



Newsletter

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

Volume XII, No. 2

September 2009

MHSA Spring Sessions Feature Old Way of Singing and Low German

by Henry Janzen

Some of the readers of this article may be familiar with Dr. Wesley Berg's 1985 book entitled *From Russia with Music: A Study of the Mennonite Choral Singing Tradition in Canada*. In addition to his research into Mennonite music for the book, he continued that research into the richness of related musical traditions.

More recently, and this was the focus of his presentation to the semi-annual gathering of the Society at the Edmonton First Mennonite Church, he and his wife Selma undertook travels to pursue inquiry into a hunch he had about a particular pattern of singing practices within worship services used in very different and distinctive religious traditions. This musical pattern sounds somewhat like the Gregorian Chant attributed to

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Experiences During the Revolution in Russia

by Herman Warkentin, translated by Erna (nee Warkentin) Goerzen

When the German-Austrian troops were forced to leave the Ukraine in November of 1918 the fate of the German settlers and estate owners in the Ekaterinislav Gubernia (region) was sealed.

Anarchy followed the withdrawal and the robber-band leader Machno and his followers were strafing the countryside with terror.

They reached Pologi and made it their temporary headquarters. In smaller groups they marauded the countryside robbing and plundering in a manner that is hard to describe.

We were living at the time on the rented farm Nikolaifeld situated by the railroad running from Aleksandrowsk past Pologi to Wolnowacha. Many German settlers already had left their holdings and had fled. Our parents also decided to leave the unsafe area with their younger children. They loaded a wagon with the needed bedding, some food supply and move to the German colony. We older children decided to stay a few days longer hoping to be able to save some of what we owned. Our best horses had already been robbed by roving bandits but we still had 25 head of livestock, 7 pigs, 150 hens and 80 ducks. We sat on pins and needles as we waited to see what might happen.

This sinister foreboding was not an empty fantasy. The railroad watch-

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Watch for news about our meeting in Calgary—April 10, 2010

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Editorial Reflections:

by Lorne Buhr

The deaths of two individuals this June prompts me to write something of a tribute to these gentlemen. It happens that both have the surname "Epp" which is purely a coincidence. The persons are Reuben Epp, Kelowna (March 1920-June 2009) and Dick H. Epp, Saskatoon



(September 1927-June 2009). Both men grew up in Saskatchewan and Reuben lived in Langham, the same town as I did. Although he was much my senior, I recall visiting with my parents in his parents' home while I was a "shaver". Readers who have heard of Reuben will likely be aware of his vast contributions to the preservation, understanding and furtherance of the Low German language. He had a profound love and care for the language which was well known to many of our forebears and many current readers of this newsletter. In this issue you will read of Chris Cox, who carries on in Reuben's fine tradition. Reuben was a teacher by profession. We get an idea of the wider contributions Reuben made by reading the following in his obituary. "He was well known in the international Mennonite community as an author noted for his scholarship in its languages, history and literature. His hobbies were myriad: woodcraft, all things mechanical, hunting, fishing, boating and even preparing jams, pickles and soups. He enjoyed camping and traveling with his wife Irmgard throughout North America and Europe." You may wish to pause a moment in your reading now to put on one of Reuben's entertaining Low German CDs!

Ah, you are back. Next I would like to turn to Dick Epp's contribution to us. Specifically to the MHSA. Yes, way back when we were part of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and Alberta established in November of 1973, Dick was one of the chief founders. Some folks have told me that I attended one of the early meetings. I do recall travelling, while still a resident of Saskatchewan, to a meeting in Calgary. Dick

literally kept the society afloat with his own funds. Memberships were initially very low in numbers. Eventually the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS) and later the MHSA each became separate organizations.

Dick was president of the MHSS from 1980-1996. He then took on the task as editor of *The Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*. In the eleven years he served as editor he developed the newsletter into a high quality and an enviable publication.

Dick was born near Rosthern, Saskatchewan but grew up on a farm in the Glenbush area. After his education he became a life long teacher serving in numerous roles and positions. He was also widely known as a master photographer. But it was his love for and communicating of the stories of our Mennonite people for which he will be remembered with much appreciation, admiration and thankfulness. You may wish to look at a eulogy and tributes to Dick on the MHSS website <<http://www.mhss.sk.ca/tributes>>.

Being an amateur historian also gives me the liberty to go wool gathering about two Epps from a different era altogether — the 19th century.

First I'd like to tell you a little bit about Jacob D Epp (1820-1890), whose descendants abound in the Rosthern area of Saskatchewan. He himself never made it to the "new world", but his widow Judith and family did. Jacob took on many roles in his Mennonite community in southern Russia, now Ukraine. He was teacher, preacher, window installer and later part of the *Judenplan*—an idea the Mennonites had of how to work alongside their Jewish neighbours

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and help them farm better. Epp was one of the landless class even though he had many well off relatives. It was difficult to make a living and a life. From 1874-1890 he did have his own farm in Neu Chortiza. He also had only one eye.

Jacob kept a diary and not an ordinary one—yes, he did record matters of weather and farming but he also noted the many struggles of church and community life without too much varnish to hide the failures and sins. Three volumes of the diaries remain and Professor Harvey Dyck has created a book which has entries from the period 1851-1880.

The 1860s and 1870s were especially challenging due to the growing number of landless Mennonite farmers, the birth of the Mennonite Brethren church in 1860, and the continuing threats of change in the official status of Mennonites regarding such matters as military service. It is estimated that up to a third of the Mennonites in south Russia immigrated to North America at this time.

Lastly I would like to touch on the life of Claas Epp Jr., who considered himself a prophet and visionary. In many parts of Europe and sectors of European society the period prior to 1880 was marked by a *Drang Nach Osten*, the idea that something potentially great was to happen east of Europe. Religious folk easily identified this idea with the second coming of Christ.

Epp as one of the leaders of the groups of Mennonites from South Russia who made what ended as a 3,000 mile great trek into Asia. We now know that Epp was seriously wrong and even though he recalibrated his calendar he never accepted his human limi-

tations and continued to predict events that never happened. As recently as 2008 a group of people—some being Epp's relatives—reconstructed the Great Trek from Kansas to Khiva as it were. The resulting DVD, *Through the Desert Goes our Journey*, portrays some of what happened so long ago.

It should be noted that although some Mennonites followed Epp others did not even though they were on the same trek. Groups formed as they always do when Mennonites with strong beliefs and opinions try to work together.

Some of Claas Epp's relatives on the recent trek were acknowledging what had happened in the past, something which they said they had been trying to live down. Eventually some of the "Great Trekkers" returned to their original residences and then immigrated to North America. One of these, Jacob Klaassen, a teenager when the trek happened, is my first wife's grandfather. His diary of that time makes for a gripping read of history lived. ❖

Chairman's Corner

by Colin Neufeldt

Some of my business clients have recently been talking about their plans for "growing their businesses," that is, increasing their clientele and sales notwithstanding that we have been experiencing one of the worst economic recessions since the 1930s. For a few of these clients "growing their business" during a recession involves increasing their advertising budgets; for some it is improv-



ing customer service, while for others it involves purchasing their competitors' companies on the verge of bankruptcy. Many of my clients also tell me that it would certainly be easier to "grow their businesses" if they received government bail-outs like the banks and automobile companies, but they don't qualify to receive taxpayer dollars.

