

# JOHANN PLETT

## *A Mennonite Family Saga*

*Johann (Hans) Plett, Ellerwald, West Prussia,  
A Mennonite Family Saga,  
with Biographies to the Fifth and Sixth Generation.*

The story of the Plett family is a template for the Flemish Mennonites who fled Polish-Prussia to Imperial Russia in search of a refuge for their faith. Having pioneered in the Moloschna Colony in 1804, descendants *Ältester* Johann Plett Harder (1811-75), Blumstein, and *Ältester* Peter Plett Toews (1841-1922), Fischau, speak for the Mennonite Church in the face of growing apostasy and the loss of religious freedom. In 1874 Mayor Cornelius Plett (1820-1900), Kleefeld and Delegate Cornelius Plett Toews (1836-1908), Hierschau, lead the Plett family to North America where they wrest a new homeland from the prairie wilderness. In the U.S.S.R. *Ältester* Gerhard Plett (1860-1933), Hierschau, and minister Gerhard Kornelius Plett (1891-1937), Nikolaifeld, are martyred for the faith under Sovietization and the exile of Mennonites to the prison camps of the Siberian Gulag.



Crossway Publications Inc., Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada

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**Delbert F. Plett**

**Crossway Publications Inc., Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada**

ISBN: 1-896257-44-5

**Printed in Canada**

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**Published by:**

Crossway Publications Inc.  
Box 1960, Steinbach  
Manitoba, Canada, R0A 2A0.  
1(204)326-6454, fax 1(204)326-6719  
E-mail: delplett@mb.sympatico.ca  
Website: www.hshs.mb.ca

**Printed by:**

D.W. Friesen & Sons  
Altona, Manitoba, Canada  
**Graphic Design by:**  
Sundown Graphics  
St. Pierre, Manitoba, Canada  
E-mail: sundowng@escape.ca



Left: **Front cover photograph:** Archaded house (Vorlaubhaus) in Fürstenwerder (Zulawki), Prussia (Poland), where Johann (Hans) Plett II lived. The photograph taken in June 1998 was originally published in *Preservings*, No. 12, page 47.



Left: **Rear cover photograph:** The old Dutch windmill at Ellerwald (Wicrowo), Polish-Prussia, where Johann Plett I once lived. Unfortunately this invaluable heritage treasure burned June 14, 2002. Photo 1998 - Erwin Wieler, Surrey, B.C.

Below: **Title page and Spine:** Coat of Arms of the Romanov Dynasty, Czars of Imperial Russia.



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# Acknowledgements

As a young lad, I had occasion one Sunday to foray into my parent's parlour ("guast schoave") in Blumenort, Manitoba, where they were entertaining distant relatives from Kansas. They were heavy into the "Mennonite game" - sorting out who was related to whom, and how. During my few moments in the room, I was dumbstruck with the dialogue flying thick and hard: "so-and-so was the great aunt of so-and-so on the maternal side" - "Trienche Meum, und Fadda Ohm, once removed?" I remember thinking to myself, what a pathetic life it must be to arrive at such a mind-numbing state, where one could possibly be interested or even excited about such seemingly irrelevant and abstract trivialities.

As life so often seems to go, it did not take long after I had established my law practice in Steinbach in 1973, that I too got hooked. This was the time of Alex Halley and his book, *Roots*, which generated much interest in the topic. As my career as a lawyer become more established, my boyhood love of history evolved and extended to encompass my own genealogy, and particularly, my own story. Who was I? Where did I come from? Where was I going?

I remember so well an older Holdeman gentleman coming into my office on some business, and then relating in passing that he had known my grandfather Heinrich Plett of "Plattehof" very well, adding a few complements. Then another client came in and told me he had been married by my great-grandfather, Cornelius L. Plett, the Kleine Gemeinde minister in Satanta, Kansas. Of course, the story of the Plett family was always special to me. My interest was probably also spurred by the fact - which I soon discovered - that I was a descendant of Johann Plett (1765-1833), three times. My only consolation was that at least I had an excuse for my idiosyncrasies - surely more than most people could say.

According to my earliest notes, by 1978 I was actively interviewing older people and collecting writings and information. This was invariably part of the agenda when I talked and visited with newly found mentors such as Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, and Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982), Steinbach, Manitoba. One of the first fruits of these labours was the *Plett Picture Book: A Pictorial History of the Children and Grandchildren of Cornelius Plett (1820-1900) and Sarah Loewen (1822-1903)*, 161 pages, published in 1981.

My interests quickly expanded to encompass the history of the Kleine Gemeinde, a Mennonite denomination founded in Russia in 1812, to which all of my ancestors going back five or six generations had belonged. As many readers will know, the seven volume Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series compiled and written over the next two decades was the ultimate result of these endeavours. Well, within a short time I myself was probably regarded as one of the oddest individuals in Steinbach because of my passion for the story of our people.

Much of the work on compiling information about the Plett family was already completed when I published *Dynasties of the Kleine Gemeinde*, Volume Seven of the Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series, in 2000. But I decided not to include the chapter on the Pletts in *Dynasties*, and to rather expand and publish the material at some future time as a separate book. This work, then, is the result of 25 years of collecting and gathering of information and the deciphering and



interpretation of primary and secondary source materials about the Plett clan or *Sippenschaft*. The purpose of this book is to list all the descendants of Johann Plett, Ellerwald, to the fifth and sixth - and sometimes the seventh - generation with biographical notes where possible.

Family history has long been a proud tradition in the Plett family. Already in 1900, Peter Toews (1841-1922), former Kleine Gemeinde Ältester, wrote a family chronicle in which he referred to his mother, Maria Plett, and his maternal grandfather, Johann Plett (1765-1833).<sup>1</sup> In 1916, Peter Isaac (1846-1922), another grandson, published his well-known *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern Vom Jahre 1694 bis auf die Gegenwart*, in which he dealt with his paternal Isaac clan and also with his maternal Plett side, outlining much valuable family lore.<sup>2</sup> This was among the earliest, if not the very first, family histories published among the Russian Mennonites. In the words of Dr Leland Harder, North Newton, Kansas, "Peter Isaac demonstrated a profound capacity to record for posterity those matters and facts which would be of vital interest to genealogists and social historians a century later."<sup>3</sup>

This was followed on July 2, 1945, with a large family gathering of all the descendants of Cornelius Plett (1820-1900), son of Johann, which took place in the pasture of David L. Plett, Blumenhof, Manitoba. 1200 people in 200 automobiles came to enjoy what was probably the first large-scale family gathering in the area. A small booklet edited by David P. Reimer and Gerhard J. Thielmann, *Bericht von dem Pletten = Tag zu Giroux, Manitoba am 2. Juli 1945* (Steinbach, 1945), 52 pages, was published to commemorate the event. In 1953 the first Plett genealogy was published, edited by Bishop David P. Reimer, Gerhard J. Thielmann and Peter A. Penner, *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Groszeltern Kornelius und Sarah Plett* (Steinbach, 1953), 140 pages.

Since that time there have been numerous articles written and genealogy books published regarding various branches of the extended Plett family going back to Johann Plett (1765-1833), the "Kanadier Pletts", as well as among the descendants of his brother Michael Plett (1761-1826), sometimes referred to as the "Russländer Pletts". The most ambitious of these is the book by Leslie Plett, *Family Register of the descendants of our Grandparents Abraham L. and Gertrude (Koop) Plett* (923 Midridge Dr. SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2X 1H5), 738 pages. I want to acknowledge the valuable contribution Leslie Plett has also made by identifying and researching many additional "Russländer" Plett lines. Part C, Section Two, on Elisabeth Plett and Johann Harder, is based largely on the extensive Harder family study, *The Blumstein Legacy: A Six Generation Family Saga* (Box 363, North Newton, Kansas, 1999), 273 pages, by Dr. Leland Harder. I also acknowledge, historian Royden Loewen, who was kind enough to allow me to quote liberally from his *Blumenort* book and other works. I hereby thank Leland, Leslie and Royden for sharing their information and research. Without their hard work and generosity this book could not possibly have been as complete as it is. The Plett family interest in its history and genealogy speaks for an important characteristic of the Flemish Mennonite people, namely, a respect for the past and one's elders and the traditions and legacy which God gave to His people.

Delbert Plett, April 25, 2003, Box 1960, Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada, ROA 2A0,

# Foreword

It is evident that the older Plett generations were deeply committed to the community-orientated, Christo-centric faith tradition of their forebears, originating in Catholic monasticism, Erasmus and Christian humanism, Thomas a Kempis and the Brethren of the Common Life and Dutch Sacramentarianism during the Reformation. Many in the Johann Plett family branch belonged to and were prominent in the Kleine Gemeinde reform movement founded in Imperial Russia in 1812, while descendants in the Michael Plett line belonged to and also served as leaders in the "Kirchliche" congregations. By the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, some members of the Plett family were also involved in the Brüdergemeinde and Holdeman sectarian movements, which arose in the 1860s (later known as the Church of God in Christ and the Mennonite Brethren Church, respectively). In the mid-20th century the E.M.C. and E.M.M.C. denominations arose in Manitoba teaching mainly incorrect and pejorative information about Mennonites, resulting in many of their young people losing all desire to remain true to the Holy Gospel and the faith of the fathers.<sup>4</sup> As people lost sight of the vision of their forebears - of discipleship and the ethic of love practised within a restored apostolic church community arising out of the medieval monastic tradition in Flanders, more and more descendants associated themselves with non-Mennonite church denominations and religious cultures, often converting themselves to the dead and empty religious traditions and man-made laws and doctrines of American Evangelicalism and its bizarre Calvinistic fantasy of eventual world conquest and absolute world domination.

Those who have abandoned the simple biblical truths of the Flemish Mennonites will certainly recognize the striking difference between the existential Christian faith of their Plett ancestors in comparison with the "pop" theology and manipulative traditions of their current religious culture. Nevertheless, all of the Plett descendants can still claim and be proud of the steadfastness and loyalty of our common forebears to the faith of the fathers - the tradition of following Jesus and of obedience to His commandments. Those who insist that history must conform to their current ideology and religion, should realize the past is a different place, they do things differently there. The chronicler of the human condition must seek to document the passage of time as it was, and not how some descendants might wish it to be in order to justify their current ideology and religious culture.

Although our Plett ancestors originally settled only in the Molotschna Colony, Imperial Russia, their descendants took part in practically every Mennonite settlement and migration thereafter, with family members represented in the steppes of Siberia, the Volga and Sagradovfka regions, as well as in the mid-western States, the Canadian prairies, the Paraguayan Chaco, the highlands of northern Mexico, the jungles of Belize and the industrial cities of modern Germany.

During WWII a number of Plett descendants were inducted into the German Wehrmacht and Red Army while others were conscripted or volunteered for service in the military forces of Canada and the U.S.A. One family member, Peter W. Friesen (1895-1917), actually died in WWI combat in Flanders, Belgium, on

November 11, 1917 (exactly one year to the day before Armistice Day), on the very soil from which the Flemish Dutch Mennonites had originated four centuries earlier.<sup>5</sup> In September, 1944, many in the Molotschna Colony were inducted into the Wehrmacht. This included Gerhard and Johann, the sons of Gerhard Gerhard Plett (1888-1938), Hierschau, who were marched off to the Western front where they saw active combat in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium around Christmas 1944, "...with Gerhard killed [January 3, 1945] but Johann surviving."<sup>6</sup> Thus the blood of Flemish Mennonites was again shed on the ground where our forebears struggled so valiantly and suffered so heroically from 1530 to 1640 to maintain their faith and to survive as a people of God under the onslaught of the Spanish Inquisition.

As will quickly become evident, there are, unfortunately, a number of large gaps remaining in the family record of the Michael Plett branch. There are also a number of lines which have not yet been directly connected into the Plett family tree. Many family members have lost their ancestry because of deportation or exile in the Soviet Union. Hopefully the information in this book will be of assistance allowing those descendants to reestablish their appropriate places in the family record. In the meantime, the biographies of men like Ältester Gerhard Plett (1860-1933), Hierschau and his nephew Gerhard Kornelius Plett (1897-1937), Nikolaifeld, stand out as examples of the suffering and persecution of our Mennonite martyrs in the Soviet inferno. May the labours of the saints in the kingdom of God be blessed by the Lord for we know that their faithful suffering for the Crown of Righteousness shall not be in vain.

In some ways it may seem almost heretical to combine accounts of Pletts in the Soviet Union suffering horribly under sovietization, banishment and in exile with those of pioneers struggling to survive in new settlements in Manitoba and the American midwest. And yet, because of their blood relationship, they are part of the same community and of one story. As Mennonites we must learn to be proud of the contributions made to our community by different groups and individuals, each in their own unique way, as long as these endeavours resonate with the traditional Christo-centric teachings of our confession. The reader will note that some biographies and certain sections are more complete than others, indicating either the importance of their contribution or, possibly also, that more information was readily available. The saga of the Plett family - the composite of hundreds of similar and yet, unique and different lives - creates a giant human mosaic. The stories blend, interact, and dialogue with each other to provide parallel and sometimes multiple accounts of events and people, documenting tragedy as well as much routine human drudgery. In their totality these accounts form a rich tapestry - the story of a community and culture long ago forgotten.

I have attempted to integrate these diverse strands as well as findings from recently available sources into a single, cohesive narrative, thereby making the rich story of the Plett family more widely available. History is often told through the medium of the nation-state, the community (region), religious denomination, or even the immediate family circle or village. Each venue or slice of life's experiences tells only a part of our story, for the Flemish Mennonite saga cannot be restricted to such contexts nor can it ever be adequately understood within such artificial boundaries or boxes. Our story spans many centuries, nations,

lands and peoples, a veritable human cloak of many colours - a mini-United Nations. The Plett family saga speaks for the multi-dimensional cosmopolitan life world of the Flemish Mennonites, long before jet-setters and globalization become popular. Since the days of the Reformation our people have related to communities which straddled and crossed international boundaries, and developed vibrant intellectual and cultural life-worlds whose horizons extended far beyond the vistas of their local village and immediate family.

This study tells the story of a people through the eyes of a large extended family clan as it evolved through time and space. This is not the exalted venue of professional historians, rather the mucking in the seemingly insignificant trivialities and often undramatic quagmire of the past, the plain stuff of history, the often despised home ground of amateur and folk historians like myself.

Russian Mennonite historiography has traditionally been dominated by Molotschna triumphalism (Franz Isaac and H. Goertz), and, in particular, by the self-serving polemics of Separatist-Pietist sectarians, such as produced by those of Brüdergemeinde persuasion (P. M. Friesen, Bekker), seeking to justify the invariably brutal family and community schisms and traumatic emotional scarring caused throughout Imperial Russia by their often fanatical advocacy of their newly adopted religious creed.

The reality, however, was that in the 1860s, some eighty percent of the Molotschna population still belonged to the so-called Grosse Gemeinde (the Molotschna 'Rein' Flemish Gemeinde), and that even in 1920 eighty percent were members of the Kirchliche congregations. As a result, the overwhelming majority of the people have been cheated and short changed in the historical record in that the story of their grandparents has not been told and their voices have not been heard. Even the little that is written about them is generally wrong, false, negative, derogatory, misinterpreted and misunderstood. Professional historians have also been guilty in this regard. Dr. George K. Epp, for example, adopted the Molotschna triumphalist school of thought in his interpretative paradigm when he referred to the endeavours of Margenau Ältester Heinrich Wiens (1800-72) to defend traditional Flemish Mennonite ideals and teachings such as grass roots democracy and self-determination against the tyrannical and often brutish dictatorial regime of the "great" Johann Cornies as "shameful submissions" and "false representations".<sup>7</sup>

By comparison, James Urry, the undisputed dean of Russian Mennonite historians, acknowledges that Ältester Heinrich Wiens "...had merely defended basic Mennonite principles and he suffered for his steadfastness."<sup>8</sup> However, even Dr. Urry does not critically enough examine the authoritarianism represented by Cornies as self-appointed despot and the insidiousness of the strong arm tactics employed against the majority of the population. Nor does Dr. Urry adequately examine the Christo-centric teachings and Enlightenment ideals that the Flemish traditionalists defended so stoically and the foundational contribution they made in the Molotschna and elsewhere, and to the fact that they were invariably the ones who carried the survival and incredible life vitality of the Mennonite community on their collective backs - whether by migration or resistance to assimilation. Only by listening to the voices of the traditionalist majority and by hearing their story, will a more truthful and more balanced historiography of the Russian Mennonites come into being.

Since the time of the noble Zonists in the 1660s in Amsterdam who so heroically defended the Holy Gospel in the great Dutch War of the Lambs, the vision and philosophy of the conservatives and traditionalists have seldom been articulated very well - certainly not as well as it should or could have been. But this does not diminish the necessity of history being written to include all components of a community and to represent adequately their vision. Because of the misunderstood focus, for the reasons already outlined, of historians on those individuals converting themselves to Separatist Pietist religious culture and/or on those groups deemed to have been more "progressive" (and the apparently inherent and completely unexplained superiority of these sectarian viewpoints), the account of the majority of Molotschna residents - the common man - has largely been lost to posterity. Baring the existence of some major document collection - yet to come to light - or other primary sources, the only way of retrieving and rediscovering their story will be by mucking in the small stuff of history such as the rich mother lode of their journals, letters, oral tradition and kinship networks, to recreate their lives and experiential embryo.

Hopefully, this Plett study will be a modest contribution to that endeavour. The result, unfortunately, is sporadic at best, uneven in its treatment, and surely, difficult for some to follow.

The multifarious experiences - tragic, routine and joyful - of the Plett family speak for the saga of the Flemish Dutch Mennonites who repeatedly fled and resettled over five centuries and across four continents for the sake of their faith and in search of religious freedom. In so doing they experienced and created a defining narrative that only hardships and travail would be the lot of those who responded to the invitation of Jesus to take up the cross to follow Him, but also that those who remained faithful unto the end would receive their just reward, the robe of blessed immortality. Together as a faithful community in their earthly pilgrimage, they have and shall continue to soldier onward together onto victory and salvation.

The story of the Plett family stands as a template for the experiences of many kinship circles among the Russian Mennonites. It is an account defined by suffering, piety, discipleship, Gelassenheit, Christo-centric faith and the courage of mortal beings to remain steadfast in the face of great adversity and travail. The record of their steadfast endeavours should be of interest to those concerned about the maintenance of religious freedom and the sacrifices made by people to preserve that freedom - freedoms which no society can ever take for granted.

Tolerance became the principle characteristic of the Mennonitism of the Spanish Netherlands during the Reformation.<sup>9</sup> "Endeavour always to build up one another," were the parting words of 37 year-old Jacques de Rore (1532-69), a Flemish Mennonite martyr executed at Brugge on July 10, 1569.<sup>10</sup> These are appropriate words for the Plett family as well as the Flemish Mennonite diaspora as we enter the dawn of the 21st century already marred by the ugly spectre of war and countless innocent deaths in a world which desperately needs, as never before, the living testimony of those who would follow Christ and partake of His kingdom of peace.

Delbert F. Plett, April 29, 2003.

# Part A - Plett Family Background

## Section One: Name Origins.

The earliest known common ancestor of all the Russian Mennonite Pletts and their modern-day diaspora in Germany, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, Belize, and elsewhere, is Johann (Hans) Plett who lived in Ellerwald, West Prussia, during the early and middle-18th century. In family history, everyone, of course, is always interested in the earliest possible known connections of a particular lineage. With the rapid strides that have been made in historiography in recent decades, Russian Mennonites can typically establish a direct ancestral link to the early 1700s in Polish-Prussia. The topic of such name origins is surveyed by historians Horst Penner,<sup>11</sup> B. H. Unruh,<sup>12</sup> and others, but the “Plett” surname is not dealt with by these writers.

The first records of the Plett surname are found in West Prussia. West Prussia was an old designation for the territory along and near the coast at the southeast corner of the Baltic Sea and along the lower Vistula River. East Prussia lay immediately to the east and centred in Königsberg. The area was originally inhabited by Pruzzen, a Lettic people. The city of Danzig was founded in 996. By 1000 A.D. Germans, Poles as well as Dutch and Flemish began settling the region.<sup>13</sup> In the 12th century the area was conquered by the Teutonic Knights who subjugated the local population who spoke a mixture of Slavic and German called “Kashubisch.”

In 1466 the Teutonic Order was defeated in the Battle of Tannenberg and West Prussia became a province of Poland, known as “Royal Prussia”. East Prussia became a semi-independent Dukedom, originally a vassal of the Polish King. Eventually the Margrave of Brandenburg, around the city of Berlin, also became the Duke of East Prussia. Considerable tolerance existed in both West and East Prussia, attracting refugees from various parts of Europe, and particularly from the regions of the lower Rhine and along the coastal area of the North Sea. After the 15th century, Brandenburg-Prussia became the nucleus of the modern Prussian state which, in turn, gave birth to modern Germany. In the 17th century, Brandenburg-Prussia under the Hohenzollern dynasty became the major military power of the region acquiring the political and economic power to become the unifying force of the German Empire in 1871.

In the Middle Ages, people were known only by a single name. However, as the population increased and travellers set out on their journeys, it became necessary for people to adopt a second name to identify themselves. An Encyclopedia of name origins states that many people, such as the Plett family, adopted the name of their feudal occupation as their surname. The surname “Plett” was a common occupational name for a person who made breast plates for armour. The name stems from the Middle High-German words “blat”, meaning plate or body armour, and “blatenaere” referring to a person who built body armour. As a skilled craftsman, the original bearer of this name was a prosperous member of his community.

Since very few people were literate in the Middle Ages, names were often recorded in official documents by scribes who wrote on the basis of the way they

sounded rather than according to uniform spelling rules. The many spelling variations of the name include Blatten, Blatte, Blath, Blate, Plattener, Plettner, Platter, Plettener, Pletten, Plett, Pleter, Pletener. Pitten, Plat, Platter, Platener, Plaeth, Plactner, Plaettner, Platen and many more.

The development of surnames began much later in the Holy Roman Empire than in the other European states. During the Middle Ages, the practice of adopting hereditary surnames began in southern areas and gradually spread northward. After the second half of the 12th century, when the first hereditary names were found on German soil, the nobility began to call themselves after their ancestral seats. However, surnames were not adopted until the 14th century among the citizens and they did not become stabilized or universal until the 18th century when Emperor Joseph II decreed that all people throughout the Empire were to assume surnames.

The early records of the Plett family reveal that the barons and counts von Platen of Hallermund lived in Brandenburg since the beginning of the 10th century. This branch of the family possessed large estates in Priegnitz and Neumark. They were later established in Pomerania, Meeklenburg, Brunswick, Hanover, and East Prussia. In 1190, this branch of the family was ennobled and their most important estate was at Ruegen. Wilken von Platen, who was of this line, was the Minister of Justice and Privy Councillor to the princes of Pomerania in the 16th century. Throughout northern Germany, numerous descendants of this branch occupied the position of privy councillor and advisor at royal courts.

One of the other influential branches of this family resided in the Mark region where they owned estates in Preignitz. Georg von Platen, who was a member of this line, accompanied Prince Joachim II of Brandenburg on the pilgrimage to Frankfurt on the Main in 1563. Claus Ernst, Georg's grandson, was the War Commissar and Brandenburg Emissary to the Imperial parliament at Regensburg, during the early 17th century. Pabrum von Plathe, who was from the Hanoverian branch of the family who resided on the estate Grabow in the district of Lueckow, was the Privy Councillor and Governor under the Dukes of Lueneburg.

However, it is likely that the ancestors of the Russian Mennonite Pletts originated from the regions of Brabant, Flanders, Holland and Friesland in the lower Rhine valley and along the North Sea coast. This interpretation is more consistent with the historical background of the Mennonites in West Prussia, and with the socio-religious forces which articulated their movements in the 16th and 17th centuries. Dutch Mennonite historian Johan Sjouke Postma describes the origins of the Plett name as follows: "Apparently from 'Pleyte', a shallow fishing boat. Fishermen were often given such names. Seeland."<sup>14</sup> The reference to Seeland would refer to the Province of Zeeland in the modern Netherlands.

Johann Plett of Ellerwald, West Prussia belonged to the Flemish Mennonite denomination. The ancestors of these Mennonites were often refugees who had come to Vistula Delta in 1530 and after. In Prussia they were also joined by some converts of Dutch and Low German background whose ancestors had relocated to Prussia centuries earlier. It appears, therefore, that our Plett ancestor(s) were among those who emigrated from the Low Countries in either the early part of the second millennium or as Mennonite refugees in the 16th century and later.<sup>15</sup>

There is also a line of Pletts tracing their origins to Denmark. On July 21, 1992, Maralyn A. Wellauer, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, wrote advising that her grandmother Wellauer "was a Plett, born in Denmark. Her father, Hans Heinrich Plett, was born in Holstein. We can trace our line back to Marx Plett, who was married in Holstein in c. 1691. Perhaps you have heard the story about the famous vaccinator, the school teacher, Peter Plett. He was one of my ancestors."<sup>16</sup>

According to an ancestral file at the Mormon Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah, the family of Marx Plett is recorded as follows:

Generation 1 - Marx Plett, born ca. 1666;

Generation 2 - son Hans Plett, born March 19, 1692, Klein Rheide, Holstein, married Wiebke Schroder, born December, 1690, Boklund, Holstein;

Generation 3 - son Hans Plett, born 18. Trinitate, 1730, Kropp, Holstein, married Garderuth Knutzen, born 12 March 1747, Kropp, Holstein;

Generation 4 - son Hans Plett, born 13 July, 1765, Klein Rheide, Holstein, married Catharine Greven, born ca. 1765; Generation 4 - son Peter Plett, born 29 December, 1766, Klein Rheide, Holstein, married Elisabeth Magdalena Heyk, born 20 September, 1771;

Siblings, generation 5 - son Jakob Frederick Plett, born 15 November, 1800, Probsteierhagen, Holstein; daughter Dorothea Magdalena Plett, born 20 November, 1802, Probsteierhagen, Holstein, married Jochim Lamp; Catharina Elisabeth Christina Plett, born 28 March, 1804, Probsteierhagen, Holstein; Peter Plett, born 7 September, 1808, Probsteierhagen, Holstein; Hans Heinrich Plett, born 25 April 1811, Sciltonberg, Preetz, Holstein, married Ane Marie Carstensen, born 9 July, 1813, Odense, Denmark.

Generation 4 - Jurgen Heinrich Plett, born 19 March, 1786, Klein Rheide, Holstein.<sup>17</sup>

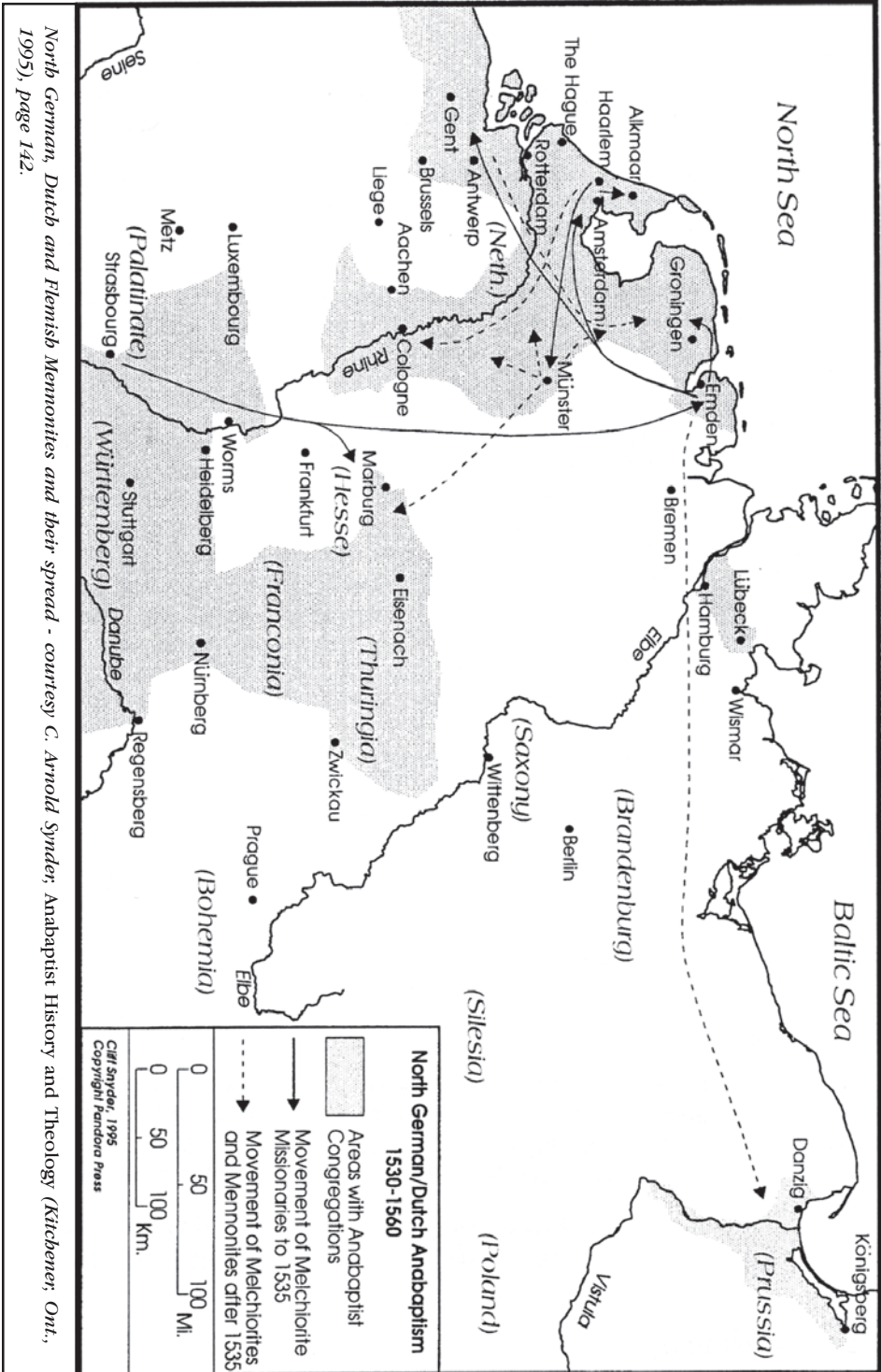
Two Pletts, unrelated to our family, have achieved some prominence in Germany: Heinrich Plett, a professor in literature at the University of Essen and author of many books and articles, and Heinrich Plett (b. 1908), founder of mutual aid organizations in post-war Germany, particularly the Neue Heimat Hamburg, providing housing. There is a "Heinrich Plett Strasse" or street at the university in Kassel, and a "H. Plett Allee" in Bremen.

There is no direct indication that either of these Plett families was connected to the Mennonites or to our particular line. However, in the 16th and 17th centuries, many Mennonite refugees from the Spanish Netherlands, south of the lower Rhine, did flee to northern Germany and settled in the area of Altona and north into Holstein - at that time part of Denmark - and so a connection is always possible.

The Plettenberg family is another line with a similar or resonating name. Joachim van Plettenberg (1739-93) was born in Leeuwarden, Friesland, in 1739. He became the governor of the Bahaia Formosa on the South African Cape and in 1779 he renamed the town Plettenberg Bay. It is presently a popular tourist resort. There is the City of Plettenberg, north of Frankfurt, in the Maskichen district, Nordrhein-Westfalen, between Dortmund and Kohn, in Germany.<sup>18</sup>



# Map One: North German, Dutch and Flemish Mennonites.



North German, Dutch and Flemish Mennonites and their spread - courtesy C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology* (Kitchener, Ont., 1995), page 142.

## Section Two: Johann Plett, Ellerwald, Prussia

1 **Johann Plett** of Ellerwald (Wicrowo), West Prussia, appears to be the Stammvater of all the Russian Mennonite Pletts identified to date. Ellerwald was a Flemish Mennonite village located just west of Elbing at the northeast corner of the Mennonite triangle in the Vistula Delta. "This was a pie-shaped mass of 160 square miles of land with Danzig at the northwest corner, Elbing at the northeast corner, and Marienburg at the southern tip. This land lay from three to seven feet under sea level and had to be drained and diked to bring it under cultivation. The Dutch Mennonites were good at that and were permitted to come to Poland for that purpose."<sup>19</sup>

Mennonites in Prussia were not fully recognized as a religious community and hence were legally required to register their births, marriages and deaths with either the Catholic or Lutheran State Churches. On June 25, 1988, genealogist Glenn Penner wrote that the death records (1710-1770) in the "Kirchenbuch" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Elbing - Neuheide,<sup>20</sup> "include Mennonites from 1730 and .....[that] he had found the following references to Pletts":<sup>21</sup>

<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
Jan 21, 1738	Men. Johann Plett	Ellerwald-wife
Mar 6, 1742	Johann Plett	daughter-Elisabeth
Sep 3, 1744	Men. Johann Platten	son
May 10, 1754	Men. Joh. Pletten	Ellerw.-wife
Aug 22, 1756	Men. Joh bletten	Ellerw.-son

On October 8, 2002, Glenn Penner wrote: "The register of Mennonite burials kept by the Lutheran church at Fürstenau,<sup>22</sup> about six miles west of Ellerwald, also mentions 'Johann Plett'. It should be pointed out that it was not unusual for Mennonites in a particular village to register their vital statistics with different Lutheran Churches or to have members of their families buried in different cemeteries. For example, vital statistics for Mennonites living in Einlage are recorded in the Lutheran churches at Zeyer, Jungfer and Elbing. The aforementioned registers record only deaths (i.e. burials). I believe that this is because Mennonites were not allowed to have their own cemeteries during their early years in West Prussia and were required to bury their dead in Catholic or Lutheran cemeteries. In some cases these deaths and burials were recorded by Catholic or Lutheran clergy. Judging from some of these registers, the Mennonites were required to pay a fee to have members of their community buried. Catholic and Lutheran churches did not as a rule register Mennonite statistics unless services were provided for a fee (i.e. burial in Catholic or Lutheran cemeteries). From 1772 on the Mennonites were required by the Prussian government to keep their own vital statistics and from 1800 on they were also required to register their vital statistics with the state church (Lutheran). The Fürstenau records do not state Johann Plett's village of origin. The following deaths of Johann Plett's children are recorded [at Fürstenau]:

<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
March 18, 1753	Catharina, age 3 weeks	Daughter
Jan. 2, 1754	Anna, age 10 1/2 years	Daughter
Sep. 27, 1756	Elisabeth, age 10 years	Daughter
July 22, 1758	Jakob, age 1 year	Son

Dr. Penner has written: "This may have been the Johann Plett that lived in Fürstenwerder in 1776. If so, there would have to be at least a 35 year gap between the birth of his first and last child. He may also be the father of Johann Plett of Fürstenwerder (who may have been born before 1740) and Peter Plett of Thiegart(erfeld)."<sup>23</sup> Dr. Penner indicated that the Johann Plett in Ellerwald was born before 1718 and died sometime between 1758 and 1776. He had a son Johann Plett from his first wife who died on June 21, 1738. Johann Sr. married again and had at least three more children - a daughter Elisabeth and two sons - with his second wife all of whom died in childhood."<sup>24</sup>

"Evidently, children of Johann Plett survived," wrote Dr. Penner on October 8, 2002. "Two probable sons are recorded in the 1776 census of Mennonites in West Prussia. They are Johann Plett of Fürstenwerder and Peter Plett of Thiergart. If one assumes that Johann and Peter were sons of Johann Plett of Ellerwald, the following family chart can be constructed:

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Death</u>
1 m	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Before 1718	Between 1758 and 1776	Jan 21,1738
2	Johann Plett	Before 1738		
1 2m	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Before 1718	Before 1740	After 1770 May 10,1754
2	Peter Plett	About 1740		
2	Elisabeth Plett			Mar 6,1742
2	Son Plett <sup>25</sup>			Sep 3,1744
2	Son Plett			Aug 22,1756
2	Catharina Plett	Feb, 1753		Mar 18,1753
2	Anna Plett	About 1743		Jan 2,1754
2	Elisabeth Plett	About 1746		Sep 27,1756
1 3m	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Before 1718	Between 1758 and 1776	
2	Jakob Plett	About 1757		July 23,1758

In 1992 genealogist Henry Schapansky forwarded his charts on the Plett family, showing Peter Plett of Thiergarten, Kleine Werder, and Johann Plett of Fürstenwerder, Großeswerder, as brothers.<sup>26</sup>



*Part of the recently restored (1999) Flemish Mennonite cemetery at Ellerwald (Wicrowo). Photo courtesy of Erwin Wielez, Surrey, B.C.*



*The old Dutch windmill at Ellerwald (Wicowo), one of the last remaining in the Vistula delta, which unfortunately burned to the ground June 14, 2002. Photo courtesy E. Wieler, Surrey, B.C.*



*The Ellerwald Flemish Mennonite church as it appeared after World War Two. The worship house was dedicated by Ältester Gerbard Wiebe in 1783. Photo - Men. Life, July 1948, page 11.*



*The Tiegenbagen Flemish Mennonite worship house built on the banks of the Tiege River in 1882 - view to the north. It was destroyed in WWII.<sup>27</sup> The Tiegenbagen Gemeinde became independent of Danzig in 1639. In 1735 Tiegenbagen was divided into four quarters: Elbing-Ellerwald, Barwäld-Fürstenwerder, Obrloff-Ladekopp and Tiegenbagen. The Tiegenbagen Gemeinde was the home church of almost half of the emigrants to Russia in 1788-89 and 1803-4. Photo - Men. Life, Oct. 1947, page 13.*

## Map Two: Modern Polish road map for Vistula Drive



A modern Polish road map of the former Mennonite triangle in West Prussia formed by Danzig (Gdansk) - to the west, Elbing (Elblag) - to the east, and Marienburg (Malbork) - at the southern tip. The Flemish Mennonite emigrants to Russia between 1788-89 and 1803-4 originated from the older and well established villages in the Werders of the Vistula delta. The more Germanized and Prtized post-Napoleonic War emigrants came largely from the poorer settlements along the Vistula valley. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 57.

### Section Three: Johann Plett, Fürstenwerder, Prussia.

2 Son **Johann (Hans) Plett** lived in the village of Fürstenwerder, West Prussia. Fürstenwerder (Zulawki) was a large village on the east bank of the Vistula River, three miles north of the main highway from Danzig (Gdansk) to Tiegenhof (Nowy Dwor Gdanski) and Elbing (Elblag). Even today, the village is well-preserved and picturesque with at least six arcaded houses (Vorlobhäuser), some of which date to the 18th century, and a lock (Schlusze), a well-known local landmark, connecting the canal transportation system with the Vistula River.

The Mennonites in the village of Fürstenwerder belonged to the Bärwalde Flemish Gemeinde, which later became the Fürstenwerder Gemeinde. Bärwalde (Nedzwiedzica), where the worship house was located, was situated two km. southeast of Fürstenwerder. The worship house survived the fierce battles of WWII, only to be destroyed by a fire caused by children playing with fire on the night of February 23-24, 1990.<sup>28</sup>

On December 14, 1910, Gustav Schulz of Fürstenwerder, Prussia, wrote the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in response to an inquiry by Johann P. Friesen (1847-1920) of Rosenort, Manitoba, providing the following information:

“Johann Plett lived in Fürstenwerder from 1759 to 1791. At the time of his death he was survived by nine children:

- 1) Sarah born Oct 15, 1759 and died January 21, 1813 [in Fürstenwerder].<sup>29</sup> She was married first to a Friesen and second to a Penner;
- 2) Michael Plett born 1761 who lived in Einlage, West Prussia.
- 3) Helena Plett born 1763, was married to J. Dyck, Neustädterwald.
- 4) Hans Plett, born 1765, was married first to Katharina Klassen, second Elis. Baer (Evangelical/Lutheran). He was excommunicated from the Gemeinde and from 1793 until 1797 he went forth into the military service. A son was born to the second marriage by the name of Michael, perhaps your grandfather.
- 5) Anna Plett, born 1766, married to a [Franz] Isaac in Mösland.
- 6) Maria Plett, born 1767, was married to J. Dyck in Kl. Mausdorf.
- 7) Heinrich Plett, born September 1, 1769, was married to Anna Isaac. He died on October 7, 1843, in Vierzehnhuben. He left no descendants.
- 8) Margaretha Plett, born 1771, was married to J. Wiens, Wernersdorf.
- 9) Katharina Plett, born 1774, was married to Simon Schroeder in Neumünsterberg.”<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Glenn Penner has written that “....the statement by Gustav Schulz in the *Rundschau* that ‘....at the time of his death, he [Johann Plett II] was survived by nine children,’ indicates that Schulz had access to the local estate records. These are referenced many times by B. H. Unruh as ‘Hyp. Beil. Akt....’ Many of these are still in existence in Poland and are more-or-less collecting dust and slowly deteriorating. These records usually list the surviving children (as is done in Schulz’s letter). I suspect Johann Plett’s estate was settled in 1791. If we had access to these records, we could check on this.”<sup>31</sup>

Johann Plett is listed as resident in the village of Fürstenwerder in the 1776 Konsignation, a census-like listing of Mennonites in Prussia: Landwirt, 1 male, 1 female, 3 sons, 6 daughters, Eigenthumer, mm.<sup>32</sup> The designation “mm” or “mittle maeszig”, means that the family was well-to-do. It was a status shared by only one in four Mennonite families in Prussia at the time. Bishop Peter Toews (1841-1922) has written that his “grandfather Johann Plett descended from a well-to-do family that possessed 14 huben [40 acres per huben] of land.”<sup>33</sup> This was a considerable holding at a time when many Mennonites in Prussia had no land.

The family’s fortunate economic status is illustrated by son Johann Plett who had apparently sometimes wished that God would spare him from extravagant living like his parents who apparently hosted large gatherings with many guests “...and where costly and sumptuous meals were served.”<sup>34</sup>

Like most well-to-do, middle class people, the Johann Pletts of Fürstenwerder were conservative, supporting the traditionalist teachings of the faith which prohibited marriage with those from outside the Flemish community. Peter P. Isaac recorded that his grandfather Johann Plett in both his first and second marriages “...had taken women of the Lutheran faith. To this his father....apparently was very disagreeable and when he found out that grandfather had plans to marry Elisabeth Baer, who was working in the parental home, he told him, ‘If you do that, I will disinherit you and you need not come to my home anymore.’ He is to have been well-off, materially. Then grandfather said, ‘Well, Elisabeth, then come.’”<sup>35</sup>

Henry Schapansky has written that daughter Anna was baptised in 1784, daughter Maria Plett in 1786, Heinrich in 1788, Margaretha in Fürstenwerder in 1791, and Katharina in 1795.<sup>36</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
2	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Before 1738		
m				
3	Sarah Plett	Oct 15, 1759		Jan 21, 1813
m	Friesen			
2m	Penner			
3	Michael Plett	Mar 16, 1761		1826
3	Helena Plett	1763		
m	Jakob Dyck	1765		
3	Johann Plett	1765		Mar 25, 1833
3	Anna Plett	Feb 23, 1766		Nov 27, 1807
m	Franz Isaac	Dec 14, 1744		Nov 27, 1807
3	Maria Plett	1767		
m	Jakob Dyck	1765		
3	Heinrich Plett	Sep 1, 1769		Oct 7, 1843
m	Anna Isaak			
3	Margaretha Plett	1771		
m	J. Wiens			
3	Katharina Plett	1774		
m	Simon Schroeder			



Genealogist Katie Peters, Winnipeg, Manitoba, has compiled a “Plett Family Chart” showing the wife of Johann Plett II as Anna Schroeder.<sup>37</sup> Dr. Glenn Penner has commented: “I’m not sure of the original source of the information on Anna Schroeder, wife of Johann Plett II, who died on January 1, 1808, in Fürstenwerder. This information is in the Grandma IV database. But, as usual, the GM database fails to provide any sources!....I have scanned through these records a few times and would have noticed her death if the name Schroeder or Plett were mentioned. Perhaps she is recorded as Mrs. Heinrich Epp.”

“The fact that Johann Plett (and Anna Schroeder) named their first son Michael hints at a connection to the Gross Werder Schroeder family. For example, Gerhard Schroeder of Gruben Kämp has a son Michael (b. 1764, baptized 1784), and Simon Schroeder of Petershagen (later Stobbendorf) had a son Michael (b. 1777, baptized 1796, d. 1813). Gerhard would have been born in the 1730s or early 1740s (his first wife was born in 1748) and Simon Schroeder would have been born in the 1740s or early 1750s. I have not yet been able to connect the two, but I suspect that there is a common Michael Schroeder connection (perhaps the father?).”<sup>38</sup>



*Photo of the Fürstenwerder locks, view from on top of the west gate, east towards the village. The houses visible in the rear are toward the south end of Fürstenwerder. Photo - Walter F. and Leah Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1998.*



*The locks at Fürstenwerder (Zulawki), connecting the mighty Vistula River (Wechsel) with the internal waterway and drainage system of the Grosswerder; view from the east end of the lock toward the river. MCC Chair Ron Dueck and wife Wendy inspecting the locks during a visit in 1996. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 57.*



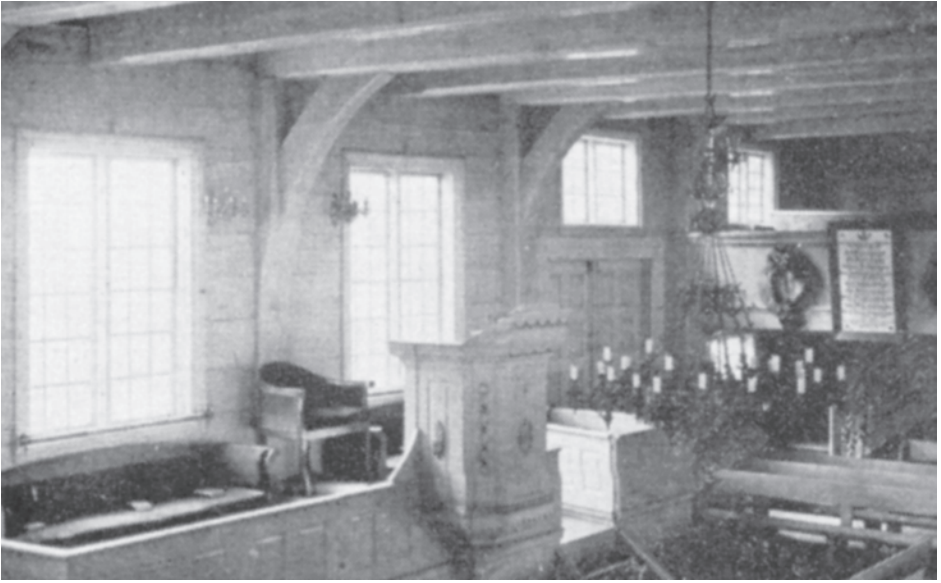
*A view of the majestic Vistula River, as it flows by the village of Fürstenwerder, towards the Gulf of Gdansk and the Baltic Sea. This is the view that Johann Plett III, our great-great-great grandfather would have seen most every day. The photo was taken from on top of the west gate of the lock by Walter F. Reimer, Steinbach, 1998.*



*Archbated house towards the middle of Fürstenwerder, east side of the street. In German it is known as a "Vorlaubhaus." Photo - Walter F. Reimer, Steinbach, 1998.*



*Beautifully preserved archbated house at the north end of Fürstenwerder, view to the east. This particular house is protected as a Polish historical site. See front cover for another view of this stately home. Photo - Walter F. Reimer, Steinbach, 1998.*

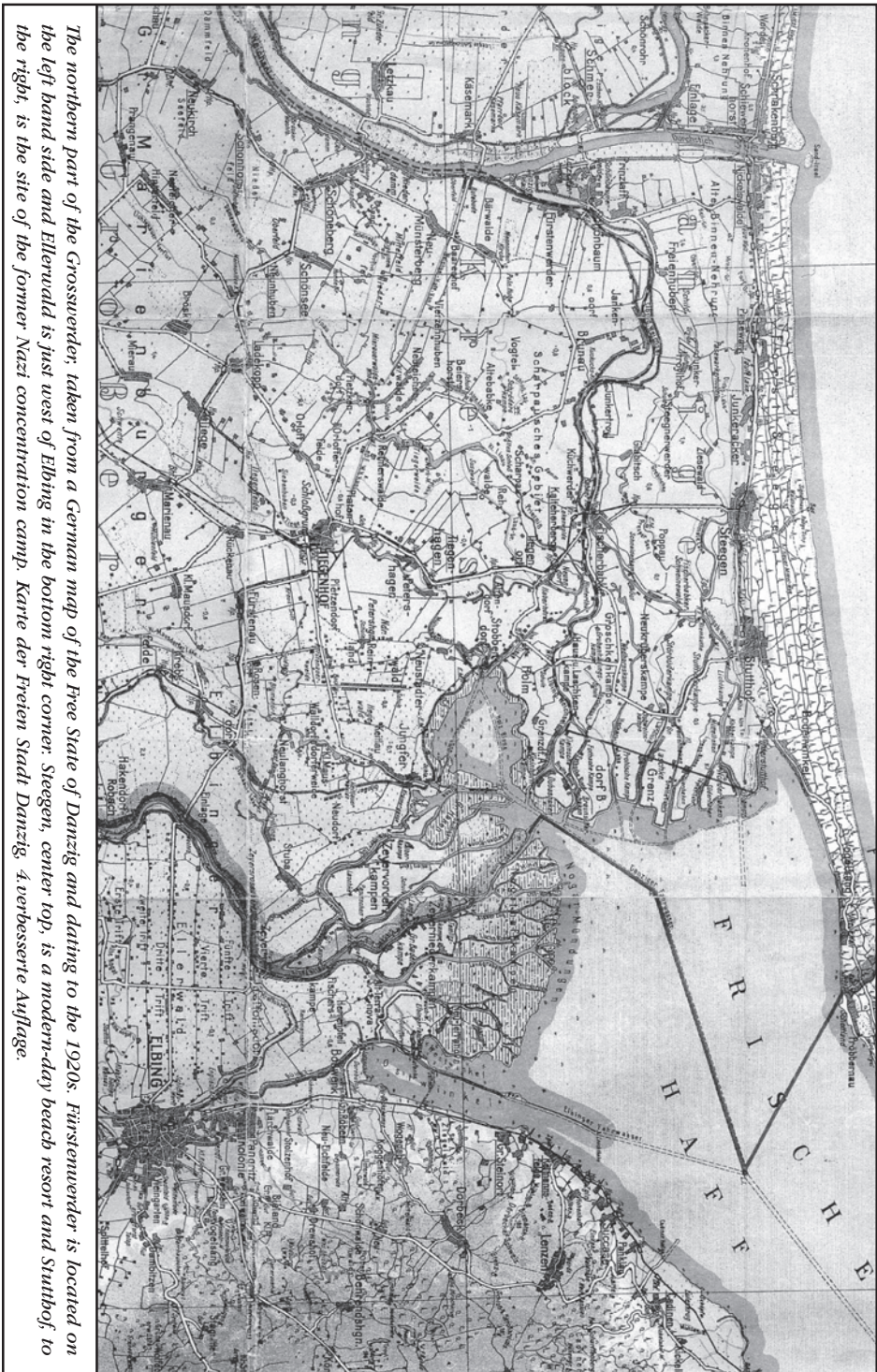


*The interior of the Fürstenwerder Mennonite church built in 1768. This is where Jobann Plett II and his family would have attended worship services. Photo - April 1948, page 14.*



*Former worship house of the Flemish Fürstenwerder Gemeinde, located in Barwælde, two km. southeast of Fürstenwerder. The building was destroyed by fire on the night of February 23-24, 1990.<sup>39</sup> Photo - Men. Life, Jan. 1959, page 28.*

## Map Three: The Northern Grosswerder, 1920's



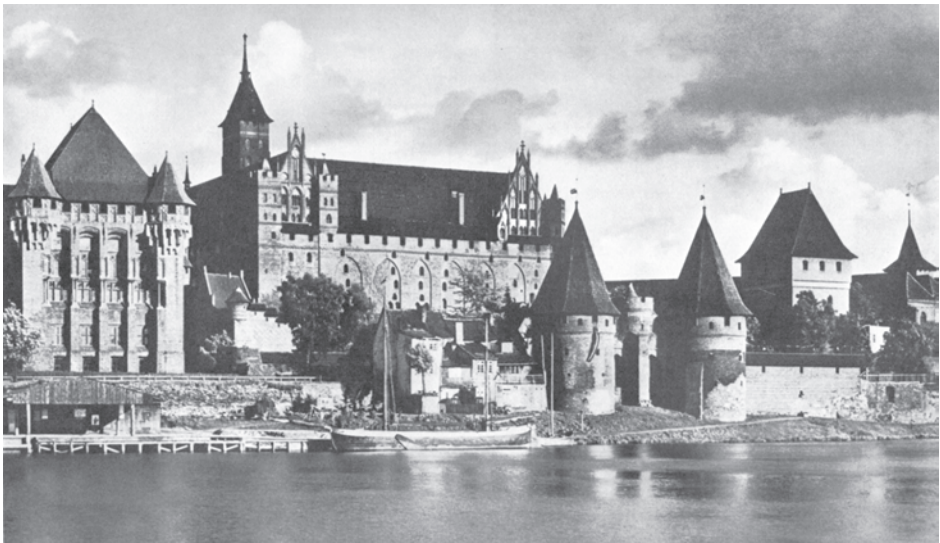
**Section Four: Peter Plett, 1740-1783, Tiergarterfeld.**

2 Son **Peter Plett** is listed as Peter Riett in the 1776 Konsignation in the village of Tiegart[ten] in the Klein Werder, Prussia: Landwirt, 1 male, 1 female, 1 son, schlechte."<sup>40</sup> Dr. Glenn Penner writes that Peter Plett was married twice. His first wife died in 1776. He remarried in 1777 to a Harms daughter. The second marriage is described as "a widower marrying a single girl (Jungfrau)". Peter Plett's widow married for the second time on December 4, 1783, to Abraham Doerksen. She is referred to as "a widow under 40 years old".<sup>41</sup>

In 1982 Glenn Penner wrote: "I have record of Peter Plett leaving the Orlofferfeld Frisian church in 1774 for the Klein Werder where they belonged to the Thiensdorf-Preussisch Rosengart Gemeinde. This information is found in the 'Attestatum' of the Orlofferfeld church."<sup>42</sup> This means that Peter Plett at one time (pre-1774) lived in the Groszwerder and that he was a Frisian.<sup>43</sup> "Peter Plett belonged to the Frisian Thiensdorf Gemeinde whereas Johann Plett is recorded as belonging to the Bärwalde Flemish Church (Fürstenwerder)."<sup>44</sup> Dr. Glenn Penner has written "I doubt very strongly that he [Peter Plett] had any children who survived... [leaving] Johann Plett of Fürstenwerder as our Plett Stammvater."<sup>45</sup>

3 Son **Khristian Plett** died of measles in 1776. Son **Peter Plett** was baptised circa 1783-84.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
2	<b>Peter Plett</b>	1740		Jan 22, 1783
m				ca. 1765-1777
3	Christian Plett	1765		Apr 30, 1782
2	<b>Peter Plett</b>	1740		Jan 22, 1783
2m	Harms	After 1743	Oct 21, 1777	
3	Jakob Plett	Oct 7, 1778		Dec 26, 1778
3	Peter Plett	ca. 1783-84		



*The famous Marienburg castle built as the headquarters for the Teutonic Knights from 1280 to 1318. View to the east. Photo - Martin Thiehsen und seine Nachkommen, photoplates.*

## Section Five: Emigration to Russia.

Royal Poland was a fragile political entity, also referred to as the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth after 1569. The lack of strong central government and strong regionalism, sometimes worked to the advantage of often barely tolerated minorities such as the Mennonites and Jews. But Royal Poland's fragility also made it vulnerable to outside forces. By the late 18th century the Prussian Hohenzollerns had become the leading military power in the region.

Royal Poland was eventually dismembered and annexed by its neighbours, Austria, Russia and Prussia: "The first partition occurred in 1773 and the[y]...gained control of Royal Prussia,"<sup>46</sup> bringing most of the Werders in the Vistula Delta under direct Prussian rule. This was one of the major incentives for the first Mennonite migration to Imperial Russia in 1788, resulting in the establishment of the Chortitza Colony on the Dnieper River. The seizure of Danzig followed in the second partition in 1793. After the third partition in 1795, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist. This resulted in a second major wave of Mennonite immigration starting in 1803 with the founding of the Molotschna Colony the following year. The larger and more prosperous Molotschna Colony would become the future home of the brothers Plett - Michael and Johann. A third wave of emigration followed at the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The majority of these immigrants were from the poorer, less established Mennonite settlements along the Vistula River valley toward Warsaw. They were already more Germanized and influenced by Separatist-Pietist religious culture, with chiliasm as an important motive for the "eastward" move. Some of the later immigrants aggressively interfered with the peaceful functioning of the traditionalist Flemish Mennonite Gemeinden in Russia.



*The "old" City of Danzig, view to the south. At the left is the city hall, the Maria Cathedral, middle, and the famous crane tower (elevator), right. Photo - Martin Thiehsen und seine Nachkommen (Burgdorf, 1977), photoplates.*

## Part B: Michael Plett

### Section One: Michael Plett, 1761-1826, Halbstadt, Molotschna.

3 Son **Michael Plett** married Anna Thun, youngest daughter of Johann Thun of Jankendorf, Prussia.<sup>47</sup> She was born on March 24, 1764, at 7 p.m. in Tiegenort. Anna died while giving birth to son Heinrich in 1794, January 24, at 6:30 p.m. seven hours after giving birth. She was 29 years, 4 weeks and 3 days old and married 10 years, 10 weeks and 4 days.<sup>48</sup> According to the 1910 *Rundschau* article by Gustav Schulz, Michael Plett lived in Einlage.<sup>49</sup> Michael Plett is listed in the 1793 Danzig census as resident in Schönrohr with two sons and one daughter.

In the immigration records Michael Plett and his family are recorded as being from Klein Mausdorf, Prussia, from where they immigrated to Russia in 1803: "Plett, Michael, Kl. Mausdorferweide, 42, Landwirt, to Molotschna, first wife Anna Thun deceased, second wife Anna Wiens, Kl. Mausdorferweide, to Molotschna, children from the first marriage Johann 17, Anna 15 and Michael 13."<sup>50</sup>

Michael Plett settled on Wirtschaft 1 in the village of Halbstadt, Molotschna, in 1804. The family is listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen: "Michael Plett, age 48, from West Prussia, Kleinmausdorf, Amt Elbing, Land Bauer, wife Anna 53, children Johann 23, Anna 21, Michael 19, and also friend Elisabeth Plitten age 22. Property 1 wagon, 4 horses, 10 cattle, 10 sheep, 1 plow and 1 harrow." Listed as an Anwohner or as someone without their own Wirtschaft is "Johann Plett age 20, from Fürstenwerder, Amt Tiegenhoff, (no record of occupation), wife Gertrude 23, no record of property."<sup>51</sup> Michael Plett is listed as the owner of Wirtschaft 27 in Halbstadt in the 1835 census which shows that he died in 1826. Presumably Michael's sons had both acquired their own Wirtschaften elsewhere by then and so the Wirtschaft in Halbstadt was sold in 1826 to Heinrich Heinrich Kroeker.<sup>52</sup>

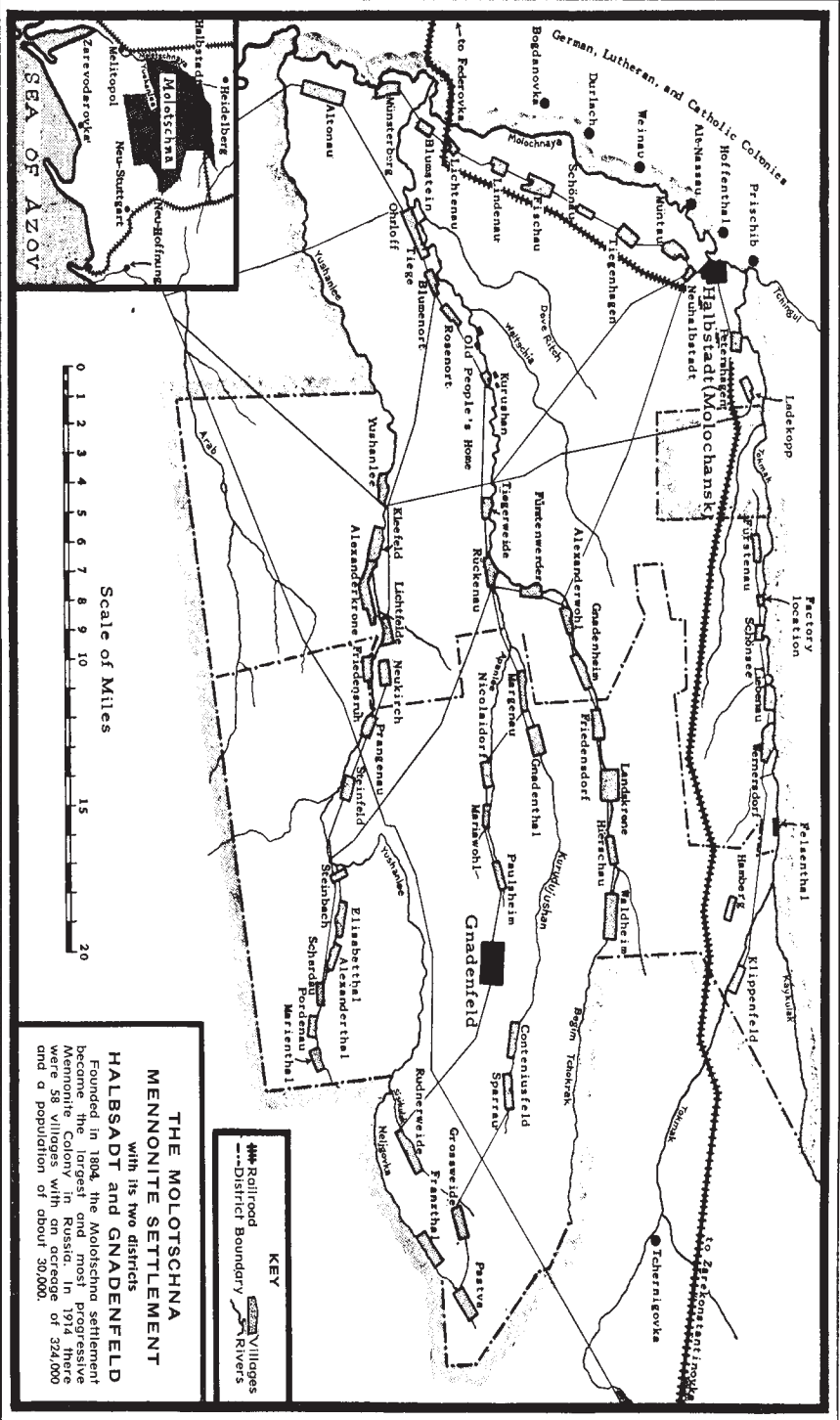
According to the "Family Record" of Peter Joh. Plett, "Michael Plett died after a very painful six day illness. Brought his age to 65 years less 6 days and 20 hours."<sup>53</sup>

4 Daughter **Anna Michael Plett** "...fell asleep in the Lord after a very severe three day sickness"<sup>54</sup> at 4:30 in the afternoon.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Michael Plett</b>	Mar 16,1761		Mar 8,1826
m	Anna Thun	Mar 24,1764		Jan 24,1794
4	Johann Plett	Mar 8,1786	Apr 23,1808	Jul 17,1854
4	Anna Plett	Mar 26,1788		Mar 11,1811
4	Michael Plett	Mar 25,1790		
4	Gerhard Plett	Apr 27,1791		Jul 31,1791
4	Gerhard Plett	May 24,1792		Feb 6,1793
4	Heinrich Plett	Jan 24,1794		Mar 21,1794
3	<b>Michael Plett</b>	Mar 16,1761		1826
m	Anna Wiens	1757		



# Map Four: Molotschna Colony, Russia



**THE MOLOTSCHNA  
Mennonite SETTLEMENT**  
with its two districts  
**HALBSADT and GNADENFELD**

Founded in 1804, the Molotschna settlement became the largest and most progressive of the colonies. It consists in 1914 of 58 villages, with an acreage of 324,000 and a population of about 30,000.

**KEY**

—•—•— Railroads  
--- District Boundary  
--- Villages  
--- Rivers

*Molotschna Colony, Imperial Russia, 1914. Molotschna Mennonite Settlement, Russia, 1914. Map - Mennonite Encyclopedia, Volume Three, page 733/Men. Exodus, page 16.*

**Section Two: Johann Michael Plett, born 1786, Pordenau, Molotschna.**

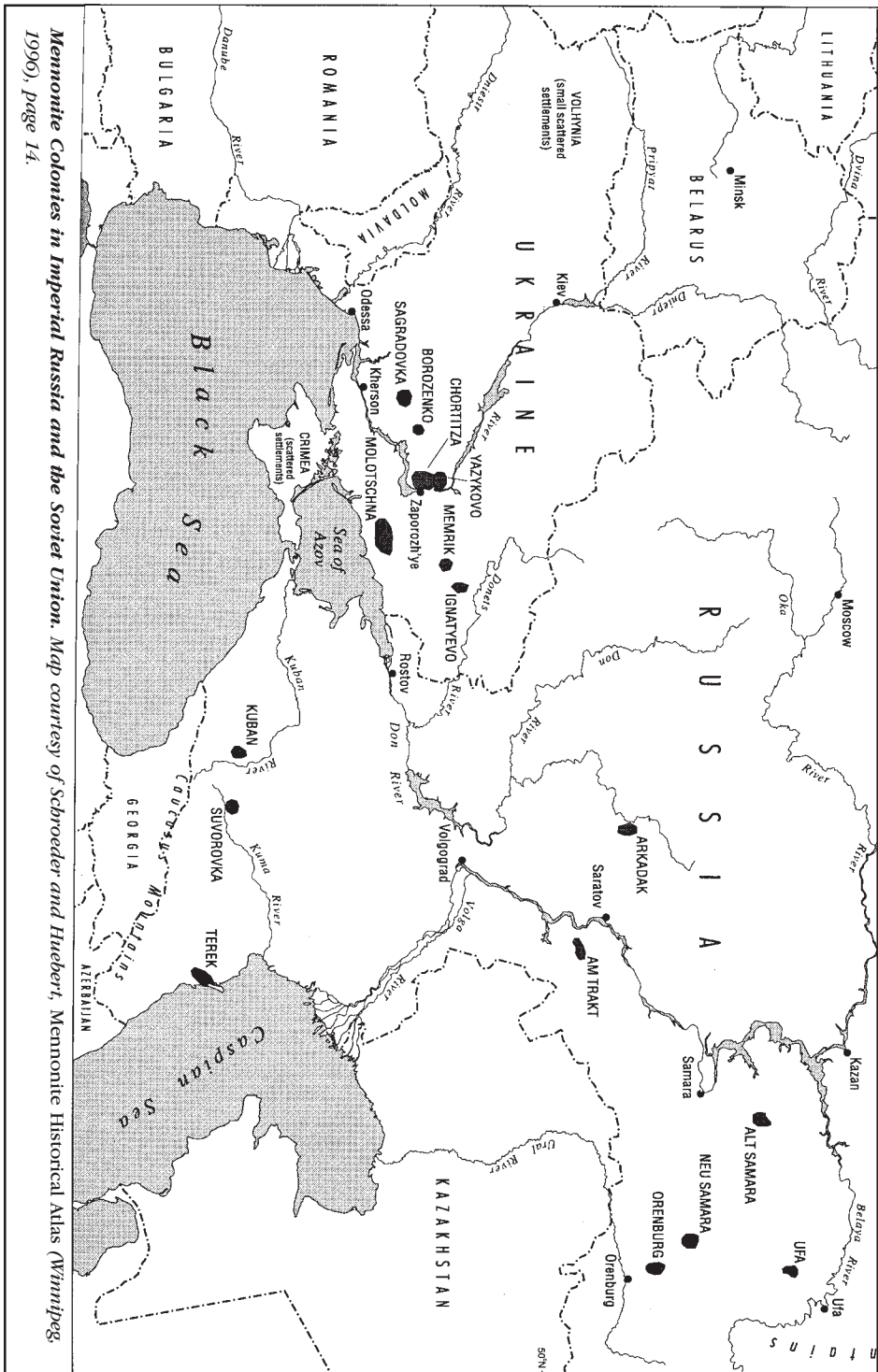
4 Son **Johann Michael Plett** married Gertrude Enns, oldest daughter of Julius Enzen (1742-1818) and Gertrude Baergen (1753-1819) who settled on Wirtschaft 2 in Blumenort, Molotschna, in 1805.<sup>55</sup> An immigration list of “Mennonite families that moved to Russia in 1806” under “Conveyance sent from Grodno on October 23, 1806,” included the family of “Johann Plett age 20 (b. ca. 1876). From Heuboden. In Grodno they received 68 rubles 34 kopeks silver for food and 36 rubles in silver as animal feed for the trip.”<sup>56</sup> In 1808 Johann and Gertrude Plett were living in Halbstadt where they are shown as Anwohner in the village in the Revisions-Listen of that year.

Sometime thereafter Johann Plett moved to Fürstenau where they owned Wirtschaft 14. In 1821 they sold this Wirtschaft to Albrecht Jakob Mantler who was shown as its owner at the time of the 1835 census. Also in 1821 Johann Plett and his family moved to Pordenau where they are listed in the 1835 census as the owners of Wirtschaft 19: Johann Michael Plett age 48, 1821 from Fürstenau, wife Gertrude 44, children Gertrude 25, Michael 22, Anna 20, Julius 18, Heinrich 15, Johann 13, Katarina 9, Maria 7, Peter 4 and Elisabeth 2.

The Johann Plett family is fortunate in that three records of the children of Johann Plett and Gertrude Enns are in existence. The oldest is the account of son Peter Johann Plett written in 1854, the next, was compiled by grandson Peter Jakob Plett, and a third, author unknown, originates from the family of grandson Cornelius Plett (1849-1920), Lehigh, Kansas. The chronicle of son Peter Johann Plett - also the most extensive of the three - was dated December 3, 1854, merely four months after his father’s death. The family record of Peter Jakob Plett was copied from that of his uncle on July 30, 1944. The third record may well originate from the same source.<sup>57</sup> The patronymic middle name “Johann”, has been inserted into the names of Johann’s children to make the family record easier to follow.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Mar 8, 1786	Apr 23, 1808	Jul 17, 1854
m	Gertrude Enzen	Dec 26, 1790		May 25, 1870
5	Gertrude Joh. Plett	Jan 28, 1810		
5	Michael Joh. Plett	Jul 23, 1812		Nov 25, 1880
5	Anna Joh. Plett	Jan 21, 1814		
5	Julius Joh. Plett	Jan 24, 1817		Jan 2, 1892
5	Heinrich Joh. Plett	Apr 9, 1819		Feb 8, 1880
5	Johann Joh. Plett	Aug 31, 1821		
5	Gerhard Joh. Plett	Nov 18, 1823		Aug 20, 1825
5	Katharina Joh. Plett	Mar 8, 1826		
5	Maria Joh. Plett	Mar 27, 1828		Mar 11, 1895
5	Peter Joh. Plett	Jul 16, 1830		Jan 11, 1907
5	Elisabeth Joh. Plett	Nov 6, 1832		Feb 1, 1899
5	Jakob Joh. Plett	Mar 5, 1836		Nov 17, 1893

## Map Five: Mennonite Colonies in Russia



*Mennonite Colonies in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. Map courtesy of Schroeder and Huebert, Mennonite Historical Atlas (Winnipeg, 1996), page 14.*

5 Daughter **Gertrude Joh. Plett** married Abram Dueck of Muntau, Molotschna. They had three sons and two daughters.

6 Daughter **Gertrude Dueck** married David Goerzen of Schardau. They had six children but none in Canada. Son **Abram Dueck** married Helena Thessmann of Marienthal. They had five sons and one daughter: Jakob, Abraham, Johann, Heinrich, Peter and Helena. Some of the Abram Dueck grandchildren lived in Coaldale, Alberta. Son Peter Dueck is in Canada with his family except one daughter. Daughter **Helena Dueck** married Johann Hooge of Friedensruh. They had two children: Johann and Gertrude. Johann Hooge remarried after her death and had a large family, but all remained in Russia.<sup>58</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Gertrude Joh. Plett</b>	Jan 28, 1810	Dec 28, 1834	
m	Abram Dueck			
6	Abram Dueck	Dec 29, 1835		
m	Helena Thessmann			
6	Gertrude Dueck	Apr 26, 1837		
m	David Goerzen			
6	Johann Dueck	Nov 29, 1839		
6	Helena Dueck	Aug 18, 1840		
m	Johann Hooge			
6	Heinrich Dueck	Apr 19, 1843		



*The Girl's School in Halbstadt, built in 1909. In 2000 the building was remodelled and opened as a "Mennonite Centre" to serve as a cultural centre and to provide assistance and education to the local residents. Photo June 2003. See Diese Steine, page 244/Pres., No. 18, page 64.*

5 Son **Michael Joh. Plett** married Elisabeth Dueck of Muntau, Molotschna. Elisabeth died in 1848. Michael married for the second time to Katharina Wiebe of Altona, Molotschna. The Michael Plett family lived on Wirtschaft 3 in the village of Kleefeld, Molotschna, across the street from his father's cousin Cornelius Plett (1820-1900) who lived on Wirtschaft 38 and served as mayor of the village for some time. Three of the Michael Plett children were attending school in Kleefeld in 1857/8: Kornelius age 7, Gertrude 11 and Maria 9.<sup>59</sup> In 1862 their children Kornelius age 12, Maria 14 and Katharina 11 were attending school in the village.<sup>60</sup>

Michael Plett immigrated from Russia in 1877 crossing the ocean on the S.S. Vaderland.<sup>61</sup> The family arrived at Sutton, Nebraska, on June 21, 1877.<sup>62</sup> Family historian Mrs. Lydia Plett Balzer writes that "In York County, Nebraska, somewhat north of a little town Lushton they settled and made their claim to eighty acres of land. They erected buildings according to the pattern in the old country. Parents Michael and Katharina Plett lived together with their children Cornelius and Sarah Plett." Michael Plett and Katharina Plett died and "Both lie buried in a cemetery about half-a-mile south of their farm where they had lived in the new world since they settled here." The information for the genealogy and history of the family of Michael Plett is from the family history book by Lydia Plett Balzer.<sup>63</sup>

6 Daughter **Elisabeth Plett** died at the age 22 about three weeks after she was married.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Michael Joh. Plett</b>	Jul 23,1812	Oct 12,1838	Nov 25,1880
m	Elisabeth Dueck			1848
6	Helena Plett	1839		Died
6	Johann Plett	Aug 2,1840	1873	Apr 26,1914
6	Helena Plett	Jan 1,1842	1869	Dec 25,1907
6	Elisabeth Plett	Sep 19,1843	Oct 28,1865	Nov 17,1865
6	Gertrude Plett	Sep 24,1845		1891
6	Maria Plett	Mar 3,1848		Dec 26,1928
5	<b>Michael Joh. Plett</b>	Jul 23,1812		Nov 25,1880
m	Katharina Wiebe	Dec 8,1822	Jan 19,1849	Jun 13,1891
6	Cornelius Plett	Nov 7, 1849	Feb 13,1875	Mar 6,1920
6	Katharina Plett	Feb 12,1852	Oct 25,1878	Jan 3,1928
6	Sarah Plett	Nov 11,1862		Nov 16,1862

6 Son **Johann Plett** married Maria Janzen. They had seven children, two of whom were born in Russia. They immigrated from Russia in 1877 and came to Nebraska together with his parents. Later they moved to Inman, Kansas, where they "settled on a farm one mile east and a little south of Inman." They belonged to the Bethel Mennonite Gemeinde at Inman. They are listed in Superior Township, McPherson County, Kansas, in the 1880 census.

7 Son **Johann J. Plett** never married.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann Plett</b>	Aug 2,1840	1873	Apr 26,1914
m	Maria Janzen	Aug 14,1850		Feb 28,1903
7	Johann J. Plett	May 15,1875		Sep 23,1923

7	Wilhelm Plett	Nov 26, 1876	Oct 5, 1904	Nov 10, 1946
m	Margaretha Harder	Feb 16, 1884		Dec 3, 1942
7	Heinrich Plett	Mar 14, 1879	Jun 11, 1901	Dec 29, 1957
m	Justina Goertzen	Oct 3, 1876		Jan 26, 1961
7	Cornelius Plett	Oct 15, 1880	Apr 17, 1906	Sep 4, 1951
m	Maria Siemens	Apr 2, 1884		Oct 28, 1971
7	Gerhard Plett	Jun 6, 1889	Nov 13, 1921	Oct 12, 1961
m	Helena Becker	Mar 23, 1896		
7	Daughter Plett			Infancy

6 Daughter **Helena Plett** married Peter Martens. They came to America in 1877 together with her parents and made their home north of Henderson, Nebraska. After Helena's death, Peter made his home in Buhler, Kansas.

7 Daughter **Maria Martens** never married. Daughter **Helena Martens** was married to Dietrich Olfred. There were no children of this marriage.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Helena Plett</b>	Jan 1, 1842	1869	Dec 25, 1907
m	Peter Martens	May 7, 1847		May 5, 1929
7	Katharina Martens	Oct 26, 1870		Infancy
7	Maria Martens	Jul 11, 1872		Sep, 1940
7	Peter Martens	Mar 22, 1874		Age 1 years
7	Peter Martens	Nov 8, 1875		Age 6 months
7	Helena Martens	Jul 7, 1878		May, 1955
m	Dietrich Olfred			

6 Daughter **Gertruda Plett** married Cornelius Duerksen. In 1874 they were both baptised by Bishop Abraham Schellenberg and became members of the Mennonite Brethren Church. They immigrated to the United States in 1877 together with her parents. They settled near Yankton and Parker, South Dakota.

7 Daughter **Tina Duerksen** married Jakob Loewen. Their son Jakob lived in British Columbia, Canada. Son **Cornelius C. Duerksen** later came to Kansas and settled in the Lehigh area. Son **Jakob C. Duerksen** later came to Kansas and settled in the Buhler area.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Gertrude Plett</b>	Sep 24, 1845		1891
m	Cornelius Duerksen	Dec 21, 1847		1905
7	Katharina Duerksen	Jan 9, 1874		Apr 1, 1874
7	Cornelius Duerksen	Jul 24, 1876		Infancy
7	Tina Duerksen	Jan 1, 1877		Oct 23, 1902
m	Jakob Loewen			
7	Cornelius C. Duerksen	Oct 5, 1879	Jul 16, 1903	Jan 5, 1961
m	Helena Duerksen	Sep 21, 1878		Jan 21, 1913
2m	Maria Funk	Jan 28, 1889	Jun 12, 1913	Jan 5, 1961
7	Jakob C. Duerksen	Apr 10, 1882	Jan 20, 1906	Oct 29, 1959
m	Anna Adrian	1878		Jul 20, 1906

6 Daughter **Maria Plett** married the widower Johann Becker from Kansas. He had three teenage children from his first marriage. They came to the United States with her parents in 1877. The Becker family moved to South Dakota where they lived for 28 years. Maria lived in South Dakota for a few years after her husband's death, but then her step-children brought her to Kansas where she lived with the children of her brother Cornelius. She is buried in the Springfield Church cemetery near Lehigh, Kansas. She was known to her nephews and nieces as "Mitchkjhe Mumjche".

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Maria Plett</b>	Mar 3, 1848	1898	Dec 26, 1928
m	Johann Becker			Mar 3, 1926

6 Son **Cornelius Wiebe Plett** (1849-1920) was baptised by Ältester Bernhard Peters and became a member of the Margenau Gemeinde in 1871. He grew up in Kleefeld. He married Sarah Epp of Tiegerweide. Cornelius and Sarah Epp immigrated to America in 1877 together with his parents. Sarah Epp Plett was not well at the time suffering from tuberculosis. They made their home with his parents near Lushton, Nebraska. Family historian Lydia Plett Balzer writes that "They worked hard and exercised thrift." There were Mennonite churches in Henderson and Fairbury, Nebraska, but none at Lushton, and so the families here were served by ministers from other congregations. In 1886 the Cornelius Plett family joined the Krimmer Brüdergemeinde. In 1892 Cornelius Plett purchased a farm in Marion County, Kansas, in order to establish himself on a larger acreage. The farm in Lushton, Nebraska, was sold for \$2500.00. They purchased a 160 acres "plus a heifer and a few pigs for a total of \$2925.00, about three miles west of Lehigh." They attended church at Gnadenau until the Springfield Church was built in 1894. In 1901 Mrs. Cornelius Plett became ill of inflammatory rheumatoid arthritis. Family historian Lydia Plett Balzer writes that "She was bedfast and for two years had bouts with high fever and severe pain, often not knowing whether she would live. She was left crippled and had to spend 21 years of her life in a wheel chair."<sup>64</sup> In 1915 the Cornelius Pletts retired and moved to Lehigh where they lived for the remainder of their days.

7 Daughter **Sarah E. Plett** remained at home looking after her parents. Son **Jakob E. Plett** died the first night after his parents arrived at the new settlement in Nebraska. Son **Cornelius E. Plett** married Elisabeth Fast. They lived in Hillsboro, Kansas. They had nine sons and one daughter. They are the parents of Lydia Plett Balzer, family historian, upon whose work the Michael Plett (1812-1880) section of this book is based.<sup>65</sup> They are also the parents of Cornelius F. Plett (born 1910), former moderator of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference.<sup>66</sup> He was the author of the denominational history *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church* published in 1985 shortly before his death.<sup>67</sup> Son **Jakob E. Plett** was ordained as a minister of the Springfield K.M.B Church on October 24, 1920. In 1950 he and his second wife moved to Hillsboro, Kansas.



*Cornelius and Sarah Epp Plett family, January 1910, on their farm in Lehigh, Kansas: l-r: Isaac, Henry, Frank, Jobn, Jacob, Sarah, Cornelius, Abraham, Peter and David. Photo - Michael Plett Family Record 1812-1971 (Bubler, Kansas, 19710, pages 34/35.*



<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Cornelius Wiebe Plett</b>	Nov 7, 1849	Feb 13, 1875	Mar 6, 1920
m	Sarah Epp	Feb 11, 1851		May 5, 1922
7	Katharina E. Plett	Dec 31, 1875		Feb 21, 1878
7	Jakob E. Plett	Nov 22, 1876		Jun 22, 1877
7	Sarah Plett	Jul 5, 1878		Jul 27, 1944
7	Cornelius E. Plett	Oct 10, 1879	May 24, 1903	Sep 5, 1973
m	Elisabeth Fast	Nov 10, 1882		Dec 23, 1973
7	Jakob E. Plett <sup>68</sup>	Oct 18, 1881	Dec 30, 1903	Jul 1, 1981
m	Maria Heinrichs	Jul 6, 1883		Nov 19, 1943
2m	Susanna Thiessen	Dec 2, 1896	Dec 9, 1945	Apr 3, 1984
7	Johann E. Plett	Sep 7, 1883	Mar 8, 1911	Dec 19, 1935
7	Tine Isaac	Oct 31, 1888		Jun 27, 1938
7	Peter E. Plett	Sep 7, 1883	Dec 13, 1906	Dec 23, 1958
m	Helena Penner	Dec 7, 1887		Oct 10, 1967
7	Heinrich E. Plett	Oct 31, 1885	Apr 8, 1907	Apr 28, 1951
m	Maria Heinrichs	Aug 12, 1885		Jan 10, 1948
7	Abraham E. Plett	Aug 17, 1887	Mar 10, 1910	Oct 12, 1968
m	Tina Klassen	Jul 1, 1890		Apr 5, 1976
7	Franz E. Plett	Oct 27, 1889	Oct 10, 1912	May 27, 1972
m	Annie Harder	May 7, 1893		Oct 19, 1976
7	Isaac E. Plett	Jul 17, 1891	Sep 17, 1916	Jul 3, 1971
m	Lydia Steinert	Mar 29, 1893		Aug 31, 1964
7	David E. Plett	May 20, 1893	Mar 11, 1917	Mar 23, 1989
m	Helena Pankratz	Jan 22, 1937		

6 Daughter **Katharina Wiebe Plett** married Abraham Sperling. Family historian Lydia Plett Balzer has written that "The Sperlings farmed in Nebraska and Oklahoma. At one time they also operated a furniture store in Buhler, Kansas."<sup>69</sup> The Sperlings were members of the Mennonite Brethren church at Enid, Oklahoma. Abraham Sperling had an automobile accident in Hutchison, Kansas, from which he died on April 8, 1917. Mrs. Sperling died at the home of her parents in Collinsville, Oklahoma.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Katharina Wiebe Plett</b>	Feb 12, 1852	Oct 25, 1878	Jan 3, 1928
m	Abraham Sperling	Jun 12, 1855		Apr 8, 1917
7	Tena Sperling	Feb 22, 1879		Jul 26, 1880
7	Maria Sperling	Mar 14, 1880	Nov, 1911	Feb 23, 1947
m	Peter A. Buller	Jul 27, 1879		Apr 17, 1952
7	Tena Sperling	Nov 10, 1881	Feb 20, 1902	Aug 5, 1972
m	John H. Voth	Aug 23, 1880		Oct 25, 1967
7	Cornelius A. Sperling	Feb 12, 1883	Dec 13, 1903	Aug 28, 1918
m	Elisabeth Regier	Mar 28, 1886		Feb 7, 1970
7	Abraham A. Sperling	Oct 16, 1884	May 13, 1909	Oct 13, 1973
m	Tena Penner	May 26, 1886		Aug 20, 1975

5 Daughter **Anna Joh. Plett** married Franz Quiring of Konteniusfeld, Molotschna.<sup>70</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Anna Joh. Plett</b>	Jan 21, 1814	Nov 24, 1838	
m	Franz Quiring			
6	Anna Quiring	Nov 9, 1839		
6	Elisabeth Quiring	Feb 19, 1842		
6	Katharina Quiring	Aug 25, 1843		1898
6	Franz Quiring	Sep 21, 1844		Dec 31, 1847
6	Gertrude Quiring	1846		Jan 17, 1880
6	Maria Quiring	Sep 30, 1847	Jan 5, 1867	Jun 30, 1888
6	Helena Quiring	Jan 8, 1854		

6 Daughter **Katharina Quiring** married Heinrich Poetker, son of Heinrich Poetker of Klein Lunau, Prussia. Heinrich Poetker was born in Landskrone, Molotschna Colony. The family emigrated to America where they settled in Henderson, Neb. Katharina Quiring Poetker died in Henderson where she was buried. Some time later Heinrich Poetker moved to Fairview, Oklahoma, where he was buried. Most of Katharina's family moved to California.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Katharina Quiring</b>	Aug 25, 1843		1898
m	Heinrich Poetker	May 18, 1841		Jan 29, 1930
7	Heinrich Poetker	1865		1940
m	Elisabeth Regier	1863		1923
7	Franz Poetker	1866		
m	Mary Janzen			
7	Gerhard Poetker	1870		
7	Anna Poetker	1872		
7	Katharina Poetker	1873		1900
m	Henry H. Smith	1872		1909
7	Johann Poetker	1875		
m	Kate Hiebert			
7	Maria Poetker	1877		1943
m	Doc McVicker			
7	Jakob Poetker	1878		1935
7	Helena Poetker	1880		1968
m	Daniel Janzen			
2m	Hansen			
7	Susanna Poekter	1883		1971
m	David Klassen			
2m	Frank Smith			
7	Peter Poekter	?		Infancy

6 Daughter **Maria Quiring** married Gerhard Poetker, son of Heinrich Poetker of Klein Lunau, Prussia, brother to Heinrich. The family emigrated to America where they settled in Henderson, Nebraska. Maria Poetker was buried in Petersburg, Nebraska. Gerhard Poetker married for the second time to Katharina

Janzen (1863-1941) of Gnadenfeld, Molotschna Colony. He changed his name to Petker. A total of 10 children died in infancy: three in Russia and seven in Nebraska: Heinrich (1870), Maria (1872), Franz (1873), Franz (1874), Henry (1876), Henry (1877), Maria (1878) and John (1879). John's twin brother died in 1887 and Maria herself died at the birth of another child.

7 Maria's **sons George, Henry, Jake and John** went to California. The **daughters, Anna and Mary** and their families stayed around Henderson, Nebraska. Julia Millsap who provided much of the information for this section is the daughter of son John Gilford Petker.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Maria Quiring</b>	Sep 30,1847	Jan 5,1867	Jun 30,1888
m	Gerhard Petker	May 18,1845		Mar 20,1908
7	Gerhard Petker	Oct 31,1869		Aug 19,1952
m	Mary Viola Smith	Sep 25,1879		Dec 18,1970
7	Henry Petker	Sep 13,1880		May 21,1977
m	Katherine Brawn	Jun 27,1888		Aug 15,1908
2m	Anna Regier	Apr 7,1888		Sep 12,1961
7	Mary Petker	Jan 18,1882		Dec 31,1971
m	Jakob J. Kroecker	1881		1952
7	Jakob G. Petker	May 28,1883		Feb 8,1939
m	Laura Agnes George	May 31,1893		Jun 21,1987
7	Anna Petker	Sep 17,1884		Nov 27,1972
m	Abraham P. Buller	May 18,1884		1951
7	Johann Gilford Petker	Jan 22,1887		Jan 28,1974
m	Martha Belle George	Dec 12,1896		Nov 29,1966

6 Daughter **Gertrude Quiring** married Wilhelm Ewert. After his death, she married David Erb from Pennsylvania. They are both buried in Council Cemetery, Charleston, Nebraska. Their families were raised around York, Nebraska.

7 Son **Henry Quiring Erb** married Esther Perk. They are both buried in the Greenwood Cemetery, York, Nebraska. Daughter **Sarah Quiring Erb** married David Franklin Broadwell. They are both buried in the Greenwood Cemetery, York, Nebraska.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	Gertrude Quiring	1846		Jan 17,1880
m	Wilhelm Ewert			
7	Will Ewert	before 1875		
6	Gertrude Quiring	1846	Jun 12,1876	Jan 17,1880
2m	David Erb	1836		Dec 11,1893
7	Henry Quiring Erb	Jun 9,1877		Nov 19,1956
m	Esther Peck	Nov 15,1879		Dec 13,1949
7	Sarah Quiring Erb	Mar 12,1879		Jan 25,1967
m	David Franklin Broadwell	1873		Jul 25,1928

5 Son **Julius Johann Plett** married Anna Baerg in Pordenau, daughter of Abraham Baerg and Elisabeth Matthies. Julius and Anna had six sons and one daughter. They lived in Pordenau where their son Abraham was born in 1841. In 1848 Julius Plett was one of the pioneers in the newly established village of Hierschau.<sup>71</sup> He settled on Wirtschaft 12.<sup>72</sup> Julius Plett married for the second time to Elisabeth Voth, daughter of Peter Voth and Elisabeth Ewert of Friedensdorf, Molotschna. Ten children were born to them of whom three died. The family lived in Hierschau, Molotschna, where sons Julius age 12 and Heinrich 8, are listed as attending school in 1857/8. The family of Julius Plett remained prominent in Hierschau and a village map of 1920 shows that a total of seven Wirtschaften were own by the Pletts and their in-laws.<sup>73</sup>

6 Son **Heinrich Julius Plett** married Gertrude Gerhard Klassen of Paulsheim. The family moved to the village of Bogomosow in Neu-Samara in 1895.<sup>74</sup> They had four children who died in infancy. Son **Peter Julius Plett** married Sara Peter Bartel of Wernersdorf, Molotschna. According to one source the family moved to Karporka, Memrik in 1884.<sup>75</sup> Cousin Peter Jakob Plett reported that the Peter Plett family went to Barnaul, Siberia, where he died. They had a son Peter remarried to Elisabeth Kroeker, Sagraodvfka, but they had no children. Their other children died in infancy. Daughter **Maria Julius Plett** married David Penner of Rückenau. She married for the second time to Peter Neufeld. She lived in Prangenau. Daughter Maria married Henry Thiessen. Son David lived in Alberta.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Julius Johann Plett</b>	Jan 24, 1817	Sep 26, 1840	Jan 2, 1892
m	Anna Baerg	Aug 14, 1819		Feb 10, 1858
6	Abraham Jul. Plett	Jul 4, 1841	Nov 9, 1867	Apr 27, 1913
6	Johann Jul. Plett	Nov 9, 1842	Oct 25, 1867	
6	Julius Julius Plett	Jan 21, 1846	Nov 4, 1875	
6	Elisabeth Jul. Plett	Jun 13, 1848		Mar 8, 1849
6	Heinrich Jul. Plett	Jan 25, 1850	Dec 7, 1871	
m	Gertrude Klassen			
6	Peter Julius Plett	Jun 15, 1852	1881	
m	Sara P. Bartel			
6	Jakob Julius Plett	Mar 11, 1854	Jun 24, 1874	
5	<b>Julius Johann Plett</b>	Jan 24, 1817	May 28, 1858	Jan 2, 1892
m	Elisabeth Voth	Dec, 1831		Jun 26, 1903
6	Kornelius Jul. Plett	Jan 18, 1859		Oct 31, 1895
6	Gertrude Plett	1859		1862
6	Gerhard Julius Plett	Jun 30, 1860		Apr 1, 1933
6	Bernhard Jul. Plett	Dec 3, 1861		Oct 28, 1916
6	David Julius Plett	Jul 20, 1863		Sep 5, 1887
6	Elisabeth Jul. Plett	Oct 15, 1865		
6	Maria Julius Plett	Oct 25, 1867		
m	David Penner			
2m	Peter Neufeld			
6	Gertrude Julius Plett	Apr 15, 1869		Jul 18, 1924
6	Isaak Julius Plett	Mar 15, 1872		
6	Diedrich Julius Plett	1871		Infancy

6 Son **Abraham Julius Plett** was baptised in Pordenau. He married Maria Thessmann, daughter of David Thessmann and Maria Wall of Marienthal, Molotschna. The family lived in Hierschau, Molotschna, where all their children were born and where Johann and Heinrich as well as mother Maria died. Abraham Plett immigrated to America in spring of 1892 with all 11 children where they settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. In 1901 they moved again, to Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Abraham Plett died in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, in 1913.<sup>76</sup> "They were poor but a happy family."<sup>77</sup>

7 Daughter **Maria Abraham Plett** married Abraham Bernard Klassen, son of Abraham Klassen. Maria and Abraham farmed on Otter Road, Aldergrove, B.C., where he died at the age of 83. They had one child, Abraham David Plett Klassen (1894-1968), in Plum Coulee, Manitoba. Daughter **Elisabeth Abraham Plett** married Franz J. Goossen, son of Jakob Goossen and Maria Buhler. Elisabeth and Franz emigrated from South Dakota to Saskatchewan in 1899 where they settled eight miles southwest of Waldheim. They retired in Rosthern. Son Herman (1896-1983) died in Waldheim, Saskatchewan. Their son George F. Goossen served as Reeve of the R.M. of Waldheim from 1943-55 and was a livestock dealer. Son David Goossen was an elevator agent in Waldheim. Son William Goossen farmed on the homestead in Waldheim. Daughter **Anna Abraham Plett** married Gerhard (George) Dick, son of Klaas C. Dueck and Katharina Neufeld of Sparrau. They lived at 1235 L Street, Reedley, California, where they both died. Their daughter Rosie married Reuben C. Nickel, son of Cornelius F. Nickel, in Reedley, California. Rosie died in Visalia, California, December 8, 1987, age 74. Daughter Anna C. Dick married John J. Rempel, of Carpenter, South Dakota. She died in Reedley, California, on August 30, 1984, at age 84. Daughter **Katharina Abraham Plett** married George G. Penner, of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Their daughter Katharina (Katie) married Carl Radtke and died in Lambertton, Redwood County, Minnesota, in 1988 at age 85. Their son Jacob G. Penner died in Fresno, California, on October 31, 1981, age 73. Daughter **Gertrude Abraham Plett** married Gerhard Goosen, son of Gerhardt Goosen and Agatha Peters. Together with his parents they left Hierschau and immigrated to America, settling in the Marion-Freeman area in South Dakota. The family lived in Freeman, South Dakota, where 12 children were born.<sup>78</sup> Gerhard died in Marion, South Dakota. Sons Abraham, George, Aaron, Peter and Jakob farmed or worked in Onida, Piedmont, Parker, Marion and Huron, South Dakota. Sons John and David lived in Richey, Montana. In 1953, third youngest daughter, Linda Goosen, was a lab technician in Sioux Falls. She was resident in Onida in 1981.<sup>79</sup> Son **Abraham Abraham Plett** married Katharina Epp, daughter of Gerhard Epp and Katharina Janzen, of Rosthern. Katharina died in Saskatchewan and was buried in the Eigenheim cemetery near Rosthern. The family moved to Vancouver, then Emerson, Manitoba, Bradner, B.C., and finally to Clearbrook where he died. Son Wilfred Plett married Hana Janzen and lived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Theodore Plett married Elma McNish and lived in Glasgow, Scotland. Son Edwin Plett married Mary Falk, and they live in Gretna, Manitoba, where he served as minister of the Berghthaler Church. Daughter Clara Plett lived in Clearbrook. Daughter Francis Plett married Abe Heinrichs and they live in Sprague, Manitoba. Son **Julius Abraham Plett** died before 1896 in a mine accident in Russia. Daughter

**Helena Abraham Plett** married David Andres, son of Johann Andres and Helena Epp from Baratov, Russia. The wedding took place in the Eigenheim Mennonite Church near Rosthern, Saskatchewan. The family moved to Otter Road, Aldergrove, Langley Township, B.C., where they both died. Son Abraham Andres (1903-92) died in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Daughter Maria Andres (1908-96) married David Giesbrecht of Orenburg, Russia. He was a strawberry farmer and egg producer in Langley, B.C. Daughter **Margaretha Abraham Plett** married Andreas Cornelius Unruh. They resided in Hepburn, Saskatchewan. Daughter **Sarah Abraham Plett** married Peter Gerhard Andres, son of Gerhard Andres and Maria Kroeker. Sarah and Peter resided in Silberfeld, southeast of Waldheim, Saskatchewan, in 1918. Later they lived in Aldergrove, Langley Township, B.C. Son **David Plett** married Agatha Andres, sister to Peter Gerhard Andres. In 1929 David and Agatha moved to Reedley, California. In 1935 they moved to San Jose. He worked as a maintenance and boilerman for the Santa Clara Packing Company. After his retirement, they moved to Santa Clara and lived at 1576 Lexington Street. He died in San Jose, California.<sup>80</sup>



*Abraham Abraham Plett (1875-1970), born in Hierschbau, Molotschna, and died in Clearbrook, B.C. Photo - Obituary.<sup>81</sup>*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Abraham Jul. Plett</b>	Jul 4, 1841	Nov 9, 1867	Apr 27, 1913
m	Maria Thessmann	Aug 1, 1845		Jun 16, 1889
7	Maria Abr. Plett	Oct 29, 1868		
m	Abraham B. Klassen	Mar 5, 1857		Mar 17, 1940
7	Elisabeth Abr. Plett	Nov 18, 1869	1894	1954
m	Franz J. Goossen	May 9, 1853		
7	Anna Abraham Plett	Mar 7, 1871	May 15, 1894	Jun 16, 1956
m	Gerhard C. Dick	Nov 29, 1867		Jul 20, 1931
7	Katharina Abr. Plett	Nov 17, 1872	Oct 29, 1902	Jul 22, 1945
m	George G. Penner	Mar 18, 1860		Oct 29, 1937
7	Gertrude Abr. Plett	Feb 14, 1874	Jan 13, 1895	Jun 20, 1965
m	Gerhardt Goosen	Apr 3, 1868		Dec 26, 1951
7	Abraham Abr. Plett	Oct 8, 1875	Jun 18, 1912	Feb 24, 1970
m	Katharina Epp	Mar 26, 1894		Nov 17, 1926
7	Julius Abraham Plett	Nov 22, 1877		
7	Helena Abraham Plett	Feb 24, 1879	Aug 3, 1902	Nov 7, 1963
m	David Andres	Dec 14, 1875		Nov 14, 1964
7	Margaretha Abr. Plett	Dec 23, 1881		
7	Johann Abraham Plett	Sep 13, 1883		Jan 12, 1890
7	Sara Abraham Plett	Sep 14, 1884	Nov 1, 1903	Aug 7, 1978
m	Peter Gerhard Andres	Aug 7, 1879		Dec 7, 1955
7	David Abraham Plett	Sep 4, 1886	Nov 18, 1909	Oct 15, 1981
m	Agatha Andres	Feb 7, 1890		Jul 23, 1987
7	Heinrich Abr. Plett	Jul 3, 1888		Feb 28, 1890

6 Son **Johann Julius Plett** was baptised at age 22 in Pordenau, Molotschna. He married Elisabeth Thessmann, daughter of David Thessmann and Maria Wall, from Marienthal.<sup>82</sup> They immigrated to America with her family arriving in New York from Antwerp on August 4, 1875.<sup>83</sup> They are entered in the Gemeindebuch of the First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota. His birth date is given here as Nov. 9, 1842, baptism 1863.<sup>84</sup> The Gemeindebuch states further that they “all moved to Oregon in 1883.”<sup>85</sup> Johann Plett married for the second time to Katharina Nikkel in 1884. Apparently Johann changed his name to “Platt” around the time he moved to Oregon and some of the children followed suit while others kept their name.

7 Son **Julius Johann Plett** never married. He lived in Oregon from age 14 when his family moved there until his death of tuberculosis. The entire family lived in the community called “Friend Oregon”, a small hamlet located east of Portland near the Columbia River. Son **David Johann Plett** was born in Minnesota. He married Bessie Ina Drake. She was born in Missouri. David and Bessie resided in Goldendale, Washington, in 1912. He was a machinist by occupation. Son **Henry Johann (Platt) Plett** was born in Friend, Oregon. He had one daughter Adrienne Platt Plett, born ca, 1941.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann Julius Plett</b>	Nov 9,1842	Oct 25,1867	
m	Elisabeth Thessmann	1846		1884
7	Maria Johann Plett	Nov 8,1868		
7	Julius Johann Plett	Nov 17,1869		
7	Johann Johann Plett	1874		1874
7	David Johann Plett	Jun 4,1875		
6	<b>Johann Jul. Plett</b>	Jan 21,1846	Feb 14,1884	
2m	Katharina Nikkel	Jun 12,1848		
7	Henry Johann Plett	1891		

6 Son **Julius Julius Plett** married Helena Diedrich Goossen in Hierschau.

7 Daughter **Anna Julius Plett** married Johann Hiebert.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Julius Julius Plett</b>	Jan 21,1846	Nov 4,1875	
m	Helena Dietrich Goossen			Dec 20,1896
7	Helena Julius Plett	ca.1876		
7	Julius Julius Plett	ca.1877		
7	Jakob Julius Plett	ca.1879		
7	Anna Julius Plett	ca.1881		
m	Johann Hiebert			

7 Son **Jakob Julius Plett** married Agatha Kroeker. They lived in Hierschau where their children were born and raised. They survived the Machnov attacks and the Revolution. Because Jakob owned a Wirtschaft he was considered a threat by the Soviets and was exiled to a labour camp where he died. In the meantime, the oldest sons were conscripted and sent to the front. The Army also took all their horses from their barn in Hierschau. In 1943 Agatha and her younger children joined the other Hierschau villagers on the trek to Germany. After the war Agatha and daughter Anna were repatriated to Russia.

8 Son **Jakob Jakob Plett** returned from the War and got married and had a family. They made their home in the Caucasus where he was an accountant. Son **Julius Jakob Plett** married after the war and moved to Siberia with his family. Daughter **Helena Jakob Plett** got an infection and had to be left behind during the trek in 1943. Daughter **Sarah Jakob Plett** was inducted into the Wehrmacht as an interpreter when they arrived in Germany in 1943 and never heard from again. Son **Heinrich Jakob Plett** was taken into the Wehrmacht but later repatriated to the Red Army and never heard from again. Daughter **Susanna Jakob Plett** stayed single but was later sent back to Russia. Son **Gerhard Jakob Plett** died in a Russian camp. Daughter **Anna Jakob Plett** married a Mr. Herlibouss and had three children, living a reasonably comfortable life in Novosibirsk. Son **Johann Jakob Plett** was adopted by a Johann Penner family who found him standing alone on a street corner in Germany. The Penner family moved to Grassy Lake, Alberta, taking Johann with them. He remained a bachelor and is now living in Calgary.<sup>86</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Jakob Julius Plett</b>	ca.1879		
m	Agatha Kroeker			
8	Jakob Jakob Plett	ca.1905		
8	Julius Jakob Plett	ca.1908		
8	Sarah Jakob Plett	ca.1910		
8	Heinrich Jakob Plett	ca.1914		
8	Helena Jakob Plett	ca.1918		
8	Susanna Jakob Plett	ca.1921		
8	Gerhard Jakob Plett	ca.1924		ca.1942
8	Anna Jakob Plett	ca.1927		
8	Johann Jakob Plett	May 26,1930		

6 Son **Jakob Julius Plett** married Maria Tobias Sperling. The family went to the village of Plescanowo, Neu-Samara, in the Volga River region.

7 Daughter **Margaretha Jakob Plett** married Gerhard Peters. They lived in Neu-Samara. Son **Heinrich Jakob Plett** married Justina Goertzen. They came via Moscow, to Germany and Paraguay in 1929, and to Clearbrook, Canada in 1965.<sup>87</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Jakob Julius Plett</b>	Mar 11,1854	Jun 24,1874	
m	Maria Sperling	1854/56		
7	Jakob Jakob Plett			
7	Anna Jakob Plett			
7	Gerhard Jakob Plett			
7	Maria Jakob Plett			
7	Margaretha Jakob Plett	Sep 2,1885	Aug 6,1922	Dec 27,1973
m	Gerhard Peters			
7	Helena Jakob Plett			
7	Elisabeth Jakob Plett			
7	Gertruda Jakob Plett			
7	Heinrich Jakob Plett	Jul 23,1895	Dec 11,1920	Jan 26,1977
m	Justina Goertzen			



6 Son **Kornelius Julius Plett** married Margaretha Sperling, daughter of Tobias Sperling and Anna Buller of Hierschau. In 1881 Kornelius was chosen among 123 youths to begin their period of four-year service in the *Forstei*.<sup>88</sup> “He was the first soldier to serve in the Wladimir Kazaren.”<sup>89</sup> Kornelius and Maria lived and farmed in Hierschau, Molotschna.

7 Daughter **Margaretha Kornelius Plett** married her cousin, Johann (Plett) Fast, son of Gerhard Plett, who had been adopted by Johann Fast. They had a daughter Greta, who married Gerhard Wiebe. Son **Heinrich Kornelius Plett** married Anna Banger, a Russian girl. Their daughter Margaretha Plett married Andre Kravetz whose family had moved to Hierschau, Molotschna, after the Revolution. Andre Kravetz served as a “Gaust Arbeiter” in Germany. After W.W.II, the Kravetz family fled on the “Great Trek.” They returned to Hierschau where they worked on the Collective Farm: Andre as the tractor boss, and Margaretha as the calf boss. In 1982 Dr. Helmut Huebert visited Hierschau, and was taken by his “guides” to meet a German lady. It turned out to be Margaretha Kravetz. She did not let on that she knew Helmut, because that was dangerous at the time. When Helmut casually dropped a few Low German words, Margaretha responded by telling the story of an attack which had taken place in Hierschau, which only family members would know. Then Helmut knew that she had recognized him and that he was her mother’s cousin.<sup>90</sup> Members of the 1996, 1998 and 2002 “Mennonite Heritage Tours” were honoured to be received by Margaretha and Andre in their home in Hierschau.<sup>91</sup>

*Two branches of the Plett family meet, June 10, 2002. Thelma Wiebe (Virgil), Fullarton, Ontario, and Margaret Wohlgemuth Warkentin (Milton)(right), Cartright, Manitoba, visit Margaretha Kravetz (left) in her home in Hierschau, Molotschna.*



Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Kornelius Jul. Plett</b>	Jan 18,1859	Jan 14,1886	Oct 31,1895
m	Margaretha Sperling	Jan 25,1860		Oct 31,1914
7	Margaretha Kor. Plett	Nov 14,1889		
m	Johann (Plett) Fast			
7	Kornelius Kor. Plett	1890		1941
m	Russian Woman			
7	Gerhard Korn. Plett	ca. 1891		Oct 20,1937
7	Heinrich Kor. Plett	Apr 16,1893		
m	Anna Benger			
7	Peter Kor. Plett	Dec 3,1895		1941
m	Lena Loewen			
7	Jakob Kor. Plett	Jan 14,1897		Missing, 1921
7	Anna Kor. Plett	Jan 3,1900		Jun 17,1922

7 Son **Gerhard Kornelius Plett** was a member of the Landskrone Gemeinde. He married Elisabeth Kroeker, daughter of Peter and Katharina Kroeker of Nikolaidorf. Gerhard and Elisabeth lived in Nikolaifeld where their children were born. During WWI, Gerhard was taken away into service. This left her alone with a child and her brother's children with the youngest only eight months old. After a few years her husband Gerhard came home from the army. But just as life seemed to settle to normal, he was elected to the ministry. His widow later wrote: "Because my man was a minister, one day the Reds came on our yard and dispossessed us, taking everything away we owned.....one day they also took my man and brought him to the district capital Melitopol into the prison. That was in 1931. We had eight small children, four sons and four daughters. Oh, how we bitterly cried when our beloved father was taken. Yet, these people knew no compassion. Four times I was able to visit him in prison together with my youngest daughter, only five months old when father was arrested in August. The oldest son of 15 years had to drive father from the yard with the wagon. He returned crying and related that Father had admonished him, that he should always be obedient to his mother at home and to please her. The children have always carried this out. We were very poor, since they had taken everything away from us. But the Lord brought us safely through this time, and we all remained alive. But when we then realized how badly things were for father in prison, our sufferings were soon forgotten. They tortured my man grievously - they struck needles under his fingernails and the like. How lamentable it saw! From Melitopol he was sentenced to five years in exile. He survived these years and after five years he returned to the homeland. It was a great surprise when father suddenly appeared on the yard. But the younger children did not recognize him anymore. So often they had prayed for their beloved Papa during the evening prayers, and now he was actually present. It was like a dream for all of us. Not all of the children were at home anymore, as they had to earn their bread among other people. Yet when father was home, they all came home, and there was great rejoicing. The beloved neighbours also rejoiced with us. But this joy did not last for long. The cruel Soviet officials again came to our home and tore him away from the family. That was on the 20th of October, 1937. We have never learned where they took him to. Later, in the year 1941, our four sons were also taken away from us [into the Red Army]. Their fate also has always remained unknown to us. When we were resettled from southern Russia to Poland in 1943, I moved there as well with my four daughters. One of them served there in the hospital as a nurse. Through our further flight we became separated and finally I remained alone with one daughter. Oh, how the separation pains gnawed at our hearts. Our only remaining hope was to see each other again in heaven with the Lord. In the meantime we also want to trust the Lord, even if things sometimes appear very dark. Presently, the Almighty God will wipe away the tears from our eyes. How often we have cried and prayed during all these difficult years."<sup>92</sup> By 1954 Elisabeth Kroeker Plett had settled in Hepburn, Saskatchewan. She died in Saskatoon in 1972.<sup>93</sup>

8 Daughter **Anna Gerhard Plett** married Jakob Penner. Daughter **Susanna Gerhard Plett** married Mr. Cey. Daughter **Elisabeth Gerhard Plett** married a Mr. Manilenko. All three daughters lived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at some point.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Gerhard Korn. Plett</b>	ca. 1891	1913	ca.1937
m	Elisabeth Kroeker	Feb 2,1893		Sep 19,1972
8	Anna Gerh. Plett	ca.1914		
m	Jakob Penner			
8	Susanna Gerh. Plett	ca.1916		
m	Mr. Cey			
8	Elisabeth Gerh. Plett	ca.1918		
m	Mr. Manilenko			
8	Margaret Gerh. Plett	ca.1920		
8	Kornelius Gerh. Plett	ca.1922		
8	Heinrich Gerh. Plett	ca.1924		
8	Gerhard Gerh. Plett	ca.1926		
8	Peter Gerh. Plett	ca.1928		

7 Daughter **Anna Kornelius Plett** married Aron Neufeld, son of Abraham and Katharina Neufeld. Aron was sent to a labour camp and never heard from again.<sup>94</sup> Anna immigrated from Russia and arrived in Rosemary, Alberta, on July 10, 1949.

8 Son **Cornelius Plett Neufeld** lived in Coaldale, Alberta. Son **Gerhard Plett Neufeld** lived in Lethbridge, Alberta. Son **Hans Plett Neufeld** lived in Coaldale. Son **Peter Plett Neufeld** lived in Lethbridge.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Anna Kor. Plett</b>	Jan 3,1900	Jun 17,1922	
m	Aron Neufeld			Exiled 1947
8	Margaret Plett Neufeld			
m	Kornelius Klassen			
8	Hilda Plett Neufeld			
8	Cornelius Plett Neufeld			
8	Gerhard Plett Neufeld			
8	Katie Plett Neufeld			
m	Heinz Dyck			
8	Hans Plett Neufeld			
8	Erika Plett Neufeld			
m	Joachim Black			
8	Frieda Plett Neufeld			
m	Peter Dyck			
8	Peter Plett Neufeld			

6 Son **Gerhard Julius Plett** was baptised May 21, 1879. He married for the first time to Elisabeth Franz Klassen from Alexanderkrone. He married for the second time to Katharina Willms, daughter of Gerhard Willms and Maria Baerg of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna. The following biography of Gerhard Julius Plett was written by his grandson Gerhard Hildebrandt, as a refugee in Germany in 1947:

Shortly before his death, my dear grandfather expressed the wish that the [records] in "the golden classical Bible" (family Bible) be continued under all circumstances. In fulfilment of his wishes. I now feel compelled to write his life story. Today, May 1, 1946, I find myself in Mündersheim, Germany, where I have been employed as a public school teacher since October 25, 1945.

[I] do not only want to preserve the eventful story within the framework of family happenings. Even more than this, I want to portray my grandfather's unshakeable faith, which became a kind of refreshing oasis during the Red reign of terror, and his conviction that not a hair on our heads would be singed without God's will. [I] want to portray his strength to patiently bear the hardship visited upon the Mennonites, without murmuring, and in the fear of God, [a strength] which stemmed from this conviction. I want to honestly depict his upright desire to serve the Mennonite people with his life and work, his actions and activities.

Another one of his last wishes must also be carefully taken into consideration, namely, that no words of praise about his life work he mentioned in his funeral sermon. Therefore, it is my humble wish that my attempt to show dear grandfather as he was in everyday life will not be construed as a form of praise. His God-fearing lifestyle is to be the ongoing example for all his descendants.

From the very onset, I have to regretfully note that the portrait will not be without its gaps. During the retreat from Russia to Germany, valuable pages containing grandfather's handwritten memoirs were lost in flight. Many important incidents in his life which find a welcome place [in these jottings] came from the recollections of his daughters Maria, Katharina, Nelly, and Aganetha, who were on the Ringelsbruch estate in Westphalia while these lines were being written. Time references cannot always be given exactly but, in general, are correct. The loss of the said papers was especially regrettable, because the fate of a considerable section of the Molotschna settlement was intimately associated with grandfather's activities.

After completing village school, grandfather received his further education in an evening school run by the teacher Johann Doerksen. It cannot be argued that this was more of an inspiration rather than an education for grandfather, since this style [of education] suited him admirably. His knowledge, which was rather impressive and diverse, was largely acquired by self-study.

For some years, he was a teacher in the village of Sparrau, Gnadenfeld district. After his first wife died, he moved to Hierschau. Here, he purchased a small farm and also acquired the clay pit near the village. At the same time, he built a small store. Here, grandmother sold bread, meat, rope, nails, etc. to the Russian travellers who came from far and near to buy the much sought after clay. Grandfather had married again; and so they worked together. At that time, the clay pit brought a rather good income. The clay was also called "white earth" or lime. Russian clay huts were plastered with this inside and out. Even Mennonite

housewives bought this from Russian peddlers who went down the street shouting, "Bella Glina" and used it to paint the brick walls in their rooms so that they appeared snow-white. The brick fences in front of them were also painted once a year, usually for Easter or Pentecost. This gave a festive appearance to the entire farm.

Through this business, my grandfather was soon able to accumulate capital, and when his father, our great-grandfather, died, he bought his fine, full-sized farm in the village [Wirtschaft 12 on the north side of the street].

For a lengthy period, he was the district judge in the Gnadenfeld district. Unfortunately, I cannot give the exact time when he held this position. In 1904 he gave up this post in order to devote his full time to the ministry. He had already been elected as a minister by the Margenau Mennonite Gemeinde in 1899. When Ältester Peter Friesen died in 1907, he was ordained as Ältester of this Gemeinde the following year by Ältester Heinrich Koop of Alexanderkrone. One or two years later, he also took charge of the Landskrone Gemeinde where a fine meeting house was being constructed: this was in 1910. Following the death of Ältester Johann Schartner, Gerhard Plett also took over the Gemeinde in Alexanderwohl. He baptized some 2,000 people. It is evident from statistics, which he carefully kept, that in one year he made 400 trips on behalf of the Molotschna churches. This naturally included all the travel required of him as Ältester of the three churches, especially at funerals, weddings, worship services, etc.

Though he spent almost all of his time in the service of the churches, his farm was in model order.

In 1916 son Kornelius contracted some form of "black pox" and died on February 23, while serving in the *Forstei* in Anadol, near the Sea of Azov. Gerhard performed the funeral.<sup>95</sup>

In 1919 he was arrested by the Reds and imprisoned in a very unhealthy cellar for 14 days. Why so many Mennonites were locked up never became clear; they were mistreated for no real reasons. Sixty-four men were crowded together in a room of 56 cubic meters. The wet and cold floor was of stone. After several days, grandfather could no longer stand on his feet. With great difficulty, enough room was found for him to lie down, but he had no protection from the [cold] floor. When his son Gerhard visited him several days later, he did not recognize him. With the help of the Mennonite doctor, Franz Dueck, grandfather was transferred to the hospital after 14 days. After one month, he was allowed to go home, without ever learning why he was imprisoned in the first place.

Grandfather even spoke of this period as the leading of God. He was able to comfort and pray with many men in prison, and for some of them these were the last minutes of their life. Men had not only prayed but cried to God. Many a man was taken at night and, not long after, one heard shots. Why the prisoner had been shot, no one knew.

The health of our grandfather Plett had deteriorated severely while he was in prison. After that time, he never fully recovered. He obviously contracted rheumatism there, which later, virtually crippled his legs. By 1928 he could hardly move without the help of his cane. Because of his poor health, he felt compelled to resign his office as Ältester and placed it in the hands of his younger colleague, the minister Heinrich T. Janz of Landskrone. This happened in the year 1928.<sup>96</sup>

In 1928 Russia initiated equalization - in simple words the liquidation of classes. This generally referred to those who had more possessions than the average person. The procedures were rather harsh. First, a money levy, the so-called "extraordinary tax," had to be paid. Then came the second levy which also had to be paid to the state within a very short period of time. This went on until the last resources were exhausted. This, of course, was the purpose of the whole operation. All the possessions were then confiscated by the state and sold at a ridiculous price in order to pay the debt to the state. In this fashion, three-quarters of all the farmers had to part with their belongings accumulated over many years of work. They were only allowed to take what they carried with them on their own person.

In this manner, grandfather saw his earthly possessions vanish in December 1930. On February 17, he had to bid his home adieu. When they came to take his furniture, grandfather commented, "For his livelihood a blacksmith needs a smithy and a bed. The one is as important as the other. My chair and my bed mean the same to me as a shop and a bed to the craftsman. I go from the bed to the armchair and the armchair to the bed." Amazingly, they left him these two items but no more. His farewell to the men who forced him out of his own house was characteristic of his whole lifestyle. In a warm, forthright manner, he shook each hand and wished them all the best for their later life. The men, normally not given to sentimentality, were dumbfounded by such behaviour.

Grandfather found a secret refuge with Heinrich Sawatzky of Landskrone. In the summer of the same year, Sawatzky suffered a similar fate: he had to leave as well, and grandfather went to Kornelius Toews, also of Landskrone. By April, 1932, the difficulties generated by the local political administration made a further stay in Landskrone impossible.

On a pitch dark April evening, my father, Hildebrand, secretly obtained horses (which did not belong to him) in order to get grandfather. Though the wagon was almost empty - what did the grandparents still possess? - and the four strong horses did their best, the journey made slow progress because of the deep mud. I, as a 13 year-old, was along at the time.

Grandfather's stay at our house had to be kept secret so that he would not be found by his pursuers. Meanwhile, his health deteriorated, and, after several months, he was confined to bed where he remained until the end of his life. His daughters Aganetha and Maria were with him. Katharina and Nelly were in Kharkov. The political situation steadily worsened and so, one hot June day, grandfather, with no regard for his condition, had to be loaded onto a wagon and taken to Friedensdorf.

During the last days of his stay in Hierschau, his daughters Maria and Aganetha had to hide in the gardens and hedges in order to avoid arrest. This time it was Jakob Voth in Friedensdorf who placed his home at the disposal of the grandparents. Here, grandfather was privileged to spend the last months of his strenuous life. If he was confined to his bed before the move, the move itself certainly did not improve his condition. Instead, the pain intensified month by month, and later, week by week. His bodily weakness steadily increased. His body became sore from lying in bed. Sitting brought some relief, but soon his weakened condition did not allow this. He could not even turn in bed.

He consistently viewed the political chaos as God's leading, as he did the arrest of ministers, the prohibition of public worship, the closing of churches, the deportation of Mennonites to Siberia, etc. During his entire period of suffering, no one ever heard him make a complaint. He was as calm in death as he had been in his pain and suffering. On April 1, 1933, he died quietly in the Lord.

The funeral service was held on April 5, 1933 at the home of Jakob Voth in Friedensdorf. Ältester Heinrich T. Janz from Landskrone, his successor in the office, preached the funeral sermon. All the children, except Gertrude were at the funeral. The small room could not hold all the visitors. Even men like Heinrich Kliewer, director of the high school in Gnadenheim and a communist, as well as several of his colleagues were present.

In a quiet spot in the Friedensdorf cemetery, grandfather Gerhard Plett gently sleeps until the great resurrection morning.

Mrs. Plett and her four daughters, Maria, Katharina, Nelly and Aganetha (with her three children) fled before the Russians to Germany where they work on the estate Ringelsbruch. Aganetha's husband, Heinrich Kaethler, vanished during the war as a member of the Red army. Mrs. Plett is very weak and confined to bed. She only wishes to die and go home. (The latest word from Germany which just arrived, states that Mrs. Plett has died and was buried on January 29, 1947.)

Note by Aron A. Toews: "For a time, Ältester Gerhard Plett was a member of the Molotschna School Council. As such, he had to visit the schools and evaluate and supervise the instruction of religion and German language. School council members also had to be present at the final exam of the village school pupils in order to test the verbal and written skills of the graduates and provide them with an appropriate certificate."

"They were also the examiners in religion and German for the final exam in high school and for the candidates in the pedagogical classes. They also represented the interests of the school to the community and the government. They were elected by the Molotschna Ecclesiastical Council for a specified term. The Ecclesiastical Council was comprised of all the ministers of all the churches of the three [Mennonite] groups in the Molotschna."

"Ältester Gerhard Plett was a man possessed of a calm objectivity and presence of mind. His verdict meant something in the churches. He had respect among the congregations, in the community, among his colleagues and the teachers."

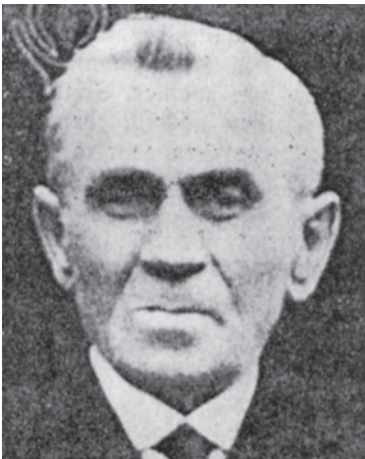
"I was able to visit him on his sickbed in Hierschau in the last years before my emigration. At that time, he was still vitally interested in the affairs of our churches. May the Lord reward His servant according to his work. 1 Corinthians 3:8."

Postscript from his diary: "Most of my childhood and youth were preoccupied with learning. On May 21, 1879, I was baptised in the Margenau Gemeinde by Ältester Bernhard Peters. In the fall of 1881, I was called into state service, but was released because of family obligations, serving as a teacher in the Crimea at the Spat station in a tenant village called Schamk. From there, I was transferred to Sparrau in the Molotschna Colony where I served for six years as teacher in the village school."<sup>97</sup>

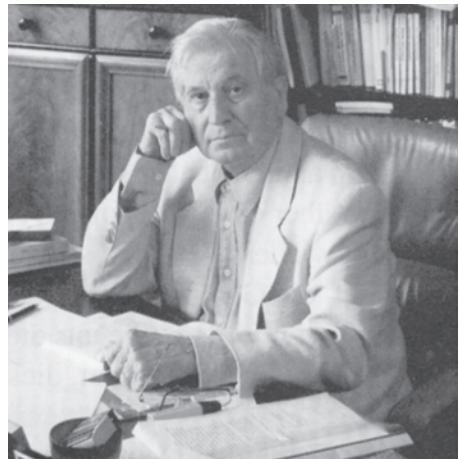
Gerhard Plett was the only Plett mentioned in the *Mennonite Encyclope-*

*dia*. His biographer Heinrich Goertz has written “Devotion to duty and sound judgement were outstanding features of his character.”<sup>98</sup>

7 Son **Johann Gerhard Plett** was adopted by a Fast family from Hierschau. He was exiled to Siberia before the Germans occupied the Ukraine. His wife and daughter also came to Germany but were forcibly deported back to Russia by the Russians. Son **Gerhard Gerhard Plett** married Katharina Plett, daughter of his uncle Bernhard Plett of Hierschau. Until 1931 Gerhard and Katharina lived in Hierschau when they were dekulakized. They lived for a time in Chortitza and then were exiled to Seneno, 400 miles east of Moscow. In 1936 they returned to Chortitza. In February of 1937, Gerhard Plett was arrested and executed May 5, in Saporoshje Prison.<sup>99</sup> He was found dead, his clothing covered with blood. Katharina was arrested in 1939 and released after one year. The family lived in Chortitza again until the arrival of the Wehrmacht in 1941. In 1943 she with her children joined the Trek to Poland. In 1945 she and children were repatriated and sent to Archangelsk, northwestern Russia, where she died. Son John (b. 1927) founded the Mennonite Gemeinde at Bechterdissen, Germany, and served as the first Ältester.<sup>100</sup> Daughter **Elisabeth Gerhard Plett** and her husband, David Hildebrand, together with several children, were also sent back to Russia. Two children remained in Germany, among them son Gerhard Hildebrandt, who wrote his grandfather’s biography. He is a retired Professor of Russian Literature and History in Göttingen, Germany, and former Ältester of the Mennoniten Gemeinde. Daughter **Maria Gerhard Plett** escaped to Germany and immigrated to Coaldale, Alberta, in 1948 with sisters Katharina and Enelse. Son **Heinrich Plett** was arrested by the Russians in 1938. He was shot in prison. His wife and their child were deported before the occupation. She is to have been in a train on which the Russians poured oil and set it on fire. There is no word as to her fate. Daughter **Gertrude Plett** and her husband Johann Bergen remained in Russia, fate unknown. Daughter **Aganetha Plett** married Heinrich Käthler, son of Heinrich Jakob Käthler and Helena Johann Janzen. Aganetha died in Alberta of an accident. He was exiled before 1945.



*Ältester Gerbard Plett (1860-1933), Hierschau, in his later years. Photo - Mennonitische Märtyrer, Volume Two, page 214.*



*Professor and Ältester Gerbard Hildebrand, Göttingen, Germany, grandson of Ält. Gerb. Plett. Photo - Men. Geschichtsblätter, 1999, page 140.*



Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Gerhard Julius Plett</b>	Jun 30,1860		Apr 1,1933
m	Elisabeth Klassen	Jun 4,1862	Jun 3,1882	Jun 2,1890
7	Franz Gerhard Plett	May 31,1883		Oct 27,1890
7	Elisabeth Gerh. Plett	Aug 12,1884		Aug 12,1886
7	Gerhard Gerhard Plett	Aug 26,1885		Jul 31,1886
7	Johann Gerhard Plett	ca.1886		Before 1940
m	Margaretha Plett			
7	Gerhard Gerhard Plett	Oct 2,1888	Nov 19,1922	May 5,1938
m	Katharina Plett	Jul 15,1896	Jun 3,1882	Nov 14,1962
7	Franz Gerhard Plett	Apr 4,1890		Oct 27,1890
6	<b>Gerhard Julius Plett</b>	Jun 30,1860		Apr 1,1933
2m	Katharina Willms	Jan 15,1869	Sep 22,1890	Jan 27,1947
7	Jakob Gerhard Plett	Dec 7,1891		Oct 17,1894
7	Elisabeth Gerhard Plett	Mar 23,1893		
m	David Hildebrand			
7	Kornelius G. Plett	Dec 1,1894		Feb 23,1916
7	Peter Gerhard Plett	Sep 15,1896		Nov 4,1896
7	Maria Gerhard Plett	Nov 14,1897		Jul 28,1986
7	Katharina Gerhard Plett	Feb 21,1900		
m	Hans Thiessen	From Friedensdorf	Coaldale, Alberta, 1948	
7	Heinrich Gerhard Plett	Dec 21,1901		Exiled
7	Kornelia (Enelse) Plett	Jul 3,1904	Came to Canada 1948	
7	Gertrude Gerhard Plett	Mar 29,1906		
m	Johann Bergen	Mar 19,1905		
7	Aganetha Gerhard Plett	Jun 27,1911	Aug 23,1934	
m	Heinrich Käthler	Mar 16,1909		



*Ältester Gerbard Julius Plett (1860-1933), Hierschau, at the funeral of his son Cornelius in February 1916 at the Forstei "Anadol" in the Crimea. Photo - Hiertschau, page 159.*



*Ältester Gerhard Julius Plett (1860-1933), Hierschau, Molotschna. Photo - Hierschau, page 158.*

6 **Bernhard Julius Plett** married Anna Sukkau, daughter of Tobias Sukkau. They farmed in Hierschau. Anna died of diphtheria. Bernhard Plett remarried to Maria Neufeld of Grossweide. She died of tuberculosis. Bernhard Plett married for the third time to Maria Boldt, daughter of Salomon Boldt of Grossweide. Maria also died of tuberculosis. By 1904 Bernhard Plett had acquired Wirtschaft 7 in Hierschau.<sup>101</sup> In 1910 Bernhard Plett was elected as the mayor of Hierschau.<sup>102</sup> In 1910 Bernhard Plett married for the fourth time to Maria Giesbrecht, daughter of Peter Giesbrecht and Anna Thiessen of Grossweide. Bernhard Plett's widow and two young children left Russia for Canada in 1925 leaving the older children to sell the farm. "They unfortunately had trouble finding a purchaser, and by the time they were ready to leave, opportunities for emigration had ceased."<sup>103</sup>

7 Daughter **Katharina Bernhard Plett** married her cousin Gerhard Gerhard Plett. When his uncle Bernhard Plett died, leaving a large family, Gerhard was appointed to assist them in managing the Wirtschaft. In this way, he and Katharina got to know each other and got married. Son **Peter Bernhard Plett** was executed when the Red Army and the Makhnowze moved into Hierschau in March of 1919: "Despite the warning to hand in all weapons at the Schulze's place, someone had hidden guns and shells in a strawstack at the Bernhard Plett Wirtschaft. Whether their son Peter had actually hidden the firearms, or whether it was someone else is debatable. In any case, after they were discovered, Peter Plett was taken to the Makhnov headquarters in Waldheim and sentenced to death for this alleged offence. He was taken behind a small grove of trees on the east end of Waldheim and shot through the head. Peter Plett was buried at night, with his body simply wrapped in a sheet."<sup>104</sup> Son **Heinrich Bernhard Plett** drowned in the Caucasus. Daughter **Anna Bernhard Plett** died in 1936 in Chortitza. Son **Abraham Bernhard Plett** "was taken in 1938 or 1939 and probably died in a concentration camp."<sup>105</sup> Daughter **Sarah Bernhard Plett** married Jakob Doell, son of Daniel J. Doell and Maria Neufeld of Winkler, Manitoba. Jakob Doell died in Winkler, Manitoba. Son **Isaak Bernhard Plett** married his brother-in-law's sister. The Isaak Plett family lived in Winkler, Manitoba, where their children were born.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	Bernhard Julius Plett	Dec 3, 1861		Oct 28, 1916
m	Anna Sukkau (Tob.)		Jan 13, 1887	
7	Johann Bernhard Plett	ca. 1888		Two days later
6	Bernhard Julius Plett	Dec 3, 1861		Oct 28, 1916
2m	Maria Neufeld		Feb 2, 1891	May 27, 1898
7	Peter Bernhard Plett	Jan 20, 1892		Feb 28, 1919
7	Elisabeth Bernhard Plett	Feb 8, 1893		
m	Gerhard Poetker			
7	Katharina Bernhard Plett	Jul 15, 1896		Nov 14, 1962
m	Gerhard Gerhard Plett	Oct 2, 1888	Jun 3, 1882	May 5, 1938
7	Bernhard Bernhard Plett	1897		
7	Maria Bernhard Plett	Feb 26, 1898	Jul 15, 1950	
m	Kornelius Penner			
6	Bernhard Julius Plett	Dec 3, 1861		Oct 28, 1916
3m	Maria Boldt		Jul 5, 1898	Apr 22, 1909
7	Heinrich Bernhard Plett	Aug 6, 1899		1920

7	Bernhard Bernhard Plett	Nov 10,1900		
m	Aganeta Sukkau			
7	Gerhard Bernhard Plett	Jun 14,1902		
m	Lydia Wallmann			
7	Anna Bernhard Plett	Feb 14,1904		1936
7	Kornelius Bernhard Plett	Nov 26,1906		
m	Margaretha Krahn			
7	Abraham Bernhard Plett	Oct 14,1908		Exiled 1938-39
7	Gertruda Bernhard Plett	Mar 16,1909		
m	David Schellenberg			
6	Bernhard Julius Plett	Dec 3,1861		Oct 28,1916
4m	Maria Giesbrecht	Mar 29,1877	Jan 9,1910	Nov 5,1950
7	Margaretha Bernhard Plett	1911		1916
7	Sara Bernhard Plett	Oct 27,1912	Nov 17,1942	
m	Jakob Doell	Jan 28,1911		Jan 3,1972
7	Johann Bernhard Plett	1913		1914
7	Isaak Bernhard Plett	Sep 18,1915	Oct 5,1939	2001
m	Katharina Doell	Sep 28,1917		



*Plett family cousins, photographed in Landskrone in 1926, shortly before the Willms family emigrated. All except Susanna and Katharina Heidebrecht lived in Hierschau. Front: l.-r., Gertrude Plett, Katharina Willms, Aganetba Willms, Aganetba Plett; Second row: Katharina Plett, Elisabeth Braun, Maria Plett, Maria Braun, Gertrude Plett. Third row: Anna Plett, Susanna Heidebrecht, Enelse Plett, Katharina Heidebrecht, Gertrude Willms; Fourth Row: Kornelius Plett, Abraham Plett, Johann Willms, Heinrich Plett, Bernard Plett. Gerhard Willms. Photo - Hierschau, page 120.*

6 Son **David Julius Plett** fell in love with the neighbour girl Aganetha Sperling, daughter of Tobias Sperling and Anna Buller. Before they were able to finalize wedding plans, he was called into the army.<sup>106</sup> In the meantime Aganetha was pregnant and gave birth to his daughter, Aganetha David Plett. After his discharge David returned to Hierschau but died three months later. Later Aganetha Sperling married Johann Harder who raised daughter Aganetha as one of his own but keeping the Plett name.

7 Daughter **Aganetha David Plett** married George C. Kroeker, son of Cornelius J. Kroeker and Katharina Wiebe of Blumstein. They experienced some turbulent years. In 1925 they decided to immigrate to Canada arriving in Halifax with five children in October. They bought a farm in Alexander, Manitoba. In 1940 they moved to Justice, Manitoba. In 1947 they retired from farming and moved to Winnipeg where George worked for eight years as custodian of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College. They were members of the South End M. B. Church where George served as a deacon. Their daughter Tena is married to Dr. John Huebert. Son John Kroeker lived in Brandon, Manitoba. Daughter Selma married Jacob Penner.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>David Julius Plett</b>	Jul 20,1863		Sep 5,1887
m	Aganetha Sperling	Jan 25,1866		
7	Aganetha David Plett	May 11,1887	Feb 5,1917	Nov 12,1971
m	George C. Kroeker	1890		May 5,1972

6 Daughter **Elisabeth Julius Plett** married the widower Bernhard Koop of Tiegerwiede, Molotschna. She remarried to Heinrich Kasper of Konteniusfeld.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Elisabeth Julius Plett</b>	Oct 15,1865		
m	Bernhard Koop			
7	Maria Plett Koop			
m	Richert			
7	Elisabeth Plett Koop			
m	Dyck			
7	Bernhard Plett Koop			
7	Jakob Plett Koop			
m	Klassen			
2m	Klassen			
7	Anna Plett Koop			
m	David Kasper			
7	Helena Plett Koop			
m	Fritz Siebert			
7	Gertruda Plett Koop			
7	Heinrich Plett Koop			Exiled
6	<b>Elisabeth Julius Plett</b>	Oct 15,1865		
2m	Heinrich Kasper			

6 Daughter **Gertruda Julius Plett** married the widower Johann Braun of Hierschau. She adopted his five children. He died of typhus after a three day illness. She was wooed by two men, both named Willms. She dreamt she was in a burning building, and that Johann braved the flames to rescue her. She took this as a divine revelation and choose Johann, son of Gerhard Willms (1836-94) and Maria Baerg (1840-1909), Nikolaidorf, Molotschna.

Gertruda Plett remarried to Johann Willms, son of Gerhard Willms and Maria Baerg.<sup>107</sup> Johann Willms was the brother of the second wife of Ältester Gerhard Plett. The Johann Willms family lived in Hierschau where they acquired Wirtschaft 30. The Willms Wirtschaft was always a model farm. “[Gertrude]...had dark hair, was about five foot four or five inches, and always well dressed....Her relationship to God seemed to be an important element in Gertrude’s life. She often referred to her prayer life, and daily retired to the *Grosse Stube* to read the big family Bible. She was a good story teller and often told her children Bible stories....During the revolutionary period and the subsequent civil war, there were many times of danger....One band of Makhnowze who had been plundering and raping in the village stormed into the yard and demanded entry into the Willms house. Gertrude plead with them through the closed door, and eventually for some reason, they just left....for a number of years she suffered from periodic illness. She seemed to have trouble with her weight....One evening after a light supper....she tried to get up, but just could not manage, even with help. A stroke had partially crippled her.” She was buried in the village cemetery. Her brother Ältester Gerhard Plett delivered the funeral address.<sup>108</sup>

After Gertrude Willms’ death, her remaining children moved to Rosthern, Saskatchewan, and later to Namako, Alberta.



*Johann and Gertrude Plett Willms (1909). Photo - Hierschau, page 125.*

7 Son **Heinrich Plett Braun** served as a leader of the Selbstschutz protecting the Mennonites from the Machnov anarchists. When the German army withdrew he had to hide from them and joined the White Army. With the defeat of the White Army, Heinrich and his comrades escaped through Yugoslavia, eventually reaching Henderson, Nebraska. Heinrich Braun was rebaptised in the Henderson M.B. Church in 1924. After 1928 he farmed five miles southwest of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. In 1929 he married Katharina Kroeker, daughter of Franz Kroeker, born in Henderson, Nebraska. They resided in Alexander, Manitoba, after 1945 where Katharina died. Heinrich died in the Donwood Manor, Winnipeg. Daughter **Elisabeth Plett Braun** married the widower Rev. Jakob Dueck. Elisabeth died in Coaldale, Alberta. Daughter **Maria Plett Braun** married Aron Wall. In January, 1922, while visiting her mother in Hierschau, Aron was taken prisoner and held in Waldheim, where they were condemned to death. It happened that the judge being thirsty stopped at the Willms home where Maria was staying for a drink of water. She pleaded for her husband's life and he was released. In 1926 several of the siblings were intending to immigrate. They held a joint auction, and later the Willms house was attacked by thieves, and a horrible fight ensued resulting in the death of Peter Dyck.<sup>109</sup> Aron Wall died in Vineland, Ontario. Son **Gerhard Plett Willms** married Tina Unruh. He died in Coaldale, Alberta. Daughter **Gertruda Plett Willms** married Aron Baerg. By 1943 they had settled in Coaldale, Alberta, where their daughter Magdalene was born. Son **Johann Willms** married Martha Hintz, of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. They lived in Bassano, Alberta. Daughter **Katharina Willms** married Gerhard Huebert of Margenau, Molotschna. They were married in Namaka, Alberta. They were the parents of Dr. Helmut Huebert (b. 1935), Winnipeg, Manitoba, orthopaedic surgeon, publisher and author of the Hierschau village history, which also contains considerable information regarding the family of Julius Johann Plett.<sup>110</sup> Daughter **Aganetha Willms** married John Aron Toews, son of Aron Toews of Alexanderkrone. The family lived in Hillsboro, Coaldale and Winnipeg. John A. Toews was a teacher, preacher and widely respected Mennonite Brethren Conference leader. Their son David Waltner Toews is a widely known poet.



*John Aron Toews,  
Photo - Men. Life, Dec. 1979, page 12.*



*Dr. Helmut Huebert, Winnipeg.  
Photo - back cover Hierschau.*

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Gertruda Jul. Plett</b>	Apr 15, 1869		Jul 18, 1924
m	Johann Braun	Feb 14, 1853	Feb 18, 1892	Jun 23, 1899
7	Franz Braun	1894		1894
7	Heinrich Braun	Oct 17, 1895	Apr 15, 1929	May 28, 1983
m	Katharina Kroeker	Feb 10, 1897		Jan 3, 1953
2m	Margaretha Schroeder	Mar 27, 1910	Oct 11, 1972	Jun 29, 1972
7	Elisabeth Braun	Mar 14, 1897	May 30, 1937	Dec 6, 1939
m	Jakob Dueck			
7	Maria Braun	Sep 10, 1898	Sep 4, 1921	
m	Aron Wall	May 26, 1896		Apr 22, 1972
6	<b>Gertruda Jul. Plett</b>	Apr 15, 1869		Jul 18, 1924
2m	Johann Willms	Jul 28, 1868	Apr 27, 1900	Apr 25, 1914
7	Gertruda Willms	May 30, 1901		Jun 6, 1901
7	Gerhard Willms	May 16, 1903	Feb 1, 1925	Oct 25, 1963
m	Katharina Unruh	Oct 25, 1904		
7	Gertruda Willms	May 10, 1905		
m	Aron Baerg	Jun 13, 1904	Mar 3, 1928	
7	Johann Willms	Oct 6, 1907		
m	Martha Hintz	Dec 10, 1910		
7	Katharina Willms	Sep 12, 1909	Oct 26, 1933	Apr 29, 2001
m	Gerhard D. Hübert	Apr 18, 1906		
7	Aganetha Willms	Jul 18, 1911	Nov 9, 1935	2001
m	Johann Aron Toews	Aug 15, 1912		Jan 13, 1979

6 Son **Isaak Julius Plett** married Agatha Toews of Marienthal. He married for the second time to Sara Klassen of Marienwohl.

6 Son **Heinrich Isaak Plett** was taken by the Makhnovze. Daughter **Elisabeth Plett** died of burn wounds while small. Daughter **Anna Plett** was seared by burn wounds. Daughters Anna and Maria Plett were twins.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Isaak Julius Plett</b>	Mar 15, 1872		
m	Agatha Toews			
7	Heinrich Plett			
7	Elisabeth Plett			
7	Anna Plett			
7	Maria Plett			
7	Gertrude Plett			
7	Isaak Plett			
6	<b>Isaak Julius Plett</b>	Mar 15, 1872		
2m	Sara Klassen			
7	Gerhard Plett			



5 Son **Heinrich Johann Plett** married Helena Baergen.

6 Daughter **Helena Plett** married Hermann Friesen of Grossweide, Molotschna. Daughter **Elisabeth Plett** married Gerhard Baergen. They lived in Mariawohl. Six of their children live in Canada in various regions. Daughter **Katharina Plett** married Johann Warkentin. They lived in Sagradovfka. Daughter **Maria Plett** married Jakob Nickel. They lived in Sagradovfka.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Heinrich Joh. Plett</b>	Apr 9, 1819	May 30, 1844	Feb 8, 1880
m	Helena Baergen			
6	Gertrude Plett	Mar 18, 1845		
6	Jakob Plett	Jul 30, 1846		
6	Heinrich Plett	Feb 5, 1849		
6	Johann Plett	Jul 29, 1851		1851
6	Helena Plett	Nov 26, 1852		
m	Hermann Friesen			
6	Elisabeth Hein. Plett			
m	Gerhard Bergen			
6	Katharina Plett			
m	Johann Warkentin			
6	Maria Plett			
m	Jakob Nickel			

5 Son **Johann Johann Plett** was married but the name of his wife is not known. According to Abraham Harder, son of Ältester Johann Harder (1811-74), Blumstein, Molotschna, "two brothers, Julius and Johann Plett, Hierschau, whom I knew well, were in her [his mother's] family line."<sup>111</sup> However, Helmut Huebert does not mention Johann Joh. Plett or any of his descendants in his detailed study of Hierschau, and, therefore, one concludes the family had moved elsewhere or died out.

6 Daughter **Maria Plett** married Jakob Stobbe of Hierschau. Two Jakob Stobbe families are listed as Wirtschaft owners in Hierschau in 1904 and 1920, namely Wirtschaften 4 and 8.<sup>112</sup> Jakob Stobbe of Wirtschaft 8 leased the white clay pit in the village and eventually became known as "White Earth Stobbe."<sup>113</sup> A Jakob Stobbe family consisting of six individuals is listed as immigrating from Hierschau in 1926.<sup>114</sup> According to the Peter Jakob Plett, "Family Record," the Stobbe descendants moved to Manitoba. Margaret Kroeker, Mennonite Genealogy, Winnipeg, writes: "I believe he is the son of the Rudnerweider minister, Heinrich Stobbe, who lived in Hierschau. The *Genealogy of Jakob Goertz 1748-1977* lists a Jakob Stobbe who married a Plett - her name is not known. However, there was more than one Plett family in Hierschau, so we cannot be sure whether this is the Jakob Stobbe who married your Maria Plett."<sup>115</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Johann Joh. Plett</b>	Aug 31, 1821		
m				
6	Maria Plett			
m	Jakob Stobbe			

5 Daughter **Katharina Johann Plett** married Johann Rogalsky of Steinfeld.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Katharina Joh. Plett</b>	Mar 8, 1826	Dec 4, 1852	
m	Johann Rogalsky			
6	Johann Rogalsky	Nov 7, 1852		
6	Gertrude Rogalsky	Dec 27, 1853		Jan 3, 1854
6	Nehla Rogalsky	Dec 31, 1854		
6	Jakob Rogalsky	Apr, 1856		

5 Daughter **Maria Johann Plett** married Jakob Rogalsky. The family lived in Steinfeld, Molotschna. Jakob Rogalsky may have been a widower as a daughter Karolina age 7 is listed attending school in Steinfeld, Molotschna, in 1857/8.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Maria Joh. Plett</b>	Mar 27, 1828	May 27, 1852	Mar 11, 1895
m	Jakob Rogalsky			
6	Nehla Rogalsky	Sep 27, 1853		
6	Maria Rogalsky	Dec 24, 1855		



*Peter Johann Plett (1830-1907) and wife Maria Peters (1833-1912), farmers in Tiegerweide, Molotschna Colony. Photo - courtesy of great-grandson Peter H. Plett, 75th Ave S.W., Calgary, Manitoba. The photo is a priceless gem in terms of clarity and composition. It shows the styles of clothing and apparel worn by Mennonite men and women during the 1890s.*

5 Son **Peter Johann Plett** (1830-1907) married Maria Peters, daughter of Gerhard Peters (1812-84) and Maria Derksen (1813-85) of Tiegerweide, Molotschna. The Peter Plett family lived in Tiegerweide where he was a farmer and “also wove baskets.” He “had a full land holding of 64 desjatien.” He “was only small of stature and suffered greatly from rheumatism in his later years.” His wife “however, was quite large and stooped. She loved flowers and was often found telling humorous stories about her life.” She “always had a lot of nice flowers in the garden and in the house.” Peter Plett died on January 11, 1907, and his funeral was on January 16. Both of the Pletts were buried in Tiegerwiede. Peter Johann Plett compiled a family record of his brothers and sisters and their children. This record was later continued by his grandson Heinrich G. Plett (1887-1950), and continued by his son Peter H. Plett, Calgary.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Peter Joh. Plett</b>	Jul 16,1830	Oct 23,1856	Jan 11,1907
m	Maria Peters	Aug 17,1833		Nov 11,1912
6	Gerhard Plett	Aug 29,1857	Nov 15,1879	Oct 3,1931
6	Maria Plett	Aug 6,1859		Jan 21,1860
6	Gertrude Plett	Mar 29,1861		Aug 3,1861
6	Maria Plett	Aug 13,1862		Nov 1,1863
6	Maria Plett	Dec 27,1864		Jan 27,1866
6	Peter Plett	Jun 10,1867		Feb 3,1920
6	Maria Plett	Mar 5,1870	Jan 30,1890	Aug 18,1890
m	Peter Matthies	Dec 22,1863		Nov 17,1935
6	Elisabeth Plett	Dec 20,1872	Nov 19,1892	Apr 15,1929
6	Johann Plett	Nov 5,1875		Nov 10,1875
6	Heinrich Plett	May 23,1877		May 25,1877

6 Son **Gerhard Peter Plett** married Anna Balzer, daughter of Peter Balzer, a full farmer or Vollwirt in Tiegerwiede. The Gerhard Plett family lived in Tiegerwiede, Molotschna. “His main business was farming. Besides that he did finish carpentry, tinsmithing, blacksmithing, and he understood basket weaving.” Gerhard Plett died in Tiegerwiede, Molotschna, in 1931 and his wife in 1941.

7 Son **Peter G. Plett**, born in Tiegerwiede, went to America in 1914 and stayed with his aunt, Mrs. Johann Peters Balzer. He helped with the work on the farm and served as the community blacksmith. He married the widow Aganeta Epp, nee Regier, in Henderson, Nebraska, and adopted her four children. They had no children. They farmed together until they retired to Henderson, Nebraska. His step-children were Katie, Mrs. John Kroeker, Ernst and Mary Epp, Emma, Mrs. Cornelius Hiebert, and David and Sarah Epp. Son **Gerhard G. Plett** married Justina Bergen from Fürstenwerder. He was a farmer and bought his parents-in-laws’ Wirtschaft in Fürstenwerder. He was elected as a minister. According to the last known word [December 24, 1936] they were living in the Caucasus where his wife died. “He and his family suffered a great deal from hunger and hardship because the Bolsheviks did not recognize preachers and wanted to eradicate religion.....” Their son Gerhard was killed in Belgium on December 25, 1944. Their daughter Maria married Erwin Kroeker. Her oldest sister Elisabeth Plett Thiessen lives with them. Her husband was killed in Russia. Their sister Justina is in a Nursing Home in North Kildonan, Winnipeg, Canada.

Marian, the oldest daughter of Maria Plett Kroeker, married Russell Plett, son of former Steinbach Bible College President, Stan Plett (son of Abraham D. K. Plett, Landmark). She was killed in a car accident. Daughter **Maria Plett** married Abram Janzen of Tiegerwiede. He was a teacher in Elisabeththal and later in Schostack, South Russia. Son **Heinrich G. Plett** married Anna Sawatzky, daughter of Isaak Sawatzky and Helene Matthies of Tiegerwiede. They were married in 1924 in the Margenau Gemeinde and emigrated to Canada the same year. They lived in Morris, Manitoba, for part of the first year, then moved to Langham, Saskatchewan. In 1926 they moved to their farm in Herschel, near Rosetown. Heinrich farmed and was the pastor of the local church. Mrs. Anna Sawatzky Plett was bedridden for her last 20 years and was looked after by her brother Walter Sawatzky. Heinrich G. Plett continued the family record started by his grandfather Peter Johann Plett. The record was continued by their son Peter H. Plett (born 1936), Calgary, Alberta. Daughter **Anna Plett** married Gerhard Neufeld. The family were land-owners and moved to Ufa in Northern Russia where they had quite a good life. After the Revolution, they were driven out by the Bolsheviks and "died there due to hunger and deprivation....Anna from tuberculosis and G. Neufeld from rheumatism and heart disease." Sister **Helena Plett** married Johann Harder. He was a land owner in Fischau. They farmed on her father's farm in Tiegerwiede. Their daughter married Harry Unger of Einlage, Zaporozhe. They lived in Novosibirsk where their children were born. They have a son and daughter living in Germany. The son is also called Johann. Johann Harder remarried to Tina Goertzen.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Gerhard Peter Plett</b>	Aug 29, 1857	Nov 15, 1879	Oct 3, 1931
m	Anna Balzer	Aug 19, 1856		1941
7	Peter G. Plett	Oct 15, 1880		
m	Aganeta Epp			
7	Gerhard G. Plett	Aug 8, 1882	May 29, 1908	1937
m	Justina Bergen	Aug 4, 1883		Aug 10, 1935
7	Maria G. Plett	Jul 19, 1884	Apr 28, 1905	
m	Abraham Janzen	Jan 4, 1884		
7	Heinrich G. Plett	Nov 8, 1887	May 4, 1924	Jan 21, 1950
m	Anna Sawatzky	Jun 2, 1898		Dec 5, 1958
7	Anna G. Plett	Jan 10, 1890	Oct, 1912	Mar 5, 1933
m	Gerhard Neufeld	Sep 10, 1889		Dec, 1934
7	Johann G. Plett	Jun 4, 1893		1893
7	Helena G. Plett	Jun 14, 1895		Apr 26, 1935
m	Johann Harder			
7	Elisabeth G. Plett	Apr 8, 1899		Childbirth

6 Daughter **Elisabeth Peter Plett** married Peter Matthies, son of Bernhard Matthies (1823-84) and Helena Derksen (1826-1915). He was the widower of her older sister Maria. He was born in the Caucasus. The family lived in Tiegerwiede, Molotschna, where all their children were born.

7 Son **Bernhard Matthies** married widow Maria Tarsen, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Elisabeth Pet. Plett</b>	Dec 20,1872		Apr 15,1929
m	Peter Matthies	Dec 22,1863		Nov 17,1935
7	Peter Matthies	Mar 30,1894		
7	Bernhard Matthies	Feb 16,1896		
m	Maria Tarsen			
7	Gerhard Matthies	Feb 16,1898		
7	Jakob Matthies	May 11,1900		May 22,1900
7	Jakob Matthies	Nov 22,1901		
7	Heinrich Matthies	Apr 8,1904		
7	Maria Matthies	Feb 6,1906		
7	Helena Matthies	May 9,1909		
7	Hans Matthies	May 30,1911		
7	Elisabeth Matthies	Aug 24,1914		

6 Son **Peter Peter Plett** married Maria Wiens from Tiegerwiede, Molotschna. The family lived in Tiegerwiede where son Peter was born in 1904. Peter Peter Plett died of cancer in 1920. In July of 1924, his widow and son Peter emigrated to Canada, where they settled in Herschel, Saskatchewan. In 1924 Mrs. Maria Plett remarried to Johann Schroeder (1867-1947) of Herschel.

7 Son **Peter Peter Plett** came to Canada in 1924. He married Sarah Klassen, daughter of Bernhard K. Klassen (1878-1943) of Herschel, Saskatchewan. Peter and Sarah raised their family in Herschel. Their third son Bernie Plett at age 21 went to work on a road construction crew with his father Peter Plett and brother Karl. In the fall of 1962 he was killed when he was hit by an earth moving machine.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Peter Peter Plett</b>	Jun 10,1867	Mar 2,1903	Feb 3,1920
m	Maria Wiens	Oct 22,1880		Apr 2,1963
7	Son Plett			
7	Peter Peter Plett	Jun 23,1904	Apr 13,1936	
m	Sarah Klassen	Aug 23,1911		

5 Daughter **Elisabeth Johann Plett** married Jakob Harder of Friedensruh, Molotschna.<sup>116</sup>

6 The oldest **daughter Harder** was married to Benjamin Pankratz of Paulsheim. The second **daughter Harder** was married to a Janzen of Tiegerweide.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Elisabeth Plett</b>	Nov 6, 1832		
m	Jakob Harder			
6	Jakob Harder	1860		
6	Johann Harder	Mar 29, 1861		Jan 12, 1914
2m	Maria Baerg			
6	Abraham Harder			
6	Daughter Harder			
m	Benjamin Pankratz			
6	Daughter Harder			
m	Janzen			
6	Katharina Harder	Oct 26, 1869	1890	Mar 31, 1926

6 Son **Johann Jakob Harder** married Margaretha Voth. The family lived in Friedensdorf where she died. Johann Harder married for the second time to Maria Baerg, daughter of Gerhard Baerg of Tiegerwiede. Johann Harder married for the third time to Helena Sawatzky who also died in Friedensdorf.

7 Son **Heinrich Harder** immigrated to Canada in 1927 where he died. Son **Gerhard Harder** married Maria Peters. They lived in Grande Prairie, Alberta, Salmon Arm, B.C., and Leamington, Ontario. Son **Jakob Harder** lived in Novosibirsk. Daughter **Anna Harder** died in Karaganda. Daughter **Helena Harder** married Isaak Hildebrand who died in Bielefeld, Germany.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann Jakob Harder</b>	Mar 29, 1861		Jan 12, 1914
m	Margaretha Voth		ca. 1885	1898
7	Heinrich Harder	1886		Aug 2, 1927
7	Peter Harder	1889		
7	Johann Harder	1892		
6	<b>Johann Jakob Harder</b>	Mar 29, 1861		Jan 12, 1914
2m	Maria Baerg	1864	ca. 1898	Sep 11, 1904
7	Gerhard Harder	Oct 14, 1899	Nov 18, 1933	Dec 17, 1988
m	Maria Peters			
6	<b>Johann Jakob Harder</b>	Mar 29, 1861		Jan 12, 1914
3m	Helena Sawatzky		ca. 1905	1920
7	Jakob Harder	1906		
7	Anna Harder	Feb 28, 1908		
7	Helena Harder	May, 1909	1958	May 22, 1973
m	Isaak Hildebrand			

6 Daughter **Katharina Jakob Harder** was born in Friedensruh, Molotschna Colony. She married to Peter Delesky of Prangenau. Katharina died in Prangenau.

7 Daughter **Elisabeth Delesky** married to Aron Peter Wiebe. They lived in Campbell River, British Columbia. She died in Abbotsford, B.C. at age 96. Daughter **Katharina P. Delesky** married Heinrich Johann Nichol. She died in Russia. Daughter **Maria P. Delesky** married Peter P. Dueck. She died in Russia. Daughter **Gertruda P. Delesky** was born in Fürstenwerder, Molotschna. She immigrated to Canada. She died in Winnipeg, Manitoba, at age 86.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Katharina Jakob Harder</b>	Oct 26, 1869	1890	Mar 31, 1926
m	Peter Delesky	1865		1919
7	Peter P. Delesky	ca. 1891		
7	Elisabeth P. Delesky	April 4, 1894	ca. 1918	May 3, 1990
7	Gerhard P. Delesky	ca. 1896		
7	Katharina P. Delesky	Mar 27, 1898		1961
m	Heinrich Johann Nichol			
7	P. Delesky	ca. 1900		Childbirth
7	Maria P. Delesky	Jul 7, 1902		1981
m	Peter P. Dueck		Oct, 1926	
7	P. Delesky	ca. 1904		Childbirth
7	Gertruda P. Delesky	Jul 17, 1907		Apr 23, 1994

5 Son **Jakob Johann Plett** (1836-93) married Maria Dueck of Elisabeththal, Molotschna. The family lived in Pordenau, Molotschna, where their son Peter was born in 1881. Since Jakob was the youngest in the Johann Plett, he may have taken over his father's Wirtschaft in Pordenau. Jakob Johann Plett had a Wirtschaft and owned a windmill in Pordenau. His widow was sickly during the last years of her life, and son Peter had to give her a daily enema.

6 Daughter **Maria Jakob Plett** was married her cousin Heinrich Plett. They lived in Rudnerweide, Molotschna. They had three sons - Heinrich, Jakob and Peter - who were seized by the Soviets in 1937. All three were married. Later their widows were exiled and they eventually settled in Karaganda.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Jakob Johann Plett</b>	Mar 5, 1836	ca. 1862	Nov 17, 1893
m	Maria Dueck	Nov 1, 1842		Mar 7, 1903
6	Klaas Jakob Plett	1863		
6	Maria Jakob Plett	1865		
m	Heinrich Plett			
6	Jakob Jakob Plett	1867		
m	Nickel			
6	Johann Jakob Plett	Dec 20, 1870		
6	Gertrude Jakob Plett	1874		Died
6	Heinrich Jakob Plett	Sep 15, 1877	1911	Jun 8, 1929
6	Peter Jakob Plett	May 15, 1881		
6	Gertrude Jakob Plett	1883		

6 Son **Heinrich Jakob Plett** married Sarah Esau, daughter of Aaron Esau and Katharina Thiessen. They were married in Münsterberg, Sagraodovka. Heinrich and Sarah had four sons and one daughter: Heinrich, Jakob, Peter, Werner and Tina. The Heinrich Plett family immigrated to Canada in 1925 and were directed to settle in Hochfeld, near Winkler, Manitoba. Shortly thereafter they moved to Starbuck, Manitoba, where they bought a farm. After two years he suffered a haemorrhage and died. His widow Sarah Plett moved to Winnipeg, where they lived on Manitoba Avenue. They had four boys and a daughter who lived in Winnipeg.

7 Son **Verner Heinrich Plett** was born in Canada. He married Helen Kjartanson who was of Icelandic background. Daughter **Katharina Heinrich Plett** was a seamstress, She lived for 12 years in Chicago, but returned to Winnipeg, where she died.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Heinrich Jakob Plett</b>	Nov 15, 1877	1911	Jun 8, 1929
m	Sarah Esau	Nov 13, 1891		Sep 22, 1972
7	Heinrich Plett	Jan 13, 1912		Sep 14, 1974
m	Annie Welwich	Jul 17, 1916	Dec 2, 1939	Dec 30, 1985
7	Jack Plett	Feb 9, 1916	Aug 19, 1943	Jul 1, 1992
m	Wilma Lamors	Dec 5, 1921		
7	Katharina Plett	Sep 11, 1918		Feb, 1996
7	Peter Plett	Oct 16, 1923		
m	Dorothy Bradley	Jan 21, 1928	Nov 29, 1947	
7	Verner Plett	Aug 10, 1929	Nov 7, 1953	
m	Helen Kjartanson	Feb 17, 1935		

*Jakob Jobann Plett (1836-93) family: l.-r., rear: Jakob, Maria, Klaas. Front: Mother - Maria Dueck Plett, Johann, Peter and Father - Jakob Jobann Plett. Photo courtesy of grandson Henry Plett, 1106-1630 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, R2G 2B0.*





6 Son **Peter Jakob Plett** managed his father's windmill for seven years. After his father's death the windmill was sold and Peter was planning to travel to Germany to study engineering. But his brothers objected to this plan and being the youngest, he heeded their advice and did not go. Instead he started a kiln for manufacturing bricks. In 1906 Peter Jakob Plett married Helena Wall, daughter of Heinrich Wall and Helena Adrian of Rudnerweide, Molotschna. Peter and Helena were married by Ältester David Nikel, Grossweide. After their marriage they moved to Trubetzkoje, a settlement of four Mennonite villages located near Berislov. Here they farmed and he also started a oil-powered flour mill. The oldest four children were born here. When WWI started Peter Jakob Plett was drafted. He applied to be assigned as a machinist. As a test all the applicants had to make a tool, and his was the best. Consequently he was placed in charge of a supply depot. While Peter was in the service, his father-in-law Heinrich Wall came and an auction was held, and the Peter Plett family moved back to the Molotschna, settling in Rudnerwiede. Soon thereafter Peter Plett was discharged, and the family relocated to a chutor he and his wife's cousin purchased in Silberfeld in the Schönfeld-Brazol settlement. The chutor also included a steam-powered flour mill and 900 desjation of land. During the Makhnov era the family had to flee. One day while sitting around the dinner table the family heard that Mr. Neufeld, living some 16 kilometers away, had been shot by his adopted Russian son who had joined the Makhnovze. They got up, hitched on the wagon, and fled to the Molotschna. Three weeks Peter Jakob Plett rode to Silberfeld to see whether it was safe to return. He was devastated to see that the entire chutor was destroyed, the buildings were burned and only ruins were left. The family stayed in Rudnerwiede with Mrs. Plett's parents. Here they experienced the typhus epidemic. Some of Peter's brother-in-laws had sometimes felt that he was not wealthy enough to marry their sister. However, during the typhus epidemic Peter was the only one not afflicted and for three weeks he nursed those that were sick including his brother-in-laws. He was so busy he was not even able to change his clothes during the entire period. The family immigrated to Canada in November 1925 and settled in Hochfeld, near Winkler, Manitoba. A year or so later they moved northwest of Morden where they farmed and pastured the village cattle from Morden. By this time, Peter Plett was not very healthy. In 1932 son Heinrich moved to Winnipeg, and in the Fall his parents moved to Winnipeg as well, where they lived at 349 Jarvis Avenue. Both Peter and Helena died in Winnipeg. On August 14, 1944, Peter Jakob Plett completed transcribing the family records which were the source of information for this section.

7 Daughter **Justina Plett** married Peter P. Fehr, son of Peter Fehr and Margaretha Dyck of Osterwick, Russia. They were married in Morden, Manitoba. They lived in Winnipeg, moving to Winkler where son Edwin was born in 1942. By 1980 they had moved to Steinbach, Manitoba. Peter Fehr was a minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church and later of the Steinbach Mennonite Church, Steinbach. Daughter **Helena Plett** married Jakob C. Rempel and they farmed near Elm Creek. Their daughter Helen married Fred Rempel and lives in Elm Creek. Son **Heinrich Peter Plett** moved to Winnipeg in 1932 where he worked for Winnipeg Cold Storage for four years. In 1940 he married Minnie Schier, daughter of Adolf and Amelia Schier. The family resides in Winnipeg.<sup>117</sup> Their

oldest grandchild, Christine Plett, is married to Edward Klassen, Stratford, Ontario, Paraguayan harpist. Daughter **Maria Plett** married David Loewen, son of Abraham Loewen and Anna Adrian. Maria and David Loewen lived in Newton Siding, Manitoba, where they farmed. Son **Peter Peter Plett** married Susanna Penner, daughter of Gerhard Penner and Katharina Schmidt, of Ohrloff, Sagraadowka. After their marriage, Peter and Susanna Plett lived in the Vancouver area. But when his mother suffered a stroke in 1944 they relocated back to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where their children were born. They were the parents of Kathy Plett, a school teacher in Winnipeg, Manitoba, interested in the history of the Plett family. Daughter **Katharina Plett** married Menno Barkman from Herbert, Saskatchewan. After their marriage they farmed near Morse, Saskatchewan. After three years on the farm they moved to Herbert, where they served as house parents for the Herbert Bible School. After four years they moved to Saskatoon and continued operating their farm at Morris. After farming became too difficult, the family moved to Abbotsford, B.C., where he worked as a painter.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Peter Jakob Plett</b>	May 15, 1881		Oct 1, 1954
m	Helena Wall	Jun 20, 1888	Apr 28, 1908	Dec 29, 1944
7	Justina Peter Plett	Jan 15, 1910	Sep 4, 1932	Sep 8, 2001
m	Peter P. Fehr	Feb 2, 1908		Jul 9, 1995
7	Helena Peter Plett	Mar 28, 1911		Dec 23, 1997
m	Jakob C. Rempel	Feb 7, 1902	Nov 28, 1942	Nov 11, 1983
7	Heinrich Peter Plett	Dec 14, 1912	May 11, 1940	
m	Minnie Schier	Mar 24, 1913		
7	Maria Peter Plett	Jun 20, 1915		
m	David Loewen	Sep 10, 1912	Sep 28, 1940	Aug 16, 1989
7	Peter Peter Plett	Jan 18, 1919	Nov 11, 1942	
m	Sue Penner	Feb 14, 1921		
7	Katharina Peter Plett	Sep 4, 1921		
m	Menno Barkman	Aug 15, 1914	Oct 2, 1943	Sep 24, 1981
7	Jakob Peter Plett	Oct 2, 1923		Aug, 1924

*Immigration, 1925: l-r., rear: Heinrich, Helen and Maria. Front: Justina (Mrs. Peter Febr), Peter, Mrs. Helena Wall Plett bolding son Jakob, Peter Jakob Plett with daughter Katharina. Photo - Henry Plett, 2002.*



**Section Three: Michael Plett, born 1790, Neukirch, Molotschna.**

4 Son **Michael Plett** married Catarina Neufeld, daughter of Gerhard Neufeld (1758-1817) and Elenore Neufeld, who settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Lichtenau in 1804. Catarina Neufeld Plett was born in Walldorf, West Prussia. Michael Plett (born 1790) lived in Halbstadt - probably with his parents - at least until 1820, as their children were all born there. According to the 1835 census, Michael Plett was resident on his father's former Wirtschaft 27 in Halbstadt where his family is listed as follows: "Michael Michael Plett age 45, wife Margaretha 53, children first wife - Anna 24, Michael 21, Gertrude 14, children second wife - Margareta 9, Elisabeth 8, Johann 7, Maria 5, Heinrich 4 and Jakob 2."

Additional information regarding the children of Michael Plett (born 1790) is contained in a Vollmacht or Power of Attorney signed by Jakob Barkman and Isaac Enns on April 11, 1838 as Vormünder or Guardians of the minor heirs of Judith Braun, nee Neufeld, who died on February 15, 1838 in Kl. Mausdorferweide, Elbing Kriese, Prussia.<sup>118</sup> The deceased was the sister of Mrs. Gerhard Neufeld - nee Elenore (Elike) Neufeld, Mrs. Jakob Wiebe - nee Elisabeth Neufeld,<sup>119</sup> Mrs. Peter Friesen - nee Anna Neufeld,<sup>120</sup> and Mrs. Michael Plett - nee Catarina Neufeld, the daughters of Gerhard Neufeld (1758-1817). Since these sisters had predeceased Judith, their children received their shares and are also listed on the Vollmacht.

The Michael Plett family had moved to Neukirch sometime prior to the death of Catharina in 1824. According to the 1838 Vollmacht, she died in Neukirch. At this time, Michael Plett's children by his first marriage were resident in Neukirch. Although no date of death is currently available for Michael Plett (born 1790) it is likely that the children were living with him at the time. According to a certificate attached to the 1838 Vollmacht, the children of Catarina Plett, nee Neufeld (1787-1824), were under the guardianship of Heinrich Neufeld from Rosenort and Gerhard Neufeld from Neukirch.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Michael Mich. Plett</b>	Mar 25, 1790		
m	Catarina Neufeld	Aug 23, 1786	ca, 1812	July 20, 1824
5	Michael Michael Plett <sup>121</sup>	Nov 13, 1814		Childhood
5	Anna Michael Plett	Jun 24, 1815		
5	Catharina Michael Plett	Feb 10, 1817		
5	Michael Michael Plett	Nov 1, 1819		1899
5	Gertruda Michael Plett	Dec 20, 1820		
4	<b>Michael Mich. Plett</b>	Mar 25, 1790		
2m	Margaretha	1782	ca. 1825	
5	Margaretha Michael Plett	1926		
5	Elisabeth Michael Plett	1827		
5	Johann Michael Plett	1829		
5	Maria Michael Plett	1830		
5	Heinrich Michael Plett	1831		
5	Jakob Michael Plett	1833		

5 Son **Michael Michael Plett** married Maria Ratzlaff, daughter of Peter Ratzlaff in Neukirch. Maria died in Blumenfeld in 1866. Michael Plett married for the second time to Katharina Friesen of Fürstenau. The family eventually moved to Ufa, Russia, where Michael Plett died.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Michael Mich. Plett</b>	Nov 1, 1819		1899
m	Maria Ratzlaff	Aug 25, 1830	Nov 29, 1851	May 2, 1866
6	Heinrich Plett	Nov 10, 1852		1938
6	Johann Plett	Jul 10, 1858		
6	Peter Plett	Jul 3, 1861		Oct 10, 1925
5	<b>Michael Mich. Plett</b>	Nov 1, 1819		1899
2m	Katharina Friesen		Aug 28, 1866	
6	Katharina Plett			
6	Aganetha Plett			
m	Cornelius Loewen			
6	Maria Plett			
m	Jakob Kroeker			

6 Son **Heinrich Michael Plett** was born in Neukirch, Molotschna Colony. He married Tina Teske. The family moved to Alexanderfeld, Sagradovfka where he was a school teacher and a minister in the Mennonite Church. Later when the collective farms were established he became a book keeper and a minister on one of the farms.

7 Daughter **Anna Heinrich Plett** married Heinrich Loewen of Sagradowka. He was executed in 1937.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Heinrich Mich. Plett</b>	Nov 10, 1852	Sep 9, 1874	
m	Tina Teske	Jul 21, 1857		
7	Heinrich Plett	Jan 2, 1877		1933
7	Kornelius Plett	Nov 10, 1878		Perished
7	Katharina Plett	Mar 1, 1881		
7	Peter Plett	Mar 10, 1883		Mar 11, 1884
7	Peter Plett	Apr 25, 1885		
7	Maria Plett	1886		
7	Johann Plett	Jul 30, 1890		
7	Anna Plett	Aug 21, 1892		
m	Heinrich Loewen			
7	Susanna Plett	Nov 15, 1894		1970
7	Lena Plett	Sep 8, 1899		Dec 11, 1979
6	<b>Heinrich Mich. Plett</b>	Nov 10, 1852		
2m	Justina Friesen		1918	
6	<b>Heinrich Mich. Plett</b>	Nov 10, 1852		
3m	Lena Friesen		1927	

*Minister H. Plett and wife in Friedensfeld, Sagradowka. Photo - Quiring, In the Fullness of Time (Saskatoon, 1963), page 101.*



*Spring run-off in Neu-Schönsee, Sagradowka. The school to the left. Photo In the Fullness of Time, page 101.*

7 Son **Heinrich Heinrich Plett** was born in Neukirch, Molotschna. His records tell us that he farmed in Nikolaifeld, Sagraodovfka, Russia. In 1933 when the famine overtook the Ukraine, his daughter Justina and son Jakob, and father Heinrich starved to death. He was 56 years old. The following year, daughter Susanna died of starvation.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Heinrich Heinrich Plett</b>	Jan 2,1877		1933
m	Maria			
8	Justina Plett	1915		1933
8	Susanna Plett	1918		1934
8	Jakob Plett	1921		1933

7 Daughter **Maria Heinrich Plett** was born in Sagraodovfka. Russia. She went to Germany during the war. In October of 1947 her husband Wiens was shot in Germany. Maria came to Winnipeg with her three children.

8 Daughter **Mary Wiens** and her husband live in Michigan. Son **John Wiens** lives in Oliver, B.C. Daughter **Maria Wiens** is buried in Winnipeg.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Maria Plett</b>	1886		
m	Wiens			Oct,1947
8	Mary Wiens			
8	Child Wiens			
8	John Wiens			

7 Son **Johann Heinrich Plett** grew up in Neu-Schönsee, Sagraodowfka. He was taken by the Russians and sent to a Siberian prison camp (Gulag) where he worked on the railroad line. He became sick in camp and was sent home to recover. However, he only lived another three months till he died.

8 Son **Heinrich Johann Plett** died in a Russian prison camp. Son **Johann G. Plett** was born in Friedensfeld. He married Hilda in Siberia where he died. Son **Isaak (Bruno) Plett** was killed in the war in Budapest, Hungary. Son **Peter G. Plett** was born in Trubetskoye, Sagraodowka. He immigrated to Canada and lived in Vancouver, B.C. His second wife, Frieda Meuller, came from Schwarmstedt, Germany. In 1990 he married for the third time to Margaret Lammert, Langley, B.C.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Johann Heinrich Plett</b>	Jul 30,1890		
m	Anna Graewe		ca. 1908	
8	Johann G. Plett	1919		1968
8	Isaak (Bruno) Plett	1922		1944
8	Heinrich G. Plett	Apr 20,1924		ca.1978
8	Peter G. Plett	May 7,1926		
8	Katie G. Plett	1927		1929
8	Anna G. Plett	1928		1947
8	Jakob G. Plett	Oct 10,1936		
8	Neta G. Plett	Jun 11,1939		1963
8	Rudolph G. Plett	Jun 11,1939		

7 Daughter **Susanna Heinrich Plett** was born in Blumenort, Sagraadowka. She married Isaak Janzen. They lived in Blumenort, No. 7, Sagraadowka. In 1937 Isaak was exiled from the family, never to be heard from again. In 1943 she and her family joined the trek to Germany. After three years in Germany, she and sons Walter, Johann and Jakob immigrated to Paraguay, settling in Fernheim. Her son Heinrich and only daughter Helena (Kurt von Schmude) stayed in Germany. Helena tempted her to join her in Bielefeld, which she did. All her children later joined her. Son Peter Plett Janzen was drafted into the Wehrmacht and perished.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Susanna Heinrich Plett</b>	Nov 15, 1894		1970
m	Isaak Janzen		1919	
8	Peter Plett Janzen	1921		
8	Helena Plett Janzen	1924		
8	Heinrich Plett Janzen	1926		
8	Walter Plett Janzen	May 11, 1928		
8	Hans Plett Janzen	Feb 26, 1930		
8	Jakob Plett Janzen	Nov 15, 1938		

7 Daughter **Lena Heinrich Plett** was born in Alexanderfeld, Sagraadowka. She married David Knels, son of David Knels and Katharina Giesbrecht. Lena and David lived in Nikolaifeld, Sagraadowka. In 1937, David Knels, and Johann Jakob Dueck, a son-in-law to be married to daughter Helena, were both taken and exiled to Solikamsk. Four years later, Helena married Walter Thiessen. In 1943 they joined the trek. In Germany they were captured by the Red Army and repatriated to Domborawka, near Orsk, in the east. Only son David Herbert Knels, escaped and was able to come to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1949, where he still resided in 2002. Daughter Helena had a son Johann with Johann Dueck and a son Walter with her second husband. Johann Dueck Jr. married a Russian woman and had large family. Only one daughter has emigrated to Germany. Walter Thiessen Jr. married a Russian woman and then moved to Orenburg. They have two daughters who moved to Germany with them in 1997. Daughter Sarah Knels married a Russian and still resides in Domborawka. Daughter Tina Knels married a Russian, and also lived in Domborawka. Son Herbert Knels and wife Annie Nickel live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Son Hari Knels married a Russian and they have two girls named Halja and Olja. They moved from Domborawka to Omsk, but presently live in Frunze, Kirgizian. They are poor but satisfied.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Lena Heinrich Plett</b>	Sep 8, 1899		Dec 11, 1979
m	David Knels			
8	Helena Plett Knels	May 10, 1920		
8	Sara Plett Knels	Feb 22, 1922		
8	Katharina Plett Knels	May 1, 1924		
8	Herbert Plett Knels	Jan 19, 1926		
8	Heinrich Plett Knels	1928		1928
8	Johann Plett Knels	1929		1929
8	Johann Plett Knels	Sep 21, 1931		
8	Harri Plett Knels	Aug 9, 1937		

6 Son **Peter Michael Plett** married Maria Friesen who originated from the Crimea. The Peter Plett family lived in Friedensfeld, Sagraodvfka Colony, South Russia, where he died.<sup>122</sup>

7 Daughter **Helena Peter Plett** married Gerhard Kroeker.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Peter Michael Plett</b>	July 3, 1861		Oct 10, 1925
m	Maria Friesen	Oct 8, 1855		Apr 10, 1904
7	Peter Peter Plett	1885		
7	Abraham Peter Plett	Apr 12, 1887		Feb 10, 1967
7	Maria Peter Plett	Aug 6, 1894		
7	Johann (Hans) Peter Plett	Nov 1, 1897		June 28, 1978
7	Helena Peter Plett	Dec 26, 1898		

7 Son **Peter Peter Plett** grew up in Friedensfeld, Sagraodvfka Colony. He married Aganeta Graewe from his home village. They lived in Neu-Schönsee, Sagraodowka. His second marriage is uncertain but his third marriage was with an Olga. One of his marriages was to a gypsy woman. They had a daughter Maria.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Peter Peter Plett</b>	1885		
m	Aganeta Graewe	1894	1912	
8	Peter Plett			
7	<b>Peter Peter Plett</b>	1885		
2m	_____?			
7	<b>Peter Peter Plett</b>	1885		
3m	Olga-			



*Peter Michael Plett, 1925 funeral photograph with children mourning at the casket. Rear, l.-r.: Johann, Abram and son-in-law Gerbard Kroeker. Front: Maria (Mrs. Hans Plett), Susanna (Mrs. Abram Plett), Lena (Mrs. Gerbard Kroeker), Maria (Mrs. Graeves) and her son Hans. Photo - granddaughter Gerda Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba.*



7 Son **Abraham Peter Plett** was born in Friedensfeld, Sagrafovka. He was sometimes known as "Abramawich". Abraham married Maria Peters, daughter of Abraham Peters, from the village of Liebenau, Molotschna, and later Memrik. The wedding took place in Memrik. The young couple made their home in Friedensfeld, Sagrafovka. In 1917 the family moved to Neu-Schönsee, where she died at age 33. At this time their little baby Helena was fostered out to a Abram Loewen family where she was raised. Abraham married the second time to Susanna Teichrieb, daughter of Maria and Heinrich Teichrieb, originally from Münsterberg (No.11) and later from Neu-Schönsee. During the Makhnov times in 1919, Susanna had watched from their hiding place how people were killed with an axe and how one old sick lady was covered with benzine and burned alive. The family belonged to the Brüdergemeinde. Before the German invasion in 1941, Abram and Susanna Plett lived in great fear for their lives. Many nights they feared they would be taken. They hid in the gardens and bushes around their farms so that they could watch the homes where their children were sleeping. On October 31, 1943 Abram and Susanna and their three youngest children, fled the Soviet Union and arrived in Germany in 1945. After the war they lived in various places including Bülstädt and the MCC camp in Fallingbostal, and back to Gronau, Westfallin. On December 17, 1950, the family boarded a ship in Bramerhafen and immigrated to Canada. They lived for a little while with daughter Elisabeth and her husband Hugo Heidinger in Winnipeg. Their sponsors were Jakob G. Goertzens from New Bothwell. In 1951 the Abram Plett family came to Steinbach and joined the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church. Abraham P. Plett died in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1967. He was sometimes known locally as "Schnurboout Platt" because of his large mustache.

8 Son **Abram A. Plett** married Sara Buller, born in Gnadenfeld, Sagrafovka, daughter of Heinrich Jakob Buller and his second wife Maria Friesen. Abram A. and Sarah Plett lived in Neu-Schönsee (No. 2). At the end of October, 1943, they joined the trek to Poland. Eventually they found their way to Bülstädt, Germany. In 1948 they moved to Neuland, Paraguay, where he was elected as a minister of the Brüdergemeinde. In 1956 they immigrated to Canada, settling in Steinbach, Manitoba. He was employed at Loewen Chev. In 1969 they moved to Winnipeg where he worked for Palliser Furniture. He was the father of Abe Plett, meat department, Penner Foods, Steinbach. Daughter **Maria Plett** married Jakob Janzen, son of Paul Janzen, of Friedensfeld (No. 3), Sagrafovka. Maria and Jakob Janzen lived in Friedensfeld. Jakob was arrested by the Soviets in 1941. Maria and the children were sent to Siberia where they found their husbands. Jakob Janzen was exiled to northern Siberia, where he suffered horribly. He was all swollen up from hunger and walked the streets dressed only in rags, begging for food. After WWII he was released and eventually found his wife and children in Russia. After they were reunited, they had another daughter Tina. Jakob Janzen was elected as a minister in the Brüdergemeinde. In the early 1990s they were able to immigrate to Germany where they settled in Espelkamp. Their daughter Maria and her husband Jakob Epp, who had remained in the Soviet Union, died of asphyxiation while asleep when their oil burner malfunctioned. Daughter **Margaretha A. Plett** married Aron Funk, from Ohrloff, Sagrafovka. The couple lived in Ohrloff. Aron was conscripted into the Wehrmacht and served through-

out WWII. Margaretha and children were sent to Siberia. In 1943 Margaretha and her sister Maria joined the trek to Poland. They were not able to flee to Mecklenberg, Germany with the rest of the family and were repatriated. In Russia, they were forced to do hard labour in the forests. One day while walking home from the forest Margaretha and her friend crossed a freshly dug-out potato field. They had nothing to make for supper that day and took some left over potatoes. They were seen by a guard and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. During this time her daughter Susanna was placed in a Soviet orphanage. After three years of imprisonment, Margaretha was released when Khrushchev came to power. In the meantime, daughter Susanna had been placed for adoption with the paper work almost completed. Margaretha found her daughter in Kirgisian just in time and was able to get her back. Shortly thereafter Margaretha was reunited with her husband. Later, Aron and Margaretha were able to immigrate to Germany. They settled in Espelkamp. Daughter **Helena A. Plett** married Gerhard Harder, who was a dedicated hard-core Communist. Just before the advance of the Wehrmacht in WWII, he and another Communist named Quiring, had prepared a list of 40 people (including Abram and Susanna Plett) who were to be taken to the end of Neu-Schönsee, herded together, doused with benzine (gas), and burned alive. Harder was a heavy drinker and abused his wife. They were very poor. He apparently drank himself to death. Helena married for the second time to Abram Enns from Sagradovfka. He was in the German police force in the Ukraine. Helena and her husband lived in Neu-Schönsee. In 1943 they also fled to Poland. Here he was conscripted in the Wehrmacht and perished in 1945. He went missing in action. Helena was repatriated by the Soviets together with Mrs. Loewen, her foster mother, and sentenced to hard labour in the Siberian forests. Lena's son Heina starved to death in 1945. In 1947 her foster mother starved to death while they were sleeping together in bed. Despite her herculean efforts Helena had been unable to provide them with sufficient nourishment. She lived in Kant and later Nova Pakrowka, Kirgiesian. In 1974 Helena was able to immigrate to Germany, arriving on April 17. She settled in Espelkamp where she is still living today. Son **Jakob Abraham Plett** came with the family during the trek. In Poland a group of 18 year-old Mennonite men from Sagradovfka were gathered in a room by the Wehrmacht and asked if they wanted to join up. No one responded, but one man spoke out and asked why and for whom they should kill people. This courageous individual was taken outside and never heard from again. The soldiers returned to the room and asked, who of the group did not want to enlist. No one responded and everyone was inducted into the Wehrmacht. Jakob served in Prague. After the war he was repatriated by the Soviets and worked in the coal mines and flour mills. His lungs were severely damaged and he underwent an eight hour operation. In 1950 he married Maria Wiens, originally from the Molotschna. They lived in Stalinbad. In 1980 they were able to come to Espelkamp, Germany, to visit. Shortly thereafter they were able to immigrate and settled in Espelkamp. Daughter **Elisabeth Abr. Plett** married Hugo Heidinger, who came from Bessarabia, a Wehrmacht veteran. In 1949 they immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Daughter **Gerda Plett** married Jacob R. Plett of Steinbach, Manitoba, son of Jakob J. K. Plett (1904-74) of Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>123</sup> The Jakob R. Plett family lives in Steinbach where he was a finish carpenter.<sup>124</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Abraham Peter Plett</b>	Apr 12,1887		Feb 10,1967
m	Maria Peters	Mar 8,1885	May 10,1911	Sep 2,1918
8	Abram Abr. Plett	Feb 9,1912		May 6,1983
m	Sarah Buller	Sep 12,1908	Dec 20,1931	Feb 15,1983
8	Maria Plett	Sep 23,1914		1990
m	Jacob Janzen	Sep 25,1914	1935	Dec 12,1992
8	Margaretha Abr. Plett	Jul 26,1915		Dec 12,1996
m	Aron Funk	Jul 10,1918	Jan 2, 1938	2001
8	Helena Abr. Plett	Sep 3,1917		
m	Gerhard Harder	1911	1937	Apr 21,1939
2m	Abram Enns	1920	Mar,1940	1945
7	<b>Abraham Peter Plett</b>	Apr 12,1887		Feb 10,1968
2m	Susanna Teichrieb	Jul 9,1894	1918	Apr 4,1970
8	Jacob Abr. Plett	Nov 27,1924	Oct,1950	Jul,1996
m	Maria Wiens	Jun 16,1932		Jul,2002
8	Leise Abr. Plett	Dec 13,1927	1948	Apr 5,1982
m	Hugo Heidinger	Jan 12,1924		1969
2m	Walter Pritz	Jan 8,1933		1998
8	Gerda Abr. Plett	Sep 6,1935	Jun 25,1955	
m	Jacob R. Plett	Sep 9,1933		Mar 11,2003



*Abraham P. Plett family photograph, Kramskriet, Poland, 1944, just before son Jasch was inducted into the Wehrmacht. Rear: Liese (Mrs. Heidinger) and Jasch. Front: Mother, Mrs. Susanna Plett, Gerda, and Father, Abram P. Plett. Photo - Gerda Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

7 Daughter **Maria Peter Plett** married a Graewes. They lived in Friedensfeld (No. 3), Sagraodvfka. Her husband died in Soviet Russia before the German invasion. Maria fled to Poland with the others. Maria and her sister Helena lived together in Mecklenberg, Germany. Both were repatriated to Soviet Russia.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	Maria Peter Plett	Aug 6, 1894		
m	Graewes			

7 Son **Johann Peter Plett** grew up in Friedensfeld, Sagraodvfka Colony. He married Maria Dück from Neu-Schönsee. The couple made their home in Neu-Schönsee and farmed there. They joined the trek to Poland and eventually also to Bülstädt, Germany. In 1948 they also immigrated to Neuland, Paraguay, where they died. They were quite poor and sickly. Maria Plett only died in 1985/6.

8 Son **Johann D. Plett** married Erna Ledwitz. They went to Paraguay with his parents. Eventually they emigrated to Canada, living in the St. Catherines area. They were the parents of Willie Plett, well-known NHL hockey player.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Johann Peter Plett</b>	Nov 1, 1897		Jun 28, 1978
m	Maria Dück	Oct 21, 1896	1920	1985/6
8	Johann Plett	Dec 30, 1921		Jul, 1977
m	Erna Ledwitz	Nov 7, 1921	Nov 30, 1941	Mar 21, 1998
8	Herman Plett	Jan. 5, 1926		Jan 30, 1975
m	Adina Taube	Nov 8, 1922		
8	Peter Plett			
m	Russian Girl			
8	Abram Plett			
m	Tina Ketler			



*Maria and Johann Peter Plett (1897-1978) in Bülstädt, Germany, 1944, with son Gerhard (left) and Hans. Photo - Greda Plett.*



*Willie Plett, right, NHL hockey star. Photo - Les Plett.*

7 Daughter **Helena Peter Plett** grew up in Friedensfeld, Sagradovka. She married Gerhard Kroeker from Neu-Schönsee, Sagradowka. They also made there home there. The children are all born there. They joined the trek to Poland where he was inducted into the Wehrmacht. Gerhard Kroeker died of a heart attack in Taschkent in 1945-49. Helena eventually made it to Mecklenberg where she lived together with sister Maria. Both were repatriated by the Soviets. In later years Helena lived with her daughter Helena Pauls in Siberia. In her letters to her family in Germany and Canada, Helena also reported about her sister Maria who lived in the same area but who was already too weak to write herself.

8 Son **Gerhard Kroeker** was conscripted into the Wehrmacht. He and his wife Gunda lived on Jamison Street, Winnipeg. Son **Peter Kroeker** was conscripted into the Wehrmacht in Germany. He is currently in an invalid home in St. Catharines. Daughter **Helena Pauls** is presently in Germany.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Death</u>
7	<b>Helena Peter Plett</b>	Dec 26, 1898		
m	Gerhard Kroeker	Aug 16, 1893	1919	ca. 1944
8	Peter Plett Kroeker	Sep 20, 1921		
m	Alfrieda	Oct 16, 1920		
8	George Plett Kroeker	Nov 8, 1923	1947	
m	Gunda	Feb 10, 1929		
8	Johann Plett Kroeker	Apr 10, 1930		
8	Abram Plett Kroeker	Oct 12, 1932		
m	Elsie Krebs	Dec 22, 1933		
8	Lena Plett Kroeker	Aug 16, 1937		
m	Heinrich Pauls	Dec 27, 1937		



*Peter P. Plett (b. 1885), Neu-Schönsee, Sagradowka.*



*Mrs. Abram P. Plett, 22 years old in Nikolai Feld, Sagradowka. Photo - daughter Gerda Plett.*

5 Son **Johann Michael Plett** grew up in Neukirch where his parents were resident in 1838. Genealogist Leslie Plett, Calgary, Alberta, has concluded that Johann Michael Plett (b. 1829) was the father of Johann Plett (1860-1922), who died in Schönthal in the Slavgorod settlement in Siberia. This connection is based on the memoirs of grandson Evangelist Cornelius Plett (1891-1961), later of Gem, Alberta, who recorded his name with the initials "J.J.M.M." Plett, presumably meaning that his father and grandfather were Johanns and his great and great-great-grandfathers were Michaels.<sup>125</sup> Cornelius Plett also provided the names of his uncle and four aunts, their spouses and some of their children, upon which the following family history is based. No ages are recorded and they are listed here in the order as given.

6 Son **Cornelius Johann Plett** was married at one time and had a family of at least five children: Johann, Kornelius, Alexander, Anna and a second daughter. Daughter **Katharina Johann Plett** was married to Jakob Franz, the second oldest brother of Susanna Franz, who married Johann Johann Plett. Katharina and Jakob Franz lived in Orenburg. Daughter **Anna Johann Plett** was married to a Siebert, and her descendants Jakob Sieberts live in Reedly, California, and Agnes is married to a H. Heine in Portland, Oregon, and Anna Prieb lives in Buhler, Kansas. Daughter **Maria Johann Plett** married Cornelius Franz, who was not related to the other Franz in-laws. They lived in Dolinskoje, Neu-Samara.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Johann Michael Plett</b>	1829		
m				
6	Johann Joh. Plett	1860		1922
6	Kornelius Joh. Plett			
6	Katherina Joh. Plett			
6	Anna Joh. Plett			
6	Helena Joh. Plett	Feb 11, 1868		1951
6	Maria Joh. Plett			

6 Son **Johann Johann Plett** was born on the side of the teamster road along the Juschanlee River near Neukirch, Molotschna Colony. He was married to Susanna Franz from Elisabeththal, Molotschna Colony. The wedding took place at the home of her brother Heinrich in Elisabeththal. The young couple made their home in Alexanderthal, Molotschna, where the oldest six children were born, and two buried. They were quite poor and started out by working as servant and maid. In 1894 they decided to move to Koltan, Neu-Samara in the Volga region. They packed up all their belongings of 360 pounds into two cases, loaded them on their wagon, and joined the wagon train together with their four children, one of whom was only an infant. First they travelled by river boat and later again by wagon train, a total of 4000 miles. In Neu-Samara they had a difficult farming operation breaking sod and starting with nothing. The most difficult part was the mortgage payment which took most of their earnings. In 1906 they sold out and moved to Friesenow, Tokuscki [a railway station in West] Siberia,<sup>126</sup> where they rented land and started a dairy milking 15 cows by hand. When the rented land was sold in 1908, they moved to Isiljkulj, Omsk, Siberia. In 1910 they moved to the village of Schöntal, Slavgorod Province in Siberia (known as the Barnaul District until 1910 when the City of Slavgorod was founded)

where Johann Johann Plett died. His widow together with her family immigrated to Canada settling in Gem, Alberta. Many of their descendants still reside in the area.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann Johann Plett</b>	1860		1922
m	Susanna Franz	1860	Dec 4,1879	Feb,1935
7	Johann Joh. Plett	Jun 24,1881		June,1933
7	David Joh. Plett	Nov 21,1883		1893
7	Susanna Joh. Plett	Dec 21,1885		Apr 1,1947
7	Heinrich Joh. Plett	Mar 28,1888		before 1890
7	Heinrich Joh. Plett	Mar 2,1890		before 1891
7	Kornelius J.J.M. Plett	Apr 9,1891		1961
7	Katherina Joh. Plett	Oct 6,1893		Feb 15,1922
m	Gerhard Driedger	May 3,1890		Sep 28,1936
7	Anna Joh. Plett	Mar 26,1896		1917
7	Jacob Joh. Plett	June 9,1897		1917
7	Peter Joh. Plett	Nov 3,1900		May 27,1972
7	Heinrich Joh. Plett	Apr 18,1904		Jun 26,1978

7 Son **Johann Johann Plett** married Maria Koop, possibly the daughter of Thomas Koop of Koltan in Neu-Samara. They established their own farm beside his parents in Schönthal, Slavgorod. In 1928 they moved to Friedensfeld in the Amur region. In 1930 they fled across the Amur River to China with their 10 children. After about two years of hardship in refugee camps and journeying, they arrived in Neuland in the Paraguayan Chaco. Maria died shortly after arrival and Johann was left to establish a new home with 10 children. The oldest two were already married in Siberia. Johann met a widow Sarah Weddel who had lost her husband the year before and had a house full of six children. They decided to get married and lighten their load. Johann Plett died only six months later leaving her with two households to care for. After contemplation she gave up the Plett home.

8 Daughter **Maria Plett** married Heinrich Born in Friesenaw, Siberia. They immigrated to Paraguay in the 1920s. Son **John Plett** died in Chilliwack B.C. Sons **Henry Plett** and **Peter Plett** went to Vancouver, Canada. Son **Bernard Plett** stayed in Paraguay.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Johann Joh. Plett</b>	June 24,1881		June 1933
m	Maria Koop	1883	ca.1903	1932
8	Maria Joh. Plett	Dec 18,1904		May 4,1976
m	Heinrich Born	Jan 6,1902	Jan 21,1923	Jan 28,1970
8	Johann Joh. Plett	July 21,1906		May 14,1966
m	Margaretha Wiebe	Jul 20,1901	Nov 1,1925	Nov 30,1974
8	Katharina Joh. Plett	1908		Apr,1984
m	Gerhard Kopper			
8	Anna Joh. Plett	1910		1985
8	Susanna Joh. Plett	Mar 13,1912		
m	Christopher Brockman			
8	Cornelius Joh. Plett	1916		1935

8	Sarah Plett	1918		1967
m	John Litjohn			
8	Heinrich Joh. Plett	Apr 27, 1920		Nov 22, 1980
m	Elis. Meklenburger	Aug 8, 1916		May 22, 1943
8	Peter Plett	May 15, 1922		
m	Helena Gerbrandt	May 1, 1927	Jan 27, 1945	
8	Bernhard Plett	Sep 1924		
m	Elisabeth Klassen			
7	<b>Johann Joh. Plett</b>	Jun 24, 1881		Jun, 1933
2m	Sarah Weddel		1932	

7 Daughter **Susanna Johann Plett** was called “Zowna” in Low German. She married Jakob Teichrieb on May 20, 1911. When her other siblings moved to America, Zowna and her family stayed in Russia. They lived in Alma-Ata.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
7	<b>Susanna Joh. Plett</b>	Dec 21, 1885		Apr 1, 1947
m	Jakob Teichrieb		May 20, 1911	
8	Abram Teichrieb	Jun 22, 1912		Nov 15, 1975
m	Maria Ahaneva		1947	
8	Martha Teichrieb	Apr 22, 1916		
m	Heinrich Krieger		Jul 2, 1937	
8	Jakob Teichrieb	May 12, 1922		
m	Anna Larsen		1952	
8	Heinrich Teichrieb	May 10, 1924		Oct 10, 1949

7 Son **Kornelius J.J.M. Plett** married Katherina Reimer, daughter of Aron Reimer (1870-1931) and Sarah Janzen, also resident in Schöntal, Slavgorod region.<sup>127</sup> After trying several times, Cornelius realized he was not meant to be a farmer. In 1921 he was elected as a minister in the Brüdergemeinde in Schönthal, where his father-in-law was Ältester. He became an evangelist in Soviet Russia, travelling far and wide to proclaim the “pentecostal” Gospel. In 1924 Cornelius and his family moved to Alma Ata near Turkestan. When the Soviets started watching his activities, Kornelius feared for his safety and decided to immigrate to Canada, departing Moscow on May 19, 1929. In 1930 they arrived in Alberta, and lived in Boresland, Calgary and Gem where they established a small farm. Kornelius Plett was an adherent of Pentecostal religious culture. His main occupation was running a printing press, printing tracts and gospel literature. He compiled his memoirs, “Lebenslauf des Cornelius J.J.M.M. Plett,” shortly after arrival in Alberta.<sup>128</sup> His widow, Katharina Reimer Plett, also compiled her memoirs which were published in 1998.<sup>129</sup> Cornelius is buried in Coaldale, Alberta. His wife, Katharina, was buried in Gem, Alberta, near Brooks. Their family lives mostly in the Calgary area and in southern Alberta.

8 Daughter **Susanna Plett** was a nurse. She was a Pentecostal. She and her husband worked in Northern Canada among the natives. The story of her experiences were compiled under the title “Von Starker Hand getragen,” 114 pages.<sup>130</sup> Daughter **Katharina Plett** was sent to the “Taubstummenschule (Deaf School) in Tiede, Molotschna. She had met her husband in the school in Tiede. Son



**Neil (Cornelius) Plett** was resident in Vancouver, B.C. in 1992. Son **Johann Cornelius Plett** was a contractor building houses. He died in Vancouver, B.C. Son **David Cornelius Plett** served as an Evangelist and presently resides at 209 S. Lincoln, Hillsboro, Kansas, 67063. Daughter **Nettie Plett Berlin** is presently living in Calgary, Alberta. Daughter **Jemina "Minnie" Plett** presently resides in Winnipeg.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Kornelius J.J.M. Plett</b>	Apr 9, 1891		May 5, 1961
m	Katherina Reimer	Aug 4, 1893	Apr 28, 1913	Jul 29, 1973
8	Susanna Plett	Feb 21, 1914		
m	Heinrich Peters		Oct 17, 1936	
8	Katharina Plett	May 10, 1915		Aug 18, 1893
m	John Zernickel		Oct 8, 1954	
8	Aaron Corn. Plett	Sep 23, 1917		Apr 30, 1994
m	Katie Loewen	Sep 7, 1920	Oct 8, 1944	
8	Neil Corn. Plett	Nov 28, 1919		
m	Hilda Unger	Jun 3, 1920	Apr 16, 1944	
8	Johann Corn. Plett	Nov 28, 1919		1993
m	Martha Derksen	Mar 25, 1924	Jun 8, 1940	
8	Daniel Corn. Plett	Oct 1, 1923		Aug 13, 1925
8	David Corn. Plett	Dec 11, 1927		
m	Elvira Kroecker			
8	Nanette Corn. Plett	Dec 19, 1933		
m	Donald Berlin	Aug 29, 1934	Jun 2, 1953	
8	Jemina Corn. Plett	May 8, 1935		
m	Henry Kliever		Sept 4, 1954	



*The family of Katharina Reimer and Kornelius J. J. M. Plett, 1925. Photo - Familienstammbuch...der Familie Reimer 1740-1995 (Großwallstadt, 1998), page 81.*

7 Son **Peter Johann Plett** came to Alberta with his family. They farmed near Gem, Alberta and have developed a home for their descendants here. Their descendants are found in Gem, Brooks, Bassano, Medicine Hat, Coldale and Calgary, Alberta, Chilliwack, B.C., and Gravelberg, Saskatchewan.

8 Son **Jake Plett** was an Evangelist whose wife was kidnapped and murdered near Edmonton in 1971. Jake wrote a book about his wife's tragic death, *Valley of the Shadow* (Beaverlodge, Alberta, 1976), 168 pages. In a review in *Mennonite Life*, Bernie Ratzlaff summarizes the book as follows: "MaryAnn Plett was a real estate salesperson in Edmonton, Alberta. In a short period of time she had become very successful in her work. On September 15, 1971, she was murdered by a client on an acreage 25 miles outside of the city. MaryAnn's body was not found until April the following spring. In this book, Jake Plett, the husband of Mary Ann, describes in touching, sometimes almost overwhelming manner the emotions, upheavals, adjustments, questions, and religious experiences of those seven months of uncertainty. Of the first hours he writes, 'My mind was in a whirl. Hundreds of tortured thoughts pounded their way into my mind. Like rabbits, they darted off in a thousand directions.' At the same time he also responded with considerable rationality in some areas. '...I had not told any of her family yet, reasoning that there was really nothing they could do at night, they might as well get a good night's sleep. They would need it in the morning.' At various points in the book he describes, often at length: his initial feelings toward the abductor; how he told his sons, aged 8 and 5, of their mother's disappearance; the healing aspect of having to go back to the routine of a job; the problem of how to pray for Maryann when he did not know if she were dead or alive; his response to people offering help through mediums, clairvoyants and fortune-tellers; and the outstanding efforts put forth by two police forces that were involved in the investigations....The basic purpose of the book is to herald the great love and faithfulness of God." Jake remarried and then was killed together with his second wife on a plane crash in Cranbrook, B.C., in 1978. Son **Henry Plett** is a retired school teacher presently living in Calgary, Alberta. He wrote the book, *Wings of Hope*, about a crisis when his daughter needed a liver transplant.<sup>131</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Peter Joh. Plett</b>	Nov 3, 1900		May 27, 1972
m	Sarah Wiebe	Jun 11, 1902	Sep 24, 1920	Nov 18, 1972
8	Sarah Peter Plett	Aug 18, 1921		
8	Susanna Peter Plett	Jul 8, 1923		
8	Peter Peter Plett	Aug 24, 1925		
8	Maria Peter Plett	Oct 3, 1927		
8	Anna Peter Plett	Jan 15, 1930		
8	Tina Peter Plett	Sep 30, 1931		
8	Olga Peter Plett	Mar 11, 1933		
8	Cornelius Pet. Plett	Nov 13, 1934		
8	Jake Pet. Plett	Dec 1, 1936		1978
8	Martha Peter Plett	Dec 23, 1938		
8	George Peter Plett	Jun 15, 1941		
8	Henry Peter Plett	Sep 7, 1942		

7 Son **Heinrich Johann Plett** came to Alberta with his family. They farmed near Gem, Alberta and developed a home for their descendants.

Mary Harder Plett told the story of how she had been introduced to her husband Henry Joh. Plett. It was in mid-summer while hoeing beets; it was hot, the days were long, and they were running behind schedule. She was approached as an older woman, if she would not like to adopt a few children. Well, she replied, the beet field was so busy just then; if they needed to know right now, oh, and by the way, there are 10 children in all, with a father to go with it. She and Heinrich were married three weeks later.<sup>132</sup>

8 The **Plett** children all live in southern Alberta. Son **David Heinrich Plett** plays in a musical group called "Revival Rain".

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Heinrich Joh. Plett</b>	Apr 18,1904		Jun 26,1978
m	Sarah Voth		1923	
8	Waldemar H. Plett	1924		1926
8	Peter Hein. Plett	Mar 22,1926		
8	Nick Hein. Plett	Feb 20,1928		
8	Jake Hein. Plett	Oct 10,1929		
8	Frieda Hein. Plett	1931		1936
8	Lena Hein. Plett	Apr 4,1932		
8	Olga Hein. Plett	May 8,1936		
8	Dora Hein. Plett	Nov 9,1938		Sep 11,1989
8	Bill Hein. Plett	Nov 9,1938		
8	Karl Hein. Plett	Oct 31,1939		
8	Irene Hein. Plett	Mar 9,1942		
7	<b>Heinrich Joh. Plett</b>	Apr 18,1904		Jun 26,1978
2m	Maria Harder		Aug,1942	1995
8	Elvira Hein. Plett	Jan 27,1945		
8	Abe Hein. Plett	Sep 16,1943		
8	David Hein. Plett	Jul 11,1948		
8	Martha Plett	Jan 23,1951		

6 Daughter **Helena Johann Plett** married Jacob Friesen, son of Johann Friesen and Anna Steingart. Helena and Jakob Friesen lived in Blumstein, Molotschna. Seven children were born of this marriage of which two grew to adulthood and had families. Jacob Friesen starved to death in 1933 in a Russian labour camp. Helena died in the Siberian Gulag.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Helena Plett</b>	Feb 11 1868		1951
m	Jakob Friesen	Jun 6, 1869		Aug 23, 1933
7	Liesa Friesen	Jan 20, 1898		May 15, 1980
7	Anna Friesen	Mar 23, 1899		Aug 29, 1962

7 Daughter **Liese Friesen** married Gerhard Esau. In 1935 the entire Esau family returned to Germany from Canada. Liese Friesen Esau died in Germany.

8 Son **Jakob F. Esau** died in Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Liesa Friesen</b>	Jan 20, 1898		May 15, 1980
m	Gerhard Esau	Mar 3, 1895	May, 1918	Jan 26, 1966
8	Jakob F. Esau	Mar 15, 1919		Mar 24, 1997
m	Auguste Philipine Tjaden	Sep 9, 1925	Oct 29, 1949	
8	Gerhard F. Esau	Jul 15, 1920		Feb 6, 1997
8	Helene F. Esau	Jun 23, 1923		
m	Heinz Kern			
6	Heinrich F. Esau	Sep 12, 1924		
8	Dietrich F. Esau	Aug 22, 1926		
8	Peter F. Esau	Sep 7, 1928		1944
8	Nicholas F. Esau	Nov 29, 1930		
8	Elisabeth F. Esau	Mar 1, 1932		Oct 21, 1955
8	Mariechen F. Esau	Jul 15, 1933		
8	Agatha F. Esau	Feb 18, 1935		
8	Ernst F. Esau	Oct 12, 1936		

7 Daughter **Anna Friesen** married Johann Epp. In 1924 they immigrated to Dominion City, Manitoba. Their son Jakob died in Ressor, Ontario. Anna died in Kitchener Ontario. They were the grandparents of Agnes Epp, Box 51, Sharkston, Ontario, who has done research on her family history.

