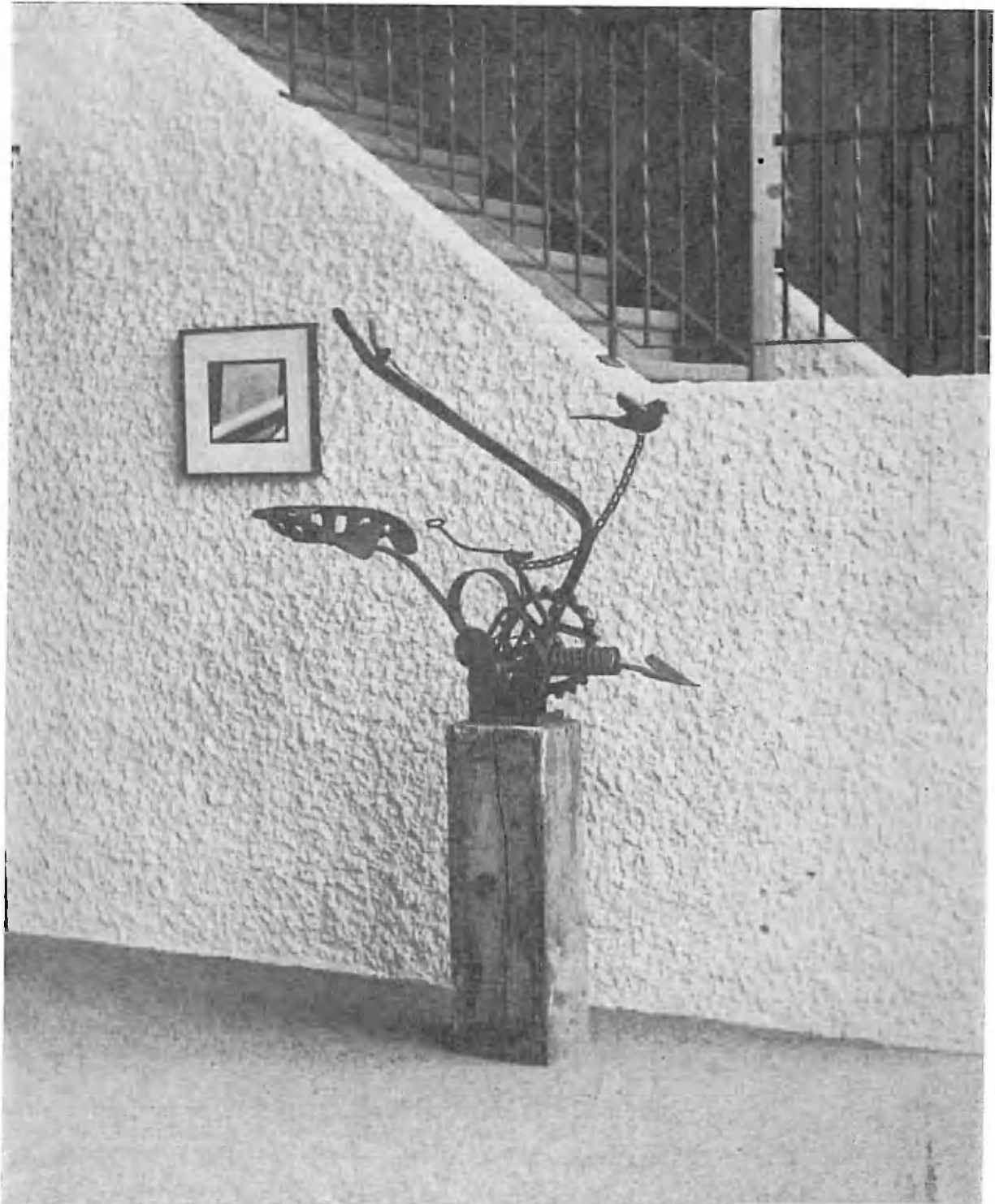


MENNONITE LIFE

DECEMBER 1979



In this Issue

The stories of human experience find many forms of expression, and a variety of persons preserve them for future telling. That's part of the drama this periodical attempts to portray. Indeed, in large measure, that is why it exists at all.

To our readers we present, this time, several so-called "lay historians," persons not given to the academic pursuit of historical research and publication. There are those—farmers, some, and housewives, as well as artists and craftsmen whose deep sensitivity to the continuities of personal and community life draw them as well into the realm of historical endeavors.

Appropriately, Peter Paetkau has set forth the details of origins for a major Christian community in North America, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Its seventy-fifth anniversary occurred just over a year ago. Ken Reddig's portrait of the Mennonite Brethren archives is of course, an account of development and future challenges as well. The memories of energetic and courageous leadership in both enterprises have not failed to stimulate others who want presently to extend what their predecessors once wisely began.

Gerald Loewen's photos again help to appreciate the realities of togetherness and community provided by time and participation in human activities. Faulkner has put it well, of course. Past, present and future do not sort themselves out with neat lines.

We also welcome Sharon Olfert, a student of CMBC, to the storytelling clientele. Not a few are finding new appreciation for their families these days, and where is there one in the Mennonite community which has not given many of its offspring to contribute meaningfully to the God-given fellowship that families normally provide? The Hildebrands undoubtedly belong to that cluster as well.

Finally, we present to you again a portion of the ever-swelling stream of literature which appears newly written each year. A special word of appreciation must go to all those who, in their reviews, continue to suggest what special rewards await those willing to read, or what recompense we may owe others who have recently added something useful to what is now in print.

Lawrence Klippenstein

MENNONITE LIFE

December 1979 Vol. 34 No. 4

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Front Cover

"Cautious Time Machine," a metal sculpture design erected by Gerald Loewen in the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Photo: Rudy Regehr.

Back Cover

A display feature prepared by Sharon Sawatzky and Gerald Loewen for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada sessions at Calgary, July 7-11, 1979. Photo: GCMC offices, Newton, Kansas.

Photo credits

Pp. 4-10: Mennonite Heritage Centre archives; pp. 11-14: MB Archives, Winnipeg; pp. 15-17: Gerald Loewen, Lawrence Klippenstein, Rudy Regehr, MHC archives; p. 18: Ken Loewen; p. 19: MHC archives; pp. 20-26: Sharon Olfert.

MENNONITE LIFE is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in March, June, September and December by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Second Class postage paid at Newton, Kansas 67114.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, \$4.00; Two years, \$7.00. (U.S. funds)

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The Conference of Mennonites in Canada: Background and Origin

by Peter Paetkau and Lawrence Klippenstein

Manitoba was an infant province when the first Mennonite immigrants landed at the confluence of the Red and Rat rivers in 1874. About 14,000 people, including many Metis and half-breeds, lived in the new "postage-stamp" area. When about 7,000 Mennonites arrived during the next six years, the population increased substantially. As the subsequent first shipments of prairie grain headed east from Emerson, it became evident moreover that a fair livelihood could be secured on the treeless and western mosquito-infested plains of the Red River Valley region.

Of the new Mennonite arrivals, the largest group, numbering about 3,000 people, originated in the Bergthal Colony in south Russia.¹ Most of them settled initially in the East Reserve, a tract of land reserved for the exclusive use of the Mennonites by a Canadian Order-in-Council passed on March 3, 1873.² Very early applications for block settlement in Manitoba were also made in an area extending west and northwest from Emerson and granted by an Order-in-Council in 1876.³ This became the so-called "West Reserve", described by E. K. Francis as the "first permanent agricultural settlement ever established in the open prairies of western Canada without direct access to a major body or current of water."⁴

The second major contingent of Mennonite settlers, which arrived from south Russia in 1875 primarily from Chortitza and another daughter colony, Fuerstenland, first settled in eighteen villages on the western end of the "West Reserve". The eastern portion of this Reserve remained available and became the focus for settlement soon afterwards when a movement of Bergthaler from the East Reserve to this area gained momentum.⁵ Largely independent of one another as communities they only gradually organized in this area. During the next decade about 400 Bergthaler families established such villages as Altbergthal, Neubergthal, Sommerfeld, Silberfeld, Schoenau, Hochstadt and others. Some settled in the railroad towns of Gretna, Altona, Rosenfeld and Horndean as well.⁶

Under the *Aeltester*⁷ Johann Funk (1836-1917) a regrouped Bergthaler church emerged on the West Reserve in the early 1880s. Funk was chosen as a minister in the East Reserve in 1877, but then moved west several years later. During 1880 *Aeltester* Gerhard Wiebe came to the West Reserve to assist Johann Funk in organizing the church here.⁸ When in 1882⁹ his successor *Aeltester* David Stoesz also ordained Johann Funk as *Aeltester*, organized church life had officially begun in the eastern half

of the West Reserve. Development of clear objectives was slow in coming however, and it proved very difficult to establish one harmonious body.

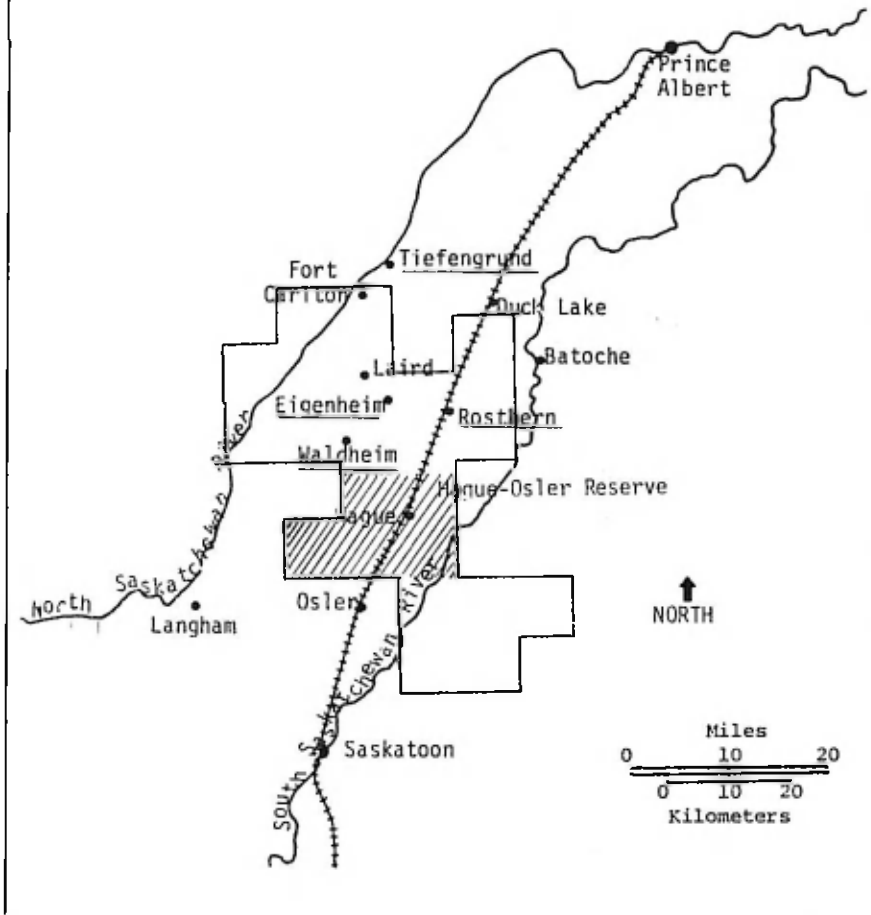
Education, for example, became a contentious issue. Deeply concerned and playing a major role in the development of education in southern Manitoba, Funk "tangled head-on with the traditional school structure and consequently antagonized very many people."¹⁰ In 1888 Funk helped to found a teacher-training institute to provide more qualified teachers for the elementary schools of the area. The majority of the Bergthal people were however, still overtly opposed to the public school system created by the Manitoba government at that time.

By 1889 this secondary school was operating in Gretna under the direction of Wilhelm Rempel. It closed after one year due to Rempel's resignation and the failure to find a suitable replacement at the time. The Manitoba educational authorities also had an interest in the school and through their encouragement the Mennonites brought a new director on the scene in the person of Heinrich H. Ewert.

Born in West Prussia, Ewert had emigrated to Kansas, USA in 1874 as a nineteen-year-old, anxious to study and join the ranks of teachers in his new homeland. He began his

ROSTHERN MENNONITE RESERVE

Rosenorter congregations are underlined (ca. 1905)



mong the Bergthaler people of this area. As a young forty-three year old ordained minister and *Aeltester*, Regier carried a strong mandate for spiritual leadership amidst fellow-immigrants of his home community at Rosenort in West Prussia. From his homestead farm at Tiefengrund, northwest of Rosthern, he organized the Rosenorter Mennonite fellowship of congregations in 1896, and from its first appearance gave the idea of a *Konferenz* his unwavering support.¹²

Some Manitoba Mennonites were moving westward as well. To integrate with a new community was not always easy. In the reports, correspondence, and visits from 1893-1902, it became evident that something needed to be done in order to make it easier for the former Manitoba Mennonites to unite with the newly established Rosenorter congregations of Saskatchewan as their new church homes.¹³

The Manitoba Bergthalers now delegated two men, Benjamin Ewert and Johann M. Friesen, to visit the brethren in Saskatchewan. An agreement was reached in 1902 that if the Bergthalers and the Saskatchewan Rosenorter churches could establish close ties, easier membership transfer might be facilitated.¹⁴ The discussions for this arrangement transpired on July 18 at the residence of Aeltester Peter Regier, according to some sources, on the outdoor benches of his beautiful garden.