The challenges that my clients routinely face in expanding their businesses remind me of some of the challenges that historical societies such as the MHSA must address. The MHSA currently has many devoted and generous volunteers and supporters who donate their time and resources to our organization, but we are also looking for a new cadre of volunteers and supporters who will help to infuse additional energy and ideas into the MHSA.

As chairman of the MHSA, one of my goals for the upcoming year is to find and implement ways to "grow the MHSA." Now I am not suggesting that the MHSA apply for a government bailout or we steal volunteers from other organizations, but perhaps some of the tactics used by business people to grow a business are applicable to the MHSA. Advertising our services and events more effectively is perhaps one possibility; perhaps improving our existing programs and providing better services to our members is another.

I am very interested in hearing what your suggestions are on this topic. If you have any ideas as to how to help the MHSA "grow" as an organization then we would like to hear from you. In the next few months the MHSA will provide opportunities for our members to provide feedback on what they



want incorporated into the way we do things at the MHSA. If you can't wait and would like to share your ideas immediately, I encourage you to call me at 780-433-2127; alternatively, email: chairman@mennonitehistory.org. I look forward to hearing from you. ❖

(Continued from page 1)

man came to us on our yard, obviously agitated he warned us to be careful. He thought we should hide or even leave the yard because the bandits intended to come to our place that night. They planned to do a house-search because it was rumoured that we were hiding a machine gun. Now we needed to decide and act quickly, knowing that every lost minute could spell disaster. It was about dinner time but no one thought about eating. In rapid tempo we began to pack chests and baskets. In the shop we had prepared an extension ladder wagon and there were still four old horses in the barn. The short November day gave way to evening sooner than we had hoped. As a precaution, my younger brother stood watch at the edge of the garden to forestall a surprise arrival of the gruesome visitors. Before long he was back in the house announcing the approach of a number of riders and of one vehicle. We blew out the lamp, the shutters had all been closed previously and we fled through the attached barn out into the back yard. It had become pitch dark, mercifully for us for in dark-ness was our only hope of escape.

With gruesome oaths and foul language the horde advanced into our yard and when they found the front door locked, they broke it down with their guns. They entered the house with a lit torch and then all hell broke loose. It was indescribable to anyone who hasn't experienced it. Every piece of furniture was broken and hacked to pieces with their swords. Pillows and featherbeds were slit open and spilled on the floor.

I had snuck from the backyard around the adjacent building and was standing in the darkness under a big elm tree from where I could hear and see what was going on. For about an hour the so-called Freedom Fighters plied their work of destruction before they proceeded to the upper floor—no doubt looking for the inhabitants. When they found no one they went to search the barn. Finding no one there they went once more around the house.

With fearful curses over the escaped Bourgeoisie, the pack finally left

the yard and drove off. When after a while, everything had become quiet, we siblings began to softly whistle as a way to call us all together.

After brief discussion we decided to leave the yard immediately. Fortunately, the bandits had not taken any of our remaining horses. The chests and baskets we had been packing had all been turned upside down and everything was hacked to pieces. Jars and canned fruit were smashed against the wall and packaged butter was trodden underfoot. It was a picture of raw bestiality—for normal thinking people almost beyond comprehension. In utmost haste we packed anything that was still left into our wagon. In the loft we had hidden two good fur coats in the chaff; we brought these out and took them along.

(Unfortunately, these later had to be sold to buy food.) In the adjacent building there were still a couple of smoked hams hanging in the chimney, and we did not forget these. Then we harnessed the horses to our loaded wagon and on November 15th, 1918 at 10 o'clock in the evening, we left our much loved home, never to see it again.

How much sweat and toil it had cost us, but also how many lovely hours we had experienced there. Sorrowfully we bade our precious home farewell. Then we drove under the railroad bridge and took a field road in a southerly direction into the darkness of the night. We often needed to light a match to find the road. Shots were to be heard from lesser and greater distances indicating that the region was infested with bandits.

Our progress was slow because of the mud. Yet we moved without mishap the entire night and at 10

o'clock the next morning we arrived at the first German village of Liebenau. We had acquaintances in the village, and there we fed our tired horses and took some much-needed rest ourselves after a sleepless night. After a short respite for people and animals, we were on our way again.

That evening, we arrived tired and exhausted, at our Uncle Peter Warkentin's home in Waldheim where our parents and younger siblings had found temporary shelter. Tearfully our mother greeted us and she could scarcely believe that we had now lost everything we had owned. Yet she was glad that we had all escaped with our lives.

From then on, our lives became difficult and insecure. In the following years our dear parents and our oldest sister, died. Then came the hard year of famine in 1921, which many did not outlive. When in the years after 1923, the door opened for immigrating to America, we also decided to grasp the walking stick. On the 26th of September, 1925, we left the village of Friedensruh where we had been living and where I had married. After a long trip over land and sea, we arrived in Didsbury, Alberta, on October 28th. From 1927 we have lived on a farm near Munson that we bought. Here too we have experienced much storm and also sunshine. While we must live in very modest circumstances, we thank God that we can be content, as we live in peace and calm. Despite that, the above-told experiences will remain in the writer's memory as long as he lives.

Editor's note: Herman continued to live in Munson until his death in 1952. Erna (Warkentin) Goerzen translated this article, which was written by her father. ❖

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Gregory The Great, and has also been found in other traditions which one might say were "worlds apart" geographically. Those who used this distinctive pattern of music could not have possibly been aware of each other's use or practices. One might say it was a singing style from which Gregorian chant as well as Old Colony Mennonite singing may have derived. Berg found that when congregations are left on their own to find a way of singing, this is the type of singing that develops.

Much like a forensic musicologist, Berg gave us a most interesting sample travelogue of chasing down an "old way of singing," playing sample tapes of singing from not only Germany, Sweden, Pennsylvania, and the Faroe Islands but also from contemporary La Crete, Alberta. He believes that this "old way of singing," characterized by a slow tempo, weakened rhythm and dissonant effect, was one of the reasons why church services took many hours to complete. It is easy to criticize the music and singers. It is often seen as less than educated singing where no melodic path is evident combined with often very loud, forceful and nasal tones.

Berg, nevertheless, convinced his audience of the richness of the tradition. As well, he helped us understand the role of the leader for church singing *faasjenja* (song leader). Church attendees were dependent on the art and talent of the *faasjenja* if there was to be tempo and melody in the songs, that until the latter 1800s were recorded only with written words. When Mennonites arrived in Russia in the 1780s they arrived without musical instruments to accompany their singing and there were no notes in their song books. After the first 100 years a song book was produced with *tsiffa*. These were numbers placed alongside the song's words as a substitute for staff notation, which made singing closer to the way it is today. The music seems also to have sped up from the previously long tunes where each syllable had three or four notes for it.