8 Daughter **Katharina F. Epp** married Henry Percival Bergen of Waterloo, Ontario. She died in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Anna Friesen</b>	Mar 23,1899		Aug 29,1962
m	Johann Epp	May 8,1892	Aug 1,1921	Jun 7,1955
8	Helena F. Epp	Jun 30,1922		
m	John Jakob Epp		Aug 21,1943	
8	Anna F. Epp	Oct 3,1924		
m	Rudy Szozda		Oct 17,1942	
8	Katharina F. Epp	Oct 21,1925		Dec 18,1997
m	Henry Percival Bergen		Mar 9,1946	
8	Justina F. Epp	Jun 27,1926		
m	Tony Wolske		Apr 19,1945	
8	Liese F. Epp	Dec 18,1928		
m	Gorden J. C. Ziegler		Aug 27,1949	
8	John F. Epp	Jan 29,1930		
m	Roma J. A. Humphrey		Feb 23,1952	
8	Maria F. Epp	Mar 25,1931		
m	Edwin L. R. Walther		Sep 20,1950	
8	Susan F. Epp	May 17,1932		Aug 6,1983
m	Stanley John Gross		Oct 20,1956	
8	Erma F. Epp	Jul 26,1933		
m	Dougals D. King		Sep 24,1955	
8	Frieda F. Epp	Jul 19,1934		
m	Ralph Emil Hoeft		Sep 29,1956	
8	Agnes F. Epp	Oct 10,1935		Nov 28,1998
m	Robert Conrad Schmidt		May 21,1955	
2m	Frederick Jacob Rose		Nov 6,1964	
8	Jacob F. Epp	Dec 31,1936		Mar 31,1937

5 Son **Jakob Michael Plett** lived in Ohrloff, Molotschna, where his two sons were born and raised.<sup>133</sup> One grandchild vaguely recalled that Jakob's wife may have been called Maria.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Jakob Michael Plett</b>	1833		
m				
6	Jakob Jakob Plett	Dec 2, 1872		1924
6	Klaas Jakob Plett	Feb 20, 1877		Feb 7, 1921

6 Son **Jakob Jakob Plett** married Susanna Gertzen. In 1907 they moved to the village of Schönwiese, Slavgorod district, Altai region, Siberia, together with Jakob's brother Klaas and family. Things were tough and they had to struggle all their lives.

7 Daughter **Maria Jakob Plett** married Heinrich Toews in Siberia. In 1994 she came to Germany together with sons Heinrich and Jakob. Son **Abraham Jakob Plett** married Sarah Wiebe. He was shot in 1938. Daughter **Helena Jakob Plett** married Jakob Schroeder. She died young leaving some issue. Daughter **Sara Jakob Plett** married Peter Schroeder. Their children Sarah, Peter, Jakob and Wilhelm all immigrated to Ostbevern, Germany.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Jakob Jakob Plett</b>	Dec 2, 1872		1924
m	Susanna Gertzen			
7	Jakob Jakob Plett	ca. 1894		In Childhood
7	Jakob Jakob Plett	Aug 11, 1895		1938
7	Maria Jakob Plett	Mar 11, 1897		1988
7	Susanna Jakob Plett	ca. 1898		Sep 1, 1900
7	Abraham Jakob Plett	ca. 1899		Dec 28, 1899
7	Susanna Jakob Plett	Apr 1, 1901		Nov 29, 1991
7	Abraham Jakob Plett	Feb 1, 1904		1934
7	Isaak Jakob Plett	Nov 13, 1906		
7	Katharina Jakob Plett	Nov 13, 1906		
m	Bernhard Derksen			
7	Heinrich Jakob Plett	ca. 1908		Mar 23, 1910
7	Helena Jakob Plett	Nov 12, 1910		Young
m	Jakob Schroeder			
7	Sara Jakob Plett	Jan 16, 1914		

7 Son **Jakob Jakob Plett** married Helena Wiebe in Altai, Siberia. From 1930 until his death, he was a bookkeeper in Heidelbrecht (Nororomanowka). He was an upright community person, teaching his family to go to church as was the custom. However, this was contrary to the program of Soviets and in 1938 they shot a group of church members in Slavgorod, Altai, Siberia, including Jakob and the pastor. Jakob Jakob Plett kept a diary. One journal of 154 pages is extant, containing mostly poetry in German but also a few Russian and English items. There are also a few extremely valuable entries in which he wrote about his parents and siblings, with birth and death dates.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	<b>Jakob Jakob Plett</b>	Aug 15,1895		1938
m	Helena Wiebe			
8	Jakob Jakob Plett	1928		Before 1936
8	Lena Jakob Plett	1930		
m	Johann Friesen			
2m	Johann Hamm			
8	Sarah Jakob Plett	1934		
8	Jakob Jakob Plett	1936		
8	Katharina Jakob Plett			

7 Son **Isaak Jakob Plett** married Katharina Martens in July, 1925. In the same year they immigrated to Canada. They settled in Morden, Manitoba, where Isaac was an average worker. He managed his finances carefully and even acquired a revenue property. Isaac is now a widower and living alone in his apartment in Morden. In July of 2002, Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta, interviewed him: "His memory is surprisingly clear and he could still tell me a lot about his younger years. He said that his parents had moved from the Molotschna Colony to Schönwiese, Siberia, because of the new colonizing that took place, along with the new opportunities and expectations that came along with it. He had been only one year old, he said. Basically he grew up in Schönwiese with the rest of his family. The two Plett brothers lived and farmed together raising their families in the same community, school and church....He remembers his uncle Nikolai's (Klaas') funeral and two years later his father passed away. As the Russian troubles intensified and an opportunity became available for them to immigrate to Canada, they took the chance. In 1925, they left for Canada, travelling through the Moscow gates as it was known then. They left his Mother, brothers and sisters behind. He, his wife, and one child were the only ones permitted to go....When they arrived in Canada, they went directly to Morden, Manitoba, and have lived there ever since....Since times were difficult in Russia, one time Isaac had the chance to send some money along to his Mother in Siberia. He sent \$25 in Canadian currency but they had no way to convert it into Russian currency. As a result it came back, although the need was in fact very great."<sup>134</sup>

8 Son **Isaac Isaac Plett** lived in Thompson, Manitoba, where he worked in the mine. Son **Jakob Isaac Plett** lived in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. Son **Gerhard Isaac Plett** was a bachelor. He was a long distance truck driver. Son **Heinrich Isaac Plett** lived in Morden. He died of blood cancer.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
7	Isaak Jakob Plett	Nov 13,1906	Jul 18,1926	
m	Katharina Martens			
8	Isaac Isaac Plett	Aug 10,1924		
8	Jacob Isaac Plett	Feb 18,1927		
8	Gerhard Isaac Plett	Nov 2,1928		
8	Susane Isaac Plett	Feb 8,1931		
8	Katharina Isaac Plett	Feb 9,1934		
8	Heinrich Isaac Plett	May 27,1938		1992

6 Son **Klaas Jakob Plett** married Maria Rempening, daughter of Jakob Rempening and Helena Giesbrecht. Together with brother Jakob, the Klaas Jakob Plett family moved to Schönwiese, Slavgorod district, Altai region, Siberia, where they established their farming operation. Nephew Jakob Jakob Plett remembered Klaas Jakob Plett as “...a quiet and peace loving person.” He also said that his uncle died of an illness causing him extreme dizziness. Klaas Jakob Plett “was more than happy to leave this world, since his life was so difficult and the family so poor, [and] next to impossible to deal with.”

7 Daughter **Katharina Klaas Plett** married Peter Gerzen. They lived in Orlow, Altai, Siberia, where she died in 1982. Son **Jakob Klaas Plett** married Maria Hertel. They lived in Grünfeld, Kirgisien, U.S.S.R. where he died in 1938. He had two children: Jakob and Elsa.

7 Son **Abraham Klaas Plett** married Helena Woelke, daughter of David Woelke and Anna Esau. The following is the story of Abram and Helena Plett as written by daughter Maria:

Our father, Abram Plett, son of Klaas Plett, was born on February 20, 1902 in Jekaterinoslav, South Russia. He was raised in the Mennonite faith and baptised at the age of 16 with a group of about 60 people.

His parents frequently moved from place to place. When dad was two years old, the family moved to Slavgorod, Siberia. In the village of Rosendorf father was a shepherd. He attended school for only two years, because he had to work to earn a living. In winter it was his duty to carry in water from the outside well. There was no running water in their house.

In 1909 and 1916 his parents moved to different places in Siberia. But after the last move in 1916 our father left his parent's home and went to Bogoslovka, He found employment as a millwright at a mill owned by Peter Gadi, Dietrich Kroeker and Wilhelm Raab (When we came to Canada, my parents met the Raabs after so many years). At this mill father also worked as a coachman until 1924.

Our Mother: Helene Plett, nee Woelke, was born in Petershagen in the Jekaterinoslav district. She was born on June 10, 1900 in South Russia. At an early age, her parents moved to the Caucasus area. They lived in Terek, 15 km. from the Caspian Sea. Mother attended school from the age of six to 12. When she was 13 her mother died in June of 1913. Soon her father remarried but died in 1915.

Mother worked as a maid after leaving school for a Fast family looking after twins, cooking meals and helping on the farm. Her life was difficult. At the age of 17 she moved with her sister to the District of Dovllekanova. Here she worked as maid for Penners, Kroekers and Raabs.

It was here in Siberia where she met father. On an Easter Sunday, March 22, 1923, they were married. My parents were poor and mother wore a white blouse and a blue skirt at her wedding. After their marriage they continued their service at the same mill. Father worked from 6 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, while mother worked in their little house and for the owners of the mill. This beautiful time soon came to an end.

The civil war of the Bolsheviks came to an end, but the country was very restless. The Communists took the mill away from its owners and my parents lost their jobs.

Mother had just given birth to our oldest sister Katja, when dad was called



to go into military service. Those two years belonged to the darkest days of his life, but perhaps also to those for which he will receive special rewards, having been faithful to his Lord and Saviour.

After the Communist revolution a law was passed, contrary to the privileges that had made our forefathers willing to immigrate to Russia....They were promised that Russia would give them freedom of faith. The Mennonites would not have to take up arms or perform any military service. The new law now demanded that every man take up arms and be trained in the army.

About a year after their marriage father was asked to register for his military service. When he refused to take up weapons of any kind, he was declared to be a coward and had to be brought "to his senses". He was taken out of the training camp and handed over to the court. He was asked to learn how to fire a gun, but father refused. At first he was beaten with the handle of the gun. Since he took that punishment without changing his conviction, a gun was tied on his shoulder and his hands tied up. He had to remain like that for 28 days. Still father kept faith in spite of the torture he had to bear.

When this type of torture did not work, father was pulled up a mountain on his legs, the head bleeding while hitting the ground. He was left lying in the heat for three days. At four o'clock the patrols would come and force him to look into the bright sun. He would have died, had it not been for a merciful shepherd, who brought him water and food.

God had a plan for father's life. After three days of suffering the patrol came and took him down again. At the court he was asked to sign a document that he had taken and learned how to use a gun. Father refused to sign. He then was taken to the infantry but he still remained faithful to his conviction. They finally put him behind a cannon, but father would not learn to operate that weapon. He was moved from one division of the army to the other. Once he was asked just to shoot at a sand bag, but the authorities had no success. All kind of tortures were invented again. He was pricked with needles, but father remained firm and the Lord strengthened him.

When the authorities saw that they were losing, father was sentenced to imprisonment. He was given two breads and put into a cell. Barely had he entered the cell when other prisoners took away his bread and he was left without food. The cell was so full, that all the inmates had to stand up. There was no space to lie down.

Father became sick and was finally taken out of prison. Now he had to serve the army by cooking the meals. He cooked for 1000 people. He also worked with the horses, looking after them. One of the doctors in the army felt sorry for father and sent him to cook for officers at a resort. Here he had an easier time and found the work pleasant.

After a while, however, he was to appear at court again. He had the same witnesses as he had at the first trial. However, the merciful doctor was not around anymore. Since father did not change his position, he was sentenced for one more year as cook in the army. The term was shortened and after six months of this second sentence he was freed.

Father continued work at the mill, but as life became more difficult, our parents decided to leave Russia. Everything was sold and items that were to go

on the trip, loaded on a horse cart. On October 2, 1929 our parents and three daughters left Bogoslavka which was 30 km. from Slavgorod. The family stayed there for three days. Father went to see whether his mother and brothers and sisters, who lived in Orloff, would leave Russia also. They refused and remained in Russia.

At first the family travelled by train to Povladar, then took a ship to Omsk and from here took a train again to go to Moscow.

In Moscow the family remained four months. During this time my father was sent back to Siberia. My mother suffered great anguish and pain, not knowing whether father would be set free again. Mother's situation became very difficult. She had to feed three daughters and live on her own.

Through God's help, father escaped from the train before arriving in Siberia and returned to Moscow. On his trip back, he saw the same patrol come through the train car on which he travelled. He climbed on a platform at the top of the coach, covered himself with a coat and the patrol missed him.

Father had to live in hiding in the forest. The police often came to check at the place where mother lived. Again, through God's grace, the patrols that checked, had misspelled father's name and my mother, who spoke Russian fluently, told them that they would have to look for that family somewhere else. Three other couples, living with her, were sent back. They blamed my mother, believing that she was left alone because she could speak Russian and the others could not.

One day father returned to the house and told mother that the time had come that our Mennonites could leave the country. Father had one big problem. When he was sent back to Siberia, the authorities had taken his passport.

Father quickly ran to a bookstore and asked for a passport. He too spoke Russian and after pleading a passport was issued. He hardly took time to sign it and then raced back to the family. Had he been a few minutes later, he would have missed the train taking them out of Russia.

On December 7, 1929 the family left Moscow, heading toward the Red Gate at the border. When they passed through that gate our parents were finally on their way to freedom. In Kaunus, Lithuania, our sister Helen died of polio.

The trip continued to Hammerstein in Germany. They lived here until March, 1930 and then took a steamer for Paraguay. They should have gone to Canada, but according to information father gave me once, the tickets for Canada reached them too late.

This information has been taken from daughter Maria's diary. Later Abram and Helena Plett moved to British Columbia where he died in 1987 in Abbotsford.

8 Daughter **Maria Plett** (1925-86) died in Vancouver, B. C., in 1986 in a tragic accident when she tripped and cut herself with a knife she was carrying. Son **Rudolph Plett**, Fernheim, Paraguay, completed his Master's thesis at the University of Asuncion, Paraguay in 1979, and has written several books in Spanish including *El Protestantismo en el Paraguay: su Aporte Cultural Economico y Espiritual* (Asuncion, 1987).<sup>135</sup>

7 Son **Nikolai Klaas Plett** married Anna Janzen. They lived in Schönwiese, Altai, Siberia. By 1943 all the parents in the village had either been executed, exiled to labour camps in Siberia or drafted by the Red Army. The following

memories of Anna Janzen Plett have been recorded: "She was left behind to tend to the farm and her family. But she saw there were children in the village who had no one to look after them and she took them in. The cry went out to God for help and relief and to not allow the children to die. Hardly could a prayer come over her lips for so great was the aching in her heart and the need as she saw the poor orphans in an ice-frozen Siberian home - before her eyes were 22 wonderful lively children who had been left behind by their mothers and fathers. All was quiet in the room as she begged and pleaded with God while gazing into the eyes of those distraught little faces; countenances which mournfully reflected one thing - there was only one tiny little piece of bread for today. There simply was no bread. For many days they had not eaten anything. Their thin shirts and torn clothing robbed them of all the strength they needed to move around from place to place. They buried themselves in the straw mattresses and cuddled in clusters to get each little bit of warmth they could from each other's body heat. Even in the darkest days there was no preferential treatment given by Anna Plett Janzen between her own children and the others. 'Mama, Mama,' called a weakened little voice in a pleading tone. Anna picked up the child in her arms, and pressed it against herself. She says that it wanted to cry but the tears could not come, the children were all cried out by now. How Anna made it through that difficult winter of 1943-44 God alone knows. With the coming of the warm April sun, there was also new hope for life in the earthen hut half buried into the ground. With the terrible cold and stormy Siberian winter behind them, they started to see new hope. All the parents had been called to the Trud ("work") Army, but she was able to stay at home with her three little ones. The other 19 children were strangers. No, not exactly strangers, but they accumulated in her home for a place to spend the winter. They really had no place to go. Thankfully, the children found this tiny earth hut. Seven children were from a Keller family, six were from a Gerzen family, three from Eberhardts and three from Rempenings. Most of the children did not make it until spring: from the Eberhardts, they all died; from the Keller family, three survived; two from the Rempening family had the strength to survive. 15 out of the 22 children did not survive. Two of Anna's children also died, only one little girl stayed alive. In springs, as the children had lived, so were they also buried - in one mass grave. First, they were put on a bed of straw in the ground, then their little bodies were laid out, covered with another layer of straw and then buried with earth. Who is to blame for this terrible tragedy of our people?...Anna Janzen Plett was a warm, strong and understanding woman. She gave her own clothing, and went barefoot and hungry to give the children some comfort for the night. As far as her strength would allow, she looked after them. Anything and everything she had, she would divide equally among them." Anna and Nikolai's daughter Katharina Plett (b. 1932) married Johann Rempel came to Lippe-Lohne, Germany, and their son Nikolai provided the above report about his grandmother.<sup>136</sup>

7 Son **Peter Klaas Plett** married Katharina Miller. He died in Altai, Siberia. Son **Heinrich Klaas Plett** married Lena. They had two daughters: Maria and Frida. Heinrich died in Kirgisien, U.S.S.R. Son **David Klaas Plett** married Elisabeth Epp. They immigrated to Detmold, Germany where he died.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Klaas Jakob Plett</b>	Feb 20,1877		Feb 7,1921
m	Maria Rempening			
7	Katharina Klaas Plett	1896		1982
7	Johann Klaas Plett	1898		1972
m	Maria Wieler			
7	Jakob Klaas Plett	1900		1938
7	Abraham Klaas Plett	Feb 20,1902	Apr 2,1923	Jan 28,1987
m	Helena Woelke	Jun 10,1900		Sep 30,1989
7	Nikolai Klaas Plett	Oct 3,1903		Apr 22,1994
7	Peter Klaas Plett	1905		Childhood
7	Gerhard Klaas Plett	1906		1906
7	Peter Klaas Plett	1907		1959
7	Heinrich Klaas Plett	1909		1940
7	Gerhard Klaas Plett	1911		1911
7	Maria Klaas Plett	1913		1913
7	David Klaas Plett	Jun 11,1915		May 29,2000



*Abraham Nicolai Plett, born Orloff, Jekatherinoslav. From "Personalausweis" Karte, March 8, 1930.*



*Wife, Helena Plett, nee Welk, born 1900. Photos courtesy of Berni and Dorothy Plett, 72 Linden Ave., Winnipeg, R2K 0M8.*

## Part C: Johann Plett

### Section One: Johann Plett, 1765-1833, Blumstein, Molotschna.

3 Son **Johann Plett** was married for the first time to Katharina Klassen (1767-1785). She died childless during the same year they were married.<sup>157</sup> Johann married for the second time to Elisabeth Baer, a Lutheran widow working as a maid in the Plett household in Fürstenwerder. Johann's parents did not approve of the marriage and when his father found out his son was planning to marry the maid he was very disagreeable. He threatened to disinherit young Johann if he proceeded with his plans and said: "If you do that, I will disinherit you and you need not come to my house any more." This was a serious threat as Johann Plett, the elder, was very well off materially. To this the son replied, "Well, Elisabeth, then come," as he left their home. Johann Jr. did not appear in his parental home any more, except once.

According to Gustav Schulz, Johann Plett was excommunicated from the Gemeinde in 1793 and went forth to join the military serving until 1797.<sup>138</sup> Johann served in the Hussars which were Prussian calvary regiments. Grandson Peter P. Isaac has given a slightly different interpretation to this event stating that Johann Jr. had been convicted of a crime for which he was to be jailed and that he had chosen the option of military service: "The reason why he [Johann Plett] enlisted as a soldier was as follows: He had transgressed the law and was given the choice of going to the penitentiary or three years of service in the army. He chose the latter."<sup>139</sup> Grandson Peter Toews writes that Johann Plett "had through voluntary joining of the military and through outside marriage, estranged himself from the family of his father, and his father disinherited him."<sup>140</sup>

As a 28 year-old Johann naturally missed his parents. Grandson Peter Isaac tells how Johann decided to visit his parental home in Fürstenwerder once more wearing his military uniform so as not to be recognized. When Johann arrived on his parent's yard he alighted from his horse and went to the door: "Nobody thought of him as in uniform, so none of the household of great-grandfather suspected that it was their son, Johann."<sup>141</sup> In this way Johann had carried out his father's instructions not to appear on the premises again, at least no one else knew that he had been there until he told them so later.

Johann's wife Elisabeth joined the Flemish Mennonites in 1786. Henry Schapansky has written that "...Johann Plett was living in 'the Kamp' at the time that his wife Elisabeth was baptised into the Rosenort Gemeinde in 1786."<sup>142</sup> Two daughters by the name of Elisabeth and Katharina were born of the second marriage. According to Gustav Schulz they also had a son by the name of Michael Plett.

Johann Plett married for the third time to the widow Kornelius Merkers, nee Esther Smit. She was also a Lutheran widow. Johann and Esther lived in Danzig, Prussia, during the early years of their married life. At this time Napoleon I besieged Danzig on his march through Germany, which he conquered causing severe destruction. The need was very great. So much so, that the head of a horse or a cat cost one "Grosch", a substantial sum of money. Later, in 1820, the grandparents emigrated from Danzig with the intention of settling in Russia. Because of their passports, they could not get any further than Poland, and lived

there for eight years. Peter Isaac writes that his "Grandfather and mother as well, who was then a little girl, have told us how they lived in great poverty endeavouring to make their way by weaving baskets. Most of the time they had no bread and only potatoes. The potatoes, of course, were of good quality as mother told us. That grandfather Plett had to struggle along in poverty considerably during his lifetime, is due, possibly, to his own wishes. One time - as my mother had told me, which I can remember very well - on occasions when great-grandparents had many guests and sumptuous and costly meals were served, he wished that God would keep him from such extravagant living as he had to witness it in his parental home. It is thinkable that God heard him in that he kept him all his life in poverty. At the time he expressed this wish, he will hardly have thought that it would materialize."

The incident where Johann Plett exorcised a ghost from a house in Danzig illustrates his courageous and forthright character. Peter Isaac tells the story: "A certain man in grandfather's neighbourhood had advertised his house for sale by auction for an announced date. A few days before the sale the owner was aware of ghost-like noises in the house. This, of course, worried him, because it diminished his chances of getting a fair price for the property. He reasoned if it should become known in the community, he might not be able to sell the house at all and he needed the money very much. When Johann Plett became aware that the owner was in such a dilemma, he went to him and asked him whether he wanted to rid himself of the ghost and offered to expel the same in order that he could sell the house, since he had perceived that this created a hindrance. But the owner only gazed at him in amazement, asking, what he thought anyway, for no man could accomplish this, since 'the devil was behind all of this.'"

"To this grandfather had replied in great earnestness, 'There is no devil in your house, and I will rid your house of those noises, provided that you tell no one of our arrangement until I am done.' Since the owner already had some confidence in grandfather and dearly wanted to sell his house for a reasonable price, he agreed and said, 'Do what you can and I will remain silent of the matter until you are finished, for I am curious myself as to what is there in my house.'"

So the next evening grandfather went to the house and since it was winter time, he made a fire in the hearth to keep warm. He settled down in the dark room to await the ghost. After he had waited in the darkness like this for a while a clattering noise started in the second story. This did not scare grandfather, and at this juncture he is to have called out, 'Come down here.' Whereupon a huge form appeared and also came half way down the stairs, where it remained standing on the steps, with a large cudgel in its hand, stomping its feet so that grandfather feared that the stairs would break. In addition, the form had disguised itself in a most horrible manner, with the head of a horse, feet like a camel, and other things more, so that grandfather is to have remarked later, that if anyone had happened to enter the house at that moment, they would have been paralysed or struck to the ground by the fearful sight."

"Next the ghost came completely down the stairs, until it came near the fireplace where grandfather was sitting; where it stamped its feet in a frightful way. Apparently it must have believed that if it came right up close and made the matter truly awful, that grandfather would seek refuge in flight. In this the ghost

had gravely erred. After the ghost had stood there for a time without having achieved its purpose; grandfather took the coal shuttle, stirred the fire and gathered up the shuttle full of hot embers, and dumped them on the feet of the ghost, who quickly shook them off. Then grandfather jumped up and remarked, "If you are a ghost whom glowing coals can burn then you can not be a genuine devil." With that he grabbed the figure, threw it to the floor, tore off its mask, jerked it back on its feet again; and rendering it a few blows remarked, 'So now you can go home again, your role of ghost acting is over.'"

"After Grandfather had peeled away all the disguises, he recognized the man as one in the neighbourhood who, in his opinion, had only set about the plan of ghost acting in order to give the house a bad name and thereby later to buy it for a song, if his plan succeeded. He was unsuccessful, however, because grandfather spread the news of this episode through the entire community: that the house had not really been haunted and that no one need be scared about purchasing the same. The house was sold for a good price and the ghost actor had to endure much ridicule after grandfather had proven that he was not apt to fear anything easily. I do not know whether grandfather ever received a reward for his deed, but it stands to reason that he did."

Grandson Peter Toews (1841-1922) composed a poem regarding the above incident under the title: "Der Mütige behält das Feld: Aus den Jugend Erlebnissen unsers Grossvaters, Johann Plett":

„Der Starke gab dem Stärkern nach;  
 Entlarvt ward nun so Geist als Sach',  
 Der Spuk hat aufgehört;  
 Das Haus war jetzt nicht lang mehr feil,  
 Es wurd' nun auch verkauft derweil  
 Für seinen vollen Wert.  
 So banne auch den Geisterspuk  
 Mit allem seinen Lug and Trug,  
 Der Enkel (\*) Grosze Zahl.  
 Doch Zieht den Harnisch Gottes an  
 Und kämpft vereinigt als ein Mann,  
 Das Feld wird euch zur Wahl. Ephes. 6:11-13.  
 Christus als Sohn über das Haus,  
 Das Gott selbst hat gerüstet aus,  
 Bezwingt den Starken hier. Luk. 11:12.  
 Wohl jedem, dem dies Haus ein Port,  
 Und eignet des Apostels Wort,  
 Das Wort: „Dies Haus sind wir." Ebr. 3:6.

(\*) Grandson in the first degree are the carriers of the following names, Pletts, Toews', Isaaks, Goossens, Enns' and Friesens [and Harders].<sup>143</sup>

Grandson Peter Toews has written about the experiences of his mother and her siblings while they were still in Poland. They "had been shouted at through the open window by the neighbour children, calling out to them, 'You are heretics'. And yet, relative to these Papists, they were also only baptised as children."<sup>144</sup> The "Family records" of grandson Johann P. Friesen, show that Johann

Plett had a son Johann who died in 1827 at nine years of age. This is confirmed by the 1835 census records and explains why Johann's only surviving son was called Cornelius and not Johann after his father.

After having lived in Poland for eight years, another man helped Johann Plett to get his passport. Peter Toews has written: "Eight long years they were interrupted in Poland in severe poverty. (Grandfather's work consisted mostly of weaving baskets). Through a certain so-called 'Große Reimer' they were looked up and supported in their dilemma regarding their immigration visas and helped in the continuation of their journey."

In 1828 the family undertook the trek to Russia. Peter Isaac has written: "This journeying was similar to that of the foreparents from father's side. For example; with a horse and two-wheeled cart, and the few most necessary belongings loaded onto it, etc." Peter Toews writes, "They came to Russia in about the year 1828 completely without means (with a vehicle of such a nature that the children had to walk)."

After a short stay in the Old Colony, they moved to the Molotschna Colony about 65 miles southeast. According to Peter Isaac, the Plett family settled in the village of Blumstein. Presumably their first stop was at the home of daughter Elisabeth, Mrs. Johann Harder. One can only imagine Elisabeth's joy as she welcomed her family, not having not seen them for over 20 years. Peter Toews writes, "Of the girls, among whom was also our mother, three took jobs in Schönwiese in the Old Colony while the others moved on to make their home in Blumstein in the Molotschna and were accepted into the Ohrloff Gemeinde."<sup>145</sup> The nearest worship house was in Ohrloff, located several miles east of Blumstein. In 1824 the conservative "Rein-Flemish" Gemeinde (often called the "Große Gemeinde"), with some 80 percent of the Molotschna population, separated leaving the Ohrloff Gemeinde as the smaller but socially and culturally more prominent community.

In the meantime three of the Plett daughters were working as servants in Schönwiese in the Old Colony for the winter. A horrible tragedy occurred when daughter Helena died from drinking ice cold water when she was overheated by work. Peter Isaac described what occurred: "She came home on a summer day, from a place where she had worked, with heated up body and a great thirst and went straightaway to the ice storage cellar and drank ice water. Immediately, after drinking she had a severe pain in her chest as though her heart were torn loose and immediately she had to go to bed. She died the next or the following day, according to what my mother has told me. Apparently, she did not know that it is not at all advisable to drink ice water after being overheated."<sup>146</sup>

In spite of his earlier poverty, Johann Plett was quickly able to establish himself materially. He is listed in Government records under "Mennonite households founded in Russia in 1828 in Sparrau: "31. Johann Plett, whose family consisted of three males and seven females."<sup>147</sup> Johann Plett was listed in the 1835 Revision as owner of Wirtschaft 47 in Sparrau: Johann Johann Plett, died 1833, Wife Ester 52, children of first marriage Johann died 1829, Maria 23, Tina 19, Kornelius 14 and Karolina 13. Also listed is Peter Gerhard Voth who moved to Friedrichsdorf in 1833, possibly an employee. Although the life of Johann Plett was not completely praiseworthy, it is clear that he did endeavour to



redeem the day financially in his older years.

Grandson Peter Isaac has written that during their fifth year of their stay in Blumstein, that is to say, in 1832, Johann Plett built a new house for himself using raw bricks. He contracted a severe cold during the construction from which he never fully recovered.<sup>148</sup> Grandson Peter Toews has written that his mother, his father's first wife, and the mother of his own children, all came from Blumstein, thus emphasizing the Blumstein connection. Possibly Johann Plett sold the Wirtschaft in Sparrau after five years of successful farming and then built the new house in Blumstein in 1832, the year before his death. If this is correct, it would turn out to be a very astute decision. In 1833 the Molotschna was hit by the worst drought on record which would have made the Wirtschaft unmarketable.

Peter Isaac has referred to Johann Plett's spiritual life: "Because his last two wives were of the Lutheran confession, his children were all baptized in infancy. In other ways, too, his walk of life was not all praiseworthy but he later became concerned and repentant which had the consequence that he and the grandmother, who had been baptized, joined the Mennonite church. As our mother has told us of the last days of his life, we can conclude that he went unto eternal rest. Consequently, we cannot hold anything against him, either." Johann Plett died on March 25, 1833, in Blumstein, Russia, at the age of about 68 years.

After his death, his widow Esther Smit Plett lived for some 10 years in the house which Johann had built during the last year of his life. At times she had her youngest daughter, Karolina, with her, that is when she was not out working for other people, and until she married. After 1843, or shortly after Karolina was married, Esther Smit Plett lived with various of her children. Peter Isaac writes; "I can vaguely remember that before 1852 she was cared for by my parents."

During the years when the Plett family lived in Danzig, Prussia, they existed in poverty and Johann's daughters from his second marriage had to work for others to earn their keep. The girls were severely mistreated by their employers and when they complained to their step-mother, she simply insisted they return to work. It happened that one of the girls, Katharina, went missing, for which the step-mother took personal blame. Peter Isaac explains: "During the ten years after the death of my grandfather, grandmother is said to have experienced very severe anguish of the soul, caused by the bad treatment she had given her stepdaughter of which I have told you before.... I remember my mother told me that, when grandmother realized that all efforts to find the lost daughter were futile, to which she had put forth so much effort in inquiring of people that came from Prussia and all was in vain; she became so very repentant of the cruel treatment she had meted out to her daughter, that she walked up and down wringing her hands: 'If only I could once again come in possession of that cast-away child, how I would embrace her and heartily beg for forgiveness for the cruel treatment I have given her! In her anguish she came to me in a childlike spirit and told me she could bear it no longer and instead of believing my daughter and getting a different place to work for her, I beat her and drove her away.'"

"Thus she came under heavier and heavier convictions because of the lost daughter, Katharina. When one falls under such a heavy judgement, the devil comes and drives one to greater fear, so that God has to say as He did of Job, 'But spare his life.' Whoever has not had such an experience himself can have no

conception of what it means to come under such judgment. When it came to the worst with grandma, she came into such desperate anguish that she bit pieces of flesh out of her arms.”

“It became especially impressive to me through the narrative of the aged widow Klaas Brandt of Rosenhof, Manitoba, when I visited her two years ago. She told me that grandmother had shown her the scars on her arms where she had bitten out pieces of flesh. But God did relieve her of this despairing anguish. She became quiet and received forgiveness of her sins. She is said to have lived a free life in God unto her death in which we can now take comfort. We can see by this that God is not pleased in the death of a sinner. The aged widow Brandt was 16 years-old at the time when grandmother showed her the scars and was in service at the home of the aged Klaas Friesens, Rosenort, Russia.<sup>149</sup> Mrs. Klaas Friesen was the daughter of grandmother and my Aunt Karolina Plett, who also died a long time ago. This widow Brandt took care of grandmother in her sickness.”

Peter Isaac’s statement that his grandmother eventually found spiritual peace is verified by the “Ministerial Journal” of Kleine Gemeinde Ohm Johann Dueck of Muntau who recorded that at a brotherhood meeting held on November 1, 1854, “Mrs. Plett was accepted into the Gemeinde.”<sup>150</sup> Apparently she had finally decided to transfer her membership from the Ohrloff Gemeinde to the Kleine Gemeinde to which all of her children belonged. Mrs. Johann Plett, nee Esther Smit, died at the end of February, 1855, at the age of 77 at the home of the above named Aunt Karolina in Russia.<sup>151</sup>

Grandson Peter Toews gave the testimony that he “...was personally well acquainted with [his]...grandmother....I still have a living memory of a well deserved motherly punishment which I received through her influence. Although suffering from a certain sickness from which she was in great anguish of soul (to the point of becoming convulsive), she became well again; she was deeply God-fearing. A dream of my childhood should be mentioned here. I got sight of my grandmother through a small portal in heaven out of which she called, ‘there I too will have to crawl through.’ Her body now rests in the cemetery at Rosenort, Molotschna.”<sup>152</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
3	<b>Johann Plett</b>	1765		Mar 25,1833
m	Katharina Klassen	1767	1785	1785
2m	Elisabeth Baer		ca.1786	
4	Elisabeth Plett	1790		ca.1840
4	Katharina Plett			
4	Michael Plett			Died
3	<b>Johann Plett</b>	1765		Mar 25,1833
3m	Esther Smit	1778	ca.1808	Feb,1855
4	Helena Plett	1809		1829
4	Maria Plett	Mar 30,1811	Aug 20,1835	Jun 15,1895
4	Anna Plett	Nov 24,1813		Mar 29,1887
4	Wilhelmina Plett	Apr 13,1815	Apr 13,1855	Jun 25,1864
4	Johann Plett	1818		1827
4	Cornelius Plett	Oct 28,1820		Nov 18,1900
4	Karolina Plett	Mar 7,1823		Feb 11,1887

## Section Two: Elisabeth Plett, Mrs. Johann Harder, Blumstein.

4 Daughter **Elisabeth Plett** married Johann Harder II (1788-1847), son of Johann Harder who settled on Wirtschaft 16 in Blumstein, Molotschna, in 1804.<sup>153</sup> Elisabeth Plett was born in about 1790.<sup>154</sup> She emigrated to Russia by herself as a young woman. Benjamin H. Unruh has record of an Elizabeth Plett who emigrated to Russia in 1804 who is listed as being “from Neumünsterberg, born in Fürstenwerder, and with the family of Jakob Wiens.”<sup>155</sup> Elizabeth did have an aunt Margaretha Plett (born 1771), married to a Jakob Wiens of Wernersdorf, and it is possible that she travelled to Russia in their company although no specific listing of this family is reported in the emigration records. At the time of the 1808 “Revisions-Listen” an Elizabeth Plittin age 22 is shown residing with the Michael Plett family on Wirtschaft 1 in Halbstadt.<sup>156</sup> Although the age listed is too old, it is possible that Elizabeth was working for her uncle Michael Plett in Halbstadt at the time. She may have met her future husband Johann Harder (1789-1847) here when he visited his brother Abraham Harder (1787-1844), who was living in Halbstadt.

The Kleine Gemeinde-associated fellowship<sup>157</sup> in the village of Blumstein included nine of the 21 farmers listed in 1808: Cornelius Loepp (Wirtschaft 3), his daughter married deacon, Jakob W. Friesen, son of Ältester Abraham Friesen; Gerhard Schellenberg (Wirtschaft 5);<sup>158</sup> Martin Warkentin (Wirtschaft 6);<sup>159</sup> Daniel Wiens (Wirtschaft 8), their son Franz Wiens settled in Jansen, Nebraska in 1875;<sup>160</sup> Johann Fast (Wirtschaft 10);<sup>161</sup> Johann Harms (Wirtschaft 12);<sup>162</sup> Johann Harder (Wirtschaft 16); Aron Schellenberg (Wirtschaft 18), brother to Gerhard; and Johann Neufeld (Wirtschaft 20) married to Gerhard’s daughter.

Johann Harder farmed together with his father for a number of years. His father had remained active as a horse lover until his death in 1827. Johann Harder Sr. lived with his son Abraham in Halbstadt for the last while. Eventually son Johann Harder Jr. purchased and took over the family Wirtschaft 16 in Blumstein and continued a successful farming operation. The family is listed as follows in the 1835 Revision: Johann Johann Harder died 1827,<sup>163</sup> son Johann Johann Harder, age 45, wife Elisabeth 44, children: Johann Johann Harder 23 and wife Justina 22, son Abraham 20, Isebrandt 18, Elisabeth 17, Helena 9 and Peter 6.

Abraham J. Harder has recorded some memories of his grandparents Johann and Elizabeth Harder which have been translated and published by Dr. Leland Harder in *The Harder Family Review*: “I recall less about grandmother than grandfather. I do not know whether grandmother was still living when I was born. By birth she was a Plett. Two brothers, Julius and Johann Plett, Hierschau, whom I knew well, were in her family line.<sup>164</sup> She was a kind and merciful person. One day a poor woman came to the door and complained about her need for clothes. Grandmother took her underwear and gave it to the lady. Earlier in life, grandmother knew what it meant not to have enough clothes.”<sup>165</sup>

“Grandfather knew Johann Cornies. They became close friends, and thus it happened that Johann Cornies, out of love for his friend, sent grandfather’s oldest son, my father Johann Harder, to the Ohrloffer Verein Schule for a three year period, paying all expenses. This education was a great help to my father in his later life.”

**Editor's Note:**

The entire Elisabeth Plett and Johann Harder (1789-1847) section of this book (Part C: Section Two), including this biography of Johann Harder (1789-1847), as well as the following biographies of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, were first published in the *Harder Family Review* and subsequently also in *The Blumstein Legacy*, and were written, compiled and edited by great-great-grandson, Dr. Leland Harder, North Newton, Kansas. These biographies are reprinted here by permission, with some alterations and additions. The reader should note that a number of explanatory and editorial comments have been inserted into the quoted text in editorial brackets [ \_\_\_\_ ] to assist the reader in understanding and interpreting the material. These explanatory notes represent the views and opinions of the editor and not those of Leland Harder or the other writers quoted.]

“An anecdote which was told about the elder Cornies and my grandfather is in my memory. One day in the dead of winter, Mr. Cornies and some of his friends walked home from church. They were walking along the ruts made by the sleigh runners in the deep snow. Several horse-drawn sleighs came home from church and made Mr. Cornies and his friends step out of the ruts into the deep snow so that they could get by. This aggravated Mr. Cornies that people had no more respect than that. While he was talking, he looked up and saw my grandfather coming along in a sleigh. Mr. Cornies said, ‘There comes Johann Harder from Blumstein. He will drive around us.’ His friends doubted it; but when my grandfather approached, he drove around just as Cornies had said he would.”<sup>166</sup>

Leland Harder has written: “In about the year 1841, at the age of 52, Johann II was ready to retire from active management of the family Wirtschaft and to turn it over to his 30 year-old son, Johann III. His wife, Elisabeth Plett Harder had died, and he was planning to be remarried to a woman by the name of Katharina Mandler. His son Johann III helped him build a dwelling with a shop and stable attached across the street from the main house and here he and his new wife lived in semi-retirement.”<sup>167</sup>

Abraham J. Harder remembered that his grandfather Johann Harder “came home sick from a trip to the Crimea and died within several days.” Leland Harder has written that Johann Harder (1789-1847) “was highly respected in the community as a man of integrity and consideration for others.”<sup>168</sup> Six children were born of his first marriage and two children of his second marriage.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Elisabeth Plett</b>	1790		ca.1840
m	Johann Harder	1789	1810	Feb 2,1847
5	Johann Harder	Sep 15,1811		Sep 11,1875
5	Abraham Harder	1815		
5	Isbrand Harder	May 18,1817	Jul 27,1839	Aug 10,1840
5	Elisabeth Harder	1818		
5	Helena Harder	Jan 14,1825		
5	Peter Harder	1829		

5 Son **Johann Johann Harder III** (1811-75) was one of the most respected and prominent Mennonite leaders of the 19th century. As already mentioned, the following biography was written by historian Leland Harder and first published in the *Harder Family Review*<sup>169</sup> and subsequently in the *Blumstein Legacy*,<sup>170</sup> and is reprinted by permission with some modifications. Ältester Johann Harder is sometimes referred to as Johann III, to distinguish him from his father, Johann II (1789-1847), and his son, Johann IV.

Johann Harder was born and raised on the family farm homestead in Blumstein, Molotschna. He was fortunate in that Johann Cornies gave him a three-year all-expense paid scholarship to attend the Ohrloff Verein School where he also learned the trade of a tailor. His teacher here was Tobias Voth, a devoted adherent to the teachings of Separatist-Pietism.

Johann was baptized in 1833 and the next year he married Justina Schulz, daughter of Georg Schulz from Friedensruh.<sup>171</sup> She was born in Tusch, near Gradenz, West Prussia. Although her father was raised Catholic he had joined his wife's state-established Lutheran Church.<sup>172</sup> Justina's parents eventually joined the Mennonite immigration to Russia. Many of the post-Napoleonic War immigrants were heavily influenced by Separatist-Pietism. It speaks well for the upbringing received by Johann that he was able to resist such influences and remained a devout and committed Mennonite leader throughout his life.

Son Abraham J. Harder has written about Justina's faith and piety: "In the heart of my mother, many religious teachings had found their lodging. Her parents were very pious and gave their children a strong Christian nurture. This helped my mother through many dark hours in her life. She felt that she was not good enough to stand before God in His holiness on her own merit and always prayed that God would purify her whole being so that she might be made worthy to appear before Him and that her whole life might be directed for Him. If He could not achieve His purposes in her life otherwise, perhaps He would achieve it through allowing her to go through trial and suffering, whatever be His will."

"Several times sickness came to both of my parents at the same time. One time Father went to Mother's bed to shake up her pillows, and he fainted in doing so. This frightened Mother, and I cannot express the feelings I experienced as a child in that moment."<sup>173</sup>

Son Johann J. Harder later described the Christian environment of the Harder home: "In the evening during the time of his ministry, father would often read to us children from some book, and on such occasions he would say to us, 'Children, some day you will be grateful to me that I did not permit you to go out nights to get into mischief like some of the village youth. Sins are committed at the darkness of night that would not happen in the light of day.' When we were sick, he would come to our bedside to talk to our conscience that we should totally yield ourselves to the Lord so that death would not be a messenger of dread for us."<sup>174</sup>

Johann III had learned the trade of tailoring, probably through an apprenticeship. Following his marriage to Justina, he worked as a tailor in addition to the shared work on the family farm. They lived on the homestead in Blumstein but in a small accessory house which Johann had built for himself prior to his marriage. After Johann took over the family *Wirtschaft* and moved into the main house, Justina's widowed father came to live in the accessory house. Between

1835 and 1840, four children were born to Johann III and Justina, two of whom died in infancy:

In about 1840 he “built a dwelling house, with attached stable and shop across the street. His mother had died and so his father moved into this Anwohner property and he presumably bought the Wirtschaft in 1841.”<sup>175</sup> Upon mutual agreement, Johann III took over the management of the farm. Now both of their fathers lived nearby. Leland Harder notes that “Thus three generations of Johann Harders had lived successively on this Wirtschaft and made their living.”<sup>176</sup>

Son Abraham described the entrepreneurial skills of his father: “My father [Johann III] was a serious, conscientious man, but with a good sense of humour. At his work he was fast and clever. Because he had such good luck in relation to agricultural handicrafts, father was able to remodel the whole Wirtschaft [farm] within five years.”

**Village Councillor:** Meanwhile, Johann gained respect in Blumstein as a manager of affairs and a community leader. He was elected to the village council, which dealt with various matters of judicial concern, such as the following: “On day a group of young men had committed a destructive deed. The fathers of these boys were brought before the Council. Father upheld the punishment meted out to the boys by the Schulze [village mayor], which was digging sod out of a field and carrying it away with wheelbarrows. One of the fathers said to my father, ‘You don’t know what your own sons might do.’ Father replied, ‘If my sons would do something like that, this punishment would have been too lenient. I would have punished them myself and more severely.’ In his village council work Johann Harder was undoubtedly influenced by individuals like Jakob W. Friesen (1808-89), later a Kleine Gemeinde deacon, who served as Schulz of Blumstein at about this time.<sup>177</sup>

**The Ministry:** In 1855 Johann was elected to the ministry of the Ohrloff Gemeinde, along with his good friend, Franz Isaac, the historian and social activist. Johann felt great apprehension at the call to the ministry with a deep sense of the grave responsibility carried by the Ohms or ministers. His cousin, Bernhard Harder, later a renowned Evangelist among the Russian Mennonites, responded to Johann’s concerns. “When his cousin began to show the usual signs of lament and foreboding about getting such a sacred call from the church, Bernhard injected a note of humour into the otherwise depressed atmosphere with his comment, ‘When Jesus calls, the angels laugh’.<sup>178</sup> Unlike his young cousin, Bernhard Harder, the Evangelist, who felt a strong inner call to preach. Johann’s propensities had always related to managing his Wirtschaft and his leadership on the village council. What resources he had for the ministry came from observing the pastoral performances of Ältester Bernhard Fast, who always prepared his sermons for reading....In his sermons Fast often said to his congregation with tears flowing down his cheeks, ‘Some day I will have to give an account for your souls.’ The thought of preparing biblical sermons for reading to the congregation must have seemed formidable at this stage of Johann’s life.

Johann preached his first sermon on September 19, 1855; and years later he looked back and said to his children that he was sorry he had not begun to preach freely at the time of his ordination, for he always laboriously copied and read his sermons from the pulpit. Son Abraham made the following interesting

observation: "The acceptance of the ministry gave my father a sober outlook on life and its responsibilities. Where before, he occasionally indulged in smoking tobacco and reading magazines, at the disapproval of my mother, now he gave up these indulgences. He said that by reading magazines a person neglected to read the Word of God, and instead of spiritual growth, doubt entered a person's soul."

**Death of Justina:** On March 8, 1856, after 21 years of marriage, Justina Schulz Harder died following nine days of sickness. The following comment about her death was written by son Abraham: "One time when she was sure that God had placed her on a sick bed, she confessed with joy that she had found the Lord as her Redeemer, and the words of the Psalmist, 'Be still and know that I am God' had come to her. Her last prayer was, 'Come, Lord Jesus!' As the pallor of death spread over her face and with the last whisper of 'Come, oh come!', her soul went to meet her master."

"Her passing made a profound impression on me, a 15 year-old boy. The world had lost its attraction to me. After mother's passing, no loving mother eye could I see, and her loving heart had stopped beating. When my older brother [Johann IV] experienced conversion, she had called us to her bedside and exhorted the rest of us to follow his example and accept the Lord as our personal Saviour."

"My mother had been a very busy woman. Her hands had never lain idle in her lap. She had served as a midwife in the community. She had made many a herb tea from different plants for sick people. We did not have doctors in those days as we have now. On winter evenings when she was knitting or sewing, I had to read to her out of a doctor's book or health book. She was loved and respected by the women of the community. On her death bed, many came to visit her."<sup>179</sup>

**Remarriage:** Ministers were supposed to be married, and Johann undoubtedly felt some pressure from the church to find a second wife as soon as possible. His youngest child, Justina, was still an infant. On July 1, 1856, barely four months after her mother's death, Johann, then 44 years of age, married Katharina Schulz, who had not yet reached her 17th birthday. Katharina was the niece of his first wife, the daughter of Justina's older brother, Johann Schulz.<sup>180</sup> She was the eighth of 10 children and had lost both of her parents.

The marriage of Katherina and Johann III was probably a marriage of convenience for both of them, in more ways than one. Between 1857 and 1872, they had nine children of their own, five of whom died in infancy or childhood:

There is evidence that the older children of Johann III had some negative feelings when their father remarried barely four month after their mother died. Johann IV was actually three years older and Abraham only one year younger than their new stepmother. Some years later Abraham wrote the following about their father's remarriage: "After Father's second marriage, he had very few happy hours. My stepmother was often sick and in bed; and with this added to his pastoral duties, it was a hard time for him."

**Ältestership:** After serving as a minister for five years, Johann was elected as Ältester in March of 1860 to succeed Bernhard Fast. Now in addition to the duties of preaching and teaching the Word of God in association with other ministers, he had the total overseer responsibilities at the Ohrloff Gemeinde, including baptisms and communion services. Moreover, he was now a member of the Molotschna Council of Ältesten, responsible for resolving problems in the entire Colony. A lot of political as well as ecclesiastical power was vested in the Council of Ältesten to the point that it was a vested hierarchy in the Russian Mennonite Church. The establishment of the Council of Ältesten can also be seen as a first rudimentary step in establishing conference-type institutions, and comparable to some of the Ältester committees found among 16th century Mennonites.<sup>181</sup>

When the Ältesten met, they were known as the Kirchenkonvent (Conference of Churches). The recommendations of the Ältester were usually accepted without questioning at congregational meetings. To speak against an Ältester was considered a grave offense. In 1860 there were seven Ältesten in the Kirchenkonvent: Johann Harder of the Ohrloff Gemeinde, Benjamin Ratzlaff of the Rudnerwiede Gemeinde, Peter Wedel of the Alexanderwohl Gemeinde, August Lenzman of the Gnadenfeld Gemeinde, Johann Friesen of the Kleine Gemeinde, Dirk Warkentin of the Petershagen Gemeinde, and Heinrich Toews of the Pordenau Gemeinde.

On many issues, Harder and Friesen acted together in opposition to the others, who were considered reactionary by some and sometimes called “the five Ältesten.” Johann Harder III opposed corruption, resisted power and hierarchy in the church and worked earnestly for continued biblical renewal. Following his election Johann said to his 20 year-old son Abraham, “Make another cradle! We can expect a lot of company, and I know that the rest of my life will be spent in worry and sorrow.” With considerable reluctance as before, he accepted the call as a mandate from the majority of the members who voted for him. He was ordained by Fast, whose health was failing. “Ohm Behrend” as Fast was affectionately called by his friends, died several months later.

One of the first acts that Johann performed in his new duties was to baptize the young people whom Fast had prepared in his catechism class. Among the candidates was Johann’s son Abraham, who wrote that as Ohm Behrend stood before his class, he would exhort them with tears in his eyes to turn from the “way of evil and follow the Lord.” Fast promised Johann that he would try to perform the baptismal service, and Abraham looked forward to being baptized by the same Ältester who had baptized his father; but it was not to be. He did, however, have the privilege of marrying Fast’s daughter, Anna.

**Ohrloff Zentralschule:** The first issue Johann faced as Ältester concerned policies for the Zentralschule (central School) at Ohrloff. This secondary school had been started in 1822 under the auspices of an Educational Association headed by Johann Cornies. The first teachers were Tobias Voth (1822-29) and Heinrich Heese (1829-42), both of whom had received their training in Germany. A problem that emerged with each succession of teachers was the introduction of doctrines that seemed to undermine the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite vision, for instance, the strident advocacy of Voth of the teachings of Separatist-Pietism, and the pro-Russian patriotism of Heese during the Crimean War.



Conflict over this resulted in Heese's resignation and replacement with his son-in-law Martin Huebert, who was known for his effective teaching of the Russian language. In 1847, however, the Ohrloff school burned down and was not rebuilt for 13 years.

In 1860 an all new school building was dedicated and a new teacher, Herman Janzen, installed. Ältester Johann Harder was the main speaker for the occasion. Knowing the up and down history of the school, he saw the occasion as an opportunity to call the teachers and the community back to a sound Anabaptist perspective. Here is a brief excerpt from his address:

"My hope is that through this school efforts will be made not only to impart earthly knowledge (which, though useful, is of lesser profit according to the Apostle Paul), but also true godliness, which is profitable for all things. O that the Lord would send us teachers who, as poor pardoned sinners, become models for their little flock, so that the fruit of their labours might be a rich blessing for our children and children's children..."

"Woe to those educational institutions and teachers who restrict themselves solely to the knowledge and sciences of this world and attempt to give to this knowledge and these sciences a direction which brings them into contradiction with the Word of God!"<sup>182</sup>

**Barley Land Dispute:** The documents telling the story of Johann's leadership in the Colony are mostly in the nature of official ecclesiastical minutes and correspondence. One issue that the Ältester had to deal with concerned the so-called Barley Land Dispute. In the Spring of 1858, a dispute arose in Ohrloff between two men over a piece of rented land that the one had seeded into barley and the other had harvested.<sup>183</sup> Both had what they felt was a valid rental contract, but the owner confessed to the Ohrloff ministers that he had really rented the land to the first man. Ältester Fast, who would have better used his pastoral authority to resolve the conflict locally, had turned the dispute over to David A. Friesen, the Colony Oberschulze (Overseer) in Halbstadt. The Oberschulze ruled that the second renter could harvest the barley but should reimburse the first for his seed and labour.

The dispute raged on for two year and got embroiled in the larger unresolved conflict between the Ohrloff and Lichtenau (Grosse Gemeinde) congregations. By this time the most neutral and objective Ältester in the Kirchenkonvent was Johann Friesen of the Kleine Gemeinde. On June 26, 1860, he sent a long letter of appeal to the two churches to stop their disputing and let the old wounds heal. Johann Harder agreed entirely and wrote the following resolution on behalf of the Ältesten:

"Resolution of Peace:

"All the divisions which originated from the Ohrloff land dispute are hereby ended, and we Ältesten want to forgive and forget everything that has occurred in connection with this matter, and in the name of the Lord to mutually build and plant in love. To which we give witness by signing our names."

"August 5th, 1860, the Ältesters of the Gemeinden: Benjamin Ratzlaff, Peter Wedel, Dirk Warkentin, Heinrich Toews, Johann Harder, August Lenzman and Johann Friesen."<sup>184</sup>

**Ohrloff Church Dispute:** By 1858 the Ohrloff church building, erected in 1809, had deteriorated to the extent that it had to be replaced. A wealthy member who lived in the village of Neu-Halbstadt proposed that if the new church would be built in his village, he would pay for the building materials above a certain minimum cost. Without authorization he ordered the foundation laid out on a scale larger than anyone anticipated. Nevertheless, the new church was built and dedicated on December 28, 1858.

When the donor submitted his bill, including the exorbitant sum of 200 rubles for the transportation of materials, the Ohrloff congregation refused to pay more than the amount in the original verbal agreement. Meanwhile the donor had sided with the dissenters in the Barley dispute and jointed the Lichtenau Church. His plan now was to take the building away from the Ohrloff Church and utilize it for the Lichtenau Church.

The dispute was then referred to the Russian Board of Guardians in Odessa for arbitration. The Russian supervisors ruled that the building belonged to the Ohrloff Church but that the donor should be reimbursed two-thirds of his costs. Ältester Johann Harder was glad to do so; but when the payment was offered, the donor refused it, saying that he would rather have the church. Franz Isaac's history of *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*<sup>185</sup> contains a total of 13 letters written by Ältester Harder concerning this matter together with memoranda from the Council of Ältester, the Colony Oberschulze, and the Board of Guardians.

Finally in August of 1862, the matter was resolved when Johann Harder indicated the willingness of the Ohrloff Church and let the donor have the church building, and the matter was dropped.

**Brüdergemeinde Secession:** The crisis represented by the Brüdergemeinde schism may have been influenced by the conditions under which the West Prussian Mennonites settled on the Russian steppes. Here for the first time they had responsibility not only for the reestablishment of their church but also for the establishment of law and order within their own territory or colony, which now included saints and sinners within the same ethnic community. Moral lapse and the failure to share the economic resources of the land created a climate conducive to renewal movements which refused to continue with the status quo in the old compromised church, the Grosse Gemeinde (large church), later despairingly called the "Kirchliche" (ecclesiastics).

[We have already related how the Kleine Gemeinde (small church) withdrew in 1812 in protest to the apparent abandonment of traditionalist Mennonite ideals and teachings, such as the purity of the communion, grass roots democracy, the way physical punishment was used to enforce conformity, etc. The Brüdergemeinde was founded in 1860 by those converting themselves to Separatist Pietist teachings. Although there is little actual evidence to support their claims, the secession allegedly was also in protest to other specific forms of moral dishonesty in business dealing, unseemly disputing, disregard for the landless, and the lack of fear of God's judgments. The Brethren preached about the need for radical conversions (as ritualized in Separatist Pietist religious culture) which they themselves had come to experience through the revivalistic preaching of men like Bernhard Harder, Johann's cousin. Presumably their complaint was that the Flemish Gemeinden in the Molotschna were not strict enough in enforcing moral standards against their members. At the same time, they also

criticized them when excommunication was finally implemented against miscreants and those who slandered the Holy Spirit by denigrating the integrity of the Gemeinde, an integral part of the universal Church of God. In understanding the allegations of the Brüdergemeinde movement, one must remember the great disparity in understanding of issues such as morality and ethics between traditional Mennonite and Separatist Pietist religious cultures. The Separatist Pietists saw morality largely in terms of personal behaviour such as drinking, dancing, and later almost smoking, regarding which they developed an extremely legalistic regime of punishment. The Flemish Mennonites, on the other hand, saw morality more in terms of following the teachings of Jesus, particularly as found in the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes, and in terms of communal ethics, structuring their society to incorporate these ideals. Thus, the Bruder, were incensed that the Grosse Gemeinde congregations indulged some social drinking or dancing, which they punished harshly (notwithstanding that they did initially dance vigorously in their church services, hence the name "Hüpfen"), but had little or no concern over morality in a wider business and ethical sense, or regarding the waging of war, moral issues of great abhorrence to traditionalist Mennonites. Paragraph added by D. Plett, editor].

In 1859 a group of Brethren in the Gnadenfeld Church asked their Ältester to give them communion separately because they could no longer partake of the Lord's Supper with unrepentant member. When their request was denied, they went to a private home to have Communion by themselves. When word of this got around, there were immediate repercussions, especially among the five Ältester of the Kirchenkonvent, because only Ältesten, not even the ministers and especially not the laity were authorized to administer communion.

Several of the Brethren were excommunicated and the others were forbidden to hold any more private meetings, an order they could not obey. On January 6, 1860, their leader drafted a document of secession which they addressed to the Council of Ältesten, lamenting the "open godless living" of church members, reporting their separation from "this fallen church," summarizing their articles of belief, and declaring their intention to return to the teachings of Menno Simons and the Bible. In fact, however, "the Hüpfen", as the early Brethren were known for their enthusiastic forms of worship, had largely adopted the doctrines of Separatist-Pietism and the German Baptists. In assessing the claims of the Brethren that they were unjustly treated, it should also be remembered that they were often rather strident in their view that the communion of the existing Gemeinden was a fallen "devil's service",<sup>186</sup> and that "They alone were the elect and capable of forming an exclusive fellowship of true believers."<sup>187</sup>

The Brüdergemeinde (Brethren Church) was not simply a movement for the gradual renewal of the Anabaptist vision of the church. To the five Ältester and other colony leaders it looked like a revolt. They feared that this dissension, on top of the others, would give the Russian authorities an excuse for abolishing their immigration privileges and require their full integration into Russian society. After trying to admonish the Brethren to cease and desist from their schismatic activities the five Ältesten turned to their own colony authorities, centred in David A. Friesen, the Colony Oberschulze, an authoritative governor with

headquarters in Halbstadt.

Although the Brethren were harassed and threatened with banishment to Siberia by Oberschulze Friesen, their movement could not be thwarted. In fact, some very able leaders among the Brethren appealed to the imperial court at St. Petersburg and finally secured official recognition. Moreover, they secured a land grant to establish several new settlements of some of their people on the Kuban River in the upper Caucasus. [Of this settlement, J. J. Hildebrand writes: "The establishment of this Gemeinde in the Molotschna caused incomparably more difficulties, writings, journeys and conferences than the barley dispute and church building dispute together. Mile-long petitions were written in the name of this new Gemeinde and directed to the Guardians' Committee and to the Crown in Petersburg. And yet, now the adherents of this direction had gone so far that they were able to have a separate settlement district alone for themselves, and where not a single one from the 'devil-serving Babylonian church' had a right to settle and where they without any hindrance could now work their salvation in all peace and brotherly unity. However, after a number of like-minded were present together here [Kuban], it turned out completely differently. It became clear that the roots of the evil - which they had until now believed to be in the 'devil-serving Babylonian church' - were within themselves as well and grew rapidly here on the Kuban." ]<sup>188</sup>

In all of the difficult confrontations over the period of several years, the two tolerant Ältester, Johann Harder and Johann Friesen, tried to use their influence to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict. At least seven of Harder's letters on the subject have been preserved. The first, dated February 11, 1860, was a letter of support and admonition to Heinrich Huebert, a member of the Ohrloff Church, who had joined the brethren to become one of their ministers. Following is the Ältester's expression of concern:

"But that you wish to leave us causes us grief, for the church whose condition is in fact as you describe it in your letter needs members like you who recognize the decadence, seek to improve matters, and pray for us."<sup>189</sup>

To the Colony Oberschulze,...[understandably concerned about the social unrest caused by the disruptive tactics] of the Brethren, Johann wrote as follows on March 25, March 29, and November 12, 1860:

"Since all of us will surely be eager to oppose the decay of true Christianity on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, it should be possible in consequence of this fellowship's own statement signed by 33 of its members to resolve this matter in a different [peaceful] way..."

"The aspiration of these people finds expression in the desire to establish their own church on the foundation and confession of all other Mennonite churches, and in keeping with our highly esteemed religious freedom, to live according to their faith in the midst of the other churches in the hope that thus they will be able to establish a better church discipline. If they will pursue this goal, the consequences need not be detrimental to the whole..."

"Since upon investigation these secessionists declared their confession to be the same as ours, namely the Confession of Faith of the United Flemish, Frisian, and High German Anabaptist Mennonite Church..., the Ohrloff Halbstadt Church sees no hindrances to recognizing these Mennonites as a Church."<sup>190</sup>

There was apparently another letter, no longer extant, which Johann wrote to a Russian official in Odessa, Eduard von Hahn, head of the Russian Board of Guardians appointed to supervise the foreign colonies. After some years of service at the imperial court in St. Petersburg, Hahn was appointed to this office by Tsar Nikolas I, and he used his authority with a firm hand, removing three of the Mennonite Ältesten from office for unwarranted interference in civil jurisdictional matters. After the struggle of the leadership of the Brüdergemeinde to gain recognition, the Board of Guardians in consultation with the imperial court overturned the decision of the Oberschulze in Halbstadt and granted official status to the Brethren. As he delivered the decision to the Brethren leader, Johann Claasen, Hahn said "You have Ältester Harder to thank for your deliverance."

**The Landless Dispute:** By 1860 only about a third of the Molotschna Mennonites were Vollwirten, i.e., fully landed farmers. The remaining families were subsistence farmers or disenfranchised landless Anwohner who lived on small lots at the end of each village. During the 1860s a powerful movement led by Ohrloff ministers Franz Isaak and Bernhard Harder arose on behalf of the landless demanding that the surplus lands reserved in each village be distributed to them in accordance with the original intention. Franz Isaak wrote that "the landless were not prepared to be condemned in perpetuity to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water like the men of Gideon."<sup>191</sup> The rigid reaction of the Colony Oberschulze in Halbstadt is reflected in the comment that "the landless could not have even subsist on a half of a dessiatine of land [the size of their lots] and now they wanted even more land."<sup>192</sup>

As in the other disputes described above, this one required the intervention of the Russian authorities. The crucial ruling came from the Czar himself on February 14, 1866: "All the unsettled land to be found in the Colonies is immediately to be divided among the landless Mennonites, who have their own dwelling houses."

Again it was Ältester Johann Harder and the Ohrloff Gemeinde that exerted the pressure needed for this land redistribution. The petition he wrote to the Privy Councillor, Lord Islavin, on behalf of his church, was the following:

"Your Excellency, member of the Council of Ministers of State Domains, and Privy Councillor, Lord Islavin:"

"We recognize that thousands of fellow brethren are without a means of livelihood. We as the spiritual overseers cannot remain indifferent with respect to the lamentable prospects for the future which are developing in this matter. Rather, we must deal with the serious dangers to the moral character of our churches."

"Since there is a solution for the current situation through the presently available land, we feel ourselves compelled to support the wishes of our poor landless in this respect. Accordingly we submissively bid your Excellence, that you make appropriate arrangements to bring to an end to this oppression and poverty. Such a measure will be a great benefit for us and the mentioned brethren, as well as for our posterity."

"August 20, 1865 Ältester Johann Harder"<sup>193</sup>

**Ritualized Conversion:** Among the teachings espoused by the Secessionists (Brethren) was that believers needed to experience a radical and emotional conversion, sealed by river or immersion baptism to be saved. [The legalistic insistence upon a ritualized dramatic conversion experience (better described as ‘pendulum’ conversion) was contrary to sound biblical exegesis as well as orthodox Mennonite teaching, which held that believers would come to faith by a variety of means including the nurture and formation of Christian parents, 2 Timothy 1:5-7.]<sup>194</sup> Several of Johann’s children would wrestle with this issue, including son Johann IV who had moved to the Crimea in 1865. A letter dating from 1871 by Johann Harder, speaks of his religious tolerance and love for his children: “To Johann Harders in Annenfeld. Blumstein, Feb. 5, 1871”

“We received your letters, and it appears from them that you are well, which makes us glad. We also learned from them that you had not yet received my letters from the beginning of February of this year, one to you and one to your parents. The man to whom I gave them, a Prussian with the name of Bilitz, said that he lives in the lodge of his colonization project, 30 verst from you.”

“We are fairly well now, except for mother, who is always ailing, but she has improved to the point that she talks occasionally about coming to visit you in the month of May. On the 6th of January, we buried our little Jakob.”

“My dear children, here are some suggestions about your expressed decision regarding baptism. First, examine what is reproved so earnestly in the letter to the Galatians, namely, that the Galatians were abandoning the foundation of their free grace and striving after works, hence entering into the realm which ‘leads unto the flesh.’ Therefore the reproach, ‘having begun in the Spirit,’ etc. [Gal. 3:3].

“About your group, and especially you, my dear Johann, I do not believe otherwise but that your beginning was made in the Spirit, and that this was followed by the baptism of the Spirit from above [Acts 19:2ff]. The true God will not lead your group into the flesh, if you are earnest with the sighing, as you state in your letter. ‘Search me God,’ etc.”

And should you repudiate your [first] baptism, the question would surface in my mind: How were you so blessed at the time? Who has hindered you? Who has robbed you? I am fully convinced that my Saviour, who left his heavenly throne and dressed himself in the form of a servant [Phil. 2:7], carried all the miseries of this life, finally suffering mockery and reproach, torment and martyrdom, breathing his life out on the crossbeam of shame, just to free me, miserable sinner chained to Satan’s prison and deserving nothing but punishment and death. If salvation was really bound up with the form of baptism, we would expect that he would have expressly said so in his Word, that the form of baptism should be so and so, and that ‘my meritorious shedding of blood will not help you.’ No, this I cannot believe.”

“It is said now that each one is so sure of his own opinion but that the Lord will help those that are upright. Therefore, because of these different opinions, far be it from us to love each other less, as it has been the case until now. In conclusion, I wish you everything good for body and soul.”

“If you plan to visit us this spring, let us know; and then maybe we will come to you in fall. Cordial greetings from your parents who love you. ‘Johann Harder’”

**Millennialism:** The biblical reference to a thousand year reign of Christ on earth following his “second coming” is found in Revelation 20:1-10. [Jung-Stilling (1740-1817), a professor at Heidelberg, Germany, was a prominent leader of a branch of the Separatist-Pietist movement. He advocated that the second coming of Christ would occur in the East where He would gather His “true” church to escape the tribulation, and that Russian Czar Alexander I would be the protector of the church in the end times. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 these teachings had influenced many believers in Germany to emigrate to Russia. Historian Karl Stumpp has written: “Many of the faithful also looked upon the Russian Czar as the ‘White Eagle’, just as they regarded Napoleon as the ‘Black Angel’ or the incarnate Anti-Christ. In wide circles there arose an intense desire to go to the East, the land of refuge, to the sacred Mount Acarat where Noah’s ark was believed to have landed. From Württemberg the so-called ‘Harmonies’ comprising thousands of people migrated to Russia.”<sup>195</sup> Henry Schapansky has written that many if not the majority of the Post-Napoleonic War Mennonite immigrants had already converted themselves to Separatist Pietist teachings in Prussia: “Included with these groups were many Mennonites who would later promote Pietist or Chiliastic views including Nikolas (Klaas) Epp, previously mentioned, Johann Klassen (regarded as the founder of the Mennonite Brethren Church), Wilhelm Lange, Tobias Voth and Heinrich Franz.”<sup>196</sup> The Gnadenfeld Gemeinde, in particular, brought these Chiliastic views with them to Russia, and became a radicalized center for their dissemination in the Molotschna Colony. Editor D. Plett].

In their struggle with the harsh conditions on the Russian steppes, including the problem of landlessness, several Mennonite prophet-types and their deluded followers found an escapist hope for a better life in the millennial promise. Unfortunately, this hope led to several excesses that caused the acute suffering of the people involved.

One was known as the Templer group or “Friends of Jerusalem.” This movement was started in Germany in connection with Württemberg Pietism, and its goal was to anticipate the second coming of Christ by establishing little kingdoms of God on earth, starting at Jerusalem. The movement spread to the Molotschna Colony through the teaching of Johannes Lange in Gnadenfeld. The dissension this caused resulted in the temporary imprisonment of Lange in Halbstadt in 1863. Upon release, Lange and 20 of his followers founded a Templer Church and moved to the Kuban River area to establish their new branch of the kingdom.

Another manifestation of millennialism occurred in the early 1870s when another prophet-type by the name of Claus Epp began to teach the imminent end of the age and the return of Christ, launching the promised millennium. He promised the Mennonites in Russia an “open door” to the kingdom if they would “flee the tribulation” and follow him to a place of refuge (Rev. 12-14) somewhere in the far east, an idea that actually came from the writings of the German pietist, Jung-Stilling [whose tracts and novels had wide circulation among the Mennonites in the Molotschna and were promoted by those of the radicalized Pietist persuasion]. Epp led a small band of followers on one of the most bizarre and tragic adventures in Mennonite history to the barren wild land of Turkestan to meet

the Lord and inaugurate his millennial kingdom.<sup>197</sup>

The eschatology of Jung-Stilling and his eastward chiliasm, found some acceptance among the Russian Mennonites. Johann's cousin, Bernhard Harder, the renown Evangelist, supported these millennial ideas in his preaching as did Abraham Goertz, Johann's successor as Ohrloff Ältester.<sup>198</sup> By the end of the 19th century these teachings were widely accepted among the Russian Mennonites, both in the Brüdergemeinde as well as the more conservative Kirchliche Gemeinden.<sup>199</sup>

But Johann Harder and another cousin from his mother's side, Peter Toews, decided to cooperate in an effort to provide a sounder biblical view of the future Christian hope. Peter, who was 30 years younger than Johann, had been elected to the Kleine Gemeinde Ältestership at the age of 29, which spoke well for his gifts for church leadership. He was the son of Johann Toews, Fischau, whose first wife was Johann's Aunt Elizabeth Harder Toews (1800-34). Actually, however, Elizabeth had died before Peter was born, and Toews later married Maria Plett, the half-sister of Johann's mother, Elisabeth Plett. Thus, although Peter's father was Johann's uncle by marriage, they were blood cousins only through their mothers.

Peter was very bright and well read, and he knew that one of the best tools for sound expository teaching was good Christian literature, especially out of the Anabaptist past. Somehow, he had acquired a copy of the 17th century Dutch Anabaptist writing, *The Peaceful Kingdom of Christ: An Exposition of Revelation 20* by Ältester Peter J. Twisk (1565-1636), Horn, Netherlands, setting forth an orthodox Mennonite eschatology.<sup>200</sup> In contrast to the wild speculations about Christ's second coming, Twisk reminded his readers of Christ's teaching in Mark 13:32-33, "Of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, therefore, and watch and pray, for you never know when the time will come." In this perspective, Twisk argued, the kingdom of God must be understood in a spiritual sense and not as an imminent physical historical event or physical kingdom.

Peter wrote to his cousin Johann to ask for his help in publishing and distributing this tract. Here is what Johann wrote in reply:

"Blumstein, the 21st of January, 1874 Beloved friend Toews. I have received your letter of the 20th, which was very precious to me. It was truly a heartfelt joy for me to receive such a letter during a period when the teaching of the thousand year reign [millennium] which is yet to come here on earth is being adopted so earnestly. But I do not understand this in that manner and I am in complete agreement with the contents and meaning of your letter. It is unfortunate that I have not previously read the referenced work which you intend to publish, for then I would have been able to endorse it more and consequently also take a greater part in this, for the greater the number of copies printed, the lower will be the cost. Nevertheless you can count on me for 100 copies. I will forward payment as soon as you request it. With heartfelt greeting, Johann Harder"<sup>201</sup>

It took 17 months before the book came off the press of Ulrich & Schultze in Odessa. The cause for the delay was the decision of the Russian censors to require an endorsement of the book by the Mennonite Council of Ältesten. When Johann approached the other five Ältester about this he got a negative



response as usual; and in the following letter to cousin Peter, he suggested an alternative solution:

“Blumstein, April 9th, 1874. To the Church Ältester Peter Toews in Blumenhoff. Beloved Friend. It has taken somewhat long for us to provide you with a definitive reply to your last writing. I had requested that Ältester Toews in Blumenort also take part in this endeavour, but this he declined to do. The seeding season came in the meantime and so the matter remained until now.”

“But you can count on 150 copies for us. With respect to the endorsement or approval of this work for the printer, I believe that it would be sufficient if you would provide your attestations for the booklet in the same manner in which you commended it to me, for we no longer have a joint council [of Ältesten] since each church deals independently for itself.”

“It is my wish that this work be printed if the approval of the censor is granted. I wish even more that our beloved God might bless the same so that Satan cannot succeed in his plan. Matters here have already progressed to the point that it [millennialism] is being cast down from the pulpit during the worship services.<sup>202</sup> There are certainly those who are casting shame on the teaching of their Saviour in that they do not endorse or believe his teachings.”

“With heartfelt greeting from your true friend’ Johann Harder”<sup>203</sup>

**Emigration:** In 1874 Johann’s son, Johann IV, and his family, joined his Krimmer Brüdergemeinde co-confessionists from the Crimea, and immigrated to America. [Separatist Pietist ideology also played an important role regarding the emigration issue influencing many adherents of Separatist Pietism to remain in Russia. Professor James Urry has written: “One of the arguments put forward in the 1870s by members of the Molochnaia and Volga Mennonite communities for not emigrating was that Russia lay close to the ‘east’ and was thus the promised place of refuge whereas America, situated in the ‘west’ was doomed.”<sup>204</sup>

Other more traditionalist leaders simply disagreed in their interpretation the situation in Russia believing that there was still room for compromise in terms of freedom from military service. Editor. D. Plett]. The Ältester Johann Harder and cousin Bernhard Harder were not convinced that emigration was necessary, at least not until the Russian government had been petitioned for reversal of its decision to rescind their entrenched rights as pacifists.

His cousin, Ältester Peter Toews, and his people, however, were in the process of deciding for emigration. In 1872, Peter came to Blumstein to discuss the question with Johann Harder and Frank Isaak. In his diary Peter wrote that “these men [Harder and Isaak] were not yet convinced that we should emigrate. Instead, they first wanted to present a petition for more freedom to the Imperial Council and then personally to the Czar.”<sup>205</sup>

Until the day of his death, Johann remained active in the duties of his Ältestership. On March 20, 1875, he monitored the school examinations in Ohrloff for the last time.<sup>206</sup> He was saddened to hear that the able Kleine Gemeinde teacher Abraham R. Friesen, Lichtenau, was planning to immigrate to Canada. His cousin Peter Toews and his Kleine Gemeinde people, not to mention his own son and their group in Crimea, had already emigrated.

**Death:** Johann's son Abraham wrote: "Father often talked about laying down his leadership because of the many conflicts he had to face, but this was not to be. God in his wisdom had other plans and called his weary servant home by a sudden death. I often noticed how a sigh of worry and frustration escaped his lips.

In the last year of his leadership, he was encouraged by the election to the ministry of the brethren Abraham Goertz and Nikolai Ediger, who stood by him faithfully. During the last days of his life on earth, when one of the ministers visited him, he said, 'I am so tired. I long to go home.'<sup>207</sup>

On the morning of September 10, 1875, Johann became ill. Several hours later at 12:30 p.m., he suffered a heart attack and died an hour later.

Peter I. Fast (1831-1916), Rückenau (and later of Jansen, Nebraska), described the death of Johann Harder: "Today our beloved Ältester Johann Harder, Blumstein, died instantly. He had still gone to the field that day but returned home very tired, laid down, and managed to summon the children to come to pray. Three hours later he lay dead. His wife had been very sick for a considerable time already, so that the doctor had frequently been called there to tend to her, and on that day also they had sent for her. When she arrived the children rushed out of the house screaming 'father is dead!' The Doctor had thought to herself, 'they must be saying the mother is dead', since in her sickness she had frequently been at death's door. But it was indeed the father who was dead. He had evidently had a premonition of his death and had wanted to have a new Ältester elected. Through his death the Gemeinde lost a very precious shepherd."<sup>208</sup> Peter I. Fast goes on to describe a journey when they stayed at the home of minister Ediger in Altona on December 15, 1875, where Ediger had earnestly related of Ältester Harder's last activities and death as follows: "The beloved Aeltester was very loyal (devout), and had a premonition of his death and had said quite some time earlier that he wished to lay down his office, and allow a new Aeltester to be elected."<sup>209</sup>

By modern standards he was still a young 64 years of age. Indeed, his widow was only 36 and his youngest child was not yet two. But Johann was old and had finished his course. He was buried on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The memorial sermon was preached by his associate minister, Johann Regier. His cousin and closest confidant, Bernhard Harder, composed a hymn to his memory, which was sung to the familiar German tune, "Aus meines Herzen Grunde":

"Though aches and faint laments went this man's pilgrimage. Yet faced with dire potents the Lord will now assuage. O servant good and true, the Lord has called you home. To be where you can roam, to get what is your due. O house of death and grief, ordained to life that stuns, today is hard but brief. Then separation comes. Who conquered death and fear in Jesus learn to trust. You widow, children, must to him, the Lord, draw near! O Jesus, full of grace, look on these orphaned kin, and these poor ones embrace your Word of hope to win. O Father, thou wilt be to widow, orphaned soul, provider, make them whole so heav'n they can forsee. Your flock, O Jesus, give a Shepherd in his place through whom these sheep may live by counsels of your grace. Like him who built thy shrine. They realm did he proclaim, in honour of Christ's name and glorious blood divine!"

**Legacy:** Ältester Johann Harder has been widely recognized for his genuine Christian virtue and spirit of reconciliation. Among his many enduring accomplishments are the resolution of the so-called “Barley Land Dispute” and his benevolent intervention on behalf of the landless and the “secessionists”, the Brüdergemeinde. Although Johann Harder III recognized that the dissidents should be treated in love as directed by scripture, he held steadfast to the faith of the fathers’ and contended valiantly for the integrity of the Mennonite communion.

M.B. historian, John A. Toews, gave Johann Harder the following tribute: “The new elder [Johann Harder] was a man of moral integrity and of deep concern for the renewal of the church....The [Mennonite] Brethren found ‘true Christians’ in elder Johann Harder and other members of the Ohrloff Mennonite Church.”<sup>210</sup>



*Ältester Johann Harder (1811-75), Blumstein, Molotschna, oldest son of Elisabeth Plett Harder and Johann Harder. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 26/Pres., No. 13, page 129.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Johann Joh. Harder</b>	Sep 15,1811	Oct 9,1834	Sep 11,1875
m	Justina Schulz	Dec 18,1814		Mar 8,1856
6	Justina Harder	Aug 5,1835		Aug 20,1835
6	Johann J. Harder	Aug 8,1836		Feb 2,1930
6	Justina Harder	Aug 2,1838		Jun 7,1851
6	Abraham J. Harder	Aug 8,1840		1925
6	Isbrand Harder	Aug 24,1842		1926
6	Helena Harder	Sep 2,1844		
6	Heinrich Harder	Jan 24,1847		Stillborn
6	Heinrich Harder	Nov 23,1848		Mar 20,1907
6	David J. Harder	Dec 2,1850		Apr 24,1923
6	Elisabeth Harder	Jan 10,1853		
6	Justina Harder	Dec 28,1854		Dec 31,1863
5	<b>Johann Joh. Harder</b>	Sep 15,1811		Sep 11,1875
2m	Katharina Schulz	Aug 19,1839	Jul 1,1856	
6	Katharina Harder	Aug 13,1857		
6	Aganetha Harder	Jul 19,1859		1922
6	Anna J. Harder	Apr 30,1861		
6	Jacob J. Harder	Jun 17,1863		Sep 11,1866
6	Son Harder	Mar 14,1865		Stillborn
6	Jacob J. Harder	Jul 2,1867		Jan 2,1871
6	Bernhard Harder	Jan 30,1870		Nov 19,1881
6	Bernhard Harder	Oct 21,1872		Oct 9,1904
6	Jakob J. Harder	Aug 28,1873		

6 Son **Johann J. Harder IV** (1836-1930) married Elizabeth Fast, daughter of school teacher Johann Fast in Schönau.<sup>211</sup> Johann Harder was a teacher serving for the first three years in Friedensruh, and then for four years in Schönau, after his wife's parents moved to the Crimea. Part of the legacy that Johann later left to his children was not a library of published books but a number of copybooks - notebooks into which he copied the curriculum resources that he needed in his teaching. One such 56-page notebook was entitled "Geography" and the text was copied in Annenfeld in 1864 during the summer break, probably from a similar journal compiled by his father-in-law in his earlier teaching days. In 1865 Johann and Elisabeth Harder also moved to the Crimea settling in the village of Annenfeld where they purchased 94 acres of land with the help of Johann's father.

Johann Harder IV was an example of a widespread social problem in the Russian Mennonite colonies during the 1850s and 1860s, the problem of the landless younger families pushed off the parental homesteads with limited economic resources. It has been estimated that by 1860, barely a year after Johann and Elisabeth were married, over half the Mennonite population were landless. The incidence of economic deprivation was related to another phenomenon in the colonies - the outbreak of radical religious dissent. The development of new religious expressions by the disinherited is illustrated not only by the history of sectarian movements in Christianity but by Christianity itself....The center of such outbreaks of sectarian religion in the Molotschna Colony occurred in Gnadenfeld, not far from Friedensruh, where Johann taught.

Johann J. Harder went through a time of spiritual struggle in his youth resulting ultimately in departure from the church and faith of his parents and a conversion to Separatist-Pietist teachings. His views in this regard would result in much controversy among his siblings and within his community. Later he described some of these experiences in a letter to his children and other writings.<sup>212</sup> The response to Johann IV's decision was varied. His father's cousin, Bernhard Harder (1832-84), the Evangelist, replied to Johann's letters as follows:

"...I am glad for the loving tone of your letter, which shows to me that you are not renouncing or condemning me, even though your new direction tends implicitly to judge quite severely. But is it not against all Christian love and fairness to reproach a man or count it as fateful if he does not immediately run along when a new idea comes up? The reformer must consider whether the new persuasion is true or in error, also that previously he was not that far along, and how he attributes his growth to grace. Likewise he must also expect that this same grace can and will also lead the other one along."

"You, for instance, were a believer earlier than I and have for many years walked in the same persuasion of faith to which am I still committed. You also knew that others think differently. You even fully knew the same direction that you are presently pursuing, but you were a believer without that direction and were blest. If you should reply to this with a 'no', I would have to say, 'I am not convinced of that, for I have gotten this perspective from your earlier professions and from your course of life until now. If I am wrong then I have totally misjudged you; but in that case I cannot trust you now either and I would trust your present word and walk less than the earnestness of your first love for the Saviour.'"

"Yet you will not allure me to such a dismal conclusion; for you know how

at that time you were so blissful and filled with powers of faith and of eternal life. Oh, are you still so meek, so childlike, so humble? At that time with God's help, you were an example that wrested me out of the lethargic life and moralistic faith to grasp the living Saviour, where your father has rendered me faithful ministries of love. Should that now have been all for nothing? With you mother, nothing? With your father, nothing? And with you nothing? With me nothing? Well, I know that the hands of the faithful Jesus have guided me since then, and I know whom I have believed [2 Tim. 1:12] If all that is nothing, including all the blessed experiences of my life, which have become a strength for life in me, in spite of all my weaknesses and imperfections, and all that is nothing, then I expect nothing at all from all the new ideas, inventions, and introductions in the area of faith."

"I will leave it at that and leave it to the conscience of each one, whether inner persuasion or the enticement of the new is driving him, whether he serves his God in simplicity and humility, or whether the striving to be something and to enjoin something have crept in. You, however, know that all upright souls in your congregation are not ill disposed towards us. If you feel the urge to advise others to join your congregation, I will not find fault with that. It is for you the drive of conscience. Whether this is correctly or wrongly understood remains to be seen." "Whenever the members among you become rude and spiteful and are not ashamed of using any means to put others into a bad light, then the upright ones will not be part of that but admit that the 'hateful' ones among you are just as hateful as the hateful ones among us. Or when before and after the worship something edifying is made out of discussing the shortcomings and infirmities of other congregations and their members without love, then certainly the upright and loyal disciples of Jesus, will on one hand, be quiet and sigh, or on the other hand, endeavour to direct the discussion to the one who has the need. That's the way it is with you and that's the way it is with us. Your departure will soon be considered a failure, if it has not yet gone that far, and you will not have achieved anything except to increase the number of splits, which should not happen."

"When I describe the decline of our people and deplore it, I do not know a single community which I could consider an exception. However, there are many souls who are scattered here and there in all congregations who cling to the Saviour in childlikeness and sincerity and [who] will also follow when He will blow [the trumpet] for the departure [Rev. 8:6]. Always preach repentance in your congregation also, for sooner or later it will prove to be necessary. The two-edged sword hits to the right and to the left [Rev. 1:16; 2:12]. Even among the 'pious'<sup>213</sup> - among those who want the good, the decision has to come by the sword whether a heart is humble or rebellious against the word in proud self-righteousness and thinks or says, 'Such to me?' Am I like the others? etc. I have had such experiences, and my heart has grieved, grieved silently. But thanks to God! I can be silent by his grace and be strong in his power despite my weakness."

"I am telling you this because my love bids me to trust you. I trust that likewise you will give credence to me for this. I am not consciously and wilfully a gross liar, have not consciously and wilfully sought the favour of people, nor for the favour of the rich, have not consciously or wilfully preached against the pious, nor against the proper distinctions between belief and unbelief; have never, never, never declared from the pulpit or in conversation the godless to be

right when he was wrong in relation to the pious, have not preached to keep the company of the searching souls away from me, also did not know that the three young brothers were disposed like that toward me as it now turns out, but in my weakness I was sincere and loyal towards them and protected them as well as I could, more than I deemed wise to reveal to them. More later, perhaps orally, God willing.”

“I greet you cordially, ‘B. Harder’”<sup>214</sup>

Some who entertained rebaptism such as a K.M.B. founder and Ältester, Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), Annenfeld, Crimea, underwent a radical experience in 1869 when they converted themselves to Separatist-Pietism.<sup>215</sup> Leland Harder explains: “But that was not Johann Harder’s experience, and he suffered acute ambivalence before he and Elisabeth finally decided to go this route, in spite of the admonitions and rebukes from Johann’s father, brother and cousin. Johann’s first baptism had meant a great deal to him, and unlike his dear friend and colleague, Jakob Wiebe, he ‘had not a problem with it,’ as he wrote....So in spite of the conflict that this caused in his family back in Blumstein, they went ahead with it after two years of indecision and conversations back and forth....Like the elder Johann Harder in Blumstein, brother Heinrich Harder, and cousin Bernhard Harder, we may have our reservations about the schisms caused by their decision, but we cannot gainsay their sincerity and deep convictions; and we can certainly be grateful that they had the courage to emigrate when these other family members advised against it....”<sup>216</sup>

In 1871 Johann Harder was elected as a minister of the newly formed Krimmer Mennonitischen Brüdergemeinde (KMB). They were able to make modest gains in their financial situation soon acquiring an additional 40 acres. In 1874 they emigrated to America following her parents, Johann Fasts, who had immigrated the previous year and selected the site for what became the Gnadenu village in Kansas.<sup>217</sup> Their immigrating party included the entire KMB, except for three families. They left from Annenfeld and several nearby villages on May 30. According to Johann’s emigration diary “we travelled with the wagon of J.F. as far as Demisch. After spending the night there, we went on to Eugatoria, arriving there at 11:30 on the morning of the 31rst. Here immediately we had to have our baggage weighed....[816 pounds], and we had to pay 30 kopeks per pud for that to Odessa.” From Odessa they travelled to Wollenschink on the Russian border, from there to Lemberg, Krakau, Oswitsie, Breslau, Berlin and Hamburg. They arrived in Peabody, Kansas, July 21. The entire journey is described in some detail in Johann Harder’s diary.

They established the village of Gnadenu, two miles east of modern-day Hillsboro. “Elder Wiebe and Johann Harder tried with a united effort to serve the church according to Genesis 2:15. They served with the preaching of the Gospel and conducted Sunday School and prayer meetings....The primitive house of worship stood in the center of the village. It served as the school house and was [temporarily] occupied by Johann Harder, the first school teacher, as a dwelling.”<sup>218</sup> The new community also had its share of strife with divisions with some joining the Volga Brethren, “....who declared both of our elders unfit.” Nevertheless the KMB group eventually grew and expanded as more immigrants came from Russia. With church districts in Inman, McPherson, and Reno County, Kansas, Marion Junction, South Dakota and Jansen, Nebraska, the ministerial work

entailed much travelling. In 1882 two additional brethren were elected to the ministerial office, one of them was son Johann F. Harder V who later accepted teachings contrary to those delivered to this flock causing a crisis. Johann F. Harder joined the Seventh Day Adventists.

In 1886 Johann Harder IV moved out of the village settling on his own quarter of land.<sup>219</sup> His farm consisted of 180 acres of land. Starting in 1890, Elisabeth Harder struggled with chronic infirmity. It began with influenza and settled in her lungs. After November 24, 1898, she was confined to bed, passing away on December 30, 1898.

In 1900 Johann Harder returned to Russia to visit his brothers and sisters. While there he met and married his second wife, a widow Schulz, nee Renette Kroeker, from Ladekopp. With this marriage he became step-father to her four daughters from her first marriage: Tina born 1883, Maria born 1885, Renette born 1888 and Liese born 1891.<sup>220</sup> While in Russia, Johann Harder wrote back to his children: "The first Sunday I spoke in Altona, the second Sunday in the church in Neukirch, Ascension Day in Tiede, and the third Sunday in Blumstein. This village is the place where I was born, raised and attended school, where my father lived and my cradle stood. Here on hearth [Feuerstelle] No. 16, my great-grandfather settled in 1804, then my grandfather, then my dear father. All three had the name Johann Harder. All three were laid to rest in the local cemetery. Here in this village the years of my youth were spent. Here I had many bitter and sweet experiences. Here I learned repentance, faith and prayer. Here I found my Saviour. Here upon my ardent petition, I was granted your mother from the Lord in answer to prayer. O dear children, I cannot describe the feelings of my heart which I experienced. When I arrived there, I asked myself, 'Is it a dream or is it real?' After I gradually awakened as from a dream, I could tell myself, 'It is for real. I am in Russia among my brothers and sisters.'"<sup>221</sup>

In 1910 the Harders moved into Hillsboro where Johann did some preaching and enjoyed his retirement. At this time he pursued his interest in genealogy and gathered the information for his "Stammbuch." He carried on an extensive correspondence. Great-grandson Leland Harder has written that what is known about the siblings of Johann J. Harder (1836-1930) other than Abraham and Heinrich "comes mostly from Johann's *Stammbuch* and from letters his siblings wrote to him in Kansas."<sup>222</sup> The following biographies of Johann IV's siblings are based on these letters and the "Stammbuch" as quoted in "*The Harder Family Review*" and the Harder family book, *The Blumstein Legacy*, by Leland Harder.



Elisabeth Fast Harder (1838-98), wife of Johann Harder IV. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 52.

7 Son **Johann F. Harder** married Helena Klassen, daughter of Jakob Klassen of Sparrau and later KMB elder at Inman, Kansas.<sup>223</sup> The Johann F. Harder family lived near Buhler, where he was a farmer, minister and teacher in a Seventh Day Adventist School. He then taught for many years in his own SDA school in Hooker, Oklahoma, after which he taught in the SDA Clinton (MO) Theological Seminary for 13 years. He and his wife are buried in the Shafter, California, cemetery. Daughter **Elizabeth Harder** married Jakob D. Klassen of Alexanderthal, brother to Helena who married Jakob. The Jakob Klassen family lived near Inman, Kansas. Later they moved to Hooker, Oklahoma, where she is buried in the small KMB cemetery. Son **Isbrand F. Harder** married Anna Friesen of Prangenau and the family lived in Canton, Kansas, and then in Waldheim, Saskatchewan, where he was a farmer and a preacher in the KMB Church. Son **Heinrich F. Harder** moved to East Bernard, Texas, where he met and married his wife Maria Koop. Afterwards they lived in Hooker, Oklahoma, where they farmed and were members of the KMB Church, and in Detroit, Michigan, where he was hit and killed by a train while working as a rail road flagman. Both he and his wife are buried in the Gnadenuau Cemetery south of Hillsboro, Kansas. Son **Abraham F. Harder** married Anna Loewen, daughter of KMB member Peter P. Loewen, who had settled in the Hoffnungsthal village west of Gnadenuau. Loewen's sod house is now the Adobe Museum in Hillsboro. The Abraham Harder family also joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church and farmed in Hooker, Oklahoma, and several other places in Oklahoma and Kansas. They are buried in the Hillsboro cemetery. Son **David E. Harder** and his wife Margaret Flaming, both children of KMB immigrants, lived in Hillsboro, where David taught at Tabor College. They are buried in the Hillsboro cemetery.<sup>224</sup> David Harder was the father of Menno S. Harder and grandfather of Dr. Leland Harder, Newton, Kansas. Son **Bernhard Harder** married Agatha Friesen, a sister of brother Isbrand's wife; and they farmed near Hillsboro, then near Hooker, Oklahoma, after which they moved to Shafter, California, where they died and are buried. Son **Peter Harder** married Kathryn Loewen. Following the lead of his older brothers, Johann and Abraham, they too joined the SDA Church. He entered business and accounting in Hillsboro, after which he taught school in Borden, Saskatchewan. He died and is buried in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. **Helena Harder** married Dietrich Z. Wiebe, son of Heinrich A. Wiebe (1845-1910), brother to Jakob who founded the KMB. The Dietrich Z. Wiebe family moved to Hooker, Oklahoma.<sup>225</sup> Later they moved to Grande Prairie, Alberta, where they are buried.<sup>226</sup>



*Rev. Johann Harder IV (1836-1930), Gnadenuau, Kansas. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 51.*



Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann J. Harder</b>	Aug 20, 1836		Feb 23, 1930
m	Elisabeth Fast	Jan 18, 1838	Nov 16, 1858	Dec 30, 1898
7	Johann Harder	Apr 22, 1860		Feb 1, 1949
m	Helen Klassen	Oct 25, 1862	Aug 20, 1882	Jun 1, 1945
7	Elisabeth Harder	Oct 10, 1861		Nov 7, 1861
7	Elisabeth Harder	Sep 8, 1862	Oct 29, 1882	Mar 25, 1910
m	Jakob Klassen	Apr 8, 1858		Aug 9, 1946
7	Abraham Harder	Jun 17, 1865		Oct 24, 1943
m	Anna Loewen	Dec 23, 1867	Oct 20, 1889	Feb 28, 1919
2m	Eleo Markus	Apr 5, 1861	May 24, 1922	Dec 5, 1949
7	Isbrandt Harder	Feb 25, 1867		Sep 7, 1945
m	Anna Friesen	Aug 4, 1869	Sep 6, 1891	Aug 14, 1939
7	Heinrich Harder	May 15, 1870		Jul 17, 1928
m	Maria Koop	May 31, 1877		1958
7	David E. Harder	Apr 2, 1872		Oct 16, 1930
m	Margaretha Fleming	Jun 3, 1879	Jul 18, 1897	1973
7	Jakob Harder	Jun 5, 1875		Jun 22, 1875
7	Bernhard Harder	Jun 5, 1875		1958
m	Agatha Friesen	Jan 1, 1880	Dec 28, 1900	1956
7	Peter Harder	Aug 13, 1878		Feb 3, 1946
m	Katharina Loewen	Apr 10, 1889	Sep 2, 1906	Jan 24, 1989
7	Helena Harder	Aug 13, 1878		Dec 24, 1950
m	Dietrich Z. Wiebe	Jul 24, 1882		Feb 8, 1905
6	<b>Johann J. Harder</b>	Aug 20, 1836		Feb 23, 1930
2m	Renette Kroeker	Jun 24, 1854		



*Johann Harder IV family in Kansas with nephew Johann A. Harder, son of brother Abraham J. Harder (1840-1927). Standing, l-r: Johann A., Isbrand, David, Bernhard, Peter. Seated: Abraham, John, Helena, Renette Schulz Harder; and Johann Harder. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 96.*



*Harder Family Reunion in Russia, June 15/28, 1900. In the center sits Jobann Harder; 64; and on this right bis stepmother, Katharina Schulz Harder; 60. The other persons will be identified by family groups. (A) Four persons on left are Heinrich, 39, and Aganetha Harder Teigroeb, 41, and their sons Heinrich, 15, and Jobann, 11 (B) Next are David, 49, and in front of his right arm Aganetha Loetkemann Harder, 45, and their little daughter Agatba, 4. (C) Next is Heinrich Harder, 52, with bis sons Abram, 21, in back of bim, and in front of bis right arm Anna Dueck Harder, 48, and their two daughters Margareta, 5, and Maria, 12. (D) Next is the family of Abraham Harder 60, sitting to Jobann's left. with bis three married children and their spouses and one unmarried daughter. They are, left to right, Justina Epp Harder, 29 and in back of her Abram A. Harder, 34, Jobann (in white coat) and Elizabeth Harder Dick, 32; Katharina Harder Thielmann, 25, (in white blouse), and Gerbard Thielmann, 31; and the unmarried daughter is Aganetha (Agnes) Harder, 16. In front of Abraham is bis grandson, the son of Abram A. and Justina Harder: Johannes Harder 3. (E) to Abraham's left sits Isbrand Harder, 58; and to bis rear bis two daughters, Justina Harder Hildebrand, 32, and her husband Isaac, 42, and Isbrand's unmarried daughter; Anna, 22. (F) Finally on the far right sits David Epp, 48, widower of Elizabeth Harder Epp, who died in 1896; and in front of bim are their two daughters, Katharina, 9, and Margaretha, 11. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 80.*

6 Son **Abraham J. Harder** (1840-1927) married Anna Fast, daughter of Ältester Bernhard Fast (1783-1861) of Halbstadt, who had been his father's predecessor as Ältester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde.<sup>227</sup> Abraham J. Harder was the author of the extensive autobiography dealing with many of the experiences encountered and his parents frequently quoted in this family sketch. The following biography is written and compiled by Leland Harder with some editorial changes.

Abraham Harder represents a Mennonite personality that has been characterized as "Gelassenheit", which means more than the literal translation of the word: humility, forbearance, trust, composure, piety and sedateness. It is a life wrought over many generations of minority group status in an alien environment, grounded in a defenceless faith expressed through an ethnic subculture, renewed by a transmitted awareness that faith must be voluntary, tested, admonished by the Christian brother and sister, and nurtured in the children with intentional discipline but yet without coercion - a strange paradox that our modern age finds difficult to comprehend.

We've lost a lot of the Gelassenheit of our heritage. We no longer feel that humility is a way of life and a part of the Gospel we preach and teach. Some of it we have chosen to cast off as dysfunctional in a highly rational, humanist culture; and yet perhaps as we read more of our family history, we can keep our minds open to the possibility that there was something about the piety and Gelassenheit of our forebears that still speaks to our lives.

Abraham was deeply attached to his mother. He was only 15 years of age when she died, and her death left him desolate. He wrote: "The whole world was worth nothing to me; and it seemed to me that after dear mother had become cold in death and her loving mother's eye was broken, and the heart full of love had ceased all beating, all happiness and joy had vanished. By that time already my older brother had already yielded to the Lord, and she called each one of us to her bedside to follow the example of our brother...."

In his early life Abraham also pledged total obedience to the discipline of his father, Elder Johann Harder III....."When I heard the youth kicking up a row out on the street, I often had the desire to participate in such things; but later I could thank my father for his admonishments and discipline."

During the years of his elementary education in Blumstein, Abraham had four excellent teachers: Bernhard Baergen, Anton Kornelsen, Gerhard Goossen [his father's uncle by marriage - see Section Six] and Bernhard Harder. About his early nurture, Abraham wrote: "At home and at school I received many a good seed kernel and many an impulse for the good. Already as a boy, I was thoroughly convinced that prayers were being heard, so that whoever was sick, I thought, did not need to remain sick; whoever had lost something could find it if he would pray. When I had lost a knife, I prayed and found it; and when I was sick, I prayed and became well. Even when I skated I prayed that I would win the race, and it happened. Yet with all the praying, a total yieldedness to the Lord was still missing. Therefore, I was admonished by the example of my brother, my parents and my teachers. Especially Bernhard [Gerhard?] Goossen of Lindenau made a good impression on me. My own conscience spoke to me; and the many sermons of the old Ältester Bernhard Fast, the father of my wife, affected me mightily. He preached heartily full of love and earnestness so that the congrega-

tion quite commonly was moved to tears...I know very well how the baptismal candidates broke out into crying and sobbing, especially when he inspired and counselled them in the Low German language.”

Apparently Abraham’s formal education was limited to elementary school. He worked on his father’s farm, and when he was 17 years of age, he was apprenticed for the winter to a master carpenter by the name of Cornelius Friesen, whom Abraham described as a “childlike Christian whose love and gentleness did not fail to make a good impression on me.”....Inspired by such influences, Abraham grew deeper in his knowledge of the Kingdom of God: “I came to true peace with the Lord by virtue of the mercy of God. When I poured out my heart to my dear father, he helped me by his counsel and consolation to overcome the temptations I was experiencing so that I found peace for my soul. Oh, how happy my heart then became! Now I could pour out my soul, so childlike in prayer before the Lord and Saviour with confidence.”

The following year Abraham was baptized by his father in the Ohrloff Gemeinde, the first baptismal celebration that Johann III conducted as Ältester. The aged Bernhard Fast, was supposed to do it one more time, fulfilling Abraham’s wish that he might be baptized by the same elder who had baptized his father, but Fast declined because of his infirmity. “Since I was sitting at the end of the bench, I was the first person ever baptized by my father. I have subsequently never had any disquietness before God because I had not been baptized in the river. For the first time among Anabaptist descendants there was a lack of agreement among us concerning the mode of baptism. At first they baptized like it was done in the state churches where the mode was sprinkling, especially in North Germany. Later the Mennonites introduced the method of pouring...”

In 1861 Abraham married Anna, daughter of Bernhard Fast. The elder had died by that time and had been succeeded by Abraham’s father, but the wedding was preformed by associate minister Franz Isaak, Tiege....Like all married couples, Abraham and Anna had their differences, which were not always easily resolved...Anna had a more scriptural view of conversion and salvation than did those in the renewal movement in the Molotschna at the time. Her husband described their views of conversion: “From childhood Anna had a heart for the Saviour. To say it differently, she had been hired for the Lord in his vineyard in the morning hour of her life. She grew gradually into a conscious grace and love of Christ without being able to cite a specific time when she had a conversion and rebirth experience. At times in certain circles of believing souls when she heard the one or the other citing the time and hour when they had come to peace, she got the feeling that they doubted whether she was converted because she could not state a time and hour. Sometimes this brought her into such a tension that she asked herself, ‘Are you really a child of God?’ Yet by prayer in her chamber she found reassurance and strength by the grace of God, saying with tears in her eyes, ‘Let the people think and believe of me what they wish; I know that I have a Saviour with whom I am bound.’ I comforted her and said, ‘Hold on to what you have. Let no one rob you of your crown.’ Although my conversion was a different one and I went through more struggles, yet I know that I still had much to learn from her love, faithfulness, patience, hope, and joy in faith which she demonstrated especially in her last days of suffering and her quiet communion in prayer with the Lord.”

When they were married Abraham and Anna lived with her mother and unmarried brother for one year. When the summer was over Abraham had the strong urge to try teaching, but lacked the credentials....That winter he and another applicant received tutoring from Franz Isaak to prepare them for teaching assignments....Abraham received an offer to teach the school at Hierschau. He accepted the offer as an answer to prayer. During the seven years in the Hierschau schoolhouse, five children were born to Abraham and Anna.....

When the head of the Guardians Committee ordered that the Russian language be taught in all the village schools, Abraham decided that he was not capable of that and lacked the courage to learn it. He decided to quit the teaching profession and take up farming. His humble spirit was expressed in his overall evaluation of his seven years in Hierschau: "With the grace of the Saviour and with the loyal support of my dear helpmate, and with much diligence, I succeeded in leaving the school to the satisfaction of the school board and the village community, although a few parents had some dissatisfaction. In my youthful eagerness and lack of experience with a school of 80 children, there were some things I did not do well, and I had to confess, 'Lord, if you will count the sins, who can stand?' (Psalm 130:3)."

Anticipating a career change, Abraham had bought a "Kleinwirtschaft" in Tiede for 900 ruble and moved there after the 1868-69 school year. He was a small farmer in Tiede for five years, supplementing the family income by practising his carpenter's trade....He was also a part-time assistant in the mayor's office and collector of tithes.....

In the fall of 1873, Abraham was able to buy a "Vollwirtschaft" in Alexanderwohl for 3,000 ruble. This was the year that a major part of the Alexanderwohl Gemeinde immigrated to Kansas, and the flood of farms on the market and reasonable terms made the purchase possible. Here Abraham and Anna lived for 25 years to the end of her life; and here their last three children were born.<sup>228</sup> Their years in Alexanderwohl were happy ones.

In 1878 Abraham was elected to the ministry here, although again he expressed his humble spirit, "I did not entirely feel that I was in my element here." He also served on the village council that administered the local school, and he got more satisfaction from that. On January 19, 1883, he was elected as a preaching minister in the Neukirch parish, 10 miles south of Alexanderwohl, where his brother Heinrich was the leading minister; and Abraham was ordained to this office on February 6th. "Now the question arose, how and what should I preach? As for the how, I had a legacy from my father....The text of my first sermon at my installation was John 4:34, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work.' I must confess that the Lord gave sufficient grace so that I could do it with joy, and that my heart enjoyed the blessings of the work, in spite of my indolence and coldheartedness."

In his autobiography, written at the end of the century, Abraham reviewed their years in Alexanderwohl: "We moved here in 1874 and have lived here for the past 25 years. Not only have we been able to repay our mortgage on the farm enterprise, but we have also earned bread and clothing for our large family. The largest blessing has been that the Lord has given us healthy and obedient chil-

dren, who have endeavoured to 'honour father and mother' according to the word of God out of love and a sense of duty toward their parents."....

At the end of his autobiography Abraham wrote several long paragraphs about Anna's last days. She died a painful but heroic death: "During her long suffering and deterioration, she had occasional moments when she felt well and light in spirit and body so that she would be seized by a flickering hope for recovery; and then she would ask probingly, 'Should I get well again?' Since I knew the seriousness of her disease through collected knowledge, I did not say much, for I did not want to promote deceptive hope. Then she said, 'Tell me honestly. What do you think about my disease and my condition?' Not wanting to cut off hope but also not wanting to give false hope, I said, 'I think you are closer to the goal than you believe.' The she replied, 'That makes me glad.'" Anna died a few days later. "Her face was radiant and joyful as she asked for a last prayer."

When Anna died, all of their children except Aganetha were already married....In 1898 Abraham J. Harder married for the second time to Anna Warkentin....In May 1900, brother Johann,....arrived from Kansas for an extended visit with his brothers and sisters. In early June Abraham and his new wife accompanied Johann to the Crimea to the old village of Annenfeld and to visit Abraham's sons, Johann and Abram, and their families, in the village. On the train ride there, his wife suddenly got very ill and was dead on arrival....<sup>229</sup>

Apparently in their hour of bereavement, the family was well served by an old friend, Maria Pauls. Abraham must have felt right away that Maria would be a fine stepmother to Agnes and her siblings, for he married her on December 10, 1900.<sup>230</sup> For their honeymoon Abraham and Maria decided to travel to America to visit brothers that each of them had there and also to take Agnes to Kansas to attend Bethel College....Abraham and Maria each wrote journals of their trip which were published in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* and the *Herald der Wahrheit*....

Maria had married children of her own, several of whom were also living in the Crimea, and on their return to Alexanderwohl, she and Abraham decided to move there permanently. From then until Abraham died in 1927, he wrote nine letters to Johann from their home in Busau, Aktatchi, Crimea. Here Abraham did some farming and preaching and writing as the Russian correspondent to the *Rundschau* in America; but mostly he was retired and free to visit various churches and communities in the Crimea and in the Molotschna.

Abraham commented about the changing political scene in Russia and the trends of accommodation among Mennonites: "April 11, 1912: These are difficult times. It becomes more and more difficult for a beginner to buy a house. Many are moving to Siberia, but even there because of the extreme cold, it is very hard....Things are coming to a head. The growing need and poverty in the cities gives Socialism more and more material, and the spirit of revolt among the poor is growing. Also disbelief is growing at an alarming rate, and all of that makes things more and more uncertain in this world. The differentiation between right and wrong is disappearing and all of this indicates that the signs of the times are getting worse. Nevertheless, the faithful know that according to the Scriptures, all these things must come to pass; and they are not afraid even though the end of the world should come."

August 17, 1912: "Soon dear brother, we will lay down our pilgrim staff and go home. How many of our loved ones are no longer with us."

March 10, 1914: "My wife and I were on a Molotschna trip from June 11 to 22 and visited all our children and brother and sisters there. I let all the brothers and sisters read your letter and laid upon their hearts your wish to have information about the family (for your Stammbuch)....One thing, however, hurt me very much - hearing about the school programs in the high schools, where in their preparations they use historical and biblical dramas, ugly disguises (like mummies), pasted on mustaches, sword fighting, armour rattling, wigs, insulting and swear words. Teachers and preachers participate in this under the pretence of giving the children a classic education...."

February 16, 1925: "I sent your last letter to brother Isbrand Harder, who is already old and weak. His wife died. Also the widow of Heinrich Harder died of a stroke....I feel very weak and weary. Would like to go Home soon...."

From a note in daughter Agnes' correspondence, Abraham died sometime in 1927, three years before his brother Johann died. They had both lived long and fruitful lives, exemplifying the spirit of Gelassenheit to the very end.

7 Son **Johann A. Harder** (1863-1935) served in the Forstei, Razinshen Forest Reserve, from 1886 to 1889. He married Tina Klassen. Together they bought a half-Wirtschaft in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna. In 1897 they moved to the Crimea, settling on rented land near Toksaba. Johann remarried to Susanna Koop. In 1909 they immigrated to America, where they found friendly hospitality at the home of his uncle Johann J. Harder in Gnadenu, Kansas. They purchased a farm four miles northwest of Lehigh. In the 1910 the family converted itself to Separatist Pietism and were rebaptised into the Mennonite Brethren Church. Johann married for the third time to Agatha Hiebert. In 1913 Johann was ordained as a minister. They decided to immigrate to Saskatchewan, Canada, where they settled near Borden.

7 Son **Abraham A. Harder** (1866-1941) married Justina Epp of Kleefeld. They founded the Mennonite Orphanage at Grossweide, Molotschna Mennonite Colony in the Ukraine. The following story of their lives was excerpted from the biographical sketch of Anna Epp Ens, author of the Epp family book, *The House of Heinrich*:

"When Mennonites began to settle in the Crimea, the Harders joined the movement, settling at Neu-Toksoba, about 43 kilometers from the seaport Yevpatoriya. Here Harder and his wife were rebaptized by immersion. They joined the Brüdergemeinde at Spat in the Crimea."

"Unable to rid himself of a calling which he had already felt early in his youth, Abraham Harder gave up farming in the Crimea and the family moved back to the Molotschna settlement with the intention of establishing an orphanage. But Abraham's call was not encouraged by the Halbstadt and Gnadenu municipal councils. His petition to buy a 7.4 dessiatine (20 acre) sheep ranch at Kurushan and form an organization to be responsible for an orphanage was rejected. 'Even the Ältester of the church discouraged me,' he wrote in his diary."

"But Abraham and Justina were convinced that they were following God's will and were not easily diverted. Harder's diary records the purchase of a property at Grossweide on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1906. This purchase included the buildings (a

large house, a barn and granary), a garden and 4 dessiatine (11 acres) of land.”

“In later years a large modern school building with a boys’ dormitory was added. Shortly before World War I a 17.7 dessiatine (48 acre) farm with some buildings was purchased at Kurushan. At this farm the older boys received training in farming and gardening skills and shops. Many Mennonite orphans educated in the Grossweide orphanage became valuable citizens of Mennonite communities.”

“The number of orphans grew from year to year until it reached a total of 80 children during 1921-22, the year remembered as the year of the famine... Often they had no bread at all. The thin barley soup was not enough to satisfy the hungry children. They would go out and pick up whatever they could find and eat it. Their bodies began to swell because of the unbalanced diet.”

“When they heard that the American relief was coming, the children were very excited. Within a few days the supplies were distributed among the surrounding villages but the orphanage received no help. In Halbstadt it had been decided that because it was so uncertain how long the orphanage could be kept, there was no need to send any supplies there.”

“Obtaining enough food for the children became more and more of a problem. One day, in the Harder’s absence, some of the boys killed a cat and prepared a meal from it. They ate it without any qualms. Another boy ate poisonous weeds and became deathly sick. He was delirious from 5 p.m. till 8 a.m. All night efforts continued to remove the poison from his system.”

“When the new revolutionary government began to meddle in the affairs of the orphanage, forbidding religious instruction and ordering the teaching of a Communist curriculum, Justina and Abraham refused to comply and were forced to leave. Some of the orphanage children were given new homes by relatives and friends. The remaining 22 were transferred to Prischib to a government institution for German children. The Grossweide orphanage became a home for Russian orphans and later a secondary school for the neighbouring villages.”

“After living in a former teacherage for two years, Abraham and Justina moved to Kurushan to become houseparents in the Altenheim. In the fall of 1926 they resigned this position and moved to Rückenau. Here Abraham was elected and ordained deacon in the church.”

“Because of the mental handicap of their daughter Anna, the Harders were denied permission to immigrate to Canada. They decided to spend the rest of their lives in Rückenau, but it was not to be so.”

“On a Sunday morning in 1931, Harder was called out of the morning church service by Communist officials. According to son Johannes the officials confiscated all their possessions except the most needed clothes and bedding. Abraham knew that the next step would be imprisonment or exile to Siberia. They decided to flee. A friend took them to the station and they left for the Crimea.”

“They found a loving welcome in the village of Spat at the home of their children, Jacob and Katharina Harder Janzen, although their house was small. After four months the Janzens were banned to the age-old forest at Archangelsk. The parents were supposed to go along, but they were released after three days and were able to return to Spat. However, they were not allowed to move into the former Janzen house.”

“There was no room for the parents in the village, but they were allowed



to move into a dugout, which was located at the edge of the village and had been used as a chicken coop. Here they established a new home under extreme difficulties, but their faith in their Lord did not waver. Abraham Harder and daughter Bertha earned as much as they could, but it was not enough to supply their daily needs. Abraham and Justina went after the reapers in the harvest fields to glean some of the ears of grain that had fallen on the ground. Cattle dung was gathered and stored for fuel.”

“In July 1936, after a short illness, Justina passed away in the dugout. Son Johannes wrote, “She remained true to the Lord until the end. She went home, as only a tired pilgrim can, who has no home in this world.”

“The last news from Abraham Harder was received in March 1941 by his children in British Columbia. Later it became known that at age 75, in September 1941, he and his daughters Anna, Bertha and grandson Rudie had been banned to Kazakstan. Bertha’s husband, Kornelius Harder., had disappeared a few month after the birth of Rudie. Abraham Harder died on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1941, at the Omsk settlement as a result of blood poisoning of the hand.” Abraham and Justina Harder’s son Abraham married Justina Janzen who wrote a book called “Feuerproben” “to support the sending of food parcels to the starving people of the Ukraine during the devastating famine of the 1920s.” They emigrated to Germany in 1924. In Germany Abram learned “that God had many witnesses in this world who were not Mennonite Brethren.” After Hitler came to power in 1933 they witnessed - to their horror - the arrest of Jewish neighbours, among them a prominent doctor. In 1935 they escaped and were able to immigrate to Paraguay. In Filedelpia Abram Harder became Ältester of the Kirchliche Mennonites. Eventually they settled in British Columbia.

7 Daughter **Elisabeth A. Harder** married Johann J. Dyck. She died early in her married life. Her husband later settled in Coaldale, Alberta. Daughter **Maria A. Harder** married Jakob Dick, brother to Elisabeth’s husband. Both families lived for a while in Lichtfelde where they had a woodwork shop. Jakob bought a farm in Neukirch and later in Prangenu.

7 Daughter **Katharina Harder** (1875-1926) married Gerhard J. Thielmann. In 1900 they bought a Wirtschaft in Neukirch from Johann Reimers later moving to Sagrafovka.<sup>231</sup> Economically, Gerhard was a very successful farmer, perhaps too successful; for when the Communists took control, he was branded as a kulak, arrested and imprisoned. Tina died in January, 1926. Heinrich, the fourth oldest of their offspring, managed to emigrate to Canada, due largely to the financial help from somebody there. In a letter from the oldest son, Abram, to his brother Heinrich in Canada, we get a vivid and sad picture of the fate of their father:

Jan. 20, 1933

“Dear brother and Sister-in-law:

“During the first days of this month, I wrote a short letter to you to inform you of the misfortune that has come to our home. But because our letters are so easily lost, I will write another. Our dear father has become a victim of the wheat requisition which is being carried out here. He has been branded as a kulak and sentenced to 10 years in prison plus confiscation of all that he owns. You cannot imagine the implications and horror of such a sentence in our circumstances even if you try to picture the most terrible things.”

“Today we received a letter from him. He is in prison in Melitopol, but is to be sent to the far north. Because he cannot work on account of his weakness and age, he has been placed in a cell for invalids. He is together with 20 men (cripples, sick and old men) in a room which is 12 feet long by three feet wide. It will be plain to you that they cannot lie down because the cell is so crowded. Day and night they have to sit or stand. Their food rations: once a day “borscht” of the second category, consisting of water and a few pieces of beets. In the evening they get a plate of oatmeal (actually water and a few little kernels). Until now they have received 300 grams of bread a day, but from the time of writing they were to receive only 150 grams a day.”

“Father writes that many die of hunger, and he is also facing this prospect. He and his fellow cell mates are already swollen from the effects of the malnutrition. They are being treated in a brutal manner. They are being eaten by lice while they are still alive. His situation is terrible!!! Many, many thousands are in a similar situation. Terror sweeps the land like a hurricane. The prisons are overcrowded, the militia cannot keep up with its job of arresting and guarding the prisoners.....”

“Here at home everything has been taken, even the last food items. I am also threatened by the same fate. Henry, how I long to see you one more time, to embrace you once more, to speak to you!! Oh, Henry!!!!”

“Abram Thielmann”

Their father, Gerhard Thielmann, spent six years in prison; and when it appeared that he was about to die, he was released as “innocent” and died a few weeks later at home in Neukirch....His second wife, Sara Becker Thielmann, came to Canada in 1948 and lived in St. Catherines, Ontario, where she died in 1952. Son Henry was ordained as a minister of the Kitchener M.B. Church and served in Calgary and Yarrow, B.C. He died in 1985. Daughter Tina married Heinz Kliever, a Mennonite minister from Rudnerwiede, who died in Soviet exile as did most Mennonite clergymen. Son Gerhard was arrested in 1937 and never heard from again. Daughter Maria and husband Abram Isaak escaped to Paraguay in 1930 and eventually to St. Catherines, Ontario. Son Johannes was arrested in 1941 and never heard from again. Son Jakob was a teacher near Kiev. He was arrested in 1941. His wife and three daughters were last seen in Poland. Son Kornelius died of pneumonia in 1939. The youngest son Peter escaped the Soviets in 1943 and settled in Kitchener, Ontario.

7 D a u g h t e r  
**Aganetha Harder** attended Bethel College in Kansas in 1900. Here she met her husband Peter Wiens and together they served as missionaries in India. She retired in Newton, Kansas.



*Rev. Abram J. Harder (1840-1927) and wife Anna Fast, Alexanderwobl, Molotschna. Photo - The Blumstein Legacy, page 60.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Abraham J. Harder</b>	Aug 22, 1840		1927
m	Anna Fast	May 9, 1841	Jun 18, 1861	Nov 10, 1898
7	Justina A. Harder	Apr 22, 1862	Sep 15, 1884	Dec 16, 1891
m	Johann Gaddert	1862		
7	Anna A. Harder	Aug 23, 1863	Nov 22, 1883	Feb 17, 1895
m	Jakob Thiessen	Alexanderwohl		
7	Johann A. Harder	Dec 23, 1864	Jan 4, 1890	May 19, 1935
m	Katharina Klassen	1865		Apr 11, 1904
2m	Susanna Koop	1882		1909
3m	Agatha Hiebert	1886		1968
7	Abraham A. Harder	Sep 29, 1866	Jan 22, 1891	Oct 19, 1941
m	Justina Epp	1871		Jul, 1936
7	Elisabeth A. Harder	Jun 7, 1868	Nov 15, 1890	1902
m	Johann Dick	1868		1947
7	Maria A. Harder	Jan 19, 1870	Apr 30, 1891	
m	Jakob Dick	1869		1937
7	Bernhard A. Harder	Oct 30, 1871		Oct 14, 1873
7	Helen A. Harder	Oct 29, 1873	Jun 8, 1895	
m	Jakob Thiessen	Alexanderwohl		
7	Katharina A. Harder	Nov 23, 1875	Sep 31, 1899	Jan 20, 1926
m	Gerhard Thielmann	Aug 31, 1868		Dec 23, 1934
7	Aganetha A. Harder	Feb 21, 1878		Mar 30, 1879
7	Aganetha A. Harder	Jan 11, 1884		1951
m	Peter Wiens			1945
6	<b>Abraham J. Harder</b>	Aug 22, 1840		1927
2m	Anna Warkentin		Oct 24, 1899	Jun 5, 1900
3m	Maria Pauls		Dec 10, 1900	



*The orphanage at Grossweide, Molotschna, in 1913. Standing beside the carriage is the Bergthold family. Photo - A. Epp, House of Heinrich (Winnipeg, 1980), page 103.*

## Map Six: Map of the Crimea



*Justina and Abram A. Harder (1866-1941). Photo - House of Heinrich, page 103.*



*Map of the Crimea showing the location of Annenfeld, originally settled by the Kleine Gemeinde. The Mennonite church in the northwestern part of the Crimea was centered in Busau. Photo - The Blumstein Legacy, page 54.*



*In their final years Abram A. Harder and wife Justina suffered the ignoble fate of being forced to live in an underground mud but at the edge of the village of Spat. Sitting at the side of the but are their youngest daughter Bertha (left) and oldest daughter Anna. Justina is seated by the door and Abram is at the wheelstone. Photo - House of Heinrich, page 105.*

6 Son **Isbrand J. Harder** married Gertruda Neumann. Leland Harder writes: "For 13 years they lived in Ohrloff and farmed rented land. Then they bought a farm at Altona, a few miles south of Blumstein. They had nine children of whom three died in infancy....Two letters that Isbrand wrote to [brother] Johann in Kansas (one dated 1877 and other 1913) have been preserved. The first tells about various political and religious events in south Russia and the colonies, and the second tells mostly about the farm yieldd in 1913. Unlike his brothers, Isbrand was not called into the ministry but was content to be a lifelong farmer.....Isbrand did not express an interest in moving to America."<sup>232</sup> Isbrand married for the second time to a widow Hiebert, nee Katharina Penner. She had 11 children of her first marriage of whom only four survived: Abraham, Anna, Katherina, and Elizabeth. Isbrand and his family were living in Altona when brother Johann J. Harder, visited them during his trip to Russia in 1900.<sup>233</sup> "According to a letter from Abraham dated 1925, Isbrand was still living in Altona at age 82, although his wife had died by then....Anna, a daughter of brother David, wrote to her uncle Johann that uncle Isbrand was attacked by Machno terrorists in 1921 and his arm was badly cut and maimed.....we, have word from a relative that two great granddaughters of Isbrand got to Ontario after World War II, but their identities have not been established yet."<sup>234</sup>

7 Daughter **Justina Harder** married Isaac Hildebrand born in Tiege. Daughter **Anna Harder** married Isaac Bärge born in Münsterberg. Daughter **Elisabeth Harder** married Aaron Klassen born in Schardau. Daughter **Susanna Harder** married Bernhard Wiens born in Altona.<sup>235</sup>



*Isbrand J. Harder. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 46.*

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Death</u>
6	<b>Isbrand J. Harder</b>	Aug 24, 1842		ca. 1926
m	Gertruda Neumann	Dec 24, 1843	Feb 9, 1864	Apr 14, 1896
7	Gertruda Harder	Dec 22, 1864		
7	Justina Harder	May 20, 1868		
m	Isaak Hildebrand	Oct 23, 1868	May 1, 1894	
7	Helena Harder	Apr 7, 1870		
7	Elisabeth Harder	Aug 2, 1872		Oct 14, 1872
7	Isbrand Harder	Oct 12, 1873		Jun 11, 1875
7	Anna Harder	1878		
m	Isaak Baergen	May 3, 1871	Sep 27, 1903	
7	Isbrand Harder	Feb 3, 1876		Feb 8, 1878
7	? Harder	Nov 1, 1878		
7	Elisabeth Harder	Jan 23, 1881		
m	Aaron Klassen	Aug 17, 1874	Nov 9, 1902	
7	Susanna Harder	Mar 18, 1883		
m	Bernhard Wiens	Feb 19, 1883	Nov 12, 1905	
6	Isbrand Harder	Dec 22, 1842	ca. 1897	ca. 1926
2m	Katharina Penner	Oct 28, 1845		

6 Daughter **Helena J. Harder** married the widower Julius M. Barkman, son of Martin J. Barkman (1796-1872) of Rückenau, a staunch member of the Kleine Gemeinde and former Schulze of the village.<sup>236</sup> Leland Harder has compiled her biography: "In a letter of March 30, 1877, Helena writes about leaving her parental home and marriage: 'Last spring at Easter time, I drove with brother Abraham to Alexanderwohl and had my residence there since both of my parents were in eternity. I did not begrudge our father his rest, but it is hard when the rupture happens so suddenly.....On the first of March, I married Julius Barkman in Rückenau. I have been here in Rückenau, since the 18th of November because his wife had been very ill for a long time and had asked whether I could come and help....'<sup>237</sup> After Helena's death her husband married for the third time to Maria Daniels in 1893. During his visit to Russia in 1908, Martin B. Fast visited his aunt, his uncle's third wife who had also remarried and was now a Mrs. Kruger. Martin B. Fast states 'that she was still living on the old place in Rückenau.'<sup>238</sup>

In her detailed study of the village of Rückenau, Leona Wiebe Gislason, related an anecdote about a Julius Barkman, possibly the son or grandson of Helena and Julius Barkman, who "was brought before the village Soviet for having stolen a rooster....He [had] explained that he had run the rooster down on horseback with the prayer that if the Lord willed, he should catch the rooster. The Lord had willed it and therefore it should not be considered theft."<sup>239</sup>

7 Son **Julius Julius Barkman** married Katharina Gaede from Schardau. When cousin Martin B. Fast visited their half Wirtschaft in Alexanderwohl in 1908 he reported that she was losing weight. At this time they had four children including a baby that was only a few weeks old. Martin B. Fast goes on to report that son **Johann Julius Barkman** was studying in Germany at that time. Martin B. Fast left a message for him that he should visit his relatives in America before returning home.<sup>240</sup> In 1916 one of the Julius Barkman sons visited the Peter M. Barkman family around Hillsboro but did not like the area and returned to Russia.<sup>241</sup> Likely this could have been Johann. Daughter **Helena Barkman** married Kornelius Boschmann and had six children, namely, Kornelius, Helena, Jakob, Johann, Elizabeth and Peter.<sup>242</sup> It seems that Boschmans also lived in Alexanderwohl.<sup>243</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Helena J. Harder</b>	Sep 2, 1844	Nov 23, 1855	Jan 8, 1892
m	Julius M. Barkman	Mar 23, 1835		Sep 27, 1897
7	Julius Barkman	May 7, 1877		
m	Katharina Gaede			
7	Helena Barkman	Mar 29, 1880		
m	Kornelius Boschmann	Mar 9, 1878		
7	Johann Barkman	Dec 2, 1881		
7	Elisabeth Barkman	Aug 12, 1884		1884

6 Son **Heinrich J. Harder** (1848-1907) married Katharina Dueck, daughter of Gerhard Dueck. Heinrich and Helena lived in Kleefeld, Molotschna.

Leland Harder writes: "Let's pick up Heinrich's story by reading snatches from two letters to brother Johann, one from their sister, Elisabeth Harder Epp, lamenting Heinrich's harsh criticism of her for submitting to river rebaptism, and the other from Heinrich himself on the same subject. Elisabeth alleged that Heinrich had told her, "You dishonoured our deceased father and trod on him and his actions with your feet before all humanity." The other letter was addressed to Johann when he was living in the Crimea and trying to decide whether or not to be rebaptized in the river:

"Dear brother, as I know and have known, you have walked the way of the Lord for a long time; and when you were baptized, you did not then or later, as is so often the case, become indifferent about your baptism, about its meaning and the right way for the sacrament to be administered, which is not so important as to make the salvation contingent on this, which you now seem to suggest when it appears necessary for salvation for you to be rebaptized. If now you want to justify your intention by saying that without rebaptism you cannot participate in the congregation there as you wish, then I would like to ask the question: Would you not very soon meet with similar splits due to differences of opinion, like those that destroyed your togetherness at a time when you were quite in agreement with them, so that soon again you stand opposite to each other and a long distance apart? We live in fateful times when it is crucial to be earnestly on our guard so that one is not carried along with a fraudulent Christianity that has a glistening shine on the outside but a hypocritical pharisaical character on the inside. With this I want to close, but I beg you to accept this in love."

**Unity and Disunity:** The 11 children of Ältester Johann Harder were all the offspring of a great leader in the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth, a deeply religious man with a progressive spirit who was committed to resolving social and religious conflict among his people: but his death in 1875 left them divided on two issues especially. One was the issue of river rebaptism. After receiving Elizabeth's complaint about Heinrich, Johann wrote to his brother to express concern about the growing tensions in the family. Heinrich replied as follows: 'In the awareness that it is not right that so little is being done on our part to maintain our sibling relationships as they should be, I for my part admit my guilt...But today as I was reading your letter, wherein you write about the present cooling off of sibling love and the necessity of openness and trust, I immediately decided to send you a sign of love.'

"The family bonds were surely also renewed by Johann's informative letters from Kansas, his extended visit to Russia in 1900, and his 1913-1914 letters requesting their respective family genealogies for his *Stammbuch*.

"The other issue that caused conflict in the family concerned the immigration fever. As already reported, their father and his cousin Bernhard Harder were strongly opposed to emigration from Russia. It is all the more remarkable for that reason that one of their number, indeed the oldest, actually emigrated in 1874, the year before their father died. That probably happened only because they did so as part of a interdependent group of people on the isolated Crimean peninsula (the KMB). Thereafter, having their oldest brother in America was a constant

reminder that maybe, just maybe, that's what they all should do while the emigration doors were still open. Even Heinrich, who was the most committed to his father's admonition to remain loyal to their beloved mother Russia, entertained the idea of emigrating in 1874:

"It was my intention for a long time to write something to you dear ones there in faraway America...More than once we have seen from your letters that it is of no little concern to you that we write, to keep you abreast about the old homeland. From your letters one feels a bond of sibling love, and then the question emerges in us more intensely and vigorously: When will we also have to look for a new home for ourselves? Indeed, we have the same reasons to do that as you had and cannot consider ourselves any more secure here in the Colony than you believed yourselves to be in the Crimea. There is the threat that military exemption is more restricted here than there; but on the other hand we worry that we are only imagining finding freedom there, and perhaps it will not turn out to be different there in hindsight. So we are at one time often warm regarding emigration, and at another time only luke warm, all with mixed emotions. So we will wait for another year to get more information from America how the status of military freedom really is there...."

Leland Harder continues: "We are fortunate to have four letters that Heinrich wrote to Johann in the Crimea and Kansas between 1871 and 1897. From these letters it is evident that Heinrich was following a different drummer, reacting to Johann's river rebaptism and the idea of emigration according to the drumbeats of their father and cousin Bernhard. In 1871 Heinrich is angry at Johann for causing a division in the Harder family; and his words of admonition that the Crimean congregation would "soon again be divided among themselves" were surely prophetic because in Kansas Johann's own family was split for very similar religious reasons when his oldest son, John, converted to a non-Mennonite renewal church, the Seventh Day Adventists, leading two more of Johann's sons to do the same. By the time he wrote in 1897, Heinrich's attitude was one of loving reconciliation and concern for family unity."

[Typically those who converted themselves to Separatist-Pietist religious culture in Russia denied the name Christian and all possibility of salvation to those who had not adopted their legalistic and traditionalist teachings. The story of Heinrich J. Harder profiles the difficulties experienced by siblings and other family members who remained faithful to the faith once received in dealing with such spiteful attitudes and yet still retaining a sense of Christian love and charity towards those projecting such triumphalism within families and communities. In his patience and tolerance Heinrich exhibits the character traits of *Gelassenheit* and piety as modelled by his father. Editor. D. Plett].

**Marriage:** "Several months after writing his first letter to Johann, Heinrich married Katharina Dueck. The wedding was held in her village of Alexanderkrone, some 15 miles east of Blumstein, on November 18, 1871. Katharine came from a strong family bond. Her father, Gerhard Dueck, was a blacksmith; and during the Crimean War (1853-56) between Russia and the allied powers of Turkey, England, and France, he had shod the horses of the fighting Cossacks. Her mother, Katharina Isaak Dueck, had studied in the Zentralschule in Blumenort under the gifted teacher, Peter Heese, and was a devoted woman."



"The Duecks had established their home in Alexanderkrone about the time that the village was founded in 1857, and they had settled on Wirtschaft No. 28. In a similar way Heinrich and Katharina acquired a Wirtschaft in the neighbouring village of Kleefeld and joined the new Mennonite Church at Neukirch. Here Heinrich as often invited to preach and in time became the leading minister in this growing regional congregation. Heinrich and Katharina had seven children, two of whom died before their 10<sup>th</sup> birthdays."

**Remarriage:** "In one of his letters Heinrich remarked that the year 1882 "will always be an unforgettable memory." That was the year that Katharina died on March 7<sup>th</sup>, Gerhard on April 20<sup>th</sup>, and Isbrand on May 27<sup>th</sup>. Two more developments could have been mentioned. Abram, age 3, went to live with the Dueck grandparents, who subsequently raised him; and on June 15<sup>th</sup> Heinrich married Anna Dueck, who was just two years younger than her deceased sister, Katharina. In addition to the five older children of the first marriage, Heinrich and Anna had seven more children, only four of whom lived to maturity."

**Health Crises:** "In the same letter to Johann, Heinrich commented on the several health crises in their family. The children of his second marriage had a genetic predisposition for scrofulous infection, a kind of tuberculosis of the lymph glands, particularly in the neck. Then his wife suffered from what he called "Blasros", which sounds like the trachoma of the eyes that plagued the Russian Mennonites after World War I. He wrote that Anna could not see at all for 12 days. Medical treatment for such diseases was poor and the death rate was high. On July 24, 1900, their daughter Anna died, cause of death unknown."

"Heinrich himself died on March 20, 1907 from stomach cancer. Compared to his older brothers Johann, Abraham, and Isbrand, all of whom lived into their 80s and 90s, Heinrich died at the age of 58. Perhaps his health had been questionable for awhile, for on a day in June, 1895, brother David drove to brother Abraham's house in Alexanderwohl with a 'Job's message that another member of the family had fallen.' Abraham immediately thought it was Heinrich. 'No,' said David, 'it is sister Anna.'"

**Heinrich's Widow:** "In spite of some continuing health problems, Anna Dueck Harder lived to January 29, 1924 when she died following a three-month illness. Between 1907 and 1924, with the help of her son Isbrand, she kept on farming their land in Kleefeld. Indeed, even after her death, the three unmarried daughters - Tina, Maria, and Greta - managed the farm until they were forced off by Communist collectivization. The stories of Heinrich's children are representative of the experiences of members of the Plett family in the Soviet inferno."<sup>244</sup>



*Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich J. Harder, Kleefeld, Molotschna. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 65.*

7 Son **Heinrich H. Harder** (1876-1933) married Anna Gutwien, daughter of Johann Gutwien and Anna Baerg. Heinrich and Anna lived in Samara where he was the manager of a large estate. Later he lost practically everything in the Terek settlement.<sup>245</sup>

7 Son **Johann H. Harder** (1877-1933) married Anna Dueck, daughter of Franz Dueck and Sarah Regehr of Kleefeld. Johann and Anna Harder owned a small farm in Kleefeld. Their story is told by their daughter Sara Helene and published in *The Blumstein Legacy*:

“Kleefeld like most other villages in the Molotschna settlement had two rows of houses. On each side there was a footpath, and down the middle a broad street. Early each morning and again in the evening, a large herd of cows was driven along the street and the farmers still had room to drive past. On each side of the street were 20 “Grossbauernhoeft” and just as many “Kleinwirtschaften”, and we belonged to the latter. Our house stood in the low land by our neighbour, Aron Willems, who later immigrated to Canada. Here at our location the large farms stopped and the small farms began....”

“When the War was finally over, Father was able to work for himself and his family. Soon after his return in late 1917 or early 1918, he bought a different house...no longer at the end of the village but in the middle, fairly close to my grandparents but on the other side of the street....During the winter....[Father] could always work at the workbench....”

“What I remember about the early ‘20s is that the Communists entered the house, searched for the things that they wanted, and took them. Our mother was lying in bed after having given birth to our youngest brother Heinrich, in October of 1920, when this began to happen.”

“In the new house I was often in the stable. Father had horses and cows in there. Out on the street one day, things got very restless. Many soldiers came, and they were forcibly quartered at our place. Sometimes Father had to unhitch the horses from our wagon and drive for them. Then our mother was worried that our father would never come back again, and she cried often. There was also much shooting. This was all a continuation of the revolution. It was a sad time. The nice horses from our stable had nearly all been taken. Only one mare and a little foal were left. Then one day a large bunch of soldiers came along the street. I was in the stable when two soldiers came leading a lame horse. They came into the stable and got our mare, leaving the lame horse with us. The foal still needing its mother’s milk was left behind; but we could save and raise it. We also nursed the lame horse back to health, and for many years Father worked our fields with it.”

“The worst lack of food was in 1921-22. Many hungry beggars came to our door. When help came from America and a kitchen was set up for the distribution of food, neither we nor my Dueck grandparents went to get food. I cannot say that we were as desperately hungry as many, although our meals were skimpy. I remember how our mother would divide the bread and how our Hans would run to the grandparents to get the bread crusts that they couldn’t chew anymore.”

“Then after 1922 things got a little better again because Vladimir Ilich Lenin held the sceptre in his hand. But when Lenin died in 1924 and the notorious Stalin came to power,...the worst aspects of Communism began. In 1927 Father made a big mistake by selling our farm and buying a larger one west of the

school in Kleefeld....Now everyone considered us to be among the big farmers. Father was soon told that he had no right to be one of them, that he should have known about the land reform act and how much land it took to conform to it....I remember how our Franz came home from school one day and told us what the Communist teacher had said about our future. Our Father became more aware of it when enormous taxes were levied on our property. He just could not pay them. Then one day I heard him moan, 'What have I done wrong that I am a Dummy now?'"

"By 1933 our situation got much worse. We were already in the collective farms. Although that year was not a bad harvest year, we had no grain and no cattle in the barn. We couldn't butcher hogs. All the harvested grain had been hauled away. I learned later in Germany that their people thought their imported grain was 'the overflow from the Ukraine.' Father died that year. I don't know whether he actually starved to death. I do know that he caught a cold, which developed into pneumonia, and our desperate conditions were not adequate for him to recover."<sup>246</sup>

Leland Harder writes: "Apparently the fuller story of her father's death was too painful to Sara Helene that she could not go into detail about it. Sara's daughter Elisabeth wrote the following addendum to this part of her mother's memoirs: 'Mother claims that Grandfather's death was the result of the great famine artificially created by Stalin in order to wipe out the recalcitrant kulaks. While Grandfather seemed to have been a victim of Stalin's collectivization plan (1928-33), he had earlier been favoured by Lenin's New Economic Policy, announced in 1924 to get the country on its feet again after the revolutionary and civil wars. Grandfather could finally increase his property, buying a 'Vollwirtschaft' and settling down to farming and horse-breeding on a large scale while his sons were growing up, Franz soon to be 21, Hans and Hein soon finishing their schooling...Grandfather's hobby and special love was his horses. He had bred two beautiful stallions. They were only two years old when the chairman of the Kolchos [collective farm] decided that Franz was to take them to the field for plowing. The chairman, according to Grandfather, was an ignorant and poor nobody and envied Grandfather's success. Letting Franz, 21 years old, go with the stallions would have meant their certain death since the stallions had never been harnessed. Grandfather immediately took the horses to the market in Melitopol, sold them and handed the money over to the chairman. That was a criminal act in the eyes of the Farm Labour Committee [Soviet], and my Grandfather was declared a kulak destined for the slave labour camps in Siberia. So he went into hiding, the woods nearby provided enough to survive in the summer; but the winter was bad. He contracted pneumonia and came home to die in May 1933. Mother kept a loving memory of him as a man who loved farming, who loved horses, and did his work with grace and pleasure, always singing in the fields. By the time Johann died, any privileges that the Mennonites ever had in Russia were gone. Their churches were all forcibly closed, their ministers exiled to Siberia, and their farms appropriated and combined into collective farms managed by the Kolchos, the local communist officials. One by one Johann's children either became victims of the oppression themselves or made their peace with it, or a combination of both.'"<sup>247</sup>



*Heinrich H. Harder (1876-1933). Photo - Blumstein legacy, page 125.*



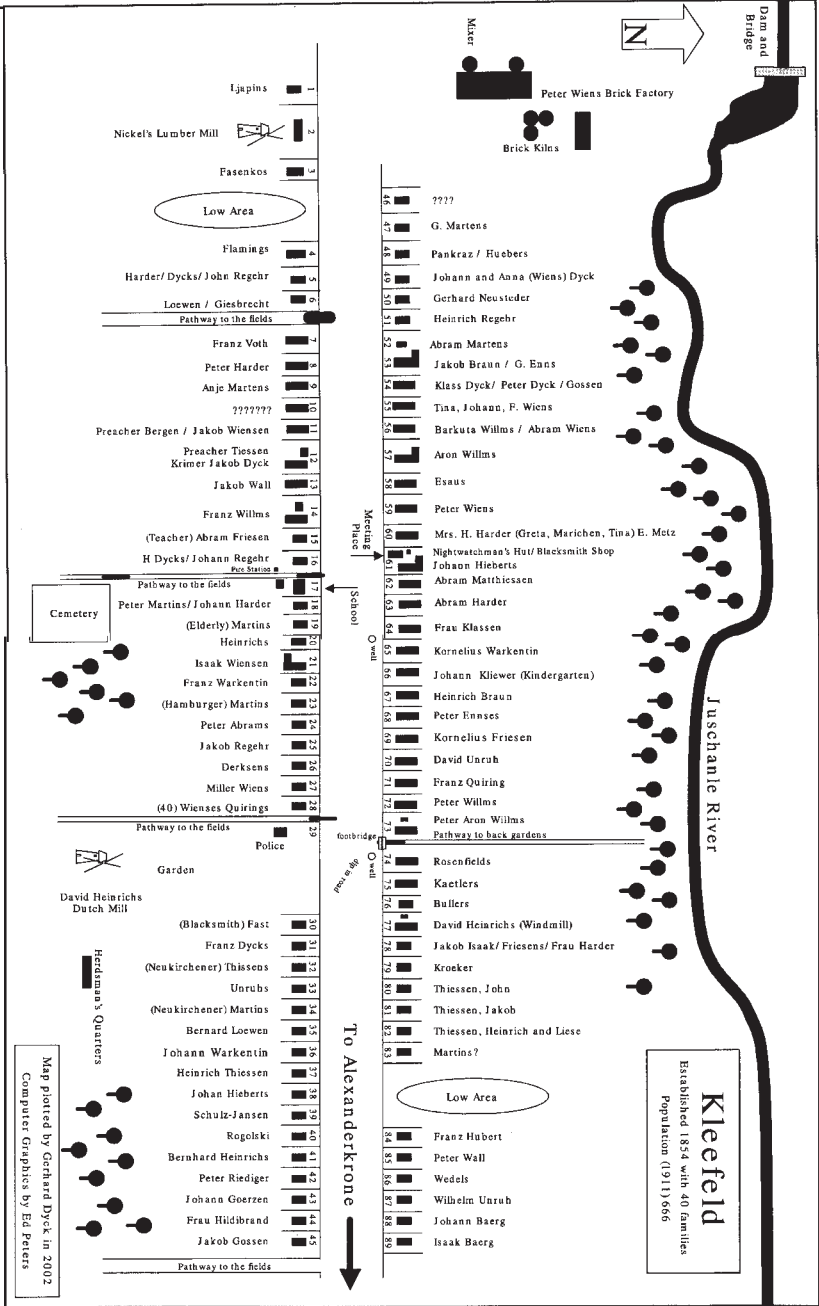
*Jobann H. Harder (1877-1933). Photo - Blumstein legacy, page 126.*



*This typical Kleefeld house-barn was owned by Klaas Dück. Standing in front are Peter Dück and bis children. Photo - From Kleefeld with Love, page 39.*

# Map Seven: Village of Kleefeld, Molotschna Colony, 1920s

The village of Kleefeld, as it appeared circa 1920. The village of Kleefeld was founded in 1854 with 40 Wirtschaften. The village had six Kleine Gemeinde Vollwirthen including Cornelius Piet (1820-1900), Wirtschaft 38, the village mayor. Living across the street on Wirtschaft 3 was his cousin's son Michael Piet (1812-80). Population 1911 was 666. Map plotted by Gerhard Dyck in 2002 and published in John A. Harder, editor, From Kleefeld with Love (Kirchenher, 2003), pages 22-23.



**Kleefeld**  
Established 1854 with 40 families  
Population (1911) 666

Map plotted by Gerhard Dyck in 2002  
Computer Graphics by Ed Peters

8 Daughter **Anna Harder** (b. 1908) married Johann Neufeld in 1931, the last wedding performed in the Neukirch worship house before it was closed. They lived in Alexanderthal.

8 Son **Franz Harder** (d. 1943) married a Russian woman who accompanied him to Siberia when he was exiled. He died of pneumonia in the forced labour camp. His sister Sara Helene believes that his stubborn attitude toward the Communists played a part in his demise. She wrote: "Our Franz was never satisfied with the collective farm system, and he told me, 'Father cannot demand that of me.'... He entered a college of technology and went to work in Woroschilowk in the Caucasus. He did not come back for his father's funeral. I visited him in Pjatigorsk on the Black Sea, where he was doing his military duty as a sailor.... Then he returned to his vocation as a Zoo Technician until the War. One day all the Germans who lived in that town were taken to the railroad station together with their families. Johann said that he had not known there were so many Germans living in their town. A large crowd of friendly Russians came to the station to protest loudly the relocation of their German friends. They insisted that they were their people and should be left here. In spite of the protest, all those Germans were loaded onto the trains and taken to Siberia. This happened in 1941 soon after the beginning of World War II. Franz had a Russian wife, who was a teacher in the German language. They had no children. I appreciated their good relationship with each other. She went along with Franz when he was exiled during the War. She could have stayed where she was, but she insisted that they belonged together and should not be separated. This was told to me by our brother Johann, who also lived at the same place at that time. They had been evacuated at the same time and could always stay together and help each other. Franz had been badly mistreated before the War. He told me this himself and declared that he would not be silenced even if he had to drive directly to Stalin to assert his rights. I felt very sorry for him but could do nothing about it. At that time Stalin sent out a command, 'If a worker gets to his workplace a quarter of an hour too late, he shall without appeal be punished by having one-fourth of his salary or earnings withheld.' Our Franz, the poorest, received that punishment. He had come back from a service trip, and his train was late. He did the best he could. He went home, changed his clothes, and hurried to the office. Then he saw his orders lying on his table. Many workers had this happen to them and had to suffer. The wages in those days were very low at the best. Johann took his banishment quite well, but he said, 'Our Franz was too proud, he couldn't always control his temper.' One time when they were working together piling up wood, they had to cross a river. It was in winter, and there was snow and ice. Franz slipped and fell into the icy water. In spite of this he had to keep working until evening, but then he got a lung infection and died. He had always been a healthy and independent young lad. He performed his service like a soldier.

8 Daughter **Sara Helene Harder** was born in 1912 in the family home in Kleefeld. Her sister worked inside with their mother while Sara worked with the livestock in the barn as a help to their father, especially during the time when their brothers were finishing their education. Leland Harder provides the following account of her life: "Under communism after the death of her father, Sara managed to get technical training as a poultry technician and always had gainful

employment in that field. In 1941 she became the superintendent of a large poultry business in Tomakowka, 15 km. west of the Mennonite villages of the Chortitza Colony. By this time she had a baby girl, Elisabeth, by a Russian man named Alexander Melnikoff. She was fairly well paid and had status here and certain privileges. For instance, she was given four weeks vacation right away.”

“By this time life in the Molotschna Colony had become so intolerable that her mother, Anna Dueck Harder, had sold her Kleefeld home and moved with Sara’s brother Heinrich to the Terek Mennonite settlement in the Caucasus. Soon also her sister Anna (also known as “Nut”), her husband, Johann Neufeld, and their four children moved there from their home in Alexanderthal. Sara made a last visit to them to see them, and another to her beloved Kleefeld just as the German Wehrmacht (occupation army during World War II) ordered the evacuation of all Germans to Germany ahead of their retreating troops. As she left Kleefeld for the last time, she looked back and saw her beloved village in flames.”

“Back in her home in Tomakowka, she watched the strange sight of Chortitza Mennonites driving past in loaded wagons. One young man recognized her and called out, asking why she wasn’t going along with them. She really wanted to stay in Tomakowka but had a strange dream one night. She dreamt that the Red Army had returned from the war and dismissed her from her job. Soon she had no money and was destitute. She tried to earn a bit of money selling sunflower seeds at the village festival, and then she woke up. She told a Russian friend about the dream and the friend said, ‘This is a sure sign that you had better not stay here.’ Sara began immediately to pack her own wagon for the arduous trip to Germany. A cousin from the Molotschna had been living with her, taking care of Elisabeth while Sara worked; and the three of them plus their shepherd dog left in the early morning hours of the next day. The Chortitzer evacuees had taken another route, but Sara’s wagon was joined along the way by several stragglers, one of whom helped her drive her team of horses. One excerpt from her long story of the journey follows:”

“After three days my shepherd dog decided he didn’t like this anymore and disappeared. A few days later we got to Perwen Majsk....I still had a driver, but all of a sudden I noted that he had gone off the road and we were going down a long hill. I had already noticed that this man could not guide the horses by himself. He had been following the other wagon for so long, but he couldn’t make it by himself. I took the reins into my hands and led the horses to bring the wagon back to the road. Luckily we were not far from our day’s destination. Every day we would get an address where we could spend the night and where both passengers and horses were taken care of....My driver acted a bit funny, and I thought he was probably ashamed of himself; but then he told me he wanted to stay here.”

“We were almost to the Polish border. The next morning I went to the rationing station, and there I saw a young man. I could tell by his face that he was a Mennonite. I asked him from where he came, and he said he was from Blumenort, from the Molotschna Colony. They had closed up the entire village. They had not gotten far when his horse got sick. They were still close enough to home for him to return and get another horse. When he got back his family and everyone had gone on, but he hoped to catch up with them soon. On the way three Russian youth jumped into our wagon. At least now we had company. I told

them about my worries and suggested that we stay together. I said, 'We are two women who will cook your meals, and you can take care of our horse.' They agreed to this. When the boys examined the wagon and horses, they advised me that the blunted horseshoes needed to be changed. It was winter now, the roads were slick. They went right to work and found a blacksmith."

"Then we came to a huge forest on the Polish border, where we wanted to spend the night. We drove onto the yard where the landlord said, 'you are welcome to stay here, but I must warn you that there are many partisans here in the woods, and during the night they come into the villages to rob and pillage. When they pound on my windows, I open the doors or else they knock out all the window panes. We can't buy any glass here, and it is winter now.' Our men laughed and replied, 'They can't take anything from us, for all we have is the clothes on our backs.' I couldn't say that, for all our possessions were packed in the wagon."

"So we stayed there. The men were given a bed on the floor, and we three were together in one bed. Sure enough, it was barely 12 o'clock when there was a rattling on the window. The landlord said right away, 'I'll open the door.' Four men came in boldly. Two came to our bed and questioned me. One took my purse and tore up my papers, and threw them on the floor. The other took my wrist watch off. I begged him to leave it on because we were on a country road. He replied, 'you won't need a watch because we're going to kill all of you!' Then they laughed and left, taking all kinds of things with them. The important thing was that we were still alive. I picked up my torn documents and put them back into my purse."

"In a certain town Sara decided to give the horses and wagon to the men and take a local train to Warthegau. The men helped them load their things, and they were off. At the Warthegau station they were welcomed by a large sign which read, "Heim ins Reich!" (Home in the German Empire). From here German officials helped the refugees along the way, but the pursuing Russian troops were never far behind. Many fleeing Mennonites were captured by them at various places and returned to Russia for banishment to Siberia. The three refugees spent one night in a bomb shelter because of the Russian bombing and strafing. They finally reached the east German village of Gatterstaedt, and were invited to stay with an elderly farm couple who had a 33 year-old unmarried son, whose name was Rudolf Käppel. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Sara got together with him, and the end result of which was that they got married."<sup>248</sup>



*Sara Helene Harder Käpple, 1947, with her two daughters Charlotte age 1 and Elisabeth age 10. Photo - Blumstein legacy, page 130.*



7 Son **Abraham H. Harder** (1879-1933) was only two years old when his mother died and he was raised by his grandparents Gerhard and Katharina Isaak Dueck of Alexanderkrone.

Abram's daughter Sara has written his biography: "In 1898 Abram completed the teachers' training course and obtained a teaching position in the village of Nikolaifeld in Sagraadowka. In 1901 he married Anna Nickel, daughter of Gerhard Nickel and Sara Abrahams of Kleefeld. Abram was assigned a teaching position in Pordenau, 15 miles east of Kleefeld, serving here for 13 years. A family estrangement occurred after the death of Abram's father in 1907, in that the children of the first marriage were not treated equally. The matter was later resolved peacefully."

"When war broke out in 1914, Abram was drafted. In 1916 his family had to vacate the teacherage and moved to Kleefeld into grandmother Nickel's house. The war between Russia and Germany came to an end in 1917. The Tsar lost his throne and soon he and his entire family were exiled to a place east of the Ural Mountains, where they were all murdered. Revolution broke out, the C.O. camps were disbanded, and Father returned from the Crimea to assume responsibility for the Nickel farm. In the following year three men from Alexanderkrone were also returned, and we were a large extended family..."

"Very unsettled times followed. The whole country was turned topsy-turvy. Hordes of militant bandits formed north of us. Rich estates were raided, plundered, and in many cases the owners murdered. Those who survived fled from their homes and came to our villages for help. In the winter of 1918-19, these mobs reached the Molotschna. We lived in constant fear and anxiety. One day a horde which called itself the 'black band' arrived in our village. We were horrified to see two heavily armed riders enter our yard. They stormed into the house and asked for the head of the household. Father fled out of the house to hide in the machine shed. The house, barn and machine shed were all one complex of buildings, one leading into the other by means of a hallway. All of us women were sent into one room while they searched through the dresser hoping to find jewellery and gold. Then they came into the room where we were and demanded that we all hold out our hands. They spotted mother's wedding band and demanded it at once. She had some difficulty removing it and one of them yelled out fiercely, 'Take it off quickly or we'll cut the whole finger off.' She finally managed to get it off and give it to him. Never again would she see the ring that Father had given her on their wedding day, but fortunately they left the house without (sexually) molesting us. Later we learned that the two invading bandits belonged to the horde which had attacked an estate 20 miles away belonging to the family of David Dueck, both of whom were murdered in cold blood. When all was peaceful again, Father returned from his hiding place and quickly learned what had happened. Without saying a word he quietly took his ring off and slipped it onto mother's finger."

"About this time the village of Blumenort was plundered by a mob of anarchists. Several hotheaded young men from another place had ambushed and killed two of the bandits in this village. When the main band came and found their friends murdered, they held the villagers responsible for it. As a reprisal, many of the villagers were killed and their homes burned to the ground. To-

wards evening we could see the sky in the west lit up from these burning houses. Soon the refugees from the stricken Blumenort began to arrive in Kleefeld. Wagons were dispatched to bring more of the villagers to Kleefeld for shelter. Next morning the people went back to survey the havoc these bandits had done and to bury their fathers and sons in a mass grave.”

“There were many such attacks on the villagers during those difficult days. Father’s Uncle Isbrand Harder lived in the village of Altonau, where he was severely wounded when a bandit struck him on the arm with a sabre. His arm was maimed for the rest of his life. These bandits were commonly referred to as the Machnovze after their leader, Batjko Machno. For several years they ravaged and pillaged the southern Ukraine, but eventually were disbanded when two opposing forces, the Red Army and the White Army, fought each other during the Russian Civil War. Battles were waged incessantly, and we often did not know who had the upper hand, or which side was in control of the villages.”

“The front see-sawed through our villages, and soldiers of either army, depending on which was in control of our village, were billeted in our homes. We had to lodge them and feed them until we had nothing left for ourselves. They also demanded horses and wagons to transport soldiers and supplies. Our men and even boys of 15 or 16 had to drive these transports, usually not knowing where or how far. One young man from our village never returned, and his family never discovered how or where he perished.”

“Our brothers Gerhard and Henry, the oldest two, were on the road many times. It just so happened that when the White Army was making its final retreat into the Crimea, Henry at age 15 was pressed into this service with a team of horses and wagon. No one suspected that this would be the final retreat and that Henry was thus forced to accompany an army that would never return. He got as far as the Crimean Peninsula, and for many days we heard nothing of his whereabouts. Finally he arrived home on foot, for he had abandoned his company one night and managed to escape. We were so glad to see him, even if the wagon and team had been lost forever.”

“We saw battles raging through our villages and heard loud roars of canons in the distance. Airplanes of the two opposing armies flew across the village, strafing soldiers and residents alike with machine gun fire and dropping bombs everywhere. On one occasion a plane dropped a bomb on a group of White Army soldiers in the neighbouring village of Alexanderkrone. There were many casualties. In one Mennonite family, the Goossens, the father, the son, and a daughter were killed in this incident. Later it was discovered that a White Army plane had dropped the bomb on its own soldiers by mistake. On another occasion it was discovered that two officers of the White army, probably spies, had been caught in the orchard a few houses from us and mercilessly hacked to death with sabres. We actually went out to see them lying in the pool of blood. Someone made the remark that their mothers would probably never know what happened to their sons....”

“These armies travelling through the villages, living in such filthy conditions and coming into contact with so many people, spread communicable diseases such as typhoid, smallpox and malaria. In some families such as our neighbours, two or three or more members died within a short period of time. In our

family Aunt Sarah and brother Henry both contracted typhoid fever and almost died.”

“It was a common occurrence that bandits would enter a village and demand large sums of money or produce from the inhabitants. All the heads of families were called to the village school, and the village Schulze (mayor) explained what the demands were. If they were not fulfilled within a set time, certain men would be taken hostage. Our father was taken hostage two or three times and imprisoned in the basement of a store in Halbstadt. He saw a number of his fellow prisoners led out of the basement at night to be shot. One of these was a Mr. Willems, grandfather of our brother Ted’s wife, Mary....He was accused of having harboured a spy.”<sup>249</sup>

Leland Harder completes the account of the Abram H. Harder family: “After experiencing the famine of 1922-23, the Abram Harder family decided to emigrate to Canada. They said goodbye to their friends in Kleefeld and departed on July 13, 1924. They settled in Arnaud, Manitoba, but after 10 years moved to Vineland, Ontario.”

8 Son **Peter A. Harder** compiled the Arnaud history book, *Arnaud through the Years* (Arnaud, 1974). Son **John A. Harder** married Mary Thiessen in Arnaud, Manitoba. In 1953 they moved to Vineland, Ontario. In 2003, John published *From Kleefeld with Love*, a collection of letters, including those of his aunts Maria and Margareta, detailing the tragic demise of the village of Kleefeld and the suffering of its inhabitants.



*Abrabam H. Harder and wife, nee Anna Nickel. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 114.*



*Gerbard H. Harder (1890-1941). Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 134.*

7 Son **Isbrand H. Harder** married Helena (Lena) Driedger, daughter of Jakob Driedger and Helena Klassen of Gnadenthal.<sup>250</sup> Isbrand and Lena received a *Wirtschaft* in Gnadenthal from her parents. In 1928 Isbrand remarried to Anna Voth. Their son Franz has written their story: "As a child my father had caught a very bad cold and developed a 'chicken breast'. Only after many years of getting used to cold temperatures could he begin to ride a horse as a youth. Before going to bed, he would pour a bucket of well water over himself, following the Kneip's Method.<sup>251</sup> He became a farmer. During the first World War he served as a medic in Moscow. Many horrors of the Civil War followed, including the Machno terrorists. It was not without grave danger that my father tried to avoid the requisition to drive the troop wagons from one town to another. During the NEP, things improved. He could cultivate his farm, harvest grain and raise huge, mighty, angry bulls, of which my mother was very afraid. The buyers of the bulls came from far and wide, even from Siberia....."

"By 1929 it became clear to my father where everything was moving,....and he decided to emigrate to Canada. In the attempt to get exit permits in Moscow, he was arrested, and our family had to return to Gnadenthal. Locked into a single cell and dead tired from all the exertion, Father fell asleep, sleeping for 24 hours without interruption, so that the prison warden was wondering, 'Well, he must have a clear conscience.' Somehow Father managed to jump over the prison fence, and soon he was back home with us."

"Now came the collectivization, but Father didn't want to go into the Kolchos [collective]. Even though we were not among the rich, we kulaks were dispossessed of our farm and sent into the Octoberfeld processing camp. A further deportation to Siberia was imminent....Somehow my father had gotten himself some documents and we fled to Saporoschje, where the largest Russian dam was being built. First we lived in a stable with a dirt floor. Then we rented a little house. With his horse Father hauled loads at the dam, but then our horse was stolen."

"The famine of 1933 hit us hard. In one week both of my siblings - Hans and Greta - died. Father could not adapt himself to the realism of our situation, for whenever he traded something for food, he would say, 'Now children, fill yourselves up for a change.' If Mother would not have set limits on him and rationed the food, we would all have died of starvation, Father first of all. My oldest sister Nunja (Anna Harder) soon went to work as a maid for Germans working on the dam, then as a nurse. Sister Lena also became a nurse."

"In 1934 we moved to Savlekanovo, Ufa, West Urals. At a distance of 20-30 km. lived Mother's parents and siblings....Our situation was hard. We lived in rented lodgings and my father, an 'unreliable element' did not get steady employment. Later, after having been pronounced innocent, his working papers were returned; but there were still many places of work he had to leave in a short time. The horror year of 1937 came. Men everywhere were arrested. Mother would wake up at night in fright and feel whether Father was still lying next to her."

"To us came the *tschornyj woron*, the black crow, which was what we called the black automobile of the NKWD (the Commissariat for Internal Affairs, known today as the KGB) in which the arrested ones were transported away. The date was August 15, 1937. Of course it happened at night, like everything else in this

dark time. Everything in our house was searched, including documents and especially letters. For instance, all the letters from Uncle Abram in Canada were confiscated, serving as proof of our conspiracy with the outside world....First, Father was kept for some time in Davlekanovo. Once in awhile we were permitted to bring him some food. With a pencil he had written a message for us on the inside lid of a coffee cup; and because of this my mother was at the station when the arrested ones were driven to the train. She never saw him again!....It has been estimated that during the 1937-38 purge, half the German men were arrested....We German children marvelled when a family we knew still had a father at home. The widow Anna Voth Harder died of a stroke in 1978.”<sup>252</sup>

7 Son **Gerhard H. Harder** (1890-1941) was arrested and sentenced to forced labour on the Belamore Canal near Kotlas. Shortly after his release he was arrested again and banished to Central Asia where he died.

7 Daughters **Maria H. Harder** (1888-1939) and **Margarete (Greta) H. Harder** (1894-1958) stayed on the Harder farm in Kleefeld. Leland Harder writes: “Eduard Metz was an Estonian orphan who had been sent to the Molotschna Colony during the Civil War. He was placed in the Harder home and later married Greta. During the collectivization, Eduard and Greta and her two sisters and six year-old niece, Liesel, moved to Donbass near Stalingrad, where Liesel drowned in 1937. Two years later they took another one of brother Isbrand’s children, Franz, into their home for seven years. Bad times followed. On June 21, 1941, war broke out with Nazi Germany, and on the 6th of July the NKWD came to arrest Uncle Eduard. In August all the Germans were exiled.”

Foster son Franz Harder has described their experiences: “In one respect this was a lucky thing for the rest of us, for just during this time the fiercest battle was being fought in the vicinity of our place near Stalingrad. Together with another family, we were passengers on a ship down the Volga River to Astrachan. I will never forget the feelings of oppression we experienced when we saw the “Kremlin” (fortress where the German prisoners were detained). Was Uncle Eduard perhaps being tortured there? Later upon inquiry I was told that he had died in this city in December of 1941....From Astrachan, Franz and his aunts Tina, Marie and Greta, were transported to Central Asia, where they lived in a Kolchos in a large village, Borodulicha. Here they had to work hard from sunrise to sunset. In the winter the temperature went down to - 50 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, Franz’s mother and brother Heinz were living not far away; and she was able to accompany Franz to take his university exams. From then on he was on his own. Mariechen died in 1939. She had cared for her sister like a loving mother. In March she suffered an attack of influenza, complicated by tropical malaria and pneumonia. Mariechen’s prayer to be buried next to her foster daughter and niece Liesel was granted her. They rest next to each other in the Nikolaipoler Cemetery, waiting for the day of resurrection when the Lord will raise his hand over their graves and summon them to eternal life! May they rest in peace till the blessed reunion in our Father’s mansion.”

In 2003, nephew John A. Harder, Vineland, Ontario, published the book *From Kleefeld with Love*, based largely on the letters of his aunts Maria and Magarete Harder, detailing the tragic demise of the village of Kleefeld and the horrible suffering of its inhabitants.<sup>253</sup>



*Maria and Margareta, the two youngest daughters of Heinrich H. Harder and Anna Harder.  
Photo - The Blumstein Legacy, page 136.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Heinrich J. Harder</b>	Nov 23, 1848		Mar 20, 1907
m	Katharina Dueck	Feb 1, 1850	Nov 18, 1871	Mar 7, 1882
7	Gerhard H. Harder	Sep 12, 1872		Apr 20, 1882
7	Katharina Harder	Dec 2, 1873		1947
7	Anna H. Harder	Mar 31, 1875		Jul 24, 1900
7	Heinrich H. Harder	Aug 21, 1876	Oct 17, 1902	1933
7	Johann H. Harder	Dec 2, 1877	Oct 6, 1907	Jun 4, 1933
m	Anna Dueck			
7	Abraham H. Harder	Jul 26, 1879	May 29, 1906	Sep 8, 1973
m	Anna Nikkel	1879		1956
7	Isbrand H. Harder	Nov 25, 1880		May 27, 1882
6	<b>Heinrich J. Harder</b>	Nov 23, 1848		Mar 20, 1907
2m	Anna Dueck	Mar 9, 1852	Jun 15, 1882	1924
7	Gerhard H. Harder	Nov 13, 1883		Mar 4, 1889
7	Maria Harder	Feb 2, 1885		Dec 18, 1886
7	Isbrand H. Harder	May 8, 1886		Oct 3, 1942
m	Helena Driedger	1893	Oct 26, 1913	1922
2m	Anna Voth	1898		Apr 18, 1978
7	Maria H. Harder	Jun 4, 1888		Mar 24, 1939
7	Gerhard H. Harder	Jan 31, 1890		Feb 26, 1944
7	Peter H. Harder	Jun 20, 1891		Dec 24, 1894
7	Margaretha H. Harder	Sep 8, 1894		1958
m	Eduard Metz	1904		1941



*The Heinrich J. Harder family at the time of Heinrich's death in 1907. l.-r., rear: Gerhard, Heinrich, Abram, Johann; front: Tina, Marie, Mother Anna Dueck Harder, Greta. Missing: Isbrand. Photo - From Kleefeld with Love, page 25.*

6 Son **David J. Harder** (1850-1923) married Agatha Loetkemann born in Kleefeld, Molotschna, daughter of Jakob Loetkemann (1823-1901). Leland Harder has written their story and that of their children: "David and Agatha "farmed in Lichtfelde, 16 miles east of Blumstein.. They had 14 children of whom five died in infancy. Two of David's letters to [brother] Johann dated 1893 and 1914 have been preserved. The main theme of the first letter is their acute indecision about whether or not to immigrate to America. From the second letter we infer that David was a healthy robust farmer while his wife had chronic ill health. Living in the centre of the Molotschna Colony, David served as the shepherd to some of his younger half siblings and their families. According to the identity of the Bible teachers who inspired him, he was leaning in the direction of the Mennonite Brethren doctrine. His son Jakob was trying to decide whether or not to accept a call to the preaching ministry. David remained in good health until the civil war and famine, when he suffered acute hunger pangs. In a 1922 letter, his daughter Anna wrote as follows: 'As you know, dear uncle, my papa was always quite broad shouldered, but now he is so emaciated and pitiful and hungry all day long. Even at night he complains of hunger. Not in all the villages is it as sad as right here in Lichtfelde. Here with few exceptions, we have a total crop failure....Then, in addition, during the entire winter until today without interruption, we have a constant stream of military personal in our house. Oh, how many of their offensive messes have we had to clean up! There was so much quarrelling, fighting and much more. We had to share our last bite with them. Repeatedly Papa was incarcerated with no evidence of blame.' A year later Anna, a midwife in the colony, wrote about her father's untimely death by blood poisoning caused by a fish bone stuck in his throat."

7 Son **Johann D. Harder** married Anna Wall from Lichtfelde. They lived in the Crimea in Tsche-tsche, three verst from the Bijuk-Onlar Station. Her wife Anna Wall had been a total invalid since her 35th year. They had three children: Kornelius, Annie and Hanschen. Daughter **Anna D. Harder** studied in Riga as a nurse. She practised in Muehlenthi Hospital in Riga. She became a professional midwife in the Molotschna. She never married. She wrote: My vocation is hard to perform at the present time. Our impoverished land has no material for bandages or disinfectants. The situation with medicine is bad. When I attended the midwife's school, the head physician, Keilmann, emphasized repeatedly that bandages should never be used sparingly; but today it is different, for one is glad if one finds a few rags in the houses to use in lieu of gauze. Son **David D. Harder** served as a teacher in Elisabeththal. As of 1922 they had five children. David was conscripted and died in the north country near Petersburg. After his death his widow Anna Rempel Harder travelled to Germany and remarried to Jakob Schmall. They returned to her children in the village of Alexanderkrone, Ukraine. At the age of 19 her daughter Lili Harder fell in love with Jakob Goossen. Because the Goossens had been wealthy, they were under surveillance by the NKWD. In 1929 they decided to be married but the night before the wedding, they decided to flee to Moscow to join the thousands waiting there in the hope of being able to immigrate to Canada. Instead Jakob and the other men were arrested to be exiled and Lili and other women were put into boxcars to be deported back to the Molotschna Colony. Jakob escaped and joined Lili to return to their homes. Here Lili was reunited with her mother and Jakob and Lili



could finally be married. They were under constant surveillance and so Jakob and his brothers and their wives decided to escape eastward through China where they found refuge and work in Kuldja. In 1931 Lili gave birth to a daughter Leni and travelled eastward to join her husband. In the Sino-Soviet War of 1939 the region was annexed by Soviet Russia and all the refugees including the Goossens were arrested and sent into the Gulag facing almost certain execution. Lili and her two children survived the Sino-Japanese War and finally in the lull that followed World War II, she and other women were able to move slowly eastward from Kuldja to Shanghai, a distance of over 2,000 miles. Stepping out of the closed boxcar in Shanghai Lili was met by MCC workers Orië Miller and John Friesen. Lili was finally able to immigrate to Canada where she settled in British Columbia. Here she met and married a writer Abraham Loewen who wrote her story, *Immer Weiter Nach Osten*.<sup>254</sup>

7 Son **Jakob D. Harder** was a teacher in Marienwohl. He also lived in Rückenau. Son **Abram D. Harder** served in the forstei in Alt-Berjaner. Later he lived in the Crimea near his brother Johann taking care of his farm. Son **Heinrich D. Harder** was still at home in 1922. Son **Bernhard D. Harder** attended commercial school. He was still at home as of 1922.



*Jakob and Lili Goossen with two surviving children Peter and Leni, 1934. Photo - front cover of Immer Weiter Nach Osten, published by Leland Harder.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>David J. Harder</b>	Dec 2, 1850		Apr 24, 1923
m	Aganetha Loetkemann	Feb 21, 1855	1874	
7	Anna D. Harder	Apr 29, 1876		Mar 29, 1879
7	Jacob D. Harder	May 11, 1877		Aug 14, 1877
7	Johann D. Harder	May 7, 1878	Sep 28, 1906	
m	Anna Wall	1882		
8	Korn D. Harder			
7	David D. Harder	Mar 16, 1880		Died at Delivery
7	Anna D. Harder	Sep 28, 1881		
7	David D. Harder	Jul 23, 1883		Died after 11 days
7	David D. Harder	May 30, 1884		
m	Anna Rempel			
7	Jacob D. Harder	Jun 2, 1886		
7	Helena D. Harder	Apr 19, 1888		
7	Abraham D. Harder	Jun 9, 1890		
7	Peter D. Harder	Jun 14, 1892		May 12, 1905
7	Heinrich D. Harder	Apr 14, 1894		
7	Agatha D. Harder	May 24, 1896		
7	Bernhard D. Harder	Oct 9, 1899		

6 Daughter **Elisabeth J. Harder** married David Epp. Leland Harder tells their story: "For the first year they lived with her mother on the Blumstein farm, where they were supposed to get eight desjatien (21 acres) of wheat for helping with the farm work with his two horses. Then they lived in the village of Alexanderwohl... Two letters she wrote to her brother Johann [in Kansas] dated March 12, 1892 and April 18, 1893, have been preserved, plus a photo of herself and her husband. Because of her free-flowing thoughts and candid expressions, the letters are very interesting. She writes poignantly about the sudden death of her sister Helena. She writes confidently about her conflict with their brother Heinrich over the issue of baptism. Apparently, Elizabeth had been rebaptised at a Mennonite Brethren river gathering and Heinrich had severely scolded her for it. 'He said I have acted totally against God's Word in the matter of baptism, and as a child I also dishonoured our deceased father and trod on him and his actions with my feet before all humanity. I replied that our father had not had this kind of a discernment but would also have discerned this with tolerance and would have been glad if all his children would discern this, and that God's Word was teaching us to decide this.... also that our father had only been a mortal, but that God's Word should be respected, and that therefore I expect to meet him openly. When I appealed more to God's Word, how the Saviour has left us an example, and pointed to several Scriptural passages, he said to me that the devil was also using the Word of God and that I considered myself so superior and knowledgable, and that this was only spiritual pride and arrogance, and his brethren were praying for me. He was angrier than I have ever seen him....I took my shawl and departed. Frau Harder ran after me and said that everything would be all right. With our sister Helena it was totally different; I could be happy with her.' Two other subjects were discussed in the letters. One was their indecision about whether or not to move to America. 'When we look into the future, which now looks so dark, we have often wondered and asked whether it would be better if we would go to America with our family. I must say that I have never been far away from this thought, only I did not want to push too hard because the children are still small and still have time....Our oldest son said to me one day, 'Mama, it seems to me that if we are going to America, why now? I feel like I would first like to learn more.' There is a lot of pressure here now in schools and places of employment to do everything in Russian, and he wondered, if we moved now, whether that would all be in vain....There are taxes on the farm so that one is never free of debt. Also the general Russian people always show themselves more hostile toward the Germans, so that one cannot look forward to a bright future here.' Elizabeth's other concerns had to do with her feelings about dying. 'I do not know if I will or can live indefinitely. What the psalmist says is true, 'Our life flows swiftly as if we fly away.' I do not know when the clock will strike for me and when I will join Helena.' Elizabeth did in fact die four years later, but her husband, David Epp, stayed in contact with the Harder family. In a letter from David to Johann in 1914, he was still grieving for the loss of Elizabeth and also since then the death of three of their children....Commenting on the daughter's [Elisabeth] death, brother Heinrich wrote, 'She died of tuberculosis, and so he had to give up another support, for this oldest daughter had fulfilled the role of a homemaker. Even without this, his temperament is inclined towards melancholy.'<sup>255</sup>

7 Son **Johann Epp** was married twice.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Elisabeth J. Harder</b>	Jan 10,1853	Feb 10,1876	Aug 15,1896
m	David Epp	Sep 5,1852		
7	David Epp	Dec 9,1876		Dec 13,1876
7	Elisabeth Epp	Dec 28,1877		Jan 29,1897
7	David Epp	Nov 7,1879		May 19,1898
7	Heinrich Epp	Sep 22,1881		Mar 29,1908
7	Johann Epp	Oct 1,1883		
7	Helen Epp	Sep 1,1885		
7	Abraham Epp	Apr 19,1887		
7	Margaretha Epp	Feb 17,1889		
7	Katharina Epp	Nov 26,1890		



*The David J. Harder family, 1913. Standing, l.-r.: Bernhard, David, Johann, Helena, Agatha, Heinrich and Jakob. Seated: son David's wife, Anna Rempel, Johann's wife, Anna Wall, Mother Agatha Loetkeman Harder, Father David H. Harder, Anna and Abram. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 138.*

6 Daughter **Katharina J. Harder** was the oldest of the half-siblings, the first child of Ältester Johann Harder and his second wife Katharina Schulz. At the age of 21 Katharina married Jakob Voth in 1878 and moved with him to the new colony of Memrik, village Marinovka, 80 miles north of the Molotschna Colony. Leland Harder writes: "One letter from Katharina to her brother Johann in Kansas has been preserved, dated February 26, 1914. By this time she was 56 years old and had 20 grandchildren with the 21st on the way. Several of her children with 16 of her grandchildren had moved to Siberia, and one daughter and one son Heinrich and wife had gone to Mountain Lake, Minnesota. The latter two later returned to Russia, and it is not known whether the daughter returned also. In any case, Katharina and Jakob Voth felt lonely in Memrik and isolated from the Harder family. Health problems had exasperated those feelings, but she could still express a clear note of trust in God. After all, the doctor told her that it was her good fortune to have a severe nosebleed, for otherwise she might have suffered a massive stroke. According to a letter from niece Anna, daughter of brother David Harder, Katharina was still living in 1922 "and also has to bear her little cross."

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Katharina J. Harder</b>	Aug 13, 1857	Nov 21, 1878	1923
m	Jakob Voth	Jan 22, 1858		
7	Jacob Voth	Aug 27, 1879		
m	Maria Friesen	1875		
7	Tina Voth	Dec 16, 1880		
7	Liese Voth	Oct 20, 1883		
7	Aganetha Voth	Apr 21, 1885		
7	Heinrich Voth	Mar 5, 1887		
7	Anna Voth	Sep 10, 1893		
7	Peter Voth	Dec 2, 1896		

Last son living



*David and Elisabeth Harder Epp. Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 48.*

6 Daughter **Aganetha J. Harder** married Heinrich Teigroeb. Leland Harder writes: "They lived first in Blumstein and later in Neukirch. One letter from Aganetha to her brother Johann Harder in Kansas dated 1914 has been preserved. By then she was 54 and Heinrich 62. Their son Heinrich, married, with a machine shop on the Neukirch farm; and Johann was 25 and had just returned from the *Forstei* service. The letter described Teigroeb's illness, fatal edema, also called 'Wassersucht' in its last stages. 'He has a lot of difficulty breathing so that he cannot lie prone. For three months now he has had to sit. He is very swollen, the feet and legs up to the hip, and the hands and arms up to the elbow. He cannot do anything for himself and must be helped with everything. One doctor diagnosed it as liver disease and an infection of the kidneys. He gave no hope for recovery.' That same month brother David Harder wrote as follows: 'Regarding brother-in-law Teigroeb, it is moving definitely to the evening of his life. He also can believe that his sins are forgiven. I have visited with him several times and prayed with him. He is very fat and consequently has become very heavy and is indeed a figure of misery. He has edema in an advanced state, and I thought, 'Oh, God, to what all the human body is subject.'" After Heinrich's death, Aganetha continued to live in Neukirch and according to a letter from niece Anna Harder, David's daughter, dated 1922, 'She looks frail following repeated strokes with very obvious consequences. Her thinking and speaking abilities have suffered, and her eyes look dim and languid. Especially hard for the aunt was the loss of her youngest son Bernhard, who was taken prisoner and perished in Kasau of spinal tuberculosis. Aunt Aganetha still has three unmarried children at home and a married daughter also living at home.' The other children live in the vicinity. A letter from Anna 15 months later reported Aganetha's death."

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Aganetha J. Harder</b>	Jul 19, 1859		1922
m	Heinrich Teigroeb	Sep 28, 1861	Jun 7, 1881	
7	Katharina Teigroeb	Mar 25, 1882		
m	Johann Hildebrand	Sep 4, 1879		
8	Heinrich Hildebrand	Sep 6, 1907		
8	Maria Hildebrand	Dec 13, 1908		
8	Aganetha Hildebrand	Sep 10, 1910		
8	Johann Hildebrand	Sep 20, 1912		
7	Katharina Teigroeb	Nov 7, 1883		
7	Heinrich Teigroeb	Feb 11, 1885		
m	Liese Huebert	Oct 10, 1887	Sep 28, 1913	
7	Aganetha Teigroeb	Feb 27, 1887		
7	Johann Teigroeb	Jan 14, 1889		
7	Anna Teigroeb	Feb 2, 1891		
7	Liese Teigroeb	Oct 29, 1893		
7	Abraham Teigroeb	May 15, 1896		
7	Bernhard Teigroeb	Sep 5, 1898		Sep 9, 1898
7	Bernhard Teigroeb	Apr 28, 1900		

6 Daughter **Anna J. Harder** married Peter Loewen. They lived in Eugatoria in the Crimea. Anna died in 1895 but was survived by two children, Katharina and Anna, a son had died at birth. Leland Harder reports that several comments about Anna can be found in the Harder letter correspondence. In 1893 sister Elisabeth wrote: "A week before Easter the stepmother and the Loewens from the Crimea were here for a visit. Last year I asked Anna if she had hope in the eternal life. She said no, but that she would like to have it. I said she should struggle until she was conscious of her state of grace. Now I have not asked her, only encouraged her that she should work on the salvation of our souls.....She hugged and kissed me long with tears in her eyes, but said nothing. It was a great joy to them that we had received your letter. They live alone among all kinds of nationalities." On June 19, 1895, brother Abraham Harder wrote about Anna's death. "Last Saturday toward evening, Brother David Harder came driving to our place and immediately after greeting us said, 'I bring you a Job's message - another one of our family members has fallen,' I immediately said, 'Surely Heinrich Harder is not dead!' 'No,' he said, 'it is Anna, Mrs. Loewen. She died Friday afternoon.' On Friday the 14th a telegram came to Altona to mother, telling her that Anna was very sick; so mother left immediately. However, after a few hours another telegram came saying that she had died. She left two little children. So one goes here, another there, to our eternal home,"

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Anna J. Harder</b>	Apr 30, 1861		Jul 16, 1895
m	Peter Loewen	Jun 3, 1861	Jun 5, 1886	
7	Katharina Loewen	Nov 12, 1890		
7	Anna Loewen	Oct 22, 1892		
7	Peter Loewen	1894		At birth

6 Son **Bernhard J. Harder** married Susanna Neufeld. They had at least two children before Bernhard died of typhus at a remote place called Tschetjabinsk, Teitja. The surviving children were a son, Bernhard, and a daughter, Anna. During the famine of 1922 Anna wrote a letter to her Uncle Johann in Kansas, pleading for help.



*Bernhard J. Harder (1872-1904). Photo - Blumstein Legacy, page 50.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Bernhard J. Harder</b>	Oct 21, 1872	Oct 9, 1904	
m	Susanna Neufeld		1900	
7	Bernhard Harder			
7	Anna Harder			

5 Son **Abraham Johann Harder** brother to Ältester Johann Harder (1811-75), was a gardener. "He was a very good gardener."<sup>256</sup> His wife was a devout lady.<sup>257</sup> In his "Stammbuch", nephew Johann Harder has recorded that "My father's brothers Abraham and Peter had no children."

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Abraham Johann Harder</b>	1814		

5 Son **Isbrand Johann Harder** married Helena Schulz. She was a sister to Justina Schulz (1814-1856), first wife of his brother Johann. After the death of Isbrand Harder his widow married for the second time to Wilhelm Harms (1808-1846).<sup>258</sup> They had three children: Wilhelm,<sup>259</sup> Agatha<sup>260</sup> and Anna.<sup>261</sup> After his death she married again to Johann Wiens (1823-85) with whom she moved to Dolton, South Dakota in 1874. She had a family of nine children with her third husband.<sup>262</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Isbrand Johann Harder</b>	May 18,1817	Jul 27,1839	Jun 9,1840
m	Helena Schulz	Aug 9,1820		Dec 17,1894
6	Helena S. Harder	Jun 28,1840	Aug 18,1860	Aug 4,1867

6 Daughter **Helena Isbrandt Harder** married the widower Johann Neufeld (1828-1914), son of Heinrich Neufeld and Regina Friesen of Rosenort, Molotschna. The Johann Neufeld family lived near Inman, Kansas. They had one son Isaac Neufeld.<sup>263</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Helena Isbrandt Harder</b>	Jun 28,1840	Aug 18,1860	Aug 4,1867
m	Johann Neufeld	Nov 24,1828		Aug 22,1914
7	Isaac Neufeld	Jul 13,1862	Dec 4,1884	Mar,1911
m	Anna Ediger	Mar 12,1862		
7	Abraham Neufeld	Dec 3,1863		Dec 3,1863
7	Jakob Neufeld	Jan 7,1865	Feb 24,1907	Mar 21,1937
m	Agnes Hildebrand			
7	Abraham Neufeld	Nov 6,1866		Nov,1866

5 Daughter **Elisabeth Johann Harder** became the wife of a Thiessen in Altonau. In his "Stammbuch" nephew Johann J. Harder has recorded that "Elisabeth Thiessen had children who lived in scattered places."<sup>264</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Elisabeth Johann Harder</b>	1818		
m	? Thiessen			

5 Daughter **Helena Johann Harder** married Johann F. Warkentin, son of Peter Warkentin and Sarah Fast Warkentin also of Blumstein.<sup>265</sup> For a time Johann and Helena lived 80 verst behind Nikopol with the Hutterites.<sup>266</sup> Their firstborn, Johann, was born at Neuhutterthal, as were Peter, Helena, and Elizabeth. The family returned to Molotschna and joined a large contingent of Mennonites who immigrated to America in July 1874. They are listed as passengers on the S.S. Teutonia, which departed Hamburg for New York, arriving September 3, 1874. Accompanying them were their single daughter Elizabeth, age 17, and married son Johann with wife, Maria Ekkert Warkentin, and infant twin sons, Johann and Jacob. What happened to son Peter is not known, but it seems likely he died in Russia before they emigrated. Their daughter Helena had married Isaak Ens in 1872, and they were living in the Chortitza Colony and did not join their parents and siblings in America until the following year.

In 1874 the family emigrated to Kansas together with several of his siblings. They settled in the Inman area in McPherson County, Kansas. This family was struck by one tragedy after another during their first decade in America. Within three years, Johann Warkentin was dead, cause unknown.<sup>267</sup> Their son Johann, a teacher, died the previous year at age 28. The youngest daughter, Elizabeth, married Heinrich H. Janzen in 1877. Of their three sons (Jacob, Heinrich, and Peter), only Heinrich lived to maturity. Elizabeth died in 1884, and Heinrich remarried the following February.

Meanwhile, the immigrant grandmother, Helena Harder Warkentin, had continued to live on her farm. Sometime in 1878, not long after her husband died, her home was struck by lightning and burned. She died in 1888 and was buried on a farm southeast of Inman in a family plot where her daughter Elizabeth and her two infant sons, Jacob and Peter Janzen, were also buried.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Helena Johann Harder</b>	Jun 14, 1825	1888	
m	Johann F. Warkentin	Mar 11, 1825	1877	
6	Johann H. Warkentin	Dec 25, 1848	Jun 25, 1871	Jan 19, 1876
6	Peter H. Warkentin	Apr 26, 1850		
6	Helena Warkentin	Nov 13, 1852	Sep 17, 1872	Aug 19, 1878
6	Elisabeth H. Warkentin	Feb 3, 1857	Nov 2, 1884	

6 Son **Johann H. Warkentin** married Maria Ekkert, daughter of Jakob Ekkert and Maria Giesbrecht. She was born in Muntau, Molotschna, and died in Washita County, Oklahoma. Johann H. Warkentin was a school teacher. He died only two years after the immigration and was laid to rest on their farm near the Sparta school.<sup>268</sup> His widow, nee Maria Ekkert, remarried to G. Kliever of Schardau. 7 Daughter **Helena Warkentin** married a Hiebert in Corn, Oklahoma.<sup>269</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Johann H. Warkentin</b>	Dec 25, 1848	Jun 25, 1871	Jan 19, 1876
m	Maria Ekkert	Sept 2, 1847	Jan 23, 1908	
7	Johann Warkentin	1874		
7	Jakob Warkentin	1874		
7	Helena Warkentin			
m	? Hiebert			



6 Daughter **Helena H. Warkentin** married Isaac Enns, son of Kornelius Enns (1819-84), a school teacher in the Bergthal Colony of South Russia.<sup>270</sup> Helena and Isaac immigrated to the United States in 1875. They settled in Inman, Kansas, and lived the first year with her sister Elisabeth and her husband Heinrich H. Janzen. Family historian Verne Ediger has written that "During this time, Isaac, a carpenter by vocation, helped build the home of his wife's sister and her husband."<sup>271</sup> The next year Isaac and Helena settled on their own farm five miles east of Inman. Three children were born to them — Helena (1873), Cornelius (1874), and Johann (1877) - of whom only Cornelius lived to maturity. In 1878, after less than six years of marriage, their mother Helena Ens, died at the age of 25, possibly from complication from the birth of her third child.

Isaac married for the second time to Anna Reimer. In 1896 the family moved to the Alexanderwohl area four miles northwest of Goessel, Kansas. In 1911 they moved to Pryor, Oklahoma, where they farmed for several years. Then they moved to Nowata, Oklahoma. A few years later they returned to Kansas, settling in Burrton.

7 Son **Cornelius Enns** married Helena Toews, daughter of Johann Toews. Cornelius and Helena lived in Moundridge, Kansas, in 1910. Cornelius was a talented musician able to play the auto harp and harmonica at the same time. He never married after the death of his wife and continued running his 160 acre farm. He is remembered as "...a quiet man, but with a temper that instilled in his children the fact they had best mind him. At the same time he was a devoted father, taking his children to the farmer's picnic each summer, spending winter evenings at home playing Parcheesi and dominoes, and taking them to church each Sunday after the death of their Grandpa Toews."<sup>272</sup> He was the grandfather of Verne Ediger, Magna, Utah, who compiled these biographies.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Helen Warkentin</b>	Nov 13, 1852	Sep 17, 1872	Aug 19, 1878
m	Isaac Enns	Mar 24, 1847		Oct 19, 1934
7	Helena Enns	Jul 18, 1873		Feb, 1879
7	Cornelius Enns	Dec 16, 1874	Oct 26, 1900	Jun 11, 1943
m	Helena Toews	Jun 5, 1877		Jun 6, 1920
7	Johann Enns	Apr 1, 1877		Apr 5, 1877

6 Daughter **Elisabeth H. Warkentin** married Heinrich H. Janzen of Franzthal, son of Heinrich Janzen (1825-1901). The Heinrich H. Janzen family lived in Syracuse, Kansas, but by 1910 they were living two miles east of Inman.<sup>273</sup>

7 Son **Heinrich L. Janzen** was resident in Syracuse, Kansas.<sup>274</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Elisabeth H. Warkentin</b>	Feb 3, 1857		Nov 2, 1884
m	Heinrich H. Janzen	Nov 12, 1852		Nov 26, 1915
7	Heinrich Janzen	Oct 17, 1879		1976

5 Son **Peter Johann Harder** married a widow Defehr. They were childless.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Peter Johann Harder</b>	1829		
m	? Defehr			

**Section Three: Katharina Plett.**

4 Daughter **Katharina Plett** is reported to have gone missing. Nephew Peter Isaac explains that “because of having been mistreated by her stepmother as well as by the elite where she was in service, she is reported to have disappeared. In spite of all the efforts put forth by her stepmother, she could not be found. The girl had complained to her stepmother about the mistreatment she had received at the hands of her employers. During the winter months she had to sleep in an unheated bedroom with only a thin blanket to cover up with, and therefore could not sleep. And because of minor mistakes she was hit on the head. Furthermore, she had poor food to eat and asked her stepmother to take her away from those people. Her stepmother thereupon gave her a beating, too, and told her to go back and serve her time.”

“After several days she came home again, weeping more bitterly, and complained about her distress and told her she could not stay in the service of those people any longer. Thereupon, her stepmother beat her up again and told her to go back and not to come home again to complain. She did not come back any more but disappeared. That was indeed a bitter experience for the poor girl, because she was only nine years old at the time. It seems to me that the grandfather must have been altogether absent or just did not care about the girl at all. Of the chastisement that the grandmother suffered to her soul I will write about later.”<sup>275</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
3	<b>Katharina Plett</b>			

#### **Section Four: Maria Plett, 1811-95, Fischau, Molotschna.**

4 Daughter **Maria Plett** married Johann Toews, son of Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) and Margaretha Loewen (1767-1823) of Lindenau, Molotschna. Johann Toews was born in Tiegenhagen, Prussia, in 1793. In 1803 his parents left Prussia - their former Homeland - and immigrated to Russia where they arrived safely in the village of Neuendorf on October 27. Son Johann was 11 years old in 1804 when his parents settled in the village of Lindenau as pioneers of the Molotschna Colony.<sup>276</sup>

In 1814 Johann Toews (1793-1873) joined the Gemeinde. In later years he and his siblings all joined the Kleine Gemeinde.<sup>277</sup> On July 4, 1816, he married for the first time to Elisabeth, daughter of Johann Harder (1764-1826), Blumstein, Molotschna.<sup>278</sup> Johann Harder (1811-75), Ältester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde from 1860-75, was her nephew.

Johann Toews evidently served as a school teacher as a younger man. In a letter of August 21, 1876, Jakob Wölk, reminisced about starting his career as a young inexperienced teacher in Fischau, and how grateful he was for Johann Toews, with whom he “was able to discuss many a problem, and who endeavoured so earnestly to be a support at...[his] side with advice which came from his own experiences, and with which he encouraged me with respect to the many problems which arise in a school.”<sup>279</sup>

After his marriage Johann Toews pursued his trade as a carpenter and cabinet maker. Around 1825 Johann was also a very gifted “Stellmacher” as the manufacturers of wooden wagon parts were called.<sup>280</sup> At first Johann and his bride lived with his parents. The young couple made their home in Lindenau until 1830 when they bought an Anwohnerstelle in Schönau. Johann Toews was concerned about spiritual things and in 1828 he bought a copy of Menno Simons, *Auszug der Merkwürdigsten Abhandlungen aus den Werken Menno Simons* (Königsberg: Johann Decknatel, 1765), 255 pages. This book is sometimes referred to as “Der Kleine Menno”.<sup>281</sup>

Johann’s wife died on October 6, 1834. On November 18 of the same year he remarried to the widow Wiebe from Rosenort. She died on December 29 some six weeks later.<sup>282</sup> In 1835 Johann and his family were still listed as resident on his father’s Wirtschaft in Lindenau. On August 20, 1835, Johann Toews married again to Maria Plett (1811-95), daughter of Johann Plett (1765-1833), Wirtschaft 47, Sparrau. Molotschna, 1835 census.

On March 29, 1838 Johann Toews bought half of Wirtschaft 9 in Fischau for 1100 ruble banko taking possession in March.<sup>283</sup> On December 14, 1844 they took over the other half for 900 ruble banko.<sup>284</sup> Johann was a successful farmer and in 1850 he was mentioned in the *Unterhaltungsblatt*, a German language newspaper, for achievements in the silk industry.<sup>285</sup> He was an avid horticulturalist and planted shelterbelts and an orchard, fondly remembered by his children even decades later.<sup>286</sup> Son Peter Toews remembered visiting Ältester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) with his parents at the home of the Ältester’s son Abraham in Rückenau.

Johann Toews became grievously ill in 1850, prompting him to write a biographical booklet, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes an der Herzen meiner Lieben Kinder*.<sup>287</sup> He wrote how God protected him during a number of life threatening events. He described these incidents in some detail, including the accident which

claimed the life of his first father-in-law Johann Harder, Blumstein, in 1827. The theme of the book was how God in his wondrous wisdom and compassion keeps His watchful eye and loving oversight upon His children, seeing to their safety and preserving them. The booklet is recommended reading for those interested in the social history of the period. It was published by Ältester Peter Toews under the title *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes Aus den hinterlassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1908), 24 pages.<sup>288</sup>

Johann Toews was a devout Christian whose example of discipleship had a profound effect on his family and others around him. He was keenly interested in the devotional writings of the conservative Mennonite faith. His father had been an avid reader, reading the books of the Enlightenment such as the French author Voltaire although in his later life he asked Johann to destroy these books. The love of reading, however, was passed on to his family. Johann's library included *Der Kleine Menno*,<sup>289</sup> *The Wandelnde Seele*,<sup>290</sup> and *Ausgewählte Schriften* by Peter Peters.<sup>291</sup> Son Peter Toews has written that his father was one of five revered Ohms in the Kleine Gemeinde whose collected documents and writings were major sources of primary material for his *Sammlung zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten* which he compiled in 1873.<sup>292</sup> One of the stories Johann Toews remembered from his boyhood days in Prussia was that the Mennonites had wanted to build special worship houses but did not have the freedom to do. Permission was finally granted by the government on the condition that the Mennonites would provide the monies to build a cathedral for the Catholics. Johann recalled this incident since he had often walked by the Cathedral which was not far from Tiegenhagen where he was born and raised.<sup>293</sup>

Johann and Maria Toews were deeply grieved when their son Jakob died on Ascension Day, May 21, 1859, from smallpox at the age of 20 years and three months. He was buried on May 23, accompanied to the grave by the tears of an assembly rich in numbers. Johann expressed his feelings in a poem entitled "Der Kirchhof" to commemorate Jakob's passing.<sup>294</sup>

### **Der Kirchhof.**

"Aber Herr, lehre doch mich, dass es ein Ende mit mir haben muss, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muss" (Psalm 39:5).

1. Stiller Kirchhof, Ziel der Leiden, Wenn wirst du mich nehmen auf-  
Dann, wenn ich von hier werd' scheiden: Und beenden meinen Lauf.
2. Dass dies einmal wird gescheh'n; Unterliegt dem Zweifel nicht,  
Denn die Zeit heisst alles gehen; Wenn ihm erst die Kraft gebricht.
3. Komm' ich und seh' schon von ferne: Dich vom Park geschlossen ein,  
Will mein Fleisch denn doch ungerne; Von dir eingezwungen sein.
4. Doch ich werd' trotz dessen Wille; Deinem Schosse einverleibt,  
Wo Gott weiss, wie lang die Hülle; In der Ruh' verschlossen bleibt.
5. Tret' ich jetzt auf dem Teraine; Deiner Hügel gross und klein,  
Seh' ich an dem Grabesteine, Hier schon ruhen mein Gebein.\*
6. O, so öffnet mein Gemüte; Sich durch einen Thränenlauf  
Und fordert durch Gottes Güte; Mich zur wahren Busse auf.
7. Leider bleibt es in Gezerre; Und was hab' ich für Gewinn,\*\*  
Wenn man mich wird durches Gesperre; Tragen auf den Kirchhof hin?

\* The reference here is to son Jakob who died in his 20th year.

Johann Toews was a sensitive individual concerned about the “landless” in the Molotschna colony. The fact that over 60 per cent of the population was landless was a major problem affecting many neighbours. Johann expressed his views in a poem of 11 stanzas dated 1865.<sup>295</sup> Two other poems written by Johann Toews in 1862 were published in 1993.<sup>296</sup> In 1863 son Peter Toews wrote a poem about a thanks-giving supper hosted by Johann Toews, “Zum Frohen Erntefeste” (“For a joyful harvest feast”) “...which he has still prepared for us, in accordance with ancient tradition.”<sup>297</sup>

Nephew Peter Isaac later wrote about Maria and Johann Toews, “I remember them very well since they often visited my parents. Until the time when my father died [1864], they alternatively helped each other butcher hogs every fall.”

The Johann Toews family farmed in Fischau until August 29, 1864 when they sold their Wirtschaft to Heinrich Wiens from Schönau for 3000 ruble.<sup>298</sup> It was this farm that son Peter Toews described with fond memories during a journey of ministerial visitation to the Molotschna in 1874: “In the evening of the previous day of our journey we arrived in Fischau. The following morning I went into the woods in order to refresh myself from the journey. These were the woods which my father had planted in his time. I wanted to once more see the place where I had frequently passed back and forth; it was the time of which the Apostle speaks, ‘... in which we were enlightened and endured a great battle of affliction.’ Many a tree was still completely familiar to me as if I had never gone. I remembered at that moment what the beloved Saviour says, ‘Every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out.’ Then in prayer to God the groaning in my heart came forth, ‘Lasz mich niemals die Kreuzes Dornen fliehen, weil sie das Zeichen deiner Freundschaft sind, wobei der Geist doch Kraft und Liebe sind, So werd ich der wie eine Rose blühen, die wenn gleich Thau und Südwind drüber weht, doch in der Kraft in deinem Garten stehn.’”<sup>299</sup>

On September 9th of 1864 Johann and Maria Toews together with sons Johann and Cornelius moved to Friedrichsthal (Markuslandt) “by Harms” (Andreasfeld), 15 km. north of Alexandrowsk (Zaporozhe) along the Dneiper River, renting a smaller property of 33 1/3 desjatien.<sup>300</sup> Johann and Maria now “moved to the place of their children, the Johann Goossens.”<sup>301</sup>

On the 25th of November, 1865, the Johann Toews’ went on a trip to the Molotschna where they visited their old friend Isaac Loewen, Lindenau. They had stopped in Prangenau and then at Franz Kroekers in Kleefeld where Ohm Isaac was visiting and where they handed over a letter from son Peter. Shortly thereafter Ohm Isaac replied to Peter Toews, later the Bishop, providing a glowing testimonial of Johann Toews: “Do also greet your beloved parents from me. Your aged father is my bosom friend, with whom I have stood in loving harmony, although in weakness, since the time of our youth. I am always reminded of him when I walk by his former property in Fischau. I also give thanks for the greeting to me from your father, which I read in his letter to in-law Plett, and from which I could perceive that he still thinks of me. I suppose that our friendship will soon come to an end, as we are both fragile, old and aged. We need not place much expectation that either of us will be here much longer. But the day and the hour are not revealed to us, as this is known to the Lord alone.”<sup>302</sup>

Some time prior to 1870 Johann and Maria Toews moved to the village of Blumenhof, in Borosenko, northwest of Nikopol, continuing to live at the home of daughter Susanna. Johann had not lost his enthusiasm for reading in the devotional literature of the faith. On Christmas Day, 1872, he placed an order for copies of *Ebe der Christen* and *Hoffart und Demut* which son Peter was ordering from Johann F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana.<sup>303</sup>

Toews was active even as an elderly man. Abr. F. Reimer, from the neighbouring village of Steinbach, recorded that Mr. and Mrs. Toews came to visit them on their sleigh on Sunday, March 1, 1870. On November 1, 1871, Abr. F. Reimer and the “old J. Toews were visiting at Hein. Reimer Sr. where they were slaughtering swine.” April 17, 1873, the “old” Joh. Toews’ visited the home of Abr. F. Reimer in Steinbach, Borosenko, for dinner.

Johann Toews died May 15, 1873, while his son Cornelius was in America as the delegate of the Kleine Gemeinde. Peter Toews writes: “My father died at two o’clock during the night of the 15th. He had lain sick for a lengthy period.”<sup>304</sup> Johann Toews died at the home of children Susanna and Johann Goossens in Blumenhoff. He was buried on Thursday May 17, Ascension Day, age 70 years and eight months. Son Peter Toews has written that “His body rests immediately adjacent to that of his brother Jakob Toews, who passed away three months before him (who was a couple of years younger) in the cemetery close to the worship house at Blumenhof.<sup>305</sup> Son Peter gave his father the loving eulogy: “\*\* His soul quietly departed to be with God with a living hope for eternal life, in the year 1873 when he went to his rest, having completed his 79th year.”

In 1875 his widow Maria Plett Toews immigrated from Russia moving to Gnadenu, Kansas, with her children Johann P. Goossens, and single daughter Maria. Maria died at the home of daughter, Susanna Toews Goossen in Kansas.<sup>306</sup> A biography of Johann and Maria Toews and an English translation of his writings were published in 1993.<sup>307</sup>

The concluding stanza from Johann’s book, “The Watchful Eye of God,” forms an appropriate template for his life’s pilgrimage:

The word of God take oft to hand,  
It will refresh your soul,  
And persevere until the end  
Then heav’n will be your goal.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Maria Plett</b>	Mar 30, 1811	Aug 20, 1835	Jun 15, 1895
m	Johann Toews	Oct 25, 1793		May 15, 1873
5	Cornelius P. Toews	Jun 11, 1836		Feb 21, 1908
5	Jacob P. Toews	Feb 27, 1839		May 21, 1859
5	Peter P. Toews	Aug 5, 1841	Nov 12, 1863	Nov 3, 1922
5	Susanna P. Toews	Jan 10, 1844	Jun 25, 1861	Oct 14, 1912
5	Abraham P. Toews	Jul 5, 1846		Mar 9, 1848
5	Abraham P. Toews	Dec 12, 1848		May 5, 1849
5	Abraham P. Toews	Aug 24, 1850		Oct 2, 1850
5	Maria P. Toews	Dec 27, 1854		Dec 3, 1918

1861 # 266  
 am 24<sup>ten</sup> Juni  
 von Ludwig Doerksen  
 Johann Toews  
 in  
 Fischpau  
 Maria Toews  
 in  
 Blumenhoff  
 1869  
 gedruckt von  
 Obmann Wogst  
 Minibuf Mann  
 neu gebunden 200

Die  
 wandelnde Seele,  
 das ist  
 Gespräch

der  
 wandelnden Seele mit Adam, Noach und  
 Simon Cleophas.

Verfaßt die  
 Geschichten von Erschaffung der Welt an bis zu und  
 nach der Verwüstung Jerusalems.

Daraus ordentlich zu ersehen, wie eine Monarchie und  
 Königreich auf die andere gefolgt, wie diese angefangen,  
 jene aber vergangen, und auch der ausführliche Verlauf  
 der Zerstörung Jerusalems.