Present at this historic occasion, besides Benjamin Ewert and Johann M. Friesen, and Regier, were ministers and deacons, of the Rosenorter groups: David Epp, Johann Dueck, Heinrich Warkentin, David Toews and Gerhard Epp. Sitting in also was a General Conference (USA) evangelist from Berne, Indiana, James E. Sprunger who was representing publication interests there at the time.¹⁵ An agreement was reached to continue to meet as ministers from both provinces, and to do this in the context of a *Konferenz* (Conference) the following year. Educational concerns were discussed as well.

Subsequently then, representa-

career in 1882 and five years later also helped to gain support for a continuation school eventually to become Bethel College. He was ordained a minister in 1884, and as a Sunday school superintendent helped to found the Sunday School Convention of Kansas.

When contacted about the Gretna, Manitoba school Ewert undertook a survey of the situation in the summer of 1890, and thereupon agreed to take the position of principal beginning the next year. The so-called Gretna Normal School was reopened. Ewert remained at the helm of this institution for the next 43 years, indeed until his death in

1934, and would hold prominent positions in Manitoba church life, and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as well.¹¹

By now elements of this future organization were appearing elsewhere in the country. During the early nineties scores of Mennonite settlers from Eastern Europe and the United States were entering the Territories of Western Canada. The Prussian immigrant contingent of 1893 included Peter Regier, who, before going on to his eventual home in Saskatchewan, renewed an old acquaintance from Prussia with the Ewerts at Gretna.

Regier found a hearty welcome a-

tives of these two church bodies met on July 20 and 21, 1903, in the Hochstadt Bergthaler Church, of the West Reserve in southern Manitoba.¹⁶ Among the twenty or so men attending that meeting were Gerhard Epp from Saskatchewan, J. W. Kliewer from Wadsworth, Ohio, J. E. Sprunger from Berne, Indiana, along with the Manitoba Bergthaler ministers Benjamin Ewert, Jacob Hoepfner, and Heinrich Ewert, one layman, H. H. Hamm of Gretna,¹⁷ and several visitors from the recently-founded Sommerfelder Church of Manitoba.¹⁸

Who, one might ask, were the *Konferenz* workers of this occasion? Besides Regier and Funk, who apparently did not attend, there was Jacob Hoepfner (1850-1936), a native of south Russia who had received his education in the schools of the Old Colony and joined many others in coming to Manitoba in 1876. Having begun a teaching career in the villages south of Winkler, Hoepfner was first elected minister in 1887 and then ordained as assistant *Aeltester* of the Bergthaler Church in April, 1903. The senior *Aeltester* was still Johann Funk whom Hoepfner succeeded as the leader of the Bergthaler people several years later.¹⁹

Benjamin Ewert (1870-1958), a younger brother of Heinrich, served as the secretary of the 1903 Conference. He had come from West Prussia to Hillsboro, Kansas as a child. After obtaining his education in Kansas he moved on to Manitoba and taught in the village school of Edenburg for about ten years. In 1894 he transferred his membership from the General Conference to the Bergthaler Church in Manitoba, in which he was ordained to the ministry by *Aeltester* Funk in 1895. In 1902 he moved to Gretna and served as a teacher at the Mennonite Educational Institute for a few years. He also operated a bookstore and printing shop until after World War I. In 1921 he left for Winnipeg to take up his ministry as *Reiseprediger*, in which capacity he travelled throughout western Canada for the next twenty years. Most of his activity belonged to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in which he



The ministers and deacons who met for the 1902 conference planning session at Tiefengrund. Left to right (standing) Deacon David Epp, Johann Dueck, Ministers Heinrich Warkentin, David Toews and Gerhard Epp. Front seated: Benjamin Ewert, Aeltester Peter Regier, Johann M. Friesen and James E. Sprunger.

held various positions in succeeding years.²⁰

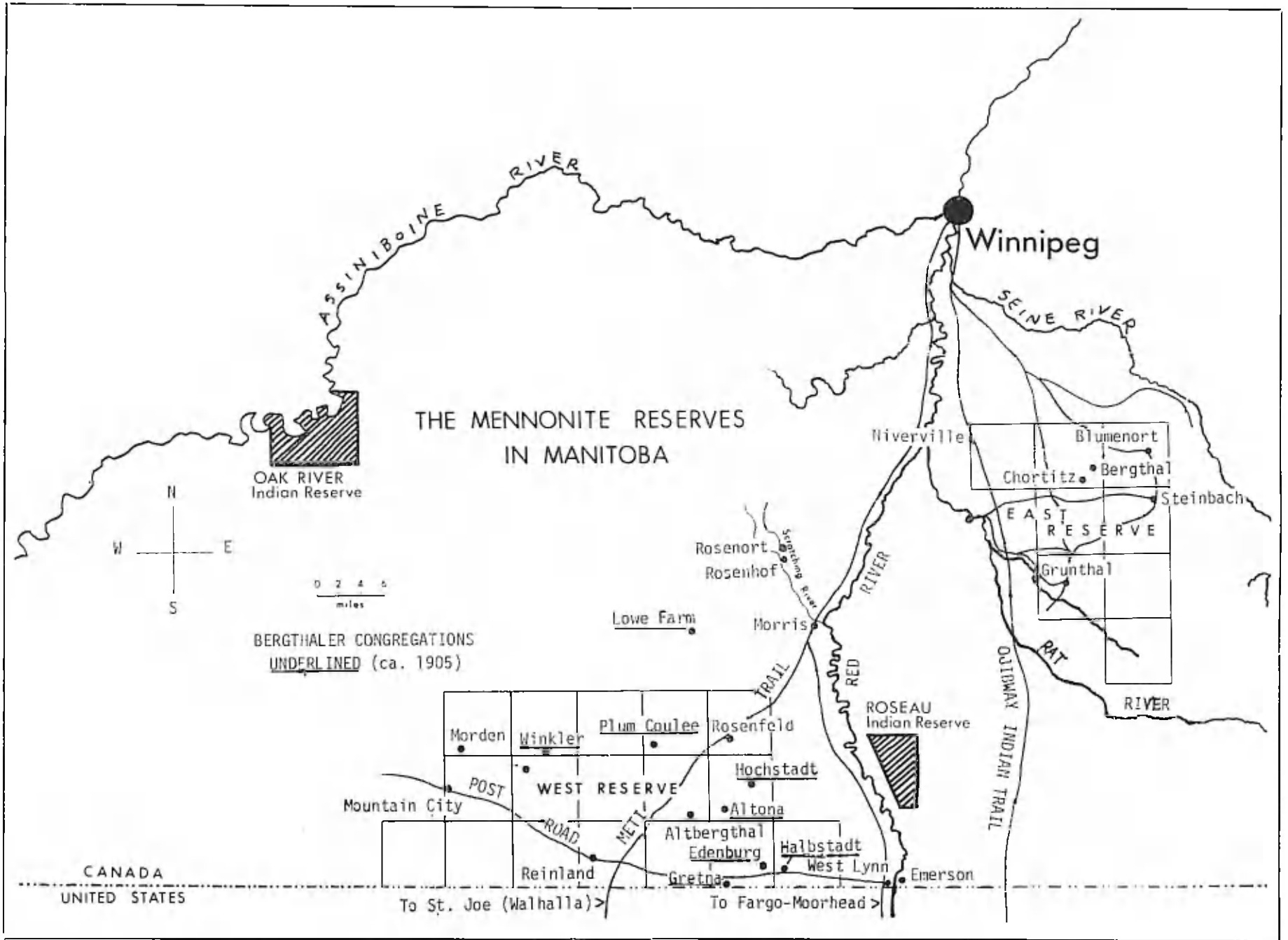
Minister Johann M. Friesen, ordained in 1895, was born in Russia in 1865, but educated in Manitoba, being one of Heinrich Ewert's first pupils in 1891-93. He was a man who "possibly surpassed Ewert in insight, though not in education and Mennonite convictions". He taught school in Hochstadt during the years 1892-99, and also served as inspector of schools in southern Manitoba after Ewert's dismissal in 1906. Friesen, a progressive mind, promoted ideas sometimes out of reach of the people of his day. He was active in the organization of the Canadian Conference and endorsed the relocation of the Mennonite Educational Institute from Gretna to Altona.²¹

Gerhard Epp (1864-1919), the single Saskatchewan representative at the sessions, had homesteaded in the Rosthern area around 1894, also an immigrant from South Russia. Active as a school teacher, he had been ordained to the ministry in 1895 and continued as a strong supporter of education and the cause

of missions in the Conference after its founding.²²

Under the direction then of the Bergthaler *Aeltester*, Jacob Hoepfner as the chairman, and Benjamin Ewert as the first secretary, the *Konferenz* participants spent two days listening to at least six papers (*Referate*) and two sermons with discussions of the same. After Hoepfner had preached a sermon on the text concerning the Council of disciples at Jerusalem, according to Acts 15, H. H. Ewert read his paper on "The Purposes and Uses of a Conference", and "noted the benefits of nurturing mutual love, the fostering of togetherness, mutual edification, and improved possibilities to do God's work with greater effect."²³

A second paper was prepared by David Toews of Rosthern and read by J. E. Sprunger in the absence of its author. Concerned about a more effective caring ministry to the many scattered brethren, Toews recommended that they become established in their own congregations by the conference, even if such groups would be quite small in mem-



bership at first. This paper raised the issue of, and eventually gave birth to, a mission program as well. The conference went on record as asking the various congregations to raise funds for a new church building at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, being erected that year.²⁴

The next day of the Hochstadt Conference opened with a sermon by J. W. Kliever entitled, "Take up the Cross!" according to a text from Mark 10:21. This was followed by Benjamin Ewert's paper on "The Value of Printed Congregational Regulations", positively endorsed by the delegates, and to be recommended to the local congregations. Jacob Hoepfner, choosing the more controversial though quite appropriate issue of political involvement, admitted to finding a few Scripture references opposing it, but remained convinced that acceptance of public office and voting in an election should not be encouraged. The only exception to be tolerated, he felt, was participation in local municipal politics, especially when this was entirely in Mennonite hands and with little interference from the state. Generally it was felt that voting should be left to the individual conscience but the issue of seeking public office produced a heated debate which was left somewhat unresolved by this conference.

The final day drew to a close with the reading of two other papers, Gerhard Epp's on "Should members of our fellowship take each other to court?" and Johann M. Friesen's entitled, "What is our position on worldly amusements such as drinking, dancing and gambling?" The conference responded with a decisive "no" to Epp's question, and also expressed strong opposition to any involvement in worldly amusements listed by the final presentation.

In the resolutions ending the conference it was decided 1) to publish all papers in the General Conference periodical, DER CHRISTLICHER BUNDESBOTE;²⁵ 2) that the congregations would be urged to contribute funds to assist in building a church at Rosthern, and Home Missions in general; 3) to appoint Peter Regier, Gerhard Epp and

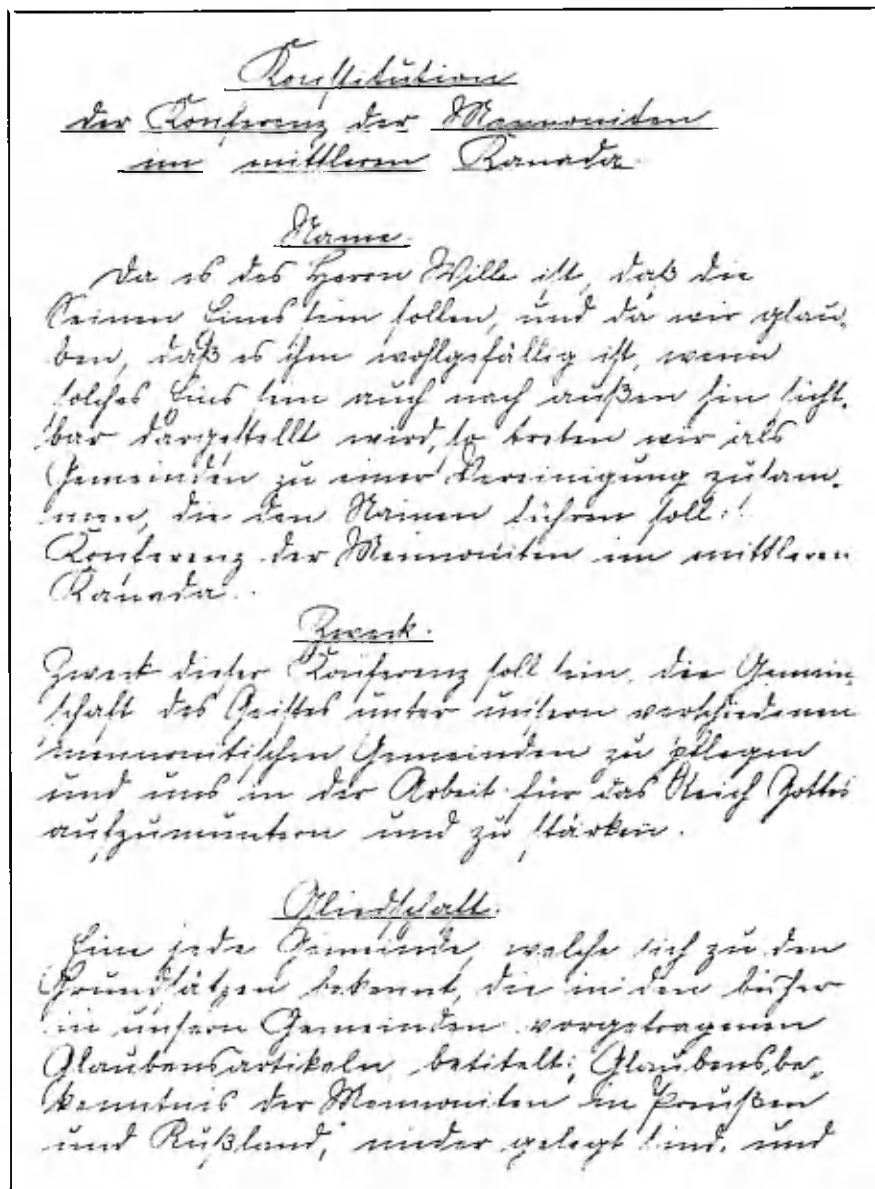
Heinrich Ewert to draw up a constitution for consideration at the next conference sessions; 4) to retain the officers of the Conference, Jacob Hoepfner, as chairman, and Benjamin Ewert, as secretary, until the next session; and 5) to reconvene Conference representatives at Eigenheim, Saskatchewan the following year.

