorf*, just like the villages in Russia from which the immigrants had come. The details of the model represented a stage of village life perhaps a decade or two after immigration. Homesteads were lined up on one side of the village street with the Church/School in the middle and the windmill and cheese factory at the end. The graveyard was near the middle of the village, but removed from the Main Street. The Grünfeld cemetery still exists in its original location, but now in the middle of a corn field.

The model was photographed by Henry Fast, who also identified the families living at each village farm. The model is inside a display case so extraneous details had to be photo-shopped out by Paul Klassen.



The South end of the village. The last house is that of the postmaster; next is the Abram Schellenberg home and then came the Holdeman Church.

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shifting power balances and the like. The mass migrations in the news today on all continents are little different. What makes the Mennonite migration somewhat unusual is that it was not clearly a response to those typical factors, but the decision of a people to move on principle while life was still good. One can only marvel.

Footnotes

- ¹ What the Mennonites deemed a new "Privilegium" was really only John Lowe's summary of existing legislation, with the added element of bloc settlement and immigration subsidies. The education clause #10 was never approved by OiC but that was kept secret.
- ² Edmund Morris Collection: <https://collections.rom.on.ca/objects/215720/portrait-of-chief-yellow-quill-auzawaquin-plains-anishina;jsessionid=A9B175C33C93B1D550E6C90C0966874E>.
- ³ Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, Kommissionsverlag und Druck H. J. Braun, Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908, p. 298.
- ⁴ G. E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar*, Mennonite Historical Committee, 1956, p.42.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, p. 45.
- ⁶ https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Society_of_Friends&oldid=167516.
- ⁷ Jacob Buller, Letter to his family, May 16, 1873. Bethel archives Wilhelm Ewert Collection.
- ⁸ <http://epa.oszk.hu/03500/03556/00014/pdf/>

EPA03556_szolgatars_2008_04_027-030.pdf.

- ⁹ Jacob Buller, Letter to his family, May 13, 1873. Bethel archives Wilhelm Ewert Collection.
- ¹⁰ Klotz's papers regarding his work with Mennonite immigrants were presented to the Waterloo Historical Society by his daughter after his death and are currently in the Kitchener Public Library - see listing at www.kpl.org/sites/default/files/mc49.pdf.
- ¹¹ Steiner, Samuel, *Vicarious Pioneer*, Hyperion Press Ltd, Winnipeg, MB, 1988, 101.
- ¹² <https://archive.org/details/canadianalbummen02cochuoft/page/246/mode/2up>. Klotz image: <https://archive.org/details/canadianalbummen02cochuoft/page/246/mode/2up?q=klotz>.
- ¹³ Spiro appears later as an emigrant broker. Karlsberg, Spiro & Company with a branch office in Odessa even advertised in *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* 1908 published by H. Dirks in Halbstadt.
- ¹⁴ *Manitoba and Northwest Herald* Sept 19, 1874.
- ¹⁵ "An Immigration Incident Recalled" *The Commercial* (Winnipeg), 14 (33) (April 27, 1896), 748.
- ¹⁶ Gerhard Ens, "The Manitoba Act, the Métis and the Mennonites: A Tale of Two Reserves" *Preservings*, 36, 2016, 9.
- ¹⁷ http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/winkler_e.shtml.
- ¹⁸ Ernst Correll MQR 24 p. 336.

Book Notes

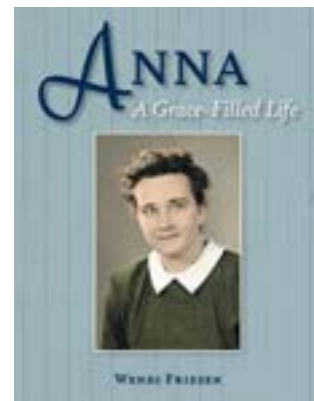
by Erin Koop Unger
On Mennonite/s Writing: Selected Essays – Hildi Froese Tiessen
 (CMU Press, 2023)

Just as there's been a flowering of Mennonite literature over the past few decades, there's also been an equally bountiful crop of writing about Mennonite writing. Hildi Froese Tiessen has been at the forefront of it all and her new book draws from decades of material, providing fascinating insight into the careers of many Mennonite literary figures.