Durch  
 Johann Philipp Schabalie  
 in niederländischer Sprache beschrieben,  
 an jetzt aber in die hochdeutsche Sprache  
 übersetzt von  
 J. B. B.

1860.  
 Druck von J. F. Steintopf in Stuttgart.

In 1869, at age 15, Maria Toews Doerksen Hildebrandt (1854-1918) received a copy of the *Wandelnde Seele* from her father Johann Toews. The *Kleine Gemeinde* published the book in 1860 to combat growing apostacy in the Molotschna. The book plate demonstrated how young women were socialized among the *Kleine Gemeinde*. It is inscribed "1861 the 24th of June received from the book binder. 'Johann Toews in Fischbau.'" It was customary for senior Obms to purchase a number of these books in order to underwrite the publication costs. They were later given to family members as gifts and keepsakes. The second endorsement on the book plate is by Maria: "Maria Toews in Blumenhoff 1869". Evidently she did not keep the book reflecting changing religious values among the Kansas Mennonites many of whom quickly converted themselves over to Separatist-Pietist and/or American Revivalist religious culture. By a miracle the book found its way back to the East Reserve in Manitoba where it is a treasured artifact in the writer's personal library. Photo - Preservings, No. 10, Part One, page 24.

5      Son **Cornelius Plett Toews**, as he himself recorded, lived a wayward youth: "My composition and inspiration from the years of my youth was evil so that together with David I was convicted to plead, 'Ah Lord, do not remember me after the sins of my youth, but deal with me according to your compassion and the goodness of your will.'" In 1857 Cornelius was baptised and joined the Kleine Gemeinde. Shortly thereafter he came under the ban because of a moral indiscretion. On August 18, 1857, Prediger Ohm Johann Dueck (1801-66), Muntau, recorded in his ministerial journal, "I was in Rosenort for the worship service....The brotherhood meeting dismissed Corn. Toews from the Gemeinde, as he had entered the room of a woman through the window and stood before the husband as if he had been carrying on with the wife. Later, however, he denied everything." A week later Cornelius was forgiven and reaccepted in the Gemeinde at a brotherhood meeting held in Neukirch. Cornelius himself later wrote he had not "obtain[ed] any acknowledgement or remorse for the same until after I had been married for approximately two years, when on a certain opportunity, through three or four elderly and experienced brethren, I felt inwardly convicted and punished for the same and received great fear and distress, so that I fell upon my face and pleaded with God for forgiveness of all my sins, 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, and received peace and forgiveness in my conscience over the matter...the consequence was that the spirit of the grace of Christ seized my heart and convicted me and inspired me unto pure penitence."<sup>308</sup>

In 1858 Cornelius Toews married Elizabeth Friesen, daughter of Klaas Friesen (1813-56) and Katharina Loewen, Paulsheim. Katharina was the daughter of deacon and patriarch Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) of Lindenau.<sup>309</sup> Klaas Friesen was the son of Klaas Friesen (1774-1839), also a Lindenau pioneer.

Cornelius Toews and his bride established their home in Hierschau. Son Johann has written, "By profession Cornelius was a saddle and harness maker....[He] did not make the breechings or wheel harnesses, the use of which was forbidden in the Kleine Gemeinde to which my father belonged."<sup>310</sup>

In 1863 the family moved to Friedrichsthal, Markuslandt. "Here Cornelius and his brother-in-law [Goossen] built themselves an earth hut called a 'Semoljenko' in Russian.....On one occasion it occurred that wolves descended upon the roof of our miserable dwelling place whereupon they taunted [the residents] with their howling and growling. Presently, Father and Uncle armed themselves with pitchforks and carefully stepped outside in order to chase them away." Johann F. Toews described another incident that occurred in this scenic region: "One beautiful winter day Cornelius Toews and a number of men had ridden on horseback to Einlage, a village on the west bank of the Dnieper River, some 15 kilometres away. On the way home the ice broke under the horses hooves so that father only escaped death by valiant exertion."

Cornelius' first wife died in 1864. Cornelius remarried to Anna Bartel, daughter of Peter Bartel (b. 1802) of Kronsgarten, northeast of Ekatherinoslav.<sup>311</sup> Anna Bartel wrote in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* that she had "served as a maid in Ekatherinoslav at Heinrich Heslen and at 'old' Heinrich Thiessen. There she married Peter Friesen and moved to Einlage. Her husband died leaving two



children who soon followed him. Then I married widower Cornelius Toews, Hierschau."<sup>312</sup> Ältester Peter Toews referred to Anna as "the widow Friesen from Hierschau."<sup>313</sup>

In 1867 the family moved to Grünfeld north of Borosenko. On January 6, 1868, at a ministerial election held in Grünfeld (in the so-called Grünfeld Gemeinde), Cornelius Toews was elected first as deacon with 17 votes and thereafter as minister with 18 votes. His election caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction because of an earlier excommunication when he was still a young single man.<sup>314</sup> The Kleine Gemeinde followed the longstanding Flemish protocol that a member who had previously been excommunicated could not serve ministerial office even though the member had been forgiven and reaccepted. The result of this controversy was that Cornelius voluntarily relinquished the position, explaining his actions in a letter to the Gemeinde dated March 1868.<sup>315</sup>

On Dec. 29, 1871, Abraham F. ("Fula") Reimer, Steinbach, Borosenko, recorded that his son-in-law "Toews and Korn. Toews, Grünfeld, travelled to the Molotschna and Tiege."

On February 4, 1873, Cornelius Toews was elected as the delegate to America for the Blumenhoff congregation receiving 62 votes out of 70 cast. A collection was held and within six days, 1200 ruble had been gathered to fund the journey.<sup>316</sup> After a false start on February 15, Cornelius and David Klassen - the delegate for the Heubodner Gemeinde - finally left for America on April 15, 1873.

The correspondence of Cornelius Toews, preserved by brother Peter, provides information regarding the journey. By April 21, 1873, the delegates had travelled across Eastern Europe, through Berlin and reached Hamburg. On April 25, together with the two Hutterian Brethren delegates, the Tschetters, they embarked on the ship S.S. Silesia enroute to New York City arriving on May 8. The next day Toews copied some details about the ocean journey from his diary and sent them to brother Peter back in Russia. He reported that he "was quite sick...[and] completely unable to eat for two days. ...But thanks and praise unto God for I was relatively well once again during the last four days."

On May 9th the delegates departed for Elkhart where they waited several days for the arrival of the other delegates from Russia as well as the return home of Johann F. Funk who was to accompany them on their land scouting expedition. On May 21, 1873, Cornelius Toews wrote another letter. The other delegates had not yet arrived and finally on May 21, Toews, Klassen and the Tschetters decided to leave for Fargo without them. On May 24 (June 5 Julien calendar), the others finally caught up with them in St. Paul. On the 29th they looked at land in the James River area 100 miles north of Fargo where the Hutterites would eventually decide to settle.

On Thursday, May 31, 1873, the group decided to continue on to Manitoba. That same evening Toews wrote another letter to his loved ones back home. The delegates embarked again and by June 4, 1873, they arrived in Emerson, Canada, the border crossing. Tschetter noted the red coats of the British soldiers. The next day they arrived in Fort Garry, where they were hosted at a reception by the Governor who "told us about all the good they would do for

us.” On Wednesday, June 6, a group of 20 men on three wagons left for a tour of the land being offered southeast of Winnipeg, or Fort Garry, as it was known. After crossing the river on a barge they drove for 15 versts [km.] and stopped to feed the horses and eat. “It was a terrible road.... After 60 verst....we finally arrived at ...[Point des Chenes, today’s Ste. Annes]...The people did not want to allow us unto their abodes, but finally we were allowed to enter and could spend the night.”

At 5 p.m., June 7 “we arrived at the land where we ate our evening meal...” The next day they continued south to what later became the Steinbach area where they “...arrived at a residence where only the wife was home. She spoke a beautiful German having immigrated to Canada two years ago....she praised the region highly, presumably because they dearly wanted to have neighbours.” On another occasion the delegates had a harrowing experience when they were attacked by a group of Metis (half-breeds) at a post some 30 miles west of Fort Garry, now Winnipeg.<sup>317</sup> After having inspected what became the East Reserve all except the Kleine Gemeinde and Berghthaler delegates went on to inspect other land in the American mid-west.

On June 21, 1873, Cornelius Toews wrote to brother Peter, “...we are already in the tenth week since we departed. ...We have been here in Winnipeg since the third of this month....The government takes us into all parts of the State.... We have decided on another ....[tour] tomorrow which will take four days at the most. After this we will proceed to ...[Ottawa] in order to attempt the final and most important part of our mission....We have the expectation that we can be home in seven weeks....[God] has protected me from danger and preserved me from evil.” Letters were also written to Cornelius from Russia but only received sporadically.

On July 1, 1873, Cornelius again wrote brother Peter, “...we are now proceeding to Ottawa, the capital of Canada with the purpose of obtaining a complete conviction regarding our principle concern. In fact, we have the expectation that there is nothing more satisfactory to our questions to be obtained anywhere than exactly here.”

The delegates arrived in Ottawa and were able to obtain the assurances they deemed necessary. On July 25, 1873, these assurances were confirmed in writing by John Lowe, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, a document subsequently regarded by the Mennonite as their *Privilegium*. It responded favourably to practically all of the questions which both the Berghthaler and Kleine Gemeinde delegates had been commissioned to present to the government.

The delegates arrived in Nikopol on August 7, 1873 on board the steamship *Nacmorka*. The journey to America of Cornelius Toews was rare at the time and attracted considerable interest. Upon his arrival in Nikopol he was greeted by many brethren and sisters including brothers Peter and Johann. Nephew Peter “Schmidt” Toews described their trip to the Nikopol: “Soon we heard the blast of the ship’s horn. Father urged the horses on faster and we arrived in time to see the ship come in.....We were able to spot Uncle Cornelius from far away, since he had an American straw hat on his head. Uncle Peter and Father took his carrying bags and hurried ahead. Uncle Cornelius and I followed.”

“He had a burning question on his heart; quickly he bent down to me and

asked, 'Are they all living?'"

"I told him his daughter [three year-old] Katrina had died [of smallpox July 31]. 'The others are all living?' he asked."<sup>318</sup>

"I told him that they were."

Cornelius Toews already knew that his father had passed away May 15. Son Johann wrote that the family's "...joy was mixed with bitter tears of sorrow because of the pain over father for the deaths of his departed loved ones."<sup>319</sup>

Brother Peter recorded that at 2 p.m. in the afternoon of the same day "...[they brought Cornelius home] in Grünfeld at his beloved own safe and sound....and [he] was greeted with tears of joy...The beloved brothers and sisters in Grünfeld all gathered together there, and we gave voice to the song of love, 'Grosz ist Herr deine Gute.'"

In 1874 the family immigrated to Manitoba. Peter Toews has written, "On May the 30th the first ones departed from Nikopol for America. They travelled by way of Odessa, Prussia; via Liverpool, England, to Quebec, Toronto, and so on to Winnipeg. Also among this group were my brothers Johann and Cornelius, Regehrs, my sister, and others more, about 25 families."<sup>320</sup> Cornelius Toews and David Klassen, the delegate for the Heubodner congregation, and minister Jakob Barkman from Friedensfeld, were the leaders of this emigration party, the first to arrive in Winnipeg.

Cornelius wrote a number of letters to brother Peter during the journey. On June 21, 1874, he wrote from Hamburg: "Our journey, although slow and accompanied by numerous delays," he wrote, "praise be to God, has gone reasonably well to date." That evening they had been joined by 49 families from the Crimea, presumably the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren group, and including the small contingent of some six Kleine Gemeinde families who had remained true to the faith of the fathers. One child "...it was said, was killed in Boreslau [Breslau] when she was driven over, but this was not one of ours." He warned those following to be sure their children were well behaved, so they would not get a bad reputation in the train stations where they often had to wait patiently for extended periods. They were still waiting for another party from Borosenko and had set the date for sailing. Two days later, Cornelius wrote again, reporting the awaited party of 26 families had arrived, the Heubodner under delegate David Klassen, "...having lost much time on the train. They were very tired and some had almost become sick. Mrs. Friesen was quite weak when I saw her on the way; likewise Mrs. Froese and a number of others....Peter Friesen of Heuboden [the group's treasurer], who had been waiting here already for some time, felt constrained to go to Breslau to meet his family there and to assist them on the way. Instead the tragic news, especially for his wife, was reported that he had died instantaneously. This obviously stunned everybody and shall serve as a solemn warning for all of us."<sup>321</sup>

The next letter was written from Duluth, Minnesota, dated July 15/27, 1874. "Our trip until now has gone better than expected....We had a fairly uncomfortable sea voyage which took about three weeks, since our ship stopped in various places.... It was a great joy to receive your letters in Halifax...You can look up the location on the map....At first it was somewhat lamentable as almost

all of us became sick. This only lasted eight days after which the sea was more calm and we started to feel better, with the exception of the women who were already weak,...These remained in their places but eventually recovered.” Two children had died and were buried at sea, and two were born. One family, the Johann Klassens, had to remain in Liverpool because of their child who was sick. Toews reported that in Toronto “We were greeted by our [Old Mennonite] brethren from various places, some from 70 miles away.” They were offered “...bacon, butter and lard, and two tons of dried apples.” They also offered lodging and work for the winter for those without means. That Sunday a worship service was held with seven of the American brethren, including two ministers, “who also spoke to us, directing us to our calling and admonishing us to remain true.” The next letter was written from Schantz house, dated July 29/August 10, 1874. “We arrived in Winnipeg on the 31/19 July. The following day we went up on the Red River, till we got to a place opposite our Reserve, and disembarked [from the steamship S.S. International]. Cornelius had received another letter from brother Peter on June 7.

Cornelius Toews, half-brother Johann, and half-sister Anna, Mrs. Jakob Regehr, settled in the village of Grünfeld, now Kleefeld.<sup>322</sup> On December 8, German time, 1874, Cornelius wrote brother Peter, mentioning he had received, finally, the letter Peter wrote September 25. Cornelius acknowledged, “...the short summer that was left for us here, needed to be intensively applied to building the temporal buildings required for shelter for ourselves and our livestock....We were blessed with a very suitable time to get this done.” “As far as the natural things are concerned,” Toews wrote, “nobody needs complain. The brethren in Canada have provided for our necessities. Schantz who was in charge of the project, with \$20,000.00 at his disposal, made the purchases for the whole Manitoba group in St. Paul buying: 2000 bushels of wheat, 2000 bushels of barley, 2000 pounds of dried apples, 170 barrels of beans, and 3000 bags of flour. The flour was divided two to three bags per person. The cost was 2.60 to 3.60 a bag payable on credit over eight years....Wheat was distributed according to the acreage which each one had ready for seeding....As far as I know everyone has a cow or two.”

Cornelius voiced a spirit of optimism: “On the whole we feel ourselves fortunate in this country and believe we have a healthy climate. Everybody still does their daily work outside,...especially in cutting wood, both for fuel and lumber, which is close by and no shortage of it....The water is very good at about eight feet.” He reported the death of the elderly widow Ratzlaff, the first adult to die in the new land. But, he says, “As far as I know...we adults are set to proceed with the building of the settlement.” As a good Klein Gemeinder, Toews quickly returned to the fundamentals, “In one word I must say, up to the present, we have experienced abundantly the goodness of the Lord, and should He bless our work, especially the coming seeding time, we should soon be able to provide our own bread.” He quoted a stanza from a poem, possibly from their beloved *Gesangbuch*, “It won’t be long my brother, Just wait a little while, It won’t be long my sister, Then we’ll be going home.”

Cornelius closed with a few words for his beloved mother and single sister, Maria, still at home. He added a request for those coming later not to bring

“Surplus clothes and footwear, as these are better here....Do bring a supply of writing paper since that is expensive here. Bring us a hanging lamp, one of the big ones, without the glass. They are available here too but not as bright.”

Cornelius followed with an even longer letter a week later on December 13. Evidently American immigration agents had tried to scare the remaining immigrants that Manitoba had a severe climate. Cornelius refuted these allegations “that...[the climate] was very fearful and comparable to Siberia.” He praised the climate, noting that even when it was 40 below it does not feel as cold as in Russia: “The earthen huts everywhere are covered with snow, and the snow is dry. We have made our own footwear from buffalo fur,...and our feet remain more protected therein than in the cow leather boots....No one need to fear moving here on account of the weather.”

Another myth Cornelius debunked was that the Natives and Metis were hostile: “I have not heard anything to this day....that they have hurt anyone....Many of us have purchased our cattle, potatoes and other goods from them. Everyone who has had business with them praises their hospitality....We have not come into contact as much with the Indians. It has happened that two - perhaps even three - of them, whose way has led them here past our place, have stopped and viewed our modes of construction in amazement; and upon being greeted, they receive a small gift with thanks, and then hurry on their way....”

Cornelius again shared some tips for the later immigrants suggesting that they should not bring their wagons along. He asked them to bring along some flax seed. He reported that construction was to start the following spring on the Fargo-Winnipeg railway, along the western border of the East Reserve, eight miles away. Although, “...they pay one and a half dollars and free room and board,...we are more than busy enough with our own.” He was positive about the possibilities of market gardening for the Winnipeg market which was growing and as “we are presently minded...may be our first and most readily available income.” Schools have already been started and he is “presently awaiting the calendars and readers, the latter being especially important for the schools.”

Cornelius reported that “...on the 18th of December, Peter Dueck came from Winnipeg, and to our great joy, again brought along letters from Isaak Warkentin, Mrs. Reimer, Johann Friesen, and from you, beloved brother, which had not been sent via Schantz.”

It broke Cornelius' heart, however, to report that the hoped for oneness of mind within the new settlement and particularly with the Heubodner had not come to pass: “I am fully conscious of your troubled heart regarding our separated settlements.....there was no shortage of fault finding and unjustifiable accusations at the time, which were applied particularly to me and Klassen. Everyone, even from there, is aware that we were unable to come to one view in this regard, nor could this be altered, before it had transpired itself into action. Some of them, especially both the Kroekers, presently regret this very much and seem to blame Klassen. On the other hand, Klassen always tries to placate them with a presentation of various negative aspects. He especially mentions that spring will bring each and everyone to make a decision. Is it right that this has become

a matter of party? I should hope not!”

Cornelius pointed out that Klassen’s option of relocating to the Scratching River in the Morris area would be next to impossible for the poorer brethren for whom starting in the woodlands of the East Reserve, with plentiful fuel, water and building material would be much easier: “According to my limited understanding, I cannot even for a moment, come to any conclusion, but that it is better here on the Reserve for those without means, then in the other place. Consequently, I have always defended myself. Everyone knows very well that the situation of the poor must be dealt with regardless of anything else. No one has been able to refute this.” Cornelius referred to the accusations being made: “Unto this day the matter speaks more and more for itself....brother D. Klassen once related to a number of brethren, ‘If only Toews was a man of means, he would talk differently.’ Perhaps this is also the reason why we live in two places. In my opinion we should observe the matter, and consider it carefully for that which may be of benefit to us all, and not only for the one part.” Although all parties regretted the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba was separated in two locations, this was merely a continuation of the situation in Russia, with members concentrated in Borosenko, the Crimea and the Molotschna.

On February 3, 1875, Cornelius wrote a letter during a ministerial visit at the Scratching River settlement near Morris which included 15 brethren and several sisters. Cornelius was in a historical frame of mind, noting the party still in Russia would soon be leaving on the emigration journey and encouraged them: “...may the Lord be gracious to you and inspire you with love, so that you may prepare yourselves; as did our forefathers two or three hundred years ago, when they fled for the sake of Christ, thereby leaving us an example.” He suggested, also, that, “...when you travel through Galacia and see at a distance the Carpathian Mountains on your left,....[reflect about] the Hutterian Brethren [who] crossed with their wives and children under various difficult conditions on their flight.” “Moreover,” Cornelius continued, “when you get to Hamburg, think of the dear followers of Christ, of whom many thousands yielded their lives in the rivers, and who gave their blood for Christ’s sake in Hamburg, and allowed themselves to be martyred.”<sup>323</sup>

On February 8, 1875, Cornelius sent a short note: “The winter is soon ending and we are looking forward with longing to your arrival.” He was planning to meet brother Peter’s party in Fargo or Moorehead.

A final letter from this collection is dated May 6, 1875. Cornelius referred to the trials and testing of life and the sacrifices that must be made: “For otherwise, we and you, would gladly have remained in our beloved Russia, our blessed fatherland, and lived there the remainder of our days, eventually to sleep in the earth there as do so many a father and a mother and faithful brother and sister, resting from their labours until the sound of the last trumpet....we continually experience.....that there is still [only] the one and only way to that certain and eternal Fatherland....we find it requires no small self denial to walk upon this way.”

Cornelius was shocked to hear his beloved mother and sister Maria had

left brother Peter's group in Liverpool and proceeded to Kansas, together with sister Susanna and husband Johann Goossen. "Has it then been foreordained that we shall not see our dear Mother and Maria again?...Just as I also once longed to see my Father, and even more longed to speak to him about our pilgrim journey and how much goodness God had shown to us.....we want to commit [to God] the heartaches, and the sorrow, and the tears shed because of it as a sacrifice unto our heavenly Father."

On March 16, Peter Dueck had again brought the mail from Winnipeg, some from Russia and some from the States, including a letter from brother Peter. Cornelius concluded his response with special words of comfort for the elderly matriarchs concerned about how they would fare in such a primitive pioneering venture: "...do not worry unnecessarily about our settling down here, since we believe our Reserve speaks for itself. It praises itself and does not require that anyone praise it and the words applied to creation apply also to it, 'And God saw that it was very good.' It leaves little to be criticized." One wonders at the truth of these prophetic words. Some 130 years later, the area which Cornelius was so harshly criticized for selecting, is among the most productive and prosperous farming and business communities in North America.

Son Johann F. Toews wrote the pioneers had difficulty adjusting to the cold winters: "Our dwellings were truly not warm enough for the cattle which really had to suffer on account of the cold, indeed, some were actually felled by the cold. There were many grasshoppers the summer following that first winter. One could not walk in slippers, the only form of footwear available for many, since one's feet squashed all the grasshoppers entering therein, making the soles so greasy that the feet continually slipped out. Slippers here refers to 'schloare', a sandal-like footwear. We were freed of this plague only after all the grasshoppers had hatched out and flown away."

In the winter of 1876 Cornelius Toews bought a small windmill from the Red River settlement north of Winnipeg. Many men from the village went with him to dismantle the mill and move it to Grünfeld. On March 16, while the men were away, his Wirtschaft, buildings and contents, were destroyed by fire.<sup>324</sup> "Everything went up in flames, even some cattle. The family got away with no more than their lives. When Uncle Cornelius came home, he found everything in ashes." Cornelius received an insurance settlement of \$668.33.<sup>325</sup> Unfortunately the fire also destroyed his historical documents and records. Later in 1876 Cornelius completed his windmill, one of the first in the East Reserve. According to the "Brandordnung" records, his windmill was insured for \$300.00 on August 21, 1876.

Also receiving payouts from the insurance association for furniture and contents were "Mrs. Bartel and Katharina Bartel [Anna's mother and sister]" who were living with them. Mrs. Bartel died on December 12, 1877, at Anna and Cornelius' home.

The insurance was cancelled on December 21, 1878. "That very same winter logs were hauled in and a log house built which was insured for \$200.00 and in 1880 they added a new barn insured for \$200.00.

Historian Henry Fast, Steinbach, has written that on April 11, 1888, Cornelius

Toews copied the 42 articles of the Brandordnung (mutual fire insurance organization) indicating that he was the Brandältester for Grünfeld: "Since Toews had the misfortune of losing his entire house, barn and contents in a fire in the year 1876, it can be assumed that an earlier copy of the regulations was destroyed in the fire as well as other early village records."<sup>326</sup>

In 1882 Cornelius Toews and his siblings joined the Church of God in Christ Gemeinde under Johann Holdeman. February 1, 1883, Cornelius Toews was hired as teacher in Grünfeld to replace his cousin Abram Isaac who "cannot continue because of his travelling and preaching"<sup>327</sup> having recently been elected as a Holdeman minister.

According to the 1884 Municipal assessment records Cornelius Toews was a moderately successful farmer with 240 acres of land - 20 cultivated, a dwelling assessed at \$200.00, 3 1/3 horses, 6 oxen, 6 cows, 4 yearlings and 4 pigs and a line of farm machinery.

In 1885 the Cornelius P. Toews family moved to Steinbach, Manitoba, settling on SW26-6-6E, originally Hudson's Bay land, joining the Heinrich Fast family who had settled there in 1882. The small three-farmer hamlet was called "Fischau" in memory of the village in Russia where both Toews and Fast had grown up.<sup>328</sup> Cornelius Toews erected a fine set of buildings where South Park Drive is located today. In a letter to Johann F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana, of March 5, 1887, Cornelius Toews wrote, "we with our family are well and healthy and presently live near Steinbach on a farm....It is now two years ago."<sup>329</sup>

Cornelius Toews played a continuing role in representing the people of the East Reserve. On September 12, 1895, cousin Cornelius L. Plett and son-in-law Bernhard Doerksen "...drove to Cornelius Toews' to speak to H. Schans from Ontario."<sup>330</sup>

Grandson Henry E. Toews has written that they "farmed [in Steinbach] until approximately 1898-9, when they moved to Greenland to retirement. His mental facilities gave out, but physically he did not suffer too long and too severely."<sup>331</sup> April 20, 1898, the *Rundschau* reported that "Cornelius Toews had sold his land in Steinbach to Cornelius Sawatzky, West Reserve, for \$1,600.00."

On March 22, 1899, Cornelius Toews wrote to the *Rundschau* reminiscing "that he was a young man when the Crimean War broke out...[and that he] had been actively involved in the 'Podwodden'." He referred to many of his wife's Bartel relatives.<sup>332</sup> Maria's spinster sister was living with them and died at their home in Greenland on February 1, 1901.

Cornelius P. Toews died at his home in Greenland, Manitoba.<sup>333</sup> He is buried in the Greenland cemetery. Evidently he had Alzheimers for the last years of his life, and by the time of his death, his mental facilities had failed completely. November 24th, 1908, Peter I. Fast, Rückenau, Molotschna, wrote the following eulogy for his friend Toews: "Greenland has to grieve over the death of another one. This time it is the old Ohm, Cornelius Toews, who is known to many readers here as well as in Russia. He died with the assurance of Jesus as Saviour and His reward. He was 71 years, 8 months and 10 days. He was one of the deputies and one of the last still remaining. He and a few others were sent here from Russia to investigate land and government here in Manitoba. Through



the influence of the deputies, including that of Mr. Toews, it was decided to put Manitoba under an agriculture plan. His trip and other minor things helped to make an memorable beginning...."<sup>334</sup>

Anna Bartel Toews died in Steinbach on June 29, 1917. Her obituary appeared in the *Rundschau*, February 20, 1918.

*Painting of Cornelius P. Toews. The painting appears to be based on the photograph from 1906. Photo courtesy of great-grandson Earl Taves, Box 20368, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2T1.*



Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Cornelius P. Toews</b>	Jun 11,1836		Feb 21,1908
m	Elizabeth L. Friesen		1857	Jul 24,1864
5	Johann F. Toews	Sep 28,1858		Apr 7,1931
m	Sarah L. Fast	May 21,1861		Nov 5,1927
5	Cornelius F. Toews	Mar 28,1862	Apr 14,1884	Nov 14,1924
m	Anna R. Loewen	Nov 19,1864		Feb 9,1912
2m	Anna I. Loewen	Jul 10,1879	Nov 12,1912	Mar 2,1960
4	<b>Cornelius Toews</b>	Jun 11,1836		Feb 21,1908
2m	Anna Bartel	Oct 4,1838	Sep 12,1867	Jan 29,1918
5	Maria B. Toews	Dec 25,1865	Jul 20,1887	Feb 4,1947
m	Wilhelm Q. Vogt	Dec 21,1868		Nov 10,1952
5	Anna B. Toews	Aug 20,1868	Dec 25,1886	Jan 26,1933
m	Peter B. Toews	Jan 31,1859		Aug 11,1945
5	Katharina B. Toews	1870		Jul 31,1873
5	Peter C. Toews	May 20,1874	Apr,1902	Oct 7,1945
m	Carolina Eck	Nov 16,1880		Sep 30,1956
5	Katharina B. Toews	Feb 26,1876	Jan 6,1895	Jun 27,1950
m	Peter H. Wiebe	Jan 12,1874		May 5,1934
5	Susanna B. Toews	Jan 8,1878	Nov 13,1898	Jan 5,1927
m	Wm. K. Giesbrecht	Apr 30,1878		Mar 27,1943
5	Agnes B. Toews	Mar 5,1880		Feb 5,1958
m	Jakob B. Friesen	Jan 25,1875		Apr 20,1939
5	Margaret B. Toews	Nov 7,1883	Apr 12,1901	Dec 5,1955
m	Peter X. Friesen	Feb 12,1876		Jun 27,1922
5	Elizabeth B. Toews	Jan 28,1887	Jun 15,1904	Oct 9,1955
m	Martin M. Penner	Feb 9,1882		Oct 17,1963



*Cornelius P. Toews (1836-1908), Grünfeld, Borosenko, 1873 delegate for the Kleine Gemeinde. According to son Cornelius F. Toews, the photograph was taken in 1873, presumably while on the delegation journey. As quoted in Stb. Post, June 22, 1949, page 4. Photo - 60 Jährige Gedenkfeier, page 32-33/Preservings, No. 14, page 126.*

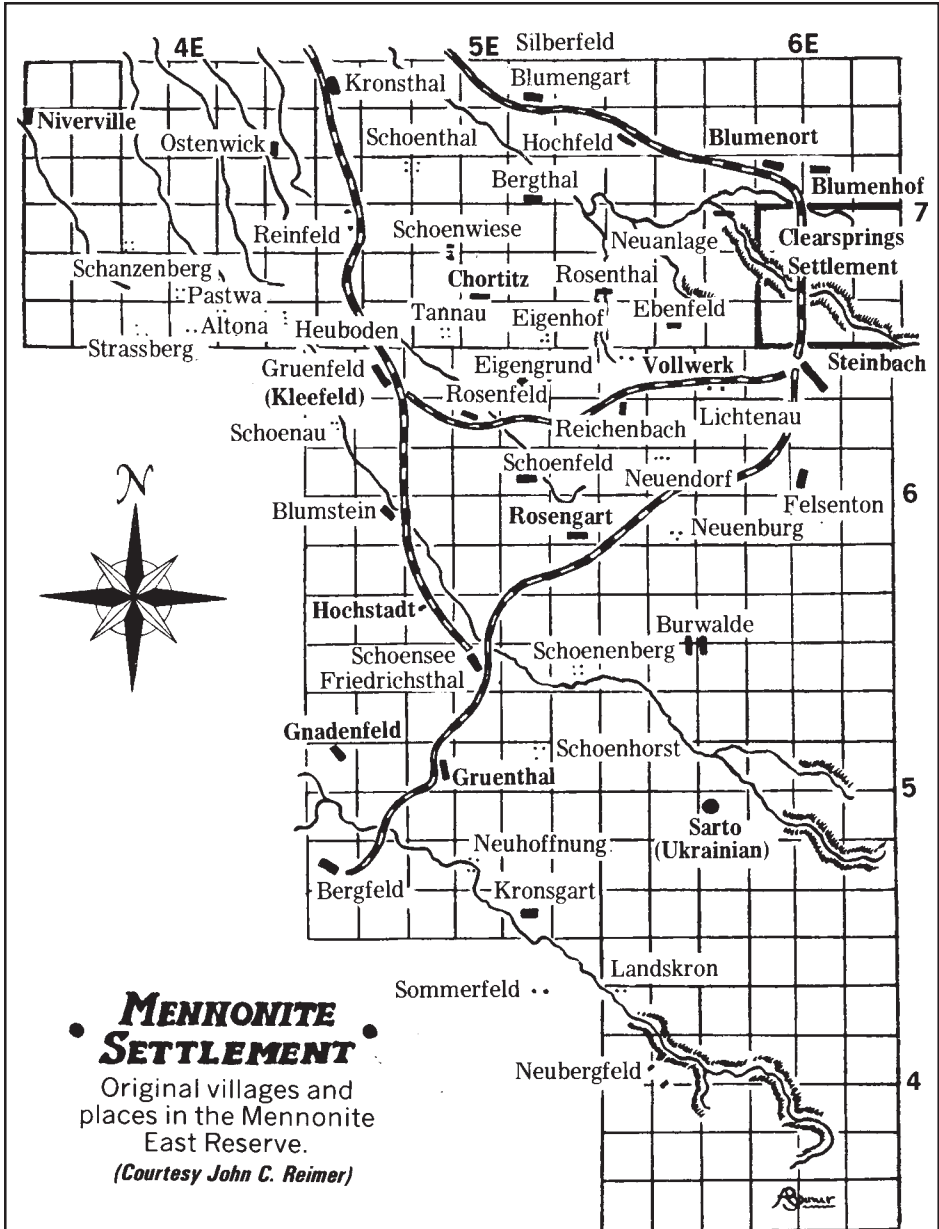


*Cornelius P. Toews (1836-1908), Steinbach, Manitoba, 1906. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 48.*

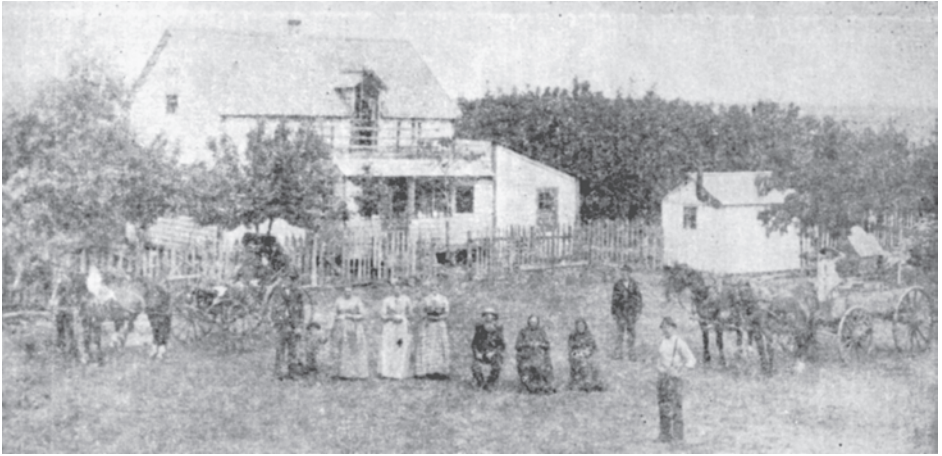


*This photograph was taken in Winnipeg on June 18, 1873 in front of the Dominion Lands Office where the Mennonite delegates from Russia were photographed (to their embarrassment) before leaving on a trip to inspect the land around Steinbach and area. Delegates Tobias Unrub, Paul Tschetter and Leonard Suderman and Andreas Schrag and Cornelius Toews kept diaries documenting their journey. Unfortunately the historical documents of Cornelius Toews were destroyed in a fire in 1876. Photo - Reflections, page 17.*

## Map Eight: The Eastern Mennonite Reserve



Though records indicate some 54 villages were settled by the Mennonites in the East Reserve, a fair number of these were only small hamlets, particularly after the out migration to the West Reserve by half of the Bergthaler between 1878 and 1882. Practically all of the villages have since disappeared without a trace, Steinbach being the only Mennonite community in Manitoba still in existence today, laid out based on its original Strassendorf configuration. Photo - Reflections, page 28.



*Above: The home and farmyard of delegate Cornelius Toews, one mile south of Steinbach in 1898. L.-r.: On the buggy, Heinrich Vogten from Altona, West Reserve; Wilhelm Vogt, currently in the invalid home in Steinbach (1949); his son Peter who died in 1918 in Alberta; Mrs. Vogt (nee Maria Toews), died 1947 in Steinbach; Susanna Toews (Mrs. Wm. Giesbrecht), died in Alberta; Aganetha Toews (Mrs. Jakob B. Friesen, Crooked Creek, Alberta); seated Grandfather Cornelius Toews; Grandmother Toews (nee Anna Bartel); "Trienke Mum" Katharina Bartel, died 1901; Peter X. Friesen; Peter C. Toews; and Elisabeth Toews, Mrs. Martin M. Penner, Steinbach. Photo - 75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung, page 34.*

*Left: The burial plot of delegate Cornelius P. Toews in the cemetery of the Greenland Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Let us pay due homage to those humble servants who allowed God to use them in leading His people. Photo - title page of Cornelius P. Toews family book.*

5 Son **Johann F. Toews** (1858-1931) married Sarah Fast, daughter of Heinrich Fast (1826-90) of Fischau, Molotschna, and original Steinbach pioneers.<sup>335</sup> November 20, 1880, they were living with his parents when “they were blessed with a son [Heinrich].” Their son born in 1881 was “deaf mute.”<sup>336</sup> They moved with the Fast to the Hamlet of Fischau in 1882 where they are listed in the Municipal records of that year with 80 acres of land - eight acres cultivated.<sup>337</sup> In 1882/83 the Johann F. Toews family is listed in the “Seelenlisten” in Steinbach, presumably the residents of Fischau are counted as part of the village of Steinbach. In the 1883 and 1884 tax records, the Heinrich Fast and Johann Toews families in Fischau are listed as an addendum to Steinbach. On March 16, 1887, Johann F. Toews filed for a homestead on NW24-6-6E. In the early 1890s the family relocated to Friesen Avenue, Steinbach, west behind the Katstellen. In the beginning they had a tannery and later also built a flour and grist mill.<sup>338</sup> He owned 120 acres on NW34-6-6E, later sold to Kl. Reimer who sold it to Johann W. Reimer, which became the “Bush Farm”. In 1896 Johann Toews was still resident in Steinbach.<sup>339</sup> Shortly thereafter they moved to Stuartburn, Manitoba, where he also owned a gristmill. March 20, 1901, Johann and Sarah wrote the *Rundschau* referring to his problems with the Holdeman Church. A report from Stuartburn announcing the death of Mrs. Sarah Toews appeared in the *Rundschau* on November 16, 1927. Family historian Frank G. Friesen writes that: “He [Johann F. Toews] was ailing in 1930 when he took refuge in Steinbach with his sons Cornelius and Edward.” Johann F. Toews was a member of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, but was separated from the denomination. He took legal action against the church but lost the court case. He wrote a book about his childhood experiences in Russia and also about his litigation against the church.<sup>340</sup> They were the parents of Cornelius F. “Baker” Toews (1884-1965), who started a bakery and shoe repair shop on Main Street in Steinbach.<sup>341</sup>



*Johann F. Toews and Mrs. Toews, nee Sarah Fast. Photo - Second Fast Reunion poster.*



*Cornelius F. “Baker” Toews (1884-1965) and Mrs. Toews (nee Katie Polos). Photo - son Earl Taves, Steinbach.*

5 Son **Cornelius F. Toews** (1862-1924) married Anna Loewen, daughter of David W. Loewen (1836-1915) of Lindenau, Molotschna, and later Hochstadt, Manitoba.<sup>342</sup> The Cornelius F. Toews family lived in Hochstadt where he worked as a common labourer for his father-in-law for a number of years. Then he spent four years as a clerk in the Hochstadt general store working for his cousin Jakob T. Regehr. After this he rented his father-in-law's farm for five years. In 1905 Cornelius F. Toews and family moved to Swalwell, Alberta, where he had taken out a homestead the year previous.<sup>343</sup> He married for the second time to the widow Cornelius Quiring, nee Anna I. Loewen, daughter of Abraham T. Loewen and Helena P. Isaac, Hochstadt, Manitoba, and later Swalwell, Alberta. Cornelius had another family of six children with his second wife.<sup>344</sup> He died while visiting his daughter Margaret, Mrs. John I. Penner, in Hochstadt.<sup>345</sup> His son Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982) was a well-known school teacher and folk historian in Manitoba and Alberta.<sup>346</sup>



*Cornelius L. Toews with his sisters Anna, Mrs. Henry F. Thiessen, (left) and Susan (Mrs. Claude Unrub), ca. 1916. Photo - granddaughter Marlys Penner, Steinbach.*



*February 22, 1945. Cornelius L. Toews and Mrs. Toews, nee Elisabeth Enns, celebrate their 25th anniversary. Photo - granddaughter Marlys Penner, Steinbach.*

5 Daughter **Maria B. Toews** (1865-1947) married Wilhelm Vogt. The family lived in Greenland, Manitoba, until 1911 when they moved to Needles, British Columbia, where they went into fruit and vegetable growing. Because of the intervening war years they were unable to market their products which had disastrous financial results. When the Holdeman community at Needles was disbanded in 1917, the Vogt family moved to Swalwell, Alberta. In 1936 they returned to Steinbach to retire settling in a house on Main Street near the former R. M. of Hanover Municipal offices (Lot 5, west side).<sup>347</sup> Their adopted son Peter became involved with the Swedenborgian church.

5 Daughter **Anna B. Toews** (1868-1933) married the widower Peter B. Toews. The following biography was written by Cathy Barkman, Box 3284, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0. Peter B. Toews (1859-1945) was a tall man, known as "Grote" Toews, or large Toews, son of Peter W. Toews (1831-1922), Anna's father's cousin.<sup>348</sup> Peter's first wife was Elizabeth Reimer (1858-86), daughter of Klaas R. Reimer (1837-1906), Steinbach merchant. They had one daughter, Katharina, born 1883, later Mrs. Peter G. Toews of Steinbach.<sup>349</sup> After eight years of marriage Elizabeth died on Sept. 4, 1886.

December 25, 1886, Anna C. Toews and Peter B. Toews were married. They raised 12 children. They lived in Blumenort until 1890 where Peter operated his father's sawmill. They then moved to Greenland where Peter was a farmer. He also owned part of a steam-engine threshing outfit. He was a quiet man. He is remembered by one grandchild as having an innocent and naive nature. He didn't like to spend time alone. Leona Rempel, a granddaughter, tells the story which was passed on from Russia about how Peter went into the barn and found that the hired hand had hung himself. Since then he preferred to have people around him and after Anna died he always had someone living with him.

Peter liked to tell stories. Martin Barkman related one regarding an incident which happened in Russia. The body of a dead person was put on a board in the sawmill. A group of boys dared each other to go into the sawmill to see the body. How would they believe that the boy had actually done what he claimed to? Whoever agreed to the dare should take a hammer and nail and put the nail into the board. That would be proof that he had been there. One of the boys went in but never came out. When the other boys checked on him he had nailed his own coat to the board by accident and was "literally" scared to death.

In 1882 Anna and Peter joined the newly formed Holdeman church. Some say Peter spoke in tongues. He wanted to talk about his experiences so people came from far and wide to hear him. In the 1910s there was an agent who sold land to Holdeman Mennonites hoping to establish a settlement in British Columbia. As a result Peter Toews bought land in Needles, B.C. The family moved west in 1911. The land turned out to be worthless and Peter and Anna faced financial disaster.<sup>350</sup> Son William passed down some memories of the B.C. trip: "When they were down to their last piece of bread and had only enough money left for train tickets they decided to go back to Manitoba. With heavy hearts and tattered clothes they waited long hours for a train that was apparently late. An older English couple, noticing the destitute family, invited them into their home

for the night. They fed them and got them off to the train the next day. Their generosity was highly regarded for a long time afterwards.”

After they returned to Manitoba Peter bought a farm in the R.M. of Ste. Anne, River Lot 29. Peter B. Toews farmed grain, cattle, horses, pigs and chickens with his boys. They never had a tractor. Peter also delivered milk to the cheese factory to supplement their income. Peter and Anna were poor as they raised their family through the depression years. Eva (Toews) Snyder, a daughter, says that she was born in Ste. Anne in the family home - a large house with fancy gable ends. It was plain but comfortable with two stories, a basement, and no indoor bathroom or electricity. There were three bedrooms upstairs and two downstairs, a parlour, a big kitchen/dining room combination and a pantry.

Peter and Anna were viewed as a popular couple. Anna was a large, tall woman, but Peter was even taller. A niece, Mrs. George (Katharina Wiebe) Penner, in reminiscing about Peter and Anna Toews remembered that Peter was very deaf for as long as she knew him. She thought perhaps this was the reason that Peter and Anna always spoke loudly to each other. Peter was a happy, easy-going person and didn't get excited very easily.

Peter Toews always sat in the passenger seat of the car and was so tall, his head touched the roof. Anna did the driving when they travelled in their Model T car which didn't have any windows. Many wondered at that rare phenomenon - a woman who did all the driving? Some say Peter didn't have the courage and was too nervous to drive. Peter wasn't interested in driving the car but he always kept up the repairs and changed the tires when needed. He regularly crank-started the car for Anna. In fact, whenever Anna, who was a midwife, took the car to deliver a baby he went with her to crank-start the car so she could come home once the newborn arrived. As a rule, people came to get Anna when they needed medical attention.

Eva (Toews) Snyder remembered the family car in which they frequently went to Winnipeg. If they didn't take the car they rode the train to Winnipeg to do their shopping. They bought their groceries in Ste. Anne. Some of their food supply was supplemented by the large family garden. Eva remembered picking many potatoes. The homestead had a smokehouse behind the house. The family would butcher pigs and hang them in the smokehouse providing smoked pork for the winter. The Toews' home was a busy place. They sewed their own clothes, dresses and pants, with a sewing machine. Anna spent some of her "spare" time knitting. Peter would go to Winnipeg with his horses and sleigh and bring things back to sell out of his house in Ste. Anne. Annie Penner recollects going to get some one cent popcorn bags and other candies from the little store grandpa operated on the side. Peter and Anna were the first family outside of Steinbach to have a telephone line. This could have had something to do with the fact that their son Peter ran the telephone exchange in Steinbach. Their phone line, installed in 1911, led from the house to the cheese factory.

As Peter and Anna reached retirement age their daughter Eva bought the supplies needed for a house which was built across from the family farm by volunteers. Once Peter and Anna moved into the new house their son Peter and



his wife Eva took over the Toews' farm. Family gatherings still carried on. Leona Rempel remembers going to visit her grandparents. William Toews, Leona's uncle, owed his sister-in-law, Mrs. Jakob Toews, some money. To repay the debt Bill (William) would swing around Steinbach, pick up Mrs. Toews and Leona and take them to visit Peter and Anna Toews. Regular family get togethers and picnics were greatly enjoyed by the grandchildren. They would all squat on the ground and Grandma would start a table song in German. Peter Toews was a very affectionate and generous grandpa. He would pay out 10 cents for a kiss from the grandchildren. Selma Barkman tells of how they used to carry little pails of water into the farmhouse because grandpa and grandma didn't have running water. Grandpa sold mixed hard candy and he would give the grandchildren one for little chores they did for them. Laura Barkman recalled grandpa enjoyed when the grandchildren would line up on the stairs in the new house and sing "My Grandfather's Clock" for him.

Eventually Peter moved to Steinbach and the first house Eva had built for Peter and Anna became a schoolhouse. In 1936, three years after Anna died, Eva had another house built in Steinbach for her father. Peter, preferring not to live alone, lived first with the Charles Rumble family (close friends of Peter) and then Dave Barkmans. In 1943 Waldon and Alma Barkman moved in with Peter who lived with them until his death. Today this home still stands at the corner of Hanover and Elm Avenue and is owned by Waldon and Elma Barkman (1996). Peter Toews died on August 11, 1945. Leona Rempel recalled seeing his coffin in the front yard of the house on Hanover. His funeral was held at the Steinbach Holdeman Church and he is buried at the Steinbach Memorial Cemetery.

As one of the grandchildren put it "Anna Toews was an amazing woman" who possessed a keen memory. People use descriptive words such as friendly, cheerful, generous, hard working, busy, and humorous as they reminisced about her. She was a plump woman and almost as tall as her husband. Anna usually wore a black apron over her plain black serviceable dresses. She wore her hair pulled back as was the custom. "Groute Toewsche", as Anna was known, enjoyed a good meal. After the car drive from Ste. Anne to Steinbach to visit her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jakob Toews, she would often head for the pantry first and ask if there was anything good to eat. She also loved a good bowl of chicken noodle soup and didn't mind going 40 miles to get it. Anna made wonderful chicken noodle soup from their own chickens which was served with her delicious homemade buns. Guests, family and extended family often sat around the Peter Toews' table for a meal and as a result all the women at the Toews' home had to do their share of the cooking. Anna liked to bake peppernuts and hand them out to the grandchildren.

Anna Toews was a woman ahead of her time. She had a full time occupation outside of the home. Between the age of 19 and 45, covering a span of 26 years, Anna bore 11 children. At the same time she was a *Hebbamme* or midwife which meant she was busy delivering the babies of families in her own community as well as other districts such as Blumenort, Ste. Anne and Richer. As a midwife she delivered babies for Kleine Gemeinde, Holdeman, Metis and pre-

sumably people of other beliefs and backgrounds.

Historian Royden Loewen reported that her personal records show she delivered almost 1,000 babies.<sup>351</sup> Family members acknowledged that among these were many of her own grandchildren. Whether people were wealthy farm or village residents or poor bush-dwellers without money, Anna felt that God had called her to help anyone in need. In 1892, Anna volunteered, along with two other women - Aganetha, Mrs. Johann R. Reimer, Steinbach, and Margaretha, Mrs. Jakob B. Toews, Hochstadt - to take a church-sponsored, six week course in midwifery from Dr. Justina Neufeld, Mountain Lake, Minnesota who was well-known in the East Reserve.<sup>352</sup> Anna was known as a competent midwife. Anna's reputation as a respected person in the medical field was so widespread that she was often called to certify the deaths of people. To my knowledge, no one knows how or why Anna became a midwife.<sup>353</sup>

Anna was also available for other afflictions that women experienced. On one occasion a woman had been treated for a severe haemorrhage by several doctors who used ice packs to stop the bleeding. They had pretty much given up when someone summoned Anna Toews who in wondrous ways helped the woman make a full recovery. Since doctors were very scarce, Anna was sought out for her advice on curing numerous ailments. Selma Barkman noted her grandma grew "moya blada" in the garden which was used to rub on sores and boils. She also grew chamomile in the garden using the blossoms to make a tea for sick people. An article "Remedies", written by Tina H. Peters, says that a cup of chamomile tea in a baby's bath water was thought to prevent "Schwam" which was a prickly heat rash on newborn babies. The same tea was supposed to be beneficial for the baby's mother after her confinement.<sup>354</sup>

Anna looked after the medical problems of her own family as well as others. An article by Alma Barkman, "Remedies" provided insight as to the common illnesses and diseases that pioneer women had to deal with in the late 1800s and early 1900s: rickets or "head growing" treated by rubbing the head with apodoldac or alcohol; the common cold treated by hot foot-baths, home-made chest rubs and poultices; bronchial colds treated by applying goose grease, chicken fat or even plain lard mixed with a few drops of turpentine to the chest; tonsillitis or sore throat treated with cloths wrung out in hot water and applied to the neck and throat or medicine of a few drops of Wonderoil into a teaspoon of sugar; earaches treated with the heart of a roasted onion placed against the inner ear; and the "seven years itch" treated by a sulphur bath and a daily change of clean clothes and bedding. Alum or salt in water was used as an antiseptic to treat canker sores of the mouth or haemorrhages after a tooth had been extracted. Anna probably used all of these remedies at one time or another.<sup>355</sup>

How did Anna juggle her medical career and home life? Peter supported Anna in her decision to be a midwife. He was very proud of her. Leona Rempel says that Anna was very dedicated to her medical profession. She would sit beside the bed of a woman about to deliver a baby for as long as two days if needed. No wonder many of the mothers-to-be wanted Anna to deliver their babies. Fortunately for Anna, she had a very capable step-daughter, Katherina, who worked

very hard at home and convinced the younger children to help as well. She kept their enthusiasm going by telling them stories and reading to them while mother was busy out of the home. It is no wonder that Anna was a little reluctant to allow Katharina to get married as she was such an asset to the household during Anna's busiest years outside of the home. One can only imagine the strain that an occupation such as Anna's may have put on the family and home. Her husband, Peter, and the older children will have had added responsibilities in raising the younger children and keeping up with the household chores which in other homes were done by wives and mothers. We can well appreciate what Anna's vast knowledge, experience and dedication meant to the communities surrounding her.

The January 17, 1933 issue of the *Messenger of Truth* reports under News Items that: "Sister Peter B. Toews, St. Anne, Manitoba, is ailing and suffering much with the fatal malady, cancer. The sister prefers to be with her Saviour, and is prepared to meet her God. We have much sympathy for the sufferers of the dreadful disease, cancer." Grandchildren confirmed this news adding Anna Toews suffered from stomach cancer. Leona Rempel remembered going as a young girl with her mother to visit her grandmother as she lay sick in bed. A woman dying of stomach cancer was a traumatic sight for a young girl. Anna's daughter, Eva, and her granddaughter, Elma Barkman, sat with Anna towards the end of her illness. Eva, who was training to be a nurse in Portage, was called home to be with her mother. Elma was considering going into nursing at the time and Eva thought this would be a good time to see what nursing was really about.

The February 14, 1933 issue of the *Messenger of Truth* printed the obituary for Anna Toews by P.A. Penner. Waldon and Alma Barkman of Steinbach provided a copy. Parts of it read: "About two years ago she began to ail somewhat that she at intervals became confined to her bed, but as soon as she sufficiently recovered she ventured to calls for obstetrician which she had rendered faithfully her past 40 years, people gaining such confidence, that she could not refuse when possible, until December last when she became so ailing that she felt her end was only a question of short duration, when she expressed her preference to meet her Saviour at rest from all sorrow and suffering and be with God's children, since she confessed and believed to be in peace with God and man through the redeeming blood of Christ, not of good works but the free gift of God. Christmas it appeared as though she might recover, when she said, she would also gladly be with her dear family if so it would be God's will, even though with much suffering. But it was God's will to relieve her from her much suffering, wherein she remained patient to her last. She was wholly offered unto His will, until He called her January 26, 1933, awaiting until the glorious resurrection morn, when she will respond to the trumpet's call. Funeral services took place Jan. 28 in the Greenland Church, Brother P.A. Penner opened services by calling minds to prayer and led in prayer, then brother Wiebe spoke from text Heb. 4:9-11, in German, then brother J.M. Penner spoke in English, then brother J.J. Penner made closing remarks. The remains were laid at rest in the adjoining cemetery." Because Anna's funeral was in the winter there were no automobiles at the funeral. The coffin was transported from the house to the Greenland Holdeman Church by horses which pulled the large sleigh.

Anna Toews was an extraordinary woman. Although she lived a different lifestyle than most women of her time she did not view herself as “different” or more advanced. Anna is remembered as an efficient woman who was dedicated in her role as a medical caregiver in southern Manitoba. Along with her medical commitment to the community, she managed, with the help of her husband, children, family and friends to raise and care for her family. Although Anna was not without flaws, she was devoted to fulfilling the will of God for her life. This meant being a loving caregiver to strangers as well as friends and family. She was respected and loved by neighbours, family and community. The foregoing biography of midwife Anna Toews was written by Cathy Barkman, Steinbach, Manitoba, and published in 1997.<sup>356</sup>



*“Four generations of the Toews Family.” On the back of the photograph, Peter B. Toews himself has written the following memorial: “This picture was taken on July 11, 1941, at Eatons and Company in Winnipeg. I myself, Peter B. Toews, am sitting in the middle, 83 years old; to my left is my daughter Tien, Mrs. Peter G. Toews, 59 years old; her daughter Anna, Mrs. J. G. Friesen, is standing to my right, and standing by me is my great-grandson, age 15. Mrs. Job. G. Friesen is 37 years old. Photo courtesy of Peter T. Friesen, Winkler, Manitoba, 1981/Pres., No. 10, Part Two, page 50.*



*Left: Anna Toews (1868-1933), ca. 1912/13 shortly after they returned from Needles, B.C. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part Two, page 50. Anna's children included well-known sons "Central" Toews and "Ralighs" Toews.*

*Below: The Peter B. "Groete" Toews family on the Spray Bridge near Needles, B. C., 1911. Peter B. Toews is sitting on the bridge and Anna is standing behind him. Photo Ted de Veer/Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 30.*



5 Son **Peter C. Toews** (1874-1945) met his wife, Carolina Eck, while he was on a trip to Kansas. She was from the Polish Mennonites. In his younger years, Peter C. Toews was known as “Wild Pete” because he was a happy-go-lucky person. The family lived in Main Centre, Saskatchewan, where he had a prosperous well-drilling business. In 1918 they moved to Steinbach, Manitoba, where they retired, purchasing the premises of Steinbach mayor Johann G. Barkman.<sup>357</sup> Their descendants include Lilly, wife of John K. Schellenberg, former Secretary of the Hanover School Division<sup>358</sup> and “Doc” Toews, a bachelor. Grandson Peter Schellenberg owns the Pioneer Inn, Steinbach.



*Peter C. Toews and Mrs. Toews, nee Carolina Eck. Photo - daughter Mary Jane Harder, Winnipeg.*

5 Daughter **Katharina B. Toews** (1876-1950) married Peter H. Wiebe, son of deacon Heinrich Wiebe of Blumenort, Manitoba, who perished in a fierce blizzard in 1876. Anna and her husband lived in Greenland, Manitoba, where they farmed and Peter served as the Postmaster. In 1911 they moved to Needles, British Columbia, where they went into fruit farming. In 1917 they returned to Steinbach, Manitoba, purchasing the property on NW26-6-6E from Gerhard W. Reimer, where Anna's parents had once lived.<sup>359</sup> Peter H. Wiebe again served as Postmaster and was known as "Poust" Wiebe. He also served on the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization which assisted Russian Mennonite refugees to come to Canada during the 1920s. He served as the Waisenman for the Molotschna Waisenamt, the widow's and orphan's trust organization run jointly by the Kleine Gemeinde and Holdeman Church.<sup>360</sup> Their descendants include son Ben P. Wiebe, Steinbach Creamery, and grandson Dennis Guenther, longtime manager of the Steinbach Credit Union.



*Peter H. Wiebe. Photo - Noreen Reimer.*



*Mrs. Katharina Toews Wiebe. Photo - Noreen Reimer.*

5 Daughter **Susanna B. Toews** (1878-1927) married Wilhelm K. Giesbrecht, son of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1846-1907), one of the original Steinbach pioneers and mayor in 1883.<sup>361</sup> Wilhelm and Susanna moved to Needles, B.C., in 1912, and four years later to Swalwell, Alberta. He was a farmer and for several years ran the Swalwell No. 1 mail route. Wilhelm was married three times but his children were all from the first marriage.

5 Daughter **Agnes B. Toews** (1880-1958) married Jakob B. Friesen, son of Johann S. ("Asel") Friesen (1853-1937) of Steinbach, Manitoba, and later Hochstadt.<sup>362</sup> Jakob was a carpenter and a farmer on the side. The family moved to Needles in 1912 but they only stayed two years when they moved to Swalwell, Alberta. Later they moved to Crooked Creek in the Peace River district.

5 Daughter **Margaret B. Toews** (1883-1955) married Peter X. Friesen, the brother to Jakob B. Friesen who had married Margaret's sister Agnes. Soon after their marriage the Peter X. Friesen family settled down on a farm about four miles southwest of Steinbach, Manitoba. Peter was a machinist and for a long time operated a well drilling rig for Cornelius K. Friesen. Peter died in a tragic accident when a coupling fell from a high derrick and hit him on the head. He was fatally injured and died two days later.

5 Daughter **Elisabeth B. Toews** (1887-1955) married Martin M. Penner, son of Martin R. Penner, a Holdeman minister.<sup>363</sup> The family lived in Greenland, Manitoba. In 1911 they also moved to Needles, British Columbia. They stayed only for a year or so, returning to Steinbach, Manitoba, where Martin Penner, together with brother John, founded a sash and door company.<sup>364</sup> In 1918 he bought out his brother. In the 1930s M. M. Penner also acquired "Steinbach Lumber Yards," operating it until 1950 when Jonas Friesen took over. Martin M. Penner was a successful entrepreneur and prominent member of the Steinbach business community. Journalist Abram Warkentin has written: "...An exceptionally active community member, Mr. Penner left the community and district a number of monuments, the greatest of which was his family of eight sons and two daughters. Cornelius, the oldest, became a farmer and building contractor at Sydney, Man.; Emil, Alfred, Bill and Pete operated the Colenso Lumber Company; Linden, became the owner of Family Shoe Store; Joe is the owner of Penner Electric; George runs an insurance and travel agency in town; Doris is know as Mrs. Henry Ketter and Eva as Mrs. K.T. Kroeker. Mr. Penner was a councillor of ward 3 in the Hanover Municipality for many years. Ward 3, at that time, included the village of Steinbach. He was the councillor in charge during the construction of the Piney Highway in 1931-32 and could recall vividly in later years the poorly fed men and horses which worked on the tax relief project. In 1935 or 1936, Mr. Penner led a Chamber of Commerce sponsored project to build a road which should ultimately connect Steinbach with Vita. Money was scarce and with the exception of a \$250 grant from the provincial government, all work was voluntary. It was Mr. Penner's job to recruit this voluntary help, needle the province for the stupendous grant of \$250 and finally act as the man in charge of the project. And Mr. Penner also found time to tackle problems closer to home. He deplored the inadequacy of the little plant which was the only claim to "modern" lighting facilities which Steinbach had. Since there was no other way to get better electricity, he settled the matter in characteristic fashion. 'I'll build a light plant.' Some ridiculed the idea as utterly impossible but in the fall of 1936 the purchase of two diesels was made and by Christmas the power was on. Poles, wiring, transformers, and what not had been set up and the town was provided with alternating current for the first time. The Penner plant, known as the Steinbach Light and Power Co., was in operation until 1943 when it was bought by the Manitoba Power Commission."<sup>365</sup>

According to the Cornelius P. Toews family book, "...the early years [of their marriage] in particular were very rugged. Several winters of preparations, moving and living with her children in a bush camp took up her days. Rabbit hunting with .22 calibre rifle on winter afternoons on occasion. Her summers were just as busy preparing and looking after a family....The gentler years began with the opening of a lumber camp in Ontario. Blue Lake was a joy to her and she had special pleasure when her sons would boat her on the Lake. Elizabeth's concern was the conversion and well-being of her family. When war was declared in 1939 she wrote the Dominion Government on behalf of her sons of conscription age, reminding the Govt. of their promise made to her father [of military exemption].... Her letter was returned with the request that it be written in English..."<sup>366</sup>





*Elisabeth Toews and Martin M. Penner, wedding picture, June 15, 1904. Photo courtesy of grandson Gary Penner, Steinbach.*

5 Son **Peter Plett Toews** (1841-1922) was a pastor, bishop, churchman, poet, songwriter, historian, spokesman to the Czar, emigration leader, farmer, nature lover and horticulturalist - truly a renaissance man.

Even as a young lad Peter Toews was conscious that his parents and Gemeinde were set apart from the world around them. He, himself, wrote that he endured the spiteful teasing of school mates of other Gemeinden, when they called him *Froamskotuks*, the godly one, or the pious one, because he was held back from carrying on in mischief during the night and from taking part in godless associations, use of tobacco, playing of cards, swearing, etc. The witness of his parents was such that he believed in the Church of God from an early age, and that the Kleine Gemeinde was such a church.<sup>367</sup>

As already mentioned Peter's younger brother Jakob, only 20 years old, died of small-pox on May 21, 1859. This tragedy brought out new dimensions to Peter's reflective nature, and resulted in what may have been his first written poetry - a poem entitled "Ein Gedicht über das Absterben unseres Bruders Jakob Toews, 1859." One stanza of the poem reads as follows:

Doch lasst uns dieses denken nach -  
Wie er so früh gestorben:  
Und wie viel Thränen Ach und Ach -  
Wir uns dadurch erworben  
Das wie hier nicht in dieser Zeit  
Uns haben in der Einigkeit  
Befleissiget zu leben.  
May our minds reflect  
how he died so young,  
and how much pain and woe  
to us have come, and tears,  
in our time, because we here,  
have not sought enough  
to live as one in unity.

Peter Toews was baptised and accepted into the Gemeinde by Ältester Johann Friesen on June 4, 1861. Toews later recalled his spiritual journey: "I believed that I was converted, even though I was not instructed in the aspect of being consciously aware of the forgiveness of my sins through faith. The emphasis was more on the living of a life of discipleship. I overcame a special experience in the summer of 1863, through the reading of Menno Simons' *Meditation on the twenty-fifth Psalm* which was my favourite devotional reading at the time. A spurned proposal of marriage was the cause as I had followed the influence of friends instead of seeking the counsel and countenance of God. I came into distress and temptation, and learnt what it meant to be tried and tempted face to face by Satan; but much more so I also learnt to seek the Lord and to experience his friendly countenance and to be secure for one's self as the Saviour says, 'I have prayed for you,' etc. The experience was so wonderful, especially for a few days, that it was like bathing in the peace of God.....When I married in the knowledge of God's leading later in fall, my heart was still in this precious peace."<sup>368</sup>

In the summer of 1863, Peter Toews had the privilege of accompanying Isaak Harms (1811-91), Lindenau, on a journey to investigate settlement opportunities for the young and landless in the Kleine Gemeinde. In a letter to the *Rundschau* of 1913 Peter Toews reflected about the experience: "As we drove through Snamenka we marvelled at the well-tended vineyards of the Russians, which were not yet to be found among the German people in the Molotschna at the time. I have always loved gardening and trees, and my thoughts still frequently return to the many fruits in my father's garden in Fischau. The exact location of the many different fruit trees remains a very fond memory for me."

A six year lease was entered into for a property 15 km. north of Einlage on the east side of the Dneiper. The village of Friedrichsthal was settled that fall and a second village, Andreasfeld, the following spring.<sup>369</sup> The Markuslandt settlement and the village of Andreasfeld were named in honour of Andreas Markus, the landowner.<sup>370</sup>

On November 12, 1863, Peter Toews married Anna Warkentin, daughter of Johann Warkentin (1817-86) and Anna Loewen. Anna was the daughter of *Musterwirt* Isaak Loewen (1787-1873), Lindenau. The Warkentins came from the village of Blumstein where Toews' mother and Plett grandparents had lived for a time. In 1900 Peter Toews recalled that Blumstein had strong connections to his family, as not only his mother and step-mother but the mother of his children all originated there.

Johann Warkentin (1817-86) was an aggressive farmer who was cited in the *Unterhaltungsblatt* as being "the owner of the second most productive dairy herd in the Molotschna." It was reported "...that he owned three cows whose average milk production came to more than 14 Russian quarts a day."<sup>371</sup> Warkentin was active in the out-immigration of the Kleine Gemeinde from the Molotschna during the 1860s. He purchased and leased parcels of land which he resold to other settlers. In 1872 he purchased an estate called Hochfeld, a short distance north of the Borosenko Colony.<sup>372</sup>

Peter Toews and his bride lived in Fischau until Tuesday, Pentecost, 1864, when they moved to Markuslandt. They established a home on rented land in Andreasfeld. In 1866 they sold their farm to Aron Lepp, a Brüdergemeinde preacher.<sup>373</sup> The family moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko, with Anna's parents. Peter Toews owned a farm of 140 acres. Blumenhoff with 20 to 30 Wirtschafte became the center of the reform congregation of the Kleine Gemeinde known as the Blumenhoff Gemeinde.

### **Ministerial Election, 1866.**

As Peter Toews had become older his natural talents and abilities were becoming more evident. He was a sensitive man who was warm and outgoing. One source described him as follows: "He was very active, and had a keen mind, an ability to be precise and sure of himself. Short of stature and erect, he made a commanding figure. His gifts of communication and expression no doubt lent themselves well to occasion..."<sup>374</sup>

Peter Toews was a deeply spiritual person. It was probably not unexpected

that he would become a candidate for ministerial office. On October 10, 1866, Toews was elected as a minister at an all-congregational brotherhood meeting held in Fischau, Molotschna. Also elected was his older cousin, Gerhard P. Goossen. Another purpose of the meeting was the election of a new Ältester. Heinrich Enns (1807-81), Fischau - Peter's uncle by marriage - was chosen. The Kleine Gemeinde in 1866 was in the process of restructuring: one-half - the so-called reformed group - had withdrawn from Ältester Johann Friesen, Neukirch, and constituted themselves as a separate congregation with their own ministerial. This group later came to be known as the Blumenhoff congregation. The other party, eventually coming under the leadership of Abraham L. Friesen in 1869, was referred to as the Heuboden Gemeinde. The names came from the villages where the respective Bishops lived.

In a letter written in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, during October, 1866, Toews wrote to the brethren in the Molotschna, Crimea and Markuslandt. He described, "the sorrowful and heavy heart with which I covenanted with you and the Lord to enter into the service for which I was elected with a majority of votes."<sup>375</sup> The return journey to Borosenko took Toews several days. He found his young son mortally ill: "Here my pride and joy, my only child, lay prostrated and on the death bed, and also died after having preached repentance to me for two days and two nights, suffering in all parts of the body. It was not the death of the child, rather the sorrow and loneliness of my wife and the acknowledgement of my sins in the suffering of the innocent baby which grieved me so."<sup>376</sup>

Journeys of spiritual ministry and pastoral visitation became a way of life. In a letter of December 1867, Peter Toews reported returning from a journey to the Crimea having driven from the 7th of December until the 10th when they reached the banks of the Dnieper. Here they had to wait until a vessel had passed by in order to break the ice on the river to cross over: "This did not occur until after sunset and it was 11 o'clock in the evening before we arrived at home; we found all our loved ones to be well."<sup>377</sup>

One of the first issues facing Peter Toews was the controversy over the election of brother Cornelius as minister. This election took place on January 4, 1869, in Blumenhoff, Borosenko. Bishop Enns and minister Goossen from the Molotschna, and minister Jakob A. Wiebe, from the Crimea, were in attendance assisting the local Ohms. Toews and others accompanied the visiting ministers on their return journey up to Nikopol. However, the brethren in the Molotschna were not satisfied with the result because Cornelius had been excommunicated in 1857 and there was a teaching in the Gemeinde against an excommunicated member later holding ministerial office.<sup>378</sup>

In a letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna written in December of 1868, Toews confessed he had defended the election of his brother too strongly the previous winter and asked for forgiveness. Toews revealed a willingness to admit mistakes, to look at a problem from new perspectives: "We all truly wish to live in accordance with the Lord's commandments. If in some matters our fathers have not achieved this goal, let us believe that they failed because of human weakness... rather than with intention and premeditation...."<sup>379</sup>

## Crimean Secession, 1869.

These events were taking place during a turbulent time for the Molotschna Mennonites. Religious dissension, sectarianism and fanaticism were raging on all sides. German Separatist-Pietists were making inroads among the poor and were successful in tearing apart many families and even some churches. As the same time, the established socio-economic elite in the Molotschna were being challenged by reformers such as Abraham Thiessen (1832-89), Neu-Halbstadt, and minister Franz Isaac (1816-1900), Tiege.

Dissatisfaction was also simmering in the Kleine Gemeinde in the Crimea which had grown considerably under the enthusiastic leadership of ministers Jakob Wiebe and Peter Baerg - both relatively recent members. Some brethren had been influenced by Separatist-Pietist dogma that they had not been "properly" converted at the time of their baptism. The Kleine Gemeinde, however, held to the more Biblical view that ". . . a true heartfelt remorse and repentance is a presentable reformation upon which we are promised salvation, and which is the foundation of every conversion."<sup>380</sup>

There was also a growing desire among the Crimean brethren to be independent by electing their own Ältester. In a letter to the Crimean Gemeinde of January 14, 1869, Toews mentioned hearing they were planning to have a vote for an Ältester between the two ministers Baerg and Wiebe on the Sunday after the New Year. They were anxiously waiting to hear whether the Gemeinde had "a new Ältester".<sup>381</sup> Toews also reported that a reconciliation between the Blumenhoff Gemeinde and a large part of Johann Friesen's Gemeinde was taking shape and a meeting between the ministers of the two groups had already taken place on December 28, 1868.

The Crimean Gemeinde, in the meantime, had elected Jakob A. Wiebe as its new Ältester. The immediate concern was the matter of his ordination. Apparently Wiebe had considered being ordained by an Ältester from a different Gemeinde, possibly by the leaders of the *Ausgetretene* or Brüdergemeinde secessionists who visited Annenfeld only a few weeks later. The idea was frowned upon. In a letter of March 16, 1869, Peter Toews wrote such an ordination would to some extent symbolize a bond with the outside parties. Toews advised Wiebe to proceed with an ordination by Ohm Baerg in accordance with the precedents in their own Gemeinde.<sup>382</sup> Wiebe, evidently, decided to follow the advice.<sup>383</sup>

The major reconciliation already alluded to was finally achieved on May 6, 1869, at an all-congregational brotherhood meeting in Blumenhoff, Borosenko. The Gemeinde was also served with communion by the new Ältester after he had first baptised three women upon confession of faith. This was followed on May 20, 1869, with a ministerial election for the Molotschna congregation.

Only a few weeks after the reconciliation and the return of Wiebe to the Crimea, Toews received a letter from Peter Baerg advising "that after the presence of a number of men, including Peter Hiebert of Liebenau, the Ältester of the secessionists [Ausgetretene], our Ältester Wiebe and a number of other members wanted to change the baptism and have themselves rebaptised, and in fact, wished to allow themselves to be dipped under water."<sup>384</sup> A great volume of

correspondence was now exchanged between the brethren in Borosenko, Molotschna, and the Crimea. Several of the major epistles have been published elsewhere.<sup>385</sup>

Peter Toews sought to counsel the rebel faction in love and understanding. In a letter to the minister, Abraham Klassen, Prangenau, Molotschna, of August 11, 1869, Toews quoted Ohm Peter Baerg to the effect that a declaration was to be expected from Wiebe that the baptism of the Kleine Gemeinde would no longer be regarded as valid - meaning they could no longer be considered as Christian brethren by the Krimmer group.<sup>386</sup>

This was followed on August 31, 1869, with a lengthy letter by Toews to Wiebe convincingly outlining Biblical teaching and historical precedents. After quoting extensively from Scripture and the writings of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, Thielmann Janz von Braght, George Hansen, Peter J. Twisk, Johann Philip Schabaelje and Hermann Schijn, Toews made one final attempt to convince Wiebe he should at least continue to regard his former brethren as fellow Christians: "Perhaps you will revoke your judgment and perhaps you might still change your mind, when you give thought to the earnestness of those holy testimonies of blood and to their zeal for the house of the Lord and also to their baptism. Are they to have erred so terribly? Are they to have been the ones who allowed their bodies to burn, without the love? But oh! I repeat my plea once more. Do at least retract to the point that you would at least recognize affusion as a valid baptism."

Toews concluded his well-reasoned epistle by stating sadly that he could not allow his friend and former brother to come to such unscriptural views without making one final attempt to communicate with him: "I might not have written anything at all, if you, beloved brother, had you not declared baptism with water, namely, by pouring, to be so completely worthless.... I merely wanted to remind you and draw your attention that we had somewhat more knowledge and faith than do innocent children when they are baptised."<sup>387</sup>

It is always difficult for genuine Christians to learn to deal charitably and in love with those who have fallen into spiritual darkness and fanaticism and then arrogantly deny the name Christian to all others, including their former brethren and sisters. There was no stopping the Secessionists at this stage. On September 21, 1869, Wiebe was rebaptised by Cornelius Enns, son of Ältester Enns. Thereafter Wiebe, in turn, baptised some 20 others. The Secessionists now organized as the Krimmer Brüdergemeinde. A group of six to eight families under the leadership of Ohm Baerg remained true to their Lord and Saviour and to the solemn covenants they had once made.<sup>388</sup>

Peter Toews, naturally, was discouraged, expressing himself in a letter to Ohm Baerg: "Yet, I hope - the way you write - that you will not think it ill of us, that we must be anxious [regarding the loss of the Ältester], when we think of the love which he poured out upon us only such a short time ago and the many blessed hours, regarding which many a one would surely say with the Galatians, that they would have torn their eyes out for him, had it been possible, and given them to him [Wiebe]....I cannot bring it across my heart that I must now act so knowledgeably and unequivocally - as I have already done - against the seces-

sionists, who I had always seen as being a great distance ahead of me [in their Christian piety]; and that I must now declare them as being in error,....”<sup>389</sup>

It is trite to say that when individuals deny the validity of their former conversion - and their own honesty at the time of baptism on faith and convert themselves to Separatist-Pietist religious culture - this creates a heart-wrenching sorrow for the faithful Christians left behind to deal with the torn-asunder relationships and human debris left in the wake of such wantonness.

The Blumenhoff Gemeinde was now all the more in need of an Ältester. Wiebe’s defection left only one Ältester - Abram L. Friesen of the Heubodner Gemeinde. An all-congregational brotherhood meeting was called on September 10, 1870, at Rosenfeld, Borosenko, where Toews was elected to the office with a large plurality. He was ordained by Ohm Peter Baerg on October 26, 1870, as the sixth Ältester of his denomination. At the age of 29, he was the youngest man to hold the position.

As the shepherd of his flock, Toews faced numerous issues and challenges. Within the coming year three ministers were removed from office, cousin Johann Isaac was charged criminally for having despoiled an Orthodox statuary, the last 10 members of the Gemeinde of Ältester Johann Friesen (1808-72) joined the Blumenhoff congregation, and numerous pastoral and disciplinary issues came about. These matters are detailed in the many documents of the Kleine Gemeinde already published.<sup>390</sup>

One issue, directly relevant to the Toews family, was the dissatisfaction of Johann Goossen - Toews’ cousin and brother-in-law, married to sister Susanna - regarding a boundary dispute arising in Blumenhoff, Borosenko.<sup>391</sup> As the Ältester, Peter Toews, was called in to mediate the dispute. Eventually Goossen was put out of the Gemeinde because of insufficient acknowledgement. Although he later conceded and was accepted back, he left the Gemeinde at the time of emigration in 1875, settling in Gnadenu, Kansas.<sup>392</sup> The matter left a lasting estrangement between Peter and sister Susanna.<sup>393</sup>

### **Emigration, 1872-75.**

The issue regarding which the Kleine Gemeinde under Ältester Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) had originally seceded from the Grosse Gemeinde in 1812 was the principle of nonresistance. It was ironic that the departure of the denomination from Russia would be sparked by similar concerns. In his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*, Peter Toews voiced his view that the Mennonites and particularly his Gemeinde, had compromised their faith during the Crimean War.<sup>394</sup>

Similar questions were arising by the 1870s. With the reorganization and retrenchment of the Kleine Gemeinde there was less room for compromise. In the Molotschna, the minister Abraham Klassen was ordered to serve on a jury. This was deemed unacceptable as it was just as bad to give an order orally, whereby someone would be punished, as to physically mete out the punishment.<sup>395</sup> A related issue arose in Borosenko when the Mennonites were told they would be organized as a Volost District - a form of municipal or county government - and

have to take part in juries and hold positions of authority. Peter Toews felt it was hypocritical for his co-confessionists to agree to this, while sending one delegation after another to Petersburg, the Russian capital, to plead for exemption from the proposed conscription laws.<sup>396</sup>

Toews followed the representations his co-religionists were making in the Russian capital, collecting relevant documentation under the title, "Akkten die Deputerten von den Deputationsreisen . . .", 72 pages; another collection pertaining to the one year period commencing in March, 1871, was gathered under the title, "Bericht über die Deputationsreise nach S. Petersburg. Verfertigt von L. Suderman, Berdjansk, zugehörig, Peter Toews," 36 pages. The collection of these writings manifested a sense of historical consciousness in Peter Toews.<sup>397</sup>

The military service issue was discussed at a brotherhood meeting held in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, on June 25, 1872. It was decided it would be dangerous to rely on the delegates of other denominations. The Kleine Gemeinde would have to make its own representations. By July 19 a petition had been prepared to be forwarded to Petersburg. On August 27 a decision was made to send delegates to the capital together with the Heuboden Gemeinde. On September 11, 1872, the delegates - Abraham Klassen, from the Molotschna, Abraham L. Friesen, for the Heuboden Gemeinde, and Peter Toews, representing the Blumenhoff congregation - left for Petersburg. Ironically, the day before they left, Toews' congregation held its first worship service in a fine new brick worship house in Blumenhoff - the first for the Kleine Gemeinde after 60 years in Russia.<sup>398</sup>

Peter Toews, Klassen, and Friesen arrived in Petersburg on Sunday, the 17th of September. On the 19th they spoke with Lord Hahn who gave little encouragement and advised against submitting a petition to the Czar. On the 28th they went to the General-Adjutant of the Czar, Baron von Magendorf. He advised they should speak with Minister Wolujeff. The Ältesten from the Molotschna, Volga, and Poland had arrived in the meantime. They had already talked with Prince Heiden, and had also been directed to Wolujeff. The two Ältesten, Dietrich and David Hamm from the Volga and Samara, and B. Peters, Goertz, and Isaac from the Molotschna, had spoken with him. Wolujeff allowed it to be understood he had more hope for the continuation of freedoms than Hahn.

In the meantime, Klassen and Peter Toews spoke with Pastor Dalton, of the Reformed Church, who assured them he had opportunity to make intercession with the Minister. He gave them a written commendation to his Bishops who had more opportunity to speak to the Minister. The Kleine Gemeinde delegation left Petersburg on the 29th, arriving in Kremenschug on the evening of October 2nd. From here they travelled to Ekatherinoslav by Post where the brethren, P. Penner, Rosenfeld, and Peter's brother Johann Toews, Grünfeld, were awaiting them. In Petersburg the delegates had met two Ältesten from Poland, Tobias and Stukke, and also two men from Hutterdorf by the name Hofer.<sup>399</sup>

Within a month another attempt was made to petition the higher authorities, this time directly to the Czar himself. Information was received from the Molotschna that a deputation was to be sent to Yalta where the Czar was staying at his summer palace on the Black Sea. Toews was again delegated. Together



with A. Friesen from Heuboden, they left on the 13th of October by way of the post coach. It took until Tuesday the 17th to arrive. The other delegates were: Bern. Peters and Peter Goertz from the Molotschna; Ältester Gerhard Wiebe from Bergthal; Ältester Gerhard Dueck and David Epp from Chortitz; and Friesen, the honorary Justice of the Peace, from Berdjansk. The Governor-General was sick when they arrived and for this reason they could not get an audience with the Czar. The party was able to appear before the Governor-General and were told he was aware of their concerns. On Sunday the 22nd, they attended at Lodwadia, the Imperial palace, in order to see the Czar. But it was in vain, and they left during the evening arriving at home at 12 midnight, Wednesday, the 25th.<sup>400</sup>

On the 29th of October, Toews reported to the brotherhood regarding his experiences in Yalta. On December 24th the sending of a delegation to America was discussed for the first time. On January 21, 1873, Toews, Abraham Loewen and Johann Harms, accompanied by other brethren drove to the Molotschna. They were joined by Abraham Klassen to attend a conference in Pordenau. The representatives from the various Gemeinden recommended a delegation be sent to America. On January 29th Toews and his associates attended another conference in Alexanderwohl. He was deeply influenced at the meeting through a presentation made by cousin, Ältester Johann Harder, of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. At the close of Harder's address everyone rose to their feet, and moved "...by the earnestness of the occasion, a few verses of the song, "Herr, floesz mir diesen Trostgrund ein, dasz bei dir soll mein Wohnhaus sein..."", etc, echoed forth."<sup>401</sup>

On February 4, 1873, Toews was back in Borosenko and reported to the brethren. It was decided the Gemeinde should send its own delegate and Cornelius Toews, Peter's brother, was elected. On the 10th his commission setting out the sought for privileges was approved and a collection provided the necessary funds.

Peter and brother Cornelius communicated regularly during the journey. Their letters provide a poignant portrait of the close relationship they shared. On July 31, 1873, Peter wrote to Cornelius, referring to the death of their father on May 15, as well as the death of his own child and his wife's grandfather, Isaac Loewen, his beloved mentor. He wrote: "...the day before yesterday, we received your letter of May 31, which you had written in Fargo. Thus we had both written each other on the same day and in like manner our prayers will often have come before God at one and the same time... In the previous letter you will first of all have read the news that our beloved father has gone home to his rest....[In] the Molotschna....my beloved wife became sick and then our Anna and also our little Johann. Anna also died after two days. The pronouncement 'to thrust in thy sickle and reap' of the Revelation of St. John has also found application among us. For after you have rushed home on the post wagons, you will find that many friends are no longer in our midst and are now in the grace of God. Four sisters have died in Steinbach. Also we have already buried our beloved grandfather [Isaac Loewen]. He died, old and at a peaceful age; he was also tired of living. The Lord has finally provided him with his release for which he - as well as our father - had truly longed for from the heart. They have gone on to their rest in the land of true freedom and are now enjoying blessedness and peace at the right hand of the Saviour in the eternal fatherland, where they

will nevermore grow weary.”<sup>402</sup>

In the meantime the crushing demands of leadership of a large Gemeinde with congregations in three distant locations continued. On May 7, 1873, Toews - accompanied by ministers Kroecker and Loewen - left on another trip to the Crimea where he preached three times. A continuous stream of young people were being baptized and received into the Gemeinde. There were the normal discipline matters to deal with. Although the denomination suffered membership losses during these turbulent times, there was also a steady flow of people who were leaving other denominations to join the Kleine Gemeinde to seek spiritual solace and rest for their souls. The people needed pastoral counselling and spiritual nurture. On May 31, Toews - accompanied by wife and children - left for the Molotschna for another journey of ministerial visitation. On July 8, he was in the Province of Kherson where he preached in Nikolaithal (Gruschewka), some 20 km. west of Borosenko, to a small Kleine Gemeinde fellowship there.

On August 7, brothers Peter and Johann Toews were at the dock in Nikopol to greet brother Cornelius on his return from America.

In a report to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna of August 8, 1873, Peter Toews admonished his parishioners that spiritual concerns should be their first priority regarding the emigration. He worried about the need to provide for widows, orphans and poor “...and that we might also have as much love for Christ who has so much love to us. If only all the beloved brothers and sisters would gladly surrender their hearts to him....[to be] willing to sacrifice the necessary capital and in addition to put aside what is necessary for the brethren.” Toews concluded his pastoral letter, “Oh that we would not waste the day of salvation, the acceptable time, in which we are to work for the meat which is not perishable. This is the day in which we are to gather treasures in heaven which will never perish.....Oh, that we would be acceptable with a life that is holy and pious.”<sup>403</sup>

Peter Toews was concerned that the teaching of community of sharing as taught in the Gospels would not only be acknowledged in theory but would also be carried out in practice. History would show that the Kleine Gemeinde was successful in being able to bring all their orphans, widows and poor along with them, so no one need remain behind because they lacked means.

On August 12 the brotherhood discussed favourably the terms which had been offered by the Canadian Government. Nor was the fear of universal military conscription abating. On August 19, Toews accompanied Heinrich Wohlgemuth to Ekaterinoslav, to have a certificate issued that Wohlgemuth - who had been drafted in his home province in Poland - was indeed of Mennonite birth, and therefore exempt.

On August 10, 1873, Toews met with the Ältester and ministers of the Heuboden Gemeinde - at their request - to discuss a possible union. On August 18, the proposal of the Heubodner was presented at a brotherhood meeting but did not come to fruition. On August 30, 1873, Toews had a meeting with the Ältesten, Abraham L. Friesen, Heuboden, and Jakob A. Wiebe, from the Crimea, where it was decided that land grants as provided for by the authorities in Canada would be accepted, namely, for all men and women over 20 years. It had earlier

been considered that only the male persons be utilized for this purpose.<sup>404</sup> It was also discussed that it would be beneficial for outstanding debts to be paid in advance, before the debts and demands had to be published. On November 7, Ältester Friesen and Toews were summoned to appear at the Volost office in Nikolaithal, where they made representations which exonerated the Gemeinde from a claim by Abraham F. Thiessen, Neu-Halbstadt, a disgruntled member.

An important meeting took place on April 17, 1874, when Peter Toews and fellow ministers, were summoned to appear before General-Adjutant von Totleben, in Halbstadt. They were brought over the Dneiper, but were only summoned before Totleben on Saturday the 20th. He advised the Mennonite Ältesten and ministers that the Czar had sent him to counsel them against the emigration and that he, the Czar, "had reconsidered our faith. On Thursday evening, the 25th, we were required to appear in Chortitz where we were given the same presentation and earnestly exhorted to remain in Russia. Finally we submitted to him a letter of thanksgiving for the freedoms we had enjoyed in Russia and a petition for a favourable disposition regarding the request for passes for those ready to emigrate."

On April 29, Toews, together with a number of those who had not yet sold their properties, were summoned to attend in Ekaterinoslav. This included Cornelius Plett - Peter's uncle, and Heinrich Reimer (1818-76) - his brother-in-law. Totleben repeated the previous presentations. The emigration passes of those who had already disposed of their properties were being held up in an apparent attempt to dissuade the emigrants. Toews took the opportunity to plead on their behalf since they would soon be without places to live. He also requested that Totleben present their "Letter of Thanksgiving" directly to the Czar which Totleben promised and also that the emigration passes would soon be issued.

About a month later, on May 30, 1874, the first group of Kleine Gemeinde immigrants left for Canada. Toews together with a group of some 30 families remained in Russia until May 1875 to ensure the orderly completion of the emigration. He provided direction and leadership to his Gemeinde through an extensive correspondence with ministers and parishioners in Canada and with officials and leaders involved in the emigration. During this time Peter Toews completed the publication of a book, *Das Friedensreich Christi auf Erden*, already referred to. He wrote a brief history of his Gemeinde from and after the 1866 division under the title "Anhang N. 1" which he appended to the already completed *Sammlung*.<sup>405</sup> In preparation for the emigration, he compiled a "Genealogy Register" (continued to 1878), listing all 163 families of his congregation.<sup>406</sup> He organized his collection of personal documents and church papers which he would take along to America and which would later form the key to any study of his denomination. Toews was also given some books by his widowed aunt, Mrs. Klaas Friesen, nee Carolina Plett, who did not want to ship them all the way to America. One of the books by Dutch Bishop Claas Gangloffs, *The United Undivided Church of God*, would have fateful consequences for the Gemeinde.<sup>407</sup>

The nonresistance crisis and the subsequent immigration from Russia were the most important leadership tasks Peter Toews would face. He met the challenges courageously and successfully.

## **Manitoba, 1874-1880.**

In 1875 Peter Toews and the last 30 Kleine Gemeinde families in Russia migrated to Manitoba. The Peter Toews family consisted of son Peter, daughter Maria and two foster children - Isaac Wiens and Anna Broski. They arrived in the village of Grünfeld on the evening of June 29, 1875.

Most of the basic work relating to the establishment of the pioneer settlement had already been done. Villages had been laid out, roads and drainage started and the first crop was in the ground; the church, schools and village communities were up and running. Cornelius Toews - who had gained immense stature as a delegate and prominent leader during the journey and transhipment to North America - played an important role during this time demonstrating that his leadership abilities were comparable to his brother's.

The immigration period brought forth some interesting dimensions in the close and sometimes symbiotic relationship between Cornelius and Peter. In talking with various descendants of Cornelius one senses a hint of jealousy regarding the phenomenal success of his younger brother. History has added an ironic twist to this normal sibling rivalry in that Cornelius has been recognized as a pioneer leader of the Mennonites in Manitoba, with his picture prominently displayed in every history book, while it is still not quite respectable to refer to Peter and his legacy.

Another family matter arising during the immigration, was the fact that his mother, Maria Toews, and two sisters, the single Maria and Susanna (Mrs. Johann Goossen), had left the immigration party in Liverpool, taking the Inman Line to New York. From New York they went to Gnadenu, Kansas. Peter Toews was not happy with this but unable to do anything about it.

In his determined and forthright fashion Peter Toews plunged into the thick of leadership responsibility immediately upon arrival in Manitoba. His experienced hand at the helm was much in need. He found the fellowship in a state of grief and shock over the drowning, only a week earlier, of minister Jakob Barkman, Steinbach, and companion, Jakob Friesen, Grünfeld. They had been in Winnipeg purchasing supplies. The next Sunday he preached in Blumenort, where minister Abraham Klassen, Rosenort, announced he was moving to Kansas. Klassen was one of a dozen families who would make this decision to move to warmer climates in Nebraska and Kansas in 1875. In October Toews baptised young people and accepted six new members by transfer.

Toews moved quickly to formalize, reconstitute and revitalize, social and economic structures such as schools and the Waisenverordnung (orphans' trust and estates office). This was more important for the Kleine Gemeinde than the others since in the Molotschna they had shared these institutions with up to 12 other denominations. The Bergthaler, for example, had simply transplanted their existing school, Brandordnung and Waisenverordnung, from Russia to Manitoba.

Most important was the confessional (church) educational system. At a brotherhood meeting on Rosenfeld on November 19, 1875, resolutions were passed that the ministerial would act as the board of directors of the school system, that all the children without exception were to be educated and that the financial

arrangements proposed by Hespeler were to be accepted. In a letter to all the teachers of the Molotschna Mennonites of the East Reserve of January 3, 1876, Peter Toews let it be known that the church through the ministerial would be in complete control of the school system, that all school age children were to receive the appropriate education regardless of the financial means of the parents, teachers were expected to support and attend teachers' conferences and seminars and all curriculum was subject to their approval. In a tersely worded edict, Toews wrote: "Teachers shall instruct their children by example in word and deed in such matters as manners, etiquette, obedience, attention, love and friendliness to everyone. No teacher shall adopt a new innovation without the support of their colleagues and the approval of the school authority."<sup>408</sup> The confessional school system implemented under Toews' leadership was undoubtedly among the most advanced in Manitoba at the time.

In December the first ministerial election in Manitoba was held in Rosenort. In January, 1876, a ministerial election was held in Blumenort. Next it was the turn of the Waisenverordnung. At a brotherhood meeting in Steinbach on January 6, 1877, a resolution was passed that the institution should continue as it had in Russia with the amendment that leadership would be provided by the ministerial instead of the Gebietsamt.<sup>409</sup> The brethren were to withdraw any deposits they had with banks and directions were given respecting charging interest.

On December 27, 1877, it was resolved to build three meeting houses for the East Reserve, one each in Grünfeld, Steinbach and Blumenort. The preparation of a systematic set of school regulations was commissioned at the same meeting. They were drafted by the veteran Molotschna school teacher Gerhard Kornelsen (1816-94), Lichtenau.<sup>410</sup> On January 11, 1878, the specifications for the dual purpose school and worship houses were finalized - they were to be 50 feet long by 30 feet wide and seven feet high. This protocol was again recorded under the signature of Peter Toews. He seemed intent on giving the Gemeinde a much wider purview and oversight than it had ever had in Russia.

There were also signs that not everyone was happy with the direction in which Toews was leading the Gemeinde. The previous discussion regarding the payment of interest was not sitting well with some - presumably those with money to lend. The situation was magnified early in the new year when Toews preached a sermon against the charging of interest. The issue was discussed at a meeting at the home of Peter Toews on June 8, 1878, where he managed to persuade everyone except Jakob L. Dueck who openly spoke against his position. Others were not happy with Toews' openness to outside ideas.

The issue came to a head at a brotherhood meeting in Grünfeld on July 2, 1877. A number of brethren were not satisfied with Toews' sermon, principally, his uncle Cornelius Plett. This opposition served Plett in so far that a brotherhood meeting was called in Grünfeld where many from the Scratching River were present. Toews addressed the brotherhood expounding against the charging of interest [Wücher] from the books of the Pentateuch, Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels, as being wrong and an abomination before God. The brotherhood was not convinced. The Ältester was unanimously instructed to discon-

tinue reading magazines, at least not to subscribe to any more, although the *Herald [der Wahrheit]* was approved by the majority.<sup>411</sup>

It was a setback for Peter Toews with a clear message that his reform program could go only so far. But the reorganizational agenda in other areas went forward as before. The school regulations were now ready. On September 29, 1878, they were read to the brethren and approved effective immediately. On November 6, the ministerial met with the Protestant School Authority at William Hespeler's office in Winnipeg, where financial support was offered for the school system. On March 10, 1878, the school teachers were examined in Chortitz by a committee consisting of William Hespeler, Jakob Friesen, Tannenau - for the Berghthaler, and Abraham Isaac, Schönau (Toews' cousin) - for the Kleine Gemeinde.

Most of Peter Toews' time and energy from 1875 to 1878 went into the establishment of school and village institutions and other social structures such as the Waisenverordnung. In addition, he dealt with all the Ältester duties of preaching, counselling, baptising and disciplining. One has a picture of the pioneer Bishop at this time, driving off his yard with his sleigh and team of horses during a snowstorm on his way to preach in Blumenort or perhaps Rosenort, or sitting by the light of a coal oil lamp late into the night studying in his ancient *Martyrs' Mirror*, or writing a sermon, while his beloved Anna sat nearby, working on some sewing, and pausing occasionally to exchange a few endearing words or reflections regarding the Gospel. Toews' leadership was so all-pervasive that his personal story from the time of his election as a minister in 1866 until 1881, in reality, was also the history of the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde.

### **The Holdeman Attraction, 1881-96.**

Johann Holdeman, a revivalist minister from Ohio with "old" Mennonite roots, was to have a devastating impact on the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde. Although they had apparently corresponded since 1876, the first reference to Holdeman in Peter Toews' ministerial journal is on April 2, 1879, when he recorded sending Holdeman nine books he had requested. The list of titles provides an interesting insight into Toews' mind; 1. *Das Biblische Namen und Chronikbuch* by P. J. Twisk, Holländisch, 2. *Das Friedensreich Christi* by Twisk, 3. *Spiegel des Lebens*, by George Hansen, 4. *Fundamentebuch*, by George Hansen, Holländisch, 5. Also by Hansen, *Confession* in Latin and German, 6. and 7. Two volumes of *Geschiedenis der Christen . . . Mennoniten Genant*, by Hermann Schijn edition of Gerhard Maatschoen, 8. *Ein Confession oder Glaubensberichten der Alten Flemischen Taufgesinnten*, German, 9. The work of Peter Peters, Holländisch.

In November, 1879, Johannes Holdeman came to Manitoba to investigate the Kleine Gemeinde. He preached many times. On the 13th of November he travelled to the Scratching River. A brotherhood meeting was held January 16, 1880, where the "differences between our Gemeinde and that of Johann Holdeman were put forward."<sup>412</sup>

From here on the experiences of Peter Toews as church leader, become the history of the Holdeman Church in Manitoba. Toews was not satisfied with the spiritual life within his Gemeinde. From reading the book by Claas Gangloffs,

already referred to, he had become focused on the idea of a united visible church, as the one and only true church of God. The Kleine Gemeinde, following sound Flemish teaching, believed itself to be only one part or local manifestation of such a universal “true” church. At the time of Holdeman’s visit in 1879 Toews was under the impression that Holdeman too was looking for such a church.<sup>413</sup>

After Holdeman had returned to Ohio, he wrote to Toews that union with the Kleine Gemeinde as had originally been contemplated would not be possible. In his view the Kleine Gemeinde was “too schism-ridden, too formal, too quick to baptise anyone and not spiritual enough to constitute the ‘True Church.’” What was needed was a new start, with each person being rebaptised and then individually joining the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>414</sup>

There were serious reservations in Manitoba regarding Toews’ idea of a union with Holdeman. The matter was discussed at great length at a brotherhood meeting in Grünfeld on February 27, 1881. Another brotherhood meeting was held in Rosenfeld regarding the differences in the Gemeinde over baptism.<sup>415</sup> Wisely the brotherhood commissioned Toews and his uncle, Cornelius Plett, to go to Kansas to investigate Holdeman’s church. Since Plett had stood up to Toews earlier on the issue of charging interest, he was probably chosen to placate those suspicious of Holdeman and the American-style revivalism he was espousing.

On June 7, 1881, Cornelius Plett and Peter Toews, left for Kansas. On June 28, Peter Toews returned to Manitoba. Shortly thereafter Toews presented a report to the brotherhood.<sup>416</sup> Cornelius Plett came home from Kansas and Nebraska on July 2. They came back with very differing views. In his “Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession,” teacher Peter L. Dueck (1842-87), Grünfeld, reported that “...when Ohm Plett returned from Kansas he did not give a favourable report as had Ältester Peter Toews who had declared himself that he had found affairs in the Holdemans’ Gemeinde to be above expectations.” Plett, on the other hand, was concerned about incidents of loveless conduct within the Holdeman congregations which did not square away with its profession of being the only “true” church. Dueck wrote, “...Ohm Plett...related to me in Toews’ presence, how Mrs. Schmidt had tearfully lamented to him how lovelessly her brother Abraham Hiebert had treated her.” Plett’s report had a deep effect on many, including Peter L. Dueck, who added, “...this made me realize that Toews was no longer impartial in the matter.”<sup>417</sup>

Peter Toews was also opposed by Rev. Peter Baerg of Grünfeld, Manitoba, once his faithful lieutenant in the Crimea. Baerg was particularly concerned about Holdeman’s emphasis on visions and dreams.<sup>418</sup>

In November of 1881, Holdeman and Markus Seiler, a co-minister, visited Manitoba again “conducting a series of meetings that stretched well into 1882.”<sup>419</sup> Peter Toews described what he experienced the day he made his final decision regarding Holdeman: “Directly before my acceptance into the Church of God,...about 14 or 15 were together in our house one evening....brother Markus [Seiler] was among us, and he led in prayer. During the prayer a special power gripped me which made my whole body shake and tremble that I thought the place moved beneath us, and I instantly received a great joy. Having arisen from

prayer, the trembling and movement still continued throughout my body.....[This] brought to my mind Acts 4:31 and Romans 8:16, '....the Spirit itself beareth witness within our spirit, that we are the children of God.' Although having formerly believed, experienced, and thus taught and testified, I had never before experienced it in such perceptible power...."

The following evening, Peter Toews, his wife and others of those gathered the previous day were baptized and received into Holdeman's Gemeinde.<sup>420</sup> Peter Toews now resigned as Ältester. The process is described by Johann B. Toews, Blumenort: "After the visiting ministers J. Holdeman and M. Seiler had held a meeting at each of the four different meeting places, brother Toews arose in an open assembly and acknowledged his incapability, or rather unworthiness of continuing to stand before the church as leader and bishop, and openly announced that he was resigning from his position and turning the further leading over to the visiting ministers,....Besides brother Toews, another two ministers resigned from their office....His resignation was not an easy matter, he loved his church, he did his best to instruct her, to build her; he sacrificed strength and health.....The Gemeinde had confidence in him. Many, in sincere love, clung to him...."<sup>421</sup>

Approximately one-half of the Manitoba membership of the Kleine Gemeinde followed their Ältester Peter Toews. On January 11, 1882, Peter Toews, Abram Isaac (his cousin), and Martin Penner (married to Toews' cousin), were ordained as ministers in the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>422</sup> Peter Toews now became a passionate advocate of the Holdeman church.

When Peter Toews joined the Holdeman's Gemeinde, he, of course, was rebaptized himself. He now insisted his mother also join the Holdemans which she did. Later she changed her mind - presumably under intense lobbying by sister Susanna - and again went back to Wiebe's Gemeinde. Nephew Johann F. Toews described these events in rather negative terms: "When my grandmother received the second baptism from the Krimmer Brethren Gemeinde this action was condemned by her son Peter. Later he allowed himself to be baptized as a member of the 'true' Gemeinde of God. Now he considered it to be necessary that his aged mother be rebaptized for the third time in order to also be able to join this one and only salvation-giving Gemeinde. When, however, she returned to the Brethren Gemeinde after her third baptism, she was banned by the Holdeman's Gemeinde; and her son Peter deemed it to be right."<sup>423</sup>

The estrangement between Peter Toews and his mother and sister became quite open when Mrs. Johann Toews asked her grand-nephew, Franz K. Goossen, Hochstädt, Manitoba, to inquire of her son as to why he was not paying the money which he owed. In a reply to his mother of June 28, 1892, Toews stated he had been asked by Goossen to pay the debt amounting to \$84.00 in 1889. He enclosed a payment of \$8.00 and requested the balance be allowed to continue by credit.<sup>424</sup> Shortly thereafter Toews received a terse postcard from brother-in-law, Johann Goossen, stating his mother-in-law had told him, "....write....she said, you are so capable, meaning thereby, as good [a writer] as Cornelius, that I am demanding my money; failing which [payment by Toews], I shall direct myself to uncle Cornelius Plett."



Toews replied on April 28, 1892, that he hoped to pay his debt soon and mentioned his concern that his previous letter was not read to his mother and that the Goossens had thereby cut off his means of communication....” In a post-card sister Susanna responded, “...I want it [to be paid] so that mother does not need to upset herself so much over this; she says, ‘he treats me like an animal.’” This was obviously no longer merely a private matter between Toews and his mother. By now the hint of a scandal was known in wider circles.

On September 14, 1893, Peter Toews wrote Johann Nickel, Inman, Kansas (married to his wife’s cousin), advising he still owed his mother \$40.00. He asked Nickel to pay the debt on his behalf since he did not have sufficient money, adding, his mother was rather adamant. Nickel complied and went to Goossens’ to pay the debt and also read Peter Toews’ letter to them. In his reporting letter to Toews, Nickel wrote that Toews’ mother “....had said that she gladly forgave him [Toews] regarding the money, but that with respect to the anxiety and sorrow which he had caused her....he himself would have to give answer before the Judge on the last day.”

Peter Toews was deeply grieved by the situation. On February 8, 1897, he wrote his mother expressing his regret that she had originally joined the Gemeinde in order to please her children and then had withdrawn in order to please Susanna and husband Johann Goossen. In Peter’s view she would have been better off “. . . to have remained in Wiebe’s Gemeinde instead of taking such a serious step merely to please people, meaning the Goossens; and to come and then to go again, as if it were a light matter. You have heard how deeply this has affected me....” Although the matter of Peter’s debt was resolved, it was clear the family estrangement remained.

### **Publications, 1897-1912.**

It was during his Holdeman period that Toews was finally free to devote more energy and talents to his love of writing and publication. In the Kleine Gemeinde the seminal writings of the Mennonite faith were revered and collected as spiritual treasures. It was a great achievement for someone to discover such writings - perhaps from a relative in Prussia or from the long forgotten papers of some deceased brother in Russia - and to translate them from Dutch to German. Handwritten copies were circulated among the brethren and in the community. This was a common interest among leadership as well as laity.

Peter Toews collected such writings and also translated them from the Dutch to the German. He was an historian by nature and saved many of the letters organizing them carefully. Like many others - but in a much more systematic and organized way - he transcribed letters from former times shedding light on the history of the Gemeinde. By 1874 Toews had gathered the most important source materials into a handwritten volume of 502 pages of historical writings entitled “Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinden der Mennoniten an der Molotschna.” This was probably the most important collection of historical documents in the Molotschna at the time.<sup>425</sup>

Toews was also interested in events beyond the borders of his community

and country. By 1872 he was subscribing to the *Herald der Wahrheit* published by Mennonite publisher Johann F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana. In the same year, Peter Toews also corresponded with Funk.<sup>426</sup> Toews ordered a quantity of devotional books from Funk for distribution among his parishioners.<sup>427</sup>

The Kleine Gemeinde was the pioneer in publishing among the Russian Mennonites. The first publication, a book by Dutch Bishop Pieter Pieters, was printed in 1827. Peter's uncle by marriage, Heinrich Enns, Fischau, was the promoter of three devotional books published between 1860 and 1865.<sup>428</sup> Peter Toews, himself, was the promoter of the last work to be published in Russia - an exposition of the Mennonite understanding of the millennium by the Dutch Bishop Peter J. Twisk, entitled *Das Friedensreich Christi oder Auslegung des 20. Capitels in Offenbarung St. Johannes* (Odessa, 1875), 31 pages.<sup>429</sup> As already mentioned, Toews was assisted in this project by cousin, Johann Harder, Ältester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde.<sup>430</sup>

The immigration to America and the efforts required to reorganize schools, church and social institutions in a new country, followed seven years later by a life changing union with Johann Holdeman, seemed to have absorbed Toews' energy. In the late 1890s, Peter Toews again became actively involved in publication work.<sup>431</sup> Although Toews did transfer religious allegiance to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, there is no evidence he ever collected historical writings regarding this denomination in any sort of formal way as he had perviously done for the Kleine Gemeinde.

In 1897 he, together with Johann Holdeman, commenced to publish the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, as a monthly paper.<sup>432</sup> This was the first denominational newspaper sponsored and edited by a Russian Mennonite. The achievement seems somewhat more impressive considering that the entire body of Mennonites in Russia - often claiming to be more educated and cultured - did not manage to establish their own newspaper until 1903.<sup>433</sup> In his capacity as co-editor, and later as a contributor, Toews wrote and published volumes of material in the *Botschafter*.<sup>434</sup>

Another significant publishing event was the completion of a 430 page songbook for the Holdeman Church in 1906, the first in Manitoba: *Unparteiisches Liederbuch: Eine Sammlung geistreicher Lieder zum öffentlichen and häuslichen Gottesdienst, zur allgemeinen Erbauung und zum Lobe Gottes, Hereausgegeben von Gemeinde Gottes* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonitischen Verlagshandlung, 1906). Some 50 of the songs were written by Manitoba members of the church, over half of them by Toews himself.

A number of family and historical booklets were published by Bishop Peter Toews shortly after the turn of the century. The first was the booklet by his father, Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes: Aus den hinter-lassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Elkhart, Ind., 1908), 24 pages. During the same time Toews published an eight page devotional booklet, *Biblische Speisekarte der Altväter*.<sup>435</sup> The *Speisekarte* consisted of seven poems telling the story of the ancient biblical patriarchs.<sup>436</sup> In 1910 Peter Toews published a 10 stanza poem entitled, *Wie Gott das Gebet einer Mutter erhört*.<sup>437</sup>

The next year, 1911, Peter Toews published a 27-page booklet, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit Angeben der durch Peter von Riesen von Schidlitz bei Danzig in Preußen in Druck gegebenen Menno Simons Schriften*.<sup>438</sup> It dealt with the 1833 publication by Peter von Riesen and brothers Klaas and Abraham in Russia of Menno Simons' "Foundation of Christian Doctrine" in a three volume edition.<sup>439</sup> It has been suggested that this more historical work was written in response to Peter M. Friesen's *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Ruszland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitische Gesamtgeschichte* published in Russia in 1911, and providing mainly false and pejorative information about the Kleine Gemeinde and other conservative Mennonites.<sup>440</sup> In 1912 Peter Toews completed his last work, a book of poetry in the form of song lyrics, published under the title, *Der Köstlichere Weg in Liedern*.<sup>441</sup>

### **Grünfeld, 1900-1909.**

Peter Toews continued to write history and poetry while living in Grünfeld. In 1900, he wrote an important article on the history and genealogy of the Toews family, "Toews Family Chronicle" tracing the lineage to Cornelius Toews in 1766.<sup>442</sup>

Peter Toews also wrote poetry. The poem "Seven who have entered" refers to the seven children the Toews' lost in infancy and the five who survived to adulthood.

#### **Seven who have entered:**

Sieben sind vogangegangen, In die frohe Ewigkeit,  
Um mit Unschuld dort su prangen, Angetan mit Herrlichkeit.

Fünf sind noch im diesim Leben, Auf dem kampfplatz angestellt,  
Guter Gott! Du wollest gehen, Dasz wir einst in jenner Welt.

Möchten unsere Namen finden, (Und durch's Blut des Lammes Jesu  
Uns gereinigt von Sünden), In dem Buch des Lebens Heh'n.

O! Du Todes-überwinder! Heiland, Jesus, Gottes - Sohn!  
Mach uns schon zu Gottes kinder, Hier, und einst vor deinem Thron. Amen

With these verses the above is finished, January 17th, 1901 – Peter Toews,  
Grünfeld, E.R., Manitoba.

#### **English translation.**

There are seven who have entered. In the realms of endless bliss,  
Clothed in innocence forever. Glory-clad with happiness.

Five remain to man their stations; On the battlefield of life.  
Loving God! May we be valiant; That beyond this world of strife.

We might find our names inscribed; Within the Book of Life one day,  
Cleansed thro' Jesus, Lamb of God; Whose blood once washed our sins away.

O, Thou Victor over death; Savior, Jesus, God's own son!  
Take and make us as Thy own; Here, and then before Thy throne.

Peter Toews, January 17th, 1901

(Trans. Margaret Penner Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, September 2000)

## Unser Monument

Glaubens voll auf Gott vertraut; Haben wir auf ihn gebaut  
Nicht auf Sand unser Gebau; Auf dem Fels des Heils getreu  
Jesus Christus is der Grund; Und mit ihm auch unser Bund  
Hier in dieser Prüfungszeit; Und in alle Ewigkeit  
Das sei auch am Grabe noch; Unser Zeugnisz tief (\*) and hoch  
Als dem Herrn geweihter Dank; Statt der Klage Lobgesang  
Denkt ihr an ein Monument; Dasz man unser Grab erkennt  
Pflanzet von des Waldes Saum; Einen immergruenen Baum  
Der da lege Zeugnisz ab; Von dem Leben uebern Grab  
Da uns Sterben war Gewinn; Fort zu leben immerhin  
Unser Leibe wird auferstehn; Unverweslich neu und schoen  
Abgestreift das alte Kleit; Agenthan mit Herrlichkeit  
\* Psalm 130:1, Korinther 2:10

## Our Monument

Trusting God, His Word within. We have built our lives on Him.  
We've not built our house on sand; On the fields of grace it stands.  
Christ is our foundation sure, And in Him we live secure.  
Here in time He is our plea\*, Our hope in all eternity.  
In the grave wherein we'll lie. Our Advocate will still stand by.  
No lament these lips shall raise; Instead our Savior we will praise.  
A monument? Should one be made; To mark the place where we are laid,  
From forest glades go get a tree; And plant an evergreen for me.  
'Twill be a sign that life can bloom; From the darkness of the tomb,  
'Tis sure our earthen bodies die, but we will rise to live on High,  
Rise to live in perfect love; New and beautiful above.  
We'll shed our old worn dress, to wear; Refulgent garments over there.  
\*Psalm 130; 1 Cor 2:10<sup>443</sup>

Peter Toews, Grünfeld, E.R., Manitoba  
(Translated by Margaret Penner Toews, Box 3451, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, SOM  
2C0, Sept. 2000)

Some glimpses of the lives of Peter and Anna Toews in Grünfeld, East Reserve, are found in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.<sup>444</sup>

June 28, 1905, M. B. Fast, reported visiting the home of Ältester Toews for dinner and "noted the old wall clock of the Toews' which had served since 1752." November 27, 1907, Jakob Enns, Nebraska reported about their trip to Manitoba, "She is very impressed with Peter Toews' garden - like a catalogue....Much wild fruit," etc. April 15, 1908, it was reported that "Ältester Peter Toews was in Grand Rapids for treatment."

In 1909 Peter Toews moved to the village of Hochstadt, several miles to the southeast of Grünfeld "...to be nearer to the church."<sup>445</sup> February 1, 1910, Peter Toews wrote the *Rundschau* that "his small booklet on Menno Simons' book will soon be in print."

## Swalwell, 1911-1922.

By 1910 Peter and Anna Toews were not in good health. In a letter in the *Messenger of Truth*, Toews described the difficulties encountered during a trip made to Alberta that year: "We left early July 6, for Otterbourne, where we boarded the train for Alberta. But as we were to board the train it seemed a great undertaking considering our age and the feebled condition, the long siege of typhoid fever has left us in, and to this yet my wife being nearly robbed of her sight, and our third companion, Margaretha Warkentin, needed the crutches for her support. But we undertook the trip with Jesus for our staff and guide."<sup>446</sup>

In view of their physical condition it was not surprising they would seek lesser responsibilities. What is surprising is that after retiring from active service in 1911, Peter and Anna - by now some 70 years old - moved to Swalwell (Stern), Alberta. This community, also referred to as Linden or Sunnyslope, was founded in 1904-5 by members of the Holdeman denomination from Rosenort, Kleefeld and Greenland, Manitoba. It was seen as a place of opportunity where young people could still get into farming on their own.

A major reason for the move was that all four of their sons had sought their fortunes at Stern, Alberta. In 1911, Isaac returned to his birthplace in Manitoba to get a wife. His parents were getting on in years and decided to go west with their son to retire. Peter and Anna Toews now sold their home in Hochstadt, Manitoba, and went west with Isaac and his bride.<sup>447</sup>

Although tired and sometimes weary, Peter Toews continued doing what he loved - writing and ministering to his people. He collected poetry. His journals for the period are filled with clippings of poems - invariably of a religious and devotional nature. He wrote poetry for funerals, weddings and anniversaries, for many friends and parishioners to whom he had ministered.<sup>448</sup> He contributed to the *Rundschau* with letters filled with historical details and reminiscences. On August 2, 1912, for example, Peter Toews wrote a lengthy letter mentioning his teacher in Fischau was Jakob Wölck."<sup>449</sup>

Peter Toews also had a sense of humour, a characteristic which probably remained hidden for the most part because of the serious responsibilities of the ministerial office he served. In 1919 he wrote a lengthy poem about the automobile entitled "Aus der Zeit fuer der Zeit" in which he refuted certain criticism of the automobile in a humorous vein. He compared the auto with the travel of the prophets who were transported to Egypt ("Man denkt an den Propheten; Den nahm man bis Ägypten mit"). He predicted the motor car would soon be in general usage and that it was not wrong if used properly. He made a prophetic comment that during the lifetime of his children, it might be commonplace for people to be sailing through the air:

"Nur wenige hatten ein Pferd; Nach den Einwandrungsjahren  
Es war nur das Hornviehgefährt; Mit dem alle gefahren  
Ist es das Automobil heut; Wird bei der Kinder Leben  
Wohl schon nicht über lange Zeit; Man durch die Lüfte schweben?"

"Most people had slow-moving oxen when we immigrated;  
A few had horses, serving well e'en since they were created.

Now children think of autos. 'Autos, autos!' is the cry. Before they're grown they probably will even want to fly."<sup>450</sup>

Although his health was failing Peter Toews enjoyed tending to his flowers and working in his garden. His eulogist added a further perspective regarding his retirement years: "... Always a lover of horticulture, he soon had a flower garden flourishing around the little house where he lived..." On December 6, 1922, son P. P. W. Toews, Acme, Alberta, reporting his father's death in the *Rundschau* mentioned he "...loved to garden. He had planted in Alberta but not as extensively as his garden in Grünfeld."

Peter Toews remained involved in the work of the ministry. He carried on an active correspondence with many, in particular the church leaders of his day. On June 7, 1916, he wrote the *Rundschau* with an article about "why we do not go to war...[mentioning] the articles of 1873, Lord Dufferin's speech, etc." Thus he remained active in shaping church policies.

By this time Anna had become almost blind from cataracts. A surgery was performed, but instead of improving her sight, it made her completely blind. His eyes also became poorer, 'till toward the last he, too, was practically blind.

One imagines Peter Toews' once erect bearing becoming more hunched and bent by time; his once keen mind slowing and his speech becoming hesitant. Peter Toews did not approve of photography and, therefore, no portrait is available as is the case for brother Cornelius. Even though Cornelius died some 14 years earlier there are two good portraits of him. A picture from the time - apparently the only one in existence - showed Peter Toews from a distance sitting on a son's yard and watching a hog being butchered. His handsome features are only partly visible under a dark heavy cap and behind a white flowing beard. He is wearing a dark fall coat and his hand is holding what appears to be a cane. The picture illustrates that even in his old age and infirmity, Peter Toews still enjoyed being with his family and the people he loved.

Peter Toews loved the imagery of the mountains: "Their latter days were often spent on their rockers on the veranda of their home, facing westward. In the distance he knew were the Rockies outlined in crystalline starkness against the livid white-blue under the curve of the Chinook arch. He loved these mountains and often expressed the regret that he would probably never see them..." because of this near blindness.

## **Death, 1922.**

Peter Plett Toews died November 2, 1922. He was sitting on the veranda of his home with his beloved Anna facing westward, towards the beautiful Rockies. His eulogist described his passing: "A granddaughter was home with them. Practically all the people in the community were at church, paying their last respects to a cousin of his, also a Peter Toews. Suddenly his wife heard a thud."

"'Peter,' she cried!"

"But her husband lay silent. The moment of triumph for which he had spent a life of preparation, was his at last. Through the mundane door of a failing heart he had gone to be with his Lord. The community was difficult to

alert to the crisis in the Toews home. The granddaughter tried vainly to phone, number after number, but no answer. To her and her blind, helpless grandmother, the hours were very long until help arrived to lift his body off the floor."<sup>451</sup>

### **Legacy and Assessment.**

Peter Toews is and always has been an enigma in the annals of history. He was an important personage in the story of the Russian Mennonites but has received little recognition within that context. This was largely because of the lack of understanding among historians - particularly those of Mennonite background — of the significance of conservative denominations such as the Kleine Gemeinde to the development of the larger community.<sup>452</sup> Fortunately this situation is changing with the more balanced work of recent historians such as Dr. James Urry of Wellington, New Zealand,<sup>453</sup> Henry Schapansky, New Westminster, B.C.,<sup>454</sup> Samme Zijlstra, Leeuwarden, Netherlands,<sup>455</sup> and Dr. John J. Friesen, Winnipeg, Manitoba.<sup>456</sup>

It is evident that Peter Toews made important contributions to Russian Mennonite historiography and religious literature as poet, historian, genealogist and archivist. Some 30 of his sermons - carefully written prior to 1882 - are preserved, and constitute an important resource of devotional literature.<sup>457</sup> Peter Toews was the leading figure in the development of a print culture for the East Reserve Mennonites in Manitoba.<sup>458</sup> As a prominent leader of the Mennonite people who made up some 20-40 percent of the population of Manitoba during the 1870s, Toews will eventually be recognized by social historians as a founder and builder of the Province leaving a permanent imprint upon its people and culture. Not the least of his accomplishments was his leadership in the establishment of a progressive and universal system of education for his people, a rarity at the time.

Peter Toews, of course, was also a critical figure in the denominational history of the Kleine Gemeinde. Although in one way his decision to join with Holdeman sounded the death-knell of the denomination in its Russian formation, his importance as a leader and historian ranks him the equal to Klaas Reimer, the founder; Abraham Friesen, the builder; and Heinrich Balzer, the theologian. To the members of the Kleine Gemeinde - at least those who personally remembered the shocking and disillusioning events of 1881 and 1882 - Toews would always be a traitor. No matter how brilliant and unselfish his earlier service of the Gemeinde, he could never be recognized or credited. He, personally, had brought about the downfall of the church and could never be forgiven.

At the same time, although the Holdeman people revered Peter Toews and highly respected his talents and boundless energy, they could never credit him as founder as they did Johann Holdeman. Firstly, Peter Toews was simply too modest a man - he shunned any credit or office of authority - as opposed to Holdeman who seemingly thrived on it. But secondly, and more importantly, Peter Toews always had to remain somewhat suspect for after all he had once been the passionate advocate of another teaching and the gifted leader of a different church - all of which seemed foreign and alien to those too young to remember anything of such events somewhere in the distant murky past - somewhere before Holdeman.

The result was that a man who had contributed much more in several areas than many leaders, could not be fully acclaimed by anyone. The recent availability of new primary sources, and particularly the documents collected, preserved and written by Peter Toews himself, make it possible to come to a deeper and more balanced understanding of the contributions he made to the various communities he touched.

Historian Peter G. Hiebert, author of the biography of Peter Toews for the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, summarizes Peter Toews legacy as follows: "Endowed with a keen craving for knowledge, Toews read and studied constantly and prayerfully, comparing the scriptures with the works of earlier writers. With a large part of his flock he joined the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in 1882, and was ordained anew to the ministry on January 11, 1882. His sermons were clear and sound, as were also his many articles of Scripture exposition published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*....He translated several works from Dutch into the German language. He corresponded with a number of leaders of his day. He was a moderator of the General Conference (of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite)."<sup>459</sup>

The unidentified eulogist provided a suitable parting image of Peter Toews: "...reflective and somewhat mystic as he was, he had a last wish to have an evergreen tree planted over his grave, a wish that he aptly expressed in a poem:

Should you erect a monument  
to mark my grave, when I am spent?  
Place no granite, cold and bare,  
but from the forest's fringes wild  
fetch an evergreen  
and plant it there.

Shortly after the death of his beloved Anna - who died two and a half years after his death - his sons took pains to honour Toews' wishes, planting the tree which he himself had chosen as a symbol to represent his memory. In fact, his sons did more than plant just one tree; they planted eight trees - in itself a symbol of how their father's vision and noble spirit had grown and multiplied within the hearts of those whom he had loved and served."

The eulogist concluded: "They planted two evergreens at the head of each of their parents' graves. For good measure...for evergreens were not easily nurtured, and lacking a certain amount of faith...they planted two more at their feet. Today in the cemetery at Linden [Alberta] sway eight tall evergreens, alive and flourishing. Somehow they seem to be a fitting tribute to a man who was so instrumental in shaping the spiritual destiny of his posterity."<sup>460</sup>

This biography of Peter P. Toews was first published in 1993 and is republished here with minor editing changes.<sup>461</sup> A biography of Anna Warkentin Toews was published in 1997.<sup>462</sup>



5 Son **Peter P. W. Toews** (1874-1949) married Katharina R. Klassen, oldest daughter of Holdeman minister Abraham B. Klassen, Rosenhof and later Swalwell, Alberta.<sup>463</sup> At first Peter and Katharina lived in Rosenort. On July 5, 1899, the Kleefeld news in the *Rundschau* reported “Peter P. W. Toews moved to this side from Morris.....[he] bought the Johann L. Dueck land in Grünfeld.” In 1905 Peter P. W. Toews took out a homestead in Swalwell, Alberta. On August 20, 1907, P. P. W. Toews, Alberta, reported about a trip to Manitoba remarking that “the once ‘anmutig gelegene Dorf’ Grünfeld does not exist anymore. Each person is now working his own land. He attended church in Grünfeld. For dinner many visited at his parents’ place. Tables had to be set up outside in the garden under the trees. The next Sunday the church service was in Blumenort.” Peter’s wife died in 1909 leaving seven infant children. Peter remarried to Bertha Otto.

On June 14, 1911, the *Rundschau* reported “P. P. W. Toews was a land agent for B.O.” presumably for the settlement of the Watchan Valley in B. C. In this capacity P. P. W. Toews solicited purchasers for the land. In his diary for April 11, 1911, Johann W. Dueck, Rosenort, Manitoba mentioned that he had bought a five acre lot and that, “Peter P. W. Toews, a sub-agent for this company says that 20 Greenland farmers, all Holdeman, plan to settle there and another 40 have taken up lots in the Watchan Valley on Arrow Lake.”<sup>464</sup> April 17, 1912, P. P. W. Toews wrote the *Rundschau* “that the first of the ‘Auswanderer’ left for B. C. on March 20 from Ste. Anne - six freight and a private car for 27 passengers. G. K. Giesbrechts and we expect to leave on April 11 from Otterburne.” Many lost their entire investment when the B. O. Company went bankrupt and could not provide the deeds to the land. Peter P. W. Toews was excommunicated as a result.<sup>465</sup> Peter P. W. Toews and his second wife eventually moved to Winton, California, where both are buried.



*Peter P. W. Toews (1874-1949). Photo courtesy of granddaughter Mary Pickford, California/ Pres., No. 18, page 102.*



*Ältester Peter Toews (1841-1922), ca. 1920. The only photo known to exist.*

5 Daughter **Maria W. Toews** married the widower Jakob T. Wiebe, eldest son of Kleine Gemeinde deacon Heinrich F. Wiebe of Blumenort, Manitoba, who died in a blizzard in 1876. The Jakob T. Wiebe family lived in Greenland, Manitoba. He was elected as a deacon of the Holdeman church in 1904 and as minister in 1910.<sup>466</sup> Maria had no children but became the step-mother to a large family. Lloyd Penner, Jakob T. Wiebe's biographer, writes that when he "...spoke, it was slowly and distinctly. When he preached, even children could understand him, though our knowledge of German was scanty. He loved telling stories: stories of pioneer days, stories about his own experiences and his travels. Everyday events became fascinating tales. His friendly personality made him a friend of all and an interesting conversationalist. He loved to write. He wrote many articles for the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, the official German church paper, and was editor for 17 years, a work he loved. When he had to give this up, he continued to write articles for it. He was a great letter writer and spent many an hour pecking at his typewriter...Everyone seemed to respect him. Because he spoke thoughtfully, every word counted. And because of the way he said it, even a word of reproof did not arouse resentment. Perhaps most of all, people knew that he was a man of principle. Even ministers of other denominations came to him for advice."



*Jakob T. Wiebe, Greenland, Manitoba. Passport photograph, circa 1950. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 100.*

A biography of the Jakob T. Wiebe family was published in 1996.<sup>467</sup>

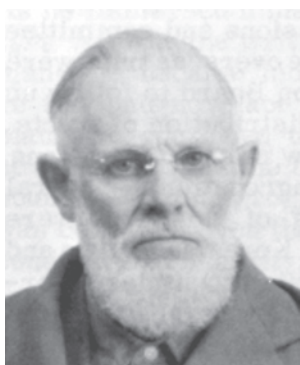
5 Son **Johann W. Toews** married Elisabeth Bartel, daughter of Heinrich W. Bartel, who came to Canada as an orphan with the Isaac L. Warkentin family in 1875.<sup>468</sup> Johann and his bride made their home in Swalwell, Alberta, where he had taken out a homestead a few years earlier. They lived on this land for the next 45 years adding the quarter section adjoining to the north as a pre-emption.<sup>469</sup> Their daughter Anna B. Toews was married to Peter W. Friesen, Crooked Creek, Alberta, who wrote and published a book about their pioneering experiences.<sup>470</sup>



*Johann W. and Elisabeth Toews, at their diamond wedding anniversary, Jan. 19, 1970. Photo - Footprints on Mi-Chig-Win, page 259.*

5 Son **Cornelius W. Toews** remained a bachelor and farmed near Linden, Alberta. He was a prominent community man, serving as Secretary Treasurer of the Swalwell local of UGG. He was one of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Linden, Alberta.<sup>471</sup>

5 Son **Isaac W. Toews** (1887-1976) married Helena Bartel, sister to Elisabeth who had married brother Johann. A photograph of the two sisters as young women was published in 1997.<sup>472</sup> The Isaac W. Toews family made their home on a homestead near Swalwell, Alberta, which Isaac had taken out in 1906. Later they bought a farm two miles north of Linden, Alberta. He was elected as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in 1921.<sup>473</sup> Isaac and Helena Toews retired in Abbotsford, B.C. They were the parents of Milton Toews, Nielberg, Saskatchewan, currently (2003) the custodian of the Peter P. Toews papers and records.



*Isaac W. Toews. Photo - Clarence Hiebert, The Holdeman People, page 306/Pres., No. 18, page 100.*



*Cornelius W. Toews. Photo - Footprints on Mi-Chig-Win, page 435.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Peter P. Toews</b>	Jul 24, 1844		Nov 2, 1922
m	Anna Warkentin	Jan 31, 1843	Nov 24, 1863	Mar 12, 1925
5	Johann W. Toews	Apr 26, 1865		Oct 30, 1866
5	Anna W. Toews	May 3, 1867		Aug 12, 1868
5	Anna W. Toews	May 11, 1869		Jun 25, 1873
5	Johann W. Toews	May 11, 1872		Jul 14, 1873
5	Peter P. W. Toews	Jun 10, 1874		Dec 28, 1949
m	Katherine Klassen	Jan 16, 1875	Sep 29, 1895	Dec 28, 1909
2m	Bertha Otto	Jun 1, 1878	Mar 21, 1908	Sep 14, 1955
5	Johann W. Toews	Oct 18, 1876		Feb 18, 1877
5	Maria W. Toews	Dec 17, 1877	Dec 6, 1925	Jan 22, 1951
m	Jakob T. Wiebe	Oct 25, 1872		Apr 6, 1965
5	Johann W. Toews	Jan 6, 1880	Jan, 1910	May 10, 1975
m	Elizabeth Bartel	Sep 12, 1891		Dec 26, 1975
5	Cornelius W. Toews	Oct 21, 1882		1960
5	Isaac W. Toews	Apr 23, 1884		May 17, 1885
5	Jacob W. Toews	Jul 3, 1885		Dec 17, 1885
5	Isaac W. Toews	Aug 7, 1887		Feb 26, 1976
m	Helena Bartel	Apr 29, 1893	Dec 20, 1911	Oct 28, 1961

4. Daughter **Susanna Plett Toews** (1844-1912) married cousin Johann Goossen, son of Gerhard Goossen (1811-54), long time Molotschna school teacher. The family moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko where they had a Wirtschaft. In 1872 Johann, together with uncle Cornelius Plett, served as the village representatives on the building committee for the new worship house in Blumenhoff.

In 1873 a dispute arose between Johann and a neighbour regarding a boundary. It fell upon brother-in-law Peter Toews to arbitrate the matter as Ältester of the Gemeinde. The result, unfortunately, was that Goossen became unhappy with Toews. On December 12, 1873, Johann was voted out of the Gemeinde "because he was unreconcilable and because of insufficient acknowledgement." He was reaccepted on January 1, 1874.<sup>474</sup> Goossen was not happy with these results, perhaps expecting Toews to take his side. The matter came back to a brotherhood meeting on May 9, 1874, and brother-in-law Toews described the incident in more detail: "Johann Goossen renounced the Gemeinde. ... the matter regarding Goossen had now continued for about a year. It had arisen in that he came into conflict with the village society (Dorfgemeinde) on account of land measurement and a road, and in addition he stood in disrespect and mistrust of me because of miscalculation in dividing land."

In April, 1874, step-father Heinrich Enns, Fischau, reported that he had paid the Brodgeld (per capita tax levy) in Fischau for Johann and Korn. Goossens, Korn. Plett, Korn. Toews and his mother, the widow Toews.<sup>475</sup> December 7, 1874, sister-in-law, the "widow of Gerhard Goossen", wrote to Peter Toews and greeting "my dear Johann Goossens, how are you? Are you all healthy? My beloved sister, I have heard that the Lord has given you twin sons. It was so hard for you with your son Johann. Now He has given him back to you and another with him. What are you going to give your Lord for him?"<sup>476</sup>

In 1875 brother Peter Toews led the last group of 30 families out of Russia, destination Manitoba. When they came to Liverpool, England, Susanna and husband, Johann Goossen, decided to go to the United States instead, taking her mother and single sister Maria with them. This was a grievous disappointment for Peter and brother Cornelius already resident in Manitoba. Peter noted the event in his journal: "Thursday, June the 3rd...the ship got underway at about 6 o'clock in the evening. Peter Penners, and my siblings, the Johann Goossens, and my beloved mother left us in Liverpool for the United States, taking the Inman line to New York."<sup>477</sup> Susanna and Johann Goossen moved to Gnadenu, Kansas. They were farmers.<sup>478</sup>

Nephew Johann F. Toews wrote, "Via correspondence we discovered that grandmother and her two daughters there had joined the Krimmer Brüdergemeinde by immersion, which caused a great disturbance for many."<sup>479</sup> Her brother, Cornelius Plett, presumably also admonished his sister for her changing views, since she was to have said after moving to Kansas, albeit jokingly, "...that at least she was rid of one thing, namely, her beloved brother."<sup>480</sup>

The continuing estrangement between Susanna and brother Peter manifested in the matter of their mother's rebaptism and the debt owing to her has already been described in the previous section.

Susanna Toews Goossen did maintain contact with her family in southern Manitoba. On Wednesday, Oct. 25, 1905, Abraham M. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, recorded that "The widow Mrs. Joh. Goossen and daughter were here [visiting] as our guests." Johann P. Goossen and Susanna Goossen "were both buried in the Ebenfeld cemetery, Hillsboro, Kansas."<sup>481</sup> As of 1916 their children were still resident in Kansas.<sup>482</sup>

5 Son **Johann T. Goossen** married Lena Zacharias. They belonged to the Mennonite Brethren Church. Johann is buried in Collinsville, Oklahoma. Son **Peter T. Goossen** married Lena Reimer. They belonged to the First Mennonite Church. They are buried at Hillsboro, Kansas. Son **Cornelius T. Goossen** married Kathryn Zacharias. They belonged to the Baptist Church. He was a farmer. They are buried at Turlock, California. Son **Gerhard T. Goossen** married Maria Reimer. They belonged to the General Conference. They are buried at Hillsboro, Kansas.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Johann P. Goossen</b>	Jan 5, 1842	Jun 25, 1861	Dec 14, 1904
m	Susanna P. Toews	Jan 10, 1844		Oct 14, 1912
6	Maria T. Goossen	Jul 3, 1862		Aug 31, 1865
6	Johann T. Goossen	Jan 6, 1865		Jul 5, 1873
6	Gerhard T. Goossen	Apr 7, 1867		Mar 8, 1868
6	Gerhard T. Goossen	Apr 11, 1869		Aug 7, 1871
6	Susanna T. Goossen	Oct 24, 1871		Sep, 1878
6	Peter T. Goossen	Sep 5, 1874		Aug 10, 1875
6	Johann T. Goossen	Sep 5, 1874		Oct, 1876
6	Johann T. Goossen	Jan 1, 1877	1898	Jan 16, 1938
m	Lena Zacharias	Oct 11, 1876		Apr 29, 1952
6	Peter T. Goossen	Dec 25, 1878		Nov 29, 1951
m	Lena Reimer			
6	Cornelius Goossen	Mar 7, 1881	Aug 12, 1907	Sep 28, 1953
m	Kathryn Zacharias	Jan 14, 1887		Oct 9, 1968
6	Susanna Goossen	May 25, 1883		Nov 5, 1954
6	Gerhard Goossen	Feb 26, 1886	Dec 22, 1909	Jan 14, 1950
m	Maria Reimer	Apr 5, 1888		Nov 13, 1953

4 Daughter **Maria Plett Toews** came to Kansas together with her mother and sister Susanna, Mrs. Johann Goossen, who settled in Gnadenau, Kansas.<sup>483</sup> According to the Gnadenau "Gemeindebuch", Maria was re-baptised in 1875.<sup>484</sup> She married the widower Kornelius Duerksen, son of Kornelius Duerksen (1794-1881) listed as the owner of Wirtschaft 3 in Alexanderthal in the 1835 census.<sup>485</sup> Kornelius Sr. belonged to the Kleine Gemeinde where he was listed in the ministerial election of 1846. Kornelius Jr. was married for the first time to Sarah Franz (1830-72) and again to Gertrude Fast Penner (1829-76). No children were born of the second marriage.<sup>486</sup> Kornelius was the school teacher in the village of Rosenort, Molotschna. He immigrated to America together with his second wife, leaving their home on July 22, 1874. They took passage on the S. S. Teutonia and arrived in New York harbour on September 3, 1874.<sup>487</sup>

Kornelius described the journey as well as the early settlement period in Kansas in some detail in his "Day Book".<sup>488</sup> These records were translated and published in 1971.<sup>489</sup> The Duerksen family settled in Gnadenau, Kansas. On September 15, 1874, Kornelius recorded "That at Jakob Wiebe's we made a down payment on land of section 35." On September 20 he added: "We have the east 1/2 section, and [brother-in-law] Dalke, the west 1/2 section." In 1876 Kornelius Duerksen married Maria Toews. In 1881 Kornelius assisted Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe with his letter correspondence.<sup>490</sup> The Kornelius Duerksen family farmed in Gnadenau, Kansas, until his demise.

Son Johann T. Duerksen described his father's death writing that one day he, his Father, and uncle Jakob, who was staying at their place, were replanting some corn; "when all of a sudden around 4 p.m. my Father took sick and laid himself down on the field. Then my uncle helped Father on his feet and led him to the house, where he laid himself down on the couch. Then about two or three hours later when Mother gave us children our supper (I was the oldest and my youngest brother was about six months, there were six of us), all of a sudden Mother went to the couch where Father was lying and Father had just passed away. Mother must have heard him breathe his last breath."<sup>491</sup>

After the death of her husband, Maria was unable to support all her children. As a result, sons Johann and Jakob Duerksen were raised by Heinrich Fast and son David by Johann M. Fast. Daughter Maria was raised at the home of KMB Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe.

Mrs. Maria Duerksen went to Manitoba, Canada, to visit her brothers. When she came back she married for the second time to the widower Jakob J. Hildebrand, born in Alexanderkrone, Molotschna. He came to Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1878. After her marriage they gathered the family together again. Jakob J. and Maria Hildebrand moved to Weatherford, Oklahoma, where their children Abraham and Katherina were baptised in the Korn KMB Gemeinde on March 10, 1910.<sup>492</sup> November 12, 1913, Abr. S. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, wrote the *Rundschau* reporting "...in Reedley he visited the Hildebrandts, the wife is a sister to Peter Toews, Ältester." Maria died in Reedley, California.<sup>493</sup> January 1, 1918, son Peter T. Doerksen wrote the *Rundschau* with Maria's obituary.

5 Son **Johann T. Duerksen** was baptised on March 24, 1895, in the KMB Gemeinde in Gnadenau, Kansas. He married Katharina Sawatzky who was born in Jansen, Nebraska, daughter of Jakob S. Sawatzky and Katharina Regier. The Sawatzky family were members of the Korn Brüdergemeinde at Weatherford, Oklahoma, where Katharina and Johann Duerksen were married. The young couple moved a number of times. By 1913 the family lived in Escondido, San Diego, California, where daughter Martha was born. In 1925 they were living in Vancouver, Washington. The Johann T. Duerksen family immigrated to Canada in 1925. Katharina Sawatzky Duerksen was buried in Crooked Creek, Alberta. Johann T. Duerksen was buried in Abbotsford, British Columbia.<sup>494</sup> Son **Peter T. Duerksen** married Katharine Neufeld. The family lived in Weatherford, Oklahoma. By 1910 they had moved to Escondido, California. By 1917 they resided in Fairmead, California. They were the parents of Erma Duerksen Neufeld, the author of the Kornelius and Maria Duerksen family book.<sup>495</sup> Daughter **Maria T. Duerksen** was baptised in the Korn KMB Gemeinde in Weatherford, Oklahoma, on May 11, 1898. She married second cousin Jakob E. Friesen, son of Isaak Friesen and Maria Toews.<sup>496</sup> Jakob and Maria Friesen lived in Weatherford, Oklahoma, where they belonged to the Korn KMB Gemeinde. In 1902 they changed their membership to the Brüdergemeinde.<sup>497</sup> Jakob E. Friesen has been described by reporter Allan Teichroew "as a restless man plagued by misjudgment. . . He was always looking for just the right land but could not hit the mark. He bought in 1912 a small orchard in Reedley, California, held it for a year or two, then sold it; he set up a Weatherford real estate business where the demands of the trade outpaced his ethics; and finally, after losing a bid to become owner of a Ford Motor Company distributorship he made the fatal mistake of exchanging his farm near Weatherford for an abandoned plot near the ghost town of Wilburn, Kansas. Here, in the netherworld of Mennonitism, which Jakob Friesen may partially have longed for, having been of two minds about his religious attachment, the family starved - emotionally, physically, and intellectually. When asked about their plight, [son] Gordon Friesen, a writer, shields his face from loss of words. He remembers emphatically that when they appealed for help, they were told by church members to bear their difficulties as the will of God. . . [Finally] an uncle came to save them and bring them back to Weatherford." Allan Teichroew has written about Maria Duerksen Friesen that "as a child [she] had been 'orphaned out' to the family of Krimmer Mennonite Brethren founder and elder Jakob A. Wiebe. She remembered the experience bitterly, but despite unforgiving anger at what she thought was menial treatment, . . . [she] became desperately attached to her religious faith. She would pray anxiously, woefully for her family's deliverance, and in a corresponding manner ask berating questions about her husband's ability to earn their bread."<sup>498</sup> Maria and Jakob were the parents of Gordon Friesen (born 1909), the author of *Flamethrowers*, a controversial novel of a Mennonite settlement in Kansas.<sup>499</sup> Son **Jakob C. Duerksen** married Maria Friesen, daughter of Jakob M. Friesen, nephew of Kleine Gemeinde Ältester Johann Friesen (1808-72), Neukirch, Molotschna.<sup>500</sup> The Jakob C. Duerksen family lived in Weatherford, Oklahoma, where they belonged to the Korn KMB Gemeinde. From here they moved to California and Oregon looking for greener

pastures. Son Menno Duerksen writes as follows: "When Dad had set off to the promised lands of California or Oregon, he returned each time poorer than before."<sup>501</sup> By 1920 the family had returned to Weatherford where they were assisted financially by Maria's father who was a wealthy land owner and elder of the local KMB church. The wilderness territories of Oklahoma combined with the rigid legalism of the frontier Brüdergemeinde seems to have been a fertile incubator for writers. Maria and Jakob C. Duerksen were the parents of Menno Duerksen, World War Two correspondent whose memoirs were published in 1986 under the title *Dear God, I'm only a boy*.<sup>502</sup> Son **David F. Duerksen** was baptised on August 3, 1903. He married Lillian Munday. The Korn KMB Gemeindebuch records only that he resigned from the Gemeinde.



*Gordon Friesen, author of Flamethrowers, a controversial novel published in 1936. Gordon was the son of Maria T. Duerksen and Jakob T. Friesen. Photo - Men. Life, June 1983, page 6.*

	<b>Gen Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Maria P. Toews</b>	Dec 27, 1854	Nov 15, 1876	Dec 3, 1918
m	Kornelius Duerksen	Feb 15, 1824		May 31, 1888
5	Johann T. Duerksen	Feb 29, 1880		Jul 25, 1980
m	Katherine Sawatzky	Jul 17, 1884		Aug 2, 1935
2m	Elizabeth Lehman	Oct 24, 1902		1973
5	Peter T. Duerksen	Sep 28, 1881	Feb. 1, 1903	Mar 5, 1922
m	Katherine Neufeld	May 9, 1882		Mar 2, 1935
5	Maria Duerksen	Nov 29, 1882	Nov. 8, 1910	Dec 1, 1968
m	Jacob E. Friesen	Nov 25, 1874		Apr, 1955
5	Jacob C. Duerksen	Jul 14, 1884	Oct. 15, 1905	Nov 2, 1966
m	Maria Friesen	Dec 9, 1886		1968
5	David T. Duerksen	Jan 17, 1865		
m	Lillian Munday			
5	Gerhard Duerksen	Feb 5, 1888		1952
m	Justina Fransen	Mar 21, 1888		Apr 23, 1959
4	<b>Maria Toews</b>	Dec 27, 1854		Dec 3, 1918
m	Jakob J. Hildebrand	Feb 4, 1859	1892	1937
5	Kath Hildebrand	Jan 14, 1893		
m	Johann Toews			
5	Abr Hildebrand	Mar 17, 1895		
m	Ruth Buller	May 28, 1910		





*Maria Toews Duerksen (1854-1918) and family, l.-r.: Peter T. Duerksen, George T. Duerksen, Maria Duerksen Friesen, David T. Duerksen, Maria Toews Duerksen, Jakob T. Duerksen, and Jobann L. Duerksen. Photo courtesy of great-grandson Kevin Enns Rempel, Fresno, California/ Saints and Sinners, page 206.*



*Maria T. Duerksen and Jakob Friesen, a troubled life in a world of rigid and legalistic Fundamentalism. Photo - Men. Life, June 1983, page 5.*

### **Section Five: Anna Plett Isaac, 1813-87, Schönau, Molotschna.**

4 Daughter **Anna Plett** married Johann Isaac, son of Franz Isaac (1784-1853) of Tiege, Molotschna, who immigrated to Russia in 1804. Franz married Margaretha Warkentin (1788-1868), daughter of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825)<sup>503</sup> and Margaretha Thiessen (1767-1807),<sup>504</sup> prominent pioneers in the village of Blumenort. Franz Isaac was the uncle to the prominent minister, historian and teacher, Franz Isaac (1816-1900) of Tiege. The story of the extended Isaac family of Tiege was published in 2000.<sup>505</sup>

In 1824 the Franz Isaac family moved to Marienthal, an event long remembered by son Johann.<sup>506</sup> In 1831 Anna Plett was baptised and married shortly thereafter.<sup>507</sup> In 1835 Anna and Johann Isaac were still registered in the census with his parents on Wirtschaft 3 in Marienthal.

This biography of Anna and Johann Isaac is mainly from the insightful recollections of son Peter Isaac. He wrote: "After the first year of their marriage, my parents lived for eight years in Altonau, Russia, on a rented place because they had only scant means to begin by themselves. In the year 1840 my father bought a house in the village of Blumstein, without land, a sign that he was already making some headway. The parents, nevertheless, had a hard row to hoe in their early years in Altona for in the year 1832 they harvested little, in 1833 nothing, and in the following year only a little again. Many had to receive support from the Russian government.... Father got along without taking government support, but soon had to build a new house in Blumstein. Soon after he married, father learned carpentry and later also the art of wagon construction. He also rented some land from the Russians. Because he was not afraid of work and saving, with mother also contributing her share of the work without stint, they soon came to a better financial condition. They had saved a pretty sum of money."

In 1852 Johann and Anna Isaac purchased a Wirtschaft in Schönau, Molotschna, for several thousand rubles banco by using his savings and making a small loan. In February, 1852, the Johann Isaacs took possession of their Wirtschaft in Schönau. Son Peter Isaac described the event: "I was five years old at that time and I remember many things of that time especially when the Schönau people came to get us with bag and baggage. I had made up my mind to ride with one of the big loads but father would not permit me to do so, but instead I had to go with my parents on a one-horse rig. It made me angry because I could not have my own way."

In 1854 the Crimean war started and farm prices increased considerably. The Johann Isaac family now had a series of good years, except in 1855, when large Egyptian locusts ate everything. The debts they had incurred were paid off in short order. In the years up to 1861, the crops were good. They also owned a grinding mill.

In 1862 the Johann Isaac family was almost wiped out by a fire. Son Peter Isaac describes the incident: "In September 1862, our home burned; but the mill-house, which had a fireproof roof, remained standing, as did the masonry walls of the house. The grain that was stored in the upstairs of the house, and the year's supply of flour, was burned so badly that the pigs would not even eat it.

The furniture was nearly all saved, but nothing that was in the cellar. I saved the horses and pigs.”

“It happened as follows: I was working as a miller in the mill at the time and went to look out of the door on the north side which was toward our yard. Then I saw my brother Johann and Bernhard L. Dueck,....standing in the street. Suddenly, they looked rather bewildered towards the north which directed my attention that way.”

“The next moment Johann came running calling, ‘Fire, Fire!’”

“B. Dueck ran to his home, fearing that it would catch fire too, because it had started to burn just east of his house. When I looked that way I saw the heavy black smoke going up behind our house. I quickly shut off the mill, closed the door tightly, and ran across the yard to the barn, untied the horses and drove them out. Then I ran to the pigs. It took a greater effort to get these out, because they are so reluctant to be driven but I succeeded in getting them out due to their fear of fire.”

“In the meantime my sister Maria and brother Johann, who were still at home at the time, and brother Franz, who was on his own already, with the help of mother had put forth every effort to remove the furniture from the burning building. The fire had broken out in the fourth house north of us and a light north wind had driven it to our house. Father was not at home at the time. He had gone to Hierschau to get white bricks to build an oven. While coming home he had seen the black smoke and suspected that it must be in Schönau. He speeded up his horses fearing that our house might also catch fire. He came home before it had burned completely.”

“I can well remember the feeling of compassion which came over me, seeing him lose many of his material possessions in that fire.”<sup>508</sup>

The next spring the burned-out walls were pulled down, and everything rebuilt with bricks. The walls of the house were two feet thick and those of the barn one and one-half feet thick. After the fire and during the time of rebuilding the Johann Isaac family lived in the mill house, the west end of which had been arranged for that purpose. In the same summer of 1863, Johann Isaac sold the milling machinery but kept the building. In the fall of 1863, the new buildings were completed and occupied.

During the next winter Johann Isaac took sick. After being bedridden for six weeks, he died on February 8, 1864. Peter Isaac referred to his father’s spiritual struggles as follows: “In regard to his spiritual life, I can say that father was not careless and although his strong nature often gave way to severe outbreaks of temper and many mistakes, yet he always repented and never indulged in self-praise like, ‘I have lived 40 years in righteousness and otherwise no one has been able to accuse me of having committed any wrong.’”

Peter Isaac refers to the deep and genuine spirituality of the Kleine Gemeinde and other traditionalist and conservative Mennonites that many earnest seekers for truth find so encouraging: “I remember from my youth that I was an eye witness of how he wept over a misstep he had made. He sat bent over, his elbows propped on his knees, weeping. He had many sad hours of concern about his soul’s salvation. I still have compassion for him when I think of how he was not given to showing off in sham devotion and piety.”

Son Abraham also gave his father the testimony that he “...passed away...with

a hope and an inner desire to enter that eternal home above.”<sup>509</sup>

After his death, widow Anna Isaac continued farming for three years in partnership with son Johann. Son Peter and Franz were still at home and worked on the family farm. During the second year after father’s death, in the spring of 1865, Johann married, and he with his wife Elisabeth stayed on the farm through the year 1866. At that time they decided to establish their own home which meant that the Wirtschaft had to be sold since the other sons were too young to carry on farming with mother. The farm was sold by auction at the end of the winter, 1867. Son Abraham Isaac writes that after mother sold the farm, she “...made her home with Abraham Friesens, the second oldest daughter.”<sup>510</sup>

In 1867 Anna Isaac moved to the newly established village of Grünfeld, situated about 85 miles west of the Molotschna Colony, together with her children, the Johann Isaacs, and lived with them in their newly built home.

In 1874 Mrs. Anna Isaac immigrated to Canada travelling with the first group of Mennonites to arrive in Manitoba on August 31, 1874, together with sons Abraham and Johann and families. They settled in the Grünfeld area in the East Reserve, Manitoba. She and daughter Helena lived with sons Peter and Abraham in the hamlet of Schönau, a mile and a half southwest of Grünfeld, for the first year. Son Peter mentions that “our aged mother who lived with us at that time often suffered in that cold hut.” In a letter of December 8, 1874, nephew Cornelius Toews, wrote, “I frequently hear it said, namely of Mrs. Isaac, that she is well again like before.”<sup>511</sup>

In 1877 brother-in-law Heinrich Enns wrote a long letter of spiritual encouragement to Anna and her sister Karolina in Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>512</sup> Later Anna Isaac lived with son Johann Isaac in Grünfeld. On December 25, 1881, her insurance of \$50.00 on personal belongings and furniture was transferred to Grünfeld.<sup>513</sup>

Anna Plett Isaac died at the home of Johann Isaacs in 1887. April 20, 1887, the *Rundschau* reported that the funeral of “Frau Isaac was in the afternoon, April 2, 1887.” Her son Abram gave her the testimony that he had been “cherished and nourished by a loving mother.”<sup>514</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Anna Plett</b>	Nov 24, 1813		Mar 29, 1887
m	Johann Isaac	Jun 13, 1809	1831	Feb 8, 1864
5	Anna P. Isaac	May 10, 1832	May, 1856	Jan 15, 1896
5	Margaretha Isaac	Dec 24, 1833		Feb 1, 1919
5	Johann P. Isaac	Oct 26, 1836	May 12, 1865	Apr 12, 1920
5	Franz P. Isaac	Sep 29, 1838	Oct, 1865	1928
5	Maria P. Isaac	Sep 26, 1840		Jan 24, 1908
5	Peter P. Isaac	Nov 26, 1846		Sep 29, 1923
5	Abraham P. Isaac	Dec 31, 1852	1874	Mar 10, 1938
5	Helena P. Isaac	May 5, 1858	Mar 4, 1877	Jun 30, 1945

5 Daughter **Anna Plett Isaac** (1836-96) married Jakob P. Wiebe, son of Jakob Wiebe (1799-1856) from Schönau, Molotschna, who lived directly across the street from the Johann Isaac Wirtschaft. Anna Isaac was baptised in May, 1851. and Jakob Wiebe two years earlier on May 15, 1848. He had been baptised by Ältester Johann Friesen.<sup>515</sup> Brother Peter Isaac described the young couple as follows: "When the Jacob Wiebes (sister Anna) were married they lived for some time with his parents and worked for them, which is not possible here in America. What remuneration they received for their labours I do not know but at a later time his father helped him to buy a treadmill and an Anwohner house in the village of Prangenau, about 20 miles east of Schönau. There they established the first home of their own in 1857 and lived there for several years."<sup>516</sup>

In 1863 Jakob and Anna sold this property and moved to Markuslandt, a leasehold settlement situated some 20 verst northeast of Einlage near the Old Colony, where a large number of Kleine Gemeinde families were settling as well. Peter Isaac writes, "Jakob and Anna took the treadmill with them which they operated in conjunction with farming."

After several years they sold the mill and moved to the village of Annafeld in the Borosenko settlement about 30 verst northwest of Nikopol. "They again settled on rented land which was then available in that section of Russia at a reasonable price, because the noblemen had to release their serfs to make an end of serfdom." Jakob Wiebe was listed in the Brandordnung in Annafeld with insurance coverage of 200 ruble on inventory (livestock) and 200 ruble in feed and supplies.<sup>517</sup>

In 1874 Jakob and Anna immigrated to Canada arriving in Quebec City on August 27, 1874. They took out a homestead quarter on NW32-7-6E but settled in the village of Blumenort, Manitoba. Their Wirtschaft was located on the south side of the street, directly across from brother-in-law Abraham M. Friesen and kitty-corner to the church and village cemetery. Here they lived the remainder of their lives. "It was hard work to begin with, but in their latter years it was somewhat easier."

Jakob Wiebe was entered in the Brandordnung on Wirtschaft No. 4 with a hut and barn insured for \$30.00. The next year (1875) they built a proper housebarn insured for \$50.00 followed by a more substantial structure in 1877 insured for \$300.00. According to a map drawn by Martin K. Friesen their housebarn was built with a straight roof line.<sup>518</sup>

Jakob Wiebe was a progressive farmer. Historian Roy Loewen has written that as early as 1878 he had "purchased a threshing machine powered by Peter W. Toews' upright Watrus steam engine."<sup>519</sup>

Neighbour Abraham "Fuella" Reimer recorded various details about Jakob and Anna Wiebe in his journal:

Saturday, August 7, 1880, "Yesterday and today, Jak. Wiebe, Pet. Penner Sr, Martin Penner and Cor. Penner were threshing. J. Wiebe has 72 bushels from three acres." The next day "Jakob and brother Peter Wiebe went to Rosenfeld."

Oct. 18, 1880, "Jakob Wiebes, Abr. Reimers Jr., Abr. Reimers Sr., Heinrich Reimers, helped slaughter hogs at Peter Reimers." The latter was married to

Maria Plett, Anna's cousin. Nov. 1, 1880, "Jakob Wiebes slaughtered three hogs." Monday, March 28, 1881, "Jakob helped a neighbour build a barn."

October 18, 1882, "Schanzen from Ontario visited at the home of Jakob Wiebes." The "Schanzen" presumably referred to the "old" Mennonite Jakob Schantz from Berlin, Ontario, who had provided invaluable assistance to the Mennonite settlers in the East Reserve in 1874.

The Holdeman schism did not leave the Wiebe family unscarred when son Johann was baptised into the Separatist movement on Sunday, February 12, 1882, presumably by Evangelist Mark Seiler who was conducting evangelistic services in the area. Also baptised were Johann's cousin Abraham I. Friesen, and Mrs. Johann W. Reimer, daughter of Steinbach merchant Klaas R. Reimer.

According to the 1883 tax records Jakob Wiebe was a moderately successful farmer with a double farm, 320 acres, of which 44 acres were cultivated, buildings assessed at \$300, furniture \$125, 3 horses, 2 oxen, 4 cows. Jakob also owned one of the two threshing outfits in the village. His assessment of 967 was the third highest for 1883, next only to Peter Penner at 1426, and Peter W. Toews at 1095. By the next year he had sold his threshing machine and his assessment had fallen to 816.

In 1888 Jakob P. Wiebe purchased a binder which cut and bundled the grain in one operation replacing the earlier reapers.<sup>520</sup> In 1889 Jakob Wiebe's assessment was the fourth highest in the village.

Among the holdings of the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, is a 1870 Johann F. Funk edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* which Jakob Wiebe acquired in 1883. Wiebe's ownership of this massive volume speaks to the fact that in addition to being diligent in his financial affairs, he also recognized the importance of the spiritual sustenance.<sup>521</sup> Inside the flyleaf page of the *Martyr's Mirror* was written the name, "Johann Wiebe", which was struck out, indicating that Jakob may have purchased the book from him. The flyleaf page bears the further memorial: "This book belongs to Jakob Wiebe, Blumenort, cost 6 dollars and 50 cents, the year 1883."<sup>522</sup>

The journal of brother-in-law Abraham M. Friesen provides additional information regarding the Jakob Wiebe family:

June 4, 1884, "Johann Isaacs with mother were at J. Wiebes." January 29, 1886, "[Abraham M. Friesens] went along with Jakob Wiebes to the Senior Pletts, Blumenhof." Plett was the uncle to the two women.

An interesting event occurred on Monday, August 23, 1886, when "a bear had bit a calf during the night at Jakob Wiebes."

In February 1889 Abraham M. Friesen "repaired some shoes for Jakob Wiebe."

Sept 28, Thursday, 1893, "Franz Isaacs and Jakob Wiebes were visiting at P. Penners." Nov. 7, 1893, Abraham M. Friesen "helped slaughter hogs at Jakob Wiebes." Dec. 21, Thursday, Abr. M. Friesen "helped slaughter oxen at Jakob Wiebes." The next day, son Peter must have gone to Winnipeg, as Friesen "gave a quarter of beef along with him to sell."

Anna, Mrs. Jakob Wiebe, died on January 15, 1896.

Brother-in-law Abraham M. Friesen has recorded that Jakob Wiebe held an auction sale on February 13, 1897.

In 1898 at the age of 68 Jakob retired, keeping only two horses. By this time son Peter I. Wiebe was already farming in the village in a substantial way. On December 26, 1900, Jakob Wiebe wrote the *Rundschau* asking about various relatives and friends.

Historian Royden Loewen has written that “[Jakob Wiebe] operated a threshing machine and was a noted horse man. He is remembered as a tall, strong man who loved to tell stories. In his last year he lived with son Peter in Hochfeld.”<sup>523</sup>

Jacob Wiebe died on February 19, 1901, at his home in Blumenort. Several of their children died in infancy.

5 Son **Johann I. Wiebe** married Anna Baerg, daughter of minister Peter Baerg (1817-1901) of the Crimea and later Grünfeld, Manitoba. Johann did not live quite two years with her. Monday, February 13, 1882, Abraham F. Reimer recorded “Yesterday, Johann Wiebe, son of Jakob, was baptised in the Holdeman church.” But on Friday, the 17th, Johann “...attended the Kleine Gemeinde baptismal services in Steinbach” and, in fact, was baptised there on the 27th. Young Johann had seemingly developed a romantic interest in Anna, daughter of Ohm Peter Baerg of Grünfeld, which may have influenced the move. Ohm Peter Baerg was a valiant stalwart of the faith - not one to be swayed by any Evangelist from the States, no matter how eloquent or fiery they might be. According to the journal of uncle Abraham M. Friesen, Johann died “instantly after dinner on April 19, 1884. He was buried on Thursday the 22nd, with a considerable attendance.” He suffered from epilepsy and died of this sickness in Blumenort. May 1, 1884, teacher and former uncle Peter L. Dueck, Grünfeld, wrote “Johann Wiebe was buried there [Blumenort] as you may know...Wiebe’s death was very sudden, and one wonders, ‘Will he have been ready to go?’ But God is able to save anyone who desires it. And He certainly does not wish that a sinner should die unprepared. We trust that this young brother [was] received [in] grace.”<sup>524</sup> Folk historian Peter P. Isaac referred to nephew Johann I. Wiebe, “I still have compassion when I think of him, since his father at times was too hard on him in his sickness. I have been told that his father in his last days had repented of his impatience and anger. May we be forgivable and not hold anything against him!” After Johann’s death, Anna married for the second time to Cornelius Fast (1840-1927) of Steinbach, Manitoba. Johann and Anna had one son, Jacob married to Margaretha Isaac of Kleefeld, Manitoba, where he farmed. Their children were: Dora, Albert and Frank. Dora’s son Harry Bartel was a minister of the “Full Gospel Chapel” a Steinbach Pentecostal church, now defunct. Son **Peter I. Wiebe** married Margaretha B. Friesen, daughter of Peter B. Friesen of Neuanlage near Blumenort.<sup>525</sup> Peter I. Wiebe remarried to Katharina Klassen, daughter of Peter B. Klassen of Neuanlage, Manitoba. The children of the first marriage were: Peter, Jacob, Abraham, and of the second marriage: Katharina, Johann, Anna, David and Frank. On October 15, 1889, Peter I Wiebe bought the Blumenort village bull for \$12.50.<sup>526</sup> Peter I. Wiebe “...farmed in Blumenort until 1900, when he purchased

NE and SE19-7-6E from the Manitoba Government. Peter carried on his father's interest in horses to become a widely-known horse breeder and veterinarian: "In 1916 Peter I. Wiebe imported a Belgium stallion from Saskatchewan and paid for it the unheard-of sum of \$1,000. For many years farmers from miles around Blumenort relied on Wiebe's stallion to improve their stock. The stallion was hitched to a democrat, and the Wiebes travelled from farm to farm on service calls."<sup>527</sup> For a time Peter I. Wiebe was involved in road construction, serving the community as road boss. He also served the community as school trustee during World War I."<sup>528</sup> He is remembered as a successful farmer in Hochfeld, west of Blumenort. Jim Wiebe, Blumenort, farmer and accountant is the son of Jakob F. Wiebe. Daughter **Anna I. Wiebe** married Peter B. Friesen Jr., brother to Margaretha who had married her brother. Anna and Peter farmed in Blumenort until 1901, when they moved to Neuanlage to take over his father's farm after his death in 1901. Here they lived until 1908, when they returned to Blumenort. After Blumenort broke up in 1910, they were allowed to remain in the village for a year to give them time to look for a new place to live. The Friesens were subjected to lengthy illnesses and were very poor. Later they returned to Heuboden where they lived until they died."<sup>529</sup> Peter B. Friesen had a series of attacks of mental disturbances which hindered a happy married life. Their children included: Abraham, Anna, Tina, Isaac, Elisabeth and Peter. In 2000 son Isaac W. Friesen (1905-2001) was still living in Jagueyes, Mexico the oldest resident at the time. Son Jakob W. Friesen (1892-1981), Kleefeld, was a knowledgeable folk historian. Daughter **Elisabeth I. Wiebe** married Jacob R. Reimer, son of deacon Abraham R. Reimer, Blumenort. Elisabeth was often sick in her short span of life and left no children.



*Jakob W. Friesen (1892-1981), Kleefeld, later Steinbach. A knowledgeable folk historian.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Anna P. Isaac</b>	May 10,1832		Jan 15,1896
m	Jakob P. Wiebe	Mar 9,1829	May 1856	Feb 19,1901
5	Johann I. Wiebe	May 7,1862		Apr 19,1884
m	Anna Baerg	Aug 18,1859		Jan 22,1930
5	Anna I. Wiebe	Nov 9,1868	Jun 28,1890	Feb 25,1931
m	Peter B. Friesen	Nov 27,1867		Mar 12,1933
5	Peter I. Wiebe	Apr 5,1871	Nov 1,1896	Oct 1,1931
m	Margaret Friesen	Nov 1877		Dec 15,1900
2m	Katharina Klassen	May 10,1877	Mar 1,1901	Jun 1,1921
2m	Susanna Harder	Dec 4,1869	Feb 17,1924	Apr 11,1954
5	Elizabeth I. Wiebe	Jul 24,1875	Feb 9,1896	May 11,1898
m	Jacob R. Reimer	Apr 25,1874		Aug 18,1900





*Above: Mr. and Mrs. Peter I. Wiebe with their children the Frank K. Wiebes, circa 1928, at the Wiebe home in Hochfeld. Courtesy of Loewen, Blumenort, page 322/Preservings, No. 14, page 133.*



*Left: Peter B. Friesen (1867-1933), son-in-law of Jakob Wiebe. Photo courtesy of daughter-in-law Elizabeth Friesen, Box 217, Blumenort, Manitoba, R0A 0C0. Peter B. Friesen was the great-grandson of Abramam Friesen (1782-1849), Obrloff, Imperial Russia, second Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde. Mrs. Peter B. Friesen was staunchly traditional and refused to allow herself to be photographed. Photo - Preservings, No. 14, page 133.*

5 Daughter **Margaretha Plett Isaac** (1833-1919) married Abraham M. Friesen, son of Kleine Gemeinde minister Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) Rosenort, Molotschna, by his first wife, Margaretha Mathies. Margaretha Isaac was baptised in 1854 and Abraham in 1853. Abraham compiled a "Book of Prayers" between the years 1844 and 1851, a remarkable feat for a lad of his age.<sup>530</sup> Like his brothers, Abraham had a good education. John C. Reimer later wrote that he "was the most learned man in the East Reserve."<sup>531</sup>

Ohm Johann Dueck recorded that at a worship service in Blumenort on May 27, 1856, "Friesen's Abraham was there with his bride and their banns were proclaimed."<sup>532</sup> Abraham M. Friesen himself has written, "they held their Verlobung on June 4 (June 16 according to the new calender), and we were married after the worship service by cousin Abraham Friesen from Neukirch, in Lindenau at Isaac Harms in the Scheune [hay barn]."<sup>533</sup>

Abraham and Margaretha farmed on their Wirtschaft in Kleefeld, Molotschna, a village settled in 1854. Abraham was well-liked in the congregation and at age 27 he was appointed as song leader or Vorsänger after a worship service in Rosenort on Feb. 19, 1861.<sup>534</sup> In 1866 Abraham acquired a copy of Peter Pieters, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, published by the Kleine Gemeinde in 1865. He endorsed the flyleaf, "This book belongs to Abraham Friesen in Kleefeld 1866 January 23." The cost was 63 kopek silver. On another flyleaf page he wrote the stanza, "What is the way which I must follow, if heavenward I would go?" presumably a line from a favourite song or poem.<sup>535</sup> In 1869 Abraham M. Friesen wrote a 32 stanza poem in which he reflected regarding the unfortunate strife which had befallen the Kleine Gemeinde and other Mennonite denominations in Russia. He encouraged his readers to be uplifted and encouraged in their Christian pilgrimage.<sup>536</sup>

Around 1870 the Abraham M. Friesen family moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko. Like most Kleine Gemeinde families the Friesens travelled frequently, visiting relations in the Molotschna or on business: August 28, 1872, they "went to the Molotschna to Abr. Klassens, Prangenu."

In 1874 Margaretha and Abraham emigrated to America. They settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, Wirtschaft 13. During the first winter in 1875 a river boat carrying flour and grain relief supplies for the new settlement got stuck in the ice near Emerson. Abraham M. Friesen sent teenage son, Johann, with a team of oxen and a sleigh to earn \$1.00 per bag plus a bag of kerosene-smelling flour for the family. Years later, Johann remembered the 10-day journey in the intensely cold weather; when, dressed very poorly, he had run in circles around the oxen and sleigh 'so as not to freeze to death.' The flour Johann earned for his family was much appreciated as it cost \$5.00 a bag in those days.<sup>537</sup> The dire straights of the family are illustrated by a story told by Margaretha about son Johann: "He had gone to the bush to get wood, and in the evening he had also fed the cattle and then come in. There had been a piece of bread lying on the table and ...[Johann] had picked it up to eat. Thereupon the mother had said, 'Son, leave the bread alone, that is all we have for breakfast.' That had really grieved the mother."<sup>538</sup>

Abraham maintained a correspondence with relatives in the U.S. and Rus-

sia. In 1875 he received a letter from his cousin, Helena (von Riesen) Jansen from Mount Pleasant, dated June 22, 1875. Helena was the wife of Cornelius Jansen, exiled by the Russian Czar for advocating the emigration from Russia. According to the letter Abraham had ordered a *Martyr's Spiegel* from the Jansens.<sup>539</sup>

By 1883 the Friesens owned a double farm, 320 acres. He had a house valued at \$250.00, barn \$130.00, 4 oxen, 2 cows, 1 yearly and 1 calf and a modest line of farm equipment.

From 1877 to 1878 Abraham served as the teacher for the neighbouring village of Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>540</sup> In 1888 he served on the committee responsible for operating the Blumenort village school. During the 1880s Abraham served his village as Schulz. He served for a time as "Brandschulz" or local fire insurance manager.

During the Holdeman schism in 1882 Abraham was very concerned. He transcribed a letter dated May 13, 1882, written by his brother-in-law Franz Isaac in Russia to brother-in-law Abraham Loewen, in which Franz questioned the movement but reiterated he "would continue to love his brothers even though they were leaving the church." No doubt writings such as these influenced Abraham and Margaretha in their decision to remain true to the faith once received.<sup>541</sup>

Abraham M. Friesen was familiar with drilling wells. On Monday Dec. 14, 1884, he "set up the well drilling rig but because of much trouble had not started." In 1889 Abraham M. Friesen did actually drill a new well. His diary indicates some of the problems encountered: Jan. 14, 1889. "Set up the well-drilling machine." Jan. 15. "Not much progress made because of various problems - only 10 feet." Jan. 26. "More trouble with the well-drilling machine." Jan. 23. "Went to Steinbach to have a part welded for the drilling machine." Feb. 2. "Reached 83 feet." Feb. 13. "The well drill became stuck at 93 feet." Feb. 15. "Tried to free the drill without results." Feb. 18. "Went along with young Wiebe to Janzens to talk to a Mr. Master in regard to freeing our drill." Feb. 19. "Master drove with young Wiebe to Winnipeg where they had a special piece of equipment made to get the drill out."<sup>542</sup>

Abraham was a shoemaker. On April 4, 1884, for instance, Friesen either fixed or made shoes and boots for five different customers and charged them each 15 cents. January 19, 1890, "[Abraham]....made a pair of boots for neighbour Peter Penner." Friesen also fixed watches for people from the surrounding area.<sup>543</sup> Abraham was knowledgeable with animal husbandry and hired by neighbours to castrate pigs and bulls. He had a sense of humour reporting on March 15, 1891, he brought a "cat with a kitten along from Steinbach, from Kl. Reimer Sr."<sup>544</sup>

Abraham M. Friesen tried to help his neighbours in need. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "Abram M. Friesen, although not a deacon, seems to have had a heart for the elderly widow, Mrs. Peter Penner. Friesen's diary shows he frequently helped her with various things such as fixing her well, helping her slaughter hogs, driving with her to Steinbach, and organizing her 1892 auction sale."<sup>545</sup>

In 1892 the Friesen family moved out of the village and established their own farm on the SW35-7-6E where they farmed for the remainder of their days.

On April 25, 1893, Abraham noted, "today we reached consensus that we would get onto Section 35, the southeast quarter." A further change must have been negotiated as in actual fact the Friesens settled on the southwest quarter. On April 28, 1894, the Abraham Friesens actually moved to the farm, having constructed buildings and prepared a yard the preceding year. Abraham finished the well on the property on July 14, 1894. Occasionally he hauled goods for merchant H. W. Reimer, Steinbach. Abraham's sons sometimes worked out for others to raise extra cash.

Like his father, Abraham had a sense of historical consciousness and collected various records and writings some of which were preserved by son Johann I. Friesen and brother Johann P. Friesen. Abraham enjoyed writing and maintained a diary. The journals covering 1884-1889, 1889-1897, and 1905-1908 are still extant and form a valuable source of information on pioneer life in the Steinbach-Blumenort area.<sup>546</sup>

Abraham M. Friesen was a poet and "is known to have written much poetry for his grandchildren."<sup>547</sup> Granddaughter, Mrs. Jakob T. Loewen, nee Margaretha Friesen, later recalled that he would often sit in his office and sing and "then it was fun to stand at his side." He was also artistically inclined and made many "Irrgarten" or paper cutout puzzles which he gave to the older grandchildren.

Abraham M. Friesen's library included an 1872 Elkhart edition of the Dietrich Phillips' *Enchiridion* acquired in 1883 and now in the writer's possession. Abraham continued his letter correspondence. On Jan. 22, 1889, Abraham bought "a dictionary at an auction sale for the widow Dück in Grünfeld." On Tuesday, Sept. 1, 1888, he received a letter from Bernhard Thiessen, Russia.



*Abraham M. Friesen and wife Margaretha Isaac Friesen, ca. 1900. Note that Margaretha is wearing a "Haube". Photo courtesy of LaVerna Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Photo - Preservings, No. 9, Part One, page 48.*

Abraham fostered relationships with relatives and stayed in touch with siblings and in-laws in Nebraska and Kansas. On Feb. 17, 1897, Abraham wrote to brother-in-law Kl. Koop in Nebraska. Abraham M. Friesen loved his family and particularly his grandchildren. Granddaughter Margaretha Friesen Loewen recalled Abraham M. Friesen would frequently come to her parents' place, 2 1/2 miles from the Greenland School, to pick up the school children to drive them to school with his hayrack, when it was very cold. "He must have gotten up at least at 5 a.m. to feed the horse and drive all the way to our place." Margaretha also recalled that her grandfather never came by without some gift for them, even if it was only garden produce or fruit "but he wanted to make us a joy. Not with many words, but with deeds, from which emanated a sweet aroma."

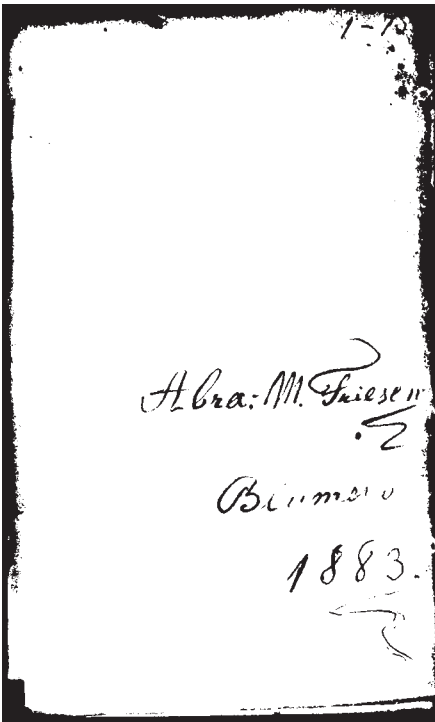
Abraham M. Friesen died on October 10, 1908, "of a sore foot which would be called diabetes today. By the time Abraham died the Friesens considered themselves part of the Blumenhof community where he was buried in the cemetery on SW25-67-6E. Grandson Henry E. Friesen recalled that Margaretha, Mrs. Abraham M. Friesen, often stayed at the home of her youngest son Peter in Greenland during her widowhood. Henry remembered her as an elderly woman: "[She]...died in [our]... house in the parlour, and a year later .... his uncle Isaac died in the same room."<sup>548</sup>

6 Daughter **Margaretha Friesen** never married.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Margaretha P. Isaak</b>	Dec 24,1833		Feb 1,1919
m	Abraham M. Friesen	Dec 6,1834	June 28,1856	Oct 10,1908
6	Klaas I. Friesen	Nov 26,1856		Dec,1858
6	Johann I. Friesen	Jan 15,1860	Apr 18,1880	Jan 21,1941
m	Helena Penner	Aug 24,1861		Sep 4,1917
2m	Katherine Ratzlaff	Jan 26,1863	May 23,1918	Dec 23,1938
6	Abram I. Friesen	Jun 10,1862	Jul 31,1887	Sep 2,1938
m	Maria Wiebe	Mar 27,1867		Feb 2,1964
6	Margaretha Friesen	Nov 14,1864		Dec 16,1838
6	Klaas I. Friesen	Feb 19,1868	Sept 1,1889	Oct 9,1927
m	Katherine Penner	Jan 14,1871		Oct 12,1952
6	Isaac I. Friesen	Nov 18,1870	1901	Aug 27,1920
m	Emilie Koening			
2m	Rosa Eichel			
6	Peter I. Friesen	Dec 3,1873	Mar 5,1899	May 30,1966
m	Anna Eidse	July 1,1875		Jul 18,1973



*Johann I. Friesen and Helena Penner Friesen circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches," Carillon News, 1952. Photo - Preservings, No. 9, Part One, page 49.*



ENCHIRIDION.  
 oder  
**Handbüchlein,**

von der  
**Christlichen Lehre und Religion.**

Zum Dienst von allen Liebhabern der Wahrheit durch des  
 Gnade Gottes) aus der heiligen Schrift gemacht.

Mit einem schönen und faßlichen Register.

von  
**Dietrich Phillip.**

1 Theil. 8. 12.  
 Den Geist demvort nicht; die Befragung gerachtet nicht; prüfet aber  
 alles, und das Gute behaltet. Weiset allen bösen Thun.

Jener gedruckt zu Hartford im Velland, nächst aber mit der  
 treueste überlegt in die hochwichtige Sprache, durch die  
 Liebhaber der Wahrheit.

Dritte Amerikanische Ausgabe.

Elkhart, Indiana.

Gedruckt und herausgegeben von Jehu A. Hunt und Brud.  
 1872.

*Book plate and title page of 1872 Elkhart edition of the Dietrich Phillips' Enchiridion. A quality leatherbound-bound volume, using brown cow leather. Photo - Preservings, No. 9, Part One, page 48.*

6 Son **Johann I. Friesen** (1860-1941) was gifted at calligraphy (“Schönschreiben”) receiving recognition in school for his achievements.<sup>549</sup> During his teenage years, Johann spent much time away from Blumenort, working for French and English people from Emerson to Winnipeg.<sup>550</sup> In 1877 the Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin visited the new Mennonite settlements in Manitoba. When the vice-regal party entered the East Reserve August 21, they were met by an honour guard of four young mounted Mennonites. Some of the riders in the caravan had indicated they wanted to race. The Mennonite men, assuming that Dufferin was in the covered carriage and that these mounted members in the party were merely his valets, took them up on it. How surprised they were when they arrived at the reception centre and discovered that one of the riders was in fact none other than Lord Dufferin, the Queen’s representative! Johann I. Friesen described the resulting anxiety: “...Those gentlemen on horseback had all kinds of pastimes with the Mennonite riders, short races, etc. and the latter were pleased and joined them quite freely and openly. Thus they arrived at the reception area. How horrified our riders were when they saw how one of the gentlemen was being waited on by the others and how respectfully and courteously he was treated. It was Lord Dufferin. A rigid fear fell over the young men, undoubtedly they had done something for which they would be blamed or maybe their loose behaviour had offended the Governor. In Russia they were accustomed to something different. A government official would be approached in nothing but the most respectful manner. They shared their concern with Mr. William Hespeler, who also was part of the Lord Governor’s retinue, and whom many of the settlers knew. Mr. Hespeler passed these young men’s fears on to Lord Dufferin; however, he calmed their fears by saying that all was well.”<sup>551</sup> Johann “...was given the honour of carrying...[Lord Dufferin’s] riding boots to the tent.”<sup>552</sup>

“Through a serious accident he was led to conversion at the age of 19 and was baptised as a member of the Kleine Gemeinde on Aug. 3, 1879.”<sup>553</sup> Johann married Helena Penner, daughter of Peter H. Penner (1839-1916) and Helena Penner (1840-1908) of Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>554</sup> On August 25, 1880, Johann was entered in the Brandordnung for Wirtschaft 11 with a dwelling insured for \$25.00. Presumably he farmed the Wirtschaft together with his father. In 1884 Johann was recruited by Abr. S. Friesen to move to Steinbach, working as fireman and engineer for Friesen’s sawmill. On December 24, 1884, Johann was entered in the Brandordnung in Steinbach with a new dwelling house insured for \$300.00. After two years the family returned to farming on Wirtschaft 11 in Blumenort. By 1885 they had their own house insured for \$75.00 which was increased to \$100.00 in 1887 and a barn added for \$35.00. On December 8, 1887, another \$15.00 was added to the coverage for the house and \$50.00 for the barn. In 1887 the insurance on the house in Steinbach was cancelled. In 1889, \$25.00 was added to their insurance coverage for the farm in Blumenort for a milkhouse.

On Wednesday, February 17, 1892, Johann I. Friesens “moved to Steinbach, Manitoba,” as accountant for the flour mill.<sup>555</sup> On Feb. 25, 1893, father Abraham recorded, “Johann took our vehicle to drive to Blumengart to pick up the maid.”

The mill burned down August 16, 1892, and a new one was built. Katharina Friesen Reimer, Johann's daughter, recalled some of the construction: "The foundations were poured later that same fall. Next March they started to build. The men working on the construction project boarded at our parents. The lumber for this building was brought from the bush in winter from Pine Hill, 25 miles east of Steinbach. The man who made the blueprints was a man named Lipzeit and another man was his helper. They were both from Ontario and a Mr. Tennirren was the miller for some time, and Peter T. Barkman was the boss, and my father was his helper. He took over the work of bookkeeper and kept things in order."<sup>556</sup> A change in management occurred in that the position of General Manager in the newly rebuilt mill was offered to the dynamic young Johann I. Friesen. Johann also acquired a one-eighth share. The business now operated under the name "Reimer, Barkman, Friesen." In addition to the flour mill, the firm operated a lumber and building supply business to the north of the mill, under the name "Steinbach Lumber Yard". The location later became known as Lumber Avenue in honour of the business which operated there until the 1960s. Johann I. Friesen came to be inextricably associated with the Steinbach flour mills acquiring the nickname "Maella Fries'e."

Johann held the position of General Manager for 26 years and made numerous friends. The "houses and buildings of miller Johann I. Friesen and his assistant Reichel were located to the south of the mill itself." In 1915 Gerhard E. Kornelsen wrote about the Steinbach mill that "It is not unusual on a fall evening to meet lines of wagons loaded with wheat from St. Malo or even Stuartburn, who had come to grind their wheat into the far and wide known 'Prairie Rose Flour'. The next morning these wagons return home laden with the snow-white flour."

In 1897 the Johann I. Friesen family moved from their traditional shingled house-barn in Main Street, Steinbach, into their new modern two-story house set further back, southwest of First Street (then known as "Mill Street"). "Plasterers came from Winnipeg to plaster all the walls. This was never redone. Linoleum was laid all over the first section of the building....The first part of the house had four bedrooms and a large hall also holding one double bed. A living room across the front and two bedrooms toward the back....The second part had a separate staircase. The upstairs was called 'de yalle bane.'....The name came from the yellow floors. Most wooden floors were painted yellow in those days....The house was finished on the outside with board siding painted white. Thus far all houses in Steinbach had been built with shingles on the outside. Grandfather [Johann I.] Friesen's modern trends were not approved of by the Kleingemeinde but he always remained a contributing member. Grandmother Friesen, on the other hand, was very upset when the elders reprimanded her for the white curtains with frills on her windows..."<sup>557</sup> Johann I. Friesen was known "...to be very punctual in all his dealings." In 1917 his wife died and for various other reasons the mill was sold for \$12,500.00.

In 1918 Johann I. Friesen moved to Meade, Kansas, where he remarried to the widow Abraham K. Friesen, nee Katherina Ratzlaff, daughter of his cousin Susanna Thiessen (1853-1917) and Bernhard Ratzlaff (1835-1918).<sup>558</sup> Johann I.



Friesen returned to Steinbach, Manitoba in 1940, where he died the following year. Johann I. Friesen was knowledgeable in genealogy.<sup>559</sup> His only genealogical work to be published was an "Anhang" (Addendum) to Peter Isaac's "*Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern*" in 1916.<sup>560</sup> Johann was interested in history and made a short presentation of his recollections of the pioneer days at the 60th anniversary celebration of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba held in Steinbach in 1935. These reminiscences were printed in the booklet later published to commemorate the event.<sup>561</sup> One of Johann I. Friesen's journals included letters and correspondence regarding Johann Holdeman, Jakob A. Wiebe, Gnadenau, Kansas, and Abraham F. Thiessen, Jansen, Nebraska. Johann was one of the few members of the extended Plett family to be mentioned in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.<sup>562</sup> He collected the papers of his father and grandfather, some of which were later deposited at Bethel College by son Abraham, "a famous American physicist" who taught there.<sup>563</sup>



*Johann I. Friesen with daughters in front of the Peter B. Reimer home in Steinbach, 1941, l.-r.: Maria (Mrs. Peter Rempel), Margaret (Mrs. Abram A. Reimer) partially hidden, Elisabeth, never married, Katharina (Mrs. Peter B. Reimer), Johann I. Friesen, and Anna (Mrs. George W. Reimer). Photo - Pres., No. 4, page 10.*

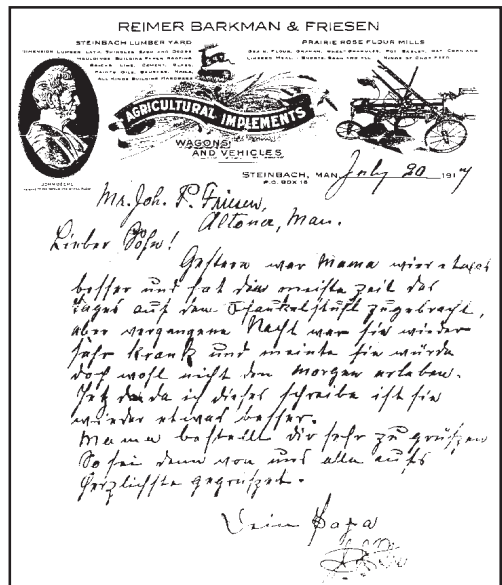
7 Son **Abram P. Friesen** (1887-1953) taught in Steinbach from 1911 to 1923, after which he pursued higher education, obtaining a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in 1935.<sup>564</sup> The following article was published in the *Carillon News*, June 27, 1952: Former students of Dr. A. P. Friesen to Hold Get-together on Friday. A distinguished guest in Steinbach this week is Dr. A. P. Friesen, educator and physicist who is at present head of the physics department of Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas.

Dr. and Mrs. Friesen, their daughter and son-in-law, Prof. G. A. Ediger are on their first visit to Manitoba in 29 years. Their agenda includes visiting Dr. Friesen's sisters and their families, namely, Mrs. G. W. Reimer, Mrs. A. A. Reimer, Mrs. P. B. Reimer, and Mrs. Elizabeth Friesen.

Once a flour mill apprentice and later night miller at Steinbach Flour Mills (1900-1904) Dr. Friesen was listed in "Who's Who of America" last year. He was reared in Blumenort, seven miles north of Steinbach, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Johann Friesen. While working to help his pioneering parents, he spent spare moments in study. In 1906 he taught his first rural class; in 1909 he was teacher of mathematics and physical sciences at the M.C.I. in Gretna. He taught in Steinbach from 1911 to 1923, but his quest for higher learning took him to the U.S.A. In 1924 Dr. Friesen received his B.A. degree at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas; his M.A. at the U. of Colorado in 1928; his Ph.D. at the U. of Kansas in 1935.

To pay tribute to their former teacher and principal, a group of Dr. Friesen's former students have arranged a get-together for Friday evening, June 27, at 8 p.m. at school No. 3. All students of the years 1912, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20 and 21 are invited to attend, as well as the teachers who taught here in the same period.

**Editor's Note:** Dr. Friesen began the Steinbach High School. In the 75 *Gedenkfeier*, pages 91, John C. Reimer has written that the Steinbach High School was started in 1914 with Abram P. Friesen as teacher and John R. Barkman, Gerhard K. Reimer, Amy Smith, A. T. Loewen, Nikolai Janz, Joh. G. Kornelsen, and C. F. Giesbrecht, students.



Letter by "Reimer Barkman Friesen" General Manager Johann I. Friesen July 20, 1917, to son Johann in Altona advising that "mother...is very sick" and had only barely survived the previous night. Letter courtesy of Ernie P. Toews, Steinbach, Manitoba. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part One, page 44.

7     **Son Johann P. Friesen** (b. 1892) was a banker. Journalist Abram Warkentin has written his story: “One fall day in 1906, a thin, 14 year-old boy said goodbye to his parents,....in front of their home in the little village of Steinbach. He climbed into a democrat that was waiting nearby with several young fellows about his own age and began the journey which would take him to high school at Gretna, Man. The boy’s name was John P. Friesen and that trip.....was his first away from home. He didn’t know it then but he was starting on a career which would lead him ultimately to one of the more important banking positions on Wall Street in New York, the commercial crossroads of the world. John P. Friesen was born Dec. 20, 1892 in his parents’ home in Steinbach in one of the buildings then in style - a house and barn built together. After he became a New York banker, he took delight in telling his broker friends that he was born in a barn.”

“At the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, John’s teachers discovered that he was no slouch, especially at figures and when he left the Institute in 1911, after three years, they recommended him for a job at the Gretna branch of the Bank of Montreal which he accepted. In the spring of 1913, the bank of Gretna caught fire and burned to the ground. Fortunately, everything of value was locked in the fireproof vault but the heat of the fire had warped the steel on the outside of the vault and an expert had to be called down from Winnipeg to cut a hole through it. John and the town constable, a Mr. Funk, had to sleep in the vault for the first two nights after the fire as guards. During the second night they heard someone prowling around outside and drew their guns to fight it out with the supposed burglar. When they switched on their flashlight, the beam shone right into the face of a black cat which had been tramping around on a piece of tin roofing outside the vault. The guards looked at each other sheepishly then burst out laughing so hard they had to sit down till they got over it.”

“Following the fire, John was moved to Altona and from then on he held jobs of gradually increasing importance at various Bank of Montreal branches right up until 1924. He worked at Raymond, Alta., Saskatoon, Regina, Tavistock, Ont., Waterford, Ont. And Oshawa, Ont. From Oshawa the bank sent him to its New York branch where he stayed on until his retirement in 1954. As the bank’s joint call-loan manager in the big metropolis, he supervised the issue of loans for about \$20,000,000.00 a day. Most of it went to Wall Street brokerage firms. It was quite common, he said, to have a broker call up and ask for a loan of one million or even five million dollars. Mr. Friesen said his branch never lost a cent in the 1929 stock market crash ‘but we had our headaches’. He says, too, that there is no truth in those stories about the deluge of brokers’ bodies supposed to have rained down on Wall Street from their office windows during the crash of 1929. ‘I only knew two or three who did that.’”

“Because of his position, John met many interesting and famous people. Among them were George Bernard Shaw and the notorious ‘Match King Kruger,’ the international confidence man. The latter ended his life by committing suicide in a Paris hotel after swindling millions of dollars in the United States, fortunately none of it from Mr. Friesen’s bank. About the most interesting persons he ever met he says, was a poet who became a millionaire and later lost his

money in one day. This particular poet lived in a rather poverty stricken life in the city of Pittsburgh and spent his spare time making up rhymes. One day while crossing a bridge, he saw a boy fall into the river. Without a thought, the poet threw off his coat, dived in and rescued the lad. He discovered that he had rescued the son of a Pittsburgh steel magnate who died sometime after leaving to his son's rescuer a bequest of \$250,000.00. The poet turned this sum over to the Wall Street brokers who, through speculation, built it up to a million dollar fortune for him. That was in the 1920s. When the crash came in 1929, the poet lost everything. Far from jumping out a window, he took it all very philosophically and went back to making up rhymes again."

"Mr. Friesen has remained a bachelor all his life. 'Not purposely,' he says, 'just coincidence.' Asked in 1958 following his retirement what he thought about the future of our economy, Mr. Friesen said: 'I'm an optimist. We cannot afford to have a depression. The last depression was only an artificial one. The banks were not broke; their assets were just frozen. Our governments will go out of their way to see that we don't run into that situation again.' Mr. Friesen, by the way, claims he is related to almost everyone in Steinbach, and when he starts listing his relatives here, one is inclined to agree. His nearest relatives in Steinbach were his four sisters, Mrs. George W. Reimer, Mrs. P.B. Reimer, Mrs. A.A. Reimer and Miss Elizabeth Friesen. A fifth sister, Mrs. Peter G. Rempel, lives in Fairbairn, Nebraska. His only brother, Dr. Abram P. Friesen, who was a famous American physicist, was listed in the *American Who's Who* in 1952-53. He taught physics in several large universities in Colorado and Texas. When he died on July 31, 1957, the *New York Times* carried a half column obituary. Mr. Friesen is a close friend of K.R. Barkman with whom he attended school and a first cousin of Frank Friesen of the C.T. Loewen Lumber Co. Of the rest of his relatives in the Southeast he says, 'There are so many I couldn't count them all.' In 1971, John Friesen, the retired banker was residing in Winnipeg."<sup>55</sup>



Dr. A. P. Friesen (1887-1953), Bethel College, Newton, Ks. ca. 1935. Photo - Men. Life, Sept. 1987, page 8.



John P. Friesen (b. 1892), New York banker. Photo - Pres., No. 14, page 92.

6 Daughters **Helena P. Friesen** (1889-1920) and **Katharina P. Friesen** (b. 1894) married Peter B. Reimer, son of Abraham W. Reimer, Giroux lumberman and merchant. In 1974 Charlotte Reimer Kennedy wrote a biography of her parents, Peter B. Reimer, and wife, Helena P. Friesen and second wife, Katharina P. Friesen, daughters of Johann I. Friesen. The article was entitled "The one with the hat": "'The one with the hat,' we children pointed out unanimously, 'that's father.' From the sanctity of father's cubicled writing desk mother had drawn a small collection of brown-tone prints. One, in particular, captured our childish interest. Curious, we scanned the impress of turn-of-the-century Steinbach's pride: her young men, posed in two orderly rows. The men, sombre, yet somehow foppish in their shiny Sunday best, had adopted self-consciously formal poses in keeping with the seriousness of a picture taking in 1904. But father had to be different. That was how we knew it was father. Wearing a jaunty hat and a cocky air, he presented a slightly raffish appearance. We thought he looked dashing, even handsome. 'Was he popular?' we asked. 'Especially with the women,' Mother replied, chuckling."

"The inevitable hat which marks Peter Barkman Reimer in those early photographs is something more than the symbol of that individuality which made him very much his own man. There were always literal hats. Peter liked wearing hats - shapeless grey felt for winter and scruffy pale straw for summer. There were hats to fit a variety of times and roles. The dapper cheesecutter was discarded along with his brief youth in favour of workaday businessmen's hats: the barber's, the butcher's, the storekeeper's. And there was always the drab, non-nonsense Sunday and special Occasion hat. Of these, there was one, a vintage model of his later years which had a special place in his life. It was a disreputable mass of sodden grey felt, limp of brim, and lumpy of crown. Time, wind and weather had combined to mould this favourite to fit Peter's head perfectly, and oh so comfortably!"

"To this hat he clung desperately in his last days, almost as if he was afraid that without it he was not quite Peter B. Reimer, the man complete. Gravely, deliberately, he doffed that shabby ticket to uniqueness when he first entered the Greenland Home in order to take up residence there. He said he would leave the hat 'outside,' as 'something to come back to.'"

Hatless, he came into the world on November 12th, 1885. His formal education consisted of Grade Three, with highest honours in 'Schönschrieben' (Calligraphy). At age nine he was considered mature enough to assume the responsibility of adulthood. As a full-fledged labourer in the family lumber business, he was quick to learn from his father, Abram W. Reimer, the skills, as well as the rough and ready ways, of the lumberman. From his dour, yet patient and courageous mother he learned all she could teach him about cooking and bookkeeping. And at the sawmill, to his parents' delight, young Peter was able to exercise his natural bent towards mathematics to the fullest. Rapid mental calculation was his forte, and it wasn't long before his father could entrust him with the tricky business of assessing the value of a load of wood in terms of cords times going rate."

"But Peter was restless, and, as soon as he could be spared from the lumber

operation, he took the then unprecedented steps of seeking further education. He attended a barber college in Winnipeg and soon set up his own shop. Here, one of his first customers was the late Mr. G. G. Kornelsen, who endured, without flinching, a cut which included a nicked ear. 'Why didn't you complain?' a dismayed Peter queried. 'Thought that was how those Winnipeggers taught you to do it,' was the reply.

"Before opening his shop Peter had married his boyhood sweetheart, Malla Frieis' Leinche. She presented him in rapid succession with five children: Frank (1908), Katherine (1909), Anne (1910), Otto (1912) and Werner (1915-63). Their home was happy, and Peter's shop was beginning to operate in the black when his father beckoned: the Abram Reimer business needed help. Peter, feeling the tug of filial duty, shut the door softly on his dreams, and answered the summons. Peter and Leinche lived and worked in Giroux until 1917, when in a move to expand the Giroux operation, a brand new store was built in Steinbach. It was at this juncture that Peter, donning a new business hat as manager of 'The Steinbach Meat Market,' became 'Butchcha' Reimer."

"But, scarcely had Peter settled his family in the old C.W. Reimer residence on Mill Street [later renamed First Street], when the 1918 flu, struck. At one point during this seige, Leinche, exhausted by the demands of ailing youngsters, had fallen into deep slumber after setting her alarm clock. The alarm sounded in due course, and Leinche, groggy with sleep, tried in vain to turn it off. 'Just a few more minutes...' But with shrill insistence the alarm jangled on until finally Leinche turned over, only to discover that the sound was coming, not from the clock, but from little Vern whose ear she had been twisting in the mistaken notion that she was grappling with the alarm button! His mother's days, however, were numbered. Two years after the 1918 scourge she succumbed to the ravages of diabetes. Peter B. Reimer's first wife had been born too early for insulin."

"In August of 1920 Peter married Katharina, sister of Helena. Katharina became a mother to Peter's five little ones, as well as her own: Amanda (1921), Erich (1923-24), Paul (1924), Karl (1962), Menno (1928), Peter (1929), Charlotte (1930), Henriette (1932), Grace (1934-36) and Arlie (1935)."

"As children, we saw Peter B. Reimer, not as a colourful and controversial figure in the community, but rather as provider, mentor, and man of faith. As provider, father was indefatigable. In order to shelter and feed his growing brood, he worked tirelessly, 18 hours a day, six days a week. His family never lacked the necessities of life, but as new babies arrived, lebensraum became a serious problem. In 1923 a solution came by way of an offer to move into Grandpa Friesen's spacious home on Mill Street. (John I. Friesen, incidentally, had built that home at the then exorbitant cost of \$700!). The house with its porches, verandas, sunroom and beautiful treed grounds proved a real boon. As relatives watched its nooks and crannies being filled with children they called it 'Schloszkinderreich!'"

"Converting the meat market into a general store had created an urgent demand for hired help, but the business was as yet too shaky to support a large payroll. This time the children themselves became the solution, and soon the six

oldest were pitching in full time. Helena's children shared with their father the burden of a burgeoning grocery business, while Amanda took on the onerous task of running the huge household. By dint of sheer back-breaking work Peter and his family managed to keep their business afloat during the depression. By 1942 Peter was thanking the God who had granted strength through the lean years for a new prosperity."

"'Father's place,' however, was not destined to thrive. On the night of December 9th, 1943, the store and an adjoining lumber yard went up in a fire which set the skies ablaze for miles around. Alarmed, yet fascinated, we children huddled together in the bitter cold of that December night to watch. We younger ones were concerned chiefly about the Christmas presents we had hidden in the store's mezzanine office that day. Three whole dollars and hours of agonizing decision making had gone into those gifts bought at the P.A. Vogt store that afternoon. But our purchases became mere trifles when we saw the grief in father's face as daylight, harsh and uncompromising, dawned on the desolation that had been our livelihood. Peter B. Reimer however, was not one to weep over what could not be changed. To the accompaniment of sharp bursts of exploding canned goods, P.B. Reimer & Sons (& daughters) made plans for a new beginning. On December 18 the store reopened in a rat-ridden warehouse behind the rubble."

"Peter entered this new phase of his business career with his usual resilient enthusiasm, but in 1944 the strain of the preceding year took its toll. He suffered a heart attack from which he never fully recovered. Responsibility for the construction of the new 'Reimer Foods' now devolved largely upon Frank and the other older children. Grand Opening Day found Peter B., once more hopeful and eager, but too physically weak to enter fully into the festivities. Soon, he was back up on his feet and for 10 more years he was Butcher Reimer, cheerfully serving customers, but happy to leave to his children the complexities of management."

"But Peter B. was concerned with more than the provision of mere necessities for his family. There were moral, ethical and spiritual values to be fostered and nurtured. No doubt each of the 12 children alive today has his own special recollection of one of father's eyeball-to-eyeball lectures. They usually began in an ethical vein and from such counsel he would move on to moral pronouncements, leading them into matters spiritual. As young people we respected the advice born of love and deeply-rooted personal convictions, but at times we felt he was too inflexible, too sure of the line between right and wrong. As we grew older we came to understand that his spiritual vision encompassed a great deal more than the limited black/white picture against which he so often measured our behaviour. But in his attempt to be fair to all his children he found himself trapped in the web of shifting standards. Old gauges for new times presented problems he had difficulty resolving. I remember well the sunny Sunday when he spent an entire afternoon brooding over the question of whether or not to punish his three youngest for engaging in activities which his older children had been denied."

"As provider and counsellor, Peter B. lives in memory still; but most vivid of all is the memory of Peter B., man of faith. The beliefs which coloured every

decision of his adult life are best summed up in a hymn which he often sang: 'Doch ich weiss an Welchen Ich glaube...' But Christianity for Peter B. was more than a 'pie-in-the-sky' religion; it was very much a here-and-now way of life. He learned to look life's hardships in the face and say with compelling conviction: 'Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan.'

"In 1961 'Schloszkinderreich' was almost empty. A move to smaller and more convenient quarters was in order. At this time Amanda provided the brand new bungalow which we younger members of the family remember affectionately as 'the little brown house.' Leaving the old home was not easy for someone who, in his old age, more than ever, clung desperately to things familiar. But Peter B. bade farewell, first to the white house filled to the rafters with echoes of children sounds, then soon thereafter to the cosy brown home, believing what he sang: 'Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan, Es bleibt gerecht sein Willi, Wenn Er fängt meine Sachen an, Will ich Ihm halten stille.'"

"Peter B. Reimer was not a saint. In his single-minded pursuit of the goals which he deemed right and good, he often trod on people's toes. He gave offense often, but as often apologized. He was affectionate, kind, and gentle with children, but he could also be outspoken, tactless, stubborn, insensitive and inconsiderate." "The Steinbach business community had its own little list of unflattering adjectives to describe this maverick Mennonite who had no sense of his 'proper' place in the split-level social structure that was Steinbach. He was as much at ease speaking to an 'English' dignitary in Mennonite-Anglaise as he was exchanging banter in pidgin French with friends from La Broquerie. Perhaps because he treated all people as equals with little regard for the niceties of parochial distinction, or because currying favour was simply foreign to his nature, or because material gain as a means to status and power held no attractions for him - perhaps for all of these reasons his business was never a roaring success. But, then, success per se was not his goal. He simply believed in doing with all his might the things he was called to do."

"Peter B. despised sloth and lack of ambition; he admired initiative and resourcefulness. Peter B. was proud of the children and grandchildren who became missionaries; but he was equally proud of those who established themselves in other ways, provided that each tackled his job with a will, 'seeking first the kingdom of God.'"

"Peter B. Reimer died on April 9th, 1966. Today we treasure the snapshots showing our retired father wearing that special hat he loved so much. But it wasn't what he wore on the outside that made him Peter B. Reimer. Rather it was an inner resource, a personal faith that shaped the man. That faith manifested itself in a variety of ways, not least of which was a child-like gratitude toward those who attended to his needs when his eyesight failed. 'That man has love in his hands' he said of the late Mr. Peter Wohlgemuth who cared for him in the Greenland Home. And in that last year, 'light denied,' his faith, so firmly rooted, allowed him still to say 'Was Gott tut das ist wohlgetan.'"<sup>566</sup>

Helena and Peter B. Reimer were the parents of Frank F. Reimer, founder of Reimer Express Lines, Winnipeg, a national trucking firm in Canada.<sup>567</sup>





*Steinbach young people. Left to right. Rear: Helena P. Friesen later Mrs. Peter B. Reimer; Anna H. W. Reimer; Katherina H. W. Reimer, later Mrs. Jobann F. Giesbrecht; Maria W. Friesen, later Mrs. George Starfield; Katharina R. Barkman, later Mrs. Ben P. Janz; Elisabeth R. Barkman, later Mrs. Jakob S. Rempel; Anna E. Barkman, later Mrs. Jakob D. Barkman; and Mrs. Dietrich F. Giesbrecht; Seated: Isaac T. Loewen, Klaas B. Reimer and Peter B. Reimer. The woman seated in front is unidentified. Photo courtesy of Amanda Reimer, Winnipeg - Preservings, No. 9, Part One, page 35.*



*Photograph of the Barkman, Reimer & Friesen flour mill. The residence of Jobann I. Friesen, rear ("Schloss Kinder Reich"). Photo - Pres., No. 17, page 101.*

6 Son **Abraham I. Friesen** (1862-1938) married Maria Wiebe, daughter of Johann Wiebe (1841-1909)<sup>568</sup> and Maria Neufeld (1840-1920),<sup>569</sup> pioneers on Wirtschaft 14, Steinbach. Abraham and Maria were married in Chortitz on July 31, 1887. On December 24, 1887, Abraham was entered in the Brandordnung in Steinbach with insurance coverage for a house on his father-in-law's property insured for \$75.00. Abraham attended school in Gretna in 1889. The family returned to Steinbach where they were living with Maria's parents at the time of the 1891 census. Abraham started a farm machinery dealership on his father-in-law's property, Wirtschaft 14. He was the agent for "Peterson Machinery Company."<sup>570</sup> Monday, September 2, 1896, brothers "Isaac and Klaas went to Steinbach to help A. I. Friesen move the barn across the street." Abraham lived in Winkler for a few years. Around 1905 Abraham I. Friesen, father-in-law Johann Wiebe, and other Kleine Gemeinde-associated families moved to Herbert, Sask., settling in the Rush Lake area.<sup>571</sup> Abraham was an alcoholic. In 1923 the family moved to Dallas, Oregon, where son Heinrich W. Friesen settled. By 1933 Abraham and his family were back in Saskatchewan living with daughter Maria, Mrs. George Starfield, in Riverhurst, Saskatchewan. From here they moved to Dundurn, Saskatchewan, where Mr. Abram I. Friesen died in September 1938. Mrs. Friesen moved with her daughter to Alberta, living in Lethbridge, Coaldale, and Calgary. Son-in-law George Starfield was also a longtime barber in Steinbach."<sup>572</sup> These biographies are taken from an article by granddaughter Lydia Schroeder, Wawanesa, published in 1999.<sup>573</sup> Abraham's son Peter enlisted in the Canadian Army and was killed in action in W.W.I on November 11, 1917 in Flanders Fields.<sup>574</sup>



*Abraham I. Friesen and Mrs. Friesen, nee Maria Wiebe, ca. 1920. Photo - Pres., No. 14, page 83.*



*Peter W. Friesen (1895-1917), Steinbach's war hero. Buried in Flanders fields, his ancestral home. He died defending freedom. Photo - Preservings, No. 13, page 49.*

6 Son **Klaas I. Friesen** (1889-1927) married Katharina Penner, sister to Johann's wife. On Monday June 27, 1892, Klaas "moved onto the farm." Klaas I. Friesen had a cartage business hauling from Giroux to Steinbach. They also ran a livery stable in Steinbach, Manitoba. In 1920 they moved to Prairie Rose where he farmed for another 10 years.