The collaboration of Rosenorter and Bergthaler churches as a "Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada"²⁶ did not immediately solve all problems in Saskatchewan. As late as 1908, Aeltester Jacob Hoepfner was required to baptize people here. Some Bergthalers found it

difficult to join the Saskatchewan group even after Conference ties were established. Still, this turn-of-the-century representative meeting of two Mennonite bodies provided the founding framework of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as it exists today.

On July 8, 1978, at its annual convention held at Gretna, Manitoba, the delegates unveiled a cairn at the site of the former Hochstadt church building in commemoration of the beginning three quarters of a century ago.²⁷ The combined dedication and memorial service program included the well-known Klein-stadt Gospel Quartet and a Low

An excerpt from the original constitution adopted by KMMK in 1904.





Aeltester Johann Funk, Altberghthal, Manitoba (1836-1917).



*The Hochstadt Bergthaler church (later school) where the first KMMK sessions were held in 1903. The history of the school district has been written up in **Reunion. Kleinstadt School District No. 781**, published at Altona, Man. in 1977. It was co-authored by F. J. Kehler and Ben Krueger. A book on the family and life work of Aeltester Funk will be available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre shortly.*

The Conference cairn unveiled at Hochstadt in 1978 by Peter Hamm, a local resident, and Ken Funk, a descendant of Peter Regier, of Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Aeltester Peter Regier, 1851-1925, Tiefengrund, Saskatchewan.



German solo by Rev. David D. Klasen. Peter D. Zacharias, a teacher at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, and a former member of the community spoke about the development of education in the West Reserve. A native son of the area, Dr. Rodney Sawatsky, now teaching at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, touched on the meaning of the seven decade long "Conference experience."²⁸ Rev. David Neufeld, conference chairman, led the cairn dedication, with Peter J. Hamm of Hochstadt and Ken Funk, a direct descendent of *Aeltester* Peter Regier, assisting in the unveiling of the cairn. The plaque recalled the coming of the first settlers to the Hochstadt area in the mid-1870s, and the first sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada held there in 1903.

Today we may well be surprised at the broad scope of the papers read and ideas discussed at the Conference sessions seventy-five years ago. The fact is that their authors, some with only a modest education, and none without human failings, worked diligently for the union of Mennonites in Canada until they arrived at their goals. The history of the Mennonite community in western Canada must now include also men who sat in *Aeltester* Peter Regier's garden and later conferred in earnest at Hochstadt. They determined in a significant way, the course of nearly 26,000 persons belonging to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada today.²⁹

NOTES

¹ Henry J. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, Altona, Man., 1970, 34-37. As an offshoot of Chortitza, the oldest settlement of Mennonites in south Russia, Bergthal was the first Mennonite "daughter" colony, which by its founding helped to alleviate the problem of an increasingly landless population. However, Bergthal too, soon developed an economic, social and religious impasse that desperately required a solution. Fearing the increased militarism in Russia and needing still more land, the Bergthalers required little more persuasion to leave Russia when the opportunity arose.

² *Ibid.*, 59.

³ It should be noted that the first Mennonite settlement west of the Red River had already begun as the Scratching River community. Including Rosenort and Rosenhof, it was founded by thirty or so Kleinsegemeinde families in 1874-75 under "delegate" David Klassen, when they did not approve of the land assigned to them on the East Reserve. William Schroeder, *The Bergthal Colony*, Winnipeg, Man., 1974, 59.

⁴ E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia. The Mennonites in Manitoba*. Altona, Man., 1955, p. 62. For a brief study of the early settlement of the West Reserve cf. also Lawrence Klippenstein, "Manitoba Settlement and the Mennonite West Reserve," *Manitoba Pageant*, XXXI, No. 1, Autumn, 1975, 13ff.

⁵ Peter D. Zacharias, *Reinland—An Experience in Community*. Reinland, Man., 1976, 53-55.

⁶ On the founding of the early Bergthal villages in the West Reserve cf. Francis, 67ff. For a more detailed treatment of the background of the Mennonite groupings of Manitoba, of especially the first chapters in Gerbrandt's *Adventure in Faith*, and a summary in G. Ens and Lawrence Klippenstein, "Die Vorgeschichte der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Kanada," *Der Bote*, June 14, 1978, 1-2, and June 21, 1978, 1-2.

⁷ The word "Aeltester" is sometimes translated as "elder" or perhaps more accurately as "bishop." Neither term is quite an equivalent, hence retention of the original here. A book on the family of *Aeltester* Funk is presently in preparation.

⁸ H. J. Gerbrandt, 82.

⁹ This date has recently been established on the basis of notes in the David Stoesz papers, CMC Archives, Vol. 1559.

¹⁰ Gerbrandt, p. 82.

¹¹ To date the fullest biography of H. H. Ewert remains P. J. Schaefer, *Heinrich H. Ewert, Lehrer, Erzieher und Prediger der Mennoniten*, Gretna, Man., 1945.

¹² Cf. Lawrence Klippenstein, "Peter Regier, Churchman—Farmer, 1851-1925," *Mennonite Historian*, 11, September, 1976, 1-2.

The references to "Saskatchewan" in the pre-1905 period recognize the formal organization of this province only in 1905.

¹³ Benjamin Ewert, "Die Allegemeine Konferenz der Mennoniten-gemeinden in Kanada: 1902-1952," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, Vol. LXVIII, 1953, 35-36.

¹⁴ Henry J. Gerbrandt, "Conference of Mennonites in Canada," in *Call to Faithfulness*, edited by Henry Poettcker and Rudy Regehr, Winnipeg, Man., 1972, 84.

¹⁵ The *Reiseprediger* or "travelling evangelists" of the General Conference Mennonite Church played an important role in maintaining the inner dynamic of early church life in western Canada. They helped to create closer ties with the North American Mennonite Conference as well. Among the people who found much support from and for them was Johann Funk of the West Reserve. Sprunger submitted a report of this meeting to the *Christlicher Bundesbote* where it appeared August 14, 1902, 5.

¹⁶ Hochstadt was the name given to a West Reserve village settled in the mid-1870s and located about three miles north-east of Altona. A church had been dedicated here in 1898, and it was for a time one of the main congregational meeting places of the Bergthaler Gemeinde. Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, 151. In 1912 the building was purchased for use as a school house by the district of KleinStadt into which Hochstadt had been absorbed.

¹⁷ Hamm was a graduate of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, and became a prominent citizen in the Gretna-Altona area. He served some years as a teacher, then became a businessman, and finally, after being the secretary-treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Rhineland for many years, was also elected mayor of Altona.

In recalling this meeting fifty years later, Ewert also listed the *Aeltesters* Johann Funk and Regier, as well as David Toews, among those present. However, in his minutes of that meeting presumably written at the time of the sessions Funk and Regier are not mentioned, and Toews is explicitly noted as "not present." Cf. Ewert, 36, and the first notebook of the minutes in "Annual Sessions, 1903-1927," CMC Archives, Vol. 525.

¹⁸ This group was a reorganized portion of the Bergthaler body, originating around 1893 and retaining the majority of that group under the name of *Sommerfelder Mennoniten Gemeinde*. The minority continued under the leadership of Funk as the *Bergthaler Mennoniten Gemeinde*. The Sommerfelder observers at the Conference were not named in the minutes.

¹⁹ Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, 79.

²⁰ Johann G. Rempel, *Fuenfzig Jahre Konferenzbestrebungen (1902-1952) Erster Teil*, Rosthern, Sask., 1952, 13.

²¹ Gerbrandt, *Adventure in Faith*, 155-156.

²² A brief biographical sketch of Epp is found in Rempel, 20, and many other references to him occur later in the same work.

²³ Summaries of these papers appear in the minutes of those sessions.

²⁴ Rempel, 29.

²⁵ The *Bundesbote* had begun publication as a semi-monthly and then weekly, German-language newspaper in 1882. In 1947 it merged with the *Immigrantenbote* of Rosthern, Saskatchewan to become the weekly *Der Bote*, presently published in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

²⁶ The official name adopted through the constitution of 1904 was *Die Konferenz der Mennoniten im mittleren Kanada*. As other groups joined, especially after the 1920s immigration, the name was changed to General Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and finally to Conference of Mennonites in Canada as it is known today.

²⁷ For a local newspaper report on the sessions, and the unveiling of "Arena needed to Accommodate Audience," *Red River Valley Echo*, July 12, 1978, 1-2. A taped record of the cairn unveiling program is available in the CMC Archives of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

²⁸ Excerpts of his text were published in Rodney Sawatsky, "The Conference Experience—75 Years," *Mennonite Historian*, IV, Sept., 1978, 1-2.

²⁹ Cf. 1979, *Conference of Mennonites in Canada Yearbook*, Winnipeg, Man., 1979, 11-48 for a list of congregations and the latest published membership figures. Cf. also a recent pictorial documentary sketch of the Conference experience in Irene Friesen Petkau, ed. *Just When we Were . . . The Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada*. Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1978.

Peter Paetkau is a writer for Mennonite Mirror, and a farmer at Sperling, Manitoba.

The Mennonite Brethren Archives in Winnipeg

by Ken Reddig

An idea often has a long period of incubation before it gains the impetus to become reality. The establishment of an archives centre for the Mennonite Brethren Church of Canada has once again proved that truth.

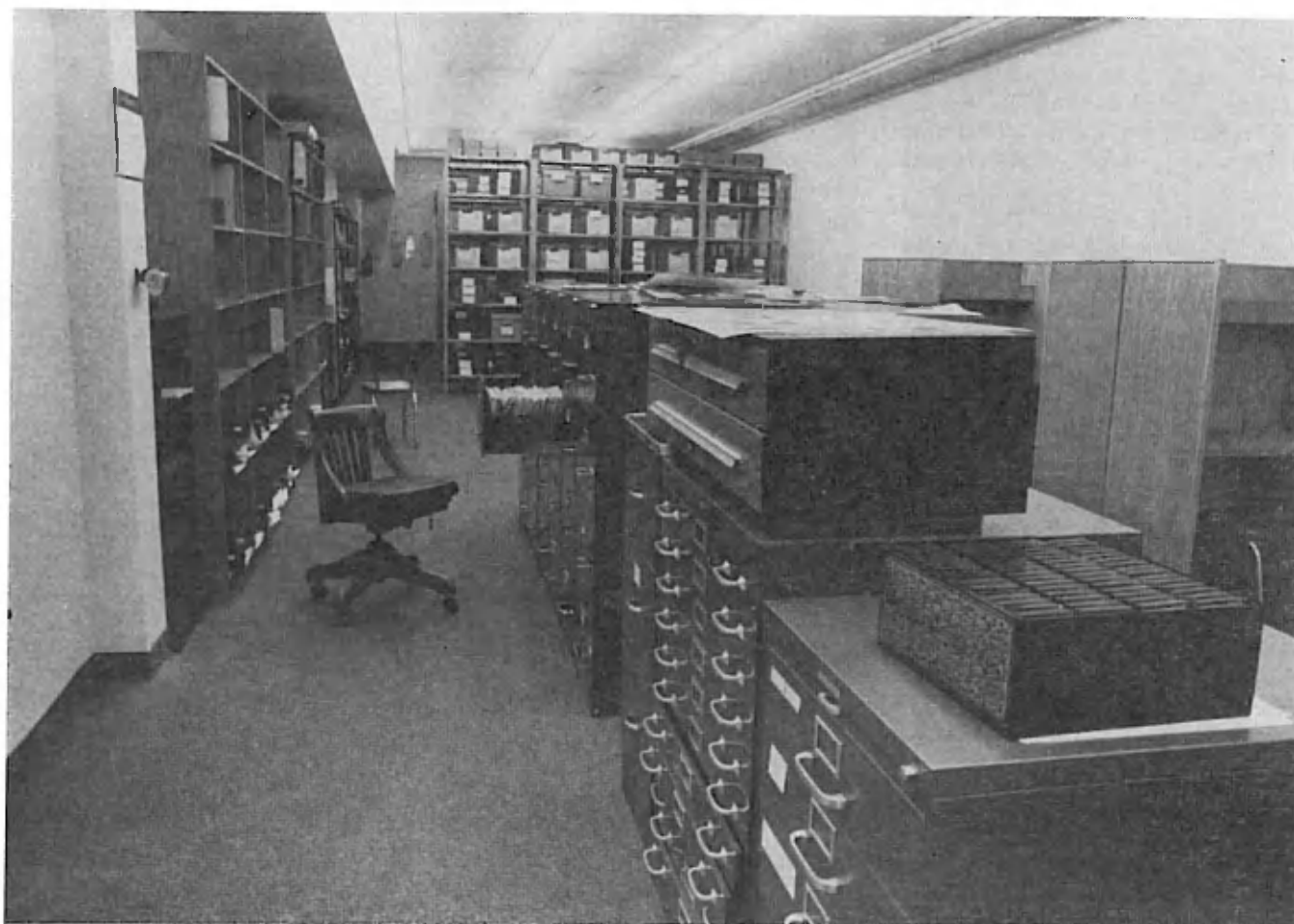
The idea of a Mennonite Brethren Archives originated around 1950

with Dr. Abraham H. Unruh, Professor of Bible and Exegesis at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg. While engaged in the research for his history of the Mennonite Brethren Church (*Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brudergemeinde: 1860-1954*) he became acutely aware of the lack of re-

sources readily available for historical research and proposed the establishment of an archives collection. However, at the time no action was initiated to begin such a project.