The Amish had developed the same patterns of singing to the contemporary La Crete examples and indeed one could not tell any difference in listening to the respective tapes. Similar sounds emerged from very different traditions. This style of music, which essentially had died out in the mid-19th century in Europe, was seen also in the music of the Primitive Southern Baptists in the United States, Germans from Russia, Swedish colonies in Ukraine and the island of Runo, and the Faroe Islands. This music style, in retrospect, was one of the most fully developed type of singing in many places of the world and fits well within a rural way of life. We should be grateful that it still exists today. Although there may be a greater differentiation today between church singing and secular music by those who preserve this older style, we can appreciate the origin, continuity and story it brings to us today.

A second and also most interesting and informative presentation at the May 30, 2009 meeting of the MHSA was provided by Christopher Cox, a



post-graduate linguistics student at the University of Alberta. His presentation centred on the Low German language, more particularly one of the nine branches of this group which has become known as *Plautdietsch* and which is closely associated with Mennonites from a particular geographical trail. It too was evident from the questions of the listeners that his presentation captured their interest and was, one might say, *utjetakjent* (first rate).

His presentation was also a travelogue – both historically and geographically. Cox’s interest in this form of Low German began not when he did his studies in linguistics and computer science at the University of Saskatchewan, but earlier at age 13. His mother began to laugh during a Low German presentation at a community event, having previously told him that English was her only language. His passion for the preservation of small languages is evident and was the focus of his Master of Arts degree. He says Low German is *de aulā-scheenste sproak* (the very best language of all).

Cox showed how the term Low German has a number of dimensions, including geographical, linguistic, and historical and that it originated in the low lands of Europe close to the Baltic Sea. With maps and charts he developed and showed in a PowerPoint presentation, he was able to illustrate the boundaries of linguistic groups as well as the origins. Low German came from the Old Saxon parent language in 700 AD. He pointed out that by 1200 AD Low German had become the official language of the Hanseatic League, which covered trade routes of over 2,000 kilometres and how it was possible to link particular Low German words to present day words in the Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Finnish and English languages. As an important language of trade and commerce Low German evolved with regional variations. *Plautdietsch* became an exceptional variety of Low German adopted in the Vistula Delta area during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Mennonite leader, Menno Simons, wrote in Low German in addition to other languages to ensure that his works were broadly understandable.

Cox showed how particular words of *Plautdietsch* had come from Dutch, Frisian and later Polish and Russian language sources, as for example, *ladig* (empty—Dutch), *kejast* (wedding—Frisian), *schaubel* (bean—Polish) and *borscht* (a kind of soup—Russian). The Mennonite sojourn had left its mark on *Plautdietsch*, now spoken on four continents. He added that this language branch is not static, but expanding both geographically and through the addition of more words. Because of the distinctness of *Plautdietsch*, Cox argued that efforts should be made to preserve this branch of the Low German language group.

He challenged the attendees: if we want to preserve *Plautdietsch*, doors for partnership must be opened. This includes the need for preserving even little stories told in *Plautdietsch*. Linguistic archives can be built up and then language materials can be made available through digital technology, radio



stations, and media. In his view these are ways that can help to preserve this unique aspect of the Russian Mennonite story while providing a linguistic anchor in the presence of some nine million Low German speakers who will continue to influence changes to this unique group of languages. ❖

May 30, 2009 MHSA Annual General Meeting

by Erna Goerzen

The AGM held in Edmonton First Mennonite Church was attended by 26 people.

The question, “Who is a Mennonite?” brought various responses from speakers at the meeting, for example, “Anyone from a Mennonite village;” “Mennonite Mafia;” and “Mennonite is faith, culture and genealogy.”

For the meeting of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia in Medicine Hat on June 15-21, the MHSA presence included Peter Penner as a speaker and Irene Klassen setting up a sales and display table.

The main income sources for the MHSA in 2008 were from Donations, Memberships, and Book Sales. There was a total of \$17,900 income. The main expenses were from Rent, Book Purchases, and Insurance. There was a total of \$14,716 in expenses. The year-end bank balance was \$7,068.

The use of lottery funds available to the MHSA was discussed. It was pointed out that the Alberta Government requires a certain levy from lotteries to be paid into its general revenue—a form of taxation. In addition, there is a requirement that the Alberta Government designate a certain amount of charitable donations from general

revenue as coming from lotteries, to make them credible to the public. The discussion concluded that it still would not seek out such funds to support the MHSA.

The election resulted in unanimous support for Colin Neufeldt as Chairman for one year and Ralph Dahl as Vice Chairman for three years. David Pankratz continues as Treasurer and Erna Goerzen as Secretary. Both Henry Goerzen and Irene Klassen continue as Members at Large as well.

Susanne Braun Hanser was appointed by the Board as MHSA's Northern Representative and this was affirmed by the membership.

Judith Rempel reported on the MHSA library and archives operations. Volunteers have spent 700 hours at MHSA site, plus that many hours again, off-site. There are four regular volunteers, including Judith who work on site. 200 books were added to the library catalogue this year. Membership at year-end was 92. The MHSA website has steady visits. We need to improve our website to make it more inclusive of all Mennonite branches.

Colin Neufeldt attended the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada Meeting in Montreal, held in the Mennonite Bible School. Information learned at the meeting included that all five volumes of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* are now online (www.gameo.org). Older articles have been kept and new ones are being added. Biographies of significant people who have died are needed. Templates to facilitate writing are available (see: www.gameo.org/Resources).

We need an Alberta representative on GAMEO to develop Alberta-based content and attend MHSC meetings.

Two issues of the *MHSA Newsletter*, co-edited by Lorne Buhr and Dave Toews and prepared by Judith Rempel, were issued last year. More contributions are welcome. The *Newsletter* seeks to be inclusive of Mennonites from all branches.

Refreshments with coffee and a delicious lunch were served by the ladies of Edmonton First Mennonite Church. ❖



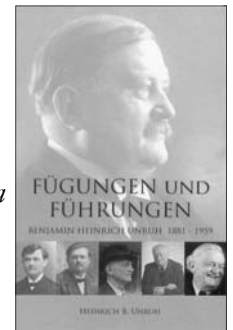
Review of Heinrich Unruh, *Fuegungen und Fuehrungen, Benjamin Heinrich Unruh (1881-1959): Ein Leben im Geiste christlicher Humanitaet u. im Dienst der Naechstenliebe (mit einem Nachwort von Peter Letkemann [Winnipeg]*. Detmold, Verein zur Erforschung u. Pflege des Russlanddeutschen Mennonitentums, 2009, documentation, appendix, 509 pages, excellent and appropriate graphics
by Peter Penner

Loosely translated, the title speaks of *Providence and Guidance in the Life of B. H. Unruh (1881-1959): a life lived as a Christian humanist and in the service of brotherly love.*

The design work was done by Joel Letkemann; the reader was Peter Letkemann, Winnipeg; printing was done in Kirchheimbolanden (south of Weierhof-Bolanden), Pfalz, Germany.