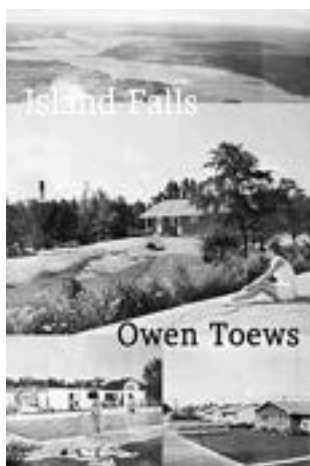
Anna: A Grace-Filled Life – Wendi Friesen
 (FriesenPress, 2021)

A moving tribute to Anna Giesbrecht, this biography follows her life from her birth in Mexico, to her challenging move to Canada. Through it all, she faced many personal battles, drawing strength from faith and family. Through this book, readers are invited to share in Anna's abundant wisdom, and partake in her unique, down-to-earth home cooking.



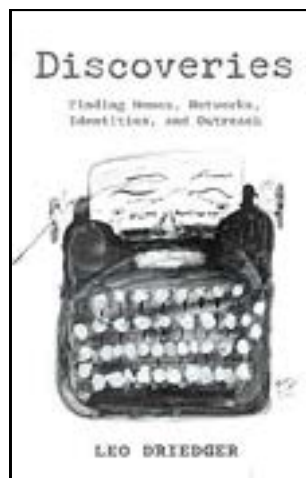
Island Falls – Owen Toews (ARP Books, 2023)

Author of the non-fiction *Stolen City*, Owen Toews turns his attention to fiction, penning this extraordinary debut novel *Island Falls*, described by Duncan Mercredi as, "A sad, beautiful read. . . Owen has captured the feelings of loss of a place we once knew." Is it an essay, story, or report? From group homes to unmarked graves, Toews' protagonist explores the history of the mill town where he grew up, digging deeper and deeper into the secrets and stories otherwise untold.



Discoveries, Finding Home, Networks, Identities, and Outreach – Leo Driedger (FriesenPress, 2023)

Leo's 20th and last book. It includes two academic articles on nonviolence and indigenous resistance. It is also a memoir of a childhood in Saskatchewan and life as a notable sociologist on the international stage. He expresses his outspoken commitment to his Mennonite faith.



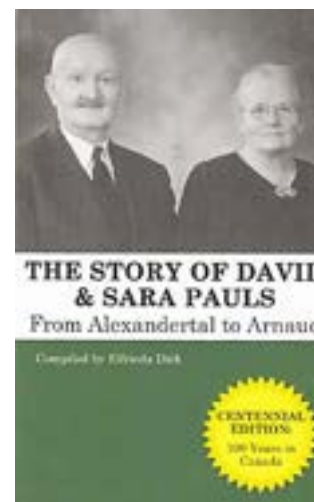
The Mennonites of Backnang, Germany: from Galicia, Prussia and Russia to Württemberg – Horst Klaassen, translated by Ervie L. Glick and Mario R. Wenger
 (Independently published, 2020)

This book reaches back all the way to the birth of Anabaptism in 1525, tracing the development of faith-based Mennonite communities across the aforementioned countries. Klaassen then gains focus in conveying the experiences of European Mennonites during World War II, zeroing in on one specific town in Germany: Backnang, and the role MCC played in rescuing Mennonites stranded in Western Europe in the 1950s.



The Story of David & Sara Pauls: From Alexandertal to Arnaud, Compiled by Elfrieda Dick,
 Schleithem Press, 2022.

From the back cover: The story "follows the couple's joy and loss, triumph and tribulation, and God's goodness throughout. It was first written for the 1978 Pauls Reunion." It includes the story of the Pauls' trip to Canada with family pictures. Readers are invited to contribute to Grace Children Ministries, working in Rwanda.



Shopping in Winnipeg in 1874

by Shelisa Klassen

When the Mennonites arrived in Winnipeg in August of 1874, they encountered a lively, bustling city, with many new buildings under construction for both private businesses and government use. There were around two thousand people living in the city at the time, and many more passed through it every day as the main centre of trade. The predominant languages spoken were French and English, but Cree and Ojibwe were also in regular use, not only by First Nations and Métis, but also by the older settlers of Manitoba. Smaller groups of Norwegians and Swedes and other European immigrants had begun to arrive in the months prior to the Mennonites.