Later, during the sixties Herbert Giesbrecht, MBBC librarian, initiated the collecting of certain basic Conference materials, such as the

Interior view of the archives at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Canadian and provincial M.B. year-books. At the same time the late Dr. John A. Toews, then president of MBBC, assisted in securing the personal papers of B. B. Jantz of Coaldale, Alberta. This large collection of personal and official correspondence, materials related especially to Russian emigration and resettlement in Canada, became the nucleus of inspiration, as it were, and the basis for developing a receiving centre for Mennonite Brethren Historical materials.

The preliminary work of Giesbrecht and Toews was however not officially sponsored by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Canada. It was only later, in July of 1969, at the Convention of the Canadian Conference in Winnipeg that the Conference officially recommended the establishment of an archival centre. At this convention Herbert Giesbrecht was appointed archivist for the Canadian Conference and asked to spend one-quarter of his time in developing such a centre and expanding the existing collection.

These early collections lay in a small faculty office in the A. H. Unruh Memorial Wing of the Library Building until the summer of 1973, when a larger classroom was made available for these holdings. Over the next six years, this classroom became quite crowded with accessions as the holdings grew through donations and the diligent efforts of the archivist in collecting relevant documents and papers.

In 1976 the Bible College and its Board began planning a new addition to the Library and Music Building. It was then suggested that the archives be assigned a portion of the new building since it, like other areas of work, was short of usable space. With the completion of the College expansion this past spring, the archives collection has been moved into the basement of this new building.

The new facility comprises approximately 1,500 square feet of usable space. The entire area is temperature, as well as humidity controlled. Much of this space can be utilized for the shelving and storage of documents and records.



Leading MB ministers meeting in the Kuban around 1913, Left to right: Peter Koehn, itinerant minister from Waldheim, Molotschna; Kornelius A Wiens, Kuban Aeltester ordained in 1905; Jakob W. Reimer, Ruckenan, Molotschna, itinerant lecturer and minister, and Johann Fast, teacher and minister from Alexanderfeld in the Kuban.

B. B. Jantz, (1877-1964), teacher and emigration leader, later minister at Coaldale, Alberta, Canada.

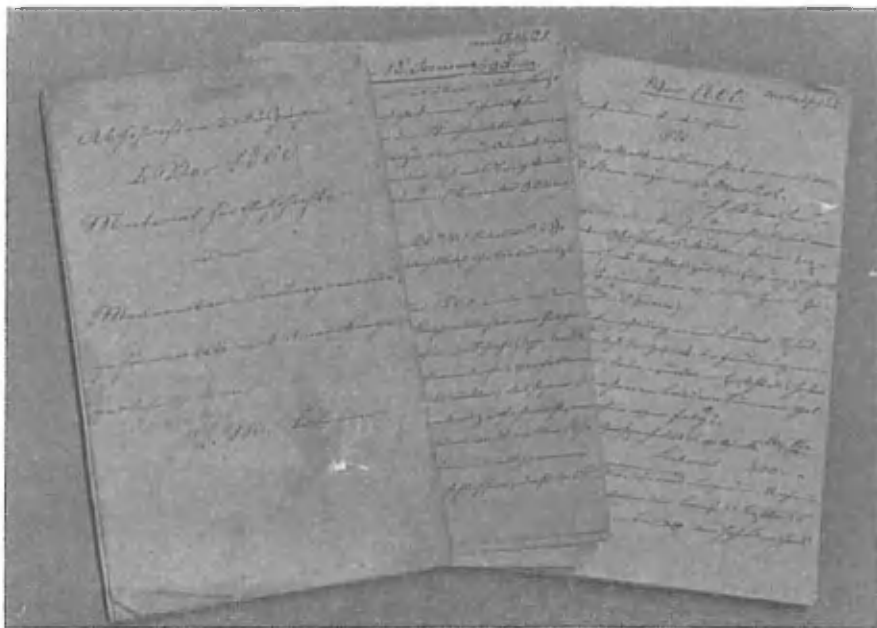




Dr. A. H. Unruh, (1878-1961), noted preacher, and president of Mennonite Brethren Bible College, 1944-45.



Ken Reddig (left) and Herb Giesbrecht (right) checking archives files at the Centre of MB Studies.



An excerpt from the original manuscript of Friesen's noted work, **Die alt-evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland, 1789-1910**. The second printing of the English translation of this study will be available in 1980.



Peter M Friesen, (1849-1914), with his wife Susanna, nee Fast.

Ample desk space has been provided for use by visiting researchers. Also included are separate rooms for the office of the archivist, for micro-filming and microfilm-reading facilities, as well as a room to house the John A. Toews Mennonite Historical Collection of rare books.

The present holdings of the archives include the following: the B. B. Jantz Collection (by far the largest and richest single resource in the Centre); records of the Canadian Conference and General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches; the C. A. DeFehr Collection of correspondence related to the Board of General Welfare (M.B.) and MCC concerning Mennonite settlement in Paraguay (principally); Canadian, Provincial and General Conference year books, and Mennonite-related periodicals; approximately 155,000 pages of church records (microfilmed) covering nearly all of our Mennonite Brethren congregations across Canada; an unusually rich map collection pertaining to Prussian and Russian Mennonite colonies and villages as well as numerous smaller collections and deposited items.

Presently the archives is staffed by Herbert Giesbrecht, the part-time head archivist, and Ken Reddig, associate archivist and also director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada.

Inquiries may be mailed to:

Ken Reddig, Centre for MB Studies, 77 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2L 1L1 or phone 1-204-669-1626.

The staff welcomes visitors and researchers to view and utilize the holdings of the archives.



Photo: M B Herald

Dr. John A Toews, (1912-1979), served as instructor of Biblical Studies and professor of historical theology at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg from 1947-1967, and 1976-1979. He was also president from 1956-1963.

*A preliminary listing of Toews' publications appeared in **Direction**, April 1979. Cf. Herbert Giesbrecht, "A Bibliography of a J. A. Toews' Published Writings," pp. 39-48. Toews' major works include **Alternative Service in Canada During World War II (1959)**, and **A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Pilgrims and Pioneers (1975)**.*

A volume of collected essays and sermons by Dr. Toews is being prepared for publication in the near future. The editing committee is under the direction of Dr. Abe Dueck at MBBC in Winnipeg. An updated edition of the earlier Toews bibliography will be included in this work.