This is a beautifully produced book, technically attractive. It is however entirely in German, even the *Nachwort* (epilogue), intended in the first instance for the reading public in Germany and Paraguay and wherever there are German communities. Though I think I know German almost as well as any of my age group, Heinrich Unruh's German, vintage intellectualized and academic, probably in vogue among Germany's professions and politicians, may be a deterrent to many Mennonite readers in Canada. To read the whole book – many paragraphs twice – was however eminently worthwhile. It was a German-learning experience – “every German word fit to print”!

This work was a long time in the making. Many people knew that Benjamin himself worked on a book with this title for thirty years, but never published it; his daughter Liesel [Horst] Quiring-Unruh published a summary of her father's life under the title *Fuegung u. Fuehrung im Mennonitischen Hilfswerk, 1920-1933: Humanitaet in christlicher Sicht in 1966*; finally his son Heinrich, during another 15 years, shaped his father's amazing life under the mast-head title, but died in 2003 before publishing it. Nevertheless, he produced



four sections of this biography: Benjamin's early years to 1907; his teaching appointment to ambassadorial work on behalf of the immigration of the 1920s and permanent residence in Germany; his colossal contributions to Mennonite world relief efforts, covering the years to 1933; and last some 40 pages on Unruh's attempts to continue his mission in life while coping with the issues raised during the "Third Reich". Peter Letkemann, Winnipeg, completed the biography and saw to its publication, something that should find widespread applause.

Peter Letkemann, Winnipeg scholar (author of *The Ben Horch Story*), complemented the biography through his own research as given in the *Nachwort*. His *Epilogue* of about 80 pages uncovers most of Benjamin Unruh's essential continuing work and advocacy on behalf of Mennonites during the Hitler years and into the post-war years, as well as some startling revelations of how well he was known to, and consulted with, such high Nazi officials as Heinrich Himmler and Georg Leibbrandt. Perhaps because of severe criticisms levelled against Unruh after the War, both he and his son were reluctant to reveal much about the Hitler or the post-War years.

We have never received an appropriate evaluation of Unruh's attitude toward and relations with the Party of Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler, nor of how much he knew of and perhaps protested the final solution of the Jewish question. In the Appendix, Letkemann lists pages of *unveroeffentliche Quellen* (unresearched sources) to be researched for the biography of Unruh in English on which he is working assiduously. This is something to anticipate.

During the early years of Hitler's political empowerment, Unruh can be said to have taken a position somewhere between the adulation of a Walter Quiring (and perhaps Gerhard Fast) and the totally opposed views of B.B. Janz. Unruh was consumed by the belief that Hitler's Germany was the only power that could destroy the hateful Bolshevism ruling in Russia and en-

dangering his beloved Mennonites and other Germans in Russia. From what is glossed over, one may conjecture that he did not see or acknowledge openly that Hitler's aim to destroy the Jews of Europe was stronger than his motive for maiming Stalin's Soviet Union.

I must not editorialize.

Our hang-ups about Nazism aside, this German-language work reveals a man of enormous intellectual capacity and almost infinitely wide interests who worked tirelessly through 40 years to help his "beloved Mennonite people", but also to infiltrate the minds of others with his high view of the Mennonite witness over the centuries. Unruh's writings of his working relationship with the organized Mennonite churches of Germany – northern Vereinigung and southern Verband – are a case in point. He had risen beyond the differences that had hindered relations between Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite churches. That he found himself pushed aside after the War by Mennonite relief agencies from abroad and especially when the Mennonite World Conference was brought to his own city, Karlsruhe, in 1957, hurt him deeply.

The reader will be glad for portions given to Benjamin Unruh's family, both his children and his siblings. Little known perhaps, was the fact that after he had left the Ukraine for his first foray abroad with other commissioners seeking emigration possibilities for Molotschna Mennonites, he was not allowed to return to Leninist Russia. This made it necessary to get his family, wife Frieda (Hege) and their eight children, to join him in Karlsruhe, Germany. Except for the publication in this book of

Mennonites in Paraguay

Co-Editor, Lorne Bubr attended the Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay this past July. We hope with time to get a reflective article on that experience. In the meantime, to whet your appetite, here is something related to the Paraguay experience quoted from the Jan-Mar. 2009 issue of MCC's Peace Office Newsletter, p.2

"Paraguay has had a troubled history, including two costly wars with neighbouring nations. Its past is rife with corruption and an abysmal human rights record. The 35-year reign of Alfredo Stroessner ended in a bloody coup in 1989. There followed a move toward democratization including a new constitution and other reforms. In 2008 a left-leaning former Catholic priest, Francisco Lugo, defeated the long-ruling Colorado Party.

"So what brought the Mennonites to this land and what made Paraguay so extraordinarily receptive to Mennonite appeals? Since the first exploration in 1921, Paraguay became a kind of City of Refuge for Mennonites. In 2008 the entire multi-ethnic Mennonite population, including the indigenous and Paraguayan Latinos, is approximately 60,000. It ranks in the top ten countries in Mennonite World Conference and exceeds the Mennonite population of either Holland or Switzerland. The story of Mennonites in Paraguay is a marvelous example of God's leading and human ingenuity and perseverance." (Edgar Stoesz, writer)

Frieda's diary of that journey, we would probably not have been told of her ordeal, via Moscow and Riga, of taking the eight children Benjamin had given her within a 10-year span. Instead of making arrangements for a southern route, the one the Commission took — via the Black Sea, she had to travel north and west in March 1922, in the lingering chaos of Civil War and War Communism. Beset by some serious illnesses among her children and other delays, as in Riga, she did not reach Karlsruhe until late July.

Heinrich Unruh brought his father's siblings, otherwise deserving of some recognition, into the picture (pp. 24-31), but printed some wrong information. His Uncle Cornelius did not obtain his Canadian citizenship before the Great War, but rather in the first half of the 1920s (pp. 191, 324). Though missionary Heinrich's widow brought six children back to the Molotschna after her husband's death in 1911, Heinrich, the author, does not even mention her name [Anna (Peters), 30]

For many years I thought that the eulogies heaped on Benjamin Unruh after his death were somewhat overblown. This work, however, given to us by his son and Letkemann proves for this reviewer that that was not the case. He was an intellectual giant, had qualities of the statesman exceeding many others mentioned in the story. He was far-seeing, if not all-seeing. He had recourse to people in high places, quite astonishing, people who almost invariably treated him with high respect and courtesy, though occasionally made aware that a prophet is not without honour except among his own kind. ❖

Review of

***Settlers of the East Reserve* edited by Adolf Ens, Ernest N. Braun & Henry N. Fast**

by Peter J. Krueger

Settlers of the East Reserve: Moving In – Moving Out - Staying, is Volume 4 in the Mennonite East Reserve Historical Series, published by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, Winnipeg (2009), 328 pages, soft cover. Available from the MHSA for \$30 (an optional full-text searchable CD, additional \$10) plus shipping and handling.

The East Reserve (ER) in Manitoba (Hanover Municipality) was the earliest home of the Russian Mennonites in Canada. Mennonite immigrants from South Russia who settled on the ER during the years 1874-1878 comprised the majority of two congregations (*Gemeinden*), the Bergthaler Mennonite Church and the Kleine Gemeinde. While both congregations emigrated as a whole, not all settled on the ER.