In 1966 daughter, Mrs. Peter D. Reimer, nee Maria P. Friesen, wrote a biography of her parents Klaas I. and Katharina Friesen: "If the neighbours said in their low German, 'Daut es en stelle fromma christ,' all of the Klaas Friesen family agreed that it was a good character sketch of father. K. I. Friesen was of medium build, somewhat stout, red hair and at times a beard, never in a rush, but steady working and what he did was well done. He could sit for hours and talk about all the different breeds, the leading race horses and any information available was read and studied. During the many years when he served Steinbach, Manitoba as the leading teamster, hauling gravel for the town and possibly thousands of loads of goods from the C. N. R. station at Giroux, eight miles from Steinbach, he was nearly as regular as the sun, but he would never overload his team if he could possibly help it. He taught his second son Paul the care and treatment of horses when they ran two rigs."

"Since it was an impossibility for him to get a schooling, for he should have been a teacher or professor and not a teamster, he did the next best and that was read during the long winter evenings or tell the children and neighbours of his store of knowledge because he was one of the best read up men in the area. Neighbours and children loved to hear him. His knowledge of geography, history and other subjects soon revealed that he had been a lover of many books, with an excellent memory. Some of the young people of the neighbourhood would bring a pail of delicious apples in order to spend an evening to hear Klaas Friesen tell stories of vital interest. And as a lover of his own fine family he would thrill the children with stories of adventure, over a bowl of porridge. Every story was given in detail, they enfolded like a movie."

"The very severe winter storms, and Klaas I. Friesen encountered many of them, began to tell on his health. He thought it was asthma. For this reason three oldest sons-in-law in 1920 bought a farm at the newly developed Prairie Rose settlement [Landmark] with the intention of possibly making an easier livelihood for him. But real pioneering on the lone prairie proved even harder. Inadequate buildings and facilities during the hard winters, when all the water had to be carried to the barn in pails, ice would pile up at the pump, everything in the house would freeze solid except that which was right close to the heater, made conditions even worse. Mr. Friesen was at all times troubled with poor circulation, constantly cold hands and feet did not help the situation."

"[Klaas I.] Friesen never owned a car but had an excellent team of Hackney ponies which were a great help to make their needed 22 mile trips back to Steinbach. On a dark night when the children returned, a car without lights caused a severe accident. The buggy was wrecked; the horses ran away. When Paul and Mary were brought home shaken up and bruised, father was happy to see them safe. All he said in his quiet way, 'Too bad you could not bring the

horses home.' Early the next morning he started out by foot, walked 14 miles only to find that one of his ponies had a broken leg and had to be shot."

"One thing is sure that Mr. K. I. Friesen never complained in spite of all his hardships. In the early years of his married life poverty was his lot. Although the highest and lowest ebb in ones life never lays itself bare, one of his hardest experiences must have been when his oldest children gave him the 50 cents which they had received for Christmas, from saying 'Wenshi.' He harnessed the horses to the sleigh and went the seven miles to buy flour with the coins."

"Whenever Mr. Friesen was at home he spent much of his time fixing harnesses for the horses. As he worked he would, in his quiet way, sing or usually whistle in the most fascinating trill the melodies out of the old *Gesangbuch*. The one he loved so well was 'O Ursprung des Lebens, o ewiges Licht, da niemand vergebens sucht was ihm gebracht.' When the noonday sun and the heat of the battle was greatest, he said one day to his 16 year-old daughter: 'Maria, wir haben hier keine bleibende Stad.'"

"When he finally went to see a doctor about his asthma, which was always thought, was the cause of his shortage of breath, it was diagnosed as a weak heart. He died in the home of C. K. Friesens in Steinbach. His last words, as he passed away were the Lord is coming ('Der Herr kommt')." "The funeral was held in the "small" Kleine Gemeinde worship house in Steinbach for which many guests in bereavement found their way in attendance. Sermons were presented by ministers Heinrich R. Dueck and Heinrich R. Reimer, and Rev. Abram Isaak, the uncle of the deceased, read the obituary and also made some important comments."<sup>575</sup>

"Now, as we look back into Klaas Friesen's school of experience we praise our heavenly Father who has given us this heritage: and are reminded of the testimony that God gives on one of His saints in Heb. 11:4, applying it to Mr. Friesen: 'By faith... he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying... he being dead yet speaketh.'"<sup>576</sup>

In 1997 great-granddaughter Mary Ann Loewen, Steinbach, Manitoba, wrote a biography of Katharina Penner Friesen, Mrs. Klaas I. Friesen: "Katharina was a middle child in a family of 12. In 1874, at the age of three, she migrated with her family to Kansas. But five years later, when she was eight, the Penners moved to Manitoba, where they settled in the village of Blumenort and established a successful farm. Evidently the Penners joined the Holdeman church in 1882, although it seems that Katherina did not."

"When she was 18, on September 1, Katharina married her neighbour, Klaas I. Friesen, son of Blumenort village mayor Abram M. Friesen. They probably lived on the Friesen parents' farmstead until 1893 when parents and married children left the village and moved onto a separate quarter section in the Greenland area. Here, close to Klaas' parents' place, they ran a small farm. Despite the fact that Abram M. Friesen's diary notes that Klaas and Katherina had their own farm, house and oxen, the 1898 municipal tax roll records show that Klaas I. Friesen, age 30 and father of five children, owned no land, and no livestock other than one cow. This fact would coincide with the stories the grandchildren remember about their great-grandfather. They recall that his sense of business

was not very good, and that they just barely managed to ‘eke out a living’ [Katie Reimer]. After 10 years on the farm in Greenland, they moved to Steinbach, where they lived in the southern section of town, later described as “behind the Vogt store” [Erna Thiessen].”<sup>577</sup>

“Together, Klaas and Katherina had nine children, six of whom were girls. These Friesen girls, according to my father and Katherina’s grandson, Wilbert Loewen, were known to “turn heads” with their red hair and attractive physical features. Klaas had a livery stable and Katherina ran a ‘guest house.’ Klaas also hauled gravel for the town, and goods for people, with his team of horses, from Steinbach to the train station at Giroux. As the need for horse-drawn freight service decreased with the coming of motorized vehicles, the family moved to the Prairie Rose settlement to once again try their hand at farming. They lived here from 1920 to 1927, when Klaas died, likely from either asthma or heart disease. At this time Katherina moved to Steinbach with her only unmarried child, 17 year-old Alfred.”

“In spite of obvious hardships in life, Katherina seems to have maintained a reputation as a ‘jolly, happy person’ with a ‘one-sided’ smile [Elvira Penner]. According to my father, she was known as ‘die dicke Grossmom’ in order to differentiate her from the paternal grandmother, Mrs. C.B.Loewen, known as ‘die denne Grossmom.’ Katherina is remembered as someone with an obvious interest in both conversation and food. Elvira Penner, a grandchild, remembers well how her grandmother always liked to sit in the middle of the table during a meal, so as not to miss out on either the conversation taking place around her, or the food being consumed. Other grandchildren associate specific foods with their grandmother; Wilbert Loewen, remembers specifically her popcorn balls, and Elvira Penner remembers her gingersnaps.”

“Unlike her husband, Katherina was aware of the business side of life. From oral accounts by various grandchildren, it seems that this side of Katherina came out when she helped her youngest child, Alfred, run a raspberry farm after moving back to Steinbach in 1927. Katherina was the one who knew exactly how many baskets of berries had been picked and how much each basket was worth. (Incidentally, it seems that Alfred had a special place in his mother’s heart; this sentiment was apparently ‘common knowledge’ amongst the grandchildren.)”

“According to some accounts Katherina was not a humble woman. An awareness of appearance was apparently not lost on her. Elvira Penner says that her grandmother was very proud when she, Elvira, was born, because she was the first grandchild with brown eyes. Wilbert Loewen recalls how activity would centre around grandmother, and Helen Eidse recounts her grandmother’s love of the game Chinese Checkers, and that when playing with the grandchildren, she would somehow always manage to win!”

“There are several humorous stories about Mrs. Friesen that have surfaced through the interview process. One of them comes from Helen Eidse. It goes as follows: Mr. Friesen says to Mrs. Friesen, ‘The Penners can simply not get along in life without incessant talking!’ To which Mrs. Friesen replies, ‘Yes, but what can the Friesens not get along in life without? The Penners!’ Another story comes

from Norma Martens. She tells us about the time when Katherina's 'English' daughter-in-law, Frances, came over to borrow sugar. Frances, trying her hand at Low German, asked for 'zucker', and Katherina, likely wanting to impress her daughter-in-law with her knowledge of the English language, answered her using the English form of the word, 'sugar.' A third story is told by Katherina's daughter, Margaret, Mrs. Jakob T. Loewen. Apparently, in Katherina's early years of marriage, there was a day which found her home alone with pre-school children, feeling extremely lonely and unwell; her husband was away at a lumber camp east of Giroux. When suddenly she saw her parents-in-law's old dog on the yard, she had an idea; she wrote a note and tied it around the dog's neck and sent the animal home. She was rewarded when Abraham M. Friesen, her father-in-law, saw the note on the dog, retrieved and read it, and at once hitched horses to the sleigh and came over with two of his daughters, bringing treats for the small children."

"Katherina was a member of the Kleine Gemeinde church. Some of her children, however, became members of the E.M.B. church. One of these was her son, Paul. When his daughter, Elvira, married Archie Penner, who was not only a Kleine Gemeinde, but a Kleine Gemeinde preacher, there was great rejoicing!"

"Most of the informants agreed that grandmother had diabetes. It is a known fact that Katherina had to have a leg amputated at the knee, a result, according to Erna Thiessen, of 'poor circulation.' This amputation was hard not only on Katherina, but also on the grandchildren; they found it hard to see their grandmother this way."<sup>578</sup>



*C. T. Loewen and wife Helena Friesen Loewen, daughter of Klaas I. Friesen, with Cornie, Elvira and Wilma, 1930s, Melvin Toews, 75 C.T. Loewen & Sons Anniversary (Steinbach, 1980), page 8.*



*Archie and Elvira Penner, May 18, 1947. Elvira was the daughter of Paul Friesen, son of Klaas I. Friesen. Archie is well known for his spiritual writings and teaching career in various colleges and Bible Schools. Photo - Contending for the Faith (Regina, 2002), page 34.*

7 Daughter **Helena P. Friesen** (1892-1950), daughter of Klaas I. Friesen, married Cornelius T. Loewen (1882-1959), and their son Cornie established "Loewen Windows" in Steinbach. In 2000 daughter Mary Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, wrote a biography of her parents, Cornelius T. and Helena Friesen Loewen. Cornelius T. Loewen received his elementary education in the traditional Mennonite church school, consisting of four levels or forms from ages 6 to 13, with academic progress based on ability. Because the Loewen clan was so huge...and having the same name as his father and grandfather, young Cornelius soon acquired the colloquial "C.T." by which he was known all his life."

"At age 31 he married Helena Friesen and established a Christian home. The family altar became an integral part of the day in that the family gathered around the Word of God. At the table before breakfast, he would read from the 'Abreisskalender.' With the entire family he would pray, 'Alle gute Gaben.' At bedtime it was 'Lieber Heiland.' He would also sing 'Muede bin ich geh zu Ruh.' This was a cue for the family to retire. In this way the children were taught the importance of a vital relationship with Christ. C.T. was a generous provider for the family. Every summer he used to buy a big barrel of apples which was kept in the basement. The children were free to help themselves. On a family trip to B.C. he noticed that the children liked soft ice-cream and hamburgers. Frequently he would stop where these were available. They enjoyed these heartily. At meal times there was never a question about not having enough. His ample provisions for the family did not prevent him from teaching his children economical values. Shoes could be resoled, and that for 10 cents at the neighbour's shoe repair shop, Mr. Gerhard W. Reimer. He also gladly saw his children get a Biblical education, from which George, Mary, Anna, Wilma and Elvira benefitted."

"C.T. had a healthy motto for the family. It was, 'Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.' He practised this. When Mary, the eldest daughter, was old enough, he promised her 10 cents per morning if she would get up early and make breakfast. He taught her how to build a fire. Then she cooked the rolled-oat porridge. Soon it was time to awake the others. He then knocked on the hall door and called the sleeping ones upstairs, 'Time to get up.' At times this call would have to be repeated. Through good insight he taught his children to drive the family car. This ability was convenient at times. After his wife died, CT went to B.C. with Elvira, the youngest daughter, as helper in driving. With him were his aunt and uncle, Abram Penners, and their daughter. In the mountains they ran out of gas with evening coming on. What now? Fortunately they managed to reach a hamlet."

"At times the children did not always follow his driving instructions precisely. During potato harvest, Cornie was going to go by car to the potato field north of Steinbach. But he was under 16, although able to drive the Model T jalopy. So, he asked Mary to do the steering while he sat beside her and shifted the gears. Now, who was to pass them, if not the town police! Fortunately no ticket was issued. During the early years the CTs had a family cow which they kept in the barn. Each morning it was sent out to pasture with the other village cows. John Friesen, the shepherd, would start at the east end of Main Street,

blowing his horn, signalling the people to send their cows onto Main Street, so that he could chase them to the pasture. By supper time, he would return them and again blow his horn, so that each villager could get his cows from the street.”

“At CTs’ Edward, the eldest, did the milking for the family for a while. Next it was George’s turn. Apparently he did not enjoy this work too much. Hence he worked out a plan. He went to a Mr. Thiessen and offered him the cow in exchange for the daily milk supply for the family. CT liked the innovative plan. It was time anyway to get rid of the cow, as it no longer fitted into mid-town.”

“As a family man CT took care that there was an ample supply of wood for the house. During the early times CT bought cord wood and had it unloaded on the back yard and sawed into short pieces for the kitchen stove. This was chopped by the older children and carried to the back fence and piled up. While George and Mary were thus engaged, George taught Mary to whistle. This pastime is still enjoyed to this day. A friend used to whistle in harmony with her sisters. What a feat! One year the girls piled up four wood walls for a play house. As a result CT, in his love for his children, had a play house built on the side of the yard.”

“CT was concerned about what his children were reading. He would ask, ‘What are you reading?’ When the children had failed in what they were doing, he would ask, ‘So, what have you learned now?’ It is obvious that he thought much of the family.”

“The Kleine Gemeinde Church had an important part in his life. Sunday was the day of worship, when the entire family went to the service. Sunday mornings he would take the children to Sunday school, and, if need be, on a toboggan. If the John B. Reimers happened to catch up with them, he would tie the toboggan to the sleigh, get on and enjoy a happy free ride to church. The church mid-week Bible study, which at times was held in his home, was a source of spiritual strength. He was involved in getting the Red Rock Bible Camp started, which through the years has been a great blessing to many, many children. When the Gospel Light Hour was started by some young Christian men, CT came to their help and donated windows for the building. In regard to this radio work he was assisted by his wife and her sister, Mrs. J. T. Loewen, who at one time went out to collect money for the project. They came home with the grand sum of 25 cents!”

“One Sunday morning he made a rare experience of attending the E.M.B. Church [Brüderthaler]. George, one of his sons, had told the family that the Parschauers were here and that their singing was bit of heaven. C.T.Loewen happened to sit in front. When he had an occasion to leave early, he respectfully acknowledged the speaker by bowing, so as not to offend him.”

“C.T.Loewen was a man of character. He was kind. Never once did he speak unkindly to his wife or to his children, although he would be strict with the children, when they cried too hard or when they were too unruly. At such times the cellar steps became good resting places for them. C. T. Loewen never spoke negatively of the clergy. The local Kleingemeinde minister, Rev. Peter D. Friesen and his wife, were close friends. He would say, ‘We should have the preacher, the doctor and the police for our friends.’”

“In spite of his low academic education of four levels, he was a wise man.



He established a big, prosperous business. His wisdom also came to the fore in training and disciplining his children. He did not allow them to grumble. He instilled in them a thankful and optimistic attitude. C.T.Loewen was also generous. The church and the poor had to be supported. Once when he went out to collect just debts and found that the customer was too poor to pay, he gave him a bag of flour. In addition, he gave work to many a person, so that many families could earn a decent livelihood. C.T.Loewen worked for the good of the community. He was involved in getting the first telephone system into the community, as well as the fire brigade. He also served as a member of the Steinbach Village Board.”

“He was a peace loving man, although with some latitude. Once when one of his sons overplayed the older one, he said to him, ‘You don’t have to allow that.’ At another time when a Gypsy woman in east Steinbach reached into his pocket, he firmly grabbed her wrist until she let go. To his children he said, ‘If anyone threatens you, stand your ground. Then that one knows that he does not have power over you.’ And with tongue in cheek, added, ‘And they won’t kill you.’ He also said, “If any stranger gets into the house, shout as loudly as you can, ‘Johnny, get the gun,’ although there was no Johnny and there was no gun. He also said, ‘If you are in a crisis in the presence of others, do something to encourage others.’ He enjoyed a congenial relationship with others.”

“CT had an interest in music. When Rev. John R. Barkman and family moved to Alberta, and needed a trailer, CT provided one in exchange for their piano - and this in spite of the fact that the Kleine Gemeinde did not favour music. Soon he provided a piano teacher, Bill Weiss, of Friedensfeld. One of the daughters took advantage of this opportunity. Mary could get instructions for a dollar per lesson. Edward was inspired to play the alto horn and joined the town band. At one performance when the town band was playing in the CT factory, a leading businessman declared that the band had pretty much ‘punk.’ The word caused a ripple of chuckles. George was encouraged to learn to play violin, taking lessons from Neil Unruh. Cornie sang in harmony with Jakie (his cousin) and Art Reimer. They sang Gospel songs accompanied on the piano by sister Mary. CT’s music interest brought in good results.”

“CT was a lover of nature. A few times he took his family to the zoo in Winnipeg. He liked animals. Once he brought home a young bear. A large cage was provided for it on the back lawn, and he himself or one of the children would feed it by pushing the food through the opened cage door. Once this cub ran its claws along Elvira’s face leaving some long scratches. For the winter the cage was placed behind the back fence with plenty of straw inside. Under this the cub hibernated during the winter. In spring it came forth much emaciated. One Sunday morning when the family returned from the church, the bear was gone. After a search, it was found inside the lumber yard building. Soon after this it was disposed of. Another time he brought home an owl. It was placed in the garage, where it remained in the corner looking very menacing. Still another time a porcupine was spotted up on a tree, but it was uncertain how it got there. He also brought home a big dog, but it bit the milkman. Hence it had to go. He also had grandma’s cat, but it ate the canary. The cat too had to leave.”

“He enjoyed a friendly relationship with others. Once he had a little quip with one of his employees, Rev. J. S. Guenther. When CT made a round to see his workers, CT said to Mr. Guenther, ‘Johnny on the spot.’ Who in turn responded with, ‘Johnny on the right spot.’ Congenially he would visit Mr. Kreutzer, the blacksmith across the street. When CT was in need of a small loan, he would ask Mr. Kreutzer, who responded in a generous way. Or if Mr. Kreutzer was in need of money, then CT would respond very favourably. And all this without going to the bank. CT was no respecter of persons. When a former acquaintance, a young man known as “Buffalo Bill,” came from the west, CT accepted him into his home. The poor were never looked down upon.”

“CT had pleasure in travelling, which rubbed off on Cornie, his son. One day Cornie heard that there was help needed to take horses to Europe. He and his cousin Jakie (Mel) Loewen decided to help and thus get a trip to Italy. Great experience!”

“C.T. was a good businessman. He held the view of starting small. He believed in providing quality service. The “75 C.T. Loewen & Sons Anniversary” pictorial report gives further insights into C.T. Loewen as a businessman. He began a sawmill operation near Sandilands, about 50 miles southeast of Steinbach. ‘It was 1910 before the lumber business started, that Mr. Loewen had a Main Street office.... With the start of the First World War in 1914, the company’s volume took a big swing upwards, as it supplied the building material for the many homes constructed during this period. Included in these materials were doors and windows which the company’s small woodwork shop began furnishing to the local trade in 1917. The business was expanded in 1919 with the construction of a mill work factory....The financial depression of the Thirties marked a crisis in Mr. C.T.Loewen’s business career. The events of this difficult period were to have an effect on C.T.’s business dealings in that they resulted in an understanding of others’ experiencing financial difficulties...In 1941 the company became the owner of a lumber yard located in Rosenort, near Morris.”

“The building boom which came with the war created a lumber shortage. To help alleviate this shortage, and at the same time provide an alternative for the Conscientious Objectors, the C T. Loewen firm set up lumber camps which it operated during the winter months. In 1946 a large, modern factory was built for the production of beekeepers’ supplies. As well, equipment was installed for use in cabinet making. In regards to this beekeeping business CT sent a truck to the southern US for a load of bees. Isaac Plett invented a machine for making wax for the bee farmers. By means of the centrifugal principle the honey was extracted. ....In 1947 the company’s new lumber drying kiln was ready for use. Drying was done by heat and steam, a process resulting in an equal drying of both the inside and outside of the lumber. This opened the way to manufacturing products such as office counters and desks. When the beekeeping industry declined, the C.T. Loewen firm used its facilities to manufacture hydro pole crossbeams for the Manitoba Government’s rural electrification program. As well, it manufactured church pews during the winter months....With the increase in housing construction following the war, the company began large-scale production of doors and

windows. CT was involved also in other helpful business enterprises. This showed that he was not only a hearer of sermons but also a doer of it.....”

“When the CT family visited his brothers Isaak T. Loewens and A. T. Loewens, who lived in Nebraska, USA, and when CT saw that they were having a hard time making a living, he told them, if they would move to Steinbach, he would help them to get a good start. Thus Isaak Loewen became a successful car repair man and Abram T. Loewen a caring undertaker. No more was there a need to have coffins stored in the small upstairs of the CT office on Main Street. In 1914 the first Ford dealership was started in Steinbach and in 1923 the first General Motors dealership was started by CT and his brother P. T. Loewen. Later CT gave Peter Loewen the choice of taking either the car or the lumber business. Peter Loewen chose the former and developed it into a successful business. CT, further, started the business of moving houses. This business he sold to J. T. Loewen, his brother,....Also CT started a sawmill in Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan. In this enterprise he was helped by his two older sons, Edward and George and their wives, who moved there to operate it. CT would ever so often go down to see how things were getting along. He enjoyed the camp life. Together with the Pletts, CT had a planing mill in Roblin. When bearings needed repairing, he showed his nephew, Wilbert Loewen, how to pour babbitt. These instructions CT gave in a friendly way, although quite dogmatically. CT got into the ice business before the electric refrigerators had come on the market in the community. At the rear of the lumber business ran a creek, which provided plenty of ice during the winter.”

“In the enterprises of the doors, windows and church pews CT was ably assisted by Mr. Frank Friesen, his brother-in-law, and Mr. Jonas Friesen, who managed the business for a long time, and also Miss Nora Rieger, his efficient accountant for a number of years.”

“In 1950 after he had sold his business to his three sons, he suffered a massive heart attack, which was followed by a severe stroke. As a result, he was bed-ridden for nine years. At first he was taken care of at home, but later he was cared for in the Rest Haven and finally in the St. Boniface Hospital, where he died in 1960. He suffered without complaining. Just before he died, he said a few times, ‘Come, come, come.’ The Lord then took him peacefully into His eternal presence.

“All in all Helen, his wife, ably assisted him throughout their marriage.”

“Helena P. Friesen, Mrs. C. T. Loewen,....was a gentle and kind woman, as well as devout and generous. The maids whom she at various times had were always treated in such a way. Years later one of them testified of this characteristic trait. She was a good home maker. In summer she would plant a garden in the back of the yard and on the other side of the creek, which ran pass the property nearby. She had the children help her and thus teach them to garden. When the produce was ripe, she would fill many jars with preserved fruit. This caused much heat in her kitchen, so that her face was bathed in perspiration. When CT saw this, he build a summer kitchen, which took care of much of the heat in the main kitchen. The many pantry shelves in the basement were filled.”

“Helena was a very devout woman. During her pregnancies, she would pray that, if life become too hard for the child, God would take it home. Thus

when some of these died at age two or under, she was reminded of her prayer and could accept the loss. Her devotion one day was clearly evidenced by one of her daughters. When the daughter entered the house without her mother knowing it, she heard her praying. It was very intense. No wonder that all her seven children accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and got baptized and became members of the church.”

“She was quite generous. This showed itself when poor guests would come. At such a time she would give a piece of fabric which always seemed ready for such purposes. Furthermore, she had a good sense of humour. At one time CT took Helena for a boat ride on the creek running past the back yard. Before long the neighbour, Mrs. G. Goossen, remarked, ‘I saw some strange clothing on the wash-line.’ She and CT had capsized and gotten a good dip necessitating laundry washing. They had a good laugh.”

“At another time when she was ready to return home from Mrs. Klaas I Friesen, her mother, she could not find her hat. As a result, she had to return bare headed. Then in a church service in the town tabernacle she wore it again. Mrs. J. T. Loewen, her sister, who knew of the lost hat, remarked, ‘So you found your hat!’ Her sister Margaret teasingly confessed that she had placed it with the dirty laundry. Hats could be worn too long!”

“Helena had a wholesome attitude. Cheerfully she accepted adverse circumstances. She used to say, ‘One person is particular here and another there.’ Thus she accepted shortcomings in others. She loved her family and conscientiously showed it in practical ways. When the children came home from school, she was there to meet them. At times she and CT would go to Winnipeg. At such times she would have provided meals for the children. There would be rice pudding or pumpkin pie. Sundays there would be pluma mooss or canned fruit, date cake, meat, etc. Helena with her love, generosity, gentleness, kindness and firm devotion was a great reason of the success of CT and the family.”

“When her time for departing into eternity came, she was sick only one day. It was on a Saturday. Cornie and wife Annie had come home for the weekend. When her sickness set in, she said, ‘Pray that I may have joy to die.’ The next moment she said, ‘Now I want to die.’ That evening she breathed her last. That was September 13, 1950, about 10 years before CT died.”

“She was dearly missed by her family. On her tombstone is engraved, ‘Nimmer vergeht, was du liebend getan.’ (What you do in love remains for all eternity).<sup>579</sup>



*Miriam Toews, Winnipeg, award winning author of Summer of My Amazing Luck and Swing Low (2000). She is the granddaughter of Helena and C. T. Loewen. Photo - Dusk jacket.*

6 Son **Isaac I. Friesen** (1870-1920) married a Lutheran girl described as “a very fine lady” by nephew Henry E. Friesen. February 28, 1905, they departed for Herbert, Saskatchewan, where they homesteaded. After his wife died, Isaac remarried but the marriage was not a successful one. In 1919 they returned to Manitoba and lived with youngest brother Peter I. Friesen.

6 Son **Peter I. Friesen** (1873-1966) married Anna Eidse, daughter of Cornelius E. Eidse, Rosenhof, Manitoba and later Lonetree, Kansas.<sup>580</sup> Peter I. Friesen took over his father’s farmstead on SW35-7-6E near Blumenort which they acquired in 1905. In 1911 they sold the farm and moved to McPherson County, Kansas, where they lived until April of 1912. Then they moved to Grey County where they pioneered for one year. In 1913 they moved back to Manitoba to a 240 acre farm in Greenland which they purchased several years thereafter. The family belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>581</sup> Peter I. Friesen was a school trustee for a few years and often led singing in church. Peter I. Friesen was described by his son Henry E. Friesen as “mainly a handplow farmer.”<sup>582</sup>



1912. Klaas I. Friesen family. L.-r.: Anna Friesen (Mrs. John R. Barkman), Katharina Friesen (Mrs. Cornelius K. Friesen), Margaret Friesen (Mrs. Jakob T. Loewen), Maria Friesen (Mrs. Peter D. Reimer). Seated son-in-law Cornelius K. Friesen, holding Pauline Friesen (Mrs. Heinrich D. Reimer), and Katharina Penner Friesen (Mrs. Klaas I. Friesen), mother to the Friesen children, holding son Alfred. Missing from the picture are children Helena Friesen, Mrs. Cornelius T. Loewen, and sons Frank P. Friesen and Paul P. Friesen. Photo Mennonite Memories, page 198/ Blumenort, page 273/Pres., No. 8, Part One, page 55.

5 Son **Johann Plett Isaac** (1836-1920) married Elisabeth Wiebe (1846-1926), half sister to Jakob P. Wiebe who married Anna P. Isaac. Elisabeth and Johann were married at the home of his parents across the street from her house in Schönau, Russia. The Johann Isaac family moved to the Kleine Gemeinde village of Grünfeld north of Borosenko in 1867. It was here in Grünfeld that Johann got involved in an incident regarding a statute or idol in a Russian cemetery. Ältester Peter P. Toews describes the situation: "Already in February of 1868 the Russians had laid a complaint which in fact was false that he [Johann] had broken the picture and that he had said that it was nothing more than ordinary wood and not a God or deity. Following this, the affair dragged out until he was charged to appear before the Judge in Ekatherinoslav on December 29, 1869. Represented on behalf of the Gemeinde with a presentation, we appeared there on the appointed day and he was given one month's arrest as his punishment. However, this penalty was too light for his enemies (which included the Russian Popes), who placed an appeal in the matter to the Criminal Court in Odessa. Again accompanied by a presentation on behalf of the Gemeinde and accompanied by brother Gerhard Goossen, Isaac left Nikopol by mail stage coach on March 26 for Odessa in order to appear before the said Court by which he had been subpoenaed on March 30. The matter was also adjudicated as it had been in Ekatherinoslav. At the request of Johann Isaac in Ekatherinoslav on June 17 he was able to postpone to October his period of confinement under arrest in Ekatherinoslav."<sup>583</sup>

In 1874 the Johann P. Isaac family immigrated to Manitoba and settled in Grünfeld, now called Kleefeld. With them was their foster son, Franz K. Goossen, son of cousin Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-72). They built a temporary house insured for \$125.00 with additional coverage of \$250.00 for contents and \$300.00 for feed and supplies. In 1876 they built a spacious new house which was insured on April 1, 1876, for \$375.00 with additional coverage of \$50.00 for a detached building, probably a separate barn of some kind. In 1882 a new house was insured for \$400.00. They farmed in Grünfeld for the rest of their days. April 24, 1901, the *Rundschau* reported "Johann Isaac lost his right eye by a nail hit incorrectly." September 12, 1912, the *Rundschau* reported "Johann Isaac's of Kleefeld, buildings were destroyed by fire."

When the Isaacs retired they sold their land to their son, Franz Isaac, keeping 20 acres to live on in their old age. According to the Jakob W. Isaac family book, "In the early years grandparents Johann Isaacs moved to the folks [Jacob W. Isaacs] from Grünfeld. With them came a house moved by a traction steam engine. Their youngest daughter Aunt Mary was still with them. The house had been a combination barn and living quarters on the other end. The barn was now fixed up for living....This is where we five brothers and one sister slept."

6 Daughter **Anna W. Isaac** (1867-1942) married the widower Cornelius Penner (1854-99), son of Peter Penner (1816-84) of Margenau and later Blumenort, Manitoba. Anna and her husband lived in Blumenort until his death. In 1898 Cornelius was the highest assessed farmer in Blumenort farming three quarters of land - 90 cultivated, with a dairy of 14 cows and seven head under three years. Peter Isaac described the death of his brother's son-in-law as follows: "He died while com-

ing home from the threshing machine. Having complained of not feeling well, he lay down, and died within several hours." Soon after his death, Anna sold their land and moved to her parents place in Grünfeld, where she had a house built on their yard. Later, she bought 160 acres of land which she farmed together with her three grown-up children: Johann, Elisabeth and Anna. In recognition of the sorrow she had experienced, Uncle Peter P. Isaac gave her the testimony: "May God be her staff and stay unto the end!" Anna Isaac Penner farmed on SW28-6-5E. She was an astute manageress. Her son Johann I. Penner (1893-1973), later purchased her farm in Kleefeld, Manitoba. He was a prominent minister of the Holdeman Church. His sons included Rev. Cornelius and David Penner of Kleefeld, Manitoba. In the year 2002, David Penner's son Rollin published the book, *Greenfield Chronicles* (117 pages),<sup>584</sup> a humorous look at rural Mennonite life.

6 Son **Johann W. Isaac** (1870-1942) married Aganetha Penner, daughter of Aron Penner of Blumenhof, Manitoba, who was killed by lightning in 1892. Aron was a brother to Cornelius Penner who married his sister. The Johann Isaacs lived on their own land at Hochstadt, Man., Section 16-6-5E. In 1916-18 they moved to Littlefield, Texas. They returned six years later, buying a farm four miles northwest of Rosenort. Their children: Peter married Katherine Toews, John married Maria Goossen (he was a minister), Philip married Naomi Giesbrecht, Anton married Marion Smith, Elisabeth married Bob Small, Abraham died when five years old, Annie, Gertrude, Aaron married Doreen Frid.

6 Daughter **Elisabeth W. Isaac** (1874-1956) was born on August 3, 1874, the day of her parents' arrival in Manitoba. She was married to Jacob W. Toews, son of Johann H. Toews of Grünfeld.<sup>585</sup> Jakob W. Toews died on April 15, 1905, apparently of pneumonia. Peter P. Isaac describes his death as follows: "He had contracted a cold when they moved to the farm at Grünfeld, Manitoba. May he rest in peace!" Elisabeth Isaac remarried to widower Heinrich G. Thiessen, son of David F. Thiessen of Neukirch, Molotschna, and later Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>586</sup> Elisabeth and Heinrich lived on the same farm where her first husband died. In 1919 they moved to Swalwell, Alberta. Children of the first marriage: Anna, Hans, Frank, Elisabeth, Helena. Children of the second marriage: Abraham, Katharina, Maria. Heinrich had three grown-up boys by his first wife.

6 Daughter **Margaretha W. Isaac** (1877-1957) married widower Gerhard G. Thiessen of Rosenort, Manitoba, a brother to Heinrich. Gerhard G. Thiessen was a farmer and a good singer. Children of this marriage: Annie married to Peter F. Loewen, John married Mary Martens, Peter married Dora Loewen, Henry married Margaret Rempel, Dora married Henry Goossen, and Abe, deceased.

6 Son **Jacob W. Isaac** (1879-1964) married Katharina Friesen, daughter of Jakob S. Friesen, later of Steinbach, founder of the Steinbach Post.<sup>587</sup> "Father had homesteaded in Swalwell, Alberta, for about three years prior to their marriage. Mother, among other useful activities has been cheesemaker. At first she made cheese in Hochstadt and later in Grünfeld. She began making cheese at the tender age of 13, acting as an assistant to her father Jakob S. Friesen." After selling his homestead in Alberta, Jakob and Katharina lived near Grünfeld, Manitoba, on their farm, SE28-6-5E. "Their first house and barn was moved to the

farm from Grünfeld as far as I know. This house consisted of two small rooms and a lean-to....Seven people died on that place,.....sister Anna, brother Jacob, grandpa and grandma Johann Isaacs, my mother's uncle Henry S. Friesen, his son Henry and an infant child which was born to Peter Poetkers who had recently immigrated from Russia and were living with us one winter [1926].” Here their children were born. After the rest of the family was grown up, they adopted a three year-old daughter Helena. Walter Braun writes: “She [Helena] loved her pets - dogs and cats. Although being adopted at the tender age of three, she gave the otherwise stoic and sedate family a taste of liveliness and song. She married Herman Harder in 1953 and after a divorce, married Ray Leduc in 1972.” Their children were: Joseph, Heinrich, Justina married to Walter Braun,<sup>588</sup> Frank, Klaas married to Reimer, Herman married to Frieda Froese, and Helen. In 1929 they bought a Model T Ford, through the salesmanship of Peter H. Wiebe, then working for J. R. Friesen, Steinbach. Jacob “....possessed an unshakable integrity and trust in God. Though he was a man of few words, there was in his Christian life a depth which has been a keeping power to all of us.” “Father was a ‘home buddy’ - he loved to sit at home and read the Bible or study the geography book. He tried to make the rounds to the church members once a year.” He had a near fatal accident in the winter of 1943-44 when he was kicked by a horse. “Mother was more socially inclined than Father. She loved to go visiting, however, she had resigned herself to staying at home. She was an avid gardener and loved to raise plants.”<sup>589</sup>

Jakob W. Isaac himself wrote a letter describing his homesteading experiences in Swalwell, Alberta: “I was fortunate to have my auntie and uncle, Abram Loewen, live within one mile from my place, where I had my bread baked, and where I obtained the cream for my coffee. A yoke of oxen was brought along from Manitoba, together with other settlers’ effects; the oxen were to turn the sod in my neighbourhood. I went to Didsbury, about 36 miles northwest, for lumber to build a shack on my homestead. I had made up my mind to erect a small building 12 by 12. After it was finished, I spent many a beautiful evening here, after retiring from my weary trudge behind the breaking plow. My team of oxen proved to be an unsurpassed asset on the new, western plains. They were a heavy-built yoke, matched well. The 12 inch breaking plow was an easy task for them. During the early hours of a new day, after we had made several half-mile rounds, or so, they often became quite reluctant in their gait, sometimes petering out to an almost complete standstill. Well, I found out, this behaviour was quite common with oxen. It wasn’t long, until I found out they could move more quickly. When the day began to warm up real well, the heel-flies would emerge from their hiding places, and they would go about their business. Once I barely reached the other end of the field, when in a desperate hurry I got the harness off, and — away they bounced, in opposite directions, each looking for a place of refuge. Later when the day became cooler, I managed to round them up again. It has been related to me that one of the two might elevate his tail in the form of a perpendicular, and seemingly wait for his mate to do likewise. Then they would both jump up suddenly, cutting across or diagonally, into the open field, to find the nearest slough or creek, where they might find shelter from the mean heel-fly. I had other cattle on my homestead. Once when I re-



turned from one of my away-from-home trips, I found the glass from the four-pane window broken. Investigating, I found small whisks of white hair adhering to the sharp points of glass on the sides of the frame. The white steer had simply nosed his way through the window and meddled with the oats stored in my shack. He found his way out through the same window, seemingly none the worse for it....”<sup>590</sup>

6 Son **Peter W. Isaac** married Katharina Penner. In 1911 they moved to Needles, British Columbia, where they intended to take up gardening. In 1917 they settled themselves in Swalwell, Alberta, and took up farming. Their children: Thomas, Walter and Nathan. Linda married to Aaron Penner.

6 Daughter **Maria W. Isaac** remained unmarried. She stayed at home and took care of her parents in the evening of their lives.

6 Son **Franz W. Isaac** married Maria Thiessen. At first they lived at Grünfeld close to his parents. Walter Braun writes: “They moved to Rosenort around 1915-16 and farmed all their lives. They moved to a farm in Chortitz in 1946, moving back to dwell on the yard of daughter Margaret and husband Ben Loewen at Rosenort.” Franz was engaged in farming. One of Mrs. Isaac’s comments was: I’m a Thiessen with a Thiessen nature. I am somewhat lazy, so I have to rise early in the morning in order to get my work done.” Their children: Diedrich married to Annie Shatropa (she and a daughter were killed in a car accident September 1969), Margaretha married to Ben Loewen, Gerhard married to Anna de Veer Isaac, Benjamin married to Tina Froese, Tina married Edwin Froese, Martha married to Steve Apostele, Elizabeth married to Herb de Veer, Abe married to Corinne Hogard, and Jake married to Adina Penner.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Johann P. Isaac</b>	Oct 26, 1836		Apr 12, 1920
m	Elizabeth F. Wiebe	Apr 13, 1846	May 12, 1865	Oct 1, 1926
6	Anna W. Isaak	Oct 20, 1867	June 30, 1890	June 29, 1942
m	Cornelius Penner	June 4, 1854		Sep 25, 1899
6	Johann W. Isaac	Apr 27, 1870	June 5, 1898	Aug 3, 1942
m	Aganetha Penner	July 5, 1877		Mar 10, 1943
6	Elizabeth W. Isaak	Aug 3, 1874	July 1, 1894	Dec 14, 1956
m	Jacob W. Toews	Oct 4, 1873		Apr 15, 1905
2m	Hein G. Thiessen	Feb 2, 1865	Nov 16, 1909	Jan 6, 1935
6	Margaret W. Isaac	Feb 8, 1877	Aug 6, 1906	May 7, 1957
m	George G. Thiessen	Jan 20, 1860		Apr 1, 1945
6	Jacob W. Isaac	Dec 31, 1879	Dec 5, 1909	June 12, 1964
m	Katherine Friesen	Jan 24, 1885		sAug 5, 1965
6	Peter W. Isaac	June 17, 1882	Mar 24, 1907	Apr 28, 1965
m	Katherine Penner	Nov 9, 1883		
6	Maria W. Isaac	Mar 13, 1885	June 1, 1924	Apr. 29, 1929
m	Herman Krebs	June 14, 1860		Nov 27, 1950
6	Frank W. Isaac	Mar 18, 1888	Sep 11, 1910	May 1, 1964
m	Maria Thiessen	May 15, 1890		



*Wedding picture, 1916, John I. Penner (1893-1973) and Margaret L. Toews, daughter of Cornelius F. Toews. Courtesy of granddaughter Carol Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

5 Son **Franz Plett Isaac** (1838-1928) married second cousin Maria Friesen, daughter of Bernhard Friesen and Maria Epp.<sup>591</sup> In his youth, Franz Isaac learnt the blacksmith trade and later practised it and farmed. On May 13, 1882, Franz Isaac wrote a letter to his siblings in Manitoba.<sup>592</sup>

Alexanderfeld, May 13, 1883

“Beloved mother, siblings and to all of your’s, a heartfelt greeting and wishes of good health from us.”

“Beloved siblings. Received your letters on May 4th while breakfasting, brought by our next door neighbour, Peter Isaak - one from b.[rother] J. I., one from sis[ter] Loewen, one from b. A. I.. I received them all unopened. On April 22 I received one from in-law Abr. Friesen and have received news from all of you. We have not received any from Peter Friesens to us but have read one written to uncle Peter Isaaks which he sent along to us in middle February and [we] returned same in the month of March. After this we received also a letter from you, A. Isaak, written on April 1: at that time you were well.”

“Now, you beloved, after much longing, we have again received news, which is greatly joyful for us. Yet I must say, largely on account of [your good] health, since there is only [little] in the letters that [we] agree [with], three part harmony is not [that] great for us. Let each and everyone be like Christ!”

“Beloved brother Jo. I. Your have made note that I write only so unclearly about the situation of my heart’s condition, but what can I joyously report to you in this world of all-enveloping evil. It is better, I believe, if one writes only the way one actually believes and the way things really are in one’s heart, rather than superficially, the way so many today are expressing their salvation and conversion, verbally as well as on paper. In reality only few all agree on this.

“In your letter, beloved brother Abraham Isaac, you say that you now believe that the Lord has one visible church on earth. Did you not believe this previously as well? You did not write that you have again allowed yourself to be baptised, but that is how it is to be understood. Oh, that the beloved Saviour might allow it to suffice for your salvation. Or that you do not again have to lay a foundation, for ‘no other foundation shall be laid than that is laid.’ I do not believe that the old can be superseded, like the Jews and the repetition of circumcision, which was once commanded after the fall. I [fear] it will only be the same with the baptism.”

“Beloved brother Peter. I remember how you once said to me that according to our reckoning the Lord was always with you, and we hope, I believe, that this was not only said as a general statement.

“But that I shall hold all movements for fanaticism, against this I will guard myself unto my very end. It is not in the slightest incumbent upon me to declare myself in judgement in that regard. And I firmly hope my love for you will not be any less because of this than in the previous days. For one has enough to do, to see to one’s own salvation. But it is not in the least my place that I should declare the ‘Brüder’ here as right believers. Although it appears that they have directed their emotions on a heavenly pilgrimage, one observes that many of them are still stuck in the old mud. Nor can it be any other way in this fallen and corrupted time than how we see that it is. Not even the best Gemeinde of God in former times was completely without error, for even at that time there were

many differences; how much more so even today. But as we know, no differences of opinion should hold us from sharing news with each other; and, surely, the enemy will not restrict himself from applying his utmost might, and, if possible, to tear apart the bonds of love. And if he can accomplish that, then he has achieved what he wants. And so, let us rather exert ourselves in good works; if we can not agree on ancillary matters than let us agree in the fundamentals, so that we shall not delay to come into His rest.”

“Now, you beloved brother-in-law Loewen, you want to excuse yourself that you are a poor writer, but I am that also. And when in five years one only now and again signs one’s name only in official matters, then that is obvious. But of this, we - on both our parts - do not want to consider this, but rather [focus] on the good will and good intentions. That which you mentioned in the letter which could be had for free, was the very best. And we shall truly take it to heart, and it can really only take place if we fully deny ourselves and love our neighbour. May the Lord in His grace grant us all such love and faithfulness unto the end. ‘Franz Isaak’”

Brother Peter Isaac writes that “Franz and Maria came to America in 1893.” Cousin Margaretha Plett Kroeker, Steinbach, noted “Franz Isaaks of Russia arrived in Grünfeld, July 8 and 9, 1893. The Isaacs became farmers in Manitoba in a moderate way living on a farm near Kleefeld where Jakob B. Wiebes later lived. They had seven children but they were all deceased by 1916.

After the Franz Isaacs had lived in Manitoba for 15 or 16 years, they moved to Kansas and established a new home there. Maria’s mind had become weakened in Manitoba and she got considerably worse in Kansas. She did not live very long thereafter. After her death, Franz Isaac lived by himself as a widower in his cottage for five years. Later, at an advanced age, he remarried, to widow Fleming.

6 Daughter **Maria Isaac** was the youngest of the family. She immigrated to America together with her parents. Maria married Jakob D. R. “Roode” Loewen, son of David Loewen and Anna Reimer of Lindenau, Molotschna and later Hochstadt, Manitoba. Maria passed away in peace with God on March 17, 1899, at her parents-in-law’s farm in Hochstadt, near Grünfeld, Manitoba. She died in confinement.<sup>593</sup> Her infant daughter died later the same year. Jacob D. R. Loewen moved to Alberta after her death. He married again for a third time. Son **Franz Isaac** was given special mention by his uncle Peter P. Isaac because he was poetically inclined. A poem that young Franz wrote was published in 1916 by Peter P. Isaac in his “Stammbuch” and again in an English translation in 1990.<sup>594</sup> This nephew Franz Isaac was 12 years and 10 months old when he composed this poem.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Franz P. Isaac</b>	Sep 29, 1838	Oct, 1865	1928
m	Maria Friesen	Feb 21, 1843		Jan 27, 1910
6	Franz F. Isaac			Apr 30, 1888
6	Maria F. Isaac	1880		May 17, 1899
m	Jakob D. R. Loewen	Apr 30, 1871		
5	<b>Franz P. Isaac</b>	Sep 29, 1838	Oct, 1865	1928
2m	widow Fleming			

5 Daughter **Maria Plett Isaac** (1840-1908) married Peter R. Friesen, son of Kleine Gemeinde minister Peter W. Friesen of Tiege, Molotschna, and later Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>595</sup> In 1866 Peter R. Friesen had an accident “when a ‘bindernagle’ (“binding nail”) went through his right hand when he was inspecting a ‘Naehmaschine’ (“sewing machine”). The hand always remained sore.”<sup>596</sup> In 1870 they “bought land behind Nikopol.” The Peter R. Friesen family resided in three different places in Russia up to their emigration to America in 1874. The family settled in Jansen, Nebraska, village of Rosenort - east end, south side, probably across the road from his father. At the time of the 1880 property listing for Cub Creek, Peter R. Friesen had 70 acres cultivated and a farm property worth \$2000.

July 30, 1890, Peter R. Friesen wrote the *Rundschau* replying to a request of Johann Isaac, Russia, for his address. January 18, 1893, P. R. Friesen wrote the *Rundschau* reporting the death of his father. On Jan. 16, 1894, Peter R. Friesens wrote a letter to in-laws, Abr. M. Friesens and Jakob P. Wiebes, Blumenort.<sup>597</sup> Abr. M. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, reported that May 10, 1895, “Sister-in-law P. Friesen, Nebraska... was at our place.” Friday, May 17, 1895, he “drove the sister-in-law P. Friesen from Nebraska, to the old Pletts.” In 1905 the widow Friesen was visiting in Manitoba, and June 20, brother-in-law Abr. M. Friesen, Blumenort, reported “sister and sister-in-law Peter R. Friesen have departed for Nebraska.” August 24, 1904, the *Rundschau* reported “the widow of Peter R. Friesen was here [Kleefeld, Manitoba] visiting children.”

Peter R. Friesens lived in Nebraska until his death. Thereafter Maria moved to Kansas. Historian Henry N. Fast has written: “Likely they belonged to the K.M.B.”<sup>598</sup> Brother Peter P. Isaac has written: “The sister had only a few pleasant days in her life.” She finally became totally crippled with rheumatism. She died in an Old Folk’s Home in Kansas.

6 Son **Peter I. Friesen** married Katharina Reimer, daughter of Abraham F. Reimer and Anna Eidse of Jansen, Nebraska. In 1916 they were farming in Nebraska. Their children are all grown up. Son **Franz I. Friesen** is to have settled somewhere in Idaho. In 1916, uncle Peter P. Isaac did not know whether Franz was married.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Maria P. Isaac</b>	Sep 26,1840		Jan 24,1908
m	Peter R. Friesen	Aug 24,1842		Feb,1904
6	Peter I. Friesen	May 18,1867	Jan 24,1891	Apr 4,1933
m	Katharina Reimer	Jun 24,1869		Apr 4,1939
5	Franz I. Friesen			

5 Son **Peter Plett Isaac** (1846-1923) married Katharina Warkentin, daughter of Johann Warkentin (1817-86), wealthy Vollwirt of Blumstein, Molotschna, and later Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>599</sup> Katharina and Peter lived with her parents after the marriage. Katharina died of tuberculosis. Peter married for the second time to Katharina Friesen, daughter of David Friesen and Maria Tilitzki of the Chortitza or Old Colony in Russia and later Neuenburg near Morden, Manitoba. At the time Katharina was working as a maid for the Heinrich Reimer family in Blumenhof in the Borosenko Colony. After their marriage, Peter and his second wife lived and worked with her parents. In the spring of 1872 they bought 50 desjation of land from his first father-in-law Johann Warkentin who had founded a chutor or estate known as Hochfeld near the Borosenko colony.

In 1874 Peter and Katharina Isaac immigrated to Manitoba where they and brother Abraham P. Isaac settled in a small hamlet called Schönau, two miles southwest of the village of Grünfeld. Early in the spring of 1875 Abraham and Peter each built a small log house on the site.

In 1879 Peter Isaac moved to Rosenort, Manitoba, where they farmed for 10 years. In 1889 they sold their farm and worked for a farmer by the name of John Kastner near Morris where they earned a good living. They belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. In 1893 they moved to Abilene, Texas, together with Cornelius E. Eidse of Rosenort, Manitoba. The other families from their church soon left Abilene and they were left by themselves. In 1899 they moved to Fairbanks, Texas, where several Holdeman families lived at the time. Here they experienced the horrible hurricane which devastated Galveston, Texas, in September of 1900. During this time Peter contracted malaria and grew so weak that he lost 60 pounds. In 1902 they sold their possessions and moved back to Manitoba visiting friends and relatives in Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska along the way.

On May 1, 1902, Peter P. Isaac, Abraham B. Klassen, Peter Baerg and Jakob B. Toews went to Alberta looking for homesteads. In 1903 Peter married for the third time to Susanna Ratzlaff, daughter of Tobias Ratzlaff of Waldheim, Molotschna. In 1905 Peter and Susanna moved to Alberta building up a new yard on his homestead in Swalwell. After the death of Susanna the implements and cattle were sold to settle her estate. Peter lived on the homestead until 1908 when the farm was sold to Peter W. Toews. In 1911 he returned to Manitoba to live with son David. When he arrived David was very ill and also died later that spring. For several years Peter stayed with his widowed daughter-in-law helping her in the operation of the farm. In 1914 he returned to Alberta where he lived with his sons Abraham and Johann. Peter P. Isaac was very interested in people and what they were doing and why. He collected genealogical information and gathered this material into a book which he published in 1916 under the title "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern Vom Jahre 1694 bis auf der Gegenwart" frequently quoted in this book. An obituary of Peter P. Isaac was published in the *Rundschau* November 4, 1925.

August 6, 1925, cousin Maria Reimer, Blumenort, wrote a letter referring to Peter Isaac and that "in so far as I know Peter Isaac is still sick. I have not recently

heard. I have also visited him once, and he said he was going through the school of suffering. Yes, he had a severe bladder condition which apparently was much more severe at night than during the day. At the time he thus related about many things."<sup>600</sup>

6 Son **Peter F. Isaac** was found dead in a hotel room in Sioux City, Iowa. His death had occurred under suspicious circumstances.

6 Son **David F. Isaac** married Helena Thiessen, daughter of David F. Thiessen (1834-1906) of Neukirch, Molotschna, and later Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>601</sup> Helena and David F. Isaac farmed in Rosenort, Manitoba, where he died a painful death at the age of 38. His father has written a moving description of his experience which was published as part of his "Stammbuch":

"I arrived there on December 23, 1911. Circumstances turned out to be altogether different from what I had anticipated, because my son David was sick. They told me he had been sickly and weak for almost a year. The weakness increased from time to time and he would say at times, that he would not have long to live anymore. He would not tell this to his wife Helena, though, not wanting to cause her grief."

"It was especially important for me to know what he had told his son, David, concerning his death. His son asked him how he felt, and he told him he felt poorly. He could hardly work anymore. 'Oh children, how lonesome you will be.' A premonition of his coming demise. Poor little David was so perplexed by what his saddened father had said. He could not answer anything, for never before had his father talked to him like that. Immediately, he went to the house to his Mamma and said to her: 'I do not know what is wrong with Papa because he is so sad.' I believe the boy will never forget this, for he was 10 years old at that time. David said to a sister when she visited him, 'How will it go with my Helena later, when I will not be here anymore?'"

"His energy gradually decreased, so that by April 30 he could not work at all any more. He had still worked in the field till then, sowing all his wheat and beginning with the oats. It had been a pitiful drudgery for him during the last few weeks, so that I could not help but look at him in pity. He then hired a young man who finished seeding the rest of the grain. Until May 4 he languished, lying down, sitting up, coming to the table sometimes but eating very little. In the evening of May 4 he became so sick that he called his children to his bedside and said good-bye to them; on which occasion he also told them he would not speak to them again. Weeping began that was heartbreaking to witness. Then I contradicted him and told him he might be mistaken and might get well: 'No father, I am not mistaken; you will see that I will die.' So it came to pass later."

"The following night after his farewell, Satan attacked him so fiercely with his temptations that I do not feel that I can describe it in detail. At the beginning of his sickness Satan's attacks lasted two days and two nights, with occasional let up, so that in between he also had comfort from heaven. I can remember when the attack let up on one occasion. He said, 'How beautiful it will be in heaven.' This gave me a strong hope that God was standing by him with His mercy and strength. We have the words of Peter when he said, 'The devil as a roaring lion,

walketh about seeking whom he may devour.”

“Soon David had to experience this to the fullest extent during the last days of his life, not only he, but also others -- his family and close relatives -- who had to witness it. We all felt a deep compassion for him. I was reminded of the battles I had overcome in the days of my youth. Anyone who has not experienced such violent attacks of Satan may think that one must have lived a very sinful life, which, however, would be an erroneous judgement. It became clear to me while sitting at David’s deathbed that not all that boast of their piety in this life will enter into heaven and that those who are not always so filled with piety will be cast into hell.”

“After two days of severe suffering David lost most of his ability to speak so that he could seldom answer when asked questions, and when he was delirious. Thus, he was lying there until the very last days when he began to talk more but without regaining consciousness. He did not eat and he drank very little. He reluctantly took the medicine the doctor prescribed for him. At the first when he took sick, he had no inclination to accept the doctor’s help. The medicine apparently did not have any effect. He was in bed from the 4th of May till the 24th in the evening until the hour of his death at 10 p.m. He had the desire that God would take his soul unto eternal rest, washed in the blood of Christ.”

“Then I stayed with my mourning, widowed daughter-in-law, Helena Isaac, and her children, who wept many bitter tears. I helped her with the farm work until after May 14, 1914. Then I said farewell to them and went back to Alberta from where I am writing this book. From May 30, 1914, till August 13, I stayed at Johan Isaac’s place and then stayed at Abraham Isaac’s place.”

“I know what I have experienced in the past; but what lieth before me, I do not know. How long I will have to live, God alone knows. I have written as well as I could and as it was retained in my memory of the sickness and death of my son David Isaac. For many, I fear this will be too elaborate. I did it mostly for the sake of the widow and children he left behind. When the children will grow up or should they grow old, they will find this remembrance of their deceased father in this family record.”<sup>602</sup>

6 Daughter **Katharina F. Isaac** married the widower Heinrich W. Toews, son of Johann F. Toews of Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>603</sup> The Heinrich W. Toews family lived in Greenland, SE9-8-6E. During the Depression of the 1930s, they, like many others, ran into financial difficulties, and step-son Henry P. (“Stock”) Toews took over their farm. The parents then moved onto the NE9-8-6E, where they owned an additional 120 acres. Although Katharina was a little older when she married, they also had three children together. Anton died of the flu in 1918 and Arnold died in 1933 at age 14 of dropsy. Only one son, David Toews, survived and lived in Whitemouth, Manitoba. He was killed in an accident while building a bridge.

6 Daughter **Anna F. Isaac** married Fred Kasper in Texas. He was employed with the railway as a section boss. She was quite sick for some time and is to have weighed over 200 pounds but towards the last she was hardly more than skin and bones.

6 Son **Johann F. Isaac** married Anna Esau, daughter of Abraham K. Esau and



Helena W. Toews of Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>604</sup> Anna Esau was born in Oregon where her parents were living at the time. The Johann F. Isaac family lived in Swalwell, Alberta. In about 1920 they moved to Manitoba and lived in the Steinbach area. Johann K. Esau describes his death as follows: "One day Johann went for firewood. When he did not return they went looking for him. At six o'clock that evening they found him lying on the ground near the horses with his axe still in his hand. The body was slightly frozen when it was found. He had been suffering from a weak heart. His wife received such a shock that she screamed for a couple of hours."<sup>605</sup> In 1926, his widow moved back to Swalwell, Alberta, where she raised her children. She married again to Abram Giesbrecht and they celebrated their 25th anniversary together. She was living in Crooked Creek, Alberta, at the time of her death.

6 Son **Abraham F. Isaac** went to Stern (later called Swalwell), Alberta, to take out a homestead in 1903, It was located a half mile north of the Johann Isaacs.

A biography of Abraham W. and Edna Isaac was written by sons Carl and Noah Isaac and published in *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Wun*:

"Abraham Isaac (Dad): Was born on June 13, 1883 at Rosenort, Manitoba. Homesteaded and moved to Alberta at the age of 20 years and lived a bachelor for eight years and spent his first years in a sod house. He first took up a homestead on N.E. ¼ of Sec. 28 Twp. 30, R25 W4. Next he applied for N.W. ¼ of Sec. 27 Twp. 30 R25 called a preemption, just across the road allowance, which was also granted him by the Dominion Land Act and on which he then made his home for the rest of his life.

"Dad married at the age of 28, Jan. 1, 1912, to Edna, nee Boese. They lived together over 50 years. She was the daughter of Samuel Boese, [of Kansas,] also one of the first pioneers in the district.

"Dad believed in the saying that 'a rolling stone gathers no moss,' so he stayed on his place all his life, where all his children were born and raised. The names of whom are as follows: Oscar (Ella) Isaac of Fort Vermilion; Sol Isaac [Hythe]; Carl (Margaret) Isaac of Linden; Matilda (William Wohlgemuth) of Crooked Creek; Noah (Lea) Isaac of Linden; Ella (Harvey Toews) of Linden Carla (Ben Toews) of Linden; Mary Isaac of Linden; Ena Isaac of Linden. Noah Isaac with his family lives on the preemption and at present daughters Mary and Ena live in the house their father built. Daughter Ella with husband Harvey and family live on 32 acres of the original homestead, and Noah Isaac farms the balance.

"As far as we can remember Dad only brought one team of oxen and a hand plow along from Manitoba. Dad has told us many interesting events of his early pioneer days. I (Carl Isaac) remember him telling us about how he not only walked many a mile but ran. Once when he was out of salt for his cattle he ran along the wagon trail to Sunnyslope which did not follow the road lines as they are today, but across the open prairies. Upon arriving at Sunnyslope he bought a few groceries and walked home, and when home discovered he had forgotten the salt so he ran all the way approximately five miles cross country back and got the salt. With this we are not implying that Dad was absent minded as a whole, but an instance that we remember.

“To me (Noah Isaac) one of the most outstanding events of his pioneer life was how he would make a whole week’s trip hauling for others with a wagon and team of oxen. Monday morning he would leave for Carbon and load up a load of coal (one day), come home on Tuesday (two days). Wednesday morning he leaves for Didsbury and he’d get there about Thursday noon, unload the coal, then go farther west for rails and logs for farm buildings and fences (four days) then leave for home on Friday and at best get home Saturday noon or evening (six days). By this time he had earned enough for a bag of a flour. The oxen knew the trail across the prairie so he had often laid down on the wagon while the oxen trodded steadily along their 2 ½ mile per hour speed.

“Due to measles at five years of age he received an impediment of speech so he never was sent to school or learned to read and write. He was just barely able to write ‘A. Isaac’. But that did not hinder him in his farming. And people have often marvelled how he could figure out the acreage in a piece of land even if it was a triangle, and the amount of grain on a wagon while going to the elevator. Most of the homestead quarter Dad broke up with a team of oxen and a one bottom walking plow. Feed was prairie wool hay, so cash expenses were about nil. It only took a lot of pioneer courage and time.”<sup>606</sup>

Abraham F. Isaac got sick of cancer in spring of 1962 and died that September. Their son Solomon was co-publisher of the 1980 edition of Peter P. Isaac’s “Stammbuch”.<sup>607</sup>

6 Son **Franz F. Isaac** was a day labourer. He lived mostly in Calgary, Alberta. He died from a mishap while fishing on the Pacific Ocean. His boat was later found abandoned.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Peter P. Isaac</b>	Nov 26, 1846		Sep 29, 1923
m	Katharina Warkentin	1847	Jan 8, 1867	Jun 11, 1871
6	Peter W. Isaac	Jun 12, 1868		Jul 10, 1869
6	Anna W. Isaac	Mar 24, 1871		May 7, 1871
5	<b>Peter P. Isaac</b>	Nov 26, 1846		Sep 29, 1923
m	Katharina Friesen	Oct 18, 1848	Nov, 1871	Nov 26, 1900
6	Peter F. Isaac	Oct 31, 1872		Nov, 1900
6	David F. Isaac	Jun 21, 1874	Apr 3, 1898	May 24, 1912
m	Helena Thiessen	Sep 14, 1876		Feb 18, 1960
6	Katharina Isaac	Apr 9, 1876	Feb 26, 1911	Apr 17, 1942
m	Heinrich W. Toews	Jan 25, 1867		Aug 18, 1942
6	Anna F. Isaac	Feb 10, 1878		Dec 7, 1914
m	Fred Kasper			
6	Johann F. Isaac	Apr 23, 1881		Feb 16, 1926
m	Anna T. Esau	Apr 15, 1890	Apr 2, 1912	Jun 18, 1982
6	Abraham F. Isaac	Jun 13, 1883	Jan 1, 1912	Sep 29, 1962
m	Edna Boese	Jan 22, 1891		Aug 30, 1970
6	Franz P. Isaac			
5	<b>Peter P. Isaac</b>	Nov 26, 1846		Sep 29, 1923
m	Susanna Ratzlaff	Sep, 1846		1905

5 Son **Abraham Plett Isaac** (1852-1938) was born in the village of Schönau, Molotschna Colony, Imperial Russia. The following biography of Abraham P. Isaac was compiled and written by great-grandchildren Roger and Dawn Penner, 2284-21 Ave. S.E. Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 3Y4. Abraham's father Johann Isaak died when he was only 12 years-old. Abraham completed his schooling in his home village. By his own admission he did not feel that he was endowed with a special talent, but learning, instead of being a burden, gradually became more of a pleasure. As a teenager young Abraham worked briefly for his Uncle Cornelius Plett, Kleefeld, Molotschna. After that he was hired by cousin, Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-82), Lindenau, Molotschna. Before his year of employment ended they moved about 90 miles northwest to Grünfeld, north of the Borosenko Colony. When his year of employment was up he worked for Franz Froese, in the village of Heuboden 15 miles south from Grünfeld for one year.

After this he was approached by the elders of the Kleine Gemeinde Church and asked to serve as a school teacher in Grünfeld and taught there for five years. He related how humble he felt to be promoted from stable hand to school teacher. He took his teaching very seriously, studied diligently, and in his own words, almost totally denying himself association with other youth, made his school life his sole activity.<sup>608</sup> He was grateful to his cousin Gerhard P. Goossen, an experienced teacher who acted as his mentor and advisor.

A student recalled his former teacher: "Our school teacher here [Grünfeld] was a certain Abraham Isaac, with whom we also had to learn Russian. [He]...taught us that the earth rotated and the sun stood constant. Nobody believed this in our house. David, the son of Johann Hiebert, who was at our house to learn the art of saddle making from my father, said that I should tell the teacher, that if this was true, his brandy flask would tip over in the cabinet during the night. I did not pursue the matter, since I was scared that my skin might thereby come in too close an acquaintance with the teacher's bamboo rod."<sup>609</sup>

On December 26, 1873, Abraham P. Isaac married Margaretha Loewen, daughter of Peter Loewen (1825-87) and Susanna Enns (1824-57), Hierschau,<sup>610</sup> and later Gnadentort/Hochstadt, East Reserve, Manitoba.<sup>611</sup> Chronicler Abraham "Fuela" Reimer, Steinbach, Borosenko, recorded "December 26, 1873, Wednesday. -2, later +1. Cloudy. Abr. Isaak from Grünfeld and Margreta, daughter of Peter Loewen, Sawitzki, were married by Rev. Toews in Blumenhoff. On the 27th her father and Corn. Fast, Steinbach travelled to Kronsthal, Old Colony, where Peter Loewen became engaged." With his marriage, Abraham's teaching career came to an end.

In 1874 the Isaacs joined the emigration to Canada. Abraham Isaac's own memoirs contain an account of the trip from Russia to Canada. His mother nee Anna Isaac (1813-87) came with them. They established a small hamlet, which they called Schönau, approximately one mile west of present-day Kleefeld. Abraham filed for a homestead on 30-6-5E.

The first winter, Abraham, wife Margaretha, brother Peter, with his wife and two children, younger sister Helena, and their mother, all stayed together in a hut built of reed grass (a Semlin). Abraham and Margaretha's first son Peter was

born that winter while the temperature under the bed was below freezing. In the spring Peter and Abraham built a 16' by 16' poplar log house. Later that summer they built another larger one as well, so that both families would be more comfortable.<sup>612</sup>

Their first planting (1875) of grain, potatoes and vegetables was a total loss because of grasshoppers. 1876 yielded a good crop. The wheat which was hauled to the city of Winnipeg with oxen, sold for 50 cents a bushel. Only 25 cents a bushel was received in cash and the rest they had to take in supplies.

December 13, 1876 Abraham took a half a cord of fire wood to a sawmill so that he could buy a gallon of kerosene for their lamp. Kerosene cost between 75 cents and one dollar per gallon. On his way home at about 6:00 p.m. a severe blizzard enveloped him. He unhitched his oxen, trampled down some snow, lay down and let the snow cover him. His upper body stayed warm because of his Russian fur jacket but his legs, neck and face became very cold. He fought sleep, but love and sympathy for his wife, if he should die, kept him determined to stay alive.

At about 2:00 a.m. the wind abated and he got out of the snow. After running in several directions frantically he saw a light. It was the storekeeper Erdman Penner's house in the village of Tannenau. His frozen nose and ears were washed with turpentine to thaw them out. In the morning he was taken to his brother Johann Isaac's house in Grünfeld. Johann had already been looking for him, since both of his oxen had shown up in the village. Johann had talked to Abraham's wife Margaretha, who was somewhat prepared for news of his death in the blizzard. Even though Abraham's mother and sister Helena insisted that Abraham was sitting on the sleigh as it drove into the yard, she did not believe he was alive till he stepped into the room. What a joyous reunion that was!

Though Abraham Isaac now occupied his life with farming he still had an interest in the denominational school system. On March 10, 1879 he was appointed to the teacher examination board of the Provincial Department of Education at a general teachers' conference in Chortitz. The panel consisted of Mr. Wm. Hespeler, Canadian government immigration agent (the facilitator for the Mennonite emigration), Ältester Peter Toews, representing the Kleine Gemeinde, and Ältester Gerhard Wiebe, representing the Bergthaler Gemeinde. Teachers Abraham P. Isaac and Jacob Friesen (born 1828) of Tannenau.<sup>613</sup> represented these churches respectively. All 36 teachers from the East Reserve were present, examined and certified. Abraham, presumably, had the respect of the school authorities, the church (Kleine Gemeinde), as well as his peers, to be appointed to serve in this capacity.<sup>614</sup>

February 18, 1880, the *Rundschau* reported that Abr. Isaac had been hired as teacher in Grünfeld replacing Peter L. Dueck.

On January 5, 1882, Abraham P. Isaac along with Peter Toews and Martin Penner, were ordained as ministers in the newly founded Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (Holdeman).<sup>615</sup> His pastoral work involved much travelling. On March 27, 1883, "Martin Penner, Abr. Isaak and Peter Toews, three ministers, travelled to Pembina (West Reserve)."<sup>616</sup> Feb. 1, 1883, the *Rundschau* reported: "Corn. Toews was hired to replace Abr. Isaac, 'who cannot continue because of his travelling and preaching.'" March 27, 1889, the *Rundschau* reported: "Abr.

Isaac from Manitoba stopped at Jansen [Neb.] as he travelled from Kansas,” adding the comment, “seems to be an earnest servant.” February 10, 1904, the *Rundschau* reported that Abram Isaac was in Jansen, Nebraska, where he was one of the speakers at the funeral of brother-in-law Peter R. Friesen.

**Recollections:** In 1980 Abram’s son-in-law Jakob I. Bartel related an interesting episode of Abraham Isaac’s years of youth: “Abraham P. Isaac was a studious young man who enjoyed learning. Abram’s father died when he was only 12 years old and so he was hired out [vemieth] until the age of 18 with his uncle Cornelius Plett. One day the Ohms came to him while he was working and asked him if he had ever considered the occupation of a school teacher. He replied that he had never considered this and that in any event he was bound to work for his uncle for another year. A few weeks later the Ohms came back again and asked him if he had given the matter any further thought. When Abram again gave the answer that he was still bound for another year the Ohms asked if it would make a difference if he would be released from this obligation? And so it had been, for when they asked Uncle Plett, he replied that if the Ohms could arrange for Abram to teach and if this was satisfactory to the Gemeinde, he would gladly release him.

Some time later Abram was walking along the road when his uncle Abraham Isaac (1827-90) of Pordenau, not a Kleingemeinder, came by and gave him a lift. Uncle Abraham questioned him whether the Ohms had been to see him already and what they had said? When Abram finally admitted that the Ohms had indeed been to see him, his uncle wanted to know what they had wanted. Finally Abram admitted that Ohm Friesen and Reimer had been quite satisfied with his teaching but that Ohm Toews and Goossen had said that he should first be born again and join the church. Apparently Abram at this time was still not a member and errant in his ways, although he read much in the Bible using it as a reading book in his schooling. To this Uncle Abraham replied, anyone could see that one should be born again.” Recollections by Jacob I. Bartel.<sup>617</sup>

In the early years after the Mennonites had come to Manitoba, butter cream and milk was sold in Winnipeg. One time Abram P. Isaac delivered butter to his customers in Winnipeg. The man wanted to tease Abram and so he asked him, “Yeah, you Mennonites, I guess you make your women and children stomp bare-foot through the milk to make you butter, eh?”

Abram was a friendly and out-going man and not at all flabbergasted by the remark. He replied, “No, that takes far too long, we do this by chasing our oxen through the butter.”

Abram P. Isaac was always a well-liked man and so it was perhaps to be expected that he was elected as a minister. One day, he was to preach the main sermon in the Greenland Church with the local minister Isaac Penner giving the introductory sermon, usually only a short devotional. This particular Sunday, Penner’s sermon went on and on and on. When he was finally done it was almost time to end the two-hour long worship service. Never nonplussed, Abram got up and went to the pulpit. With his dry voice he said, “Well, we’ve already

heard the sermon, now I will make the closing [Schluss],” Recollections by Ted Wiebe, Benito, Manitoba.

Peter A. Plett, Landmark, Manitoba, remembered that Abram P. Isaac had a big white beard. Plett grew up in Blumenhof, Manitoba, where the Kleine Gemeinde and Holdemans took turns having church services in the school house. He recalled attending the Holdeman service one Sunday when Abraham Isaac was preaching. Rev. Isaac talked to him after the service telling the whole story of the Plett genealogy and that he also was a Plett - of which he was very proud.<sup>618</sup>

After a number of difficult pioneering years things gradually improved and the Abraham Isaacs farmed successfully and raised a large family. Abraham and his wife Margaretha lived at the same location (Schönau) all their lives. They eventually owned all of Section 30-6-5E except for the northwest quarter, originally owned by brother Peter, the folk historian. After Abraham’s retirement, youngest son David took over the farm.

Abraham P. Isaac had a keen sense of determination and dedication. He was a man with a thirst for knowledge and, therefore, took his studies, early teaching career and ministry seriously. This is illustrated through his own admission of forsaking the frivolities of teenage life and devoting himself to studies and teaching when he was promoted from stable boy to school teacher in Russia. He devoted a lot of time to studying and reading to improve his knowledge, becoming a well-educated man, though largely self taught. Rev. C. T. Penner remembered being told of Heinrich Ewert (1855-1934) from Gretna coming to visit Abraham Isaac. The level of conversation between these two would be on a much higher plane than his usual conversations. He must have kept a number of his books as his granddaughter Adina (Bartel) Penner Kleefeld, remembered one of her brothers borrowing a book on astronomy in the 1930s for a school project.

We can also conclude that Abraham had a love for God and the Church which he served faithfully for over 50 years.

Cornelius T. Penner (Kleefeld) remembers Abraham Isaac, as a minister always wearing his hat and winter coat as he walked through the Church to his position in front. He had a hook on the wall where he would hang them prior to the start of the service. C. T. Penner also remembers being told of an incident when Abraham felt his parishioners were dozing off or not paying enough attention to his sermon. One Sunday, Abraham did not use a Bible text prior to his sermon as was his custom. After the service, he asked the Church members what text he had used, and was surprised to find that many of them knew his sermons well enough that they could pick out the Bible text that his sermon had been based on.

Physically Abraham Isaac’s determination is shown by the impressive improvements he made in his farming operation. Grandson, Bill Isaac (Camrose, Alberta) remembered how his grandfather tried to rehabilitate himself after his first stroke in 1931. He would walk daily the nearly a quarter mile south through the bush to his daughter’s (Susanna and Jacob I. Bartel) farm. He had a chair half way where he could rest. The Abram P. Isaac family lived on the same yard for 42 years. This farm is currently owned by Lester and Penny Bartel, Kleefeld.

Abraham Isaac also had a sense of humour. Bill Isaac recalls that as a young boy he was practising his reading from “Grimm’s Fairy Tales” with his Aunt Maria Isaac. After listening intently to a story about the usual prince, princess, dragons, etc., Grandpa Isaac dryly commented, “And that story probably isn’t even true.”

Abraham P. Isaac was interested in history and had a sense of historical consciousness. He contributed an article to the *60 Jährige Gedenkfeier*, a book commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Mennonites in Manitoba.<sup>619</sup> His writings were quoted at length in the *75 Jährige Gedenkfeier* by Gerhard F. Wiebe in a paper on the economic development of the East Reserve.<sup>620</sup> In 1930, at the age of 78, Abraham P. Isaac composed his memoirs published in the Abram P. Isaac family book as well as in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*. The book by brother Peter P. Isaac, “Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern,” written in 1916 contained considerable historical information about Abram P. Isaac.

**Obituary:** The following is an extract from the obituary of Abraham P. Isaac in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* (Messenger of Truth).<sup>621</sup>

“...The marriage ceremony was performed by Ältester Peter Toews in the church in Blumenhof, South Russia. On June 4, 1874 the parents left their homeland and travelled to Manitoba, Canada, arriving there on August 2. Here, while facing many hardships and deprivations they established their new home. On January 5, 1882 father was elected as a Minister, and with God’s help as far as his health would allow, he served the church.”

“September 27, 1930 our loving mother passed away leaving father lonesome. They were married for 56 years and 9 months. February 18, 1931 father had a stroke, leaving his right side paralysed and his speech impaired, but he recovered sufficiently to assume his ministerial duties for three more years. On February 3, 1935 he preached his last sermon. After that his strength deteriorated slowly. He became a shut-in in his own home.”

“During his last two weeks he had problems breathing to the extent that he had to sit up for a few hours nearly every night.”

“His condition worsened. The last two days and nights before his death he could not lie down at all because he was short of breath. Wednesday evening on March 9, when his plight worsened, the doctor was called. After examining him the doctor stated that his heart would soon fail. The doctor was able to make him more comfortable so that by 2:00 a.m. he could go to bed. When asked how he felt he said “much better, now I can rest.” At 2:30 Thursday morning father lapsed into a coma. At 8:00 a.m. he breathed his last. “Finally he comes softly, takes us by the hand, leads us on our journey home, to the promised land.”

“The funeral was held Monday, March 14. At home, Minister C. Wohlgemuth gave a short message, then in the Kleefeld church Minister John Penner opened the funeral service and led in prayer.”

“For the text Minister Peter A. Penner chose Philippians 1:21 and Hebrews 13:7, then all Ministers present followed with short tributes. At the interment at the church cemetery Minister J. F. Barkman spoke words of comfort and closed with a prayer.”

“Left to mourn his departure are: 4 sons, 3 daughters, 40 grandchildren,

16 great-grandchildren and 1 sister who lives in Alberta. Preceding him in death were: 1 son, 1 daughter, 1 daughter-in-law, 3 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Father reached the age of 85 years, 2 months and 10 days.”

“The long awaited peace has finally come for our beloved father. We are mourning, but are thankful that he has gone to his eternal rest. He was very patient, he didn’t complain and he often told us he was looking forward to the day he’d be released of his suffering.

The above biography of Abraham P. Isaac was published in 1998.<sup>622</sup>

**Margaret Loewen Isaac (1855-1930):** Grandmother Isaac was born Margaret Loewen. She had an older sister, Susanna (1852-1918), married to Peter L. Dueck, teacher in Kleefeld, and for the second time to Peter R. Reimer. Family legend holds that Grandmother’s branch of the Loewens held themselves socially a cut or two above their neighbours, because there was by all accounts a baron or baronetcy back in their family line which lent them definite distinction. So there weren’t hints lacking that young Abraham Isaac was rather audacious in seeking the hand of grand Margaret Loewen. Margaret Loewen married Abraham Isaac December 26th, 1873. June 4th, 1874, the two of them....set out for Canada. Married only five months, young and carefree, the voyage was to them as Grandfather declared, “a wedding honeymoon trip.....”

We remember Grandmother Isaac only in her later years. She must have been dark-eyed and dark-haired then, sturdy and hard-working. She planted maples around their homestead house, which grew into huge spreading trees around which her grandchildren revelled in their growing up years. She also planted red and yellow currant shrubs, gooseberries, plums, cranberry bushes, and rhubarb, chives, and sorrel. All were there for us to enjoy in our childhood. She was an avid gardener, loving her plants and flowers and preferred staying home to look after them to going visiting.

We remember her as a small woman, her dark hair streaked with grey, her face soft and wrinkled. She was our grandmother, and we ran to her first with our small scrapes and hurts, always sure of sympathetic loving arms. She told us Bible stories and scared one small grandchild stiff, when after telling the awful story of the Flood, she added that one day the world would “melt with fervent heat”.

Grandmother was as neat and tidy in her person and appearance as if she had stepped out of the proverbial bandbox. She was also very particular about her home, her meals, and her children. Having a strong mind of her own, she could pronounce definite opinions about people who didn’t come up to her standards. Though once when her minister husband suggested it to be her duty, as the minister’s wife, to reprove some lady church member’s slovenly house-keeping, she quickly softened and said she didn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.

She was also a good singer, her family being noted for that. She had no trouble starting a song, or carrying the tune, if the song leader faltered because he happened not to know it well.

Going for a mile long walk to visit neighbour Toews (Naba Toewse), was most enjoyable for a small granddaughter. It was so special, the privilege to “go along”. Grandmother explained all about Western Red lilacs (wilde Tulpe) and



red-winged blackbirds (Spree) which nested among the reeds along the creek. And she didn't laugh when what the childish imagination fancied were two rabbits sitting up straight opposite each other far down the road turned out to be the side rails of the wooden bridge spanning the creek.

After Grandparents retired, they moved to a snug little place back of their original farmstead. Grandmother had a whole new place to fix up and garden in. This day she was planting small elm trees on either side of their garden gate. The aforementioned grandchild was on hand to watch and ask questions. "Will those little trees ever grow tall?" "Yes, they will," was the answer. Pointing to the magnificent maples across the driveway, "as tall as those?" "Yes, as tall as those, but by that time, I will be gone," she replied. They did and she is.

Grandmother died quite suddenly of a supposed brain haemorrhage....

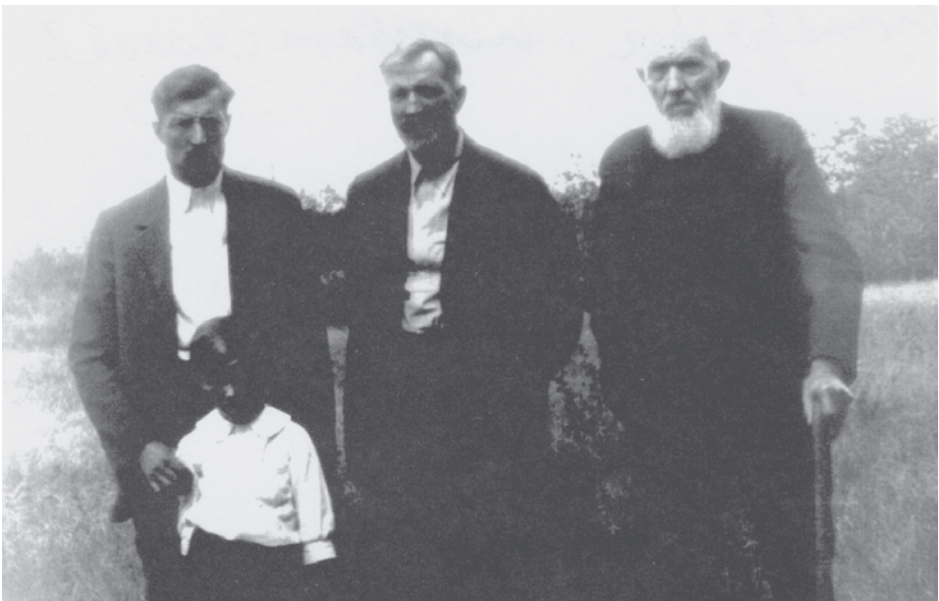
On our mantle now sits their old clock that sounded out the hours with mellow chime tone, and ticked away the minutes of a brave, courageous, pioneer woman, secure in the love of her God, her husband, children and grandchildren. Many of the Margaret and Abraham P. Isaac descendants still live in the Kleefeld area today.

Biography of Margaret Loewen Isaac, by granddaughter Daisy Isaac Penner, Box 116, Reston, Manitoba, ROM 0B0.

6 Son **Peter L. Isaac** married Maria Reimer. They lived on a farm near Hochstadt, Manitoba, on Section 17-6-5E, where the Hochstadt school was located. Granddaughter, Norma Isaac married Rev. Don Toews, accountant and minister, formerly of Kleefeld, Manitoba. Son **Johann L. Isaac** married Carolina Schmidt from Montezuma, Kansas. They homesteaded at Aberdeen, Saskatchewan. Because of drought conditions they relocated to Montezuma, Kansas. Son **Abraham L. Isaac** married Katharina Friesen, daughter of Johann S. ("Aesel") Friesen. The Abraham Isaacs homesteaded in Aberdeen, Saskatchewan, in partnership with brother Johann. Abraham moved back to Hochstadt at the beginning of the Depression. He farmed at Hochstadt and also served for several years as Administrator of the Bethesda Hospital. Cecil Fast, apiarist, Kleefeld, Manitoba is a grandson. Daughter **Margaretha L. Isaac** married Jakob B. Wiebe, son of her cousin Johann I. Wiebe. In 1916 they lived on the farm on Section 29-6-5E which had belonged to his uncle Franz P. Isaac. Mrs. Earl Penner, nee Daphne Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba, is a granddaughter. Daughter **Susanna L. Isaac** married Jacob I. Bartel. In 1916 they were living with her parents. They farmed on SE30-5-6E. Jakob I. Bartel later married for the second time. In his retirement years they lived in the Maplewood Manor, Steinbach, Manitoba. Daughter Adina Bartel married Cornelius Penner, Kleefeld, formerly minister of the Holdeman church. Son Paul Bartel farmed in the Kleefeld area. Son **Franz L. Isaac** married Elisabeth I. Penner, daughter of cousin Anna W. Isaac. He taught school for some years and farmed in the Hochstadt area. Son Ted Isaac took over the paternal farm. Son John Isaac is the Administrator of the Maplewood Manor, Steinbach. **David L. Isaac** farmed in the Kleefeld area. They took over the paternal farm after his father's retirement being the NE30-6-5E. The buildings were located so that they straddled the quarter section line between the NE and SE quarters, so that 10

acres from the SE30-6-5E were added to the NE30-6-5E to keep the yard intact. Their youngest son Alfred (born 1934) farmed there as well until 1981. Alfred Isaacs now live in Eden, near Neepawa, Manitoba. Alfred wrote a book of reminiscences "Yesterdays Trails" in 2002. Daughter Gladys Isaac is married to Rev. Milton Fast, Landmark, Manitoba.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Abram P. Isaac</b>	Dec 31,1852		Mar 10,1938
m	Margaretha E. Loewen	Mar 16,1855	Dec 26, 1873	Sep 27,1930
6	Peter L. Isaac	Nov 20,1874		Mar 12,1932
m	Maria S. Reimer	Sep 27,1878	Oct 23,1901	Sep 15,1930
6	Johann L. Isaac	Feb 25,1877	Mar 20,1911	Dec 17,1960
m	Caroline Schmidt	Mar 17,1885		Mar 28,1972
6	Anna L. Isaac	Jun 16,1879		1886
6	Abram L. Isaac	Oct 11,1881	Nov 26,1904	Apr 13,1962
m	Katherina Friesen	Nov 25,1879		May 12,1969
6	Margaretha L. Isaac	May 10,1885	Nov 9,1905	Nov 20,1958
m	Jakob B. Wiebe	Feb 5,1884		Sep 29,1947
6	Susanna L. Isaac	Mar 12,1887	May 24,1915	Jan 2,1951
m	Jakob I. Bartel	Mar 15,1891		Jun 4,1982
6	Maria L. Isaac	Dec 13,1889		May 7,1977
6	Franz L. Isaac	May 16,1894	Oct 4,1918	Aug 28,1979
m	Elizabeth Penner	Mar 22,1896		Mar 29,1979
6	David L. Isaac	Dec 28,1896	Nov 4,1921	Apr 17,1967
m	Justina Bartel	Apr 3,1900		Aug 22,1963
2m	Helen de Veer	Sep 26,1917		



*Four generation picture 1936. Front left, great-grandson Jim Isaac (born 1931), back row, l-r., father Daniel Isaac (1905-76), grandfather Abram L. Isaac (1881-1962), and great-grandfather Abraham P. Isaac (1851-1938). Photo courtesy of Irene Wiebe, High River, Alberta. Photo - Preservings, No. 12, page 69.*



*Left: Coffin picture of Abraham P Isaac. The photographer was P. K. Schwarz, Kleefeld, Manitoba. The picture was taken the day of funeral at Kleefeld, Manitoba, from on top of a small building beside the Kleefeld church that was used for storage. The viewing of the body was held outside because the church was too small to accommodate all the mourners. In the picture, from left to right, are three granddaughters: Amanda Isaac (Mrs. Henry E. Toews), Emily Isaac (Mrs. Winston Woblgemuth), Margaret Bartel (Mrs. Alphae Penner), and Mrs Jacob Friesen, nee Anna T. Barkman, partially off the picture. They had stopped in to see him on their way to school, when he passed away. Photo - Preservings, No. 12, page 70.*

*Below: Frank L. Isaac, Hochstadt, visits with school principal, Gerbard G. Kornelson, in front of the former Hochstadt Post Office. Photo - In Search of Utopia, page 160.*





*Young Peoples' Group at Kleefeld, circa 1908. Left to right: First row Helen Bartel (Mrs. Is. Toews), Elisabeth Bartel (Mrs. John Toews), Nettie Toews (Mrs. Wiebe), Maria Isaac, Katharina Toews (Mrs. Frank Hiebert). Second row: Mrs. Jac. Bartel, Helen Bartel (Mrs. Is. Toews), Elizabeth Hiebert (Mrs. Jac Regebr). Third row: 1, 2, 3 Diedrich Dueck, 4 Jacob E. Regebr, 5. Fourth row: Rev. John I. Penner, Frank L. Isaac, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Can readers identify others? Photo - Preservings, No. 11, page 55.*



*Abraham Isaac's grave marker located at the Church of God in Christ Cemetery at Kleefeld, Manitoba. Photo - Preservings, No. 12, page 71.*

5 Daughter **Helena Plett Isaac** (1858-1945) married Abraham T. Loewen, son of Kleine Gemeinde minister Abraham Loewen (1833-86) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>623</sup> Helena and Abraham T. Loewen lived in Grünfeld, Manitoba. They belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. They had 13 children, two died in infancy. In 1890 they moved to Hochstadt. Granddaughter Rhoda Loewen Regehr writes: "It is an item of interest that their sturdy house was built by brother-in-law Peter Baerg. We saw the house eight years ago. I thought it looked in good condition considering it was over 100 years old." In 1902 they moved to Swalwell, Alberta, where they farmed. Rhoda Regehr writes: "They travelled by train and arrived in Didsbury in Fall. Grandmother Helena with her girls and younger boys stayed in Didsbury over winter. Grandfather Abraham (age 45 then) and the older boys went on east to the Linden area and built a shelter to live in. Cattle were obtained from rancher Pat Burns. Through the winter they were fed cut 'prairie wool', as the grass was called. In spring the rest of the family was able to come out."

Daughter Margaret Loewen Ratzlaff later wrote her memoirs from which the following is an extract: "For the house, barn and other farm buildings, lumber was purchased in Didsbury, the nearest town with a railway station. In order to finance the purchase, the Loewens would first go to Carbon, load up with coal and drive all the way back to the Linden area. The trips to Carbon would take a whole day. The distance to Didsbury would be too long for one day so they would stay over at a Suderman farm. Margaret says that in the summer she liked going along with her father to Didsbury. On very cold wintry days, her father walked in front of the horses and sometimes walked most of the distance. In those early years, beef cattle had to be driven to Didsbury where they were loaded on cattle cars and sent to market. In 1908 Acme came into being with a railroad extension. Cattle could then be shipped from Acme."<sup>624</sup>

Rhoda Loewen Regehr writes: "Also in her memoirs, Aunt Margaret recalls a trip to Calgary with her parents. In 1906 their transportation was horses and wagon. There were only few dwelling places to be seen along the way. Mostly they saw knee-deep prairie grass and the occasional grove of willows or poplars. Calgary had only one main street, which is now 8th Street. Abraham Loewen took up a homestead along the Kneehill Creek which was south and a little east of the Linden church. Soon a big barn was built followed by a new bigger house which was attached to the old one. Together they planted many trees and bushes. Grandma loved flowers so there were many of them. It was a lovely farm and we enjoyed going there. They made us feel welcome. The first known baptism in the newly established Church of God in Christ, Mennonite was Abraham Loewen, their oldest son...."<sup>625</sup>

A biography of Helena P. Isaac and Abraham T. Loewen was submitted for the Sunnyslope community book, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun* by Jake I. Loewen and Margaret (Loewen) Ratzlaff:

"In 1878....[Abraham T. Loewen] married Helen Isaac in Kleefeld, Manitoba. This marked the beginning of a 67 year marriage during which time four girls and seven boys achieved adulthood.

“In 1890 he, his wife and family moved to Hochstadt, a town five miles south of Kleefeld. Twelve years later, in 1902, the family made another move; this time to take up a homestead in Alberta.

“The trip from Manitoba to Didsbury was conducted in two stages. Abraham, the father, came earlier to file for homestead for himself and his three oldest sons, giving the family a section of land. He then rented a house in Didsbury for the large family. Meanwhile, the three oldest boys loaded four freight cars with settlers’ effects and accompanied the freight to Didsbury where Abraham Loewen was waiting for them. The remainder of the family came by passenger train.

“The father and his three eldest sons then proceeded to the homestead about 35 miles east of Didsbury with 50 head of cattle, a wagon and a team of horses.

“A tent was pitched on the homestead and the building of a farm was begun. The first building to go up was a shanty, then the house was built followed by the barn. Winter set in before the building had been completed providing plenty of hardships for the pioneers on their newly acquired homestead.

“The remainder of the family, which were of school age, attended school in Didsbury. I, Jakob, earned a memorable black eye during the time of my education in Didsbury.

“By the spring of 1903 enough of the building had been completed to allow the rest of the family to move out to the homestead.

“It was on May 17<sup>th</sup> of this year that we experienced a three day snowstorm the fury and destruction of which remains unparalleled to this day. Thousands of head of range cattle died during the storm, a severe setback to the ranchers and homesteaders in the area.

“In the later part of June father started again to make his bi-weekly trips to Didsbury for lumber. On the return of one of these trips the Kneehill Creek near our homestead had risen to flood level. When father attempted to navigate the creek with his load, the horses lost their footing in midstream. The team, load, and father were swept downstream. We thought that all, including father, was about to be lost when the horses fortunately gained sufficient footing again to allow them to pull the load to shore some distance downstream from the intended crossing. This is but one example of the perils which confronted the homesteaders at the turn of the century.

“In 1913 the family again moved with several other families to Fire Valley in the interior of B.C. near the arrow lakes. Mother rather liked this country where one could grow fruit quite easily, but access to the markets made it economically unfeasible to carry on farming so the family returned to the homestead which they had not sold in Alberta.

“The move back to the homestead was the last move they made as a family. It was here that they endured the dirty thirties and the depression and saw the recovery of the economy prior to and during World War II.”<sup>626</sup>

Daughter Margaret (Loewen) Ratzlaff also submitted some memories for the Sunnyslope history book: “My Parents As I Remember Them [by] Daughter Margaret Ratzlaff. Of the many memories I have of my father there are three which stand out above the others. They are: his meticulous nature, particularly

as related to his care of and pride in his horses; his absolute honesty; and his extremely good health. I recall his insistence that the stable be kept clean and swept. Also the care he would take in matching his horses that would pull his buggy and the care he took in the grooming and in the harnessing and hitching of these horses to his buggy. As an example of his perfectionist quality, I recall a time shortly after my marriage to my husband Simon Ratzlaff when my parents visited us at our farm. My husband was assisting him in hitching up the horses to the buggy prior to leaving. He had snapped the cross check line with a half twist. When my father was on the buggy he saw the imperfection and promptly got off and made the correction.

“Concerning his honesty, as far as I know, my father always kept his word both within and outside the family circle. When it appeared that he would not be able to make a payment at a certain due date, in the bank, he would always make a point of going to the bank in plenty of time even during extremely adverse weather conditions to make new arrangements. His health was noteworthy in that he was rarely ill and was never bedridden prior to the few weeks preceding his death in September 4, 1944. At his death at age 87, he still had a perfect set of teeth even though he had never required the services of a dentist during his life time.

“The only thing, that characterized my mother was her love of flowers and gardening. Her meticulous care of potted plants went so far as to the carrying them from window to window in order to follow the sun throughout the day. She could not tolerate a sickly plant; it either had to be revived or destroyed. She made a point of learning the names of all the many flowers she grew in her garden even though she had not learned to read in English. In addition to her love for, and skill in horticulture she was quite fond of reading. Through this form of communication she was able to keep up enough with the events of the day in order to develop rather decided opinions concerning the activities of her community.”<sup>627</sup>

6 Daughter **Anna I. Loewen** married for the second time to the widower Cornelius F. Toews, son of 1873 delegate Cornelius Toews. Anna and her husband Cornelius Toews lived in Hochstadt renting his father-in-law's [David Loewen 1836-1915] farm for five years. Son Cornelius L. Toews submitted a biography of his parents for the Sunnyslope history book: “At the beginning of the century several neighbours became interested in going westward to find a homestead....so he decided to follow in fall of 1905. An auction sale was arranged to dispose of surplus inventory and the goods to be used on the homestead were packed into a freight car, to be shipped to Didsbury, Alberta. On Nov. 8, 1905, a freight car with household goods and implements, and another with stock, left Otterburne, accompanied by Jac. L. Toews as attendant; the family went in a passenger car but by the same train to Winnipeg, from there on in separate trains. On Nov. 10, 1905, we arrived in Didsbury, where Mother's brother David R. Loewen was already waiting for us. He took us to his home, about 35 miles east of Didsbury. We spent several days with our uncle, then moved into Cousin John W. Toews' house, which was closer to Dad's homestead.”<sup>628</sup>

6 Son **Abraham I. Loewen** lived on a farm in Swalwell, Alberta. The Abraham I. Loewen story was submitted for the Sunnyslope history book by daughter Mrs. John R. Friesen: "In 1904 Abraham I. Loewen and Sarah Boese were united in marriage. This was the first marriage to be performed in the new settlement in Alberta. Rev. Samuel Boese was the officiating minister."

"Experiences on the homestead were many and varied. One early recollection is of the young mother Mrs. Loewen running down the hill with a butcher knife in her hand in hot pursuit of a coyote, that was trying to destroy a sheep. What she intended to do with the butcher knife still remains a mystery. Whatever it was the coyote could not withstand this furious onslaught, but made good his escape, leaving the sheep intact. One day in the early morning hours, the house caught on fire. The children were unceremoniously bundled up and taken outside, and remember getting dressed in the democrat. Soon the neighbours were there to offer what help they could."

"Glowing reports were heard from B.C. The Loewen family moved to Needles, but distant pastures were not as green as they had appeared, so after eight months the family were back in Alberta.

"With the farm a mile and a half from Delft school it was difficult for Ena to walk so far. When the move was made to Sec. 5, Twp. 30, Rnge. 25, this was only one half mile from school and eliminated a lot of difficulties. Alfred, Naomi, Joe and Rhoda were born on this place. All nine of the children had their public schooling at Delft. Mr. Epp was one of the teachers that boarded at Loewens. Ena went to high school at Acme but quit when she was 16 years old and went working out.

"On one New Year's morning, Susie came down with a very serious attack of scarlet fever. Nearly all of the family had it and there were serious after effects of this epidemic. Mother Loewen had been sick with the flu most of the winter. One morning during her recovery, she was expecting a visit from her sister Mary. When the news was brought to her of her sister Mary's sudden death, it caused a serious relapse.

"One by one we all married and moved to various places. Ena married Doug Christ and lived respectively in Calgary, in B.C. gold mining area, then in Phoenix, Arizona and finally to Dallas, Oregon, where her husband passed away in 1969. Phillip married Betty Klotz and they for a while lived on a homestead but now live at Pine Lake where they operate the Spruce Bay summer resort. Matilda (Tillie) married A.J. (John) Wilson presently engaged in the Gospel ministry at Abbotsford, B.C. after they had served in various missions such as Sunchild Indian Mission at Rocky Mountain House, in Mexico and also in Nigeria. Alfred married Alvina Ray, homesteading near Pine Lake, then living in Alix, and close to Lacombe and now in Red Deer. Naomi married Verner Andreason in Calgary and is there at present working in the General Hospital. She had made two trips flying to England in the latter years also touring part of Europe in 1971. Joe married Josephine Giesbrecht in California, lived at Abbotsford, B.C., then in California and now at Scio, Oregon. Rhoda is married to Herman Toews and they have lived at various places in and out of Linden, Sunnyslope, Oras, which



is near Rocky Mountain House and now are settled on a homestead north of Blueberry Mountain. Susie married John R. Friesen, a teacher and carpenter by trade. We went to the Mexico Mission for a while, to Europe under M.C.C. Relief Work.

“My folks have had 29 grandchildren, quite a number deceased and a goodly number of great grandchildren. My father at the age of 60, after suffering for sometime, passed away. He had several strokes. My mother who was so sickly when raising the family lingers on in the Linden Nursing Home at the age of 87. John, my husband, is also in the Home and a wheelchair patient at 86. He has spent nearly nine months in hospitals.

“After Dad passed away on Mother’s birthday July 18, 1941, with a mortgage on the farm, Mother had to work very hard to pay it off. Later she sold the farm place. It has been in various hands. At the present Henry Wohlgemuths are living there. She moved to a quarter mile north of the Linden Nursing Home and this is where Evangeline Andreason, whom she lived with for many years, now lives. Nothing remains the same and time goes on! Our fathers paved the way for the plenty we today enjoy. Let us be thankful.”<sup>629</sup>

6 Son **Johann I. Loewen** married Agnes Toews Friesen. Daughter Kathryn Newton wrote a biography for the Sunnyslope history book: “On November 8, 1905, they left for their new home in Alberta where Johann had filed for a homestead on SE10-30-25. I was born there November 30, 1906. About six months later my parents moved to Calgary where Dad did carpentry work for a while, and then they moved back to Manitoba....[In 1916 they were living on a farm near Giroux where they manufactured gravestones.] In 1917 we moved to Alberta again and by that time there were six in the family. My brother Ben was born in Alberta, April 15, 1919, and in June of the same year, we all moved back to Manitoba. Only Ben and I [out of 11 children] were born in Alberta....Dad worked for 20 years to build up a mail order business of the Lo’s Stone Works. At the time of his retirement it was a prospering business with a good response from coast to coast. He sold it to his son Ben. In all his dealings Dad’s motto was always ‘Scrupulous Honesty’. He never sued anyone for debts owed to him as he believed this to be an unchristian act.”<sup>630</sup> They belonged to the Salvation Army. This family eventually lived in Chilliwack, B. C.

6 Son **Frank I. Loewen** lived in Acme, Alberta. He himself wrote down some of his experiences for the Sunnyslope history book: “I was born on August 8, 1886 at Kleefeld, Manitoba. In October 1902, together with my parents and brothers and sisters, I moved to Alberta. In order to bring the 50 head of cattle and machinery along, my brothers Abe and John and I had to ride in the freight cars to attend to them. It took us from Monday afternoon till Sunday morning to make this trip. We slept, and ate our food which was brought from home, in one end of a freight car.

“One day in about 1909, while coming home with a load of coal, I met a man from the Rosebud district. He had loaded his coal on a sleigh, but in the meantime a strong Chinook wind had come up and melted the snow on the south side of the creek. Consequently, he had taken his team home, brought a wagon back and was in the process of changing his load to the wagon. I helped him finish and we loaded the sleigh on the top of the coal. However, just before

loading it, we chopped enough wood off the box to build a bonfire. In a syrup pail we melted some snow and my English friend and I enjoyed a cup of tea before we parted.

“On September 4, 1908, I took my homestead at SW ¼ Section 10, Township 30, Range 25. Later, I took another preemption quarter, on which I lived with my widowed sister, Anna. Half of this house was on her homestead and half on my quarter. In this way we both improved up our homesteads.

“In 1915 I sold this half section to Mr. Jim Haining and bought the SW quarter of Section 22, Township 29, Range 25. It was to this place that I took Annie Unruh as my bride and it was here that our six children were born.

“In 1924 we sold this farm to Mr. Bill Templeton and we moved to our newly acquired half section farm on Section 1, Township 30, Range 25.

“In February 1927 we awakened one morning and discovered very mild weather. After having a cold winter with a great deal of snow, this was a welcome change – especially since it was so early in the season. Weather was so mild in the morning that Joan was permitted to attend school that day because she was to start after Easter of that year. So I hitched a team of horses to the cutter and sent the children off to school. This mild weather did not last, however, As the children neared the New Hope School, a severe blizzard suddenly was upon us. They managed to turn in at the school gate, then one of the big boys grabbed the reins, unhooked the horses and put them into the barn. The girls could not have managed without his help.

“Naturally, being much concerned as to whether or not the children arrived safely at school, I decided to follow them with another team and the big bob sleigh. With considerable difficulty I managed to get to the school. To my relief I found the children had arrived. Once there, I decided to wait till the children were dismissed. By 4 p.m. the storm had subsided considerably, and so going home was easier, even though the temperature had dropped. In the meantime Annie spent a very concerned and anxious day at home. Communications were cut off entirely. It was a great relief to her when the family arrived home safely. The concern was noticed by the youngest four year old daughter, for when we entered the door she said, ‘Mother cried today.’

“In January 1928 we discovered Annie had cancer, so she underwent surgery. The following summer another misfortune struck when four of our girls contracted typhoid fever. Since Annie’s surgery was not successful, her health was going down fast. Although much needed in the home, Annie was taken to her reward July 8, 1929.

“On June 8, 1931 we had occasion to go to our neighbours, John Klassens, for the evening. When visiting neighbours we usually walked. Since my daughters were anxious to get started I told them to leave before I did. Leaving a little later I notice a black cloud in the western sky and it seemed to be advancing very quickly. I especially noticed this because there had been no rain that spring and fields were extremely dry. After walking a short distance and noticing the approaching storm I decided to return. Not long after that the storm broke. Within half an hour, approximately 4 inches of rain fell. The coulee running through our land had been dry for some time. Suddenly it had filled and widened until

it resembled a river. Then within a half hour most of the water had disappeared.

“In the process a dead animal and debris were washed along the coulee from the neighbour’s farm. A bridge near my home was washed out. Other than these things plus a water line to show how high the water had been, there was little evidence of the cloudburst.

“This relates a few incidents and experiences of my early life in a new country.”<sup>631</sup>

6 Daughter **Helena I. Loewen** married Cornelius D. Penner. They lived in Swalwell, Alberta. Cornelius died of a severe disease so that he was hardly more than skin and bones when he died. She continued the farming operations after her death. She married for the second time to Jakob F. Friesen, son of teacher Diedrich S. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba. Jakob F. Friesen died in Los Angeles, California.<sup>632</sup>

6 Son **Peter I. Loewen** married Margaretha Reimer, daughter of Aron W. Reimers of Giroux. They lived in Grünfeld, Manitoba in 1916.

6 Daughter **Susanna I. Loewen** was married to Jakob M. Loewen, son of David R. Loewen of Swalwell, Alberta.<sup>633</sup> The Sunnyslope history book has the following account of their lives written by Susanna: “Their first home was in a granary, while Jake built their house. They lived near his parents who had moved to Texas. Shortly thereafter Susanna and Jakob moved as well. After living there for almost a year, they returned, visiting in Kansas and Manitoba along the way. They had to start all over again, settling near Acme where they had a two room house....Jake had a nice team of horses, ‘Peter’ and ‘Blue’. One day however they were running around loose, etc. [Daughter] Mary who was only about four was sitting on the doorway of the barn, unaware what was going on, but the horses just ever so gently jumped over her, never even touching her. We were both wondering what would happen. To say we were petrified, would be putting it mildly. By this time Jake’s parents had moved to Winton, California, and soon afterwards we followed suit. [We] Arrived in Winton the last day of October, 1922. Quite a train trip that was travelling with four children and Harvey was so car sick. Even at the tender age of four, Harvey already had a real good voice, his favourite song was ‘Smile Awhile,’ which he sang as we left my parents’ yard for the train depot....While moving to Wintan we again had an auction sale; sold everything - furniture, cattle, etc. machinery. Jake worked real hard at any kind of work he could get, carpentry was his trade.”<sup>634</sup>

6 Son **Jakob I. Loewen** farmed near Bircham, Alberta. Their only child, adopted daughter, Sandra, was born in 1946.

6 Son **David I. Loewen** lived in Swalwell, Alberta. He married Elisabeth Thiessen, daughter of Peter and Margaretha Friesen Thiessen at Kleefeld, Manitoba. She came to Alberta with her parents in 1919. In a report for the Sunnyslope history book Elisabeth wrote: “David came to Alberta with his parents in 1902....David and I were married Feb. 24th, 1929. This same year we made an agreement for sale for the farm owned by David’s father Abraham Loewen. Here we farmed for three years. Because of the dry conditions here it seemed prudent to go north where rain was more abundant. So in 1932 we went to Crooked

Creek, Alberta, where David filed on a homestead. Here we farmed for three years until we had the patent. This time I think was the most interesting and happy years in our life even though there were some hard times. In 1935 we came back to this township as David was having an ailment in his shoulder. This proved later to be the beginning of multiple sclerosis. We had bought a small farm from my father in 1936 where we lived till 1969. A house in Linden was bought where there was more room for a lift which was used for conveyance from bed to chair, etc. David died June 24, 1971. In 1933 we chose Abe, a three-month old boy for adoption. However, in 1941 Abe meant with a tragic accident with a horse which proved fatal. In Feb. 1935 we chose a three-month old girl, Matilda. She married Kenneth Barreth. In 1941 we chose another eight-month old boy - Abraham Harold. On January 31, 1970, he married Shirley Roberts."<sup>635</sup>

6 Daughter **Margaretha I. Loewen** married Simon Ratzlaff. The family lived at Sunnyslope, Alberta. They belonged to the M.B. Church.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Helena P. Isaac</b>	May 5, 1858	Mar 4, 1877	Jun 30, 1945
m	Abraham T. Loewen	Nov 11, 1856		Sep 4, 1944
6	Anna I. Loewen	Jun 10, 1879		Mar 2, 1960
m	Cornelius Quiring	1874		1907
2m	Cornelius Toews	Mar 28, 1862	Nov 1, 1912	Nov 14, 1924
6	Abraham I. Loewen	Dec 26, 1880		Jul 18, 1941
m	Sarah Boese	Jul 18, 1884	Oct 9, 1904	Jan 26, 1979
6	Johann I. Loewen	Jan 12, 1884	Oct 8, 1905	Oct 26, 1955
m	Aganetha T. Friesen	Jun 3, 1887		
6	Frank I. Loewen	Aug 7, 1886	Apr 16, 1916	Jan 4, 1973
m	Anna Unruh	Jun, 1883		Jul 8, 1929
6	Helena I. Loewen	May 8, 1888		Nov 9, 1973
m	Cornelius D. Penner	May 30, 1884	Mar 26, 1907	Jul 27, 1912
2m	Jakob F. Friesen	Jul 3, 1874	Aug 15, 1920	May 5, 1960
6	Peter I. Loewen	Feb 18, 1890	Oct 21, 1915	1970
m	Margaretha Reimer	Sep 25, 1888		May, 1982
6	Susanna I. Loewen	Apr 3, 1892	Jul 15, 1912	1973
m	Jakob M. Loewen	Jul 8, 1886		Jun 1, 1967
6	Jakob I. Loewen	Jan 10, 1894	Dec 22, 1928	1989
m	Susanna Esau	Jul 24, 1902		Nov 18, 2000
6	Heinrich I. Loewen	Feb 20, 1896		Jan, 1976
m	Helena Toews	Nov 18, 1906	Mar 11, 1928	May, 1998
6	David I. Loewen	Feb 22, 1899	Feb 24, 1929	Jun 24, 1971
m	Elisabeth Thiessen	Mar 16, 1902		ca. 1983
6	Margaretha Loewen	Mar 14, 1900	Feb 21, 1926	Apr 7, 1997
m	Simon Ratzlaff	Apr 22, 1898		Apr 17, 1974

## **Section Six: Minna Plett 1815-64, Fischau, Molotschna.**

4 Daughter **Wilhelmina “Minna” Plett** married Gerhard Goossen, son of Gerhard Goossen of Blumenort, Molotschna. Gerhard Goossen Jr. was the forefather of the Kleine Gemeinde Goossens. One source indicates that Gerhard Goossen was born in Russia.<sup>636</sup> This means that he would be the child of one of the three Goossen families listed in the 1803-4 immigration records and/or of one of the six Goossen families listed in the Revisions-Listen of 1808.<sup>637</sup> An Isaac Goossen family is listed on Wirtschaft 14 in Blumstein in 1808 which may be of significance since Gerhard Goossen’s oldest son was supposedly born in that village. However, the Isaac Goossen family as listed in the 1835 census does not include a son Gerhard.

Another Goossen family - that of Franz - lived in Ladekopp and their son Johann Goossen married into the family of Hermann Neufeld, Münsterberg.<sup>638</sup> Three more Goossen families are listed in Schönsee and a Gerhard Goossen in Blumenort.<sup>639</sup> The research of Henry Schapansky indicates that Franz Goossen in Ladekopp was the son of Jakob Goossen (1713-85) listed in Stobbendorf, Prussia, in the 1776 Konsignation. Jakob Goossen was also the father of Johann Goossen listed in Tiegenhagen, Prussia, in 1776, whose sons immigrated to Russia and settled in the Molotschna Colony - Johann, Jakob and Heinrich, in Schönsee, and Gerhard in Blumenort.<sup>640</sup> According to the 1835 census, Gerhard had a son Gerhard born in 1811, but a further notation shows that the son moved to Landskrone in 1846. There are no sources which indicate a connection between Gerhard Goossen and Landskrone but neither does any source contradict such a connection. Since he is the only Gerhard Goossen shown in the 1835 census of the correct age it is concluded that he is the Gerhard Goossen (1811-54) that married Wilhelmina Plett.

Gerhard Goossen was a school teacher all his life.<sup>641</sup> He must have taught for some time in the village of Blumstein since sons Gerhard and Johann were reportedly born there in 1836 and 1842, respectively. Quite possibly, Gerhard met his wife, Minna Plett, in Blumstein, and settled there to be near her family. He was the teacher for the village of Muntau at the time of the “Gemeinde Berichte” in 1848 and composed and signed the report as the school teacher.<sup>642</sup> The Muntau report is one of the most extensive and complete. Goossen also taught in the village of Schönau, for a number of years around 1851 where the oldest five Johann Isaac children had him as a teacher.<sup>643</sup> Gerhard Goossen died in 1854 in Russia.

Wilhelmina Plett Goossen married for the second time to Heinrich Enns, son of Cornelius Enns and Maria Wiebe who settled on Wirtschaft 14 in Fischau, Molotschna, in 1804. Heinrich was baptised in 1827. Enns had been married for the first time to Margaretha Friesen whose identity is presently unknown. Heinrich took over his parent’s Wirtschaft, presumably in 1836 when his uncle Johann Enns and family left Fischau and moved to the Old Colony. The ownership of a full farm at the young age of 28 meant that Heinrich was in a fortunate position.

Shortly before his death, Enns reflected upon some of the conditions prevailing at the time: “It was about nine or 10 years after my baptism when I began to

realize and consider the deterioration of the Grosse Gemeinde, and saw that I could not stand before God. Indeed in such circumstances, I felt that I would make myself a party to the sins of others! As a result, I submitted myself to the Kleine Gemeinde, where I expected to find more peace for my conscience. After some years I was called upon to be a teacher [minister]. After a number of years I again became restless and questioned within me, whether this had been God's will for me, because so much evil dwelt within me. Neither could I console nor quiet my conscience to the fact that the Gemeinde had become lukewarm and felt more secure in many respects, particularly so after both Ältesten were gone, and our hearts became more burdened with cares for our natural provisions. We, of course, consoled and flattered ourselves, we did not want to get rich; but still aimed at greater things, such as large Wirtschaften fashioned as comfortably as possible. That is to say, we were very well off, in fact some of our people were rich."

Heinrich Enns married for the second time to Sarah Toews, daughter of Cornelius Toews (1802-31), Fischau, uncle of Ältester Peter Toews (1841-1922). Enns was an earnest Christian who tried to use his manifold talents for the work of Christ's kingdom. He was elected as a deacon in 1849 and as a minister in 1851. He was known as a good neighbour who was available to consul and assist those in need. In a letter to Peter Toews of August 21, 1876, Jakob Woelk of Fischau and a former neighbour, mentions that Enns had always been willing to assist him when he had needed advice as a young inexperienced school teacher.<sup>644</sup>

Heinrich married for the third time to Minna Plett, widow of school teacher Gerhard Goossen (1811-54) of Blumstein. Through this marriage Enns became the step-father to his wife's children from her first marriage, including school teacher Gerhard P. Goossen.

Enns was a strong advocate of the writings of the faith and was credited by Ältester Peter Toews for having spearheaded the Kleine Gemeinde publication program of the 1860s.<sup>645</sup> Enns also encouraged his children to become versant in these writings and gave them copies of these books. In 1860 he gave a copy Menno Simons, *Die Fundamentebuch*, Volume One, to his daughter Sara which was passed on as a precious heirloom to her daughter Sara E. Plett, who married Gerhard D. Doerksen. The book was most recently in the possession of their son Henry P. Doerksen of Blumenort, Manitoba. It was part of a three volume set published by the Kleine Gemeinde in 1833.<sup>646</sup>

The Heinrich Enns family is listed in the village of Fischau with daughter Sara, age 13, attending school in 1861/2. Gerhard Goossen, the step-son of Heinrich and a minister, was the teacher at the time.<sup>647</sup> Enns soon became a leading minister of the Kleine Gemeinde responsible for some of its official correspondence. Several of these letters were preserved by Peter P. Toews in his "Sammlung...": 1) A letter to Christian Schmutz, 1861; 2) A letter to Heinrich Loewen, 1863; and 3) A letter to Peter Thiessen in Schönau, 1864.<sup>648</sup> Enns was widowed for the third time in 1864. The funeral of Minna Enns was in Fischau.<sup>649</sup>

Ohm Heinrich was a strong-willed man whose determination and one-mindedness sometimes hindered his effectiveness. He led a movement which

was dissatisfied with the spiritual situation in the Kleine Gemeinde under the leadership of Johann Friesen (1808-82), his one-time son-in-law. Matters came to a head and in early 1866 the Kleine Gemeinde separated into two factions. Presently Enns was elected as the Ältester of the reform faction. He was only the fourth person to hold this office in the Kleine Gemeinde in over half a century and the first who was not a descendant or in-law of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) of Ohrloff. Enns resigned from this office in 1868.<sup>650</sup>

In 1875 Enns emigrated from Fischau, Molotschna Colony, Russia and settled in Rosenort, Manitoba. Later Ohm Heinrich planned to move to Kansas. In a letter of August 21, 1876, Jakob Woelk of Fischau, inquired whether Enns was still living in Manitoba or whether he had moved to Kansas as he had intended.<sup>651</sup> According to two letters written by Enns in 1877, he did live in Gnadenu, Kansas, presumably at the home of son Cornelius Enns.<sup>652</sup> This indicated that Ohm Heinrich was able to reconcile with son Cornelius, one of the leaders of the Crimean secessionists in 1869. In 1880 Heinrich Enns is listed as the owner of Wirtschaft 19 in Rosenort, Manitoba, with buildings insured for \$250.00. Heinrich Enns died in Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1881.<sup>653</sup>

No specific collection of writings such as sermons or letters of Ältester Enns have surfaced to date. An epic poem of 89 stanzas written by Enns in 1874 is still extant. It starts with the words, "Ihr aber meine Lieben, errinert euch der Worte, die zu euch vorgesagt sind von den Aposteln unsers Herrn Jesu Christi. Judea Brief vers 1 bis 17". The booklet of 20 pages was passed on to Heinrich's daughter Sara, and most recently to grandson Henry P. Doerksen of Blumenort, Manitoba.

A number of letters written by Heinrich Enns have been preserved in the letter collections of Ältester Peter Toews. They provide an insight into the mind of a talented and active individual. Very few matters in the Gemeinde escaped his attention. Various of these letters have been published in 1987,<sup>654</sup> 1991,<sup>655</sup> and 1993.<sup>656</sup> Of particular interest are two epistles already referred to, written by Enns from Gnadenu, Kansas, in 1877, wherein he sets forth his observations regarding the status of the Gemeinde and his reflections about its religiosity in earlier times in Russia.<sup>657</sup> These writings provide an appropriate farewell to a man who had served God and Gemeinde with great fervour. A biography of Heinrich Enns (1807-81) was published in 1993.<sup>658</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Wilhelmina Plett</b>	Apr 13,1815	Apr 13,1855	Jun 25,1864
m	Gerhard Goossen	Sep 23,1811	Jul 9,1835	1854
5	Gerhard P. Goossen	Jun 11,1836	Jul 2,1857	Sep 1,1872
5	Peter P. Goossen	Jan 23,1838		1922
5	Cornelius P. Goossen	Nov 30,1839	Dec 12,1863	Jan 8,1916
5	Johann P. Goossen	Jan 5,1842	Jun 25,1861	Dec 14,1904
5	Maria P. Goossen	Feb 27,1848	Feb 19,1867	Mar 18,1888
4	<b>Wilhelmina Plett</b>	Apr 13,1815	Apr 13,1855	Jun 25,1864
2m	Heinrich Enns	Jul 19,1807		May 9,1881
5	Jakob P. Enns	Jul 19,1856		Jun 11,1917
5	Heinrich P. Enns	Oct 17,1858		May 14,1935

5 Son **Gerhard Plett Goossen** married Anna Klassen, daughter of Franz and Anna Klassen of Neukirch, Molotschna (1835 census, Wirtschaft 18). Anna Klassen “had five sisters and one brother named Peter. Peter Klassen was forced to serve as a wagoner during the Crimean War in Russia in 1855. He was quite ill when he returned and shortly passed away. Grandfather Franz Klassen had also died and both of them were buried the same day. Mother’s sisters were Aunt Schellenberg, Aunt Ens, Aunt Epp, Aunt Fedehrau, and Aunt Baergen.”<sup>659</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen served as a school teacher in the Molotschna for 17 years.<sup>660</sup> It seems that he started teaching in about 1853 when he was still in his late teens.<sup>661</sup> Goossen was a dearly loved teacher. By 1856 he was teaching in Paulsheim, where he wrote a two page report to the Schul Verein or school society (board) regarding moral conditions in the Molotschna.<sup>662</sup> He wrote that “... his view [was] that the reason for the present moral conditions was the falling away that had occurred and that the solution was for each and every individual to do their utmost to inhibit a further deterioration and to exert all possible efforts to the betterment of the same.”

By the school year 1861/2 Goossen was teaching in Fischau where he signed the students’ attendance report. In 1864 he was released from his position by the village assembly under circumstances which indicate some sort of power play had taken place.<sup>663</sup> Many of the Kleine Gemeinde fellowship in Fischau had moved to Markusland the previous year and it is possible that opponents of a more conservative education were able to gain the reins of power and remove a teacher who promoted traditional values and methodology.

Gerhard P. Goossen was also a poet and wrote a poem to express his love for his students who must have been shocked by his termination. The poem is entitled, “Am Schlusz der Schulprüfung am 22sten Februar, 1864” or “A poem for the close of school examinations, February 22, 1864.”

1. So musst ich denn bald von euch scheiden, Von euch ihr lieben Kinder mein  
Und diese Stätte gänzlich meiden; Und nicht mehr eurer Lehrer sein.

Soon I must from you depart, from you, dear children ‘mine,  
and leave this place for all time, and no longer your teacher be.

2. Ich, der ich euch so ‘treu geliebet; Mancher Fehltritt euch verziehn.  
Wer ja so schwer, so sehr betrübet, Weil ich nun muss bald von euch ziehn.

I who have loved you so dearly, and many mistakes forgiven,  
it is so difficult and sad, that soon now, I must be gone.

3. Ja, Kinder, ja es thut mir schmerzen, Ich weiss ich hab es gut gemeint,  
Ich liebt euch alle recht von Herzen; Hab oft geseufzet und geweint.

Yes, children, yes, it gives me pain. I know my intentions have been good  
I loved you all the more sincerely, and often sighed and wept for you.

4. Dasz Lieb zu mir und zu euch Kindern; Doch möcht allein ins Mittel geh’n  
Denn Lieb allein hat’s können finde; Dass diese Trennung nicht geschehn.

For love to you children, and to me, the only means could be  
love alone could have avoided; that this separation would not be.

5. Nun Gott sie aber zugelassen; Er, der so gute treue Hirte,



Woll ich auch Trost und Hoffnung fassen; So schwer mir auch der Abschied wird

Since God has allowed this to happen; He, the Shepherd good and true  
my hope to Him I bring in prayer; How'ver difficult the parting may be.

6. Er kann's mit uns nicht boese meinen; Nein, Kinder, nie, er meint es gut  
Auch wenn er uns schlägt, dass wir weinen; Ist's seine Liebe, die es thut.

He does not intend bad for us; My children, no, He means it well  
Ev'n when He punishes us in pain; 'tis out of love He does so.

7. Nun noch zuletzt ihr meine Lieben; Will ich auch bitten zum beschlusz.  
Folgt doch nie eures Fleisches Triebe: Ja, fliehet Aug und Fleischeslust.

Now, in conclusion, my beloved; I want to ask you in closing,  
follow not the evil longings. Yes, flee the lust of the eye and flesh.

8. Vielmehr befolget Treu der Lehren. Die ich euch gab als Lehrer hier  
Betet, wacht, und lass't euch nicht verfuehren. Fliehet Sünd und Laster fuer und fuer.

Truly follow in the teachings, which I as teacher have given here.  
Watch and pray, be not deceived. At all times sin and enslavement flee.

9. Noch bitt' ich, folgt dem neuen Lehrer. Ja, allem guten treulich nach  
Und er als treuer Hirt und Führer; Geh euch voran und ihr hernach.

I bid you, heed your new teacher; in everything that's good and right  
as he, the shepherd and true leader, leads the way for you to follow.

10. Und werdet ihr, so treu vereint. Auf Gottes Wegen treulich geh'n,  
So Werd't ihr, wenn der Herr erscheint, Zu seiner Rechten dort auch stehn.

And if you truly are united, and go the ways of God always,  
Then, when the Lord appears, you will, be standing at His right hand as well.

By school teacher *Gerhard Goossen*, February 22, 1864.

Translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, and published in 1990.<sup>664</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen then taught in Liebenau from where he wrote two letters to cousin and co-minister Peter Toews in 1866. On October 10, 1866, Goossen was elected as a minister of the Kleine Gemeinde at an all-district brotherhood meeting held in Fischau. The meeting had been called for the purpose of electing an Ältester and two ministers. The results were that Peter Toews was elected with 49 votes and Gerhard Goossen with 33.<sup>665</sup> Heinrich Enns, Goossen's step-father, was elected as Ältester at the same meeting.

Jakob I. Bartel (1891-1982) formerly of Kleefeld, Manitoba, recalled an interesting story about the election of Gerhard Goossen related by his father-in-law, Abraham P. Isaac. Isaac had been walking along the road one day when uncle Abram Isaac (1827-1890) of Pordenau pulled up beside him in his carriage and stopped to chat. The elder Isaac belonged to the Grosse Gemeinde but was interested in what was going on the Kleine Gemeinde. He related to the younger Isaac that Gerhard Goossen was an intelligent and gifted person and that he had heard there was a chance that Goossen would be elected as a minister. He inquired whether the younger Isaac had heard anything about this. The response was that he had heard the proposal discussed but that he had heard nothing definite yet.<sup>666</sup>

By 1867 the Gerhard P. Goossen family was living in Lindenau from where he wrote a number of letters to Peter Toews during the next year. Goossen was also farming on the side. Cousin Abraham P. Isaac "...found employment...until November 11. When this was ended I engaged myself....for one year with my cousin Gerhard Goossen, Lindenau, also for farm work."<sup>667</sup> Heinrich Enns was coming under censure for his conduct as Ältester and a rift developed between him and step-son, Gerhard Goossen - who had been functioning as his right-hand minister in the Molotschna. Fortunately this estrangement was eventually healed. In November of 1868, the Goossen family moved to Grünfeld near the Borosenko settlement northwest of Nikopol on the Solenaja River.<sup>668</sup>

In September of 1869 Goossen wrote a lengthy epistle to Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, regarding the question of baptism which was causing a schism in the congregation there. In this letter Goossen pleaded passionately that Wiebe should not proceed with his terrible mistake and that even if he had to consider their baptism for naught, he should at least still consider his former brethren as fellow Christians.<sup>669</sup>

Gerhard Goossen's ministry entailed travelling to the congregations in the Crimea, Markuslandt, and Borosenko. Peter Toews has recorded on January 4, 1868, Goossen and Bishop Heinrich Enns, from the Molotschna, together with a number of brethren from the Crimea, came to Borosenko. Goossen preached a sermon in Blumenhoff on January 6 in preparation for a controversial ministerial election.<sup>670</sup> Goossen worked tirelessly in the service of the Gospel. A letter of January 10, 1869, reveals he made a number of trips to preach at Nikolaithal ("Gruschewka"), 20 km. southwest of Steinbach, Borosenko.<sup>671</sup> Eighteen letters written by Gerhard P. Goossen between 1866 and 1870 were translated and published in 1993.<sup>672</sup>

Goossen was a dedicated man, sincerely concerned about the material and spiritual well-being of his brethren. In a letter to cousin and fellow minister Peter P. Toews, of February 12, 1869, he wrote: "When I bend my knees before our heavenly Father in my solitude, it occurs to me that perhaps a beloved brother and travel companion on the way to our heavenly abode is also praying at the very hour; perhaps brother Wiebe in the Crimea or you there are also pouring out your hearts before God at the very moment. And then I rejoice over the comforting words of our beloved Saviour that where two or three are gathered to pray, their prayers shall be granted. For even though we are physically so far distant from each other, we are - nonetheless - one in the spirit and intimately bonded together inwardly. Oh, how I do sometimes rejoice over all our faithful brethren, who are so truly beginning to find a true love for our Lord Jesus, and within whom the love for the world and all its pleasures is more and more diminishing and the love for Jesus and of the brethren is continually growing stronger. May the Lord preserve them in His love."

Goossen's wife, Anna, was frequently ill, which weighed heavily upon his heart.<sup>673</sup> In a letter of December 4, 1868, cousin and fellow-minister, Peter Toews, writes as follows: "...for even though the beloved brother Goossen has already been here [in Grünfeld, Borosenko] for over six weeks, he has still not had time

to drive to Friedensfeld together with me, because his wife has frequently been sick to her death - although her condition varies."<sup>674</sup> Peter Toews also wrote her a ministerial letter, attempting to strengthen her faith in the face of serious illness.<sup>675</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen assisted employee and cousin Abraham P. Isaac, by recommending him for a position as teacher in Grünfeld. Abram Isaac later testified that he had been discouraged but that with the assistance of Goossen - a veteran teacher in the Molotschna Colony - he managed the task.<sup>676</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen only became a full-time farmer during the last years of his life, after the move to Grünfeld. Tragically, this gifted and talented teacher and servant of the Gospel passed away in 1872 after he had built a new house for his family during the same year. He died at the young age of 36 years, two months and 19 days.

Son-in-law, Johann K. Esau described his death: "He had been quite ill and often delirious, but there were times when he rallied; in these moments he would declare his joy of having 'worked' his salvation in days when he was still well, for he should be unable to do so now. Let us take note of this, for this is important."<sup>677</sup>

Neighbour Abraham F. Reimer from Steinbach, Borosenko, recorded that Goossen was buried in Grünfeld, Borosenko, on September 2, 1872.

Occasionally it happens that a particular individual touches the lives of those around him in a special way. Through his teaching, his ministry, and by his genuine interest and love for people, Gerhard P. Goossen captured the hearts of his fellow human beings. The love and esteem for him are shown by the following testimonials:

Cousin Peter P. Isaac: "...I can give him the testimony that he lived a God-fearing life."<sup>678</sup>

Peter I. Fast (1831-1916), Jansen, Nebraska: "[he]...was my boyhood companion, and a right smart lad. He had, however, become converted, and went over to the Kleine Gemeinde. He was a school teacher and since he had very manifest talents, he was elected as a minister, that is to say, in the Toews Gemeinde."<sup>679</sup>

Cousin Peter Toews: "On a Friday, September 1, 1872, the beloved fellow servant Gerhard Goossen died in Grünfeld. He died after a very severe three week sickness at the age of 36 years."<sup>680</sup> Toews wrote that he and Goossen "...had already often given testimony during public teaching, and especially, that one had to have the witness of being a child of God."<sup>681</sup>

Mrs. Gerhard Goossen, nee Anna Klassen, was not left a wealthy widow, nor was she well physically. Her husband's death was very hard on her so that she was unable to take care of her family. As a result other people took care of her children; daughter Katharina was in the care of the Gerhard K. Schellenberg family; daughter Maria was in the care of the Isaac L. Warkentin family, and son Franz K. Goossen was with the Johann P. Isaac family.<sup>682</sup> On Sept. 24, 1873, Anna Klassen Goossen held an auction sale selling her "cow, hogs and things, for which she received 350 ruble."<sup>683</sup>

In 1874 Anna Klassen Goossen immigrated to Manitoba with the rest of the Kleine Gemeinde and settled in the village of Grünfeld. On December 7, 1874, Anna wrote a lengthy letter to Ältester Peter Toews, who was still living in Blumenhoff, Russia, at this time. In this letter she expresses her love for her Saviour and her loneliness and concern for her children who could not live with her.<sup>684</sup>

#### **Letter Dec. 7, 1874.**

Peter Toews, Blumenort, Borosenko.

“Today, Monday, the 7th of December (1874, J.W.) Baergs came from Steinbach and brought letters with them. The one from you brother Toews, we read most eagerly and saw therefrom, that you are still in Russia. I, therefore, take the pen and will tell you a little of how things are out here, for tomorrow they want to go to Winnipeg, and I wish to send this letter with them. Greatly beloved brother and sister, I wish you the grace and love of our heavenly Father and a living faith in Christ Jesus, the crucified One.

“Dear sisters, Mrs. Heinrich Reimer, Mrs. Peter Toews, Mrs. Johann Warkentin, and Mrs. Isaac Warkentin, and all relatives; you have had to give up your dear mother. This also falls very heavily upon my heart, but we can console ourselves, as we all have the hope that she passed away in blessed peace, and is now in that everlasting Fatherland. She now rejoices in Paradise where the multitudes are nourished by manna, the living tree, the crystal fountain, whereof the Revelation speaks. Before the throne of the Lamb, her tears are wiped from her sorrowful countenance. She is refreshed in her heavenly abode, where no second death intrudes.

“Oh! That we were there too already, where we would not have to weep any more tears. However, our God and Father, who knows all things, will not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. I know not how I am to survive the time, if it is to take until next year, before you come. Our God and Father whom I serve, knows our plight, and will help us, as He has helped before. He knows the answer to all our needs. He alone knows whether we will ever see each other face to face again.

“Brother and sister Isaac Warkentins, is my dear Mariechen alive? Is she well and healthy? May the Lord grant you His blessings with her, and give you wisdom to truly nurture her in the ways of truth, for it is so important in these last and evil days, that we keep a watchful eye over our children, that we may be able to say on that great day, when we shall face God the Father, ‘Lord, here am I and those whom Thou hast given me.’

“I will have to break off, for it is getting late. I must also tell you yet, that I live in the middle, between Abraham Loewens and Peter Baergs. I have had to give away all my children, except Peter, whom I still have with me. We are all well.

“I have many reasons to be thankful. During the night when I, in my lonesome state, begin to think of how much, and in how many ways the Lord has led me, I cannot tell enough of His great goodness and mercy. I am mindful of my children, whose welfare weighs so heavily upon my heart, and how I had to give

them up to others, and now they are receiving such good care. When I get together with them, they console and comfort me, and tell me not to worry about them; and also that I should not cry when I go to bed, or during the night, for they are all in very good circumstances. I was at Katarina's lately, and I had to promise her, that I would not cry. The Lord, our Redeemer, always intercedes for us with inexpressible pleadings unto His Father.

"Now, my dear Johann Goossens, how are you? Are you all healthy? My beloved sister, I have heard that the Lord has given you twin sons. It was so hard for you with your son, Johann. Now He has given him back to you and another with him. What are you going to give your Lord for him? Yield your heart in love that you might be filled with peace.

"And Grandmother, are you also among the living? How are matters going with you? I imagine you will often think of us and wonder what we might be doing. We are not walking on soft roses and often hurt ourselves on the thorns of life. This mortal journey is quite hard. Oh! If I were but in heaven! Now I must quit, for the others, are all sleeping.

"Dear Johann Warkentins, I must turn to you a little. Are you all healthy, together with your little children? I have to tell you dear ones, also Johann Goossens, that as far as I know, Cornelius Goossens are well. Sister-in-law is still the same. My two oldest children are there to help them.

"Adieu my dear ones, this is written in great haste. Whatever you cannot read, you shall have to guess, for I have little time. Sister Mrs. Regehr is here for the night, and before she went to bed, she said to tell you, Mother, and the others, that they are all well. Her husband went to Winnipeg, and she came over to hear the letter, and asked to send you her hearty greetings. They want to write soon.

"Now beloved ones, I entrust you all unto God's loving care and grace. He does such great wonders unto us and for all. Let us praise Him and spread His fame, all of us that are His own, for His grace and mercy last forever. He will eternally enfold us in His arms with sweet love, and remember our short-comings no more. Beloved ones, write as soon as you have read this. Goodbye."<sup>685</sup>

*"Widow Gerhard Goossen"*

Anna's loneliness was alleviated in 1876 when she married for the second time to Johann Hiebert (1816-90) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later Grünfeld, Manitoba. She had three more children with him.<sup>686</sup> After his death in 1890 she married for the third time to Johann L. Warkentin, a wealthy farmer from Blumenhof, Manitoba. Warkentin had been married to her sister-in-law, Maria P. Goossen (1848-88). By 1896 the Johann L. Warkentins had moved to Kansas, where they lived in Hillsboro, Kansas. She died in 1927 and is buried in the Alexanderfeld cemetery southwest of Hillsboro.<sup>687</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Gerhard P. Goossen</b>	Jun 11, 1836	Jul 2, 1857	Sep 1, 1872
m	Anna Klassen	Feb 10, 1839		Feb 16, 1927
6	Anna K. Goossen	Apr 26, 1858	Nov 4, 1877	Nov 20, 1910
m	Peter Hiebert	Sep 19, 1846		Oct 27, 1917
6	Gerhard K. Goossen	Sep 3, 1859		Jun 29, 1937
m	Anna Braun Froese	Jun 21, 1863		Mar 17, 1943
6	Franz K. Goossen	Oct 26, 1862		Apr 28, 1929
m	Maria Dueck	May 20, 1863	Nov 4, 1883	Jan 19, 1940
6	Kath K. Goossen	Oct 28, 1864	Jun 24, 1883	Mar 17, 1943
m	Heinrich R. Loewen	Apr 16, 1859		May 13, 1946
6	Peter Goossen			
6	Maria K. Goossen	Sep 22, 1868	Dec 16, 1893	May 19, 1954
m	Johann K. Esau	Sep 28, 1867		Dec 25, 1946
6	Peter K. Goossen	Aug 23, 1870	Aug 7, 1892	Aug 17, 1944
m	Maria Froese	Oct 2, 1872		Dec 21, 1908
2m	Maria Penner	Jan 24, 1885	Nov 9, 1919	Jan 11, 1977
6	Cornelius Goossen	stillborn		

6 Daughter **Anna Goossen** (1858-1910) was married to Peter K. Hiebert, son of step-father, Johann Hiebert (1816-90) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna.<sup>688</sup> The family lived in the village of Blumenhoff, South Russia, from where they immigrated to Manitoba in 1875, settling in the village of Rosenhof.<sup>689</sup> Sometime later they moved to Kansas, where they farmed in the Hillsboro area.

6 Son **Franz K. Goossen** (1862-1929) was brought to Canada as the foster son of Johann P. Isaac, Grünfeld. In 1883 Franz married Maria Dueck, daughter of Johann L. Dueck, deacon, from Alexanderkrone, Molotschna.<sup>690</sup> They lived for two years with the Isaacs and then bought their own property in Hochstadt. In 1888 they moved to Hochstadt where he bought a 160 acre farm from Gerhard Friesen for \$600.00. He was the first teacher there, starting out with 11 pupils.<sup>691</sup> In 1893 Franz is listed as the teacher in Hochstadt.<sup>692</sup> In 1893 he took a teacher upgrading course in Gretna, Manitoba.<sup>693</sup> In 1902 the Franz K. Goossen family moved to Canada, near Hillsboro, Kansas, where they lived for about a year. In 1906 they moved back to Manitoba, Canada, where they purchased the Alex "Sandy" Adams farm in Clearspring, the north half of Section 7-7-7E. "During this time [Franz K. Goossen] even went back to the teaching profession that he had liked so well in younger years. He happened to be...the teacher for two years in Blumenhof - 1912."<sup>694</sup> In 1916 emigration fever ran high and they together with some of their married children once more made the trek south and moved to Littlefield near Lubbock, Texas. Here they lived for a little more than a year after which they returned to Canada because of the war conditions. They settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, purchasing the old Heinrich Brandt property on Main Street, Wirtschaft 4, also convenient to their church. They lived here for the rest of their days.<sup>695</sup> Franz K. Goossen was interested in history and made a presentation at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first immigration of the Mennonites to Manitoba, held

in Vollwerk (today Mitchell) on September 26, 1924, entitled "Recollections from Early Times":

"It was the last day of July, 1874, as we descended the Red River to Winnipeg. There were so many bends in the river that the sun shone first from one side, then from the other. The river was narrower than it is now, with trees growing so thickly on the banks that the squirrels could jump from one side to the other. On August 1<sup>st</sup> we went to Winnipeg. Many took advantage of this opportunity to buy necessities, including teams of oxen. On August 2<sup>nd</sup> we were driven back to Niverville again, where we took shelter for a time. There we got busy with washing and cleaning and combing the lice [Lauese] out of our hair—they were full-grown already, and you could hear them when they fell onto the boards."

"It was dry at that time and we did not have water, so a well was dug. Two men fell into it, and were saved only with great effort - one was Peter Reimer, a married man, and the other Johann Hiebert, single at that time. They were quite injured. Both recovered; Reimer is dead now and J. Hiebert still lives here in Hochfeld. There was also a low area not far away, in which we dug holes for the water to collect. There were some who got up early in the morning to get water and could not find it in the darkness. There was also a Johann Driedger who was very dissatisfied with his portion here, and complained about the delegates a great deal. Then as he was cutting kindling, all at once he dropped his knife and he lost the ability to think and speak, although he partially regained his speech. He also is now deceased."

"The older men and grown sons went out from here to claim their homesteads and to group together in villages. As we only began haying in September and October, the cattle feed was meagre and hard. Many people had only 'Sereis' for homes and barns. Humans and cattle had to endure severe cold. Sod huts were warmer."

"I had to herd a lot of cattle for the Grünfelders in 1875. The 1875 immigrants also gave me cattle to take care of, for which they promised me payment. I still have not received any to date."

"My foster parents were so poor that I had to herd cattle barefoot. In fall when it became cold my father gave me his felt boots. Through this exchange I got abscessed blisters, which only healed after I had determinedly trampled barefoot through the loamy mud, as a way of smearing them."

"In my 14<sup>th</sup> year I went to church barefoot and wearing rough linen trousers made of Russian sacks. As everything was devoured by grasshoppers in 1875, we were very poor."

"On June, 1875 a number of people travelled to Winnipeg, including Jacob Barkman and Jakob Friesen of Steinbach. On their return, they stayed overnight in St. Boniface and discovered they had forgotten a number of things. So the next morning, they wanted to go back to the city again. The boatman, however, did not want to take them, as there was quite a strong wind and it was even snowing a bit. So they hired a man who agreed to take them across with his boat. The boat started to rock, but it was close to a wire [used by the ferry] for which the men reached out, causing the boat to capsize. They held onto the wire and

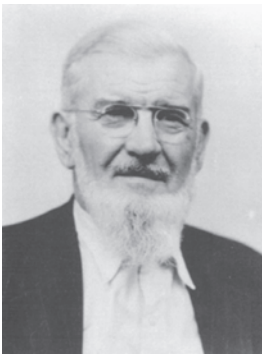
tried to make their way to shore, but their limbs became numb from the cold water, so that they let go and were drowned. The boat man was able to swim, and saved himself. Many people found the winter of 75-76 very hard. There was a family, called the 'Big Duecks' living between Grünfeld and Rosenfeld who became ill because of malnourishment, and two of them died. As soon as their need became known, help was given to them; people from Grünfeld brought them milk and food."

"By 1876 we were doing better. Peter Wiens and Johann Braun constructed a threshing machine, 2 ½ miles directly north from where Kleefeld is now. Also two second-hand Holland-style windmills were erected, one by Johann Janzen and another by Corn. Toews in Grünfeld. We were very happy to see the bread basket hanging high after the harvest in '76. The Grünfelders had also bought a threshing machine, and when we had threshed some wheat, many fathers each took a sack of wheat on their shoulders and carried it to the mill, so that they could have bread from their own flour - and how good that simple flour tasted!"

"In December of 1876 there were many people from Blumenort and Blumenhof who drove out together to the forest they had bought, in order to divide it up. It snowed the whole day and as evening drew near, a wind began to blow. They stopped at the east end of Blumenhof to see if they were all still together, but Heinrich Wiebe said that his hands were going to fall off, as they had frozen."<sup>696</sup>

Franz K. and Maria Dueck Goossen were the parents of John D. Goossen, well-known Notary Public and conveyancer in Steinbach, and long-time Secretary-Treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Hanover.<sup>697</sup> Son George D. Goossen was a Steinbach barber and pool-hall operator.<sup>698</sup> He was the father of Clara Goossen, wife of long-time Steinbach Credit Union Manager Jac D. Reimer. Sons John and Peter R. Goossen were farmers in Greenland.

### Wedding Photographs of Franz K. and Maria Goossen Children



*Peter D. Goossen 1890-1972.*



*Mrs. Peter D. Goossen, nee Lena F. Reimer born 1894.*



*Anna D. Goossen 1893-1920 married Martin F. Barkman 1890-1969.*





*John D. Goossen 1884-1951 married Elisabeth R. Friesen 1886-1964.*



*George D. Goossen 1886-1958 married Maria Guenther (b. 1890) in 1908.*



*Maria D. Goossen married Aaron M. Penner 1887-1963 in 1910.*



*Frank D. Goossen 1895-1928 married Maria F. Barkman 1895-1972 in 1916.*

6 Son **Gerhard K. Goossen** was a teenager living in Grünfeld (Kleefeld) at the time of the Holdeman movement in 1882. His conversion is described in the book *History of the Congregations*: “In the year 1881, brothers John Holdeman and Markus Seiler arrived in Manitoba and conducted meetings in the villages surrounding Steinbach. Gerhard Goossen, being a boy of 16 at that time, lived in Kleefeld [Grünfeld], Manitoba. He was already baptized by Bishop Peter Toews in the Kleine Gemeinde church. Bishop Toews instructed him on the new birth and how it could be obtained and later he testified that he never doubted his experience of conversion. But in time he became discouraged and careless, but while attending meetings conducted by Holdeman, he renewed his vows and was baptised by brother Holdeman. Shortly after, Gerhard Goossen took up a homestead at Rosenort....”<sup>699</sup>

In his “Life’s Chronicle,” Peter W. “Schmit” Toews, recalled that he had been hired out to work for Johann Hiebert, Grünfeld, East Reserve, Manitoba: “Gerhard [K. Goossen], the step-son, was the farm operator.....I worked at this place through the summer 1876. I remember yet, how, when we were working the last piece of ground to finish the seeding, Goossen tied his oxen to my harrow and I had to harrow alone. He ordered me not to turn too short. Then he hurried off to Hochstädt to make arrangements with Heinrich, son of David Loewens, to go along to Morris. Apparently, something impelled him strongly to go there.”<sup>700</sup>

While in Rosenort, Gerhard K. Goossen married Anna Froese. She was the daughter of Anna Braun and Franz Froese also of Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>701</sup> The couple settled down in Rosenort where they made their home.

6 Daughter **Katharina K. Goossen** married Heinrich R. Loewen, son of David Loewen (1836-1915) of Lindenau, Molotschna, and later of Hochstadt, Manitoba. The Heinrich R. Loewen family lived in Fairbanks, Texas, where they both died. They belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

6 Daughter **Maria K. Goossen** married Johann K. Esau, son of Anna Klassen and Heinrich Esau of Nikolaithal, Borosenko, South Russia, and later of Heuboden, near Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>702</sup> February 26, 1902, the *Rundschau* reported “Jakob S. Friesen bought the Johann Esaus’ land.” The Esau family lived in Manitoba until 1907 when they moved to Kansas. In 1915 the family moved again, from Kansas to Texas. Johann K. Esau was the author of “The Esau Family Tree 1740-1933,” in which he wrote: “We have lived in Manitoba, Canada; Kansas, U.S.A. and Texas, U.S.A.. We were pioneers in Manitoba, and we have also lived three years in Oregon, the land of orchards. My wife was suffering much from headaches in Manitoba, and being unable to find help, we decided to move to Kansas, U.S.A. in November, 1907. She benefited from the change of climate, and had regained her health in a few months. In 1915, people were moving to [Littlefield], Texas, where the land was cheaper, and where some of our people had already organized a church. We moved onto a larger piece of land and began pioneering again. Shortly after, the war came to Texas, and most of our people moved away. After the war, the settlement became a nice town, and the country is well settled. We have grown old in the meantime, the same as our neighbour Peter Penner, who lived through the hard years of pioneering, but has now

moved into the heavenly Canaan. We, too, shall soon follow him into that land where there shall be no more sorrow. And then the children will take over building the world.”

“[Son] Heinrich was forced to join the Army on October 7, 1917, and on the 8th of June, 1918, was sentenced to 25 years in Fort Leavenworth on account of non-resistance. On April 15, 1919, he was set free. On April 27, 1931, he married Anna Barkman. [Daughter] Adina was married to Abram W. Penner...[who] was called to the Army on October 7, 1917. On July 8, 1918, he was sentenced to 25 years at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, but set free on April 12, 1919. They now [1933] live on the farm near Littlefield, Texas.”<sup>703</sup>

6 Son **Peter K. Goossen** worked for older brother Gerhard in the latter part of the 1880s. During this time he purchased 80 acres of land. The following biography was written by son George P. Goossen: “He worked this farm with the help of his brothers and at the same time, kept his employment with Gerhard Goossen. Now at this time as situations improved he fell in love with Maria Froese, a sister to Uncle Gerhard’s wife and got married August 7, 1892 with Minister Abraham Isaac officiating. The year of 1908 was a hard year for our father. On August 29, grandmother Froese died at age 64. On October 19, grandfather Warkentin died at age 63. Then on December 21 our mother died at age of 36, and she left behind a family of seven boys and two girls. Sister Ann became the sole housekeeper with the help of some of her brothers. We were exceedingly fortunate that Aunt Anna Goossen was our next door neighbour. She ever so often came over with a helping hand and gave suggestions in the home all around. When the following spring made its seasoned appearance, grandmother Warkentin arrived from Kansas to mother the brood that was left in deep sorrow by the death of Mother....”

“Mother, when she was still with us, was promised a new home and one which had ample room; this she did not live to see and enjoy. So when the opportune time rolled in on 1910, father built us a good size home for which everybody was very happy. This made life so much more pleasant and comfortable. We had a good sized sitting room in which we gathered almost every evening to sing songs to bring us closer to God and to heal the wounds of sorrows. Many of these songs father taught us....and bring back memories of life at home. The strict admonishments we received ever so often, was really more appreciated when we became more serious and more responsible....”

“Eleven years rolled by when all of a sudden one morning the sun rose in the south, at Littlefield, Texas, in the year 1919. Then news of this now was very hard for us to believe, and on November 19, 1919 it was the second wedding of my father. He brought us, when he came home, Marie Penner as our greatly cherished mother. Now our home was complete and my sister Ann’s face lit up as she became second in command. During this marriage three brothers and one sister were added to the family making ten brothers and three sisters in all. I am very happy of each member of the family.”

“Father was still very active in these years, but eventually his strength faded slowly and on Aug. 17, 1944 he met his Maker to be at Home. He reached the age

of 74 years less 6 days. Mother lived to a ripe old age to see the nineties.”

As of 1980 the children were living in the Morris Municipality except for Anna in Steinbach, Walter and Martha at Grandview and Frank at Sinclair who is also in retirement.<sup>704</sup> Son George P. Goossen was as life-long teacher and taught in Rosenhof and also served as Councillor for the R.M. of Morris. Victor Goossen, owner of Prairie View Press, Rosenort, is a grandson of Peter K. Goossen.



*Early farmyard built up by Peter K. Goossen in Rosenort, Manitoba. The large house and farm buildings testify to a prosperous farm. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 417.*



*Two-story farm home built by Peter K. Goossen in 1910. Photo -Furrows in the Valley, page 417.*



*George P. Goossen,  
teacher and farmer  
in Rosenhof. Fur-  
rows in the Valley,  
page 417.*

5 Son **Peter Plett Goossen** married Justina Dueck from Lindenau.<sup>705</sup> They lived in Lindenau where he and his wife both died in 1922. They became members of the Brüdergemeinde. Like brother Gerhard, Peter Goossen was an articulate man who carried on letter correspondence. A letter written to him by cousin Peter Toews dated April 3, 1873, is still extant.<sup>706</sup> The Goossens had a Wirtschaft in Lindenau where they lived and farmed for over 50 years. A letter written by Peter Goossen, on February 28, 1904 to his cousin Johann P. Friesen, Rosenort, Manitoba, is still extant. In the letter Peter referred to some of the former neighbours they both knew in their boyhood days. He also described some of their circumstances with their farming operation, etc. He writes "That although I no longer work as hard as in the past, yet, summer is not my best time for letter writing, which I prefer to do in winter when one gladly sits inside in the house." He mentioned that this "was already the eighth letter this winter, and I go through my thoughts so as not to repeat myself."<sup>707</sup> By 1915 they had given the Wirtschaft over to their children. Some of their children lived in the Crimea.<sup>708</sup> Mrs. Goossen spent the last years of her life in total blindness.<sup>709</sup>

The genealogical information in this section is from the *Gerhard Goossen Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1982), pages 11 and 104.

6 Daughter **Justina D. Goossen** had no family. Daughter **Maria D. Goossen** married Hermann Klassen. They both died in Siberia. Son **Peter D. Goossen** had one daughter.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Peter P. Goossen</b>	Jan 23, 1838		1922
m	Justina Dueck			1922
6	Justina D. Goossen			
6	Tina D. Goossen			
6	Johann D. Goossen			
6	Maria D. Goossen			
6	Peter D. Goossen			
6	Margaretha D. Goossen	Mar 29, 1880		

6 Daughter **Tina D. Goossen** married a Derksen. She died in Ontario at the age of over 90 years.

7 Daughter **Tina G. Derksen** married Peter Goertzen.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Tina D. Goossen</b>			
m	Derksen			
7	Tina G. Derksen			
m	Peter Goertzen			

6 Son **Johann D. Goossen** married Agatha Baerg. Johann died in Lindenau in 1942. Five of their children died young.

7 Daughters **Justina B. Goossen**, **Luise B. Goossen**, and **Greta B. Goossen** were last heard from in Siberia.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Johann D. Goossen</b>			1942
m	Agatha Baerg			
7	Justina Goossen			
7	Luise Goossen			
7	Greta Goossen			

6 Daughter **Margaretha D. Goossen** married Jakob Kornelsen. She died in Siberia.

7 Daughter **Anna G. Kornelsen** married a Derksen. She died 1931 in Paraguay. They had one son Jakob whose address in 1982 was Filidelphia, C.D.C. 984, Asuncion, Paraguay. Daughters **Greta Kornelsen** and **Justina Kornelsen** died in Siberia.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
6	<b>Margaretha D. Goossen</b>	Mar 29, 1880		
m	Jakob Kornelsen	Dec 26, 1878		
7	Anna Kornelsen	Aug 17, 1907		1931
m	Derksen			
7	Justina Kornelsen			
7	Greta Kornelsen			

5 Son **Cornelius Plett Goossen** married Katharina Friesen, daughter of Klaas F. Friesen of Paulsheim.<sup>710</sup> In 1863 the family moved to Friedrichsthal, Markusland. They built an earth hut, called a semlin, together with cousin Cornelius P. Toews, married to Katharina's sister.<sup>711</sup> On December 2, 1867, Goossen wrote a letter to Peter Toews, by then living in Blumenhoff, Borosenko.<sup>712</sup> The Cornelius P. Goossen family later moved to the village of Annafeld, Borosenko, where he is listed in the fire insurance records of 1874.<sup>713</sup>

Cornelius P. Goossen married for the second time to Katharina Barkman (1851-1912) whose father Rev. Jakob M. Barkman, settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874, and who drowned in the Red River, near Winnipeg, Manitoba, the following year.

The Cornelius P. Goossen family settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874.<sup>714</sup> He was immediately insured for \$25.00 for dwelling, \$250.00 for cattle and contents, and \$100.00 for feed and supplies. The next year they built a new dwelling house which was insured for \$150.00 on September 20, 1875. He sold half his farm in 1882 or 1883 and continued farming on a smaller scale but made a good living in spite of it. After 17 years he sold the remaining half of his land to Heinrich Sobering.<sup>715</sup>

Cornelius P. Goossen and his wife are described as follows: "He was not a strong man and not able to work hard. Being thrifty and saving, they were able to make a comfortable living. Uncle and Aunt were well-liked. He had a good credit, and Auntie was lovable and hospitable. We always liked to visit there."<sup>716</sup>

In a letter of December 12, 1912 to Jakob Kroecker, neighbour Cornelius L. Plett described the death of Mrs. Goossen: "You will have heard that the old Mrs. Cornelius Goossen died so suddenly. Yet, she did so without a care. Whether she fell asleep in the evening, I cannot say. Yet, she went to bed in good health...and in the morning she was dead. After Goossen had risen in the morning, it was strange for him that his wife remained motionless for so long, as she was usually up before him. He looked at her, and she was dead."

Cornelius P. Goossen died at the home of Peter K. Esaus, 71 Lilly Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. He was buried in Steinbach.

6 Son **Cornelius B. Goossen** was a farmer and labourer. He is buried in the cemetery at Kleefeld, Manitoba. The family belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Daughter **Katharina B. Goossen** married Peter K. Esau, son of Heinrich Esau (1830-99) of Sparrau, Molotschna. Peter K. Esau was a cheesemaker for many years at Hochfeld, Manitoba. Later they moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where they opened an inn serving meals and providing lodging, etc.<sup>717</sup> Katharina Goossen married for the second time to the widower David L. Toews of Linden, Alberta. Son **Peter B. Goossen** married the widow Peter Guenther with four children. Peter B. Goossen was a salesman in Steinbach, Manitoba. He belonged to the Immanuel Mission Church. He owned a religious bookstore. In 1920 Peter B. Goossen published a booklet of poetry dealing with his experiences entitle *Erfabrungen In Reime Gebracht* ("My Experiences composed in Rythmes").<sup>718</sup> His daughter Agnes married Ben B. Unger, Friedensfeld, Man., and their son Wilbert Unger owns the parental farm.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Cornelius P. Goossen</b>	Nov 30, 1839	Dec 12, 1863	Jan 8, 1916
m	Katharina Friesen	Sep 22, 1844		Dec 9, 1870
6	Cornelius F. Goossen	Jul 5, 1864		Apr 5, 1870
6	Heinrich F. Goossen	Jan 28, 1867		Sep 26, 1867
6	Katharina Goossen	Jun 23, 1868		Nov 29, 1873
6	Maria B. Goossen	Dec 2, 1870		Feb 9, 1871
5	<b>Cornelius P. Goossen</b>	Nov 30, 1839	Dec 12, 1863	Jan 8, 1916
2m	Katharina Barkman	Aug 8, 1851	Feb 7, 1871	Dec 5, 1912
6	Cornelius B. Goossen	Jun 16, 1876		Jan 10, 1959
m	Margaret Friesen	Oct 22, 1874	Oct 22, 1898	Jul 27, 1958
6	Heinrich B. Goossen	Oct 25, 1877		Jun 11, 1883
6	Katharina B. Goossen	Jan 14, 1879		
m	Peter K. Esau	Jun 12, 1874	May 4, 1902	Apr 25, 1935
2m	David L. Toews			
6	Maria B. Goossen	Oct 18, 1880		Feb 27, 1883
6	Daughter Goossen	Jan 12, 1882		Jan 12, 1882
6	Peter B. Goossen	Jun 13, 1890		Dec 21, 1890
6	Jakob B. Goossen	Jun 13, 1890		Jun 13, 1890
6	Peter B. Goossen	Apr 18, 1895		Dec 18, 1978
m	Anna Wiebe Ginter	Jun 4, 1884	Jun 10, 1921	Jul 2, 1966



*Peter B. Goossen  
1895-1978, bookstore  
owner, Steinbach,  
Manitoba. Photo -  
Dolores Pankratz/  
Pres., No. 10, Part  
Two, page 17.<sup>19</sup>*



5 Son **Johann Plett Goossen** married first cousin Susanna P. Toews, daughter of Maria Plett and Johann Toews (see Section Four for a listing of the family). The Johann P. Goossen family lived in Blumenhoff, Borosenko. The Johann P. Goossen family emigrated in 1875. They settled in Gnadenau, Kansas.<sup>720</sup> They are listed as Family No. 116 in the Gnadenau KMB Gemeindebuch rebaptised in 1876. Peggy Goertzen, Tabor College Archivist has concluded that they only remained in the KMB for “perhaps two to five years - 1880 to 1885...The early baptism date of 2 October 1876....indicates the baptism occurred as part of Eckert’s Church (Ebenfeld M. B. Church) which congregation worshipped in the nearby east school house of Gnadenau village.”<sup>721</sup>

Johann and Susanna Goossen are listed in the 1880 census of Marion County - Liberty Township: Goossen, John - age 36, wife Susanna - age 35, son John - age 3, son Peter - age 1, and mother-in-law Mary Toews - age 69. Peggy Goertzen writes: “Johann and Susanna Goossen farmed in Risley Township, Marion County, as documented in the 1880, 1885 and 1895 census records for Marion County, Kansas. In 1885 Goossen is recorded as the owner of 85 acres, 69 of which were under fence, neighbouring the farms of Peter Flaming and Aron Schellenberg. By 1895, Goossen was listed as the owner of 98 acres, all of which were fenced. Goossen was an orchardist, with 112 fruit bearing trees: apples, pears, peach, plums and cherry, and 11 young apple trees; he was also a farmer with small acreages planted in winter wheat (36 acres), corn (35 acres), oats (17 acres), and Irish potatoes (1 acre). In 1899, Goossen was reported as ‘always busy corn-shelling,’ having purchased an old shelling outfit from Abraham Eitzen, and making plans to purchase a new one. The Goossen household was the permanent home of Johann’s widowed mother-in-law, Maria Toews, a native of Germany [Polish-Prussia] from the age of 69 through to 84 years, as documented in the three census records....” According to the obituary in the *Vorwärts*, Johann and Susanna were the parents of 12 children, the last five - Johann, Peter, Cornelius, Susanna and Gerhard - were born in Gnadenau and survived.

Johann Goossen died in December of 1904. His funeral was held in the Ebenfeld M. B. Church. Peggy Goertzen writes: “Three years after Johann’s death, three of Johann and Susanna’s children and a daughter-in-law were baptized 19 May 1907 and received into membership of the Ebenfeld MB Church: Peter and wife Lena Reimer, Susie and Gerhard....Peter and Lena moved to Saskatchewan in April 1912. The mother Susanna (Toews) Goossen, died a few months later from typhus in October 1912, her funeral took place in Ebenfeld.”<sup>722</sup> They are buried in the Ebenfeld cemetery, near Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>723</sup> Peggy Goertzen adds, this indicates clearly, “...a strong connection....and most probably attendance and preference of affiliation, though not official membership.” Peggy Goertzen notes: “It is not clear from the notation in the Gnadenau index whether Mrs. Johann Goossen (Susanna) or daughter Susanna moved to Saskatchewan for a short time. When daughter Susanna died on 5 November 1954, she was buried in the Ebenfeld cemetery.” A note on the family page in the Gemeindebuch indicates that daughter Susanna Goossen was received into the KMB on Oct. 31, 1920.

5 Daughter **Maria Plett Goossen** married Johann L. Warkentin, son of Johann Warkentin, Blumenhof, Molotschna, a successful Vollwirt. The Johann L. Warkentin family settled in Blumenhof, Manitoba, in 1875. They farmed in a big way. He also served the community as a well-driller. After the village disbanded, he built up a farm on SE24-7-6E. Here the well he drilled proved to be an overflowing well, flooding the farm and forcing the Warkentins to move.<sup>724</sup> The Warkentin family belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

On September 12, 1891, Johann remarried to sister-in-law, the widow Anna Klassen Goossen. On Nov. 19, 1894, cousin Margaretha Plett Kroeker, Steinbach, noted that "The old Mrs. Joh. Dueck, and Joh. Warkentins left for Kansas." They settled in Hillsboro. Anna was a widow for 18 years after Johann death. Towards the end she lived with her children Gerhard B. Toews' where she died. Her funeral was held on February 20, 1927, in the M.B. Church in Hillsboro. The officiating ministers were D. H. Dueck, A. G. Enns, and E. M. Yost.<sup>725</sup> Anna Klassen Warkentin was buried in the Alexanderfeld cemetery southwest of Hillsboro.<sup>726</sup>

6 Son **Johann G. Warkentin** married Helena Dueck, daughter of deacon Johann L. Dueck (1833-94) of Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, and later Gruenfeld, Manitoba. In 1896 the couple were resident in Grünfeld, presumably living with his in-laws.<sup>727</sup> Around 1905 Johann G. Warkentin and his family moved to Greenland, establishing a farm on SW9-8-6E. They farmed in a small way and ran a blacksmith shop and a small grocery store. Johann married for the second time to the widow Jakob T. Dueck, nee Aganetha Penner, daughter of Cornelius Penner (1854-99) of Blumenort, Manitoba. She was a heavy-set woman and quite immobile. Their farm was located on Greenland Road, east across the road from the church, and later the Greenland Home and various residences were located there. Marlin Warkentin, Greenland, and Milton Warkentin, Cartwright, Manitoba, are grandson of Johann G. Warkentin.

6 Daughter **Anna G. Warkentin** married Gerhard K. Giesbrecht, son of Gerhard R. Giesbrecht (1846-1907), who served as Schulz of the village of Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1883. Gerhard K. Giesbrecht served for a time as a school teacher in Blumenort, Manitoba. In 1916 they lived in Montezuma, Kansas.<sup>728</sup> In 1918 he taught in Watshan Valley, B.C., also referred to as "Needles."<sup>729</sup> "Gerhard is remembered as a lame man who had permanently injured his knee in a saw-mill accident."<sup>730</sup> In 1946 they were again living in Montezuma, Kansas, where Anna died and is buried. Gerhard later lived with his children in Winton, California.<sup>731</sup> Daughter **Maria G. Warkentin** married second cousin Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth, son of Holdeman minster Heinrich Wohlgemuth of Blumenhof, Manitoba. The Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth family farmed on SE26-7-6E which he purchased in 1905 from his uncle David L. Plett. Cornelius was elected as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, on July 14, 1910. Daughter **Elisabeth G. Warkentin** married Isaac Friesen, son of Peter Friesen (1854-1925) of Inman, Kansas.<sup>732</sup> The Isaac Friesen family lived in Convey, Kansas. Elisabeth is buried in Inman, Kansas. Isaac was interested in family history and compiled a genealogy of the Johann Warkentin family.<sup>733</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Maria P. Goossen</b>	Feb 27,1848	Feb 19,1867	Mar 18,1888
m	Johann L. Warkentin	Feb 13,1845		Oct 19,1908
6	Johann Warkentin	Dec 30,1867	Jul 10,1895	Jan 30,1947
m	Helena Dueck	Apr 27,1875		Jan 22,1908
2m	Aganetha Penner	Feb 7,1882	Oct 22,1911	Oct 24,1934
6	Anna G. Warkentin	Jan 6,1870		Jan 30,1870
6	Anna Warkentin	Jul 16,1871	Dec 3,1893	Apr 14,1946
m	Gerhard Giesbrecht	Feb 5,1872		Mar 8,1945
6	Maria G. Warkentin	Feb 22,1874		Dec 28,1874
6	Isaac Warkentin	Dec 27,1875		Mar 25,1876
6	Maria G. Warkentin	Aug 12,1877	Mar 10,1901	Sep 24,1941
m	Cornelius Wohlgemuth	Nov 6,1879		Jul 20,1959
6	Margaretha Warkentin	Sep 22,1880		Nov 8,1955
6	Elisabeth Warkentin	Apr 13,1884	Jun 20,1883	May 22,1940
m	Isaac Friesen	Dec 20,1883		

5 Son **Jakob Plett Enns** married Catrina Rempel, daughter of Abraham Rempel of Margenau, whose widow settled in Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1876.<sup>734</sup> The Jakob Enns family lived in Rosenort, Manitoba. In 1880 Jakob owned Wirtschaft 1 insured for \$250.00 for buildings, \$250.00 contents and \$150.00 for feed. In 1882 Jakob and Catrina Enns joined the Holdeman Church in Rosenort. In 1884 Jakob was elected as a minister, but "Slowly thereafter brother Enns resigned from his position as he was convinced that he could not serve as a minister. He was released from his ministerial office and appointed as a deacon,...."<sup>735</sup>

In 1915 Jakob Enns was living in Rosenort with his only daughter Katherina on his farm. Jakob married for the second time to the widow David Isaac, nee Helena Thiessen, daughter of David F. Thiessen.<sup>736</sup> In February 5, 1934, cousin Maria Reimer wrote that "Jak. Ennsche is weak, but otherwise well."<sup>737</sup> In 1896 Jakob Enns was resident in Rosenort.<sup>738</sup>

5 Daughter **Catrina Enns** "left for Iowa [August 15, 1910] to join her father who had gone earlier. Together they want to travel to California and spend the winter there in a warmer climate. Enns had a letter in the *Rundschau* on August 17 in which he writes about the health spa he is attending."<sup>739</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Jakob P. Enns</b>	Jul 19,1856		Jun 11,1917
m	Catrina Rempel	Sep 24,1854	Dec 9,1876	Jul 31,1904
6	Catrina Enns	Jun 14,1879		Jun 14,1879
6	Catrina Enns	Jul 6,1884		
5	Jakob Enns	Sep 14,1889		Sep 14,1889
4	<b>Jakob P. Enns</b>	Jul 19,1856		Jun 11,1917
2m	Helena Thiessen	Sep 14,1876		Feb 18,1960

5 Son **Heinrich Plett Enns** was a frequent visitor at the home of teacher Abraham R. Friesen, Lichtenau, Molotschna (married to Heinrich's cousin, Agatha E. Kornelsen) during the years 1872 to 1874. In 1875 Heinrich immigrated to Manitoba, Canada, together with his father Heinrich Enns. In 1880 he was insured as owner of Wirtschaft 19 together with his father, with feed and contents only insured, indicating that perhaps both of them are living with brother Jakob.

In 1884 Heinrich P. Enns married Maria Thiessen, daughter of David Thiessen of Neukirch, Molotschna.<sup>740</sup> In 1896 Heinrich and Maria lived in Rosenhof, Manitoba.<sup>741</sup> January 17, 1894, Heinrich Enns wrote the *Rundschau* reporting on a trip together with father-in-law David F. Thiessen to the East Reserve: "...He visited the school of Franz Goossen in Hochstadt. He visited Vetter Franz Isaac, recently from Russia. Next morning, Franz Goossen drove him to Steinbach to visit 'meinen bruder' Cornelius Goossen. He visited uncle Gerhard Kornelsen, Sr, from Lichtenau. He is sick and ailing at 78 years. Enns visited Blumenhof for a teacher's conference. Peter Loewen, newly arrived from Russia is the teacher. He visited uncle Cornelius Plett. For night at Isaac Warkentins' where "meine verstorbene Bruder, Ger. Goossen's daughter, Maria lives (recently married to Johan Esau, from Oregon)." Isaac Warkentin remembered his school-teacher, Bernh. Harder. Once when Warkentin had not done his lesson well, Harder had written on his "Tafel" "...dort oben Muss ich's loben, Dort unten Bei dem Bunten ists loben verschwunden." Heinrich Enns attended the teachers' conference in Blumenort - teacher, Cornelius Friesen. On Sunday, Dec. 31, they attended the worship service in Hochstadt, Ab. Isaac made the introduction and led in prayer. Peter Berg spoke on the text I Peter 4:7.. On Monday church was in Grünfeld, Peter Toews preached."<sup>742</sup>

Heinrich P. Enns served for many years as a school teacher.<sup>743</sup> Fellow teacher Johann W. Dueck refers to Heinrich P. Enns in his journals. On January 29, 1898, Johann W. Dueck went to Morris for firewood and Heinrich Enns came along as well. On February 8, Dueck visited Enns' school. On March 18 Heinrich Enns was having "Prufung" in the Rosenhof school and Dueck cancelled his classes so he could attend. It seemed that Dueck preferred the Rosenhof teaching position which was closer to home and on April 29, 1898, he received 11 votes to Heinrich Enns' four, presumably obtaining the position.<sup>744</sup> Heinrich also taught school in the Halbstadt/Gretna area for some years. September 26, 1903 the *Nordwesten* reported that "Schoolteacher Heinrich Enns is moving to the Emerson district, where he has secured a teaching position....at Strassburg."<sup>745</sup>

Heinrich P. Enns was a literate man. March 4, 1904, Heinrich wrote the *Rundschau* about various people in Fischau, namely old Abr. Eidse, etc. In 1914 H. Enns resigned as postmaster having served for years.<sup>746</sup> In 1915 the Heinrich Enns family was living at the south end of Rosenort.<sup>747</sup>

Heinrich was a small man 5'6" in height, with a slight build. In about 1932 Heinrich had lip cancer and underwent surgery to remove his lower lip. Heinrich loved to sit by the table learning to sing songs from notes.<sup>748</sup> June 13, 1934, Heinrich published a letter in the *Rundschau* reminiscing about the "good old days."<sup>749</sup> On February 4, 1934, cousin Maria Plett Reimer wrote her brother

Cornelius, Satanta, Kansas, reporting on a letter she had received on January 5, from Heinrich Enns in which he wrote....about a visit to Ohm Joh. K. Friesen, and that it was not possible to converse with him, as his senses are wandering. He lay on the sofa and even fell asleep while he was there. In fall of 1933, Heinrich P. Enns toured the East Reserve also visiting cousin Maria Reimer at Peter P. Reimer's home, "for which he was glad as was I." Cousin Maria Reimer reported that Heinrich Enns "was completely cured of his cancer, but has no bottom lip which appears rather different. Now he is back home again among his own."<sup>750</sup>

On March 22, 1934, Heinrich P. Enns wrote Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas: "Beloved brother-in-law, may the peace of God be with you and all within your house. Also Gerh. Doerksen. The family relatives are so many more but it is not nurtured earnestly enough....I have not forgotten everyone, no, never. Particularly when I think back to the days of my youth in Fischau when we worked together on the field, harvesting. The sweat was then pressing through our clothes. And now we have surpassed everyone and the time has passed by and both of us are old already - I am 74 and you are already high in the '80s. And thus things proceed always further downhill into the valley of death; only then shall we truly be home. But today we remain here to battle with flesh and blood. The crown awaits at the end, we live here in the hope of an eternal life in the dwellings which the Lord hath prepared for us and where all the blessed shall enter in who have faithfully served Him here in this life. There we shall also meet all our dear ones who have proceeded us into their eternal rest." Heinrich P. Enns also reports of his circumstances: "I am still living in my old home which you already know where it is - 2 1/2 miles from brother Jakob's.....In the preceding year I visited many of my relatives on the East Reserve. Also cousin Maria Reimer, 81 years old. Later I wrote her a letter and she also wrote back. She can still write very well. I was also at your children, Hein. Pletts. Together with their children they have a veritable Bruderhof. It appears so genuinely brotherly, not so? I was also at cousin Hein. Wohlgemuths' - she was alone in the house with her daughter. I also visited the brothers Abr. and David Pletten. They were all well. The youngest, Jakob, had to bid farewell to this world already earlier - even though no longer young. So many of my cousins and nieces are no longer here. With the widow Joh. P. Friesen here things are only going one way, and that is how things go. Soon brother Jak. and I will remain all alone. Often I have an earnest longing for the heavenly home. Indeed, the more we lose here the more we shall once find there in heaven, that shall be our comfort. Since the departure of my beloved wife, with whom I shared this pilgrimage together for 49 1/2 years, the world has less value to me and at times one feels so alone. As well, the world lies in destruction and the abominations increases steadily. We must remain steadfast. Daughter Maria lives with me. Now during winter Dav., Jak. and Joh. were also at home most of the time when they were not away working. We have also had a stormy winter. When it is nice I make visits in the neighbourhood."

On June 4, 1934, Heinrich P. Enns also wrote to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* reminiscing: "One beautiful Sunday morning at the beginning of the '70s, I saddled my grey [horse] in the village of Fischau, Russia, and rode in the

direction towards Blumstein. My father had borrowed a large *Martyrs' Mirror* from Ältester Joh. Harder. I bound the same into a bag upon my back and wanted to return it. As I entered [the village] - they lived at the west end where my brother Cornelius Ennses also lived at one time - he was just coming home from Ohrloff from the church. His mother was an Elisabeth Plett and my mother a Minna Plett. They were half-sisters....Uncle Cor. Plett lived in Kleefeld on the east side when we visited him...."Ji Klegimehnta" is certainly not a negative expression. I do not want to give up the word. For if we want to follow Jesus, such words can only encourage us in the battle against sin and the world...."<sup>751</sup>

5 Daughter **Aganetha T. Enns** married Heinrich Froese, son of Franz Froese. In his younger years Heinrich Froese had served as a school teacher in Rosenort. Heinrich and Aganetha lived in Rosenort on Section 1. Aganetha married for the second to Isaac Klassen, son of Rev. Abraham B. Klassen.

6 Daughter **Elisabeth T. Enns** married Cornelius L. Toews, son of Cornelius F. Toews of Kleefeld, Manitoba.<sup>752</sup> Cornelius was a school teacher in Blumenort, Manitoba. Later he and his family moved to Swalwell, Alberta. He was always very interested in history and wrote and compiled historical material.<sup>753</sup>

6 Son **David T. Enns** never married. He had a long and eventful career as a salesman of various products. The following biography of David T. Enns was published in the Rosenort history book, *Furrows in the Valley* in 1980: "...He worked on the farm in his younger years, during which time he became interested in music. His dad, a school teacher, noticed this desire and bought him a violin (fiddle) which added a lot of enjoyment in Dave's life, as well as for his many acquaintances, whom he entertained. He used to listen to the good old music box, the Edison gramophone, and copied many a good old tune from its records. One of his favourite songs (some 20 verses) 'The Irish Jubilee' still lingers in his memory and he can sing all verses by memory and without a hitch. He also can play the mouth organ and flute plus the Jew's harp."

"His selling career started in 1919 when he went on the road to take orders for Neal Bros. Groceries. This trade brought him in close touch with the people in this area and he was well known for miles around. In 1927 he became the Champion 'Coffee Salesman' of the three western provinces. A contest sponsored by Neal Bros. made David T. really hustle, and in a 10 week period he sold 2,500 lbs of coffee. At that time coffee sold at 60 cents a pound."

"He also sold made-to-measure men's suits for Rex Tailoring Co. and from 1926 to 1942 draped 496 satisfied customers with well fitted suits, at an average cost of \$30.00 per suit. Water-less Cookers was another line of merchandise salesman Dave peddled, selling some 150 cookers. He would give his sale pitch in his very friendly way, and many a time, stayed for the meal prepared by his customer. 'Sure cut down on the food bill,' he remarked."

"'Sign Painter Dave' they called him in them thar days. His lettering has graced the walls of many business places, trucks, sign boards, caps and hats, etc. To this day there are still various signs in evidence, bearing his trademark. A gifted person in more ways than one, he was a very well recognized Horse Shoe player. With his 'hop, skip and a jump' delivery, he won many a game and en-

joyed it immensely.”

“At this ripe old age of 90, Dave keeps in touch with the times in closely following the news and sports on his radio. Although his eyesight is failing, he still walks up town from his present home in the Red River Valley Lodge. One can truly say of him – ‘Dave was my name, selling was my game.’”<sup>754</sup>

6 Daughter **Marie T. Enns** never married. She had various jobs in Winnipeg. Son **Heinrich T. Enns** married Marie Toews, daughter of Peter W. Toews, Rosenort. Heinrich and Marie farmed in Rosenort. Later they moved to Linden, Alberta. Son **Johann T. Enns** lived in Mount Lehman, B. C., for many years. He was the author of the *Thiessen Family Book*. In his retirement years the family lived in Steinbach, Manitoba.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Heinrich P. Enns</b>	Oct 17, 1858	Jan, 1884	May 14, 1935
m	Maria Thiessen	Dec 10, 1862		Jun 10, 1933
5	Aganetha T. Enns	Jun 6, 1887	Jan 1, 1911	Sep, 1971
m	Heinrich Froese	Apr 3, 1881		Jun 16, 1931
2m	Isaac Klassen	Aug 3, 1884	Jun 3, 1945	Aug 8, 1984
5	David T. Enns	Dec 25, 1884		Apr 4, 1887
5	Maria T. Enns	Nov 11, 1890		May 26, 1894
5	David T. Enns	Feb 15, 1889		
5	Heinrich T. Enns	Jun 28, 1893		May 1, 1894
5	Maria T. Enns	Jan 8, 1895		
5	Elisabeth T. Enns	Aug 2, 1896	Feb 22, 1920	Aug 26, 1959
m	Cornelius L. Toews	Oct 23, 1891		1982
5	Heinrich T. Enns	Mar 28, 1898		Feb 15, 1922
m	Marie Toews	Feb 13, 1901		
5	Jakob T. Enns	Jan 11, 1900		
5	Johann T. Enns	Apr 18, 1902	Jun 21, 1940	
m	Elizabeth Duerksen	Dec 20, 1909		



*David T. Enns was well-known for his musical ability. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 404.*



*The young David T. Enns on his motorcycle. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 404.*

### **Section Seven: Cornelius Plett, 1820-1900, Kleefeld.**

Cornelius Plett was born in West Prussia (today Poland) on October 28, 1820.<sup>755</sup> Cornelius, or “Kjnals,” as he was known in his Plautdietsch mother tongue, came to Russia at the age of eight together with parents and four sisters. He already knew the bitter taste of tragedy and bereavement: brother Johann - two years senior - had died in 1827 and sister Helena died two years later in Schönwiese.<sup>756</sup>

In 1828 Johann Plett and family arrived in the Molotschna Colony where he acquired Wirtschaft 47 in Sparrau. In 1833, at the age of 13, young Kjnals suffered the loss of his father. His mother continued in the family home and young Kjnals being the only son presumably learned much about responsibility. One assumes the poverty and lack of permanence in his childhood must have toughened his character and shaped his determination and drive.

In 1841, at age 21, Cornelius married Sarah Loewen, daughter of deacon Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) of Lindenau.<sup>757</sup> The couple lived in Lindenau as Anwohner where he manufactured wagon wheels and other components.<sup>758</sup>

By 1848 they were able to afford a maid. On March 7, 1848, Ohm Johann Dueck of Muntau recorded Cornelius had struck their adult servant girl and treated her harshly. This was common in society at the time but not allowed in the Kleine Gemeinde.<sup>759</sup> Sarah’s father, Ohm Isaac, was aware of the incident but failed to report it to the Lehrdienst or ministerial. Either he did not consider it that serious or possibly felt Cornelius had acted appropriately. The brotherhood, however, disapproved of Plett’s action. It would seem he must have been censored in some way, possibly placed under the ban, but this is not stated. The ministerial was upset over Ohm Isaak’s failure to inform them and removed him as deacon for what was termed “lack of diligence”.<sup>760</sup>

### **Kleefeld, Molotschna, 1854.**

In Spring of 1854 the Cornelius Plett family took up a full Wirtschaft in Kleefeld, a village founded in that year. Son Cornelius L. Plett described the move: “In the spring of 1854 my parents moved to the village of Kleefeld, where they settled on a Feuerstelle [or Wirtschaft—a full farm of 165 acres in the village plan]. Kleefeld was a large village of 40 Wirtschaften [with farmsteads on both side of the street]. My parents built on Feuerstelle 38.”<sup>761</sup> It was one of the largest villages in the Molotschna, second only to Alexanderkrone.

The Plett children attended the village school. The 1857/8 school register listed the family on Wirtschaft 38 with children Isaac 13, Cornelius 11, Sarah 11, Anna 9 and Maria 6 attending. The teacher was Peter Doerksen. The children missed a total of 14 days because of illness. Son Isaac missed 95 days and Cornelius missed 34 days for “other reasons”, a sign they were working at home on their father’s burgeoning farming enterprise.<sup>762</sup> In 1862 two children are listed in school: Maria age 11 and Katharina 8, missing one day between them for sickness and 19 days for “other reasons”. Peter Doerksen was still teacher and the village Schulz (mayor) was Bahnmann.<sup>763</sup> In describing his boyhood days in Kleefeld, Johann F. Harms, wrote that Doerksen was a well-respected teacher who taught



here for over 20 years.<sup>764</sup>

The student body in Kleefeld which in some years numbered over 100 was divided into two sections for teaching catechism: Margenauer and Rudnerwieder. The Kleine Gemeinde children would have been part of the Margenauer group there being no fundamental theological differences between them. Johann F. Harms wrote the Kleine Gemeinde girls distinguished themselves in their apparel by wearing a plain black bonnet. The Plett children not only attended school faithfully but did well. Daughter Maria L. Plett distinguished herself as an excellent calligrapher winning first prize for her ability.<sup>765</sup>

Cornelius Plett was a warm and outgoing person. He was appreciated by the neighbours who elected him as village Schulz. In this position he provided leadership in many concerns such as hiring the village teacher, setting pasture rates, mediating disputes, etc. He represented the village assembly at the Gebietsamt, or District local government offices, in Halbstadt. Bishop David P. Reimer wrote that his mother, Maria L. Plett, had been a great help to her father with all the writing required in the position of mayor.<sup>766</sup>

The Schulz made sure all buildings were properly constructed in accordance with the building code. Son Cornelius L. Plett described these requirements: "They had to be constructed according to regulations which required that each establishment be of the same size, width, length and height, and constructed of kilned bricks with a roof covered with plates of kilned clay. Barn and hayshed [Scheune] were joined to the dwelling house. Similarly the hay shed built across the end of the establishment was joined diagonally to the end of the barn. The barn in turn was joined to the house so that the whole establishment was under one roof. Along the street throughout the village were the fences built of mortared kilned bricks, with the exception perhaps of not more than two [Wirtschaften]. One of these was at the home of our parents."

Kleefeld had an active Kleine Gemeinde fellowship with five Vollwirthen.<sup>767</sup> They included Cornelius Plett, son-in-law Franz M. Kroeker, nephew in-law Abraham M. Friesen (1834-1908); brother-in-law Jakob F. Friesen (1820-88);<sup>768</sup> brother-in-law Johann Loewen (1823-81) and Peter Toews (1818-67).<sup>769</sup> Abraham "Fuela" Reimer (1808-92) lived in Kleefeld, possibly moving there in 1857 with sons Klaas (1837-1906) and Abraham (1841-91), Anwohner, both operating blacksmith shops. There were several additional families closely associated with the Kleine Gemeinde: Jakob G. Harms (1815-98), father of Johann F. Harms, had several uncles and aunts in the Kleine Gemeinde; Jakob Thiessen (1825-94) was the brother of one-time Kleine Gemeinde minister Peter Thiessen of Schönau;<sup>770</sup> Johann Neufeldt (1824-84);<sup>771</sup> Johann Willms;<sup>772</sup> Rev. Abraham Wiens (1824-99), whose wife was a cousin to Kleine Gemeinde elder Johann Friesen;<sup>773</sup> and living in Wirtschaft 3, across the street from Cornelius was Michael Plett, son of Cornelius' cousin Johann.

The Cornelius Plett family prospered and by the 1860s he had decided to build a large Scheune (haybarn) which the larger farmers also used as a threshing barn. He had already purchased the bricks to be baked at the kiln in the Lichtfelde, planning also to build the mortared fence to replace the wooden pickets along the street in front. Son Cornelius L. Plett wrote: "Then there was a large fire calamity in the village of Lichtfelde so that many houses were destroyed. They now needed the bricks to build houses and finish them. The parents sold the bricks and so the picket fence had to be good enough until they sold the Wirtschaft."

In 1862 Cornelius Plett did construct the haybarn he needed. Following time-honoured tradition, he wrote a circular letter to his neighbours in the village requesting their assistance at a barn raising bee:

"Worthy, honoured friends: You and your beloved wife are hereby wholeheartedly invited to be present here with us on Monday the 14th day of May, at the first hour of the day, in order to provide us with the help necessary to erect our hay shed. We ask this of you in the best of expectations. Your friend who is always ready to help you.

'Cornelius Plett', Kleefeld, May 11, 1862."

"Our friends are asked to forward this invitation to the following farm owners: Peter Reimer, Peter Bekker, Martens, Abraham Maties, Michael Plett, Diedrich Janzen, Abraham Thiessen, Peter Reimer, Peter Reimer, Jakob Reimer, Peter Reichert, Benjamin Schmidt, Jakob Friesen, Cornelius Abrahams, Peter Hiebert, Heinrich Schroeder, Johann Martens, Franz Bahnmann, Jakob Harms, Gerhard Neufeld, Jakob Quiring, Jakob Solhkiman, Heinrich Bekker, Peter Rogalski, Andreas Flaming, Franz Kroeker, Daniel Konradt, Ohm Abraham Wiens, Johann Loewen, Peter Janzen and Arend Thiessen."<sup>774</sup>

Johann F. Harms has written that many of the Kleine Gemeinde moved away from Kleefeld in 1865 when the government implemented the requirement that each household take their turn in providing guard duty for criminals. According to Harms these families moved to the "Pachlandt" or leasehold settlement at Markus. This included the brothers Reimer - Klaas and Abraham but Cornelius Plett, son-in-law Franz Kroeker and brother-in-law Johann Loewen continued farming in Kleefeld.

Cornelius Plett had employees such as nephew Abraham P. Isaac who worked for him for one year.<sup>775</sup> Jakob I. Bartel related an episode regarding his father-in-law, Abraham Isaac, from around 1867-8: "Abram's father died when he was only 12 years old and so he was hired out [vemieth] until the age of 18 with his uncle Cornelius Plett. One day the Ohms asked him [to become] a school teacher....the Ohms asked if it would make a difference if he would be released from this obligation?...when they asked uncle Plett, he replied that if the Ohms could arrange for Abram to be a teacher and if this was desired by the Gemeinde, he would gladly release him."<sup>776</sup>

111  
22  
W  
wüßgriffälzte Freunde

Die werden für dich ganz unge  
bucht unpußt sein. Lieber  
zu Montag ab d. 11. Mai  
1. Du die Tagest selbst bei  
und zu versichern, wie bei der  
verpflichtung unpußt. Deswegen  
und dazu nötige Hilfe zu  
leihen.  
solches Festhalten, wie in bester  
Anspruchung.  
Ihre

Als Dienstdwillige Freunde  
Cornelius Plett.

Kleefeld  
d. 11. Mai  
1862

Die werden für dich ganz unge  
bucht unpußt sein. Lieber  
zu Montag ab d. 11. Mai  
1. Du die Tagest selbst bei  
und zu versichern, wie bei der  
verpflichtung unpußt. Deswegen  
und dazu nötige Hilfe zu  
leihen.  
solches Festhalten, wie in bester  
Anspruchung.  
Ihre

Barn-raising circular letter by Cornelius and Sarah Plett, Kleefeld, 1862. The letter was found among the historical papers of Johann E. Friesen, married to granddaughter Margaretta A. K. Plett. Courtesy of Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Man. - Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 53.

## **Farming and Travel.**

By 1865 the Kleine Gemeinde had four congregations: Molotschna, Crimea, Markuslandt and Borosenko. Members of the community, and particularly the ministers and senior farmers, did a lot of travelling between these settlements. During these travels they became familiar with the Russian people and the social environment in which they lived as well as the numerous ethnic groups all around and amongst them.

In 1869 Cornelius and Sarah made a trip to visit friends and relatives in the Crimea together with Sarah's brother Johann and his wife. Perhaps they were already thinking of moving away and wanted to investigate the new settlements for themselves. Brother-in-law Cornelius Loewen recorded: "The Cornelius Pletts and Johann Loewen were to leave for the Crimea on the 15th of April. They arrived at our place [Cornelius Loewens' in Grünfeld] on the 26th of April, 1869." Loewen also recorded that the Crimean ministerial arrived in Borosenko only a few days later on May 1 to attend the meeting at which a major reconciliation of the Blumenhoff Gemeinde and the majority of the Friesens' Gemeinde was achieved.

In a letter of January 6, 1870, nephew Peter Toews mentioned he had just heard in Friedensfeld that the Cornelius Pletts were expected to return to the Molotschna shortly. Toews was writing a letter which he intended to forward with them. In a letter of January 28, 1870, Johann L. Dueck of Alexanderkrone wrote that he and minister Abraham Klassen had been visiting at Cornelius Pletts in Kleefeld that evening. Plett had informed them they were leaving for Borosenko the next morning and so he was quickly writing a letter to send along.

Cornelius Plett enjoyed the life of a Vollwirt, expanding his operation. In 1871 he leased a parcel of crown land so that Cornelius, his recently married son, could return to work at home. Son Cornelius' wages consisted of 27 acres of wheat or one-tenth of the total wheat acreage consisting of 270 acres. In addition to wheat, a Vollwirt raised feed grains and hay to provide for draught animals required to work such an acreage. Plett was fortunate to have six sons at home - from 26 year-old Cornelius to 6 year-old Jakob - to help with the enterprise.

Later in Borosenko Cornelius Plett's employees included a young Polish Mennonite by the name of Heinrich Wohlgenuth who would become his son-in-law. Most of the labourers, however, came from among the Russian people. Son Abraham later recalled that Russians were hired by the wagon full, especially for harvesting. In the morning before going to work they were assembled on Plett's yard and given a shot of vodka to start the day. Then they climbed onto their wagons to be taken to the fields. Young Abraham never forgot the beautiful singing of the workers as they were driven away for their day's labour.<sup>777</sup>

On February 10, 1871, school teacher Abraham R. Friesen of Lichtenau, Molotschna, recorded Cornelius Pletts had been there for a short visit. On March 14 he recorded they were visiting at Heinrich Warkentins in Fischau and that his parents, Heinrich Enns, Cornelius Pletts and Eph. Ballan were also there. On January 1, 1872, Rev. Abraham Klassen noted they waited in vain for the return of Cornelius Pletts from Borosenko hoping Ältester Peter Toews would have returned with them to pay them a visit. On February 13, 1872, Abraham R. Friesen

recorded worship services were held at the home of Heinrich Warkentins and that Plett and Dueck were at his home in Lichtenau for dinner. On September 30, 1872, Friesen recorded that he and Plett were in Prischip at the Komptor, the regional government offices.

The Pletts were friends with midwife Elisabeth Rempel Reimer and her husband Abraham "Fuella" Reimer, who occasionally referred to their activities in his chronicles. In Oct. 1871, the Pletts made an extensive visit to the Borosenko Colony, presumably to finalize arrangements for the purchase of property. They arrived in Borosenko on Saturday, Oct. 9, visiting until Oct. 18th when they headed back home to the Molotschna.

Life was not without tragedy. Sarah and Cornelius were shocked to hear of the death of son Isaac on July 21, 1871. Isaac was the oldest and already a successful farmer in Friedensfeld, 40 km. north of Nikopol. He fell victim to a typhoid epidemic.<sup>778</sup>

### **Blumenhoff, 1872.**

In 1872 Cornelius Plett and brother-in-law Johann Loewen moved to the village of Blumenhoff, Borosenko, 20 miles northwest of Nikopol and 100 miles west of the Molotschna. Blumenhoff was the largest of the Borosenko villages with some 30 *Wirtschaften*.<sup>779</sup> It became the unofficial capital of the *Kleine Gemeinde* in the Borosenko area and the heart of the denomination in Imperial Russia. Cornelius Plett and Johann Loewen each purchased a *Vollwirtschaft* from brother-in-law Johann Warkentin who had bought a *chutor* or estate called "Hochfeld". As part of the transaction son Cornelius L. Plett and Peter Hiebert, son-in-law of Johann Loewen, each acquired a half *Wirtschaft* of 25 *desjaten* or 60 acres.

Cornelius Plett apparently served as the village mayor in Blumenhoff. Peter P. Toews wrote, "As so many in the *Gemeinde* were now living near to each other and as the *Gemeinde* was always getting larger, we were soon in need of more room in order that we could assemble for worship services. Even the largest residences no longer had sufficient room."<sup>780</sup> After a number of brotherhood meetings, the *Gemeinde* decided to build a house of worship in Blumenhoff. Cornelius Plett favoured the construction of a new church and was involved in several ways. In his "1872 to 1878 Diary" Ältester Peter P. Toews recorded that on Sunday May 28, 1872, "it was finally decided that it was to be built here in Blumenhoff together with a school facility. In addition to our brother Cornelius Plett, the elected representative of the village assembly, the two brethren Johann Goossen with 19 votes and Franz Froese with 22 were elected to supervise the erection of the building.... The cost estimate was ...put forward which would require that some 700 ruble be raised from among the membership. The collection of these funds was to commence on June 25. At a brotherhood meeting on July 25 in Heuboden it was announced that 331 ruble and 27 kopek had already been gathered for this purpose."<sup>781</sup> By September 10th, 1872, the new building was ready for occupancy and the first worship service was held.

Johann W. Dueck described the new worship house: "Later the Blumenhoff villagers built a beautiful school house with an adjoining worship house. It was

built in the middle of the village of kilned bricks and the roof was covered with plates of kilned clay. The building also included a teacherage into which my parents [Peter L. Duecks] moved during the school term. In the adjoining room was the school and in front of both the teacherage and the school was the sanctuary which was usually locked except on Sundays.<sup>782</sup> To complete the building the Gemeinde borrowed some funds privately: 300 ruble and 96 kopeken from Cornelius Plett, 200 ruble from Rev Abraham Klassen in Prangenau and 200 ruble from deacon Johann L. Dueck in Alexanderkrone. As evidence of this loan the lenders received a Promissory Note in the following form:

“Whereas the Gemeinde centred at Blumenhoff has borrowed the sum of 300 ruble and 96 kopeken from Cornelius Plett of Blumenhoff, Borosenko, for the purpose of constructing a meeting house, therefore, this sum shall bear interest at five percent per annum from November 10, 1872, and shall be repaid from the voluntary contributions of the members.”

“In witness whereof the undersigned have affixed their signatures in the name of the Gemeinde: Ältester Peter Toews, minister Ab. Loewen and deacons P. Wiebe and P. Kroeker, Blumenhoff, January 2, 1873.”

Cornelius Plett was interested in devotional reading. When nephew Peter Toews ordered devotional books from John F. Funk in Elkhart, Indiana, on August 30, 1872, Cornelius ordered a *Martyrs' Mirror* at a cost of 10 ruble.<sup>783</sup> Later he also ordered a copy of *Spiegel der Taufe, Ebe der Christen* and five copies of *Hoffart und Demut*.

Cornelius was a mentor and confidant for nephew Peter Toews, the Bishop, although the two did not always agree. In a letter to the Molotschna ministerial dated Jan. 21, 1872, Peter Toews mentioned that “Ohm Plett” had told him, Abr. Klassen had been requested to deliver a eulogy (“Abdanken”) at Peter Rempel’s funeral which he had done. Toews had replied that Abr. Klassen should have done the eulogy, it was his obligation. The indication was that Ohm Cornelius was displeased over such a departure from standing protocol.

Ohm Cornelius was a frequent traveller on the road to the Molotschna and elsewhere. On November 1, 1872, Abraham R. Friesen of Lichtenau noted he sent 10 copies of *Bibelsche Geschichte*, a bible history, along with Cornelius Plett for Cornelius Fast, a school teacher in Steinbach, Borosenko. In early January, 1873, Peter Toews sent letters along with his uncle, one dated January 9 for Abraham R. Friesen in Lichtenau, Molotschna, and another dated January 14, 1873, for Peter P. Goossen in Lindenau. On January 20, 1873, Peter Toews recorded “he was in Fischau as P. Loewens, P. Kroekers and Cor. Pletts from Borosenko were there” and he sent a number of letters along for various people back in Borosenko. On April 22, 1873, school teacher Abraham R. Friesen, Lichtenau, recorded “J. Esaus were here [Friesen’s home in Lichtenau] and also at worship service. Also at the worship services were Corn. Pletts, Borosenko, Joh. Enns’ from Alexanderwohl and Gerhard Warkentins from Fischau.” On Friday, Sept. 7, 1873, the Pletts visited the elderly Abraham “Fuela” Reimers, Steinbach, Borosenko.

Cornelius Plett had compassion for those in need. On Dec. 13, 1874, nephew Cornelius P. Toews, Grünfeld, Manitoba wrote to brother Peter in Russia

referring to widow Klaas F. Reimer and admonishing them to “Work for the rights of orphans, and to see to the affairs of widows. I beseech you not alone, but also the other brethren there, do take her dilemma to heart, and be compassionate. In this regard I am mindful of Ohm Plett, who certainly had compassion while we were still there.”<sup>784</sup>

In a subsequent letter of May 6, 1875, Cornelius P. Toews referred again to “Ohm Plett [who] at that time was sympathetic to her ....[the widow Klaas Reimer, nee Maria Bartel],” who had decided to move to Kansas instead of Manitoba. Cornelius was seemingly anxious that the Gemeinde had perhaps not been supportive enough to the plight of his recently widowed sister-in-law. He comforted himself as Plett’s expressed concern had also demonstrated compassion on behalf of the community.<sup>785</sup>

Marriages were important occasions for the large extended family clans of the 19th century. For conservative Mennonites, marriages were an important vehicle to insure survival of the faith, community and culture, and the preservation of economic resources within extended family dynasties.<sup>786</sup>

The Pletts’ oldest daughter Margaretha married Franz Kroecker (1827-1905), a widower 13 years her senior. The story was told that Sarah was not happy with this marriage, evidently thinking that her daughter should have a husband more her own age. But Kroecker was a successful farmer from a good background and the marriage went ahead.<sup>787</sup>

The next oldest daughter, Sarah, married Jakob J. Thielmann, a young man from a Kleine Gemeinde family, probably seen as a good choice.

The next oldest daughter, Anna, also married a widower, Gerhard T. Siemens, a successful farmer from Steinbach, Borosenko. Anna died on April 23, 1873, survived by a daughter Gertruda.

Daughter Maria was an intelligent young woman resembling her older sister Margaretha. Maria was comfortable discussing her spiritual life with her grandfather as well as helping her father with his mayoral duties. Maria was baptised on confession of faith in 1870 by cousin Peter Toews. She previously had a suitor, Heinrich Wiebe, but rejected him.

Maria finally found the man she wanted - Peter R. Reimer, son of Abr. “Fuella” Reimer, from Steinbach, Borosenko. Peter was a widower and came from a poor family, albeit a family with a prestigious pedigree: both of Peter’s parents came from important clans - the Rempel and von Riesen families.

Abraham “Fuella” Reimer recorded the events of Peter and Maria’s courtship. On June 28, 1873, Peter Reimer drove to Blumenhoff to court Cornelius Plett’s Maria. Evidently some gossip was making the rounds which had the Pletts concerned about their prospective son-in-law. The next day, “Peter Reimer went back to the Pletts early in the morning, to regulate some unhelpful gossip regarding the marriage of the young Plettsche at Kroekers, but it was all reconciled. June 30, “after breakfast, Peter Reimer and his parents drove to Cornelius Pletts in Blumenhof for Peter’s Verlobung; at least 18 other families were present as well.” On July 8, 1873, they were married by Minister Peter Kroecker from Heuboden in a double wedding with Gerhard Siemens.”

Youngest daughter Katharina fell in love with Heinrich Wohlgemuth, a labourer from the Crimea and previously Poland, who had worked for her father. Unfortunately the two were to be separated by events which lay ahead, events beyond their control.

### **Emigration, 1875.**

Concerns leading to emigration of Mennonites from Russia to America were first raised among the Kleine Gemeinde in 1871. But it was 1873 before the issue became a harsh reality for most members of the denomination. "On Nov. 11, 1873, the Pletts visited [at the A. F. Reimer home] for faspas." The topic of conversation was the impending emigration to America and A.F. Reimer noted "that our Toews has much doubt."

During the spring of 1874 the rank and file of the Kleine Gemeinde in Borosenko and elsewhere were busily making arrangements to emigrate. Brother-in-law Cornelius Loewen was one of the first to leave and held his farm auction sale in February of 1874. He recorded the various sales made, noting Cornelius Plett purchased their gelding for 48 ruble. On Sunday, Feb. 24, 1874, after the worship service, the elderly Abraham F. Reimer from Steinbach, Borosenko, visited for dinner at the Plett home in Blumenhoff.

The first contingent of Kleine Gemeinde emigrants had sold their properties and were ready to leave Russia. The authorities, perhaps hoping to dissuade them, held back their immigration passes. This was a serious problem. On April 29, 1874, Peter Toews was served with an official summons to appear before the Governor-General Eduard von Totleben in Ekatherinoslav for Monday April 29, 1874, together with some [Wirthen] who had not yet sold their properties. Possibly a number of well-to-do farmers were to serve as sureties for the good conduct of the Gemeinde during the immigration.

Peter Toews recorded details of the meeting: "I was accompanied by Cornelius Plett and Heinrich Reimer (1818-76) as well as our Oberschulz [of the new Nikolaithal Volost]. Here General Adjutant von Totleben personally appealed to us [to drop the planned emigration] as he had in Neu-Halbstadt [on April 20] and in Chortitz [on April 25]. Finally I pleaded that those of us who had already sold their properties could obtain their passports as they would shortly be without a place to live and [these] had a lengthy journey ahead of them. I also requested that he personally deliver our letter of Thanksgiving to His Majesty the Czar, which he promised to do and also that our people would soon receive their passes." The delegation was successful as the first party of Kleingemeinders left Nikopol on May 30, 1874.

The Pletts remained in Russia for another year. Oral tradition held they harvested a bumper crop in 1874 which they were able to sell for ready cash in the booming Black Sea grain market. This resulted in criticism from others that Plett had used the situation to his advantage. The Pletts had various business



matters to wind up necessitating another trip to the Molotschna. On October 2, 1874, school teacher Abraham R. Friesen recorded that "Pletts from Blumenhoff were here and stayed for night."

Cornelius Plett and brother-in-law Johann Loewen were still waiting to sell their properties which they completed by February, 1875. However they did not receive all the money immediately "and only expect to receive the bigger portion of the money for Easter."<sup>788</sup>

In May, 1875, Cornelius Plett and his family left their Wirtschaften in Blumenhoff and emigrated from Russia. They travelled in a group of 30 families which included brother-in-law Johann Loewen. The contingent was led by Bishop Peter Toews himself.<sup>789</sup> They left Nikopol on May 4, 1875. On June 3, 1875, they boarded the S. S. Prussian in Liverpool for the ocean voyage. On June 19, 1875, they arrived in Quebec City. From there they went by train through Chicago to Moorhead, Minnesota, and from there by riverboat along the Red River to Manitoba where they landed at the confluence of the Red and Rat River on June 29, 1875, at 4 a.m.<sup>790</sup>

### **Blumenhof, Manitoba, 1875.**

The next day Plett and brother-in-law, Johann Warkentin, arrived at the site of their new village on Sections 22 and 23-7-6E. They named it Blumenhof in honour of their former home in Russia. Naturally the 1875 arrivals were spared much of the grief and privations endured by those coming a year previous. The new immigrants also brought a fresh infusion of cash badly needed in the pioneer settlement. The 30 families travelling with Peter Toews had a total of \$23,000.00 in their possession, an average of \$850.00 per family - the highest for that year. Historian Royden K. Loewen noted that "...the very settlers who complained about the Cornelius S. Plett family remaining in Russia for an additional year and harvesting the bumper crop of 1874 were the first to accept money offered to them by Plett."<sup>791</sup> Oral tradition holds that Plett was able to help out his less fortunate neighbours with loans.<sup>792</sup>

One day Cornelius Plett was riding his horse through the woods to the east when he spotted a pretty looking cat with a white strip and bushy tail. Always an animal lover, Plett alighted from his horse and walked over to pet the animal. This resulted in his return to the village with a humiliating stench. There were no skunks in the old country and the settlers had to discover their pungent qualities for themselves.

Cornelius Plett and his six sons lost no time in establishing their new homes in Blumenhof.<sup>793</sup> The 12 villagers held their land in common under a communal *Strassendorf* system, but each filed for their own homestead quarter. On March 1, 1876, Cornelius Plett filed for a homestead on NE 24-7-6E. The original Crown Grant for this land is still in the files of Notary Public Abraham S. Friesen, currently in the possession of the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach.