Moments

by Gerald Loewen

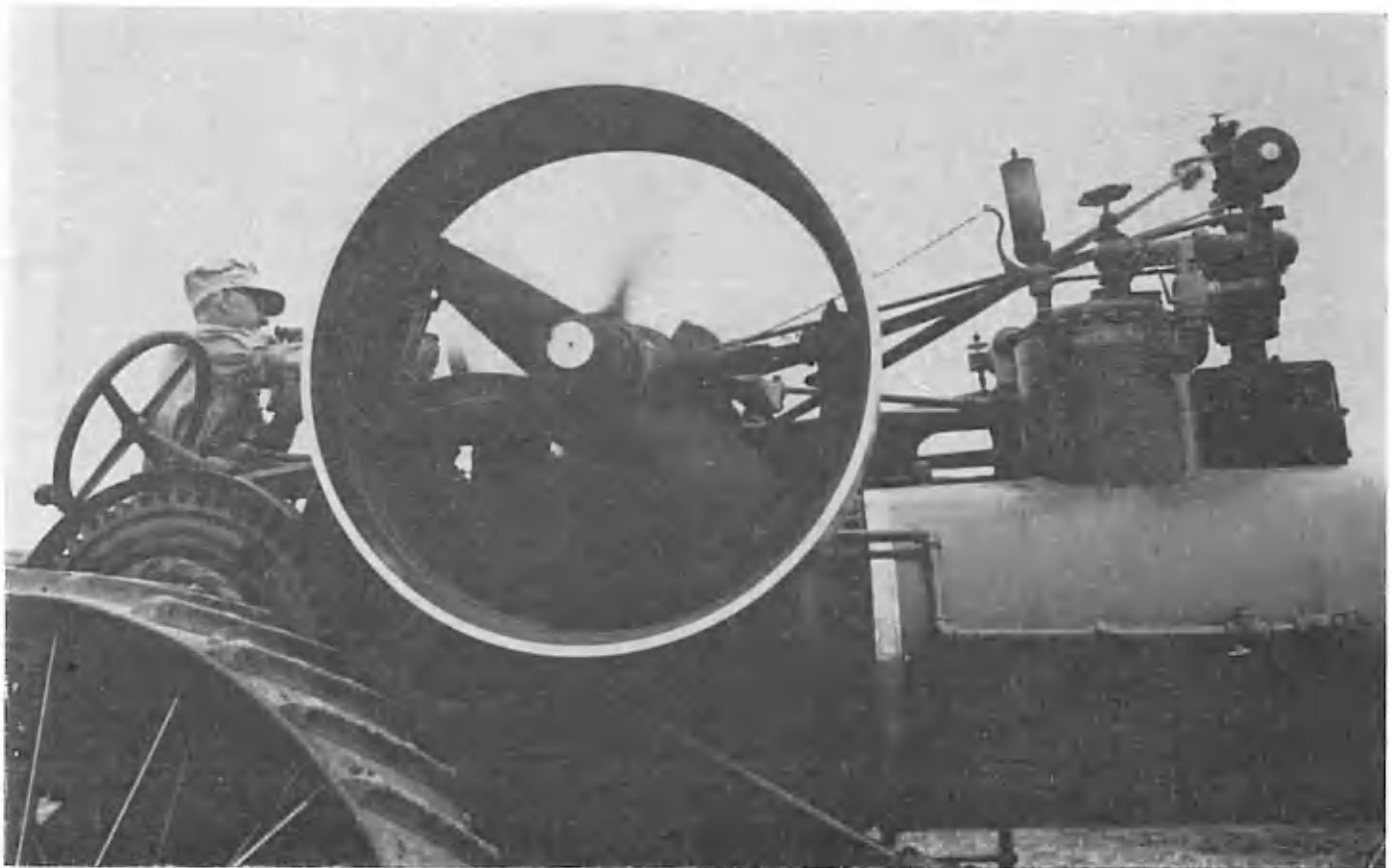


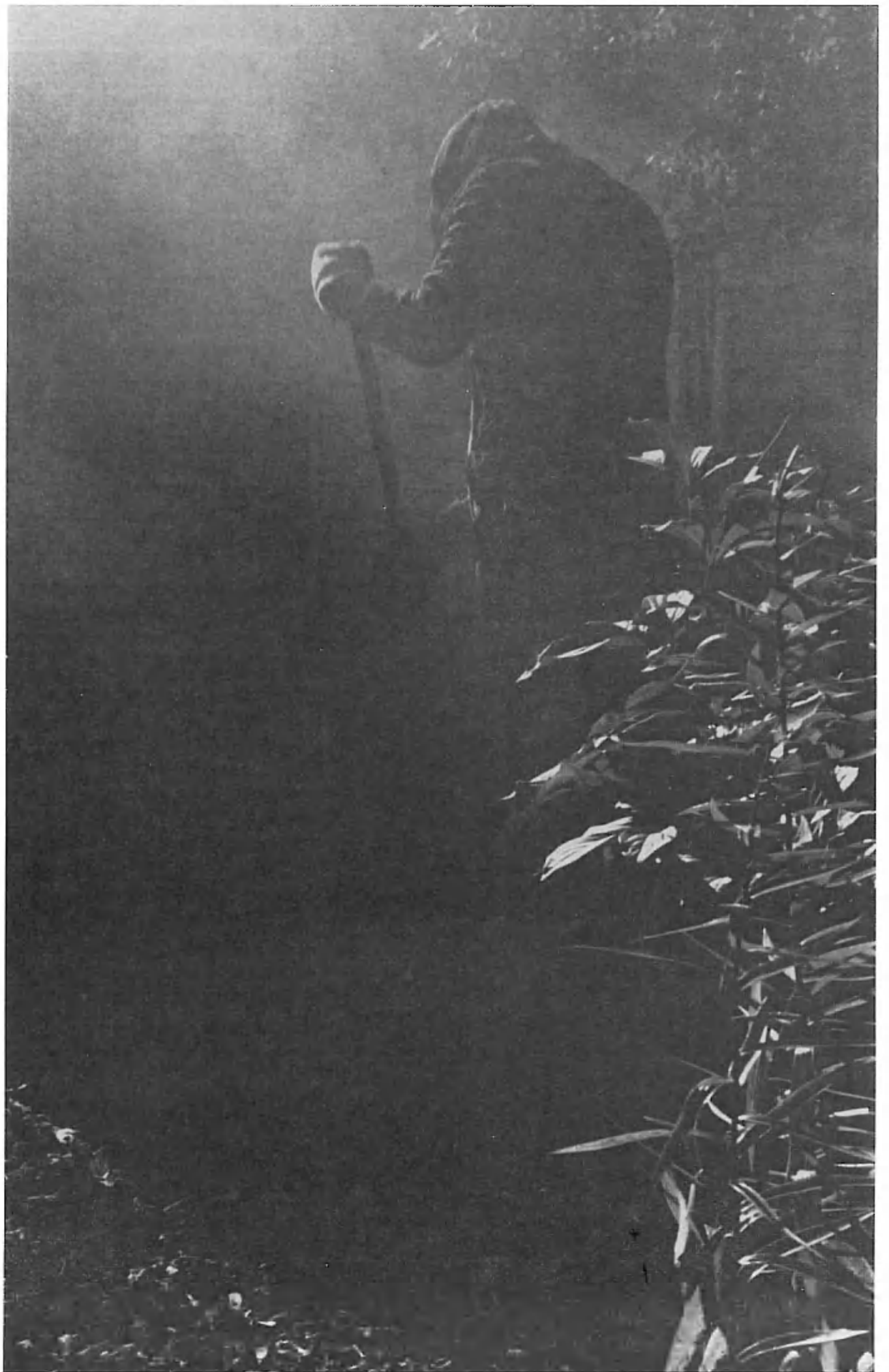




The past is not dead; it is not even past.

William Faulkner



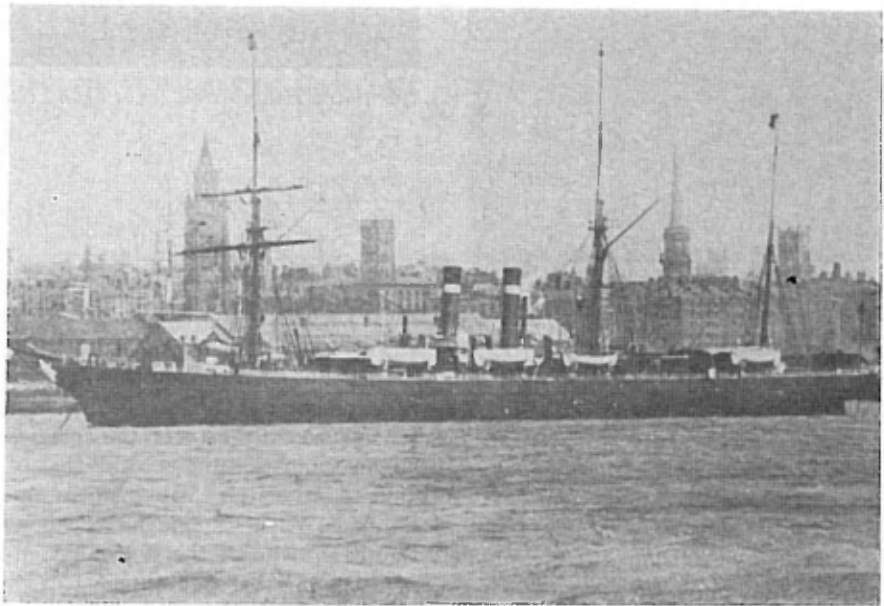


The Hildebrands of Rosenthal, Manitoba

by Sharon Olfert

Bernhard (1) Hildebrand¹ was born on 4 March 1795, in the village of Rosenort in Prussia. At the age of twenty-two, Bernhard, his wife Susanna (nee Krahn), nineteen year-old brother-in-law Daniel and mother-in-law Aganetha (age 50), settled in Neuenburg, South Russia 2 April 1818.² Susanna died in Russia in 1875, after having been blind for thirty-two years. Their son Bernhard (11) was born on 18 March 1818 in Russia, and drowned while herding sheep across the Dnieper River on 10 May 1840. His wife, nee Agatha Krahn, was born on 19 June 1818 and died 18 February 1890, after an illness of fourteen days. Bernhard (115) was born 17 July 1840, in Russia, and died on 28 August 1910 in Manitoba in the village of Rosenthal, seven miles south of Winkler. He was baptized by Bishop Gerhard Dück in 1861 in the Chortitzer Mennoniten Gemeinde in Southern Russia. His wife, nee Katharina Doell, was born on 7 April 1840, in Russia, and died on 11 May 1911, also in the Winkler area.

Only scant information is available about their way of life in Russia. Bernhard (115) was a woodworker, making wagons. His popularity resulted in his becoming *Dorfschult* of the village.³ When some of the older boys broke the village law, they had to appear before the council and council members decided what punishment was to be given. As *Dorfschult*, it was Bernhard's (115) responsibility to see to it that the punishment was properly executed. Usually it entailed a certain number of strokes



The S. S. Peruvian made at least three trips to Canada on behalf of Mennonites from Russia: 1875, 1878 and 1894. It was scrapped in 1905.

of the whip. The village herdsman did the whipping under the supervision of the *Dorfschult*. One anecdote relates a situation in which two boys were so utterly terrified of the whipping, that they begged Bernhard (115) to allow them to turn the lathe for him as he made wheel hubs for wagons, and they promised to obey the village laws in the future. Bernhard conceded and the boys escaped from the "hot seat" in that way.

The Mennonites became quite progressive. They had been granted attractive economic guarantees and a large measure of administrative autonomy. They ran their own school

systems and had a well established church life and *Lehrdienst* i.e., Aeltesters, ministers and deacons to lead the congregations.

However, in the 1870's much uneasiness overcame the Mennonites of the Russian Empire. Educational reforms were taking place and nationalistic feelings became more pronounced. When at that time the Russian government declared its intention of enforcing universal military conscription the Bernhard Hildebrand (115) family seriously began to consider leaving Russia. Bernhard was not prepared to surrender seven growing sons to the Russian military machines.



Katherina (Mrs. Bernhard) Hildebrand and in 1935. Cf. Appendix A, No. 1153.

Katherine and Bernhard Hildebrand (No. 1153).



Bernhard Hildebrand (No. 1153) on his farmyard (standing, extreme right).

The Mennonite colonies united in an attempt to persuade the Russian government to change its mind. After unsuccessful efforts, the colonies began investigating possibilities of emigration to the United States and Canada. When Canada heard about the difficulties of the Russian Mennonites, it reacted enthusiastically, concerned to bring settlers into the Northwest and to hold the Americans at the forty-ninth parallel. Special immigration agent William Hespeler was immediately sent to investigate the situation. Mennonite delegates visited Canada and were informed of that government's privileges for immigrants. Specific guarantees were made regarding military exemption and freedom in the conduct of schools. Opportunity for block settlement was offered as well.

Emigration fever spread rapidly and in 1874 the migration began. Thus the Bernhard Hildebrand family joined many of their fellow Mennonites on the venture to a new land. They boarded the *SS Peruvian No. 27*, a ship that left Liverpool on 20 June 1878, and arrived at the city of Quebec on the 30th of June of the same year.⁴

When the family arrived in Manitoba, they found an opportunity to purchase a farm on which a new house and barn had been erected, but the barn still had no roof. The farm was located in the newly established village of Rosenthal, approximately seven miles south of the town of Winkler. Here two other sons, David and Peter, were added to the family.

The Hildebrand family set to work with courage in the new land. Some details of the emigration experience and early settlement are revealed by the following quotation from a letter written by Bernhard Hildebrand (115) at this time.

On March 20, 1878, we left Russia with our beloved mother Maria Doell entrusted to our care. She was seventy-five years of age. After five weeks of hardship and heavy seas, we were glad to arrive in Canada, and after a short resting period with the Doell family (sons to our mother), it was agreed that mother should stay with us as soon as we had a place to live. After we had bought our farm on Section 9, Township 2, Range 4 west, mother came to live with us. After a few years she had a stroke, and her condition gradually grew worse, so that she could no longer take care of herself during the last years.

During those last years, my wife worked very hard to take care of mother, and she was able to serve her until her death on August 31, 1887. We took care of the funeral expenses, and found that for the nine years we had taken care of mother, she had willed to us her right to homestead and so get land cheaply in our new country.

At my own expense, I drove out and looked for and found land on 3-3-7, which seemed like good soil to me. Then we went to Nelsonville to the Land Title Office and arranged for the homestead and an additional parcel of land to be bought there. I paid for expenses amounting to \$20.00, we built a shanty 14' by 14' for \$35.00, paid \$30.00 for plowing, and another \$320.00 for the additional parcel of land next to our homestead. The title to our homestead cost \$10.00,

the sales contract and registration another \$18.00, so that the total cost of the land was \$430.00.5

The Hildebrands farmed contentedly on their land until one day they discovered that the land on which their village was located had against it a mortgage of \$900.00 held by the London and Ontario Investment Company. Apparently the original owner of the land had granted and mortgaged to the said Company their successors and assigned for all that certain tract of land situated in 2-4-9. When Bernhard Hildebrand (115) realized this he became uneasy. As a result, he and another man decided to go to Morden to find out what could be done. They

agreed upon a day, decided to go on separate vehicles, and meet at the lawyer's office. After Bernhard (115) had waited at the office of the lawyer until 4:00 p.m. and his partner still had not arrived, the lawyer urged him to take the responsibility completely upon himself. When Bernhard told him that he had only \$500.00, the lawyer offered to loan him the money, because Bernhard had sons to work on the farm for him. Thus, the deal was made in the name of Bernhard Hildebrand (115).

After the deal was completed, Hildebrand was considered by many a rich man. Later, when his sons wanted to start farming on their

A Map of Quarter Sections owned by Rosenthal householders in the early years of settlement.

Map showing:

- (a) Date of homestead entries
- (b) Owners of specific sections 1800-1900
Dates of registration for deeds and mortgages (wherever available).
- (c) Date of letters of Patent received from the Crown.

■ Suggested location of the village

■ Bernhard Hildebrand farmyard (115)

		9		10	
		Klaas Dueck (c) 12/5/84 Johann Peters Herman Unger	Cornelius Wall (a) 18/9/79 (c) 12/1/84 (c) 6/2/91 Bernhard Hildebrand (c) 2/7/84 Bernhard H. and Abraham Hiebert (b) 22/1/91 Jacob Hildebrand		
		Franz Guenther (a) 18/9/79 Johann Martens and Peter C. Martens (b) 10/12/88	Abraham Dueck (c) 26/6/84 Bernhard Hildebrand 1 acre reserved for cemetery	Bernhard Hildebrand (a) 18/9/79 (c) 2/7/84 Bernhard H. and Abraham Hiebert Gerhard Hildebrand (b) 24/3/09	Peter Friesen (a) 18/9/79 Franz Peters (a) 18/9/79 Jacob Bonmann Jacob Y. Shantz (c) 31/10/89
		Bernhard Hildebrand farmyard (115)			
Herman Unger (a) 18/9/79	Bernhard Lapwet (a) 18/9/79	Klaas Dueck (a) 22/9/79 Cornelius Bonman (a) 18/9/79	Isbrand Peters (a) 18/9/79	Johann Nickel (a) 18/9/79	Jacob Hildebrand (a) 18/9/79
Jacob Dueck (a) 18/9/79		Johann Martens (a) 18/9/79	Jacob Redekopp (a) 18/9/79	Aron Dueck (a) 10/9/79	Johann Peters (a) 18/9/79 Peter Martens (a) 17/9/79
5		4		3	

own, more land was needed, and it was at this point that the homesteading rights he mentioned in his letter were put to use. As a result, the two oldest boys, Bernhard (1153) and Henry (1154) took possession of the land in 1885 at what came to be called Greenfarm village.