This volume provides an excellent overview of some of the community organizations which the Mennonites had developed in Russia and then gradually adapted to suit the Canadian context and the relatively new Province of Manitoba. For example, the community form of local self-government (with *Gebietsamt*, *Vorsteher* and the village *Schulzenamt*, with *Schulz* and *Beisitzer*) gave way to a municipal council headed by a reeve and councillors from wards instead of village representatives. A complete listing of all the municipal officers for the Municipality of Hanover for the period 1880-2008 is provided. The mutual aid form of fire insurance established in Russia eventually became a mutual insurance corporation in Manitoba, continuing 400 years of fire insurance service to Mennonite communities. The book includes a report on the status of the ER in 1900, together with comprehensive maps on the ER villages which provide vital information as many of these villages no longer exist.

An outstanding feature of the book is the tabular presentation of the complete data on ER homestead applications (under the terms of the Homestead Act), as well as a description of the process and the terms and conditions whereby the homesteader could aspire to own a quarter section of land, as well as the right to purchase a further adjacent quarter section within a specified time period at prevailing land prices.

Readers can trace individual settlers by name to the legal description of their homestead site within the eight townships (288 "sections" or square miles) that constituted the ER, the date of application and the date when title to the land was obtained.

Also included is the earliest list of ER Bergthal villagers (1876), the complete tax assessment record for the Rural Municipalities of Hespeler and Hanover for 1885, and the 1891 federal census data for the ER and Scratching River settlements (with convenient listings by village). The assessment data provide information about the land acreage under cultivation, the valuation of property, the number of people in the family and the livestock owned; the census data allow for the identification of family members by name along with their respective ages, invaluable for genealogical work.

The first published piece on the *Brotschuld* register consists of a 1876



index, by village, of the immigrant families who received loans as immigration assistance in the early years, the funds coming from Ontario Mennonites and the Federal Government of Canada. It was a struggle within the Mennonite communities to repay these loans.

There were approximately 62 known Mennonite villages and place names on the ER in the 1870s; of these only five are still identified by their original name. Historical sketches of 26 have already been published in previous volumes in this Series, and this volume adds three more village histories – for Friedrichsthal, Schoenwiese, and Rosengard (the first two no longer in existence). Of course some other communities have published histories independently of this Series. The editors note that 19 villages have no published history to date. The village narratives deal with the founding, growth and life of each village and provide excellent maps as to their location. They are loaded with detailed information about the lives and inter-family relationships of the early pioneer families that settled in each village, including a large number of photographs.

This volume includes the following biographies and family histories: the Erdman Penner family; the Jacob T. Wiebe Journal; the Jacob D. Wiebe Journals, with a biography; the Heinrich R. Rempel autobiography; and the Johann M. and Katharina (Barkman) Koop biography.

Mennonite history is replete with group migrations from country to country, in search of better conditions. The following three significant departures from the ER in the first 50 years are discussed: the Mennonite Settlement in Cass County, Dakota Territory, U.S.A (1874-1892); the Bergthaler Mennonite Resettlement to the West Reserve in Manitoba (1878-1882); and the Emigration to Paraguay (1926-1927).

This compilation will fill in many gaps that remained after the publication of the earlier three volumes in this Series. A very extensive bibliography is provided for those who wish to follow up various items in depth. This book is highly recommended to family historians as a rich source of information about this important phase of Mennonite settlement in Manitoba. ❖

Life Story of Hans G. Claassen—a Synopsis

by Dave Toews

I was born December 26, 1932 on the Vistula Delta not far from the Free City of Danzig (Gdansk, Poland) in the village of Schonsee (Jeziernik) into an ethnic High German Mennonite family.

My earliest memory is the birth of my brother Claus-Jurgen, April 18, 1936, when I was just over three years old. I remember Aunt Grete taking me to his crib in the *Sommerstube* (summer room), a sunny south facing room with two huge trees for shade from the hot summer sun.

My sister Eva was born April 18, 1934. Our parents were Erick G. (b June 4, 1907) and Marie (b January 7, 1904 Quiring) Claassen. Of our grandparents we only got to know dad's sister, Henriette (Wiens) Claassen, a good seamstress. She would often chase after us to get our measurements or to have us try on new clothes, much to our annoyance.

Mom's parents, Heinrich and Berta (Mecklenburger) Quiring, passed away at an early age. In spite of this they left lasting impressions on our lives. Grandpa Heinrich for his woodwork-ing talents, fine gardens and orchards and both for their religious devotions often led with violin and singing. Their faithful servant old Antje continued with these traditions and would stay with us for many years to come.

As children we seldom went with our parents to the church in Ladekopp, there was no Sunday school, so reading from the huge family picture Bible was my early religious education.

We three children had a great time, we had the whole farm, 39 hectares (100 acres), the house, orchard and barns as a playground. We kept cows, pigs, geese, and chickens; the dogs and horses were our special pets. The barn was attached to the house with only a firewall and steel door separating the two. Dad could easily go into the barn at night if a cow was calving or an animal was sick. I remember hanging fly strips, as there were a lot of flies in the house because of the close proximity of the two buildings.

Dad used wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, peas, oats and alfalfa as his seven year crop rotation system. Ditches crisscrossed the fields to provide constant drainage as many of the fields were below sea level. Butchering pigs in fall was always a big occasion, friends and neighbours would come to help.

*Includes village sketches for
Friedrichsthal,
Schoenwiese, and
Rosengard*



Old Antje

Much of the meat was salted into barrels, sausage smoked in the chimney space, lard rendered and stored in the pantry. Sometimes Dad would issue instructions to the men and head for the *Gasthaus* - a weaknesses he later overcame.

I have many fond memories of those early years. Claus would sometimes imitate the servants by drawing a picture of a pig in the dirt, hit it with an axe and squeal at the top of his lungs. Claus and his friend Adolf would try to outdo each other by bragging how many things they had. Adolf would say, "We have two tractors on our farm." Claus retorted, "We have ten Tractors." Adolf, "We actually have a hundred!" So Claus asked, "Well, where have you got them?" "We buried them under the ground".

Dad would go duck hunting and sometimes our hound and I would be allowed to accompany him on these exciting adventures. Once a year we would go on a *treibjagd* (bushwhack), hunters would encircle the field on three sides as the young boys chased the rabbits towards them. Hunters would only shoot to the outside of the circle. Not a "sport" I would participate in today, but rabbit wrapped in bacon was mouth-watering the way Mom roasted it. Another highlight was our annual trip through the fragrant forests to the clear white sands of Stegen to swim in the clear blue waves of the Baltic. After we would enjoy Mom's *Kirschen Torte* (cherry cake). I admired my Dad in whatever he did, there was a special bond between us. He would sit on the front steps in the warm morning sun and watch me play, a scene that still comes back to me, unforgettable memories.