The Pletts lived in the village of Blumenhof and their yard and buildings were located on NW 24-7-6E on the east side of the village cross street which was also the road allowance between sections 23 and 24. Some 100 years later the

current owner of this land, great-grandson David P. Loewen of Blumenort, unearthed the original fieldstones which served as the foundation of the premises that Cornelius Plett constructed upon their arrival.<sup>794</sup> He built a substantial house-barn. According to the "Application for Homestead Patent" filed by Cornelius Plett in 1886, the dwelling house was 26x40 and the stable, 26x40. These buildings were insured in the Brandordnung (mutual fire insurance company) for \$600.00. Plett carried additional coverage of \$300.00 on contents and equipment and \$400.00 on feed and inventory.<sup>795</sup> By comparison the premises of brother-in-law, Johann Warkentin, one-time estate owner, was initially insured for \$500.00, increased to \$700.00 after a major addition in 1878.<sup>796</sup>

David L. Plett, son of Cornelius, described their first impressions of the new home and how they established the new settlement: "It did not look very appealing here. The people who came here last year had sowed and planted some grain, but the grasshoppers ate everything. The people, however, all seemed to be happy and continued working. Another little village was established a short distance to the east of Blumenort which was named Blumenhof. Here our parents built a homestead. A house and barn was built and pasture [sod] was broken. The lumber for the house had to be hauled from Winnipeg with oxen. Father bought two yoke of oxen right away, also a horse and buggy with which to travel. Because I was not quite 12 at the time, I cannot remember everything exactly and can only write in general. For winter everything was finished so far that we could live in a warm house and the cattle could be kept in a barn. The firewood for the first winter was all taken out of the poplar tree bush...in the northeastern part of the settlement. This I remember well. We also drove a wagon before winter set in. All travelling was done by oxen. For winter Father bought another horse. Then it was easier to travel to church with two horses. Horses were only used on Sundays to go to church and to go visiting."<sup>797</sup>

Veteran Abraham R. Friesen, Lichtenau, Molotschna, was hired as the first teacher instructing the Blumenhof children. His journals document the lives of Sarah and Cornelius Plett: Sunday, October 17, 1875, the elder Cornelius Pletts were at his home in Blumenhof for a visit and "also Johann Reimers, Steinbach, Klaas Friesens, Peter H. Ungers, Martin Kornelsens, sister Margaretha, my father, and brother-in-law Broesky." On December 5, 1875, Friesen recorded, "Johann Klassen, Rosenfeld, Cornelius Pletts and Broeskys were here." On April 13, 1876, Prufung or school examinations were held in Blumenhof and Plett was included among the guests who attended. On April 28, 1876, "P. Ungers and Elder Pletts plowed for me [A. Friesen]."

As already mentioned, youngest daughter Katharina, had fallen in love with one of her father's employees, Heinrich Wohlgemuth. The Wohlgemuths had left Russia in summer of 1874. The Wohlgemuth family went to Kansas, while he came to Manitoba. Presumably he was hoping against hope, to be reunited with Katharina, coming the following year with her parents. On October 30, 1875, Blumenhof, teacher Abr. R. Friesen recorded, "Verlobung was held at the Elder Cornelius Pletts, namely, Katharina with Heinrich Wohlgemuth." The marriage represented a happy ending to a romantic love story.

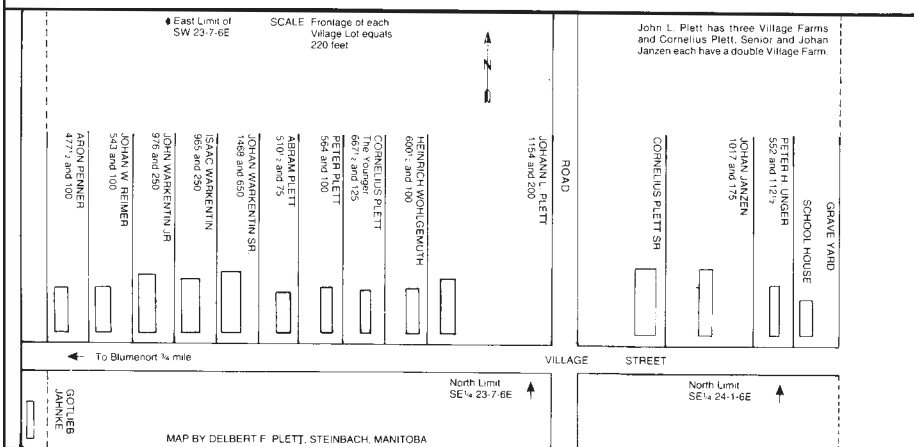
The matter of charging interest on loans became a serious issue in the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba. At a brotherhood meeting in Steinbach on January 6, 1877, the brethren were instructed to withdraw any deposits they had made with banks and directions were also given with respect to charging interest. Not everyone was happy with these restrictions - presumably those who had money to lend. The situation came to a head early in 1878 when Ältester Peter Toews preached a sermon against charging interest. The issue was discussed at a meeting at Peter Toews' on June 8, 1878. He managed to persuade everyone except Jakob L. Dueck, who openly spoke against his position. Others were not happy with Toews' openness to outside ideas.

The issue was considered at a brotherhood in Grünfeld on July 2, 1877. Peter Toews described the meeting: "A number of brethren were not fully satisfied with my sermon, principally, my uncle Cornelius Plett. This opposition served my uncle in so far that a brotherhood meeting was called for that purpose in Grünfeld where many brethren from the Scratching River were present. I expounded repeatedly against the charging of interest [Wücher] from the books of the Pentateuch, Psalms, and the Prophets, as being wrong and an abomination before God; I referred, similarly, to the words of Christ (Luke 6)."<sup>798</sup>

The meeting resulted in a defeat of sorts for Peter Toews for "he was also unanimously instructed to discontinue the reading of magazines, at least not to subscribe to any more. The *Herald* [der Wahrheit] was approved by the voice of the majority." This appeared to be a harbinger of things to come. Evidently there was concern that Toews' views were being influenced away from the traditional teachings of Christo-centric faith.

In 1880 Ohm Kjnals was again in controversy in the Gemeinde. A.F. Reimer recorded that at a brotherhood meeting after a worship service in Steinbach on August 15, 1880, "The old Cor. Plett was discussed. He had spoken too harshly with some people. He, however, denied that he had spoken harshly to Brandt. He had taken hold of him because he had permitted his six horses to be sometimes in his wheat field." The next day, Peter Toews, the church Bishop, went to the Plett home in Blumenhof, presumably to discuss the matter with his uncle. Evidently it was resolved to everyone's satisfaction as the issue did not resurface at the brotherhood meetings.

## Map Nine: Blumenhof



*Blumenhof, as it may have appeared in 1883. Photo - Blumenort, page 242.*

### Chart of livestock and equipment in Blumenhof “Based on RM of Hanover ‘Hespeller’ Assessment Records”

	Value of Furnishings	Horses valued at \$40 each	Oxen at \$30 each	Cows (incl. 2 calves) at \$25 each	Yearlings at \$15 each	Swine at \$15 each	Threshing machine	Feed crusher	Grass mower	Hay rakes	Grain cleaner	Wagons	Plows	Harrows	Sleighs		
G. Janke	\$125	2	2	1	3	1		1	200.00	20.00	6	12.00	1	30.00	12.00	3.00	6.00
Peter H. Unger	\$200		4	3	2	2	3			20.00	6.00		5.00	12.00	1.00	4.00	
Johan Janzen	\$200	4	8	4	4	3	1/3 share 100.00	10.00	6.00	1/3 2.00		65.00	18.00	8.00			
Cornelius Plett, the Elder	\$200	4	6	5	1	2	1/2 share	1/4 share	1	1	1	2	2	3	2		
Johan L. Plett	\$250	4 1/4	6	2	5	4	1/4 share 80.00	25.00	20.00	6.00	10	65.00	18.00	8.00	6.00		
Heinrich Wohlgermuth	\$100	2 1/4	2	2	2	2	1/2 share 40.00	1/3 share 70.00	10.00	2.00		30.00	20.00	8.00	15.00		
Cornelius Plett	\$150	3 1/4	5	1	5	2	1/2 share 40.00	1/4 share 50.00	10.00	2.00		20.00	5.00	8.00	5.00		
Peter L. Plett	\$50	3 1/4	2	1	2	1	1/2 share 40.00	1/4 share 50.00	10.00	2.00		40.00	8.00	1.00	15.00		
Abram L. Plett	\$50	2	3	1	2	2	1/2 share 40.00	1/4 share 50.00	10.00	6.00		30.00	15.00	2.00	15.00		
Johan Warkentin, Senior	\$400	3	2	13		5		1/3 share	1	1	1	2	2	1	1		
Isaac L. Warkentin	\$150	3	8	3	5		1/3 share 100.00	1/3 70.00	17/3 6.00	1/3 2.00		40.00	10.00	8.00	20.00		
John L. Warkentin	\$200	4	4	1	3	2	1/3 share 100.00	2/3 85.00	17/3 6.00	1/3 2.00		50.00	15.00	8.00	15.00		
John W. Reimer	\$50	2	2	2	2		1/2 share 40.00	1/3 70.00				50.00	15.00		15.00		
Aron Penner	\$200	3	1	1	1				10.00	1/2 1/3 2.00		20.00	12.00	8.00	15.00		
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8 1/2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	

*Chart of Livestock, Equipment, and Property Ownership, Blumenhof, 1883. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 23.*



*1983. Ben R. Plett stands by the recently unearthed foundation rocks (fieldstones), at the site where his great-grandfather Cornelius Plett once lived in the Blumenhof village. View to the south. Photo - Loewen, Blumenort, page 74.*

## **Farming and Life, 1879.**

Contemporary journals and diaries indicate that the traditional agrarian lifestyle of visiting and socializing was barely interrupted by the relocation from Russia to Manitoba. The lives of the Plett family are illuminated by the journals of old friend Abr. "Fuela" Reimer, now in the neighbouring village of Blumenort, a mile west of Blumenhof. On April 6, 1879, the Pletts visited the Abraham F. Reimers, where they enjoyed fasma. On Jan. 17, 1879, the Pletts visited the senior Johann Koops in Neuanlage, two miles southwest of Blumenort and for the night they stayed at the Abr. F. Reimer home in Blumenort. "On the way home they got stuck with the horses in the swamp." On June 30, Ohm Kjnals went to Blumenort to pick-up Elisabeth Rempel Reimer as her services as midwife were required at the home of his son Cornelius in Blumenhof.

Aug 23, 1879, "son-in-law Peter R. Reimer built a small buggy with several seats for Cor. Plett." On Nov. 3 "the Pletts helped at a pig slaughtering bee [at the home of son-in-law] Peter Reimer." On Nov. 20 son "Abr. Plett married Gertrude, daughter of Johann Koop, Neuanlage." The wedding took place at the Plett home in Blumenhof and "some 30 families attended including an English doctor." On Nov. 21, Abr. F. Reimer "visited the Plett home [in Blumenhof and stayed] for night."

The Pletts travelled frequently continuing a pattern of socializing well established in Russia. Thursday, Dec. 11, 1879, "the Pletts went to Rosenfeld and Tuesday to Winnipeg, and then to the other side of the river" to the Scratching River settlement of Rosenort and Rosenhof. They returned home on Dec 17. On November 21, 1879, brother-in-law Cornelius Loewen by now living in Steinbach recorded that "Brothers Johann and Peter Loewen came to our place. They stayed overnight and then we went with them to Blumenhof. December 8, 1879. Kroekers, Pletts and we went to Rosenhof and Rosenort. We and the Pletts returned on December 14. June 20, 1880, Pletts and David Loewens were here [at Cornelius Loewens]."

Further entries are found in the Journal of Abr. F. Reimer. In March, 1880, Elisabeth Rempel Reimer "lined an old fur coat for the Pletts." July 24, the Pletts "completed their hay harvest and received 80 loads." Nov. 9, "The old Pletts slaughtered two hogs and had six pails of lard." Nov. 22, "the Pletts helped their daughter Maria and son-in-law Peter Reimer slaughter, this time "a black cow which was nine years old." Jan 22, 1881, "Peter Reimer began to build a new bedstead" for his parents-in-law which he "finished on Feb. 1 and delivered to" the Pletts on Feb 2. On June 1 Peter Reimer did some plastering work at the home of his in-laws. On Wednesday, Nov. 26, "The Pletts slaughtered an ox and received 14 pounds of tallow."

The farms of Cornelius Plett and his sons in Blumenhof were humming with activity. In 1879 Abraham R. Reimer of Blumenort had bought the blacksmith business of his wife's step-father Johann L. Plett in what was probably one of the first business deals in the area, buying the blacksmith shop for \$180.00.

The Pletts from Blumenhof continued to patronize the smithy. The "Account Book" of Abraham R. Reimer provides some details. The most common

entries were making horseshoes, sharpening plow shares and side cutters, sale of various nuts and bolts, iron bars, fixing wheel rings, wagon seats, chains, various farm implements, installation of new irons on sleigh runners. A sample entry in the account of Cornelius Plett, the elder, for November 27, 1879, stated: "Settled accounts and credit remaining 15 cents."

The Pletts hired help as needed in their burgeoning operations. On Sept. 11, 1881, threshing machine owner Peter Toews from Blumenort, "harvested at C. Pletts. From 10 acres they got 100 bushels of \_\_\_\_\_ and from 8 acres they got 280 bushels of oats." Presumably the Toews' outfit was hired to assist the Blumenhof threshing outfits finish off the season.

In 1881 Cornelius Plett saw that more land would be needed to ensure that his sons and sons-in-law could become established with a sufficient land base. The solution was to purchase the three quarter sections of Hudson Bay Company land on Section 26-7-6E, a half-mile north of the village. On November 29, 1881, Cornelius S. Plett was in Winnipeg to meet with Charles John Bridges, Commissioner of the Hudson Bay Company. An agreement for sale was signed for the purchase of the NW and SW of 26-7-6E at a price of \$1520.00, payable with \$180.00 down and \$180.00 payable per year at seven per cent annual interest. Cornelius Plett signed these documents in firmly rounded strokes using perfect English letters.

Unfortunately the third quarter, SE26-7-6E, which lay immediately to the north of the village, had only recently been sold to a speculator, John Meyers, Seaforth, Ontario.

Never daunted, Plett met with William Hespeler, the Canadian government agent for Mennonite settlement in Manitoba, and negotiated to buy Meyers out. Plett was successful and on November 30, 1881, William Hespeler wrote Charles Bridges, HBC Commissioner as follows: "I hereby beg to notify you herewith that I the attorney of John Meyers of Seaforth, Ontario, have this day transferred to Cornelius Plett of the village of Blumenhoff in the Eastern Mennonite Reserve, Niverville Post Office, the S.E. Quarter of Sec. 26, Twp 7, Range 6 E. I am yours truly Wm. Hespeler, Attorney of John Meyers."

Plett was no stranger to Winnipeg, and business matters in general as a number of early deeds were prepared for him by Winnipeg law firms.<sup>799</sup>

Plett demonstrated his independent streak when he did not place the three Hudson Bay quarters into the Blumenhof village plan, an omission which earned him censure from some neighbours. However, the Blumenhof village minutes reveal that Plett did have a change of heart and that he offered to put the SE26-7-6E into the village systems. This offer was considered by the village assembly on December 16, 1881. After due deliberation the village assembly released Plett "from any obligations and advised him that he was free to utilize the land for his own use."

One of the tragedies in the Plett family was the illness of daughter Sarah L. Plett, married to Jakob J. Thielmann. This prevented her from joining her parents when they emigrated in 1875. The intention was that the Thielmanns would follow as soon as her health permitted but this did not come to pass - Sarah died

in Friedensfeld, Russia, on December 23, 1881.

In a letter of January 5, 1882, son-in-law Jakob J. Thielmann wrote Sarah and Cornelius Plett, describing the circumstances of Sarah's death. He wrote how his wife "had a deep longing for her parents and brothers and sisters, but the Lord has placed her where there are no needs, no crying nor tears and no suffering."<sup>800</sup> It must have been a great shock for the parents to receive the news that their beloved Sarah had died.

### **Holdeman, 1882.**

In November of 1879 Johann Holdeman and Mark Seiler visited the East Reserve, as the invitation of Peter Toews, Bishop in Manitoba, who felt a renewal in church life was needed. Holdeman had roots in the "old" Mennonite church but had been influenced by American Revivalism and started his own church.

Evidently Holdeman had spent some time with Cornelius Plett Sr. trying to convince him of the veracity of his new teachings. Plett, however, was a tenacious debater with an extensive knowledge of scripture. It was said that he knew the New Testament almost by memory. One day Holdeman had come to visit Plett to remonstrate with him and to persuade him to join his cause. After debating the veracity of his teachings vigorously for some time, Plett again and again stumped Holdeman with his extensive knowledge of scripture and debating skills. Finally after Plett had successfully parried a particularly important point, Holdeman got up, stamped his feet, and declared, "Dieses Haus werden wir müssen Gott überlassen" ("This house we must forsake to the will of God"), and walked out.<sup>801</sup>

In 1881 Johannes Holdeman and helper Mark Seiler came to Manitoba where Peter P. Toews, the Bishop, allowed them to preach in the churches. There were serious reservations within the brotherhood regarding the unfolding events. On February 2, 1881, Cornelius Plett went to Heinrich Reimer Jr. in Blumenort to borrow Holdeman's book, presumably to study his teachings and to compare them to the Bible.

Peter Toews wanted to go to Kansas to prove Holdeman's church, a proposal which did not receive universal approval among the brotherhood. According to the diary of Cornelius Loewen - the uncle to Toews' wife - the matter was discussed at length at a brotherhood in Grünfeld on February 27, 1881. Another brotherhood meeting was held in Rosenfeld regarding the differences in the Gemeinde over baptism.<sup>802</sup> The brotherhood decided to send Toews and Plett to Kansas to investigate Holdeman's church. Since Plett had stood up to Toews earlier on the interest issue, he may have been chosen to placate those in the brotherhood who did not appreciate Holdeman and the American-style revivalism he represented.

Cornelius Loewen recorded that "...[on] June 7, 1881, my brother-in-law, Cornelius Plett, and brother Peter Toews, left for Kansas." Neighbour Abr. F. Reimer recorded on June 7, 1881, "Today Bishop Toews went on the first iron railway to Kansas. Kor. Plett from Blumenhof went along to Kansas and Nebraska. In the morning he went to Grünfeld. They got as far as Winnipeg today. In the evening of the 8th they departed on the train for Kansas. Toews returned home on the 18th of June." Cornelius Loewen wrote that "on June 28, 1881, Peter Toews returned home."



Ohm Kjnals stayed on to visit sister Maria Plett Toews in Gnadenu, Kansas, and sister Karolina Plett Friesen Harms, and friends and relatives in Jansen, Nebraska. On June 26, 1881, matriarch Sarah Siemens Janzen, Jansen, Nebraska, wrote son Johann Janzen in Blumenhof, Manitoba: "Ohm Plett visited us all. I happened to be at Klassens. I must say it was truly a great encouragement and joy for me."<sup>803</sup> Plett also visited relatives in the Inman area. In a letter of June 17, 1881, Peter Warkentin of Inman wrote that "...two days ago Cornelius Plett was here." Warkentin complained that Plett had not taken enough time to visit his friends there and that he had only been at aunt "J. Warkentin's for two hours and not at all at his place."<sup>804</sup> August 1, 1881, a report from Blumenort, Manitoba, appeared in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* that Corn. Plett, "who had visited his Geschwister in Nebraska and Kansas was home."<sup>805</sup>

What Warkentin probably did not realize was that Plett was also on an important mission on behalf of his church. Shortly after Peter Toews returned to Manitoba, he presented a most positive report to the brotherhood, the text of which was published in 1990.<sup>806</sup> Cornelius Loewen recorded that, "My brother-in-law Cornelius Plett came home from Kansas and Nebraska on July 2, 1881 at 6 p.m."

The two men not only returned separately from Kansas but also came back with differing views. Veteran school teacher Peter L. Dueck, Grünfeld, was originally favourably inclined towards Holdeman. In his "Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession," he reported, ". . . when Ohm Plett returned from Kansas he did not give a favourable report as had Ältester Peter Toews who declared himself that he found affairs in the Holdemans' Gemeinde to be above expectations." Plett was concerned about incidents of loveless conduct within the Holdeman group which did not seem to square away with the profession of being the one and only true church. Dueck wrote, "...Ohm Plett....related to me in Toews' presence, that Mrs. Schmidt had tearfully lamented to him how lovelessly her brother Abraham Hiebert had treated her." This had a deep effect on many people, including Peter L. Dueck, who wrote, "...this made me realize that Toews was no longer impartial in the matter."<sup>807</sup>

The differences in view between Ohm Kjnals and nephew, Bishop Peter Toews, fuelled the already heated debate raging in the Gemeinde providing new impetus and adherents for the group desiring to remain true to the faith once received. On July 8, 1881, Jakob L. Dueck, Gruenfeld visited at the Plett home in Blumenhof. On July 11, the Pletts again visited friends Elisabeth and Abr. F. Reimer in Blumenort "for two hours." Presumably the Holdeman issue was a hot topic of conversation.

Johann W. Reimer (1861-1952) of Blumenhof, Manitoba, overheard a conversation between Johannes Holdeman and Cornelius Plett sometime in 1881. Ohm Cornelius had confronted Holdeman regarding the strife and family divisions he was causing. To this Holdeman replied, he was not pressuring anyone and that he received only those who came voluntarily. This had a positive impact upon young Reimer who until then had not been very impressed with Holdeman.<sup>808</sup>

Cornelius Plett was a gifted speaker and strong debater. He could quickly corner an adversary in verbal jousting. During the Holdeman division he came out early and forcefully against the move. Son Johann L. Plett, married his cousin, the widow Heinrich Reimer, nee Margaretha Warkentin, a sister to Ältester Toews' wife. Margaretha was a strong-willed woman and unequivocally supportive of brother-in-law Toews and his Holdeman union. On one occasion she had argued so forcefully with her father-in-law, he finally told her she was too pushy and coming on too stridently. Ohm Cornelius said, "If they wanted them [the Kleine Gemeinde] to join Holdeman, they would have to come meekly in love and try to persuade them." When Margaretha later came to him in tears, Plett told her "...they were only crocodile tears."<sup>809</sup>

As a senior member of the Gemeinde, firmly opposed to the Holdeman union, Ohm Kjnals did much travelling and talking to people. In late August, 1881, he went to Rosenort and "returned home on Sept. 2." The Plett visited at the Abr. F. Reimer home in Blumenort twice that month. It was no accident that the Plett and Reimer families were strongly allied on the issue.

The Holdeman schism would not pass without dividing the Plett family itself. Son-in-law Heinrich Wohlgemuth was one of the first to join with Holdeman in 1882. His wife, Katharina L. Plett, was not inclined that way, wanting to stay with her parents in the Kleine Gemeinde. She finally relented, however, in order to keep peace with her husband.<sup>810</sup>

Favourite son Johann L. Plett followed brother-in-law Ältester Peter Toews in his union with John Holdeman. "On Jan. 22, 1882, [Mark] Seiler baptised the Joh. Pletts from Blumenhof." This was a huge coupe for Holdeman as Johann soon became the wealthiest farmer in the entire area north of Steinbach.

The story is told that Johann did not favour Holdeman but eventually made the change largely to please his wife, Margaretha.<sup>811</sup> Cornelius Plett was devastated when he learned of his son's intentions. It was a double blow since daughter Katharina had only recently made a similar decision. He told Johann that if he went through with this step, he would disown him and "forbid them the door."<sup>812</sup> Ohm Kjnals took the extreme measure of disinheriting Johann thereby drawing a line in the sand, as it were, to insure that others would not follow. The action caused a permanent estrangement between the two men, but the measure was successful as Johann L. Plett was the only male Plett to join Holdeman.

In February, 1882, Bishop Abraham L. Friesen accompanied by several ministers came from Nebraska to help in the reorganization of the Kleine Gemeinde in the wake of the devastation caused by Holdeman. They preached in the churches around Steinbach. On March 3, 1882, they were in Blumenort and for night they stayed at the home of Cornelius Plett in Blumenhof. On March 7, Plett, Franz Kroeker and a group of East Reserve ministers accompanied the visiting entourage to Rosenort where further discussions were held. On Dec. 4, 1883, the Pletts from Blumenhof together with son-in-law Peter Reimer, by now a minister, and his brother, Abraham R. Reimer, went by sleigh to the West Reserve [Rosenort]. They stayed overnight at the home of [Reeve] Kliever [in Schantzenfeld, near modern-day Niverville]."

### **Life and Farming, 1883.**

In the meantime, Sarah Loewen Plett had suffered from a severe illness. She was so sick that Abr. "Fuela" Reimer noted it in his journal for May 16, 1882, adding, "...it seemed as if she would die." But Sarah recovered and on January 5, 1883, Elisabeth Rempel Reimer "Finished a fur coat for the Pletts which they delivered during a visit that day."

Travelling continued: Jan. 22, 1883, nephew Joh. Isaac and Kor. Plett and son Kor. Plett "went to the West Reserve [Rosenort] for a visit." June 16, 1883, the Pletts again went to the West Reserve and returned home on the 19th."

The family experienced another tragedy when daughter-in-law, Agatha Koop Plett, wife of Peter, died in childbirth April 4, 1883. To add to the calamity, her young baby, named Cornelius after his grandfather, also died not quite two years later on April 1, 1885.

Economically good progress was being made. The village of Blumenhof was established and soon became one of the most prosperous in the East Reserve. The Rural Municipality of Hanover assessment records showed that the village had 14 farmers in 1883, six of whom consisted of Plett and his children. Of the total assessment of 11267, the six Plett families accounted for 4560. By comparison, Blumenort with 19 farmers was assessed at 10293 and Steinbach with 28 was assessed at 15474. Historian Royden K. Loewen has written "that Cornelius S. Plett farmed in a big way."<sup>813</sup>

By 1883 Plett owned a double village farm of 320 acres of which 50 acres was cultivated as well as the Hudson Bay land for a total of 800 acres. His buildings were assessed at \$500.00 and furniture at \$200.00. They owned four horses, 11 cattle, a calf and two pigs. He owned a feed crusher valued at \$200.00 together with sons Cornelius, Peter and Abraham. He and his family members together owned one of the two threshing machines in the village valued at \$320.00. In addition his sons Cornelius, Peter and Abraham and son-in-law Heinrich Wohlgemuth each had a full village farm of 160 acres and son Johann L. Plett had a triple village farm of 480 acres. Altogether the extended family in Blumenhof was farming over 2000 acres - without counting son-in-law Franz Kroeker, Steinbach, and Peter Reimer, Blumenort, both of whom were substantial farmers.

### **Retirement, 1883-87.**

By 1883 Ohm Kjnals was 63 years old and slowing down in his farming operations. He was farming in partnership with his two youngest sons David and Jakob. By 1884 he was no longer part owner of the threshing machine, son David having acquired his one-quarter share.

On Dec. 4, 1884, Sarah and Cornelius moved into a new retirement home they had built on their farm yard. According to the "Brandbuch" of Johann Esau of Rosenfeld, Plett insured a new dwelling for \$200.00 on December 24, 1885, and reduced his contents coverage to \$150.00 and feed and livestock coverage to \$100.00.<sup>814</sup> They kept only three cows and a horse. The Feuerstelle was given over to oldest son Cornelius L. Plett.

Further details of the lives of Sarah and Cornelius S. Plett are gleaned from the journals of Abraham M. Friesen, Blumenort, married to Plett's niece, Margaretha P. Isaac: Sunday, June 29, 1884, "Worship services were held in Rosenfeld. After dinner we drove to Blumenhof and were at Cornelius Pletts." On November 6, 1884, Thursday, "Cornelius Pletts were here as our guests." Sunday, January 4, 1885, "After dinner we drove to Blumenhof to Pletts." Sunday, February 22, 1885. "Worship services in Grünfeld. We, together with Cornelius P. Friesen, were at the old Pletts." March 29, 1885, Sunday, "Kroekers were here and old Pletts." Friday, Jan. 6, 1887, "Jakob Wiebes, Cor. Friesens with sister Mrs. Jakob Fast, visited at the Pletts." Cornelius Friesen and Mrs. Wiebe were nephew and niece, respectively, to Ohm Kjnals. Friday, March 15, 1887, "Auction sale in Blumenhof at the old Pletts." Monday, December 28, 1887, "Went to old Pletts with Joh. Friesen, Rosenort." Sunday, January 29, 1888, "We, together with Cor. [P] Friesens, had gone to old Pletts in Blumenhof." Friday, October 19, 1888. "With sister Maria [P. Friesen, a 20 year-old single woman] to old Pletts." Tuesday, May 11, 1889. "With brother Joh. Friesen at old Pletts in Blumenhof." It is clear that Ohm Kjnals and Sarah Meum were appreciated by their nephews and nieces.

The Blumenhof villagers decided to dissolve their village as of 1887 in order to move onto their individual quarter sections ("onto the land") according to the North American fashion. It was the first village in the East Reserve to dissolve. Through complicated negotiations they decided who could remain living in the village and who got which quarter section of land. Cornelius Plett was one of the fortunate ones who did not need to relocate. The Plett family had already decided that oldest son, Cornelius L. Plett, would take over father's homestead and they made an arrangement whereby the parents built a new retirement house on the yard. Through a series of transactions, son Abr. L. Plett transferred SE24-7-6E to Isaac L. Warkentin, Cornelius L. Plett transferred NW25-7-6E to brother Abr., and Is. L. Warkentin transferred NW24-7-6E to Cornelius L. Plett.

In order to secure their land holdings in this manner, each villager had to obtain title to his property. Cornelius Plett applied for his "Homestead Patent" on September 22, 1886. On his "Application for Homestead Patent", Cornelius Plett stated that he was a British subject by Naturalization Certificate No. 3115. Son Abraham and brother-in-law Johann Warkentin, were the signatories vouching for Cornelius's application.

On Nov. 15, 1887, Cornelius Plett transferred title to another parcel of land, NW26-7-6E, to son-in-law Heinrich Wohlgemuth in consideration of the sum of \$760.00. The Law Firm of "Blain, Perdue and Robinson", Winnipeg, was retained to handle the legal work for the title transfer and deed registration.

Cornelius and Sarah remained financially independent continuing to farm in association with sons David and Jakob into 1886. But they continued the process of winding down their business affairs. Abraham F. Reimer of Blumenort, Man., recorded that the Pletts had an auction sale on March 25, 1887, "with two wagons, harvest mower, sleigh and other things and a horse." Plett may have decided that the dissolution of the village represented a good time to retire. But active farming operations in Blumenhof did not diminish. On Sept. 29, Abr. F. Reimer went to the Pletts for a visit, noting that "everyone on the village was busy threshing with three machines."

At the age of 68 Ohm Kjnals was still an active and vigorous man, a person of some authority and influence. On Jan. 31, 1886, Joh. F. Friesen, Abr. F. Friesen, Justina Klassen and three ministers from Nebraska visited at the Plett home in Blumenhof. When his sister Maria Plett Toews in Gnadenu, Kansas, had trouble collecting an account from her son, Bishop Peter P. Toews, in 1890, the ultimate threat she could make was that if Peter did not pay immediately she would take the matter to her brother Cornelius.

The Pletts continued travelling and visiting. Johann L. Dueck of Grünfeld, Man., recorded on Oct. 22, 1893, "...[the] Old Pletts were here for about an hour." Presumably they were in Grünfeld to visit the Kleine Gemeinde Bishop, Jakob L. Dueck, who was critically ill and on his death bed: he died five days later on Oct 27.

The friendship between Sarah and Kjnals and Elisabeth and Abr. F. Reimer in Blumenort became even stronger as they aged. The couples visited each other frequently. These visits are documented in Abr. F. Reimer's journals for 1887 to 1889: 1888, Oct. 3, "Early yesterday, A. Friesen and K. Friesen, and the old Harms,...went to the old Plett [Blumenhof]. He stayed there overnight. Today at 9 a.m. he came to our place for two hours." "Old" Harms was Isaac Harms (1811-91), an old friend from Russia.<sup>815</sup>

By a Deed of Land dated February 6, 1889, Cornelius Plett transferred his homestead quarter NE24-7-6E to youngest son Jakob L. Plett for \$900.00 thereby taking another step in reducing his property holdings. The Deed was prepared by Notary Public Abraham S. Friesen of Steinbach.<sup>816</sup> On Feb. 23, 1891, Monday, Abraham M. Friesen "and bro. Joh. Friesen visited at Ohm Pletts."

Ohm Kjnals had a continuing interest in spiritual matters. Son-in-law Rev. Peter R. Reimer, Blumenort, was in charge of selling the Georg Hansen devotional books published in 1892. On August 12, Cornelius bought a copy of the Hansen books at a cost of 30 cents.<sup>817</sup>

In 1893 Cornelius Plett took a further step toward full retirement selling the SE26-7-6E, his last remaining property, to son David, living in Neuanlage. The purpose of the transaction was to induce David to move back to Blumenhof, closer to his parents and family. By 1893, Cornelius S. Plett - once one of the largest land owners in the East Reserve - no longer had any land registered to his

name.<sup>818</sup>

Though retired, Cornelius and Sarah remained active continuing their visiting, travelling, and hosting of visitors. On Sept. 23, 1893, nephew Abraham M. Friesen reported that nephew Franz Isaac and Jakob Wiebe (married to Franz's sister), "...went to visit at the old Pletts." On Monday, March 25, 1895, "alte uncle Plett" visited nephew Abraham M. Friesen, who by now was living on his farm, SW35-7-6E, a mile north of the old Blumenhof village.

The 1895 and 1896 diaries of son Cornelius L. Plett reveal some of the numerous visitors at his parent's home; usually these visitors would drop in to see him as well or vice versa: December 20, 1895: "Abram Eidse [from Rosenort] was here. Together we went to my parents. The Isaac Loewens from Nebraska came. Eidse left right after dinner so we went to the parents, as both pairs of Peter Reimers from Blumenort and Isaac Loewens were still there."<sup>819</sup>

Cornelius and Sarah enjoyed helping their children in pig slaughtering bees and other activities. On November 29, 1895, they helped out at Cornelius L. Pletts where they butchered two hogs and two oxen with the help of son Abraham and Cornelius' son Heinrich E. Plett and sons-in-law Gerhard and Bernhard Doerksen. Royden K. Loewen has written, "In the same month Cornelius Pletts helped each one of these families butcher pigs, cows, oxen, calves and chickens."

### **Sarah Meum.**

Bishop David P. Reimer gave his grandmother, Sarah Loewen Plett, the testimony that she had conducted herself in a calm and peaceful manner during her life's journey so that her descendants could remember her as the likeness of Sarah in accordance with 1 Peter Chapter 3.<sup>820</sup>

When I think of Sarah Loewen Plett, I think of a quiet person, but one of indisputable authority, her power constituted by years of unselfish devotion to her family, working alongside her husband "without stint." I picture her as a woman who did not have to shout to have people hear what she was saying. Rather, a loving smile or an encouraging nod was enough to inspire those dear to her.

Much of what we know about Sarah must be painstakingly teased out from the darkness of the past by reconstructing her life-world, her experiential embryo, as it were, and by comparison with other women of her time. One such woman was Sarah's close friend, the irrepressible Elisabeth Rempel Reimer (1814-93), nine years her senior, who, through the chronicles of her husband, Abr. "Fuela" Reimer, is probably one of the more fully documented women of her contemporaries.

Sarah's personality stands in contrast to that of Elisabeth Rempel Reimer, an extroverted and outspoken person. Where Elisabeth rushed to and fro, her insatiable curiosity never quenched, Sarah was more the quiet reflective type. She was happy to allow her husband centre stage, but, nonetheless, orchestrating her life-world and that of those around her according to ancient ways and traditions which she preserved and managed carefully and strategically. Sarah would have been quiet and contemplative - but not to kid yourself - one who knew very precisely and exactly what was going on in her domain, and who had a sense of historical consciousness, committed to preserving the social constructs

of the past which had served well her mother and mother's mother before her.

Sarah must have enjoyed writing and reading. In a letter of March 18, 1926, daughter Maria waxed nostalgic when she thought back to her childhood days: "But I am so weak and I still miss so much and long to return to all that which once was mine. When I think of that which I had and my family, oh how dearly I would once again long to sit at the writing table where Mama's books would still all be lying."<sup>821</sup>

It was clearly from Sarah that the strong writing tradition among her children came from and not from "Ohm Kjnals" who had been raised in the midst of poverty and privation in Danzig. He had experienced much instability in his childhood, and presumably little or no education. He might well have been one of the best wheat producers in the Molotschna, but it was Sarah who had grown up in a stable home in Lindenau, socialized by a father who loved writing. The writing tradition was strong among Sarah's children: daughters Margaretha (Mrs. Franz M. Kroeker), Steinbach, and Maria (Mrs. Peter R. Reimer), Blumenort, both maintained journals - Margaretha's dating from 1892 - and sons Cornelius, Abraham, David and Jakob L. Plett all maintained significant journals and correspondence.

I picture Sarah as a slightly heavy-set woman, not fat, of pleasing proportions. I make this presumption based on photographs of nephews and nieces. I assume that her father-in-law Johann Plett was a wiry, lithe man, like her sons, Johann, Abraham and Jakob L. Plett. Sarah's sons Cornelius and David, on the other hand, were slightly heavier, and, I assume, that came from the Loewen side. Great-granddaughter, Sarah Doerksen Penner (1892-1994), whom I interviewed in 1985, who personally remembered both Sarah and Ohm Kjnals, recalled that neither of them were very big physically, and that Cornelius was somewhat stout but not fat.

I picture further that Sarah was resembled by her daughters Maria (Mrs. Peter R. Reimer) and Margaretha (Mrs. Franz M. Kroeker), who were remembered as attractive and intelligent women. A photograph of Maria, taken in 1931, showed her to be a slight woman, 5' 6" in height, with a rounded face, an expansive gentle smile. Recently I had occasion to review the notes I made while researching the *Plett Picture Book* in 1981, and came across a note that Sarah Loewen Plett had a wide mouth and pleasant smile, certainly consistent with the picture of daughter Maria.

The material possessions and physical surroundings of our ancestors inform us about their personality and character. One of the treasures of Sarah Loewen Plett was a dinner set - "Regent" brand - manufactured in England by Johnson Brothers. According to family tradition, the dish ware was acquired in southern Russia and came to Canada in the 1875.<sup>822</sup> It has been pointed out that the trade markings on the dinner set were not used until after 1891, meaning that it was only acquired in Manitoba.<sup>823</sup> Upon the death of Sarah, the dinner set was evidently broken up and divided among the children. The place setting - consisting of plate, cup and saucer - inherited by son David L. Plett has been preserved and is currently the proud possession of their granddaughter Ellen Plett of Wawanesa.

One of the treasures I inherited from my father's side of the family is a copper lustre wear cream pitcher. It has a beautiful blue band around the middle and a picture of a young couple embracing in a relief. The picture was partially scratched out to obliterate their faces. According to material culture expert, Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen, Pretty Prairie, Kansas, the copperware cream pitcher was of the type produced by British porcelain makers, "Staffordshire" as early as the 1850s.<sup>824</sup> British pottery and porcelain products were extensively marketed in southern Russia by the 1840s, presumably where the cream pitcher was acquired.

In my 1995 novel *Sarah's Prairie*, a character named Sarah inherited a cream pitcher from her father, who had acquired it prior to the implementation of a Gemeinde protocol against the creation of such "false likenesses". As with many women in traditional Mennonite culture, Sarah was more conservative than her husband. Yet, she could not bear to part with the precious cream pitcher, a memento of her father whom she had loved dearly and so she sanitized it, removing the images of the faces which offended her sense of rightness and strict moral integrity.

The story, of course, is fiction, but does illustrate the power possessed by Mennonite matriarchs in Russia. True, they were living in a patriarchal society, but it was a society significantly less patriarchal than other cultures of the 19th century. The power wielded by women of Sarah's life-world was attributable to some extent to the necessities of running their farm enterprises. Within their life world, conservative Mennonite women managed the household economy, including the dairy, garden and orchard production. This power was enhanced after emigration to Manitoba in 1874-5, where they had to shift into a mixed farming mode, precisely the areas traditionally managed by the women.<sup>825</sup>

But this is not the complete story. Conservative Mennonite theology called for full equality of women in inheritance and in other matters. Abusive behaviour towards women, whether spouses, servant girls, or otherwise, was strictly punished. In this respect they were a century ahead of the rest of society. In an epistle dating to the 1820s, Kleine Gemeinde Ältester Abraham Friesen, Ohrloff, justified equal inheritance rights for women by citing scripture.<sup>826</sup>

It is unfortunate that only little information is available about many pioneer women such as Sarah Loewen Plett, who played critical and vital roles in the development of our Province and Nation. Often those most stridently criticizing the omission of women from the historical record are the same ones too lazy to do the time consuming research required to reconstruct the shape of their lives from out of the past. Let us all remember it as a solemn duty to preserve and document the legacies of our mothers and grandmothers, that in the future they might receive the recognition they so richly deserve.<sup>827</sup>

At the "Plettentag" in 1945, David P. Reimer related an interesting tradition. Since Johann Plett's second wife was a Baer and Cornelius' wife a Loewen, the saying arose that the Plett bloodline had arisen from "Loewen (lions) and Baehren (bears)." But David P. Reimer was quick to clarify that since Cornelius Plett was the son of the third wife Smit, this saying was not really correct.<sup>828</sup>



## Ohm Kjnals.

Ohm Kjnals was an open and friendly man, comfortable with people of all ethnic backgrounds and stations. Son C. L. Plett recorded that on January 6, 1896, his parents "...had an Anglander staying at their place for night." On January 9th, Mr. and Mrs. Gerhard Wiebe from Chortitz, the former Bergthaler Bishop, were visiting at their home.

Cornelius Plett was a walker and loved to walk around Blumenhof and area to visit neighbours and relatives and to see what each and everyone was doing. He enjoyed weaving rucksacks and baskets which he made from one-year-old willow roots cut in the woods one mile to the east and brought home to dry. This was an art which Cornelius had presumably learned as a young boy in Danzig when his family eked out a miserable existence by basket weaving.

It was on an overcast day in 1895 that Cornelius went to the woods and, because the sun was not shining, lost the direction from which he had come. For some time he wandered about lost, until finally, with the falling of dusk, he emerged from the woods in the opposite direction towards the north, but not knowing where he was. Upon noticing a light in the distance, he proceeded towards it. To reach this place he still had to walk over two miles. When he arrived there he had come to the home of a Frenchman by the name of Benoit. This gentleman drove him to Gerhard Giesbrechts in Greenland who brought him home, where his wife was anxiously awaiting him.

Son David L. Plett later recalled that his father loved to walk. On one occasion he wanted to walk to Steinbach in the course of which he lost his way, but finally and thankfully, found his way home.<sup>829</sup>

Cornelius Plett possessed a warm and winning nature and knew nothing about shyness. In the words of grandson, David P. Reimer, "Anyone among his grandchildren who had to struggle with shyness certainly did not inherit that trait from him."<sup>830</sup> Cornelius was a friend of people and particularly children. His grandchildren remembered him fondly for his invariably warm and friendly greeting. At the "Plettentag" family gathering on July 2, 1945, grandson Johann A. K. Plett was able to imitate and articulate Cornelius Plett's expression and speech when he met and spoke to children, as if he was actually again saying the words for himself. For example, "Wems Junkjhe best du?" he would ask. "Pletten Johann," was the reply. "M-hm, a ha ———," which usually was his customary greeting for the children.<sup>931</sup>

In 1985 great-granddaughter Sarah P. Doerksen Penner (1892-1994) of Blumenort actually remembered having met Sarah and Cornelius S. Plett personally. She recalled they were referred to as "the old grandparents".

Sarah grew up in the home of her parents Gerhard and Sarah Plett Doerksen on SW 26-7-6E only 300 yards away from the David L. Plett place on SE 26-7-6E, with whom Cornelius and Sarah Plett lived for a time. Sarah recalled that her "old" grandfather came walking by their place and that he sometimes stopped to cut willow bushes in their pasture from which he made baskets, large and small - some were large enough to use to feed cattle.

Her mother, Sarah Plett Doerksen, told her about an incident when Ohm

Kjnals had come by and picked off the first flower that had bloomed - a begonia. Her mother was a bit upset as apparently he had not asked her first.

Cornelius Plett was somewhat stout but not fat. He was most resembled by sons David and Cornelius, more so than Abraham and Jakob, as the latter two were trimmer in build. Sarah Doerksen Penner recalled that earlier, Cornelius and Sarah Plett had lived in their own home, close to, but not quite on the same yard as Cornelius L. Pletts, her grandparents. It was a ways to walk from the old village to their place. Along the way there was a small bridge and once when she was looking down into the water, she had fallen in.<sup>832</sup>

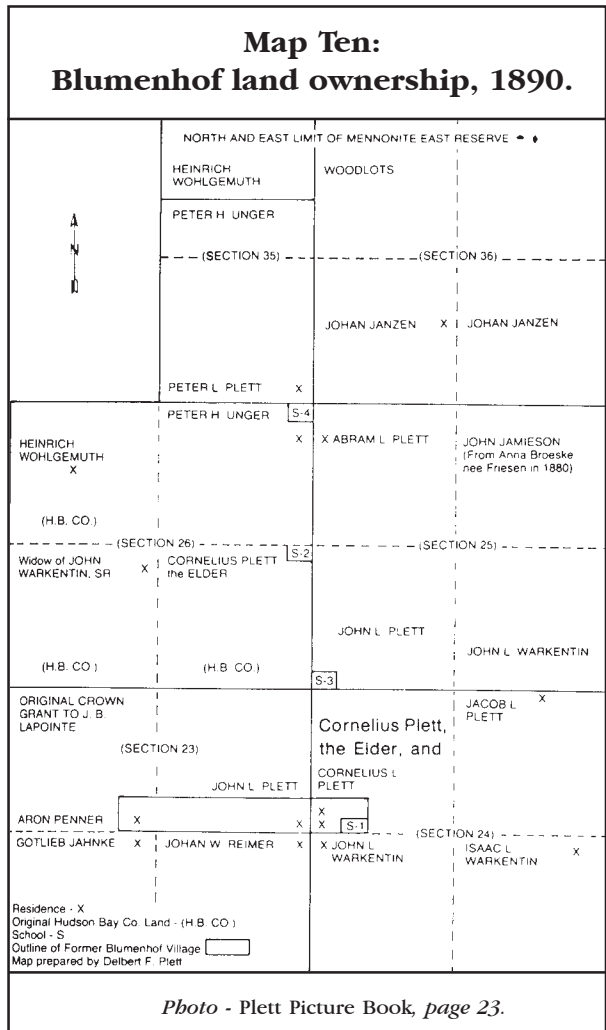
One day Sarah was peacefully playing in the flower borders around her parent's house when an old man came by, stopped, and watched what she was doing. She remembered being irritated by his forwardness and somewhat forceful nature. The man talked to her with familiarity as if he knew her, asking what she was doing and who she was, etc. sort of as if he owned the place. Later she realized that this had been her great-grandfather Cornelius Plett.

#### Great-grandson

John R. Unger remembered seeing the retirement house of Cornelius and Sarah Plett as a young lad. It stood in the southwest corner of NW24-7-6E: "It was a small one storey house and the barn was built separate. Even at this time little could be seen of a yard."<sup>833</sup>

The journal of oldest daughter Margaretha, Mrs. Franz Kroeker, Steinbach, provides some details as to the senior years of Cornelius and Sarah: January 25, 1896. "Mother took sick.. We went down there on the 27th and stayed overnight. February 18. "We were at the parents. Mother is a little better."

On March 23, 1897, daughter Margaretha Kroeker recorded, "The parents moved to David Pletts." The last while Sarah and Cornelius Plett lived with youngest son, Jakob.



## Death, 1900.

In Fall of 1900 southern Manitoba was struck by a typhoid epidemic. Daughter Margaretha Plett Kroeker recorded a number of deaths and funerals: October 14, "brotherhood was here [in Steinbach]. C. Plett with G. Doerksen and P. Plett and D. Pletts were here." October 28. "We were in Blumenort at the service and at P. Reimers and Mrs. A. Reimer. October 30. "We were at C. Pletts. She and Cor. were sick and at Joh. Pletts he is very sick."

From November 1 to the 7th, Margaretha and her husband went to "jentsied" or Rosenort where Cornelius Kroeker "was sick there". November 1. "Funeral at A. Pletts. Their infant son Jakob died." November 14. "I went along with Cornelius [P. Kroeker], to the parents and Joh. Pletts. Father and Joh. Plett both very sick."

One of the tragedies in the Plett family was the estrangement between Ohm Kjnals and son Johann arising in the aftermath of the Holdeman schism of 1882. While Johann lay on his sickbed, he dreamt he and his father were farming together again like in the old days in Russia, that all their crops were beautifully green and luxurious and that their teams of horses were perfectly matched, etc.

When Ohm Cornelius heard of Johann's illness he could not withhold himself; he was unable to countenance the death of Johann without expressing his love and saying farewell. Without regard for the turning away in religious beliefs of his son, and although cautioned about the contagious nature of typhus and the danger he too might catch the dreaded disease, he rushed to Johann's home on the other side of the village cross street. Cornelius burst into the room where Johann lay dying. With tears streaming down his face, Ohm Kjnals took leave of his son, shaking hands and giving him the brother kiss of love. Tragically he thereby also contracted typhus and being overwhelmed, died of a heart attack two days after his son.<sup>834</sup>

The unfolding events were documented by daughter Margaretha Plett Kroeker: November 16. "10:30 in the evening, Joh. Plett died. He was 45 years and 19 days old." November 20. "The funeral. And father died November 18, at 10 in the evening. He was 80 years, one month and some days." November 21. "Joh. Dueck took us to Joh. Pletts for the funeral. We stayed at Cor. Pletts' overnight. In the morning P. Reimers came and took us to A. Pletts' where Father's funeral was held. Then Joh. Duecks came and took us home."

In view of the reconciliation of the two men, the Plett family tried to arrange for a joint funeral but this was not allowed and Johann's funeral was held one day earlier than his father's. Family ingenuity and loyalty triumphed in the end, when the father was buried the next day in the same grave as his son, where they are resting together in peace with a firm confidence and a living hope in their Redeemer, awaiting the resurrection morning. The land where they were buried, SW 25-7-6E, was owned by Johann. His daughter Sarah, Mrs. Jakob T. Dueck, had been buried here only two months previous. The parcel was subsequently dedicated as a cemetery and became the second Blumenhof community cemetery.<sup>835</sup>

On December 5, 1900, the death of Johann Plett and Father Cornelius Plett was reported in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* by Heinrich E. Kornelsen, reporter for the Steinbach district.<sup>836</sup>

After her husband's death, Sara Loewen Plett lived with daughter Maria and husband, Peter R. Reimer, in Blumenort. Daughter Margaretha Plett Kroeker documented her mother's illness: January 19, 1903. The [worship] service was here. [We were] in Blumenort at Reimers. The beloved Mother had to suffer very much because of her teeth." February 12. "We were also there. The infection got worse." March 17. "Went to Blumenort. Mother is getting weaker. We went with the buggy today." March 22. "The worship service in Blumenort. Mother is greatly improved, so that the proverb is verified, 'Sunday improvements, Monday death.' Sunday night she got much worse because of the plaster on her chest."

Sarah Loewen Plett died on March 23, 1903: "Monday at noon we went there. She was happy that we came. She had difficulty speaking. After dinner, she ceased speaking. She died at 10 o'clock in the evening. We stayed for the night. In the morning we wanted to go home. Then I got sick and so we stayed until Friday evening. Thursday was the funeral. She was 80. Friday. We had a service and made the division. Peter, Joh., and C. Loewen, Joh, Friesen and Froese [from jentsied] came for the funeral.

The late Jakob W. Friesen remembered Sarah Loewen Plett's funeral held in the worship house in the old Blumenort village on March 26. Jakob was a young herdsboy and recalled the funeral train behind the coffin as the mourners walked from the worship house to the cemetery just north of the village. The "old" Blumenort cemetery is located on NW 22-7-6E on the hill just west of where great-grandson David P. Loewen's turkey farm is today (1995).

Son Jakob L. Plett described his mother's death in a letter to cousin Heinrich F. Loewen of Jansen, Nebraska:

"Blumenhof, March 29, 1903

"Dear friends, Heinrich Loewens;

"Firstly I wish you the peace of God and the dwelling in you of the Holy Ghost. And secondly I wish that these lines might find you in the best of health. So dearest friends as our exchange of letters has almost become extinguished I wish to call it back to life. I would report to you first of all that thanks be to God, we are all quite healthy.

"However, our dear mother who has been suffering for some time has died on the 23rd day of March at 9:30 p.m. and on the 26th we gave her over to the security of the earth where she sleeps in the deepest peace which she was unable to do in the last time of her life. She often had great pain in her foot and when not in her foot then in her chest and then she also had difficulty breathing.

"She endured it all in great patience as she had often prayed so that the Lord's will could be carried out which she also had lived out all her life. Her life span encompassed 80 and one-half years having attained a goodly age. She leaves to mourn eight children, 70 grandchildren, and approximately 56 great-grandchildren. Who knows if any of us will accomplish so much.

"Well beloved friends, this time the letter will not be very long. We are at home today as the weather is not very comfortable, that is to say, there is a strong wind from the north with rain. However it will become nicer as the sun went under clear and so another day has passed by. So much for now as it is becoming

dark. In the morning I will not have time to write.”

“With greetings, ‘Jakob and Maria Pletten’. Hoping for your early reply”

**Estate.**

Son Cornelius L. Plett was the executor of his parents’ estates. In 1913 he was able to close off the estate and provided an accounting to the beneficiaries. Son-in-law Peter R. Reimer copied the report into his account book:

“To Peter Reimers

“This is the accounting for the inheritance from our parents. How much, and for the accounting after the auction sale - how much you still have coming, how much you already have received and how much you still have coming. According to the accounts you were entitled to \$180.71 of which you have received the following amounts:

May 21, 1903 .....	\$25.00
Jan 29, 1903 .....	\$25.00
March 26, 1905 .....	\$15.00
June 25, 1905 .....	\$20.00
Jan 2, 1912 .....	\$40.00
March 15, 1913 .....	\$15.00

“Therefore, you have received \$140.00 in total. In addition, you are entitled to \$40.71. You are to receive this money from Jakob L. Plett. I certify the foregoing as correct.” “Cornelius L. Plett”

The accounting was countersigned, “November 9, 1915, I have received the \$40.71 in good order. The last payment was recorded in the “Account Book” only a day before son-in-law Peter R. Reimer himself died. On March 18, 1913, son Cornelius L. Plett, by now living in Friedensfeld/Steinbach, drove to Blumenhof to visit Heinrich H. Enns and “brought them the capital from the parents’ estate owing to them, from the grandparents.”<sup>837</sup>

Calculating there were 12 family branches, the total value of Cornelius S. Plett’s estate was \$2168.50. This was a considerable sum for 1900, considering they had already been retired for 15 years.

## Legacy.

Cornelius Plett and Sarah Loewen Plett made an important contribution to the settlement of southeastern Manitoba and the establishment of a vibrant Hanover Steinbach community. For their strict stand for the faith of the fathers, Ohm Kjnals and Sarah Meum deserve much credit for the survival of the Kleine Gemeinde (today found in Mexico and Belize) and the existence of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Canada.

But their richest legacy was their descendants by now numbering well over 10,000 souls. A large number still live in the Blumenort, Ridgewood and Landmark area north of Steinbach. Even today, the land along the road where Cornelius and son Johann lie buried for several miles in each direction, is owned by their descendants.

I wonder sometimes whether any of them ever thinks of the significance of that small mound of earth at the Blumenhof cemetery where Cornelius lies buried, as they rush by in their vehicles. In 1995, Cornelius' third last grandchild, Mrs. Henry M. Toews, nee Minna J. K. Plett, was buried in that same sacred ground.

In 1993 the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society passed a resolution requesting that the road passing the Blumenhof cemetery on SW 25-7-6E where Cornelius Plett and son Johann L. Plett are buried, be named in honour of Cornelius Plett. The spot where Sarah lies buried - in the old Blumenort cemetery - also lies along this road only a mile and a half to west, on the south side. In 1996 the Council of the Rural Municipality of Hanover enacted a By-law naming the road north of Sections 19 to 24-7-6E "C. S. Plett Road" in honour of this pioneer family.<sup>838</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Cornelius S. Plett</b>	Oct 28, 1820		Nov 18, 1900
m	Sarah W. Loewen	Sep 12, 1822	Oct 26, 1841	Mar 23, 1903
5	Margaretha Plett	Oct 27, 1842		Dec 9, 1920
5	Isaac L. Plett	Mar 15, 1844		Jul 27, 1871
5	Cornelius Plett	Aug 8, 1845		Jul 11, 1846
5	Cornelius L. Plett	Oct 29, 1846		Jan 3, 1935
5	Sarah L. Plett	Oct 29, 1846		Dec 23, 1881
5	Anna L. Plett	Apr 23, 1848		Apr 23, 1873
5	Jacob L. Plett	Dec 17, 1849		Infancy
5	Maria L. Plett	Dec 29, 1850		Oct 6, 1934
5	Katharina L. Plett	Feb 8, 1854		Jan 18, 1944
5	Elisabeth Plett	Feb 8, 1854		Apr 27, 1854
5	Johann L. Plett	Oct 17, 1855		Nov 16, 1900
5	Elisabeth L. Plett	Dec 4, 1856		Feb 17, 1859
5	Peter L. Plett	Feb 18, 1858		Oct 19, 1944
5	Abraham L. Plett	May 18, 1859		Oct 15, 1934
5	David L. Plett	Oct 8, 1863		Jun 25, 1953
5	Jakob L. Plett	Dec 12, 1864		Nov 4, 1931



*Above: Copperware cream pitcher owned by Cornelius and Sarab Plett. The cream pitcher was passed on to son Cornelius and to his son Heinrich. Now owned by the writer. Photo - Pres., No. 12, page 96.*

*Left: Ellen Plett, Wawanesa, Manitoba, poses with a dinner plate passed on down from her great-grandmother, Sarab Loewen Plett (18222-1903), Blumenhof, Manitoba. Photo - Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta/Pres., No.12, page 99.*



*John K. Reimer (left), Spanish Lookout, Belize, displays a copper kettle brought to Canada in 1875 by Cornelius and Sarab Plett, the great-grandparents of his wife Gertrude Plett. Looking on are sister-in-law Clara Plett Kornelsen and Milton Kornelsen, Jagueyes, Mexico. Photo - Feb. 1987.*

5 Daughter **Margaretha L. Plett** married widower Franz M. Kroeker of Kleefeld, Molotschna, son of Franz Kroeker (1799-1853) of Margenau, Molotschna.<sup>839</sup> Franz Kroeker was married for the first time to Susanna M. Friesen, daughter of minister Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) of Rosenort, Molotschna, by his first marriage. Franz Kroeker farmed in Kleefeld, Molotschna.

From Kleefeld they moved to Steinbach in the Borosenko settlement, northwest of Nikopol. Chronicler Abraham "Fuella" Reimer, recorded for May 2, 1872: "Kroekers from Kleefeld moved here [to Steinbach]." Reimer's journal provides glimpses of life in Russia: Saturday, Sept. 10, 1872. "Put up house for Fr. Kroeker." July 4. "I was at Kroekers, who began cutting wheat the week before." Oct. 29. "I went along with Kroeker to Kontinius. to the annual market." Jan. 19, 1873. Franz Kroeker and Peter Loewen, Sawitzki, went to the Molosch" returning Jan. 26. Feb. 17. "The widow Is. Plett from Neu-Anlage moved in with Kroekers." May 3. "Verlobung at Kroekers. Their maid Helena Rempel, daughter of the old Abr. Rempel, with Corn. Plett." Sunday, April 6. "Worship services at Fr. Kroekers." May 19. "Franz Kr. came home from the Crimea around Vesper." Nov. 14. Kroekers and Toews' slaughtered an ox for an auction sale in the village." Feb. 1, 1874. "...Joh. Reimer, Peter Buller, and Franz Kroeker, went to Nikopol."

In 1874 the Franz M. Kroeker family immigrated to Manitoba, "...becoming one of the 18 pioneer families to settle in Steinbach, which was the namesake of their village in Russia. In Steinbach, Manitoba, the Kroekers quickly established themselves as leading farmers."<sup>840</sup> Franz Kroeker was one of two settlers to acquire a double Wirtschaft in the village plan. Wirtschaft No. 1 remained unoccupied for many years.<sup>841</sup> The Kroekers settled on Wirtschaft No. 2, building a semlin which they shared with neighbours, Heinrich Fasts, the first winter. The structure was built so that half stood on the Fast side and half on the Kroeker property.<sup>842</sup> The semlin was insured for \$50.00. Kroeker also had coverage of \$400.00 for livestock and contents and \$200.00 for feed and supplies. In 1876 Franz Kroeker built a large house-barn, insured for \$400.00 on December 1, 1877. This building also served as the meeting house for the Kleine Gemeinde in Steinbach until 1882. In 1879 \$100.00 was added to this coverage.

Steinbach historian Klaas J. B. Reimer has written: "Mr. Kroeker was able to buy some green summer hay from John Mack, the first settler in the Clearsprings district. (Mr. Mack lived on the quarter that Alex McCaskill bought from him in 1879. He had a German speaking wife and is probably the settler referred to by the Russian delegates of 1873.) By feeding this hay to his oxen he was able to get them through the severe winter. A friendship developed between the two settlers as a result of this and Heinrich Fast, the neighbour boy, remembers that John Mack's sometimes visited the Kroeker's, Mrs. Mack acting as interpreter. After the first winter the Kroeker family had the dugout to themselves and they converted the available space for Sunday church services. After building a spacious residence, the church services were continued in the new residence for many years."<sup>843</sup>

Franz and Margaretha Kroeker corresponded with sister Sarah, Mrs. Jakob Thielmann, in Russia. On January 5, 1882, Sarah's husband wrote her parents



referring to a letter they had received from the Kroekers, noting they had not received a reply.<sup>844</sup>

In 1882 Franz Kroeker purchased the Wirtschaft No. 3 from neighbour Heinrich Fast and added \$200.00 insurance coverage for these buildings. The 1883 assessment records show that Franz Kroeker owned 480 acres of land, with 125 acres cultivated, buildings \$700.00, contents \$350.00, 7 horses, 2 oxen, 16 cattle, 6 calves, 5 pigs, a feed chopper, grass mower, hay rake, grain cleaner, three wagons, 3 plows, 3 harrows and 2 sleighs - total assessment \$1843. This was the second highest assessment in Steinbach, second only to merchant Kl. R. Reimer. Franz Kroeker was the highest assessed farmer in the village for many years. In 1886 he owned 400 acres, 7 horses, 21 cattle (including cattle under 3 years), and 5 pigs.

Historian Klaas J. B. Reimer has written: "Mr. Kroeker's grandson, Cornelius T. Kroeker, remembered that his grandfather owned a fair-sized flock of sheep in his farming days. He had hired the two Giesbrecht boys, Jacob and Dietrich, from the north end of the village, as herders. One day they herded the flock on the boundary line of south Steinbach. Four year-old Corny was with them on this occasion. Old Johann Klassen was the owner of the other land to the south and had put up a neat rail fence along the road allowance. As the boys had much leisure time, they started to test the strength of the old rails. It was great fun to see them break so easily. The pleasure came to an abrupt end when Mr. Klassen appeared on the scene with a formidable stick to mete out justice. Only by humbly begging forgiveness did they escape heavy punishment."<sup>845</sup>

Margaretha Plett Kroeker was an intelligent person maintaining a journal covering the years 1891 to 1909. Next only to the journal of son-in-law Johann R. Dueck, it was the earliest known journal in Steinbach and the earliest known journal by a Kleine Gemeinde woman. The journal was inherited by great-grandson Ben K. Plett, Landmark, Manitoba and translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg. The journal for the year 1892 was recently published by Professor Royden Loewen.<sup>846</sup> Margaretha Plett Kroeker, as seen through her journal, provides a classic example of the significant role of women in the management of the household economy and their prominent place in conservative Mennonite society. One way of understanding this valuable primary document is by examining its contents relative to various topics.

The most obvious purpose of Margaretha's journal, was to document the lives of the relatively small Kroeker family, consisting of son Cornelius P. Kroeker, daughter Margaretha and son-in-law Johann R. Dueck, and daughter Sarah and husband Peter R. Dueck. Margaretha Plett Kroeker recorded, for example, the frequent family butchering bees. Dec. 20, 1892: "We and Johann Duecks each slaughtered an ox." Dec. 21. "He and Johann Duecks took the hind quarter to Winnipeg, 192 pounds for 4 1/2 cents. \$8.24." The Kroeker children were frequently included in their social life. Oct. 28, 1892. "The parents came here for night." Oct. 29. "The service was here. The parents, the old Mrs. Berg, Cor. Fasts, Cor. Pletts, Mrs. Abraham Reimer, and in the evening all three pairs of children were here as visitors." Although the three sets of children farmed independently, there was much overlap and working together as a family unit. Sept. 27, 1893.

“Father and the children got Loewen’s threshing machine from Blumenort.” July 15, 1894. “Father and J. Dueck and P. Dueck went to Winnipeg. For potatoes they received 35 cents.” Dec. 6, 1900. “Joh. Duecks slaughtered 10 hogs and a cow. We took a hind quarter of 133 pounds for 5 1/2 cents.” Dec. 11. “Joh. Dueck went to Winnipeg. We sent one hog along.” On Nov. 12, 1901, Margaretha noted: “In the afternoon Peter Dueck ordained as Ältester.” A few days later, Nov. 21, the sombre, “Johann Dueck, our son-in-law died.” Nov. 27. “The funeral.”

Margaretha’s journal documented the life-world of the extended Kroeker and Plett families. Particularly important were Margaretha’s parents and eight siblings, living in Blumenhof and Blumenort, three miles north of Steinbach. Almost every day one or more of her brothers, sister Maria, or parents, would stop in for dinner, vassa or supper or the Kroekers would be visiting them. Frequently they came on the Sundays when the worship services were held in Steinbach. January 25, 1892. “We were at the parents and Peter Pletts.” January 24. “The service was here. The parents, Cor. Pletts, H. and Peter Reimers were visiting us.” References to “Old Mrs. Plett” refer to next door neighbour and sister-in-law Maria, the widow of brother Isaac Plett. Jan. 28, 1896. “[Cor.] Kroeker went to Winnipeg. The old Mrs. Plett also went along with H. Cornelsen to Winnipeg because of [son] Isaac’s stomach.” Dec. 17, 1903. Margaretha noted her brother “C. Pletts came back from Nebraska.” The fullness of the Kroeker’s social calendar is emphasized by Margaretha’s casual note Sept. 25, 1904: “The [worship] service. For once we have no visitors. [Cousin] H. Loewen, Nebraska, was at P. Duecks.”

Occasionally, also, Franz M. Kroeker’s brothers Peter and Jakob from Rosenort would drop in, or Margaretha and her husband would drive to *jantsied*, as they said in those days, to visit for several days. Margaretha took pains to record the activities of her widowed sister-in-law, Mrs. Abraham Sawatzky, nee Katharina Kroeker, from Nebraska, and her family. Sept. 28, 1895. “[Nephew] Abr. Sawatzky came here and got work at the mill.” Sept. 30. “He took our team and got his wife from *jantsied*.” They could count on the Kroekers for employment. May 31, 1896. “Abr. Sawatzky helped 6 1/2 days with seeding.” Sister-in-law Katherina Sawatzky lived with the Kroekers, where “she took sick [Sept. 22] at 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 30, she died. She was 76 years.” Oct. 3, “The funeral.”

Margaretha kept in touch with her Plett and Loewen cousins. She noted when cousin Franz Isaac arrived from Russia on July 8th, 1893. A week later she had them over, July 21: “Franz Isaaks came her for dinner and stayed until evening.” Nov. 19, 1894, Margaretha Kroeker noted that cousin, “...Joh. Warkentin had left for Kansas” moving to Hillsboro. May 20-21, 1895. “[Cousin] Mrs. Peter Friesen of Nebraska was here at our place.” Oct. 19, 1901, another cousin, “Klaas Koops, Nebraska, came here for the night.” April 16, 1902. “Peter Isaak was here as guest. He had returned from Texas.” April 9, 1903. “We went to A. Pletts, to attend the service. Jakob Thielmanns came from Russia to A. Pletts.” April 17. A. Plett went and met them in Winnipeg and P. Plett got them from the train.” Nov. 19, 1903, Margaretha noted, “.....for dinner the bridle couple, Mrs. Brandt and Jak. Thielmanns were here.” Thielmann presumably was Margaretha’s deceased sister Sarah’s son. April 12, 1902, Margaretha noted the death of her cousin’s widow,

"Mrs. C. Friesen, Blumenort, died suddenly while eating dinner. She was 55 years, 10 months, and some days." April 15. "The funeral."

Over the years the Kroeker farm employed various servants and maids. Margaretha usually made mention of them. December 24, 1891, the opening entry of the journal, "Katharina [Penner] went home and did not come again." Jan. 4. "Penners came to get her clothes." With these terse words, referring to the end of a maid's service, Margaretha started her journal. March 14-16. "Abraham Schellenberg worked here for 75 cents a day." March 23. "Father and Dalke went for popular wood." May 3, 1897. "Hired Giesbrecht's Wilhelm for seeding. Ploughing and seeding five acres oats and ploughing for sowing barley." May 18, 1897, they hired a carpenter Johann Esau. "He worked five days. He takes nine cents per hour for putting in the pantry ceiling and floor in the house."

The booming Steinbach business sector required more manpower than locally available and German immigrants ("Prie'se") and others filled the vacuum. July 13, 1892, Kroeker brought along a servant referred to as "Paul" from Winnipeg, at \$6.00 per month and laundry. August 18, "a German immigrant "Barkowski helped to level the manure." May 2, 1895. "Adam began sawing wood." By the turn of the century the Kroekers were helping recent immigrants by leasing cows. Nov. 22, 1902. "The young Mrs. Shenkel got the cow for a year for \$5.00." April 5, 1904. "Kochen came here and lived here in the kitchen." July 7, 1904. "The young Mrs. Shenkel borrowed 108 pounds of flour until the new wheat harvest."

Within traditional Mennonite culture, journals were a necessary tool providing the statistics needed to farm: crop and breeding records, weather patterns, etc. Margaretha regularly recorded the details of cows calving, interspersed among deaths and community events. February 16, 1892, "The Daelli calved" February 22. Brother "Peter Pletts were here for the night. Corn. got the cow." The extent of the Kroeker farming operations also becomes evident. Aug. 20. "During the night much rain. Cut wheat in the afternoon." August 31 and Sept. 1. "Began hauling wheat to the yard." Sept. 13. "Until lunch we finished gathering in the grain." Sept. 14 and 15. "We had a little frost." 15. "I began digging potatoes. Father helped Gerhard Giesbrechts with threshing. The cattle began grazing on the ploughed land...Then Paul left and went to Johann Wiebes." "Threshed on the 19th until lunch at Burkowskis and then to Kroekers until the 20th afternoon and then at our place, 182 bushels of wheat." May 9, 1893. "Father began to plow in the forenoon." In the back pages of the journal, Margaretha kept careful annual accounts not only for farm sales like eggs, butter and chickens, traditionally part of the woman's domain, but also of seeding times, grain production and wheat and meat sales. An unusual incident was reported April 1, 1900. "We sold two cows for \$85.00 to the Jews. The night following someone came to take away our money. April 3. "Isaak Plett came here with a policeman from Winnipeg."

Margaretha and Franz had close relationships with their fellow Steinbachers and particularly senior members of the community like Peter K. Barkmans, co-founder of the flour mill, and Cornelius Loewens, her uncle. Oct. 21, 1892. "We and the old Peter Barkmans went to *jantsied*." Jan. 20, 1893, "the old Cor. Loewens came here for dinner and stayed for night." March 8, 1893. "The old Cor. Loewens

came here to visit, three days." Nov. 30, 1893. "the sheep were brought home. Kroeker and Joh. Dueck got them. Father and Burkowski hauled poplar wood in the afternoon. Slaughtered 17 chickens and cleaned them. In the evening Father went to Cor. Loewens'. The old man is confined to bed." Nov. 10. "At 8 o'clock in the evening, the old Cor. Loewen died." The return to the Kleine Gemeinde community of old friend and former neighbour, Cor. Fast was noted. April 16, 1893: "Cor. Fast was accepted into the church."

Events of significance to the Steinbach community were recorded. August 31, 1895. "Heavy rain during the night and very hard thunder. Lighting struck at Gortitz, but did not burn, they could extinguish it." April 4, 1896. A Frenchman disappeared. They sought for several days and did not find him." April 26. Sunday. "In the forenoon Kroekers' children went on the road ahead and found the Frenchman on our ploughed field." Margaretha then added several lines detailing the incident. Oct. 14, 1898. "Braun got killed handling stones." The day following the death of sister-in-law Mrs. Abr. Sawatzky, on Sept. 30, 1900, a "telephone [telegram?] message was sent to *jentsied* to Jak. and Peter Kroekers" the first mention of the new gadget. Nov. 14, 1901, "Jak. and Pet. Kroeker, Joh. Friesen, C. Eidses and H. Friesen," who had been in Steinbach for the ordination of Peter Dueck as Ältester, "...went by rail to *jantsied*," a first in terms of travelling by this mode. Nov. 1, 1902. "They came home with the threshing machine. Then they took wheat to the railway," presumably to Giroux, the first mention of a new way of marketing grain. On several occasions family members attended to see "Dr." Joh. Peters in Grunthal. March 5, 1906. "P. Duecks and Mrs. Dueck went to Peters to have his knee treated."

The extended Kleine Gemeinde community played an important part in the Kroeker's lives. June 8, 1893. "The Nebraska people arrived. Jakob Bartel came to this side and [Ält.] Abr. Friesen and [Rev.] Cor. Friesen to the other side." On the 22nd the Nebraska Ohms and brother Jak. M. Kroeker returned to the Kroekers' home in Steinbach. Dec. 18, 1893. "Ministerial election took place. Abraham Dueck, Grünfeld, and Peter Loewen, Neuanlage, as ministers, and our Peter Dueck as deacon." Jan. 1, 1894. "[Nephew] Is. Plett left the church." Frequent reference is made to meetings of the Ohms which included her brother Cornelius L. Plett, brother-in-law Peter Reimer and son-in-law Peter Dueck. Feb. 27, 1897. "The Nebraska Ohms were here visiting." In 1902, the Kleine Gemeinde started holding worship services in Blumenhof, initially at the home of Margaretha's brother Abraham: February 19. "The first service was at A. Pletts' in Blumenhof." April 1, 1903. "They started to build the church building." March 18, 1906. "Service in Blumenort. Old Mrs. Klaas Reimer banned."

The Kroekers' life-world straddled international and denominational boundaries. June 10, 1901. "Joh. Quiring, Dakota, came here." March 3, 1905. "P. Rempels were visiting us. They came from Russia in fall and live in Kansas." The Kroekers visited with several Bergthaler families. Feb. 21, 1901, "Joh. Friesen, Strassburg came here for the night." April 3, 1901. "We were in Schönfeld attending a funeral. Joh. Siemens' son Peter." July 22, 1902. "The old Mrs. Schneider with her children came here for a little while."

By 1896 Franz Kroeker retired from active farming. The 1896 assessments show their holdings had declined to 80 acres, 5 horses, 1 ox, 20 cattle, 5 sheep and 3 pigs. They had transferred and given land to their children. In addition to the village land, they also owned 120 acres on SW32-6-6E, of which their children later each inherited 80 acres.

Franz Kroeker suffered much from an injured foot which did not heal. Historian Klaas J. B. Reimer writes that Franz "...was afflicted with a sore leg since his youth resulting in his lameness in later years." Granddaughter Katharina Dueck, Mrs. Diedrich Reimer, recalled having been told the injury occurred when a big wheel (possibly a water wheel) fell on his foot while they were fixing it. The children were sent to collect a certain type of leaf which was packed on the foot to cool it. Margaretha Plett Kroeker first referred to her husband's illness Jan. 19, 1900. "Loewen's Joh. was here. He gave some medicine for Father's foot to heal."

The Kroekers were generous people having been known to give of their property to help poorer families get established. They took in a foster daughter of a Penner family that was very poor. This foster daughter was a little younger than Sarah (Mrs. Peter R. Dueck), and later became a Mrs. Johann Siemens and moved to Paraguay. March 13, 1899, the old Mrs. P. Eidses died. She had lived for two full years at the Kroeker home.

About one year before his death, Franz Kroeker suffered from a stroke-like attack from which he however recovered to the extent that he could get around. Margaretha Kroeker recorded the event in her journal. June 3, 1903. "Father got sick suddenly so that he could not work." On July 9, she noted, "Father still cannot speak everything the way he would like to." Two years later he became very sick and died August 8, 1905. His widow noted in her journal, "Father died at 7:30 p.m. He lay in bed three weeks with much pain." Aug. 11. "The funeral."

Widow Margaretha Plett Kroeker was an independent person and continued to reside in the family home. The 1906 assessments show 80 acres registered in her name. During her last years there her granddaughters would take turns coming in to stay with her for night. Granddaughter, Katharina Dueck, Mrs. Diedrich L. Reimer, recalled how scared she was when entering the grandparents establishment through the barn, and then through more doors, through the summer kitchen and, finally, into the living room (grote scthoave) where grandmother would be seated. The living room would be the only room to be lighted. Margaretha was often visited by brother Cornelius L. Plett, by now living with children, Bernhard Doerksens, in Friedensfeld, one mile southeast of Steinbach (NE24-6-6E).

In 1911 Margaretha moved to her own small house and attached barn on the yard of her children Peter R. Duecks on SE 26-6-6E. Her former premises were then used as a private school for two years.<sup>847</sup> April 12, 1912, brother Cornelius L. Plett recorded he had "...driven to Steinbach for the auction sale which was of the goods of my sister Margaretha Kroeker."

The Peter R. Dueck girls took turns staying over night with their grandmother in her little cottage on their yard. Margaretha kept a cow, some chickens and a hog for her own needs. In the barn there was a window (door) right beside the cow, and she could clean out the manure without having to hitch on

the horse. In the spring the Peter R. Dueck sons had the job of spreading the manure in Margaretha's beautiful garden. Grandson Jakob P. Dueck recalled that when grandmother would get visitors, such as her brother Cornelius L. Plett, the grandsons would quickly run to the garden where she was often working to tell her in the hopes of then receiving one of her delicious syrup cookies as a reward. She was remembered by all her grandchildren as having been an exceptionally good cook. She was especially remembered for her wonderful syrup cookies, which no one was able to duplicate, the recipe having been lost. An interesting feature of her house was a cord connected to a bell in the Peter R. Dueck residence, which she could ring if she required anything.

Grandson Cornelius P. Dueck recalled his grandmother, winding up the "trakjcha klock" every night for bedtime. Margaretha had the clock beside her bed. The family tradition was the pendulum clock had come along with the grandparents from Prussia. It had the date 1819 on the face. Since the Kroekers came to Russia in 1804, it is believed that the clock came with the Johann Plett family who arrived in Russia in 1828. Presumably it was inherited by son Cornelius and then by daughter Margaretha.<sup>848</sup>

For the last year of her life Margaretha Plett Kroeker was no longer able to look after her own needs and so she moved into the Peter R. Dueck home where she was lovingly cared for until her death. In a letter of February 20, 1918, son-in-law Peter R. Dueck writes that "Since the 15th of November the beloved mother is living in our room. She is often sickly. Her eyesight was quite bad for a time, but now it is slowly getting better and she is starting to read again."<sup>849</sup>



*The Kroeker Pendulum clock, with the date 1819 on the face plate. The clock was inherited by daughter Sarah Kroeker Dueck and then by her son Cornelius P. Dueck. Photo - Preservings, No. 8, Part Two, page 60.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	Margaretha Plett	Oct 27, 1842		Dec 9, 1920
m	Franz M. Kroeker	Aug 6, 1827	Aug 19, 1861	Aug 9, 1905
6	Cornelius P. Kroeker	Jun 27, 1862		Sep 6, 1942
m	Katharina Toews	Jul 13, 1866	Apr 1, 1884	Jan 16, 1938
2m	Katharina W. Reimer	Jul 15, 1866		Sep 15, 1940
6	Margaretha Kroeker	Sep 13, 1863		Aug 5, 1918
m	Johann R. Dueck	Dec 1, 1860	Nov 19, 1882	Nov 24, 1901
2m	Isaac W. Loewen	Aug 16, 1845	1909	Sep 15, 1926
6	Jakob P. Kroeker	Mar 4, 1866		Oct 11, 1868
6	Franz P. Kroeker	Jun 4, 1869		1870
6	Sara P. Kroeker	Mar 7, 1871	Dec 9, 1888	Feb 10, 1951
m	Peter R. Dueck	Aug 29, 1862		Jan 7, 1919



The Franz M. Kroeker house-barn built in 1875 and insured for \$400.00 in 1877. Kleine Gemeinde worship services for the Steinbach church district were held here from 1875 until 1882. In was here that Holdeman and Seiler preached in 1881. In 1911 the Kleine Gemeinde church school operated here for two years. Photo - Preservings, No. 10, Part One, page 76.

An Franz Kroeker Steinbach

Vormündung

No. 3

Inselbe wird firmit über die Union  
 d'igen Kindes des Wittwe Peter Frosche  
 befehlt zum Vormund Erhöchtigt, und  
 zugleich Aufgabtrager für die  
 Vergen zu fassen, das für Geistlich  
 von ungen, und ifam in allen billigen  
 Dingen Pust winderfassen mögten auf  
 Insam 1, 17. in. Virens 4, 10.

Rosenfeld am 15, Januari 1883,

Waisenvorsteher Gerhard Schellenberg

The official "Vormünder Appointment" by Waisenvorsteher Gerbard Schellenberg, Rosenfeld. Courtesy of Elvina Loewen, Steinbach, Manitoba. Photo - Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 13.

6 Son **Cornelius Plett Kroeker** married Katharina R. Toews, daughter of Peter Toews (1838-82) and Elisabeth Reimer of Steinbach, Manitoba. Her father was sickly. He was a teamster and often away from home. The farm work was left mostly for his wife and children. The family struggled financially. Peter Toews died on May 9, 1882 at the age of 43. At first it was suggested that the younger children be put in with relatives, but with help from her mother's brothers, and the appointment of Franz M. Kroeker as "Vormund" or advocate for them, the family could stay together.<sup>850</sup> Katharina's mother was left with a growing family, the youngest only one year-old. Her oldest sister was already married and another sister Anna got married in November of that year. So much of the work fell on the 15 year-old Teen and her 10 year-old brother, Peter. She often cried in frustration when the old oxen were balky, and the plough was too hard for her to handle. Katharina had a strong character and a natural sense of humour that helped her through some difficult times in her life. Through her parents' admonitions, and the moving of the Holy Spirit, she accepted Christ as her Saviour at an early age. She was baptized by Ält. Abraham L. Friesen, Nebraska.<sup>851</sup>

For the first years Katharina and Cornelius farmed together with his parents. In 1887 they established their home on Wirtschaft 1 which his father acquired in 1874.<sup>852</sup> They located their yard and premises at the corner of what is now Kroeker and Main St. According to the Kleine Gemeinde insurance records the house was insured for \$600.00. By this time they were farming on their own with 160 acres of land and 43 cultivated, two horses and four cows. Cornelius P. Kroeker took over his father's farming operation. In his time Cornelius was a large scale farmer seeding up to 500 acres. He also had a mixed farm with a dairy, and in some years, sheep. In 1900 he bought the farm of Johann Klassen which lay to the south of him. Thus by 1900 the Kroekers owned all the village land south of the present day Barkman Avenue. In addition he owned NW26-6-6E, SW36-6-6E and 100 acres of SW32-6-6E. He was always interested in breeding good horses and usually had a dozen heavy Percherons.

In 1905 the Kroekers built a new house which "...was one of the elite homes in Steinbach; well built, with all modern conveniences of that time....Of special interest was the pump at the kitchen sink, eliminating the endless trips to the barn for water....The indoors bathroom was another facility that we thought was really a 'throne' room, with its vented pail, enamel bath tub and wash stand. To top it off, you could light up the house with the flick of a switch. What class!...[The house]...was quite big with 14 rooms, plus basement and porches. Having separate kitchen, dinning room, living room and master bedroom downstairs, and a bathroom and seven more bedrooms upstairs, and two stairways leading up to them, something which few houses had at that time. I loved the covered porch, where you could sit and watch the people go by. It also had a back porch that extended up to a balcony accessible from upstairs. It also went around to a side entrance."<sup>853</sup> It was said that Katharina Kroeker had "...such a well-equipped, well-stocked kitchen that she surely could not wish for anything more. This probably came in handy, not only to feed her own large family, but also for entertaining the many visitors, salesmen, refugees etc., who always found



a warm welcome at the large house at the south end of town. It was also conveniently situated close to the church, so it was very handy to drop in for dinner right after the church service.....[Daughter] Sara remembers the big pots of Plumi moos (or any other fruit season, even gooseberries), potatoes and meat that were cooked in advance, to be ready to serve family and guests."<sup>854</sup> The first house stayed on the yard and became a "Gjemeinte Hus", or community house, where various Russländer refugees and others found a welcome home in time of need. In 1928 this old house was moved to Hanover Street and became the first Steinbach hospital. In 1892, Katharina's mother had remarried to Heinrich L. Friesen in Rosenort, Manitoba. After his death in 1910 she moved into a small house in the Cornelius P. Kroeker yard where she lived until her death in the influenza epidemic of 1918.<sup>855</sup>

Cornelius P. Kroeker was also involved in the threshing business, purchasing his first steam engine, a Case 15/30, in partnership with Abram P. Reimer in 1896. Apparently brother-in-law Peter R. Dueck may also have been a partner for the first years. As was common among the Kleine Gemeinde farmers, German Lutherans, who had settled in the Friedensfeld area during the 1890s, were hired for the threshing crews as well as other work. Custom threshing was also done with the main customers in the Steinbach and Friedensfeld districts. In 1910 Cornelius and his cousin Peter B. Kroeker bought a brand-new Rumley. Son Frank T. Kroeker was usually the engineer of the steam engine while Peter T. Kroeker ran the threshing machine. In 1922 Cornelius P. Kroeker replaced the steam engine with a new Titan tractor. He usually bought modern equipment when it became available.

Historian Klaas J. B. Reimer has written: "The father of C.T. Kroeker became well known by the second generation of the village as he became a big scale farmer. In 1900 he bought the aforementioned farm owned by Mr. Klassen, thus providing work for his growing family.....As early as 1894 he and another Steinbach farmer, A.P. Reimer, owned a steam threshing outfit. The same year in spring, an incident occurred which left a keep impression on C.T. Kroeker, then a lad of six years. It was in the later part of March that two men left for their home in La Broquerie. When only one of the two men arrived home, a diligent search was started. Both French and Mennonite search parties spent days looking for the missing man but for weeks no clue of his whereabouts could be found. A new snowfall further hindered the search. The frantic relatives offered a considerable sum of money to anyone finding the missing man. One Sunday morning, about four weeks later, when some of the snow had disappeared, young Cornelius with his elder and younger sisters set out on a walk along the winding creek which, incidentally, was also the main road east. Suddenly one of the children spied something white. Walking boldly nearer they found it to be the missing man. With great haste they ran back home to spread the news about the gruesome discovery. His father went to Peter T. Barkman and together they went to La Broquerie to report the case. After the arrival of the dead man's friends, a small hut was built over the body and a team was sent to Winnipeg to notify the police. After due investigation the authorities released the corpse for burial."<sup>856</sup>

In 1929 Katharina and Cornelius P. Kroeker went on a long journey. Cornelius P. Kroeker wrote a "Reisebericht" published in the *Steinbach Post* (Issue No. 33, August, 1929) summarized by granddaughter Katie Kroeker Barkman: "On June 19, 1929 I, with my wife, son John as driver, and daughters Tien and Sara left, by car, to go as far as Golden, B.C." It was a visiting trip, but for health reasons they also spent some time in Banff Hot Springs. Mentioning some of the people they visited may bring back memories for some of you, as you follow their trip. They stayed at grandma's sister, the Corn. Ratzlaffs, in Herbert a few days. They also visited Gottlieb Janhkies, Klaas Friesens, Peter X. Friesens, Heinrich Giesbrechts, Peter S. Reimers in the Herbert area. Between Herbert and Levine they paid a surprise visit to their grandson Cornelius, son of Isaac W. Reimers, who worked on the railway, building bridges. He was quite overwhelmed to get visitors from home. Here they also met H. H. Hieberts and Corn. Barkmans. In the Lethbridge-Coaldale area they were amazed at the huge beet fields, and found the irrigation farming fascinating. Here they visited the David Lepps, who had stayed with them awhile when they first came to Canada. In Swalwell they visited the John R. Barkmans and spent the night at John Penners. They knew about "Mennoniting Your Way", long before it got popular and organized later. They also visited John Riegers, but mostly stayed at Peter (Schmidt) Toews, who were going to travel with them the rest of the way. July 8 they packed up their clothes and food and were off to Banff. After some days of soaking in the Hot Springs and mountain climbing they left for Golden, their last destination. On the Sunday morning when they started their trek back east, he writes grandma is cooking fresh cherry moas, and Mrs. Toews is making pancakes for the days' meals. They probably ate quite well, even though he doesn't once mention eating in a restaurant. I found it quite interesting that they visited my future in-laws, John D. Barkmans in Saskatoon, as well as the P.P.R. Toews and the Reimer families. In Hepburn they visited grandpa's cousins, the Jake and Gerhard Thielmanns. In Foam Lake they stayed at the Klaas R. Barkmans for night, and at Jacob Fasts for dinner next day. They came home on July 30, thankful for a safe trip, having covered about 4,500 miles."<sup>857</sup>

In 1933 Cornelius was on a trip to Kansas when he "was called home for an emergency and could only look on the face of his dead son Abraham...."

Cornelius P. Kroeker "... was seriously ill with typhoid fever in mid-life; but otherwise he could always do his work."<sup>858</sup>

The depression hit Cornelius P. Kroeker hard. Granddaughter Katie Kroeker Barkman explained, "The market dropped, but people could not afford to buy, even at inflated prices. Most of his sons chose other than farming careers....In 1929 [son] Peter Kroeker moved in....and took over some responsibilities.....After about five years. grandson John K. Reimer, as a 16 year-old, helped out with the farm work."<sup>859</sup> Having worked for him for several years, John could not remember his grandfather ever saying a harsh word or putting him down for something he did wrong.

In 1934 Cornelius P. Kroeker retired and sold the SW36-6-6E to son Henry T. Kroeker. The land in the town of Steinbach was divided among the children

and the NW26-6-6E was sold to Russländer refugees for potato farming for \$10.00 per acre in narrow strips off what then became known as "Moscow Street" (later renamed McKenzie Road).<sup>860</sup>

According to the obituary Katharina Toews Kroeker was sickly a good part of her life. The last time she had gone out was to her sister-in-law's, Mrs. Klaas R. Toews' funeral in November 1937. After that her condition got worse and pneumonia set in. She died Sunday, January 16, 1938, at the age of 71 years, six months and three days. She went home to her rest, where there will be no more pain, sorrow or temptation.

On November 10, 1838, Cornelius P. Kroeker remarried to the widow Peter T. Barkman, nee Katharina W. Reimer. The *Christlicher Familienfreund* reports on their Verlobung held on Nov. 5, and that "a special feature at this event was that father Kroeker's daughter-in-law Mrs. Frank T. Kroeker was also in attendance with her bridegroom, a recently immigrated brother, Peter Unger, who held their Verlobung the previous day....The bridegroom, who previously belonged to the Kirchliche, was received into our Gemeinde the previous week."

Cornelius and Katharina "were able to serve each other for mutual comfort." On August 30, 1940, she "...laid herself down, and did not become well again. Frequently, as she lay on her sick bed, she mentioned that she would right gladly go home; she had great longing. She seemed to be done with life and tired. It was difficult to establish her illness but it started with high blood pressure and pneumonia. At 11 p.m. Sept. 15, 1940, her hour of death was come and gently and almost unnoticeably she was able to go home."<sup>861</sup>

Cornelius P. Kroeker passed away on Sept. 6, 1942, of cancer from which he suffered for the last year. Even in the last summer he drove to Prairie Rose (Landmark) by himself to visit his children and only spent the last two months in bed at home and only the last two days in hospital.

Cornelius P. Kroeker is remembered as a quiet peaceable man who loved farming. He was a systematic, meticulous man, and what he did, he did well. His house and buildings were among the best built and kept in all of Steinbach. But more important, he had a kind and compassionate heart. Historian Klaas J. B. Reimer gives Cornelius Kroeker the following testimony: "Cornelius Kroeker Sr. lived as a village farmer all his life. He made many friends during all those years and is still remembered for his fair dealings. The oldest son, Cornelius, who helped to compile these notes, later lived on the same lot owned by father and grandfather. He operated a flourishing oil business under the name of C.T. Kroeker & Sons."



*Cornelius P. Kroeker, Steinbach farmer, 1940. Photo - Pres., No. 12, page 77.*



*Cornelius P. Kroeker (1862-1942), 1938. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 66.*



*Katharina Toews Kroeker (1866-1938), ca. 1935. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 81.*



*John T. Kroeker (1906-96). Photo - Pres., No. 12, page 77.*



*Henry T. Kroeker and Margaret H. W. Reimer wedding photo, 1928. Their marriage represented the union of two prosperous Steinbach families - retail merchant Heinrich W. Reimer, and the Kroekers. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 82.*



*The "old" Kroeker house which was moved in 1928 and used as the Steinbach Invalid Home. According to Kleine Gemeinde insurance records it was insured in 1887 for \$600.00. Photo - Reflections, page 226/Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 65.*



*Rumely steam engine purchased by Cornelius P. Kroeker and cousin Peter B. Kroeker in 1910. This picture was taken in 1928 after the machine had been sold to Streich Brothers, Niverville. Photo courtesy of John C. Reimer, Steinbach/Plett Picture Book, page 148/Pres., No. 12, page 78.*



*The new Cornelius P. Kroeker house, built in 1908, at what is today the corner of Kroeker Ave., and Main Street. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman. Photo - Preservings, No. 10, Part One, page 76.*



*Cornelius P. Kroeker steam engine outfit moving the former house of his parents-in-law, Peter P. Toews'. The Jakob S. Friesen printery, right. The shorter man standing in the middle by the door is C. T. Loewen. The man standing at left with his back to the camera is Cornelius P. Kroeker. The man standing beside the door may be son Cornelius T. Kroeker, the man on the steam engine may be Jakob B. Kroeker from Rosenort. Photo - P. T. Friesen/Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 18.*

6 Daughter **Margaretha Plett Kroeker** married Johann R. Dueck, son of minister Jakob L. Dueck of Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>862</sup> They established their home on the Wirtschaft No. 3 which her father had acquired from Heinrich Fast in 1882.<sup>863</sup> They built their premises on Main Street, north of the Franz M. Kroeker premises, approximately where the MCC “Self-Help Store” is located today.

Johann R. Dueck kept a five-year diary starting January 1, 1888, the first known journal in the Steinbach area. He described the construction of their new barn: Tuesday, January 10, 1888, “Isaak Plett began to make shorting for the well.” On the 25th he and I. Plett started drilling the well. In the meantime Johann made numerous trips to the “pine” bush, where he was cutting logs for saw lumber and fire wood. February 2, 1888, he “...began to build the barn.” Feb. 13. “I and I. Loewen started the carpentry work.” On the 18th they “completed the gable and put on the roof boards.” On Monday the 23rd, they “finished covering the roof of the barn, and began to nail the shingles.” Johann also started the seeding that day. August 2, 1888, Johann “laid a floor in the basement” finishing the job the next day. December 7, 1888, he “finished shingling the smithy.” July 3, 1889, Johann started building a machine shed.

Margaretha and Johann’s furniture was first insured on April 25, 1887. On August 25, 1887, a new dwelling house was added for \$200.00. The house was relatively substantial as by December 24 of that year the coverage was increased to \$400.00 and the next spring to \$600.00, reflecting the value of the large barn and other buildings which Johann had added.

As a young married man, Johann R. Dueck was actively involved in community work. On Thursday, January 3, 1889, he received notice to appear in Schönthal for a municipal meeting on the 5th. The R. M. of Hanover minutes record a meeting that day with the Vorsteher and Councillors and in the afternoon “the [village] Schulzen [mayors] were present” and approved their program.<sup>864</sup> It is not completely clear in what capacity Johann attended the meeting. His journal for 1889 to 1891 indicated responsibilities relating to road work and bridges, a position usually referred to as “road boss”. June 2, 1888, he “worked with horses on the road to Lichtenau.” June 4, 1891. I worked on the road.” Saturday, June 22, 1888, “in the morning, worked on the bridge.” And the next year, June 22, 1890 “worked on the road.” Monday, Jan. 10, 1891, he “repaired the bridge at J.P.” Johann also had duties regarding the auditing of village or municipal accounts. On December 24, 1888, he “attended to the mayor’s concerns.” On the 28th he “helped audit the village accounts.” On December 28, 1889, and December 27, 1890, he “took the tax money from Grünfeld to Schönthal,” possibly doing someone a favour on his way back to Steinbach.

Johann R. Dueck served as the Steinbach “Brandschulz” or district manager for the mutual fire insurance (Brandordnung) operated by the Kleine Gemeinde. On Wednesday, January 2, 1889, he wrote, “...collected the fire insurance premiums for the first time.” January 9, 1889, he “received a request from the mayor to permit the election of a Brandältester,” and the next day he mailed out the necessary notices. July 20, 1888, he “collected the fire insurance.” Tuesday, December 25, 1888, he “...went with the fire insurance money to Lichtenau,” where

Gerhard S. Kornelsen, the Brandältester, or president, lived. Being involved in the fire insurance association Johann noted several fires. December 19, 1888, Johann reported “the [worship] service was here [in Steinbach], during the service a fire started at Kornelius Loewens’.” August 14, 1892, Johann reported a much bigger fire: “during the night the steam mill burned down.”

Johann’s journal contains numerous details regarding his farming operations. During the early years some grain from Steinbach was shipped via the railway in Niverville. March 28 and 31st, 1888, Johann reported going to “Niverville with two sleighs.” On May 2, 1891, he “went to Otterburne with potatoes.” November 26, 1888, Johann “bagged oats in the morning, and went to Winnipeg, [stayed] for the night at Buschers.” He arrived in the city the next day at noon, and “sold oats at the Hudson Bay Company for 27 cents a bushel,” returning home the next day.

Steinbach in the 1890s was still operating as a traditional “Strassendorf” and the open field system. May 17, 1888, Johann was seeding on the “Schadruthen,” the “Gewanne” or section of small lots crossing the end of the larger fields and acting as a buffer in case of prairie fire. August 28, 1888, he “did some cutting on Father’s Feuerstelle,” the small acreage attached to each lot along main street. The next day, he “cut my Schadruthe” and “the far side of the Feuerstelle and for Mrs. Plett, two acres.” Like any aggressive young farmer Johann did custom work - plowing, binding, and harvesting - in order to advance and be able to acquire the modern machinery needed. September 1, 1888, he “did some cutting oats for Kornelius Kroeker and father.” A year later, on September 1, 1890, he tried “Isaac Plett’s self-binder,” presumably an invention of some kind. September 13, 1892, “We began to thresh at G. Giesbrechts.” October 2, 1888, Johann reported “Heinrich threshing at Toews” while he worked in his house. On October 27, “Heinrich plowed.” Presumably Heinrich was an employee.

Johann R. Dueck was a gifted man, apparently proficient as a carpenter and blacksmith. Wednesday, January 2, 1889, he reported “I worked on the lathe.” The next day, he “started to work on a Prosch (crib).” January 23, 1892, he “started to build a milk cabinet.” June 1, 1891, he “started plastering the pantry.” Wednesday, January 17, he “did some blacksmith work for K. Kroeker.” Monday, March 13, 1890, he “shod Johann Klassen’s horse.”

Several times over the five year period Johann went to Clearsprings to “W. Lang.” August 24, 1889, “We had J. Peterson at the machine, possibly helping with repairs. April 2, 1889, he attended widow Isaak Plett’s auction sale on the Feuerstelle next door. Johann reported regularly the monthly brotherhood meetings but only rarely as to the subjects discussed or actions taken.

On Friday, July 13, 1888, Johann and Margaretha travelled to Rosenort, and stayed overnight at uncle Jak. Kroekers. Two days later, Kroeker took them to Morris where they boarded the train for Gretna to visit Johann’s cousin, Johann W. Dueck, staying for the night.

Johann R. Dueck referred to medical services. April 21, 1892, he reported that “Dr. Peters had dislocated his foot.” May 26, 1890, “Maria is still sick. I got [Dr.] I. Warkentin in the morning.” But June 12, “Maria died, at five o’clock in the morning.” Nonetheless, Johann “seeded until lunch.” The next day, he and



brother Peter made the coffin. One imagines the two brothers solemnly working together on the sad occasion. On Saturday, December 1, 1888, Johann reported "brother Peter got engaged to sister Sarah," undoubtedly a much happier event celebrated four days later, December 5, when "both sets of parents and the bridal couple were here for dinner."

At the back of journal are specific accounts with brother Peter R. Dueck, brother-in-law Cornelius P. Kroeker, neighbour and aunt, Mrs. Isaac Plett, and the major one, with father Franz M. Kroeker.

Johann operated one of the pioneer general stores in Steinbach. The store itself was built onto the northwest side of the house. "In between the house and the barn was a partition with large windows facing south....[He] used this for his store business."<sup>865</sup> It was said that Johann R. Dueck sometimes overworked himself hauling barrels full of apples, cookies, and whatever else was required from Winnipeg. The merchandise then had to be carried into the store or into the basement for storage - not easy work. Johann and Margaretha also had a big garden and fruit trees on each side of the street as well as a dairy and in some years a herd of sheep. The family prospered and by 1898 the assessment records show he was farming 390 acres of land of which 110 acres was cultivated, with 5 horses, 14 cows, 15 sheep, and 26 pigs. By 1900 his stable included 7 horses, 18 cows, 21 pigs and 26 sheep. In addition Johann found the time to serve his Gemeinde as a Vorsänger in the church.

Johann R. Dueck died of a haemorrhage on November 24, 1901, having suffered for the previous six months of heart trouble. November 21, 1901, mother-in-law Margaretha Kroeker recorded in her journal: "Johann Dueck, our son-in-law died." Nov. 27. "The funeral. He was 41 years. Sick six months, the last two days very sick. Their three children have died and seven still living. Abr. Loewen, Joh. Loewen and Joh. W. Dueck, Rosenhof, came for the funeral."

The store was closed after Johann R. Dueck's death. November 7, 1902, "Auction sale at Joh. Duecks' with cattle and farming implements."

Widow Margaretha Kroeker Dueck continued farming in the village until 1909 when she married Isaac W. Loewen from Rosenort, Manitoba. They lived in her premises in the village for four years.<sup>866</sup> At this time they bought the Tomlinson farm in Clearsprings, NE11-7-6E, just north of where the Clearsprings Mall is located today. This farm included a long dairy barn and an old house. They built a square two-story house that was used until 1979 when it was removed for the widening of the No. 12 Highway. Here Margaretha and Isaac Loewen continued farming with up to 18 milk cows.

During this time, Johann's mother, Maria, Mrs. Jakob L. Dueck, stayed with the family "much of the time. She was much troubled with sores or ulcers and needed much care. [Daughter] Sara was often asked to dress the sores."<sup>867</sup> When son-in-law Cornelius D. Barkman died in 1914, daughter Margaretha moved into the old house on the yard with her two children. Daughter Maria and her husband, John B. Reimer, bought the adjacent SE10-7-6E, where the Clearsprings Mall is located today.

Daughter Katharina, Mrs. Diedrich L. Reimer, recalled that on the evening

of August 5, 1918, she was milking in the barn, when she noticed her mother seemed to be rocking back and forth on her milk stool. When her mother did not respond to her anxious inquiries, she helped her mother sit down in the barn corridor, and called her step-father from the yard. She then ran for other help, and the first car coming along the road, happened to be George F. Friesens. They were good friends and stopped, and then helped to lay her mother on the couch. But it was of no avail and her mother passed away a short time later having suffered a stroke.

The next spring, step-father Isaac Loewen held an auction sale and the family including daughter Margaretha, moved back into the former property along the village main street, which had not been sold. In the fall of 1919, after daughter Margaretha had married for the second time, stepfather moved back to the Rosenort district where the most of his family resided. The younger children went to work out for others.

7 Daughter **Maria Kroeker Dueck** married Johann B. Reimer, son of Steinbach pioneer Johann R. Reimer. Maria and Johann farmed on the SE11-7-6E where the Clearsprings Mall is located today. Johann B. Reimer and Peter F. Unger, Blumenhof, were among those promoting Evangelical Fundamentalist teachings in the Kleine Gemeinde.<sup>868</sup> Maria and Johann B. Reimer had a number of prominent descendants in Steinbach including grandsons Reg and Gary Reimer, owners of "Reimer Farm Equipment." Grandson Doug Reimer teaches literature at the University of Manitoba, and has written two novels. His brother James Reimer is professor of theology professor at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, and author of a major work on Mennonite theology.

7 Daughter **Katharina R. Dueck** married Dietrich L. Reimer. They farmed in Linden, near Landmark, Manitoba. Their son Ralph Reimer is a retired farmer in Landmark.



*John B. and Maria Dueck Reimer. Photo - Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck, page 50.*



*A photograph of the Johann R. Dueck house-barn located directly across Main Street from the E.M.C. (formerly Kleine Gemeinde) church in Steinbach. The structure was built in a "L" shape, with a summer kitchen between residence and the barn. The property was acquired in 1928 by Mrs. Susanna Siemens Neufeld, who took this picture on December 8, 1935.<sup>869</sup> Photo - Preservings, No. 10, Part One, page 74.*



*Elisabeth Kroeker Dueck, daughter of Margaretha and Johann R. Dueck. Photo - Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck, page 61.*



*Daughter Margaretha Dueck Barkman (1890-1963) and her first husband Cornelius D. Barkman (1890-1914). Photo - Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck, page 37. Their granddaughter Elaine Barkman Beckett owns the Steinbach McDonalds.*

6 Daughter **Sara Plett Kroeker** married Peter R. Dueck, brother to Johann, sons of Rev. Jakob L. Dueck, Grünfeld. The story is told that as a young man, Peter Dueck “occasionally went to Winnipeg with products and brought back goods. This was done with horses and sleigh, or buggy. Once, when coming back he encountered a snow storm and got lost not far from home. Had it not been for a big buffalo fur coat and the protecting hand of God he would have frozen to death, for the temperature dropped rapidly below 30 degrees Remur. He kept himself and the horses from freezing by constantly walking in circles all night till dawn, when the storm had subsided and he found his way home.”<sup>870</sup> Historian Royden Loewen has referred to the incident as “an example of clearheadedness, resolve and ultimate aim which characterized his leadership in later years.”<sup>871</sup>

After their marriage, Sarah and Peter R. Dueck established their home in Steinbach just across the street from her parent’s place - just southeast of where the E.M.C. conference offices are located. Mother Margaretha Kroeker recorded that on March 29, 1892, Peter Duecks “begin to build. Also the posts for a well.” March 31. “They put on the rafters.” Peter R. Dueck is entered in the Brandordnung on April 25, 1891, for furniture for \$125.00. February 23, 1892, a dwelling house is entered for \$300.00 and April 25, a barn for another \$300.00 and \$100.00 for feed and supplies.

According to the 1891 assessment records Sara and Peter R. Dueck were farming 160 acres, 59 acres cultivated, with 2 horses, 10 cattle (3 cows and 7 under three years). In 1896 Peter Dueck was registered with 160 acres. As a minister his buildings were exempt from taxation. His stable held 6 horses, 19 cattle (10 of which are under three years), and 19 pigs. In 1910 the Steinbach village plan was dissolved and the farmers were relocating out of town onto “the land.” The village farm was sold to brother Cornelius who sold the yard to Peter G. Toews in 1923.<sup>872</sup>

In 1911 Peter and Sarah purchased the “Brandt” Reimer farm, the east half of Section 26-6-6E (320 acres). They farmed here for the rest of their days - a typical mixed farm with grain and dairy. Later they also purchased the NE23-6-6E. One of the interesting features of this farm was the large windmill built onto the south end of the barn which was used for grinding grain for feed and pumping water. Son Jac P. Dueck recalled how scared he sometimes was as the whole windmill would shake and rattle when the grindstones ran empty.

Peter R. Dueck was always busy with his church work and so the whole family was involved in the farming. It was a real treat for the sons when their father had time to help them with the farm work. “The youngest sons remember the fond days of working the land with their father, of putting extra oats into the feeding bags of poor visitors, of shipping grain to LaBroquerie, and of dealing with their Friedensfeld Lutheran neighbours.”

“His children remember him as a gentle, mild mannered and generous man, a powerful testimony to a first rate family man.”

## Ältestership, 1901-19.

Peter R. Dueck was elected as a deacon of the Kleine Gemeinde on December 18, 1893. He was elected as a minister on March 12, 1900. A year later he was elected as Ältester on July 17, 1901, at a brotherhood meeting in Blumenort. He served this office faithfully until his death.<sup>873</sup> He had warm receptive character and a special concern that the poorer people in the community were assisted. He was also a man of humility. Historian Royden Loewen, the expert on Peter R. Dueck, has written, "In his first year in office he invited Jakob Kroeker (the Bishop from Rosenort) to baptise the youth because as he says 'I felt too unworthy and incapable of it.'" But as Loewen added, "Other than this, there is every sign of a confident leader, who energetically picked up the challenge of leading the church."<sup>874</sup>

Peter R. Dueck worked closely with his fellow Ältester Abraham L. Friesen, Meade, Kansas, and Ältester Jakob M. Kroeker, Rosenort, Manitoba, as well as his "Lehrdienst" including the senior "Ohms" Peter W. Loewen, Neuanlage, and his wife's uncles Peter R. Reimer, Blumenort, and Cornelius L. Plett. By 1906 Cornelius Plett was living with his children only a mile to the east of the P. R. Dueck farm and a frequent companion on ministerial travels. During his term in office Peter R. Dueck would have to say farewell to all three of these faithful colleagues - Reimer and Loewen, through death, and Cornelius L. Plett, when he moved to Satanta, Kansas in 1915.

The memoirs of Peter F. Unger, Blumenhof, document two of Peter R. Dueck's trips to Kansas: "In November 1913, the ministerial from Manitoba, namely: Ältester Peter R. Dueck, Steinbach; Rev. Johann K. Friesen, Morris, and Rev. Abram Eidse, joined a few days later by Rev. Cornelius L. Plett, travelled to Meade, Kansas, where they conducted many worship services and brethren meetings." Peter R. Dueck made a similar trip the following year: "In the fall of 1914 Ältester Abram Friesen from Meade, Kansas, was here on a visit also bringing God's word, notwithstanding that his eyesight was already very poor. He requested that the ministerial from here come to Meade, Kansas, as a new Ältester was needed there. Accordingly, on November 4, 1914, Ältester Peter R. Dueck and Rev. Cornelius L. Plett, accompanied Ältester Abraham Friesen back to Meade to conduct the Ältester election there. Here Rev. Jakob F. Isaac was elected as Ältester on November 23, 1914."<sup>875</sup>

During the war years, Ältester Dueck promoted closer cooperation with other conservative Mennonite denominations, working jointly with the Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, and Old Colony churches in making representations to both Provincial and Dominion governments. There was also other dialogue and mutual sharing. On July 20, 1917, Ältester Dueck, accompanied by Rosenort minister Johann K. Friesen, travelled to Winkler to meet with the Old Colony Ältester Ohm Johann Friesen in Neuenburg. There was a reciprocal visit by Ältester Friesen to Steinbach on February 23, 1918, where Ältester Ohm Friesen was invited by brotherhood vote to preach in the Kleine Gemeinde church. It was unfortunate that such mutual uplifting and fellowship was not continued by their successors.

During his time in office Peter R. Dueck baptized 303 believers, officiated at 46 weddings, conducted 61 (adult) funerals, received or implemented 37 resignations and excommunications. During this entire period, the Gemeinde almost doubled in size, growing from 208 to 387 members.

Peter Dueck died on January 7, 1919, only 56 years old. His "...illness was a form of heart disease. He was already sick for a time during summer, yet, it got better again. But after a few days, his health deteriorated so that on Monday, January 6th, he already did not go to church. After dinner, however, he revived somewhat so that he even ate a little supper. At 10 o'clock he laid down to sleep. Approximately at 1 o'clock during the night, his loving spouse was awakened by his noticeable breathing. She lit the lamp, and immediately realized what was taking place. She called all the children together at home, and they were allowed yet, to see, how their father made his last few breaths - then he was a corpse....The entire Gemeinde felt this enormous loss."<sup>876</sup>

### **Ministerial Journal.**

A number of letters written by Peter R. Dueck between 1908 and his death are extant.<sup>877</sup> Some 40 of his sermons have been preserved, a valuable resource of Evangelical teachings in the Christo-centric tradition, still awaiting scholarly exposition.

In terms of P. R. Dueck's written legacy, his ministerial journal is his greatest contribution. The journal emulates that of his grandfather, Rev. Johann Dueck (1801-66), Muntau, Molotschna,<sup>878</sup> following a template already developed by earlier Honourable Ohms such as David Epp (1781-1843) and son Jakob Epp (1820-90), in Russia, and Ältester Ohm Gerhard Wiebe (1725-96), Ellerwald, Prussia. A section of Peter R. Dueck's journal covering 1910 to 1913 was published in 1999.<sup>879</sup>

The significance and importance of the diary was assessed by Professor Royden Loewen in 1993 in his book, *from the Inside Out*: "The diary...lists the location of the revolving church services and notes which of the four East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde preachers – Peter W. Loewen (Neuanlage), Cornelius L. Plett (Blumenhof), Peter R. Reimer (Blumenort), or Peter R. Dueck himself presented the Sunday sermons. More important, the diary portrays the work of the Bruderschaft, which we have translated as Brotherhood, comprising all baptized male members (usually 21 and over), who gathered when summoned, usually monthly, to discuss and enforce the Anabaptist principles of the simple life. The word Bruderschaft refers to such meetings. Members who fell into adultery, premarital sex, incest, drunkenness, or theft were excommunicated. Members who supported the establishment of a public school or the purchase of cars proved especially troublesome and seem to have been pressured to resign, a severance that usually did not result in shunning. During these years, several members left the Kleine Gemeinde on account of these issues and joined the more progressive Bruderthaler or Holdeman churches in Steinbach."

"The diary records historic changes in the Steinbach-Hanover Mennonite community. The first car was purchased in May 1910 and the first indication of

the establishment of a public school in Steinbach came in April 1911, five years before provincial law made such schools mandatory for all Mennonite communities. A further sign of change came in October 1911, when the Kleine Gemeinde Church was refused entry into the schoolhouse that it, itself, had constructed for religious services and parochial education; the school by public petition had been turned into a state-run school, and church services could not be held in Steinbach until a new building had been completed. There were other events that indicate that Steinbach was a quickly ascending trading center. They include the proliferation of telephones, business enterprises at Giroux, the rail depot 10 kilometers to the northeast, the opening of a guesthouse and even a store selling tobacco and musical instruments. A sign of this encroaching world was J.R. Friesen's resignation from membership on 7 April 1912. Friesen, later reputed as being the owner of western Canada's first Ford dealership, seems to have renounced and resigned his membership in the Kleine Gemeinde over the issue of either 'worldly weddings' or car ownership. Contrary to local folklore, it appears that Friesen was not excommunicated and banned for his actions."

"The diary also reveals the nature of proceedings at a Mennonite Brotherhood meeting: the Ältester and minister warned and admonished but did little ruling; not until a consensus was reached could the Brotherhood act. It was because the Brotherhood was divided on the public school and automobile question that the ministers could not act as decisively as they seem to have wished. The debate on these issues continued to the year of Dueck's death in 1919. Another issue that shows the nature of Brotherhood deliberations was the request in December 1912 by young widower Johann G. Barkman to marry the sister of his deceased wife, a practice once prohibited in the wider Christian church. The Brotherhood debated the issue for six months. The ministers were loath to make the change, but scripture evidently did not support the prohibition, and in June 1913 the change was made. The decision came too late for Johann, for his love seems to have waned during the long deliberations and he married his deceased wife's cousin instead."

"Finally, the diary defines social boundaries for the conservative Kleine Gemeinde. The East Reserve church communities - Steinbach, Blumenort and Gruenfeld - were bridged by networks that extended to two sister communities: Jenseit, this is, the Kleine Gemeinde community on the "other side" of the Red River, at Rosenort and Rosenhof near Morris; and Meade County, Kansas, the location of the American chapter of the Kleine Gemeinde Church. Both church communities offered and received assistance from the East Reserve churches during these years. The East Reserve church, however, was linked to a wider world within Manitoba; Ninette's Sanatorium, Brandon's Insane Asylum, and St. Boniface's hospital were institutions that the church supported financially. Reports of famine in India and Russia solicited similar benevolence from it."

"This is a personal diary; it is an informal set of notes, hastily written at Dueck's home according to Dueck's recollection after, and sometimes several days after, the church meetings. This means that the entries are not always in chronological order."<sup>880</sup>

## Letters, 1917-1918.

Two letters by Ältester Peter R. Dueck (1862-1919) to his colleague and wife's uncle, Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas, provide an intimate look at the man and his ministry. His letter of October 11, 1917, reveals the incredible pressure of leadership during a critical time of intense battle for the Gemeinde: "Indeed, my beloved, you can hardly imagine, how things have gone with me in the last while. Yet, Ohm P. Plett will have become aware of it to some extent, how the labour has fallen upon me during this last while and also how it has unfolded, so that the thoughts also sometimes arise within me, how both you aged workers have so readily been able to forsake the field of labour; indeed, I must say, when the work so overwhelms me, that the thought does often come to mind, whether you had thereby done something wrong. And if not, I can understand that also."

Peter R. Dueck was a Bishop determined to resist the overwhelming seductiveness of technological progress as an evil which might eventually subvert his flock and lead them away from "simplicity in Christ." The automobile became a symbol of this struggle: "And thus we have also sometimes held brotherhood in order to prepare for unity [communion], but it seems to be in vain as the brethren are too fainthearted in this regard. The work has almost been lost since so many brethren themselves have already driven along with the automobile and which has weakened the opposition. And yet, it is important to us that the entire Gemeinde be watchful and some brethren were to wait with holding communion until we can again have brotherhood and present it to the brethren that those who do not wish to heed our advice, might unburden themselves of much; that with their opposition they are thereby making themselves unworthy of taking communion....And then Peter Barkman declared himself.....whether it would be easier for him if he would go to another Gemeinde since he was repeatedly unable to agree with us in our views."

In spite of reverses, Peter R. Dueck reiterated his commitment to persevere: "...one never knows how long we will be able to maintain the victory regarding the autos. But I will not yet cease to battle against this, notwithstanding that at times it has already been very difficult." He expressed concern for co-religionists in the States beleaguered amidst a war-hungry citizenry and committed the Gemeinde in Kansas "to the protection of God, for at times it sounds truly doubtful regarding [matters] for the Mennonites in the States.

In a letter of February 20, 1918, Peter R. Dueck reported to Cornelius L. Plett regarding developments in the church: "And since the brother G. Siemens has inquired as to what was dealt with at brotherhood on January 13, regarding which he has been notified from here, be hereby informed of the same in so far that the matter regarding Klaas P. Reimer shall now finally put aside - either one way or the other, which appeared to be a hinderance for us with respect to the ministerial election, and thus, the beloved brother confessed before the brethren unto betterment...."

Among the positive developments under Peter R. Dueck's leadership were the contacts made with the Old Colony Gemeinde in the West Reserve. The two congregations had much in common regarding their faith and practice and a



united front against the ethnic cleansing onslaughts of the Provincial Government could only stand to benefit both. As Peter R. Dueck explained, the initial contact by the Old Colonists was made with the Kleine Gemeinde congregation at Rosenort: "We are hardly finished with one issue and then another matter arises. And thus, I received the summons by telephone from Cor. T. Kroeker from Morris whether I could not come there to Morris. On the one hand, a difficult matter has arisen there and, on the other, they were to receive the Ohms from the Old Colonists there as their guests, and wanted me there as well. But as already said, I was unable to accommodate as the date for the brotherhood and Verlobung had already been announced. Consequently they decided that they would come here on Sunday, and for which Johann K. Friesen joined them as their guide. They wanted to be picked up on Saturday, for which brother-in-law K. Kroeker was helpful and requested of Klaas Toews to pick them up, and they arrived here a little after 9 o'clock in the evening, that is, at our place for night, namely, Joh. K. Friesen and the Ältester Friesen and a deacon A. Friesen, in order to see for themselves our field of labour here....Ohm Johann K. Friesen presented the word, and since the brotherhood had been announced for the afternoon, and the outside Ohms were also interested in attending, they were among us the entire day. And we also asked the brethren whether they would be inclined to also hear the Ohm's sermon: the brethren appeared to be very unanimous in that regard, and so we hurried ourselves with the brotherhood. Around 5 o'clock we were again all assembled and the Ohm presented a truly earnest sermon on the text, Revelations 11:7, revealing to us the danger and cunning of Satan from all sides. It was again a fine assembly, and as I believe, he brought something for everyone to reflect upon. He is a very gifted man. He had written out his sermon, but apparently also much was added in between."

Peter R. Dueck was also a spiritual caregiver to his aged colleague Cornelius L. Plett and he noted his expressed concerns regarding his salvation and that of others: "Indeed, my beloved, that is one of the most important concerns that a person should well have in this time of grace in order to attain the eternal salvation after death, for this our life is only of short duration.....This requires of us people who are healthy, great earnestness and a steadfast dying to our earthly nature. This is problematic for me also, not to be as torn away from the world as I would gladly wish to be and should. As a result I often have many concerns regarding myself, as well as the beloved family, and also for the Gemeinde entrusted unto me....and ultimately, there is no escaping from the Judgement seat of Christ, other than to confess one's fault, to reconcile, and to exert oneself day by day in the sanctification of the spirit, and to go forward in the pure fear of the Lord, and to grow in the grace of Christ, and to become ever more the partakers of the nature of Christ, which should be our every endeavour, plea and longing of our heart. And this all the more so, as we can note how everything at this time is unfolding for the end of the world; for there is the great war and the great unrest among the people, among other horrors, and precious time, famine and other things more of the like, which testify clearly enough for the soon reappearing of the Lord Jesus for the judgement of the world...."

## Challenges.

Historian Royden Loewen has pointed out that Peter R. Dueck faced a number of challenges during his 18-year term as Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde: the school issue, military service during World War One, and the agonizing debate over the automobile and other technological innovations.<sup>881</sup> In a paper presented in 1987, Royden Loewen wrote as follows: "There were also other issues. The ones for which there is little precedent; yet obviously wrong. A brother shoots at the hand of another; another shoots a brother's ox; another has problems with an English neighbour who wants his borrowed money; another enjoys wearing women's clothes. Then there are the issues of the flesh - the ones which every church through the centuries has had problems with; premarital sex and sexual infidelity and drunkenness were not without their occurrences in the Gemeinde. Here there was precedent. No matter was dealt with so quickly and unequivocally as sexual promiscuity; excommunication came automatically. Those repentant were readmitted only after at least a week outside of the church. When it came to drunkenness the church was more lenient."

"A brother in 1911 had during the fall harvest been carried away (oral sources indicate that some alcohol was tolerated during pig butchering and during the cold days in late harvest) and had had too much. His repentance, clean record and the fact that it was not premeditated brought with it early forgiveness. It proved to be a more difficult thing when drinking and carousing involved unbaptized youth. That sin would reign in the community was expected; it became problematic when youthful activities became socially disruptive. How does one control the unchurched adults - corporal punishment, excommunication and reporting are not possible."

"The greater problems, however, were with those issues which came about as a direct result of a changing society. These were problems for which there was no precedent; for which there was a great deal of ambiguity. Yet, these were problems that Peter Dueck had a clear mandate to counter. The Blumenort conference of 1899 and the 1901 ratification of the manifesto were high on the mind of the young Ältester in 1901. It was a declaration against the things that a modernizing society was offering; personal aggrandizement through photos, a pietistic approach to Christianity, closer involvement with other churches, government jobs."

"The conference however could not stop history and the problems envisioned by the leaders in 1899 would not go away. In fact they increased. The Holdemans were introducing Sunday School and the Brüderthaler [later the E.M.B.] offered an easier, more joyful approach to God. The telephone and the car squeezed their way into the church so that the ministerial was almost powerless to deal with them effectively. The town and its street life - youth gathering in parties and members opening businesses that were no longer merely there to meet the needs of the farmer."

"And a government that was realizing that the old approach in which immigrant groups would be allowed to develop as they saw fit was not in the best interest of a country which had declared the 20th century the century in which

Canada would become a united, British nation which others in the world would have to reckon with. The authors of a recent history of Canada during the first two decades of the 20th century have dubbed it *A Nation Transformed*. In this transforming nation a conservative church wishing to perpetuate 16th century ideals would have a difficult time. Yet, this was the mandate of Peter Dueck.”

“It is significant that the real threat to the old way of doing things came not so much from the government as it did from within the Gemeinde. The government pressure on the Gretna School and Rodmond Roblin’s Flag Act of 1907 were easily dealt with - withdrawal. Government insistence that members register in a national manpower survey and then for national service cards and the insistence for money were met with hesitancy to be sure, but with an easy compromise nevertheless. The 1916 School Attendance Act was the most difficult, but it was difficult only for those outside Steinbach and for those in Blumenort it was soon realized that the government would enact it only with a great deal of leniency.”

“Where the real problem lay was with the members themselves. These were the members who were adjusting to the new economic realities. They saw that there was money to be made with the establishment of businesses, they saw that life could be made easier with the telephone and car and that English would be a major asset in the entry of Canadian society, and they began seeing government as a friendly source and even more as something that they could identify with. Capitalism, technology and democracy were going to make the old vision hard to maintain. Not because these forces were being pushed on the Mennonites but because there were enough of them who were enticed.”

“The Gemeinde would have to give in or break. During Peter Dueck’s term a bit of both happened. On telephones and gasoline tractors a year or two was all that was needed for the Gemeinde to drop it as issues. On the marriage of one’s sister-in-law and the individualistic act of moving away, the Gemeinde changed as well. Even on the public school an extremely hesitant leadership complied, first in 1912 then in 1919.”

“The idea of a pietistic faith and the ultimate individualization seen in the acquisition of the automobile, however, were not to be compromised with. And on these issues the church lost more members than it gained. Some members were gained; from the Holdeman Gemeinde and from the Saskatchewan individualists. But more members were lost. In 1912 A.S. Friesen, Benjamin Janz and Cornelius B. Loewen said their farewells and G.G. Kornelson even had himself rebaptized. Other members were excommunicated or denied communion, a lesser form of the ban - 15 stayed away from the height of the battle in 1917.”<sup>882</sup>

In his 1993 book, *Family, Church and Market*, Royden Loewen deals at greater length with the issues confronted by Ältester Peter Dueck: "...Unlike the Brüderthaler Church which adapted quickly to a more urban existence and succeeded, the Kleine Gemeinde Church confronted that new world and in that mission it failed. The basis of that confrontation was a set of religious practices rooted in the cycles and mores of an agrarian society. Baptism was now associated with early summer; between 1902 and 1917 the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde held its baptismal ceremonies in late June or early July with only one exception."

"Church services were rotated from district to district within each of the larger communities of the East Reserve and Rosenort, a practice that was meant to unite the wider church community but that often resulted in sporadic church attendance [The traditional and highly treasured ecclesiastical church calendar was followed in planning church teaching and events]: religious holidays included 'Heilige Drei Königen,' 40 days after Christmas, and 'Himmel Fahrt,' 40 days after Easter. Seasonal changes were celebrated each June and September by the special 'spring sermon' and the 'harvest sermon.' Church leaders were chosen from kinship lines that had proved themselves in church leadership; each of the three Ältesten who served the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde during these years was the son of a preacher."

"There was much, however, that was dynamic in Kleine Gemeinde Church life during these years. This dynamism resulted from the Kleine Gemeinde's attempt to cultivate communitarian ways in a new, more urban and individualistic society. The nature of these ideas was forcefully articulated by Peter R. Dueck,.... From the time of his election as Ältester in 1901 at the age of 38, to his sudden death in 1919, he worked vigorously to maintain traditional ways. His ideas, encapsulated in scores of 7,000-thousand-word handwritten sermons, were remarkably different from those of George Schultz [the hyper-emotionalist and dispensationalist Evangelist of the Brüderthaler]."<sup>883</sup>

"The contents of a Christmas advent sermon composed in 1905, and delivered 19 times during the next 14 years, illustrates this point. For Dueck the church was a community, not a physical structure; it was characterized by 'brotherly love, unity and...the fear of God.' Its leaders were not professionals, but servants who came to their people in 'great weakness and imperfection' realizing that God 'will put an end to the mighty and their sanctuaries.' Dueck's ethical concerns focused less on personal morality, than on "pride, abundance and much contentment" that could ruin communal solidarity."

"For Peter Dueck, religious salvation was not a personal event, claimed by an individual with 'assurance' and promising a 'present joy.' It was grace given by God at the end of a life of 'cautiously walking in his paths and seeking to keep the holy covenant faithfully.' Salvation could not be 'claimed' as the Brüderthaler preached, it could only be 'desired'. A presumptuous, confident life was simply not indicative of a soul longing for God's grace, and to a person who did not desire grace, God could not grant salvation. The 'cautious walk' always entailed two things: a humble love within the congregation, and a separation from worldly society. It included among other things 'fleeing the transitory pleasures of this

world,' a spirit of 'fear and trembling' before God, 'yieldedness' to the community, 'Nachfolge Christi' (following Christ [discipleship]) in a life of simplicity and peace, and of allowing one to be refined and purified through tests of death and sickness, and 'toil and trouble.'"

"These were the ideas that Peter Dueck attempted to keep alive in a changing social environment. A highly detailed diary traces that effort over the course of 18 years between 1901 and 1919. In every instance the church sought to maintain an 'unblemished' community in which peace, unity, and love within the brotherhood would flourish. It was only in this state that it could hold its biannual 'Einigkeit,' the service of Holy Communion in which 'unity' among the brethren was a prerequisite for 'communion' with God. Thus, no item was too small to address: there was the brother who had become drunk during threshing time; another one had, for chicanery's sake, shot a neighbour's ox; a sister who had been caught stealing merchandise from her stepsons; a widow and widower, now married, who confessed to premarital sex; a brother who had hosted a "worldly" party in his guesthouse; two brothers who had had a fist fight after one had spread gossip about the other; a sister who had been discovered to have lived in "great sin."

"These, however, were the minor issues, almost always quickly resolved, either through warnings and confessions, or through brief periods of excommunication. The half-dozen references over the course of the 18 years of Dueck's diary - to each of drunkenness, adultery, and assault - indicate their lack of importance in the list of church issues. The all-male church brotherhood, after all, met almost 200 times during these years and at each meeting addressed at least a half-dozen ethical issues."

"The most thorny problems were those that went hand in hand with the encroachment of the modern world with its new technological innovations such as the telephone and the car; its new capitalistic order that saw increasing indebtedness, consumerism, and business size; and a government that seemed intent on integrating Mennonites into the wider society. During these years members at the brotherhood meetings grappled with the issue of commerce 38 times, with government intrusion 35 times, and with the car 34 times. These brotherhood agenda items reflected the issues on which the church felt it was the most vulnerable."

"The intrusiveness of government was, no doubt, a major concern and Anglo-conformity, however, were clear-cut issues, requiring unequivocal responses from the Gemeinde. The Manitoba Flag Act of 1908 was a major threat for the Gemeinde, but the issue and the action required were indisputable. When the Act, which required all district schools to fly the Union Jack was passed, the Gemeinde responded quickly. After all, it saw the flag as nothing less than a 'military banner.' The Kleine Gemeinde leaders joined Holdeman Mennonite preachers and the Mennonite schools inspector, H. H. Ewert, in making a personal visit to Manitoba's premier, Rodmond Roblin. When Roblin kept the delegation waiting in his lobby for almost four hours and then promised only to do "his best," the Kleine Gemeinde immediately withdrew its schools from the dis-

strict school roster even though it meant forfeiting the 'legislative grant' that had financed the hiring of local schoolteachers for more than a generation."

"Similar action was taken to deal with other government action during World War I. Although the Manitoba Mennonites were to receive a total exemption from military duty, they faced a host of pressures from the Anglo-Canadian society and from the government as the war progressed. Quiet acquiescence, however, was the strategy of the *Kleine Gemeinde* and most of the wider Mennonite community."

"When the federal government requested that Manitoba Mennonites purchase war bonds and pay a special "one percent war tax," once in 1917 and again in 1918, Mennonites complied; Peter Dueck protested privately that paying the tax was 'to make friends with the unrighteous 'Mammon'' but publicly he reasoned that 'since the money is to be used only for the needy [we] will participate.' When in August 1917 the Canadian government passed its Military Service Act and then, although excepting the pacifist Mennonites from the draft, issued a directive for a comprehensive registration of Canada's manpower, the *Kleine Gemeinde* did hesitate. But as Peter Dueck explained, after an inter-Mennonite delegation ascertained from federal officials that completing the registration 'cards has nothing to do with 'Violence'' and that 'writing the name Mennonite on the cards' would safeguard their military exemption, 'we agreed to obey the government.'"

"The *Kleine Gemeinde* was also required to deal with pressures from other sectors of Anglo-Canadian society. The most overt occurred one Sunday night in September 1918 when a troop of some 25 soldiers descended on the town of Steinbach, startling the townspeople. The *Steinbach Post*, reported that at first 'no one knew what they wanted,' but then, after booking in at the guesthouse, the soldiers began demanding to see the military registration cards of randomly chosen townspeople, and then arrested those who could not produce them. These were pressures, however, that the conservative Mennonites could understand and deal with. In fact it served well the purposes of the elders who warned youth to remain within the sanctuary of the Mennonite settlements. One Steinbach father eagerly publicized his warning from a Winnipeg resident to 'keep your boys at home [in Steinbach]...[for] if, upon returning from the 'fire' [of the war] our sons will find your sons at the pool tables [in Winnipeg] we will not be able to constrain them!'"

"*Kleine Gemeinde* Mennonites similarly adjusted quickly to the Anglo-conformist principles of Manitoba's Liberal premier, T.C. Norris. His government's 1916 School Attendance Act that forced Mennonites to attend public English-language schools was to precipitate the migration of 8,000 Old Colonist and Sommerfelder Mennonites to new colonies in Latin America. The *Kleine Gemeinde*, however, acquiesced after determining that by forming their own local school boards and hiring community members as teachers it could still control the education of their children, even though it was now in English. The view of Steinbach farmer C.B. Loewen in 1919 that 'we cannot blame the government for we have been in this country long enough to learn the language' held a certain degree of support among *Kleine Gemeinde* members; the view of Blumenort farmer Peter Unger that 'many did not want to leave this government

which had been so good to them' was even more widespread."

"What caused the Kleine Gemeinde brotherhood at least as much consternation as these highly publicized events, were the more subtle ways in which the Mennonite community and the 'outside world' became enmeshed. In 1906, when the Manitoba government expropriated Bell Telephone Company and began to erect long distance lines linking Winnipeg with rural outposts, the Kleine Gemeinde members were caught in a quandary. They decided to vote on the issue in order to keep the long distance line out, but realized that by exercising their vote they were compromising their principle of political noninvolvement. Similar quandaries faced Gemeinde members in 1912 and 1913."

"In one incident a single, 38-year-old mentally deranged Blumenort man who threatened his neighbours with a pistol, was physically constrained and turned over to 'authorities' in Winnipeg. In the other incident the Blumenort family of a daughter who had been gang raped asked for the church's permission to heed a subpoena and testify at the trial of the Anglo-Canadian offenders in Winnipeg. Both incidents precipitated lengthy brotherhood meetings where the brethren questioned whether it was right to involve the wider society in the community's problems. In both cases the brotherhood conceded, but clearly with apprehension: in the first instance, they gave their approval of the Blumenort neighbours' action, but only because the 'government disallows us to have people like that living in our community'; in the second case they decided that "we cannot forbid [the family] to testify because the proceedings were not initiated by them."

"A second, more perplexing problem for the Gemeinde, came when old boundaries were violated on members' own initiative. The list of requests to brethren to heed established mores on any kind of political involvement was long: in 1906 a brother was asked to resign his post as municipal secretary, a vocation that contravened" Article 27 in the *Martyrs' Mirror*; in 1907 two men involved in a land dispute were told that 'fighting one another with lawyers cannot be approved of, nor seeking to defend oneself in that manner'; in 1910, members were 'warned not to vote in the government election' and when several voted anyway, the church compelled them to repent; in 1913, members were asked to consider whether the reporting of thefts to police did not 'come too close to [contradicting] our faith'; in 1914, farmers were warned not to take their neighbours' cattle to the pound as 'it is wrong to complain to the 'world' about one's brother'; in 1916, members were counselled that to vote in the Manitoba's temperance plebiscite would be tantamount to Christians 'trying to rule and govern with the 'world.'"

"No single challenge to old boundaries, however, compared to the decision in April 1911 by a majority of the Steinbach village parents to turn the town's parochial, German-language, school into a public institution. The significance of this decision is that it came fully seven years before Mennonites were compelled to end their private schools by government. That the parents had been encouraged to do so by a Manitoba school inspector who argued that in 'a British country people should speak English' and who 'explained the purpose of the flag' did not impress the rural-dominated Kleine Gemeinde. Peter Dueck's protest that the public school was seen by 'most congregation members as very

wrongful, for us and for our descendants' and his promise to 'work against' the new school, however, did little to impress the progressive parents."

"In fact, by July 1911 it became apparent that the Kleine Gemeinde had become isolated, being alone among the Steinbach churches in its opposition to the public school. The only course left open to it now was to open its own private school. A symbolic end of the old concept of community came in October 1911 when the Kleine Gemeinde received word from the 'new [head] school-teacher [that he] no longer wants church services to be held in the [Steinbach] schoolhouse as it has been turned into a 'District School.'" That year the Kleine Gemeinde built its first building in Canada used exclusively for worship."

"A third major issue in the Kleine Gemeinde during the years of World War I was the erosion of plain, modest life-styles. Increased prosperity, the growth of town businesses, the rise of consumerism, and especially the purchase of automobiles were transforming the community. While merchandising itself was no longer opposed by the Kleine Gemeinde, it actively attempted to shape mercantile activity and maintain simple life-styles."

"Thus it opposed both the January 1911 banquet held for 'high officials.... according to worldly custom' at Klaas Toews' guesthouse and the November 1911 rental agreement between merchant H. W. Reimer and a young barber who was planning to sell tobacco and musical instruments from a store on Reimer's land. It censured the gain mentality that rose in the heady economy of World War I, decrying those who 'charge exorbitant interest rates from poor people' and those who 'incur large debt loads.' And it questioned the shifting boundaries of commerce. In March 1916 when butcher A.W. Reimer opened his Winnipeg branch office the brotherhood was unequivocal, 'for salvation, this is certainly harmful.'"

"With commerce and abundance came conspicuous consumption. The Kleine Gemeinde leadership made it clear that it believed that the new acquisitiveness turned one's attention from one's neighbour and one's soul, to one's fortune and status. Thus, it sought to counter each of the elements of this new life-style: the new fashions, the 'stiff white collars' for men and the 'ruffled blouses and skirts' for the women; the 'Nachhochzeiten,' the wedding parties where invited guests gave gifts and enjoyed fancy meals; the new fascination with firearms, justified for the hunt, but remaining, nevertheless, a symbol of power; the musical instruments that graced the 'lawn parties' held by Steinbach's youth in full view of town elders."

"Of all these 'symbols of pride,' the car was the most heinous. On May 16, 1910, at a Sunday afternoon brotherhood meeting in Steinbach, Ältester Dueck presented the 21 baptismal candidates for the year and then introduced an issue that would be debated in the Gemeinde for eight long years; 'a brother has purchased a car for \$480 which most of us brothers do not see as proper.' Two weeks later when the owner, 26-year-old miller Abram Reimer, appeared before the brotherhood and promised to sell the car, Dueck elaborated his position: 'it is detrimental to one's salvation as it seeks to emulate the world, is on the whole such an unknown thing, is so costly and leads to such arrogance and ostentation.' If Dueck thought that this could stop the tide of car purchases he was



wrong. By July it was apparent that Reimer had reneged on his promise to sell his car. Only an overt threat of excommunication brought another promise to sell the offending object. A year, later, however, there were reports that 'two more brothers who look upon our opposition as self-made rules,' wrote Dueck after the meeting, and 'thus we were unable to come as far as we had wished.'"

"Peter Dueck, however, never retreated. By April 1912, the church began to force members who owned cars, including the Steinbach's premier car dealer J.R. Friesen, to resign from the church or face excommunication and the ban. A standoff had occurred and people began leaving the church. Between 1911 and 1913, the church banned or accepted the resignation of 19 members. In 1912, Dueck baptized fewer members than he had since taking office in 1901, and for the first time in a generation the Kleine Gemeinde suffered a net loss of members."

"Still the Gemeinde would not change its course. Over the following years, owners of cars were called upon to repent, requested to avoid communion services, warned against riding in the cars owned by members of other churches, berated for registering cars in the names of their unbaptized children, and cautioned that ownership of gasoline-powered tractors could serve to weaken the resolve of members not to purchase cars. Just two months before his death in January 1919, Dueck made the observation that 'most brethren are [still] not heeding our warning about the car' and that more time will be required before communion services can be held with the owners. The year of Peter Dueck's death, however, marked the end of the Kleine Gemeinde's opposition to the car and during the summer of 1919 members purchased cars in unprecedented numbers. The Kleine Gemeinde had clearly lost this battle to maintain old ways."

In a 1996 article, historian Royden Loewen, suggested some conclusions regarding the challenges faced by Peter R. Dueck, and his courageous responses.<sup>884</sup>

"A glance at the church and the community through the eyes of Ältester Peter R. Dueck can offer another view. It is the view of a man who took up the challenge of building a visible body of believers where God and not people would be supreme, where humility and love and not arrogance and self centredness would be the distinguishing mark of members, where a radical separation of worldly and godly values would inform each moment of work and social interaction. It will be the view of a man who was extremely active, one who had a well thought through plan of action, one who confidently took up the challenge of leading a church along a difficult path in a rapidly changing society...."

"The challenge of being a church administrator was small perhaps when compared to that of being its teacher and pastor. The 40 some sermons which constitute the repertoire of Peter R. Dueck's teaching material reflect the challenge of convincing a people that their purpose for being in this world is to prepare for the next."

"A Christmas advent sermon preached in Blumenort just two weeks before his death in 1919 indicates that for Peter R. Dueck such a preparation must come through a life of discipleship. This comprised a life of yielding to God and to fellow Christians, of living a life of love and fear of God, of following the Lord

Jesus in a life of simplicity and peace, of hungering for God's gracious provision of salvation, of increasing the spiritual life which God had begun through Christ, of producing the fruits of repentance, and of allowing one to be refined and purified through tests of death and sickness."

"A careless, presumptuous, confident life, in Dueck's understanding of the scripture, was not indicative of a soul longing for God's grace and to a person who did not long for grace, God could not give salvation. This was the central message in his sermons. These he delivered once or twice a month, depending whether or not there was a religious holiday or a communion service. He also preached at the bimonthly or monthly brotherhood meetings, and in the annual series of spiritual renewal meetings held each spring before baptism."

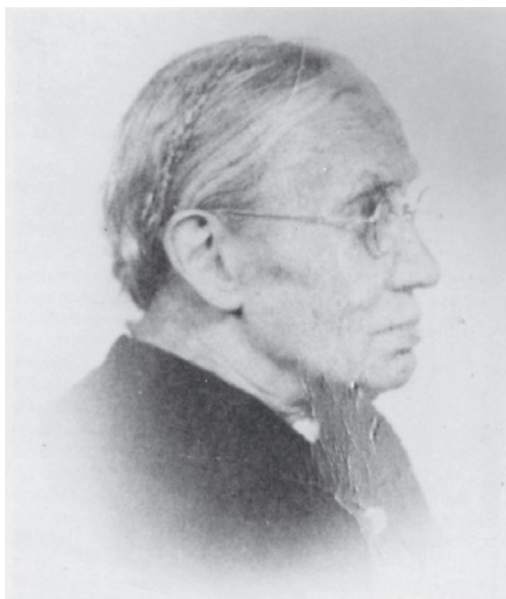
"And this was the message the ministerial sought to instill in its members through the purchase of books written by 17th century Anabaptist authors, Tielmann van Braught, George Hansen and Pieter Pieters. For example, \$129.30 for Pieters' devotional books was collected in 1902."

"There were other challenges. There were the competing churches who offered an easier, more joyful brand of Christianity. There was the difficult time of the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic when Peter R. Dueck, although handicapped by an ailing heart, preached and comforted and buried the dead. Until his sudden death of a heart attack on January 7, 1919 no challenge which touched on his vision of 'Nachfolge Christi' was too great for this Ältester to take on."

"Peter R. Dueck may not have been the architect of present-day Steinbach or the modern EMC. He was, however, an envisioned, loving, determined leader who gave himself to his people and to the work of God. And, most importantly, he passed on the faith. [His legacy lives on in the 2500 member modern Kleine Gemeinde headquartered in Mexico and Belize.]"

"Ten years after Dueck's sudden death one of his friends wrote about him: 'In the course of his service he passed through many trials, but his teachings and admonitions have brought much fruit, even in our day, for many of the members who live today came to repentance and conversion through his teaching.'"

"What an epitaph!"



*Passport Photo 1948. Mrs. Peter R. Dueck, nee Sarah Plett Kroeker. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 83.*

**Peter R. Dueck's Steinbach.**



*Street level view of the Kleine Gemeinde worship house in Steinbach taken October 7, 1933, during the funeral of Abram T. Kroeker, son of brother-in-law Cornelius P. Kroeker. Behind the church, are the premises formerly the farmyard of Ält. Peter R. Dueck. C. F. Toews shoe repair shop (left). Photo by Jakob D. Barkman - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 70.*



*1925. Panoramic view of the Kleine Gemeinde worship house, taken from the flour mill roof. Behind the church is the farmyard of Peter R. Dueck. Behind the barn, to the right, is a steam-engine shelter belonging to Cornelius P. Kroeker. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 71.*

### **Tribute to Mother, Sarah Kroeker Dueck, 1871-1951.**

Tribute to Mother, Sarah Kroeker Dueck, by son Cornelius P. Dueck.

In 1915, when I was five, my grandma's brother, Cornelius L. Plett, had an auction sale before moving to Kansas. I remember, when he came to visit Grandma, I ran ahead to notify his coming. I also knew that Grandma liked me, because she opened her big cedar chest (brought over from Russia) with a compartment where she kept handkerchiefs, candy and other small things.

After my father died in 1919, Grandma moved into our house, so my mother could better take care of her. I remember Grandmother in my mother's bedroom, winding the old pendulum clock on the wall.<sup>885</sup> There was a toilet in one corner with a curtain around it, with a 3" pipe leading into the stovepipe, and a pail which had to be emptied every so often.

My grandmother died on December 9, 1920, about 11 months after my Dad. All this was hard on Mom. My mother was 39 when I was born, the 10th child. She gave birth to two more children, and so, since two had died in infancy, there were 10 children living. The two oldest were already married when Dad died. Frank was the oldest son at home, and he was only 16. There were two older daughters and five younger children. So much rested on Mother's shoulder.

Mother raised her children and managed the farm courageously, but with many heartaches and struggles. She was a hard worker, though she was small of stature. I ask myself "Who in our day would do what she did?" I thank our dear, loving, praying mother, who found her strength in God. Her aim was that her children would know the Word of God, and live accordingly. On the Sundays when we did not go to church she would read to us from the Bible or *Martyrs' Mirror*, to make it clear what it meant to have faith in the Word, and to stand up for our faith.

Mother showed us how to work, keep things in order, and be hospitable. She always prepared food on Saturday to have enough for family and friends on Sunday. She always kept a big garden to raise enough vegetables for the whole year: a lot of potatoes, beets for eating and also the larger beets for the cattle, cabbage, corn, sunflowers, radishes, watermelons, cucumbers, "vruki" (turnips) and what have you. Closer to the house were all the different kinds of flowers, and even some peanuts and grapes. She canned fruit from our own garden, as well as wild fruit such as chokecherries, pincherries, cranberries, and strawberries. Some years there were also many hazelnuts.

Mother had made herself a "schalduak" (apron), which she put to good use getting weeds from the garden to feed the calves and hogs, bringing vegetables in from the garden, and gathering dry sticks from the woods around the farmyard to make a fire in the cookstove. I remember once when she came across the yard with a "schalduak" full of sticks, she looked so sober, I wondered if I had done something wrong, and she might use them on me. I was relieved, but I felt sorry for her, when I realized she was very tired.

Sometimes when Mom had given me orders what to do or not to do, I was very forgetful, and had to be punished so I would remember the next time. I needed that. Blessed are the mothers who train their children, even if it means

chastising them for not listening, or disobeying their parents' instructions. Mother was always on the go. In winter, she'd spin our own wool, then knit, sew, and patch clothing for the family. She read, made meals, and looked after her children, making sure all the chores were done properly, and lunches were ready for the schoolchildren.

Mother was fond of horses. Her favourite was a driver, a medium-sized brown mare, which she bought as a three-year old. (It died in its twenties of sleeping sickness, of which three other horses on our farm died that year. There was an epidemic that year, and many horses died.) Mother could depend on this mare, easy to handle and a good runner. In winter we used her with another grey horse hitched together before a top sleigh. In summer Mom used her before a top buggy.

This brown mare took her many places: grocery shopping, visiting friends and sick people. In summer when the horse (her name was Birdy) was in the pasture, we cried "Birdy!", and she would come to the gate. We would take her into the barn, give her a little oats, put the harness on to hitch her to the buggy, and away they went.

Mom also had a 1927 Ford Touring car, which she bought in 1928. She did not learn to drive it, but we children did, so we could go to other villages, like Rosenort, to visit the Bernard R. Duecks and others. My sister Elisabeth went with Mom many times, by car and also by horse and buggy.

When spring came, Mother planned the garden and prepared the seeds. The equipment to work the garden, such as hoes, rakes, garden cultivator, and lawnmower, had to be ready.

Planting potatoes was usually done with the help of two horses hitched to a 16" hand plow. The potatoes, which were cut so that each piece had at least one eye, were placed in the upper part of the furrow, every second round. (At about this time of year, we started going barefoot. We had permission at 12 Remur) Then, too, there were preparations for putting in the field crops. Seeds, such as oats, barley, wheat and sometimes buckwheat, were cleaned. The seed drill was checked, oiled, and possibly repaired. The cultivation and harrows were sharpened. The harness was repaired and oiled. After seeding, we gathered stones. When all was done, we looked to God for His blessing upon our labour.

In spring, too, when the hens had laid a number of eggs, some became "broody" and stopped laying. So, Mother gathered 12-15 good-sized eggs, made a nest in a confined place, and set a "broody" hen on it to hatch them. She usually set enough "clooki" to hatch 100-150 chicks-hens for laying and roosters for meat. She always kept some of the better laying hens over for the second year, and the rest were killed for meat. The older hens seemed to be better for noodle soup.

Then there was summerfallow to cultivate, hay to make for the cattle and horses and sheep to be sheared. The work went on and on.

One year there was a lot of breaking to be done on the northwest quarter of Section 26-6-6E. I think Dad must have had the brush cleared, then Mom saw to it that it was broken up and cleared of stones. There were some large stones that had to be blasted. I still remember how some hired men did it. They chis-

elled a hole about 7-8 inches deep with the special chisel. This took a long time. When the hole was deep enough, they put dynamite powder in it, then a cord and some wool. They packed it solid with the stone sand and lit the cord. They moved to a safe distance, and waited for the explosion. Sometimes it would not ignite. They waited until it was safe to investigate, then relit it. After the blast, the stone was in many smaller pieces, which could then be handled with horses and a stoneboat.

Haying was usually done before grain harvest. The hay was cut by a grass mower drawn by two horses. The cutting bars were about five feet long and had about 21 3" v-shaped knives riveted onto it. These had to be sharpened on both sides on a 20"x 2" grindstone with a handle to turn it, mounted on a stand. It took about half-an-hour to an hour to sharpen. At first we children had to turn the handle, and it got pretty tiresome. It was a great improvement when two pedals and a seat were added to the stand. Now one person could sharpen a knife by pedalling like a bicycle (keeping the stone wet at all times), only needing a hand toward the end - especially for the binder knife, which was 7-8 ft long.

After the grass was cut, it had to dry a few days. Then it was raked with a 10" wide rake drawn by one or two horses, and raked into piles. These were hauled into stacks or the barn with a hay rack drawn by two horses. One man with a pitchfork threw it in and another tramped it down on the rack to make a solid load. We used to put two slings on the rack per load to haul it to the barn. We drove into the hay barn which had a hay track. On the hay track was a cart where a long rope came through with a lot of pulleys. This cart could be turned so the hay could be unloaded either onto the second floor, or into the haybarn. The slings had a latch onto which we latched a long thin rope. When the hay reached its destination, we tripped the latch, and the half-load was dropped. It took two horses to lift a half-load to its place.

After haying, we harvested the grain. At first, we used a 6 ft. binder drawn by three horses. The binder got old, and didn't work on the heavy crop one year, so Dad bought a seven ft. International binder with a cart in front which eased the weight on the horses' necks. They put a seat on the cart for my brother Jac. to urge the horses on when the grain got thick. He used a whip to make them go faster. We used four horses on the 7 ft. binder; later, an 8 ft. and also a 10 ft. binder were used with the tractor.

The sheaves the binder made were stooked. After three days to a week of good drying weather, they were ready to stack or thresh. The stacks were made round, tapering to the top, so that the rain would run off. Three to nine loads made up a stack. One man on the hayrack pitched onto the stack, and one was on the stack. I still remember my sister on the stack, and Dad throwing on the sheaves. Marie was good at making stacks. Once these stacks were made, they would stand a lot of rain, and could be threshed later in fall.

At first my parents shared a steam threshing outfit with C.P. Kroekers. Then the Kroekers bought a Titan tractor, and the steam outfit was sold (including our share). Much could be said of the olden days - threshing with the steamer, which was heated with straw. One man fed the fire in the steam engine, another one oiled. One man with a team hauled water, another worked as bagger. (All the

grain was baged on a wagon box). Four men pitched sheaves into the threshing machine from the stack. For threshing sheaves from the field, four to six teams with racks were used, as well as two to three wagons with boxes for hauling the grain. After the fields were cleared, they chased the cattle on to finish what was left, as well as the new growth. The cows gained weight and gave more milk. The fields were now ready for plowing, which was all done in fall. The straw stacks were trimmed, and the screenings from under the threshing machines were cleaned up and fed to the sheep, or crushed and mixed in with the feed grain.

For winter, we had to cut about 12 loads of green poplar wood from our land. this was cut into 14 in. lengths with a crosscutting machine operated by someone who went around going custom work. Sometimes we used our windmill when there was a lot of wind to create enough power. The wood also had to be split and piled to dry for the next winter.

There was always work to do with the chores and everything else that had to be done. After Dad was gone, this was managed by our good, loving mother, training the family to help with the work, so the farm could prosper in good as well as lean years. If it wasn't for the hard-working pioneer mothers, our country wouldn't be what it is today. They did it not for fame, but as their duty to their families, and as it turned out, as servants for our country.

In the years 1923-24, when the Russian immigrants arrived, Mother accepted the Harders, putting them up in the house Grandma used to live in. When they moved out, Kasdorfs, and later Thielmanns, lived there.

In 1931 she went into partnership with her sons Cornelius and Jakob.

We loved our mother. She was a great mom to all of us. I, for one, did not treat her as I should when I was growing up into manhood. But when I gave my heart to the Lord, we rejoiced together, praising the Lord.

In Fall of 1948 she moved to Mexico with her daughters Katherina, Anna, Margaret and Sarah. She lived with various of her daughters in the villages of Eichenbach and Thalheim. She died on Feb. 10, 1951. (My family and I were able to visit her in the fall of 1949)

May the Lord bless our pioneer mothers.



*Sarab Kroeker Dueck in Mexico with grandson Milton Kornelsen. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 38/Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 83.*

**Children of Sarah and Peter R. Dueck**



*Margaretha K. Dueck (1891-1955), Mrs. Klaas D. Reimer. Photo - Desc. of J. L. Dueck, page 74.*



*Deacon Peter K. Dueck (1893-1964). Photo - Desc. of J. L. Dueck, page 84.*



*Sara (b. 1900), Mrs. John R. Plett, later Mrs. Jak. Kornelsen. Photo - 1982.*



*Maria, Mrs. Henry J. Reimer (b. 1898). Photo - Desc. of J. L. Dueck, page 91.*



*Rev. Jakob P. Dueck (b. 1907). Photo - Desc. of J. L. Dueck, page 106.*



*Rev. Cornelius P. Dueck (b. 1910). Photo - Desc. of J. L. Dueck, page 109.*



5 Son **Isaac L. Plett** married Maria R. Brandt, daughter of Klaas Brandt (1815-57) and Maria Reimer (1814-51) of Tiegenhagen.<sup>886</sup> Maria's grandparents on both sides were original Molotschna pioneers in 1804/5. Klaas Brandt was a Vollwirt farmer. According to the "Theilings-Verordnung" at his death in 1857, his young widow was obligated to pay his five children 10,000 ruble banko, or 2857 2/7 silver ruble. Mennonite inheritance laws required that the spouse receive an equal amount, meaning Klaas had an estate of over 20,000 ruble banko, a substantial sum during a time when a Wirtschaft was selling for 3,000 to 4,000 ruble.

The Klaas Brandt family was one where the teachings of the faith were affirmed and nurtured. On December 29, 1856, Maria received a Catechism book from her parents, *Catechismus oder kurze und einfältige Unterweisung aus der Heligen Schrift in Fragen und Antworten für die Kinder zum Gebrach in den Schulen* (Odessa, 1851), 76 pages. Maria was 16 at the time and probably received the book as a gift from her parents as she grew in her spiritual life.

Maria Brandt's mother was the daughter of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), a successful Vollwirt in Muntau, Mol. Heinrich was interested in the writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith. When the Kleine Gemeinde published a leather-bound 530-page edition of *Die Wandelnde Seele* by the Dutch writer Jan Philips Schabaelje (1585-1656) in 1860, Heinrich purchased a copy for each of his grandchildren including Maria. Particularly special was the four page memorial, dated September 17, 1861, he wrote into the book plates for his granddaughter, presumably in honour of her baptism.<sup>887</sup> Maria R. Brandt was baptised in 1861 and became a member of the Gemeinde. She remained true to her solemn covenants all her life.

Ohm Heinrich Reimer loved his children and grandchildren dearly and on Sept. 10, 1865, he (his wife died in 1859) invited them to a grand meal he put on for them at the home of daughter Elisabeth (Mrs. Peter Rempel) in Paulsheim, with the words of the poet No. 344, "Oh, my soul, sing!" ("Du, Meine Seele Singe.") Included on the invitation were granddaughter Maria and her husband Isaac L. Plett, still living with his parents in Kleefeld at the time.

The young couple established themselves on a Wirtschaft in Friedensfeld, a new Kleine Gemeinde settlement of 5400 acres purchased in 1866. Isaac L. Plett was a successful farmer. In his book, "History and Events," Johann W. Dueck, Rosenort, described how he had frequently run out to play with the neighbour's boy, Isaac Pletts' Isaac. He also wrote about the death of his mother, Mrs. Peter L. Dueck, and how, in the evening that it happened he "was taken from my [his] bed and held in the arms of Isaac L. Plett....and taken to be present at the death bed of my mother."<sup>888</sup>

On October 28, 1870, Isaac L. Plett wrote a letter to brother, Cornelius, at that time resident in Fischau, Molotschna, in which he referred to the dying of his neighbour's wife, Mrs. Peter L. Dueck. In the letter he described how the Separatist Pietists in the village were using terror tactics to frighten Mrs. Dueck on her deathbed regarding her salvation, something just as reprehensible then as it is today:

“Dear brother Cornelius Plett and your beloved wife: Firstly from the bottom of our hearts greetings. As we live so far from you and do not know if we will ever again have the opportunity in this life to fellowship in person, I am compelled by love to visit you with this small writing, for I also find it very comforting and dear when we are able to learn something of your experiences. This, of course, is possible when one has opportunity to write. Let us remember and direct each other upward so that we do not lose the Crown of life. The Lord is still merciful, patient, and full of grace and goodness. Indeed God does not want the death of a sinner, but rather that everyone be converted in love. Yes, the Lord wakes and calls us in many ways so that we are not to fall into slumber.”

“Sharply we were called as we had to witness the parting from here of the wife of Peter Dueck. It has been a great exhortation for me. I shudder when I recall how she had to struggle and fight with Satan. At times it looked as if she was writhing in Hell and yet at the last she became more peaceful and talked calmly and expressed her concern for her beloved children. She then seemed to sleep somewhat and we went home to bed. But, in an hour we were again called, shortly after which, she died. We have the firm hope that her soul departed for Eternal Bliss.”

“Yes, let us not forget to pray for each other that the Lord does not remove his hand of Grace from us. We have great reason to stand in God who is our shelter, and to attire our self with the sword of the Spirit, for Satan so cunningly circles to see who he can ensnare. Through the passing away of Mrs. Dueck, our opponents here believe they have found a great example that the right rebirth is lacking. Indeed, they have stated that if one of them were to die they would gladly part from here. Nevertheless one must not be alarmed by them as it must stand that we are not to believe every spirit and that we are to prove the spirits to see if they are from God. Also by their fruits can they be known. Yes, diligently we wish to strive for the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness. So much depends on attaining eternal salvation.”

“I must now conclude this imperfect writing. However, I will at least note that thanks be to God we are well and healthy in body and that we wish you the same. Write to us soon of your circumstances and experiences or visit us in person if it is possible. Lastly again a heartfelt greeting from us. Also a greeting to our dear father and all the other friends who ask about us.”

“Isaak Plett, Friedensfeld”

In a letter of July 21, 1871, Peter L. Dueck wrote to Ältester Peter Toews stating that Isaac Plett was on his death bed and wished that some of his brothers or cousins, Peter Toews or Gerhard Goossen, might come to comfort him. Johann W. Dueck wrote that Isaac L. Plett “succumbed to the same disease,” namely, typhus.<sup>889</sup> Chronicler Abraham Reimer, Steinbach, recorded that “Isaac Plett was buried on July 26” (presumably old calendar), adding Isaac had been only 27 years and some months old.<sup>890</sup> Cousin Peter Isaac wrote of Isaac L. Plett, “I can remember him well.”<sup>891</sup>

As was customary, the church Waisenverordnung or widows and orphans administration appointed advisors for widows in such circumstances to give counsel and act as their advocate. Maria's trustees or "Goutmana" were Franz M. Kroeker, married to her husband's sister, and brother Heinrich R. Brandt.

It is recorded that Maria lived in Neuanlage after Isaac's death.<sup>892</sup> Perhaps she had moved in order to escape the Separatist-Pietists who had so viciously attacked their neighbour, Mrs. Peter L. Dueck. Abraham F. Reimer recorded February 16, 1873, "Mrs. Plett from Neuanlage had an auction sale. The Feuerstelle [homestead village farm] she has rented. The cattle and house articles netted 1000 ruble." Four days later, Klaas and Heinrich Brandt picked up their sister and belongings and took her to Steinbach, Borosenko, where she lived with her sister-in-law Margaretha and husband Franz M. Kroeker.

In 1874 Maria Brandt Plett immigrated to Canada, together with her late husband's sisters Maria and Margaretha and their families. Maria Brandt Plett apparently settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, where son Isaac age 7, attended school for the first year.<sup>893</sup>

Life as a pioneer widow - albeit with some means - was lonely. Evidently Maria developed a romantic interest in young Heinrich Wohlgemuth, a one-time employee of her former father-in-law, Cornelius Plett. There was a slight problem: according to oral tradition Heinrich had fallen in love with his employer's daughter Katharina and had taken leave of his mother and siblings in Liverpool in order to meet her in Manitoba when the Pletts came the following year. A letter written in Blumenort on Dec. 5, 1874, stated that "Heinrich Wohlgemuth has promised to marry the widow Plett on the 8th of January." The Verlobung was confirmed in a letter by Blumenort deacon Heinrich Wiebe on Jan. 9, 1875. The wedding never took place. Heinrich obviously developed second thoughts?<sup>894</sup>

Maria had sufficient means to lend the Kleine Gemeinde church treasury \$600.00. These funds were used by the deacons to assist needy families. Of this loan \$437.10 was still owing to her in 1883. Maria was the only woman on record able to assist others in this way.

By 1876 Maria Plett was apparently living in Steinbach, where son Isaac, born 1867, was listed among the students by teacher Gerhard E. Kornelsen.<sup>895</sup> Presumably Maria was again living with "in-laws" Margaretha and Franz M. Kroeker. According to one source Maria was one of the Grünfeld, Manitoba, pioneers in 1874.<sup>896</sup> There is certainly confusion in this regard as she was not listed in the Kleine Gemeinde insurance records in either Blumenort or Grünfeld.<sup>897</sup> Based on the school records referred to, it seems clear that Maria lived the first year in Blumenort, and thereafter in Steinbach.

In 1877 Maria purchased an Anwohner property in Steinbach which was entered in the Brandordnung for \$100.00. On May 20, 1880, Maria filed for a Homestead on SE2-6-6E. Sometime later either she or her son also acquired the NW36-5-6E. In 1883 she purchased Feuerstelle 17 in Steinbach, Manitoba, from Johann S. Friesen ("Aasel Friese"). The house on this Wirtschaft was entered in the Brandordnung on April 25, 1884, for \$300.00 and a barn for an additional \$100.00. By 1884 she owned 320 acres of land of which 35 acres was cultivated,

buildings valued at \$500.00 and furniture worth \$100.00. They had 2 horses, 3 oxen, 3 cows, 4 yearlings and 2 pigs. They had a grass mower, a plow, 1 wagon, 1 rake and a sleigh.

During her retirement years, Maria stayed with various of her extended family. In a letter of April 26, 1926, cousins Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett reported that "...it is going down with the Tante Isuk Plettsche. Presently she is at Klaas F. Penners. We were visiting there recently, and it has really declined with her since winter. When she is walking her legs move forward well enough but her feet don't want to go past each other. When people are going away, she would dearly like to go along but it is too difficult. But she is still very interested when something is discussed from the Holy Scriptures."<sup>898</sup>

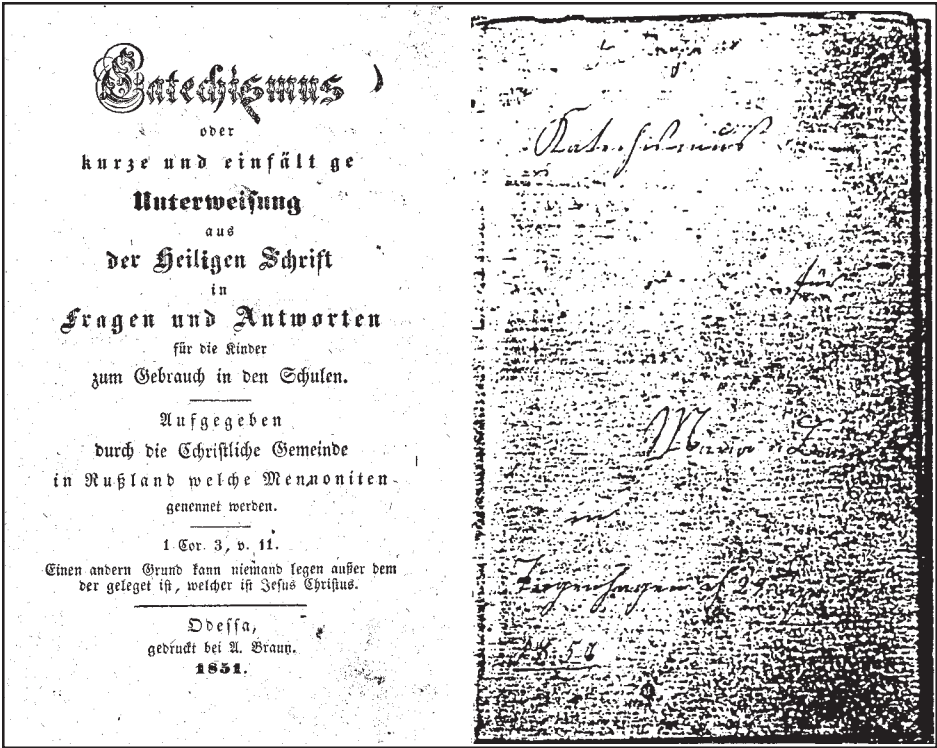
For the last while Maria Brandt Plett was cared for by Isaak R. Reimers in Prairie Rose. In a letter to her uncle Cornelius L. Plett of March 1, 1932, Sarah, Mrs. Isaac R. Reimer writes: "...the Tante Plettsche has died at our place, she had been here at our place for almost four months. She got sick in summer and remained sick. She was only sick for two days and one night and then she died in the night. We told Klaas F. Penners yet in the morning and in the evening she died already."

Steinbach historian Gerhard E. Kornelsen has written "Mrs. Isaac L. Plett farmed together with son Isaac and with toil and thrift soon had a debt free home."<sup>899</sup> In later years she farmed in a small way, probably mainly to supply her own needs. In 1952 Klaas J. B. Reimer wrote he "could well remember that the plums in her front garden, near the street, tasted especially good."



1905. Isaac B. Plett (1867-1933), businessman, thresherman, well-driller and inventor. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 79.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	Isaac L. Plett	Mar 15, 1844		Jul 27, 1871
m	Maria Brandt	Sep 22, 1843	Nov 1863	Jun 27, 1927
6	Child Plett			Infancy
6	Child Plett			Infancy
6	Isaac B. Plett	May 28, 1867	Nov 21, 1886	Aug 20, 1933
m	Elisabeth Dueck	Aug 14, 1867		Sep 24, 1924
6	Cornelius B. Plett	May 4, 1869		Dec 13, 1869



Book plate and title page of the 1851 Catechism received by Maria R. Brandt. The memorial written for Maria R. Brandt reads "Katechismus for Maria Brandt in Tiegenghagen, December 29, 1856." Catechism courtesy of Mrs. Abram D. Plett, 1981. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 78.



View of east end of Steinbach Main Street, ca. 1930. Home of photographer Jakob D. Barkman (left), Mrs. Isaac B. Plett, and the former Johann R. Dueck premises (right). Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 71.

6 In 1886 son **Isaac B. Plett** married Elisabeth Dueck, daughter of Ältester Abraham L. Dueck of Grünfeld, Manitoba. Shortly after his marriage, Isaac B. Plett became the owner of the creamery in Kleefeld [Grünfeld].<sup>900</sup> He also started a machinery sales business in Steinbach on the west side of Main Street.<sup>901</sup> According to one source this was the first machinery dealership in Steinbach. He posted large signs advertising his products. This and other occurrences aroused the misgivings of the church. The situation was aggravated by the fact that his premises were located across the street from the church, where the Ohms could not help but see what was happening. As a result Isaac was separated from the church in 1894 and lived for many years outside of the community.<sup>902</sup> On January 7, 1925, uncle Abraham L. Plett wrote about the situation: "...when I think back to the time, how it was then, when Isaac Plett set up his sign, on or with a simple board, and how wrong that was considered, compared to that which there are today many signs with large letters and names on both sides, I believe you can readily distinguish the difference compared to the former times...."<sup>903</sup>

Isaac B. Plett was involved in the lumber business with a sawmill at Pinehill. For many years Isaac B. Plett was also involved in the threshing business, owning his own steam engine threshing outfit. In 1906 he purchased a new 28 horsepower American-Able steam engine from "Friesen & Reimer" in Steinbach for \$4000.00.<sup>904</sup> His dining room car on wheels was an added novelty.

For many years Isaac B. Plett was separated from his wife and lived away from home working with his well drilling business and various other ventures. For a while he lived in Giroux with his friend, Fred Acres, operating a sawmill in the forests to the east. Isaac enjoyed drinking and socializing with like-minded friends, a lifestyle unacceptable in the Kleine Gemeinde community. In his younger years Isaac had an adventuresome life including a trip to the Chicago World Fair in 1892, taking part in the Yukon Gold rush, well drilling and many travels.

Journalist Abram Warkentin has written about Isaac B. Plett, the renowned inventor: "Of the many real inventors who made history in the town [Steinbach], one of the most colourful and successful was Isaac B. Plett.....Mr. Plett was only a lad of eight when he came to Steinbach from Russia with his widowed mother but from his very early youth young Isaac's nature turned to invention and adventure. His adventurous nature in later years made him hit the trail during '98 when the gold rush to the Yukon was on and his inventive genius has probably resulted in the latter-day self-feeder on the threshing machine."

"But in his youth he worked around the home town, helping his widowed mother make a living. Together with the youths of the age, he started working in sawmills and later was an experienced well driller, thresher man and saw miller. His sons still have in their possession a contract dated 1906 recording a transaction whereby Plett Sr. purchased from Friesen and Reimer - then agents in Steinbach - one 26 h.p. American Abel steam engine and a 40-inch separator as standard equipment, for \$4,000.00. His dining car on wheels was an added novelty."

"Long before he had his own machine, in fact long before he became of age, he envisioned a self-feeder on the threshing machine which at that time was being fed by hand. At that time he was still too young to do anything about it and

waited for the opportunity when he would be able to build such a feeder. Shortly after his marriage in 1886, he became owner of the creamery in Kleefeld. Here in the engine room, in his spare time, he set out to build what was to be Canada's first self feeder for a threshing machine. Naturally such an undertaking could not remain secret very long. The brethren eyed this change in the established order dubiously, as they had eyed the bicycle and other new fangled ideas in the past."

"Finally, to avoid publicity, Isaac moved to Winnipeg, and in an undertaker's basement carried on his work. It is not known how he got together with Mr. Thompson (the original Thompson Block still stands opposite the City Hall), but at any rate an agreement was made whereby Mr. Plett could work in the basement and use the tools at night providing he kept them sharp for the men who manufactured caskets during the day. Mr. Plett was not one who believed in ghosts, but one night during a storm when some boards that had been set up against the side of the house fell over, a cold chill went up and down his spine and he looked to the next room where the corpses were held until burial. In this eerie surrounding, during the dark hours of the night, the first automatic sheaf feeder was built. When it was finally put onto a threshing machine, it was found that the engine already had enough load without this added feature, but some 10 years later there appeared on the market - together with a more powerful engine to match - threshing outfits with self feeders attached. One such feeder looked strangely familiar and was known as the Parson Feeder."

"His simplified Moon washer was sought after by the hard working pioneer women of the day in the same manner that their great-granddaughters now go after automatic washers. Less successful was the automatic grain stoker that Mr. Plett spent long hours to develop and build to working conditions. It had not been built past the experimental stage when it became apparent that the combine would eventually establish itself in the grain belt of Canada and make all mechanical stoking methods obsolete. Another hit was a low priced, durable hammer and axe handle. The article was simple enough but not so the machine and the method for producing in quantity. Within a few years it was felt that there were no longer enough oak trees of the right quality in the Red River Valley. For awhile, handles were made from birch. Another invention that created quite a sensation in Steinbach in 1917 was Mr. Plett's helicopter. The machine was completed to the minutest detail, including the painting. When the day for take off arrived, it was found that the model T engine taken off his car lacked the power to take the machine off the ground for a sight-seeing tour over Steinbach."

"The former immigrant boy, who took to pioneer life like a duckling takes to water, by all accounts found a good measure of adventure in all kinds of work and creation. At one time, however, he suspected too much adventure being involved, for example, at digging gold in the Yukon. It may not be generally known that someone from this district took part in the hazardous journey during the historic gold rush. Mr. Plett was one of the many who turned back when reports of lawlessness and robberies 'over there' collided head on with the weary travellers. He turned back but had a prolonged stopover in the so-called wild west where he helped with the transformation before returning home."<sup>905</sup>

Johann W. Dueck described Isaac B. Plett as “a very small man, but really energetic.”<sup>906</sup>

In the Brandt family history, son Isaac D. Plett wrote a biography of his mother, Elisabeth R. Dueck: “Already in her years of youth, she came into anxiety regarding her feelings of unworthiness. And so, I would like to know at what time the roses ever bloomed for her, other than when she occupied herself with the promises of a future home. Among my first memories are the songs my mother sang, namely, as cradle songs for the ones who occupied the cradle after me. At the same time she sang these songs for her own strengthening. And for me, they were ringing songs which unknowingly filled my heart, and which for a long time afterwards came to mind as ‘the songs my mother sang.’ She sang songs such as ‘Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen,’ und ‘Nimm weg von mir die schwere Last.” In her later life, the song “O Ursprung des Lebens, O ewiges Licht,” became her favourite. We have generally always lived in Steinbach, only during the beginning years we moved back and forth a few times from Grünfeld. This was during a time when there was still a sickly mother living in Grünfeld, and a widowed mother-in-law in Steinbach. My mother dearly wanted to be there where she could be the most helpful for both sides. Shortly before the turn of the century, we moved again to Grünfeld in order to live with the grandparents [Abr. L. Duecks] - mother, I, my younger brother Abram, and younger sister Elisabeth. It seemed to be quite in order to me to live at the grandparents, especially when the uncles took me along to Winnipeg. One day they were talking that in a newspaper printed somewhere in the west, something had been mentioned about an ‘iron master Plett [Eisenkünstler Plett].’ From this we could conclude and know that father was still alive. This was exactly the time when the so-called ‘wild west’ was experiencing a great boom and growth activity. Perhaps he had been drawn forcefully along with the excitement. While father was still busy with drilling wells in Manitoba, there were also occasions for him to be away from home a lot, when there were still no autos. After the grandparents had both died, the old home, where mother had grown up, after immigrating with her parents as a seven-year-old girl, was soon dissipated....After this she lived in several places with her sisters in Blumenort and Rosenort. I had a position and some earnings in uncle Klaas Friesen’s factory in Steinbach. It was in 1906 that father returned to Steinbach, buying himself a threshing machine and sawmill. Mother made a decision and was soon back in Steinbach in the same home where she had once been taken in as a young manageress, and wished for nothing better than a simple, quiet life. This was also where our cradles had stood, and where the already mentioned songs rang forth, also for those who died young here. Now the father was not exactly a stranger but for the longest time he was occupied at the sawmill in the forest and resident there. In the meantime, the sister had married and had her own home and hearth. Exactly during the busy threshing time, mother wanted to be helpful and worked in the kitchen. Upon her return, it was evident that she had become sick. During the night she had difficulty breathing. She told me that I should not be frightened on her account. When I asked her about the desirability of care in a hospital, she replied it was not necessary in terms of a better outlook. This was a week before her end.



It was on a Sunday; the last for my mother on earth; and for me, the best opportunity to discuss much which later seemed necessary. Some 35 hours later she had a severe stroke during the night while I was home alone with her. The doctor was called who prescribed a sedative as a preliminary measure. Many guests, however, came by the next day and I felt like I was pushed aside. I knew that she still had something on her heart, based on what she had already shared the previous day. A suitable opportunity came - she wanted to have more certainty regarding a 'future meeting.' She added these final words: 'I always thought you would make yourself up more definitely yet; and if you have already done so, why have you not already told me earlier?' Then she sank back, without strength. She had another 16 hours for herself...Although she had great difficulty breathing, yet, the end came easy and peacefully. Someone brought me the news in the house, 'mother is dying now.' I rushed over and gazed into her eyes which had just broken open, and asked, 'Have you then in the final moment really seen in flesh, how they open the door?'"<sup>907</sup> The funeral was held on September 26, "and the church was almost full."<sup>908</sup>

7 Journalist Abe Warkentin has written: "Mr. Plett's two **sons, Isaac D. and Abram**, both inherited the inventive nature from their father. Abram D. Plett became a very successful inventor and manufacturer of his own inventions at Rosenort. Some of his more important inventions have been a grain loader and a collapsible trailer.

"More unorthodox but also highly successful was Isaac who still lives in Steinbach [1971]. Exhibiting the great inventive gift he had, Isaac D. Plett in 1937 invented a now-locally-famous machine used for reinforcing the wax foundation for the bee industry by a quick process of imbedding wire in the wax. The machine was rated as the best of its kind in Canada and the wax foundation which it produced enabled Steinbach's C.T. Loewen firm to keep atop the bee equipment industry for 25 years. Royalties earned by his machine, though small, helped Mr. Plett to live during the years since he first leased it to the Loewen factory in 1938. Over the years the machine earned or saved hundreds of thousands of dollars for its operators and for beekeepers who used its products. Almost as great a breakthrough for Mr. Plett as the invention of the machine itself, was his design in 1956 of a device for feeding it automatically. This relieved the operator of the job of lifting the wax sheets off the conveyor belt. Honey production in Canada reached its peak in 1947 when it was widely used as a sugar substitute during the sugar rationing days."<sup>909</sup> Isaac D. Plett remained a bachelor all his life. He wrote "an interesting biography of his father, Isaac B. Plett....which...[the editors of the 1945 *Plettentag* booklet deemed] so worthy that hopefully it will be printed...." Unfortunately this manuscript has never yet been located.

7 Son **Abram D. Plett** founded Westfield Industries in Rosenort, Manitoba, a large manufacturer of augers and other farm implements. The business was owned and operated by sons Frank, Benjamin, Stanley and Oliver.<sup>910</sup> In 2001 the business was sold. Daughter **Elisabeth D. Plett** married Gerhard W. Brandt, son of Steinbach pioneer Heinrich R. Brandt, and they were the parents of David P. Brandt, Blumenort, who assisted with this article.



*Isaac B. Plett, ca. 1920. Photos for this page, courtesy of Mrs. Abram D. Plett, Rosenort, 1981.*



*Abram D. Plett, founder of Westfield Industries, Rosenort.*



*Isaac D. Plett, Steinbach inventor: Photo - Reflections, page 115.*



*Martha Fuchs Plett and Abram D. Plett, 1932, outside Rosenort Co-op. Abram was the first manager.<sup>911</sup>*



1933. House-barn built by Maria Brandt Plett on Lot 17, presumably as an Anwobner since she only acquired the Feuerstelle in 1883.<sup>912</sup> In 1965 it was the oldest dwelling in Steinbach. Note the windmill device mounted on top of the barn to generate electricity for the owner's use. The building was demolished in 1989 to make way for a new MCC building. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 73.



Abram D. Plett and wife Martha, nee Fuchs, in front of his mother's home in Steinbach, ca. 1930. Arnold Dyck, the Mennonite writer, lived in these premises. The house later became the home and law offices of Gordon J. Barkman, and then Plett, Goossen & Associates. In 1989 it was demolished to make room for the MCC Trift-Shop. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Abram D. Plett, 1981.

5 Daughter **Sarah L. Plett** married Jakob J. Thielmann, son of Jakob Thielmann (1810-62), Neukirch. Family historian Alfred Redekopp, Winnipeg has written that when Jakob was 16 years old, his parents moved from Neukirch - where Jakob was born - to Alexanderkrone where they established their own Wirtschaft. In the neighbouring village of Kleefeld lived the Cornelius Plett family and their third oldest child, Sarah. <sup>913</sup> Sarah's twin brother Cornelius has written that he ".....and his sister Sarah were baptised in the spring of 1865 by Ältester Johann Friesen at Abraham F. Friesens [in Neukirch] in the Scheune."

Sometime between the fall of 1867 and spring of 1868, Jakob and Sara Thielmann moved to the settlement of Friedensfeld, a settlement founded in 1866 by the Kleine Gemeinde who in a spirit of compassion allowed three Brüdergemeinde families to settle there as well. Sarah and Jakob Thielmann joined the Brüdergemeinde in Friedensfeld in 1869.

When her parents immigrated to Canada in 1875 Sarah was ill and so the Thielmann family could not join them. The intention was that they would do so later. Sarah died in 1881 before her wishes to once again see her parents and siblings could be realized.<sup>914</sup>

In a letter of January 5, 1882, Jakob Thielmann wrote to her parents in Manitoba describing her death and last wishes:

**Letter, 1882.**

"Friedensfeld, Jan 5, 1882"

"Dear Parents Cornelius Pletts:"

"Since we have waited long and in vain for news from you, I now must report our state of being, and that with sorrow-filled heart. On the 1st of Dec. 10 o'clock in the evening my dear wife suddenly had a violent stomach illness, like she had already had a number of times earlier. I quickly prepared the bed, but before I was finished, she began to vomit. It became easier for her then, and I felt that now she would soon be well again.

"No,' she said, 'Two more times like before - then it will be better.'"

"But no, it did not happen so. The vomiting not only happened two more times but happened a number of times and then she also became constipated. That lasted throughout the night and day. Toward the evening I went to get some advice from the midwife. She came along and gave her an enema. But it did not help. So another day and night passed, and then the enema was made again, and this time with success, but she did not improve, only became worse. The vomiting became more severe, so that I became quite worried and said to her: 'I suspect that this could be the end.'"

"Then my dear wife answered, 'May the Lord's will also be mine.'

Then I responded, 'So it is right, but on the other hand, I can't do without you. What do I do with the small children?'"

"Yes,' she replied. 'Those dear children.'"

"But', she said, 'We can't both die at the same time,' and so she preferred to go first to that solid hope and blessed rest, to be released from all pain and sorrow. This was the 3rd day of her illness as she moved toward her end with extreme constipation and vomiting. O dear parents, she suffered severely. We

spoke often of you, dear parents and brothers and sisters so far away. A getting together was unthinkable. Monday the 8th day I wanted to send for the doctor from Nikopol, but her condition was a little better that day so we waited for Tuesday when it was worse again, and brother Martin Thielmann left in the morning and returned 10:30 in the evening with a doctor."

Immediately he used his wisdom, skill and remedies to get her bowels to move, and then announced, 'Now she has been saved.' She actually started getting better, so that I even believed that she would again become healthy. The vomiting also stopped. I became quite happy in the hope that my dear wife would soon be well. Food again started to taste better for her. But it was not long till the illness took another turn.

"Right after lunch she said, 'What is happening to us?'"

"I responded, 'Nothing, other than that you are very sick.'"

"Then she said, 'Oh, I'm not sick.'"

"Then I saw however that she was very ill."

"It is Jan. 8th today: The illness soon spread more to her mind, and my dear wife became weaker by the hour. This was the 10th day. On the 11th day toward evening she became a little peaceful and requested chicken soup. So we immediately killed a chicken and prepared the meal. When the soup was ready and I served her, she took but one spoonful, spit it out and asked just for some cold water. At about 7 o'clock she became very calm and fell asleep for two hours. A 9 o'clock she stopped breathing and so she entered a gentle death."

"Oh, the separation is so painful, but I want to be patient and take hold of the hope that it is not forever, but comfort myself and look forward to a reunion in the blessed Eternity. Presently my situation is not joyful, but full of grief. Sarah is not yet 14 years-old and the youngest son, Martin, is one year and five months. He needs his mother the most right now, and longs for her, so that it becomes quite difficult for us. However, I want to take hold of myself and say with Job, 'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord (even with a weak and grieving heart).'"

"I want to share yet what we had in mind and were pursuing. We had announced in the Chortitza and Halbstadt Districts that our farm (Wirtschaft) was for sale, so that we could buy a ticket in Spring and visit you with our family, since she had a deep longing for her parents and brothers and sisters, but the Lord has placed her where there are no needs, no crying nor tears and no suffering. O dear loved ones, whoever doesn't feel ready for such a move, namely from this present age to Eternity, let him draw near to Jesus. Let me invite with the song writer:"

"Come to the Saviour, make no delay,  
Here is His Word He's shown us the way;  
Here in our midst He's standing today.  
Tenderly saying, 'Come!'"

"Think once again, He's with us today,  
Heed now His blest commands, and obey,  
Hear now His accents tenderly say,  
'Will you, My children, come?'"

“Refrain:

Joyful, joyful will the meeting be,  
When from sin our hearts are pure and free;  
And we shall gather, Saviour, with thee,  
In our eternal home.”

George F. Root (1820-95)

“On Dec. 15th I returned the body of my dear wife to the earth. The funeral service began with the singing of the Song No. 702 (*Gesangbuch*). Psalm 90 was read as an invocation and teacher Janz chose the funeral text from Revelation that reads, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth, blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them.’ (14:13). Several songs followed the message and also at the burial.”

“Well I want to close my short writing. I read in the *Rundschau* that you, dear father-in-law, have been in Kansas for a visit. I also spoke with my dear wife about some who have come to Russia for a visit. There is a Mr. Buller from Nebraska, formerly he lived in Alexanderwohl, who is here with his family visiting in Russia and will be staying for the winter.”

“As far as I knew how and was able to, through prayer and medical advice, I tried to keep my dear wife alive. A certain proverb says, ‘No weed has ever grown for its death’ and that is the case here as well.”

“Now what are you all doing over there so far away? Are you still all alive or has someone of you also died? Two more questions: 1) Abram Plett’s, did you receive the letter that I wrote to you where I mentioned Johann Thielmann? 2) And Kroekers, have you also not received a letter, since we received a special letter from you and also again wrote one. We have, however, received no answer. Now I want to close my simple writing and hope it has not offended any one. A sincere greeting in closing from your deeply grieving son-in-law,

“Jacob Thielmann.”

p.s. Greeting also to all your children and all who remember me. Also greetings to Johann Dueck.<sup>915</sup> The dear friends, Peter Penners, also send greetings to you.”

“From my dear wife, I can send no greeting. Please write me about how things are going with you.”<sup>916</sup>

A widower with six children desperately needed help in raising them. It was quite understandable, therefore, that some four months later Jakob Thielmann remarried to Helena Dueck, from the Kuban, Caucasus. He fathered three children with her. Family historian Alfred Redekopp has written, “Jakob J. Thielmann had a very hard life as far as his economic situation was concerned.” During his last year he worked hard at improving the buildings, completing the work before the harvest. During the harvest he suffered a stroke. A few months later on January 17, 1894, he died in Friedensfeld of the illness known as the dropsy. His widow later remarried to David Vogt of Friedensfeld. They moved to Siberia where Helena is believed to have died in 1940.”

The biographies of the children of Sarah L. Plett and Jakob J. Thielmann are written by Alfred Redekopp, Winnipeg, Manitoba, a great-grandson.<sup>917</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Sarah L. Plett</b>	Oct 29, 1846		Dec 23, 1881
m	Jacob Thielmann	Jul 17, 1841	Oct 31, 1865	Jan 17, 1894
6	Sarah Thielmann	Feb 20, 1868		Sep 1, 1913
m	Jakob Lepp			1920s
6	Jakob P. Thielmann	Feb 17, 1870		Jul 2, 1947
m	Karolina Lietz	Jan 6, 1866	Dec 14, 1897	Apr 5, 1933
2m	Aganetha Hamm	Mar 29, 1867	Aug, 1933	Oct 27, 1946
6	Agatha Thielmann			4 years old
6	Kornelius Thielmann	Jun 7, 1873		Apr 23, 1961
m	Anna Wiebe			Sep 14, 1935
2m	Anna Peters	Jun 18, 1892	Sep 17, 1936	Jan 29, 1968
6	Johann Thielmann			1 year old
6	David J. Thielmann	Oct 1, 1876		Feb 29, 1960
m	Maria Epp	Mar 6, 1884	May 15, 1903	Oct 7, 1954
6	Gerhard J. Thielmann	Jul 21, 1878	May 17, 1902	Jan 15, 1949
m	Katharina Huebert	Mar 23, 1879		Jan 2, 1974
6	Martin J. Thielmann	Jul 10, 1880		Jul 10, 1890



*Children of Sarah L. Plett (1846-81) and Jakob J. Thielmann (1841-94), Friedensfeld, Borosenko, Russia, ca. 1900. Rear (l.-r.): Kornelius, David and Gerbard. Rear: Maria and Helena, younger half-sisters. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 30.*

6 Daughter **Sarah Thielmann** (1868-1913) married Jacob Lepp of Andreasfeld in 1891. Together with other Germans they established themselves in the large Russian town of Barwenkovo, Charkover District, soon after their marriage. After being childless for the first 10 years of their marriage, they had a son, Jacob. In 1921 while in the State Service he contracted typhus, came home on sick leave, and died. He was 20 years-old. Sarah suffered severely from spinal consumption and rheumatism for five years before she died in 1913. Jacob Lepp later married Maria Doerksen. During the early 1920s Jacob Lepp also died.

6 Son **Jacob Thielmann** (1870-1947) married Karolina Lietz (1866-1933), born in West Prussia, who emigrated to South Russia around 1873 with her widowed mother and older siblings. As a young woman she was baptized in the Baptist Church. They lived in Friedensfeld for one year and then they leased a farm in Johannesfeld. Since they could not have children of their own they adopted a young orphan girl, Olga, in 1901.

In 1903 Jacob Thielmanns left Russia for Canada. The first winter they spent in Manitoba with his Plett relatives. In 1904 they pioneered on a homestead close to Aberdeen, Saskatchewan. In 1919 the farm was taken over by their adopted daughter and husband, Peter Dueck. Jakob and Karolina moved to Hepburn, Saskatchewan. In 1924 they were joined by Jacob's brother, Gerhard and his family who emigrated from Russia.

On April 5, 1933 Karolina Thielmann (nee Lietz) passed away after suffering quite severely from dropsy (Wassersucht). The funeral took place at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and despite poor Spring roads the church was full. Peter Nickel and Jacob Dueck officiated and a choir sang. John Sawatsky read scripture and prayed at the graveside. She was buried at the local cemetery at Hepburn.

In 1933 Jacob Thielmann married widow Aganetha Krahn (nee Hamm) (1867-1946). Aganetha Hamm was born in the village of Chortitza in S. Russia and lived in the village of Rosengart after 1880....

In the summer of 1945 Jacob and Aganetha Thielmann left Hepburn, Saskatchewan to visit and live closer to her children. Aganetha had already not been very well for four years. On October 27, 1946 she passed away in Abbotsford, British Columbia after being bedridden for two months. The funeral was officiated by H. H. Nickel, John Harder, Yarrow, and Franz Thiessen on Oct. 31, 1946. She was buried in the Abbotsford cemetery.

On July 2, 1947 Jacob Thielmann also passed away in Abbotsford, B.C. The funeral was on Sat. July 5, 1947, officiated by Isaak Janz, J. Riesen, Yarrow and H. Toews...Jacob Thielmann was buried at the Abbotsford cemetery.

Jacob Thielmann was very hard of hearing in his later years. His nephew, George G. Thielmann, remembered how his father attempted to converse with Jacob, but despite speaking loudly little comprehension took place. On one occasion after sitting quietly together for some time, they began to communicate through writing on a small slate and passing it back and forth.



6 Son **Kornelius J. Thielmann** (1873-1961) had a slight physical handicap in that one leg was shorter than the other. Apparently as a little boy he fell off the big clothes closet while not being watched very well by the maid. His parents didn't become aware of the injury until it was too late and the one leg had developed a retarded growth. Even though this handicapped leg was very sensitive to the cold and often caused him pain, he still was quite successful in the trade of upholstering and saddle making. After apprenticing with various masters in the Molotschna villages of Tiege, Münsterberg and Neu-Halbstadt, he completed his training in the city of Charkov.

After completing his training, he married Anna Wiebe and established his home in Friedensfeld. The Kornelius Thielmanns' changed their place of residence often. For some years they lived in Kudaschewka, South Russia where their three children were born. Finally they moved to the Omsk region in Siberia. In 1929-30 when many German speaking people fled from the Soviet Union through Moscow, Kornelius Thielmanns also wanted to leave, but this did not happen.

Kornelius Thielmann's three children all got married in Russia. Son Jacob Thielmann and his wife had no children. Jacob worked as a bookkeeper in a business. In 1940 he was imprisoned and died while in custody. Kornelius Thielmann's daughter Olga married a school master, Johann Janzen (1902-81). This family immigrated to South America and later to Canada. Kornelius Thielmann's other son, Cornelius was a school teacher in Leningrad. He had two sons. He died in the Second World War.

In 1935 Kornelius Thielmann's wife Anna Wiebe died in the Omsk region. In 1936 Kornelius Thielmann married widow Anna Kroeker (nee Peters) (1892-1968). At this time only the sons Cornelius and Jacob Thielmann were in the Omsk region - daughter Olga Janzen (nee Thielmann) and her family were elsewhere. For many years absolutely no news reached the western world. For example, in 1945 David J. Thielmann (1876-1960), then in Paraguay, wrote that they had heard nothing since Kornelius Thielmann married his wife's cousin, widow Anna Kroeker in 1936, and he does not know if Kornelius Thielmann is still alive in the Soviet Union.

On Sunday, April 23, 1961 Kornelius J. Thielmann died in Issil Julj, near Omsk. For three years he had suffered from illness in his digestive system, but he was thankful to God that he could get out of bed by himself every morning, and be spared a long illness and intensive care. On the day of his death he had visitors including some who sang some songs for him. The funeral on April 27<sup>th</sup> was well attended. Although Kornelius Thielmann's widow, Anna, became quite ill herself immediately after his death so that she could not attend the funeral, she was able to sit up long enough for a last viewing of her deceased husband and have a picture taken with her two grandsons and two daughters-in-laws.

After the death of Kornelius J. Thielmann, his widow Anna chose to live with the family of her niece, Marie and Benjamin Siemens....Shortly after Christmas 1967 she became quite ill with a stomach flu, and passed away on January 29, 1968. Anna Matthies, Omsk, reported in a letter, "....the fellowship of believers must grieve the loss of one of their praying sisters."

6 Son **David J. Thielmann** (1876-1960) married Maria Epp (1884-1954), the daughter of H.H. Epp, in 1903. A few years later when many Mennonites were purchasing land in Siberia near Omsk, David Thielmanns were also interested. In 1907 a land purchase of 1035 desjatein was made from an Officer Iwanov. H.H. Epp, David Thielmann's father-in-law, purchased 535, Aron Lepp, Mrs. Thielmann's uncle, 200, David Thielmann 50, Kornelius Epp 150, and Johann Regier 100 desjatein. They established a village named Iwanovka, belonging to the children of H.H. Epp.<sup>918</sup> The village was next to Margenau which had the Brüdergemeinde church and school. David Thielmann's farmed here from 1907 till 1929.

Besides farming David Thielmann was also the church choir director in Margenau.....David Thielmann hosted at least one special choir directors course and Sangerfest with the guest conductor and instructor, Bernhard B. Dueck (1869-1936), his cousin....His choir was heavily involved in that venture. There were also a number of other Sangerfests in the Omsk region....During the years in Siberia, David Thielmann was keenly interested in education. After 1917 he became the treasurer of the newly formed society for establishing a high school (Zentralschule) in Margenau. His children attended this school during the 1920s.

In the fall of 1929 when many Mennonites and other Germans in the Soviet Union fled to Moscow in a desperate attempt to obtain exit visas, David Thielmann and his family with the exception of one married daughter, also sold everything in Siberia and came to Moscow. Historian John B. Toews says that the "cause of the panic in part related to the accumulated economic hardships and social disruptions generated by the revolution and civil war." Many people assumed that exit visas to Germany would be granted and from there they would be allowed to emigrate to Canada as so many other Mennonites had done from 1923-1926 (over 17,000 persons). Little did they know that despite the best diplomatic negotiations between the German government and the Soviet Foreign Ministry, which got the approval for the planned exodus of the many refugees in Moscow, everything would be halted when on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1929 the Canadian government announced that no immigrants could be accepted until the following spring due to rising unemployment. Germany had seen itself only as an intermediary and could not take the refugees for an indefinite time. The Soviets did not want to risk further international exposure of the failure of its economic system (collectivization and Lenin's Five Year Plan), so it also could not tolerate a lengthy delay of the refugees. Before a new emigration plan could be negotiated, at least 8,000 refugees were forcibly deported from Moscow. On November 25, 1929 the Soviets agreed to allow the refugees still remaining in Moscow to leave for Germany (about 5,500 persons).<sup>919</sup> Once in Germany negotiations continued. Germany would accept only some on a permanent basis. Canada proved the greatest disappointment since only 1,000 refugees managed to get there largely due to the efforts of friends and relatives. Another 1,200 persons went to Brazil and the remaining 1,700 settled in Paraguay. The David Thielmanns came to the Chaco jungle of Paraguay in 1931.

The pioneer years in the Chaco were not easy. Economic progress was slow and difficult due to the many environmental adjustments and lack of prox-

imity to world markets. Through the help of the Mennonite Central Committee in North America their existence in Paraguay became possible. The Thielmanns pioneered and settled in the Fernheim Colony. Some of their children continued their education there. Four of their children got married in Paraguay. In 1953 they celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Just over a year later in 1954, Maria Thielmann (nee Epp), David's wife, died. In February 1960 David Thielmann went to the capital city of Asuncion for an eye operation. There he passed away on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1960 of a stroke at the age of 83. His body was flown back to Filadelfia, Paraguay by special aircraft the next day, where the funeral and burial took place. He was remembered as someone who had served the Mennonite community as a choir director for 42 years.

The David Thielmanns had seven children that reached adulthood. One daughter, Mrs. Anna Matthies remained in the Soviet Union and still lives there today (1985). Two daughters, Mrs. Lydia Wiens and Mrs. Sara Neufeld, live in British Columbia, Canada. Son Walter Thielmann was a teacher in Filadelfia, Fernheim, Paraguay, and also served as president of the South American General Conference Church. Presently, descendants of David and Maria Thielmann can be found in Canada, Paraguay and the Soviet Union.



*David J. and Maria Thielmann's family in Fernheim, Paraguay, during the 1930s. Back (l.-r.): Kaethe, Maria, Lydia and Heinrich. Front: David, Mother Maria, Father David and Sara. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 39.*

6 Son **Gerhard J. Thielmann** (1878-1949) was born in Friedensfeld and attended the village school for seven years. Through the influence of his parents and teacher Abraham Wall he went to Neu-Halbstadt in the Molotschna Settlement at the age of 14, where he completed three years of study at the high school (Zentralschule). In his second year, which was also the year that his father died, he received a bursary of 100 rubles from the Halbstadter Gebietsamt for his living expenses. This bursary was given to needy students who showed academic potential. Following his studies at the Zentralschule he took a two year education program and successfully completed the state examinations for becoming a teacher, in Simferopol, Crimea, the capital city of the Taurien District. He received his first teaching position in the Halbstadt village school but since he did not have the proper qualifications to instruct in the Russian language, he was replaced after one month by a Russian. However, he soon found a position as a tutor for four students in the Rosenort village school which had over 40 students. Here he enjoyed the young people and even conducted a choir. He taught in Rosenort for five years and then for two years in Friedensdorf as a result of a teacher exchange with teacher Jacob Janzen. His last year of teaching was at the newly established girls' school in Gnadenfeld where he was the teacher of religion and German language.

On May 21, 1899 he was baptized and became a member of the Brüdergemeinde. During his 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Rosenort he proposed marriage to Katharina Huebert of Münsterberg who accepted his request. In her memoirs, Katharina Thielmann (nee Huebert) writes about this decision.

“In November 1901 teacher Gerhard Thielmann, Rosenort came and asked for my hand in marriage and I said ‘yes’ to him. Later I regretted my decision and would gladly have changed my mind and I pleaded with God that He should not allow the marriage to happen. During this restless period in my life, a letter came in the mail from my fiance. Only a few lines had been written, but they were song lyrics which to this day are precious to me: “Let him do as He would do, Wise and loving prince, and He’ll perform in such a way, That you will be surprised. The promise being honoured, in loving word and deed, The task will be completed, Of which you were concerned.”

On May 4, 1902 Gerhard J. Thielmann married Katharina Huebert (1879-1974), the daughter of Johann N. Huebert (1848-1934) and Katharina Toews (1849-1890). The wedding was not at the church, but at the Huebert’s home in the large shed which had been decorated with garlands and flowers for the festivities, as was the practice in those days. The buildings remained decorated for the funeral of the bride’s grandmother, Elizabeth (Huebert) Wiebe (nee Toews) (1814-1902) who died the next day.

Gerhard Thielmann lived in Rosenort, Friedensdorf and Gnadenfeld before a career change was made in 1908 when the family moved to Münsterberg where he first received temporary work as a correspondent in the “Hamm and Huebert” business which sold harvesting equipment. A little later he became their bookkeeper in the village of Lichtenau. In 1910 when the “Hamm and Huebert” business was transferred to Halbstadt because business was thriving and

Halbstadt was a more centrally located city, the Thielmanns moved there as well....After living in two different houses for two years each, Gerhard Thielmann had a duplex built for his family and the Abram Hueberts, his brother-in-law. He only lived in this house one month, for in 1914 he had to leave his family for three years of state service during the First World War. He served in the medical service (Sanitätsdienst) and also as a bookkeeper for the Red Cross in Ekaterinoslav. He was released from the service on account of his weak eyesight. The "Hamm and Huebert" firm which depended on German imports had gone out of business by then, so he again was forced to be away from his family as he found work in Altona and Münsterberg as a bookkeeper. In 1918 he was able to move the family to Münsterberg where they lived until they emigrated to Canada in 1924. In 1923 Gerhard Thielmann had the opportunity to go to an exhibition in Moscow. His job in Münsterberg included not only bookkeeping but also business management.

On July 13, 1924 Gerhard J. and Katharina Thielmann left Russia for Canada with son Gerhard and daughter Elly. One daughter Kaetchen had died in Lichtenau at the age of one and son Jacob died in Münsterberg in 1921 of typhus and pneumonia - age 12. The oldest son, Johannes, being in the state service, intended to emigrate later, but was unable to in 1929 and so remained in the Soviet Union till his death in 1957.

In August 1924 the Gerhard Thielmanns arrived in Hepburn, Saskatchewan where brother Jacob Thielmann (1870-1947) lived....The early years in Canada, adjusting to a new climate and gaining social acceptance, were difficult times. Not all Canadians, or even all Mennonites in Canada, in the 1920s were ready to accept the new immigrants from Russia even though many of their forbearers had come from the same places just over 70 years earlier.

For example on August 12, 1922 there had been a meeting in Hepburn, Saskatchewan of leaders of the Mennonite Brethren Conference which resulted in a letter to the Canadian Pacific Railway officials in Montreal, who had offered to transport 3,000 Mennonites from Russia on credit on the basis of the Canadian Mennonites' guarantee of repayment as negotiated by the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization of which David Toews was the chairman. This letter stated that some 12 Saskatchewan churches, all represented at this Hepburn conference, refused to be a party of the contract signed by Rev. David Toews and the Canadian Pacific Railway. For some Canadian Mennonites it was undoubtedly a financial question. Who would raise and pay for the Reiseschult (transportation debt)?

Others were sceptical of their distant cousins in Russia with regards to their faith. They suggested that the Russian Mennonites had abandoned the principle of non-resistance in forming a self-defense unit (Selbstschutz) which operated during the Russian civil upheaval. At any rate, adjustments were difficult for many of the new immigrants to Canada in the 1920s. For Gerhard Thielmann there were also other barriers to overcome. He was not a farmer; he had been well educated in Russia and been employed in education and business, but in Canada he was expected to do hard physical labour.

In spring or early summer of 1925, Gerhard Thielmann made a trip to

Manitoba to visit his Plett relatives. These relatives would gladly have had them move to Manitoba, but finding appropriate work was difficult. He did find work in Manitoba during that summer but the experience was not good. Working in the hot sun on construction, pouring tar, he severely burned his eyes and so he terminated his employment and returned to Hepburn.

In 1926 he found employment at the Canadian Pacific Railway replacing railway ties. This work lasted only four months a year, but had good benefits. After three seasons of employment, he could travel free with his wife and dependent children as long as he applied in advance of his lay-off. In 1929 he made a trip to B.C. alone, in 1930 to Coaldale, Alberta together with his wife and daughter. During the 1930s the Thielmanns made several trips to B.C. and Ontario with likely stops in Manitoba. When there seemed to be little future on the prairies during the economic depression of the early 1930s, they deliberated between moving to Ontario or B.C. for better opportunities. On April 9, 1935 they left Hepburn and moved to Ontario. On May 21, 1935 they arrived in Vineland Ontario where they lived till the spring of 1937 when they purchased land in the Virgil area. Together with their daughter Elly, and her husband Abram H. Redekopp they began to farm fruit. Before the young trees could bear fruit, seasonal crops such as strawberries, tomatoes and asparagus were grown and marketed.

Gerhard J. Thielmann and his wife were charter members of the Virgil Mennonite Brethren Church founded in 1937. Gerhard J. Thielmann served this congregation for 10 years as church secretary and only resigned due to his failing eyesight. Although he had suffered a severe heart attack in 1941 and pneumonia in 1943 he was still healthy enough in 1947 to learn and master reading Braille. He enjoyed reading the Biblical gospel in Braille. His instructor also taught him basket weaving which helped pass the time. On January 15, 1949 he passed away in the Niagara Hospital at the age of 70. He was buried in a St. Catharines cemetery after the funeral in the Virgil M.B. Church.

Katharina Thielmann (nee Huebert) remained a widow for almost 25 years till she passed away on January 2, 1974 at Tabor Manor, St. Catharines, Ontario. She was active and wrote many letters especially for her grandson, writer of this Family History and Genealogy. She comforted many people through the poems and songs she copied for them. Until her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday she was still quite alert and active. Except for a short time in the Vineland Home for the Aged during the mid-1950s she lived alone in the house, built in 1943, till June 1969 when she moved to Tabor Manor. She was buried in the Lake Shore Cemetery near Virgil after the funeral in the Virgil M.B. Church which was officiated by Rev. John G. Baerg.

Their son George G. Thielmann received his Ph. D. from Western Reserve University in 1955. For a number of years he taught in the Political Science Department at Georgia State University. After retirement from that institution he moved to Seattle, Washington. He was the first descendant of Cornelius and Sarah Plett to earn a Ph. D. Other descendants of Gerhard J. and Katharina Thielmann are in the Soviet Union, Canada and the United States.