To recall a few farming experiences, one must go back some years. As agriculture developed, grain yields increased and threshing became a problem. In Russia, they had chiselled and shaped a threshing stone so that it would roll over the heads of grain in the sheaves and thus cause the kernels to come out of the chaff. In a similar way, prairie Mennonites now made a roller from a larger block of wood that was cut from a tree about three feet in diameter. This was used for threshing grain. Next they made a machine to blow the chaff away from the grain kernels.⁶ Due to the excellent crops and heavy yields, the need to speed up the threshing process arose. Threshing machines were being manufactured in the United States, with the first ones being driven by horses walking around a large cog wheel. Soon, however, steam power came into use, and Johann Nickel purchased a threshing machine and a steam engine that had to be moved by means of horses pulling them. The sheaves had to be fed into this threshing machine by hand. By 1885, steam engines that drove under their own power were available, and also threshing machines with a self-feeder for the sheaves. This was the kind of machine and steam engine that Bernhard (115) purchased. His sons worked together with their father until he died in 1910. Because the family of farmers was getting too large to use one threshing machine, and because smaller machines were being manufactured, with tractors using kerosene as fuel, the large machine was traded for smaller ones, eliminating the number of farmers required to operate one machine. Thus small threshing companies became more common. By 1920, the Hildebrand family had three threshing outfits.

In addition to farming, Bernhard (115) had a sincere interest in the

education of his children, particularly reading and writing. When his grandchildren entered the home, they often saw grandmother standing at the six-foot base of a large chimney, frying meat. They remembered the pleasant aroma, but before long they would be called into the guest room, where grandfather would give them the thick *Gesangbuch* (Church Hymnal) and they would be asked to read for him so that he could see how they were developing. He wanted all his children to receive an education, and so he participated in any effort possible to assist in this area.

Bernhard had other interests as well. The records of the Schanzenfeld School registers show that he was the secretary-treasurer from 1897 to 1899. When one of the teachers in the school district ventured to India as a missionary Bernhard's (115) concern for the underprivileged children became evident. Apparently the teacher, a Mr. Penner, informed Bernhard that in India, \$50.00 was enough to keep a school in operation for a whole year. As a result, Bernhard sent him this amount annually as long as he lived.

Bernhard's life was filled with work. His efforts were blessed, for he was able to give each of his children eighty acres of land.

Nothing is known about Bernhard's relatives who stayed in Russia. It is known that there was an aunt, Katharina Hildebrand, who married a Mr. Dueck, and there were his uncles, Gerhard, Daniel, and David Hildebrand. Fortunately Bernhard was able to come to Manitoba.

The children of Bernhard (115) had all settled in an area within a two hour drive by horse-drawn wagon. Bernhard (1153) had moved to 3-3-7, part of present day Greenfarm. It is here that Johann M. was born in 1893. After Johann's marriage to Maria Wall in 1914, the couple resided at the farm at Rosenthal for several years. Johann had spent the summers there as a bachelor, working the fields together with cousins Peter and Bernhard H. Hildebrand.

The family (11534) moved to the Plum Coulee area before settling at

Greenfarm in 1930. In 1953 they left the farm and moved to Winkler, where Johann (11534) slowly withdrew from strenuous physical work. Johann's son Abraham (115346) took up residence there and continued the farming operation.

Johann (11534) was an avid reader as well as a writer, contributing to German newspapers such as *Der Bote*. His last efforts were directed toward the planning and completion of the "Hildebrand Reunion" on August 29, 1971. He died the following week.

The Hildebrands were energetic and enthusiastic farmers, utilizing to the fullest extent the blessings and privileges given to them by their country, and by God.

Rosenthal

The evidence for the founding of the village of Rosenthal on the West Reserve in Manitoba speaks strongly for the year 1875.⁷ Due to the fact that it no longer exists, one must conjecture on the basis of meager information from various written sources, and people who are able to recall incidents from the turn of the century. John H. Warrentin mentions that some of the villages in the West Reserve were badly disrupted when as sometimes happened there was a danger that a portion of the land would fall into the hands of a mortgage company. Although this happened only seldom, the threat was strong enough to scare many, including Schanzenfeld and surrounding areas in 1885.⁸ Whether this held true for the village of the Rosenthal is difficult to say. The name arises in a list of villages of the Mennonite settlements in 1893, although no details are given. Unfortunately a pattern of the village layout has not been made available so far.

The Free Land Homestead Act (1872) granted a free quarter section of land to a naturalized citizen fulfilling a three year residence requirement and cultivating and otherwise improving the property. Only after the fulfillment of these conditions could any application be made for a Letters Patent grant and for a pre-emption on an additional quarter.⁹

The Mennonites used the "Application for Homestead Patent" form in the 1870's. They enjoyed the "hamlet privilege" although it was actually contrary to the intentions of the Canadian land laws. Despite its availability through the Dominion Government, its use depended entirely on voluntary claims. Whoever would seek in the future, full possession of the particular quarter-section legally entered under his name, could in no way be prevented from doing so. Because the Canadian law (unlike the Russian), did not support the open field system, its institution and maintenance was totally dependent upon the harmony within the group. Whenever secular values became dominant, the solidaristic type of rural community organization tended to collapse. Eventually, individual settlement was preferred by many.

Returning more specifically to Rosenthal, the first census apparently was taken in 1880, indicating that the village was a standard proportion at that time. The following pages provide information on various aspects of the village as it existed at the time.¹⁰

Footnotes

¹On the origin of the name Hildebrand cf. Horst Penner, *Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederländer im Weichselmündungsgebiet um der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der Preussischen Zeit*. Weierhof, Pfalz, 1963.

²Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16, 18, und 19 Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 218.

³In Russia each village was under the leadership of a *Dorfschult* and several qualified men in the office of the *Schulsenamt*, somewhat like a municipal council today. It was their responsibility to enforce rules and regulations as a governing body of the village.

⁴Cf. Passenger shiplists of Mennonite Immigrants, CMC Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, vol. 939.

⁵From copy of a letter found in translation in the home of John M Hildebrand, Winkler, Man., and in duplicate also in the author's files. The original was not available.

⁶Johann M. Hildebrand, grandson of Bernard (115) remembers seeing such a roller and blowing machine at his grandfather's farm.

⁷John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba." Unpublished PHD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960, 62 ff.

⁸Ibid., 208.

⁹Peter D. Zacharias, *Reinland: An Experience in Community*. Reinland, Manitoba, 1976. 70ff.

¹⁰This information is based on the documentation of Abstract Book T.2R3 and 4, Land Titles Office, Morden, Manitoba, and *Mennonite West Reserve Settlement Register*, Microfilm 44, at CMC Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



John M Hildebrand is seated on extreme left. Cf. Appendix A, No. 11534.



Members of the Hildebrand clan. The original photo has marked on its back "Onkel Gerhard Hildebrand und Schwager (and brother-in-law) Peter Dyck, 1915."

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Interviews

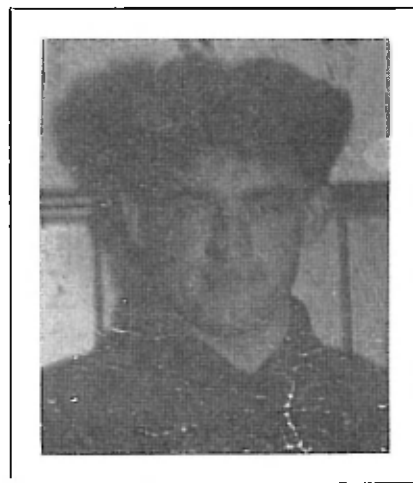
- Miss Annie Hildebrand, Winkler, Manitoba.
- Bernhard II Hildebrand, Winkler, Manitoba.
- David L. D. Hildebrand, Rosenfeld, Manitoba.
- Henry W Hildebrand, Winkler, Manitoba.
- Mrs. John M. Hildebrand, Winkler, Manitoba.

Appendix A The Bernhard Hildebrand Family

1 Bernhard oo Susanna Krahn— *4/3/1795 *15/1/1796 +25/1/1874 +21/6/1875	115 Bernhard oo Katharina Doell *7/4/1840 +11/5/1911	11534 Johann oo Maria Wall on 4/10/1914 *6/3/1894 +6/5/1979
-11 Bernhard -17 Sara *18/3/1818 *21/1/1830 +10/5/1840	-1151 Maria -1157 Jakob *17/10/1862 *24/11/1871 +17/10/1862 +14/10/1926	-115341 Johann -115347 Helena *30/6/1916 *15/7/1929
-12 Peter -18 Peter *4/11/1819 *29/12/1831 +6/6/1827 +7/11/1909	-1152 Bernhard -1158 Daniel *15/10/1863 *30/9/1873 +15/10/1863 +6/5/1951	-115342 David -115348 Elisabeth *20/11/1917 *5/11/1931
-13 David -19 Gerhard *20/3/1822 *26/1/1834 +1/1/1904 +2/10/1903	-1153 Bernhard -1159 Gerhard *5/10/1864 *23/12/1875 +18/2/1923 +14/10/1926	-115343 Katharina-115349 Peter *4/2/1920 *24/1/1934
-14 Daniel -110 Susanna *14/1/1824 *17/12/1835 +17/12/1903 +1909	-1154 Heinrich -11510 Katharina *31/7/1866 *31/12/1877 +----- +21/8/1951	-115344 Heinrich -1153410 Anna *11/6/1922 *10/8/1936
-15 Gerhard -111 Katharina *15/4/1826 *17/12/1837 +9/12/1828 +1837	-1155 Abraham -11511 David *1/5/1868 *21/12/1879 +----- +-----	-115344 Maria -1153411 *4/11/1924 Margaret *10/8/1938
-16 Aganeta -112 Katharina *19/4/1828 *30/4/1839 +9/9/1901 +-----	-1156 Isaak -11512 Peter *20/3/1870 *27/10/1881 +26/9/1922 +-----	-115346 Abraham *8/4/1927
	1153 Bernhard oo Helena Peters on 18/11/1884 *6/4/1864 -11531 Helena +15/4/1886 *6/4/1886 +-----	115348 Elisabeth oo Jacob Olfert on 4/11/1956 *16/9/1933
11 Bernhard oo Agatha Krahn— *19/5/1818 +18/2/1890	oo Katharina Peters *22/18/1866 +11/1/1951	-1153481 Sharon -1153483 Lois Anne Marie *16/12/1958 *16/12/1962
-111 Gerhard -114 Katharina *1834 *----- +10/2/1903 +-----	-11532 Katharina -11536 Abraham *8/2/1888 *17/3/1899 +5/2/1959 +15/1/1959	-1153482 George -1153404 Leonard Aldon Henry *21/2/1961 *23/11/1964
-112 Daniel -115 Bernhard *----- *19/7/1840 +17/12/1903 +28/8/1910	-11533 Bernhard -11537 Maria *16/9/1890 *2/1/1902 +?/9/1953 +-----	
-113 David *----- +1/1/1904	-11534 Johann -11538 Anna *9/1/1893 *31/12/1904 +1/9/1971 +-----	
	-11535 Heinrich -11539 Jacob *23/9/1896 *4/3/1908 +----- +3/12/1954	

B. Village Census 1878-1880

Family	Birthdate				
1. Dueck, Aron	7/10/1837	9. Baumann, Cornelius	17/11/1854	18. Wall, Cornelius	11/6/1841
wife Elizabeth	10/12/1833	wife (unlisted)		wife Anna	21/4/1850
Johann	20/8/1861	Margaretha	23/2/1875	Cornelius	30/9/1865
Aron	2/11/1862	Elizabeth	26/8/1877	Peter	17/4/1870
Elizabeth	28/11/1871	10. Peters, Isbrand	26/1/1837	Johann	10/4/1874
		wife Helena	11/12/1835	Susanna	15/7/1877
2. Redekopp, Jacob	6/12/1844	Jacob	16/12/1862	19. Banman, Jacob	15/9/1831
wife Susanna	30/6/1844	Wilhelm	16/7/1869	wife Margaretha	17/1/1836
Johann	18/6/1869	David	7/8/1877	Peter	9/9/1860
Jacob	20/4/1871	Elizabeth	13/6/1867	Margaretha	17/1/1860
Peter	17/6/1875	11. Nickel, Johann	11/4/1855	Justina	21/5/1865
David	2/12/1877	wife Maria	18/11/1857	Catharina	15/10/1869
Benjamin	14/10/1879	Helena	2/9/1878	20. Friesen, Peter	16/2/1832
3. Martens, Johann	13/11/1827	Maria	9/10/1879	wife Helena	15/9/1833
wife Helena	3/8/1825	12. Hildebrand, Jacob	1/10/1831	Peter	1/5/1860
Heinrich	13/11/1866	wife Maria	10/12/1834	Jacob	18/6/1868
4. Peters, Johann	22/8/1839	Jacob	9/5/1861	Maria	22/3/1862
wife Helena	30/6/1841	Elizabeth	7/10/1872	21. Quiring, David	2/2/1825
Johann	11/10/1869	Maria	24/11/1878	wife Elizabeth	9/5/1814
Aron	7/9/1872	13. Peters, Franz	20/9/1835	22. Nickel, David	11/12/1853
Jacob	5/9/1877	wife Anna	11/9/1836	wife Elizabeth	15/2/1859
Helena	6/4/1864	Franz	16/3/1859	Elizabeth	10/8/1879
Catharina	4/12/1866	Aron	29/4/1870		
5. Dueck, Jacob	4/7/1832	Peter	5/3/1873		
wife Maria	12/8/1833	Anna	24/5/1863		
Abraham	22/11/1857	Catharina	15/12/1865		
David	7/6/1864	Maria	25/4/1868		
Isaak	1/10/1867	14. Hildebrand, Bernhard	31/7/1840		
Peter	25/4/1876	wife Catharina	19/4/1840		
Anna	15/2/1859	Bernhard	17/10/1864		
Maria	20/4/1869	Heinrich	12/8/1866		
Helena	10/11/1872	Isaak	4/4/1870		
6. Unger, Herman	15/2/1840	Abraham	13/5/1868		
wife Agatha	2/2/1837	David	12/10/1874		
Herman	7/11/1861	Gerhard	5/1/1876		
Cornelius	28/4/1863	Catharina	30/12/1877		
Jacob	16/2/1865	15. Dueck, Abraham	8/7/1850		
Gerhard	8/6/1870	wife Maria	9/6/1851		
Anna	13/4/1872	Franz	8/12/1874		
Agatha	15/12/1876	Peter	10/2/1879		
Helena	31/6/1878	16. Guenther, Franz	3/12/1830		
7. Martens, Peter	25/4/1852	wife Maria	24/9/1826		
wife Justina	2/2/1853	Anna	8/12/1860		
Elizabeth	18/2/1877	Catharina	10/1/1865		
8. Loewen, Bernhard	27/8/1836	Elizabeth	12/4/1868		
wife Margaretha	5/2/1835	17. Dueck, Klas	24/8/1833		
Peter	20/12/1861	wife Sara	28/8/1837		
Jacob	2/2/1866	Klas	14/2/1865		
Bernhard	12/9/1868	Isak	26/5/1868		
David	25/6/1877	Johann	6/6/1871		
Margaretha	10/1/1864	Heinrich	29/9/1878		
Maria	4/12/1870	Sara	26/6/1875		
Catharina	28/4/1874				



John M. Hildebrand (No. 11534) as a boy of sixteen.