Steamships, horse drawn wagons, and Red River carts pulled by oxen brought people and goods to and from the city, of which the Red River carts were the most common. Sawmills, hardware stores, meat markets, general stores, bakeries, and churches dotted the city streets, amongst the hundreds of buildings, both residential and commercial, that made up Winnipeg. There were even speciality shops selling boots and shoes and “fancy goods and ladies’ outfitting.” Winnipeg’s wide streets were caked with mud that spilled over onto the wooden sidewalks and ground floors of buildings in the spring, and though the mud lessened in the dryer months, it remained a concern all year round, when men would idle outside of hotels and saloons and cause ladies and finer gentlemen to detour through the mud to get past.

Visitors and newcomers to Winnipeg often marvelled at the beautiful architecture of the Winnipeg buildings, exclaiming that it felt more like Europe or an eastern city than the “western frontier.” At the same time, the buildings of Winnipeg in the 1870s represented the complicated and layered history of its residents, with several grand colleges, banks, mercantile houses, a cathedral and convent located nearby the military and trade outpost of Fort Garry. These buildings were visited by Red River carts and dog trains, depending on the season, as the majority population in Manitoba remained Indigenous in these early years.

In a scene that would be repeated with every new arrival of the Russian Mennonites, they departed their canvas-roofed accommodations aboard the *International* steamship and caused a lively scene as they entered into the city. They were accommodated at the “immigration sheds” but typically spent their money quickly, particularly in the hardware stores and wherever agricultural goods and



implements were sold. Newspapers reported that the “dealers in provisions were besieged by crowds of the new comers” and that Mennonites arrived with plenty of money to spend, even if they often tried to negotiate prices down for better deals. While Mennonite thriftiness was commented upon, merchants could hardly keep up with the Mennonite demand. One hardware establishment reported that they sold close to \$4000 that day (approximately \$100,000 today), and the Mennonites could be seen leaving the shopping area heavy laden with hay forks, scythes, stones, coffee mills, frying pans, groceries, provisions, tin-ware, potatoes, and sundry odds and ends. The majority of the Mennonites quickly left the city for the East Reserve, to live in the reception houses prepared by Jacob Y. Shantz and begin building their homes.

By December of 1874, newspapers reported that Mennonites with access to trees had built houses of timber and sod and plaster, and surprisingly, all the Mennonite families had warm homes and stables for the winter. Some of the more recently arrived Mennonite men left their families in the immigrant sheds all winter, and were building up their houses and barns by themselves. Most didn’t have much furniture yet, but reported having plenty of bread, tea, and coffee, with some families having potatoes, pork, and milk as well. Their purchased supplies from Winnipeg had equipped the Mennonites for weathering that hard first winter on the open prairie.



Drive the Peace Trail



MMHS and EastMenn are developing a 55 Km route from the Mennonite Landing Site to the Peace Garden at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. At present the route has been set only for vehicle drivers, hence "Drive the Peace Trail". The trail will be opened to cyclists and hikers later this summer when all due diligence with regard to permissions, insurance and safety has been done.

The waypoints on the trail celebrate history, ecology, spirituality, and recreation:

1. Mennonite Landing Site, where the Mennonites arrived during 1874-1876.
2. The River Lot Panels: Also a waypoint on the Crow Wing Trail, where the river-lot system gave way to the 1-mile square grid.
3. Hespeler Park in Niverville: Hespeler was an important immigration official.
4. The Stantz Cairn, where four immigrations sheds provided temporary shelter to the immigrants.
5. Tourond Creek Discovery Centre: an ecological site
6. Gruenfeld Cemetery, the cemetery of one of the first villages to be established
7. Chortitz Church and Cemetery: the oldest Mennonite church on the East Reserve
8. Rosenthal Nature Park, an ecological site important to indigenous people
9. Keating Cairn, a memorial to the Clear Springs settlers and trailhead of the Blind Creek Trail
10. The Dirk Willems Peace Garden at MHV: the trail terminus