*Gerbard J. Thielmann (1878-1949), ca. 1896, upon completion of teacher training. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 45.*



*David J. Thielmann (1876-1960), ca. 1900. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 38.*



*Gerbard J. Thielmann family 1924, just prior to departing Russia for Canada. L.-r.: Gerbard J. Thielmann, Elly, Hans, Katharina, and George G. Thielmann. Hans was in the service and intended to come later, but never did. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 48.*



*Gerbard J. and Katharina Thielmann with daughter Elly and son George, 1948. Photo - Jacob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker, page 50.*

5 Son **Cornelius L. Plett** (1846-1935) was the only one of his siblings to actually compile a brief autobiography for his children. Although short, it does provide a basic narrative of his life's pilgrimage. From this source we know that Cornelius was younger than twin sister Sarah, being born four hours later.

Cornelius himself wrote that on September 2, 1869, he married Sara T. Enns, daughter of Heinrich Enns (1801-81) of Fischau, Molotschna, one-time Kleine Gemeinde Ältester.<sup>920</sup> Cornelius and his bride lived for one year with her parents in Fischau. Their son Heinrich was born here. In 1871 Cornelius and Sarah moved to Kleefeld, Molotschna, to farm together with his parents, receiving the tenth part as his wages, namely 27 desjatien of wheat, plus board. Daughter Sarah was born in Kleefeld.

In Spring of 1872 Cornelius and Sarah with his parents moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, northwest of Nikopol. His father and uncle Johann Loewen each purchased a Wirtschaft from uncle Johann Warkentin. As part of the transaction, Cornelius Jr. and Loewens' children, Peter Hieberts, each acquired a half-Wirtschaft of 25 desjatien. On Feb. 16, 1871, "Cornelius Pletts stopped in for a moment [at the home of school teacher Abr. R. Friesens in Lichtenau] on their way from Kleefeld."

During the summer Sarah became sick with pneumonia. That fall they drove to the Molotschna to seek medical attention, staying at her father's home in Fischau. They sought the assistance of Dr. Bergensche, a noted practitioner, but she was unable to help.<sup>921</sup> Sarah passed away November 21, 1872 and was buried in the Fischau cemetery on the 25th. Among Sarah's treasured possessions was a copy of Volume One of Menno Simons' "Fundamentabuch," published by the Kleine Gemeinde in 1833, received in 1866, presumably a baptismal gift from her parents.<sup>922</sup> Cornelius wrote in his autobiography that "Soon after the funeral I had the opportunity to travel home with Jakob Regehrs of Grünfeld. Only one who has undertaken a trip home with two motherless children can understand what this can be."

"However, God be thanked," he added, "though His grace and support I again found a spouse, Helena Rempel, to share my life." On March 23, 1873, Cornelius married for the second time to Helena Rempel, daughter of Abraham Rempel (1798-1878), Margenau.<sup>923</sup> Helena had been working as a maid at the home of Cornelius' sister Margaretha Plett Kroeker in the neighbouring village of Steinbach. Helena Rempel was the aunt of Abr. R. Friesen in Lichtenau. On Oct. 7, 1874, Friesen noted: "Pletts from Blumenhof arrived [at Friesen's home] and stayed for night."

When the majority of the Kleine Gemeinde emigrated to America in 1874, the group remaining was left without a Vorsänger. Peter Toews saw to it that Cornelius and uncle David Loewen were appointed to replace the choristers who had emigrated. Cornelius wrote, "I served this office in my weakness for 17 years."

In 1875 Cornelius Jr. and second wife, Helena Rempel, immigrated from Russia. Together with his parents and five brothers they established themselves in the village of Blumenhof, Manitoba, three miles north of Steinbach. They quickly built a semlin which provided basic shelter for the first winter. In 1876 he



built a house 22x32 and a barn 26x40. Grandson Abraham R. Plett later described these premises: "The house which Cornelius....built...was much larger than the first. It was connected to the barn under one ridge pole so that they did not need to go outside to attend to their livestock. The house was a one-story affair with a steep roof. It was unpainted and the floors were made of six-inch boards....The house was insulated in winter by grain stored in the attic."<sup>924</sup>

Cornelius was an average village farmer. The pioneers produced and marketed potatoes, poultry, beef and pork meat, eggs, milk, butter, wheat, barley and oats. From examining his 1895 diary, historian Royden Loewen has concluded "that Cornelius L. Plett drove to Winnipeg at least once a month with products for sale."<sup>925</sup> They purchased a variety of items including cloth, lumber, steel, brandy and apples. Great-great granddaughter Rosabel Fast has written: "Until he retired, Kornelius earned a moderate livelihood with mixed farming. Meat, vegetables, fruit, grain, and milk for their own consumption were raised on the farm and enough produce sold to buy other necessities at the store in Blumenort or Steinbach."<sup>926</sup>

The early Mennonite pioneers worked together in close harmony. Much of the work was done as groups or by villages. The family was the most important social unit. The butchering bee was a common example. Once it was cold enough in fall, extended families took turns helping each other butcher hogs and cattle. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "Another example of a butchering bee was one held on November 29, 1895, at the Cornelius L. Pletts, when they butchered two pigs and two oxen with the help of Abram L. Pletts, Gerhard Doerksens, Bernhard Doerksens, Heinrich Pletts and their parents, Cornelius S. Pletts. In the same month Cornelius Pletts helped each of these families butcher pigs, cows, oxen, calves and chickens."<sup>927</sup>

Cornelius served for a time as mayor (Schulz) of the village.<sup>928</sup> When his parents retired from active farming in 1885 Cornelius took over their village Wirtschaft located on NW24-7-6E. When the village dissolved two years later, he was fortunate and did not have to relocate his buildings to a new site. For a time he had one of the larger dairy farms in the village, e.g. 21 cattle in 1889. His diary shows that seeding for 1895 was done from April 10 to 19th.<sup>929</sup>

In his autobiography Cornelius writes: "In 1881 the Gemeinde divided when almost half gave themselves over to Holdeman, including Ältester Peter Toews with three teachers [ministers], namely, Abraham Loewen, Heinrich Reimer, and Johann Enns [brother to Cornelius' first wife]. Thus, the Gemeinde of which I was a member experienced three divisions. Firstly, on account of the reactance in the Gemeinde of Abraham Thiessen, who was under the ban; and for the second time on September 21, 1869, the Ältester Jakob Wiebe in the Crimea and a number of other members were rebaptized in a stream; thirdly, in 1881, Ältester Peter Toews together with half of the Gemeinde [in Manitoba] joined together with Johann Holdeman and also were rebaptized but not in a stream. And so in this desolate world there have been many mountains to climb and valleys to cross."

Cornelius L. Plett was elected as a minister of the Kleine Gemeinde on December 15, 1891. Historian Royden Loewen has pointed out that "the elec-

tion.... was called after Deacon Abraham R. Reimer's sudden death. At this election both Cornelius Plett and brother, Peter L. Plett, were elected deacons. The ministerial election which followed ended in a tie between Cornelius Plett and Abraham Dueck. A lot was cast to break the tie, and Plett became the minister."<sup>930</sup>

In the aftermath of the election, Cornelius L. Plett reflected that "...in the time of my ministry, five Ältesten have died." Among the highlights of his ministry was meeting with Jakob Y. Schantz, on September 12, 1895 at the home of cousin Cornelius Toews in Steinbach. Schantz was the "old" Mennonite from Waterloo, Ontario, who had been of such tremendous service to the Russian Mennonites when they arrived in Manitoba in 1874. In the Ältester election of 1901 Cornelius received 26 votes, second only to Peter R. Dueck with 56. On November 12, 1911, Cornelius was chosen to preach the dedication sermon for the new Steinbach worship house."<sup>931</sup>

In a sermon preached in Blumenort on March 18, 1900, and in Blumenhof on March 19, 1905, Cornelius L. Plett emphasized the urgency of living a life of discipleship and the need for devout and repentant lives. Excerpts as translated and compiled by Historian Royden Loewen are reproduced here:

"Let us not depend on things that are certain, but instead, let us seek those things that are uncertain; for that which 'is not seen is eternal' according to II Corinthians 4:18. Then know this, my beloved, that when Christ left the holiness of His Father and came to earth, He had to take on much misery and sorrow. Now He is the leader and we are the followers....If we, indeed, are followers of Him and wish to be with Christ in His Father's house and inherit the heavenly place, then we must set out on the way that Christ our Lord has walked and accept anything we meet. Then we want to live in humility, even in sorrow, through which we will be raised in holiness with Him (Matt. 5:4)....."

"Behold, beloved ones! We can find so many wonderful verses and lessons in the Holy Scriptures, which so clearly teach us how we shall walk the narrow way to the heavenly Canaan, and how we shall let our light shine for those who still walk in darkness. How can this be taken to heart and followed? Must we not admit that our light is often very dim; that it is sometimes almost invisible; and one fears that the Lord will come and take our light away....Oh beloved: Let us think about this in time before it is too late; that we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Shall we take to heart the words of the apostle when he says: 'Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,' (Hebrews 12:1)....so we are not allowed to be weary or lazy, or else the devil takes our victory from us. The Lord, however, is patient with us and does not wish that anyone should be lost, but that each and everyone will come to repentance."<sup>932</sup>

In 1980, Wilhelm S. Giesbrecht, Ste. Anne, Manitoba, recalled the sermons of C. L. Plett and that he spoke in a gravelly voice and delivered his sermons well."<sup>933</sup> Historian Royden Loewen in reference to brother-in-law Rev. Peter R. Reimer, noted that he "...is to have been a preacher who stressed the rewards and advantages of the Christian life, while his counterpart, Cornelius L. Plett of Blumenhof is said to have 'stressed the dangers of likely punishment for not accepting salvation and living a Christian life.' It is also said that 'Peter R. Reimer

delivered his sermons in a hollow resonant voice, while Cornelius L. Plett spoke in a deep horse voice.”<sup>934</sup>

In 1906 Cornelius retired and sold his farm in Blumenhof to son Heinrich for \$4000.00. At age 60 Cornelius devoted himself to the ministry. He is mentioned frequently in the journal of his neighbour, Ältester Peter R. Dueck, Steinbach.<sup>935</sup> Cornelius moved into a small house on the yard of daughter Helena in Friedensfeld, NE24-6-6E, a mile southeast of Steinbach, Manitoba. They lived here until the death of wife Helena on November 23, 1913.

Grandson Bernard P. Doerksen recalled that when C. L. Plett’s first wife died he had to divest himself of half his worth to his children Heinrich and Sarah. At this time he was still starting out and of modest means. By the time Helena died he was moderately well-to-do. On his remarriage he again had to divest half his property which went to the children of the second marriage, Helena and young Cornelius, who died in 1909.<sup>936</sup> Grandson Dietrich P. Doerksen, recalled that on a blustery winter day, C. L. Plett walked from Steinbach to Grünfeld to preach the sermon and then walked back home without staying for dinner.

Because of his ministerial duties Cornelius occasionally travelled to Jansen, Nebraska, and Meade, Kansas. In the course of these travels he found his third wife, the widow Katharina Heidebrecht, nee Reimer, in Meade, Kansas. Katharina was the daughter of deacon Klaas Reimer (1812-74), Tiege. At the time there was also immigration fever in the East Reserve with some Holdemans moving to Littlefield, Texas, and some Kleine Gemeinders to Herbert, Saskatchewan. On October 1, 1915, the *Rundschau* reported “Gerhard Doerksens and Cornelius Pletts had auction sales and are planning to move to Meade.” The two families moved to Satanta, Kansas, leaving by train from Giroux, December 1, 1915.”<sup>937</sup> Great-nephew John R. Unger remembered C.L. Plett’s auction sale held in preparation for the move. His father Johann F. Unger was there and purchased some items and phoned home for son John to come and pick them up.<sup>938</sup>

On December 12, Cornelius married for the third time to the widow Heidebrecht, nee Katharina F. Reimer, from Meade, Kansas. Together with children Gerhard Doerksens, Cornelius and his new wife moved to Satanta, Kansas. They acquired a section of land, 10 miles north of Satanta, Cornelius buying the northwest quarter and Gerhard Doerksens the other three quarters. With help of his grandsons, Cornelius built a new house, across the half mile boundary from Gerhard and Sarah Doerksen. They lived across the road in an old house until the new one was finished. The old house also served as a school and worship house of the new community and later as an immigrant house.

Cornelius rented his land out for a one-quarter share to J. N. Koops. One time in 1919, J. N. Koops had left Kansas, leaving Gerhard D. Doerksen to harvest their crop. One day, C.L. Plett had come to help. One of the men had asked whether he was tired. He replied, “No. Only lazy.” On August 26, 1926, he sold the quarter section to grandchildren Jakob N. Koops for \$4,000.00.

Cornelius L. Plett was the minister of the small Kleine Gemeinde community at Satanta, serving the congregation faithfully until his retirement in 1926. In 1922 Cornelius served as a delegate joining Ohms from Manitoba and Meade,

Kansas, to inspect land settlement opportunities in Mexico.<sup>939</sup> He was a friendly person and receptive of people. He had compassion for those in need. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "In 1896, Cornelius L. Plett lent money to Gottlieb Janke who no longer belonged to the Kleine Gemeinde, and around 1900 allowed the Herman Krebs family to move into a small house on their yard after his father, C.S. Plett, died."<sup>940</sup> C. L. Plett also lent money to nephew Jakob J. Thielmann to assist him and his family to emigrate in 1903. The debt was still outstanding in 1926, at which time Jakob Thielmann paid \$50.00 interest and \$50.00 principal.<sup>941</sup>

Grandson Bernard P. Doerksen remembered Cornelius L. Plett as a patient and unexcitable man. On one occasion in Kansas, he had been hammering fence posts with a sledge hammer and somehow got a large sliver through the skin and flesh of his hand. He had walked from his place over to Doerksens where his grandsons Henry and Bernard were shingling on the roof and calmly asked if they might want to help him by pulling it out. After they had done so, he walked home responding to his wife's anxious inquiries, quietly assuring her all was well.<sup>942</sup>

Cornelius was a gifted carpenter and cabinet maker and even in his '80s, loved nothing more than to work in his garden and fruit orchard. He enjoyed moderately good health all his years with the exception that his eyesight failed him in the last years to the point that he was unable to read. During the last years of his ministry, Cornelius would appoint various other brethren to read the sermons for him.

Cornelius L. Plett was a literate person who maintained a journal commencing in 1895, several volumes of which have been preserved.<sup>943</sup> Extracts from Cornelius' journal covering much of 1895 and parts of 1896, 1897 and 1912 were published in 1981.<sup>944</sup> Two dozen of his sermons are extant.<sup>945</sup> According to grandson Rev. Bernard P. Doerksen, Cornelius L. Plett used some Low German in his sermons. He could speak English well enough to get by with his English neighbours in Satanta. He was historically inclined and wrote a short autobiography.<sup>946</sup> He collected some 200 letters which were written to him from Manitoba and elsewhere between 1915 and his death. These letters have been preserved and form a valuable body of information of life in the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde during the 1920s. C. L. Plett was a meticulous organizer noting on the envelope of each letter the date it was received and the date he replied.

A number of his letters were preserved. Two letters written by Cornelius L. Plett to Ältester Jakob M. Kroeker in Rosenhof, Manitoba, reveal the character of a staunch Mennonite whose overwhelming concern was that all his family and church community would find salvation.<sup>947</sup> In a letter of March 26, 1902, he wrote: "I feel your love and inclination for me. Hence I cannot but reciprocate your love, although in a very simple way.....Let us also consider the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess, Christ Jesus...." Like other conservative Mennonite leaders, Cornelius was much concerned about the shallow religious cultures which were becoming popular by the turn of the century: "But this glory and profession is not to be false, as nowadays there are many false confessions....On that day of judgement many will believe that they are those who did many deeds in the name of the Lord, but the Lord will tell them, 'I never knew you, depart

from Me ye evil doers.” His faith was always positive, “Therefore, let us go with joy and sincerity to the throne of grace, [but] let us die daily unto sin, so that we shall also inherit with Him the glory.” Cornelius reported his wife “is sick a good deal this winter” and son “Cornelius’ attacks also do not want to stay away, although they are ameliorated.” In a postscript he mentioned on Dec. 10, they helped Peter Duecks and sister Mrs. Kroeker to slaughter hogs. “...He [Kroeker], however, always felt something in his back, but in the morning when he arose, he felt quite well and went to feed the hogs. Then he got a sharp pain in his back so that he could not keep the pain in hand and hardly made it into the house. He has had that sickness several times but never as severe.”

In his letter of December 12, 1912, to Ältester Jakob Kroeker, Cornelius “...thought of writing a few words of consolation and encouragement.” Cornelius refers to the common enemy of those preaching an easy religion, writing “...the preaching [nowadays] is rendered more through human wisdom than through the demonstration of the deed whose child he is.” Cornelius laments the lack of diligence “...here at our place, there at your place and in Kansas [so that]...one often gets sad in heart as if there is no way out. Then I think and supplicate often to the Lord..[that He] might give us power, wisdom, and understanding. That we, who are leaders, would lead with a sound teaching and example.”

Also preserved is a series of letters Cornelius wrote to son Heinrich in Blumenort, Manitoba, starting March 5, 1916. In the first letter Cornelius refers to his correspondence, “But I have and ought to satisfy so many with writing and have even now to answer a letter from Jak. L. Pletts and B.D. Doerksens and also one from my brother-in-law or Br. P. P. Reimers.” “Yet for a long time,” he adds, “I have been prompted by love to write you, and as we today are our first Sunday in our new place, I may have a little more time....We now live here in a house that belongs to M. T. Doerksens. It is 350 steps from our door to G. Doerksen’s door. But once it is decided that we get the land, then we want to build directly across the line from G. Doerksens.”

In a letter of April 9, 1916, Cornelius referred to his sister Maria, being his daughter-in-law’s step-mother as “Mother” and that “She often visits me [by letter], as she feels keenly frequently to be left alone.” Cornelius was pleased with the warmer climate, noting, “...this morning it was 2 degrees R. and during the day it got to plus 15, and sometimes even more.” Cornelius’ love of horticulture become evident, “Then one has the inclination to go outside and work in the garden, trim trees, and spread fertilizer. In another two weeks we will be planting potatoes and so on.”

On April 20, 1916, Cornelius dashes off a letter as “G. Doerksens are thinking of going in the forenoon tomorrow to Satanta, so I wanted to take the opportunity to send something along.” Heinrich has apparently inquired whether the report that his father had taken a ride in a car is correct? Cornelius responded, “You [say] you wish that it were not so. Then your wish is futile this time, as I did go along with the land agents looking at property to buy in this territory. I think you should still remember what was decided at the brotherhood meeting down there.”

On December 21, 1916, Cornelius writes, "We arrived in Satanta on Saturday at noon. There were enough teams, also ours stood waiting. We did some shopping including a wood stove....Then we went the last stretch on the buggy 10 miles to our home." He reported regarding many guests, "Sunday, the 10th, we had the service, and Pet. Pletts, Jak. Pletts, and Joh. Koops were here, and Monday, the 11th, we all together went looking for land. For Vesper, we were at Siemens', although actually at Cornelius'. Then a car came down here. They wanted that Gerh. Doerksens or we should come at once with the guests to Gerh. Doerksens, where also M.T.D. and B.D.D. were." Cornelius was in touch with the Gemeinde at Meade, reporting: "Monday, the 18th, they had a brotherhood meeting at Meade, and Tuesday, the 19th, the Ohms, namely, Ältester Jak. F. Isaak, Joh. K. Friesens and Jak. R. Duecks and Heinrich K. Friesens, came here...and Thursday, forenoon, in our weakness, we observed the communion."

In a letter of May 4, 1917, Cornelius referred to some outstanding financial matters from home, noting "The \$100.00 from Schinkel I have received. I had asked Sckinkel to put it on account at Jak. W. Reimers'.... I would also gladly sell the barn, but to sell it cheaper than \$140.00 that I do not know as yet whether that will help, as I think it is already very cheap." The community at Satanta was growing and Cornelius noted, "Tomorrow we want to go to Satanta again with the expectation to get Pet. Pletts."

In his letter of January 17, 1917, Cornelius noted, "Yesterday, we had Jacob R. Friesens as guests. They were here in their own car....Bernhard D. Doerksens were visiting Siemens yesterday. They live in our upstairs." In a letter of February 20, 1917, Cornelius acknowledges that the war has impacted their lives referring to rationing of wheat with the comment: "People are probably to economize so that more may be sunk into the sea. Terrible and sad it is what the woeful war precipitates." He refers to 12 families from Meade, Morris, and Hillsboro, that have visited them so far that year. He also asks about his sisters, Mrs. Franz Kroeker, and Maria Plett Reimer: "And mother, is she still courageous and still lives at D. Reimers?"

In his letter of February 21, 1922, Cornelius congratulates his children on the marriage of their son Johann to Sara, daughter of Pet. Duecks: "We wish the young couple much success and blessing from God in their new state." Ongoing concerns are expressed for the health of sister Maria, Mrs. Peter R. Reimer. Apparently she had complained to brother Jakob that Cornelius was too slow in answering his letters. He rejoices to hear that nephew Cor. P. Reimer is on his way to Kansas to visit them.

In a letter of January 13, 1924, addressed to sister Maria, Cornelius mentions "I am not too well. I frequently have pain in my back, so that I find working quite difficult, so that at times I can hardly do anything." But he remained positive, noting "The Lord does not want the death of a sinner."

The letters of Cornelius are quite full of news about harvesting, hog slaughtering, visitors, and relatives. In a letter of January 13, 1924, Cornelius notes that the rabbits are stealing from the garden. "The pumas also take them if there is no wire mesh." Sometimes the letters cross with those of his daughters'. In the letter

of January 13, 1924, a section is added by daughter Sarah: "My husband and Johann are shingling the parents' dwelling together with Father. Once they have finished the roof there, then the house has been completed from the outside. Margaretha is discing today. For plowing it is too dry. We have prepared about 60 acres for seeding."

In a letter of November 19, 1925, Cornelius refers to the corn threshing at son-in-law Bernhard Doerksen's farm: "They threshed 52 bushels while I was there. They haul it from the field to their yard and threshed it at home with their thresher. It takes about three-quarter hour to thresh one load. They get about 30 bushels per acre," but not everywhere, Cornelius is quick to add. He extends a blessing for grandson Heinrich who "tells us he is now a bridegroom. And as we cannot be present at his wedding, thus I wish the new couple much success and blessing."

Cornelius had an ongoing interest in the condition of the Gemeinde in the East Reserve. In a letter of June 22, 1926, he inquires about the results of a brotherhood meeting held "when the Ohms from Meade were there." In his view, the regulations of the church, "...held thus far are good and need not be changed, but rather followed." He is concerned that the principles of the church are being eroded to "suit the flesh." He states also "My seeing and hearing have decreased within a year. Preaching I do not enjoy any longer. It is always misty before my eyes."

In a letter of April 23, 1929, he notes their declining health and that "Mother has only been in the service three times since New Year," and has not been able to visit much with her siblings J. F. Reimers. In his letter of June 2, 1930, Cornelius notes sadly that "...he is well, to the Lord be the honour, except the weakness of old age. The seeing and hearing and the weaknesses are not getting any better." He notes that "There are people far worse off than I am, including Cor. J. Klassen. He cannot get out of the chair nor out of the bed alone and when he is on his feet he shuffles along with one leg. The visitors from Manitoba in Meade went down there three times. First I went along with P. P. Reimers on Tuesday evening. Then we celebrated a service there and Monday, we Ohms were together at Heinrich Isaaks and in the evening we went home with J. G. Barkmans." On the 30th, Cornelius again went to Meade for a brotherhood meeting, catching a ride with Pet. Plett's Jakob. He noted, "...the song leaders elected were G. Rempel, Isaak Loewen and Johann Loewen."

Cornelius and Katherina shared joys and sorrows in Satanta, Kansas, for almost 14 years until her death on October 5, 1929: "The privilege of dying in our house and at home was not granted to my beloved wife, rather during a visiting journey to Meade, Kansas, at her sister-in-laws, Heinrich Reimers'. Here I saw her die. We had actually gone there to attend a funeral. But it turned out completely different. Instead of attending a funeral, Helena herself became a corpse and had to be prepared for burial. And thus the Lord sometimes goes in completely different ways than we humans think or have decided for ourselves." Son Heinrich, accompanied by grandsons Klaas and Jacob R. Plett as drivers, came from Manitoba for the funeral.<sup>948</sup>

On October 25, 1929, Cornelius had an auction sale of his belongings and thereafter until his death lived with his children, Helena and Bernhard Doerksen. Great-nephew Abram R. Reimer, who grew up nearby in Garden City, remembered that Rev. C. L. Plett was almost blind during his last six or eight years. During the worship service he would sit in front with the Vorsänger and stand up to call out the name of one of the older brethren like Abram B. Reimer, Corn. E. Reimer and Bernhard or Gerhard Doerksen who would read the sermon.<sup>949</sup>

In a letter of September 20, 1930, Cornelius remarks, "...I find myself still a pilgrim along the way." On May 11, 1931, he wrote to his grandson Heinrich R. Plett, praising him "...that you were prompted by love to write to me." Cornelius is quite conscious that his days are numbered, "Yet, I do not know the hour when I must depart this world and be put into the grave after that older brother." His melancholy thoughts reflect the fact that he has now been a lonely widower for a year and seven months. He added, "...being prepared is very important."

In a short letter of May 11, 1931, that is only partially preserved, Cornelius L. Plett bids a formal farewell to his congregation: "I have served you in my weakness and imperfection with the Word nearly 24 years....I ask all the beloved brothers and sisters to forgive me in the hope that you will have nothing to put in my path. Thus I commit you to God and the work of His grace...As I intend to step out of your midst and go to my southern Geschwister in Meade, and the time draws near that I want to separate myself from you....."

In his letter to Heinrich and Elisabeth of July 30, 1931, Cornelius asks them to write with a pen as he finds it impossible to read a letter written in pencil. As the years go by it is evident that Cornelius writes less and less news, a sign that he is becoming more isolated because of his age and failing health. His letters now contain more of spiritual thoughts and Biblical quotations which he knew by memory. His final letter of January 4, 1933, closed with the words, "Good-bye, Aufwedersehen, if not here than there where there is no more parting."<sup>950</sup>

Cornelius L. Plett died at Satanta, Kansas, January 3, 1935, 10 minutes before midnight. He was buried in the Kleine Gemeinde cemetery on SW26-28-34.<sup>951</sup> A report of the funeral and an obituary written by son-in-law Gerhard Doerksen, was published in the January 23rd, *Steinbach Post*: "...For his age,...[C. L. Plett had]....long been quite active and sturdy, but in the last years his strengths declined, as did his hearing. Nevertheless he had faithfully attended the worship services until his sickness, three weeks before his death. He became sick on December 15, and then had to suffer severely for two weeks."

"His remains were surrendered to the refuge of the earth on January 7 with a large assembly from near and far. Sermons were brought first by Joh. G. Barkman, then followed by Ältester Jak. F. Isaak and Rev. Joh. J. Reimer, and finally Rev. Jak. F. Barkman, from Steinbach, gave a talk in the language of the land since a number of our English neighbours had come. Now the weather which we had long wished for was not very pleasant on this day since it rained during the night and continued into the afternoon. The ground was so wet that the autos could only drive with great exertion. Cornelius L. Plett was survived by



40 grandchildren and 107 great-grandchildren were alive.”

6 Son **Cornelius R. Plett** never married. He suffered from epilepsy from the 15th year of his life. John R. Unger recalled Cornelius R. Plett as a “robust man.” Nephew Cornelius P. Doerksen remembered his uncle Cornelius as a average size man, but of quite a solid build. When he got his attacks, he became stiff, shaking and then finally unconscious, after which his body relaxed. The attacks started coming oftener in the last years. He remembered one time when Cornelius was helping his father shingle a roof, how C. L. Plett would always be looking and watching him in case he had an attack. Cornelius R. Plett was a dedicated worker and quite a friend to his nephews. As a boy, he had been trampled by a bull.<sup>952</sup>



*Rev. Cornelius L. Plett (1846-1935). Photo taken in 1922 during the Kleine Gemeinde land scouting delegation to Chibua, Mexico. Photo - Loewen, Blumenort, page 167.*

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Cornelius L. Plett</b>	Oct 29,1846		Jan 3,1935
m	Sarah Toews Enns	Jun 18,1849	Oct 3,1869	Nov 21,1872
6	Heinrich E. Plett	Jun 23,1870	Nov 10,1889	Jul 11,1953
m	Elisabeth F. Reimer	Jun 29,1870		Nov 7,1947
2m	Helena F. Dueck	Jun 20,1879		1957
6	Sarah E. Plett	Nov 19,1871	Jul 14,1889	Mar 9,1948
m	Gerhard D. Doerksen	Jul 25,1865		Jan 22,1949
5	<b>Cornelius L. Plett</b>	Oct 29,1846		Jan 3,1935
2m	Helena Rempel	Dec 24,1843	Mar 23,1873	Nov 23,1913
6	Helena R. Plett	Aug 15,1875	Oct 30,1892	Nov 11,1967
m	Bernhard D. Doerksen	May 26,1871		Sep 4,1956
6	Cornelius R. Plett	Jun 30,1879		Jan 9,1909
5	<b>Cornelius L. Plett</b>	Oct 29,1846		Jan 3,1935
3m	Katharina F. Reimer	Sep 12,1845	Dec 12,1915	Oct 4,1929



*Kleine Gemeinde Obms 1922, Mexico - The park photo. Taken in Chibuabua, Mexico, during their land scouting expedition. L.-r., Heinrich K. Reimer, Meade, unknown - presumably a realtor, Heinrich R. Reimer, Landmark, Cornelius J. Classen, Meade, Rev. Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Rev. Heinrich R. Dueck, Kleefeld, and Jakob J. Reimer, Meade. Photo - Pres., No. 14, page 104.*



*Auction sale at Cornelius L. Pletts' on Oct. 25, 1929. The Gerhard D. Doerksen residence visible at rear. Photo - Jacob R. Plett, Blumenort, Manitoba.*

6 Son **Heinrich E. Plett** married Elisabeth F. Reimer, only surviving child of Rev. Peter R. Reimer by his first marriage to Elisabeth S. Friesen. "By birth she was not closely related to Heinrich but they got to know each other as cousins because Elisabeth's stepmother was Heinrich's aunt."<sup>953</sup>

The young couple established their home at the west end of the old Blumenort village on the north side. This may have been the old Peter Penner farmyard.<sup>954</sup> They were entered in the insurance records on August 25, 1891 - house \$175.00, furniture \$75.00, feed and supplies \$50.00. On December 24 of 1892 the coverage on the dwelling was increased by \$25.00 and a barn added for \$25.00.

Rosabel Fast writes: "Heinrich and Elisabeth had a large family of 12 children born between 1891 and Christmas Day 1911. Of these 10 were boys and two were girls....A daughter Maria died in early childhood. This large family grew up in a big two-storey house that was connected to the barn with a summer kitchen. This was a room that was used as a kitchen in summer and had an assortment of uses all year around. Elisabeth, who was a small but healthy woman, planted a vegetable garden each summer and tended the fruit trees to keep her family supplied with food."

Elisabeth and Heinrich were undoubtedly helped along in their financial progress by the legacies they inherited as young adults. Royden Loewen has written, "Not only was Elisabeth in line to receive a 325 ruble inheritance from Russia, her father, Rev. Peter Reimer, was also one of the wealthiest men in the village."<sup>955</sup> On April 1, 1890, Uncle Klaas R. Reimer, the Steinbach merchant, signed a receipt acknowledging receiving the capital with interest to April 1, 1890, of Elisabeth Reimer, wife of Heinrich Plett. Total amount is \$376.16. Signed 'A. S. Friesen,'" (her uncle).<sup>956</sup> Presumably this represented Elisabeth's inheritance from her mother's father, Ohm Abraham Friesen (1807-91), Jansen, Nebraska, who died the following year.<sup>957</sup> On December 16th, 1892, Elisabeth's father, Peter R. Reimer "... paid him [Heinrich] the capital of Elisabeth, amounting to 325 ruble in Russian currency and in dollars, \$216.86."<sup>958</sup> This represented the balance of what Peter R. Reimer was required to put aside for Elisabeth prior to his second marriage in 1873. At the time, his father, Abraham "Fuela" Reimer, noted that Peter had to pay his daughter 425 ruble.<sup>959</sup>

Heinrich's mother also died when he was an infant. The inheritance was of a lesser amount, partially, because it was shared by Heinrich and sister Sarah. In 1891 Sarah's husband, Gerhard Doerksen, recorded receiving \$53.50. It is clear that Elisabeth and Heinrich invested these monies carefully and wisely.

"The plow land that Heinrich owned was scattered in small plots ["koagels"] around the village. He worked this land with a pair of oxen and at harvest time cut the grain with a binder attached to a team of horses. After this everyone who was available had to stook sheaves. Then it was threshed with a machine owned by Heinrich and Peter P. Reimer. They did all the threshing in Blumenort. The grain was then taken to Winnipeg on a large wagon pulled by a team of horses. The trip required a least two days. Heinrich also raised livestock. Instead of taking the animals to the city they were butchered at home first and then the meat was taken to Winnipeg in the same way as the grain."<sup>960</sup>

Heinrich E. Plett became a leading village farmer and community man. After the cheese factory was moved from across the street to the east end of the village this "koagel" was also acquired by Father. In 1904 or so a steam shed for the Plett and Reimer Watrous steam engine was built here. In winter the steam engine was often used to crush feed for the neighbours.

Heinrich also had a windmill used for grinding feed and flour for the surrounding area. Mr. Jakob W. Friesen, whose parents were next door neighbours just east, recalled that around 1900 the Pletts purchased a larger windmill with more power for the feed crushing business. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "As farms expanded, some of the more industrious farmers set up large wind-driven crushers. One of these farmers, Henry E. Plett, began to crush grain for his neighbours and soon had a thriving feed business which continued for 40 years. Plett operated the mill from his *Feastaed* on the west end of the village. He set up his wind-powered mill shortly after he was married in 1889. His first outfit was driven with a 12-foot windmill, but around 1900 he purchased a new 16-foot "Ideal" windmill which powered a 12-inch crusher. The windmill was made entirely of metal except for the huge 14" by 20" wooden mast on which it rested. The mast was attached to the east end of Plett's barn and rose 10 feet above the barn. The crushing stones were located on the second floor. These stones lay flat and were powered by a direct drive from the shaft of the windmill. Bags of wheat would be hooked and hoisted through the second-storey and poured into the crusher. After the grain was crushed, it would run down through a chute to the first floor where it was rebagged and reloaded into a farmer's wagon. When the village broke up in 1910, Plett moved his barn and windmill to his new farmstead, a mile to the northeast. Here he continued using the windmill."<sup>961</sup> It was said that if there was a good wind this wind-powered grinder could grind up to 35 bags of feed an hour. The windmill continued in service until 1918 when Henry E. Pletts purchased a three-wheel Case tractor, to power the grinder.

By 1896 Heinrich E. Plett was the second highest assessed farmer in Blumenort, with 339 acres of land - 120 acres cultivated, 5 horses, 2 oxen, 8 cows, 9 cattle under 3 years and 23 pigs. Rosabel Fast has written: "In 1896 Heinrich expanded his farm by buying his father's quarter section in Blumenhof. The house was old by this time so it was dismantled and the barn was used to shelter the oxen and horses. This expansion provided a better opportunity for his 10 sons to go into farming as they grew up."<sup>962</sup> Another source indicates the land transaction was completed in 1904 for \$4000.00. It was always referred to as the "Blumenhof Farm." According to one source, Cornelius L. Plett lived on the Gerhard D. Doerksen yard in Blumenhof, until 1908 when they moved a small house on their daughter Helena's farmyard in Friedensfeld.<sup>963</sup> Son Klaas R. Plett later recalled working on the Blumenhof farm and that there had been the remains of four village yards, which was inconvenient for working around and they also distracted the oxen. Nephew Bernard P. Doerksen later remembered hearing the older Henry E. Plett boys singing loudly as they returned home after a long day of working on the Blumenhof farm.<sup>964</sup> Heinrich E. Plett also owned a 20-acre woodlot on NE 36-7-6E, acquired as part of his father's farm in Blumenhof.

**Threshing:** Together with brother-in-law Peter P. Reimer, Heinrich E. Plett owned a steam engine employed in the custom threshing business. Son Klaas R. Plett later recalled that H. E. Plett originally “had an older style steam-engine with the smoke stack in the rear.”<sup>965</sup> In 1894 Cornelius L. Plett mortgaged the NW24-7-6E to the J.I. Case Co., possibly to finance the purchase of this machine by himself and son Heinrich.<sup>966</sup> “By 1904 Heinrich E. Plett and Peter P. Reimer of Blumenort were custom-threshing with their 22-horsepower, two-cylinder Watrous. Sometime later they purchased a second steamer, a 25/75-horsepower Case, which they used for plowing.”<sup>967</sup> Nephew Peter P. D. Reimer remembers that the Case was shipped to Giroux by rail around 1915 and then driven “walked” to Blumenort.<sup>968</sup>

Historian Royden Loewen provides some background to the threshing business: “At least four steamer outfits were in operation by 1904 [in the Blumenort and Blumenhof area] and each outfit had a particular area to serve. Plett and Reimer was the name of the Blumenort steam engine outfit. It was also known as CPR, presumably for ‘Case Plett Reimer.’ The company was begun in 1904 by five brother-in-laws Henry E. Plett, Peter P. Reimer, John F. Unger, Cornelius P. Reimer and Abram P. Reimer. Each was a son or son-in-law to Rev. Peter R. Reimer. These five men decided to start a company after the village decided against a community-owned steam outfit. Around 1906 three of the original partners had left the partnership to spend more time on their farms. This left Henry E. Plett and Peter P. Reimer to carry on the service. Their first steam engine was a 15/30-horsepower Watrous. When an additional steamer, a 25/75-horsepower Case, was purchased [in 1915], the Watrous was used only for threshing, while the Case was used only for pulling an eight-bottom plow. The big shed where the threshing outfit was stored was located across the street from Henry E. Plett’s place and later moved to the Peter P. Reimer place in Neuanlage. It was a long shed which allowed the steamer, the tender (the water and straw wagon) and the threshing machine to stand, one behind the other, as they would in transport. Here the mechanically interested Henry E. Plett boys came to do the repairs on the steamer.”<sup>969</sup>

Nephew Cornelius P. Doerksen recalled working for the Plett and Reimer threshing outfit during the war years, although at the time Johann P. Reimer was the boss. They had threshed almost until Christmas, although the latter while they had many breakdowns because of the cold.<sup>970</sup>

Historian Royden Loewen interviewed Jacob W. Friesen who had worked for the Plett, Reimer threshing outfit: “[He]...was another young crew member in the early years. Like Peter K. Plett, he worked his way up to become the “Separata Maun”. Friesen worked for Peter P. Reimer, the boss of the Plett and Reimer Co. This outfit included an American Able Advance threshing machine, first powered by a Watrous and then by a new 25 horsepower Case. This outfit, as all others, also included the tender wagon which carried straw for the steamer while in transport, and a caboose which housed the crew.”

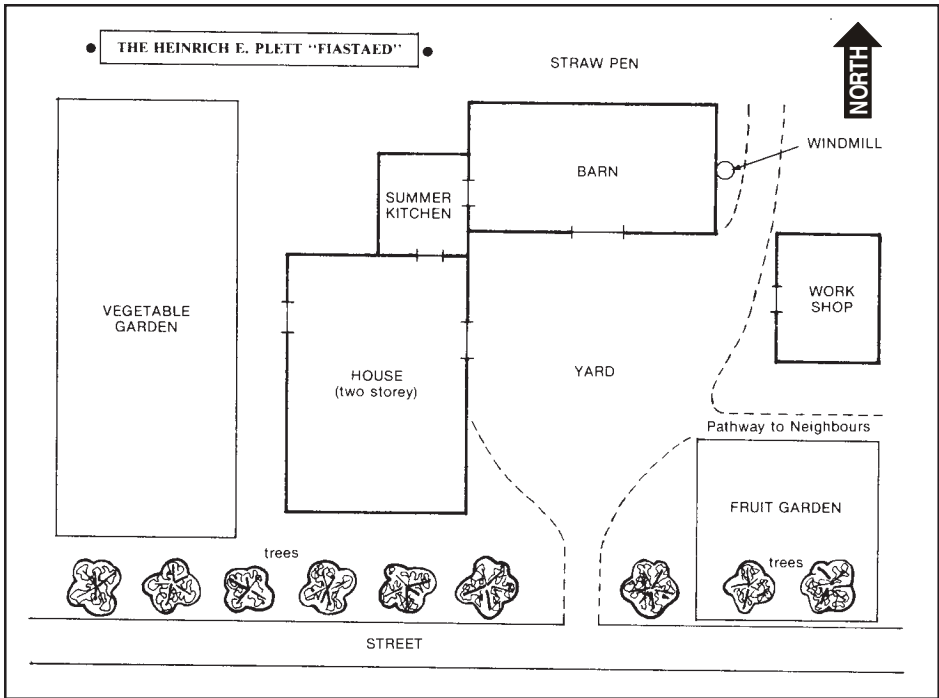
“Friesen remembered that when barley or oats were threshed, “Plett and Reimer” used the Hoopes Drashi method. Using this method the crew threshed sheaves which the farmer had previously stacked in a pile in his farmyard. This

meant that the crew did not have to engage in the monotonous work of gathering sheaves from the fields. It also meant that the farmer had the straw in his straw pen where he could feed it to his cows. For wheat, "Plett and Reimer" used the Hocki Drashi method in which the threshing was done at the Koagels. The boss would choose one strip of land on which to do the threshing. His workers would then haul sheaves to the threshing spot from the surrounding koagels."

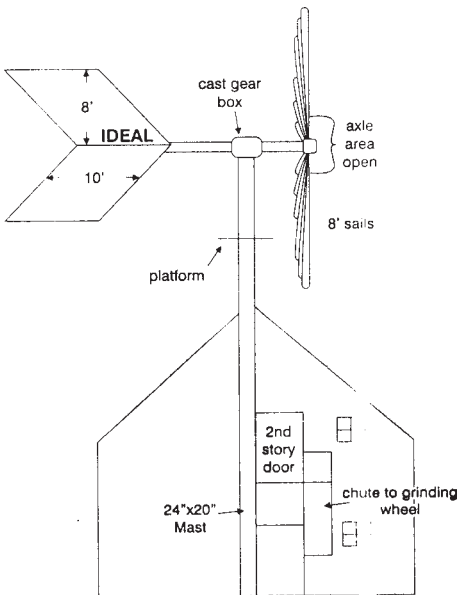
"The typical threshing day, according to Jacob Friesen, began at six a.m. Three hours later the crew stopped for *Nein Brot*, today known as coffee break. At 12 noon the engineer blew the whistle on the steamer, signalling dinner time to both the crew and the women in the house, who had prepared fried ham and potatoes for the hungry workers. At four p.m. the crew stopped for *Faspa*, and then they returned to work till eight p.m. when supper was served. It is said that Plett and Reimer usually shut down long after other outfits did, apparently to keep the boys out of mischief. Usually by this time the threshing for one farmer was finished and the crew prepared to move on to the next farmer in the village. Only at the Grout-Formasch, the big farmers, would threshing take more than one day."

"The most vividly-remembered threshing stories come from times when the outfits left Blumenort to thresh for Bergthalers and French people in the outlying regions. The following story was told by Jacob W. Friesen many years later: There was always competition with other threshing gangs to get the well paying jobs out west. We were offered a good job by Niverville, one which we young men really wanted. So we looked forward to finishing at C.W. Brandts. We knew that the J.R. Friesen outfit would be heading west as well, and we wanted badly to be there before them. We were almost finished at Brandts when we spotted the Friesen outfit, a mile to the west, heading toward Niverville. As we waited downheartedly, we suddenly saw the Friesen steamer vanish, leaving only its smoke stack showing. It had fallen through the bridge or headed off the road into a deep hole. It took a very long time for Friesens to get their outfit going again and by that time we were well on the way to Niverville. We headed straight west to the Manning Canal which had been built through there around 1907. At the canal we had to go along the canal road for a while. The road was so narrow and high that our caboose kept veering off and would have tipped over had we boys not hung on to the caboose sides from the outside. Here, too, we once broke a front wheel spoke of the steamer. There was no way of fixing it on the road. So we emptied the water tank which was on the tender wagon, and took off one of its wheels and put a log in its place. The tender wagon wheel fitted onto the front axle of the steamer although it looked strange to have such a tiny wheel up front. (On the Case there was a lot of weight up front as the boiler was located in the mid-tractor area.) In winter when it was humid the snow packed nicely and we could drive. In fall we had to look for high ridges to travel on."<sup>971</sup>

Peter P. D. Reimer remembered the last year of operation of the Watrous when it broke down and the Case steamer was brought in to finish the threshing season.

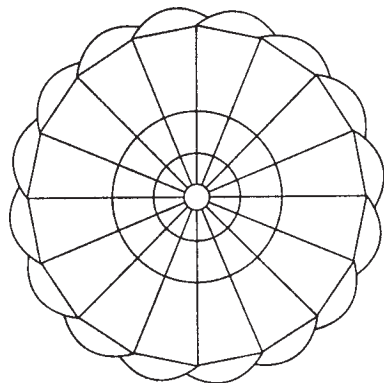


*Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett's feastead, on their lot in the old Blumenort village. As recalled by son Abram R. Plett. Photo - Blumenort, page 75.*



*Left: Drawing of the "Ideal" blade windmill acquired by Heinrich E. Plett, Blumenort around 1900. As recalled by son Ben R. Plett, March 26, 1981. The sketch shows how the large fan-tailed mill was attached to the south end of Heinrich's bog barn. Photo - Pres., No. 16, page 126.*

*Below: Drawing of the 1900 "Ideal" blade windmill, frontal view. 8' sails plus 4' axel area, total circumference 20'.*





*Case 25/75 steam engine and eight bottom gang plow. Plowing stubble two miles west of Twin Creek (Neuanlage) in 1919. Engineer is John P. Reimer and fireman (bent over) is Cornelius R. Plett. Man on gang plow unidentified. Photo - Peter P. D. Reimer/Plett Picture Book, page 150.*



*Plett & Reimer steamer threshing at Johann F. Ungers, Blumenhof, 1922. Photo - John R. Unger/Plett Picture Book, page 150.*



**Village Dissolution:** Heinrich E. Plett served as the Schulz (mayor) of Blumenort from 1906 to 1910. Rosabel Fast has written: "In this position Heinrich was responsible for calling and leading the village meetings. Notification of the meeting was made by sending one of the children to the neighbours with a note. This note was then carried to the next house by the first neighbour and so on until everyone had been notified. On a meeting night Heinrich carried his own kerosene lamp to the school house to provide some light in the building and the meeting could begin. All the village business items were discussed here. This included their choice of teacher and the school budget."<sup>972</sup>

The difficult issue of the village dissolution occurred during Heinrich's term as Schulz. The old "Koagel" system with each farmer owning many small scattered parcels was inefficient at a time when bigger machinery was coming into use. Historian Royden Loewen explains: "Between 1900 and 1910 a few of the more progressive farmers like Klaas P. Reimer and Heinrich E. Plett began to trade 'koagels' in order to consolidate their land holdings in one particular area and thus make farming more profitable."<sup>973</sup>

Rosabel Fast has written: "A big event in the Heinrich Plett family and the final event in Blumenort was the dismantling of the old village. Heinrich chaired a number of meetings concerning this event and preparations were made to move the large two-storey houses and barns unto various quarter sections of land. In the summer of 1910 the buildings were loaded unto big wagons and pulled by steam engines, which had been equipped with extra large wheels, to their new locations. The largest building required two steam engines to move....."<sup>974</sup>

Son Klaas R. Plett remembered that Heinrich E. Plett had the job to move the buildings out of Blumenort. One building was particularly heavy and could not be budged by the Plett and Reimer Watrous engine. They called David L. Plett from Blumenhof who had a 22/50 American Able steam engine. He came and hooked his chain on the front of the Watrous. Peter P. Reimer himself was operating the Watrous and had wanted to show how smoothly the two-cylinder Watrous could be engaged into power. He slowly eased in the clutch. But David L. Plett had engaged the American Able with a jerk - and much to Peter P. Reimer's surprise, the whole thing was in motion before he even had the clutch fully engaged.

Royden Loewen described the moving of Heinrich's buildings as follows: "Moving was not accomplished without difficulty. Henry E. Plett decided to move his hog barn with the pigs still in it. Using Plett and Reimer's Watrous as well as David L. Plett's Case, they got the barn up to a quarter mile from Plett's new place when the heavy load became bogged down in a low area. It was said that on this occasion such deep ruts were made that years of plowing did not erase them....By the end of the summer the flurry of moving was over."<sup>975</sup>

Nephew Peter P. D. Reimer clearly remembered in 1911 when the steamer was used to move the H. E. Plett hog barn from the "old" Blumenort village to the Plattehof. By this time the house and barn had already been moved and set up on the farm. The hog barn was jacked up high enough so that the high, heavy freight wagons could be pulled underneath. Usually three wagons were used -

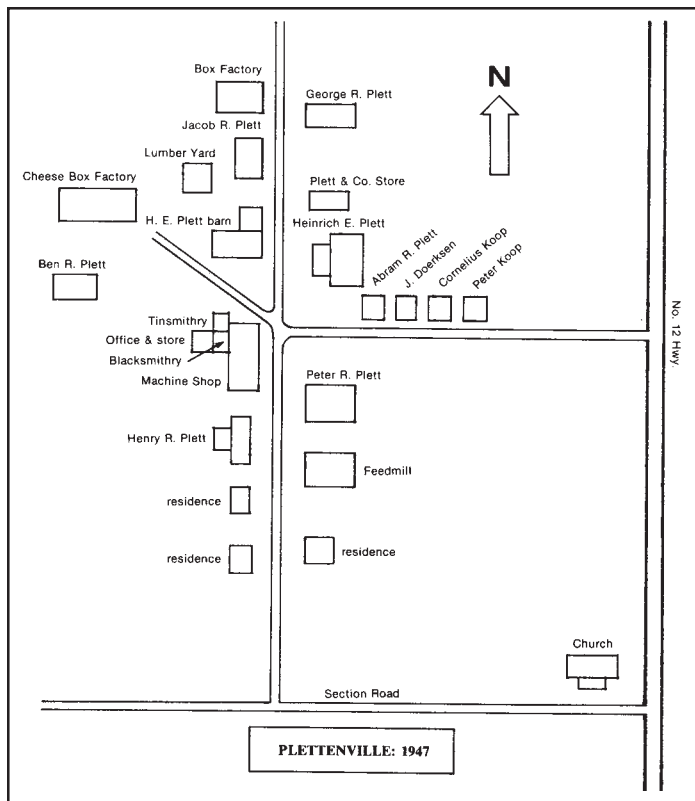
one in front and two in back. The wagons were hitched to a crossbar attached to the front wagon and sometimes also a triangle affair was constructed, and the rear wagons hitched to the front one. For a great heavy load, four wagons were used. He recalls the procession moving north out of the village and getting stuck on the mile road. It would have been extricated by jacking it up again, possibly adding another wagon. Apparently the hogs were left in the barn while moving and he remembered how they were constantly screaming.<sup>976</sup>

**Plattehof:** Rosabel Fast writes: “Meanwhile Heinrich and Elisabeth and their family had settled down comfortably on their new location. The property in Blumenhof was closer to their home now.” Soon their sons established homes on the yard as well. It quickly developed into a small family hamlet known as Plettville or Plat’ehof (also as “Plat’ekuta”).

When the old Blumenort village was dissolved Heinrich E. Plett received 120 acres of prime land centrally located three-quarters of a mile north on SE27-7-6E and \$108.00 cash as his share of the village complex.<sup>977</sup> Here they established their farm. The old two-storey barn from the village was moved to the farm. The old pig barn from the village was placed perpendicular at the west end and served as a hog barn. A new section was built at the west end of the old barn to connect with the hog barn. A large attached haymow was added at the northeast corner of the barn. Jacob W. Friesen, Kleefeld, recalled that “H. E. Plett moved his old hog barn and cattle barn from the village and built a section in between. In the village the hog barn stood about 250 feet north of the yard.” The old two-storey granary, with its shingled walls, which had stood on the village koagel on the south side of the street, was placed a little to the north of the barn.”

To accommodate their growing family, a large two-storey addition was added to the existing house moved from the village. The hay mow was rigged up with a huge fork and pulley system, so that wagons full of hay could pull to the large door for unloading. After the fork was full, the track and pulley system drew it to the desired spot in the haymow or the second storey of the main barn where the hay was dumped.

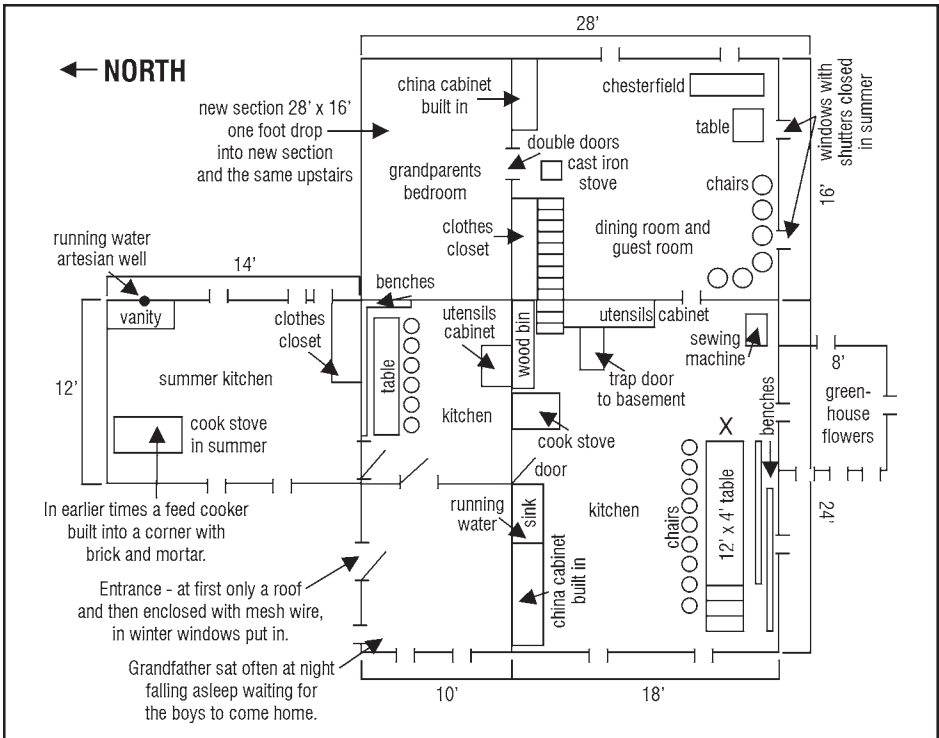
Historian E. K. Francis described this settlement: “The oddest example of a rural business aggregate was without doubt Plettville. It was a product of depression and rural electrification. It consisted of a cluster of small business units, partly commercial, partly industrial, all of which were owned by members of the same family. Two of the Plett brothers operated a lumber yard, three others managed a box factory, while the youngest brother ran the paternal farm. Other business units combined with this family enterprise were a mechanical workshop, a small sawmill turning out shingles, a feed crusher, and a little store. The parents and the brothers with their families each lived in their own house, forming a veritable village by themselves; for ten brothers and the old couple made quite a crowd, and there were lots of blond-haired, blue-eyed children around. Moreover, three or four of their working men had built cottages on the Plett farm, which had become a teeming industrial settlement with lowing cows and shrieking pigs as an appropriate backdrop.”<sup>978</sup>



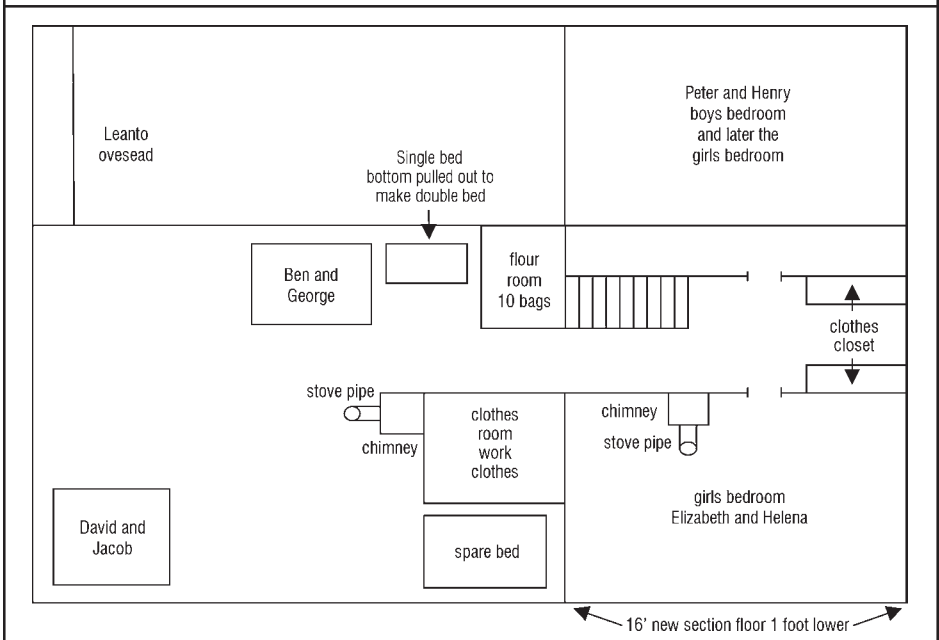
*Plettenville, 1947. Map of SE27-7-6E by Peter S. Koop. Loewen, Blumenort, page 384.*



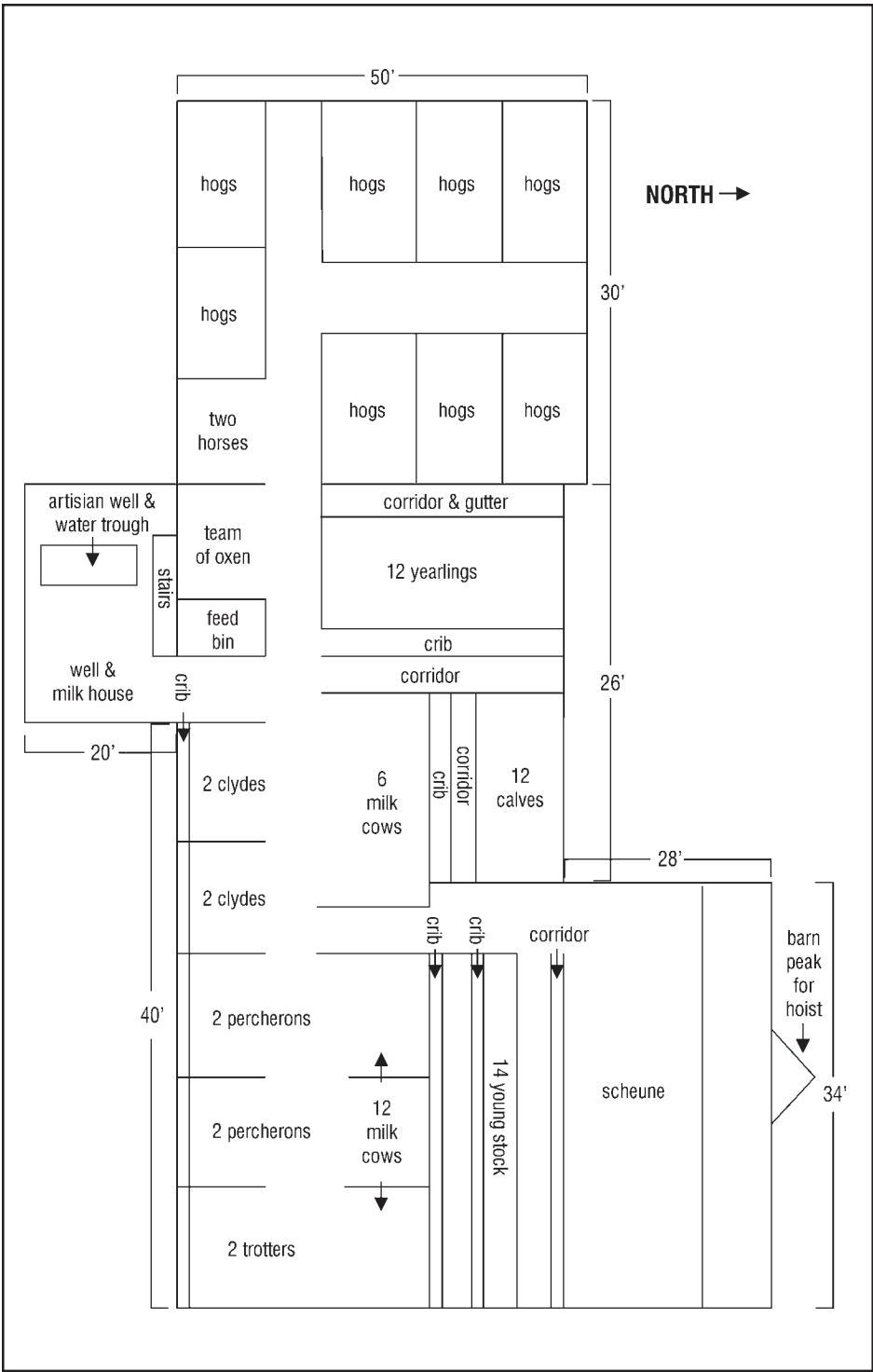
*Plettenville around 1950, view to the northeast. The Heinrich E. Plett house is hidden behind the trees just to the right of the large dairy barn. Note the feedmill, right, the Plett Bros. factories - south and northwest of the dairy barn, and the Plett & Co. box factory, top left hand corner. Compare with the panoramic photo dating to 1946 by Peter S. Koop and published in the Plett Picture Book, pages 58-59.*



*House plan, main floor, Heinrich E. Plett, Plettenville, ca. 1920, as recalled by son Ben R. Plett, Blumenbof, Manitoba, 1981. "X" where Grandpa sat.*



*House plan, second floor, Heinrich E. Plett, Plettenville, ca. 1920, as recalled by son Ben R. Plett, Blumenbof, Manitoba, 1981.*



Heinrich E. Plett dairy barn, SE27-7-6E, Plettenbof, 1920. Drawing by D. Plett, 1981.

**Schools:** Heinrich E. Plett served two terms as school trustee - 1916-17 and 1922-23. In 1919 he headed a delegation from Blumenort, "sent to the Department of Education in Winnipeg to see the Official Trustee, Mr. Greenway, about building a new school. The story goes that while Greenway was not in his office at the time, his deputy told the Blumenorters to go ahead and build their school. Plett Brothers, headed by C. R. Plett, went to work the next spring cutting, planing and stacking the wood on a new site across from Klaas F. Penner's farm. By May 1 construction of the new school was well underway. Somehow Greenway had never been made aware of this plan. When he visited Blumenort in spring, he discovered, to his dismay, that the independent Kleine Gemeinders were building a school without his official approval, and even without bothering to consult him about the plan. It is claimed by some that, when Greenway saw the new schoolhouse, he became so angry he threw his hat off and stamped around on it."<sup>979</sup>

The anti-German and anti-Pacifist hysteria experienced by the Mennonites, which got worse with the return of the World War I veterans, left many considering other options. The Anglo-conformist persecution, focusing on the retraction of the rights negotiated by the Mennonites in 1873, particularly regarding the operation of their confessional schools, would become so extreme that some 8,000 Old Colonists, Sommerfelder and Chortitzer Mennonites eventually emigrated from Manitoba between 1922 and 1927. A strong immigration movement was also present in the Kleine Gemeinde. In 1922 Heinrich's father Cornelius had been part of a delegation to Mexico to consider settlement opportunities there. The Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde sent four delegations to inspect a tract of land in Quebec. Heinrich was among the men chosen for these delegations. The third delegation was sent in 1925.

Royden Loewen writes: "Henry E. Plett, who had been a delegate on the former two trips, was possibly the leader. This trip seems to have been the longest and most complex. According to a letter written by Plett to his parents in Kansas, the delegation travelled almost 3500 miles and spent three weeks examining land in both Ontario and Quebec. The letter clearly reveals that the delegates had two primary concerns: the first was educational freedom and the second available farmland."<sup>980</sup>

June 26, 1925"

RR1, Box 36 Giroux

"Dearly beloved Parents:

"I will seek to send you a writing of love and life. We say thank you very much for the letters you sent us...Now then, dear parents, what shall I tell you this morning hour? I believe that our uncle and aunt will have already told you everything, but I think I shall still find something to write. Whether I will be able to inform you something of edification I don't know, but first I will tell you something of our findings."

"About our trip to the east: We left on June 2, 1925, in the evening with the 'Flyer' from Giroux. The train had been stopped especially for us, and 45 minutes later we arrived in Winnipeg. That quickly I have never before travelled to the city. From here we left at 10 the next morning...After examining land in

Ontario for a few days, the journey continued to Montreal, a city which has over 900,000 inhabitants. One cannot write of all the things which can be seen there. From here it was on to Quebec City, where we arrived that evening. It was here that we had arrived from Russia in 1874 and where the Russlander are now also arriving. Things have changed very much...Here, too, there are too many wonders to write them all down."

"In Quebec City we went to Parliament Buildings to ask about our school freedom in Quebec, and also to see if our military exemption was as good there as in Manitoba. We found out that it was. They knew very well about the freedoms we had been granted (in 1873) and they wanted very much to have us settle their land."

"From Montreal to Quebec it is very sparse. The grass grows small and the grain grows poor. There is also some land on the south side of the St. Lawrence, but the land did not please us. Too stony! The boundaries were piled with stones and on the land we saw many stone piles. There was some very rich soil; such as one had never seen before. But this was in a place which had such small pieces of land that settlement would be impossible. Yet this is the best that there is to be had in Quebec and it has already been examined twice. No better land is known by the Kron Edsens (Land Agency) or the Quebec government."

"We returned to Montreal and then west on to Toronto. There we wanted to or had to also go to the Parliament Buildings concerning the land we had seen at LisKeard, but mostly to enquire about the school laws in Ontario. They said that we could have private schools, but they require that an inspector see that our children learn enough. There, too, we were offered land, but I think the school freedom in Quebec is better. From here we went to Kitchener where the Mennonites are. There we stayed at Lanmans for night. In the morning was church. First was Sunday School which was in German. The church service was in English. The preacher mentioned that it was too bad that it was not possible to learn German in school. For closing they sang a German song for the visitors."

"After being hospitably treated and seeing the rich countryside, we returned to Giroux. We travelled 3,467 miles without getting off the train. When we got home it was very wet. The grain is already grown high. It looks like there will be much straw. This afternoon we will see what will become of our moving away. I cannot write about it yet."

In 1928 another delegation was sent to re-examine the land near Amos, but in the end no move took place. Royden Loewen concluded that "Those who sought new land found it in Prairie Rose and those who had opposed public schools learned to live with them."<sup>981</sup>

Abe P. Reimer, Ridgewood, remembered when the delegates for the Quebec delegation were being elected, the brotherhood had wanted "old" H. E. Plett together with Cornelius R. Penner and Johann P. Reimer. But some had said that Heinrich was too old already and that he might fall over because of the considerable walking involved. Nevertheless, he was elected. When the delegates had arrived in Quebec, they had walked for miles. The story is told that although H. E. Plett had walked slowly and carefully, he was strong and sturdy, and even-

tually outlasted the other delegates notwithstanding his age.

Another version of the story has it that Heinrich E. Plett and neighbour Isaac P. Loewen were elected as delegates. Loewen was small and lithe of stature and had apparently joked that he would wind up having to carry Plett part of the way. When they got to Quebec it turned out the opposite and it was Plett who had to lend Loewen a shoulder to help him make it back to base. The story illustrates the sometimes friendly rivalry between the two men. Loewen was a well-off farmer who made his money by operating on a small scale and watching his expenditures carefully. Plett, on the other hand, liked to operate on a big scale. Both men were successful, each in their own way. In the Kleine Gemeinde the brethren were rotated on a roster for digging graves. It happened that Plett and Loewen were designated to dig a grave together. After they had dug for some time, Plett's side of the grave was deeper. Loewen made the comment that the ground was softer on his side and that to be fair they should change sides. Plett obliged but shortly thereafter his side was again deeper.



*The Plettville businesses included a home-built firewood and feed crushing unit which travelled around the neighbourhood. Here the unit is cutting firewood on the Plattebof. View to the east. The north ends of the scheune and bogbarn, right, and the old granary, moved out from the Blumenort village, middle rear. Jakob R. Plett, middle. In 1946 the Jakob R. Plett house was built to the left of photo. Jakob R. Plett, middle, operated the unit. Photo - Jakob R. Plett, 1930.*





*The four youngest sons of Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett, (l-r): Bernhard, Jakob, George and David, 1924. Photo by cousin Cornelius P. Doerksen on a visit from Satanta, Kansas.*



*Jakob R. Plett, with his fiddle, presumably beside the stair case in the Heinrich E. Plett home. Photo - Jakob R. Plett, ca.1926.*



*During the winter, the men would go to the lumber camps located to the east of the East Reserve, cutting logs for lumber. All winter trains of sleighs loaded with logs returned to the Mennonite villages where the logs were cut up into fire. Photo - Jakob R. Plett, 1920.*

**1920s.** In the meantime things were changing on the Plettenhof. Son Ben R. Plett recalled that the hog barn at the west end of the new barn had a north-south corridor. In 1923 this was changed so that the east-west corridor of the new dairy barn extended straight through to the west end. This eliminated the difficult turn with the manure sled at the dead end and the team could now exit the barn at the west end. It was also more pleasant not to have to pass by the house with every load of manure. At the same time, the wooden floor of the hog barn was torn up and replaced with a cement floor. In the process, about 100 rats were killed. At the point where the east-west corridor of the dairy barn intersected the north-south corridor of the hog barn, a large trap door was built. This was handy for butchering as a cow could be hung on a block and tackle, or a wagon was driven underneath and grain passed up or down from the second floor for storage or loading.<sup>982</sup>

Heinrich E. Plett always had a good team of light horses (like American saddle horses) for his top buggy, small Democrat, or in the winter a "Kabit" sleigh. The last many years he had a team called "Jeff" and "Barney." Although they were not matched for looks like some farmers who raised and bred horses, such as Abraham L. Plett, they were a spirited team. They would trot at a brisk pace from the moment they left the Plattehof until they reached the railing at the destination, whether Steinbach, Kleefeld or Landmark and even then the driver had to hold in the reins. In addition, Heinrich E. Plett had a four-horse team of big heavy Clydes for plowing, and another four-horse team of Percherons or Belgians for lighter work - usually Percherons which he preferred to Belgians. He never raised his own horses and simply bought the best horses where he could.

Until he bought the Case tractor - and even a little after - Heinrich E. Plett always had a team of oxen, even though most people went to horses as soon as they could, because oxen were so difficult to handle and terribly slow. But Heinrich had an attachment to oxen and a knack for working them. For the last years, he had a team of well-trained and obedient oxen called "Buck" and "Charlie". Buck was brown and weighted 2100 pounds and Charlie was a lighter brown with white spots and weighed 1800 pounds. These animals would pull a two-bottom plow and could be unhitched in the field and left to graze while the driver went home for dinner. Sons John R. and Klaas R. Plett still did a lot of plowing with this team. Son Ben R. Plett remembered as a five-year-old holding their reins while his older brothers were picking rocks.

A little to the southwest of the hog barn stood a 24' by 16' chicken barn. When son Klaas R. Plett got married they cleaned it out and lived there for a year or so. Later it was moved to their farm in Blumenhof, added to, and eventually used by cousin Jac. P. Doerksens. Heinrich E. Plett usually had about 200 hens and six sows, raising whatever weanlings they produced. Son Ben R. Plett recalls that in 1925, P. K. Penner had just got his new Model T truck, and they had shipped a load of 10 hogs, a big load at the time. His father had driven along to Winnipeg and he, as a ten-year old, had the big privilege that he could also accompany them.

Heinrich E. Plett usually had 18 to 20 cows for milking and young stock.

Son Ben R. Plett remembered that his father and his wife, Tien, had milked together one winter. The next winter, 1933-1934, he and his wife milked and managed the dairy while Heinrich E. Plett and brother Jacob went into the bush in Vassar. That winter, Jacob, assisted by his father, built the sawmill, and did a little sawing on the yard. Having enjoyed the experience they decided to start their own lumber camp.

Royden Loewen has written that by 1920 Heinrich E. Plett was farming a section of land which had risen in value from \$15.00 per acre in 1910 to \$45.00 per acre.<sup>983</sup> Shortly after the dissolution of Blumenort village in 1910, Heinrich E. Plett and sons purchased "almost a section of agricultural land....in the Greenland area."<sup>984</sup> Sons Cornelius, Peter and Henry R. Plett bought the North half of Section 33-7-6E in northern Blumenort from Peter Wiebe.<sup>985</sup> Cornelius took the northwest quarter establishing a farm. Brother John R. Plett rented the northeast quarter from Peter and Henry and eventually purchased it. Son Ben R. Plett remembered that when this land was bought the northeast quarter was only sod grass dissected by cart trails leading to Ile des Chenes. Heinrich E. Plett rented this land from his sons who were more than occupied with their construction business. Eventually the entire quarter was broken. Heinrich himself acquired the SE and S1/2 of NE4-8-6E (240 acres) just north into the Greenland district from Germans who had started a yard where Abraham R. Pletts later lived. In those days a road went north from the Plattehof across Isaac R. Reimer's yard, and Jakob G. Barkman's and then west along the section line, which was the route the Pletts took to get to the "Greenland Farm."

An interesting business carried on by the family from 1918 to 1934 was a mobile custom feed crushing, wood sawing, firewood splitting unit pulled by horses which travelled throughout the neighbourhood. The outfit was run by sons John and Klaas and later by son Jakob. On one occasion, the wood splitter had accidentally cut off one of Jakob's fingers. He held it in place while going to Steinbach where it was successfully reattached by Dr. Shilstra. In another incident from around 1931 or 1932, Jakob was cutting and splitting wood at Bartels in Clearsprings. The machine malfunctioned resulting in a serious gash on his arm. Jakob had calmly walked across the Bartel's yard to ask for some lard to stop the bleeding. None of the Bartel men were home and the woman had all fainted when they saw the ugly wound. Consequently Jakob himself had to go to the pantry to find the lard. Then he was off to Steinbach to Dr. Shilstra, who had sewn the wound, apparently saying, "Es tut nicht weh." No anaesthetic was used.

In 1918 Heinrich E. Plett bought his first tractor, a three-wheel Case. The Case was a poor starter and had one big drive wheel, two feet wide, and a normal wheel 10 inches wide. While plowing or working down a field a coupling was inserted so that both wheels were powered, but had to be disengaged to allow turning. The tractor had only one wheel in front and a skid was designed for plowing that would follow the furrow. For turning, this devise had to be tripped up so that it did not hook the ground or fences. Others, including uncle Abraham L. Plett, bought the 10/20 Titan which proved to be a more reliable machine and a better purchase. Heinrich had decided to buy the Case as it was a four-cylinder, for steadier power and, perhaps, he felt a little too loyal to Case.<sup>986</sup>

Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, remembered how impressed he had been when the Plett steam-engine and threshing outfit had come by. He also remembered son David R. Plett driving to the Greenland farm with the three-wheel Case.

In 1920 Heinrich E. Plett bought the first two-bottom Fordson, and this was the first of four or five such tractors he would own. In 1927 he bought another new Fordson which already had wheel fenders.

Nephew Cornelius P. Doerksen, Blumenort, recalled that "His uncle Heinrich Plett liked to fashion and invent all sorts of things especially together with his sons. This would have been the case already even while still in the old Blumenort village." One of their devices was a windmill made of boards and set up in the Scheune. When the wind was blowing from the north they would open the doors and it generated extra power for the main windmill on the roof. Nephew John R. Unger remembered the artesian well on the Plat'ehof "which had quite a lot of pressure and the Plett boys designed a system using the force of the water flow to run various tools like a lathe, washing machine, grinder to sharpen tools, etc. The well eventually had to be closed down because it caused considerable flooding of the lower land in the area."<sup>987</sup> Perhaps the interest in designing easier to operate household conveniences was inspired by the fact that the H. E. Plett boys all had to take their turn at maid duty and helping their mother.

As sons Cornelius, Peter and Henry R. Plett got old enough in their later teens they worked on the threshing outfit. By 1915 they were running it with Cornelius as engineer, Peter as fireman probably until 1918, and then as engineer, replaced by Peter P. D. Reimer as fireman. Peter P. D. Reimer remembered one year when he was already working on the steam engine outfit and they were threshing for Peter R. Penners and Cornelius R. Plett was the engineer. After they had shut the outfit down for the night, Cornelius and one of the other workers had walked the mile east to Abr. L. Pletts to visit the girls. They had returned quite late, after he and the other four workers were already in their bunks in the caboose. Thinking that all were sleeping, Cornelius and his companion analyzed their visit. Peter remembered Cornelius commenting that one of the girls had said he was too old.<sup>988</sup>

Royden Loewen has written: "In 1926 Plett and Reimer stopped custom threshing after Peter P. Reimer was elected as the church elder." During the latter years, Peter R. Plett was usually the engineer, Peter P. D. Reimer the fireman, and Henry R. Plett was the separator man. John R. E. Reimer hauled water and the last years Klaas R. Plett hauled water. Son Ben R. Plett recalled hauling sheaves with a team of horses in 1927. That Fall the outfit made its customary threshing sweep through Lorette - it was the last season.

In 1928 the Case steamer's proud place at the power source came to an end after Heinrich E. Plett reluctantly allowed his sons to try their new....tractor on the threshing machine...."<sup>989</sup> Heinrich E. Plett bought a new 15/30 International tractor that year. Son Jacob had mentioned to his father that it would be nice to see if the new tractor could power the threshing machine. Heinrich E. Plett had replied that the tractor couldn't even power the separators, never mind the threshing machine. But Jacob insisted and the tractor was tried after all.

Although the 15/30 International did not match the steamer's power, it operated without the small army of men and teams of horses required to service and supply it with wood and water. At the end of the day the 15/30 could almost equal the steamer's output with its slower but steadier progress. This marked the end of the big steam-engine threshing outfits. The steamer was used as a stationary engine and parked in a special lean-to built onto the workshop and smithy of son Peter and Henry on Plettenhof, powering the shingle saw mill and other tools, while the slabs and sawdust were the fuel for the steamer's boiler. In 1934 it was used in the lumber camp in Vassar for one year to power the sawmill. In the end the wheels were taken off and it served as a boiler for the Plett & Co. box factory in Plettenville.

Son Ben R. Plett recalled that Heinrich E. Plett bought his first car in 1928, a Model A Ford Touring. Prior to this they had a 1925 Ford half-ton which had no windshield and no roof. Ben remembered his Father driving this vehicle and calling loudly, "Woa-woa-wo-wo," when he suddenly wanted to stop. The truck did not heed his commands and Heinrich wound up driving into a fence.

After the Model A Touring, H. E. Plett drove a light blue Plymouth or Dodge Chrysler and by 1940 he was driving a dark blue Chevrolet.<sup>990</sup>

John K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, worked for H. E. Plett personally in 1932 and 1933 as a farmhand. He was originally engaged for a month for \$10.00. One time before the month was over, he noticed H. E. Plett watching him and then getting into his buggy and driving away. He said he had suspected that his employment would be extended. Later he discovered that Plett had been on the way to his parents to make the arrangements including a raise to \$12.00 per month. He hauled grain, drove tractor and other general farm work. He remembered that H. E. Plett had owned three good quarters of land. He recalled that H. E. Plett's Buick touring car had been parked in the garage but that in fall it was again licensed. He doubted that H. E. Plett ever drove himself.

John K. Schellenberg describes his experiences with the Pletts in the spring of 1933: "...I received work at Henry E. Plett's in Blumenort. I started on June 13<sup>th</sup>. ....Initially, I was hired to do a little garden work and shovel saw dust away from the saw at their saw mill. Later, however, I did all kinds of other farm chores. Perhaps there are people today who think the mechanical woodsplitter is a recent invention. The Pletts already had one in 1933 – fifty years ago. The wood after being sawn into short pieces went along a conveyor. At the end of the conveyor, two people would hold the wood end for end under a large revolving iron wheel that had a wedge type contraption attached to it. Everytime the wheel turned it hit this piece of wood and split it. The wheels and saw were powered by the same motor."

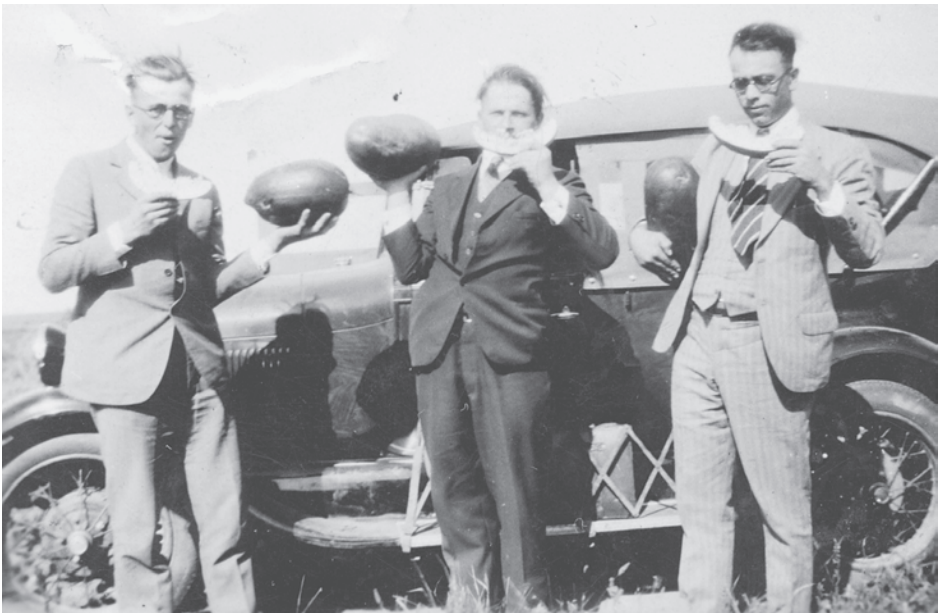
"The Pletts lived on a large yard approximately a quarter mile west of the #12 Highway, four-and-a-half miles north of Steinbach in Blumenort. They had 12 children, all grown up and married by the time I came to work for the father....Five of the sons and one daughter lived at home on the same yard as the parents. Henry and Peter had a large blacksmith and woodworking shop on the yard. Cheese vats for the large number of cheese factories springing up in southern Manitoba were manufactured in the Pletts' shop. Ben, the youngest, did

most of the farm work on the three quarters, 480 acres, of land that was farmed by father Plett. George and Jacob also helped out on occasion. Henry Plett, senior owned a 15/30 McCormick Deering tractor; a lot of work was still done with horses.”

“Running a binder was a chore usually done by older people and not entrusted to 17 year-old boys. With the many levers to handle and adjustments to make to ensure that the binder would turn out good sheaves this was not a job for a novice. However, for some reason or another, the Pletts decided I would have to run the binder and I did. I guess it was also with a certain degree of success because I did it for quite a long time. Again, the tractor wasn’t used for the binder; it took four horses.”

“Because there were so many families living on the yard they didn’t only need male hired help, but also female hired help. From what I remember there were two girls, named Lies and Maria. However, a 17 year-old boy in 1933 was not interested to a great extent in girls and I paid no attention to them except to occasionally nod in their direction to show that I really wasn’t antisocial.”

“In the fall, I went along with the threshing gang to all the Pletts’ sons who had land, and drove a stook wagon. Days were long and I had to work hard. From what I remember, I didn’t mind this so much. Threshing time usually meant lots of good food on the table which, you can be sure, I stowed away in vast quantities....It seems I have gotten sidetracked from my experiences at Pletts’ Later on in the fall there was no more work for me at the Henry Pletts’ and I did some brush cutting for David Plett at Blumenort for five cents an hour, which was fifty cents for a ten hour day.”<sup>991</sup>



1930. Jakob R. Plett enjoying watermelons with cousins George P. Doerksen (left) and John P. Doerksen (right) in Satanta, Kansas. Jakob made the trip with his new roadster. Photo - Jakob R. Plett.



*Plettenville, 1946, view from the west (l-r): Ben R.Plett home, Plett Bros. cheese box factory, George R. Plett (original) home, Jakob R. Plett, dairy barn, H. E. and Elisabeth Plett home, Plett Bros. blacksmith and sawmill. Photo - Peter S. Koop, longtime Plett & Co. foreman.*



*The logs are squared with a small saw to the west of the blacksmith shop. Ben R. Plett house (left) and Plett Bros. cheese box factory, middle. Note the ever popular Fordson tractor (left). Photo - Peter S. Koop.*



*In 1953 Eugene Derksen, Carillon News, visited Plettville to do a story on a 5,000,000 fish crate order for the Maritimes won by Plett & Co. Eugene took several photographs including this shot of the box factory. View to the north.*



*Moving to Mexico, 1948. Relatives have gathered to say farewell to the Heinrich R. Plett family. They had 16 children and so had constructed a passenger truck box with trailer so that the family could travel together. South end of Plettville, view to the southeast. Peter R. Plett home (left), Plett Bros. feedmill (middle) and H. R. Plett home off the photo (right). Note the Blumenort Kleine Gemeinde worship house (rear). Photo - Peter S. Koop.*





*"Plett's Feed Service," 1953. Jakob R. Plett standing in the doorway. Photo - Eugene Derksen.*



*Co-owner, Jakob R. Plett, showing the interior of the box factory, 1953. Photo - Eugene Derksen.*



*Plettenville centre, view to the south. Plett & Co. general store (left), Jakob R. Plett house (right). Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett, 1950.*



*Plettenville centre, view to the north. On the east side of the street, the carriage shed, old granary, store and George R. Plett house (original). Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett, 1950.*



*Hauling the rough boards from the sawmill at the south end of the village to the box factory at the north end. H. E. Plett house, middle rear. Isaac Wiebe, a recent refugee from Neuendorf, Chortitza Colony, Russia, on the tractor. Peter and Heinrich R. Plett had signed as guarantors for a number of refugees and also provided them with jobs upon arrival in Canada. Photo - Peter S. Koop, 1952.*



*A wagon chassis manufactured in the metal and wood workshop by Plett Bros. Heinrich E. Plett house, rear. Photo - George R. Plett.*



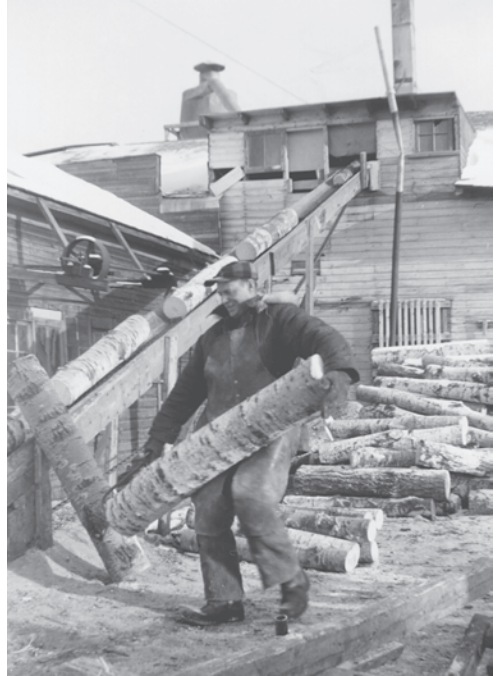
*Marie (Mrs. Jake K. Friesen), daughter of Heinrich R. Plett. Heinrich E. Plett house, rear, and his automobile (left), carriage shed and old granary. Photo - George R. Plett.*



*Another view of the new wagon chassis. H. E. Plett dairy barn, left, and general store and George R. Plett house, right. Photo - George R. Plett.*



*George R. Plett with second wife, Katharina S. Koop, ca. 1948. Photo - George R. Plett.*



*Frank Wiens, loading logs onto the conveyer, which took the logs to the sawmill on the second floor. Photo - George R. Plett.*

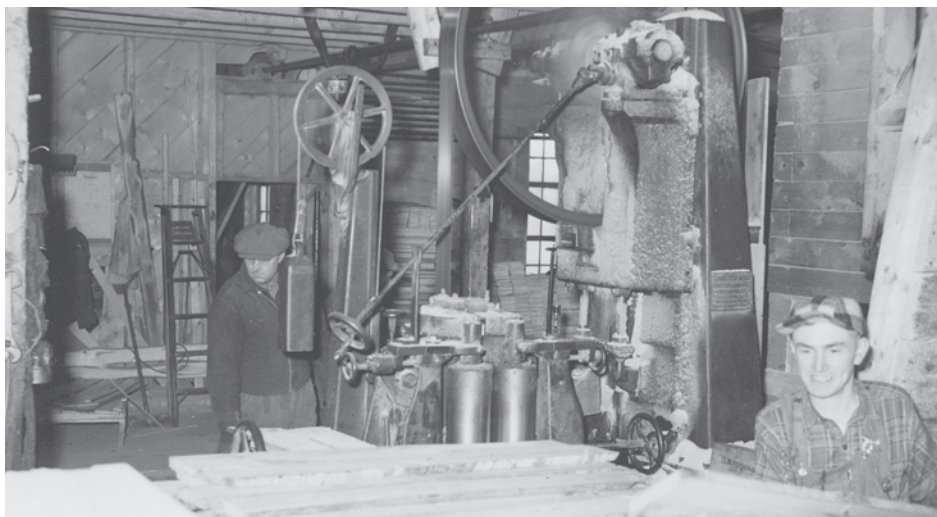


*The Plett Bros. truck with passenger chassis, ready to depart for Mexico, 1948. View from the H. R. Plett yard, north. The metal and woodworking shop, middle, and blacksmithy, left. Photo - George R. Plett.*

**Box Manufacturing Process - Photos by Peter S. Koop, 1952.**



*The logs are cut into boards in the second floor sawmill at the south end of Plettenville. Operator Henry Kornelsen, Ridgewood.*



*The band saws cut the boards into thinner sheets. Peter B. Klassen (right) and Cornelius D. Koop (left).*



*Surface planer, planes boards to even thickness. Peter Wiebe (middle) and Levi K. Reimer (right).*



*The blacksmith shop and metal and woodworking shop, right. View to the north. Photo - George R. Plett.*



*After the poplar logs were cut up, the boards were piled for drying. The lumber storage area, view to west from the second floor saw mill in the woodworking shop. In the distance, is the oak bush on SE28-7-6E, where grandfather Peter R. Reimer and later his son David P. Reimer lived. Photo - George R. Plett.*



*Jakob R. Plett, and particularly, George R. Plett, were strong adherents of Pentecostal-Evangelical religious culture. They often had meetings for the employees, like this one in the Plett & Co. store, ca. 1950. where films were shown and speakers invited. J. R. Plett, rear, left, and George R. Plett, centre, seated with trademark white shirt and tie. The little boy at the rear left is the author. Photo - Peter S. Koop.*



*One of the divisions of the Plett & Co. general store was retailing appliances under capable salesman John K. Unger, later of Abbotsford, B.C. Photo - Peter S. Koop.*



*A number of trucks were required to haul lumber and supplies and deliver the manufactured boxes. Leonard Plett, son of George, getting gassed up at the blacksmith shop to haul a load of shavings. Photo - Peter S. Koop.*

**Letters 1924-26:** Among the most significant of the sources of information regarding the lives of Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett are a series of letters written by them to his father in Satanta, Kansas. Compared to most letters found within conservative Mennonite circles, which tend to focus on spiritual matters with only a short postscript reserved for more mundane secular events, these letters are quite newsy. The writers openly share details of their lives and that of their extended families and also regarding Gemeinde matters or items discussed at brotherhood meetings. The letters, starting in 1924, have been preserved by the B. D. Doerksen family in Satanta, Kansas, who deserve our gratitude.<sup>992</sup> They provide an amazing view into the busy life-world of the Pletts and their 12 children. The total collection of letters by Heinrich and Elisabeth consists of over 30 letters. Since it is impossible to report on each one, the letters from 1924 to 1926 will be explored to recreate a panorama of life in the mid-1920s.

The first letter dated March 8, 1924, written by daughter-in-law Elisabeth Plett, Mrs. H. R. Plett, refers to visiting and socializing: "Are you still visiting a lot? I think today you may well be at uncle and aunt Kl. P. Reimer." Elisabeth mentions "there were two worship services here, in the morning Ohmche Jak. Kroeker held worship services and in the afternoon, Omke Johan Friesen. For dinner we were at Ab. R. Pletts. Susanna J. B. Reimer and Jac. and Abr. F. Wiebe were here for dinner. For Vesper Maria S. Kornelsen was also here. She is presently at Abr. Pletts.....Monday. Today for dinner we had ripe beans, rice, pickled meat and liver sausage.....The fields are almost black but the small rise here is not yet nearly clear...Jacob P. D. Reimers want to move to Morris....Justina, Len, and I went to Cor. R. Pletts. We had taken socks along to darn. Johann had gone to the bush. Heinrich was sick...Joh. F. Ungers were very curious regarding the letters from you....Gerh. and Ben are sleeping already. Da. and Jac. are not home yet. A greeting to close to all of you, and write soon. 'Lies'"

On May 25, 1924, Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett focused more on church matters. The letter refers to the warnings by Ält. Peter Dueck against the use of mirrors in the matter of vanity, "...which Ält. Jak. Dueck does as well, but what is the response as things remain the way they were....Hein. Duecks were our guests, the first time with this wife....At Cor. Pletts they have a little daughter, Elisabeth, since Easter....Ält. Jak. Dueck is completely cured from his suffering but currently he has a severe flu."

In a longer letter of December 24, 1924, Elisabeth and Heinrich note that his father is not well, and speculate whether it might be "...such a Viehsucht as the old uncle Fast had a few years ago?...I think he had doctored himself with bear fat." Heinrich refers to his father's age and "...that it always makes me glad that you have remained so unchanged and cling firmly to the faith once received." Although much changes in the world, Heinrich is of the view, "...that the faith should however, always remain the same." "Yesterday...Klaas Friesen led the brotherhood [meeting]." Heinrich refers to "trouble with some teachers who want to use the gramophone." P. J. B. Reimer had opined "that our children are being shortchanged." Abr. Toews wanted permission to sing four-part harmony at home "that is, if it did not offend anybody." Other brethren replied "that



it would bring the young people into temptation and if the young people are singing that way then why not us also?" Heinrich regretted that some brethren evidently put the matter, "that the two had been treated to hard." The brotherhood also talked about a poor widow in Germany who needed help and the use of tobacco. Heinrich concluded that "we had a good brotherhood, that is to say, if things go forward in this fashion." A final item of more personal news, concludes the letter: "Friday the children tipped over with the sleigh. All of a sudden there was a steep snow drift. Also P. P. Reimers are to have tipped over Tuesday....there by Is. W. Reimer's haystack, where there is also a big drift, he has young horses that run so wildly, that they were already scared. I have heard they broke their sleigh...."

In between the letters of Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett are letters by their children, including, as already referred to, one by daughter-in-law Lies, and letters by sons John, Jacob, and Henry R. Plett, the latter to advise his grandfather of his forthcoming engagement.

March 25, 1925, Elisabeth and Heinrich write to let his father know they had left Jansen, Nebraska, safely, and arrived at home. They had not "...used the sleeping car on the way, but put something up between the seats and then it did not go too bad" In Giroux "...sons Gerh. and Bernard picked us up at the Dubcko [Depot] and the girls had a hen on the fryer. The first thing I did was to cut noddles and after dinner I put buns in the pans. And then the children Kornelius and Johann and Klaas Pletts, and Abraham Pletts were here yesterday for dinner and after dinner all the siblings came here with Mother and in the evening Jak. [L.] Pletts were here...."

This note was followed four days later with a more detailed report. Heinrich stated that "since his wife is already writing." he "will try to write something since I had felt poorly the first several days after returning home." Heinrich reveals his own interests as he reports on the seemingly endless problems the railway had experienced, "...they replaced the locomotive but then the boiler gave out....Made it to Touron and telegraphed for another engine which arrived within the hour. We thought we would miss the connection in McFarlene, but just made it, and it soon left....but not for long, then it stopped and waited for another." Upon arrival in Jansen, Abraham I. Loewen was waiting for them and took their baggage into his office. They stayed for the night with Tante Joh. Friesen (the Mrs. Siemens' Friesens). Upon leaving Jansen, they reached Omaha, then on to Des Moines, arriving at 8 p.m. where they waited for the 'Schot Kort Flier' from Kansas. They travelled through 'Sangpaul' 'driving very fast, but safely.' At 9 a.m. in the morning arrived in Duluth, and by 7 p.m. they were at the border, where Heinrich showed their papers and they "were asked what they had done in the States. The first customs officer had said everything was okay but then the second...." Heinrich again added a report about matters in the church, the baptismal candidates had been "....asked about tobacco" and "....Jakob Plett's Jakob had perhaps the most fault in this. He had to declare himself before the entire assembly before baptism." Also a ministerial election had been called rather suddenly and "it fell on Cor. R. Penner with the majority of votes." He refers to Ger. E. Kornelsens who "are planning an auction, presumably they will give up the

Wirtschaft, and they are also already old and alone, the one works alone in Winnipeg.” From the standpoint of a large-scale farmer “....it would also be better if this was not done, working alone like that in the city.” “Indeed,” he concluded, “we have eminent reason to be concerned for our souls.”

The next letter dated June 26, 1925, is the report on the trip to Quebec already referred to. Elisabeth and Heinrich note they “have heard that you have been visiting in Meade.”

Next follows an invitation for the Verlobung of daughter Elisabeth with Abr. J. Thiessen, Giroux, for June 27. Elisabeth and Heinrich also report on some kind of a manhunt for a lost person and that “yesterday, David Reimers, Kl. Brandts, P. T. B. [arkmans], and many others had gone to look somewhere in the swamp.” The water was so deep that “the boots had not been high enough.”

In the letter of November 1, 1925, Elisabeth and Heinrich report that “the roads were muddy and only Peter, Heinrich and Helena had gone to church. Joh. Friesen, Morris, preached. The previous Sunday, they were at our place, and many other guests and David Reimers with Mutterchen.” Reporting on the boys, “Heinrich is building a machine shed at Abr. P. Reimers, Peter is trying to finish shingling Johan Plett’s barn, Klaas Pletts have gone visiting today, tomorrow they want to slaughter a pig, David is grinding feed at Peter E. Friesens and Bernhard goes to school. The others are doing the chores and will go for straw. Yesterday, Lena was cleaning and sealing windows, and baked buns and bread, and I was cleaning. My man had driven to the children to see about the well they are making.” After some comments about matters in the Gemeinde and her hope that young people will again come forward asking for baptism, Elisabeth reports “They together with their children have received sufficient fruit of every kind except plums which had yielded poorly. Many are complaining the trees are drying up.”

In his letter of January 5th, 1926, Heinrich waxes philosophical as “one year passes by after the next, as we journey towards eternity.” The letter includes a fascinating report that “four Old Colonists came here yesterday to David P. Reimers, wanting to know about the possibilities in Quebec and they wanted to hear something and so those who had been there were called together by telephone, except Peter P. Reimer who was visiting at Mankies who did not have a telephone. At around 9 p.m. in the evening he had telephoned to David Reimers, but by then it was too late. The uncles regretted this, but we talked much with each other. They were 100 families there in the West Reserve, they did not like it in Mexico. They are of the opinion that there would easily be around 40 families who would want to go to Quebec....They wanted us to go with them to Quebec after the seeding, which was not declined....” To close Heinrich reported that son “Peter has returned from his extended trip to Morris and Medes [?] and Winnipeg,...he even sold another sleigh.”

The letter of March 17, 1926, opens with a prayer, “Lord, I must confess there is nothing good within me,” quoting Psalms chapter 139. Heinrich laments “that everything seems to be going along with the world, but I cannot understand it, that there is supposedly more freedom unto pride in the present time.” Bible Schools, Sunday Schools, and singing sessions have long been favourite

instruments used by those who would pervert the Gemeinde and lead it away from the Holy Gospel. Heinrich referred to such efforts and that "all this only leads to more zealous innovations." He feels that these brethren "...are going to far too many strange churches."

In a new innovation regarding their brotherhood, the women were allowed to attend when a sister repented, and they were asked if they could forgive her, which Heinrich notes "was strange to me." Then "the Abr. R. Pletts phoned if I would not want to drive to Steinbach to get the Tante Reichelsche as their baby was very sick. But she could not come...so I drove to Tante Regehrsche and she came along. She said the child had pneumonia....she smeared it with Bomöl and then with kömö and made a mustard plaster and I think she held it on for about 15 minutes. The she took it off and said she should apply it again in about two hours. The child had a high fever in the head. She made a potato poultice ["Schrochsel"] and laid it on the head, and said more she could not do....This morning they phoned....and the child is already better." Heinrich reports that "the snow rail is very good, they load up to 2000 board feet of green lumber at the sawmill in the forest and take it home. Yesterday, son David came with a load of 1500 board feet, and the driving was very good. But I think this is coming to an end. David has gone to the dentist. Yesterday Cornelius and Klaas Pletts had gone to doctor Peters. We are starting to clean seed grain. Heinrich has gone to Steinbach with boards to be planed as he wants to build himself a small summer kitchen. They are exactly now cutting up turnips to cook for dinner, we have very good ones weighing up to 19 pounds each [?]. Heinrich Pletts have their dwelling house almost finished. Their house is about 75 feet from the walls of the factory. Mrs. Klaas Plett's siblings are here picking up lumber as Klaas has too much work in the workroom [shop]."

Heinrich opens his letter of April 26, 1926, by explaining that "since it is raining this morning I will quickly send you a few lines." Firstly he reported on illnesses. Son Heinrich "has the fever for two days already....Mutterchen has been sick and is also better again. Yesterday, we did not go to Steinbach to the worship services, only David and Helena went. We went to Peter P. Reimers, who had gone straight home from church as their children, Jakob Kornelsens, were coming over. For Maria has also been fluish for a week....Of Johann K. Friesens we have not heard anything for a few days. They were both also sick, so that the people had to help them....." He adds, "I must write quickly, for I have to drive with cream and eggs."

Heinrich E. Plett then writes about Gemeinde matters sharing some of the challenges faced by brother-in-law Peter P. Reimer: "[He] also has a difficult time since the Gemeinde is not united in everything, there are differing factions which really does not become the Kleine Gemeinde. Oh, how sad when one looks around and perceives where it is all going. Next coming Sunday, all the youths are to come together here in the church; the way Heinrich Reimer said here in the church last Sunday, it made no difference who - whoever had a burdened heart should come. I do not understand it, that elderly brethren and sisters must also come in this way. There are also brethren who say, that anyone who says anything at brotherhood should stand up. And thus there are many

aspects that still need to be regulated.”

Heinrich closes with a brief report on farming activities, “[we] have already drilled some 60 acres, and want to seed some 240 in total.

On October 26, 1926, Heinrich E. Plett starts his letter noting he “cannot walk because of his toe.” A brotherhood meeting has been called for that afternoon to present the youths for baptism: “There are again a number of youths that want to start a better life.” This raises recent events and issues in the Gemeinde: “It would be so much better if there was real unity [in the Gemeinde], oh, where is the fatherly love, the faith of the fathers. Another spirit seems to be at work in the Gemeinde and the [genuine] love has been repressed, only reason and the desires of the flesh hold place, which admonishes us, one quickly observes a zeal here and there in many respects with evil and deceit to pervert the Word of God....” Heinrich expresses concern regarding preaching by strange ministers: “You and father-in-law [Peter R. Reimer] always advised us not to attend foreign assemblies, or even at funerals where a strange minister is called forward.” He closes, “This morning I will see if I can finish this letter. Yesterday, there was an important brotherhood, the youths were presented.”

In the last letter of 1926, dated December 28, 1926, Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett describe their Russländer guests (see section following). In the remainder of the letter they reflect regarding the end of one year and passing into the other: “Who knows what fruit it will have brought.” Heinrich expresses his deep spiritual concerns: “Who knows for how long God will allow the world to remain standing and have patience with the sinful humanity. What benefit is it to those who stand in union with the world with its evil and freedom? What will it help to cry ‘Lord, Lord, and Master,’ for those who do not escape the bonds of Satan? How can one think he is reconciled who still serves the world and sin?”

Elisabeth and Heinrich closed with news of the family: “The children have all been home, except Cor. R. Yesterday, Joh. Pletts helped her mother slaughter hogs. David has driven to Giroux with a hog for Johan. Abraham, Johan, Cornelius are hauling their hay home, roughly two miles....Peter, Heinrich, Klas are in the factory. It seems the people always want to keep the boys working. Jakob is going out, [feed] crushing and sawing wood. We have already sawn all our firewood for a [whole] year, only need to spilt it yet. The wife’s sore is healing already. She is darning socks. Helena is sewing. We have much snow and cold weather. Thursday, there is to be a brotherhood meeting in Steinbach,....Now my ideas are at an end and the paper is full. And so, beloved parents and siblings, in closing, you are remembered with a greeting. From your children and Geschwister,

“Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett”

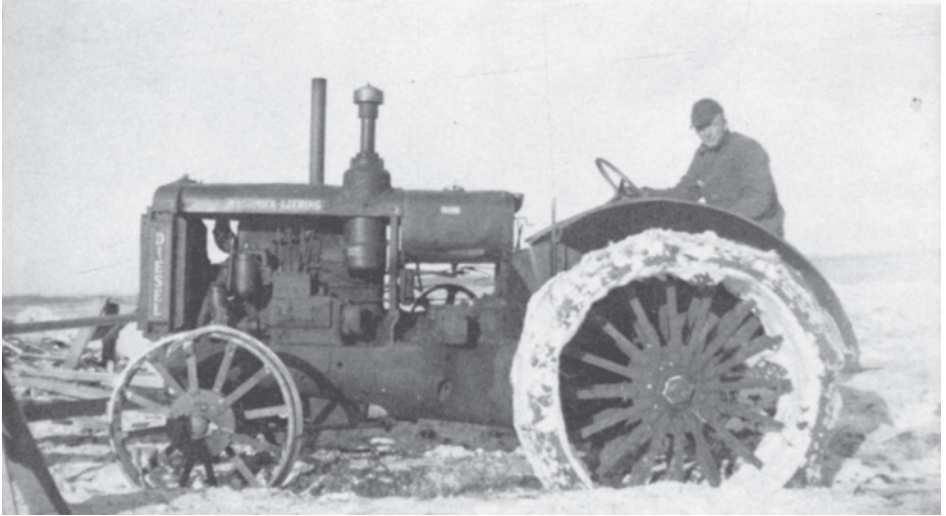
The letters of Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett provide fascinating glimpses, not only at the life of the immediate family, but also splashes of description of the physical landscape and earthy characterizations of some of the people dwelling there. As well, these letters provide insight into the inner workings of the church and the concerns of those anxious about the departure from the faith once received, as promoted by a certain misguided zealots within the Kleine Gemeinde.

**Russländer:** As did others in the district, Heinrich and Elisabeth provided shelter and employment for several Russländer refugee families. In a letter dated December 28, 1926, Heinrich E. Plett writes about the Russländer refugees they are hosting: "We cannot be thankful enough that we can live in this peace and calm. We have a widow and three children living here with us who are also from Russia. They also arrived here almost without clothes in this cold. The widow is 42 years-old and the oldest son is 18, called Peter. The daughter is 14 years-old, named Helen, and the third one is Jakob, 8 years-old. The Tante is a Mrs. Abraham Hamm. She has already buried two husbands. She has already experienced much. It has truly been a sorrowful time. When she relates of all their experiences, I have the impression that we have had it too good here and we love and imitate the world too much....If only we could walk circumspectly so that the Lord would wish to preserve us from such abomination. Lene is at our children Abraham Thiessens. The Peter is very quick, he allows himself to be used for everything, before breakfast he helps the boys clean out manure, and then after breakfast, he goes to the workroom [factory] doing the work the boys give him and is very quick. The Tante is also from a rich family. Her parents used to own three large factories and a mill. The factories are in a large book where every room can be seen: the iron works, the carpentry shop....also the workers. In the last years they had 700 men working in one factory, that is to say, one [shift] went at night, the other 700 men. The father died one year before the war, they have lost everything. The Tante seems to be insightful, she says, she had reflected much over where it says in the scripture, that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. I asked [what she would do] if someone paid her return journey and gave her money to return home? She replied that if someone did that and brought back her buildings and land and the factories and her man was standing there, she would still not want to go back. Only her man, [she would] tell him to come here. And she says, even if she has to serve her entire life, for the children learn nothing good in Russia. She says, the children are only taught that God does not exist, and when she thus relates what the children must sing there, one truly quivers. The children never want to go back. They are from a wonderful region. But they have experienced so much that they are satisfied were they are now."

Inserted among news of his own family, Heinrich noted, "This Tante is from 100 verst from the Molosch, southwest." Later in the letter, Elisabeth and Heinrich added that son, "Cornelius has a boy from the Russländer, his name is Heinrich Spent."

On March 21, 1927, Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett write: "We have a young married couple from Russia living here on the second floor. The Tante is helping very willingly, and the uncle also works very quickly. They are called Jakob Hamms and she is a Bernhard Loewen's daughter." Heinrich asked, "Is it perhaps yet from your relatives?" "Her father was killed by the Russians....," he added.

The brief and quite positive introductions to their Russländer guests, also provides an interesting view as to how the Mennonites in Manitoba perceive their co-religionists from Russia, who had suffered so incredibly.



*Heinrich E. Plett's WD40 International diesel, powering the sawmill, 1934. Operator Cornie Fast. During the summers the machines were kept busy day and night brush plowing across southeastern Manitoba, at first by Jakob and George R. Plett and later by Verner and Cornie Fast. In Fall the WD40 was used for threshing during the day and at night for custom plowing. Peter K. Reimer drove the WD40 during the night shift one fall, plowing with a 4-14 Cocksbot plow. Photo 1939 - Cornie Fast.*



*Around 1938 Plett & Co. acquired a TD35 International crawler for their lumbering operations, also used for brush plowing during the summer season. Jakob R. Plett is driving the cat hauling two sleighs full of saw lumber to the railway siding in Vassar. The regular operator in Vassar was Abram A. Reimer (Abr. P.). Photo - Jakob R. Plett.*

**Lumbering:** Heinrich always had a passion for lumbering. Rev. Jacob P. Dueck, Steinbach, who worked for Plett & Co. in Vassar remembered one day going with H. E. Plett looking for good timber stands. He recalled how Heinrich would talk as they walked along, assessing how many board feet of lumber a particular tree might yield, then he tripped on a root, fell on his face in the snow, got up, and being completely engrossed, just kept right on talking as if nothing had happened.<sup>993</sup> Nephew Peter R. Barkman worked for Plett and Co. in Vassar. H. E. Plett would often sit on the tractor seat watching the sawmill. Often he would doze off. But if the sawmill should stop for any reason he was awake immediately. As long as everything was running he was contented. He recalled that the Pletts bought a new WD40 diesel tractor to power the sawmill. The iron-lugged machine was used all summer for bush plowing.<sup>994</sup>

Daughter-in-law Gertrude Friesen Plett, recalled that after her marriage in 1931 to son Jacob, Heinrich would often come and talk to her husband while he was hoeing in the garden. They were talking about starting a lumbering venture. Her husband had then come to her and asked for her opinion when he should do this or not.<sup>995</sup>

Rosabel Fast writes: "Heinrich was always an ambitious man and when he was almost old enough to retire he decided to start a logging business with his sons Jacob and George." In 1934 Heinrich started Plett & Co. in Vassar, Manitoba together with his son Jakob. The next year Gerhard also joined this partnership and in 1940 the operation was moved to Roblin, Manitoba, and in 1946 to Norquay, Saskatchewan. At the peak this business employed up to 95 men." Although his share of Plett & Co. had been purchased by sons Jacob and George, the parents usually moved to the lumber camp in winter, which father enjoyed.

David D. Barkman recalled how tough Heinrich E. Plett was even into his 70s. One time in Vassar he had joined the work gang being taken several miles from the camp to the logging area by horse team and box-sleigh. All the men typically crouched down for warmth. Even though it was 30 to 40 below Heinrich E. Plett was so excited about the fine stands of timber they were traversing, he stood up in front of the sleigh pointing out particularly clumps and mentally tabulating the number of board feet they would yield.

In 1933 Heinrich had given up active farming and the youngest son Ben took over the large dairy, at first as manager and later purchasing it. Ben R. Plett recalled that "they first started to work for his parents on a share basis. His wife received so much per cow for doing the milking and he received a share of the crop for seeding, working and harvesting. Even in this year during the depression, they made \$128.00, quite a good income for the time. Eventually he bought the entire dairy herd and continued farming on Plathof until 1946 when they bought the Gory farm in Blumenhof.

During the winters Heinrich and Elisabeth often moved to the lumber camp with sons George and Jacob.

**Plett Brothers:** All these years the three oldest brothers - Cornelius, Peter and Henry R. Plett - were engaged in building construction during the summer, building the majority of new houses in the area between 1915 to 1932 under the name "Plett Brothers." In 1918 they built a large two-storey house for their father's aunt, Katharina, the widow Wohlgemuth. In the same year the Plett Brothers built the new Blumenort church situated on the southeast corner of the Plett farm (SE27-7-6E): "Cornelius R. Plett was hired to be the head carpenter (*Baumeister*), and he in turn hired his brothers Henry and Peter, to help him build the church.....In the end the building cost \$5,000.00...August 18 was scheduled as the dedication service.....Estimates of people present run from 425 to 500. C. R. Plett the *Baumeister*, reports that he counted 106 buggies and seven cars present at the opening."<sup>996</sup>

In winter they worked in their woodwork and blacksmith shop, manufacturing top-sleighs and heavy work-sleighs. They built all their wooden and metal parts in their own shops including runners, etc. Heinrich E. Plett's original blacksmith shop was about 18' by 24'. The business prospered and in 1920 they expanded, adding a 50' by 40' woodwork shop at the east side of the smithy. In 1935 they added a 15 foot lean-to at the east side of this building where the Case steamer was housed and powered the saws and other equipment. By 1940 the boiler had deteriorated and was replaced by a stationary diesel unit. Prior to the expansion into cheese boxes of 1932, Plett Brothers worked by themselves together with a few faithful long term regular employees, including brother Klaas R. Plett, cousin Abram F. Wiebe and friend Jakob F. Wiebe. In fact, in winter when Heinrich and Elisabet Plett moved to the lumber camp, the Jakob F. Wiebes actually lived in their home.

A corner of the woodwork shop was used for the feed mill business. In 1940 a new separate feed mill was constructed and operated until 1948 when the business was sold to Plett & Co. In 1953 Plett & Co. retired from the feed business and the mill was sold the Kleefeld Co-op.

In 1932 when the cheese factories started again, Plett Brothers went out of the house and sleigh building business and focused on building cheese boxes. They built a storage and assembly building 60' by 30', to the northwest of the big dairy barn. The west 20 feet was used for storage of paints and various wood treating supplies, the middle 16 feet was heated and served as the main assembly area. The east 24 feet was a storage area where the assembled boxes were piled until delivered to the customer. This storage and assembly shop burned down in 1944. Thirty men were employed here at the peak.

Historian Royden Loewen as written about the growth of Plettenhof and the Plett Brother's firm: "Plettenville was a family-run industrial complex operated half a mile south of modern-day Blumenort on the farmyard of Henry E. Plett. Plettenville included two companies, Plett Brothers and Plett and Company, both operated by Henry E. Plett's sons. The companies were involved in a variety of enterprises including a box factory, metal products shop, a smithy, a feed mill, and a large lumber enterprise. The complex, which eventually gave employment to almost 150 men, did business throughout Manitoba for 38 years,



from 1918 to 1956. But it was most important because its services supported local agricultural developments, gave employment to many young Blumenorters and led the way for future local business developments.”

“Plettenville had its roots in the old Blumenort village. Here Henry E. Plett, a young progressive farmer, operated a wind-driven grain crusher and was part owner of the large Plett and Reimer threshing company. When he moved out of the village in 1910 and located in the middle of S.E. 27, he continued the farming sidelines.”

“As Plett’s 10 sons began reaching manhood, these farming sidelines became more important. There were several reasons for this. On one hand, the Plett boys were very interested in mechanics, and it is said that nothing got the boys more excited than harvest time, when the steam engine was kept going steadily. On the other hand, there was a growing lack of available farm land in the immediate area, and despite the fact that almost a section of good agricultural land had been purchased in the Greenland area, the Plett family still did not have enough work to keep themselves busy. Finally, the Pletts seem to have been a very cohesive family which chose not to see any of its members move to Kansas or Prairie Rose where more land was available.”

“The year of 1918 was significant for Plettenville. In this year Heinrich E. Plett dismantled the windmill and built a portable gasoline powered feed crusher. Mounted on a wagon was a wood splitter and power saw. In the succeeding years Plett sent his sons from farm to farm, providing a valuable service to the community. This was also the year when Pletts’ three oldest sons, Cornelius, Peter and Henry, formed a company known as ‘Plett Brothers’. In summer they constructed houses and barns which were in great demand in the rich post-war years. Plett Brothers also headed the construction of Blumenort’s new church in 1918, and two years later they built the new school. In winter the small company built draft sleighs in the two-storey shed at Plettenville. On the ground floor they did the necessary metal work and upstairs they formed the oak runners and wooden tongues.”

“While building construction decreased during the 20s, activity at Plett Brothers’ small factory increased. Local people, seeing the opportunity to do business at home, readily bought up every sleigh Pletts could build. Over the years more than 200 sleighs of various models were designed and sold. These sleighs included heavy, open freight sleighs and covered caboose sleighs with two or four doors. The covered sleighs came with upholstered seats and charcoal foot-warmers. Although Pletts built few sleighs after 1930, when the car became fully acceptable by Blumenorters, these sleighs were popularly used until winter roads began improving after World War II.”

“Another product designed and patented by the owners of the small factory was the steel barn door latch which is still being sold. The following story, written in 1952, tells how the Plett latch came to be: In 1928 the two Plett brothers (Peter and Henry, Jr.) were rebuilding a barn for C.W. Brandt. He wanted a latch on his barn door that would not catch the harness passing by and one that could be opened and closed with a mitt hand. The Pletts did some thinking and

developed a latch that has been manufactured since with only minor changes. Over 150,000 of these have been sold...for use on barns and machine sheds.”

“The early years of the depression was another significant time for Plettenville. In 1932 Plett Brothers built a large two-storey shop and began a three-pronged business. The most important aspect was the wood box factory which required the most room in the new shop. Wooden cheese boxes were in great demand in the early 30s when cheese factories began appearing throughout Manitoba. The Plett brothers figured out an economical way to mass-produce these boxes and even devised their own machinery to build the boxes.”

“Ben R. Plett, the youngest of the 10 sons, still recalls how the boxes were made: ‘Poplar logs were bought in 100 cord units. Each of the logs had been pre-cut into 4 foot lengths. At the factory the logs were resawn into 16 inch lengths and sent, by conveyor, upstairs to be cut into boards. The boards were then piled up outside to dry out. After this they were brought in again and sent through planer after planer. Then several of the boards were taped together and sent to the circle saw. In this way round bottoms and tops for the cheese boxes were made. These box parts were then hauled to another, smaller building to await the plywood sides. The plywood strips were cooked at the high temperature and then sent to a special machine which rolled the hot plywood around the bottoms and nailed it to them. The finished boxes were then stored and delivered to cheese factories throughout Manitoba.’”

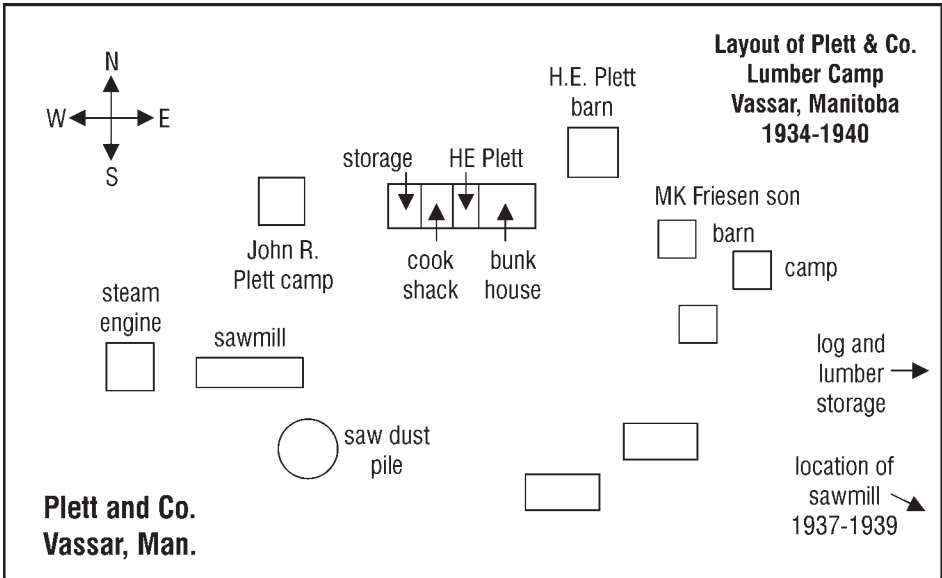
“A second part of the new building was made into a commercial blacksmith and tinsmith shop. Here farmers could come to have their regular blacksmithing done. But more important, it was here that the door latches and other patented metal products were manufactured. Included in these products were wheelbarrows, wood-burning poultry brooders, weighing cans, cooling tanks and even special machine parts.”

“A third part of the shop contained the grain crusher which had previously been mounted on a wagon. Now the crusher was made stationary, and farmers came to Plettenville to have their grain crushed. This aspect of business was so good that in 1940 a separate diesel-powered feed mill was built. Even specially-bagged feed, complete with a concentrate name PEP FEED, was produced and sold as hogs and chick starter.”



*Jakob R. Plett and Heinrich E. Plett on their way to Roblin, 1940. Stopping for lunch. Photo - Mrs. George R. Plett.*

## Vassar Lumber Camp, 1934-1940



*Yard layout of the Plett lumber camp at Vassar, Manitoba, as at 1934. Additional buildings were later added.*



*Plett sawmill, Vassar, Spring 1935. Sawyer is Jakob R. Plett and tail sawyer Henry B. Reimer (Job. P.). Gertrude, Mrs. Jakob R. Plett and daughter Clara, middle. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*View to the north from the sawmill, winter of 1933-35. John R. Plett camp, middle, and cook shack and storage building, right. John U. Duecks lived here in the winter of 1936-37. Mrs. Jakob R. Plett, middle with bat, is entertaining company. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*View to the east from the roof of the John R. Plett camp. John R. Plett sons standing in front. Middle left is the entrance to the cookback. Upper left is the Martin K. Friesen camp and barn. The camp next right belonged to Friedensfelders who brought logs out for the sawmill, including Albert and Walter Schinkel, Michael Kibn and a Biedler. In 1938-39, John R. Plett work gang lived in the building on the far right. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*Plett & Co. sawmill at Vassar, 1934, before the steam engine shelter was built. Heinrich E. Plett (left) stepping over the drive belt.*



*Left, bunksback, built onto the east end of the H. E. Plett camp. Peter D. R. Reimer (Klaas) watching Peter K. Reimer (right) fixing his harness. Photo - Peter P. D. Reimer.*



*Plett & Co. sawmill Vassar, view to the northeast. Peter P. D. Reimer, sawyer; Frank K. Wiebe, tail sawyer; and Frank P. Friesen, log turner. Upper right is the blacksmith shop and behind that the Jakob R. Plett camp. Photo - Peter P. D. Reimer.*

**Plett & Company:** “Another important development in the early 30s was the start of Plett and Company, operated by Jacob and George, the younger Plett brothers. Plett and Company essentially was a lumbering enterprise. It began in 1933 when the Pletts secured a timber lease near Vassar and labour was cheap and plentiful. Many local men spent a winter at Vassar to earn a tiny income which helped them squeeze through the depression. P.K. Reimer, who worked at the Vassar camp during this time, recalls how his pay was 2,000 board feet of lumber a winter which, when he had sold it, provided an income of \$24 a month.”

“The Vassar operation did three basic types of work. It cut four-foot green poplar logs and shipped firewood to Winnipeg. And it cut and sawed wood for C.T. Loewen of Steinbach. For a time the sawmill was even operated with the old Case steam engine that had so faithfully threshed Blumenort’s grain for years. Later it was replaced with a diesel McCormick engine. All the wood destined for Plettville was loaded on to flat rail cars and shipped to Giroux, from where it was picked up by Plett Brothers. During the summer months, the Pletts used their DW40 logging cat to clear bushland for farmers in the Vassar area.”

“In 1940 Plett and Company moved their operation to Roblin, located 40 miles northwest of Dauphin.<sup>997</sup> Here their lumber enterprise reached its zenith. One of the foremen at Roblin, David Barkman, still remembers how the first camp was established in December. He and a crew of six men drove through the miles of wilderness by crawler tractor train. The last half mile to the camp had to be cut by hand through forest. Once they got to the site, they had to set up a sawmill in -30 weather before the camp could even be built. For three weeks the crew lived in a small unheated tent and for a while lived on snared jack rabbit which John P. Friesen faithfully cooked.”

“By Christmas the camp buildings had been started, and, at the camp’s height around 1945, a dozen shacks lined the central street, making the camp resemble a small hamlet. Here many young Blumenort men worked through the war years. Plett and Company had made a deal with the government to hire Conscientious Objectors, provided the C.O’s who were unable to obtain farm leave stayed with the company for the duration of the war. The total payroll for a winter could include from 80-95 men.”

“David Barkman recalls many incidents from the Roblin years. He remembers how they once cut a 49 inch thick tree, how each Sunday Cornie Unger would go ice-fishing, how good the food cooked by Nettie Plett and Lena Penner tasted, how a Loewen and a Schellenberg once almost froze to death when their truck stalled 10 miles from camp, how some farm boys who saw bear tracks on their first day in the bush left for home the next day.”

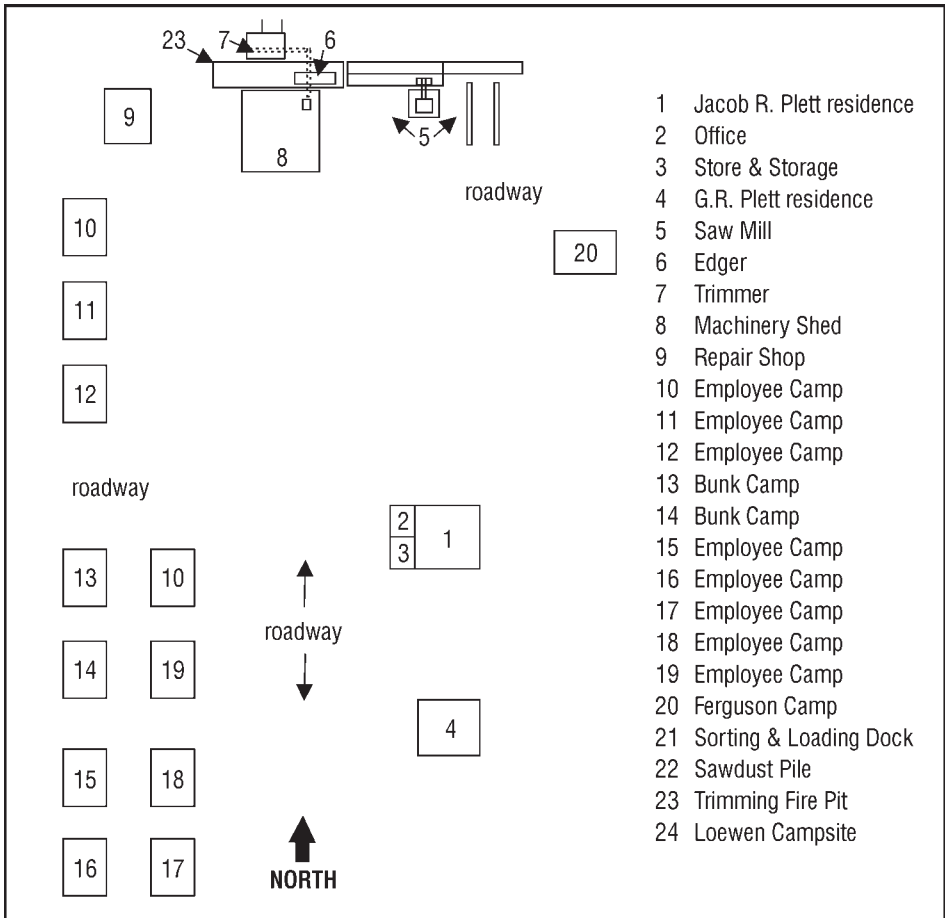
“The war was good for the lumber industry. A huge American market opened up and a great deal of lumber was sold to cities as far away as Chicago. Even in Blumenort there was such a demand for lumber that old Henry Plett set up a small office at Plettville and began retailing lumber for his sons. Another expansion saw a planer set up in the town of Roblin. Here the rough lumber which was hauled out on winter roads could be planed in spring. In 1943 the old two man saw was replaced by the power chain saw, increasing production. At the

height of the Roblin operation a million board feet a year, worth \$40,000 were produced.”

“In 1945 the camp was moved across the border to Norquay, Saskatchewan. Here the camp with the sawmill in the bush and the planer in town operated very much as the Roblin Camp had.”

“By the end of the war the Plettenville based companies were doing booming business. From the humble farm sideline beginning in 1918, the complex had grown into a large company of regional importance. From an attempt to keep the family together and make Blumenort more self-sufficient grew a large business which did almost \$300,000 worth of business a year. The men who had worn overalls during the 20s now wore business suits. In 1948 Plett and Company purchased the interests of Plett Brothers when Cornelius, Peter and Henry moved to Mexico.”<sup>998</sup>

**Map of Plett & Co. Lumber camp, Roblin.**



Map of the Plett & Co. Roblin, Manitoba, lumber camp, as recalled by foreman, Peter K. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, as of 1940-42.

## Plett & Co. Lumber camp, Roblin 1940-1946



*Setting up camp in Roblin, 1940. A crew of eight men slept in a tent for three weeks while they built the first sawboard camps. Abramam R. Reimer (left) was responsible for setting up the sawmill. Cornie and Verner Fast, right. Photo - Peter K. Reimer; foreman 1940-42.*



*Overview of the Roblin camp, 1941. Plett & Co. had two trucks bauling lumber and logs: Cornelius P. Friesen drove the 1938 Ford and John Defries, drove the 1940 Dodge. C.T. Loewen and Jakob T. Loewen each had a truck bauling lumber out of the bush on contract. The Jakob R. Plett camp with the small store is at left, and the cookback middle row, front. Blumenort, page 477.*





*Above: Sawmill, Roblin. Abraham R. Reimer sawyer.*



*Left: One of the crawlers in the Plett & Co. fleet snaking trees out of the forest to the landings. In winter Plett & Co. leased additional machines to provide the muscle for the busy logging season. In 1940-41 they leased the crawler of Peter K. Penner, operated by John P. Toews (Peter), Steinbach. Photo - George R. Plett.*

*Below: In spring before the frost came out, the lumber camp broke up. On the last day, a caravan of automobiles and trucks wound its way along the rough private logging road built by the Plett lumber company, following the TD35 which dragged the road to make it passable. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett, spring 1942, at the intersection on the Highway north of Roblin.*





*The trees were skidded out of the forest to landings where they were bucked up into logs. From the landings the logs were hauled to the sawmill site by crawler and sleigh or loaded onto trucks and hauled to the sawmill. Here they were stockpiled and eventually sawed into lumber. Photo - Nettie Fast.*



*Abram R. Plett's Caterpillar hauling a load of logs from the landing to the sawmill. Henry K. Plett operator. The A. R. Plett outfit was in Roblin from 1940-43. Photo - Nettie Fast.*



*Two International TD 14s shutting down for the night. One of them was owned by Plett & Co.*



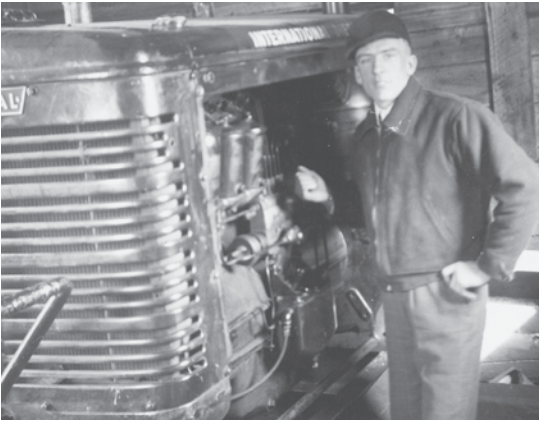
*The sewing circle "Nabverein" at the Plett & Co. lumber camp, Roblin, Manitoba, 1942. Mrs. George R. Plett, nee Annie K. Unger, (1913-43), standing in front, second from left. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett/Blumenort, page 444.*



*Workers relaxing on Sunday after church (l-r): Henry K. Plett, Emil Mankey, Wilbert Fast and Cornie Fast. Photo - Nettie Fast.*



*Above: Verner and Cornie Fast, cutting a tree with a swede saw. The old fashioned way. Later the Pletts acquired one of the first two-man chainsaws.*



*Left: Verner Fast was the engineer who looked after the 100 horsepower International Diesel engine unit powering the sawmill. Verner was the only one who knew how to get the engine started. Photo - Nettie Fast.*



*Below: Abramam R. Plett's gas-burning Catepillar 22, snaking a tree out of the forest. Operator, son Henry K. Plett. Photo - Nettie Fast.*



*Sleigh with boxed water tank, left, 1941, hauling water from lake to the cooksback where it was carried inside by hand (L-r): Nettie Plett (Mrs. Verner Fast), Elisabeth (Mrs. Abr. R. Reimer), Amanda (Mrs. Roland Reimer), Peggy Kocian, Greta (Mrs. Corn. P. Friesen), Mrs. John Wiebe (daughter of C. F. Unger). Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*Clara and Katherine Plett (Jakob R.) in front of the blacksmith shop, 1942. The logs on the sleigh show the quality of wood being harvested. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*1942. The camps of brothers Peter K. Reimer (Klaas P. L.) and Abraham R. Reimer (left). The blacksmith shop next right. The building at the far right is the tractor shelter where the TD35 was parked for night and the WD40 was parked for the winter, powering the edger and trimmer. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*1942, Jakob R. and Gertrude Friesen Plett, in front of their 1940 Chev. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*Jakob R. Plett and Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius T. Loewen (right), 1942. The Plett supplied a lot of lumber to C. T. Loewen's in Steinbach. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*Plett & Co. planing operation in Roblin, 1942. Here the lumber was planed and then shipped by rail to customers in Chicago and elsewhere in the U.S.*



*Above: Roblin planing operation, 1942. The TD35 is being pulled started by the WD 40. The tractor operator may be Cornie Fast. The TD 35 was started on gas and then switched to diesel. It was a poor starter.*

*Left: The Jakob T. Loewen family in front of their camp in Roblin 1940-41 (l-r): Wilbert (left) and Jakie and Emiline (right). They had a truck under contract to the Pletts hauling lumber out of the bush. Son Wilbert was the truck driver. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*C. Wilbert Loewen poses in front of International TD 14, operated by Jakob R. Plett. Photo - God Working Through Us, page 67.*



*Winter of 1942-43. L.-r.: Peter Rempel, Henry Loewen, Henry Rieger, Almon Reimer and Art Rempel. Photo - God Working Through Us, page 67. Hundreds of men performed their C.O. service at the Plett & Co. lumber camp at Roblin, Manitoba. Jakob R. Plett made presentations to government agencies to make this possible.*





*In 1945, Jakob and George R. Plett made a trip to Oregon and British Columbia looking for lumbering opportunities. They were accompanied by David D. Barkman (left), company foreman starting in 1942. Jakob's 1940 Chev, right. In Portland, Oregon, they visited their father's cousin Abram A. K. Plett. Driving through the mountains the travellers stopped to marvel at the scenery.*



*Plett & Co. planing mill, Norquay, 1947.*



*Plett & Co. offices Norquay, Saskatchewan, 1947.*

**Retirement:** In 1938 Heinrich E. and Elisabeth Plett wanted to retire and lessen their responsibilities. They divided the Greenland farm among their children as an inheritance, giving each of their 12 children 20 acres, on the condition that they had to assume responsibility for the debt against the farm of \$10.00 per acre." Heinrich sold the dairy to son Ben R. Plett and his shares in the lumber business to sons Jacob and George. These transactions were based on deferred payments. On May 23, 1939, Heinrich and Elisabeth held an auction sale selling off farm equipment and other items. Abram R. Penner, Blumenort was the auctioneer.<sup>999</sup> In time son Abram R. Plett bought up all the 20 acres inheritance parcels of the Greenland farm and established himself there. Ben R. Plett, for example, sold his 20 acres to brother Abram in 1948 for \$700.00.

Mrs. Eno Reimer, Steinbach, recalled working as a maid for son George R. Plett. But for night she went to Heinrich and Elisabeth Pletts where she slept. She had to walk across the yard to the well-house on the dairy barn where she met her future husband, Eno Reimer, who was working for Plett Brothers.

Heinrich Plett continued his active involvement in "Plett & Co." East of the storage shed there was a tin shed which Plett & Co. used for warehousing lumber for their retail sales in the Blumenort area. A little further east there was a small white building which served as a sort of salesroom and business office. Heinrich E. Plett acted as their local sales agent, taking orders for lumber. During the early 1940s, Elisabeth and Heinrich moved to Norquay for several winters, living in a house in town the family had rented.

Heinrich E. and Elisabeth Plett were involved in the "Plettentag" held on the farm of uncle David L. Plett on July 2, 1945, donating the lumber for the seats. As one of the family members born in Russia, Heinrich made a presentation reminiscing about the olden days: "He related his experiences of the journey here as a five year-old boy. He also added some anecdotes from his childhood in the earliest pioneering years. e.g. How an ox had shortened his tail when in the course of work it came into a too intimate contact with the implement mechanism."<sup>1000</sup>

By this time several dozen young Plett grandchildren were growing up on the Plettenhof. The "R" Plett uncles were quite conservative and not favourably inclined to sporting activities. The story is told that one particular Sunday afternoon the uncles were gathered in the Grotte Schtoave in a serious council about how to combat the rising involvement in sports. In the meantime, there were loud cries and exuberant shouts from the outside hockey rink where the "hometeam" Plett grandsons were engaged in a vigorous contest against a Blumenort team! Son Klaas R. Plett remembered the pasture west of the Plattehof was usually flooded with water in spring, and they took their sleighs and skates, making a sail of canvas, and sailed across the ice.

Like all successful people, Heinrich had a sense of curiosity. A former employee recalled that "that one time Martin Friesen's Martin had brought a crank-driven gramophone along to the bush camp in Vassar with several beat-up and scratched records. It happened that Heinrich had come into their camp while Martin and a few others were listening to the device. Heinrich had admonished them quite strongly as to why they would bring such a worldly and useless item

along to pollute the forest. Several weeks later one of the men unexpectedly had to return to the camp and to his surprise found Heinrich E. Plett and son Jacob huddled over the gramophone trying to figure out how it worked.

Nephew Jac D. Reimer mentioned the large hog slaughtering parties which the "P" Reimer siblings always had every fall, including Elisabeth and Henry Plett. "They had done this for years when all the Geschwister got together and helped each other in turn." Heinrich E. Plett's job was always to "clean the head and stir the crackles."<sup>1001</sup> He did get weak on his legs as he got older.

With over 100 grandchildren, things got rather crowded at grandparents for Christmas, Easter, and other family occasions. The younger ones were upstairs and the older ones downstairs. They were all together for the last time on Easter, 1948. The practice of getting together for dinner at the grandparents had already been discontinued a number of years earlier, as they were getting older and it had become simply too much for them.

On Christmas Day, 1940, all the children were home and practically all of the grandchildren, some 80 by then. The adults sat in the parlour (grotte schoave), and someone was in charge of bringing the grandchildren in one by one to say their "Wünsch" in order of age. The adults would sing from the *Gesangbuch*. Then the men would sit down for Vaspa, while the women and grandparents sat in the parlour visiting and singing. One of the women would be the Vorsänger. The older granddaughters proudly and graciously served the Vaspa. Then the women would sit and eat at the places where their husbands had been sitting. The men, in turn, retired back to the parlour. Later the grandchildren ate on the third table and maybe even fourth. It was always very full, crowded and noisy. One time Jacob's daughter Tina had taken her baby carriage along and the older daughter Clara was so upset that she would take up so much room, that their mother had to take it back to their small home on the Plettenville yard.

Heinrich E. and Elisabeth Plett were conservative and quite strict in raising their children. When son Jacob had a gramophone he did not play it when the parents were home. Sons George and Jacob had a crystal-set radio with ear phones which they kept hidden under the bed. Both of them also played violin quite well which they also did somewhat in secret while at home. Other Kleine Gemeinde families such as Abraham L. Pletts were not quite as strict in this regard, allowing their children to play musical instruments at home.



Heinrich E. Plett, passport photo, 1948. Side profile. Photo - courtesy of Ben P. Plett Stratton, Ont., 1981.

## **Elisabeth - Memories.**

Elisabeth Reimer Plett is remembered as a strong, hardworking woman. She was the Grossmama of a large and important local family as well as the matriarch of a large extended clan stretching from Manitoba, to Kansas, Nebraska and Russia. The success of Plettenhof was equally due to her strength of character and her unpretentious sense of humour. Like most conservative Mennonite women, she was strongly committed to the teachings of her faith and the integrity of her community. The story is told that when her younger sons Jacob and George, who converted themselves to Pentecostal religious culture, had tried to persuade her as well, she had replied that she would be happy already if she could stand by the back door in heaven and take out the night pail. She responded to the lies which Evangelical Fundamentalists typically tell conservative Mennonites in order to lead them away from the Holy Gospel, that they were not saved, by referring to ancient Babylon and that even there in the midst of evil and sin, the Lord had found 6,000 who were righteous.<sup>1002</sup>

Perhaps out of necessity, Elisabeth was known as something of a naturalist healer, being familiar with various herbs and roots and their natural healing qualities. Since there were only two daughters in the household, the sons were conscripted to help with household work, serving their turn as maid. In this way, they learned how to cook and to appreciate so-called woman's work. Even years later, my father, Jacob R. Plett, for example, could cook a simple but delicious meal, including some of the best raw-fried potatoes ever made, without difficulty. As the boys got older and busy with their businesses, Elisabeth often had a maid.

The following sketch was written by great-granddaughter Lynette Plett in 1999. "Elisabeth Reimer Plett wore her hair braided around the top of her head with a kerchief covering it. The kerchief was crimped in at the forehead. She is described by her grandchildren as serious but humorous at times. She was often teased by sons Gerhard and Jakob about getting old and senile."

"The grandchildren don't remember their grandmother as being strong; she was always frail. Elisabeth visited Dr. Koepke, a herbalist. She was very concerned with eating properly. For example, she always cooked potatoes in their skins and insisted that it all had to be eaten. Elisabeth was also known for drinking camomile tea. Elisabeth often required help with the household chores. In later years her granddaughters served as maids helping with the household work. One granddaughter recalled helping her prepare cucumbers for pickling. As she was putting the pickles in the jar, Elisabeth decided that the jars were not full enough. She took all the cucumbers out of the jar, but wasn't able to put them all back in. She was grateful for the help she received from her granddaughters. Another granddaughter did some spring cleaning for her. She and some of her cousins cleaned upstairs and sunned all the bedding. At lunch time, Elisabeth had prepared boiled potatoes and gravy for the hard working young women.

The kitchen in Elisabeth's kitchen was cool, peaceful and tidy. It was kept cool with shutters that kept out the heat. Elisabeth and Heinrich often sat together in the kitchen and sang. The kitchen was unique in that it had faucets with running water in the early 1940s. The running water was brought into the

house from an artesian well by son Heinrich, who often had to help inside.

The large garden is thought to have been Elisabeth's project. She grew grapes, black cherries, plums, cranberries, currants, watermelon, and had a large vegetable garden. There were rows of cherries and apple trees, Big maple trees bordered the garden. There was an outdoor pantry with louvred screened-in windows to keep out direct sunlight and insects.<sup>1003</sup>

Growing up on the Plettenhof, I personally remember this garden, which included several acres to the east of the H.E. Plett home. There was a little creek at the east end of the garden where the small rise of the Plettenyard joined the prairie level. In about 1953, the small son of the Henry Kroeker family renting the former Abr. F. Plett house situated just at the east end of the garden drowned in this little creek. Even years later the land which had once been Elisabeth's garden yielded exceptionally fine crops.

Elisabeth was sick for several months. On November 7, 1947, she died of pneumonia. On the day of her death, all the grandchildren were gathered to see their grandmother one last time. They all filed by her bed and shook her hand. She died peacefully without pain in her own bed. Elisabeth had not wanted to be taken to a funeral home. This wish was granted. Son Ben R. Plett recalled that she had been sick for a week or so. They had stayed there with her one night. Elisabeth was buried in the second Blumenort cemetery on SE27-7-6E.



*Elisabeth F. Reimer (1870-1947), Mrs. Heinrich E. Plett, and granddaughters Elsie (Ben R.), Clara and Katherine (Jac R.), 1940. In front of the first Jac R. Plett house at south end of Plettenville, east side. Photo - Gertrude Friesen Plett/Pres., No. 10, Part One, page 22.*

**Mexico, 1948.** Emigration fever again struck the Kleine Gemeinde in the 1940s. There were significant anxieties left over from World War One and Two regarding the military service issue and anti-Mennonite agitation. At the same time, Evangelical Fundamentalists led by clergyman Ben D. Reimer, Steinbach, were working zealously to lead the Kleine Gemeinde away from their Gospel-centric faith. A new home was sought where they would again be free to serve Christ in accordance with their beliefs and where their youths would not be subject to manipulative proselytization by misguided sectarians. In 1948 Heinrich E. Plett and older children with their large families moved to Mexico. Only the youngest four - David, Jacob, George and Ben - remained in Manitoba.

Royden Loewen has described these developments: "In 1948 Plett and Company expanded and purchased the box factory, feed mill and smithy at Plettville for \$50,000. In the succeeding five years, Jacob and George Plett operated a prospering business. Financial records for the company show that Pletts' volume of business rose from \$119,000 in 1948 to \$179,000 in 1953. Half of that turnover came from the box factory and the remainder from feed, coal, lumber, hardware and grocery sales. An encouragement for Pletts was that, despite the closing of the cheese factories and the subsequent end to the cheese-box trade, they were able to land other contracts. Drink cartons, wooden barrels and even fish boxes were built."

"In 1953 Pletts won their biggest contract ever. The job was to build 5,000,000 fish-crate bottoms for the fisheries in the Maritimes. Business was looking up and the Carillon News reported the huge contract in an article entitled 'Plettville Industry A-bustle with Huge Eastern Contract.' The article reported that the contract had resulted in 'a spurt of activity that (Plettville) has never seen before.' Forty men were reported working two shifts a day to fill a total of 56 carloads of crate bottoms. Jacob and George Plett were optimistic that the time to produce a carload of bottoms would be cut from 1,300 to 600 man-hours."

"The 1953 contract, however, was to be Plett's last. There was fierce competition among box factories at a time when cardboard boxes were becoming popular. In 1954 Plett and Company faced substantial financial losses and closed the factory. For two years it continued the lumber aspect of the business with a timber lease in Shoal Lake. Pletts, however, were unable to make up their losses and thus, in 1956, finally dissolved the company. While George moved to St. Catherines, Ontario, Jacob took over the home place and went into hog farming."<sup>1004</sup> The hog farm was continued by son Norman F. Plett, who also serves as a councillor for the R. M. of Hanover.<sup>1005</sup>

Bennie D. Reimer, Steinbach, recalled that his father John B. Reimer had what was then called a "Jew" wagon, being the style of wagon normally used by the Jewish pedlars. He had the wagon fixed by H. E. Plett on Plattehof. Plett had been a fine blacksmith who enjoyed the work. Bennie D. Reimer recalled how impossible it had seemed to the community at large, that the Pletts were moving away and that the magnificent Plattehof would dissolve.<sup>1006</sup>

Heinrich E. Plett settled in the village of Steinberg, Jagueyes, Mexico, in his own small house on the yard of his children, Henry R. Pletts. In order to assist the new settlement, Heinrich had also purchased 250 acres of land. On December 3, 1950, he married again to Mrs. Heinrich K. Friesen.

On August 18, 1950, just two months before the marriage Heinrich wrote the following letter to his children Jakob Pletts in Blumenort, Manitoba:

“Much beloved children...;

“Today I will again try to enter into your home with a few lines, and see whether you together with your children are well. For health is a noble gift of God - physically as well as spiritually.”

“What is Norman doing when he is not in school? Is he then already working for you in the factory? Or the little boy, is he still so cute? Or the girls, or what kind of work do you have that you do not have time to write me a little? You owe me, you have not yet answered my last letter. I cannot wait so long. For love inspires me to send a token of my love.”

“How have things worked out with the old well on the yard. Has it again been very muddy? Or the new one, did it not freeze to pieces? Or in the garden, have the pair of fruit trees already borne fruit? Or have they dried up? Or the basement, is it being used? Or is it standing full of water? Is the garden being kept clean? Or is it already grown under? That would really be too bad! How does the grain look on the farm? Is it all under plow? As I have heard, the pasture has all been plowed under. Is the grain already ripe? Have the grasshoppers also caused you damage in the grain or garden?”

“I was told yesterday, that J. R. Friesen had supposedly died? Is it true? It would be my wish that the Lord would have received him in grace. As I knew him, he always took it too casually. He may well have been different in the last years. I hope so. He was a close relative to mother. He was a double cousin to her.”

“Now, how is the weather there? Nice? Here we have nice weather and until now it has been wet enough to grow. Up until this point it does not look bad.”

“Now Jakob, I must again come with a request, to send some money. I need it again, and so I bid you that you make it possible to promptly send it to me, according to the agreements. I am writing Gerhard, that he shall let me know how much Canadian money he has already given to pay for the American cheque. But I have received no answer. Please send it to me so that I can record everything correctly.”

“The children and grandchildren are all well? Tomorrow after dinner, I am invited to Klaas Pletts for Verlobung [an engagement party].”

“With a heartfelt greeting to you and children, from your lonesome Father and Grandfather. H. E. Plett.”

Heinrich E. Plett died in his home on July 11, 1953. Grandson Jac K. Plett recalled that during his last years, Heinrich E. Plett had become very large. He suffered from “Wassersucht.” He may have weighed as much as 300 pounds. During his illness, the sons and daughters living in Mexico took turns sitting with him 24 hours a day.

On July 30th, 1953, daughter-in-law Helena Plett, Mrs. Peter R. Plett, wrote to Jacob R. Pletts, Manitoba, describing father's last days:

"...Yes, he has often thought of you, and wished that you there in everything might also be able to become saved."

"He was also willing to depart. For a long time already he had a sore leg and they have also done much doctoring and were also to see the doctor. But nothing really wanted to truly help. Then Peter finally drove to the villages [near Cuauhtemoc] and brought lipstock for him. A doctor woman had prescribed it for him. And then they started to get smaller."

"And then his legs started to get better and he felt quite good and became more optimistic, and chatted a lot more when he came over. Then Wednesday morning he stood up, ate breakfast as usual and then he went to the washroom. When he returned, he did comment that it had been very difficult. Almost right away, he started to shiver as he felt very cold."

"Then they told Heinrich Plett and laid him onto the bed, and then he started to cough. He coughed and choked."

"He did not have much pain, but Thursday as well as Friday, for night, Peter stayed with him. Then he had asked a few times whether one could also die from tiredness or weakness? Friday evening we were again there. By now the coughing had decreased for in the morning Peter had picked up some medicine for the coughing and stomach from the clinic."

"But by now it was almost impossible to understand when he talked. The Cornelius Kornsensens stayed for the night. And Lena had sat there by him, and around 3 o'clock he was again supposed to get some medicine. And when the clock turned three, she got up, and looked at him, and thought, now he has finally fallen asleep. Both his eyes were closed and the coughing had already become much less. Then she also laid down. After several minutes, Cor. stood up and went to look, and by then the spirit had departed."

"Oh, how glorious for the one that has battled rightly! And for those of us remaining here, that we can now have the firm hope that he is now blessed and with the Lord, where we will once again see him!"

"Indeed, the beloved father has prayed much for us children, but that has also been heard. But the beloved mother misses him very much and wishes that she too could soon depart from here; she is satiated with life. She stays here in her little house and we seven sibling wives take our turns there with her during the day, and during the night, Mag. Penner, is always there, and also she had a maid there from Bergens, a grandchild...." And so all of you, receive a hearty greeting from "Helena and Peter R. Pletts".

After Heinrich's death the Blumenhof farm was sold with son Ben buying the east 80 acres and neighbour David P. Loewen the remainder. Almost all the children had accounts with their father and these were eliminated by credits against inheritance. The land in Mexico was divided among the 12 children at a meeting in Mexico on June 3, 1954, each getting 20 acres, more or less.<sup>1007</sup> The next day, the executors issued an accounting, crediting the value of this land (\$5,131.20 U.S.) to each child's account. Stepmother died in 1957.



**Reflections:** Heinrich was an active man and interested in what everybody was doing. He loved animals. One of his favourite pastimes was walking and for years he could be seen with his dog Fido every morning and evening getting the cows from the Blumenhof farm for milking. The Gerhard D. Doerksen sons Cornelius and Bernard remembered seeing H. E. Plett walk by the south side of the farm (along C. S. Plett Road). Abe P. Reimer, whose parents bought the Doerksen farm in 1915, remembered watching H. E. Plett come by driving the cattle, when he and his brothers were working in the fields.

Son Ben R. Plett recalled that Fido was a big smart dog, part collie. Fido's job everyday was to go with his master to the Blumenhof farm to get the cows for milking. Fido always knew when it was time, and would already be sitting in the buggy seat in the carriage barn, patiently waiting for his master to come. Sometimes it took H. E. Plett too long getting the horse out of the barn and Fido would go to look for him to see what was taking him so long. Fido was a real family dog and friend to the entire extended Plett family. When he died some of the grandchildren even held a funeral for him.

Son Ben R. Plett recalled that his father was a devout Mennonite who studied frequently in the Bible and was well familiar with the canon of Mennonite inspirational literature. He read the Bible and *Martyr's Mirror* every evening in winter, except when they had visitors. He also read the Peter Peters books, the *Wandelne Seele*, M. Simons, and the *Gesangbuch*. As was customary among conservative Mennonites, the children were given copies of these books for important occasions, such as baptism and marriage. In 1939 my father, Jakob R. Plett, received a copy of the newly republished *Geschichte der Martyrer*, originally published by his great-grandfather Heinrich Enns in Russia in 1863.

When visitors came they would usually sing a few songs and have a silent prayer. He admonished his children frequently in spiritual matters, always stressing that they should be thankful for whatever they had, even if discouraged because of poor crops or illness. They were exhorted to honour the government and to prove themselves worthy of the rights and privileges they enjoyed in the land. They were modelled to live as the quiet in the land ("Stille im Lande"). Heinrich E. Plett lived out the teachings of Jesus: 'yes,' was 'yes' and 'no' was 'no,' and to do ill unto no man. He helped others by tithing. Even though quite wealthy by contemporary standards, he remained humble and felt not in anyway superior to his church brethren, even though they might be living from the assistance of the Gemeinde. The concept of submitting one to another was encouraged within the family. When he and his boys were working in the field and there possibly was not enough food, he would take a little less so the others could have their fill. He was not known to get up to complain at brotherhood meetings.

A silent prayer was always the order before meals. When Heinrich E. Plett came into the house during the day, he would sit down and read several chapters from the Bible. Sometimes he would stand in front of the commode reading. Then he would go back out and continue splitting wood. The wood was sawed with the windmill, but then H. E. Plett had the job of splitting it. If it was very cold he would come in to warm up, and would fire up the stove even though Elisabeth was already warm enough.

Elisabeth often sat and listened to Heinrich reading or she would listen while working in the kitchen. She would often sing from the *Gesangbuch* while cooking or stirring something. Of her Friesen cousins, Klaas R. Friesens often came visiting. Other frequent visitors included machinery dealer, Peter T. Barkmans. On Sunday, the daughters would put a pail of syrup and a pan of buns on the table as they readied the Vaspa.

Late in the evening before retiring for night, Heinrich E. Plett would often sit by the stove leaning into a chair, with his back to the stove. He was visiting and keeping the stove going while waiting for his sons to come home. One of his favourite songs, especially in the older years, was "Jesus ist Mein," No. 59 in the Holdeman songbook, *Glaubens=Leider*.<sup>1008</sup>

Although Elisabeth and Heinrich did not leave a large literary legacy, their letters provide important insight into their lives and personalities. In 1931 Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett compiled "A Useful Instruction for the Beginning of a Christian Marriage,"<sup>1009</sup> as an encouragement for their children as they got married. Although they did not cite their source, my sense is that much of this rather inspirational homily would originate in the devotional literature of the Ältester Ohm Pieter Pieters (1574-1651), Waterland, Netherlands, whose writings were loved and frequently published among the Kleine Gemeinde. This useful and highly worthy admonition provides insight into the spirituality of Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett, and also illustrates the deep Christo-centric faith of the conservative Mennonites. It is clear that Elisabeth and Heinrich were reflective and deeply spiritual individuals who dearly loved their family and relations, and above all, their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By 2002 Heinrich E. and Elisabeth Plett had well over 2,000 descendants mostly resident in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Oklahoma, Mexico and Belize.



*Heinrich E. Plett, passport photo, 1948. Plett Picture Book, page 57.*

6 Daughter **Sarah E. Plett** married Gerhard D. Doerksen, son of Gerhard Doerksen (1825-82) of Fischau and later Rosenfeld, Manitoba.<sup>1010</sup> Being a minister's daughter, and with only two brothers, Sarah and sister Helena often had to help with the farm work.<sup>1011</sup>

Together with sister, Helena R. Plett, and husband, Bernhard D. Doerksen, they lived on SW26-7-6E in Blumenhof, Manitoba. Bernhard's yard was south of Gerhard's. Their grandfather Cornelius Plett Sr. had acquired this land from the Hudson Bay Co. in 1881 and then sold it in 1887 to Helena Dyck Doerksen Warkentin, the widow of Johann Warkentin Sr., and the mother of Gerhard and Bernhard Doerksen. On Dec. 21, 1891, Helena conveyed by deed the east half of the quarter to Gerhard D. Doerksen for \$850.00 and the west half to Bernhard D. Doerksen for \$350.00. The difference in price is explained by the fact that the buildings were located on the ridge in the northeast corner of the quarter. In addition, part of the west half was low and subject to flooding in the early years.

On December 1, 1891, Gerhard and Bernhard D. Doerksen bought a one-eleventh share of the Blumenhof village threshing company for \$166.28, paying \$32.00 down and the balance over three years. In his account book for 1895, Gerhard D. Doerksen recorded the threshing yields: "J. Janzen 2894 bu.- 95 acres, P. Plett 1002 bu.-38 acres, A. Plett 2284 bu.- 70 acres, P. Unger 1964 bu.- 60 acres, D. Plett 2000 bu.- 71 acres, Joh. Plett 2654 bu.- 87 acres, Joh. Reimer 1064 bu.- 42 acres, Corn. Plett 1072 bu.- 33 acres, Jakob Plett 1234 bu.- 50 acres, Joh. Unger 634 bu.- 25 acres and Doerksen brothers 1762 bu.- 60 acres."<sup>1012</sup> In the same journal Gerhard also recorded ".....received my wife's capital (inheritance) from her mother...\$53.50" in three payments between January 25 and May 23, 1891.

Historian Royden Loewen has written: "By the turn of the century, Gerhard D. Doerksen was also repairing and making shoes. He had a complete supply of shoe repair equipment, much of which is still used by his son, Henry P. Doerksen [1981] of Blumenort. Doerksen used special shoe nails ordered from a Chicago firm, a shoe fitter made by the Malleable Company, a Montgomery-Ward forged shoe hammer and a wooden block on which he fitted and nailed the shoes. For his work he would charge from 5 to 70 cents, depending on the amount of work. In 1900 he mended a pair of shoes and put a new sole under one of them for 30 cents. His most frequent customers were the Gottlieb Jahnke girls who, the Kleine Gemeinde neighbours suspected, must be doing a lot of dancing."<sup>1013</sup>

In 1898 the two brothers also bought 240 acres of land on Section 10-8-6E, northwest of Blumenort. They each sold their 120 acres upon moving away from Blumenhof. The Gerhard Doerksens boys were close in age to their cousins, the H. E. Plett sons. In 1981 son Cornelius P. Doerksen remembered that he and his older brothers spent a lot of time in the old Blumenort village visiting them. He himself was a close friend with cousin Peter R. Plett. Grandfather C. L. Plett lived on their farm in Blumenhof for a few years before moving to Friedensfeld to live with daughter Helena and son-in-law Bernhard Doerksens. Some extracts of Gerhard D. Doerksens journal for 1912 were published in 1983: "On Nov. 21 Martin Doerksen was at our place for the night."<sup>1014</sup> This would have been Martin T. Doerksen from Meade, Kansas, one of the key promoters of the Kleine

Gemeinde settlement there.

Sarah and Gerhard D. Doerksen lived on Blumenhof until 1915 when they moved to Satanta, Kansas, with her father. They had purchased a section of land of which C. L. Plett took one quarter and Gerhard Doerksen the remaining 480 acres. For the first winter they lived in the existing ranch house on the property until their new two-storey home was completed. The old ranch house was really only a basement with the top part rising above the ground by a few feet. Sarah's father and step-mother lived temporarily in an old ranch granary. The farming there was mostly with wheat and maize although both Bernhard D. Doerksen and Gerhard D. Doerksens also had a dairy, selling cream.

Gerhard D. Doerksen was elected Vorsänger of the Satanta church on February 14, 1927. He also served as a school teacher and as a member of the board of the private church school until public school attendance became compulsory in 1930. Gerhard D. Doerksen enjoyed saw sharpening. He also continued to pursue his work as a cobbler which was a sideline business for him. He was a qualified carpenter and built furniture.

The good times in Kansas came to an end with the dustbowl conditions in Western Kansas during the "dirty thirties." There were seven years of crop failures during which wheat, their main cash crop, was a complete loss. For two years they were plagued by feed shortages. After years of struggle many eventually had no choice but to abandon their investment and years of hard work. In December, 1939, the Gerhard Doerksen family also decided to give up and return to Blumenort, Manitoba. Son Bernard P. Doerksen later recalled the experience: "[We] packed seven people into a 1929 Plymouth, hitched it to a loaded four-wheel trailer weighing 5,000 pounds and headed back to Manitoba. Although the trip was long and the Plymouth's rear axle broke, the Doerksens finally made it back."<sup>1015</sup> When the parents returned to Blumenort they purchased 126 acres of stony land on NE28-7-6E from Klaas P. Reimer. This was part of the "old" Blumenort village pasture. Here they established a yard on the east side of the quarter living in semi-retirement. Several of their sons, including Ben and Jacob found employment at the local cheese factory. Sarah Plett Doerksen died on March 9, 1948 of a heart attack. Gerhard D. Doerksen died on January 22, 1949. A genealogy of their descendants was published in 1984.<sup>1016</sup>

Sarah and particularly, Gerhard D. Doerksen, wrote extensively, corresponding with cousins in Canada, United States and Russia, as well as former neighbours in Manitoba. He compiled and maintained genealogical records such as a "Geburts=Register". He collected writings of the faith including an 84 stanza poem, composed by Sarah's grandfather, Ältester Heinrich Enns (1807-81) which he transcribed March 14, 1876. Another booklet in Gerhard's collection contained the plea by Ältester Peter Toews to the Secessionists in the Crimea in 1869 not to forsake the Gospel-centric faith of the fathers, transcribed January 4, 1881. A more substantial journal of some 50 pages titled "Dies ist eine Lebens Beschreibung von einem Ältester namens Cornelius Regehr, und gehört Gerhard Doerksen in Blumenhof" journal included the biography of Ältester Regehr, 26 pages, with a 46 stanza poem about Regehr's journey to Russia, a 1828 poem by

Ältester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, to brother Peter in Prussia, another one from 1833 by theologian Heinrich Balzer, and an 1833 "New Year's Wish". Among the family treasures was Volume One of Menno Simons' "Fundamentabuch," published by the Kleine Gemeinde in 1833, and received by Sarah's mother, nee Sarah Enns, Fischau in 1866, probably as a baptismal gift from her parents. An intriguing document is a form of work book or account book in which Gerhard recorded the weather, and a variety of transactions, expenditures and accounts with various neighbours. Another journal contains a lengthy poetic lament expressing the sorrow the 1870s emigrants felt as they left their beloved Russia.

Gerhard Doerksen enjoyed writing, serving as the correspondent of the *Steinbach Post* for the Satanta district. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1875 as an 11-year-old boy and later recalled the experience: "...During the first night we spent in Liverpool, England, little Abraham died. He had become sick on May 6, in Odessa, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> he died. He was sick for 14 days, but for the last four days he was so sick that he couldn't speak when we asked him. We could not bury him while we were there. He had reached the age of two years, two months and 26 days. Thursday, May 22, after breakfast we left the place and had to walk four kilometers to the port and boarded the big ship, Victoria, at 10 a.m. and sailed for two hours. Then we stopped and waited till the doctor came. In the afternoon all we emigrants had to walk past the doctor. At 6 p.m. we sailed on into the ocean. Friday we sailed a total of 190 miles, Saturday 183, Sunday 265, Monday 252, Tuesday 245, Wednesday 245, Thursday 250, Friday 130, Saturday 56, Sunday 50, Monday 26, Tuesday 25, Wednesday 265, Thursday 281, and Friday, June 6, I don't know how many miles we sailed."

"On that day, at 12 midnight, we arrived at Quebec. Sunday, June 7 at 9 a.m., we disembarked from the ship. We had been at sea for 16 days. We had experienced strong winds only for one day and night, but they had been so strong that the waves crashed onto the decks and water ran into our rooms. The wind did not slow us down much, but because of the fog we had to stay on the ocean for a long time. On Thursday, May 22, we had boarded the ship and by Thursday, May 29, it became very foggy and remained so till Tuesday June 3. During these five and a half days, the ship stopped more than it sailed. The captain was afraid that he would hit ice, as he could not see. On the ocean there were such high chunks of ice which the wind had torn from huge ice bergs that it was dangerous. We had come so close to one of these at one time, they had to back up the ship. Monday, June 2, on the second day of Pentecost, a small ship approached us, looking for people. On June 3, by German time (12 days later than Russian time), a ship had sunk after hitting ice, in a period of two hours. Four life boats full of people had been rescued but one life boat had not come to land. Where it now was, no one knew."

"Our ship was 130 paces long and 25 wide. In total there were 750 souls aboard; 650 passengers and 100 labourers who worked for the ship. We had also been sea sick. Anna and Father were sick for three days. Helena and I were sick only for a short time. Bernhard was not affected at all. Mother wasn't completely well either, but she was up and around. Tuesday, June 3, when the fog lifted, we

quickly moved on. At noon we could already see land, but it was only an island. There were many light houses on the island. We were very glad to see land, but we had to sail on before we could disembark.

“Saturday, June 7, at 9 a.m., we left the ship in Quebec, and at 4 p.m. we boarded a train. Sunday, June 8, at 4 p.m., we arrived at Montreal. There we received a breakfast consisting of potatoes, beef, coffee, and white bread with butter. It was a wonderful breakfast, and we enjoyed it, although it was really too early to eat.”<sup>1017</sup>

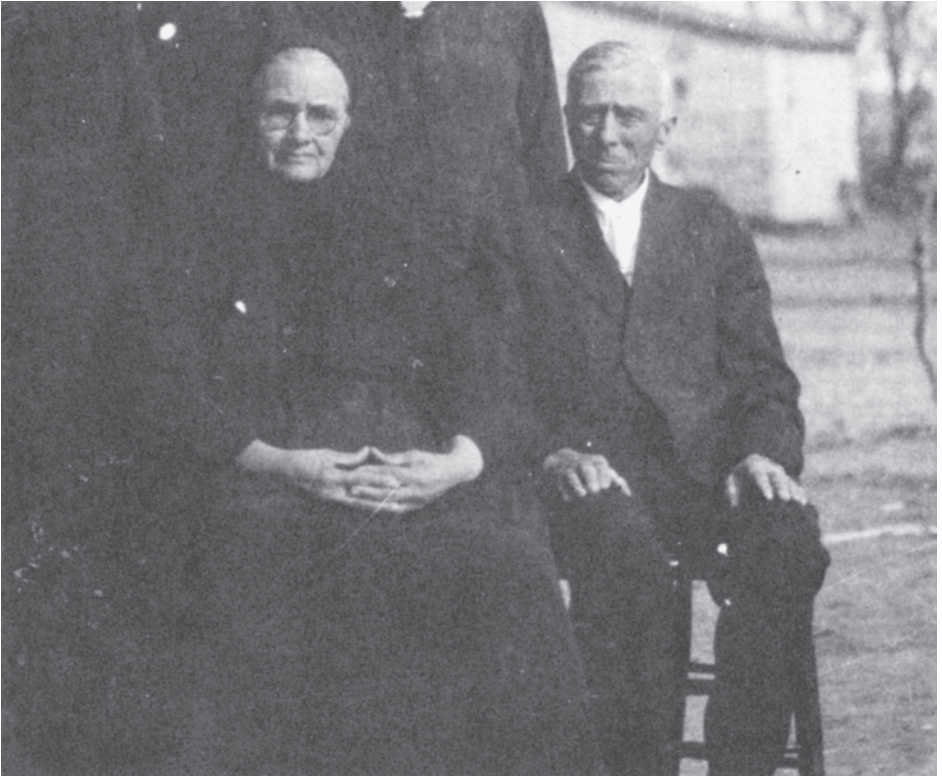
7 Daughter **Helena Doerksen** married Jakob N. Koop. After his death she married for the second time to Johann E. Friesen, Blumenort. Her short memoirs were published in 2000.<sup>1018</sup> Son **Bernard P. Doerksen** took over the parental farm on NE28-7-6E. The land happened to be the site of a rich gravel deposit and became well-known as the “Doerksen gravel pit”, and a favourite swimming hole for boys in the Blumenort area for many years. Shortly before Bernard’s death, he sold the property to his grandson Garth Doerksen. Bernard provided considerable information for this history. Son **Henry P. Doerksen** “...who moved to Kansas with his parents, the Gerhard Doerksens, in 1915 and later, in 1940, settled in Blumenort, vividly remembers the troubled times of World War I. When he was called up to register for the American army, he asked the local sheriff if he, as a Canadian citizen, would be allowed to return to Manitoba. The sharp reply was, ‘Sure, but first you will serve four years in the army.’ Shortly after this encounter Henry, with his brothers Gerhard and Cornelius and his cousin Ben, fled to Canada. When they reached the border Henry and Ben were barred from crossing.”

“That night, however, with the assistance of a stranger, they made plans to cross the border secretly. After putting on work clothing, they buried their suitcases in a nearby bush and made their way to the border bridge. Here, pretending they were railway workers, they walked across the bridge into Canada and made their way to their relatives in Blumenort. Within a few days Gerhard and Cornelius returned to the border town to retrieve Ben and Henry’s suitcases.”

“Peter L. Plett’s boys, Jacob and Abram, also fled to Canada. They came later and knew what they were facing at the border. In order to thwart the border officials, they hid in freight cars that were headed to Canada and crossed the border without incident.”

“When the war ended, the Plett and Doerksen boys returned to Kansas where their life returned to normal. Some time after their return, however, the local sheriff came to the Kleine Gemeinde settlement and arrested Henry Doerksen and Jacob Plett. The boys were sent to an army camp several hundred miles to the east, where they were given one-month sentences.”<sup>1019</sup>

Henry P. Doerksen was a bachelor. He took over his parents’ home in Blumenort after their death preserving the contents in their original condition. He became well known as a collector of stamps, coins and all manner of artifacts, including his first and only car, a 1926 Model A coupe.



*Sarab E. Plett and husband Gerbard D. Doerksen, 1932. Photo - Loewen, Blumenort, page 269. The same photograph with all the children was published in the Plett Picture Book, page 55.*



*Jakob N. Koop home in Satanta, Kansas, in about 1916. The house is built of adobe. Vegetable cellar to the left. Helena Doerksen Koop in front of the house with her three children. Jakob N. Koop with team of horses in the rear. Photo - Pres., No. 16, page 93.*



*Above: Henry P. Doerksen proudly poses in his parent's retirement home in Blumenort, NE28-7-6E. As a boy, attending elementary school across the road on NW27-7-6E, I remember the exciting times when he invited me into his house to show me his stamp and coin collections. Photo 1981.*



*Left: Helena P. Doerksen and husband Jakob N. Koop. Photo - Pres., No. 16, page 92.*



6 Daughter **Helena R. Plett** married Bernhard Doerksen, brother to Gerhard. The Bernhard Doerksen family lived in Blumenhof, Manitoba, on SW 26-7-6E on the same yard as brother Gerhard. In 1901 Bernhard went into partnership with his wife's uncle David L. Plett of Blumenhof with a threshing outfit and a Case 15/30 steam engine. This partnership was dissolved in 1904 when Bernhard and his family moved to Friedensfeld.<sup>1020</sup> Historian Royden Loewen has written that Bernhard D. Doerksen "ran a blacksmith shop in Blumenhof until 1904 when the Doerksens moved to Ekron."<sup>1021</sup> Their house was sold to Abraham Penners Sr. and moved to the "old" Blumenort village around 1906.

In Friedensfeld the Doerksen family settled on the NE 24-6-6E one mile southeast of Steinbach, usually referred to as the Friedensfeld district. A few years later, her parents C. L. Pletts moved as well, living in their own little house on the yard. Bernhard D. Doerksen served as engineer for his Uncle Jakob L. Plett who had purchased a new 15/30 horsepower Case steam engine in 1904.

Bernhard D. Doerksen had a windmill on the farm in Friedensfeld which they used for crushing feed. One day as he had climbed out of the window to grease the windmill his pants got caught in the mechanism and he was pulled into the gears. However, he was able to save himself by throwing his gloves into the gears which jammed them. The dog had been with him and raised such a commotion due to this circumstance that Mrs. Doerksen came to investigate and retrieved father. Due to this accident father's arm was partially crippled and always stiff and had to be favoured. In the last several years in Friedensfeld father had his own steam engine and threshing machine. This outfit was sold to Trylinski Brothers in 1916, who threshed with the machine for many years.

In 1916 the Bernhard Doerksens moved to Satanta, Kansas. They also had difficult times during the "dustbowl" depression years. They struggled through to prosper during the good farming years after 1940 owning about 1000 acres of land. With the discovery of natural gas on their land they were said to have become quite wealthy.<sup>1022</sup>

As already noted, Bernard D. Doerksen had been a blacksmith from his earliest married years. In Kansas he became well known for his blacksmithing abilities. After he had given over active farming to his sons, he continued his blacksmith business. He was appreciated among the non-Mennonites in the area for the quality of his work and warm receptive personality.

Bernhard D. Doerksen died on September 4, 1956. Nephew Bernard R. Plett, Blumenhof, Manitoba, visited uncle Doerksen while he was in the hospital. He recalled being received as an honoured and welcomed guest with a special chair being set out for him. Helena died on November 11, 1967.<sup>1023</sup> They are remembered as a gracious and honourable couple.

A letter written to uncle and aunt Elisabeth and Heinrich E. Plett by niece Anna H. Doerksen provides information regarding the lives of her parents, Helena and Bernhard D. Doerksens.

"Satanta, Kansas, Sept. 4, 1938

"Dear Uncle and Aunt Heinrich E. Pletts,

"Wishing you first of all the best of health, which remains to be desired at

our place. As of late I have had a burden to write to visit you with a letter. It is a year ago when I was there visiting in different places, and today exactly, it is a year ago when I had dinner at your place. That afternoon, I bade farewell to go back to Morris. I recall much about that. It seems much longer than a year ago. As we sit at home today without visitors, I thought to write you."

"In the forenoon Mama, Maria and I were in the Sunday School and worship service. The church was pretty empty. On the men's side there were only seven and on the women's side a little more. It feels very lonesome. Yet we can be thankful that we still have God's Word and may hear it. Oh that we would treasure it more and follow it more. But how incompetent I feel in following the good. I well have the desire, but where is the doing? I am often much concerned when the prospects are so sad in the world. May the heavenly Father be gracious to all of us and guide our hearts and lead us so that we all could finally receive salvation out of grace. This is my plea."

"Now, you beloved uncle and aunt, what are you doing? I have not heard from you for a long time. Please, let us hear from you, which I \_\_\_\_\_ [line missing - Do you still have] Jakob F. Wiebes as renters? And the Johan N. Koops' Tin still as cook? Oh, I could well ask many questions, but? And you aunt, are you well enough that you can still work? Yes, and, you, uncle, you complained about your legs that they did not want to carry you too well. Are they already better? And do you make the rounds through the farm to see that everything keeps working? And in the morning are you still getting the cows? Do you still milk several cows?"

"We are milking 12 in the morning and 10 in the evening. We receive about four pails of milk each time. It is not very much. The cows are getting old. This summer we broke in two young ones and have four more which we will milk next summer. One of these died last month through poisoning. Many complain about this when they send the cows into the meadow or when they get into the fodder. We still have ours in the meadow fence."

"We have five hogs, two for selling. But they are as of yet not heavy enough. We are feeding them crushed barley. With Gerhard and Hein together we have seeded 100 acres of barley; 70 acres yielded 140 bushels together with weeds. The 30 acres yielded also about 140 bushels. This I do not know definitely. Barley is 30 cents a bushel. Wheat we received this summer also a little, about three bushels per acre. We have not yet threshed everything, four small stacks still are not threshed. The brothers are very busy preparing land for seeding wheat, also they have worked hard with the corn and maize. There the weeds got the upper hand and the fodder was no better. Then one often does not know what one should do. Otherwise there are a few fields which are nearly free from weeds. The corn thus far looks pretty good, only a little late. One is always concerned whether the frost will come too soon. Sugar cane also still has much to grow if it is to grow tall enough for binding. There is not a particular need for moisture, as it seems to have been in need of rain? We had received 2 1/2 inches of rain the day before, and so to say, it was a slow rain which could sink in well. It is now again getting cloudy in the south."

“Oh, that we could rightfully be thankful for the fine rain. August 17 we received three inches of rain, which came in a short time. The water ran together very much in the lower places, but the grass is getting very green. In the feeding fence we have much water. Also there are many ducks.”

“Well, in the meantime we have eaten supper and did the chores. Heinrich, Gerhard and Lies have gone away. The parent have retired. Both are not feeling too well. Father had great pain in the right side this past month. He laid down for a few days. Then he again worked hard in the blacksmith shop. He has been very busy this summer in the smithy. Last week he again received the pain. Then Mama said that now they wanted to go to Schlichtings’ and see what the doctor could say about what is wrong. Thus the parents went and Maria on Friday. He claimed it is a double rupture. Father did not sleep much the following night, he had great pain. It is changeable. A few weeks ago, Maria got a few enamel (grunit) into her finger and had Uncle Schlichting cut it out. Her finger is still quite uncomfortable.”

“Br. Heinrich works again after his accident which he had in April, although only with his arm. The bone which was broken and crushed has now healed above the elbow to the shoulder. He was brought at once into the hospital. There they cemented in the left arm and the upper part of the body and the end from the elbow to the hand so tight that the nerves have gotten too much and deadened. Thus he cannot use the hand much. It does not have power and least of all the thumb and the pointing finger. Yet Uncle Schlichting thinks the strength will return, although it will take time. He is to have patience. Hein also takes treatments from Uncle Schlichting. The gracious hand of God has spared him, as how easily it could have been his death. May he take this much to heart, this is my supplication.”

“The garden has done quite well in view of the dry spell. The potatoes are yielding only as much as the seed. The cucumbers yielded some. We preserved about 30 gallons and sold some. We received enough for them. Some beans we have threshed. The stems now want to bear a lot. The cotton looks as if it could yield a good deal. Otherwise we have seeded fodder in part of the garden. The garden is too big for vegetables. The trees seem to dry up. The fodder looks very good. It is raining very nicely. I will close for this time. Be cordially greeted. From your loving niece, “Anna H. Doerksen”

7 Son **Johann H. Doerksen** died from injuries received in an automobile accident in 1943. Daughter **Anna H. Doerksen** never married. She died in 1985. Daughter **Maria H. Doerksen** married Herb Heinrichs. They lived in Ulysses, Kansas. She died in 1999. Sisters Anna and Marie were interested in history and preserved valuable historical documents. Son **Henry H. Doerksen** and son **George H. Doerksen** operated the parental farm. Henry married Nettie Barkman, daughter of Jakob D. Barkman, Steinbach, Manitoba. George died in 1982. He was a close friend of cousin Jacob R. Plett. After their marriage in 1948, Henry and Nettie moved into the parental home and have lived there ever since. George married for the second time to Nettie’s sister. Henry was the only one of his siblings alive in 2003. He is hard of hearing but otherwise in reasonably good health for 88 years of age.



*Above: Helena and Bernhard D. Doerksen celebrating a birthday around 1952. Photo - Loewen, Blumenort, page 139. A photo of the Doerksens with all their children was published in the Plett Picture Book, page 56.*



*Left: Henry H. Doerksen (b. 1914) and wife Nettie, at her mother's home in Steinbach, 1981. The Doerksens had brought the C. L. Plett letter collection to Steinbach, and readers are indebted to them for making these invaluable primary documents available.*



*Bernhard D. Doerksen yard at Satanta, Kansas. Photo courtesy of Ed P. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

5 Daughter **Anna L. Plett** (1848-73) married the widower Gerhard T. Siemens, son of Gerhard Siemens (1805-77) of Grossweide, Molotschna. Gerhard T. Siemens was married for the first time to Maria Harder<sup>1024</sup> - they had one son Peter.<sup>1025</sup> They lived in Steinbach in Borosenko. Neighbour Abraham F. Reimer recorded on April 6, worship services for Steinbach were held at Franz Kroekers instead of Siemens because the Siemens' maid, Elisabeth, had the pox. Mrs. Gerhard Siemens, nee Maria Harder, died of small-pox on April 24, 1869.

In February 1870, Gerhard Siemens married for the second time to Anna L. Plett, daughter of Cornelius Plett (1820-1900), Kleefeld, Molotschna.

Gerhard Siemens was an aggressive entrepreneur. In the mid-1860s he and his cousin's husband, Jakob Classen (1832-98), acquired a tract of land along the banks of the Baseluk River, where the village of Steinbach was established. Klaas R. Reimer, later pioneer merchant in Steinbach, reported he "...bought land from the company, Jakob Classen and Gerhard Siemens...60 desjation for 20 ruble per desjation, and moved there with my family in 1869."<sup>1026</sup> Reimer paid part of the land by trading Siemens 50 sheep for 3.5 ruble a piece. The Siemens had a good size *Wirtschaft* as the worship services for the village were sometimes held there.

Gerhard Siemens was a sheep farmer. June 24th, 1870, Abraham Reimer "helped Siemens finish his sheep barn." On April 24, 1873, Reimer recorded that "Mrs. Siemens [from] here died of small-pox at 3:30 in the afternoon."

After her death Gerhard married again to widow Cornelius Janzen, nee Anganetha Klassen, daughter of David Klassen of Margenau, the Heubodner delegate to America in 1873. She was Gerhard's cousin.<sup>1027</sup> On June 23, 1873, neighbour Abraham F. Reimer recorded: "Mrs. Corn. Janzen from here applied to be accepted into the Gemeinde." Two days later, in the 26th, "Gerhard Siemens [from] here drove to Heuboden to court Mrs. Corn. Janzen." Presumably Aganetha was staying with her parents in Heuboden. On July 8, 1873, Gerhard Siemens and Aganetha Klassen were married by minister Peter Kroeker of Heuboden in a double wedding with Peter R. Reimer and second wife Maria L. Plett."

In 1874 the Gerhard T. Siemens family immigrated to Canada where they settled in Rosenhof, Manitoba.<sup>1028</sup> In 1880 Gerhard Siemens owned *Wirtschaft* 4 in Rosenhof, with buildings insured for \$250, cattle and equipment \$\$300, and \$200 feed. By 1881 he already had 45 acres of land seeded. He married for the fourth time to the widow Johann K. Rempel, nee Maria Peters, originally from Prangenau.<sup>1029</sup> March 8, 1893, Mrs. Gerhard Siemens wrote the *Rundschau* asking about various relatives in Russia. March 6, 1895, Maria and Gerhard Siemens, Morris P.O., wrote the *Rundschau* asking for information regarding many relatives.

In 1903 Gerhard Siemens moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan, together with step-sons Johann and Jakob P. Rempel and three of his sons who took out homesteads: Jakob K. Siemens SE28-18-10; Cornelius K. Siemens NE28-18-10 and Abraham K. Siemens on NE22-18-10. Gerhard Siemens died here in 1909 and was buried in the garden on his homestead. Five years later the remains were moved to Main Centre, M. B. Church cemetery.<sup>1030</sup> December 9, 1908, son Abraham Siemens reported Gerhard Siemens' death with an obituary.

5 Daughter **Gertrude P. Siemens** married Cornelius W. Kornelsen, son of deacon Abraham E. Kornelsen (1845-93) of Heuboden, north of Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>1031</sup> The Cornelius W. Kornelsen family lived in Heuboden where they farmed.<sup>1032</sup> Gertrude died of complications during childbirth. Cornelius remarried to Katharina F. Unger.<sup>1033</sup> In 1947 he retired selling the farm to David Penners and moving into a house on the yard of children Isaac W. Friesens in Heuboden. In 1950 they moved to the invalid home in Steinbach. Gertrude Siemens Kornelsen was survived by three children: George S. Kornelsen, Maria S. Kornelsen (Mrs. Isaac W. Friesen), and Gertruda S. Kornelsen.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Anna L. Plett</b>	Apr 23, 1848		Apr 23, 1873
m	Gerhard Siemens	Mar 9, 1834	Feb 1870	Nov 16, 1908
5	Gerhard P. Siemens	Jul 14, 1871		Jul 14, 1871
5	Gertruda P. Siemens	Jan 1, 1873		Aug 29, 1906
m	Corn W. Kornelsen	Jun 12, 1876		Jan 21, 1951



*The Cornelius W. Kornelsen farmyard - SE6-7-4E - in Heuboden, East Reserve, 1948. The house was built in 1914 and the barn in the early 1930s. Son-in-law Cornelius D. Koop lived in the yard at the bottom left corner. The path apparently was part of the original road from Grünfeld to Heuboden. The Kornelsens and most of the other Kleine Gemeinders from Heuboden moved to Quellen Colony, Mexico in 1948. Photo - Preservings, No. 15, page 112.*

5 Daughter **Maria L. Plett** (1850-1934) married the widower Peter R. Reimer, son of Abraham F. Reimer of Rosenort, Molotschna.<sup>1034</sup> Abraham was the son of Klaas Reimer, founder of the Kleine Gemeinde and successful Vollwirt in Petershagen.<sup>1035</sup> The Abraham Reimer family struggled financially and he acquired the nickname, “Fuella” Reimer. By contrast, Peter’s mother, Elisabeth Rempel, was a saintly pioneer woman and midwife.<sup>1036</sup> She worked hard as a seamstress and cap maker to make ends meet. To her goes the credit for the fact that her seven children were among the leading pioneers in southern Manitoba.<sup>1037</sup> Elisabeth Rempel was the daughter of Peter Rempel (1792-1837) of Lichtfelde, Molotschna, patriarch of a prominent clan.

Boys from such homes were customarily apprenticed to a craftsman to learn a trade. As a young lad Peter had been working for a farmer in a neighbouring village and shared a place to sleep with another young man. One night his companion came to bed groaning with pain. Apparently he had done something inappropriate and had received a beating.<sup>1038</sup> While Peter was working away from home at age 14 he missed his family so much he skated home along the river: “[He]...would say that as long as he was skating along the river he was not afraid. But before arriving home, however, he had to run across a field, probably about the distance of a verst or more, and there he had been very much afraid of the wolves, which were the size of our timber wolves.”<sup>1039</sup>

Peter was apprenticed as a carpenter and worked for uncle Bernhard Rempel of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna as well as a Mr. Klassen, a master cabinetmaker. Peter always remembered how his uncle Bernhard told customers “....they should build their houses as though they expected to live for 100 years but they should live as though today might be their last day.”<sup>1040</sup>

Peter R. Reimer married Elisabeth S. Friesen, daughter of Rev. Abraham F. Friesen (1807-91) of Neukirch.<sup>1041</sup> Elisabeth’s mother, Helena Siemens, was the daughter of Claasz Siemens, a prominent Vollwirt from Rosenort.<sup>1042</sup> At about this time the extended Reimer family moved to Borosenko 50 verst northwest of Nikopol on the Dneiper River. Abraham “Fuella” Reimer and sons Klaas, Peter and Johann, daughter Elisabeth and husband Peter Toews, and daughter Katharina and husband Abraham S. Friesen settled in Steinbach along the Bazavluk River.

Historian Royden K. Loewen has written: “Despite the distances the Reimers were a close-knit family. Few Sundays passed but that the daughters and their husbands came from Rosenfeld for the afternoon ‘Faspa’ of coffee, jam and bread. Through the week, the boys came from Blumenhoff to help their father or brother shoe horses, to assist in setting up a barn, or to return borrowed tools and equipment. Once a month several sons and sons-in-law would drive in wagon caravans to Nikopol to market their wheat and return with wood and other merchandise. Father Reimer spent many days throughout the year visiting his children in one of the three villages; if a ride happened to be available or if he heard that wood needed chopping or the harvest required an extra hand, Father was ready at once to visit his children. Mother Reimer travelled the dusty roads as much as her husband. But she was younger and more vivacious, and her

contacts were as much medical as social. She knew that her place was at the side of a daughter in childbirth and at the service of her grandchildren when their mother lay sick.”<sup>1043</sup>

The diary of father Abraham provides some details as to the activities of the family: January 30, 1870, “brother Johann hauled oats for Kl. and Pet. Reim.” On February 27, “In-law Abr. Friesen [a brother to Peter’s wife] was at Peter Reimers for two days doing blacksmith work.” March 10, 1870, “Kl. and Peter Reimer went to Grünfeld to Johann Toews’ [Peter’s brother-in-law].” On March 12, 1873, Abraham F. Reimer recorded an interesting item for gardeners and farmers: “...no ploughing was done in the forenoon since the earth was frozen, but after dinner they were ploughing. Also Abr. Friesen and Peter Reimer started ploughing today for the first time.” On the 16th: “teacher Fast was engaged to plow for Pet. Reimer.” Spiritual matters were also noted: “Sunday, worship service at Siemen’s place. Peter Reimer and Johann Reimer and Penners were all in the worship service.”

On April 7, 1870, Kl. and Peter Reimer, and brother-in-law [Peter] Toews drove to the seaport of Nikopol to sell wheat. “It sold for 9 ruble and 20 kopek.” It also sold for 9 ruble and 20 kopek in the neighbouring Heuboden, something Abraham carefully noted. There was constant visiting back and forth. May 26, “[Brother] Abr. Reimers from Blumenhoff were visiting here at Pet. Reimers’ in the afternoon.” June 16, “The elder Mrs. Abram Friesen [mother-in-law to Peter] was visiting here at Pet. Reimers’. My wife went there as well. The elder Mrs. Friesen stayed another night at Peter Reimers’.” To illustrate another reality of life, father Abraham has recorded on June 18, “....he was at the barn raising [bering] at Abr. Duecks’ in Annafeld, where Peter had provided the ‘Susze Schnapps.’” At the time alcohol was a major medicinal remedy and form of refreshment, given that water supplies away from home were often contaminated.

**Death of Elisabeth:** On June 29, 1870, a baby girl called Elisabeth was born to Peter and Elisabeth. Historian Royden K. Loewen writes “....sometimes birthing was a process without complications. On June 16 when his [Abraham’s] son Peter’s 25-year-old-wife, Elisabeth Friesen Reimer, went into labour at their home....her mother-in-law and sister-in-law rushed over....During the course of the night a daughter was born. A day-and-a-half later Elisabeth was up and about.”<sup>1044</sup> Another daughter Maria was born two years later and, although six weeks premature, mother and daughter were fine. Royden K. Loewen explained, “Just a day after delivering a six-week premature daughter on April 29, 1873,....[Elisabeth] was quite lively, walking about in the barn as in the house.”<sup>1045</sup>

Tragedy struck. First, baby daughter Maria died. Then in June of 1873 Elisabeth took sick and died. Father-in-law Abraham F. Reimer recorded the event: “June 5, 1873, matters with Mrs. Peter Reimer were bearable. June 7, our Penners from Rosenfeld were here and at Peter Reimers. Her condition was more tolerable. For two days she had been peaceful and calm as if she might get better again. June 8, ...strong west wind, and much dust. It rained so that water was standing in places, and some lightning. The storm lasted 1 hour. Mrs. Reimer’s condition deteriorated at noon. June 9, at 9 o’clock in the morning I went to



Peter Reimers'. Matters had deteriorated very much, but it looked as if she might live till evening or until the next morning. But at 10:30 her breathing decreased rapidly until 11 o'clock when she died. She was 23 years, 6 months and some days old. It was 21 degrees warm. June 11, Mrs. Peter Reimer was buried. She had been confined to her sick bed for some four weeks. That was when she had last been at our place. But her sickness for the most part was bearable, and she always ate and drank something. Her sickness was 'Schwulst und Schlagfluss, die linke Seite.'"

Although not totally clear Elisabeth appears to have suffered a stroke. A small-pox epidemic was also making the rounds. On the 19th of June, Ältester Peter Toews recorded a number of deaths in Borosenko: "...We also found small-pox at home...And in Steinbach, Mrs. Heinrich Brandt had died on Wednesday, the 30th of May...Mrs. Peter Reimer had died during our absence."

Peter Reimer was now a widower with a baby girl, Elisabeth.

**Maria L. Plett:** It was customary that widowers did not stay remain single very long. Peter remarried to Maria L. Plett, daughter of Cornelius Plett. Maria was a gifted and artistic girl. A grandson recalled her winning first prize in school in Kleefeld for "Schönschreiben" (calligraphy) out of a class of 100. As a young woman at home she was a great help to her father with the writing required as village mayor.<sup>1046</sup>

Maria was an attractive woman and had suitors for her affections. On April 5, 1871, teacher Abraham R. Friesen, Lichtenau, recorded a young gentlemen had come to visit her but she "chased him away."<sup>1047</sup> Maria had other things on her mind. She was a devout woman with a reflective and spiritual nature. In 1870 at age 20 she was baptised by cousin, Peter Toews, the Ältester.<sup>1048</sup>

As a normal young believer, Maria had anxieties regarding her spiritual life. On December 3, 1870, she wrote her maternal grandfather, Isaac Loewen, formerly Lindenau. Although Maria's letter has not been preserved, Ohm Issuk's October 8, 1871, reply, reveals some of its contents.<sup>1049</sup> Maria was seeking spiritual advice and, particularly, regarding her striving to fulfil her solemn vows of baptism. Ohm Isaac replied, that he was confident Maria would receive his letter and advice in childlike love. He assured her that through prayer and with the help of God she would live a life of devoted Christian discipleship.

It did not take Maria long to decide when Peter Reimer proposed. He had been widowed June 9 and within 30 days, they courted and married. On July 4, 1873, Abraham Fuella" Reimer recorded: The bridal couple P. Reimer visited here last night. Today the bridal couple went to Blumenhof to their Plett parents." The wedding took place on July 8, 1873. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Peter M. Kroeker, Heuboden, Borosenko, in a double wedding with Gerhard Siemens and Aganetha Klassen, the widow of Cornelius Janzen. A daughter, Maria, was born in June of the following year.<sup>1050</sup>

**Emigration, 1875:** The background for the emigration of Mennonites from Russia in the 1870s has already been explored. By the spring of 1874 the emigration of the Kleine Gemeinde was underway.<sup>1051</sup> The fifth and final contingent of the year included Peter, young bride Maria, her 5 year-old step-daughter, Elisabeth, and six week-old daughter Maria, Maria's sister Margaretha and husband Franz M. Kroeker, and Maria, widow of Isaac L. Plett, Maria's deceased brother. Peter Toews recorded: "On Sunday the 21st, the remaining families from Annafeld and Steinbach left [their homes]."<sup>1052</sup> They travelled across the ocean on the S.S. Austrian. This ship had delivered the first contingent of Russian Mennonite immigrants to Quebec City on July 17, 1874, and had returned to England for a second voyage. The journey was difficult for the Reimer family. Maria suffered a severe boil in her breast causing much pain. To aggravate matters, baby Maria died and was buried at sea.<sup>1053</sup>

The immigration party arrived in Quebec City on August 31, 1874. From Quebec City the party travelled by train to Moorhead and from there by river boat north down the Red River to Manitoba, arriving at the landing site at the confluence of the Red and Rat Rivers near Niverville on September 17, 1874.

After disembarking they travelled east to the Schantz immigration houses, just south of the present Town of Niverville. After a few days they travelled another 14 miles east to the site of Blumenort, a village already started by others who had arrived July 31, 1874. By December 31 a total of 24 families made their home here. Peter and Maria Reimer settled on the third koagel to the east of the worship house on the north side. Son Abram P. Reimer later described the primitive conditions: "Arriving in their new home only in September, they had to make hasty preparations for the oncoming Canadian winter. With the assistance of his [Peter's] brother Abraham who had arrived earlier in the summer, a 'semclin' was hurriedly constructed. (Semlin meaning sod house.) They lived in this building the first winter. Some livestock had to be purchased - and that meant providing a stable as well as feed. Feed grew in abundance without having to do anything about it but it had to be cut and there were no power grass mowers or side delivery rakes or hay balers in those days. But everything worked out all right."<sup>1054</sup>

According to the Homestead Applications filed later with the Homestead Office, they built a wood frame house 21' by 42'. A wood frame stable 26 feet by 31 feet was added in 1875. Geographer John Warkentin has written that "three prosperous Mennonites in Blumenort purchased lumber in Winnipeg and built frame houses during the first autumn, but none were built elsewhere."<sup>1055</sup> The "Brandbuch" of Brandältester or fire insurance manager Johann Esau of Rosenfeld lists Peter's buildings and farm operation in 1875: "Inventory [being cattle and equipment] - \$125, feed - \$100. September 20, 1875, a house - \$200. April 1, 1876, added thereto - \$100. July 1, 1877, dwelling house and barn - \$300. December 28, stable - \$75.00."<sup>1056</sup> The information from the Brandbuch indicates Peter and Maria did not build a wood-frame house until 1875.

The diary of Peter's father Abraham, serves as a source of information regarding life during these years: "Monday, April 4, 1879, worship service in

Steinbach where Abr. Loewen from Grünfeld was preaching. Abr. and P. Reimer also went there. Johann Koops also drove there but they did not go half a mile before they had to turn around and come back because they almost got stuck in the mud. April 29,... After dinner I was at Peter Reimer's were there was a funeral, their little Abram was buried. May 9, Wednesday,...I fixed the fence in the garden, and after dinner Mrs. Peter Reimer walked to Blumenhof, and I dug in the garden. May 28,...it rained very heavy for half the night so that all the roads were full of water....Monday, Peter Reimer had over 1,000 [board] feet of boards sawn for him in Steinbach. Today I was at Peter Reimers and they have just finished the last of the ploughing and seeding. June 12, Tuesday,... Peter Reimer is putting siding on his dwelling house. June 13, Peter Reimer brought over the planer.<sup>1057</sup> June 17, Peter Reimer has finished putting siding on his house. June 19, Sawatzky from Bergthal was here and picked up weanlings, three from Abr. Reimer and three from Pet. Reimer. They cost a \$1.00. June 27, Friday... On Monday already Peter Reimer went to Ponte des Chene [Ste. Annes], but he had only gone half a mile when he had to turn around—he was all wet. But today he went and got back at 7 [o'clock]. I glued the small cradle together at Pet. Reimer's."

The 1879 "Account Book" of Peter's older brother Abraham provides details regarding early farming in southeastern Manitoba. Abraham was a wealthy village farmer and a deacon, He operated a blacksmith shop and had sufficient capital to lend money to those in need including non-Mennonites. The ledger page for Peter Reimer reads as follows: "December 26, settled accounts, credit \$5.41.

April 15, sharpened a plow, 15 cents. April 28, sharpened tings, 38 cents. I used the grain cleaner, 64 cents. June 18, I fixed a rake, cost 20 cents. . . . September 24, I sharpened a plow and clouter, cost 20 cents. . . . Abraham was engaged to work for him, board and everything, 50 cents [presumably per day]. . . . October 26, credit \$10.00."<sup>1058</sup> Similar routine transactions are recorded for subsequent years.

At the back of the "Account Book" is a record of loans made by Abraham R. Reimer to various people. It seems that Peter had a credit with his brother until 1880 when he borrowed \$20.00 on May 21 and \$2.50 on June 2. In 1883 Peter borrowed wheat on July 9 and 22, and August 3 and 16, for a total value of some \$5.00.



*Maria L. Plett (1850-1944) (Mrs Peter R. Reimer), widowed for 19 years. Photo - John R. Unger/Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 53.*

**Pioneer Life:** Peter and Maria Reimer worked hard to build up their farm. The assessment records of the R. M. of Hanover completed on October 3, 1883, provide information regarding property ownership in the East Reserve. The Mennonites had a policy, brought along from Russia, that members of the ministerial were exempted from taxation except for real property in excess of the basic homestead allotment of 160 acres. Consequently the only information for Peter is that he owned an additional 80 acres of which 10 acres was cultivated and 70 acres pasture. The 1889 assessments show he owned 240 acres - 36 acres cultivated and the balance pasture. They owned three horses and a relatively large dairy of 21 cattle (10 cows and 11 cattle under 3 years old).

Peter Reimer was a skilled carpenter.<sup>1059</sup> Many of the dwellings erected during the pioneering years had been crudely built and soon proved inadequate. This resulted in considerable building activity in Blumenort during the 1880s. Historian Royden K. Loewen explains: ".....The year 1880 began a prosperous decade, and many new buildings were erected. One of the leading carpenters of this era was Rev. Peter R. Reimer. A house he built early in 1889 was fitted with several glass doors which he had fashioned himself. He is particularly remembered for this philosophy of carpentry, and is said to have told his clients that he would build their house as if they would die at 100, but they should live in it as if they would die tomorrow."<sup>1060</sup> He was also a furniture maker.<sup>1061</sup> An example of his furniture was displayed at the Peter R. Reimer family reunion on July 25, 1993, namely, a miniature dowry chest built for daughter Sarah.<sup>1062</sup>

Precise accounting records were maintained within individual families. Peter R. Reimer's "Account Book" for the years 1892 to 1918 documents some of the internal family dynamics. The journal opens with the record of transactions between Peter and oldest daughter, Elisabeth, and husband Heinrich E. Plett: "Dec. 16th, 1892, we settled accounts, and the sum of 97 dollars and 20 cents was paid. I also gave him money - 25 dollars, written out as one hundred and twenty-two dollars and twenty cents. I paid him the capital which belongs to Elisabeth amounting to 325 ruble in Russian currency, and in dollars, \$216.86."

The account book records mundane details of day to day activities: "In January, 1893, Maria washed at Heinrich Pletts for two days and we figured 35 cents a day - total 70 cents, and a bunch of wool - 15 cents, and 6 pounds of soap - 20 cents. And I made them a bed for 4 dollars and 50 cents. On April 13, 1893, I gave Heinrich Plett another \$25.00....On the 22nd of April, I sold them two yearlings for \$17.00 each - total \$34.00. 10 calendars, 12 cents each - total 1.20. 1 sealer jar - 20 cents, 1 crock - 30 cents, white paint - 15 cents, November 11, 1893, sold a milk cabinet. April 30, 1894, sold 15 bushels of wheat. ....A clothes closet and a dresser, price \$11.60. Settled accounts March 27, 1895, and credit remaining \$237.00. 1896, in fall Peter worked for him for five days at .50 cents per day. In fall a sleeping bench was sold, cost \$4.50. In fall Abraham worked for two months, \$3.00 for the first month and \$4.00 for the second. Then I made him 15 pair of harness belts at 35 cents a pair. In spring Peter again worked for him for 192 hours. And Cornelius worked for him for 2 days."

And so on and so forth. The record details Peter's financial dealings, not

only with his children, but with neighbours, relatives, and even with his mother-in-law who boarded at their home after the death of Cornelius Plett in 1900.

Meticulous records were also maintained on the village level. Every service performed was recorded and compensated in some way. The Blumenort "Village Account Book 1899," shows that Peter Reimer had received the following credits:

"cut 2 loads of wood for the school .....	1.00
5 loads of popular wood from the village bush .....	(1.25)
hauled straw on the dam for 4 hours .....	.80
fenced in May, 2 men for 1 day .....	1.60
Nov 3, worked at well, 2 men for 1 day .....	2.00
Nov 4, worked at well, 2 men for 7 hours .....	<u>1.40</u>
Net .....	5.00 <sup>1063</sup>

The traditional Mennonite *Strassendorf* village was an intricate and sophisticated institution involving a complicated system of record keeping and internal documentation. The village minute books as well as the "Account Books" of Peter and Abraham R. Reimer and the journals of their father, Abraham "Fuella" Reimer, and cousin, Abraham M. Friesen, were part of this literary regime.<sup>1064</sup>

**Expansion:** Peter Reimer's financial situation was steadily improving. The 1896 assessment records show he owned 320 acres (a double Wirtschaft), with 100 acres cultivated, and 5 horses, 2 oxen and a dairy of 21 cattle (10 cows and 11 cattle under 3 years) and 6 pigs. By 1906 the exemption for ministers was deleted as it related to personal property: inventory, equipment and cattle. The tax records list Peter's property: 320 acres of land with 140 acres cultivated. Personal assessment of \$910 and real estate assessment of \$640, 8 horses, 18 cows and 22 pigs for a total assessment of 1550. To this must be added 640 for the quarter section for which he was exempted, for an actual assessment of 2190. This compared with 2837 for son-in-law Heinrich E. Plett and 2934 for nephew Klaas P. Reimer. Brother-in-laws Abraham, David and Jakob L. Plett across the village line in Blumenhof, had assessments of 1810, 3556, and 2357, respectively. David L. Plett was the highest assessed farmer in the district in 1906.<sup>1065</sup>

In 1902 Peter purchased the West half of Section 15-7-6E (320 acres) from Peter McIntrye located immediately to the south of the Blumenort village land complex (just west of the modern so-called Giroux corner - the intersection of P.T.H 12 and P.R. 311 where son Abram P. Reimer lived). The acquisition increased Peter's farm to a section of land, a considerable acreage. Four years later, in 1906, he sold the land on Section 15-7-6E to sons Cornelius and Abraham. In 1909 Peter purchased the SE15-7-6E of which son Cornelius purchased the south half. Peter was fortunate to be able to buy expensive but adjoining land in the Clearsprings district rather than having to venture further afield to Greenland, the Krim, or even Ekron, as others were doing.

Peter R. Reimer also taught his sons and son-in-laws the advantages of working together. Around 1900 sons-in-law Heinrich Plett and Johann F. Unger, and sons Peter, Cornelius and Abram, formed a threshing company with a steam

engine and threshing machine. After 1906 the business was owned by Heinrich E. Plett and Peter P. Reimer. The firm became well-known as the "Plett and Reimer" threshing company. During World War One they had two steam engines, a 15/30 Watrous for threshing and an 25/75 Case pulling an eight-bottom gang plow.<sup>1066</sup>

In 1905 Peter R. Reimer purchased 40 acres on SE27-7-6E from neighbour Jakob Wiebe. By Bill of Sale dated December 27, 1909, he sold this land to son-in-law Heinrich E. Plett, for One (\$1.00) Dollar. This was to become the site of the "Plettenhof" already referred to. The transaction was part of a land exchange program undertaken by the Blumenorters in 1910 when they divided up the village lands so that each farmer could move onto their quarter sections in North American-style. Maria and Peter R. Reimer received 320 acres, the SE28-7-6E and NE21-7-6E, as their share of the village property. They moved out their buildings and established their home on the southeast corner of the SE28-7-6E, where great-grandsons Mervin and Allan Reimer are still farming.<sup>1067</sup>

As already mentioned, during these years Peter and Maria were receiving payments from her father's estate. The last payment was recorded in Peter's "Account Book" only a day before he died. After Peter's death, his widow Maria -as his administrator, sold the 40 acres on SE15-7-6E to son-in-law John G. Barkman in 1916. When son John got married, he established his home just to the north of the parent's yard on SE27-7-6E. When son David got married they lived together with his parent's until his father's death. Thereafter, son David purchased the east half of his parent's farm together with yard and buildings. Son John received the west half of the land and moved his house and started his own yard about a quarter mile to the west.

**Ministry, 1881:** Peter R. Reimer was a man of sound spiritual convictions. On January 20, 1873, at the young age of 28, he was a candidate in a ministerial election held in the worship house in Blumenhoff, with six votes.<sup>1068</sup> He was elected as a minister of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde March 1, 1882 in the wake of the so-called "Holdeman division." With the help of Ältester Abraham L. Friesen from Nebraska, the church in Manitoba was reorganized. After two weeks of church services a ministerial election was held at a brotherhood meeting in Steinbach, where Peter R. Reimer, and two Grünfelders, Abraham Kornelsen and Jakob L. Dueck, were elected as deacons. At the same service Reimer and Dueck were elevated to the position of minister.

Historian Royden K. Loewen has described the significance of this event: "Peter Reimer was to become an influential and leading minister in the East Reserve. Because Jakob M. Kroeker, the Elder after 1882, lived at Rosenort, an Assistant Elder for the East Reserve was appointed by the church leadership. The first such leader after 1882 seems to have been Rev. Peter Baerg of Grünfeld. By the later 1880s, however, Peter R. Reimer appears to have assumed this responsibility...[He] is remembered as a man of piety, but one who also had a sense of humour."<sup>1069</sup>

Families were torn asunder by the Holdeman division, probably the single most traumatic event in the Steinbach and Blumenort area prior to the turn of

the century. The Abraham Reimer family, remained true to the faith once received. By comparison, the "Blumenhof" Reimers joined with the Holdeman group. The division in Maria's Plett family has already been referred to.