World War II began Sept 1, 1939 as Hitler took The Free city of Danzig and environs "home" into the German Reich and attacked Poland at the same time. It was my first year of school and the propaganda of the National Socialist Party was relentless, even our Dad got carried away and joined the party. A decision he later regretted but it was very dangerous to quit. Dad was drafted into the German army immediately, but as the war with Poland only lasted three weeks he was home soon. He was called up again after Germany declared

war against Russia and we saw him only for brief periods of furlough until the end of the war almost six years later. On one of his furloughs dad told mom, "You wouldn't believe what is being done to the Russians by some of the Germans, especially the *Sondertruppen* (special units), controlled solely by the party. Woe unto us if the tables are ever turned in their favour. If this happens, pack the suitcases and take the first train to Berlin". Dad couldn't say this publicly, as any talk of defeat was being prosecuted as treason.

When Antje saw a picture of Hitler she said in Low German, "*Dem lat et yo no'm Verbrekja!*" (He sure looks like a criminal!) Dad hushed her up quickly, "Shut up — you want us all to end up in a concentration camp?"

Like most boys, I joined the *Jungvolk*, German Youth, when I was ten, we were the younger group of the Hitler Youth. We sang nationalistic songs, learned slogans and were force marched to toughen us up. At home Claus and I imitated German paratroopers jumping into the hay from the high beam in the barn with umbrellas. Of course the umbrellas often collapsed making for a hard landing.

The German school system was set up so everyone took the first four grades together, then the students with higher marks went to *Gymnasium* (university preparatory schools). The rest went into a trade apprenticeship after eight years of public school. I had good marks so I attended Gymnasium in Tiegendorf about twelve kilometers from home. Once when I passed the railroad station there I noticed a guarded prison train of box cars



The Canadian GAMEO (Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online) Editorial Committee is composed of the chair (Bert Friesen), Managing Editors (Sam Steiner & Richard Thiessen), and one person appointed by each provincial historical society. Very recently, Wes Berg of Edmonton agreed to be that representative for the MHSA. He replaces Peter Penner of Calgary who has given many years of good service to this role. Thanks, Wes and Peter.

To access the encyclopedia, go to www.gameo.org. You can reach Wes at wsberg@telusplanet.net

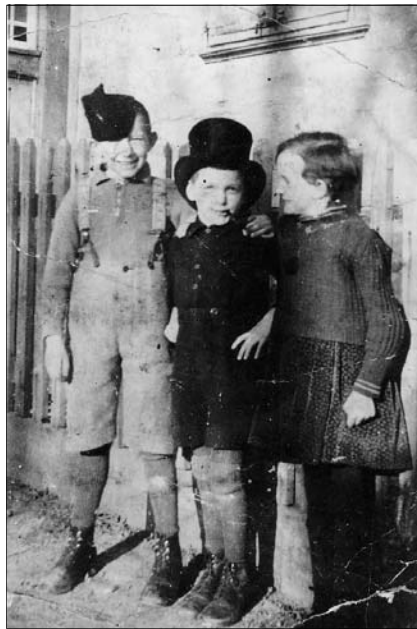
packed full of men and women. I didn't realize until much later that these must have been Jews on their way to a concentration camp. Unknowingly they thought they were going to work camps and did not realize their terrible fate. The teacher was very strict, if we forgot more than three memorized English words he would beat us with his Spanish reed. To soften the blows we sometimes put scribbles under our pants. I felt lonely, empty and guilty those days, I needed a Christian friend to show me the way to God, but I didn't have one.

During the occupation the German authorities sent a succession of families and workers to help Mom with the operation of the family farm. Some came with guards some not. The first was a young Pole named Josef, he was very skilled in agriculture, spoke High German and quickly picked up the low German dialect. I had learned Low German from old Antje and our relatives from the city marvelled how a young boy could communicate so effortlessly in both dialects. Low German was not the exclusive language of the Mennonites, it was also used by the Catholics and Lutherans of the area.

Next came a Polish family, their nineteen year old daughter Theresa did house work and her elderly father worked in the fields. If I, as a ten year old, asked him to do something he would run and carry out the task very quickly as if afraid of being punished. He must have been mistreated at a former work place.

Dad would not tolerate the mistreatment of farm animals or hired help, I never heard him raise his voice against them. Then a number of Russians came; civilians, Prisoners of War (POWs) and civilian prisoners, none of them came voluntarily, I'm sure. Dad prepared rooms in a former *Karosserie*, storage shed, as living quarters for them. I remember visiting there. Sunflower seeds were all over the floor. Konstantin was very strong, could lift a cart loaded with wheat bundles—and when he got drunk everyone was very afraid of him. Some were skilled craftsmen and could do good work including constructing cart wheels. When they got their notice to return to their camps they begged dad on their knees to keep them, but he was powerless to do so. Marcel, a French POW, came without a guard and appeared to be a man of good upbringing. He sometimes made copper rings out of pennies for us. Later I wondered if the uneven treatment of POWs had to do with the racist philosophy of the National Socialists.

Werner Haeker from Berlin came to live with us for the last few years of the war, his mother had been with my paternal grandparents during the first world war, so he was not a complete stranger. Kids were often sent to live with relatives in the country where food was more plentiful and to keep them away from the Allied bombing. Werner was ten years older than I, so I looked up to him regarding matters such as sports and sex. He loved the



Claus-Jurgen is the clown—wearing a top hat and has a pipe in his mouth.

country, but sometimes did foolhardy things. Werner hitched our four *Trakehner* horses to the so-called buller wagon, a WWI ammunition *caisson*, in the Napoleonic arrangement where one of the rear horses is ridden to guide the team. The horses spooked when the wagon rumbled over the cobblestones of our driveway, Werner was thrown from the saddle and dragged, head bouncing on the rough surface. He managed to pull himself upright and fortunately his head was only bruised.

Claus and I found dad's stash of rationed cigarettes and we had our first experience of smoking under the hay in the barn. Theresa caught us there and told dad, that was the only time I ever received a spanking from him.

I was allowed to keep rabbits as long as I looked after them. One summer they multiplied so fast there was no room for the cows in the barn that fall. Our servants had to butcher most of them.

After their defeat at Stalingrad in January 1943, the German Army was in full retreat. They used the scorched earth policy—torching everything as they moved west. This caused great suffering among Russian peasantry and created deep hatred toward the Germans. We heard reports of gross Russian atrocities, plunder, killing of civilians and rape. I don't want to go into detail about this, but it created great fear and anxiety in the villages.

Mom did not heed dad's advice to leave as soon as possible—it seemed too drastic to abandon everything so abruptly. In January 1945, we could hear the faraway rumbling of the cannon, refugees streaming through from the east, often put up for the night. The

front was coming closer. The Russians are coming!

(to be continued in the next issue of the MHSA Newsletter. ❖

Genealogy Case Study

By Judith Rempel

I have been trying to learn the date when a family member arrived in Canada, what I could learn about his journey to Canada, what his home country/village was and anything else that would allow me to search his earlier life/ancestors.