Sharon Olfert is presently a senior student at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

C. Farm Inventory 1880-1881

	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A. Farm buildings \$1.00 per sq. ft.	121	61	40	40	53	40	55	80	86	48	
B. Usable land \$2.00 per acre	50	40	30	30	30	42	21	48	24	36	
C. Unbroken land \$1.00 per acre	110	120	130	130	130	118	139	112	136	124	
D. Total acres \$1.00 per acre	160	uniform amount throughout									
E. Work Oxen	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	—	—	2	
F. Horses	4	2	2	2	—	2	—	2	2	2	
G. Cows	3	1	2	1	2	—	1	1	1	1	
H. Young Stock	5	1	4	1	3	1	—	1	2	3	
I. Sheep	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
J. Pigs	6	6	2	2	4	4	2	—	4	6	
K. Wagons	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
L. Plows	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	
M. Harrows	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	2	1	2	
N. Fanning Mill	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	1	1	1	
O. Horsesdrawn rakes	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	
P. Steam threshing machine	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Q. Horse threshing machine	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
R. Grain mowers	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	
S. Grass mowers	1	1	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	
T. "Hacksel" machine	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
U. Total assessed value	697	493	442	402	419	446	350	498	432	508	
V. Taxes	\$3.49	2.47	2.21	2.01	2.10	2.23	1.75	2.49	2.16	2.54	

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
A.	53	70	64	52	47	43	38	70	53	86
B.	30	30	36	28	36	35	43	30	25	40
C.	130	130	124	132	124	125	117	130	135	120
D.	160 uniform amount throughout									
E.	2	2	2	2	2	—	—	—	—	2
F.	—	1	2	—	—	2	2	3	2	2
G.	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
H.	2	—	—	—	3	3	—	2	3	2
I.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
J.	3	4	2	4	2	5	7	3	3	5
K.	1	1	1	1	1	—	1	1	1	2
L.	1	1	1	1	1	—	1	1	1	2
M.	1	1	1	—	1	—	1	1	1	2
N.	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
O.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
P.	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Q.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
R.	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	1
S.	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
T.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
U.	373	435	476	358	377	676	417	485	404	612
V.	1.87	2.18	2.38	1.79	1.89	3.38	2.09	2.43	2.02	3.06

The total 1880-1881 assessment of Rosenthal was \$9300. Taxes were \$46.54 altogether.

*Numbers refer to families listed in Appendix B.

Diedrich Neufeld, *A Russian Dance of Death*. Winnipeg, Man., 1978, and Hans Harder, *No Strangers in Exile*. Winnipeg, Man., 1979, both translated by Al Reimer, xiii, 142 pp., and 123 pp., respectively. Paperback \$6.95 and \$7.50 (Can.) resp. Reviewed by Gerald Peters, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Hyperion Press has released two books on Mennonite experience in revolutionary Russia, both of them edited and translated by Al Reimer. They are also the first and second volumes in a series sponsored by the Mennonite Literary Society and the University of Winnipeg.

A Russian Dance of Death, written by Dietrich Neufeld, describes some of the worst agonies and ordeals faced by Mennonites during the Russian Civil War caused by Ukrainian anarchists, the Makhnovtsya. The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the anarchists' occupation of Khortitza. In diary form Neufeld carefully documented the catastrophic effects this year-long occupation of terror has on the residents of the colony. In the second part he attempted to give an overview of the devastation of the Molotschna region after a series of anarchist raids. The third part is a fictionalized account of an escape from Russia, most likely patterned after his own daring exodus.

After reading Neufeld's excellent account of Khortitza I found sections two and three somewhat disappointing. Taken mostly from other people's reports the description of Molotschnaja tends to jump from one thing to the next without focus. Considering the fact that Neufeld lost four members of his family during these raids it is understandable that the prevailing tone of this section is embittered and condemning. This biased, sometimes shrill mood seems incompatible with the impartial style he tries to retain. The fictionalized account of his escape also

lacks the immediacy of his diary, and tends to draw too many 'blood out of stone' conclusions.

On the whole though, *A Russian Dance of Death* is a compelling and moving story. Indeed, with Al Reimer's ample footnotes, appendices, a chronological summary of the period, maps and an index it is even more than that. It is an effective and personal way of presenting history, where writer and editor share the burden of judging events, their partnership creating what is neither too much in the thick of things nor too removed on some calm and imperturbable cloud.

No Strangers in Exile, published originally as *In Wologdas Weissen Waeldern*, is a fictional account of life in forced labor camps in northern Russia during the 1930's. In Harder's own words the purpose of the work was to tell about "my brethren (in Russia) whose fate and labors I want to save from oblivion in a confused world." Although he had not had first-hand experience in the so-called "Voluntary Resettlement Program" Harder's familiarity with the characters and his knowledge of Russia produce a very powerful and convincing picture of the struggle to survive under absurdly impossible conditions.

Much credit may be due to what Al Reimer has dubbed 'creative translation' which includes changes usually minor in everything from plot and characterization to style and point of view. These, Mr. Reimer has deemed necessary to play down the author's overtly didactic intent and his all too obvious strategy to appeal to the German reader. It is easy to see how these devices, still to some extent present in the novel, would have little positive effect today.

As far as artistic merit goes, the characters are not always three dimensional and the interchanges between them sometimes flat. Yet there are passages, such as Alexander Harms' escape from camp into the snowy wastes only to return

four months later a defeated, broken man, that can tear the very heart out of the reader. Given the subject Harder was dealing with it is difficult to give the critique that he overindulged in sensationalism. And yet the novel seems hyperventilated and vivid and horrifying scenes. Mass graves and bodies are discovered everywhere. Children fall from railroad cars, dying horrible deaths underneath the wheels. When too densely packed together and not augmented with some sort of purpose other than a terrible heaping of fuel to the fire of indignation, these things become distracting, even irksome.

If one reads the novel with the author's intentions in mind, and considers that it is one of the first of its kind, written thirty years before Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, then it is eminently worthwhile taking up Dr. Al Reimer and the sponsors are to be commended for making both works available to the English reader.

I might add that publishing books of this kind is not altogether free from risk. We are not talking about masterpieces (when do we talk about such things nowadays). The subject matter of these books is directed towards people in search of their roots. They help the identified reader make that leap of feeling into the arms of his past and assure him of a sense of continuity in his own life. Indeed these works, edited carefully as they are, cannot fail to appeal to the general reader whose interest in the Soviet Union has already been sharpened over the past years.

Hyperion Press should be praised in this venture. Most publishing companies, it seems to me, are more concerned with making a killing on book sales than they are with the importance and integrity of their material. I believe we should support them for helping to make a past accessible to us that is all too quickly forgotten.

Book Reviews

Paul Toews, ed. *Pilgrims and Strangers. Essays in Mennonite Brethren History.* Centre for MB Studies, Fresno, California, 1977. Pp. 181. \$3.95 paperback. Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Man.

Revisiting 1860 in the Russian Mennonite story may cause pain to some, and seem long overdue to others. Forgotten it cannot be for the events left a legacy that is very much alive today. The formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church is a significant chapter of the Mennonite experience, and that group as well as those related to it in one way or another, needs to know how these things came about.

The seminar which gave us *Pilgrims and Strangers* met in 1975 to discuss another book, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, authored by the late Dr. John A. Toews, and appearing in print only months before. To begin with then, these essays belong to an effort to evaluate the publication, but they move on also from where the earlier volume ended.

Contributor Frank H. Epp looked for, and essentially found the Toews history a treatment that would depict the intimate, and usually intricate relationship of "body and soul in church history," i.e., the surging life of the church (soul) viewed within an earthly, socio-historical context (body). Writers of church history, he would counsel, need to improve their ability to look both ways, at the body and at the soul, in order that the role and impact of each may be more fully understood. Delbert Wiens, commenting also on the finished study, expressed a concern about a "truth that became heresy," meaning here the perpetual tendency of human communities to distort their ideals in attempting to live them out. "We seldom talk about the things that really characterize us," he pointed out.

In going back to 1525 and 1536, the founding dates of the larger Mennonite community, C. J. Dyck judged the Brethren to sustain a strong continuity with the main emphases of Menno Simons, finding clear parallels in the MB movement with the Anabaptists as well. John

B. Toews (Calgary) attempted to sketch in broad outline the disintegrative features of nineteenth century Russian Mennonitism in the 1850's; a number of questions, he felt, should still be asked, being unanswered by the documents known so far to have survived.

Search for identity, the relationship of Mennonite Brethren to other groups, led Clarence Hiebert and John B. Toews (Fresno) to a far-ranging search for possible "borrowings"; both hoped to see who the Mennonite Brethren in fact really are today. Going back also to Grebel and Manz, John E. Toews categorically asserted that Anabaptism is not to be identified with the MB community today. That question, from all appearances, remains unsettled, and the discussion continues.

In conclusion Dr. Toews, a long-time student of the Mennonite Brethren and the wider Mennonite story, shared his faith in a "bright future" for his fellow-members, but without obscuring serious problems which in his view demand attention now.

Pilgrims and Strangers forms a useful sequel to the first major English-language history of the Mennonite Brethren Church. One could quibble with details; the ever-present "proof-reading problem," not quite solved again, whether "corpus christianum" is really accurate for describing the Russian Mennonite scene, the objectivity of "insiders," etc. But this reviewer wishes not to. He finds the idea interesting that we must now "shape a drama that sings the truth which cannot literally be said" (p. 51). Indeed, let us say, and sing it as well!

Hans Harder, *No Strangers in Exile*, freely translated, edited, and expanded by Al Reimer, Hyperion Press Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1979, 123 pp., \$6.95. Reviewed by George K. Epp, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Hans Harder's novel, *In Wologdas weissen Waeldern*, was one of the first literary efforts to draw the

attention of the world to a suffering of unheard-of proportion and the first systematic mass extermination of people in modern times. This novel was dedicated to the "perished members" of the Mennonite Church and to those "who were saved" in an almost miraculous way. *In Wologda's weissen Waeldern* foreshadowed Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* by forty years, but at that time Europe's intellectuals were not very receptive to Harder's pleading and as for the rest of the world—"Wologda's white forests" were far away and the tales of refugees were "too exaggerated" to be taken seriously. Today we have accepted such stories as part of our daily news digest, and "Boat people" can be photographed, but in the cold forests of Archangelsk and other Gulag centers people died an anonymous death, unnoticed by the rest of the world.

Although by this time we have heard many horror stories about that period of Russian history, the facts of the last quarter century of history of the Mennonite villages in Russia have not yet been fully recorded. Books like *No Strangers in Exile* make this painfully clear. Harder's novel is based on the story of Mennonite families. The insights of the author are not based on historical information only, they are so convincing because of his rare gift of empathy. The Russian co-sufferers are as genuine in Harder's portrayal as the Thielmanns and Bergens. Father Nikolai, the dedicated kind Russian priest, is as warm a character as Ohm Peters, the Mennonite preacher in the camp. Harder does not only know the Russian people, the reader senses that he also loves the "Russian soul" as much as he loves his Mennonite characters.