The Account Book of Peter R. Reimer shows that he coordinated the sale of Georg Hansen books in 1892 and 1893 at 30 cents a copy. Hansen (1636-1703) was an Ältester of the Flemish Gemeinde in Danzig whose writings were much appreciated among the Kleine Gemeinde. Peter Reimer maintained a list of purchasers, including: "Abraham Friesen, 1.30 paid .30;....Klaas Reimer, brother, Steinbach 1.50.....Blumenort Korn. Friesen....Alte Abraham Penner .30;....Franz Kroecker; .....Alte Kornelius Plett..."<sup>1070</sup>

In the Ältester election of 1895, Ältester Abraham L. Dueck received 41 votes, Peter Reimer 24, and Cornelius L. Plett received 15.

Peter R. Reimer served in his church diligently. The diaries of brother-in-law Cornelius L. Plett and nephew Peter R. Dueck reveal the extent of his pastoral service. C. L. Plett recorded the two ministers or their families got together several times monthly: "January 3, 1895,...in the evening, sister Mrs. Peter Reimer was here for a little while. January 20, sister Mrs. Peter Reimer was here for a little while. January 29,...we were helping slaughtering at Pet. Reimers, they slaughtered three pigs and one ox. February 29, we were in Blumenort at the worship service and at Pet. Reimers. February 12, I went [from Doerksens] to Blumenort, Peter Reimers, to pick up the girl to help at Doerksen's place."

Ministers attended worship services at least weekly often travelling considerable distances such as the 14 some miles to Grünfeld, now Kleefeld. Periodically, such as from July 1 to 3, inclusive, there were several days of worship services and brotherhood meetings to attend. Sermons were carefully prepared with a full written text. It must have taken many prayerful evenings by coal oil lamp to complete a sermon.

The ministerial journal of Peter R. Dueck is a record of church events including occurrences at brotherhood meetings and who preached where. By 1906 C. L. Plett was more active than Peter Reimer possibly because he had retired from active farming and moved to Steinbach. Peter, on the other hand, had taken on a heavy load of pastoral work as assistant elder in the East Reserve. No doubt his pace slowed somewhat with the election of Ältester Abram L. Dueck in 1895. Ältester Peter Dueck recorded that Peter Reimer preached in Steinbach on August 18, 1907, and again a week later in Blumenort. He preached the Advent sermon on December 8 in Steinbach, again in Steinbach August 2, 1908, November 8, 1908 in Steinbach, on December 27, 1908, in Blumenort, January 17, 1909, in Steinbach, June 20, 1909 in Steinbach, August 1, 1909, in Steinbach, March 20, 1910, in Steinbach, May 29, 1910, in Steinbach, July 3, 1910, in Steinbach, July 24, 1910, in Steinbach, and December 11, 1910, in Steinbach.

Peter R. Reimer became more active in 1911. On January 22, 1911, he preached in Blumenort, January 29, in Blumenort, where C. Siemens from Herbert had come to join the church, April 2, 1911, in Steinbach, May 25, in Steinbach the Ascension Day sermon, June 3 a ministerial meeting was held at his home in Blumenort, June 18, preached in Blumenort, July 23, in Steinbach, September

17 in Steinbach, and on December 1, a ministerial meeting was held at his home in Blumenort.<sup>1071</sup>

**Sermons:** Ten of Peter Reimer's sermons are still extant:

- 1) Sermon, November 28, 1886. Text, Philippians 4:4, 36 pages.<sup>1072</sup>
- 2) Sermon no date. Text—Romans 10:1-5, 53 pages.
- 3) Christmas Sermon, December 22, 1886. Text—Luke 2:1 and 14.
- 4) A Sermon for Palm Sunday, no date. Text—Philippians 2:3, 50 pages.
- 5) Sermon, February 9, 1888. Text—1 Peter 2, verses 11 and 12, 41 pages.
- 6) Sermon, January 23, 1897. Text—1 Peter 5, verses 6-7.<sup>1073</sup>
- 7) Sermon 1898. Text—Revelations 20, verse 6, 41 pages.<sup>1074</sup>
- 8) Sermon, January 14, 1899. Text—Matthew 23:1,13, 66 pages.
- 9) Sermon, January 11, 1908. Text—John 10:12-16, 57 pages.
- 10) Sermon, 1909. Text—Hebrews 12:1 and 2, 52 pages.

Two of these sermons have been translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and published in 1994, namely, the sermon on Philippians 4:4, and the sermon on 1 Peter 2:11,12.<sup>1075</sup> The sermons are gentle pastoral homilies replete with scripture citations. They exude sound Mennonite themes such as discipleship or *Nachfolge*.

Peter Reimer preached a good confidence and trust in God. His was a faith of quiet simple piety - he had no place or patience for the vain and empty spiritual arrogance (“*Überheblichkeit*”) found in Evangelical Revivalism at the turn of century. In his sermon on Philippians 4:4 he writes: “...we should be moved through the teaching of the apostle and the Gospel to meet our Saviour with a sincere heart and godfearing conduct, for He is holy; and thus also we should be holy in all our conduct, so that in that day our names may be found in the book of life. It is to be feared that today many simply claim to be redeemed and have peace with God within. Yet Christ says, ‘But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first’ (Matt. 19:30). He will take note foremostly of those who are humble, faithful and sincere.”

The following sermon was preached by Peter Reimer in Blumenort on February 9, 1888: “In I Peter 2, verses 11 and 12, it says, ‘Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation...’”

“Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, If we look at our text carefully, we realize, from the very first words of the apostle’s wonderful admonition to his beloved brethren, that we are to be like strangers and pilgrims here. With these words the apostle clearly testifies of the faith and hope that we shall have for something better, yes, for a better and everlasting home, that we can hope for if we oppose all passions of the flesh which fight the soul...We can be completely certain that if we do not oppose these fleshly lusts than we cannot be righteous pilgrims...and that we belong to this world. And if we shall cling to this world with our desires, worldly outlook and arrogant ways, we cannot be unattached



pilgrims. The Scriptures reveal that those pilgrims who have gone before us into everlasting peace were quite different. They were strangers here on earth and lived in fear and waited for a city with a foundation built and created by God. These pilgrims allowed themselves to be truly content and let it be known that they were visitors and strangers on earth.”

“Therefore, beloved, let us pray with David, and join in with the man after the heart of God when he calls to God for help in Psalm 39: ‘Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hath made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily even man at his best is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord what wait I for. My hope is in Thee.’ (Psalm 39:4-7, KJV).”<sup>1076</sup>

Historian Royden Loewen has noted that Peter Reimer “...stressed the point that the Christian must remain aloof from the affairs of the world.”

**Correspondence:** Many in the pioneer Kleine Gemeinde maintained extensive correspondence with friends and relatives far and wide including Kansas, Nebraska, and even Russia. Often they kept ledger books where they recorded copies of their letters. Peter R. Reimer’s extant correspondence includes three letters written to him: dated June 13, 1894, by Ältester Jakob M. Kroeker, Rosenhof; April 14, 1899, by G. Siemens, Rosenhof; and again May 25, 1901, by Jakob M. Kroeker, Rosenhof.<sup>1077</sup> In the latter, Jakob M. Kroeker, seeks counsel of Peter Reimer regarding the Pieter Pieter’s books which are being published by the Kleine Gemeinde, with respect to ordering an additional 100 copies.

Only one of Peter R. Reimer’s letters is extant, an epistle to Ältester Abraham L. Friesen, Meade, Kansas, dated April 30, 1909.<sup>1078</sup> The letter provides insight into Peter’s spiritual life. He refers to the late spring weather and that it is snowing again using this as a allegory: “...may we be reminded herein that we too are too cold and indifferent in our spiritual growth and that we might be more mindful of the life-giving spring and the growth which is God-pleasing, for which purpose God will come to our aid; and so that the hearts of the youth might be inspired anew, unto a new life.”

Peter was concerned about religious trends in North American society. He warned about “...extemporaneous worship services - such as singing and praying, Sunday schools, Bible studies, which have the expression of great holiness before the people, but which do not remain distant from the lusts of eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life.” American Fundamentalism at the turn of the century was very fanatical and categorical and Peter’s comments must be understood in the context that the forms of religious discourse referred to, such as prayers meetings and Bible studies, were typically used by Fundamentalist missionaries to spread their virulent dogma and false teachings.

Because of their nonresistant beliefs, Mennonites were a favourite target for fanatical proselytizers only too happy to fracture Christian communities and homes. Peter was concerned that Bible studies, singing, and Sunday schools

should not be used to lead believers away from traditional Christo-centric faith by spreading false teachings such as “conversionism”, “churchism,” millennialism, dispensationalism, rejection of the centrality of Christ, and the teaching that a particular mode of baptism (“immersion”) was required for salvation. Peter encouraged Ältester A. L. Friesen, Meade, Kansas, writing, “let us watch and pray and be awake in all things, and let us be fearful that we do not omit to come unto His rest and that none of us might remain behind...for everything which is esteemed by the world is an abomination before God, for no one can serve two masters.” In light of the 1882 Holdeman division and the horrible devastation it had caused, Peter’s battle for his Gemeinde was courageous and noble.

The letter of 1909 provides an idea of the scope of Peter’s letter correspondence: he refers to a letter of March 17th which he wrote to Jakob Reimer in Meade, and “yesterday, we heard a worthy letter from A. E. Reimers from Meade, and today we heard one from sister Heinrich L. Friesen from Morris.” The letter also reveals that Peter was not well at this time. He writes “... yet, I am not very well, so that I can only work very little, and we still do not have seeding weather....I will close for this time. My head[ache] is so bad, and I am plagued very much by rheumatic fever which is so severe that I cannot speak loud nor make a presentation.”

The “Account Book” of Peter Reimer has already been referred to.<sup>1079</sup> The existence of another record book is alluded to in other sources. One of the records he maintained was a “Sterbe Register” or “death register” listing all deaths among the Kleine Gemeinde in the East Reserve as well as friends and relatives as far afield as Russia and the United States.<sup>1080</sup>



*Peter R. Reimer's granddaughter Mary Barkman Plett proudly displays the miniature chest Peter R. Reimer made for his daughter Sarah Reimer Barkman. Photo - Preservings, No. 12, page 95.*

**Journey, 1908:** East Reserve ministers frequently made journeys of spiritual visitation to sister congregations in Rosenort, Manitoba, Jansen, Nebraska, and Meade, Kansas. On November 16, 1904, the *Rundschau* reported "Ältester Peter R. Dueck and Rev. Peter Reimer and wives went to Nebraska for a visit."

On February 3, 1909, Peter R. Reimer reported in the *Rundschau* regarding his ministerial journey in June 1908: "In Jansen [Nebraska] he stayed at Heinrich Reimers. On Sunday, June 7, he went to church. There were quite a few people. Peter Brandt read a sermon by the deceased minister Jakob Classen....He visited old Abraham Reimer. On the second day of Pentecost, [he was] again in church. Brother Gerhard Friesen read a Pentecost message by Ältester Abr. L. Friesen. For dinner he went to [wife's] uncle Johann S. Friesen." February 10, 1909, Peter R. Reimer continued his travelogue in the *Rundschau*: "In Meade they were greeted by uncle Jakob Reimer who drove them to his place. Sunday, June 21, he attended church nine miles away, they had to go through a deep slough. Cornelius [L.] Friesen preached. For dinner he was at Abraham E. Reimers. He visited Heinrich Loewens. The travel report continued in the February 24, 1909, *Rundschau*. "...In Meade he visited; A.L. Friesen, widower P.R. Friesen, Jacob Isaacs, old A. Isaacs, A.H. Friesens, M. Doerksens, Peter Rempels, John Kornelsens, P.Isaacs, Jacob J. Friesen, A.J. and A.F. Friesen, A.E. Reimer, Klaas Reimers, John Glens, old Peter Isaacs. Then back to Jansen."

### **Death, 1915.**

Peter R. Reimer remained somewhat active as a minister. Ältester Peter R. Dueck recorded that Reimer preached the spring message on June 20, 1915. However, Peter R. Reimer was not a well man the last years of his life. Even though only in his late-60s, he had sometimes mentioned to his oldest daughter Elisabeth that he was ready to die.<sup>1081</sup> In 1985, grandson Klaas R. Plett, Jagueyes, Mexico, remembered that Peter R. Reimer had apparently visited at the home of his children Elisabeth and H. E. Plett the last day of his life and enjoyed a fish fry.<sup>1082</sup>

Peter R. Reimer died on November 10, 1915, after a three week-long illness. He is to have spent considerable time during the last year of his life, rocking and babysitting son David's first-born daughter Maria.

Ältester Peter Dueck recorded that on November 28 - just 18 days after Peter Reimer's death - Cornelius L. Plett, his long-time colleague and frequent travel companion, asked to be released from his ministerial duties in Steinbach in order to move to Kansas to marry. Thus the Kleine Gemeinde church in Manitoba had lost two faithful servants within a matter of weeks.

**Widowhood:** Maria Plett Reimer lived with various of her children during her 19-year widowhood. Mostly she stayed at John F. Ungers and David P. Reimers. Maria was interested in helping her children. Even in her '70s, she hoed in the garden for them or helped in the home or yard.

As a girl in Russia Maria had enjoyed writing, an interest she revived after her husband's death. A number of her writings have been preserved:

- 1) Diary, 1929 to 1932.<sup>1083</sup>
- 2) 28 letters, Maria Plett Reimer to Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas, written between November 30, 1924, and September 28, 1934.<sup>1084</sup>
- 3) Four letters, Maria Plett Reimer to son Klaas Reimer, Garden City, dated between November 22, 1923, and January 25, 1933.<sup>1085</sup>
- 4) Three letters by Maria Plett Reimer to daughter Sara, Mrs. John G. Barkman, dated between November 16, 1905, and September 7, 1927.<sup>1086</sup>

Contemporary diaries establish that Maria was close to her older brother Cornelius, who had moved to Kansas in 1915. She wrote him intimate and newsy letters. The letters starting in 1924 have been preserved. Cornelius was an organized person who neatly saved his correspondence. In the first letter dated November 24, 1924, Maria mentioned she was happy she could read again which she was not able to do for a while and that for some time she had not been able to understand even when someone else would read to her. She states "...that I have read over a sermon of Ohm Peter Baerg's - of which I have two. The Ohm was very gifted in preparing a sermon, and how wonderful it is to be able to read them over again."

Maria expressed a sincere piety and understanding of the grace of God, writing ".....of ourselves we can do nothing, everything which we do must be and is only of God." She was interested in what old friends were doing at home and far away and refers to "...the 'old' Abraham P. Reimersche in Garden [City, Kansas] who has passed away."

"We have no lasting city here," she added, "...and soon it may well be our turn."

In closing Maria noted that sister-in-law, Katharina, Mrs. Cornelius L. Plett, had never written anything. She teased her, "Dear sister-in-law, you never write and remain so quiet. Perhaps you feel the same way I did in earlier times when my man was writing a letter and would ask me to add something also. I would say, no, he could write letters much better and that it would be good the way he would write it. But please, why don't you make it better?"

The teasing brought results. In Maria's letter of April 19, 1925, she thanked her sister-in-law for a recent letter. Maria also mentioned that she was now living at David P. Reimers. She stated that it was Sunday and that the weather was miserable - it was raining - and so the whole family stayed at home and held their own worship service, "...with singing and praying. I have an old *Martyrs' Gesangbuch* from which I have already read many letters - it is a great way to pass the time."

The older generation of Pletts had a sentimental streak, something shared by Maria. In a letter dated March 18, 1926, she writes: "But I am so weak, I still miss so much and long to return to all that which once was mine, I think of that

which I have and my family. Oh how dearly I would once again long to sit at the writing table where 'Mama's' books would still all be lying."

October 17, 1927, Maria Reimer wrote from the home of son Johann. She referred with distaste to "things which she did not understand," referring to "The way things had again conducted themselves at the funeral of Klaas I. Friesen. I, however, had not attended, for the large funerals no longer appeal to me - but son Johann did go. For first one speaks and then another, and then a third one is summoned to read the obituary and also immediately delivers a sermon, from the Holdemans' Gemeinde, namely, Abr. Isaac. Is this not completely different then the resolutions which were once adopted in those days? Or do such have to be completely cast away at this time?"

"And so I say, I do not understand myself with such. You and I still see this the same way, for when I was there at your place in winter, we talked about such, and we were of one mind in that regard. When I reflect in this, it is truly a spiritual prostitution, don't you agree? And how so? Nor do I think that Peter P. Reimer is the fault regarding such things. He had come in[to the church] alone and somewhat late, and Heinrich Reimer summoned Isaak for this? When Johan related this to me, the words of the song came to mind, 'What kind of time is coming to pass?' I have not yet spoken to Peter Reimer about this, but I think that it will again have hindered his sleep. Indeed, a lamentable time that such comes to pass. And how can we always cling firmly [to the Saviour] in everything that comes to pass?"

Maria Reimer's comments reveal that it was often the elderly matriarchs who clung the most firmly to the tried and proven traditions and teachings which God had once given to His people. The position of respect and influence of matriarchs such as Maria enjoyed could only exist in stable and traditional cultures with extended family networks. The matriarchs were also the ones with the most to lose. Maria probably correctly sensed that once the venerable old ways and traditions were destroyed by aggressive religious cultures such as Evangelical Fundamentalism, the relative power and prestige of women like her would collapse as well and be replaced by superficial religious culture articulated by the gurus south of the border. Maria's expresses her frustration over the manipulation of those seeking to convert a people to a different religious culture. Maria asks her brother Cornelius for a letter of comfort or at least that he might personally discuss the matter with David. Delicately she acknowledges, that "this letter may not be to your liking, nor may you give it to others to read. Perhaps I have not written carefully enough. But when my heart is so full, I finally write something, and I do not know how to bring it forth any better." Maria also fails to note that Abram Isaac, her cousin, was the uncle to the deceased, a fact which possibly lessens the likelihood of a wider agenda regarding what took place.

Maria added some news: "Yesterday Jakob B. Kroekers, Morris, were to have been in Prairie Rose in the worship services. Joh. P. Reimers and Corn. W. Brandts were also to have driven there. Kroeker and Heinr. R. Reimer had served with the Word. For night they were at Franz Gertzens. Hopefully there will be worship service here yet as well....Yesterday, Sunday, I and the Joh. P. Reimersche

had ourselves driven to Corn. W. Brandts by their son Peter and there we met also the widow Gerh. Warkentinsche. Things are not going well for her either. For the winter she dearly wishes to go to jentseid. It is too cold for her here at the children in their house and they are also too poor. But if this will actually come to pass is really doubtful.”

Maria also refers to the Abr. R. Plettsche “who was deathly sick, perhaps you have already heard. She is improving, but how she is exactly now, I cannot say. It has really convicted Abraham, he was also completely sick, so that others had to do all the chores. They also had many doctors there. The children had Hein. Pletten there, which is also hard for the Hein. Plettsche, who is also not really well.”

Both sons Cornelius and Abram P. Reimer had their own pre-printed self-addressed envelopes which she used when writing from their homes. Maria’s letter of August 3, 1928, was written from Corn. P. Reimer’s home.

Maria explains her situation: “I did not feel very good for a while, perhaps some form of grippe [fever]. In my opinion I do not have enough energy. I am still here at the children Corn. P. Reimers where I already hardly know where I can lend a helping hand since there are so many workers. Now that Peter is home again there are 16 at the table of whom many of the small ones are not workers and still restless at times so that things are quite lively. Otherwise I have things quite good, I am well cared for. Only there is too much time for sitting around and then one’s thoughts roam far and wide.”

Maria reverts into a fascinating reminiscence about their days of youth in Russia on their parents’ bustling Wirtschaft: “Since it is now exactly harvest time it comes to mind, how at one time, we - I, you and Johann - worked in a row mowing feed with scythes. And I did not want to be behind Johann as he was younger than I, and, otherwise, it was the other way around. It was also quite hard for me, sometimes, and yet, it was so much fun. Perhaps you have not yet forgotten it either. On the ‘hauskagel’ on the second ‘gelink’ (part), there was wild mustard, that was quite easy. On the third gelink, there were vines, that was quite difficult, and in the fourth part, there was thick *kurei*, that was already quite hard. It was almost too much for my spine or back, and yet, I did not want to give in, and so I have apparently done it to myself, that I should have received a bad spine. I have had to endure much fleht (“lumbago”) and rheumatism. But God be thanked, everything is again more or less gone. And notwithstanding, I did get to be this age as you well know, and I have always looked after everything inside by myself during the last while that we were farming. I think you were already married at that time when I, and Johann and Katharina threshed out oats in ‘dreischlag’ (“triple unison”) in fall in the cross-scheune (“threshing barn and haymow”) with the threshing flail. I don’t know how I got onto this theme. Where is the time [gone]? Nor has it even once come to mind to make accusations that I had to work too hard, for I enjoyed all of it so much. But what is it all in contrast to today? Totally nothing. But nonetheless I owe much thanks that it is as good as it is. I can still mend, read - I read much in the big *Martyrer Spiegel* - I can also go visiting sometimes when there is opportunity and I feel up to it -

and yet, the latter is too often lacking.”

Maria surveys her recent social activity: “Monday, Corn. Reimer drove me to the Peter R. Dücksche as he was going to Steinbach with ‘Rohr’. I had not been there already for almost two years. After dinner the two of us drove to their children, the Peter K. Dücken. For night I drove along to her place - things there are pretty much the same. The next day we again drove visiting together: first, to little Peter Klassens, then for dinner to Klaas D. Reimers, also for Vesper. Then also yet to the Mankies, where I had not even been once yet. We also wanted to go to the Hein. R. E. Reimers but they were not home and so we again drove to their house. The next day, Wednesday, it finally rained again. Then the Dücksche drove me to Steinbach. She also took the Rahm along and both of us wanted to go to the store, to H. Reimers. Here I wanted to wait until Reimers again came with Rahm and again take me here for dinner. We enjoyed the visiting. After dinner there was a funeral in the Bruderthaler church - cousin Corn. B. Loewen. I did not want to stay, and probably this is not unknown to you. Further, be informed that last week I had Corn. Reimers drive me to geschwister Abrah. Pletten, and both of us visited there. Hein. R. Loewens from Texas where there and so they had invited all the siblings, and they were all together once again including the sister Wohlgemuthsche and Cor. P. Wohlgemuth. Jakob Loewens from Hillsboro, also visited me lately.....”

Although Maria is clearly lonely from time to time, her diary reveals an active social life. The following are typical entries: “June 16, 1929, Sunday . . . Joh. P. Reimer and daughter Maria went to worship service in Steinbach together with D. Reimers. Pet. and David presented the Word. Pet. Reimers came here after dinner. June 30, after dinner Joh. P. Reimer and I drove to Prairie Rose for vesper at Peter F. Pletts, and after vesper to the young widower Peter A. K. Plett. Before noon, J. Reimer and I drove to the Doctor Kroecker. Later Joh. made alfalfa. Pet. was hauling manure at Pet. Duecks and I was knitting, the others were mowing and hoeing in the garden. July 10, 1929, Joh. R. went to Steinbach to have his grain chopped into feed. The Joh. Ungersche came after dinner and also Peter P. Reimers. I received money from them. In the evening Joh. Unger picked up his wife here. July 11 ...there was also a brotherhood meeting here. In the evening J. R. and D. Reimer drove to Steinbach. Mrs. Klaas R. E. Reimer was here. July 12,. . . I had Joh. Reimer take me to Jakob Pletts for dinner, I also stayed for dinner. In the evening Plett brought me home. Reimer went to Steinbach after dinner, and Mrs. Reimer was at D. Reimers.”

May 7, 1932, Maria again writes from the home of son Corn. P. Reimer. “Love inspires me to thank you for your letter.” She laments modestly, “If I could write good letters like yours I would also write more. But the health is not [good] enough and I lack ideas.”

“But one thing I know that I wish to become saved [blessed], may the Lord be merciful to me as sinner. Struggles I have in body and soul. I dearly wish to remain steadfast unto the end,” she adds with an honesty remarkable when compared to the spiritual arrogance (“Überheblichkeit”) often associated with modern religion cultures such as American Evangelicalism.

Maria provides another look at her community: "Yesterday, Corn. P. Reimer drove to Prairie Rose for a worship service. I only went [along] to David P. Reimers. After dinner there was to be a brotherhood in Grünfeld. The David Reimersche is completely confined to bed. In her thoughts she has won the victory, if it be the will of God on the 11th day of May to go to Winnipeg to the hospital....She already is in bed for 10 weeks."

"It is presently a busy time will all sorts [of things]: seeding, engagements, brotherhood - Saturday night there was also a brotherhood in Blumenort regarding holding Sunday Schools, and so suddenly I had a housefull of guests: J. K. L. Friesensche Maria, the Isaak Plettsche, Kl. R. Friesche, Corn. B. Loewensche, and the Abr. P. Reimersche - almost too unexpected...."

"Yesterday before noon, the Joh. Ungersche was here and after dinner Hein. Plett alone was also here. It is too infrequent for me....P. P. Reimers were here the 4th of May...Reimer was very quiet, things are very difficult. Oh, what a difficult and dangerous time we are experiencing here so that one could well become fearful and anxious."

It is evident that life was becoming more difficult for Maria as she reached her '80s, and eyesight and hearing became weaker and health in general declined. On February 8, 1933, she referred to the cold weather, "...today 31 degrees below, and then it takes until noon for me to feel warm....Nor do I want to complain too much. For we do not live to enjoy ourselves, but to work our salvation and brings all manner of crosses and tribulation. Indeed, things could certainly be even move difficult. We must follow the Saviour for what has He not suffered for us.

On May 9, 1933, she continues the letter commenting that she is "one day closer to the end." She is staying with son Abram and reports that, "Abr. P. Reimer drove along with P. K. Penner to Winnipeg with hogs, seven head. Yesterday, they both went to their children A. K. Penners." Maria keeps Cornelius informed regarding her deteriorating physical condition, "I cannot sing anymore, at times I can only barely talk out loud."

In Maria's next letter, March 28, 1933, the two get on the topic of visits and letters from brothers Abram and David, still active and vigorous farmers. In his previous letter Cornelius had noted that he finds Abr. L. Pletts letters too rare, to which Maria responds, "....I find it likewise with his visits, but David L. Plett, I have not seen at all since he is back from Kansas,...he is home already for three weeks. But [in this respect] I did not find Jak. L. Plett any better. I did not get to see him before he was in the coffin and that grieves me when the brothers make it like that and I feel too weak to go there to visit."

Maria again notes, "Although I have it very good, it is hard to sit like this one day after the other, it is very boring....My eyesight is also declining, but so far I can still see well enough to read, using an old pair of glasses."

Her letters and diary reveal Maria to be a prominent matriarch of Blumenort and the East Reserve. Much of the life in the community revolved around her, her children and extended family.



## Death, 1934.

Although she may have been weak and sometimes discouraged, she wrote her last letter to brother Cornelius on September 28, 1934, only a week before she died. The letter serves as a fitting tribute to this gallant pioneer:

“September 28, 1934

“To Cornelius L. Plett

“First of all a greeting, all the best to you. I will try to write something to you from my insignificance. Regrettably I have too little inspiration. I thought I had written you the last, but now I see that you have written last after all. It had occurred to me, whether you possibly could not write any more? I would be very sad if it should come to a complete halt for it was wonderful to receive such nice letters. Now, however, I hope to receive another shortly. I have posted my last letter on July 18 and received your last letter on August 4.

“The sun was shining again this morning but it looks like it will cloud over again. It has been cloudy and windy, and it has also snowed hard already. But the snow has disappeared again. It is already wet for the potatoes which are still in the ground. Some people got them into the cellar dry. But not John P. Reimers, and many others as well. Hopefully it will get nicer again and we will get some dryer weather or else the winter will seem far too long. This will appear strange to the people from Kansas, for now they have seen a real winter; for example, Klaas P. Reimers who were just here. He is very busy with his visiting; yesterday, he made the rounds visiting on the Heinrich Plettenhof, apparently two nights and a day. In spite of all this he has not seen all the Plett children yet, and today, he wants to do the rest. He said he this kept him busy, they were so hospitable.

“Yesterday, David P. Reimers were here together with Jakob E. Friesens from Garden [City] for coffee. Tomorrow they are going to P.P. Reimers. They have already been at H. Pletts. They are planning to drive to Morris tomorrow and then homewards in a week. A week ago we went to P. P. Reimers, which is already hard for me. But Mrs. Reimer has lost a lot of weight and often has to cough. But she did come out to the summer kitchen to eat.”

Maria Reimer never finished her letter. Her daughter, Maria, Mrs. John F. Unger, found the letter, added a little note, and sent it on its way to brother Cornelius in Kansas. The note reads: “Today, the 4th, mother is quite sick, and therefore, I, Mrs. Joh. Unger, will add a few lines and post this letter in the mail. Mother is seriously ill, and we have all just come here to see how she is doing. This is somewhat difficult for Mrs. [Peter P.] Reimer for she also is still quite sick. With a greeting from all of us who are here - Corn. P. Reimers are also here right now. *Ad je.*”

Two days later, October 6, 1934, Maria Reimer died peacefully at the home of children John P. Reimers where she was staying. After her death her sons, except Klaas who had already returned to Kansas, gathered around their mother. They put crossbars under the couch on which her body was lying and carried her across the field a quarter mile east to David P. Reimer's place - her home for half a century. Her body was kept in the ice house until the burial.

**Personal Glimpses:** Recollections by contemporaries, even physical descriptions, are of value in remembering our ancestors. In my research notes made in 1981, as I researched the *Plett Picture Book*, I recorded some of these observations.

It was said that Maria was a more reserved by nature than some of her brothers, especially Abram and David L. Plett who were talkative and outgoing individuals. Grandson Peter P. D. Reimer boarded with his grandparents in Blumenort for one year, 1904-5, while attending school. On February 25, 1981, he recalled that Abram L. Plett had a narrow face and of his brothers resembled Jakob L. Plett the most. Cornelius L. Plett, on the other hand, had a rounder face and resembled David L. Plett and Peter L. Plett. His grandmother, Maria L. Plett, also had more of a round face. She resembled her oldest sister Margaretha, Mrs. Franz M. Kroecker, considerably in physical appearance and was to have been quite attractive.

One granddaughter called me on August 8, 1981, to say that her grandmother had been ill and unable to help herself during the last 10 years of her life and in fact that she had often been quite "difficult."<sup>1087</sup> Granddaughter Mrs. Willy Dueck, nee Elizabeth Plett, Arborg, Manitoba, recalled seeing Maria sitting on her rocker and wearing a black crocheted hair net as her head covering. We are fortunate to have a fairly good photograph of Maria Reimer taken in 1931 by grandson John R. Unger making it easier to picture her as a person.

Peter P. D. Reimer recalled that Peter R. Reimer was resembled by grandson Ben A. Reimer. Of the sons, Peter P. Reimer took more after his mother, while John looked the most like his father. On December 1, 1981, Peter P. D. Reimer indicated his grandfather was a little hollow-chested like son Abram P. Reimer. This is not necessarily very complimentary, but presumably it means that Peter R. Reimer was slim and lithe of stature. Son John resembled him in height and shape, he also had a bit of a round "Reimer" stomach or pot.<sup>1088</sup>

On August 22, 1981, grandson John R. Unger recalled little specifically of Peter R. Reimer. He did remember one incident when his brother Peter had a thorn stuck in his leg and no one felt competent to pull it out, and then his grandfather had done it. Another incident was an occasion in evening church in the summer of 1915 when his grandfather had "Vorgesaegt" or recited for the traditional *a cappella* congregational singing, the song "Wo Willst du Sein Wenn es Abend ist." John R. Unger also recalled that Peter R. Reimer was receptive of people and a warm and loving man as were his sons Peter and David.

I have always had a sense that Peter R. Reimer was a meditative and reflective man, and yet a man of considerable energy and drive. Coupled with this, he also had a somewhat melancholy nature. Daughter Elisabeth Plett had once related that Peter R. Reimer had sometimes been discouraged in his older years.<sup>1089</sup>

It should be remembered that while distant memories, such as those of grandchildren, may be helpful in describing our forebears, they may well portray people in their least favourable light.

**Conclusions:** If the rags to riches financial success of older brothers Abraham and Klaas R. Reimer can be compared to Horatio Algier, then the life's story of Peter R. Reimer is perhaps comparable to the journey of the pilgrim in the Pieter Pieter's book, *Der Weg Nach Friedenstadt* ("The Road to the City of Peace"). It is clear that spiritual matters were uppermost in the minds of these sturdy pioneers. Peter Reimer represented the continuation of a writing tradition as seen in the diaries of his father, Abraham F. Reimer, and the sermons, letters and autobiography of grandfather Klaas Reimer, founder of the Kleine Gemeinde. They were men who expressed themselves well, probably better than any generation until the current university educated one.

While brothers Klaas and Abraham - being older - had already made significant financial progress before leaving Russia, Peter, undertook expansion and major risks at age 57.

The story of Elisabeth Friesen Reimer, Peter's first wife, speaks for the thousands of pioneer women who died young without leaving a voice or a written imprint for posterity. Through her only daughter, Elisabeth, Mrs. Heinrich E. Plett, she has left for posterity, a large number of descendants, almost equal to that of Maria, who had eight married children.

Maria Plett Reimer was a resolute pioneer woman of great strength and fortitude. She was willing to question and come to her own conclusions regarding the important decisions which affected her life. Maria Reimer played a significant role in the history of her community - as wife of a leading minister, as mother of eight prominent children including two Bishops, but also very much in her own right, as the matriarch of Blumenort and an extended family.

Through her diaries and letters, Maria was also an important chronicler of our history providing a unique perspective of the community. Where males might have focused on the number of acres everyone was farming, the make and model of their tractors, and, perhaps, how much money they were making, Maria noted the human faces of those around her, seeing health and happiness, disease and sorrow, the zest of children and young people, and certainly, the woes of aging. Her life world was based on the enduring spiritual values and mores of her people, which she fiercely defended albeit with the unofficial shards of power so skilfully managed by women of her stature. Not the least, her writings provide important information about pioneer women in Western Canada. This is something we can all recognize and be proud of.

5 Daughter **Maria Plett Reimer** (1850-1934), by Dr. Gerhard Reimer, Department of Foreign Languages, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, 46526, presented at the Peter R. and Maria Plett Reimer family gathering at Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, July 25, 1993.<sup>1090</sup>

**Introduction:** All of us here today have come because we are interested in our identity as it has been formed and is still being formed because of our ancestral heritage. Those who do not have a heritage with which to identify often experience this as a great void in their lives. In an unusual manner, for example, the American Blacks have long suffered because of this void, and for someone like Alex Haley to go to Africa and find his roots there - finding real relatives, this had tremendous meaning. Sometimes one also sees this in the case of adopted children who really want to find their biological parents, even though they are surrounded by a most loving adoptive family. So we are here today to learn more about our heritage, to develop our identity and to be surrounded by our family.

For me my two grandmothers have been a great source of interest and inspiration because they are the only two of my ancestors of their generation whom I remember personally; both my grandfathers died long before I was born. Thus these two women, although even in my childish memory very different in the expression of their interests and in their womanhood, are the personal and immediate link to my heritage and to my identity as no one else can be.

On this occasion, then, I want to pay a tribute to my Grandma Maria Reimer, to reflect on her life and person and on the values which have come to succeeding generations because of her faithfulness and others like her of the community to which she pledged her loyalty.

I do not wish to go into a historical account of her life - Delbert Plett has already done that in an exemplary manner - but rather dwell on some impressions and ideas. My immediate impression is that she must have been a brave and fearless woman. She was born in Imperial Russian (today the Ukraine) in 1850. She was married at age 22, after having turned another suitor away earlier. This husband of hers, Peter Reimer, bringing his small daughter into the marriage, had been widowed only for a month. Maria's first child was born about a year after the wedding. At age 23, leaving her parents behind for the time being, she leaves for Canada with her husband, daughter Elisabeth, and her baby, who is quite ill. The baby daughter dies on the long journey and is buried at sea. They arrive in Manitoba towards the beginning of fall, and makeshift housing for the rapidly approaching severe winter crowds them into a *semelin*, probably together with their few animals. Another pregnancy and delivery in the new country at age 24. All of this at an age when many of her descendants today are still finishing their education.

I often wonder what she, at age 25, would have said if I would have asked her: "But Grandma, why are you doing this when you could have continued a fairly comfortable existence at home? Couldn't you have chosen an easier life?" She would certainly not have tried to impress me with a profound theological statement. She would probably have replied confidently and quietly: "I believe this is right and I want to be faithful - and God has promised that he will not

forsake us.”

Inasmuch as I was only six years old, my memories of Grandma Reimer are very much based on sensual perceptions rather than on conversations with her. It seems to me she had a rather round face. She always wore her black lace cap tied under her chin, and an apron from the waist down over her dress. Her rocker had a special squeak when she gently rocked back and forth. And when you snuggled up to her a bit she felt comfy and soft (*mollich*). Her possessions were few at that time, which made it easy for her to move from one of her children to the other -and she preferred this to living in a house built just for her. The only larger objects she would always take with her, as I remember, were her bed, her rocker, and that wonderful large maroon-coloured Russian chest, with the three shiny brass buttons on top and some colourful pictures pasted into the inside of the lid.

She had lived at our house for quite a while just prior to her death and had then gone to live with uncle John Reimer and his family. I think I was at her bed the evening before her death, and the next morning four of her sons, my father David, John, Peter and Abram, I believe, carried her body the quarter mile across the field over to our place, where it was laid on the floor of our small ice house. Wide boards were gotten, I imagine from Heinrich Pletts, and a plain coffin was built in our workshop, as I remember. This was covered with black cloth and lined with white. Aunt Maria Unger came to prepare the body for the funeral, at least she was there and seemed to be in charge of all the preparations. Following Grandma's request, she was dressed in white to meet her heavenly bridegroom. It was not quite customary in that community [anymore] to dress the body in white for burial, but this was probably an expression of her independence. These are about all the memories I have of her, interpreted somewhat from my present perspective.

**Diary 1929-1931:** Recently I read through an old diary of hers, which she kept from 1929 to 1932, and this has given me some new insights into her as a person and into her life. She wrote about four to eight lines each day and followed a kind of a formula, always beginning with the temperature on the Remur scale and the weather conditions. It is almost strictly factual and is written in a very acceptable High German, with a good vocabulary, although her grammar shows the influence of her Low German. Spelling and capitalization are quite accurate. During these approximately four years she lived by turns with five of her children, my uncles and an aunt: Johan, Abram, Cornelius and Maria. My sister, Justina Penner, says that she was very *nieschierig* (curious). Even though a woman of her age must have spent a lot of time in her rocker in those days, she was very much aware of what was going on in the family with whom she lived and in her community, it seems. Here are some of the details gleaned from her diary, many are recurring themes:

\*Every Sunday she mentions the location of the church service and who taught (preached), this, in spite of the fact, that she herself did not seem to attend church anymore at her age.

\*She also always mentions the Bruderschaften, the male membership meetings of the church, and sometimes she mentioned a bit about the agenda, e.g.,

that the ban was lifted on a member who had struggled.

\*There is always a list of visitors. There were many visitors, even throughout the week, and sometimes they would stay overnight. On the few Sundays when no one stopped in she might write "*beute keine Gaste*" (no visitors today).

\*Sickness in the family is mentioned; more serious illnesses and deaths in the community, sometimes including those of the English-speaking Clearsprings neighbours, are also mentioned.

\*Farm work and taking grain, potatoes and livestock to market occupy an important place; sometimes she mentions the market price, also calving and farrowing, once it was eight piglets.

\*Women's work is mentioned, but much less frequently than men's work, e.g. "*beute wurde gewaschen*" (today was washday).

\*Births of her grandchildren and in some cases her great grandchildren are referred to, actually only suggested, and at first it may slip past the present-day reader. On the day of my sister Sarah's birth she simply writes: *Um halb 6 Uhr fuhr Job Reimer die Pet B. Towsche nach D Reimers holen* (At 5:30 pm Johann Reimer went to fetch Mrs. Peter B. Toews to David Reimers). This is simply a report of the procedure followed when a woman's time had come: A male relative or neighbour, here my uncle Johann, would go and fetch the midwife, here Mrs. Toews, while the father of the expected child stayed home with his wife. There is no mention in the entry of that date or any later date about the ease or difficulty of the birth or even of the name of the baby or its gender. The identical pattern is followed for several other births.

\*Reports on communal work efforts, especially hog butchering, are important.

\*There are a number of references to travels of family and community people, e.g., trips to Kansas or the names of community men who went scouting for new settlement opportunities, e.g., in Quebec.

\*One of the special events mentioned is an all-day outing to Whitemouth (she writes *Weitmaut*) she went on, at age 79, to pick blueberries and afterwards to catch fish.

\*She also mentions strangers who come to the house, like the Rawleigh man, or the three Russians who are travelling by and can not continue because of the blizzard and stay overnight.

While it is fascinating to attempt to reconstruct Grandma's world on the basis of her diary, it is also interesting to reflect on what she does not write about:

\*There is essentially no mention of the events in the big outside world; these are the years of the depression following the stock market crash and Stalin's reign of terror in the old homeland.

\*Personal or subjective thoughts, statements having to do with convictions or belief, are excluded (although in her letters this is certainly not the case). This also includes an absence of value judgements. An example of this: One family thinks of leaving the Kleingemeinde to join the EMB (Brüdertaler), which would have been rather controversial in those days, I believe. She simply reports: *Wieben ...haben lust...sich bei die Brudertaler zu begeben* (Wiebes would like to join the

Brüdertaler).

\*Only twice in her entries of these years does she refer to her own physical well-being or lack thereof, once with “*mir ist eng*” (I have difficulty breathing) and another time, “*mir ist der Kopfschlecht heute*” (my head feels bad today). And yet one of my sisters, who remembers her better than I do, says that she was normally not loathe to talk about her health.

Some other interesting points from the diary:

\*A lot of her getting around in those years (1929-1932) seems to have been by car already, although when the women would go by themselves she does mention going by horse.

\*As a linguist I was interested in her use of English words and her (sometimes) creative spelling of these: Swietklower, Demokrat (a buggy with a double front seat and a short flat bed behind it for carrying a load), Buggi, Farm, kultiwathern, Stoor (store), Miething.

**Ancestral Values:** After reflecting on Grandma’s life and times, I would now like to mention some of the values that I believe have come down from my ancestors through people like my grandmother and which our larger family has tried to pass on to us. Often these values were passed on more by personal living and example than by oral teaching; you developed a feeling in your bones that something was right or proper or that it was not. Some of these values are:

\*A faith in God that will manifest itself in a desire to freely follow the way of Jesus, even if it means suffering because of it, as in accounts in the *Martyr Spiegel*.

\*Taking the simple life for granted. Often, of course, this was dictated by poverty. The simple life did not necessarily mean not having time to celebrate; it is good to share delicious food, to enjoy new clothing, to relish visiting.

\*Honesty. “Let your yea be yea, your nay, nay.” We heard that at home, in church and in school, and saw it modelled.

\*Importance of work. “Wer nicht arbeiten will, der soll auch nicht essen” (If you don’t want to work, you shouldn’t eat). It was a parent’s duty to teach a child to work and even youngsters were given responsibilities.

\*The importance of hospitality. Any guest, anyone that comes to the door, may be an angel in disguise. I remember that my mother fed and kept overnight salesmen coming from Winnipeg by horse, and in the forties, when the government chicken inspectors came out to test our flocks, she would cook an especially good noon meal for them. And then there were frequently people from the community and others who needed what today might be called “respite care” staying at our house for a week or a month.

\*Respect for life. It was wrong to hurt or kill another human being. Having “dominion” over the animal kingdom gave us the right to kill animals for use or to destroy them if they became a problem, but this needed to be done in a manner that would be as painless as possible to the animals.

\*Inclusiveness in the bigger extended family. There was a place for everyone, male and female, of different interests and abilities, and each child was

considered a gift from God. We never felt unwanted, even though we went through some lean years and one could have considered that extra mouth to feed. There were always cousins to play with, uncles and aunts to tease you and give you a big penny or a hanky for Christmas and later to follow you with interest and concern as you grew up.

\*A kind of respect for learning. I do not mean learning for its own sake, but acquiring the ability to say or write something in an appropriate manner, "being good with numbers" or understanding some of the basic laws of nature.

You may think of other values, other ways in which our family heritage has enriched us, helped us to become what we are. But I believe all of us have reason to be thankful for the good ways in which the Reimer family has influenced us.

**Conclusion:** If the embracing of each other we have learned in our families, the caring for each other, is not confined only to our blood families, but includes all humankind, then our own family heritage - while we realize that there are many other families with a great heritage - will strengthen us in all our work, in our ministry and in our professional life.

I would like to close with a quotation from the great German writer Goethe: "Was du ererbt von deinen Vatern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen," (Faust, 11. 680/1) ("Whatever inheritance your ancestors left you, take possession of it, so that it may be your very own").

May this inheritance, this heritage, continue to be passed on from generation to generation! "Gerhard Reimer" July 25, 1993.



*The Peter R. Reimer house built in the "old" Blumenort village in 1888 and moved to the SE28-7-6E in 1910. The house was used by son David P. Reimer until 1949. Photo - Blumenort, page 69.*



<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Maria L. Plett</b>	Dec 29,1850		Oct 6,1934
m	Peter R. Reimer	Dec 29,1845	Jul 8,1873	Nov 10,1915
6	Sarah P. Reimer	Jun 12,1874		Aug 2,1874
6	Maria P. Reimer	Jun 30,1875	Jan 13,1895	Jan 17,1955
m	Johann F. Unger	Apr 29,1866		Apr 25,1938
2m	Heinrich W. Brandt	Sep 23,1867	Aug 6,1939	Feb 22,1942
6	Peter P. Reimer	Jun 29,1877		Apr 8,1949
m	Elisabeth Dueck	Nov 23,1876	Feb 27,1898	Feb 8,1935
2m	Anna Dueck	Nov 12,1883	May 12,1935	Feb 2,1939
3m	Margaretha Fast	Mar 12,1889	Apr 30,1939	Apr 11,1984
6	Abraham P. Reimer	Feb 21,1879		Feb 21,1879
6	Cornelius P. Reimer	Jun 30,1880	May 13,1946	May 13,1946
m	Anna Schellenberg	Mar 10,1880	Nov 16,1902	Oct 23,1903
2m	Maria D. Reimer	Aug 12,1885	Jan 18,1904	Dec 25,1958
6	Abraham P. Reimer	Feb 14,1882		May 17,1961
m	Anna R. Dueck	Oct 14,1883	Apr 12,1903	Mar 21,1964
6	Klaas P. Reimer	Jan 10,1884		Jan 10,1884
6	Klaas P. Reimer	Sep 7,1885		Sep 7,1885
6	Sarah P. Reimer	Apr 25,1887	Aug 24,1913	Oct 14,1971
m	Johann G. Barkman	Aug 13,1887		Oct 17,1982
6	Johann P. Reimer	Oct 31,1888	Apr 14,1910	Mar 22,1963
m	Katharina W. Brandt	Jul 11,1885		Sep 8,1962
6	Klaas P. Reimer	Jan 5,1890	Jul 14,1912	Sep 13,1964
m	Anna B. Reimer	Dec 12,1888		Feb 24,1967
6	David P. Reimer	Jun 13,1894	Jun 13,1894	Jul 3,1963
m	Justina U. Brandt	Dec 7,1890		Jun 16,1966

6 Daughter **Maria Plett Reimer** (1875-1955) married Johann F. Unger, son of Peter H. Unger of Blumenhof, Manitoba. They started farming on the gravel ridge on the SE 25-7-6E. In 1904 they sold this farm to his brother Cornelius and purchased the SW 23-7-6E from his uncle Gottlieb Jahnke who had moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan. The Blumenhof farms came with a 20 acre woodlot on NW36-7-6E and having kept the woodlot parcel from the previous farm, the Ungers now had two. According to the 1906 assessment records, the Ungers had a sizeable farm, with 95 cultivated acres and six milk cows. In 1915 they purchased the adjoining northwest quarter from Aron W. Reimers who were joining the Holdeman emigration to Littlefield, Texas. They were now farming 205 cultivated acres and milking 12 cows.

Daughter Sara Loewen has written: "They did quite well until the depression years. Money was very scarce but we always had food and clothes in spite of that. I remember quite well how father would say to us, 'I do not have money for that' when we came begging for things we thought we needed. I am sure his judgement was better than ours. The farm produced enough food for us, plus some to sell, so that shoes and material for clothes could be bought. Dad kept several sheep, which supplied wool for mother to spin into yarn for socks, sweaters, etc. It took a lot to supply such a large family."<sup>1091</sup>

Johann F. Unger was the postmaster of the Clearsprings Post Office for nine months in 1915. Daughter Sara writes: "I remember that we had the post office in our house for a while. It was mostly my sister Mary's job to look after it."

Johann served as church trustee together with Abraham L. Plett and Heinrich E. Plett when land was acquired from Heinrich E. Plett on SE27-7-6E in 1918 for the new Blumenort church. Johann F. Unger, Peter F. Unger and Abraham L. Plett were in charge of the construction.<sup>1092</sup>

Johann F. Unger served as Brandschultz for many years and in 1918 he was elected as Brandältester of the Kleine Gemeinde East Reserve Brandordnung replacing Abram Penner Sr. Historian Royden Loewen has described the responsibilities and methods Johann used in fulfilling his important position: "He served in this capacity until he died 22 years later. He is remembered as a meticulous man who could sense the value of buildings as well as the cause of the fire. On one occasion he suspected strongly that the cause of the fire was arson by the owner who needed cash. Unger also sensed that the right thing to do would be to pay out the insurance and wait for the power of conscience to take its course. As he expected the owner of the buildings was on the Unger yard within a week to confess and return the money."<sup>1093</sup>

Daughter Sara Loewen has written: "Father was well accepted in the community, servings on various committees. For a while he held the position of chief executive of the Mennonite Mutual Fire Insurance, or 'Brant-ältesta,' as he was called. He also acted as district veterinarian and was often called upon for help in that line. He would rather walk, than hitching up to ride, provided that the distance was not much over a mile. He was a fast walker, I admit."

Johann F. Unger enjoyed fairly good health until he was almost 72 years of age, although he had a weak heart. He died of a heart failure on April 25, 1938.

Daughter Sara writes: "About two weeks before he passed away, he went to the field to pick up a trailer load of clover sheaves. While putting them up in the hayloft he slipped, fell and injured his hip quite badly. He was confined to bed for a few weeks. Mr. Friesen from Grunthal was called to set it right, which he did. It was so painful for Dad that he lost consciousness and never regained it again." After Johann's death, Maria traded the SW23-7-6E with the farmyard and buildings for the NE16-7-6E with third eldest daughter, Elisabeth Unger, and her husband, Isaak F. Loewen, who then took over the family farm. She lived here until her second marriage to widower Heinrich Brandt of Rosenort. When he died in 1942, Maria returned to the Blumenort district and lived on a few acres of bushland approximately where the school is located today. She lived there until her death of a heart attack in 1955.

Daughter Sara Loewen has written: "Both Maria and Johann were fond of and good with children. Maria on several occasions took in a baby when it needed nursing and its own mother was sick or had passed away. On one occasion it was [nephew] Cornelius S. Reimer, infant son of C. P. Reimers, another time it was Sara Friesen, daughter of C. F. Friesens."<sup>1094</sup>

She enjoyed spinning and dying wool yarn of which she did a lot for others during her widowhood. Daughter Sara writes: "Mother spun a lot of wool for knitting and sold most of it. She also knitted socks, sweaters, toques and countless pairs of gloves and mitts. She was also an excellent rug-maker, braiding the strips and crocheting them. Mother was fairly healthy except for a period of time after she had suffered a severe attack of pneumonia, from which she recuperated rather slowly. For a time she could not do much gardening, which she missed very much, having always enjoyed it so much. She was a good cook; I still remember the stacks of waffles she would bake, while her large family devoured them with pleasure in short order."

Maria Reimer Unger served as a midwife for the Blumenhof, Blumenort, and Greenland districts. Daughter Sara writes that: "[Maria]...was also a good midwife, being called to assist even after most women went to the hospital to have their babies." In another place Sara wrote: "Father was a good babysitter. He loved children and they loved him, too. He often had to take care of his own little ones when Mother was called away to act as a midwife. Quite often he would take her to a place for such an event during the night, come back home, and in the morning start breakfast for us and get things going."

Historian Royden Loewen has written a biography of Maria Reimer Unger: "By 1919, the year of this diary, Maria and Johann had come to represent a prominent Blumenhof-district farm family. As the diary notes, both Maria and Johann were active in the community; Johann was the local Mennonite Brandschultz (fire-insurance agency commissioner) and Maria was a respected midwife. Their eldest daughter, Maria, was a single schoolteacher who lived at home occasionally (she married local farmer Peter F. Wiebe in March 1920). Justina was married to Peter K. Dueck, the son of Ältester Peter R. Dueck of Steinbach..., and lived close to her in-laws, south of Steinbach, but continued to visit her parents regularly, an event usually designated in Maria's diary as a visit

from “Peter Duecks”. Sons Johann Jr. and Peter, 17 and 13 respectively, handled many of the heavy chores on the farm. Daughters Elisabeth, 19, Anna, 16 and Tina, 14, assisted their mother at every turn, both with housekeeping and with the work of the farm. Finally, there were the five younger children, ages 10 years to one year - Sara, Lena, Cornelius, Abraham, and Greta - who were mentioned less frequently in Maria’s diary.”

“Maria Unger lived in a tightly-knit community, ordered by the congregational boundaries of the Kleine Gemeinde Church. It was an identity that she cherished, even employing the term ‘uncle’ to identify church leaders. And on Sundays, when the rotating church services were held in Blumenort, the regional church district to which Blumenhof belonged, the Ungers hosted many couples from within the wider congregation, most of whom were not close kin. Such congregational networks alerted her to the news of death, illness, marriage, and birth in Blumenort, Steinbach, Grünfeld, and Rosenort. Only occasionally were other Mennonite churches mentioned. One exception in 1919 was the allusion on 9 March to Aeltester Wahl, an Old Colonist Mennonite, who was preaching in Steinbach. Another exception was the close relationship the Ungers had with the family of Gottlieb and Helena Jahnke, who had joined the Chortitzer Mennonite Church after Gottlieb married his deceased wife’s sister in 1877, an act forbidden by the Kleine Gemeinde until 1913. Maria recorded Helena’s (‘the dear aunt Mrs. Jahnke’) death on September 8.”

“The diary also refers to the almost daily visits and social activities with both Maria’s extended Reimer and Plett clans and Johann’s Unger and even more extensive Friesen families. Historian Royden Loewen has noted: “Thus, even names that do not bear [these]...names, such as Cornelius Siemens, Johann J. Loewen, Johann Klassen and Ältester Peter Dueck, refer to households in which the women were first cousins of Maria. Moreover the name Wohlgemuth referred to Maria’s aunt and Cornelius Kroeker to a cousin.”

Royden Loewen refers also to Maria’s more immediate family as well as her wider life world: “Finally in 1919, Maria had 57 nieces and nephews, most of whom lived within six kilometers of the Unger household. A final anchor of the Unger household was ‘Grandmother’, or Grossmutterchen, as Maria wrote it; this was her widowed mother, Maria Plett Reimer, 69, at this time in residence at her son David P. Reimer’s farm, two kilometers away. In other years, Grossmutterchen lived with the Ungers.”

“Maria was in touch with a wider world, too, noting frequent market related trips to the train depot, Giroux, seven kilometers to the east, and to the larger market, further a field, in Winnipeg. A few non-Mennonites were encountered from her home; a Mr. Halles, and Tom Mooney, a neighbor, dropped by for visits. Although Maria’s world was a German one, there are hints of an encroaching English world. They are found in the names of the cows - Bonni, Gerti, Flora - and in English designations such as zement (cement), mikzer (mixer), stohr (store), lamm (lamb), miting or mieting (meeting), zeiding (siding), traktor (tractor), telephon (telephone) and lods (loads).”

Maria’s diary for 1919 was published in 1999.<sup>1095</sup> An analysis and descrip-

tion of the diary was provided by historian Royden Loewen in 1993.<sup>1096</sup>

Maria and Johann F. Unger also wrote letters to her uncle C. L. Plett in Satanta, Kansas, of which two are extant. In the letter of February 17, 1932, Johann opens, "With a heartfelt greeting of love." He notes his "great incompetence to write letters and so I gladly leave this for my wife, but since you [C.L.Plett] have sent us such a nice letter I cannot but reply with a small token of life and love." Referring to various of C. L. Plett's letters he has read among the local relatives, he adds, "It is a great gift of God when a person can get so old and then can be of sound mind and faith." Johann refers to spiritual conditions and that, "Unfortunately many people no longer wish to be governed by the Word of God but by their own will and nature and yet believe thereby to be good Christians, on such the labours, as it appears, are in vain." He expresses concerns regarding the battle for the Gemeinde, "With the spiritual work it is very difficult here. It is the way the poet says, 'Everything is laid waste in the entire Christendom, faith and love are extinguished as it was during Noah's time...' It is very difficult for the teachers [ministers] who are striving to do right but, [it seems] that their work is always brought to shame." The Ungers have been in Satanta visiting and Johann notes with satisfaction, uncle C.L. Plett's comment that "...this has freshened up [the old love]." Maria added a small note to her husband's letter: "Since my man has written to uncle, I will also write something insignificant and add it to the letter." She refers to their health and that "my man has considerable rheumatism in his body but when it gets nicer outside, he also feels better." Abram P. Reimers' "Elisabeth is in the hospital....She has a cyst in her thigh deep in the flesh but as we hear she will be home by Sunday...."

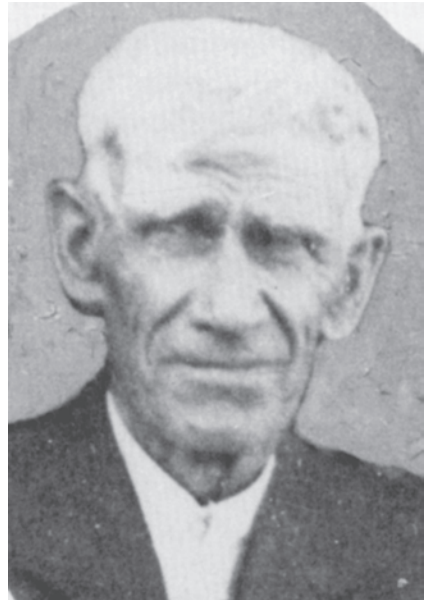
The second letter of October 29, 1933, was written by Maria. She writes about the recent baptisms in the church in Steinbach, "One was a man for he was Gerhard Froese and his wife, who were received [into the Gemeinde] after the baptism. But since the car was already full we decided not to go." Maria describes at some length the illness and death of cousin and neighbour, Katharina Plett (daughter of Johann L.): "Thursday, Katharina was buried and we had very cold wind and overcast weather. Tien was actually not severely ill for very long. For she was only confined strictly to bed for three days, but she sat in the rocking chair day and night for over a year, and it became quite difficult. I think it will seem quite empty for Enns' [Katharina's sister]. She was here at our place Friday after the funeral and lamented that she possibly should have done this thing or the other differently for she had so much compassion for the sister. According to our view, she has given so much for the sick, also Tina was easily satisfied. Nevertheless, she had to suffer - her leg was swollen and blue and toward the end they got thin and the sickness went inside. She was in bed from Sunday until Tuesday, at half eight o'clock in the morning when she peacefully fell asleep, where she will rest eternally.....Of my brother Abraham Reimer I must report that he had a severe accident while bringing a bull into the barn. But the bull wanted to run into the bush and the long rope wound around his leg and [he was] pulled until he struck a tree and got loose." The end of the letter is missing.

Johann and Maria had 13 children of whom 11 survived to marry and raise a family. Maria spent the last year of her life, in the Rest Haven Nursing Home, from where she was taken to Bethesda Hospital after having suffered a stroke. She passed away after about 10 days in the hospital. She was a loving mother and concerned about the soul's salvation of her children, praying much for them.

7 Son **John R. Unger** was well known as a Steinbach barber. Daughter **Justina Unger** married Peter K. Dueck and became a well-known chiropractor. Daughter **Elisabeth Unger** married Isaac F. Loewen and they took over the paternal farm. Their son John U. Loewen, in turn, took over the farm after their retirement and became Reeve of the R. M. of Hanover during the 1970s. Daughter **Katherina Unger** married Jakob F. Loewen. They farmed in Neuanlage (Twin creek). Jakob served for many years as a Councillor of the R. M. of Hanover.



*Maria and Jobann F Unger sitting on their front porch. Photo - Unger....Family Record, page Job-1.*



*John F. Unger, "Brandältester." Photo - Blumenort, page 448.*



*The farmyard of Jobann F Ungers in Blumenbof, three miles north of Steinbach. Photo - John R. Unger, 1917. Compare with photo in Unger....Family Record, page Job-5.*

6 Son **Peter Plett Reimer** (1877-1949) married Elisabeth Dueck, daughter of minister Jakob L. Dueck of Grünfeld, Manitoba. Son Ben P. D. Reimer has written: "Although ....[Peter P. Reimer] was not a big man physically, he had big ambitions for farming, especially after he was married."

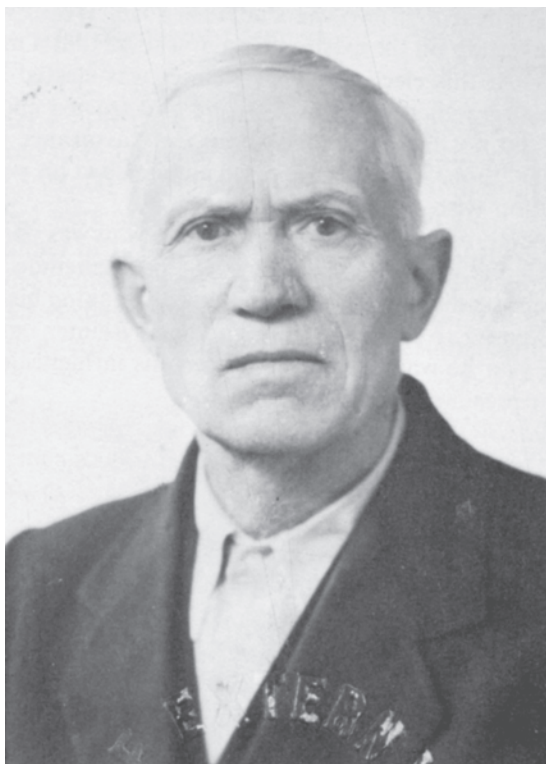
"At the time when he wished to get married, he gathered his courage, and asked his father to go to a certain household to ask for permission to marry the daughter. If the girl would not have consented, then father would have needed to summon even more courage for a second try. Was he ever glad when his father came and said the girl, Elisabeth Dueck, was willing to marry him...."<sup>1097</sup>

His third wife, Margaretha Fast Reimer has described some of Peter P. Reimer's earlier experiences: "Since he was the oldest son in the family, he also shared with his parents a good deal of the difficulties of the pioneer years. As a 9-year-old boy he was struck by a hard blow from a horses' hoof in his lower body, which occasioned severe pain, so that on one occasion his father united with him in an earnest prayer since his suffering threatened to overwhelm him. Through the declining suffering he heard - for the first time - a definite answer to prayer."

"In his 16th or 17th year, he went through a great soul anguish (Seelenangst), which lasted for several months, during which time his father frequently comforted him, and often prayed for him. In later years he frequently reiterated that such anxiety was probably the greatest suffering which a person in could experience in this life."

"In his 20th year....[Peter P. Reimer] received the Holy Baptism, upon the confession of his sins and his faith in Jesus Christ which was officiated on July 12, 1896, by Ältester Abraham Dueck."

"In the year 1898 he found in sister Elisabeth Dueck, Kleefeld, a life's companion, with whom he appeared before the altar of matrimony on February 27, and where Rev. Johann K. Friesen then served them with the betrothal in Steinbach. Twelve children were born to them of this marriage, of whom one pair of twins died shortly after birth. Daughter Maria (who was married for the first time to Bro. Peter K. Klassen, who died on June 21, 1921, and in the second marriage with Bro. Jakob U. Kornelsen) predeceased him on December 1, 1947."<sup>1098</sup>



*Ältester Peter P. Reimer, 1948 passport picture. Photo Blumenort, page 422.*

## **Farming.**

Peter P. Reimer and Elisabeth R. Dueck farmed in the old Blumenort village for six years. In 1904 they purchased the north half of Section 9-7-6E, one mile northwest of Steinbach, together with the brothers-in-law Peter B. Kroeker and Heinrich R. Reimer, where they farmed. Peter's wife and the wives of Reimer and Kroeker were cousins. The 320 acres was divided into three 120 acre parcels a mile deep, of which Peter P. Reimer had the middle. In the school year of 1904 to 1905, son Peter P. D. Reimer boarded at his grandparents, Peter R. Reimers, in Blumenort to attend school there. He remembered attending school with uncle David P. Reimer who was only four years older. After this year, Twincreek had its own school and he finished his education there.

In 1908 Peter P. Reimer bought the NE17-7-6E in Neuanlage, or Twincreek as it came to be known, from the Peter B. Koops who were moving to Herbert, Saskatchewan. At much the same time they bought 37 acres on NW8-8-6E, originally Hudson Bay land. Later they also bought the NW28-7-6E from a Winnipeg real estate company. Many years earlier this land had been owned by "Grote" Toews. In 1936 son Ben and Peter P. D. Reimer each bought 40 acres of this land and established their own farms. Son-in-law Henry P. Brandt later bought the south half of NW28-7-6E.

In addition they had 80 acres of land in Chortitz which had been purchased at the time of the emigration in 1926 and broken up for cultivation. They had a mixed farm with an average dairy milking 10 cows.

From 1900 to 1926 Peter P. Reimer was involved with the partnership "Plett and Reimer" with brother-in-law Heinrich E. Plett, operating a steam engine threshing company. Their first steam engine was a two-cylinder Watrous 15/30 acquired in about 1904. After the dissolution of the Blumenort village in 1910, the Plett and Reimer steam shed was relocated to the Peter P. Reimer farm in Neuanlage, just to the north of the yard.

In 1915 they purchased a new Case 25/75 and for some time the partnership operated both machines and did custom plowing and threshing in Blumenort, Neuanlage, Greenland and other districts. In addition one of their specialties was the moving of houses and their biggest job was moving the Blumenort village buildings to the individual farmsteads in 1910. Son Peter P. D. Reimer believed that the Watrous was later purchased by Joh. F. Unger and Jak. U. Kornelsen for their private use<sup>1099</sup> Plett and Reimer continued operating the Case on a bigger scale doing custom threshing from harvest until the end of November. Son Peter P. D. Reimer remembered that in 1918 they threshed into the beginning of December. They finished around Blumenort first, then moved to Greenland and then the people from Lorette came and pleaded for them to help them finish their harvest. One year, when he was fireman, they threshed for 60 days not counting Sundays and rainy days. The last customer, uncle Johann P. Reimer, was finished on October 31, a beautiful day although there were thunderstorms to the south.

Peter P. Reimer "...was the boss of the Plett and Reimer Co."<sup>1100</sup> He very much enjoyed the steam engine business. He also had a blacksmith shop and did a lot of blacksmith work.



### **Elisabeth Dueck Reimer, 1898.**

For 37 years Elisabeth Dueck Reimer stood by her husband's side in the operation and management of the farm and in his role as minister and pastor (Ältester). In her last months she developed a severe shaking in her right hand from which she became very tired. Elizabeth passed away on February 8, 1935, at the age of 58.

The following obituary of Elisabeth Dueck Reimer's was written by daughter Elisabeth, Mrs. Henry P. Brandt: "The life of my mother: By nature, mother was a quiet and industrious woman. In her youth, she was somewhat plump and generally healthy. Her life was not without difficulties, so that she would likely have said, 'If there was a pleasant moment, then it also came with much hard work.' While there were no particular illnesses in the family, there were, of course, a few mishaps. One of the worst involved the oldest daughter, Maria, who at the age of 15 had a bad fall on the ice. This meant that she had to be cared for the rest of the winter (instead of her helping mother). This was a hard winter for the parents."

"It was a difficult winter for mother. Grandmother (on mother's side) died at our house. Then on the morning of Jan. 14, 1926, we got a phone call telling us that a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jacob P. D. Reimer had passed away. On this same day in the afternoon, dad was elected as a bishop. For mother this was almost too much, in any case she was a sensitive woman who felt the burden of these pains very keenly."

"In earlier years, when the children were small, father spent much of his time away from home. During winter he often was away working in the woods, and in summer or fall he led a threshing crew, at which time they often worked late into the nights."

"In the last years mother was not well and as a result she lost a lot of weight. During this time she also came into periods of heavy coughing and a little later she developed a severe shaking of the right hand. However, during this period of illness she always remained patient and loving."

"Although she kept getting weaker all the time, in one of her last days she went to the barn and indicated the pleasure that the farm was for her. Yet, when she did pass away, it seemed to us to be very quickly. But to her the last hours seemed very long, so that at one point she said, 'Wann schlaegt die Stunde, Ach wann darf ich gehn?'"

"Toward the end she mentioned that she had worried so much about the children, but it was getting easier for her, for she was looking to Jesus. She then fell asleep peacefully. She is now resting, awaiting the day of resurrection."<sup>1101</sup>



*Margaret Fast Reimer, 1948 passport photo.  
Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 65.*

Third wife, Margaretha Fast Reimer added some details of the first marriage: "Firstly, that grandmother Jakob L. Dueck was being cared for by her daughter (Peter P. Reimers), where she also died on March 17, 1917. She suffered of a sore foot for 15 years and was completely confined to bed during the last [days]."

"In Dec. 1916, daughter Maria experienced a severe accident in that she fell down very hard while playing on the ice, so that she was incapable of any work for the entire winter, and remained weak. Then father brought Aganetha Klassen (D. K.'s daughter) here as company for Maria and also to be helpful in the work. But it turned out differently. During the night Aganetha came down from upstairs to drink water, fell down and was a corpse. This occurred in January, 1917."

"It is so good that the difficult hours, days, and years, come to an end."

There is no picture available of Elizabeth, Mrs. Peter P. Reimer.

### **Anna Dueck Reimer, 1935.**

"On May 12, 1935, Peter P. Reimer extended his hand in wedded life to the widow of Jakob K. L. Friesen of Rosenort, born Anna Dueck, the daughter of Ältester Abraham L. Dueck of Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>1102</sup> The wedding vows were conducted in Blumenort by Ältester Jakob B. Kroeker. This marriage only lasted for three years, eight months and 21 days, until she also was taken from his side by her death on February 2, 1939. Through his marriage her 10 children and his 10 children were brought together as one family. Through his death, their 20 children, together with spouses, were transported into deep sorrow.

Second husband, Peter P. Reimer, wrote her obituary noting the two families had much in common already even before their marriage, since "At the death of her daughter Maria, we already shared parental sorrow, she in her marriage, and I in mine, for this their daughter was our daughter-in-law. The news of her death came on the same day that I was chosen by the Gemeinde as leader; so this day remains indelibly in our memory."

Peter P. Reimer referred to Anna's first marriage and her suffering by virtue of the loss of six of her 16 children and the premature death and suffering of her first husband: "Thereafter she lived for four years and eight months in widowhood, until she extended her hand to me, after I was a widower, and Ältester Jakob B. Kroeker pronounced the wedding vows for us, whereby we brought together a family of 22 souls in addition to spouses, in that we each had 10 children. We were allowed three years, eight months and 27 days in this blessed time, to mutually share our joys and sorrows. But God, however, be thanked for this time, which we were allowed to live together with the children in such abundant trust and mutual love. In full participation she also constantly helped me carry my anxiety and worry regarding the spiritual well-being of the Gemeinde. Even upon her final deathbed, though she already gladly wanted to depart from here, she was still concerned about me and leaving me alone in my pressing concerns as spiritual caregiver and my ministry in the Gemeinde. Oh, how deeply it struck my heart, when she - in spite of her great physical pain - with clear words instructed the beloved children standing around the bed, to continually seek to lighten the work of their father in his difficult office and to be helpful to

him in secular matters.”

“She had been bothered by various physical infirmities for years, and these continued during our marriage as well. Last fall her health seemed to improve, but on the evening of October 22, she became gravely sick, so that we had to call the doctor. He said that she was suffering from gall-stone. After this date she was never again able to leave the house although she was able to quit her bed. On Nov. 26 the attack repeated itself, and again on Dec. 28. Each time the illness was different, and each time she recovered. As she took part in the work of a family gathering on Jan. 28, she expressed her happiness and thankfulness for her recovery. The heavenly Father, however, had other plans. The following morning she became critically ill, and this time she did not rally. In these last nine days she had much to suffer. She suffered from internal inflammation, which caused her extreme physical pains, and sometimes also difficulty in breathing, so that she was afraid that she might have to sink into despair. Soon, however, she was again able to say, ‘O come, Lord Jesus! Come and take me home!’ And when her voice gave out, she motioned with her hands: ‘Take me Home!’”

“On the final evening she begged me to let her go. On this point I was able, in faith to God, and out of sympathy for her, to reassure her, though it was with deeply saddened heart.”

“Her heart was too weak to withstand the severe illness, and on Thursday at 8 o’clock in the morning she could take her leave, for which she had such a yearning.”

“In her spiritual battles and physical pain, she found comfort in singing songs, of which the following became especially precious: ‘Bleibe bei Jesu, meine seele, Nimm dein Heil bestaendig wahr; Denn in dieser Leibeshoele, Schwebst du immer in Gefahr.’ And also, ‘So nimm denn meine Haende.’ When her misery grew severe, she would find solace in comforting Bible verses.”<sup>1103</sup>

The funeral service was performed by ministers P. D. Friesen, B. R. Dueck, and Jakob L. Kroeker, and brother D. P. Reimer read the obituary.

On April 30, 1939, Peter P. Reimer married for the third time to Margaretha Fast, daughter of school teacher Cornelius W. Fast of Steinbach, Manitoba.<sup>1104</sup> The wedding service was performed by brother David P. Reimer in Blumenort.



*Margaret Fast Reimer in her younger years. Photo - Pres., No. 16, page 134.*

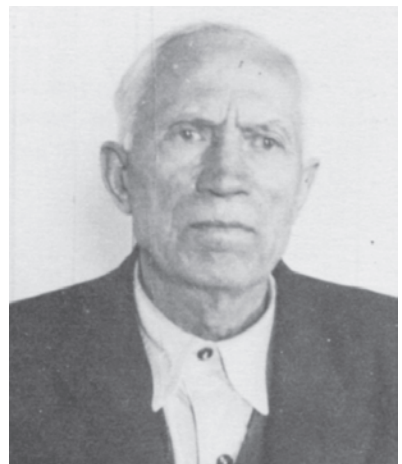
## Ministry.

Ben P. D. Reimer has written about his father's ministry: "In 1920 he was elected as a minister [with 67 votes]; he was ordained on December 14 of the same year. On January 14, 1926 he was elected bishop of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde churches, and on June 1 of that year he was ordained bishop by Jacob F. Isaak of Meade, Kansas. Father took up the work with a deep concern and tried to follow as God would direct. After 23 years he moved with a group of believers to Mexico. After almost half a year he passed away, on account of stomach cancer, on April 8, 1949. During his ministry he baptized 807 people, officiated at 56 weddings, ordained 12 ministers, six deacons and one bishop."<sup>1105</sup>

In 1926 Peter P. Reimer, age 49, was chosen as the Ältester of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde. His third wife, Margaretha Fast Reimer, described how he assumed his new responsibility: "January 14, 1926, came for him the tragic news from Morris, that his daughter-in-law Mrs. Jacob P. D. Reimer, had died there. Since an Ältester election had also been called for the same day, the vote fell upon him. It remained for him, therefore, an unforgettable day. On June of this year (1926) he was ordained as Ältester by the Meade, Kansas Ältester, J.F. Isaac. With deep earnestness he entered upon his calling, and in which he faithfully persevered. The Words of Paul found in Acts 20:31 rightly apply to him: 'Therefore, watch and remember for, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.' The words of David in Psalm 63:7 are especially applicable to him: 'When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee; and when I awake I speak about you.' For daily this represented his disposition...."<sup>1106</sup>

Although committed to the faith of the fathers and the Christo-centric faith tradition, a number of important innovations were made by the Kleine Gemeinde under Peter P. Reimer's faithful leadership. The first Sunday Schools and Young Peoples' programs were started in the 1920s and a church paper, the *Christlicher Familienfreund*, under the editorship of brother David, was founded. The Steinbach Bible School was also started during Ältester Reimer's leadership but it is certain that he would not have supported the dispensationalist and other heretical teachings originally promoted by the school under Rev. Ben D. Reimer.

Presumably Ältester Reimer felt it was better to operate and control such organizational entities, rather than to have them used by outside predators targeting the youths or by those opposed to the vision of the church. An interdenominational ministerial conference held at Meade, Kansas, October 23-28, 1937, completed an important review of church teachings, again making certain carefully measured strategic accommodations designed to preserve the integrity of the Gemeinde.



Peter P. Reimer, 1948. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 66.

## **Epistle to the Gemeinden in Kansas, 1926.**

The document collection of uncle Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas, contains letters from all the children of Maria and Peter R. Reimer. It includes three letters by Ältester Peter P. Reimer. The first letter dated June 16, 1926, only short months after his election as Ältester, was clearly written not only to his uncle Cornelius, but also as a ministerial epistle to the congregations at Satanta and Meade, Kansas. The epistle of 1926 provides an intimate view of Peter P. Reimer's faith and spirituality as well as his vision for the church.

Peter P. Reimer begins by affirming the power of the "Holy Spirit to keep us steadfast in the faith once confessed." He "...appreciates the empathy [of his uncle] and I feel I should allow myself to be counselled and admonished by such experienced servants." Nor "...am I possessed of human wisdom or precocious talents that I can put something together from the Word of God and extemporaneously present it to the assembly the way some can." But "...I will trust that it was His Holy will [that the Ältestership] fell exactly upon me, for - after all - I too am His own work."

Unlike the fear-driven teachings of Evangelical Fundamentalism, the Mennonite faith is essentially positive, a disposition frequently exuded in Reimer's letter: "...but we have the assurance of the One Who cannot lie, that He will cast no one away." He compares the contemporary circumstances to the people of ancient Israel, and "...that when times were good they yearned for the world....which has the consequences that they soon also serve its gods."

"Are things any different today?" he asks rhetorically. "Firstly, so much room is given to have everything so advanced and city-like, and the most desirable vehicles are acquired. And then it is also to be understood from many that our venerable worship of God is no longer deemed sufficient. We are supposed to pray loudly and openly before the assembly, and for some, to make the spirituality more alive. This, however, I - in my insignificance - cannot find to be so, for since the days of my youth I have been counselled and cautioned against the like, and nor does it accord with the Word of God, according to my knowledge nor that of many beloved Geschwister."

Peter P. Reimer reiterates a theme foundational to traditional Mennonite faith and teaching: "But I must confess from my own experience that the right inwardly spiritual life associated with a genuine fear of God, must be had and nurtured ever more. It is too little and needs constant encouragement and admonition but should it not also be evidenced and demonstrated by a measured walk? and whereby it can be read from us that we have also become willing to take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ?"

Again the undying optimism of Reimer's faith shines forth: "But may our ever faithful Father, who does not desire the death of any sinner, grant that such right thinking cannot be completely vanquished and trod underfoot. It is my innermost prayer that we have reconstituted ourselves [converted] to gladly wander the [pilgrim's] path, so that at the end of our lives, we can greet our great God with joy and not have to experience the great deception that we believe to have served Him here with much outwardly good-appearing demonstration and physi-

cally appealing things, only to receive the answer from Him, 'I know you not,' that we have been unprofitable servants who have not worked at all for Christendom."

Toward that end, Reimer encouraged the reader, "...upon consideration of this, the thought comes to mind, that we can admonish and greet each other with more love and earnestness, and that we should not take things too lightly." But it is important to maintain a spirit of Christlikeness and meekness: "...[as in] all counselling and admonition we should come as the very least, for it is said, in any struggle, love conquers all in victory." He concludes with the admonition, "not to be vanquished in the battle,....[for] He Who has prescribed our remuneration is true and remains so regardless...[of our setbacks and reverses] and He will not forsake us....Those who look upon Jesus will be healed. Only in this way and none other can we be healed of our sins."

Reimer reveals the focus of his faith with a closing quote of scripture: "Indeed, the statement is still valid, 'come unto me, all (note that it says 'all') ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.'"

### **Letters, 1932 and 1934.**

In contrast to the 1926 epistle, Peter P. Reimer's letter of February 9, 1932 is more in the nature of a private communication between him and his uncle. He demonstrates compassion for his elderly uncle noting "how lonesome and forsaken you must feel, particularly in view of your already weak eyesight and of your hearing being quite weak. And on top of that, [being] a widower. which particularly seems difficult as I see it, for someone like you accustomed to a married life since from your youth."

In view of this Peter P. Reimer is considerate and even writes larger to make reading easier. "It is important," he encourages, "for so long as we have life, that we live right in the spirit. And that in the spirit we direct ourselves unto the work of the Spirit seeking strength, understanding and knowledge in accordance with the Word of God."

Peter P. Reimer posed some interesting questions. "Now beloved uncle," he queries, "I do want to ask you: Why did our forebears not already in earlier times accept associations ("Vereinen") other than our traditional worship services where the ministers elected thereto presented the Word of God according to the talents they had received? Especially as they are deemed so good and actually necessary by many. And apparently for the reason that anyone present may speak regarding a scripture or present questions."

Ältester Peter Reimer is referring to the para-church organizations that were becoming popular in the East Reserve in the 1930s, and which were often being used to bring unbiblical teachings into the church. Because the growth of these "Verein" proved unstoppable the church finally realized they would have to take control of these new ways of communication in order that they serve the churches' own agenda.

"Second question," Peter Reimer continued. "What was the reason why also our Gemeinde advised and testified against the choir singing and the har-

mony singing?" Realizing his uncle will be wondering where all this is going, he stops to explain and suggests personal involvement in the "work in the Gemeinde and the brotherhood meetings before judging." The comment highlights the heroic struggle of the Ältester of the Church of God in joining battle for the integrity of the Gemeinde against those who would lead it away from Jesus Christ, its cornerstone.

To clarify the nature of this struggle, Peter Reimer cites 1 Corinthians 1:10, referring to divisions and for members of the Gemeinde to cling to each other, as well as 1 Peter 5:5, referring to humility and being submitted unto the Ältesten, "with which is also meant, those that have served before us and who have been older than we. Yes, beloved uncle, what 'resisting' means, you also will have come to know."

"But," he adds, "Things are still bearable, with the difference that I do not want to complain, but help is badly needed....."

After referring to the experiences of the people of Israel, Peter P. Reimer laments: "Oh, how can it be any different for us today. We have been far too easy in too many things and have accommodated ourselves to how things are in our surroundings." He refers to "success in the secular and trade, with many businesses, and the large farms, over what is necessary, and always, something more is done for the eye, the ear and to the flesh."

Peter P. Reimer's solution is to "pay heed to the teachings of the Gospels. Indeed, to continue steadfast with pleading and sighing in the spirit, in order to clearly understand what His will is for us."

In closing, he expressed his wish that "all might live in such a manner that we would all again be eternally united in the fully holy heaven.....[and] That to strive for such glory is only possible through Jesus Christ, by virtue of what He has done for us, arisen, he is our reconciliation with God, and only thereby are we to seek our salvation and otherwise in no works of our own or by outward appearances."

Peter P. Reimer adds some news from home. Abr. P. Reimer's Elizabeth had a severe operation on her leg at St. Boniface Hospital. Mrs. Joh. Barkman has been irrational, and "She had spoken a lot." There was "...too much snow to drive car, except from Steinbach to St. Anne, which is being kept open."

The third letter is dated April 2, 1934, only months before the deaths of both Peter P. Reimer's own wife, Elisabeth, his mother and uncles Cornelius and Abraham, the latter of a tragic auto accident. Again he encourages his uncle with a pray, "May God grant that you in your last days of earthly life, may always be truly yielded to the will and leading of our great God. The main body of the letter is a wonderful encouragement and uplifting for the elderly, well worthy of being translated and published.

Peter Reimer closes by inquiring about his uncle's health. "By us," he adds, "we are improving." His wife has some rheumatism but has recently been up and darning and helping with food preparation. Regarding his mother, she was "quite a bit better for a time with her hearing, otherwise she says she is getting weaker."

## Challenges.

Among the major challenges faced by Ältester Peter P. Reimer was the advent of World War Two, and the resulting anti-Pacifist, anti-Mennonite hysteria in the land. Historian Royden Loewen has written that “[He]...was one who strongly felt that the church should be prepared to suffer rather than to serve in any military-related service. Shortly after the war broke out in September Ältester Reimer asked David Toews, the chairman of the Winkler meeting to speak in Blumenort. Toews outlined the threat which the war was posing to the non-resistant Mennonites. He opposed the position taken by the more liberal Russlander Mennonites that conscientious objectors should be willing to render non-combatant military service....[As a result], the conservative Manitoba Mennonite churches organized an *Ältestenkomitee* to ensure military exemption. Rev. David P. Reimer, who had a command of the English language and was a natural diplomat, was chosen to represent the Kleine Gemeinde on this four-man committee....In November 1940, the Kleine Gemeinde summoned together all young men between 21 and 25.....The first court session came on December 4. Both Peter P. Reimer and David P. Reimer attended as witnesses and the first group of Blumenort boys were interrogated.”<sup>1107</sup>

Historian Royden Loewen has also written about the ministry of Ältester Peter P. Reimer generally and assessed its impact upon the denomination and beyond: “As preacher he was well respected. It is said that Peter Reimer was one of those men to whom people started listening the moment he stood up and confidently strode to the pulpit. His sermons stressed unity of faith, togetherness and consensus, and the need to live simply, following a Christ-like lifestyle and turning one’s back on evil pleasures and hedonistic pursuits. He is also remembered as a man who knew the Scriptures very well. While the church of his time did not have a vision for missions, he spoke openly of his salvation experience and allowed missionaries to speak in church.”

“It is said that Elder Reimer keenly felt the responsibility of his new office. This responsibility entailed leading a church which was becoming increasingly diverse. The effect of the more liberal Russian and American Mennonites on the Kleine Gemeinde in the East Reserve was strong during the ‘20s. In Steinbach the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Brethren churches practised oral prayer, held Sunday School, used musical instruments and stressed pietistic themes such as the assurance of salvation. Some of the Kleine Gemeinde members were attracted to this approach to church life. Others began to be open to government pensions, sports and photography. These changes were of concern to Elder Reimer, who saw them as contrary to Christian humility and separation from the world. To deal with some of these issues, he wrote at least two pamphlets: ‘Christianity and the Vote: The Reasons I Do Not Vote in Worldly Election’ and ‘A Booklet Concerning the Practice of Praying Aloud.’ Elder Reimer also took an active part in the Kansas Ministerial Conference of 1937 which dealt with some of the tensions the Kleine Gemeinde were experiencing.”

“Perhaps Peter Reimer’s greatest achievement was the reorganization of the Kleine Gemeinde into a conference of autonomous churches. It is said that



Elder Reimer realized that each of the districts should have its own church organization, but he found it difficult to lead them decisively to that point. On one hand he seemed to feel the burden of being the sole leader of the church, and, on the other hand, he felt a responsibility to keep the liberals of the church in check.”

“The talk of forming separate church districts began in earnest during the years of World War II. By the fall of 1938 district brotherhood meetings were being held, and by next spring the practice of organizing worship services at a local level had also begun. In February, 1941, Prairie Rose needed another minister to assist. Rev. Henry R. Reimer and Peter A. Plett were the first minister and deacon to be thus elected.”

“By 1945 full autonomy had been granted to each of the four East Reserve churches. In a special letter sent to each church, Peter P. Reimer placed the leadership of each church in the hands of the oldest minister. Elder Reimer now became the leader solely of Blumenort church. Three years later he resigned and lead the exodus to Mexico, where he died on April 18, 1949.”<sup>1108</sup>

Third wife Margaretha Fast Reimer added an interesting anecdote that “In 1942, Peter P. Reimer counted all the Gemeinde members on this side of the Red River, down the row and where they lived. This was something he could do from home, and only two were left out.”

According to son Peter P. D. Reimer, his father already knew he was dying before moving to Mexico, but he kept it from the family and church so as not to discourage them.<sup>1109</sup>

### **Sermon, 1926.**

The following are excerpts from a sermon preached by Peter P. Reimer in Blumenort on October 31, 1926, shortly after election as Ältester of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde. The sermon is based on Matthew 5:

“I greet the beloved church by wishing you much peace and grace from God...I, your humble servant, would like to speak to all those dearly beloved people that have gathered here today. From the oldest to the youngest who can already understand what is being said here, to you I address myself. What better thing do we have in life than to gather and meditate on God’s Holy Word. It teaches us and strengthens us in our faith as we are reminded about the comforting hope which we have in His Word. We want to seek to follow this teaching with His help so that after this life, through His grace, we shall understand and rejoice. O Beloved listeners! What could really be better for us in life than to reject all the foolish, worldly things and leave them with courage as the Spirit directs...We read about our dear Lord and Saviour as He walked on this earth. He did not even have a pillow. Yes, he walked before us as one having nothing but really having all...This does not mean that we should not own possessions or make use of them. But it means that we should not misuse them.”

“The Word says ‘Love Your neighbour as yourself.’ I must consider this. If, for example, I want to trade in my car to have one more to my taste and I know that there are some of my neighbours who do not have sufficient food for their needs, should not I ask myself if I am using what the Lord has given me, rightly?

It would be good if we would remind ourselves of what we read in Acts 2:44-45. Especially a person who has debts, has reason to be careful not to purchase things which he does not really need.”

“Our text is Matt. 5:1-19. Here Jesus says that those people who are blessed are poor and weak. It is only a person who feels his weakness and sickness who needs a doctor. Does this not imply that a person who claims to be healed will forget that God’s strength can be real only in the weak, according to II Cor. 12? Oh how great will be the disappointment on that day for those whom we read about in Matt. 7:22.”

“The Word of God teaches us to be awake so as not to deviate from the narrow way, either to the right or to the left. Oh, that God would be merciful and open our eyes! Yes, may He give us a humble heart and mind that we may look out for ourselves. The enemy of our souls is very sly and would like very much to stifle us by making us sure of things and lulling us to sleep.”

“Oh, let us be united in mind as we have been taught. Even if we do not receive much recognition from people for the (simple) way in which we conduct our church services, we can receive an eternal blessing if we worship God with a quiet, faithful heart. We do not prove that we have come to a real faith by making our services very fancy and beautiful...Saul was told that god was much more pleased with obedience than with many nice, fat sacrifices...of what good is it if we know how to sing beautiful praises to God after much practice but do not have the true humility needed for obedience to God’s Word?”

“We can comfort ourselves with the beautiful words of the song which describes how the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sin and frees us from eternal guilt and pain. But there is no salvation for us if we do not first rightly accept it. We need ransom money which we are not capable of supplying..(Yet) seeking eternal life depends completely on the denial of ourselves for Christ’s sake, according to Mark 8:34-35.”

“Pray that true love will increase and that the love for the world will become cold. Yes, what better could we wish for than that we could really strengthen each other in the faith with good works and an honest walk before God?”

“Therefore, because we have been granted life even this day, let us move forward and not stop...We must even now be patient; if we have done the best we know, then we want to put our trust in the Lord that He might continue to give us strength and assistance. Let us faithfully follow the good and rightly walk in the road that is dear to us towards the end that we, together with our children, might attain eternal life through His boundless grace for Christ’s sake. Amen.”<sup>1110</sup>



*The second Mrs. Peter P. Reimer; nee Anna Dueck, widow of Jakob K. Friesen. Photo - Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck, page 206.*

## Mexico, 1948.

In the 22 years of Ältester Peter P. Reimer's leadership he was a steadfast, and yet, patient and loving spiritual caregiver. His major accomplishment was to keep the various factions in the Kleine Gemeinde united and focused on the teachings of Jesus Christ, discipleship and the ethic of New Testament love. His was a moderate leadership but in the tradition of the blessed faith of the fathers, with Christ as the cornerstone. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit he was able to stay the course in the face of great opposition and even the promotion of Evangelical Fundamentalism and Dispensationalism by zealous sectarians in the denomination itself. At the close of his ministry he completed the transition of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde into four districts or congregations each with their own ministerial.

Leading the conservative wing of the Kleine Gemeinde to Mexico in 1948 was a major achievement. Even though he was already ill before moving south, he made the heroic effort for the sake of the preservation of Christo-centric faith within the beloved Gemeinde. Presumably he came to the conclusion that the inroads of Evangelical Fundamentalist apostasy in the Gemeinde was unstoppable and that only by the drastic strategy of retreat and retrenchment would a remnant of the faithful survive.

Historian Royden Loewen has written that "It was the second group, comprised of the more moderate brethren and led by Ältester Peter P. Reimer, which spearheaded the move to Mexico.....Some of them had been leading businessmen and church innovators. They shared the fear of the government's policy toward the education and military conscientious objection."

The fears are evident in a statement written by Ältester Peter P. Reimer on August 5, 1946, explaining his conclusion that such a move was necessary: "Concerning the desire for a move to Mexico. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that, according to government laws, certain educational freedoms have been taken from us. We are compelled to hire only those teachers in our schools who have become legally qualified with a Normal School Certificate. The school year has been extended to 10 months, during which our beloved children, from 7 to 14 years old, are instructed according to government regulations."

"Instead, we want our previously allowed Privilegium under which we had full control of our education. Also we feel that school should be held for only five months a year with students 7-12 years old. This gives us enough time to teach them to write, read, and do arithmetic and to instill the teachings of the gospel into our beloved children in order to establish them in the old ways."

"Also we want no requests for our youth to render government service in C.O. camps and elsewhere, or to pay a substantial sum to help cover war costs."

"In the case that the Mexican government grants us these freedoms as it has promised them to the Old Colonists and Sommerfelders in writing, then I attest to this that I, too, am for moving to Mexico, for the sake of our children and grandchildren in order to continue protecting and living out our faith. I trust that God will bless this undertaking."<sup>111</sup>

## **Tribute.**

The following tribute to Ältester Peter P. Reimer was written by son-in-law Peter P. Friesen, also a minister of the Gospel:

“Before marriage I knew father only as a bishop of four church districts known as the East Reserve Kleingemeinde, over which he presided in all spiritual affairs and brethren meetings. He carried out his responsibilities with dignity. He was well respected and accepted.”

“After Margaret and I were married in November, 1939, I got to know and appreciate father when we lived with our parents for several months, and also later when we moved in to live with them, upon their invitation and our convenience. Father helped us get started at farming, and with their machinery and buildings at our disposal for a few years, we had the privilege of farming somewhat in partnership with them. While father was away on ministerial duty I quite often had the opportunity to prove that we appreciated this privilege. He was easy to get along with, which also made it easy to go to him for advice.”

“When our parents moved to Mexico, father saw to it that we had the privilege to continue on the family farm which they sold to us on terms that we could handle at that time. On the day of their departure to Mexico we talked together in private when he related to me that working together had been appreciated beyond expectation.”

“During the time of his ministry he quite often shared his concern as to how things were going in the church, which helped me greatly in preparing for the ministry that we were to embark upon in the then near future. Often when we came into crises later on, we had good memories to draw from as to how father handled tight situations and coped with problems. Many were the decisions he had to make, and whether material or spiritual, he had a relaxed attitude and the welfare of all concerned in mind. From experience and some of his writings we found he was no complainer. When at one time he helped saw wood at the neighbours and got one finger almost completely sawed off, he had it fixed up by a doctor before mother got to know about it, quite likely to spare her the grief of seeing him in that state. He was not overly worried when he married the second time, which also meant adopting ten children, five of them still at home with their mother, and bringing two families together, each family consisting of ten children. This went relatively smooth.”

“When changing times brought demands for changes in the churches, and he could not please all around, he sought autonomy for individual local churches, with each having its own leadership. This lightened his load considerably. The migration to Mexico was already in progress at that time. Father felt it his duty and privilege to spearhead the spiritual aspect of the migration, a great undertaking, which all transpired without hard feelings in the family, even for those who stayed back.”

“After six months in Mexico, cancer terminated his work there. As we were arriving there to visit him on his deathbed, we were wondering what we would meet. Instead of us comforting him, he set us at ease and expressed joy at seeing our family. He passed away peacefully after a few days.”

## Death, 1949.

The obituary of Ältester Peter P. Reimer, as written by widow Margaretha Fast Reimer, provides a glimpse at Ältester Peter P. Reimer's last period of ministry in Mexico: "It has pleased the Lord of life and death, to take from our side, our beloved spouse and father, Friday, April 8, 1949, at 8 o'clock and 45 minutes in the evening, through a peaceful death....He was born in Blumenort, Manitoba, where he passed his time until our departure from there and move to Mexico....There are nine children still alive."

"On April 30, 1939, he entered into his third marriage with me, Margaretha Fast. We were blessed into this wedded state by his brother David P. Reimer in Blumenort. For 10 years, less three weeks and one day, we were privileged to have shared joy and sorrow with each other."

"Already for a year before his death he had some pain in his back which slowly increased. When we arrived here in Mexico, a heart condition was added thereto, possibly as a consequence of the change in climate. This suffering persisted for around a month. This was followed by a burning pain in his stomach after eating so that he often had to vomit. And yet, for the short time that we lived here in Mexico (and for which we were very thankful that the Lord had led in that manner), he always earnestly exerted himself to order and establish the Gemeinde here upon the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, in so far as the Lord through His Spirit granted him wisdom and strength. Since his suffering was always increasing, we finally submitted ourselves to the hospital in Chihuahua on March 11, where after medical examination it was established that he already had an advanced cancer condition. Since the doctor hoped to achieve an improvement in his condition and an extension of his days through an operation, he - in firm trust in God - decided immediately for the difficult operation, which was then carried out in the hospital on March 19, after medical preparations. It was also established here, however, that his liver was severely attacked by the cancer condition."

"On April 1, he was again released from the hospital, and so we allowed ourselves to be driven home the somewhat over 100 miles by taxi, for which he was almost too weak. Although it also appeared quite positive at home, his condition deteriorated rapidly. He was still able to discuss various things with his children Peter P. D. Reimers, Corn. P. D. Reimers, Rev. Peter P. Friesens, and his brother, Ältester David P. Reimer, who arrived here from Manitoba last Sunday. These, together with his children living here, were also all present at his death-bed, when he - though in flustered tone - often expressed his thanks and firm hope that he would be raised up and saved and calmly expelled his last breath."

"....We grieve his death not as those without hope, rather we hope to see him again with the Lord. We thank-you for the heartfelt participation in his suffering and in our grief. The burial took place on April 10, with a large participation."<sup>1112</sup>

By 1965, there were 32 children, 165 grandchildren, 105, great-grandchildren, and 7 great-great-grandchildren. Seven pair of twins were born in the family.



*Margaret Fast Reimer and husband  
 Ältester Peter P. Reimer. Photo -  
 Cornelius Fast Volume One, page 58.*



*Plett and Reimer two cylinder Watrous 15/30 steam engine threshing at Jakob P. Penners in Greenland in 1908. Standing on the steam engine is co-owner and engineer Peter P. Reimer. Behind him is fireman, John P. Reimer. Corn. T. Toews is looking out of the straw blower and Isaac Toews, his cousin, is sitting on the straw blower. To the front left is Jakob P. Penner. The man with the hat in front of the straw wagon is Heinrich Giesbrecht. To his left are: Jakob Is. Dueck, John N. Koop, Jakob R. Schellenberg. The girls are daughters of Jakob P. Penner with the exception of one who is the daughter of Heinrich Giesbrecht. Photo - Steinbach Post/Front cover Plett Picture Book.*

6 Son **Cornelius Plett Reimer** (1880-1946) married Anna E. Schellenberg, daughter of Abraham Schellenberg of Tiege, Molotschna, and later Grünfeld, Manitoba.<sup>1113</sup> Son Abram C. Reimer has written: "Sorrow soon struck this young family. Less than a year after their marriage, his wife died giving birth to their first son [Cornelius S. Reimer, on Oct. 23, 1903]."<sup>1114</sup>

Three months later Cornelius remarried to Maria D. Reimer, daughter of cousin Klaas P. Reimer. "They enjoyed 42 years together and became the parents of 15 children, three of whom died in infancy. [Cornelius P. Reimer]...was always concerned for the children's physical and spiritual well-being. He spent time with them on an individual basis." Daughter Anna recalled that the Kleine Gemeinde children - Cornelius P. and Abram P. Reimer, Klaas R. Toews, Peter B. Kroeker, Johann B. Reimer - attended the Clearsprings school, where the majority of students were of Englander and also some of Holdeman background. The Holdeman families included the Mooneys, the Martin Barkmans, Gerhard Giesbrechts, Johann T. Reimers and the English were the McKaskills, Laings, and others.

In 1906 Cornelius P. Reimer purchased the SW15-7-6E from his father, settling in the northwest corner, while brother Abram bought the NW15-7-6E. Abram settled on the south limit of his quarter and Cornelius about 600 feet south of Abram. In 1909 Cornelius P. Reimers also bought the S1/2 of SE15-7-6E. In 1914 they also bought the William Mooney farm, the west half of Section 14-7-6E of which they sold the south 120 acres of SW14-7-6E to Peter B. Kroekers. In 1914 Cornelius P. Reimers built new buildings on the SE14-7-6E where they lived until 1935 (later the Peter Bergman farm). In 1930 they bought the NE10-7-6E from Isaac W. Reimers, who were moving to Landmark, and the north half of NW11-7-6E. They moved in 1935. In 1930 they sold the NW14-7-6E back to William Mooney. In 1935 they built a new set of buildings on NE 11-7-6E except for the existing two-story house which was rebuilt.

Cornelius P. Reimer was a progressive farmer. They always had a mixed farm and prospered. Daughter Anna recalled that to run a large grain farm required that the whole family assist with threshing and field work, "especially in the harvest when all the children who were old enough had to set up sheaves and this could take up to six weeks."<sup>1115</sup> In the late 1920s they had their own threshing machine and in the early 1930s also threshed a number of years together with the Mooneys. Cornelius apparently purchased the first combine in the Steinbach area. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "In 1938, C. P. Reimer, one of the most progressive farmers in the area, spent \$1125 on a newfangled combine and swather. The combine was a Massey-Harris pull-type with a 24-inch cylinder. The swather was an eight-foot Massey-Harris."<sup>1116</sup>

Cornelius P. Reimer enjoyed raising and training horses. On occasion broncos were purchased from Alberta, and he enjoyed breaking them. Son Abram writes: "This was an interesting and challenging occupation and not without mishap. One day he sustained a kick from a horse that resulted in a broken elbow. His arm healed but remained bent at the elbow. This happened when he was about 24 years of age and from that day on he was unable to touch the top of

his head to comb his hair. His proud walk, with arms akimbo, belied a rather gentle and humble man who spent much of his time visiting with others and lending a helping hand when needed." Cornelius was a "noted carpenter" and construction supervisor ("Baumeister"). Some of his important projects were the construction of the new Bethesda Hospital in Steinbach in 1937 and the remodeling of the Kleingemeinde church in Steinbach in 1941.

Son Abram has written about his father that: "He took an active part in community development. As a young man in 1922, he had been one of the land delegates to Quebec, but a move in that direction never materialized." The delegation left Blumenort on June 6, 1922. Cornelius was the fire insurance agent ("Brandschulz") for the Twin creek district in the 1930s. He was a trustee of the Clearsprings school for a number of years. He served for a number of years on the board of directors of the Bethesda Hospital in Steinbach. Historian Royden Loewen describes the hospital established by the East Reserve churches in 1937: "Two of the society's seven members were Abram R. Penner and C. P. Reimer, both from the Blumenort area."<sup>117</sup>

Cornelius P. Reimer's greatest interest was the Blumenort cheese factory of which he served as manager and president for many years. He was a founding member and first President. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "One of the most active men at this stage of the operation was C. P. Reimer. Many trips had to be made to Steinbach and Winnipeg to find buyers for the product, to meet government regulations, and to seek an experienced cheesemaker. For this he was paid a small stipend and compensated five cents a mile for using his car." Loewen concluded: "The factory was an immediate success."

Cornelius P. Reimer "enjoyed good health and had a zest for living. In 1943 he suffered from a heart attack from which he completely recovered. He continued his grain farming operations for another three years, until his death from another heart attack in 1946 [May 13]." Historian Royden Loewen has written: "Cornelius was considered by many to be the most successful farmer in the area, farming a great deal of land." At his death he owned 520 acres of which each child received 30 and their mother retained the homestead with 130 acres.

Son-in-law Peter J. Penner and son Klaas established their homes on the parental yard. Son Peter R. Reimer lived across the highway on the NW11-7-6E. Widow Maria Reimer "also moved to Mexico with the three youngest children but came back shortly." She continued farming until 1951 when the farm was taken over by son-in-law Peter J. Penner. Maria Reimer then moved to Landmark and lived with her children Elisabeth, Margaret and David until 1953 when she moved to the Resthaven in Steinbach. By 1956 she was not doing well and could not even recognize son Abram when he returned from Mexico for a visit. She died Dec. 25, 1958.



*Maria, Mrs. C. P. Reimer. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 66.*



6 Son **Abraham Plett Reimer** (1882-1961) married Anna R. Dueck, in 1903. She was the sister of Elisabeth who married his brother Peter. They lived the first year at the home of his parents in Blumenort. The Peter R. Reimers had gone on an extended ministerial trip to the churches in Nebraska and Kansas together with Ältester and Mrs. Peter R. Dueck, and so Abram and Anna stayed at home looking after the parental farm.

In 1906 Abraham P. Reimer purchased the NW 15-7-6E from his father where they established their farm. After they had moved to their own home, Abram went to the bush every winter, as was customary. He cut his own logs in the "Thebeauville" camp, and then brought them to a sawmill to cut into lumber which was used for the construction of various buildings.

In 1914 they bought the NE15-7-6E from Cornelius B. Loewen, Steinbach. Historian Royden Loewen writes that "they built up a large prosperous farm on it."<sup>1118</sup> They built a new yard and buildings in the northeast corner of the quarter on the site of the old creamery. An old artesian well was located here and so this area had always been somewhat swampy. Also originally there was a field of bulrushes in the middle of this quarter section. They farmed here until their retirement. This intersection was known as the "Giroux corner" and the Reimers' large two-storey house and twin matching hip-roofed barns, became a striking local landmark.

In 1926 Abram and Anna also bought the farm of brother-in-law John G. Barkman. In 1927 Abram bought a Wallace tractor built by the J.I. Case Plow Works. They threshed in company for a few years with brothers Johann and David. Historian Royden Loewen writes that "the large grain growers such as A. P. Reimer and [brother] C. P. Reimer bought combines right after the depression...."<sup>1119</sup> In 1957 Abram bought a new Massey-Harris self-propel combine. He was healthy and farmed completely on his own until the season before his death.

In 1958 they moved to First Street in Steinbach although Abram continued farming. Abram suffered a heart attack on April 4, 1961, and died May 17, 1961. Anna died March 22, 1964.

Abram P. Reimer was elected as Vorsänger (song leader) of the Blumenort Kleine Gemeinde on May 24, 1918. He served in this position until his death. He was a trustee of the Clearsprings school from 1926 to 1950, following his brother-in-law Johann G. Barkman who held the position before him. Abram P. Reimer was also a proponent of Sunday Schools in the Kleine Gemeinde and he was one of the first Sunday School superintendents in Blumenort.<sup>1120</sup>

Abraham and Anna were the parents of Jakob D. Reimer, manager of the Steinbach Credit Union from the 1940s until the early 80s. Their daughter Maria married Abram K. Penner, founder of the A. K. Penner construction company of Blumenort, Manitoba. Son Ben A. Reimer later farmed on the parental yard.

## Biography.

Abraham P. Reimer was small in stature but big of heart. Many times he gave help to others both financially and spiritually at home and in the community. Anna and Abram were both supportive and loving to all their children. She often reminded us not to forget members of the family who were far from home. He often spoke of the way of salvation to his children and grandchildren.

Abram P. Reimer was a hardworking man....[In] 1956, when Dad was 74 years old, they moved to Steinbach. He warned the neighbours that he would sometimes be driving past them on his tractor early in the morning on his way to work on his farm three miles from town.

Abram's love for work made him a well-liked and highly respected member of the community....he was also active as a board member in the Ste Anne Co-op in its earlier years...He also enjoyed teaching Sunday school. He would quote many a Bible verse to his children, one of his favourites being Micah 6 verse 8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Abram applied this to his life and the upbringing of his children. Anna and Abram taught their children so much: love and appreciation, to look for good qualities in people rather than the negative aspects, and to work together in harmony.<sup>1121</sup>



*Abram P. and Anna Reimer, photographed while busy in their garden. Photo - Quiring, Der Canadische Mennonit: Ein Querschnitt in Bildern (Altona, 1961), page 51.*

### **Anna R. Dueck (1883-1964).**

Anna R. Dueck, was born in the village of Grünfeld, now Kleefeld, Manitoba, where she lived her happy childhood. She received her schooling there, with her uncle, Heinrich Rempel, as her teacher. Her happy youth and innocent years went by all too quickly. Her father [Jak. L. Dueck] was taken from them through death when she was only 10 years-old, leaving them hoping the sadness would heal. When she was nearing the age of 18, she had a deep concern about her soul and at the age of 18, she accepted the Lord as her Saviour. She was baptized that year by Ältester Jacob Kroeker and accepted into the Kleine Gemeinde.

Anna had never been a patient in the hospital, although she had 15 children. They were all born at home, which was common in those years.

There was a lot of happiness with such a big family, but it was not without times of heartaches and tears as well. When Mary, the firstborn, was one month old, Abram was brought into the house unconscious. While unhitching the horses from the seeder, one of the horses kicked him in his face. As there were no cars in the neighbourhood, anxious hours passed before someone came back with Dr. Isaak Warkentin, the only local doctor at that time. The doctor stitched his wound near his upper lip and that was done without anaesthetics. Fortunately no bones were broken so Abram could resume his seeding in a few days.

Anna and Abram lived with his parents at the time. He did the seeding together with his Father. After the seeding was done, they built a small house on their own farm one mile south of the village of Blumenort. They also built a small barn and dug a well. That was the start of their own homestead and farm. Three years later they needed a larger barn, so the first one was broken down and a new and bigger one was built.

In 1916, after living on their first farmstead for 12 years, they moved to the northeast corner of their farm where they built all the buildings which still stand at the Giroux corner on Highway #12. They lived there for 41 years and then in 1957, they moved to a house on First Street in Steinbach....

Anna and Abram modelled a happy Christian married life for their children. Anna always had a big garden which made for a lot of extra work. The children remember her as a good leader and teacher. She would not just send them to work, she would show them how to do it by working with them. She would work with the children until it was finished or until she had something else to do. She taught them to work, but she also taught them something more important. She taught them that they all needed to accept Jesus and to learn to trust and love Him.

Anna was a real encouragement to her children and she usually had a smile which showed them that they could have love in spite of all the trials that come their way. Anna and Abram showed their children how to be hospitable. They often got visitors and seemingly Anna was always ready for them. If not, she would organize the girls quickly and in no time a meal was on the table. In later years, Anna was not as fortunate with her health. She had to be admitted to the hospital quite often, but when she came home, she was always very thankful they had been able to help her again. Her ambition to work was apparent again and again.<sup>1122</sup>

6 Daughter **Sarah Plett Reimer** (1887-1971) married the widower Johann G. Barkman, son of Jakob T. Barkman of Heuboden.<sup>1123</sup> He was married for the first time to Helena R. Reimer, the aunt of Cornelius's second wife. Helena and Johann had lived with her mother, widow Maria Reimer, in the "old" Blumenort village. They had one child together - Marie, Mrs. Bernhard P. Doerksen, and set out optimistically, preparing land for a farmyard on Section 27-7-6E. Unfortunately, Helena contracted tuberculosis and in spite of treatment at the Winnipeg General Hospital, died at home on July 10, 1909.

Johann married for the second time to Sarah P. Reimer. They lived the first year with his parents in Heuboden. In 1914 they purchased the S1/2 of S1/2 of N1/2 of 15-7-6E from her brother Abraham (80 acres) and the north 50 acres of SW15-7-6E from brother Cornelius and the north 40 acres of SE 15-7-6E from her father Peter R. Reimer. They also bought the Cornelius P. Reimers' old house and summer kitchen and moved these buildings and started a yard on the NE15-7-6E, just north of the half-mile line. They farmed here until moving to Satanta, Kansas, in 1925. Johann G. Barkman "also worked as the last cheesemaker in the first Blumenort cheese factory."<sup>1124</sup>

In a letter to Cornelius L. Plett in Satanta, Kansas, dated February 11, 1924, Johann G. Barkman explained some of the local concerns regarding the government closure of the Mennonite church schools: "Can the school instruction which our children are currently receiving really be useful to them. For since Christmas only English is being instructed. And the way the world uses this is that instead of Christian simplicity and humility being planted, more and more pride and vanity is being instilled. Indeed, much has been done in order to retain our schools, our language and our religion. And yet, we would be unable to say that we had done everything we were obligated to do. And is it not really necessary that our children be instructed in our language and religion? Especially since it has already become evening, and is always becoming darker. Otherwise, how can our children later walk the [narrow] way, which is the good way? When they are then no longer able read the venerable aged writings, and no longer understand and use our *Gesangbuch*? When shortly after Christmas we received letters from the Inspector and Deputy Minister, in which various points of the school laws were noted, and all German was forbidden, then we thought of Quebec again. The school laws in Quebec would not be a hinderness to us, as far as teaching our religion and language in our schools there. And yet, the question arose within us: why have the Old Colonists decided to move to Mexico?"

Johann G. Barkman adds news about his mother-in-law: "Mother is variable, sometimes better - sometimes worse. Sara had driven there on Sunday, that is to say, to P. P. Reimers."

Because there was another Johann Barkman in the community he used an extra "J" in his initials and the pre-printed envelope in which this letter was mailed is marked "J.J.G. Barkman."

Through Jakob F. Plett, who had been visiting his parents, Peter L. Pletts, Satanta, Kansas, they learned that a school teacher was needed in the church German school there. Cornelius P. Reimers and other relatives had also indi-

cated interest in moving. Consequently the Johann G. Barkmans decided to take up the position and moved there. The first year in Satanta they lived in the school and church house across the road from uncle Cornelius L. Plett. In 1926 they bought a half-section of land and built a yard and buildings a half mile west and three miles north of the old school. Johann G. Barkman served as school teacher until 1929 when the public school system was made compulsory. The Kleine Gemeinde children in the western part then attended the Busyhill school and those in the eastern part, the Sunland school. Johann and Sarah farmed in Satanta until 1937 when they were forced to leave their farm because of the dustbowl and depression conditions in Kansas.

In 1937 they returned to Blumenort, Manitoba, and lived the first year in the "immigrant'e hus" on the Johann P. Reimer yard. They bought an acre of land from brother Jakob G. Barkman on Section 27-7-6E, and moved a house onto it. Johann started a small store and shoe shop across the road from the new cheese factory. Historian Royden Loewen describes the store as follows: "The small business was started in a small building....Shoes and harnesses were repaired. Groceries and leather goods, as well as gasoline and kerosene were sold. To supplement the income from the store, Barkman served as janitor for the church. After both P. J. Loewen and J. F. Janzen located their businesses close by, the Barkmans gave up this store and moved to a small farm northwest of Blumenort."<sup>1125</sup>

Johann had earlier been elected as a Vorsänger. In 1933 he was elected as a minister of the Satanta congregation. He also served in this capacity in the Blumenort church in Manitoba. For six months in 1956 Johann served as the resident pastor of the Quellen Colony Evangelical Mennonite Church (made up of disgruntled Kleine Gemeinders). Thereafter they lived with various of their children in the Blumenort area until 1960 when they moved into the Ashwood Apartments, Steinbach. Sarah died on October 14, 1971, having suffered from a lung disease for many years. She was spared the suffering of dying slowly of suffocation as in the end she died of a collapsed lung. August 8, 1976, Johann married for the third time to widow Anna Friesen and they lived together in the Birchwood Apartments in Steinbach.

Johann G. Barkman was interested in history and was an important contributor of information to the Blumenort book by historian Royden Loewen. He remembered a Low German poem "Dee Malkstock" which he had learned in his youth and himself used as a teacher.<sup>1126</sup>

**Sarah Reimer Barkman 1887-1971.**

Sarah Reimer Barkman was born in the "old" Blumenort village and had her schooling there with Gerhard K. Giesbrecht as her teacher. At age 26 she married and became the mother of a five year-old step-daughter.

Sarah loved to entertain and since her husband was a minister, she had many an opportunity of entertaining and also at going visiting which she enjoyed. She also enjoyed gardening. Her children often found her in the garden weeding or just enjoying the flowers. During the depression years they learned to make do with what they had which was very little, but they never went hungry. Sarah was known for making delicious soup from the little she had on hand....

The children always felt their mother's concern for their spiritual well-being. She mentioned that she often prayed for each child and grandchild individually. She found it very easy to make friends when they moved to the Resthaven Apartments in 1965, they formed many new friendships with other residents there. She was never strong physically but she outlived all her brothers and sisters.<sup>1127</sup>



*Rev. and Mrs. John G. Barkman in 1962. Photo courtesy of Marie and Bernard P. Doerksen, 1981/ Blumenort, page 425.*

6 Son **Johann Plett Reimer** (1888-1963) married Katharina W. Brandt, daughter of Heinrich R. Brandt of Steinbach, Manitoba.<sup>1128</sup> Johann and Katharina established their first home on SE 28-7-6E just north of his parent's yard. After his father's death in 1915 he and brother David purchased and divided the parental farm consisting of NE22-7-6E and SE28-7-6E. Johann took the westerly half, moving their house onto the west half of the SE28-7-6E. Nephew Peter P. D. Reimer recalled that both Johann and David P. Reimer had fairly large dairies milking 15 to 20 cows.<sup>1129</sup>

As a young man, Johann P. Reimer worked for many seasons on the steam engine and threshing outfit for "Plett and Reimer", for some years as engineer. He was described as "an agile operator of machinery." He farmed on a moderate scale, having a mixed farm as well as sheep and turkeys at times. In 1943, Johann together with brother David, purchased a quarter of land (NE13-5-7E), two miles west of the Twin creek school. Also for a number of years prior to 1928 Johann and David farmed together to some extent jointly owning a Titan tractor.

Johann P. Reimer corresponded with uncle C. L. Plett in Satanta, Kansas, and one letter dated October 1, 1932, is extant. He opens with "...a heartfelt greeting of love. Since I so frequently come to hear and read about you, beloved uncle, love and also duty inspires me to write something to you. I am earnestly agreed with what Paul says to Philemon, especially the seventh verse. Yesterday mother was here visiting at our place. She felt rather poorly. We brought the other mother here as well. Mrs. David Reimer is currently again in the hospital. The doctor says she will not get well again. Thus, a difficult diagnosis. You may already have heard about Mrs. Isaak Pletts' funeral. It seems as if the departure of the mother was still too soon for the children. And for Plett himself it seemed to be an upheaval. Yet, he comforted himself that he was able to discuss everything [with her] before she died. And may this comfort also carry him over, that is our wish. Amen."

Son Henry B. Reimer has written that Johann P. Reimer "...had a severe hydro shock in the spring of 1944, which proved almost fatal when it happened. This experience seemingly was a part of what strengthened father's desire to go from here to his better home."<sup>1130</sup>

Johann P. Reimer would have dearly loved to move to Mexico in 1948 but was unable to do so because his wife was not that well. None of the children except son John J. Reimer was interested in moving. Johann P. Reimer was described as "conservative in almost everything, from everyday life to devotions." They were able to make a six month long visit to the Quellen Colony, Mexico in the winter of 1951 to 1952. Johann had a clear voice and enjoyed singing by himself and together with his family. He enjoyed visiting with older people.

Johann and Katharina farmed until 1956 when they sold the property to son Henry B. Reimer. They established a home on the yard of their children Abram C. L. Penners in Greenland. In 1960 they moved with the Abram C. L. Penners to Arborg, Manitoba, and again had their own house on their daughter's yard. Katharina Brandt Reimer died on cancer on September 8, 1962. Johann P. Reimer died of a heart attack on March 22, 1963.



*John P. and Katharina Reimer, 1952 passport picture. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 70.*



*The Klaas P. L. Reimer farm at Garden City, Kansas. Photo - courtesy of son Peter K. Reimer.*



*Klaas P. L. and  
Anna Reimer, ca.  
1960.*

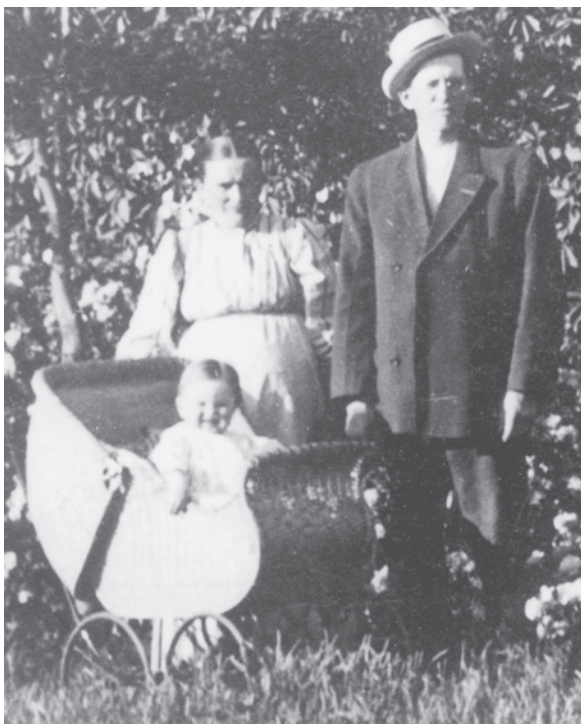


6 Son **Klaas Plett Reimer** (1890-1964) married Anna B. Reimer, daughter of Abraham P. Reimer also known as “Brandt” Reimer because his wife was a Brandt.<sup>1131</sup> For the first years after their marriage, Klaas and Anna lived on SE 14-7-6E which was purchased from her parents. It was known as the “Jimmins” farm after the previous owners. Anna’s uncle Klaas P. Reimer already used the initial “P” and so Klaas added the initial “L” and was usually referred to as Klaas P. L. Reimer.

Klaas suffered most of his adult life from multiple sclerosis. In 1916 they moved to Kansas as his physicians advised him this would be beneficial for his health. They settled in the Garden City area, about 60 miles away from their relatives around Satanta. They farmed here until 1938 when they returned to Blumenort, Manitoba. For the first year or so they lived in an “immigrant’e hus” on the Johann P. Reimer yard. In 1936 they purchased the south half of the SW 2-8-6E from Henry P. (“Schock”) Toews who was moving to Greenland. In 1953 they built a new house on this yard. Later they also bought the west 45 acres of the NE35-7-6E from aunt Mrs. Heinrich Wohlgemuth and Peter A. Penners.

The move to Kansas had not helped Klaas P. Reimer’s condition. His legs slowly became paralysed so that from 1938 he was largely confined to a wheelchair. As early as 1924 he was unable to attend personally to the heavier work on the farm such as plowing and this had to be done at an early age by his sons Abram and Peter. During the years in Garden City, the Klaas P. Reimer family attended the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren church.

Klaas P. L. Reimer died of a heart attack on September 13, 1964. Anna B. Reimer had a heart attack and died on February 24, 1967, after suffering for three weeks. Son Abram R. Reimer, Blumenort, served as a deacon and also as editor of the *Familienfreund*.



*Klaas P. L. Reimer and Anna Reimer, and baby son Abram, Fowler, Kansas, 1916. They moved onto the farm in Garden City the following spring. Photo courtesy of son Peter K. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

6 Son **David Plett Reimer** (1894-1966) married Justina U. Brandt, half-sister to Katharina Johann's wife. After his father's death in 1915, David purchased the east half of the parental farm together with buildings, being the SE28-7-6E and NE22-7-6E. They made their home here for the rest of their days.

In addition to a mixed farm they kept bees some years. Also in 1930 they had up to 100 hogs, considered a lot in those days. In 1933 they purchased a 100 acre River Lot just to the north of the Blumenhof district.

David P. Reimer gave generously of his time to church and community matters. He was often away from home on church duties and so his sons were responsible to carry on the farm at home in his absence. On a trip to Kansas in 1927 he took the time to look up his former school teacher, Gerhard K. Giesbrecht in Montezuma.<sup>1132</sup>

David served as a school teacher in the Blumenort church school from 1914 to 1919. Later he also served as school trustee. He served on a number of delegations including the Quebec delegations in 1922. In 1929 David P. Reimer was elected as a minister of the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde. He led the way for the beginning of Sunday School, "Singstund" and "Jugendverein." In 1935 he was appointed as the founding editor of the *Familienfreund* in 1935. During World War Two he served on the Ältesten Committee and spent much time visiting and counselling C.O.s in various labour camps.

In 1948 when brother Peter resigned from the position, David P. Reimer was elected as Ältester of the Blumenort congregation. He was the founding moderator of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. He also served in many other capacities. He was interested in history and instrumental in the publication of a number of family books such as the *Plettentag* in 1945, the *Plett* book in 1953, the *Reimer* book in 1956, as well as church publications like the *Sesquicentennial* book in 1962.

The David P. Reimer farm was taken over by oldest son Henry J. Reimer and his sons Mervin and Allan are presently farming on the Reimer homestead.

The descendants of David and Justina Reimer include son Gerhard B. Reimer, professor at Goshen College, Indiana.

### **Correspondence.**

Like most of the Plett relatives, David P. Reimer wrote periodically to uncle C. L. Plett in Satanta, Kansas. A number of these letters are preserved.

On May 4, 1926, David P. Reimer mentioned that a letter by uncle Cornelius had recently been read from the council by Ohm Abram Eidse, which "...reminds one so vividly of that time when you together with the entire old Lehrdienst were at the rudder." He adds, "And if only it could be oftener, for a part of you still belongs here among us in the row." David P. Reimer inquires whether his uncle might not personally come to Blumenort and even speak for the Ältester ordination. But he also acknowledges his age, and that "you are now already as old as our grandparents." David P. Reimer reminisces about Ohm Joh. K. Friesen who had told him the previous year that "he had plowed with two horses and handplow and when he also had a yoke, he would still plow with an underspan, in spite of his [failing] strength."<sup>1133</sup> Reimer uses this as an allegory for the con-

viction and firm faith of the older ministers and that they were a worthy model for himself and the younger generation.

“Johann K. Friesen, Ekron, has also finally been released from his suffering during the night of Sunday to Monday. Today in the afternoon we expect to go to his funeral. His wife is apparently doing much better already. It is noteworthy that last fall we met the Friesens in Winnipeg. I had gone to see the doctor regarding the eyesight of our little boy and he, with his wife. Later she experienced almost indescribable headaches so that hardly a thought was given to her restoration to health. And now he has gone ahead....H. R. Reimers were here Sunday for dinner....Uncle Abram Pletts were here for Vesper and I visited extensively with the uncle.” In closing Reimer asked Cornelius whether he is hearing anything from the brethren who have recently moved to Mexico, and whether perhaps he “would advise us to found our homes there or whether overall it would be better to remain calm?”

On July 29, 1929, David P. Reimer refers to a baptismal service in Blumenort that morning. He recalls “how we were once instructed by the beloved servants of whom none is still at their place, and so I - as one of the younger [ones] who are to be replacements - have a longing once more to come to one of the aged for instruction, and therefore I must write you a letter.”

Knowing that Cornelius will be curious, David reported: “The Plett uncles were again in church here yesterday, and therefore, they are safely home. When they were leaving, we were of the expectation that I would also have made a journey to the west during the time of their absence. But this has again not happened since government business has taken up much time....If it only involved Alberta and Saskatchewan, the journey would long ago have been made, but there is also a third parcel of property, in the Peas River block which is to be inspected as well.”

Reimer notes that uncle Cornelius is getting older and gently suggests they should call more ministers, “that a strengthening of the ministerial should be completed there. For we live in a time when it is highly essential that the hosanna of Zion be echoed forth with a wakening cry. Indeed, it is highly earnest for the one who is chosen for such a calling, which I must personally acknowledge.” Here David P. Reimer adds an interesting statement: “But what our fate is to be here in this life, our Saviour has already declared even before our birth.”

“It is certainly my wish,” he adds, “that in this dark time the Lord might wish to grant light to walk the right way, indeed, that we might become armed with all manner of virtue of which the love is the most important.” He closes with “a heartfelt greeting to the entire Gemeinde in Satanta...”

The letter of February 14, 1928, although addressed to uncle and aunt Cornelius Plett, is really a pastoral epistle to the entire congregation at Satanta. David P. Reimer directs himself in turn to various members there. First, he addresses himself to “....you, Cornelius Pletten,” and referring to his recent trip to Satanta. He notes with regret that they did not visit as much as he would have liked “in part because we did not want to cause you too much inconvenience. But if we could have stayed there one more night with you, we could have

discussed more between ourselves. But in so far as we were able to talk, I am happy and will not soon forget it. It was especially an encouragement when you personally vorgesägt a song for us.”

“Sunday, we were at Joh. F. Reimers. Geschwister A. Reimers came here and took us and Mutterchen along. There we were privileged to also read an appropriate letter from you. We appreciate your letters very much, and yet, I question whether we treasure them enough for - certainly - you write them with great exertion....”

“While we were together at Joh. F. Reimers on Sunday, Rev. Joh. K. Friesen surprised us quite dramatically, in that completely unexpected he suddenly opened the door and entered. Rev. H. Duecken both came with Friesens from Prairie Rose. Jak. Kroeker are also here.”

David P. Reimer redirected his focus: “now moving through the garden to Gerhard Doerksens,” noting “....you have thought of us in the letter to Mutterchen, thank-you much.”

“Now I must go next to Abr. B. Reimers, “and so what are you doing? Are Joh. Koops still at your place?...When I reflect on your neat neighbourhood, it seems to me, that surely you must have time to write letters....but perhaps you do not have time.”

David P. Reimer’s letter writing is interrupted and he continues the next day: “This evening, the 15th, I first want to enter in at Bern. Doerksens....Recently we were able to hear a letter from you at Cor. P. Reimers. I had not yet heard many letters from you, and so I commented: ‘Uncle Doerksen is certainly a gifted letter writer.’ To this Cor. P. Reimer replied: ‘I have already known that for a long time.’” David P. Reimer asked, “What are your children writing from Mexico?”

“Now to Peter Pletts,” he continues. “At that time when we together with John were at Sara’s, she wanted to go home in a month. Evidently she will now be at home. How did the fine feed do, which you, uncle Plett, personally showed to us. The picture does not yet want to leave my eyes, and also it seems sometimes as if I still have the taste of the watermelons in my mouth which we ate at your place and also elsewhere.”

If it suits at Abr. Friesens, then I will visit there,” D. P. Reimer continues. “And now to Cor. E. Reimers. Are you well?...And now to Jak. Koopen. Recently, the 5th, we were visiting your father Joh. N. Koopen here. We wanted to visit Peter, but he was at work in the forest.”

David P. Reimer has a high view of the ministry and of the faith once received. In a letter of February 6, 1934, he writes “....about the time when all the old servants were at work...for now you are already alone still alive of all the old servants, for a short time ago we also brought Ohm Johann Friesen to his rest, and as we confidently hope, he is transported into a better [land] and can now physically enjoy that which is promised in Isaiah 52:7....He is to have served with the Word more than a 1000 times. But finally everything has an end and often even the young come to a sudden end.”

David P. Reimer was reminded of his uncle for “recently we were at Cor. P. Kroekers....where we ate Vesper at your old table.”

## **Biography of David P. Reimer.**

....Early in his married life, David P. Reimer took some time to study English, a subject which his prior education had not included. This study was beneficial for the teaching position which he took up in the Blumenort school for a few years. Other than presenting an opportunity to serve his community, this teaching position also supplemented the family income....

David P. Reimer was a minister and in 1949 he was ordained Ältester of the church in Blumenort. This meant much time away from home and family. Consequently much of the responsibility of raising a large family, keeping a household, a large garden and a farm going rested with Justina. Being a minister's wife also meant hosting much company. She performed this task graciously without complaining. She had a strong conviction that this was her calling.

David P. Reimer always took a keen interest in the concerns and affairs of the churches. During the years of 1940 to 1945 he spent much time in counselling and assisting the young men of draft age. Much time was spent accompanying these young men seeking conscientious objector status in the federal courts. Under the jurisdiction of the Selective Service Board, they were assigned to various types of service including hospital orderlies, farm labour and forestry service. At times it was a traumatic experience to be removed from family, friends and church. This brought an awareness to the church to provide pastoral counselling particularly to those in distant group camps. It was to this need that father was called at various times and places in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. Father developed a keen consciousness for the need of a stronger peace teaching in the Mennonite churches. Much time and effort was spent in studying and writing on the subject of non-resistance.

Father was also deeply involved in colonization. In the interest of this, he took many trips accompanied by other delegates to evaluate possibilities of desirable locations to recommend to interested members of the church. In the early 1930s the Peace River district in Alberta was seriously considered a possibility to establish a new settlement. Later several locations in Manitoba were explored. Then later in the 1940s new interest for migration was expressed in the community. This led to his involvement in exploring the possibilities to migrate to Mexico. A number of trips were required to consummate the migration to Quellen Kolonie, Chihuahua, Mexico. Seeking to establish religious freedom, conscientious objection to war and the privilege of maintaining their own school system were some of the major goals of his entire involvement. He sensed the satisfaction of great accomplishment when most of these requests were granted.

Neither David nor Justina had a formal high school education but in many respects they were well educated. She excelled in mental arithmetic. He was more interested in reading, writing, and research. He loved to be where crowds were gathered and discussions were carried on, while she preferred to fill her role quietly at home. Interest in and love for people in general, and the church in particular led father to attending many meetings and conferences. Two of the conferences which were highlights for him were the Mennonite World Conference in Switzerland in 1952 and another one in Kitchener, Ontario in 1962.

When David P. Reimer returned from the Kitchener conference it was apparent that his health was failing. Soon after he was admitted to the Steinbach hospital for diagnosis. Later he was transferred to a Winnipeg hospital where he underwent major cancer surgery in early October. He recovered remarkably fast and enjoyed reasonable health for a few months. In early spring it became obvious that he was developing severe health problems once more. Death took its toll on July 2, 1963.

Justina experienced many medical problems over the years. As a result she had to undergo a few major operations, after which she enjoyed fair health. Prior to father's death she had already developed a heart condition. This necessitated her to slow down her work habits which she found very difficult. During the last few years of her life she had to be hospitalized many times, due to heart seizures. On June 17, 1966 mother passed away after suffering another heart attack.....

By daughter Sara Reimer, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1984.<sup>1134</sup>

## **Leadership**

In 1948 Elder Peter P. Reimer moved to Mexico, and Blumenort elected a new Elder. David P. Reimer, a younger brother to Peter, was elected the leader. David had farmed on SE 21 since he married Justina Brandt in 1914. However, for several years after he married, he also taught school. After he was elected a minister in 1929, he became increasingly involved in church work. During the years that Peter was in charge of the whole Kleine Gemeinde body, David became a leading minister in the Blumenort Church. Before the war he had led the way for Sunday School, "Singstund", and "Jugendverein" to be introduced. During the war, he served Blumenort and the rest of the Kleine Gemeinde as C.O. advisor and chaplain. He became known as a dynamic, diplomatic, and even by some, as a progressive leader. Thus, it was not surprising that he was elected Elder with a very large majority.

One of the pressing issues which David P. Reimer faced as leader was the question of missions. Formal mission involvement was a new thing for the church, and there were differing opinions about it. While Elder Reimer was noted to be a strong evangelical, he was leery of independent mission organizations. According to Peter J.B. Reimer, David P. Reimer's "view was that evangelism should occur through colonization and not by going overseas." However, when the EMC Mission Board was started in 1953, he lent his entire support to it.

Elder Reimer was a man of order, and as such, he supported a mission board in which the church would be directly involved. Similarly, he wanted the Steinbach Bible Institute to be an EMC school. As moderator of the EMC, he worked hard for a conference constitution which would bring uniformity to the various churches. As a man of order he was a strong supporter of the traditional practice of electing church leaders for life instead of for terms.

Another issue which the church faced during Elder Reimer's leadership was an apparent erosion of the simple life. During the 50s, the lifestyle of many church people, who were becoming more affluent and mobile was beginning to change substantially. Many of these issues were discussed at brotherhood meet-

ings. During these years the brotherhood was warned about the moral dangers in “worldly” magazines, radios and television. Similar warnings were given against “the practice of sisters working in Ontario” and the practice of “working in the city and using wage money unwisely.” A whole spectrum of social events such as hockey games, 4-H clubs, picnics, wiener roasts, inter-school sports events, dating, summer vacations, and late-night Christmas caroling were matters of concern which were raised during the 50s. More tangible things such as short hair on women, finger rings, musical instruments and wedding dresses also came up for criticism. The brethren who raised these issues voiced concerns about frivolity, arrogance and competition.

Not only did David P. Reimer stress the simple life, he also emphasized the Anabaptist values of non-resistance and peace. After the war he edited a book on the experience of conscientious objectors during World War II in order to strengthen the belief of non-resistance among Mennonites. In 1951 he joined the Mennonite, Quaker and Brethren churches in thanking the Canadian government for recognizing their “sacred convictions against participating in war of any form” and in requesting that it respect those views in the future. Throughout the 50s he kept in close contact with the MCC Peace Committee.

Early in 1962, at the age of 69, Elder Reimer stepped down as the active leader. He had been the leader of the Blumenort Church for 14 years and an influential minister for 33 years. On July 2, 1963, he died. He was remembered by many for his warm personality, sincere faith, sharp intellect and gifted leadership.

By historian Royden Loewen, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1983.<sup>1135</sup>



*David P. and Justina Reimer, 1945. Photo - Blumenort, page 424.*

5 Daughter **Katharina L. Plett** (1854-1944) married Heinrich Wohlgemuth, son of Peter Wohlgemuth (1805-73) of Wolle, Poland. In 1863 the Wohlgemuth family moved to the Johannesruh, near Annafeld in the Crimea.<sup>1136</sup> Heinrich and his older brother received a scare when they were notified that they would not be recognized as Mennonites and, hence, were drafted into the army. In order to avoid military service it was necessary for them to prove they were Mennonites by birth and members of a recognized Mennonite denomination. The Kleine Gemeinde assisted Heinrich Wohlgemuth by filing a petition on his behalf: "Heinrich Wohlgemuth, formerly of Plotskisch Province, formerly resident in the Crimea, where he was baptized in the Mennonite Gemeinde in 1868, is presently resident here in Ekatherinoslav Province and District, where he is a member of the Mennonite Gemeinde at Grünfeld, near Nikopol. Here he attends the worship services as a true brother and according to our faith, and otherwise also conducts himself in a quiet and peaceful manner. Almost two years ago he gave up his pass for the purpose of exchanging it but to this date has not yet received a new one. We therefore request that the authorities of the appropriate jurisdiction might be good enough to grant him such a pass and to allow the same to be forwarded here. In authentication whereof this petition is certified by the subscription of the Seal of the Gemeinde and my name. Ältester Peter Toews, Blumenhoff, February 12, 1872."<sup>1137</sup> Heinrich Wohlgemuth's situation developed into a protracted affair with a number of letters written and certificates issued on his behalf. On August 13, 1873, Peter Toews, Heinrich Wohlgemuth, and Johann Warkentin Sr., drove to Ekatherinoslav in order to have a further attestation authenticated by the authorities. The trip was successful as the Plotskisch Government (province) now issued the necessary pass.

Heinrich Wohlgemuth had come to know various of the Kleine Gemeinde farmers in the Borosenko area, northwest of Nikopol, including Cornelius Plett and Cornelius Loewen, for whom he worked. During the course of his employment, Heinrich fell in love with the Plett's daughter, Katharina. Unfortunately the two were to be separated by events which lay ahead, events beyond their control.

In the great migration of 1874, Heinrich, together with his widowed mother and siblings, immigrated to the Kansas, U.S.A. But he parted company with them in Liverpool, England, boarding the steam ship S.S. Austrian bound for Canada. Presumably he was hoping against hope, to be reunited with Katharina, coming the following year with her parents. Heinrich was never to see any of his family again. He arrived at the Forks in Winnipeg on August 1, 1874, together with the first contingent of Mennonite settlers. On October 1, 1874, he filed for a homestead on SE31-6-5E, part of the village of Grünfeld.

Other events threatened to intervene. On the 8th of January, 1875, Heinrich was supposed to celebrate "Verlobung" with Maria Brandt Plett, the wealthy widow of Maria's older brother, Isaac. Evidently Heinrich changed his mind as the marriage never took place. When Katharina L. Plett and her family arrived in Manitoba on June 30, 1875, Heinrich again worked for the Pletts. October 30, 1875, Blumenhof, Manitoba, teacher Abr. R. Friesen recorded, "Verlobung was held at the Elder Cornelius Pletts, namely, Katharina with Heinrich Wohlgemuth." On



November 7, 1875, Heinrich married daughter Katharina. The marriage represented a happy ending to a romantic love story.

The couple lived and farmed in the village of Blumenhof. The village account book records various transactions of Heinrich Wohlgemuth related to village governance. In 1881 Heinrich Wohlgemuth paid \$4.58 for his share of drilling the village well and is listed with 4 1/2 cows in the village pasture. In 1882 he rented the farmland up to the "Rohr" boundary, 1 1/2 acres, for \$6.00.

Homestead records show that on March 5, 1877, the NE35-7-5E was granted to Heinrich Wohlgemuth. The Crown Patent was issued to Heinrich Wohlgemuth on July 5, 1884, and was registered on August 10, 1884. Until the dissolution of the village in 1887-89, Heinrich held title to the quarter section in trust for the village community which then distributed the individual koagels. The 1883 Assessment Rolls already show that Heinrich Wohlgemuths owned 160 acres of which 35 was cultivated. They owned 2 1/4 horses (Katharina's brothers Cornelius, Johann and Peter L. Plett each owned a quarter of a horse - likely a stud), two cows, two yearlings, two calves and two pigs. In addition to an eighth share of the Plett threshing outfit, the Wohlgemuths owned a third share of a feed crusher, and half a grass mower. They owned a wagon, two plows, a harrow, and sleigh.

Cornelius Plett retired in 1885 and shortly thereafter sold the NW26-7-6E, originally purchased from the Hudson Bay Co., to Heinrich Wohlgemuth for \$760.00. A Deed of Land dated November 7, 1887, was registered in the Winnipeg Land Titles Office on December 8, 1887 as Number 7082. It contained a clause that Heinrich would perform all the covenants and pay all monies due pursuant to the original agreement for the sale between Cornelius Plett and the HBC dated November 29, 1881. By 1889 the Heinrich and Katharina had paid for this land and on January 29<sup>th</sup> of that year the HBC granted a deed conveying title.

Upon the dissolution of the Blumenhof village in 1887-89, Heinrich and Katharina started a new yard on a scenic spot in the middle of the gravel ridge crossing the NE26-7-6E. One of the trees they must have planted, a "Reise pappel", by now [1995] has a four foot diameter. They moved their buildings from the village and built new ones. In 1887 Heinrich Wohlgemuth sold the south 70 acres of the NE35-7-6E to Peter Unger. According to the 1896 assessment records they owned 250 acres, being the north 90 acres of the NE35-7-6E and the NW26-7-6E of which 80 acres were cultivated.

In a letter of 1881 by former Kleine Gemeinde Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe, he remembered to greet Heinrich Wohlgemuth.<sup>1138</sup>

The Wohlgemuth family history states: "Heinrich Wohlgemuth was always known as Polish, and also spoke in a dialect that marked him as not a Molotschna Mennonite. He must have been a spiritually concerned man, and that from his very youth,....When a group of them agreed to go over to baptism by immersion, he chose to stay behind. Then later when true salvation by faith upon repentance was preached by John Holdeman, he was one of the first ones to accept it." Katharina was not inclined that way but finally joined also in order to keep peace in the family.<sup>1139</sup> They became true and devoted members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Heinrich was elected as a minister on December 12, 1894.

He was a gifted servant of the Word.

Heinrich Wohlgemuth died on March 4, 1899, of cancer. He had suffered from stomach pains. He was buried on his own yard. Ältester Peter Toews, who wrote Heinrich's obituary in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, noted that the church in Manitoba had suffered a severe loss by his death and would deeply mourn his early passing.

Katharina Plett Wohlgemuth continued farming with the help of her growing family. Shortly after the turn of the century, a 12-foot windmill was constructed and used to crush grain. In 1906 Katharina owned the homestead of 160 acres, seven horses, one bull, 17 cattle (10 cows and seven cattle under three years old) and 19 pigs. She increased the farm by purchasing an additional 80 acres of land, being the west half of SW2-8-6E in the R. M. of Ste Anne. She had a new two-storey house built for her family by Plett Brothers in 1918.

Katharina was a determined and competent manager of the farm. She was also a dedicated mother raising her eight children. When youngest son John, who had worked for her until a year after he got married in 1922, went into farming on his own, she retired from active farming and continued living on the yard together with daughter Anna. She did continue to have enough livestock for her own needs. In 1939 she sold the farm to grandson George W. Wohlgemuths and moved into a house on the yard of children Heinrich P. Toews. She lived here with daughter Anna until Anna got married in 1943. Katharina then lived with the Henry P. Toews family. She died January 18, 1944, having spent the last weeks at the Peter A. Penners' in Greenland.

In a letter of February 5, 1933, to brother Cornelius in Satanta, Kansas, Katharina Plett Wohlgemuth writes as follows: "Beloved brother Cornelius Plett. Firstly a heartfelt greeting and good wishes. I hope that this letter might find you in good health. Now, beloved brother, since so much time has elapsed since I have received a writing from you, also twice a greeting through Enns' - I have also just read your letter - and so I will once again seek to send you a token of love and life. I hardly know what to write you and what would interest you. It has truly become important to me that so many have died here in a short time in our age, which you will apparently also have heard. Also [among these is] Peter Baerg from Alberta, after he had been sick for a short time, and so the row could well shortly be up to you or me. But what is wrong with that if only we might be ready if all at once the command shall come, up to here and no further. Mrs. Abram Plettsche has also been very sick, but now is apparently better. We had driven there on Tuesday, myself and Anna. Of myself I can write as much, that sitting, crocheting and spinning, that is my work, but not to be on my feet a lot. Generally I am well. My thoughts have run out. So receive, once again, a heartfelt greeting, also to the children Ber. and Ger. Doerksen. Also a greeting to Peter Pletts. Write again when you have energy and desire and can. So much in love from your lowly sister, 'Kath. Wohlgemuth.'"

Katharina Wohlgemuth was a somewhat quiet and reserved person but when she spoke she was listened to with respect. Physically she was about 5'3" and of somewhat heavier build but trim. She enjoyed robust health all her life except

for a light stroke in 1938 from which she more or less recovered. She suffered a second stroke in 1943 and a third stroke six days prior to her death on January 18, 1944. A Wohlgemuth genealogy, *The Henry E. Wohlgemuth Family Book*, was published in 1991.<sup>1140</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Katharina L. Plett</b>	Feb 8, 1854		Jan 18, 1944
m	Hein. Wohlgemuth	May 9, 1849	Nov 7, 1875	Mar 4, 1899
6	Cor. P. Wohlgemuth	Sep 22, 1876		Oct 17, 1876
6	Hein. P. Wohlgemuth	Oct 3, 1877		May 7, 1883
6	Corn. P. Wohlgemuth	Nov 6, 1879		Jul 20, 1959
m	Maria G. Warkentin	Aug 12, 1877	Mar 10, 1901	Sep 24, 1941
6	Sara P. Wohlgemuth	Apr 9, 1881	Mar 12, 1899	Jun 17, 1943
m	Peter A. Penner	Nov 14, 1878		Aug 13, 1956
6	Kath. Wohlgemuth	Feb 8, 1883		
6	Anna Wohlgemuth	Mar 23, 1885		Jun 22, 1976
m	Peter A. Penner	Nov 14, 1878	Aug 29, 1943	Aug 13, 1956
2m	Johann de Veer	Oct 27, 1884	Jan 27, 1957	Jan 24, 1960
6	Hein. Wohlgemuth	Feb 18, 1887	Jan 21, 1912	Dec 7, 1970
m	Katharina Penner	Mar 19, 1888		May 18, 1962
6	Marg. Wohlgemuth	Dec 31, 1888	Jan 17, 1917	Sep 13, 1978
m	Heinrich P. Toews	Apr 19, 1891		Aug 23, 1966
6	Peter Wohlgemuth	Feb 11, 1891	Jun 19, 1921	Jun 12, 1969
m	Magdalena Sobering	Apr 20, 1901		Feb 24, 1992
6	Maria P. Wohlgemuth	Jun 1, 1892		Mar 1, 1894
6	Joh. P. Wohlgemuth	Jul 10, 1894	Jan 1, 1922	Feb 23, 1966
m	Martha Wiebe	Jun 5, 1897		Feb 2, 1977



*Home built by the widow Heinrich Wohlgemuth on NW26-7-6E in 1918. View to the northeast. Photo 1981.*



*Peter P. Woblgemuth ca. 1915 as a young school teacher in Blumenhof, Manitoba. Photo - Blumenort, page 397.*



*John W. Woblgemuth (b. 1903) and wife Helena Hiebert (1906-85). John was interested in the history of his people and translated various documents and journals. Photo - Alfred Woblgemuth, Steinbach.*



*Peter P. Woblgemuth (1891-1969), Landmark, ca. 1960, as editor of the Botschafter der Wahrheit.  
Photo - Elmer and Tina Woblgemuth, Landmark, Manitoba.*

6 Son **Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth** (1879-1959) “grew up in his parents’ home at Blumenhof. His father died in 1899 when Cornelius was only 19 years old. He, being the oldest, the responsibility of the farm work well on him.”<sup>1141</sup>

In 1901 Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth married second cousin, Maria Warkentin, daughter of Johann L. Warkentin and Maria P. Goossen. Cornelius and Maria lived and worked with his mother until 1905 when they bought uncle David L. Plett’s farm, the SE26-7-6E. They moved to this farm in spring of 1906. The Wohlgemuths now owned the entire ridge dissecting Section 26-7-6E, which was know locally as “Wohlgemuths’ Rig’gje”. They operated a mixed farm.

Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth was elected a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite on June 14, 1910. He faithfully served this office until his death. He was a capable man who faithfully tried to assist people in the right direction wherever he could. “When Cornelius had a young growing family he was ordained as a minister which increased his responsibility in an already busy life. Maria and the children ate many meals by themselves when Cornelius was away looking after the spiritual needs of others. During the time of the flu (1918-1919) he was especially busy when he also helped other farmers with their chores (with moth-balls in his pockets to keep from getting the flu himself). Miraculously, he escaped getting the flu except for a week of not feeling quite right.”

“Cornelius left his children and grandchildren an example to follow. He had his setbacks, his spiritual struggles and failings, like everyone else does. But he pointed others to the One who is able to help in every situation. He told of the time when he first found the Lord at the age of seven years. One day when he was bringing the cattle home from the field to his parents’ homestead there was a severe thunderstorm approaching. He knelt down and asked God to forgive him all his sins. When he got home he shared this experience with his mother. Later when he wanted to make a total commitment to follow the Lord and be baptized, and when he felt the need to make a reconsecration, he always went back to that time alone in the meadow, when God first forgave him.”

Maria died on August 24, 1941, “...leaving Cornelius very lonesome; but he would still visit his children, often encouraging them to be faithful to the Lord. He would take the opportunity to ask his grandchildren individually how they were doing spiritually. As the grandchildren grew up he stated that he would never want to be responsible for keeping anyone from the mission field when the gospel was needed in other places.”

After being a widower for 17 years, Cornelius married Mrs. Maria Nikkel Penner (widow Isaac T. Penner). Cornelius gave the farm over to son Cornelius who eventually bought it. In 1959 son Cornelius sold the farm and bought a farm in Greenland and Father then lived in his own house on the son’s yard. Cornelius and his second wife had enjoyed only 14 months together when he died of a stroke on July 20, 1959.

The *Henry E. Wohlgemuth Family Book* states that Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth was remembered as “a quiet person and lover of people. He seemed to be able to put himself into another’s situation, listen intently, and offer a bit of advice. He even delighted grandchildren away from home with a special letter from Grandpa.

They wished they had learned to know him better.”

Son John W. Wohlgemuth, Whitemouth, Manitoba, was interested in history, translating various writings into English. Son Isaac W. Wohlgemuth was a bachelor who lived on his grandmother's farm on NW26-7-6E. He was well-known as an electrician in the Blumenort district. He was knowledgeable in local history and contributed to the Wohlgemuth Chapter in the *Plett Picture Book*, pages 75-81.

6 Daughter **Sara P. Wohlgemuth** (1881-1943) married Peter A. Penner in 1899. The first three years they lived and worked for her mother. They bought a farm in Rosengard, southwest of Steinbach, where they farmed until 1908 when they bought the SE 10-8-6E in the Greenland district. Here they started a yard and constructed buildings. In 1918 Sara and Peter purchased a river lot just south of Ste Anne. They had a mixed farm and dairy milking about 15 cows. In 1925 when they enlarged their cellar they found a buffalo horn. There was a buffalo trail across the field where the older children walked along going to school.

Sara died on January 17, 1943 of pleurisy (T.B.), having been sick for several years. Peter A. Penner sold the farm to son Edwin. He remarried to Anna P. Wohlgemuth on August 29, 1943. They built a small house on the yard where they resided in their retirement. Peter A. Penner died on August 13, 1956, having suffered a brain haemorrhage in December of 1955.

Peter A. Penner was elected a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, on July 18, 1918. He served this office faithfully all his life. He loved singing, often singing at his work. Father also served several terms as the trustee for the Greenland school district. He was an avid genealogist and made a presentation at the Plettentag in 1945. Grandchildren include Jake Eldon Dueck, Greenland, and Clarice Friesen, Mrs. Edgar P. Friesen, Greenland.

6 Daughter **Katharina P. Wohlgemuth** (1883-1905) married Isaac T. Penner (1880-1956), son of Aron Penner who was killed by lightning in 1892. Isaac and Katharina lived and worked with his foster parents, the Isaac L. Warkentins, SE24-7-6E. The Warkentins had no children of their own and adopted all the orphaned children of Aron Penner, except Peter A. Penner, who was taken in by Peter "Grote" Toews. The *Henry E. Wohlgemuth Family Book* states: "For the first one and a half years they lived with Isaac's grandparents, where their son Isaac was born. They moved to a farm two miles southeast of Steinbach, Manitoba. Here Henry was born. They soon moved back to Isaac's grandparents and Katharina died there on March 26, 1905."

On May 28, 1905, Isaac remarried to Maria Nikkel. In 1915 Isaac and Maria moved to Lubbock, Texas. In 1924 they moved to Inman, Kansas, where Isaac again farmed. They had five children together. Isaac died January 10, 1956. Step-mother married for a second time to Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth.

6 Daughter **Anna P. Wohlgemuth** remained at home working for her mother until she married brother-in-law Peter A. Penner in 1943. They lived in a small house on the farm of son Edwin Penner. Peter A. Penner died in 1956.

Anna Wohlgemuth Penner then resided in the Greenland home until she married John de Veere on January 27, 1957. They moved their small house to the farm of John's children, Levi Reimers in Greenland, where they lived until

John's death on January 24, 1960. Anna then returned to the Greenland Home where she resided until her death in a car accident on June 22, 1976.

6 Son **Heinrich P. Wohlgemuth** (1887-1970) married Katharina Penner in 1912. They lived and worked one and a half years for his mother. They purchased the east half of NW32-7-6E with buildings in Greenland. They had a mixed farm until they retired in 1955. They acquired an additional 20 acres from her parents, Henry Penners, across the road on the SW5-8-6E. When they retired they sold the farm to son Abram and built a small house on the yard where they lived until Katharina's death on May 18, 1962 of a brain haemorrhage (stroke). Heinrich then moved their small house to the yard of son Walter in Greenland where he resided until his death on December 7, 1970 of bone cancer and ultimately kidney failure.

Heinrich P. Wohlgemuth served for some time as trustee for the Greenland school district in the 1920s. Katharina Penner Wohlgemuth was "hard of hearing and was deprived of the pleasure of communication in social life....In the spring of 1957 she broke her hip but through the summer resumed her household duties.

6 Daughter **Margaretha P. Wohlgemuth** (1888-1978) married Henry P. Toews in 1917. He was the son of Heinrich W. Toews, Greenland. Henry and Margaretha lived and worked the first winter for her mother. Then they rented a farm, the SW4-8-6E, a half-mile south of the Greenland church, where they farmed and lived until 1918 when they bought the south half of the east half of SW 2-8-6E in Blumenhof. When Grandmother Wohlgemuth had a new house built in 1918, Margaretha and Henry bought her old house which they moved to their land. The house was moved by sleigh and 32 horses. They also built other buildings and farmed here with a mixed farm until 1936 when they took over his father's farm in Greenland, the SE9-8-6E. "Here for a while Grandma Wohlgemuth and Aunt Anna lived to the east of our house while Grandpa Toews lived to the west of our house. When Aunt Anna got married, Grandma Wohlgemuth lived with us for a while. Grandma Toews died in our house."

Margaretha and Henry continued farming until 1950 when they retired and sold the farm to son Jonas, who built his own small house on the yard. A few years later son Levi bought the farm and eventually they exchanged houses as the children required a larger house for their growing family. Most of their children had moved to the Whitemouth district. In 1965 they also left Greenland and moved their small house to the yard of their children, the Peter P. Penners in Whitemouth. They lived here until Henry's passing on August 23, 1966. Margaretha continued living in the home with youngest daughter Caroline until her death of old age on September 13, 1978.

Henry P. Toews was a cripple, having suffered an injury to his leg at 14 years of age. The injury did not receive proper treatment and the leg had to be operated on. Apparently it did heal, but nine years later the leg again became inflamed and had to be amputated. He learned to adjust and lived with his disability with courage and perseverance. As a young woman, Margaretha "...had asked someone whether this cripple, Henry Toews, would ever be able to get married. At 28 years old she was the one that got married to him. This must have been a challenge for her." Henry was innovative and after trying several artificial



limbs without finding one that was comfortable, he made his own wooden leg. Because of the wooden leg, Henry was known as "Schock" Toews.

In the earlier years Margaretha, and later also the family, had to do much of the farm work that Henry was unable to do. "She was a hard worker. Sometimes she would take all her little ones along to the field so she could help stook hay or sheaves....[She] was of a quiet nature, kind and loving, but firm."

6 Son **Peter P. Wohlgemuth** (1891-1969) studied in Gretna together with friend Peter E. Loewen, son-in-law of Aron W. Reimer, Blumenhof.<sup>1142</sup> Peter then taught school in Blumenhof in 1914-1915 and 1917-1919. "In between school terms, which were short in those years, he worked on his mother's farm." In 1915 he moved to Texas and worked among the neighbours who had moved there from Blumenhof including Johann and Aron W. Reimer and his friend Peter E. Loewen. On the way home he stopped in Satanta, Kansas, to visit his relatives and was hired to teach in the private church school there. He was a competent teacher and dearly loved by his students.

In 1921 he married Magdalena Sobering (1901-92), sister to Heinrich Sobering of Steinbach.<sup>1143</sup> The family moved to Rosenhof where he taught school until 1925. They bought the SE27-8-5E and the south half of NE27-8-5E in Prairie Rose (Landmark) where they built up a yard and buildings. "Here he used the axe, his horses and later a tractor to clear the land for grain farming, dairy, layer hens and hogs." Peter and Helena operated a dairy and farmed until their retirement in 1966 when sons Ben and Melvin bought the farm. They built a new house on the southeast corner of the farm and lived here until Peter died on June 12, 1969 of emphysema. Magdalena remained living here together with daughter Linda until 1980 when she purchased a house in Greenland where they resided until Magdalena's death on February 24, 1992.

In addition to farming Peter P. Wohlgemuth served for some years as assistant editor of the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*. "A very memorable event that many will remember was the time when their oldest son, Albert, at the age of 20 years, was struck by lightning and died." Son Jac S. Wohlgemuth was the founder of "Landmark Feeds," and his son Randy owned and operated Landmark Agro. Daughter Esther Wohlgemuth is married to John U. Loewen, Reeve of the R.M. of Hanover during the 1980s.

6 Son **Johann P. Wohlgemuth** (1894-1966) married Martha Wiebe, daughter of Jakob P. T. Wiebe and Elisabeth Mooney, known as "Englische Wieben". "As he was the youngest of the family, he with his mother and sister Anna carried on with the farming on the NW26-7-6E." After their marriage in 1922, Johann and Martha lived and worked the first year for his mother, living with her in her home.

In the spring of 1923 they purchased the north half of the east half of SW2-8-6E and the west half of SE2-8-6E in Blumenhof. This property later became known as the "Willie Wieb'e gravel pit." Johann and Martha started a yard and buildings and farmed with a mixed farm and dairy. "The oldest five children were born here." "In the spring of 1929 grandfather Wiebe died, and the following spring of 1930 our parents moved to grandmother Wiebe's farm on the NE13-7-6E" which they bought from the Jakob P.T. Wiebe estate. "Here six children were born."

Johann P. Wohlgeomuth "...was a healthy man most of his life. In 1961 he suffered a heart attack, from which he recovered to near normal life. In early 1966 our parents wanted to retire. They made arrangements for the sale of the farm, bought a house and lot in Steinbach, and were looking forward to this move in spring. On February 23, 1966, Johann had another heart attack at his home, and passed on to his reward. Martha moved to Steinbach to the house they had purchased a month before in anticipation of their retirement. Son John W. Wohlgeomuth had already purchased the farm at this time. Martha lived in this house on Home Street in her retirement until 1976 after which she lived with her children, Edward Wohlgeomuths, for about a year. Martha suffered a stroke and had to be hospitalized where she died a few days later on February 2, 1977.

*The Henry E. Wohlgeomuth Family Book* states that Johann P. Wohlgeomuth was a "...hard worker and provided well for his family. As children we do not remember him to complain. When the automobile, electricity and power machinery came the life-style changed, which father and all of us appreciated very much. We remember our father as a stable man in purpose and faith. He would not let it be known when he had worries about caring for the family, nor were we aware of many spiritual struggles....He would at times mention that he did not know how to be a father since he grew up without one. He left us a good example and was a real father to us. Father took an interest in others, caring for the less fortunate, and helping where he could."

Johann P. Wohlgeomuth was interested in spirited horses. Also he raised some of the horses that were required on the farm. He took an interest in community affairs, serving on the board of the Steinbach Cheese Factory for most of the years from its establishment in about 1932 to its dissolution. He also served as trustee of the Clearspring school district from 1940 to 1948. He was an active member of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, all his life and served on the Steinbach Church Board and other offices for various terms. Johann had a good voice and enjoyed singing. Sons Gladwin (father of lawyer Dennis Wohlgeomuth), Edward, Lloyd and Winston were well-known in the Steinbach community.



*George W. Wohlgeomuth (1908-56), son of Cornelius P. George was killed in a tragic truck accident in Ste. Anne on February 9, 1956. Photo - Isaac W. Wohlgeomuth.*

*Right: Isaac W. Woblgemuth purchased his grandmother's farm from his brother George. Isaac is standing beside a giant water poplar ("Riese papel") presumably planted by grandparents, Heinrich and Katharina Woblgemuth. Photo - 1981.*



*Below: August 2, 1960, the post office opened in Landmark, Manitoba. A group of residents came for their mail: l.-r., Jake Woblgemuth (founder of Landmark Feeds), postmistress Mrs. Kroeker, Norman Kroeker, Archie Plett (Landmark Plumbing) and John Plett (Landmark Motors). These are all Plett descendants. Photo - Reflections, page 345.*



5 Son **Johann L. Plett** (1855-1900) married his cousin Margaretha L. Warkentin, daughter of Johann Warkentin (1817-86) and Anna Loewen (1819-74) of Blumstein, Molotschna, and later Blumenhof, Manitoba. Margaretha was the widow of Heinrich Reimer (1818-76) and already had six sons and two daughters, the oldest born in 1861.

According to family tradition Johann and Margaretha's oldest daughter Margaretha W. Plett (b. 1877), was born on the yard where the Johann L. Plett family lived. Presumably the village farm had belonged to Margaretha's first husband, Heinrich Reimer. It was the Wirtschaft just to the west of the farm of Cornelius Plett Sr. - across the municipal road which also served as the village cross-street. Upon the dissolution of the Blumenhof village in 1887 Johann L. Plett was able to negotiate and exchange properties to obtain the NE23-7-6E on which the west half of the village was located. As a result he did not need to relocate his farmyard and his parents were able to remain living besides their two oldest sons. Johann L. Plett farmed here all his life.

Johann and Margaretha L. Plett became members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in 1882. They were faithful lifelong members. Johann L. Plett followed his brother-in-law Ältester Peter Toews in his union with John Holdeman. The story is told that his wife was strongly in favour of joining Holdeman but that Johann did so largely to follow her wishes.<sup>1144</sup> Cornelius Plett Sr. was devastated when he learned of his son's intentions. It was a double blow as daughter Katharina had only recently made a similar decision. He told Johann that if he went through with this decision he would disinherit him and "forbid him the door."<sup>1145</sup> This practice of "hard love" resulted in the estrangement of father and son which was not resolved until Johann lay on his deathbed. Johann was the only Plett to join the Holdeman church.

Johann L. Plett was a successful farmer in Blumenhof. The assessment rolls of the R.M. of Hanover show that in 1883 he owned 480 acres (three village farms) - 100 acres cultivated. In 1887 he owned the NE23-7-6E - 70 acres cultivated, 5 horses, 14 cows, and other property. In 1896 John L. Plett owned the north half of 23-7-6E, the SE 25-7-6E, and part of the north half of 36-7-6E for a total acreage of 536 acres - 120 acres cultivated. He owned 8 horses, 31 cattle and 36 sheep and other property. Total assessment 4180. The next highest assessment in the Blumenort and Blumenhof district in 1896 was the widow Abram R. Reimer in Blumenort, assessed at 3071. Nine other farmers had assessments over 2000. By comparison the siblings of Johann L. Plett were assessed as follows: Cornelius Plett, 1837; Peter R. Reimer 2411; Heinrich Wohlgemuth, 2721; Peter L. Plett, 1883; Abram L. Plett, 1807; David L. Plett, 1634; and Jakob L. Plett, 1236.

Historian Royden K. Loewen has written about Johann L. Plett that "By 1885 he was farming almost 100 cultivated acres and was the most highly taxed farmer in the area. For a time he also served Blumenhof as a teacher and village Schulz."<sup>1146</sup>

In 1981 step-grandson Peter R. Wiebe of Greenland remembered Johann L. Plett personally. He recalled being with his parents one day in 1900 when they were visiting there. He had gone to the paddock behind the barn to watch the

cattle. He was leaning against the fence when a board came loose. To aggravate the situation a heifer that had been watching him carefully decided to break out of the corral through the resulting hole. Being only four years old, Peter was embarrassed and anxious that he had done something wrong. Just as he was trying to decide whether to run and hide or go and tell his parents, Johann L. Plett came walking by and perceived what had occurred. Plett was a slim and trim man not very big in stature. He must have been quite strong as he picked up the heifer lifting it up over the fence, placing it back inside the paddock. Johann had found it amusing that his "grandson" had the faith and confidence in him that he would be able to lift the heifer over the fence. His step-daughter Anna Reimer Wiebe had only related good things about him.<sup>1147</sup>

Johann L. Plett's step-sons remembered him as a loving Christian mentor and a generous parent. Son Jakob W. Reimer wrote as follows regarding his mother's widowhood and remarriage: "After a while our mother married a certain John Plett, whom we loved dearly because he was a good father to us. Later we got three sisters. One was deaf and dumb, which brought many worries to our parents, and especially to our dear mother. Fortunately we were never very poor, for we owned two quarters of land and had enough hands to care for it....Besides raising sheep and cattle, we tilled our land. We brothers plowed with two yoke of oxen, my brother or I holding the plow and the other driving the oxen. We had some horses at the time but we didn't use them for plowing."<sup>1148</sup>

Step-grandson Peter R. Wiebe, remembered his mother, Anna Reimer Wiebe, telling him that "notwithstanding that Johann L. Plett was much younger than his wife, he came to be loved dearly by his step-children in a very short while. He was determined to get along with his step-children sometimes treating his step-sons more like brothers and partners than children. If even the slightest question or potential difference arose, he had repented with love and confessed for his part so that no ill-will or trouble would come to life." Johann must have been a devout, talented and capable man for having earned the love and respect of his family in this wise. Step-daughter Anna Reimer Wiebe later recalled that if Johann L. Plett had even unintentionally done something wrong or erred, he came under conviction to make it right. In this atmosphere of love and self-sacrifice, he together with his step-family prospered greatly.<sup>1149</sup>

In 1983, Dick P. Loewen, Blumenort, remembered an anecdote about Johann L. Plett, that apparently Johannes Holdeman had believed it to be a sin to marry a first cousin. Consequently, Johann L. Plett had always prayed that his descendants would not have to be punished for his sin. In a way the prayer was answered for as it turned out, Johann's own direct lineal descendants died out.<sup>1150</sup>

In 1900 Johann fell sick and died of typhus on November 16. The story of the deathbed reconciliation between him and his father has already been told in the Cornelius Plett (1820-1900) Section. Ältester Peter Toews recorded that the burial of Johann was held on November 19, 1900, and that his father was buried beside his son one day later. Step-grandson Peter R. Wiebe, Greenland, remembered the funeral - he was four years-old - and also that Johann's father and daughter Sarah had all died in a short time. It was a big blow to the Blumenhof

community.<sup>1151</sup>

After his death, his widow Margaretha Loewen Reimer Plett lived with her children Heinrich H. Enns. Step-grandson Henry R. Wiebe recalled that their "Blumenhof" grandmother would always give them a Christmas present and a handkerchief with candies and peanuts rolled up inside.<sup>1152</sup>

6 In 1898 daughter **Margaretha W. Plett** (1877-1945) married Heinrich H. Enns (1876-1944), son of Johann T. Enns of Rosenort. Margaretha and Heinrich made their home with her parents. Heinrich was a teacher and taught for the Blumenhof School district from 1899 to 1905 and from 1906 to 1909. When Johann L. Plett died in 1900, Margaretha and Heinrich took over the farm with 160 acres of land, NE 23-7-6E. They had a mixed farm and dairy milking up to 14 cows. When the H. H. Enns' took over her parents' farm in 1900, grandmother, Mrs. Johann L. Plett, lived with them until her death on April 11, 1913. Margaretha and Heinrich dearly loved children and being unable to have their own, adopted four children of whom one daughter Hazel died in 1913 at the age of one. In addition the parents also looked after many foster children.

In March 30, 1913, Heinrich H. Enns was ordained as a deacon of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. He was generous to people of all faiths and ready to share what he had. He was intelligent and had an excellent memory. He also enjoyed writing poetry, songs and melodies (some of which were published in the Church song book). They were both fond of reading and also enjoyed singing. Margaretha was a loving individual and up until 1918, when the Holdeman Church still had regular worship services in Blumenhof, would have up to 20 visitors for Sunday dinner and Faspa - whom she also joyfully received.

During 1932 and 1933 Margaretha and Heinrich corresponded with her uncle Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas. On March 20, 1932, they wrote that it "Does not seem long to us since we were there in Satanta and already over three months have passed." They added: "Tomorrow the movable property and goods of the beloved deceased uncle Jakob L. Plett, which he used here to earn his necessities, is to be sold at public auction." In March (Year not legible) they write: "Thank-you for the letter we received some time ago, it was truly very precious to us; we hardly felt worthy of such love. Our visit [there] was truthfully quite earnest; it was always on our thoughts whenever we considered whether we should make the journey, that then we would once again visit the aged uncles. It truly gave us great joy that we could visit yet so well. Oh, how one then recalls the olden days when you were still here....indeed, the beloved aunt, who so often came alone to our place when our beloved mother was still alive."

On September 25, 1932, Margaretha and Heinrich reported the mishap of sister Katharina: "You will already have heard that Trienke has fallen down. We have taken her many times to Truttke ("Chiropractor") to be made right but nothing seems to help that she can stand on her feet again. Then we drove with her to Dr. Royal in Lorette who said she had had a stroke." On September 17, 1933, Heinrich and Margaretha wrote describing Katharina's convalescence: "Uncle Abram L. Plett drove by here twice on the way to J. F. Ungers and because of this we expected that he would stop in at our place to see the unfortunate

daughter of his deceased brother. But in this regard we had anticipated without the 'Wirt' for he did not come. But to his credit he did relate to me of his circumstances when I met him at the cheese factory; and uncle David has done the same. But we do have sharing empathetic friends who evidence their sympathy with word and deed. There is Mrs. Peter R. Unger, who comes surprisingly often and brings her some treats, be it a piece of cake, pie or platz. Also the J. F. Unger girls sometimes bring her an apple or chicken soup or whatever else it may be. Even if they are only little things, which do not require large money expenditures, yet the intention or spirit in which they are expended is highly to be treasured. The sickly Mrs. Joh. W. Reimer also has empathy for her and wishes that her daughter living here might visit her and even sent her a large nice pear one time. Now it will soon already be too much for you what we write about Trienke and so this will be enough already." In a letter of December 31, 1933, Heinrich and Margaretha noted: "It seemed extremely empty in our home after Trienke was gone, and it feels empty even now, although one does get used to it more and more. Also our daughter Dora, who was in Alberta for 16 months, came home on the 23rd of December."

Heinrich H. Enns developed a heart condition in 1942 and died of heart failure at home on July 16, 1944. Margaretha had developed nerve trouble in 1937 and this condition worsened with the passing of her husband. She died on September 1, 1945, having developed pneumonia three days before her death.

6 In 1898 daughter **Sara W. Plett (1880-1900)** married Jakob T. Dueck (1875-1908), son of deacon Johann L. Dueck of Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, and later Grünfeld, Manitoba. Two children were born to them who died as infants. Sara W. Plett died September 22, 1900, 19 days after the death of her youngest child and two months prior to her father's death. Jakob T. Dueck married for the second time to Aganetha Penner (1882-1934), daughter of Cornelius Penner (1854-99). Aganetha and Jakob lived in Greenland until 1904 when they moved to Hochstädt where he died on March 13, 1908. They had a family of four sons.

6 Youngest daughter **Katharina W. Plett (1884-1933)** was a normal child until she was four years old and had scarlet fever. She suffered brain damage from this illness and was feeble minded thereafter. She stayed with her sister Margaretha, Mrs. Henry H. Enns, who looked after her until she died on October 24, 1933.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Johann L. Plett</b>	Oct 17,1855		Nov 16,1900
m	Marg. L. Warkentin	Aug 17,1841	Feb 20,1877	Apr 11,1913
6	Margaretha W. Plett	Nov 27,1877	Mar 13,1898	Sep 1,1945
m	Heinrich H. Enns	Oct 30,1876		Jul 16,1944
6	Sarah W. Plett	Oct 5,1880	Sep 18,1898	Sep 22,1900
m	Jakob T. Dueck	Apr 16,1875		Mar 13,1908
6	Katharina W. Plett	Jul 15,1884		Oct 24,1933

5 Son **Peter L. Plett** (1858-1944) was the first of four brothers to marry the Johann M. Koop daughters from Neuanlage. Johann M. Koop (1831-1897) was a well-to-do farmer from Muntau, Molotschna, and later of Neuanlage, Manitoba.<sup>1153</sup>

Peter L. Plett married Agatha Barkman Koop (1859-1883) in 1879. However Agatha died in childbirth on April 4, 1883. Her son Cornelius died on April 1, 1885. Peter L. Plett married for the second time to Susanna Friesen (1864-1936) on July 29, 1883. She was the daughter of Cornelius Friesen (1810-92) of Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>1154</sup>

Peter L. Plett started farming on his own shortly after his marriage. He was already assessed for his own Wirtschaft in Blumenhof village in 1881. When the Blumenhof village plan dissolved in 1889 the grandparents received the SE 35-7-6E as their share of the village lands. Here they continued farming and constructed buildings and made a yard on the southeast corner. Later they acquired the NE35-7-6E. They also had a 20 acre woodlot on the NW 36-7-3E.

In 1981 son John recalled that Peter L. Pletts, as well as brothers Abram and David, each had an 80 acre property two miles west of Ste Anne, which originally was hayland with some bush (SW and N ½ NW 21-8-6E). One year Peter L. Pletts are to have harvested 100 hayrack loads of hay from their parcel. They had a mixed farm with 22 cattle in 1896. In addition the sons all worked for various threshing outfits as they became old enough. Peter and John worked a number of years for David L. Plett and Cornelius for Plett & Reimer. John F. Plett recalls that he worked five years as stoker and one year hauling water for the steam engine. All the children except Katherine finished their education in Blumenhof.

Peter L. Plett was elected as a Vorsänger in the Kleine Gemeinde as a young brother. On December 15, 1891, he was elected a deacon for the East Reserve Gemeinde. He served this office faithfully all his life. Historian Royden Loewen has written that "Church records show Peter Plett to have been a particularly fastidious recorder of finances."<sup>1155</sup>

In 1917 the farm in Blumenhof was sold and the grandparents moved to the new settlement in Satanta, Kansas. They bought a section of land of which son John took 400 acres and the parents 240. Two quarters were across the road. The farming was more with row crops although grain was raised. They had a dairy milking nine or so cows and the cream was brought by horse drawn wagon to Satanta where it was sold. There were no buildings on this land and so first of all buildings had to be constructed and a yard started. They had just finished the first building, a barn made of boards, when a hail store came over making a deafening noise. The house was finished to move into by fall. The farm was located 1 1/2 mile west and a mile north of brother Cornelius L. Pletts'.

In 1918 the Peter L. Plett sons had to return to Manitoba on account of the persecution of the Mennonites which was more severe in Kansas. So for a year or so Peter L. Plett had to farm together with his daughters. When Jakob - the first of the sons to return - came home, the whole family except his mother was sick with the flu. For a month she had to do all the chores as well as feed and look after her sick family. Apparently Jakob got the flu as soon as he got home, but the



flu was not as severe as in Manitoba. Later Jakob, as well as Henry P. Doerksen, are to have been imprisoned for not having agreed to take up military arms.

Like many of their siblings, Peter L. and Susanna Plett maintained a journal documenting some of their day-to-day activities: May, 1930, 12th. "...Johan drove to the city, finished planting the kaffir corn. Received a letter from the grandchildren, J. K. Pletts, and a card from Cor D.K. Pletts. The wind was northeast during the evening. And Koop hauled a load of corn away for Joh. May 13th. The wind southwest. Joh. and Cor. helped at Abr. B. Reimers. May 14th. It threatened to rain. Thunder during the night. May 15th. The wind was northeast with rain. Cor. again helped at Ab. B. Reimers. May 16th. Johan and Justina and Sarah drove to Karben [?] and Jakob returned home. May 17th. Johan R. Ungers [?] were here for the evening meal and Peter R[eimer] and Jakob Kroeker arrived here. May 17th. The guests were all at B. D. Doerksens. May 17th. Jakob Kroeker was here at our place, and the 20th Peter Reimers here and J. Bar., Corn. Reimers, and then the 19th, B. D. and Isaak Kornelsen and the Abraham Reimersche. May 21. A great storm. Southwest. Posted a letter to D. Pletts. May 24. We and Cor. Pletts went to Meade. For dinner at the aunt H. Reimers. For Vesper at Jakob Bartels and for the evening at Johann B., the elderly. For night at J. Friesens." The recorder of the journal continues, naming numerous homes visited in Meade.

Another extract from the journal from August, 1931: August 1. It had rained nicely. 2nd. Jakob Isaaks have been here in Satanta. H. Loewens were at our place for dinner. For vesper we were at G. Doerksens. 3rd. I and Tin were at J.B. Their manure house burned down. 4th. Ohm Cor. Plett was here and I drove along with Abr. Friesens to Joh. Barkmans. 6th. I drove along with Johan to the City, 9 dozen eggs along, with the girls 7 dozen. May 12th....Johan received 30 cents for 1 bushel of wheat, has sold approximately 1000 bushel." 1933: Feb. 16th. "Ohm David Plett arrived here. Feb. 18th. He was here....Feb. 21th. David Plett drove to Meade. Feb. 24. Johan drove to Garden with us and Cor. Pletts....Feb. 28. After dinner we were at B. D. Doerksens. Ohm David Pletts and many places and Cor. Pletts also. It is snowing already....Feb. 26. Tin and Peter again drove to Pexton....March 14. The three B.s and Gerhard D. and Johan Bark. drove to Oklahoma. June 8th. Jakob and Koop's Cor. drove to Oklahoma and returned home on the 5th of July....On the 18th the youth were baptised."

In 1936 Susanna Plett died, apparently, of cancer. At the last she is to have been lying sick on the dining room couch when she suddenly rushed to the bedroom mentioning that it would be necessary to call a physician which also was done. The doctor prescribed a sleeping potion and remarked that she would sleep until morning. She never awoke from this sleep. Susanna enjoyed spinning wool. As they had sheep, she ordered a spinning wheel, causing quite a curiosity as woollen clothing and consequently spinning were not common in the warmer Kansas climate.

The prosperous times came to an end with the onset of the Depression. In 1931 the Peter L. Pletts had their best wheat crop ever, but were able to sell for only 25 cents a bushel. Then came the drought of the "Dirty '30s." Much of the land in western Kansas was turned into a dust bowl. Frequent dust storms swept

across the plains drifting earth like snow and reducing visibility to yards. Year after year they seeded a crop only to have it ruined by the dry weather, slowly expending their resources. Most farmers were impoverished and by 1935 the married children, except Abram F. Pletts, had already returned to Manitoba. The men got jobs as they could, on road work or threshing gangs, but by 1939 they decided to return to Manitoba. They sold the farm and were able to pay all their debts and had a little left over to make a fresh start in Manitoba.

The first year Peter L. Plett and the unmarried children had their own house on the yard of Peter F. Pletts in Prairie Rose. For the next few years they moved this house and lived on John's yard. During the last several years, Peter L. Plett lived in various of his children's homes. He was more or less blind by 1938 but otherwise was a healthy man. He was a quiet man, dedicated to his duties. He died of a stroke on October 19, 1944 at the home of Peter D. Brandts. Historian Royden Loewen has written that Peter L. Plett "...is remembered as a very contented man, not one to complain or strive."<sup>1156</sup>

6 Son **Peter F. Plett** (1884-1970) married Sara Koop (1885-1963) in 1908. As a single man, he had worked for a number of years on his Uncle David L. Plett's threshing outfit. After their marriage Peter and Sara lived and worked the first years for mother's parents, John B. Koop, in Neuanlage.<sup>1157</sup> After several years they moved to Hochstädt where they bought the NW 9-5-5E and built a yard and buildings. Then in 1920 they had the opportunity to purchase the John B. Koop farm (SE 17-7-6E) and so they sold the farm in Hochstädt to Jakob B. Koops and moved back to Neuanlage.

In 1922 Peter F. Plett bought a new Titan tractor and did custom work opening up land for Sarah's parents and also for Uncle Peter B. Koop in the Prairie Rose district. Later Peter F. Plett had a threshing machine and did custom threshing around New Bothwell and also in Prairie Rose. In 1926 they bought the John D. Barkman farm in Prairie Rose (NE 18-8-6E) where they farmed until they retired and sold the farm to son John.

Historian Les Plett has written: "Farming in those years was desperately hard sometimes. Father would spend every winter in the bush camps, logging for lumber to build the necessary buildings. As soon as son Peter was old enough, he would go along with Father to the bush. Mother and the older children would look after the farm chores at home, consisting of milking cows, feeding pigs and chickens, cleaning barns and bringing in dry straw from the straw stack for fresh bedding for the animals. This often resulted in frost-bitten faces, hands and feet for the children. Also, part of the chores was cutting firewood and bringing it into the house by the armfuls. Every drop of water was also carried in by pails, filling up almost daily the back reservoir of the kitchen stove and a big five gallon stone crock for drinking water."

"The older girls, Sarah, Susanne, Katherine and Anna all started to work for farmers in the area as domestic work at an early age of 14-15 years of age. Susanne, Katharina, Mary and Helen all worked in Winnipeg doing housework. All their earnings were given to Father to help with the financial crisis on the farm, until the children reached the prime age of 21 years of age or got married

before that date.”

“Much of the land which belonged to the farm was covered with bush. So Father and Peter would clear bush and plow with a one share breaking plow and steel-wheeled Titan tractor. The younger children cleared the roots by hay-racks full which was used for winter firewood. Old and young of the family all worked hard on the farm to make a go of it.”

Father owned an almost new threshing machine and tractor, which he used for custom threshing during the fall months for many years. He had a threshing crew of five to six bundle teams and men to drive, pitch the racks full, and haul the grain home from the threshing machine. Financial conditions improved as the years went by.”

“In 1954 Father and Mother retired from farming. Their son Johann bought the farm from them, and the parents bought a small two-bedroom house and moved it into the garden for their retirement home. Mother still very much enjoyed her garden and beautiful flowers around her new house. Here they lived for nine years together, enjoying fairly good health and even doing some travelling.”

“Mother suffered from different ailments from 1960 to 1963. On March 31, 1963 she passed away at home. Father lived in the house alone for over a year. After that he lived with Walter Kroekers for two years. Next he lived one winter in the Steinbach Rest Haven, which he did not enjoy at all.”<sup>1158</sup>

After this Peter lived at the homes of various of his children until his death on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1970 of a heart attack. Peter F. Plett served as a school trustee for the Landmark school district for a number of years. He also enjoyed doing blacksmith work and repairing machinery which he also did for others.



*Peter F. Plett. Photo - Family Register of Peter F. Plett, page 1.*



*Sara, Mrs. Peter F. Plett. Photo - Family Register of Peter F. Plett, page 1.*

6 Son **Cornelius F. Plett** (1885-1944) married Anna Friesen (1894-1961) in 1916. They lived the first year of their marriage on the NW 35-7-6E where they built a yard and buildings a little to the north of where Bennie P. Pletts later farmed. In 1918 they bought the SE6-7-5E in Heuboden where they farmed until they moved to Kansas in 1929. Because of the dustbowl and depression conditions there, they returned to Heuboden in 1938 and settled on the east 40 acres of the SW 7-7-5E, which Anna had inherited from her parents, the Peter B. Friesens, where they farmed until Cornelius' death. Cornelius developed a thyroid condition in 1942 and had the operation for it on April 30, 1944. Complications set in and he died of pneumonia on May 2, 1944. Thereafter Anna moved her house to the yard of her brother Jacob W. Friesen in Kleefeld where she lived until her death on October 26, 1961 of a heart attack.

6 Daughter **Sarah F. Plett** (1896-1980) worked as a maid for Sam Kells who farmed about five miles away from Peter L. Pletts at Satanta, Kansas. Here she met her husband Arthur Jones, brother to Mrs. Kells. They got married in 1929 and farmed near Bloom, Kansas, until 1948 or so when they moved to Dodge City where Mr. Jones had found employment. They lived in Dodge City until Mr. Jones died September 28, 1954. Sarah lived with her son Elmer and in 1969 moved to Wichita and in 1972 in Tucson, Arizona where she died May 8, 1980, of a heart attack.

6 Daughter **Maria F. Plett** (1898-1964) married Abram W. Friesen (1896-1969) in 1923. He was the son of Peter B. Friesens and brother to Mrs. Cornelius F. Plett. They lived the first year or so of their marriage in Heuboden in a house on the yard of Cornelius F. Pletts. Then in 1925 they also moved to Satanta, Kansas. They rented land and farmed until 1935 when they returned to Manitoba. They settled on 40 acres that Abram had inherited, just to the west of the Cornelius F. Pletts. Here they built up a yard and buildings and farmed until they retired in 1963. In 1944 they bought the Cornelius F. Plett farm and in 1948 the Isaac W. Friesen farm when the Friesens moved to Mexico. They also had 160 acres on Section 14-7-4E. Upon their retirement, they moved a house to the yard of their children, Henry Penners, in Linden. Maria died on October 23, 1964 of cancer. Abram died December 3, 1969 of a stroke.

The Heuboden children went to the Seaton school which was situated on the north limit of Section 6-7-5E. The Heuboden church district had its own worship services in the school and the minister for many years was Cornelius R.E. Reimer. The settlement dissolved when most of the families moved to Mexico in 1948.

6 Son **John F. Plett** (1887-1989) stayed single all his life as did brother Jakob and sister Susanna. When Peter L. Plett returned to Manitoba with the unmarried children and the Abram F. Pletts in 1939, John bought the E ½ of the SW 27-8-5E in Landmark where he farmed for 10 years. Sisters Susanna F. Plett (1894-1992) and Margaretha F. Plett (1902-71) lived with him as well. In 1949 John bought a five acres property in Blumenort on the NE 28-7-6E where he and sister Susanna lived until 1969.

6 On August 6, 1944 daughter **Margaretha F. Plett** married David N. Koop (1904-75). They lived on his farm about 2 ½ miles east of Landmark. Margaretha

died on December 13, 1971 of cancer. David N. Koop died on May 27, 1975, also of cancer.

6 In 1963 daughter **Justina F. Plett** (1903-92) returned from the States, where she had worked as a waitress in restaurants. She then worked at the killing plant at Blumenort until 1969. During these years she lived in her own house which she had moved onto brother John's property. In 1969 the three siblings moved to Steinbach and lived the first year or so in a rented house on Henry Street and then in an apartment. In 1981 they were living in the Cedarwood Apartments on Wilson Street. At that time John F. Plett was the oldest of all his Plett cousins. He lived to celebrate his 100th anniversary.

6 Son **Jakob F. Plett** (1897-1973) worked in Herbert, Saskatchewan for uncle Peter Janke (he was married to Mrs. Peter L. Plett's sisters) for most of the years since returning from Kansas until he developed heart trouble in 1966. After spending a year in the hospital in Winnipeg he moved to the Resthaven in Steinbach until his death of a heart attack of June 19, 1973.

6 Son **Abram F. Plett** (1900-48) married Sarah D. Koop (1914-72) in 1933. When they left Kansas in 1938 they moved to a house on Plattenhof. He had started work for Plett Bros. upon returning to Manitoba, working with the manufacturing of Plett latches. He enjoyed doing mechanical things. Abram F. Plett developed heart trouble in 1945 and died at his home on Plattenhof of a heart attack on January 29, 1948. Sarah moved beside brother John F. Plett's property west of Blumenort where she had a large market garden, raising raspberries and strawberries. She died of cancer on February 14, 1972.

6 Daughter **Katharina F. Plett** (1907-95) married Peter D. Brandt (1905-92) in 1932. They were the first of their siblings to return to Manitoba in 1935. They farmed in Lichtenau until 1938 when they bought the John J. Loewen farm on the NE 30-6-7E in Ekron, two miles east of Steinbach. They farmed with a mixed farm and dairy. In 1974 they retired and bought a house in Steinbach on Hanover Street where they were residing in 1982.



*John F. Plett at age 94 in 1981. He lived to celebrate his 101st birthday, the highest age of all his Plett cousins.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Peter L. Plett</b>	Feb 18, 1858		Oct 19, 1944
m	Aganetha B. Koop	Oct 12, 1859	Feb 27, 1879	Apr 4, 1883
6	Cornelius K. Plett	Apr 4, 1883		Apr 1, 1885
5	<b>Peter L. Plett</b>	Feb 18, 1858		Oct 19, 1944
2m	Susanna Friesen	Feb 5, 1864	Jul 29, 1883	Oct 18, 1936
6	Peter F. Plett	Sep 10, 1884	Jan 4, 1908	May 4, 1970
m	Sarah B. Koop	Jul 26, 1885		Mar 31, 1963
6	Cornelius F. Plett	Dec 2, 1885	Jul 2, 1916	May 2, 1944
m	Anna W. Friesen	Sep 1, 1894		Oct 26, 1961
6	Johann F. Plett	Apr 5, 1887		Mar 18, 1989
6	Abraham F. Plett	Jun 7, 1888		Jun 7, 1888
6	Abraham F. Plett	Sep 11, 1889		Sep 11, 1889
6	David F. Plett	Mar 17, 1891		Mar 17, 1891
6	Maria F. Plett	Aug 4, 1892		Aug 4, 1892
6	Susanna F. Plett	Jul 11, 1894		Dec 5, 1992
6	Sarah F. Plett	Jan 21, 1896		May 8, 1980
m	Arthur Jones		1929	Sep 28, 1954
6	Jakob F. Plett	May 27, 1897		Jun 19, 1973
6	Maria F. Plett	Nov 21, 1898	Feb 4, 1923	Oct 23, 1964
m	Abraham W. Friesen	Aug 8, 1896		Dec 3, 1969
6	Abram F. Plett	May 7, 1900		Jan 21, 1948
m	Sarah D. Koop	Apr 17, 1914	Nov 26, 1933	Feb 14, 1972
6	Margaretha F. Plett	Jan 29, 1902	Aug 6, 1944	Dec 13, 1971
m	Johann N. Koop	Jun 23, 1904		May 27, 1975
6	Justina F. Plett	Apr 27, 1903	Jan 6, 1937	Jun 3, 1992
m	B. Brackett	1878		
6	Son Plett			Infancy
6	Katharina F. Plett	Mar 24, 1907	Aug 20, 1932	Feb 24, 1995
m	Peter D. Brandt	Aug 23, 1905		Dec 6, 1992



*Peter L. Plett yard, SW 35-7-6E, in Blumenhof, Manitoba as it appeared ca. 1930. View to the northeast. It was one of the few barns in the area with the stone mortared walls for the ground floor. Photo courtesy of Sid Barkman.*

5 Son **Abraham L. Plett** (1859-1934) grew up on a bustling Wirtschaft in Kleefeld, Molotschna. One of Abram's fond memories was the sound of Russian workers lustily singing as they were driven off to the fields after being treated to a shot of "schnapps" on his parent's yard. One time Abram and "some other boys were playing outside when they happened to bump into a bees' nest. The bees came out and started to attack the boys. They ran away as fast as they could except for...[Abram] who stayed behind. The boys yelled, 'Rann, Obrum rann!' But...[Abram], he yelled back, 'Ein Platt rant nicht!' He got badly swollen up and was sick for several days, but he hadn't run."<sup>1159</sup>

On August 4, 1878 - in his 19th year - Abraham L. Plett affirmed his commitment to following Jesus Christ and was baptised upon communal confession of his faith by Ältester Peter Toews in the barn of Peter W. Toews, Blumenort, Manitoba. Also being baptised was a young attractive woman, Gertruda Barkman Koop, born November 21, 1861, in Mariawohl, Imperial Russia. Soon Abram followed the example of older brother Peter and started courting at the home of her parents, Johann and Katharina Koop in Neuanlage four miles to the southwest of Blumenhof. Following tradition, Abraham's parents visited the Koop home and officially presented his marriage proposal. After consulting with Gertruda, Johann and Katharina Koop agreed.

Blumenort neighbour, Abraham F. ("Fula") Reimer, a good friend of both families, recorded some of these events: November 11, 1879, Tuesday, + 4, later + 6, cloudy and calm. "In the afternoon we were at J. Koops to attend the betrothal: Abr., son of Cor. Plett Sr., was betrothed to Gertruda daughter of J. Koops." "November 20. Thur. -25, later -8. Wind south. The wedding of Abram and Gertrude, daughter of J. Koops, took place in Blumenhof at Cor. Pletts'. At 2 p.m. I went down there. There were 30 to 40 families attending. The English doctor was also there, with David Hieberts from the other side of the river."

Within six years, Abram's younger brothers, David and Jakob, would follow his example and marry Helena and Maria, Gertruda's younger sisters. The three sets of double siblings were very close and nurtured an intimate lifelong relationship which enriched their lives immensely. During the years to come, 15 children were born to Abraham and Gertruda, three of whom died in infancy.

Abr. and Gertruda Plett corresponded with friends and relatives left behind in the old Homeland. On December 23, 1881, Abraham's sister, Sarah, died in Friedensfeld, Russia. Her husband Jakob J. Thielmann wrote to Abraham's parents adding a question for Abram Pletts, whether they had received the letter he had written them, mentioning Johann Thielmann, an estate owner in Russia and presumably Abram's friend (see Thielmann Section).

## Village Life, 1880-87.

Presumably, Abraham and Gertrude lived and worked with his parents for the first year or two, farming together with his father and younger brothers David and Jakob. Chronicler "Fula" Reimer, Blumenort, made various references to the comings and goings of the Plett family: "Monday, September 27, 1880, "...a little hail and lightning during the night. At 5 a.m. Ab. Plett from Blumenhof took my wife [a midwife] to J. Pletts [for a child birth]." December 23, "Thursday, -17. At noon Ab. Pletts from Blumenhof went to Grünfeld [Kleefeld] and stayed overnight." Apparently they were on their way to Rosenort, for on December 29 Reimer recorded, "Yesterday, Ab. Pletts, J. Koops and Helena came home from the other side of the river [Rosenort "jant sied"] having been gone five days."

Abraham L. Plett filed for his own homestead on March 21, 1879, SE24-7-6E, adjacent to his father's homestead on NE24-7-6E. The 1881 Assessment rolls list him as a Vollwirt (full farm owner). The 1881 Dominion census shows that Peter and Abraham L. Plett were already established in their own homes. Abram was entered in the "Brandordnung" or fire insurance on April 25, 1881, with coverage on buildings of \$200, equipment \$50 and feed and cattle \$100. The house was a story and-a-half, 22 by 30 feet.

Abr. R. Reimer, Blumenort blacksmith, kept customer accounts. The opening item for Abram Plett in 1881, page 47: "made a hoe, 20 cents". On April 18, "sharpening plow blade and clouter 35 cents"; April 20th, "made a coulter 85 and 70 cents." The work was charged and a payment credited to the account on June 13, "I purchased meat from him 77 cents."

The Blumenhof village book for 1881-88 recorded meetings regarding village operations. Abr. Plett is included as a full farmer in a list of contributors for drilling a village well in 1881. The village provided a community pasture and assessed fees based on usage. The pasture list for July 8, 1881, charged Abraham for 5 1/2 head of cattle. In 1881 Blumenhof built a new school house for which each landowner was levied a portion to be paid over time. On October 25, 1881, Abram L. Plett rented the village land on the "Hopper" boundary, a sign he was seeking opportunities to advance his farming operations.<sup>1160</sup>

On May 20, 1882, the village council appointed Abram and brothers Cornelius and Johann as well as Aron Penner and Heinrich Wohlgemuth to survey village lands. Each village farmer had to contribute labour for the construction and maintenance of roads, drainage and other public works, a system known as "Scharwerk" or statute labour. The meeting approved construction of a drainage ditch and that "Peter and Abram Plett would provide the horses."

The 1883 assessment records show that the Pletts had a house valued at \$75, furnishings \$50, 2 horses, 3 cows, 1 yearling, 2 calves, 3 pigs, a 1/8 share in the Plett family threshing outfit, a 1/4 share in a feed crusher owned jointly with brothers Peter, Cornelius and father Cornelius, half a mower and rake, 2 wagons, 2 plows, 1 harrow and 1 sleigh, total assessment 520. Abraham had 35 of his 160 acres cultivated, a substantial acreage. The 1884 assessment rolls show that Abraham had added two more horses to his stable.

The Mennonite pioneers in 1874 had developed a commercial wheat-grow-



ing economy in Russia where their grain was purchased for cash from their farms for shipment to western Europe. Manitoba during the 1870s was much too primitive for such farming specialization making a restructuring to more subsistence level mixed-farming necessary. Ironically, it was the painful adjustments made by the pioneers during this initial period which laid the foundations for the future prosperity of all of southeastern Manitoba. The farmers also learned to market their own products in Winnipeg which involved a three day journey there and back.

Abraham, like most of his neighbours, soon decided to focus on dairying and market farming. On Thursday, June 21, 1883, Abr. F. Reimer recorded, "A. Penner began to build A. Plett's barn." Abr. Plett insured his new barn for \$200 on December 25, 1883. The barn was 35 by 50 feet long. By 1886 he had 7 cattle in the community pasture, a sign his operations were increasing. On December 24, 1886, Abr. Plett increased his insurance on furniture by \$150.

Abraham L. Plett became mayor or Schulz of the village in 1887 - the year the village disbanded. The minutes show he took on various duties. On December 21, 1887, he signed a settlement agreement on behalf of the village with Nick Elias Kolonowski, who may have been the herdsman. He also submitted a bill for driving to Schönthal (the municipal seat at the time) regarding, "the herdsman". The invoice was for time and a vehicle for 2/3 of a day. Neighbour Peter H. Unger had gone along. In 1888 Abraham quartered the "old" village bull in his barn.

The dissolution of Blumenhof involved much negotiating and discussion. All except Cornelius and Johann L. Plett had to surrender their farmyards in the *Strassendorf* village and relocate to their own quarter sections. The rest established themselves on their land with individual title holdings in North American fashion. Abraham had taken out a homestead on SE24-7-6E but received title to NW25-7-6E, the homestead quarter of brother Cornelius. Cornelius, in turn, received NW24-7-6E which included the east end of the village. The NW24-7-6E was originally homesteaded by "Dr." Isaac L. Warkentin, who received title to SE24-7-6E, thus completing the three-way exchange.

### **The Farm, 1887-96.**

Starting in 1887, Abraham and Gertruda relocated to NW 25-7-6E, 1 1/2 miles north of the old village, where they established a new farmyard. Living west across the road allowance on NE26-7-6E was the Peter H. Unger family, and "kitty-corner" to the northwest on SE35-7-6E was older brother Peter L. Plett, thus creating three-quarters of a so-called "four corners" hamlet. Over time they added additional buildings: a two-storey horse barn 30x30, a two-storey hog barn, 30x30, a 15 foot lean-to for the dairy barn (including bay mow) which was now 70 feet by 50 feet. The barn and house were joined together in an "L" shaped configuration by a large winter-kitchen and well-house. A chicken barn and a carriage shed were located on the south side of the yard.

By March 1, 1889, the process of dismantling the village was largely completed and the village decided to sell its assets by a public auction where Abram purchased a quantity of barbed wire.

On August 25, 1889, Abr. also entered a new dwelling house in the insur-

ance records for \$200 and on December 24, he added \$50 to his house coverage and \$50 for the barn, for a total coverage on house and barn of \$500. The assessment records for 1889 show that Abram owned the NW25-7-6E and a 20 acre woodlot on NE36-7-6E, 180 acres in total with 42 cultivated. Abram had 4 horses and a total of 11 cattle.

On January 7, 1890, Abraham L. Plett mortgaged his home property NW25-7-6E to the "Manitoba Mortgage and Investment Company Limited" for a loan of \$1000, co-signed by brothers Peter, Jakob and David, and by their father-in-law, Johann Koop. The purpose of the loan presumably was for the purchase of a "Pripps Kjaettle", as the stationary steam-engine units were known, and a threshing machine.<sup>1161</sup> Neighbour Gerhard Doerksen recorded that in 1891 he paid \$166 for a 1/11th share in the Blumenhof threshing company.

In 1981 old-timers such as Peter A. Plett and Jakob W. Friesen remembered that Abraham and brother Jakob operated such a threshing company with an upright stationary steam-engine. This business sideline revealed Abraham's love of modern farm machinery which enabled him to increase his land holdings and grain acreages. Peter A. Plett also recalled that when he was a young boy a feed crusher had stood parked beside the machine shed unused for many years already. It consisted of two stone wheels 3" thick and 24" in circumference. One stone was stationary and the other turned on a shaft. Grain was fed into the grinder by a hopper which directed it into the centre of the stationary wheel. Both stones were grooved from the inside out, deeper in the centre and almost disappearing at the outside. The grain moved to the outside as the wheel turned and had to be crushed by the time it got to the outside. Finally his brother Abraham sold the crusher to some Jewish iron dealers who broke up the machine with sledge hammers and hauled it away.

Peter assumed that the grinder had been powered by a "Pripps Kjaettle" stationary steam engine. He remembered that when he was just a very young boy his father had still threshed with a "Pripps Kjaettle" with a big fly-wheel mounted on a wagon and hauled from site to site by a team of horses.

In 1895 Abraham harvested 2284 bushels of grain from 70 acres, the third largest among 11 farmers in the Blumenhof threshing company. Only older brother Johann with 2652 bushels from 87 acres and Johann Janzen with 2894 bushels from 94 acres had larger crops.

In 1896 Abram had the same landholding but had increased his arable acreage somewhat to 75 acres. He had 5 horses and 17 head of livestock. His total assessment increased to 1807 from 944 in 1889.

## Journals, 1895-6.

The journals of neighbours such as "Fula" Reimer, teacher Abr. R. Friesen, mayor Abraham M. Friesen, illuminate contemporary life, including constant visiting and socializing as well as economic self-help activities such as barn-raising, pig-slaughtering bees, etc.

During the winter the men would go to the spruce forest 10 to 15 miles east of the village staying in bush camps for several days while they harvested logs which were taken to a sawmill and cut into board lumber for next summer's building projects. Throughout the year, but particularly in winter, the men made bi-monthly trips to Winnipeg to market farm produce. They would make it to the outskirts of the City in one day where they overnights at "Gilchrists", "Rohms", or "Magers". The next day they would go into the City, do their business, and then return to the livery stables for night, and then home the next day.

The journal of older brother, Cornelius L. Plett, covering 1895-97, frequently referred to the Abr. Plett family. On January 1, 1895, C. L. Plett went to the worship services and brotherhood meeting in Steinbach. Later in the evening they went to visit his parents where Peter Pletts and Abr. Pletts were visiting as well. Jan. 12, C. L. Pletts went visiting at Abr. Pletts. Sept 16, "Abram Plett borrowed 5 bags of chop from us, namely 434 pounds, and 5 bags of oats." Abram Plett returned the borrowed feed on Wednesday, January 8, 1896. Older brother Cornelius often helped out Abram with short term loans of grain, feed, and other necessities.

Visiting was a way of life for the pioneers. A typical day occurred on Sunday, February 8, 1896. While C. L. Plett was on a ministerial trip to Rosenort, his wife had visitors: Mrs. Peter Plett, the grandparents [Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Plett], Ab. Plett, Jak. Pletts and Hei. Pletts." The practice of "Noe-spatziere" was standard: On March 12, 1896, the C. L. Pletts took their guests, the Gerhard Siemens, Rosenort, visiting in Blumenhof, first to Jakob L. Pletts, then Abr. L. Pletts, where Peter L. Pletts also came; Ger. Siemens went across the road briefly to visit at Pet. H. Ungers, and then the C. L. Pletts took them to Dav. L. Pletts where Pet., Abr. L. Pletts and Ger. Doerksens also came visiting. On Monday, March 23, 1896, C. L. Pletts went "noe-spatzierung" at Abr. L. Pletts and Pet. H. Ungers, where Abr. L. Duecks, the Bishop, were visiting. Hog-slaughtering bees and other mutual self-help activities were a necessity and also an important medium for socializing. Nov. 29, 1895, C. L. Plett recorded, "We slaughtered 2 pigs and 2 oxen. We had A. Pletts, G. Doerksens, B. Doerksens, Heinrich Pletts, and my parents, to help us."

Abr. Plett enjoyed travelling and occasionally accompanied older brother, Cornelius, on pastoral visitations. On January 6, 1897, Abram and Cornelius headed to Rosenort and Rosenhof (in those days referred to as the "Scratching River Settlement"). They drove first to Grünfeld (Kleefeld) where Bishop Abr. L. Dueck joined them and then headed for Rosenort arriving at the home of Pet. Kroeker at 3 p.m. That evening Abr. and Cornelius went to visit the widow Martin Rempel - aunt to Gertruda, Abram's wife. For night they returned to Pet. Kroekers. After four busy days of visiting, worship services and brotherhood meetings, the three men returned home on the 11th.

### **Typoid Epidemic, 1900.**

Typoid struck the Blumenhof community in 1900 taking the lives of family members, including two of Abraham and Gertruda's own children: Helena - age 6 - died September 5, 1900, and Jakob - 9 months-old - died October 13. The children were buried in a small graveyard at the northeast corner of the Abr. L. Plett yard, where another son, Cornelius, only three weeks-old had been buried in 1893.

Grandson Erwin P. Friesen remembered that they were buried just south of the Road Allowance, approximately across from Abraham Plett's driveway for their retirement home. Erwin remembered a maple tree standing there and a small fenced area where the children were buried. Within a month, Abram's older brother, Johann, and father, Cornelius, had also fallen victim to typoid.

The worship services for the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde were originally held in three church districts - Grünfeld, Steinbach and Blumenort. In 1901 minister Jakob Classen from Jansen, Nebraska, was conducting worship services at the other meeting houses and had a great gift of preaching. Mrs. Peter H. Unger, the Pletts' neighbour west across the road, was sick at the time and unable to attend. Hearing about her dilemma, Abram offered that the services could be held in his spacious home, so that she could also attend. The event proved successful and Blumenhof was added to the church calendar and a worship service held every fourth Sunday, just like in Grünfeld (Kleefeld).<sup>1162</sup>

In 1901 title to the property on the SW25-7-6E where Cornelius Plett Sr. and son Johann L. Plett were buried was transferred to the members of the Blumenhof community including Abr. L. Plett. In 1903 a new school house was built on this site, where the worship services were henceforth held.

### **New Equipment.**

On June 29, 1900, Abraham L. Plett and brother Jakob each mortgaged their properties for \$500 to the "J. I. Case Tractor and Machine Co. Limited", apparently for the purchase of a modern 15/30 Case tractor-type steam-engine. This partnership continued until 1902 when Jakob L. Plett mortgaged his property for \$1850, and continued in the threshing business on his own. Jakob L. Plett continued to do the threshing for Abraham.