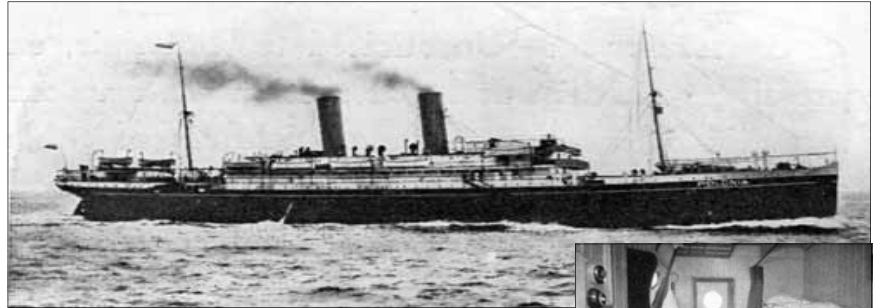
What we knew from the family was that he arrived with a wife and two children. The other two children were born in Canada (first in 1930) and were unable to provide any details about his siblings or parents (no names, dates, places). There was even lack of certainty as to whether they were Polish or Ukrainian. No family documents were available to consult.

Since it was (and continues) to be a difficult search and I was able to mine some less common resources, I thought I'd share my researching process and results.

1. I searched the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) website for arrivals in 1925-1935 – we thought that was the rough time frame.

- This was tough because his surname was misspelled and there are at least a dozen known spellings
- Fortunately his given name is unusual and so I conducted a given name search and it resulted in only 38 hits
- I scanned the list for reasonable alternative surname spellings and he was the 4th listed
- I learned he arrived at 35 years, was of Polish nation-

ality and arrived in 1929



S.S. Polonia and second cabin stateroom



- I then searched the database again – with that spelling of the surname and found 10 such persons
 - I reviewed all 10 transcriptions to see who appeared to be travelling together with him (they were on the same ship, the same date of arrival and page number)
2. I searched the LAC website for possible naturalizations, but he was not listed [later I learned he was naturalized later than the database years covered]
 3. I requested the immigration record images from Pier 21 (ca \$50), specifying all the details I had from the LAC website and noting the more likely surname variations that they might find
 4. The immigration record images arrived within 2 weeks and provided interesting detail
 - They confirmed which family members travelled together (husband, wife and 2 children), their ages, the cash in their pocket, their nationality (Ukrainian), their country of origin (Poland), etc.
 - They also indicated who his next of kin was in Poland (I've not yet been successful in following this lead)
 - They also indicated when he was naturalized as a Canadian citizen
 - They also indicated that they departed from Danzig [now Gdansk]
 5. I made a FOIP request to Citizenship & Immigration Canada using the simple form found online and enclosed payment for the \$5 fee.
 - In one month I received a polite (but boilerplate) letter covering about a dozen photocopies made from a pool quality microfilm (they apologized for the quality but said they'd done their best)
 - The information contained in the documents was valuable (and funny to us) even though the majority of the pages were virtually unreadable (not even faint print or handwriting)
 - We learned several important things from the application:
 - ◆ two spellings of his name (his and the folks who completed docu-

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT RETURN																
SHEET NO. _____																
THIRD CLASS																
S. S. S.S. Polonia		SAILING FROM Danzig										28. Mai 1929		19		
LINE	FAMILY NAME, GIVEN NAME	RELATIONSHIP	AGE			COUNTRY AND PLACE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY	RACE OR PEOPLE	IF IN CANADA BEFORE		IF YOU WERE EVER IN THE UNITED STATES OR CANADA	CAN YOU READ?			BY WHOM PAID	
			M.	P.	Y.				BETWEEN WHAT PERIODS	AT WHAT ADDRESS		12	13	14		15
1	WERNICZ, Tom	self	35			Pol. nd., -dzbrow	Polish	Ukrainian	no			n	yes	yes	Polish	husb-nd
2	WERNICZ, Helen	wife	32			Pol. nd., -dzbrow	Polish	Ukrainian	no			n	yes	no	Ukrainian	wife

ments on his behalf)

- ◆ It contained documents with his own signature (we'd never seen his handwriting)
- ◆ Where and when he was born (Weroch, Kingdom of Russia, Feb 1894 – he indicated he couldn't remember the day)
- ◆ He applied for naturalization in Dec 1936 and obtained it in 1937
- ◆ It named his children
- The RCMP report added to that by providing insight into the behaviours and opinions of the time:
 - ◆ He was born in Weroch, Poland, February 1894, was Ukrainian and married
 - ◆ He and [unnamed] wife lived in Henribourg, SK but were about to move to North Side, SK
 - ◆ The children were listed by their ages at the time (including Canadian-born children), their birthplace (place and country) and residence (place and province) [note all names were anglicized]
 - ◆ The children were said to be of good character and reputation. [no mention of his wife's reputation]
 - ◆ He wanted to be naturalized because he “wishes to enjoy privileges of Canadian Citizenship” and had been in Canada 7 years and 7 months.
 - ◆ Regarding his knowledge of languages he “speaks few words of English, cannot read or write at all, no French at all.”
 - ◆ Regarding his character, “Some persons would vouch for him others not. Said to be good worker but not scrupulous over debts.” He was not known or suspected of being a Communist. [this was a formal question on the form to which the officer had to write Y or N]
 - ◆ The narrative part of the report about the investigation read as follows:

This date the applicant reported personally to this office, and was interviewed by myself in the above [consideration?]. Said applicant cannot speak English except for a very few words, cannot read nor write. Discrete enquires made previously in the Henribourg District reveal that although he is a hard-working man, he is not over scrupulous with regard to money matters, debts, etc. As far as can be ascertained he has no definitive connection to Communistic activities, but has been heard to express opinions which might lead one to believe he is interested in the Soviet Gov't.

With regard to the references: A_____ P_____ recommends the applicant without hesitation as he has known him ever since his entry into Canada, and has worked on his farm for some time. This reference appears to be a good citizen with no Communistic tendencies. J_____ A_____ also recommends the applicant without hesitation but was only used as a reference because the applicant was unable to supply anyone else, it being a habit of this reference to vouch for anybody who wishes a reference. He is of good reputation himself, but if anyone else could have been obtained as a reference, it would have been done, on account of this reference habitually recommending in this way.

My next step will be to visit with the family to see if the above details leverage new memories that could lead to record searches. I also am trying to locate a good source of records regarding Danzig ship departures that may lead to more detail about the family overseas. Unfortunately,

“Werloch” seems to be a weak English transcription and I'm not yet certain what place was actually meant. There are couple of possibilities.