Professor Al Reimer has chosen well when he decided to translate this novel into English. He has worked hard at understanding his subject—the Mennonite experience in Russia. Very appropriately he introduces part two of Harder's novel with a quotation from Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag*:

You come to hate the forest, this beauty of the earth, whose praises have been sung in verse and prose. You come to walk beneath the

arches of pines and birch with a shudder of revulsion. (*Gulag* II, p. 200)

This is the experience of the Mennonite martyrs in those early and in many later camps. But Reimer does not only demonstrate a rare sensitivity to Harder's original creation, he is definitely also one of the better translators who do justice to a work of art because they fully understand that translation is an art which depends on interpretation as much as on the linguistic skill. A passage like the Orthodox Easter Mass, in Harder's novel (p.54), is a real test for the translator's perceptiveness. In Harder's novel this passage is one of particular beauty, and Reimer handles it with admirable skill:

"Kristos voskress! Christ is risen!" ...The choir swells to a glorious climax, "Let us embrace and kiss each other, brethren! And by the power of the Resurrection"—here the voices thunder in exaltation, "forgive those who hate us!" (p.54)

Harder's novel may well be the most powerful Mennonite novel to date and Al Reimer's excellent translation has opened this Mennonite work to thousands of English readers in a form that deserves to be seen as a new work of art.

James Long. *The German-Russians: a Bibliography of Russian Materials with Introductory Essay, Annotations, and Locations of Materials in Major American and Soviet Libraries*. Santa Barbara, CA: American Bibliographical Center (Clio Press), 1978. xi. 136 pp. Reviewed by Herbert Giesbrecht, Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Man.

The German-Russians constitute an ethnic group of German-speaking people who immigrated to Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They settled in colonies, mainly in the Lower Volga area and along the Black Sea littoral. Czarist and Soviet policies resulted in several major migrations between 1870 and 1930 mainly to the West and sometimes to other parts of the Russian empire. Today German-Russians can be found in many

widely-separated places throughout the world.

Noteworthy about this particular ethnic group is its strong and vital sense of identity and its continuing interest in the rediscovery of its historic roots. One American organization which demonstrates this fact is the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, with headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska and chapters in many parts of the US and Canada. Earlier and still continuing evidence for this assertion resides in the extensive research interests of the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland* and the *Institut fuer Auslandsbeziehungen*, both in West Germany. Indeed, much of the writing on German-Russians until recently was based directly upon German sources as the bibliographic works of Dr. Karl Stumpp (cf. *Das Schrifttum Ueber das Deutchtum in Russland* and *The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering*) amply illustrate.

The special contribution of James Long's new biography, *The German-Russians*, is its focus upon Russian language materials dealing with Germans from Russia. Long has divided his bibliography into four sections: (1) general bibliographies, (2) books and official publications, (3) articles and statutes, and (4) newspapers. He has numbered the entries consecutively, adding the English title in each case, and also brief annotations for most of the entries. Each entry is followed as well by a location symbol which indicates where the item is available with respect to eight major libraries whose holdings have been consulted: The Hoover Institution on War, Peace and Revolution at Stanford; Yale University; University of California; Library of Congress in Washington, DC, The Lenin Library at Moscow; Duke University; The New York Public Library; and Columbia University.

The 438 entries include about 30 which pertain either exclusively or mainly to Mennonite colonies and developments in South Russia. Most of these entries are restricted to the time period before 1900, more specifically between 1810 and 1900.

Nevertheless, a cursory comparison of Long's bibliography with Patricia K. Grimsted's very extensive *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR* (Princeton University Press, 1972) reveals that Long has apparently uncovered materials which are not included in Grimsted's work. Grimsted's study, notwithstanding its scope of investigation, seems to by pass nearly all materials which pertain more directly to the German-speaking peoples in Russia.

In an introductory essay Long defines the extent of his own bibliography and comments upon the relative ignorance among Russian citizens about the experiences of the country's German-speaking minorities. He notes also the relative inaccessibility of Russian primary sources to foreign researchers (especially those pertaining to the post-1930 period). The author contends that "serious research on the Germans is still insignificant and forced into the strait jacket of Marxist interpretation or buried in the works dealing with less sensitive topics." He ventures the hope however that "perhaps some time when the German issue is politically defused, Soviet authorities will sanction an extensive research effort on the Volga German and Black Sea German regions."

Long's bibliography is of most help to those researchers who are familiar with the Russian language. As it happens the number who read Russian even among our Russian Mennonite members is diminishing annually. Nevertheless, the very fact that American researchers now have fairly ready access to many German-Russian materials (often also available in American libraries) is reason for gratitude. With a little hard work and possibly the willing assistance of older acquaintances who still have some hold on the Russian language, Mennonite scholars and researchers should be able to dig out historical riches hitherto unavailable, or unknown, to them.

James Long is presently Associate Professor of History and a staff member working on the Colorado Study project on Germans from Russia at Colorado State University.

Book Reviews

Frank H. Epp, *Stories with Meaning*. Waterloo, Ontario: Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, 1979. 32 pp., pb., \$2.00. Reviewed by Gerhard Ens, Winnipeg, Man.

One of the more prolific editors and writers on the Canadian Mennonite scene, a journalist and historian of no mean repute, Dr. Frank H. Epp, has now presented us with a concise "how to" booklet; how to make history writing a "do-it-yourself" project, as it were. It has come none too soon. Local and congregational histories are rolling off the presses at a rate one would scarcely have believed possible a short decade and a half ago. Unfortunately some of these have been poorly researched and badly written among them not a few edited and written by a "committee." It is most timely that Epp argues the case for a single editor or writer of any history.

This very comprehensive yet concise book of directions is particularly valuable and practicable in the eyes of this reviewer, because of its constant references to already published and available volumes like those under discussion. The author finds both strength and weaknesses in the examples which he quotes, and he urges the would-be writer to emulate the strengths and avoid the pitfalls if possible.

The author does not shy away from some of the very practical problems that confront the compilers and writer of local and congregational history. Two are the matter of publishing and financing. His wide experience in this field results in valuable advice as to the do's and don'ts in printing, publishing, marketing and financing. Too many Mennonite authors in the past were discouraged by lagging sales of technically inferior products. Epp and a few other Mennonite writers have been able to break through this barrier. The congregational historians will not have the big-time publishers waiting at their doorsteps, but this is no reason to have books leave a printshop with badly matched type face, poorly aligned pages and almost non-recognizable illustrations.

Epp's booklet itself is a model of

good publishing: clear print on non-crowded pages, profusely and tastefully illustrated. Every historian and chronicler of history should read this booklet before sitting down at the typewriter or threading his (her) tape recorder to secure material for one more historical publication.

Irene F. Petkau, ed. *Just When We Were: The Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The History-Archives-Committee of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 1978, 60 pp.; pb., \$6.00. Reviewed by Rodney Sawatzky, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

The sub-title says it well. This is more a story than a history in the technical sense. This is a piece of art, not a monologue but a dialogue. It is completed only with the response of the reader.

The art form is a collage. Photographs, documents, newspaper clippings, extracts from conference minutes and reports, interpretive comments from conference leaders, are combined to provide an impressionistic representation of the Canadian Conference story.

Superimposed on the collage is an interpretive theme, "just when we were. . . ." When we read, what do we see? Has the conference been pursuing "every wind of doctrine" only to find them all tainted with vanity? Or possibly seeking the best vessel for the treasure, only to find that they are all earthen? Will the next 75 years move this conference into a maturity which overcomes the adolescence of the first 75 years? Or is the "just when we were" dynamic the inevitable result of seeking to be God's people in the midst of the world? Like good art, the question is posed for us, the reader supplies the answer.

In a time when history does not sell well, this piece is a most creative vehicle to encourage the necessary reflection on the past for the sake of the present and the future. Hopefully we'll see more of this same genre!

Future works will want to take into consideration some shortcomings in this piece. The binding is poor and the organization is somewhat confusing. The thematic comments might also be better correlated with the collage material.

Paul N. Kraybill, ed. *Mennonite World Handbook*. Lombard, Ill.: Mennonite World Conference, 1978. vi + 390 pp. Paperback, \$6.25 US. Reviewed by Lawrence Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Man.

The Wichita assembly of Mennonite World Conference became an unforgettable event for thousands around the globe. Its *Handbook* now offers an additional aid to fructify the efforts which brought that unique moment to pass.

In truth a mini-encyclopedia, this volume organizes a pool of invaluable information about the continental and national constituencies of the Conference. Not able to recapture totally the color and dynamic of the full fellowship, the *Handbook* still outlines effectively the "flesh and bones" which make 600,000 members in some important sense one "body" together.

In the first of its five divisions the new publication presents a penetrating Introduction in three major interpretive essays: "History of the Mennonite World Conference," by C. J. Dyck; "The Migrations of the Mennonites" by Frank H. Epp; and "Growth Through Missions" by Wilbert R. Shenk.

The broad picture of a global peoplehood is deftly sketched in Part II, entitled "Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in Their Regional Settings." To familiar writers such as Don Jacobs (on Africa), and C. J. Dyck (on North America) are added new acquaintances: Takashi Yamada (on Asia), Daniel Shipani (on Central and South America), and Leo Laurence (on Europe). Of special interest to many readers will be the report of an emerging group in Australia under its leader Foppe Brouwer. An older area for Mennonite life, with new features developed recently is

the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, discussed very ably in this context by MCC research scholar, Walter Sawatzky.

To this is added a section subtitled "Historical and Statistical Survey," a World Membership summary and index, as well as an appendix listing inter-Mennonite agencies, missions boards and regional organizations.

It's done with a wide brush at points, so some smaller groups with their activities will doubtless have been overlooked. A few typographical errors have slipped in (MWC began in 1925, not a year later, p. 1). But the *Handbook* is still a "must" for students, pastors, all church libraries, indeed anyone in the Mennonite community. The work should become available in all major languages to have its fullest impact on the world-wide Mennonite and Brethren in Christ fellowship, and beyond.

Claassen, Barbara Smucker, *Days of Terror*. Toronto, Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1979. 156 pp, hardcover; \$8.95. Reviewed by LaVerna Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Those who remember *Henry's Red Sea*, those with an interest in the Mennonite migration from Russia to Canada after the revolution, and those looking for an outstanding historical novel for older children and young people, will welcome Barbara Smucker's new book.

Days of Terror is the story of the Neufeld family, caught in the horrors of anarchy, war and famine. They struggle against bandits, disease and hunger. They face the temptation to compromise their position of non-violence. They are shaken by loss of religious freedom, imprisonment of Grandfather and by the knowledge that Otto, the eldest, has joined the Self Defense army.

Miraculously, after much suffering, those who are strong enough are offered passage to North America. There is the pain of parting, the uncertainty of a taxing journey

and finally relief and deep gratitude at the warm welcome and prospects of a new life in Canada.

Told through the eyes of young Peter, the story deals realistically with trials and tragedy and reveals the strength and stability which the Christian faith gives to a family in crisis.

Parents will appreciate that the book is divided into three sections: Peace, Terror, Deliverance, which remind readers of the perspective of hope from which events are seen by the Neufeld family. Their gratitude for God's care is transferred to the reader and affirms the validity of the Christian faith.

This is the author's fifth book and like the others demonstrates Mrs. Smucker's talent for combining historical accuracy with exciting fiction. She has again "recreated a dramatic period of history with vigour and authenticity."

Church librarians should make this book a top priority purchase. Families who read it together will make a significant investment in enriched understanding and appreciation for the strength and courage which brought twentieth-century Mennonite immigrants to this country.

Rempel, Olga. *Einer von Vielen*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMBC Publications, 1979, 201 pp. \$10.00. With editorial assistance from Gerhard Ens. Reviewed by Frank F. Enns, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

One among many he may have been as we think of the many who have suffered and perished in Siberia. But among the many Aron P Toews was an exceptionally noble man whose trials and triumphs of faith could serve as beacons for us in periods of gloom and temptation.

In the first part of the books we have the biography as written by a daughter who has been part of much of her father's life. Besides her memory, she relied on many other sources to give us an account of revolution, famine, emigration and the agony of the decision to stay with the flock. It is her simple, un-

adorned account that grips the reader.

I appreciated the stories which give us an opportunity to experience the innermost joys and sorrows of such a man. How calmly and with unshaken faith he faced the inevitable arrest! How poignant are the descriptions of the visits of the family in prison and the final farewell at the station!

His diary in exile (Part II) lets us see Toews from his own reports but there is never any touch of self-pity. There is, instead, praise for God and concern for his suffering family.

The third part of the book shows us some more of the many facets of Toews' character. He always had the right text or poem for every occasion. Even in exile he wrote poems or stories for his children back home. Surely he stands out, somehow, above many others who shared his fate.

REVIEWERS

Dr. John Bergen is a professor in the Department of Education Administration at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta.

Rev. Frank F Enns is a retired teacher, and presently leading minister at the Glenlea Mennonite Church south of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Gerhard Ens edits the German-language Mennonite newspaper, Der Bote at Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Dr. George K Epp is president, and professor of history and German at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

LaVerna Klippenstein is a Winnipeg, Manitoba, homemaker, and columnist for Mennonite periodicals.

Dr. Rodney Sawatzky serves as dean and a professor of religious studies at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

Note: All books reviewed may be ordered from the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3P OM4.

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“ Life
can only
be understood
backwards;
but
must be lived
forwards. ”

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