The sources of information for cases such as this are:

- ◆ **1832-1937 - Immigrants Quarantined at Grosse Ile**
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/grosse-ile-immigration/index-e.html
 - searchable by individual names
 - transcription only - access to image is not possible due to the fragile nature of the documents
 - no fees apply
- ◆ **1865-1922 - Passenger Lists**
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/index-e.html
 - searchable, but not by name of individuals
 - images only – no transcription
 - Index of individual names available at Ancestry.ca - <http://content.ancestry.ca/iexec/?htx=List&dbid=1263&offerid=0%3a7858%3a0>
 - transcription and images available
 - fees apply
 - Ancestry.ca site is available at MHSA during open hours for free
 - Ancestry.ca site may also be available at a local LDS Family History Centre or Public Library Branch for free
 - MHSA could conduct a search on your behalf for a small fee
- ◆ **1925-1935 - Immigration Records**
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/immigration-1925/index-e.html
 - searchable by name of individuals
 - transcription only – no images

- images are available from Pier 21 - <https://www.pier21.ca/research>—fees apply
 - images and indexes are available from Ancestry.ca—fees apply
 - Ancestry.ca site is available at MHSA during open hours for free
 - Ancestry.ca site may also be available at a local LDS Family History Centre or Public Library Branch for free
- ◆ **1890-1960 – Passenger Lists from United Kingdom**
- www.findmypast.com/passengerListPersonSearchStart.action?redef=0
- searchable by individual names
 - transcriptions and images fees apply (subscription or pay per view)
 - useful if the passage from overseas included a stop in UK (true for many Mennonites)
 - MHSA could conduct a search on your behalf for a small fee
- Note:**
- Ancestry Membership fees: <http://www.ancestry.ca/subscribe/signup.aspx> or <http://www.ancestry.com/subscribe/signup.aspx>
 - FindMyPast fees: <https://www.findmypast.com/payment-step1.action> ❖
-
- Alberta Mennonite Schools**
- Do you have one or more Mennonite school yearbooks that you could donate to the MHSA? We have a considerable collection in our library—but it still is very incomplete. We're focusing on Alberta schools, but all Canadian Mennonite school yearbooks are welcomed.
- We have a new project to index the names of students, staff and faculty. If you'd like information about one of the yearbooks or would like to assist with the indexing of names, please be in touch by e-mail (queries@mennonitehistory.org).
- For more details about the project and our complete collection, see <http://www.mennonitehistory.org/projects/schools/>.
- YO: Years in Operation; YC: Yearbooks in MHSA Collection*
- Alberta Mennonite High School, MB, Coaldale (YO:1946-1964; YC: 1953, 1955-1958, 1960)
 - Bethesda Bible School, MB, Gem (YO:1933-mid 1900s; YC: none)
 - Coaldale Bible School (aka Alberta Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute & Morning Star Bible School, MB, Coaldale (YO: 1929-1965; YC: 1956-1957, 1961-1963)
 - Countess Bible School (later part of Menno Bible Institute), MC, Countess (YO: 1939->1940)
 - Crowfoot Bible School, Mennonite Brethren, Crowfoot (YO: 1936-1937)
 - La Glace Bible School, MB, La Glace (YO: 1933-1947)
 - Menno Bible Institute, MC, Didsbury (YO: 1937-1966, YC: 1962)
 - Menno Simons Christian School , Inter-Mennonite, Calgary (YO:1983-present; YC: 1997)
 - Mennonite Bible School, MC, Coaldale (YO: 1935-?; YC: none)
 - Mountain View Bible School/College, United Missionary, Didsbury (YO: 1921 or 1926-?; YC: undated issue)
 - Rosemary Bible School, MC, Rosemary (YO: 1932-1947, YC: none)
 - Springridge German Bible School, MC, Springridge (YO: 1935->1940, YC: none)
 - Vauxhall Bible School, MB, Vauxhall (YO: 1937-1943, YC: none)
 - Wembley Bible School (aka Hoffnungsfeld Bible School), MC, Wembley (YO: 1933->1940; YC: none)
- ◆ **1865-1900 – Quebec City Passenger Lists**
- <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passengers-quebec-1865-1900/index-e.html>
- searchable by individual names
 - Transcriptions
 - images available in some cases
 - no fees apply
- ◆ **1915-1932 – Naturalization Records**
- www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/naturalization-1915-1932/index-e.html
- searchable by individual names
 - Transcriptions
 - how to obtain copies of the Naturalization records: www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/naturalization-1915-1932/001055-150-e.html?PHPSES-SID=i8dmjv0378uq45qv3aekfgd632#c
 - FOIP fee applies to paper records
- ◆ **More Records**
- See other databases at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search-recherche/anc.php?Language=eng>

Wanted—You!



Fiebel

We present in this issue of the *Newsletter* some reproductions of pages from a German reader—it and several *Fiebel* held by the MHSA archives in Calgary. Part of our motivation is to draw attention to the wide variety of materials available for research and enjoyment at the archives. Beyond that we are wishing to interest one or more of our readers in doing some further research and writing on the place of the *Fiebel* in early education of Mennonites.

Do we have any readers who as pupils used them? Likely not. If this topic tickles your fancy please be in touch with Dave Toews, Lorne Buhr, or Judith Rempel. Thank you.

Heritage Stories from Mennonites by Choice.

Are you a Mennonite By Choice (MBCer)? What is your chronicle? Do you have a heritage story to tell?

If so, send one and a half to two printed pages plus two to three scanned photographs to the *MHSA Newsletter*. The heritage/ancestor narrative should start in Europe or old country as far back as information is available to the present. Also tell us when, how and why you decided to join the Mennonite Church.

Forward your Fiebel or MBC Heritage stories to: Judith Rempel (queries@mennonitehistory.org), Lorne Buhr (lorne@mennonitehistory.org), or Dave Toews (dave.toews@mennonitehistory.org).



? Queries:

Donna Seely is looking for someone who has a copy of the Menno Bible Institute yearbook for 1953-54. That yearbook should have a class picture that includes her mother.

If anyone can help Donna, she can be reached at seely_6@yahoo.com or 403-626-3318.

Sue (nee Braun) Hanser writes: I come from Abram Braun (living) and Helen Goertzen and am trying to connect the Brauns in the Town of La Crete. I know that the other two lines come from Gerhard Braun and Aganetha Driedger. I also have verbal admonishments that my line and this line are 4th or 5th cousins from my grandfather who is no longer with

us to tell us how they were connected. But I have a theory:

Abram Braun comes from Peter Braun (born June 15, 1908, married to Anna Zacharias).

Peter Braun (born to Peter G. Braun born Aug 12, 1876, married to Marie Thiessen, born Feb 19, 1880).

Peter G. Braun born to Peter L. Braun and Anna Ginter, (other spouses Anna Doerksen and Helena Dueck).

Peter L. Braun (born June 9, 1847, married to Anna Ginter, born Oct 18, 1850). Peter L. Braun's other wives were Anna Doerksen (born Sept 15, 1851) and Helena Dueck (born Aug 31, 1867). Anna Doerksen had a son from a previous relationship by the name of Peter Peters. Peter L.

Braun's Parents were Abram (Abraham) Braun and Maria Lemke.

Abram was born to Johann Braun and Helena Thiessen (Johann's second wife), on Nov 28 1816. Maria (born on Feb 2, 1819) was of unknown parents.

Johann Braun (born in 1776) and Helena Thiessen (born Oct 1, 1795). Johann Braun's first wife is unknown and Johann's father was Nicholas Braun (born abt 1764).

Suzane is looking for any information from people who are related to this lineage or anyone who would like to help connect these two Brauns.

She can be contacted at suzane@telus.net, Box 906, La Crete, AB T0H 2H0.