Son Peter remembered how the two brothers used to enjoy visiting and discussing their farming operations. Jakob would come visiting and would sit with Abram all evening in the parlour visiting. When it was time to go, they would go out on the yard talking all the time and then into the barn, and then to the back of the barn where they stood and talked for a long time, and then uncle Jakob would turn to leave across the fields for home and Abraham would go with him over the fields until they came to the fence line a half-a-mile way, and then they would stand there visiting, all-the-while twisting off tails of grain and rubbing out the kernels in their hands. Finally with the falling of dusk the two brothers would take their leave and wend their way back to their respective homes.

Other visitors came calling as well. On Sunday, Sept. 2, 1906, Abr. M. Friesen, living on SW35-7-6E, a mile west, recorded "I and the children, Peter Friesens, were at Abr. Pletts, where the Nebraskaer A. Reimers were [visiting]."

## Female Paradigm.

The children of Abraham and Gertruda was growing up. Oldest daughter, Sarah, was married in 1903 to Johann R. Penner of Blumenort and they were already established on their own in the Krim. Johann K. Plett, the next oldest, had married Margaretha, sister to Johann Penner, and also lived in the Krim.

The Abram Plett home was quite a female world with eight daughters and four sons. This matriarchal paradigm was reinforced by the fact that Gertruda's sisters, Maria and Helena, who had married Abraham's younger brothers, also had families with more females than males. Out of a total of 37 double first-cousins in the three families, only 12 were male.

Gertruda's sisters, Helena, Mrs. David L. Plett, and Katharina, Mrs. Peter B. Klassen, were quite chubby when they were younger married women having babies. When the three sisters got together, they would talk and joke and laugh so hard their fat would jiggle. Mrs. Jakob L. Plett was not so plump, but still a little rounder than Gertruda. Gertruda and her husband, Abraham, were both quite trim of physique. When the four sisters would get together on a Sunday, they would sit in the "Grotte Sctoave" with their husbands visiting and then they would take out the *Gesangbücher*, and sing songs. They all had a pleasant time together.

The Abr. L. Plett home had the reputation for being meticulously clean. The household was run according to a very definite female order and it was said not even a fly was allowed to intrude upon this domain. One can imagine the fun the eight girls, born between 1881 and 1909, had when it came to the household economy and their daily domestic work, whether quilting, canning, cooking or cleaning. It was said that the threshing crews particularly enjoyed working at the Abr. Pletts: the food was good and plentiful, the home and yard sparkling clean, and, not least of all, there were generally several attractive daughters to serve them. In fact, three of these threshing boys - brothers Cornelius, Peter and Henry R. Plett - were so enamoured they later found their life's partners here, sisters Maria, Helena and Elisabeth.

Gertruda Koop Plett had a soft spot for her mother Katharina Barkman Koop, widowed in 1897. Katharina stayed at the homes of her various children, but seemingly had a permanent room at Abr. L. Pletts and frequently her other children would visit her there. Sister, Maria, Mrs. Jakob L. Plett reported about some of these visits in her diary: "Sept. 7, 1907, we were at Abram L. Pletts...on the 16th, we started threshing at Abram L. Pletts, on the 31st father and uncle Abram [Plett] went to the City".<sup>1163</sup>

Granddaughter Elizabeth Plett Dueck and grandson Clarence Plett remembered that Gertruda, Mrs. Abraham L. Plett, was struck by lightning and believed dead. She had been lying on the "Ruh Baenk" (settee) in the "Grotte Sctoave" (parlour), when lightning struck a wire in the wall and hanging across the room or along the wall, possibly a wash line. The lightning strike followed the line and hit Gertruda where she lay sleeping. There was a loud crack of lightning, and the wall was burned brown where the line entered the room. At this point, Gertruda was not breathing. Her children, and/or possibly her husband, dragged her around, trying to wake her up, and finally, she started breathing again.

Grandson Clarence Plett, Willowridge, B.C. remembered being in the living room with Grandma A. L. Plett and two of his younger aunts when she showed him "...where the lightning had burned a black streak on the wall, going from nail to nail. She said Grandpa was in the yard when the lightning hit and it knocked him to the ground. But he got up and walked to the house."<sup>1164</sup>

### **Son Abraham, 1906.**

The attributes of the Plett matriarchy were matched on the farmyard by the work ethic and energy of Abraham L. Plett. He was a man of tremendous enthusiasm for farming, the love of his life.

Abraham thought nothing of working 16 hour days. He sometimes had back pains but then he strapped a wide belt around his waist and kept on working. There was no appreciation or room for slackards on the Abr. L. Plett farmyard. In some ways, Abr. L. Plett carried forward the attitudes and world-view of the Prussian "Muster-wirt" or model farmer, a heritage which hailed back to medieval times when the Low-German dominated Hanseatic League controlled commerce and business in northern Europe and around the Baltic Sea.

Most people of intelligence and energy go through some period in their youth when these attributes are not their paramount goal. This also happened to Abram, Abraham's second oldest son, who turned 20 in 1904. In fact, young Abram enjoyed playing music, organizing illicit barn dances when his parents were away and hanging out with his buddies, the brothers Reimer - Klaas and Gerhard, the Krebs boys, and Gerhard Doerksen's George. The young fellows got together, played their instruments and joked around. They had their instruments hanging in the barn at Klaas P. Reimer's in Blumenort ready to go at a moment's notice.

Abraham L. Plett was an aggressive, bustling large-scale farmer not much given to tomfoolery. He was not impressed with these activities and was particularly incensed when his son took off during the working day. As the story goes one busy day during harvest, young Abram disappeared presumably to hang out with his "gang". This made his father rather upset and angry. He told his son to get off the yard and to stay away until he was ready to come back to work.

Abraham took this literally and stayed away. He slept under the "hock'e", or pile of grain stooks. Later that evening his sister Katherine (my grandmother), found him and secretly brought him food so that he had something to eat.

A few days later Abraham was just lying there in the afternoon sun contemplating the mysteries of life, when he noticed a threshing outfit passing by his parents' yard. Quickly he jumped up and ran after the big steamer and the caboose and wagons following it. It was Johann Wiebe (1864-1952) from Steinbach, heading towards St. Annes where he was threshing for the French and Metis people. Sitting besides Wiebe on the front seat of his wagon was his daughter Maria (1883-1965).

Abraham ran besides Wiebe's wagon and stopped him. "Don't you have work for an extra man?" he asked.

Wiebe was a bit of an outcast himself and must have sympathized with the good-looking youth standing before him.

“Sure,” replied Wiebe. “Jump on the wagon and join us.”

It is said that Abraham Plett and Johann Wiebe took one look and developed an immediate liking to each other. They became lifelong friends and co-workers. In 1906 Abraham went with the Wiebe family when they moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan where he married Maria in 1907. In 1911 the Wiebe families including Abraham and Maria moved on to Dallas, Oregon.<sup>1165</sup>

Young Abram’s departure left father at home with only two boys - Cornelius age 15 and Peter age 8. Still at home were six daughters who were used to working the farm together with their brothers.

### **Expansion, 1906-9.**

Historian Royden Loewen has written that, “since 1898, high wheat prices and a good local market for milk had made farming profitable.”<sup>1166</sup> Abr. Plett had laid his groundwork well and was financially well-positioned to take advantage of favourable economic circumstances.

In 1906 Abram’s landownings remained unchanged except that the arable acreage was now up to 100 acres. He had 8 horses and 20 head of livestock. His total assessment was 1900 but only 860 was taxable. They had a dairy milking up to 18 cows in the later years. In addition they usually had 8 sows, 30 to 50 hogs and 100 to 200 hens. Father liked good horses and usually had four big Clydesdales, six Percherons and several saddle horses and often also a stallion for breeding. Abraham’s tax assessment was 1810 compared to 3550 and 2357 for brothers David and Jakob, both of whom owned prestigious and highly assessed steam-engine threshing outfits. Brother-in-law Rev. Peter R. Reimer in Blumenort has an assessment of 2190. David L. Plett was the highest assessed farmer in the area north of Steinbach in 1906.

To some these statistics might indicate that Abr. Plett was not making much progress financially. But these casual observations would be incorrect. In fact, during the first 20 years of farming, Abr. Plett had laid a solid base for a period of expansion which made him one of the largest farmers in the area north of Steinbach for the next two decades.

This was a position held by Abram’s father, Cornelius, and father-in-law, Johann Koop, during the 1880s and by Abram’s older brother Johann during the 1890s. Brother Cornelius had a substantial dairy during the 1890s but soon retired from farming to pursue his ministerial work. Abraham’s strategy was to improve production and run a lean efficient operation.

To Abraham farming was a sacred calling. Like many generations before him, one of his uppermost strategies was to establish his children on farms of their own. In 1905 Abr. L. Plett purchased the NE3-8-6E and N1/2 SE3-8-6E just north of the Blumenort village boundary into the recently settled Greenland district. His daughters Katharina and Gertrude were getting married. In 1906 he sold the N1/2 SE3-8-6E to daughter Katharina and her husband Martin K. Friesen, who established their yard where cousin John D. K. Plett later lived. At the same time Abraham sold NE3-8-6E to daughter Gertruda and her husband Johann E. Friesen who established their yard where son Jake P. Friesen lived until 1996.

Abraham L. Plett had a concern that all his children would be able to farm and was fortunate that he was able to assist them by purchasing land and selling it to them on favourable terms. To get them started he also extended credit to his children for horses, equipment, and whatever else was required on a farm.

In 1909 Abr. Plett purchased NE 25-7-6E. He also owned a 100 acre River Lot west of Ste. Anne which was later sold. Around the same time Abram L. Plett and brothers Peter and David purchased 240 acres of hayfield two miles west of Ste. Anne, SW21-8-6E and N1/2 NW21-8-6E, each owning 80 acres. The land was eventually turned into cultivated acreage. Abram Pletts had a camp on their land where the men stayed for night during harvesting and seeding seasons.

Like all the Blumenhof villagers, Abraham L. Plett had a 20 acre woodlot on the NE36-7-6E, which had been broken and cultivated by the turn of the century. This meant they always had to cross the David L. Plett yard with their horses and equipment to work this field. In about 1908 the brothers made an exchange; the 20 acre wood lot for the west 20 acres of the SW 36-7-6E which was north across the road from Abram L. Plett's yard. An old house was established on this site. After the children, Abram D. Reimers, had lived on this property for several years it became an "immigrante" house where poor people could live. In the 1920s the property was used to house the Ruszländer refugees who had arrived destitute.

The cheese factory was taken over by an association of area farmers in 1910. It was the most important local business buying milk from local farmers which was processed into cheese which had a ready market in Winnipeg. Abraham L. Plett served as secretary and bookkeeper for the cheese factory.<sup>1167</sup> His only adding machine was his pencil. Pen and ink were used for more permanent records.

### **Domestic Life, 1910-12.**

Gertruda and Abraham L. Plett had a heart of compassion for less fortunate neighbours and relatives. Nieces Pauline and Justina Koop, daughters of Gertruda's youngest brother Peter, often stayed with them, working for room and board. Another frequent member of their household was Margaretha Esau, known as "Esau've Gretjche", an orphan who had lost her parents at an early age. She was somewhat slow and unable to make her own way. My mother, nee Gertrude Friesen, often told me stories of how she worked with "Esau've Gretjche" and, of course, the obligatory fights.

One day, son Peter was looking after his baby sister Anna born 1909. Anna was a cute baby loved by everyone. Peter was shaking the baby carriage to keep Anna quiet. But he rocked it too hard and it toppled over. Anna's bones were dislocated. Many times Abraham and Gertruda took her to chiropractors, but finally gave up. As a result Anna become crippled with one shoulder higher than the other.

In 1981 several people told me about the close relationship between the Abr. L. Plett daughters, a bond which lasted years later. Mrs. Henry R. Wiebe, formerly Mrs. George W. Wohlgemuth, and living on the original Wohlgemuth farm on NW26-7-6E, recalled that when Mrs. Peter R. Plett (Helena), or Mrs. Martin K. Friesen (Katharina) visited sister, Margaretha, Mrs. A. D. Reimer, on



SW26-7-6E, they would rush out to greet and hug each other, and later when leaving for home, they would walk half-way with each other. Mrs. Wiebe found it interesting that these grown-up older ladies treated each other so affectionately, like school girls.

The girls fondly referred to their mother as "Mama". The girls adored and idolized their father beyond measure, but referred to him with the formal "Vatter" or father, as well as the more affectionate "Papa".

### **Journals, 1912-14.**

Those interested in further information regarding this period are referred to the journals of older brother, Cornelius L. Plett, whose diaries covering 1912-14 are extant. By this time, Cornelius had given up farming and moved to Steinbach (Friedensfeld) focusing his time in the ministry. His journals show he visited most frequently with youngest brother, Jakob L. Plett. The relationship with Abraham seemed to revolve as much around the borrowing of various farm supplies and as it did socializing. This seemingly changed by 1913-14 when Abram's name appeared more frequently in Cornelius' diary.

On January 17, 1912, Cornelius recorded that "Abr. Pletts were here." On May 16, C. L. Pletts and Bishop Peter R. Dueck attended the worship service in Blumenhof and C. L. Pletts visited at Abr. Pletts. November 22, C. L. Pletts were visiting in Blumenort, "they were at Abr. Pletts, and after dinner he and Abr. Plett had gone to the Krim,... at Johann Loewen where Martin T. Doerksen and J. J. Friesens from Meade were visiting. I drove home but my wife [Mrs. C. L. Plett] stayed at Abr. Pletts for night." January 3, 1913, "Abraham L. Pletts came here, were here for dinner, and went to B. Doerksens for vesper, where we also were." 1913 must have been a mild winter for after dinner, January 24, the C. L. Pletts drove to Abr. L. Pletts, Blumenhof, "still with the wagon." On Feb. 24, C. L. Plett again visited the Abr. Pletts after the worship service in Blumenhof, and noted that "the Schwagerin Koopsche is still sick." On the 18th, the C. L. Pletts were at David L. Pletts for dinner and for vesper at Abr. L. Pletts. Sunday, May 17, 1913, Abr. Pletts visited at the home of Cornelius L. Plett, Friedensfeld, and after dinner, Abr. accompanied Cornelius to brotherhood meeting in Steinbach. On Sept. 18, 1913, Cornelius noted a more sombre visit to Abr. Pletts for the funeral of a grandchild, a daughter of Joh. K. Pletts.

### **Meade, Kansas, 1913.**

On Monday, December 1, 1913, Abr. accompanied brother Cornelius on a ministerial journey to Meade, Kansas, and Jansen, Nebraska. Ber. Doerksen took them to the railway station in Giroux where the train left at 7:17 p.m. travelling via Fort Francis and Duluth. They arrived in Meade on December 4, 11:50 a.m. and were picked up at the railway station by Heinrich F. Reimer of Meade where they stayed for night. The next 18 days were busy ones as Abraham visited friends and relatives while brother Cornelius attended to his church meetings. Cornelius recorded a total of 58 visits, worship services and brotherhood meetings.

At 4 p.m. December 23, 1913, Johann K. Friesen, Rosenort, Abr. and Cornelius L. Plett departed from Meade arriving in Jansen, Nebraska, at 11 a.m.

the next morning where the aged Peter P. Isaak picked them up from the station. The itinere was similar to Meade. On Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day, they held two worship services at the home of Peter R. Brandts, Cornelius preached in the morning and Johann K. Friesen in the afternoon. The next day, worship services were held in the school and Bishop Peter R. Dueck, Steinbach, preached, followed by brotherhood meeting. On the 28th a communion service was held at the Ratzlaff home. These may well have been some of the last Kleine Gemeinde worship services in Nebraska.

At 8:30 p.m., December 26, 1913, the Manitobans departed for home arriving in Lincoln at 9:50 p.m. At 4 a.m. the next morning they left Lincoln arriving in Des Moines, Iowa, at 10 a.m. By 9 a.m. the next morning they were in Minneapolis and by 2:30 p. m. in Duluth. At 8:40 a.m. Wednesday, December 31, 1913, they arrived in Giroux.

#### **Visit by Abram, 1914.**

On September 16, 1914, the *Volksbote* reported that "Abram Plett from Oregon is visiting in Blumenhof where he is helping with the harvest. After the harvest he plans to visit his former home in Saskatchewan before returning to Oregon." Grandson Abe P. Friesen remembered this visit and playing on the floor with Abram K. Plett's daughter Annie at his grandparent's place.

Peter A. Plett recalled accompanying his older brother Abram on a trip to Oregon, sometime shortly after Abram had moved there. They had gone by train from Giroux to the Beaver Flats area, Saskatchewan, where Abram had lived until 1911. This was not a very pleasant trip as railway coaches at the time lacked most of the conveniences taken for granted today. Brother Abram attended to his business in Beaver Flats, including selling the last of his equipment and attending at the lawyer's offices to sign papers for the sale of his homestead.

Abram had his car parked here and when his business was completed they were finally on their way to Oregon. The back seat was filled with used worn-out tires which Abram wanted to use until completely worn out. There were no proper highways through the mountains in 1914 and so they went up and down and around and about on unimproved and primitive roads.

They encountered various hair-raising experiences on the trip, including having to push the car up and over some steep inclines and then not being able to stop as the car gained momentum coming down on the other side on account of poor brakes. A number of times they came around a corner only to discover a curve much sharper than anticipated, with no bottom in sight on the valley side, as they rounded the curve - and no handrail.

For night they just pulled to the side of the road, made a fire and cooked some meat and coffee. When they had eaten, they threw their blankets on the ground and slept. These were all circumstances which they would never have tolerated for any money at home. Brother Abram was quite poor at the time and no unnecessary money was spent.

## Life, 1915-1916.

Abr. L. Plett was an conservative intellectual by nature and believed in preserving the tried and true and changing only if absolutely necessary. He opposed change which was merely for the sake of change.

This was illustrated in 1915 when coal oil lamps were being replaced by mantle lamps which burned much brighter and cleaner. Abraham bought a mantle lamp from brother Jakob L. Plett who was an agent distributor and who persuaded him to buy one. When the deal was made, Abraham's conscience seemed to bother him and he said, "What would my parents say if they came back and saw what I had done."

Grandson Abe P. Friesen recalled that when his brother Erwin was born in 1916, his grandmother, Mrs. Gertrude Plett, had stopped at his parental home on her way to the hay field in Ste. Anne to bring food to the men harvesting hay. At the time, Abe's parents, Martin and Katharina Friesen, were still living on SE3-8-6E in Greenland. Grandma was in a hurry. She drove up to their house, jumped off the buggy and tied the reins to the post.

Abe remembered just standing and looking as his Grandma drove up in her top-buggy. Giving him a friendly greeting, she ran into the house to say hello to his mother and to see her new grandson. Then grandmother was back on the buggy and off to the fields some five miles away where a hungry gang of men were awaiting her. Grandmother was usually dressed in dark clothes.



*Mrs. Abraham L. Plett visiting with daughter Margaretha and son-in-law Abraham D. Reimer. Photo taken in 1940 on the yard of George D. Reimer in Clearsprings. Photo - Plett Picture Book, page 105.*

## **War Years, 1914-18.**

World War One, 1914-18, was a difficult time for Mennonites. There was increasing pressure on the Provincial Government to curtail the religious and cultural freedoms which had been granted to them by the Dominion Government in 1873. Jealous neighbours forgot that these privileges had been offered as an inducement for the Mennonites to settle in Manitoba instead of Kansas or Nebraska. By the outbreak of W.W.I. anti-German, anti-Pacifist hatred had turned into mass hysteria. With the election of the T. C. Norris and his Liberal Party in 1916 the Provincial Government took action to outlaw the church confessional schools guaranteed in perpetuity only 40 years early.

Harsh ethnic-cleansing measures were imposed against Mennonites. In the Altona and Winkler area hundreds of citizens, including ministers, who insisted that the Government should abide by its promises, were jailed and usurious fines and executions imposed. Other measures included disenfranchisement - revocation of voting privileges, closing of German-language newspapers such as the *Steinbach Post*, and the abolition of age-old place names which the Mennonites had brought with them from the "old" country. All this created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety, particularly for those who needed to do any travelling outside the East Reserve.

One of the results of being denied their language, schools and culture as guaranteed in 1873 and forced assimilation, was that many Mennonites came to see themselves as second-class citizens to the Anglo-Saxons and their culture as inferior. The old ways came to be disparaged and ancient writings and artifacts were destroyed. Anna Plett Warkentin, daughter of Jakob L. Plett, recalled that speaking their ancestral German language was strictly prohibited on the school yard on pain of corporal punishment.

Being thrown into the hastily established district school system and a forced paradigm shift in language, educational philosophy and curriculum, created two generations of Mennonites who were now quasi-illiterate in English as well as in their native Plautdietsch and High German languages. It would not be until the 1960s and 70s that a new generation of university-educated young people would begin to equal in English the literary abilities of their great-grandparents in their picturesque Danziger High-German tongue. This, unfortunately, also made the Mennonites more vulnerable to the lies and deceit of American Fundamentalist proselytizers, seeking to lead them away from the Holy Gospel.

## **Economic prosperity.**

The War Years resulted in an economic boom which benefited the Mennonites. Grain prices since 1898 had been excellent - as high as 82 cents per bushel wheat in 1910. Wheat prices went through the roof in 1914. Milk prices in Winnipeg rose to \$6.75 a can, and cheese production became unprofitable. Farmers increased their dairy herds and sold fluid milk. In 1914 the local cheese factory was closed.

In 1915 Abraham L. Plett purchased the SW26-7-6E for \$5600 from Gerhard Doerksen, married to his niece, nee Sarah E. Plett. The Doerksens were moving

to Satanta, Kansas. Daughter Margaretha and her husband Abraham D. Reimer had been living in the "Gjemeinte Hus" on SW36-7-6E. They moved to this new farm where they made their home. The Abraham D. Reimers acquired title to this land in 1938.

In 1917 when Peter L. Pletts moved to Satanta, Kansas, Martin K. Friesens bought their farm situated on SE35-7-6E, kiddy-corner from her parents, for \$6000. This meant that Abr. and Gertruda's second oldest daughter now lived just a few hundred feet down the road, an arrangement much to their liking.

In 1917 Abraham L. Plett was one of the first men to inspect the land made available for purchase in Prairie Rose and to make a purchase of it.<sup>1168</sup> Peter A. Plett, then a 19 year-old youth, remembered this area as a sheet of water in spring until a canal was dug which drained it, making it suitable for farming. After the land was surveyed, fences were built by a two-man crew: often Peter himself and a "Pries'e" worker. One man would stand on the wagon with a sledge hammer to hammer in the fencepost held in place by a second man beside the wagon.

Abr. L. Plett acquired a half section on Section 24-8-5E where Peter A. Plett later lived and another half section, the W1/2 18-8-5E, where Cornelius A. Plett later lived. He purchased and/or loaned money to oldest son Johann to acquire 400 acres, NE12-8-4E, SE13-8-4E, and E1/2SW13-8-4E, in what became known as the Willowridge District. At this point Abr. L. Plett had 860 acres of land (plus the 400 acres where son Johann was living) and had already purchased and sold a Section (640 acres) to various of his children.

Wheat prices continued to rise. In 1917, Abr. L. Plett's son-in-law, Cornelius R. Plett, recorded a sale at \$3.00 per bushel. At the same time local farmers harvested excellent crops, especially in 1915 when yields of 24 bushels of wheat per acre were reported. A quarter section of land, yielding 20 bushels per wheat acre brought in \$13,600, a huge profit.

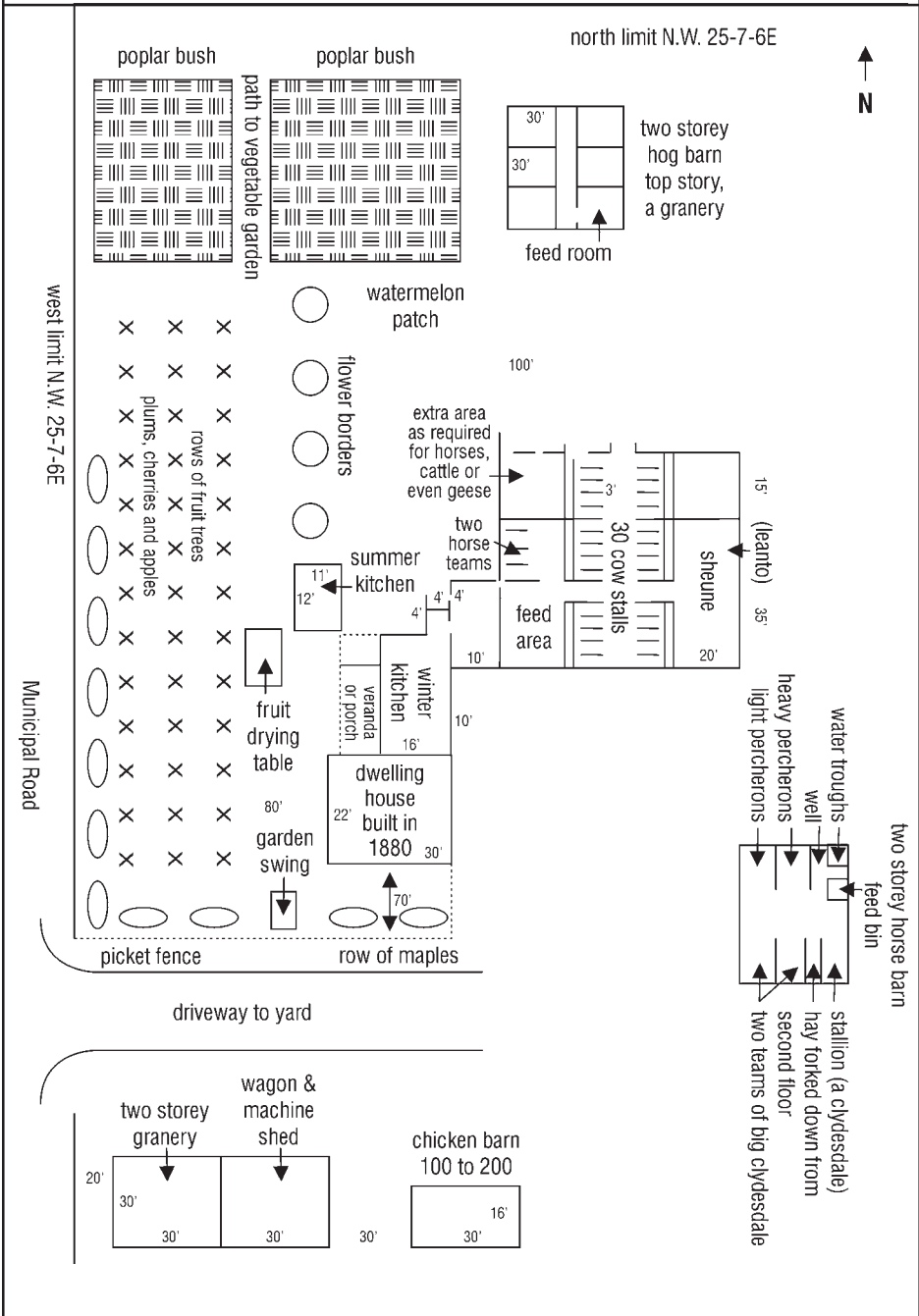
In 1916 the Blumenhof area was added to the telephone line perhaps reflecting the increasing commercialization of farming and prosperous times. Abraham L. Plett was one of the first subscribers, Line 9, ring 1-2.

During all these years, brother Jakob did the threshing for Abraham L. Plett. This changed in 1918 when Abraham L. Plett purchased a new Titan 10/20 tractor for \$1400.00 and a 22" International threshing machine for \$1,200.00. Historian Royden Loewen has written that "the first tractor around [in the Blumenort area] was a Titan 10/20 owned by Abraham L. Plett."<sup>1169</sup> Son Peter A. Plett recalled that the profits from one quarter section of land were sufficient to pay out this purchase in cash. Abraham L. Plett and the children living in the Blumenhof and Greenland districts now formed a threshing outfit as they now had enough land themselves. The arrangement continued until 1926 when Abr. L. Plett retired.

When the Titan was purchased Abraham L. Plett also set up a 10" Vassert grinder on the second floor of the hog barn for grinding chop. The Titan was big enough to power the grinder which was set up so that the chopped feed was blown into the feed room. The Titan tractor turned out to be an excellent machine and was the envy of the entire district.

# Abraham Plett Farm Yard 1910

## Sketch by Peter A. Plett



*Drawing of the Abr. L. Plett yard, NW25-7-6E, circa 1918, as recalled by son Peter A. Plett in 1981 and drawn by the author.*

## **The Farmyard, 1918.**

In 1981 I was fortunate to be able to visit with great-uncle Peter A. Plett, an avid folk-historian. One of the things we discussed was the Abr. Plett farmyard, one of the finest in the district. The cottonwood groves surrounding the buildings stood as a silent testimony to the zeal and diligence of Abraham L. and Gertruda Plett who had pioneered and farmed here since 1887.

The one-and-a-half storey, 30 by 22 foot, house faced west to the Road Allowance, which ran north and south. A winter kitchen 16 by 20 had been added at a right angle, parallel to the street, a so-called "wjinkjel" house. The wood boards nailed diagonally across the outside walls were covered with cedar-shakes to protect them from the elements. The winter kitchen at the rear corner connected with a well-house 10 by 15, which, in turn, joined the house to the barn. A veranda built on the west side of the winter kitchen and north side of the house, served as the connection to the summer kjaeakj or summer kitchen, 12 by 12. The summer kitchen, in turn, opened out to the flower garden, one of Gertruda's greatest joys. Whitewashed stones were arranged in geometric circles and squares to make borders for paths and mounds of earth. These housed flowerbeds of all colours and species: peonies, lithrum, hollyhocks, geraniums, maltese cross, lilies and tulips. The stone-laid walks in between the flower borders were kept neatly swept by Gertruda's daughters. One path led to a swing near the driveway, which was bordered by large maple or sugar trees.

To the west of the driveway, between the flowerbeds and the lilac hedge along the street out front, was an orchard which was Gertruda's pride and joy. One could find a variety of fruit trees - plums, cherries and crab apples. This was an area of special beauty in spring when the trees were in bloom - pinks, reds and lavenders - contrasting with the various shades of green leaves and hues of brown bark. Rows of rhubarb, "oldbasem", gooseberries, raspberries, strawberries and flowering shrubs separated the fruit trees from the flower gardens. In the middle of the garden was a large drying table for drying cherries, etc., for winter use. There was also a hoprack where hops were grown for yeast and baking.

Further west was the field garden, the "bestjan", where grandparents had indulged their weakness for watermelons and raised vegetables. In the favourable Russian climate, this fruit had been grown by Mennonites on a commercial basis and was used in the production of syrup - a sugar substitute for baking. The pioneers continued raising arbuzen during the early years in the new land. They soon discovered the local product could not equal for size and sweetness that found in their former home in the Molotschna Colony. Nevertheless, farmers of Abr. L. Plett's generation were fond of watermelons and made a serious effort to raise the best. They ordered new seed varieties from the east and exchanged seeds with relatives in Nebraska and "Jaunt Sied", Rosenort.

When the "bestjan" was harvested in fall, the woetamelon'e were temporarily piled in a long row against one side of the carriage shed. The fruit garden and watermelon patch were popular places during August and September. Occasionally, these places even attracted surreptitious visitors during the wee hours of the night.

Beyond the watermelon patch was a bluff of poplars and maples inter-

persed with clumps of red dogwood and high-bush currants. This area extended north all the way around the rear of the yard, serving as a shelter from the winter winds. A path led north through this bush to the vegetable garden. Several "riese papel" were growing along the trail. These giant water poplars had been planted by Abr. and Gertruda when they first settled on the site. Two cottonwoods nearby served as stanchions for a swing which the younger Plett boys, including Peter, had erected many years ago. This area served as a secluded place where the village boys could hang out.

To the north of the watermelon patch was the vegetable garden consisting of several acres of fertile soil. This was where Gertruda and her daughters spent many pleasant summer hours planting, watering and picking. Drying fruit and canning hundreds of quart jars of vegetables, "denna gjell" and jam preserves was developed into a dramatic art form by the women. For good measure, they threw bushels of overgrown cucumbers into barrels of spiced and vinegared brine in the cellar, resulting in an endless supply of the mouth-watering "djrank gurkj'e".

During the heat of July and August, several scarecrows stood guard over the long rows of maturing plants and shoots. The laundry water was hauled to the garden and poured over the cabbage and onion rows to ward off the pale-grey earthworms, which loved to feed on the plants. Powdering potato bugs with "parisa gren" and picking beetles were common forms of suggested entertainment for children naive enough to ask for something to do.

To the boys fell the agreeable task of ploughing the garden each fall and applying a generous spread of composted cow dung and bedding straw - a concoction which came from the manure pile. The messt clomp'e, as it was known, was located between the vegetable garden and the west side of the dairy barn.

The barn or "Schtaul" was connected to the east end of the well-house. It was 35 feet wide and 50 feet long, with a 15 foot "o've sied" or lean-to added on the north side. Big Norway pines, true and strong, were found and cut for the bearing beams. The beams were joined by tongue and groove mortise, and fastened together with homemade tamarack pegs. The locally cut cedar shingles covering the walls and roof of the barn were weathered and faded.

Two alleys with gutters and stalls traversed the barn with doors on each side. The feed area and Abr. Plett's favourite team of trotters occupied one side of the front row, with several stalls left empty for the teams of the visitors. The other side was used for calves, yearlings and heifers. It included a heavily reinforced pen for the powerful Holstein bull. The second row was reserved for 30 milk cows with names like Bossy, Daisy, Lazy, Jane and Sally posted above each stanchion.

Behind this was the 20 foot "Scheune" (hay mow), a separate addition across the rear of the barn. A hoist at the rear of the barn was used to lift the alfalfa and hay feed saving a tremendous amount of hot, sweaty labour. A herd of well-groomed cattle was bunched together for protection against flies near the sporadic smoke of a smudge fire at the rear of the paddock.

At the northeast corner of the yard was the hog barn (30x30) where the feed grinder was set up in 1918. At the southeast corner was the horse barn with room for six teams of horses, as well as a stallion which Abraham often owned.



The draft animals included two teams of heavy Clydesdales, three teams of lighter black-grey Percherons, as well as some Standardbreds and Quarter horses for pulling the buggy and Democrat and for riding. A wagon shed and chicken house along the south side of the yard completed the set of buildings. The horse barn and hog barn were two-storey structures with room for grain storage on the second floor.

Abr. L. Plett also had a set of old buildings on the 20 acre parcel on SW36-7-6E, north across the road. Like most larger farmers, Abr. L. Plett used these buildings to provide a temporary home for his children when they got married and for poor families in the neighbourhood. In 1918 the David K. Siemens family was living in the "Gjemeinte Hus", having recently moved back from Satanta, Kansas.

### **Influenza, 1918.**

In 1918 the entire Steinbach region was devastated by the Spanish influenza. Abr. Plett and daughter Katharina, Mrs. Martin K. Friesen, were of the very few who did not succumb to the disease. Father and daughter worked hard milking the neighbours' cows, making firewood and attending to the many other essential chores in the neighbourhood. Barns were left uncleaned for a later date. These were deeds of charity requiring considerable courage as many people were scared to even leave their homes for fear of catching the dreaded influenza. Most public meetings such as church and school were cancelled, and even funerals were only sparsely attended.

On November 6, 1918, it was reported in the *Steinbach Post* that daughter-in-law, Sarah, Mrs. Johann K. Plett, Ridgewood, and two of her children, were critically sick.

The Spanish flu was particularly tragic for the Abr. Plett family as Gertruda's sister, Maria (Mrs. Jakob L. Plett), died, as did her niece, Maria, married to Klaas K. Friesen, whose twin brother Martin was married to Gertruda's daughter Katharina.<sup>1170</sup>

The medicine in the house was liquor, either whisky or gin. "When someone got a cold, Gertruda would first of all mix a cup of hot water and sugar, add some liquor, and gave it to us [the children] to drink. Even babies were rubbed with liquor when they were sick," recalled Peter A. Plett. Kleine Gemeinde farmers like his parents had liquor in the house for medical use. Occasionally during harvest time or at a hog slaughtering bee a bottle was passed around, or on cold fall mornings before going out to kill the pigs for butchering. Alcohol use was strictly in moderation: drunkenness or frequent imbibing were absolutely prohibited. In fall the larger farmers would purchase a keg of whisky when they went to the City for their winter supplies which they shared with married children and widows for whom they were trustees ("Gutmanna"). Gin was purchased in square green bottles known "de Feyahkonckje".

As a young girl daughter Anna suffered various illnesses and nervousness. Her parents tried to do what they could to help her when she was suffering and many times her father, Abraham L. Plett, would go with her to the chiropractor or doctor. When her condition became severe, her father would take her by train from Giroux to Winnipeg for medical treatments.<sup>1171</sup>

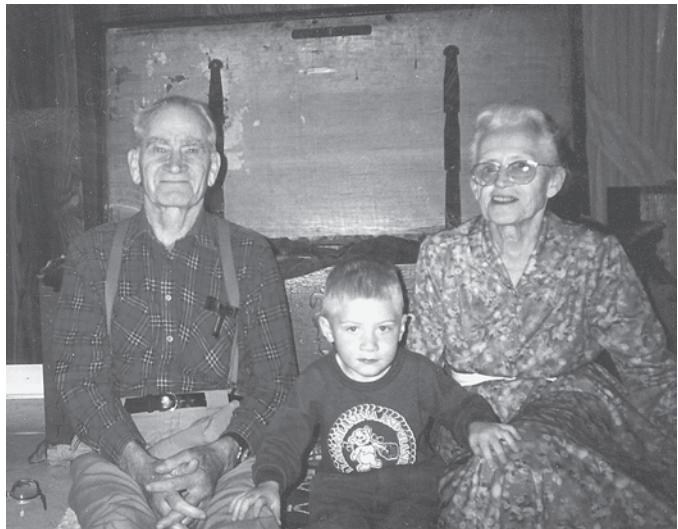
## Community Activities.

In 1918 Abraham L. Plett was one of three men appointed as the building committee to look after the construction of the new Blumenort Kleine Gemeinde church on SE27-7-6E.<sup>1172</sup> By Deed of Land dated October 30, 1919, title to the church site was transferred by landowner Heinrich Plett to Abraham Plett, Johann F. Unger, and Heinrich Plett, as trustees of the Blumenort church district.

Abraham L. Plett was a meticulous record keeper having served as the book-keeper and secretary of the Blumenort cheese factory. He believed in keeping accurate records on his own farm. He had established good credit in the district often being able to borrow money without even signing a note.<sup>1173</sup> He had a cordial relationship with his English neighbours and could borrow money from friends such as James Steel for the purchase of a farm without collateral. The aesthetic Mennonites had much in common with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, especially the Presbyterian Scots whose work ethic and outlook on life was rather similar to their own - certainly more so than any of their neighbours over the previous centuries in Polish-Prussia or Russia.

Grandson Abe P. Friesen recalled that Abram L. Plett was a hard worker. He was sometimes called "Racka Platt" by the neighbours. In 1921, young Abe worked for his grandfather driving a hay rake as part of the threshing gang. His aunts Elizabeth and Helen were also working on the farm, loading stooks onto the hayrack. Liz was strong and could pick up a whole stook with one fork full, and there was no way he could keep up. Sometimes the sheaves were full of dried thistles and other weeds, and dust got in his eyes which made him discouraged. The aunts prepared delicious food for the threshing gang which Abe enjoyed. Once grandson Abe P. Friesen, a worker, and boss, Peter A. Plett, were on their way to the Ste. Anne hay-fields to get a load of hay when the other worker got mad and took off for home. As a result, Peter and Abe had to load the three hay racks and drive the three teams home by themselves which was quite a task.

Gertruda and Abr. L. Plett spent a great deal of time visiting their friends and relatives. Of course the three brothers who had married Koop sisters were especially close and even though they lived within two miles of each other, they would sometimes stay overnight at each other's place when visiting.



*The Abraham L. Plett kjist now owned by grandson Rev. Henry P. Friesen and Elizabeth Friesen, Arborg, Manitoba. Photo - Pres., No. 21, page 131.*

### **Sons Cornelius and Peter, 1919-25.**

During all these years sons Cornelius and Peter A. Plett worked at home for their father. In 1920 son Cornelius got married. Abraham sold him 160 acres from the half-section he had purchased on 18-8-5E. Son Johann sold his 80 acre farm in "de Krim" and settled on the SE13-8-4E, part of the land his father had bought in the Prairie Rose district, this later became the Willowridge School District.

When he turned 21, son Peter received the grand sum of \$30 per month. On a certain occasion, Peter remarked to his father that Peter and Henry R. Plett, who were in the custom building business, were making much more money, and especially Klaas R. Plett, who was younger than he. His father replied that he also had rough going as he had borrowed money at six per cent interest to finance the section of land he had purchased in Prairie Rose. Eventually they came to an understanding that Peter would leave part of his salary in the farm on loan at the same rate. Later Peter felt that he had come out quite well as he was able to purchase a quarter section of land from the \$4000 he saved during the seven years working for his father. In 1925, Peter got married and started farming on his own.

Abraham L. Plett liked good machinery but did not like doing repairs. If something had to be fixed he drove all the way to Steinbach by horse and buggy to a blacksmith shop. Welding with acetylene was begun about 1915 when he brought a piece of cast home which was welded together, a real marvel at the time. All sharpening was done with a sandstone grinder turned with a crank. One day son Peter tired of it and bought an emerystone on his father's account, which made sharpening much easier.

In some respects Abraham L. Plett was not very up-to-date. The only hand-saw he had was a very old one with a piece broken off and so dull that no one would ever use it. His anvil which he used was a piece of railway track lying on the ground. This was used for rivetting harnesses or grassmower knives. He also kept harness leather and rawhide on hand for repairing harness. He would not allow too many rivets in the harness, but seams had to be nice and smooth, and the boys knew what he meant. Every spring all eight or nine pairs of harness plus the buggy harness had to be oiled with blue neatsfoot oil.

Abraham L. Plett liked horses and raised most of them on his own farm. Usually he had two or three colts a year. One spring he had especially beautiful colts and a man who came by encouraged Abraham to bring them to the fair. He said they would surely win first prize. But this seemed to be against his conscience.

After the closing of the cheese factory the fluid milk was sold in Winnipeg. It had to be cooled quickly and shipped to Giroux six miles away.

Three of Abraham's sons lost fingers in farm accidents. Johann lost one thumb while tying a horse with a rope. Abraham lost two fingers when he got them too close to a firewood saw. Cornelius lost one finger when he turned the crank of a fanning mill with gears and got one finger caught between two gears. Son Abram also broke a leg one time when he was driving horses and sleigh through the bush, when a rail slipped and hit his leg. In 1922 son Abram came home from Oregon to visit his parents.



*Son Cornelius A. Plett discing with Abramam L. Plett's 1918 Titan 10/20. Photo - Peter A. Plett.*



*Abramam L. Plett yard, 1916, view to the north. They had brought out thousands of board feet of lumber from the bush the previous winter. Photo - Peter A. Plett.*



*Abramam L. Plett bay farm on the Ste. Anne River Lots. This farm was later owned by daughter Anna and husband, Isaac C. Penner. Photo - Peter A. Plett.*

## Retirement 1926-29.

After Peter went on his own, Abr. and Gertruda decided to retire. Abraham was now 67 years-old and Gertruda two years younger. They had a new house and attached summer kitchen and barn built for themselves on the 20 acre "woodlot" SW36-7-6E where they lived in their retirement. The builders were Peter and Henry R. Plett. As the story goes they fell in love with daughters Helena and Elisabeth during the construction process. Martin K. Friesen's barn had burned down and was also being rebuilt at the same time.

The oldest daughter, Sarah, and husband, Johann R. Penner, purchased their old farmyard on Section 25-7-6E with 320 acres of land for \$13,000. Son Peter A. Plett purchased the west 120 acres SE24-8-5E, one mile east of Landmark, on credit from his parents. The livestock and machinery, including the Titan 10/20, was sold at public auction.

After the Abr. L. Pletts had moved to their new yard, a boardwalk was built south to the old place. Granddaughter Elizabeth Plett Dueck remembered a sort of wooden bridge built over the fence just beside the graveyard, three steps up, and then a level part - a platform - to cross over the fence.

Abram L. Plett kept meticulous records of the loans and credits he extended to various of his children. In 1982, grandson Erwin P. Reimer recalled that he still had some of these records in his possession.

Many families in the early years were quite set against musical instruments. In some families the children were forbidden to play instruments. In the Abr. L. Plett family they were not forbidden, but they were not officially approved either. In his younger years, son Peter A. Plett had a mouth organ. He also had a clarinet which he had bought from brother-in-law Martin K. Friesen. He understood that Martin had acquired it from "Ole Knals" the old herdsman in the Blumenort village and that Martin himself had played it in his younger years. In any case, Peter's parents had forbidden him to play this instrument in the house because it made too much noise. His sister, Katherina, Mrs. Martin K. Friesen, played the accordion.

Christmas at Abr. L. Pletts was a grand affair. With 12 children, many of whom had 12 or more children themselves, even their large house was packed. The adults sat in the living room or parlour (Grotte Schtoave), while the grandchildren filed in and said their Christmas wishes or verses. Grandson Martin P. Penner remembered "saying up his wish" at Abr. L. Pletts one Christmas and that great-grandmother, Katharina Barkman Koop, was sitting in the rocking chair, listening.

Gertrude Friesen Plett recalled the grandchildren frequently went for lunch at their grandparents. They spent many evenings there, meeting and playing with their cousins. The grandparents would invite them into the parlour and have a sing-song from the *Gesangbuch*. With 12 children and many grandchildren, each of whom had friends, the grandparents always had company. Grandson Erwin P. Friesen remembered eating at the grandparents and that they always had delicious food, pluma mouse, fried potatoes, etc. There was a large fruit orchard at the old farm with seven kinds of plums, many varieties of choke cherries, etc.

Even in retirement, Abr. L. Plett was a man of inexhaustible energy. In 1982

grandson Edward P. Friesen remembered that on a Saturday in winter when Abr. wanted to go visiting on Sunday, he had taken a team of horses and pulled a drag made from two telephone poles (shorter then) along the Blumenhof road towards Blumenort, to make hard tracks. Then on Sunday he had a nice hard snow track to drive his car to what is now the No. 12 four-lane Highway. At that time there was no road between the grandparents and daughter Mrs. Martin K. Friesen, just brush and a small slough where brother John would sometimes trap beavers.

Grandson Ben K. Plett remembered Abr. L. Plett being at his parents' place in Prairie Rose in 1928 and that he helped them haul wheat to the elevator in Winnipeg. Possibly the shipment was his share of the crop for land rent. They pulled into the elevator and the trailer was unhitched for weighing. Ben wondered what his grandfather was up to when he stepped on the scale with a grin while the elevator man was weighing the load. Ben realized later that grandfather had a sense of humour and was merely teasing the elevator man.

### **Letters 1924-28.**

Abram and Gertruda were literate people, probably more articulate in their native Danziger High German and Plautdietsch tongues than any of their descendants were in English until the university-educated generation of the 1960s and 70s. But unlike his brothers - Cornelius, David or Jakob, or sisters - Margaretha, Mrs. Franz M. Kroeker, or Maria, Mrs. Peter R. Reimer, Abraham was a man of action rather than a man of letters. Each of his letters opened with a disclaimer that he found it exceedingly difficult to write, that he lacked any ability, and then he proceeded to write an interesting and well-composed letter.

Gertruda and Abraham maintained an active correspondence with brother Cornelius in Satanta, Kansas. These letters, preserved by Cornelius' daughter Helena and granddaughters, Marie Heinrichs and Anna Doerksen, are extant today. They provide an intimate look at Abraham and Gertruda, their lives, outlook and perspective on life.

Certainly, Abraham had a sense of mortality. In a letter of January 7, 1925, he wrote: "... it is not very long ago that Peter Dueck was our Bishop, and after him, his brother, Jakob Dueck, was Bishop, and he is not here among the living anymore either, and so one after the other goes to meet their eternal destiny. And how long will it be, before the people speak of us, 'we were once here.'" Like most of his contemporaries, Abraham had a concern about the gradual abandonment of age-old traditions in the Gemeinde and a turning away from the simple teaching of following Jesus: "... the ministers from Meade were here...they have dealt with the ban, I have always said, the ban is not appropriate, for they are seeking for freedom, and have allowed themselves to be heard regarding the harmony singing, many younger members would gladly wish to sing in the worship services but have promised not to do so..." Abraham also reported on their material circumstances: "Grain we have raised, first of all, what we worked with our own people, somewhat over 7,000 bushels barley and oats, and 153 bushels potatoes. And then we also have a farm by the Pletts which they have seeded, mowed and threshed for us. Here we received 530 bushels of wheat, 800 bushels

of oats and 400 bushels of flax... Grain also has a good price compared to last year, if things continue like this for a few more years, many a one will be able to free themselves from debt among which we have also come, regarding the purchasing of much land during high prices, while the crops were poor and prices low. Beef is not worth enough at this time that it pays to ship it. With the cows it has been the situation that we have always made some money from the milk.... Beef cattle we have 20, from large to small. We still have 35 pigs, we have slaughtered 4 for ourselves. And 1 cow we also butchered for ourselves, and 1 old one we slaughtered for the hens, pigs, dog and cats, for if one wants to sell such a cow, they only grudgingly pay 1 cent per pound, live weight, and so we decided to slaughter it ourselves.....”

On March 8, 1928, Abraham reflects regarding the deterioration in the Gemeinde caused by members of the “Lehrdienst” who were promoting alien religious culture and abandoning the Holy Gospel: “Things remain in a state of change, and the years quickly rush by, when one thinks back and compares the past times with the present. And then my experience is the way the aged Abram Penner says, that he does not understand it, and that is my feeling. I too, no longer understand it, how it is to be considered good in the Gemeinde when there is no longer unity among the leadership. But I do not wish to cast blame.” Abraham also refers to efforts in the Gemeinde regarding emigration: “They are also working with emigration here. For the most part they are working with emigrating to \_\_\_\_\_, but there are still only a few who wish to travel there in spring, but what will come of it we can not know.... For some time already the Kleingemeinde here in Manitoba has wanted to emigrate somewhere, but until now there has not once been enough unity that they have decided upon a particular settlement. So far only the odd one has moved, one here and the other there. But the time will teach us what will come of this.”

Abraham also shared with Cornelius that materially things were difficult for some: “...If we have another poor crop there will be much poverty. They are buying feed and seed grain.... We do not know how much seed grain we will need.... we have rented out all our grain land....” He adds, “We do not receive much company...” and then goes on to recount a dizzying whirlwind of visiting and travelling of which the following is a sample: “Last week Peter P. Reimers from Neuanlage were here one evening, and yesterday, David Pletts, Peter Koops, Johann Penners, and Mrs. Martin Friesen, were here. Tuesday, the 6th, we helped slaughter two large hogs at our children Johann Penners; Friday, the previous week, we had gone along with Johann Penners and their guests, Johann D. Loewens from Morris, to Johann Penner’s children Abram Penners and Johann F. Janzens; that evening we also were at Cor. Ungers, but otherwise not much comes of our going out visiting.”

In his letter of December 20, 1928, Abraham again refers to their material circumstances” “....Our Helena has married with Heinrich Plett’s Peter, and in one way our family is getting smaller and in another, it is getting larger....We still have four horses, which is two too many....Cows we have three, but when Helena moves away she will take one cow with her... We have slaughtered all the hogs.... Chickens we have around 50.”

### **Aganetha Plett, 1929.**

On March 29, 1929, daughter-in-law Mrs. Peter A. Plett, nee Aganetha F. Reimer, died. When Peter and Aganetha married in 1925 she had a small goitre but two years later, small lumps formed around it and she became sick. Five different doctors were consulted in Winnipeg who called it cancer. Aganetha passed away March 29, 1929.

This left the Peter devastated with two young children living way out in Prairie Rose all by himself. The community pitched in and the children were taken in by the grandparents: Clarence to Abraham L. Pletts and Annie to Klaas P. Reimers in Blumenort.

Now Peter was a lonely bachelor. But his parents had a heart of compassion and together with youngest daughter, Anna, they moved into Peter's primitive buildings in Prairie Rose for the summer, so that Peter could tend to his farm.

### **Sister Maria, 1926-34.**

Abraham's sister widowed Maria was an intelligent woman, interested in the world around her. She maintained close relationships with her siblings and extended family. Her letters to older brother Cornelius, 1926-34, are extant and provide various references to Abraham and Gertruda Plett.

On Nov. 30, 1926, Maria wrote, "On Sunday all of us went to Abram L. Pletts, David Reimers came with their entire family, eight in number, also myself and the 'mother' Loewen. It was beautiful and the snow rails good. It started storming a bit but this was no problem in the covered sleigh.....This winter I have visited a lot at the Pletts. Abram Pletts took me along with them to Johann Friesens and Martin Friesens, and also one day to Johann R. Penners. And so I stayed at Abram Pletts for three nights altogether, and one whole day I sat there, but then Jakob Koop, widower, came there in the afternoon and Cor. R. Penners in the evening."

In her letter of July 26, 1926, Maria mentioned that her grandson, widower Jakob P. D. Reimer had worked at Abram Pletts on their new house and barn. In her letter of Feb. 5, 1928, Maria mentioned that "Johann R. Penners phoned me whether I would want to come over if they would pick me up. When I was at Penners, they also went to get Abram Pletts to their place where I visited until evening. Abram Pletts invited me to stay for night, and as Abraham persuaded me, the Penners took us to their place at 8 p.m. It was snowing lightly but not very cold. On the next day, Monday, the Pletts took me visiting at brother David's place, in the evening they took me visiting at Peter F. Ungers, the next door neighbour to Abram Pletts." Mrs. Unger was quite sick. "For night we again went to Abram Pletts. The next day, for dinner Abram Pletts took me visiting at brother Jakob's place. David Plett's had also planned to come there but did not come as he was not feeling well. Tuesday evening Abram Pletts drove me home."

In her letter of April 5, 1928, Maria writes that "Abram Pletts visited me on March 18, I was sick all day and very glad that someone would come to visit me." In her letter of August 13, 1929, Maria wrote she visited the widower Peter A. Plett one time while his parents were living there [in Prairie Rose], on a Sunday



after Vesper. "He had many guests so that it really did not lack for me, but he was glad I had come anyway."

The letters of Maria underscore the close relationship between the five "L" Plett siblings living in the Blumenhof and Blumenort district at the time. It also affirms that Gertruda and Abraham had a love of people and that visiting with family and friends was their social life.

### **Life, 1929-32.**

In 1929, Gertruda and Abraham Plett, together with their siblings, David and Helena Plett, and their son Cornelius D. K. Plett, went on a trip to Kansas, where they visited his brothers, Cornelius and Peter, in Satanta. June 11, 1929, Jakob F. Isaac, Kleine Gemeinde Bishop in Meade, recorded that "Abraham Pletten, David Pletten and son Cornelius K. Plett arrived today in Satanta, by auto." In a letter to brother Cornelius of July 23, 1929, Abraham wrote: "...We report that we arrived at home last Friday, safe and sound, 30 minutes after 1 p.m., and found everyone well, for which we can not be thankful enough. We always had good weather and dry roads...."

Like any self-respecting grain farmer of the 1920s, Abraham L. Plett hated rats which were quite a scourge in those days. Grandson Henry P. Plett remembered that periodically grandfather would go on an anti-rat campaign especially in the granary located east of the barn on the new yard. Various techniques were used including pouring hot water into the rat holes to kill or drown them. This resulted an offensive odour as the rats rotted in their burrows. Henry P. Plett vividly remembered how Grandpa's head seemed to shake continually, and wondering how he could live like that? This particular incident would have been in about 1930.

After 1930 or so grandmother was often very sick with a heavy cough and was also often bedridden. During some winters she was unable to go outside.

Brother Jakob L. Plett died on November 4, 1931. This must have affected Abraham as the two seemed to have been especially close.

Grandson Abe P. Friesen recalled an occasion in 1932 when Abr. L. Plett hired him as the driver for his model A Ford to drive him and grandmother to Winnipeg. Grandfather's brother David L. Plett and wife Helena (Gertruda's sister) were also accompanying them to Winnipeg, where the two men were to see their doctor.

By coincidence Abe was notified that he could pick up a two year-old child, Lawrence, whom he had adopted. When he mentioned this to grandfather, Abraham L. Plett had advised him not to do it, that he would only be sorry. In any case, Abe drove to Winnipeg, with the two older couples in the car. This was probably still Abraham's original Model T. They parked at the Eaton's parking lot. Abraham L. Plett and brother David went to see their doctor and the women went shopping while he picked up Lawrence. When they met back at the car, both Abr. and David L. Plett were all excited, asking where he had found such a nice good-looking young boy.

### **Advancement by Portion, 1932.**

The economics of farming declined rapidly with the end of WWI and a resulting fall in grain prices. Prices rose again towards the mid-20s but plummeted in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent drought-driven Depression. The Johann R. Penners were unable to handle the debt for the farm they had bought from Sarah's parents.

In 1932 Abraham L. Plett took the farm back and immediately made an advancement by portion to his children and was able to give each child 80 acres of land or an equivalent amount of credit. Through this division of property, the Penners received the west 1/2 of NW25-7-6E and purchased the east 1/2 at a lower price. This meant that Abr. L. Plett had to cancel thousands of dollars of debt owing to him. When some of the other children who had faithfully worked at home and helped to build up this wealth complained, Abraham replied they should accept it as an act of Christian love.

Oldest son Johann K. Plett was also indebted to Abr. L. Plett and when his estate was settled the west 1/2 SW13-8-6E was taken by the executors as a credit on these loans. Sister Helena, Mrs. Peter R. Plett, inherited these 80 acres. There was some controversy in the Abraham L. Plett family about this. In 1905 when sisters Katharina and Margaretha had married the Friesen boys, who came from relatively poor homes, son Johann A. K. Plett and son-in-law Johann R. Penner had been openly sceptical expressing the view their sisters would probably be condemned to a life of penury. As it turned out, both Martin K. Friesen and his cousin, Johann E. Friesen, were good solid farmers who built up substantial farms in their time and so the situation had some ironic overtones.

Second oldest son, Abram K. Plett, received the west 1/2 of NE25-7-6E and daughter Katharina received the east 1/2 of NE25-7-6E. Daughter Gertruda received the W 1/2 SW24-8-5E. Daughter Margaretha and husband, Abraham D. Reimer, were farming the SW26-7-6E to which they acquired title in 1938. They had already purchased the land some years before and presumably their advancement by portion was credited to the purchase price.

Daughters Maria and Elisabeth each received 80 acres on Section 18-8-5E in the Linden district which they later sold to brother Cornelius. Son Cornelius received credit against money owing. Youngest son Peter A. Plett received credit against money owing and an additional 40 acres of SE24-8-5E. Youngest daughter Anna, Mrs. Isaac C. Penner received the 80 acre farm in Ste. Anne, S1/2NW21-8-6E.

### **Letters, 1932-34.**

Six of Abraham and Gertruda's letters between 1932 and 1934 are extant. Concerns regarding declining health are prominent. In his letter of February 29, 1932, Abraham stated: "...My wife is sick, this is the third winter that she is confined to the house, ...much coughing, ... her stomach is extremely sensitive.... she has much pain in her entire body, one time in one place and another time somewhere else...." He related an interesting episode regarding the wife of grandson Abe P. Friesen: "I must also report about Mrs. Abram P. Friesen, namely, David

Siemens' Maria, that she has again been very sick. Saturday morning, between 6 and 7 a.m. while we were still sleeping, M. K. Friesen phoned here that I should come over. I got ready as fast as I could and walked over and asked what I could do, and he replied, 'Maria is very sick and I should come with him.' And so I went there and even some distance away, I could already hear how she was screaming, and when I got there I saw how she was throwing herself back and forth, from one side to the other, and from one end of the bed to the other, her man was holding her, and she screamed as loud as she could, we should help her. Indeed, I must say, I have never before heard any human scream so loud and for so long." To Abram such manifestations spoke of spiritual forces - a warning to remain steadfast and obedient to the teachings of Christ. He reported regarding their efforts to settle their earthly affairs: "We now have 20 acres, we have divided the land which we still owned among our children or sold to them in order to make the debts more equal in so far as possible. In the future we want to live from the interest or each one will have to pay something against the capital, the interest rate is presently three per cent. This way we do not have to rent out land any more and pay the taxes. And after our death, those who have no more debt than the average, will not need to pay anything....But the grain is very cheap, and if one has to take off a part to pay wages, there is only very little left over. But there is certainly enough to live off. These are very hard times for those who must pay debt,...."

In his letter of February 9, 1933, Abram again refers to Gertruda's illness: "...My beloved wife started getting sick with the beginning of fall, the same as she has now for several years already, so that she must remain inside, and it always got worse. By Christmas, she could not always get around anymore. And soon after Christmas it got even worse, so that she almost always remained in bed,... but now she is somewhat better so that she can sit up in bed and sometimes also sit on a chair for a bit,..." Abraham is mindful of his own mortality: "Here on the East Reserve, among those who call themselves *Kleingemeinde*, only two are now older than I - Jakob Koop and the old Jakob Barkman - thus [death] always comes closer down the row toward us. And blessed are we if we might be ready when the command shall go forth, 'prepare your house, for you must die'...."

On April 10, 1933, Abraham writes that Gertruda's health has improved. He also noted another marriage between one of his grandchildren and one of Cornelius' grandchildren. The two brothers were bonded by their advancing age and thoughts of dying: "...Indeed, the time shall come when our mortal bodies shall finally be released from this earthly abode, for which you have longed for already for so many years,....For it is not that long ago that brother Jakob was also among the living, but now he is dead already for almost a 1 1/2 years. And likewise, many from among us have passed on who once walked with us here on earth, but now with blessed joy, sing the heavenly victor's song...."

In his letter of October 1, 1933, Abraham recounts some of the family news: "...Yes, also our children who have travelled to Oregon, may well be home by next Sunday.... And then all-of-a-sudden, we heard that Cor. A. K. Pletts wanted to leave for Satanta, the following Monday.... At present, we are, so to say, alone

in the house, other than Martin Friesen's Bernhard, who comes in the evening and morning to milk the cows, we have three cows to be milked, but my hands do not have enough strength for milking...."

In his letter of January 15, 1934, Abraham writes about their health: "...but my strength already is much weaker, and the work is not possible anymore, and my limbs feel as if they are soon tired when they need to preform a task, but with the help of God, I can still do my work in the barn. But my beloved wife must again stay at home in the house the way she already has for many winters and get through the winter by sitting or lying in the warm room, and reading helps and also making food, but not much of knitting or crocheting, she does not eat very much and so she is always tired, and then she must go and lie down again,..."

In the last letter, dated April 7, 1934, Abraham related about daily life: "Dearly beloved brother; In the physical realm, things are unfolding here the way they always have, people are born and die; a great-grandson was born to us on April 1 at Bernhard R. Pletts, and another great-grandson was born to us at Heinrich R. Pletts.... My beloved wife is still the same, like she has already been for four winters, always confined to the house, now and then it occurs that she can sit and crochet and at times also sew a little. At times she also has severe pain.... If one is still alive, we dearly wish that we can be healthy...."

### **Summer, 1934.**

In the summer of 1934 Abraham L. Plett was building a ditch to drain the slough between his and daughter Mrs. Martin Friesens' place, just west across the road allowance. Grandson Erwin P. Friesen remembered hearing Grandpapa yelling at his team to slow down and go "steady". The horses were quite spirited and if they pulled the hand-held scraper too fast, it would flip over and possibly the operator with it. Although his hair were pure white by now, Abraham L. Plett was still an energetic man, even at age 75. Erwin remembered sitting eating dinner and from inside the house, he could hear Grandpa outside working his team and yelling at them, "hoa, hoa", to slow down. Grandson Jac P. Friesen remembered Grandpa taking him blueberry picking in the bush on NE25-7-6E, where Erwin Friesens later lived. They drove in Grandpa's Model A.

Granddaughter Gertruda Plett Reimer sometimes stayed at her grandmother's place for a few days. She remembered sleeping with aunt Anna and how safe and cosy it felt snuggling under her thick wool comforter. One time, her grandma's maid, Mrs. David Hiebert, was making her a dress and so she stayed overnight. The next day, she was sitting at the table when Grandma came to her, hugged her, and told her, "You have such nice thick arms." Gertruda remembered Grandmother as a small woman with a slim waist and narrow face, usually wearing a dark dress with an apron.

Grandson Abe P. Friesen remembered that one afternoon in early October, 1934, Abraham L. Plett came to his place by himself to visit. They lived in a little house 14x20 just west of the Martin K. Friesen yard. Daughter Rosaline was an eight month-old baby. She was in a happy mood and Abraham sat on a chair and had an pleasant and enjoyable time playing with her.

### **Tragic Death, October 15, 1934.**

Shortly after his retirement in 1926, Abraham L. Plett had bought his first car, a model T Ford. He learned to drive it fairly quickly and when the model A. Ford came out he immediately purchased a new one. Granddaughters Margaret and Mary P. Reimer remembered Abr. L. Plett coming to visit at their place in his green car, with white canvas top, known as a “top” car. They have a vivid memory of grandpapa sitting in the car, hair white, with his head shaking.

This was the car in which Abraham L. Plett and brother David, and brothers-in-law, Jakob B. Koop and John B. Koop, left for Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, leaving on October 7, 1934, the day after the funeral of sister Maria, Mrs. Peter R. Reimer. The purpose of the trip was to visit brother-in-law, Peter B. Koop, who had fallen into difficulties and was suffering from cancer, and, provided he was willing to come along, to bring him back home in order to nurse him here. But when they arrived there, they found out that this would not be possible as Peter Koop was in the hospital in Saskatoon. The men decided to return to Manitoba. On the night of October 14, 1934, they stayed overnight at the home of Klaas R. Barkman, Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, son of machinery dealer Peter T. Barkman, Steinbach, a first cousin to the Koop brothers.

The next morning, October 15, 1934, the four travellers got up early and had breakfast at the Klaas R. Barkman home. Klaas’ seven year-old son Peter still has a vivid recollection to this day (2000), of the four men as they got ready to set off on the next stage of their homeward journey. Although in their 70s they were all robust, handsome men, lithe and strong, vibrant with life. The sight of the four men getting into their car, looking dignified in their dark coats and white shirts, left a lasting impression on Peter. It was a sparkling new Model A touring, and Peter remembered that the curtains were drawn as they slowly pulled off the yard.<sup>1174</sup>

Finally they were on their way, anxious to get home to loved ones and spouses. David L. Plett was driving and Abraham sat beside him in the passenger seat. Seven miles east of Foam Lake, near a cattle crossing, there was loose gravel on the lower side of a turn. Peter L. Barkman remembered the exact corner. In those days, highways did not have curved corners like now, the curve was more like a street corner, and of course, cars like the model A had a high centre of gravity and did not hug the ground like modern cars.

It was 9:30 when they hit the loose gravel. David Plett was somewhat short sighted and may not have seen the windrow at the corner left by a grader. The car hit the windrow of gravel and went into a skid.

The car swerved and flipped over instantly. The car came to a rest, standing on its wheels.

Each of the men was still in his seat but the top of the car was completely crushed. Johann B. Koop and David L. Plett got out of the car, and also Jakob B. Koop slowly got out. But Abram remained seated. His head hung forward and he remained quiet.

David L. Plett went around to his side of the car and asked, “Obrum, what has happened to you?”

Abram replied, "Nothing has happened to me."

Whereupon Jakob B. Koop asked him, "What has happened to you?"

"I have bruised myself very hard," was the reply.

Upon hearing this he asked Abram again, "What has happened to you?"

They could see from his eyes that he was seriously hurt.

But he replied, again, "nothing has happened."

David Plett felt Abram's head and felt that there was nothing holding it.

Uncles David Plett and Johann Koop then took Abram out of the automobile and laid him on a blanket nearby. When they had finished, a vehicle came driving along from the front, and they flagged it down. A woman was the lone occupant. The Uncles asked the woman whether she could take Abraham and Uncle Jakob Koop to Foam Lake to the hospital to the Doctor? To this she replied that there was also a doctor in the City of Tuffnell, half-a-mile away. But even as they were speaking another car came along. The woman immediately said, it was the doctor.

The doctor, a woman, quickly stopped and came over. She immediately examined the injured man, but she gave little hope. The Uncles asked the woman, to drive with them to the hospital. She was unable to do so because she had been called out to another place.

They placed Abram with the blanket onto the automobile of the first woman. Uncle Jakob Koop also went with her. An Englishman, who had been along with the woman doctor, accompanied them and helped to hold Abraham on the rear seat. In this way, they drove straight back to Foam Lake.

But when they arrived at the hospital and wanted to take Abraham out of the car he had already died. This was around 10:30 a.m. Abraham had lived for about an hour after the accident. Presumably his neck had been broken when the car rolled over. Brother David L. Plett later wrote that Abraham "... lived only one hour after the accident, although unconscious."

Uncles David Plett and Johann Koop had remained with the car and waited for Klaas R. Barkman who was to pick them up, which also did not take very long. Barkman was the flour mill owner in Foam Lake where the men had stayed for night.

Abraham Plett's body was given to the undertaker. He was to place it into a coffin and send it to Winnipeg from where his sons were to pick it up.

The last morning, before the men got underway, Abraham had been somewhat impatient. He had said that he was already homesick for home, where he usually liked to be, with mother, who also always seemed to be ill during the last years. The leading of God also answered his wish, for now he had been the first one home, namely, Tuesday, 10 o'clock in the morning.<sup>1175</sup>

## **A Shattered World.**

October 15, 1934. Gertruda was helping daughter Anna finish the dishes. Just four of them for dinner: herself, Anna, granddaughter Trutchje - Maria's oldest, and the maid, Mrs. Hiebert. It felt too empty, without "Papa". How she missed her Abraham and hoped he would never have to go away on another trip again. The maid was making a new dress for 13-year-old Trutchje, her namesake, sitting quietly on a chair watching her heroine, Anna, bustle about.

Gertruda happened to look up and outside, a gloomy day. Rain, sleet, and maybe some snow? She noticed a black automobile drive into the yard. Strange. They weren't expecting anyone. She tugged at her kerchief and straightened out her apron, subconsciously affirming she was appropriately dressed if strangers should come to the door. It was not totally unusual. Even though retired, the Pletts still had pedlars and hosts of relatives dropping in.

Gertruda shrugged off a momentary sense of apprehension and went back to work.

Presently a knock on the door. "Tap, tap, tap."

Anna went to the door, opened it. "Komm nenn," she said.

There were two men. They stood there. Sombre faces, dark overcoats. Silence.

Momentary disorientation. Something did not fit. Gertruda recognized them—David P. Reimer, her husband's nephew and local minister, and her cousin, Peter T. Barkman, Steinbach machinery dealer.

By now the feelings of uneasiness had turned to shards of disorientation.

David Reimer, minister; they had just buried his mother the day before her Obrum had left on the trip. Trip, trip, Foam Lake, Barkmans' - that was where Abram was planning to stay for night ....

David came to Gertruda and put his arms around her. "Taunte Truta," he said, in his sombre minister's voice, "Please sit down. We have news, not good, terrible news." Cousin Peter, standing beside her, helped her into a chair.

Gertruda's heart was pounding, a darkness rushing in upon her, numbing senses, room and people becoming surreal and elongated. The connections came fast, bolts of lighting. Peter T. Barkman's son Klaas, Foam Lake, something terrible must have happened,....

Abraham must be dead!

Dead!

Nothing else would have brought these two men out to see her in the middle of a working day.

She collapsed into her chair, life gone from her limbs.

As if from a different world she heard snatches of what her nephew was saying, "Your husband is dead, he was killed this morning, car accident...."

Cousin Peter patted her arm, "God will provide, God will see you through...."

Anna sitting at the table had heard the news. It had taken a few moments to sink in. She burst into tears. She lost her senses, collapsing on the table. Her beloved "Papa" gone? Impossible! He was the family, the constant in their lives, always healthy, full of vitality and energy, so handsome, so loving and kind, her beloved "Papa", it can't, it can't be, it couldn't be real!

Granddaughter Trutchje was sitting quietly in the corner. She had watched through the window as the two men came to the door. She had noted their sombre looks and felt something frightful in the air. She saw her grandmother and aunt Anna collapse, the maid ran to the phone calling daughters Sarah and Katherine, both of whom lived just across the road. Soon Sarah, Mrs. Johann Penner, her oldest aunt, was there. Sarah started weeping fearfully. Katharine came, then others. They were all hugging each other and crying. Soon more family and neighbours came, the house was filled with crying and weeping.

Outside dark clouds scudded across the October sky. Trutchje sensed that life as Grandma and Tante Anna had known it was shattered forever.<sup>1176</sup>

### **Funeral.**

October 16, 1934; only a day after the accident, but it seemed like a lifetime ago. The body of Abraham L. Plett was returned to Winnipeg by train where sons Johann K. Plett, Cornelius A. Plett and Peter A. Plett were waiting to take it home. John was driving. It was a rainy, windy and muddy day. The road was rough and sons Cornelius and Peter had to sit in back of the truck holding their father's coffin for the whole trip to keep it from bouncing around.

Grandsons Andrew and Ben P. Plett remembered that the uncles and aunts were gathered at the grandparent's home that day waiting for the men to return from their sad mission. They were sitting in the Grott'e Schtoave (parlour) talking in subdued voices thick with grief, casting anxious glances out the window to see if perhaps the mud-splattered truck carrying the coffin could already be seen coming down the road.

Ben remembered seeing the half-ton truck pulling onto the yard at Abr. L. Pletts from the driveway to the south, coming into the yard and turning east, and then backing west up to the porch. In the meantime the uncles and aunts had come outside and were waiting on the porch. He remembered vividly how the uncles and aunts had started crying when they first saw the coffin in the back of the half-ton.

The body was placed in the summer kitchen for viewing. Grandson Abe P. Friesen remembered going to view his grandfather's body. He and uncle Cornelius R. Plett entered the summer kitchen together. Uncle Cornelius had been quite distressed when he noticed the undertaker had shaved Abr. L. Plett's stubble beard and had dressed him with a necktie, not considered appropriate among older Kleine Gemeinde men.

Sometimes when there were a lot of visitors the coffin was brought into the veranda where there was more room for viewing. Granddaughter Elizabeth Plett Dueck remembered how the coffin filled the air with the smell of cedar everytime the lid was opened, so that she still associates the smell with funerals to this day. She remembered how aunt Anna would cry whenever the coffin was open.

Granddaughter Maria P. Reimer remembered going to school that day. She had asked for permission to go to her grandparent's house across the road to see her grandpapa, but school teacher Waldon Barkman had not allowed it. Later the entire student body of the school together with the teacher walked across the



road together and respectfully viewed the body.

The funeral was held on October 19, 1934, at the Blumenort church, then situated on SE27-7-6E, a mile south of the present location. Several grandchildren remembered it was a rainy miserable day. The John K. Plett family coming from Willowridge had a hard time making it to Blumenort, because of the muddy roads.

Grandson Ben K. Plett remembered that it was a huge funeral. The service was officiated by local minister Heinrich R. Reimer, Prairie Rose, and Bishop Jakob F. Isaac, and Rev. Gerhard Klassen, from Meade, Kansas. The local Bishop Peter P. Reimer, as well as minister David P. Reimer, were among the mourners being Abraham's nephews.

After the funeral service, the crowd gathered around the front steps for another viewing. The coffin was placed on the front steps of the church so that it was angled upward, for better viewing. Granddaughter Margaret P. Reimer remembered standing at the bottom of the coffin and that C. A. Plett's Elsie had stood at the top end. At this time son, Cornelius A. Plett, who was a Vorsänger or song leader, led the gathering in singing a song. After the viewing, the body was brought to the adjacent graveyard for interment.

The vasa meal after the funeral was served at the home of oldest daughter, Sarah, Mrs. Johann R. Penner, living in the former Abr. L. Plett premises. Grandson Ben P. Penner remembered that it was horribly muddy and that there was a huge mess to clean afterwards, after all the guests had gone.

Son Abraham had not been home to visit his parents since 1922, but now came home for his father's funeral. It is said that he still remembered his father's words, not to come home until he was ready to work. The story illustrated another characteristic of the Plett family, being an incredible persistence, which could sometimes also become stubbornness.

Abram stayed in the Blumenhof area for a few weeks after the funeral visiting. Nephew Erwin P. Friesen remembered Abram driving his father's "death car" - a Model A two-seater touring model. The canvas top had been destroyed in the accident and removed. Abram drove around in the topless car visiting friends and relatives in Blumenort and Steinbach, smoking a big pipe and wearing Grandpa's big yellow "pletz" (fur coat), which Grandma had insisted he should have.

Grandson Jac P. Friesen remembered that the photograph of the 12 Abr. L. Plett children was taken in Winnipeg on the day that uncle Abram was taken to Winnipeg to the train station to depart for home. All the uncles and aunts had gone along to see him off, and evidently all the siblings agreed to pose for the photograph. In a letter to niece, Gertruda Friesen Plett, postmarked December 17, 1934, Abram writes that he returned home to Dallas, Oregon, on November 23rd.

The tragic mishap and death of Abraham L. Plett was an immense shock for the entire Blumenort community. Although 75 years old, Abraham L. Plett was still a vigorous man of vitality and energy. He was never known to have been seriously sick throughout his entire life.

### **Letters, 1934.**

The immediate family was devastated by Abraham's death and found solace and strength in a deeply rooted faith. In a letter to uncle Cornelius Plett, Satanta, Kansas, of October 30, 1934, daughter Gertruda referred "to the One Who can provide everything." She was thankful that her mother's health now seemingly improved: "Which we can also see in our beloved Mama, that she now has such good health, and can drive to worship services and also go visiting, for which we cannot be thankful enough. Our brother Abram came from Oregon [for the funeral], he had not been home for 12 years.... Sunday, we had communion in the church and in the evening Martin Friesens were at Peter Pletts with Mama, and Anna, and Abram. Yesterday they were at our place, and Johann U. Klassens and Abr. J. Friesens and Abram D. Reimers....It is extremely difficult for our beloved Mama that such a tragedy befell our beloved Father....."

On December 30, 1934, 2 1/2 months after the tragedy, daughter Anna, mused poignantly in a letter to uncle Cornelius: "It often occurs to me when we go to sleep in the evening, if only Mama and I would not need to wake up any more either." Her letter reveals how lonely she and her mother were: "...Mama is sleeping and I am sitting down to write. Only the tick-tock of the clock can be heard....even though we are lonesome and miss [our beloved Father so]." Anna tries to see some good in the unfolding events, recognizing her father was in a better place, his heavenly home: "I sometimes think how blessed Papa is that he is no longer here, for it was so cold again, and the work too hard for him, and to just sit and do nothing was very difficult for his nature. And yet during the winter he would sit a lot and read....."

### **Journal, 1934.**

Gertruda Koop Plett continued living in her home until daughter Anna got married. Like other Mennonite women of her generation, including sisters Maria and Helena, Gertruda maintained a journal. She wrote with a delicate, precise script. The only portion of the journal currently extant is 1934 to 1935, covering the period before her husband's accidental death and her first year of widowhood. The following extracts from Gertruda's journal commences with the day Abraham L. Plett left on his fateful journey and includes the week following his tragic demise: "Oct. 11. David Plett came here. Then David Plett and Father left at 7 a.m. together with Johann Koop and Jakob Koop. For dinner, I and Anna drove to Cornelius R. Pletts. Oct. 12. We were baking and making butter. Elisabeth came over for dinner. Sarah also came for Vesper. Abram Reimer's Willie, brought us a box of wood. Oct. 13. We held Saturday. Margaretha came over for Vesper. The boys brought five loads of wood. We have received a card from Father. In one day they drove 283 miles. Very nice weather. Oct. 14. The sister, Peter Klausche came for Vesper and Johann Penners in the evening."

"Oct. 15. Katharina was here for a little while. After dinner Peter Barkman and David Reimer came and brought us the horrible news of our beloved Father and his terrible accident and death. The children and siblings came over to hear of this horrible tragedy."

“Oct. 16. Johann, Cornelius and Peter brought our beloved Father home in a coffin around 10:30 a.m. Oct 17. We started baking. Four sets buns (Zweibak) and also white bread. The sister Wohlgemuthsche and Anna were here, Heinrich Enns, Jakob J. K. Pletts, Johann Kornelsens, also Minna, also children and grandchildren. In the evening they went to get David Pletts and the girls, Unger’s Justina, Peter T. Barkmans, Cornelius Penners, and many others. In the evening Peter A. Plett brought Abram here from Oregon. They [presumably the girls] had baked and cleaned. Six canisters of mous - three gallons per canister, three sets of bread, a large caldron (miegrapen) meat, 96 jugs of milk for Zweibak.”

“Oct. 19. [Today] was the funeral. We served the meal at Johann Penners. Jakob Isaak and Gerhard Klassen from Meade and Heinrich Reimers from Prairie Rose preached.”

“Oct. 20. Johann Isaaks were here, also Jakob Koop’s Margaretha and Isaak together with Jakob Duecks from Morris, with Jakob Isaaks and Jakob Classens from Meade, also a number of the children and grandchildren. Oct. 21. Johann Friesens were here for night. The Peter A. Pletts also came, also Abram was here. For Vesper, David Reimers with Peter Klassens from Meade, Johann Penners, Martin Friesens, Abram Reimers, Cor. R. Pletts, Peter R. Barkmans, David Siemens.”

“Oct. 22. Abram Reimers were here for night, and then the David Plettsche came, Peter T. Barkman, the Abram W. Reimersche, Harms’ Anna, Peter A. Penners, the sister Wohlgemuthsche, Johann Penners, Martin Friesens, Peter R. Pletts, Heinrich Pletts, Johann Kornelsens, Peter Ungers. Oct. 23. Johann Penners were here for night, and then Peter L. Pletts came over for dinner with Jakob and Johann from Satanta, and also Cor. P. Reimers with Klaas P. Reimers from Meade, Johann Penners, Katharina, Johann Friesens, Johann F. Reimers with Jakob Friesens from Meade.”

“Oct. 24. Peter Pletts were here for night, and then Johann Friesen’s Gertruda came over. Bernhard Doerksens were here in the evening. Abram Reimers, Martin Friesens and Johann Penners were also here a little. Abram Plett had gone along with Johann Penner to Winnipeg. Oct. 25. Bernhard Doerksens were here for night and then we drove along with Doerksens to church. Jakob Isaak and Gerhard Klassen from Meade and Heinrich Dueck did the preaching. Bernhard Doerksens and Abram were here for dinner. There was a brotherhood meeting after dinner. Sarah and Helena came for Vesper. In the evening Cornelius R. Pletts, Kornelius K. Friesens with Peter Loewens from Steinbach, Johann Penners, Katharina and Johann Friesens came.”

Gertruda kept accurate records. At the end of the journal, she maintained a record of sales of garden produce such as gooseberries (Stachelbeeren), raspberries, tomatoes, hens, eggs, and potatoes. This was normal among Mennonite women who traditionally managed the household production such as the dairy, poultry and garden production, etc. In this way, women of Gertruda’s generation had an important voice in the economic lives of their families, exerting greater influence within their life-world than their daughters, and certainly, more than their granddaughters would.<sup>1177</sup>

## **Widowhood.**

From 1936 until 1940, Anna and husband, Isaac C. Penner, lived with her mother. Granddaughters Margaret and Maria P. Reimer remembered that occasionally one of their brothers would go to pick up grandmother and bring her home for a visit. After Anna married, Grandmama had various maids to help her look after her household chores, including David Friesen's Neit and Johann K. Plett's Sally (Mrs. Henry Koop).

Sally Plett Koop worked for her grandmother for several months in 1939. She went there in May, having already made their garden at home. But some snow storms followed so that grandmother's garden was only made in June that year. Sally's job was to do the garden work, seeding, planting, etc. but grandmother did come out and give her directions. Sally enjoyed spending time with grandmother. Grandmother's nature was very concerned for the well-being of her granddaughters, and for her.

Sally recalled when she started work, Anna had asked her, "are you also willing to help grandmother with whatever she needs?"

Sally replied, "Yes, I am willing to do whatever Grandmama requires."

But Grandmama was not a demanding person and never asked her to do those things. Grandma always said, "I will manage myself somehow." And she always did.

Whenever the wind picked up outside, the wash basin made a "howling" noise. Sally noticed that Grandmama felt uncomfortable hearing the sound and asked for it to be shut off. Apparently after Grandpapa was gone the noise reminded Grandma too much of him, making her feel very lonely for him.

Grandson Martin P. Penner remembered that when Mrs. David L. Plett, grandmother's sister Helena, died in 1940, grandmother had mentioned that her older sister, Katharina, Mrs. Peter B. Klassen, who was 10 years older than Helena and also a widow like Gertruda, would be jealous that it was not she who had had the good fortune to die. One time Grandmama told Martin how much she loved and appreciated it when she went to church and her children and grandchildren were following along behind in her footsteps.

Grandmother wore long dark dresses pleated at the waist with a dark apron over top. She was generally cheerful. She enjoyed knitting beautiful multi-coloured mittens which she gave to the grandchildren. As was common in her generation, grandmama was missing some of her teeth in her later years.

When the grandchildren were visiting, Grandmama would get up and walk over to her large chest ("kjist"). They knew she would take out some candy for them. This became so common they were disappointed if they didn't get any candy.

After 1940, grandmama lived with daughter Margaretha, Mrs. Abram D. Reimer, for a year-and-a-half. Margaret and Maria remembered that grandmother was sick a lot and would lie in bed under her feather blanket.

Grandson Erwin P. Reimer remembered one time in 1942 when his brother Willie returned from the C. O. camp, his grandmother wanted to kiss him but he was bashful and avoided it.

## **Death, 1943.**

For the last year of her life, Gertruda Koop Plett stayed at the home of daughter Gertruda, Mrs. John E. Friesen, in Greenland.

Gertruda Plett died here of old age on June 2, 1943. Granddaughters Margaret and Maria P. Reimer remembered it was a rainy time. Their parents, Margaretha and Abram D. Reimer were present. Grandma died just as she opened her mouth to gasp a breath of air. Her body was prepared for burial in the traditional manner and placed into the coffin at Johann E. Friesens, where it remained until the funeral.

Funeral services were held at the Blumenort church where her husband Abraham had been buried some nine years earlier. Granddaughters Margaret and Maria P. Reimer remembered making preparations for the funeral on Ascension Day. Milk cans full of "mous" were cooked at Johann E. Friesens where the uncles and aunts gathered for a meal before the funeral services in the afternoon.

I have in my possession the Five-Year diary, 1942 to 1946, of daughter Katharina, Mrs. Martin K. Friesen (my grandmother). She recorded the events of her mother's passing: June 2, 1943, "Phoned here with the message that mother is dying. We drove there immediately but she had already died. We [stayed there and made] preparations for the funeral. June 3. It was raining very hard. Today is Ascension Day. We were at Joh. Friesens. June 4. We drove to Joh. Friesens. It was the funeral of our beloved mother."

Gertruda Koop Plett was a well-respected and much beloved matriarch of her family, one of the last of her generation.

After Gertruda's death her chest ("kjist") became the property of Johann E. Friesens. Later it was acquired by their son Rev. Henry P. Friesen, Arborg, Manitoba.<sup>1178</sup>

## **Physical features.**

Both Abraham and Gertruda Plett had a relatively narrow face. As Abraham grew older, his hair became completely white. His thick hair had thinned out a bit by the time of his death. He is remembered by many for his stubble beard as he only clipped his beard and did not shave. This was somewhat unusual in the Kleine Gemeinde it being the practice for most men - not all - to be clean shaven. This may have been a reaction against the teaching of the Holdeman's Gemeinde not to shave at all.

At one time they had a worker, a Prussian, who wanted to clean up to go to town. Without hesitation, A. L. Plett offered to lend him his razor - a switchblade that flipped out of a case which he had in his kjist. Son Peter was amazed. This was the first time he realized that his father must have been clean shaven at one point. When Abr. Plett and the worker went to get the razor they discovered that it was cracked and could not even be used. This showed that it had not been used for a long time.

Abram L. Plett had large eye-brows and his big blue eyes were set quite deeply. He is remembered for his neck muscle spasms which caused his head to twitch or jerk. He always had short trimmed hair.

Abraham was about 5' 10" in height, lithe and muscular. He was resembled by younger brother Jakob who was shorter being 5'6" and with more refined features. Brother Peter L. Plett was also about 5' 10" but resembled brothers Cornelius and David more facially and physically with a bigger build. Cornelius and David were both about 5'8" although Cornelius was heavier. Although brother Johann died in 1900 he was remembered by Peter R. Wiebe as lithe but strong. The impression I have is that brother Johann resembled Abram and Jakob and was about 5'6" or 5'8" in height. Jakob and Abraham were very close friends. Jakob was more reserved than Abraham but could be friendly and charming once he warmed up to a person.

### **Character.**

Grandfather had a warm outgoing disposition and was well-liked not only in his own community but also by his French and English neighbours. He had a sense of humour. In 1985 Klaas R. Plett, Jagueyes, Mexico, recalled that Abraham L. Plett had once jokingly said, "On Sundays he would gladly have Peter L. Plett boys, but on work days he would prefer his own." Abraham knew how to work the land on a farm and loved to work hard. He did not believe in sports. To play a game of ball he considered absolutely useless.

Abraham ate almost anything set before him. Meat was never too fat. The children were not supposed to trim any fat off their meat. Everyone had to eat what was set on the table. Nobody talked about dieting in those days, and if someone got fat, they simply got fat. Boys and girls had to get up early to feed the cattle and milk the cows before going off to school.

Abraham L. Plett was a strong healthy man. Son Peter claimed he had never even seen his father sick in bed a day of his life. Of course, Abraham was never treated in a hospital. The hard work and good business sense was reflected in Abram's material progress. Even after making a substantial advancement by portion in 1932, his estate after his death still totalled \$45,000.<sup>1179</sup>

Abraham was a man of his word. In his day, a man's word was his bond, particularly among Mennonites. He loyally supported the consensus of the brotherhood, whether he personally agreed or not. Conservative Mennonites believed it was wrong to take photographs as creating a false likeness before God. In 1897 brother-in-law, Jakob B. Koop, had been admonished before the brotherhood for allowing his family's photograph to be taken by a travelling photographer. In 1899 the three Kleine Gemeinde congregations established a protocol prohibiting photographs. Abraham honoured the wishes of his spiritual community and never posed for a picture.

The only picture of Abraham was taken at a Koop family gathering in 1926 where he is among a group of people and barely recognizable. Abraham was squatting on the ground on his knees, visiting with two other men during the picnic lunch. Standing behind him are three young women who appear to be listening to what he was saying. It is evident that Abraham L. Plett was a trim, handsome man at age 67. He was wearing a dark suit, with white shirt, buttoned, but without a tie. A black hat was perched carefully on his head.

In 1981, I hired an artist, Henry P. Fehr, Steinbach, Manitoba, who sat down with son Peter A. Plett to draw a portrait of Abraham, the only depiction of him extant. Many people have told me it is a good likeness; a few said otherwise.

One of the age-old protocols of the Kleine Gemeinde was that a man "could not marry the second sister." This meant if his wife died he could not marry her sister. The principle expressed Catholic canon law being based on a literal interpretation of scripture that a husband and wife become one upon marriage. Therefore the siblings of one spouse become the siblings of the other, and such a marriage was incest. It happened that Gottlieb Janhke, a German Lutheran whose wife Margaretha Friesen died in 1877, wanted to marry her sister. As the story goes, all the "L" Pletts opposed the marriage on the basis of the above protocol. Janhke went ahead and married her sister Helena, but not before he had left the Kleine Gemeinde and joined the Chortitzer.<sup>1180</sup> Ironically, within a generation such a "marriage of the second sister" had occurred among the children of each Abraham, David and Jakob, who were presumably now no longer opposed.

Abraham was interested in his family history. On Sept. 25, 1982, Peter A. Plett told me the story of the origin of the Plett name. Apparently the original Plett had been a soldier who had fallen in love with and married a Mennonite girl, and had consequently joined the Mennonite faith. Of particular interest was the fact that he made a point of specifying that he had heard this story from his father. At the time I sort of dismissed the story as an aberration of the Loewen legend, that a distant ancestor had been an Army General and had converted to the Mennonite faith in order to marry a Mennonite woman. But since that time it has become evident that the Plett family was indeed indigenous to Prussia. Variations of the name were recorded in Brandenburg-Prussia as early as the 12th century and various members of the family were prominent in administrative and court positions in Prussia. This lent new credence to the story or folklore which I had formerly dismissed as legend.

Abraham L. Plett and his fellow pioneers left a lasting legacy. One need only drive around the roads of Blumenhof and Landmark, Manitoba, or Spanish Lookout, Belize, or Jagueyes, Mexico, where many of his descendants live, to see this reality in action. For example, it has been estimated that the descendants of Abraham and David L. Plett together produce some five per cent of Manitoba's milk production. In each of these areas one finds grandchildren and great-grandchildren who love farming and the lifestyle it afforded and who shared with Abraham and Gertruda the love of the land, working the soil and making it produce crops, the lifecycle of the nature, of a foal or calf being born, or of training a young horse and teaching it to work.

## Spiritual Life.

Gertruda and Abraham L. Plett were devoted Christians committed to following the life and example of Jesus and living out the teachings of the “Sermon on the Mount.” Although not outspoken in that regard, they were concerned about the salvation of their children. Family relationships were dear and precious to them. Like others of their generation, they preferred to remain true to the covenants they had once made with their Lord and with the “faith once received.”

Grandson Abr P. Friesen remembered talking to Abraham L. Plett on various occasions after he had converted himself to Evangelical Fundamentalist religion and trying to persuade him of its validity. Abe felt that his grandfather must have thought it rather remarkable that a young upstart like he would suddenly endeavour to instruct him on the doctrines of Christianity. Abraham L. Plett certainly had not agreed with his views and challenged him for forsaking the true faith. In general Abe felt his Grandfather had appreciated and loved him as a person, not just as someone who worked for him.

A silent prayer was said before each meal in the Plett home. Often they asked the children to sing together. The parents regularly read and recited scripture. They preached to their children by being a good example, by modelling the teachings of the Good Book. Gertrude and Abraham spent many evenings sitting in the “Grott’e Schtoave”, singing from the *Gesangbuch* or reading the *Martyr’s Mirror*. Abraham had inherited his father’s big brown *Martyr’s Mirror*, an heirloom printed in Elkhart, Indiana, in 1872, and shipped to Russia.<sup>1181</sup> They would read in the evenings by lamp light.

A granddaughter later recalled that Abraham L. Plett would sit and read out loud from the *Martyr’s Mirror*, and also M. Simons and Dirk Philips. Sometimes he would sit and read while Gertruda listened as she knit or crocheted. Abraham Plett also read newspapers, *Die Nordwesten* and the *Lincoln Free Press*, from Nebraska. Other books owned by Abraham and Gertruda Plett included *The Complete Works of Menno Simons* and *Das Kleine Martyrer Buch* (Abridged *Martyr’s Mirror*, published by the Kleine Gemeinde in Russia in 1860).

In 1981 son Peter A. Plett recalled that his father frequently read Pieter Pieters, a Dutch Waterländer Bishop whose writings were much treasured and repeatedly published by the Kleine Gemeinde, especially a book called, “The Way to the City of Peace” (*Der Weg Nach Friedenstadt*). Pioneers of Abraham L. Plett’s generation were intimately familiar with these writings. Each of the children received a copy of the Pieter Pieters’ books and *Die Wandelnde Seele*, while they were single and still at home. In many ways the spiritual warmth and confident “Gelassenheit” exuded in these writings, better than anything I know, reflected the spirituality and piety of our heroic pioneers such as Abraham and Gertruda Plett.

Abraham L. Plett’s favourite song which he frequently sang and quoted was, “Bis hierher hat mich Gott Gebracht” (“Hitherto the Lord hast provided”).<sup>1182</sup>



## Poetry.

The conservative Mennonites who immigrated to Manitoba in 1874 had a strong literary tradition with roots going back to the writings of the martyrs in Reformation times. Poetry was one genre of this tradition. It was continued in the Mennonite songbooks (*Gesangbücher*) and used in their confessional schools. Poems were written to document history and to commemorate important occasions such as deaths and other tragic events.<sup>1183</sup>

One such poem was written by son Peter A. Plett to honour his father. A second poem was written by youngest daughter Anna to express her grief at his father's tragic death. These poems were translated by poet Margaret Penner Toews, Neilburg, Saskatchewan, one of the few modern writers with the literary skills necessary to translate the content of such poems and, at the same time, maintain something of their traditional meter and rhythm.<sup>1184</sup>

### **Our Father's Earthly Journey - by Peter A. Plett**

In spirit I peer at the distant past;  
In far-off Ukraine there once lived a lad  
By the name of Abram. Though small of stature,  
Many later would call him "Granddad".

The house that he lived in was sturdy and simple.  
His clothes were not showy, but very plain.  
"Arrogant pride," his elders would say,  
"Only reveals that a man is vain."

In a saucer that stood on their humble table  
A candle of tallow would flicker and shine,  
Filling the room with a smoky haze,  
But a practical lamp in its time.

For electric lights had never been heard of,  
Neither a watch to wear on one's hand,  
Nor a floor that was covered with warm, plush carpet...  
The floor-boards then were covered with sand.

As Abram grew taller, in size like a man,  
He went to the fields and laboured amain;  
No tractors invented, he wielded a scythe  
And stroke by stroke he cut down the grain.

No mechanical binder was seen on the land,  
Not a combine parked anywhere in a field;  
The sheaves were bound with a strand of straw,  
But the farmers were glad for their bountiful yield.

Sheaf by sheaf it was carried home,  
Rolled in the threshing stones, then beaten  
And thrown to rid it of chaff and soon  
The grain was clean and fit to be eaten.

Time came when Abram turned sixteen...and nearer  
The age when a boy would be called to arms....  
When there came the news Manitoba offered  
Religious freedom and land for farms.

No time was lost. From the Russian steppes  
To Canadian shores the Mennonites hurried  
Across the ocean, foaming and wild,  
At last by the threat of war unworried.  
On the banks of Red River the travellers landed,  
Hitched up an ox and sallied forth  
On a Red River cart ... what squeaking and rattling...  
To an area eastward called Blumenort.  
New houses were built in this alien land,  
But, placing their trust in a mighty God,  
They raised their children and, toiling, coaxed  
A living out of the virgin sod.

A change began sweeping across the land.  
Machinery fast took over the load.  
Tractors were singing the song of the soil.  
People drove autos down street and road.  
Thus said our father, "No auto for me!  
I couldn't. no matter how hard I'd try!"  
But scarce had he said it, he grabbed a wheel  
And drove an auto like you and I.  
Alas! 'Twas an auto that sealed his fate.

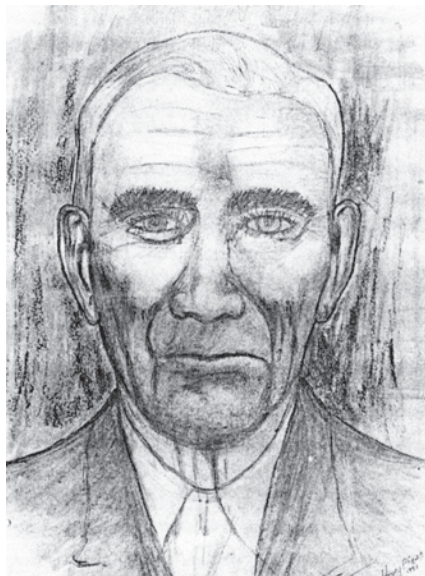
Saskatchewan-bound, he left on a trip  
Down a road that was crooked, with ditches deep,  
Too fast with his auto and over it tipped.  
Our father suffered great pain awhile,  
And a few hours later his life was gone.  
He was borne to a grave at Blumenort,  
Where he rests in peace till Eternal Dawn.  
His path was not always with roses, strewn,  
But oft God's presence he felt anew.  
We will always remember him leading the song,  
"The Lord has helped us hitherto." By Peter A. Plett

## **I cannot hold the tears - by Anna Plett Penner**

I cannot stop the pain;  
Emotions rise again  
When I the past recall  
When I was but a child at home  
In joyous innocence now flown,  
Those years the happiest of all,  
When I beside my parents sat,  
A time I never will forget.

Then, swift calamity!  
Travelling afar with friends  
Father swiftly met his end,  
So suddenly home for all eternity.  
How quickly fled! How could it be!  
We did not know, we could not see  
His final day was o'er.  
Though we knew it was an accident,  
We grieved because his life was spent,  
We'd see him here no more.

And Mother sat and cried,  
O would that she had died!  
"How can it be?" she'd sigh.  
So often she'd been ill,  
Assuming it would be God's will  
That she'd be first to die.  
Seventy-five years had passed in flight  
When he, his hair all gleaming white  
His homeland found.  
And Mother eighty-one when she  
Followed him and finally  
Attained Life's crown.

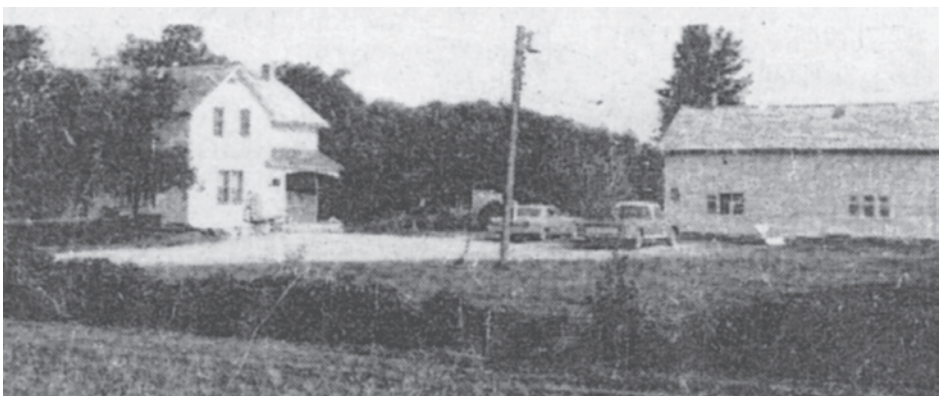


*Abraham L. Plett 1926, as remembered by son Peter A. Plett. Drawn by artist Henry P. Febr; Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 53.*



*The chassis of A. L. Plett's Model A in which he came to an accidental death. In 2003 the wreck was still parked in the pasture of Garnet Reimer, Blumenort, NE35-7-6E. Photo by Sid Barkman, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Abraham L. Plett</b>	May 18, 1859		Oct 15, 1934
m	Gertrude B. Koop	Nov 25, 1861	Nov 21, 1879	Jun 2, 1943
6	Sarah A. K. Plett	Dec 31, 1881		May 4, 1939
m	Johann R. Penner	Dec 4, 1879		Aug 11, 1952
6	Johann A. K. Plett	Mar 1, 1883	Mar 22, 1903	Jun 21, 1957
m	Margaretha Penner	Feb 22, 1884		Jan 25, 1978
6	Abraham K. Plett	Aug 27, 1884	Dec 12, 1907	Mar 16, 1955
m	Maria Wiebe	Dec 1, 1883		Aug 1, 1965
6	Katharina A. K. Plett	Jan 7, 1886		Oct 2, 1971
m	Martin K. Friesen	Mar 3, 1881	Dec 3, 1905	Nov 6, 1976
6	Gertruda A. K. Plett	Sept 8, 1887		Mar 2, 1948
m	Johann E. Friesen	Jan 20, 1881	Jan 1, 1906	Sep 8, 1971
6	Margaretha K. Plett	May 3, 1889		Feb 15, 1972
m	Abraham D. Reimer	Sep 22, 1886	Jul 12, 1908	Sep 19, 1954
2m	Jakob G. Barkman		Sep 9, 1956	Apr 19, 1968
6	Maria A. K. Plett	Oct 23, 1891	Dec 5, 1920	Aug 31, 1977
m	Cornelius R. Plett	Feb 8, 1891		Jun 20, 1971
6	Cornelius A. Plett	Jul 27, 1896	Jun 13, 1920	Feb 15, 1970
m	Elisabeth T. Kroecker	Sep 5, 1898		Apr 12, 1993
6	Peter A. Plett	Aug 4, 1898		Jan 19, 1990
m	Agatha F. Reimer	Jan 10, 1903	Dec 6, 1925	Mar 29, 1929
2m	Margaret F. Reimer	Dec 3, 1908	Dec 9, 1932	Sep 16, 1984
6	Elisabeth A. K. Plett	Jul 9, 1901		Mar 15, 1972
m	Heinrich R. Plett	Apr 10, 1896	Nov 22, 1925	Jan 6, 1976
6	Helena A. K. Plett	Dec 17, 1903	Nov 24, 1928	Mar 26, 1983
m	Peter R. Plett	Oct 11, 1894		Jan 19, 1978
6	Anna A. K. Plett	Jul 6, 1909	May 2, 1936	Aug 23, 1985
m	Isaac C. Penner	Jul 16, 1904		May 27, 1964



*Abraham L. Plett retirement home, SW 36-7-6E, Blumenhof, Manitoba, as it appeared ca. 1970, at which time it was owned by grandson Martin P. Friesen. The barn had already been disattached from the house and relocated some 60 feet eastward. Photo courtesy of Sid Barkman.*

6 Daughter **Sarah A. K. Plett** (1881-1939) married Johann R. Penner, son of Abraham R. Penner of Blumenort, Manitoba. The Johann R. Penner family farmed in Ridgewood until 1926 when they bought her parent's farm in Blumenhof for \$13,000.00. Because of the financial conditions of the depression they were unable to manage this debt. In 1932 Abraham L. Plett took the farm back, but immediately made an advancement by portion whereby the Penners repurchased the farm at a reduced price.

Johann R. Penner served as road boss for the Rural Municipality. He was known for his forthright way of expressing himself and as an interesting story teller. Historian Royden Loewen has written as follows: "John R. Penner was another man to seek income off the farm. When the depression struck the area, the R. M. of Hanover embarked on a road-building program to provide employment for hard-pressed people. The man they chose to organize the work in the Blumenort area was John R. Penner. Although Penner operated a large mixed farm in Blumenhof, he found time to be the road boss for the area. It was his job to inspect roads, drainage and bridges and report their condition at monthly municipal meetings."

"Some of his noteworthy jobs included building the first stretches of the #52 highway and gravelling the #12 highway during the 30s. As foreman of these projects he received 20 cents an hour. Penner, however, spent most of his time on the roads as a bridge-builder. For years he had built all the bridges in the area, using the municipal pile driver and hiring local men to help him. For three summers he even helped build large canal bridges in the St. Adolphe area."

"Johan Penner is best remembered as a hardy, boisterous man who loved telling colourful stories. He enjoyed telling people that he thought it was unnecessary to wear socks in his boots even while building bridges until sometime after the snow fell in November. Other people who worked for Penner recollected how he reacted to the cold when hauling wood from the bush. While the workers ran along behind the sleigh trying desperately to keep warm, Penner sat on the sleigh as if it were pleasant summer weather, and on one occasion he calmly took out his knife, pulled off his boot and began trimming his toenails."

"Other stories are told about John Penner at bridge-building. One day, while building a bridge on the Steinbach Road near the old Blumenort Church, the pile driver broke down. As Penner climbed up on top of the high machine to try to fix it, he developed a terrible toothache. Not wasting any time he grabbed a chisel, turned it against the aching tooth, and, using his heavy hammer, he knocked the tooth away."

"Few people are fond of government inspectors. John Penner was no exception. On one occasion an inspector visited the job site and Penner politely showed him around. At one place a plank extended out over the ditch or creek and one of Penner's workers happened to be standing at one end of it weighing it down when the inspector unwarily stepped on the extended end and took a look around. The young worker saw an opportunity for some fun and quickly stepped off the plank. As expected, the balance shifted and the inspector plummeted down into the wet hole. Penner, seeing this, did his duty and sternly

admonished the worker. But he admitted later that it had been a hard struggle to keep his laughter until the inspector had left.”

“John R. Penner continued in this line of work until the early 40s, by which time he was already over 60 years old. He remained active on his Blumenhof farm until 1951, when he was involved in a tragic car accident which took the life of his [second] wife. Subsequent to the accident he retired.”<sup>1185</sup>

Son Martin P. Penner related an anecdote of John R. Penner illustrating his sense of humour. John’s brother Peter R. Penner owned the store in Blumenort and also a business purchasing pigs from the farmers for resale in Winnipeg. As a consequence Peter had the nickname “Schwine’s Panna” or “swine Penner”. Early one morning one of Peter’s customers tried phoning him but dialled the number of John R. Penner by mistake. When John answered the phone, the man asked: “Es dit bei Schwine’s Pannas?” (Is this at Swine’s Penners”). To this, John calmly replied, “Wann meine Mamie nea Saig es dan yo.” (If my mother is a sow, then it is so). John R. Penner had told another story about his wife’s grandparents Johann Koops, well-to-farmers from Neuanlage. One day they had planned to go visiting in Blumenort and had sent word along with someone to let the Abraham Penners (John’s parents) know they were coming for a visit, but the neighbour had not given their names. The Penners, apparently, assumed they were receiving some important visitors and had hurried to make special preparations. But when the guests finally arrived, Abraham Penner had apparently commented, “that it had only been the old Johann Koops.”

The following biography of Sarah Plett Penner was written by son Ben P. Penner, Blumenort, Manitoba: “Sara was the oldest and first child in the Abram L. Plett family. She grew up and got married and has lived in the Blumenhof area all her life. When the family was asked about memories of their mother, they told me that the Penner family is not too good at writing. When I asked them about what they remembered about their mother they told me that she was gone already for 58 years.”

The only comment I got was that she had been a very good mother, the best one they had ever had, even though the life she had with her youngest family members was somewhat brief. The oldest child was 36 years-old and the youngest was only 14 years-old when their mother died. Her children have always been stable community members and have never moved very far from home. All the children have lived and raised their families within seven miles from where they grew up in Blumenhof.”

“John R. Penner, her husband, was always remembered by his fun-loving, boisterous and colourful personality. He would be the type of person that could always outdo others in the work force. When it was cold he would wear the least clothes. When others would be walking behind the sleigh to keep warm, he would sit on the sleigh as if he was quite comfortable.”

“Shortly after John and Sara were married his father bought them a farm in a new district near Giroux (now Ridgewood). They were one of the first settlers in the area, and it is believed that it was John R. Penner who first called it (the Krim). Besides mixed farming in Blumenhof, he would also have a job as a

bridge builder for the R.M. of Hanover. For many years he would be building all the bridges in the area. And when the R.M. would need someone to look after road construction or when gravelling was being done in spring, he would often be put in charge. He continued with his R.M. work till 1940, and continued with the farm till two years before his death in 1952.”

“Some of the surviving children in 1997 got together to reminisce about how we remember our mother. We remember her as frugal, resourceful and hard working. She must also have loved beauty because in addition to having three vegetable gardens she also had a large flower garden. She looked after her family by sewing for us. One of us recalled how she had to remake a suit jacket when some animals had chewed on the jacket hanging up in the barn.”

“Someone remembered that mother cooked jam and jelly from 100 pounds of sugar in one day. Another of us recalled how Mother had comforted her during a particularly severe lightning storm.”

“Mother left home for the T.B. Sanatorium on December 4, 1938, our father’s birthday. It is at this time that we became more aware of her strong faith and trust in God. Before she died she instructed Dad on how to bring up the children, especially the ones that were still young. The following song meant a lot to mother and she asked Dad to sing it for her. When he choked up on the last line, Mom finished the song. As a result of the effort she began coughing and this brought about her death. Before this she had affirmed her faith in Jesus Christ and stated that she didn’t fear meeting Christ.”

“This is the song my Mom asked Dad to sing just before she died: Fort, fort, mein Herz, zum Himmel! Fort, fort zum Lammlein zu! In diesem Weltgetummel ist fur dich keine Ruh’; dort, wo das Lammlein weidet, ist eine Stadt bereitet; da, da ist deine Ruh! Fort, fort, zum Himmel zu! (Onward, Onward, my heart, toward Heaven! Onward, Onward towards the Lambs! in this troubled world, there is no rest for you; there, where the Lambs are pastured, your city is prepared for you; There, there is rest for you, Onward, Onward, going toward Heaven!)

Submitted by Ben P. Penner, reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 90-92.



*Self-portrait by Peter A. Plett, left, with brother-in-law, John R. Penner (middle), and son, Abram P. Penner, right. Photo taken upstairs at Abraham L. Plett’s in Maria’s room - the west bedroom.*

6 Son **Johann A. K. Plett** (1883-1957) married Margaretha Penner, sister to Johann R. Penner. The Johann A. K. Plett family lived in the Willowridge district west of Landmark. the family was sometimes referred to as “Kjinja Platte” or “Children Pletts” because they had 21 children.

The following biography was written by grandson Harold Plett, Landmark, Manitoba: “John K. Plett of Blumenhof, Manitoba married Margaret Penner of Blumenort, Manitoba in 1903 and farmed by Giroux for 17 years. The Lord blessed this union of 54 years with 21 children. Four died in infancy.”

“His father Abraham L. Plett was helpful in getting a farm of 400 acres for them in Willowridge, Man. in 1920. Of interest was the moving of their house to its new location, it took 16 horses to pull it. As time went by they built a nice two-story house, a big hiproof barn, hog barn, chicken barn, and a big granary. (All modest in size by today’s comparisons) and of course a blacksmith shop, his pride and joy. The woods in the east and hard work yielded the lumber for those buildings.”

“They milked around 35 cows by hand. Hogs, livestock, eggs and chickens were sold in Winnipeg. Land clearing was so much better with the “new” Titan tractor than with horses. Mr. Plett had a threshing machine together with his brother Cornelius for years.”

“Extra income besides the threshing machine came from his blacksmith shop, crushing grain for the neighbours, and cutting silage for farmers far and near. Their daughters also supplemented the family income by faithfully working in Winnipeg, or in homes. You see this was necessary as in those days a 200 lbs. dressed hog would sell for \$2.00 and sometimes the price of grain didn’t even pay for the cost of hauling it.”

“John K. Plett was gifted and hence was involved in various noticeable projects. Already in Giroux he helped set up the local telephone system, and the Greenland telephone exchange. The Willowridge School and district was established in 1929 with him on the board for 13 years. In 1944 he was a significant part in building the new Prairie Rose Church. The Plett children attended school, first at the Prairie Rose Church, then at Linden, next at Ile des Chenes, and finally at the new Willowridge School with the renown Christian teacher, Frank Williams.”

“Leisure time, if any, was swimming (for the boys) at the canal near by, an occasional trip to the park and the zoo in Winnipeg, or even to the ‘Locks’ (Lockport) north of Winnipeg. The annual community spring ‘May Fest’ in a nice clearing in the woods nearby was enjoyed by all. A very big undertaking and yet precious, were the four trips to visit his brother Abram in Oregon.”

“The home was where God was revered. Grace was silently said before each meal. The teachings of the Bible were more caught than taught. Work was next to Godliness. Everyone attended church in clean dress clothes, sometimes patched, but never tattered. Jugend Verein (young people’s endeavour) and Canadian Sunday School Mission Bible camp were a speciality. They also cared for a refugee family of five (Boshmans from the Ukraine) in 1927. Mrs. Plett was noted for praying by name for each of her many descendants. Almost all of their children stayed in the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, with the biggest con-



centration in Prairie Rose. Many of their grandchildren became ministers, missionaries, teachers, and successful business people.”

“Tragedies did come along too, just to mention a few. Not necessarily a tragedy though was when stowaway Peter got to go to Willowridge from Giroux in the back of the buggy. Typhoid fever touched the Plett family too. Fortunately no one passed away, however Frank was left unattended upstairs for three days. Then there were the runaway horses with the cutter when Peter and Sally bitterly froze their hands and fingers. Nor were lives lost when the four horses ran away with the binder finally ending up in the wire fence and posts.”

“The tragedy that really touched Mr. Plett the most was when he lost his leg because of sugar diabetes in 1952, five years before the Lord took him away at the age of 74 years.”

“His wife Margaret, brave and strong, lived by herself for seven years with her grandchildren or had a schoolteacher with her. From here on she was tenderly cared for in the homes of her children for 10 years. A bad fall caused a fractured pelvis in 1974, landed her in the Ste Anne hospital, and then in the Steinbach Extended care, and Personal care home units. She went on to her reward in 1978, at the ripe age of 94 years. All these years her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and others came to visit her. She had her unique way of doing personal work with all of them, each one was special to her.”

“The Plett’s beautiful treed farm and garden was taken over in 1945 by sons Aaron and Martin, with daughter Annie and her husband Frank Shultz taking over the dairy. In 1952 it was sold to daughter Elizabeth and her husband Peter K. Plett. John and Margaret Plett then relocated to their nice new home, in the garden of their oldest son Abram, in Linden.”

By Harold Plett, reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 154-156.



*L.-r.: Brothers - John, Cornelius, Abram (seated) and Peter A. K. Plett. Photo taken in 1934 after death of father Abraham L. Plett.*

6 Son **Abraham K. Plett** (1884-1955) married Maria Wiebe, daughter of Johann N. Wiebe and Anna Harder. In 1907 Abraham Plett and his parent's-in-law moved from Steinbach, Manitoba, to Drake, Saskatchewan, to homestead. In 1911 they moved to Dallas, Oregon, where he had a dray and firewood business. Mrs. Maria Wiebe Plett had forsaken the Holy Gospel and was a rather devout member of the Apostolic Faith Church in Dallas, causing considerable lack of unity in the home. The following article was written by Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta: "Abram Plett grew up in the Blumenhof area. It was during the threshing season that a neighbour, John Wiebe, employed him. Not because his dad did not have work for him, but because he chose to work for Mr. Wiebe. At the age of 22 he decided to move to Drake, Saskatchewan to homestead, the community where the Wiebe's had moved to the year before. Here in Drake he was married to the John Wiebe's daughter Mary in 1907. Their first three children, Annie, Kathy and Ervin were born there."

"After nine months Kathy passed away and is buried there. Abram and Mary farmed here till 1914 when they moved to Dallas, Oregon with her parents. In Dallas, Abram started a Courier service with a team of horses and a wagon. For the winter he would go and cut firewood in the mountains and sell it to the Dallas market. Their children Lillian, Elsie, and Clarence were born in the U.S.A.. Clarence died after 3 1/2 years of pneumonia."

"In searching for some additional information about Uncle Abram, I went through an old letter collection that had been sent to my Dad, Peter A. Plett, from Uncle Abram. These letters were written in the Gothic German and translated by Annie (Plett) Reimer. The first letter dated April 28, 1946 talks about how much nicer it is to drive through the forest with an automobile then it was before. Could this have been his first vehicle, or maybe an upgraded one? Next he talks about Mrs. John Wiebe's funeral that took place on April 1, 1946 in Portland, presumably Abram's mother-in-law. She passed away on March 28. He then mentions that they now have an airport in Dallas, and also two planes. The boys are charging \$2 a ride in the air for 15 minutes. They now challenge each other to visit back and forth by their new air travel system. They are wondering what it must be like to see things from up above."

"April 28, 1949; Uncle Abram mentions that his oldest grandson Jim Earle, which is Annie's son, is making wood with him in the bush. He talks about getting started with his bush work in the spring, and after a long winter, it is physically difficult. Everything is slow getting started. The chainsaw does not want to run right, but eventually it all worked well. The last part of the letter talks about their sister's move to Mexico. Abram says that he warned his sisters about moving to a land with a dark coloured government and that it would be against his wishes to live with so little order in the country. He also tells them that their children will return and leave them in Mexico alone since they have lived in Canada long enough to know what Canada is like."

"December 3, 1950: Abram asks Peter, Have you got a radio already? Last spring when you had a flood in Winnipeg, I listened every evening how the water came higher, I also saw pictures of it in the paper. Does the Seine River

also flood, thinking of the hay farm that the Abram L. Pletts had next to the Seine River at St. Annes.”

“January 5, 1952: You asked me if I am living alone? Yes, except that I have had different people living here with me from time to time through the year. I went to Elsie in eastern Oregon for Christmas but now am back, I am driving a 1938 Chevy coupe, I don’t drive enough to own a new car.”

“January 25, 1953: Life is back to normal again, Mary is home again. A lot of time was spent talking about the weather since Abram’s work was affected by it so much. November 1953: Uncle Abram talks about his health and finds it more difficult to go and cut wood at age 69. He always asks Peter about their sisters in Mexico and seems to show a real concern.”

“October 1954; “I don’t have to work so hard now that I can receive social security at age 70. I receive \$60.80 and Mary gets \$30.40 and then I can not earn more than \$900.00 per year. That is not too bad since I have some savings for my older years. Mary went to church this morning and is not back as yet so I will send greetings for her. Also say hello to sister Margaret for me, since she has been sitting alone at home so much since her husband Abram passed away. The walnuts and the apples are still on the trees, other than that we are ready for winter.”

“April 29, 1964: Mary writes about her flowers, and wonders about her cherry trees. She also talks about friends that have visited her.”

“Uncle Abram suffered a stroke on March 16, 1955 at his work place and died several days later. They shared their lives for 48 years.”

“Aunt Mary lived in the family home until her final illness (pneumonia). Elsie took her home with her to Arlington and cared for her until she developed circulatory problems. Then Elsie and her husband Joe took her to the hospital in Dallas. Mary died on the way, of a heart attack. After her funeral the house was sold. There is now a Motel (Riverside Inn) where the house once stood.”

By Lesley Plett, reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 269-271.



*Abram A. K. Plett and Maria Plett at their home in Oregon, 1932, during a visit by cousin Minna J. K. Plett. Photo courtesy of Abraham L. Plett book, page 266.*

6 Daughter **Katharina A. K. Plett** (1886-1971) was closest friends with her double first cousin, Maria K. Plett, daughter of Jakob L. and Maria Plett also of Blumenhof. Katharina and Maria came to be acquainted with Klaas and Martin K. Friesen, their second cousins from Blumenort, two miles away. The twins were the sons of Blumenort school teacher, Cornelius P. Friesen.

Katharina's older brother Abraham and his friends enjoyed organizing dances and get-togethers, where they played musical instruments and had a good time. It may have been on one of these occasions in 1904 that some members of the group posed for a photograph.<sup>1186</sup> It seemed that Maria and Klaas had not yet developed a serious relationship as she was posing with Jakob Wiebe, Klaas' closest friend. In the photograph Klaas has an accordion in front of him and older brother Kornelius, a clarinet. In another sequence of the photograph, Martin is sitting on a chair with a child in his lap, and smoking a pipe.

**Marriage, 1905.** But the relationship between Martin and Katharina flourished and became serious. On Friday, November 24, 1905, uncle Abr. M. Friesen, Blumenort, made the interesting notation in his diary that "Friesens' Martin was here for night." The next day, Saturday, "A Verlobung (engagement party) took place at the home of A. Pletts, Blumenhof, daughter Katharina, engaged herself with Martin Friesen of Blumenort, Cornelius P. Friesen's son." The temperature was 5 below. The couple was married at the Kleine Gemeinde worship house in Steinbach on Sunday, December 3, 1905. The temperature was 25 degrees below zero.

**Greenland farm, 1906-16:** The first year the young couple lived and worked with her parents, the Abram L. Pletts, farming on NW25-7-6E, later known as the Blumenhof corner. Shortly thereafter, Katharina's father, purchased 240 acres of land in Greenland, being NE3-8-6E and the N1/2 SE3-8-6E, with the intention of establishing daughters, Katharina, and Gertruda, married to Martin's cousin, Johann E. Friesen, on farms of their own. Both of the Friesen boys came from relatively poor families and would not have any inheritance to get established.

Martin and Katharina purchased the 80 acres, N1/2 SE3-8-6E, located a mile-and-a-quarter north of Blumenort, on the west side of P.T.H. 12. They established a farmyard, with a story-and-a-half house, 16 by 20 feet - really a small cottage in today's terms. Son Abe remembered it as a neat little place, very cosy. As far as Abe remembered, the house had a narrow stairway to a small second floor. The second floor must have been quite small as none of the family slept upstairs. One time brother Martin fell down the stairs and hurt himself.

They had a small one storey barn, only a cheap building. It was approximately 20 by 30 feet, and stood more-or-less where John D. K. Plett's barn later stood. The house was located a few hundred feet east of barn. As Abe remembered, the door was on the side of the barn, and the aisle ran crossways through the barn with four to six cows on one side and a couple of horses and a few calves on the other. A lean-to was built onto the west side of the barn.

Katharina's journal shows that in April, 1906, they bought five weanlings from Krtin for \$10, which they raised and sold in December, weighing 160 to 215 pounds. They bought another three weanlings Nov. 1 for \$6 and another four from Abr. Reimer. The notations indicate that Martin Friesens were already farm-

ing on their own to some extent in 1906, although they may still have been living at her parents, and simply raising some of their own pigs on the side.

There was a chicken house where the John D. K. Plett house later stood. South of the barn was a granary where Martin Friesen kept his trumpet, which he had bought from "olla" Kjnals, the herdsman in the "old" Blumenort village. Occasionally Martin would go to the granary by himself and play his trumpet.

Katharina had an accordion which she often played for her children. She would usually wear dark clothes as was the style. She was a good manager and probably the reason that Martin Friesens did so well financially. She was a good boss and gave the right advice and, possibly, Martin was smart enough to know when to listen to her.

**Tragedy, 1907-8:** During the summer of 1906, Katharina became pregnant and on March 17, 1907, she gave birth to a little baby boy, whom they called Abram. Katharina and her sisters idolized their father, an energetic, handsome man, and so this choice of name hardly comes as a surprise. Tragedy followed when the young baby died September 21, 1908. Apparently Katharine had given the young baby boy a bath and he had caught a cold, presumably developing pneumonia. Little Abram was buried in the second Blumenhof cemetery on SW25-7-6E.

On March 6, 1909, Martin and Katharina's grief was consoled by the birth of another son, also called Abram, exactly three days after his father's birthday. This baby has grown up to be our beloved uncle Abe.

**Recollections, 1914:** Son Abe P. Friesen remembered that in 1914 his parents were haying and that his father would stook the sheaves up onto to the pile and mother would "set the pile". This meant that she had to carefully place each sheave to build a solid pile which was tightly packed around the outside so moisture from rain and snow would not penetrate. In November the steam engine would come and the pile of grain sheaves would be threshed out.

Martin was a good farmer and careful manager of his operation. He had a dairy and sold the milk to the cheese factory situated on SE23-7-6E, along what is now the P.T.H.12, just north of the Giroux corner. Abe was six years old and remembers going along with father with a load of milk cans for the cheese factory. The road was very primitive at the time, nothing more than a dirt grade with bush on each side. Father stopped to cut a piece of willow and made a whistle for his son with his pocket knife. Abe thought this was real neat.

Son Abe also remembered that whenever his mother had another baby, he and his siblings had to stay at the John E. Friesen home for a few days. His aunt, Gertruda and husband, Johann E. Friesen, had bought the adjoining NE3-8-6E from Abr. L. Plett and were their closest neighbours.

One-time Abe was walking along in the grain field behind his father, who was binding grain with a team of horses. Their dog came up behind Abe and bit him on the thigh, tearing a wound an inch wide. His father got so mad at the dog he chased it around the yard and finally the dog found refuge under the porch. But Martin poked under the porch with a fork until the dog came out and he killed it. Abe remembered when his cousin, John J. P. Friesen, came over to visit, he proudly pulled down his pants and showed him his wound.

**Account Book:** Grandmother came from an older generation of women who traditionally carried considerable responsibility in the family farming operations. Mennonite women of her era generally managed the household economy, meaning not merely the running of the household but also the operations of the dairy, garden and orchard production, including marketing, and handling of the sales proceeds. In many ways these women were more influential within their life-worlds than their daughters, the women of the 30s and 40s, who were frequently relegated to the kitchen.<sup>1187</sup>

It was common for pioneer women to maintain journals in which they recorded the details of the household economy. Grandmother maintained such journals as well as daily diaries. One of her journals which is extant was received by my mother and is currently in my possession. Some pages are missing, but the first entry states, "1916, April 22, I made a hotbed." Two days later, "We commenced harrowing." On the 27th, "We set two geese and two brood. And two days later we also set a brood hen on goose eggs." Selling young geese must have been big business in 1916. In May they set brooders as follows: May 3rd—2 brood hens; May 7—2, May 5—1, May 6—2, and May 11—2.

May 9, 1916, "Set potatoes. May 13, "Cleaned." On August 15, mowed the grain. May 15, "Seeded in the garden." May 14, "Planted potatoes."

The overleaf of the first page deals with the family dairy for 1917. "On March 25, we were receiving milk from 4 cows, we received 3 [became fresh milk] in 1 week." Milk sales: October 1, 1 can 8 gallons; Oct. 2, 1 can; Oct. 3, 1 can; Oct. 4, 1 can.

Oct. 1, 1917, "We have been digging out fresh potatoes for a long time already, and we went out making hay." Katharina's sister "Helena was here for 1 week and a day", probably helping.

Other pages recorded wheat sales for 1917, milk sales 1916, egg sales for 1916, poultry sales 1916, and even the record of threshing, date and yield.

Other pages undated bear the following notations, "Sold a pair of 'Preske' (a pioneer version of hush puppies) to Johann K. Friesen, \$1.30." And "I owe for a buggy \$42.00." "I have hauled out wood 500 [bd] feet." "Sold a cow to Martin T. Reimer \$22.75."

The journal closes with a detailed family record of Martin and Katherina's children and grandchildren, and also of her parents and siblings, and her mother's family. This type of record keeping was normal for grandmother's generation of women and also necessary for keeping track of their farm operations.

**Blumenhof farm, 1917.** In 1917, the Peter L. Pletts, Blumenhof, moved to Satanta, Kansas, and Katharina and Martin purchased their farm, SE35-7-6E, and 35 acres on the NE35-7-6E, a total of 195 acres. Katharina recorded they bought the farm March 10, 1917, for \$6000 paying \$2000 cash down, and the balance over time. This was a move much appreciated by Katharina's parents who lived "kitty-corner" on the NW25-7-6E.

The journal seems a bit jumbled at this point, referring also to a loan made with a mortgage company in Winnipeg, for the purchase of the Peter F. Unger land, the west 40 acres on NE26-7-6E. Payments on both loans are recorded until

1921. These were basically good years for all farm production and presumably the loans were paid in short order.

Son Abe P. Friesen was 8 years-old when his parents moved to the Blumenhof farm. He remembered that his parents went visiting at the Peter L. Plett place to discuss and finalize the transaction. Abe remembered that the Pletts' son John was very sick and actually screaming in pain upstairs which gave him an uneasy feeling about the place. Peter L. Plett resembled David L. Plett more than grandfather, Abram L. Plett.

Uncle Abe remembered the auction sale of Peter L. Plett's before they moved to Kansas and that a lot of Friedensfelders came to the auction. People attending the auction ate in the old granary.

He also remembered moving to the Blumenhof farm. Grandfather was driving a big box wagon loaded with calves and cows tied to the back. Other cattle followed behind the wagon, and Abe had to run along and herd them. The procession went across country over Section 35. When they got to Peter L. Pletts' place they had lunch.

Living so close to Katharina's parents obviously had some advantages. Sometime in 1918, she recorded in her journal that she had picked up five pounds of butter from her parents, "they owe for milk 76 cents."

**Farming:** Son Abe remembered that they usually milked 12-15 cows. They had six or more horses, a few Clydes and one or two lighter horses to pull the buggy.

In those days grain was hauled to Giroux for shipment by rail. Abe remembered going along with his father on one such trip. After unloading the wheat into a box car, Martin bought a roll of baloney and on the way home he cut off some slices for Abe with his pocket knife. Quite a treat! Martin always carried a pocket knife, as an all purpose instrument - good for slicing food on the field during harvest or for castrating pigs in the barn.

When Abe turned 14 he was given more responsibility. His father would wake him up at 5 a.m. and he had to harness the horses and do the "milk run", picking up milk cans at Peter Ungers, Johann Penners and David Pletts. The cans were taken out of the water trough, loaded on the sleigh in winter, wagon in summer, and had to be in Giroux at 9 a.m. in time for the morning train to Winnipeg. The next week the neighbours would do the run, so that not every farmer had to do it every day. The drive to Giroux could be an ordeal if the temperature went down to 30 below or in case of sleet or rain.

As already mentioned, Katharina and Martin also purchased the west 40 acres of 26-7-6E. In 1932 Katharina inherited the E1/2 NE25-7-6E, from her parents, where Erwin Friesens later lived.

**Spanish Flu, 1918:** In October of 1918 the Hanover Steinbach area was devastated by the Spanish flu epidemic. Almost the entire population in some communities fell deathly ill and hundreds died. The influenza also hit the Blumenhof community and Katherina's cousin, best friend, and sister-in-law, Maria, Klaas K. Friesen, fell victim to the dreaded disease. Maria suffered from tuberculosis and was receiving treatment from Dr. Hiebert, so her resistance was weakened. By late November she was deathly ill. She was nursed at home.

Katharina and Martin K. Friesen frequently visited the Klaas K. Friesen family. Daughter Maria, Mrs. Henry Peters, remembered, Mrs. Martin Friesen visiting her mother one day, and putting some “cold” drops on sugar cubes, which she swallowed, which was supposed to be a protection against the flu virus. Brother Klaas K. Friesen had fallen victim to the influenza and was hospitalized in Steinbach. Martin K. Friesen took over the chores. Klaas’ daughter, Maria remembered coming back to the home one day after her mother had already passed away. She walked around outside looking around. She went alone to the summer kitchen to look around. When she opened the door to go outside, a small cat stood there. The cat knew her, Maria had played with it before. It was hungry and “meowed.”

Maria told the story in her own words: “Just then my uncle Martin K. Friesen, who was doing the chores, came by. I told him he should kill the cat because there was no one at home to look after it. My uncle did so.”<sup>1188</sup>

Katherina and her father, Abraham L. Plett, were of the few who did not succumb to the flu. They went around the neighbourhood milking cows, making firewood, and looking after other necessary chores. Cleaning manure was left for a later date. This was an act of considerable courage as many were horrified of leaving their homes for fear of catching the dreadful disease.

**New Equipment:** Martin Friesens were progressive and bought new farm machinery and labour saving devises as needed. Katharina recorded “Bought a separator for 75 dol. payable over two years without interest.” Most of their supplies at the time were bought at Peter R. Penner’s store (Schwien’s Panna) in Blumenort, a mile away. In 1919 Martin Friesen bought his first tractor, a Fordson. It was one of the first tractors in the area. Son Abe remembered his uncle Peter A. Plett coming across the road to look at the new machine. He wanted to see how it worked and whether it could actually pull a plow. His father started it up and they went out into their field, plowing a round.

In about 1922, Martin bought his first car, a used “Overland” for which he paid a couple of hundred dollars. In 1925 he bought a used Model T., a “top” car which meant it had a canvas top, and not a hardtop like we are used to today. In 1930 Martin and Katherine bought a brand-new Model A, also a “top” car.

**Barn fire 1925:** In 1925, there was a big fire at Martin Friesen’s, their barn burned down. Brothers Peter and Henry R. Plett were hired to rebuild it. The same year they built a new house and barn for grandma’s parents on the SW36-7-6E, just east across the road. During this time, Peter and Henry fell in love with grandma’s sisters, Helena and Elisabeth, who were still at home.

**Renting Land 1929-31:** Katherina and Martin K. Friesen always had a mixed farm and dairy. In 1929-31 they rented two river lots in Ste. Annes, just north of where the Co-op is today on the Dawson Road. The landlord of one of the parcels lived in a yard along the road. They had their own granary which they used as a shack to stay for night when they were working on the land. The Friesen boys thought it was remarkable that the Frenchman had 16 children in 15 years of marriage. Sometimes the older boys came and visited with them when they were working there.



Martin had rented the extra land to provide work for his growing boys so they would have work at home and did not have to go working out. Uncle Abe believes that his father was really only working the land for a Land Company in Winnipeg. This was going into the Depression and grain prices were miserable. Abe had the idea that his father got paid for his work and was always able to pay the bills. Although it did not make a lot of money it always made some.

A new John Deere tractor and line of equipment was purchased to work the additional acreage. The tractor pulled a three bottom, 14" plow, considered a large outfit at the time. The Ste. Anne land had no stones and so they could work a lot of land with the machine. The second River Lot was rented at David Benoits just west of Ste. Anne, a total of 240 acres.

**Socializing:** Niece Maria Friesen Peters remembered visiting at Martin Friesens after her father had remarried. They would hitch up the buggy and drive to Blumenhof for the evening. After they had visited all evening, her father would get up to start getting ready to go home. She remembered how Mrs. Martin Friesen would immediately jump up, wipe the table, and start setting a night lunch. She would absolutely insist that they have coffee and something to eat before leaving for home.

Katherina and Martin did not travel as much as some of her siblings who loved to travel, but around 1940 they did accompany her brother Cornelius A. Pletts on a trip to Oregon to visit her older brother Abraham.

**Retirement, 1950:** Martin and Katharina farmed in Blumenhof until 1950 when they sold the farm to oldest son Abe. After retirement Katharina and Martin moved into a smaller storey-and-a-half house and made their own yard just north of the old place. Uncle Abe recalled that he had purchased his farm in Greenland from Peter D. Goossen. He bought the house from Peter A. Penner in about 1942. Jakob T. Loewen, the mover, moved the house to his land in Greenland for him, taking the old house in trade. This was the house that he traded with his parents and which was set up just north of the old yard. This is the house which most of the younger grandchildren will remember as the home of Martin Friesens. Martin and Katharina had established a sizeable estate during their lifetimes and were able to give each child 20 acres of land and some inheritance.

In 1966 they moved into the Birchwood Apartments in Steinbach. Grandmother died of sugar diabetes at her granddaughter's wedding on October 2, 1971. Martin was known for his inventive intellect and interesting character, especially in his later years. He was a great story teller. He spent many enjoyable hours in his shop. He was always interested in history and enjoyed relating of the past. Among his contributions to local history were a map and model of the "old" Blumenort village. Martin died on November 6, 1976.



*Katharina Plett Friesen, 1963, passport photo, 1962.*



*Martin K. Friesen, ca. 1901. Photo - Blumenort, page 201.*



*1903. Martin K. Friesen, taken from a group photograph. Photo -Saints and Sinners, page 223.*



*Gertrude P. Friesen and cousin Abram J. P. Friesen sitting on Martin K. Friesen's 1928 John Deere. For a photo of the same scene with the threshing outfit, see Blumenort, page 356.*



*Katbarina and Martin K. Friesen in front of their retirement home in Blumenbof, ca. 1960. Photo by daughter Gertrude Friesen Plett.*



*Martin K. Friesen farmyard on SE35-7-6E, ca. 1955, view to the northeast. Martin and Katharina's retirement home is situated at the right hand side.*



*Martin K. and Katharina Friesen family photograph, 1960. L.-r.: Annie (Mrs. Dave Barkman), Ben, Edward, John, Margaret (Mrs. Cornie Siemens), Abe, Erwin, Martin and Gertrude (Mrs. Jacob R. Plett).*



6 Daughter **Gertrude A. K. Plett** (1887-1948) married her second cousin Johann E. Friesen, son of Johann P. Friesen of Rosenort, Manitoba. Gertrude and Johann established their home on the NE 3-8-6E, part of the 240 acre parcel her father had purchased in 1906. They farmed here for the rest of their days. Johann E. Friesen continued the collection of writings started by his father and preserved the same. He was a pious and kindly person. He married for the second time to the widow Jakob N. Koop, nee Helena P. Doerksen.

The following biography was written by son Rev. Peter P. Friesen: "Gertrude, our mother, the fifth child of a family of 15, was the daughter of a prosperous farmer. She is remembered as a person of no uncertainties, very sincere and dead earnest. Even though somewhat blunt in expression when someone needed to be corrected, we would feel very humbled, but still had the grace and attitude that her way of dealing caused no offence or inferior feelings, and from here it was business as usual."

"Mother would often go out of the way to foster a good relationship and build respect without much talking. Catering visitors, including poor and needy ones, was a part of her. A grandchild says that when grandmother came visiting in their home, where the father was a cripple, she came often, but never empty-handed. When lunches were sent along to the field, it was usually the best food there was and we often noticed some love packed in it as well. Father was somewhat out of the ordinary, at least as far as the in-laws were concerned, in that he was less traditional and more vocal and assertive in spiritual interaction, such as public or audible prayer. He believed that sermons should not be copied and read in church, but rather should be oral and come from a spirit filled heart. In this mother fully supported him."

"According to father's indication, our mother was just the prop he needed to face some decision making and provided that extra boost in times of adversity or when the going got tough. When considering to buy farm machinery mother would often put in that decided vote to go ahead with, 'daut wout aul gonni.'"

"When extra help was needed in the field such as stooking sheaves behind the binder, mother was quick to send the girls out to help. And she would undertake to supply food, the best available, delivered to the field at the right time and quantities, so the harvest could continue without a hitch or lengthy meal breaks. At times instead of the workers coming into the house, the whole family would have dinner in the field."

"I recall several times when cutting grain with a Fordson tractor and an eight foot binder, with some five of us stooking the sheaves, that when the last sheaves turned out, the stooking was also completed. We were well fed but were also expected to produce labour. Our parents would never talk negatively about other people even though at times there would have been good reason to. Mother had not spoiled us in being overly concerned about minor ailments, but we knew we could get her attention and care in any situation. She went to quite some length to make sure all the children were treated equal and fair, and it was a large undertaking with so many different natures and requirements, and with the very limited source of provisions. Many had to wear hand-me-downs of all

descriptions and many clothes were remade to fit someone.”

“Mother had a custom and tradition a little before bedtime to round up the whole family in a circle, with some on the floor, and then would be singing various hymns by memory, a talk by father and a prayer. Even though it seemed boring at times, we had no doubts our parents took us all together before the throne of grace.”

“Our parents went away on many visitation trips leaving us with some instructions and assignments. Our eagerness in meeting them upon their return usually depended on how faithfully we did our duties. Sometimes we would meet them and help to unhitch the horses but at other times we did not notice their arrival. Being somewhat self-motivated, our mother would get a horse in from the pasture, harness it and hitch it to a buggy and off she was to see some of her sisters. Usually to lend a helping hand but not empty handed.”

“For reasons unknown to us, when four of her sisters prepared a farewell to move to Mexico, it was overheard by some that the one whom they thought hardest to part with was our mother. But before that time came our mother had moved away to another land where she now awaits our arrival. When in the closing days of her life she would gasp for a breath of air, most of us would leave the room because of the looks of it. It made us examine ourselves. When the final needle was given, the doctor hinted at whether or not we were prepared that she might not regain her consciousness. A few hours after this she journeyed peacefully into the arms of Jesus.”

Written by son Peter P. Friesen, reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 340-341.



*Johann E. and Gertrude Friesen children: l-r: Rear: Jakob, Diedrich, Henry, Klaas, Peter, Cornelius and Abraham. Front: Sarah (Mrs. John Thiessen), Helen (Mrs. John P. Loewen), Tina (Mrs. Isaac P. Reimer), Gertrude (Mrs. Peter Reimer), and Maria (Mrs. John U. Klassen). Photo - Abraham L. Plett book page 339.*

6 Daughter **Margaretha A. K. Plett** (1889-1972) married Abraham D. Reimer, son of Klaas P. Reimer of Blumenort. For the first seven years of their marriage Margaretha and Abraham D. Reimer lived on the 20 acres her father had acquired on SW 36-7-6E from David L. Plett. In 1915 her father purchased the SW 26-7-6E from Gerhard Doerksens who were moving to Kansas and established Margaretha and Abraham on this farm. In 1938 the deed for the farm was transferred to Margaretha and Abraham D. Reimer. Abraham D. Reimer served as manager of the Ste. Anne Co-op for a number of years. His grandson Menno R. Plett is currently President.

The following biography of Margaret Plett Reimer was compiled by the family: "Margaretha Plett....made a commitment to serve her Lord at the age of 17 and was baptized...in Blumenort by the late Rev. Peter R. Dueck...."

"Abram D. Reimer, our father, married Mom when she was 19 years of age in 1908. Rev. Peter W. Loewen led the marriage commitments in the Blumenort Church. A family of 13 children were born to this marriage, two boys were stillborn, Jacob in 1925, and John in 1931 when mom was 42 years old. Their oldest daughter Gertrude (Mrs. Peter J. R. Barkman), passed away in 1945 leaving behind nine children. Mother then took in the youngest son Peter for 11 months. When Peter J. R. Barkman remarried to Anna Wiebe in January 1946, Peter then went to live with his family again."

"Mother was always known as a quiet contented person who did her work with enthusiasm. She enjoyed her garden a lot and took good care of it.

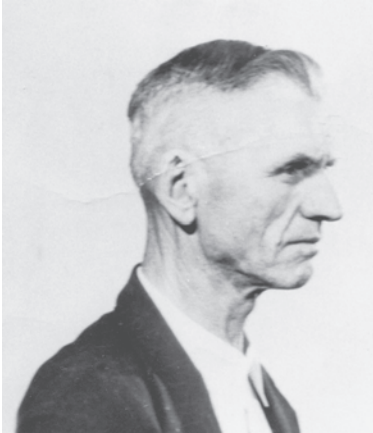
Father was the third child born to the Klaas and Helen P. Reimer family, 10 years after the settlers arrived in Manitoba. He grew up in the original town of Blumenort, located 1 and 1/2 miles south of the present town of Blumenort. Their farmyard was on the north side of the main street that followed the creek to the south. At one occasion before he was married he went along to the bush to break down a bush-camp. Here he had a dangerous mishap. While breaking the camp down a heavy wall fell on him, which almost took his life."

"At the age of 19 he committed himself to the Lord and was baptized and received into membership at the Blumenort Kleine Gemeinde Church by Rev. Peter R. Dueck. He was age 21 when he got married to Margaretha Plett. They bought a farm in the Blumenort area and have lived there all their life. He was also involved in the blacksmith business just as his father had taught him. Father was a third generation blacksmith and a very dedicated and committed person in this regard. For many years he was the caretaker of our Church. With that came the responsibility of looking after the graveyard, the allocation of gravesites and grave digging."

"Father was in reasonable good health, with one exception, that his goitre was giving him trouble for many years. It was believed that this was the reason for his heart problems. Mother said, that it was his last Saturday, as we were on our way to Riverton to our second oldest grandchild's wedding, that we had to turn our car around due to bad weather. The next morning we went to church together. That afternoon, not feeling good he went to the bedroom to lay down for a while, then passed away of a heart attack in 1954. This marriage had lasted for 46 years."

“Mother then lived on the farm with Mary and Margaret for another two years and in 1956 mother married the second time, to Mr. Jakob G. Barkman. The farm was then divided in the family, and she moved to Blumenort. In 1967 they moved into the Birchwood Units in Steinbach, where they lived together only for a few months. Mr. Barkman passed away in 1968. Mother stayed in the apartment until October of that year and then Mary and Margaret took her to their place where she stayed until she passed away of a heart attack in 1972.”

“As a diabetic she has taken insulin needles for the last 36 years of her life.”  
 Written by the Family - reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 340-341.



*Abram D. Reimer, 1948 passport picture. Courtesy of son Erwin P. Reimer, Blumenbof, Manitoba.*



*Margaretha Plett Reimer with her second husband, Jakob G. Barkman, ca. 1960. Photo - Abraham L. Plett book page 402.*



*Mrs. Margaretha Plett Reimer; second from right, with her daughters: l.-r.: Margaret, Katbarina (Mrs. Ben R. Plett), Anna (Mrs. Jakob J. R. Barkman), Helen (Mrs. Cornie Dueck), and Mary. Photo - Abraham L. Plett book page 401.*



6 Daughter **Maria A. K. Plett** (1891-1977) married Cornelius R. Plett, son of her cousin Heinrich E. Plett of Blumenort. Cornelius R. Plett was already well established in the building business. Working in partnership with brothers Heinrich and Peter under the name "Plett Brothers" they built most of the new homes and barns in the Blumenort area from 1915 to 1932. When the new Blumenort worship house was built 1918 "Cornelius R. Plett was hired to be the head carpenter (*Baumeister*), and he in turn hired his brothers, Henry and Peter, to help him build the church."<sup>1189</sup> In winter they manufactured dray and top sleighs and other products. With the opening of cheese factories in 1932 they specialized in cheese boxes and produced most of the cheese boxes used in Manitoba. C. R. Plett was also involved in the new Blumenort cheese factory and "...organized the droves of local farmers to help cement the floor and erect the building....Plett Bros. was hired to build the large cheese vats."<sup>1190</sup> After his marriage Cornelius went into full time farming retaining only a partial interest in the business. They established their farm on the NW 33-7-6E. C. R. Plett was involved in hatching eggs: "He had manufactured his own incubator, and by 1935 he was hatching almost 1000 eggs at a time."<sup>1191</sup>

The following biography of Maria Plett was written by the family: "Maria grew up in Blumenhof, Manitoba, as the seventh child in a family of 12 children. That meant she learned to work hard, which she kept up till old age. She got married to Cornelius R. Plett on December 5, 1920. They raised a family of 10 children, two girls and eight boys. They did mixed farming, even had bees, had a big garden and all the children learned to work hard too."

"They were elected into the deacon ministry in 1932, in which they served the rest of their lives, with great joy and dedication. They loved to help people in need."

"They moved to Mexico in 1950 with most of their family and started a new home and farm and also a hardware business."

"Mother always loved to serve meals to visitors, whether family or friends. Three of her sisters also moved to Mexico, so they often got together, especially when they were older. Mother struggled with diabetes for many years and finally, about a year before she passed away, she broke her hip and was bedridden for several months. The family all helped take care of her, especially Gertrude, who was still living with her at the time."

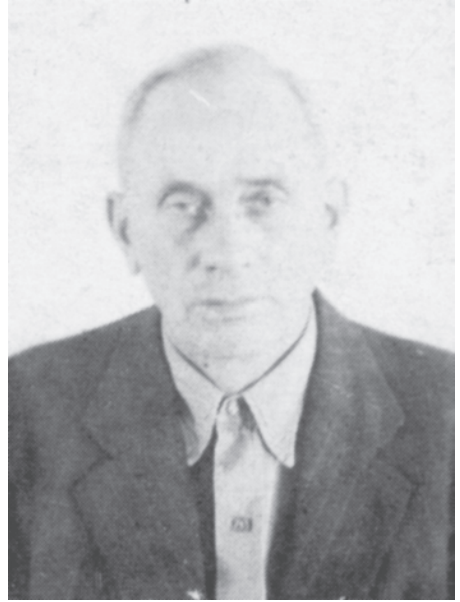
"Mother and Father did a lot of singing together. We remember well some of the songs they sang, like, Christi blut und Gerechtigkeit, Herr bleib bei mir (Abide with me) and So nimm denn meine hande (Take Thou my hand and lead me)."

"Our parents had a strong faith in God, prayed for their children every day. Their prayers were answered when all of their children accepted the Lord as Saviour. Their faith in God also helped them to make the hard decision to pull up their roots in Canada and move to Mexico, trusting the Lord to help them through it all."

Written by the Family - reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 473.



*Maria A. K. Plett, Mrs. Cornelius R. Plett, ca. 1960. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 28.*



*Cornelius R. Plett, ca. 1950, Steinberg, Mexico. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 181.*



*Maria A. K. Plett, passport photo, 1950, with sons Otto (rear) and Elmer. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 32.*



*Maria and sister Elisabeth A. K. Plett in their parent's garden. Photo - Peter A. Plett.*

6 Son **Cornelius A. Plett** (1896-1970) married Elisabeth T. Kroeker, daughter of his cousin Cornelius P. Kroeker of Steinbach. His father had purchased the W 1/2 18-8-5E in 1917 and now sold the west 160 acres of this land to Cornelius. Here he established his home and farmed for the rest of his days. In time he acquired all of the land on Section 18-8-5E and an additional quarter adjacent, and was rather well situated. Because of his substantial land holding he was sometimes referred to as "Aa-Ka-Platt" literally meaning "acreage Plett." Cornelius A. Plett served as trustee of the Willow Ridge school from its inception in 1929 until its closing in 1961. He served as the Waisenman for the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde from 1948 until 1958.

The following biography was written by the family: "Cornelius was born and grew up as an enthusiastic lad in the Blumenhof district and took his grade school in a private or church school there. At age 21 he started working for threshing gangs, then for the winter he worked for saw mills in the Richer and the Sandilands area. He committed his life to his loving Lord and took on membership of the Kleingemeinde Church where he stayed faithful all his life."

"He married....Elizabth Kroeker and together they pioneered a homestead in the Prairie Rose community in June of 1920. During the first summer of their marriage, they lived in a granary on the yard of his brother, the John K. Plett's farm. During the winter they moved back to her parents in Steinbach. From here Cornelius worked at the sawmill to obtain lumber for a house and barn, and for fence posts to fence in their home quarter, the SW18-8-5E."

"In 1921 they put up their buildings and established their own home. It had always been his hope and dream to farm. He bought more land and milked more cows with the help of hired men. In 1922 he bought his first Fordson tractor. In 1939 he bought his first combine. The farm was a great change for Elizabeth who had lived in town till now. Taking care of the big vegetable garden was a joy to her. In winter she would spend much time alone at home when Cornelius would go to the bush, preparing lumber for buildings to be built the next summer. Many times she felt very insecure on the big farm, even years later she would still ask the question, 'When is Dad coming home from the bush.'"

"Cornelius always enjoyed his successful farming enterprise and was a model to the community. Alongside his farming, he and his neighbours worked at forming a school district, and on October 10, 1929 the Willow Ridge School started and this is where their children obtained their education. He was a director of the St. Anne Co-op oil business for a period of 24 years. Among other interests outside the farming, he was a song leader in the church at Prairie Rose for 33 years and a director for the Resthaven board in Steinbach for about 17 years."

"On the farm, Cornelius and Elizabeth's children, three daughters and four sons, grew up and enjoyed life. They were taught to attend church regularly if at all possible. It is evident that they enjoyed farming together, since all four boys continued farming after they went on their own, and all of them stayed in the community. For 41 years Cornelius farmed on the same piece of land and yard. After that Leonard their youngest son took over the farm."

"In 1961 they, together with their eldest daughter Minna, moved to Steinbach

to retire there. They spent nine wonderful years together there, and enjoyed their garden with all its fruit trees. There was always enough fruit to can for the winter and lots to give away. Elizabeth loved sharing their garden with family and friends. She also enjoyed reading and handwork like knitting, crocheting and sewing. Most of all they enjoyed inviting relatives and friends over for visiting and meals. After Cornelius passed away of cancer in 1970, Elizabeth spent many long hours adjusting to her changed life style. It was her gentle nature that made this adjustment possible. She spent her last five years in the Resthaven Nursing home, and was the last one to die of all the uncles and aunts.”

“The family says Father believed in working and also tried to get his family dedicated to work and trusting in the Lord’s blessing.”

Written by the Family - reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 510-511.

On February 14, 1985, brother Peter A. Plett gave his brother Cornelius the following testimony: “Cornelius had an estate of over \$200,000.00 having already made substantial distributions of land and assets to his children prior to his death. Notwithstanding his material success, C. A. Plett was a man who put into practice the teachings to help his fellowman. When he was travelling, he had a supply of money along and if he realized his hosts where he was visiting were in need, he would give them his wallet and bid them to take what they needed. Cornelius made his commitment to Christ one day while plowing. He felt a conviction in his heart to turn more fully to the Saviour and knelt there beside his team of horses in prayer with tears streaming down his face. From that day forth Cornelius was a more committed disciple seeking to live out his Saviour’s teachings.”



1916. Cornelius A. Plett and friend, Johann S. Koop, upstairs at Abr. L. Pletts. Photo - Peter A. Plett.



Cornelius A. Plett ca. 1916.

6 Son **Peter A. Plett** (1898-1990) married Agatha F. Reimer, daughter of his second cousin Anna K. Friesen and Klaas P. Reimer. In 1926 Peter A. Plett purchased 120 acres on SE 24-8-5E on payments from his father where Peter established a home and farming operation. He married for the second time to Margaret F. Reimer, sister to his first wife. Peter A. Plett was an active community man. He was a gifted poet. He was interested in history and assisted with and contributed to various publications.

In 1981, Peter A. Plett wrote the following autobiography: "I, Peter K. Plett, was born August 4, 1898.....I went to Blumenhof School situated on the same section in the southwest corner.....Only the German language was used, just a little reading was done in English, but even the teacher would not speak English to us. ....No Canada flag was flown because that was against the conscience of the Mennonites. No marching was practised because that was too much like army training. Boys and girls were not supposed to play together. Mostly reading, writing and arithmetic was practised. Not too much homework either because all boys and girls had their share of chores to do in the house and barn. There was no Sunday School and no Jugendverein and young children didn't go along to church."

"I, Peter, worked for father on his farm until 1925, when I was 27 years of age and my father paid my wages for the last seven years. I, Peter K. Plett, changed my name to P. A. Plett because there were too many Pletts around."

"Agatha F. Reimer was born in Blumenort. Her parents were Klaas P. Reimers, sometimes called 'blacksmith Reimers' (because he had a blacksmith shop). Her birth date was January 10, 1903. She went to the Blumenort School which stood in the middle of the Blumenort village, and was later in 1920 moved to Prairie Rose."

"In the fall of 1925, Agatha and I agreed to get married and our wedding date was on December 6. That winter I worked at the sawmill and harvested lumber for a house. In the spring of 1926 we bought a piece of land in Prairie Rose from my parents. I bought 120 acres....SE24-8-5E (Later I got 40 acres from my father, then I bought 40 acres on Section 29-8-6E (20 acres on either side the canal), a total of 200 acres.

"Two children, Clarence and Annie were born. At first we lived in an old granary 12 by 12 feet with the furniture we had and lived among flies and mosquitoes while we built a house 16 by 22 feet. We were among the first settlers in this new community."

"When we got married, Agatha had a little goitre, but two years later a little lump formed around the goitre and Agatha got sick. People didn't go to hospitals in those days as a rule, but Agatha was taken to a doctor's house in Winnipeg where she stayed a few days, and where about five different doctors were consulted which called it cancer. Then she was taken to Misericordia hospital where she passed away in a few days. That was March 29, 1929."

"After Agatha's death the children were taken to the grandparents: Clarence to my parents, and Annie to Agatha's parents. Now I was a lonely bachelor. But my parents with my sister Anna left their home in Blumenhof and moved to live with me in Prairie Rose so that I could tend to my farm."

“Agatha had a younger sister Margaret who loved our children dearly and so I asked her to be my wife to which she consented. Margaret F. Reimer was born December 3, 1908. And we got married Sept. 9, 1932. In this matrimony were born seven sons of which one son, Elmer Henry, died at the age of three years.”

“In January 1969 Margaret was operated on for cancer. The doctor said, ‘You waited too long. It will now be too late.’ But when Doctor Janzen had finished the operation he said, ‘We have taken everything out, and you will never have trouble with that again.’ So far, until 1981 she is a healthy woman.”

“In 1957 when our boys had learned to build, they built a new bungalow 30 by 40 feet with a 10 by 10 entrance. It had running water, bathroom, a disposal field and tile all over the floors. Total cost \$10,000.00.”

“In the summer of 1940 a hiproof barn was built. It measured 30 by 50 with a hayloft 30 by 20 feet. John D. Barkman was the builder. We bought most of the lumber (unplanned) at Seven Sisters for \$18.00 per thousand.”

“I bought my first car about 1930 for 55 dollars. It was a Ford Runabout with wire wheels and 3 1/2-inch tires. It had a hand-crank starter and was in a good shape. I was an elected school trustee for 12 years and was Secretary-Treasurer most of the time. I was director for the Landmark cheese factory for 10 years, one-year president and nine years secretary. I was director for the old folks home in Steinbach, six years. I was elected as deacon for the Prairie Rose Kleine Gemeinde in 1942 from which I never resigned so far (1981). I was Sunday School teacher for many years of which no track can be found. I did a lot of audit work for about 15 years for the Greenland Telephone Company, the Landmark school and the cheese factory. I was one of the first Pletts to travel through the mountains with a car when roads were narrow, unpaved and dangerous. The car was a Model T. Ford with worn out brakes.”

“In 1922 when I worked in a lumberyard in Oregon and got soaking wet, I first noticed I had arthritis, which got gradually worse until my old age. At age 68 my arthritis got so bad that I had to give up farming. From then on I rented the farm out until 1974 when I sold the farm to my son Walter for \$150.00 an acre. I then got a new house built just west of their garden, which cost \$27,000.00.”

“When I started farming I made up my mind never to borrow much money because there were too many people getting bankrupt in those days. But when I built that bungalow in 1957, I borrowed \$4,000.00, the largest amount I had ever owed anybody.”

“Money was always scarce and pants, as well as tires or shoes, had to be worn patched for awhile before throwing away. In those days it was no shame to buy used goods in a second hand store, or even pick up a used tire at a nuisance ground that some richer man had thrown away.”

Written by Peter A. Plett in 1981, reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 535-538.



*Peter A. Plett with his first wife Agatha F. Reimer. Photo taken in the upstairs of the A. L. Plett home in Blumenhof. Photo - Abraham L. Plett book page 533.*



*Peter A. Plett with daughter Anna (Mrs. Levi Reimer). Photo - Peter A. Plett.*



*Peter A. Plett, passport photo, ca. 1960*



*Peter A. Plett and wife Margaret in their home in Landmark, Manitoba, 1982.*

6 Daughter **Elisabeth A. K. Plett** (1901-72) married Heinrich R. Plett, brother to Cornelius. Heinrich was a partner in the firm of "Plett Brothers." In 1948 they moved to Mexico where he served as Vorsteher or Oberschulz of the Quellen Colony from 1949-1950. As the first civic leader he had much work in organizing and establishing the new settlement. In 1973 he republished the Isaak van Duhren, *Geschichte der Märtyrer* (Erste Mexikanische Auflage, Cuauhtemoc, 1973), 214 pages, originally republished by his great-grandfather, Ältester Heinrich Enns in Russia in 1863.<sup>1192</sup>

The family compiled the following biography: "Our parents the Henry R. and Elizabeth Pletts with their large family of 17 children, moved to Mexico in 1948 together with a group of church families and friends from Manitoba. It was during this time of 1948 and 1949 that five siblings got married in two years. They lived through the pioneer years there. In the beginning father was away from home quite often on business trips for the church and the colony, which left more weight on our mother's shoulders. Father also was farming, so the later years he was usually around on the farm taking care of their dairy, and field-work."

"In 1970 Ben and Anna Plett moved onto and took over the family farm. The parents at that time retired and moved into a small house close by where they lived with Ruthie together for the remainder of their lives."

Written by the family. Reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 569.



Vorsteher John D. Friesen (left) and Heinrich R. Plett on Colony business in Mexico City, 1950. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 158.



Passport photo, 1950. Elisabeth, Mrs. Heinrich R. Plett, with children: l.-r., rear - Helena (Mrs. Wendelin Reimer), Elisabeth (Mrs. Ed F. Kornelsen), with Ruthie. Middle: Sara (Mrs. Cornie K. Reimer) and Tina (Mrs. Hein F. Petbau). Front: Pauline (Mrs. Gerbard F. Kornelsen), standing and Clara (Mrs. Milton Kornelsen) and Willie, both on mother's lap. Son David standing in front. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 31.





*Elisabeth A. K. Plett, 1960 passport photo.  
Photo - Quellen Colony, page 28.*



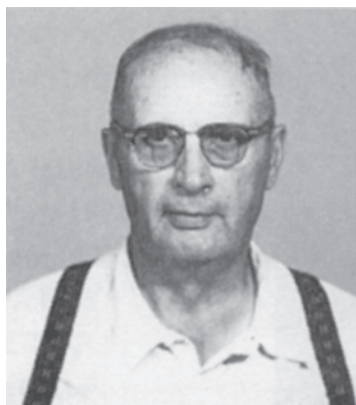
*Heinrich R. Plett, passport photo, 1960.  
Photo - Abraham L. Plett book, page 567.*



*Helena A. K. Plett, 1948 passport photo.  
Photo - Quellen Colony, page 28.*



*Peter R. Plett, 1948 passport photo. Photo  
- Quellen Colony, page 28.*



*Helena A. K. Plett, 1960 passport photo.  
Photo - Abraham L. Plett book, page 629.*



*Peter R. Plett, 1960 passport photo. Photo  
- Abraham L. Plett book, page 629.*

6 Daughter **Helena A. K. Plett** (1903-83) married Peter R. Plett, brother to Heinrich and Cornelius. Peter R. Plett was a partner in "Plett Brothers". He served on the East Reserve Hilfsverein from 1930 to 1943. In 1948 the Peter R. Plett family moved to Mexico. In 1958 they moved on to Belize, where they settled in Spanish Lookout.

The family compiled the following biography: "Mom was a good housekeeper. She liked to have a place for everything, and have everything in place and clean. She was punctual; her meals were on time. Her main dish was potatoes and she sure liked them. Once the doctor told her not to eat any potatoes, but she persuaded him to let her have at least some in the soup."

"Mom's sewing was always neat. One summer she couldn't get all her work done and decided she would go to Winnipeg and buy some ready made dresses for us girls. The sewing, however, was so poor that if she sewed like that she could get a lot of work done too but she never learned to sew poorly. Mom liked gardening and her rows were always nice and straight. That is until she moved to Belize. Here we used the tractor and ridder to make ridges in the garden. Sometimes those ridges weren't straight so she tried to straighten them with a hoe. She soon gave up on that idea, she realized vegetables could also grow in a crooked row. She has always been a hard worker and got much work done. She loved knitting and quilting and has done a lot of mending in her lifetime for her children and grandchildren."

"Mom had many friends and liked to visit and eat faspas with them together. She didn't want to let visitors go without serving them lunch. She did not like to go out and visit as late as Pa did. She once made the remark if she'd never tell Pa that its time to go, they would still be visiting at the first place they ever went to. At meal time Mom tried to teach her children to eat everything she made, and most of us ate almost anything. In spite of her efforts most of her children couldn't eat pot-barley cooked with buttermilk...."

"In Mexico and also in Belize, Mom and Aunt Annie lived within walking distance of each other so they visited back and forth every week or more in their later years."

"She had a very beautiful handwriting."

"Our parents had 11 children, five girls and six boys. Werner died just before his 20th birthday of a heart attack in Mexico."

"Mom was troubled for many years with diabetes. She suffered from a sore on her leg that would not heal. We do believe that she died of a heart attack."

"Why did Mom and Pa move to Belize with their family? It is short, plain and clear: because God wanted them there. Human reasoning: such as waiting for rain in vain after seeding time, especially after oats were up a few inches and couldn't make head ways because of the drought. Rumours abounded, like Social Security being forced on us by the Government. The threat of building a theatre on the Quellen Colony was offered to us. We now assume that these were empty threats, because none of these have yet happened. Buying land became very complicated and 'Agraristas' seemed to take over more and more."

"Some Vorstehers and some of the ministerial staff really encouraged the

movement, probably hoping to avoid problems in the church in Mexico, some of which reoccurred in Belize worse than they had been in Mexico. Too much bribing and to much Man-yana.”

“The good side to British Honduras was that everything was sooo green and had lots of rain, later almost too much rain. We would now again be under the sovereignty of the Queen of England and hoping for the same law and order as there was in Canada. This also was not as we had hoped for. The Government of Belize held their arms wide open for us Mennonites. They gave us special Privileges if only we would come and start agriculture in their country. They made it very easy for us to become permanent residents in their country.”

Written by the family. Reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 631-633.



*Helena A. K. Plett, Mrs. Peter R. Plett, 1950 passport photo with children. L-r, rear: Anna (Mrs. Clarence Friesen), Anton and Greta (Mrs. Abram L. Dueck). Middle: Almon and Adina (Mrs. Isaac Dueck). Front: Peter, Denver and Lena (Mrs. Edward K. Reimer). Photo - Quellen Colony, page 31.*



*Cornelius A. Pletts visiting at Peter R. Pletts in Mexico, ca. 1958. Helena, Mrs. Peter R. Plett, third from the left, and next to her is Elisabeth, Mrs. C. A. Plett, and Peter R. Plett, right. Photo - C. A. Plett.*

6 Daughter **Anna A. K. Plett** (1903-83) married Isaac C. Penner, son of Klaas F. Penner of Blumenort. The Isaac C. Penner family also moved to Mexico. In 1961 they moved to Spanish Lookout, Belize.

The family compiled the following biography: "When grandfather accidentally passed away and grandmother was left alone at home, she still had Anna at home to keep her company. Anna got married two years later, but even then her husband, Mr. Isaac C. Penner, moved in with them. It was only several years later that they bought a farm in the Twin Creek area and moved there. For some time grandmother had a maid with her, mainly Sally Plett Koop and Aganetha Friesen were there. Then grandmother moved to Isaac C. Penners and lived with them for a number of years in the Twin Creek area."

"Anna and Isaac had a mixed farm in Twin Creek, which included a dairy as well as turkeys. In 1948 they moved to the Steinberg community on the Quellen Colony in Mexico and bought a farm again. Here they established a grain farm and a dairy. Isaac later set up a bakery and sold a lot of bread to the community and area around. He was also actively involved as an undertaker as long as they lived here. Then in 1961 they sold out again and moved to British Honduras (now Belize) and bought land again to farm. They cleared 25 acres of tropical forest. Here they grew corn and beans and later also had broilers. Three years after they moved here, Isaac passed away with cancer. The boys then continued to farm with their mother for a number years. Isaac was a good friend with all people."

"In the early Belize years we could be talking about the 500 chickens in the barn or the only cow they had, that had to be called in from the pasture at milking time, that provided them with their daily milk. For fruit trees they would have bananas, oranges, grapefruit, lemons and other varieties in the garden as well as in the orchards. The sunflower plant in the garden could grow as tall as 10 ft and the corn likewise."

"But the story that tops them all is the time when the boys found an alligator in a water hole behind the garden. They attempted to set a trap and were successful in catching it. The 4 1/2 foot skin was then brought to market for sale. Other things that were of early interest was their weather. In December and January it would be the rainy season, then the creeks, streams, and river would swell to overflowing. Other times the heat would overtake them when the temperature would hover around the 100 degrees Fahrenheit, when it would be impossible to work during the middle of the day for several hours. The jungle could however provide them with good shelter from the heat. The threat of hurricanes was always there, but the natives said that before a hurricane would strike, they would normally have a dry spell in the weather.

"When Anna lived alone in the house she had the misfortune, when coming home one day, that her house had been broken into and robbed. Among her missing items was a much-loved clock on the wall. The natives were approached about this matter and were wondering what all the fuss was about. They could not understand what could be so wrong with this, since the Mennonites had so much more than they. It was just a matter of sharing the wealth."

"Anna was a cripple since childhood and had a crooked back. Even then

she could work hard, and in the years of poverty she was busy helping the children on the bean fields, and with the hoeing. Anna was a person that would always talk about her family. For 21 years she was a widow and would be living alone in her farmhouse and had a garden to attend to, and when possible she would have extra produce for others. So that mother wouldn't be left alone so much, Arno and Annie, her youngest daughter, moved onto her yard, yet she stayed in her own house. To pass the time she would do a lot of baby sitting with her grandchildren or helping with making blankets for her children's needs. She would go visiting church friends whenever she had an opportunity to travel and many times on Sunday for fasma."

"Her sister Lena has always been close to her, since they were the two youngest siblings and had grown up together in Blumenhof. After they were both married, one decided to move to Mexico and so did the other. Then one moved to Belize and so did the other. When the two families bought land in Spanish Lookout their choice of land was across the road from each other, and so was their house and yard. So when she needed to go and visit Lena she only had to walk across the road. But she spent a lot of lonely time at home just the same and then would write letters. Her son Elmer lived much too far away, when he decided not to move along to Belize, when the rest of the family all joined them in their move. Yes, Elmer had been involved in helping them move to Belize because he had a trucking business. He kept his business in Chihuahua, Mexico and later moved to Steinbach, Manitoba."

"Later when Anna's four boys [Norman, Abe, Ikie and Daniel] and Annie [Mrs. Arno Reimer] moved to Arborg, Manitoba, she was advised to move with them. This was quite hard for her and she dreaded it but she became willing and went. She so many times spoke about her deep concern of her spiritual eternal life and would quote the scripture verse that says, 'There will only be few that are chosen.' She passed away in Arborg, Manitoba in August 1985."

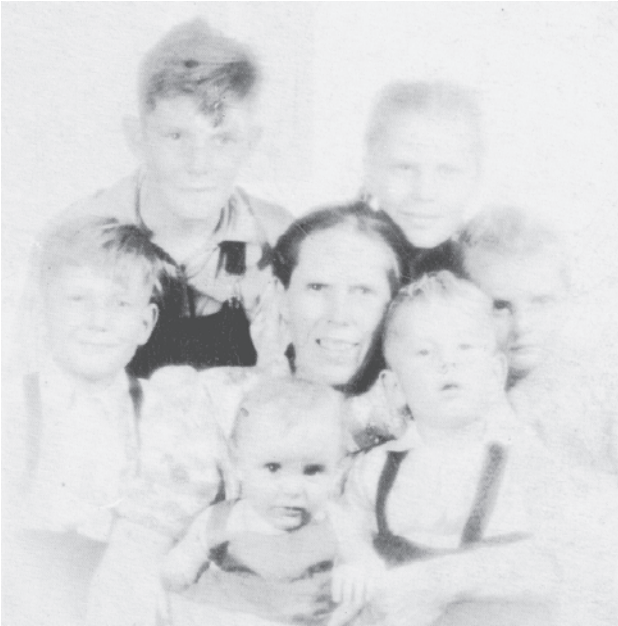
Written by the family. Reprinted with permission from Les Plett, *Abraham L. Plett* book, pages 675-676.



Isaac C. Penner, 1948 passport photos.  
Courtesy of Elmer Penner, Steinbach, 1984.



Anna Penner, Mrs. Isaac C. Penner, 1948  
passport photos.



*Anna, Mrs. Isaac C. Penner with children. Rear, l.-r.: Elmer and Maria (Mrs. Abram F. Doerksen). Middle: Norman and Frieda (Mrs. Abram Friesen). Front: Iky and Abe. Photo - Quellen Colony, page 31.*



*Isaac C. Penner with his team of horses at the farm in Morey, ca. 1946. Courtesy of Elmer Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba.*

5 Son **David L. Plett** (1863-1953) enjoyed writing like some of his siblings and Loewen grandfather. He wrote an account of the emigration from Russia and, particularly, of the ocean crossing: "From Odessa we went by train through Prussia, Austria, and Germany to the city of Hamburg. How many times we changed trains I don't remember. We then got into a ship and sailed down the Elbe into the North Sea to England. If I am correct, it was to the harbour at Hull. Here we again got into the train and crossed England. We went through dark tunnels and high bridges to Liverpool. Then we boarded a ship and sailed across the huge ocean. Many became sea-sick and brought up. But I was spared. I always felt good and healthy. But I remember that the practice of visiting almost disappeared for a few days. This didn't last long, and people soon recovered."

"After 14 days in the ship, we arrived in Quebec, in America. Then we boarded a train again. We changed trains two or three times till we reached Moorhead. Then we took a small steamer along the Red River until we reached the area between Otterburne and Niverville. There we stopped and we could disembark. Peter Kroeker and Peter Reimer [brother-in-law to David L. Plett] were waiting to get us. We drove to Blumenort to Peter Reimers. With this our journey ended."<sup>1193</sup>

In 1883 David L. Plett married Helena B. Koop, a sister to Anganetha and Gertrude. It appears that David and brother Jakob L. Plett took over their father's farm operation in Blumenhof in 1884. In that year David was assessed for a village Wirtschaft of 160 acres, 30 acres cultivated. Presumably, it had been purchased from his parents as in 1884 they are shown to own only 160 acres instead of 320 acres the previous year. David also owned 2 horses, 3 cows, 2 yearlings, 3 calves, a one-eighth share of the threshing outfit, a one-quarter share of the feed crusher, a grass mower, grain cleaner, and wagon. David and Helena do not have their own house and furniture and, therefore, must be living with his parents. On December 24, 1884, buildings in the amount of \$400.00 were insured in their names.

The 1885 assessment records show David and younger brother Jakob each owning 15 acres of cultivated land and 80 acres of pasture land. It appears that they now own the village farm together and also each have a 15 acre wood lot on the north half of Section 36-7-6E. This arrangement continued until the dissolution of the Blumenhof village in 1887. By 1889 Jakob L. Plett owned the entire NE24-7-6E and a wood lot on the NE36-7-6E, a total acreage of 179.

In 1888, "David L. Plett....purchased from the Hudson Bay Company, a quarter section of land [NE8-7-6E], lying just to the south of Neuanlage [the village started by his father-in-law, Johann Koop Sr.], and moved there with his family..."<sup>1194</sup> On August 25, 1888, the buildings of David L. Plett in the amount of \$600.00 in Blumenhof were removed from the fire insurance coverage, and on the same date, a dwelling house to the value of \$75.00 and a new barn for \$50.00 were insured in his name in Neuanlage.

David and Helena L. Plett farmed in Neuanlage until 1894 when they purchased the SE26-7-6E from his father. They relocated their farming operation moving their barn from Neuanlage. They established a new yard on the gravel ridge in the northwest corner close to Bernard D. and Gerhard D. Doerksens.

They had a 1 ½ storey house with a one storey addition added at right angles (Winkle Hus). They had a dairy, usually milking 10 cows.

In 1906 David L. Plett purchased the south half of Section 36-7-6E, 320 acres, from Johann Janzen, with existing yard and older buildings. In 1915 a new 60 foot barn plus a hay mow was built and the dairy increased to 15 cows. As was usual at the time the daughters always had the job of milking. In 1920 a large, new two-storey house was built that is still lived in today (2003). The old house, a square structure, was moved aside and used for a number of years as a granary. During the years that horses were in use the grandparents usually had 10 or so good, heavy horses. Usually they also had a few teams of lighter horses as required for different jobs.

David L. Plett also added an additional 80 acres of land on the NE36-7-6E. In 1920 he built a spacious two-story house with a second floor veranda. The Plett homestead on Section 36-7-6E is presently owned by great-grandson Frank R. Thiessen.

David L. Plett was much respected by his children. He had a great deal of confidence in his children giving them responsibilities at an early age. Once a son was physically capable of a task such as seeding then also the particulars of the task were left to his discretion.

David L. and Helena Plett were concerned regarding their extended family. When brother Peter B. Koop became sick and in marital difficulties they stood by him with support. In a letter of April 5, 1928, sister Maria Plett Reimer wrote to brother Cornelius in Kansas: "David Pletts want to go west to look up Peter Koop's daughters for they are still not coming home from visiting their mother." **Threshing.** David L. Plett was a warm, friendly individual who enjoyed meeting and visiting with people of all faiths. One of David L. Plett's special joys was his involvement with the threshing business where he met and dealt with many people. Jakob W. Friesen recalls that David L. Plett, in partnership, had one of the early upright boiler stationary steam engines and threshing machine. Likely this would have been in partnership with brothers Peter, Abram and Jakob and father-in-law, John Koop, who in 1890 co-signed a mortgage by Abram L. Plett with the Manitoba Mortgage and Investment Co. Ltd. for \$1000.00 presumably for the purchase of this machine.<sup>1195</sup>

In 1901 David L. Plett, in partnership with neighbour and nephew, Bernard D. Doerksen, purchased a Case 15/30 steam engine, and went into the threshing business. The partnership of Plett and Doerksen was dissolved when Doerksens moved to Friedensfeld in 1904. Historian Royden Loewen has documented some of the threshing machine operations: "Peter K. Plett remembers working for his father, David L. Plett. The Pletts ran a threshing outfit for over 20 years, from 1901 to 1924. During this time they had two steamers, first a Case and then an American Able and at least two threshing machines. A new threshing machine had to be purchased around 1918 when fire destroyed the old one. Apparently sparks from the steamer ignited the straw pile next to the thresher, and although the crew tried, it could not pull the machine away from the blaze in time to save it. Peter Plett recalled that it required 20 men to run his father's outfit. *Hocki*



threshing was the most common method used by Plett. It required a crew of 12 men, operating six teams, to haul the sheaves from the various parts of the field to the threshing machine."

"Here another crew, headed by the *Separaeta Maun*, ran the thresher. One man tossed the sheaves onto a platform in front of the thresher where two girls, standing on either side, cut the twine and pushed the grain to the *Ensatta Maun*, who carefully fed the straw into the cylinder. At the rear of the thresher, where the straw was pushed out, the boys forked the straw onto a huge stack. The grain poured out onto a wagon on the side of the machine. Here the *Bagga Maun* scooped the grain into large canvas bags, which bore the name of the farmer. The farmer would see to it that these bags were hauled to the upstairs of his barn or house, or to the granary if he had one."

"A third crew operated the steam engine. For mechanically inclined youths, the most envied job was held by the engineer, even though he had to get up at 5 a.m. to get the steamer going. In winter he rose even earlier to keep the fire going under the steamer to keep it from freezing. He was assisted by the heater man and a water carrier."<sup>1196</sup>

In 1906 Grandfather purchased a new 22/50 horsepower American Able steamer. Historian Royden Loewen has written that "Farm boys agreed that the American Able was the best-sounding steamer, especially if it had a heavy load."<sup>1197</sup> The steam engine was used until 1932 when it was sold to a lumber company to power a sawmill. Custom threshing was done in Blumenhof, the Krim, Ridgewood and Giroux areas. Some of David L. Plett's regular customers were Peter L. Pletts, Peter F. Thiessens, Corn. P. Janzen, John A. Pletts, the Glovers and others. When the threshing for the regular customers was finished it was quite customary for the threshing outfits from Blumenort and Blumenhof to move to Lorette and Ste. Anne to help these people finish their threshing. All the David L. Plett sons in seniority of age served as water hauler, separator man, fireman, and, finally, as engineer. "Preise" or Friedensfelder's (usually Lutherans) were hired as needed to fill out the threshing crews and for whatever jobs were needed."<sup>1198</sup>

Historian Royden Loewen reports that "Both David L. Plett and Jakob L. Plett from Blumenhof had Case steamers and custom threshed in the area. They divided the Blumenhof, *De Krim*, and Ekron areas between themselves. After they had finished threshing in this area, David Plett would generally moved north to Ste. Anne, while Jakob Plett generally moved to the south to thresh in the Friedensfeld area. The demand for the services of these companies continued to be high until the gas tractor became popular in the 1920s."<sup>1199</sup>

**Community Work.** David L. Plett served as Brandtschulz or local agent for the mutual fire insurance company for the Blumenhof district.

When John A. Plett moved to Prairie Rose in 1920, David L. Plett also took over his job of telephone man for the Blumenhof, Ridgewood, Giroux line. This job involved inspecting and maintaining the line as well as calling and conducting meetings of members and obtaining decisions regarding expenditures and repairs as well as collecting and assessing fees and expenses. Grandfather was always able

# AUCTION - SALE!

Friday, October 18th 1929.

on the Farm of

## David Plett

5 miles north & 1½ miles east from Steinbach.

starting at 10 o'clock A. M.

Lunch free

15 Horses ½ - 15 year old

5 Cows

3 Heifers, 2 years old

1 " " " "

2 Oxen " " "

4 calves

2 Wagons

1 Democrat

1 Buggy

1 Bob sleighs

2 Gang plows

2 Cultivators

1 Drill

1 Discdrill

1 Binder

1 Mower

2 Hayrakes

1 Hay rack

1 Truck wagon

1 Crusher

1 Incubator

1 Fanning mill

1 - 6 sec. harrow

1 Manure spreader

1 Grain elevator

1 Gasoline Engine 3 H. P.

1 Harrow cart

Harness

1 Steam Engine outfit  
will be sold partly

1 Steam Engine 22 H. P.

1 Threshing machine 40 x 62

2 Steel water tanks

2 Truck wagons and cabuse

1 Tank pump

1 Grappickler

2 Wool Blanketts

Pillows

1 Grindstone

and many other articles

**Terms:** Up to \$15.00 cash. Over \$15.00 on notes at 6% interest with two good securities. Due on November 1st. 1930. 6% discount for cash on sums over \$15.00 if paid cash.

David Plett owner.

Auction bill for David L. Plett's farm disposal sale October 18, 1929. Abram R. Penner was the auctioneer.<sup>1200</sup>



*The David L. Plett housebarn in Neuanlage in 1888. The buildings were moved to David's new farm in Blumenbof in 1894. Photo courtesy of Gertrude Plett, Mrs. David R. Plett.*



*David L. Plett house built in 1920, view to the west.*



*David L. Plett's American Able steamer and threshing outfit at the Peter B. Toews farm in Greenland in 1917. L.-r.: Mr. Krentz (Prussian worker), Peter Giesbrecht, Henry Giesbrecht. Mr. Lachman, Jakob T. Toews, Cornelius K. Plett and David L. Plett. On the steam engine are John D. K. Plett, fireman, and David D. K. Plett, engineer. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Jakob D. K. Plett.*

to communicate well with the many English members on the line even though he never had any special training in the English language.

In 1908 David L. Plett was elected to serve the church as Vorsänger. He was dedicated in his obligations and, for example, when the Prairie Rose church was being started, he would leave early and travel by horse and buggy to be there in time to lead the singing.

**Letters, 1924-33.** David L. Plett corresponded with brother Cornelius in Kansas, and some 19 of these letters, dating from 1924 to 1933, have been preserved. They tell in his own words, much about his life, family, faith and theology.

In his letter of December 7, 1924, David L. Plett acknowledges Cornelius' recent letter, received "while in Rochester and my beloved wife also redirected the same to me....We have had a difficult summer, for first in February, I drove there with daughter Gret, and after she was operated on and out of the hospital and [she] had found quarters with good folks, I drove home. That was one month and then I again drove there in the month of May....but when I arrived she was again in the hospital...because of kidney disease...and [I] had to remain there eight weeks; and so I was also there for over two month and the beloved Gertrude remained there for over five months....She had to endure much."

David and Helena Plett had been neighbours and business partners with Bernhard D. Doerksens when they lived together on Section 26-7-6E. They had remained close friends ever since. In his letter David writes, "Yes, [B.] Doerksens are here again...it is always a joyful reunion, considering having once spent so much time together and now being separated so far apart."

Like many other stalwart disciples of Jesus in the Kleine Gemeinde, a consistent theme through David's letters were the ongoing efforts of those seeking to subvert the church away from the Holy Gospel, endeavours which usually got onto the agenda of the church brotherhood meetings. On December 7, David had just come from one such meeting held after worship services in Steinbach: "Today...we again had a short brotherhood....they even talked about the harmony singing,...[there are those] seeking for more freedom, and that surely the way [of Jesus] is not so narrow and [there] should be accompanied singing. [and in this regard] it is obvious that the genuine simplicity [in Christ] and humility is lacking."

David's letters typically include some mention of his family. After reviewing the ailments and activities of a number of children, he writes: "....our work now is to chore the cattle and slaughter swine...three...we are still feeding 30 to sell. Grain - 900 wheat, 2000 barley, 1500 oats."

In his letter of March 16, 1925, David L. Plett writes: "We are much confined at home because of our beloved daughter Gertrude, for she must still suffer much....It seems to be a kind of rheumatism....Her only comfort, she says, is when she will finally be there where there shall be no pain nor suffering."

"You have many guests there from Manitoba," he stated, suggesting that his brother will have heard the news from home via visitors. "Are H. Pletts still there?" he asked. "I have not driven much this winter, only one load from the sawmill, and once I went with a load of swine to Winnipeg...." David explained the reason for this lack of mobility: "...but I went to the worship services almost every

Sunday but then right home afterwards, because both of us can not be away from home [at the same time] because of Gertruda.”

According to David's letter of October 5, 1925, he was actively farming having harvested “grain....over 4,000 bushel but the wheat is again damaged by rust so that it will not make No. 1.”

His letter of March 21, 1926, referred to “The beloved nephew and newly-elected Ältester,” and that Peter P. Reimer will “....also very much need support and encouragement. Indeed, it is a hard and serious undertaking for him in such a difficult and critical time and when there are so any different opinions.” In the same letter, David refers to the excommunication of A. D. Reimer.

The next letter was written on July 28, 1927, and David explained it is “usually not my style to have much available time during the hay harvest, but [it has happened] because of my accident, and I am still unable to work.” He explains that the barn of his children I. R. Reimers had burned and that three weeks ago he was helping them build a new barn when the accident occurred: “They were getting the roof ready for shingling....but the ladder was not well secured and so I fell down on my back and onto [a pile of] wood.”

During the 1920s many children of conservative Mennonites were being induced to forsake the Holy Gospel and to convert themselves to the American Fundamentalist religious culture. Naturally, David L. and Helena Plett were deeply concerned about the spiritual journey of their children: “And so, our son Abram has also decided [for baptism] and to place himself into the [spiritual] battle ground, which has already cost him much exertion and anxieties. Indeed, one feels so thankful when [the children] come like this, one after the other. Yes, this is the last of our children....” to formalize their faith commitment with baptism.

David L. Plett refers to the never ending struggle for the Gemeinde “and that it should be possible to earnestly put away tobacco and music, which belong to the evils....but regarding the music there are already some in the Gemeinde in need of enlightenment. For I cannot consider it as anything other than the lusts of the flesh, for surely our honouring and singing of praises to our Lord shall come from our hearts, for a dead instrument cannot do it for us.” David recommends rather to focus on the Holy Gospel: “Indeed, if only we could remain true and steadfast to our faith once received, so that we would not be robbed of our Crown, for he who shall persevere unto the end shall be saved.”

In his letter of January 24, 1928, David refers to the excommunication of Joh. W. Reimer and the difficulties that this occasioned for the Gemeinde. In his letter of February 14, 1927, he tells Cornelius about the illness of son Johann Plett “...and that David is also suffering severely from that and that he has severe rheumatism in his throat, sort of on the side, and it is quite thick and hard. I had driven there yesterday for dinner,...[and talked to David] and then he said, ‘the severe rheumatism had already alleviated somewhat, but that his tongue was swollen and burning....Today the 15th, I simply drove to David Pletts, and she said it is not improving.’” David D. K. Plett did in fact die November 21, 1930, regarding which tragedy his father wrote a small record of events.

On January 12, 1929, David L. Plett refers to news of his family: “At present,”

he writes, "we have only one [son], namely, Isaac working for us and then he had the misfortune that while cutting wood he split his tooth with the axe, and so for a long time he could do nothing more than just look after the chores for the cattle." Cornelius had heard his brother had been doing some travelling, and David responded by referring to "...a trip in spring far into the west, up 175 miles behind Edmonton, and then also approximately the same distance to the east. The reason for going to the west was to visit our foster children [the children of brother-in-law Peter B. Koop]." David refers to his wife and that she "is also flush and feels weak and tired, and yet, she is bustling around."

In his letter of June 5, 1929, David informs Cornelius that after thinking and talking about it for so long they have finally decided to visit the relatives in Satanta, Kansas, again. In his letter of July 20, 1929, he lets Cornelius know that they are back from the visit, safe and sound: "Firstly a heartfelt greeting is wished to you, but now only in writing and no longer in person. Indeed, the time, courses by and one hardly notices. And so our journey is also again in the past."

In a letter of January 17, 1932, David returned to the battle for the Gemeinde and the struggle at brotherhood meetings where it is constantly argued that "...something must be done to inspire the youth more toward conversion and to church, such as Sunday Schools and various societies [Vereins], but the practised singing always seems to come with this, which apparently shall induce them the most; in addition to which singing practice is already regularly held in Steinbach in which the singing is to be improved and multi-voice harmony is practised..."

"But the most are not yet in favour," David added. "Nor can I understand it that we really need it. If we wish to praise the Lord in simplicity [we should do so] with living and spiritual songs in our hearts, for I believe the Lord will look more into our hearts than at the elaborate practised singing."

Brother Jakob passed away November 4, 1931, and David was the executor of his estate. He states that "...our children were all home for the holidays....but Jakob L. Plett's children can no longer come home at Christmas time. A few had actually gone home but the parents were no longer there. Indeed, it still always feels so lonely, when one is there and looking around where the brother always has been, and now is gone for ever." Regarding the estate "there is much that needs to be settled among the heirs, but it should all work as everything was in writing."

On June 20, 1932, David L. Plett writes about his work in the Brandordnung (Mennonite Mutual Insurance Organization) and for the estate: "[I] have also been in Morris a few times, once I alone for two days and then once also both of us, four days on business, and so we also visited [taking] the opportunity. The last time we were together with Johann Ungers. I and Unger had also driven to Plum Coulee regarding Brandordnung matters. The land - the 80 acres - which the Jakob Plettsche had divided by her [Will and] Testament among the Kroekers and Rempels there, and that only after her death, is now sold; which was in three pieces for 25, 30 and 35 dollars per acre and everything paid out in cash, and now I must divide everything among the heirs." David refers to Jakob's Wirtschaft in Blumenhof, and that "...it can still not be sold, we still need good buyers. I for my part would gladly sell it in order to finally settle everything, for

the renting does not bring in very much. Still, the children are also in favour of selling, but with only one restriction, that it shall not be sold to strange people. But it may well not be possible otherwise, for the children who might still be in need of land, cannot buy it.”

Referring to how much effort is often made by people regarding their temporal affairs, David expressed the wish that “...we might also be so anxious regarding our spiritual inheritance....but it seems at this time that much shall and also is being done regarding the outwardly [religion], but is it being done in simplicity? When the Bible studies and singing societies are being held, and this more among the young Geschwister, if only there might also be the correct zeal.” Often such activities were associated with the agenda of American Fundamentalists to spread their religion and apostasy around the world and David is concerned that: “....they are in danger that they will incorrectly interpret the Bible, which is much to be feared.”

David referred to David Siemens, his niece and her husband, who “live here behind us, a small half mile away in the bush on the 19 acres of land that brother Jakob had here. [I] have sold it to them for seven dollars per acre, and [so they] at least do not need to live on rent and always move around.”

In his letter of September 24, 1932, David expressed his concerns regarding the battle for the eternal crown: “...for the experience teaches us that we have no enduring city here, and rather that we must depart from here, and blessed is the one that can safely cross over the Jordan into the eternal Canaan, where there shall be no more strife nor battle such as is here in this pilgrim life, where one always again must confess that one has not been earnest enough in the battle to attain the eternal Crown.”

In his letter of August 29, 1933, David L. Plett referred to the farming activities: “We also have various things that kept us busy this summer for we had taken on [the task] of delivering cucumbers to Winnipeg. And this results in much work, for they need to be picked often, for they only want little ones, and so we haul them to Winnipeg two times each week.” David and Helena were also mindful of those who were ill and “This always provides opportunity to visit those that are sick in the hospital there. For firstly there was the D. Reimersche, and then also our daughter-in-law, the Johann Plettsche, who was also operated on. Both of them were in one room and also close to each other and now they are both again at home....and then later our C. K. Plettsche was also in the same hospital, and is also already at home and up and around. She was blessed with the gift of a small daughter.”

David mentioned the duality of life, the hope of living and the reality of dying, referring to the death of nephew Isaak B. Plett: “And this is how things go further in this world, presently there is sorrow and then a person also soon wants to again seize hope, but often only for short duration, that it only remains a path of struggle, and then, suddenly, all the joy and sorrow of this world is passed, and, thereafter, blessed are those that have fought a good fight. For you will already have heard of [the death of] our nephew Isaac B. Plett, that he has also finished his course, and the way the tree falls it remains lying. He was also in

the St. Boniface Hospital and also died there. We, however, had not become aware of this, for otherwise we could also easily have visited him. He did not receive many visitors as it was not very well known. He was then brought from out of our church here in Steinbach to his grave."

In conclusion David returned to the battles in the Gemeinde which concern him deeply: "More would lay upon my heart, but what shall one write in that regard, for the previous Sunday we had a brotherhood, where also the Ohms from Morris were present, and things looked dark. There is no unity anymore and how things will turn out in the end seems dismal to me. The new outlook (Sinn) is always standing stronger in regards to which I cannot find myself aright that such shall belong to the simplicity in Christ. This does not agree whatsoever, but, admittedly, many are not yet in favour. May the Lord be gracious and help us direct and lead in everything."

On February 23, 1934, David mentioned that "after New Years [I was] twice in Morris. The last time, this last week, I drove there on Monday and returned home Wednesday. This time I had driven on the train. Because I was alone I did not want to drive with horse and sleigh and we could not yet get away from home with our car. I had business there regarding the Jakob Plett heirs."

David also mentioned that "we have hope of receiving visitors, namely, Gerhard Thielmanns are coming. They had already written earlier that they wanted to leave [home] the first week in February, but did not. Now he wrote that they are already in Winnipeg, and want to stay for a number of days, and then they are coming to us. They have a free ticket from the railway company."

On June 13, 1934, David wrote: "Helena, David Pletten daughter, is celebrating her wedding with Jakob G. Barkman's son Abraham, on June 10. The Plettsche also finds this difficult that she shall give up her oldest, which also means that she has been her support, while they have taken on everything."

On October 15, 1934, Abraham L. Plett was killed in an automobile accident while David was driving. In a letter of December 13, 1934, David writes about this horrible tragedy. After a busy day of visiting around the neighbourhood "we stopped in at the Abram L. Plettsche and stayed there for the evening. She is together with her Anna and there is also Johann Friesens' daughter Katharina for company. She is still unable to think of the untimely separation from him [Abram] without a heavy heart. For the parting was not with hand and kiss, but rather with a quiet sighing from my part, and he said nothing in response to my question as to what had happened to him. And then he said yet that nothing had happened to him. And I asked him again, that he should actually say what had happened to him, but he only said again that nothing had happened to him. These were the last words he spoke and nothing more. Therefore, he did not feel anything and nor did he move at all. Yet, he was still breathing but not for long and then that also was over. And then one asks, why in this way? but this does not help, for finally that is how it was. And we must again press onward, for we were far from home. I have already travelled often and yet have always returned home with joyful disposition. But to come home disposed in this way and feeling so bad, I cannot explain how [this feels]. But when I arrived home late that evening (the roads were very bad), they phoned here from Abram Pletts,



and asked if I would not want to come over. Oh, I was already tired but I could not decline, and so they came to pick us up for she wanted to hear it from me about what had actually happened there. Then, after I had related it to her, in as much as I could, and I could see how through the support of God this seemingly composed the Plettsche somewhat, it did become somewhat easier for me. Now, otherwise, Doerksens will already have told you about everything.”

In the last letter, dated December 20, 1933, David told Cornelius that son Jakob has remarried “and they together with the children appear to be quite happy. And for us and the girls things are also easier in that the girls are again both at home. They also have considerable work with the feather livestock. First feeding and then butchering and cleaning everything.”

David L. Plett refers to the illness of neighbour Johann P. Janzen, who apparently had various concerns regarding the Gemeinde “... and so he raised something from our brother-in-law Peter Reimer.” David reported telling Janzen, “...that he should simply leave this in peace. He replied that of him [Reimer] he did not want to say anything, he had made everything right.” Apparently years ago, Peter Reimer, accompanied by Cornelius Plett, had made a pastoral visitation at the Janzens while his wife was sick and now Janzen wanted to know what Peter Reimer had said. “I advised him that he should remain calm, for you would surely not remember, but he was zealous that I should write.” David L. Plett closes the letter with “A wish of all good fortune and blessing. Another greeting in closing from your loving siblings, D. and Helena Pletten.

**Retirement:** In 1938 David L. and Helena Plett retired, keeping only the SW 40 acres of the SE36-7-6E where they built a new house and a small cattle barn and a small chicken barn. Helena died on March 30, 1940 of leukaemia. David L. Plett died on June 25, 1953 of old age.

David and Helena Plett spent their lives living their Christian faith rather than expounding about it. He was historically inclined and collected writings of the history of the Kleine Gemeinde and made copies for each of his children. He also collected poems of a devotional and spiritual nature and at his death left each of his children a collection. He also got his grandchildren interested in their history. In a letter of January 15, 1932, daughter-in-law Elisabeth Esau Plett, Mrs. David D. K. Plett, writes that her son David “had brought a booklet to the parents to be written full [of writings] of when the Kleine Gemeinde was established.”<sup>1201</sup>

David L. Plett enjoyed reading. In the evenings he would love to sit and read to his family from a newspaper or from devotional writings.

David L. and Helena Plett enjoyed visiting and spent much time looking up friends and neighbours. Also they enjoyed travelling and on a number of occasions travelled to Satanta, Kansas, to visit his brothers and other relations as well as the Bernard D. Doerksens, their special friends.

David L. Plett is remembered by grandson Frank E. Plett as “a small man, but with lots of ambition and energy, with a large family. I am told his feet did not reach the floor, sitting in front of the church, serving as song leader...I remember Grandpa with his model A. Ford coming to see us. Usually on week

days for faspa and visiting with him when I should be doing my chores. Or going with my mother to see Grandpa and Tanti Trut on Sunday afternoons. When there was no other company, he started entertaining by telling stories from years ago....”

“Grandpa was also very involved and helpful at the time of my father’s [David D. K. Plett] and sister’s sickness and death. Going to Steinbach with horses for some help and later in the same day to Winnipeg with our Model T. car. That’s a long day for a 67 year-old man.”

“He was also a generous Grandpa. After his retirement, and having a little money he would help his young grandsons get started with farming. Willie, Art, Henry, David, Harvey and I were pallbearers and carried Grandpa to his grave on June 25, 1953. Grandma died in 1940 living him 13 years as a widower.”

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>David L. Plett</b>	Oct 8, 1863		Jun 25, 1953
m	Helena B. Koop	Feb 8, 1865	Jan 20, 1883	Mar 30, 1940
6	Sarah D. K. Plett	May 1, 1885	Dec 25, 1904	Jul 6, 1961
m	Isaac R. Reimer	Mar 4, 1884		Oct 11, 1966
6	Katharina D. K. Plett	Aug 2, 1886	Dec 17, 1905	Jan 8, 1948
m	Peter B. Thiessen	Sep 17, 1885		Aug 26, 1957
6	David D. K. Plett	Jul 27, 1889	Jul 10, 1910	Nov 21, 1930
m	Elisabeth Esau	Apr 11, 1893		Mar 10, 1976
6	Helena D. K. Plett	Aug 14, 1890	Oct 23, 1910	Jan 27, 1964
m	Abr. R. E. Reimer	Oct 8, 1888		Feb 19, 1949
6	Cornelius D. K. Plett	Jan 7, 1892	Dec 10, 1916	Dec 7, 1967
m	Susanna D. Reimer	Oct 12, 1897		Nov 10, 1986
6	Margaretha D. K. Plett	Jun 18, 1893		Feb 14, 1894
6	Maria D. K. Plett	Feb 9, 1895	Jan 13, 1918	Sep 17, 1973
m	Isaac P. Loewen	Feb 19, 1891		Aug 22, 1963
6	Johann D. K. Plett	May 31, 1896	Mar 3, 1918	Dec 3, 1984
m	Margaretha Penner	Dec 14, 1898		Nov 9, 1979
6	Baby Plett	Dec 14, 1897		Dec 14, 1897
6	Peter D. K. Plett	Jun 27, 1899	Dec 18, 1921	Oct 24, 1989
m	Elisabeth P. Loewen	Nov 24, 1902		Jun 20, 1993
6	Gertruda D. K. Plett	Dec 15, 1900	Jul 5, 1959	Dec 3, 1989
m	David R. Plett	Apr 25, 1906		Jul 9, 1969
6	Jakob D. K. Plett	Apr 26, 1902		Apr 28, 1979
m	Justina Goertzen	Aug 5, 1902	Apr 25, 1926	Dec 11, 1932
m	Margaretha Goertzen	Sep 11, 1906	Oct 22, 1933	Feb 23, 1987
6	Abraham D. K. Plett	Jul 11, 1903	May 5, 1929	Apr 5, 1983
m	Anna L. Penner	Sep 6, 1909		
6	Isaac D. K. Plett	Jan 4, 1906	Jun 6, 1928	Jun 6, 1988
m	Gustie Goertzen		Oct 1, 1909	Jan 31, 1990
6	Margaretha D. K. Plett	Jul 28, 1907	Nov 1, 1936	Nov 28, 1990
m	Johann U. Dueck		Oct 31, 1909	Jan 8, 1989



*David L. Plett and daughter Gertrude visiting at Gerbard J. Thielmanns, Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1947: l.-r.: David L. Plett, Elly Redekopp, Gertrude D. K. Plett, Mrs. Gerbard Thielmann and Gerbard Thielmann, far right.<sup>1202</sup>*



*David L. Plett 1951 at the home of son Peter K. Plett, Blumenort.*



*David L. Plett in 1917. Taken from the threshing outfit photo published in the Plett Picture Book, page 153/Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 56.*



*Five generation photograph, 1946. Rear: l.-r.: Mrs. Jakob J. K. Plett and Mrs. Harvey Reimer. Front: Sarah, Mrs. Isaak R. Reimer, Jake Reimer, and David L. Plett.*



*June 25, 1953. Coffin photograph of David L. Plett with daughters, l.-r., Sarah, Maria, Gertrude, Helena and Margaretha.*

6 Daughter **Sara D. K. Plett** (1885-1961) married Isaac R. Reimer in 1904 and they lived and worked the first year at her parents. They built a house and lived in the old Blumenort village until it was dissolved in 1910. As their share of the village lands they received the north 60 acres of the SE27-7-6E and the south 60 acres of the NE27-7-6E. They started a yard and constructed buildings about 600 feet north and slightly west of Heinrich E. Plett's Plathof. The road north from the old Blumenort village ran over the Plathof yard and past the Isaac R. Reimer place, joining the north limit of Section 27-7-6e just west of where the Blumenort school is presently located. Sarah and Isaac farmed here until 1918 when they purchased 240 acres in the Prairie Rose district, the SE 23-8-5E and Legal Subdivisions 6 and 11 of Section 23-6-5E. They again built up a yard and buildings farming until their retirement in 1952.

Sarah and Isaac had a mixed farm and dairy. Isaac loved horses and worked with horses long after it was customary. He would usually have three four-horse teams of Percherons as well as several lighter horses for travelling. Until 1930 Grandfather David L. Plett would come with his rig every fall to do their threshing. In 1940 Isaac bought his first tractor, a used International 15/30. In 1952 the sons took over the farm and Sarah and Isaac built a new home 1 ½ miles east of Landmark, on SW 24-8-5E. They lived in their retirement until Sarah was admitted to the Resthaven in Steinbach in 1961 where she died two weeks later. She had suffered from sugar diabetes and old age and died on July 6, 1961.

For years Isaac had the job of seeing to the heating and cleaning of the Prairie Rose church. He enjoyed woodwork and in his retirement years built picnic tables and lawn chairs. Daughter Elsie stayed at home looking after her father until 1964 when she found employment in the Menno Home in Grunthal. Isaac then moved to the Menno Home as well. He also suffered from sugar diabetes and lung disease and periodically had to be admitted to the Ste Anne Hospital for treatment, where he died on October 11, 1966.



*Sarah and Isaac R. Reimer, 1946 at Isaac D. K. Pletts. Photo - Abram P. Reimer.*

6 Daughter **Katharina D. K. Plett** (1886-1948) married Peter B. Thiessen (1885-1957) in 1905. They lived and worked the first few years with his parents, the Peter F. Thiessens, in the Krim. Katharina and Peter bought a farm in Giroux, the SW21-7-7E, farming until 1918 when they bought a farm in the Ekron district, the SE 31-6-7E. They had a mixed farm and dairy. Katharina died of a heart attack on January 8, 1948, having suffered from a heart condition for some time.

Peter remarried to Elisabeth Brandt (1901-74) on November 29, 1948. In 1949 they moved to Blumenort where they had a new house built on the third property west of the church. They lived here in their retirement until Peter died on August 26, 1957 of a heart attack. Stepmother died also of a heart attack on March 6, 1974.

Peter B. Thiessen served as a school trustee for the Ekron school district in the late 1920s and 1930s. He was interested in horses and raised and trained all the horses required on the farm. He liked to have a fine matched team for visiting and travelling. Katharina was a hard worker and good organizer. She faithfully kept a diary for many years. The parents were both good singers and on Sundays in winter when they couldn't get to Steinbach to church they enjoyed sitting with the family and singing songs from the *Gesangbuch*.

In 1987 Carol Thiessen wrote a sketch of her Thiessen ancestors as a high school assignment.<sup>1203</sup> The biography of Katharina and Peter B. Thiessen is reprinted here with some adaptations:

“Peter B. began farming one mile west of Giroux. My grandfather remembered the time when his mother would work alone in the fields cutting grain by hand. After a few years, Peter B. bought a farm in the Ekron district, east of Steinbach. The Thiessen's farm was well known for the tidy, tree-lined yard and the magnificent orchards Peter had established; the beautiful buildings and yard were always kept trim and neat....”

“Farm work was done by horses so it was important to have a stable full of horses. The minimum number would be four and the maximum number would be eight. Horses were also used for transportation. The wealthy farmers would have a running horse with a small buggy to go to town. The family would use a two horse buggy. In winter they travelled in a small box sleigh or a larger bob sled. To go to Winnipeg, they would go by horse on a road through Greenland and Landmark. Older residents in Steinbach have memories of Peter B. Thiessen driving into town with his team of horses. He was very proud of his carefully groomed horses with their shiny polished harness. It was quite a show. In those days, farmers often stopped active farm work at middle age, as Peter B. Thiessen also seemed to. It was important to have sons for they would then let their boys take over the farm. The parents would spend their time driving around and visiting.”

“Peter B. Thiessen attended the Kleine Gemeinde in Steinbach. In later years, however, he drove his Model A to Blumenort for church. He felt Steinbach was too modern and liberal. Church was very important, although Peter didn't attend every Sunday since the worship services changed location according to a church calendar. For the people during this time, traditional Mennonite values

were also very important. There was a strong emphasis on piety. They were against smoking, dancing, card playing, excessive drinking and any other worldly amusement..."

"My father [Arden Thiessen] remembers his grandfather [Peter B. Thiessen] as a stern man who was proud of his farming abilities. He didn't show affection or friendship towards his grandchildren. However, Peter B. and Katherine's daughter, Margaret Loewen, remembers her parents being quite intimate. They would stand with their arms around each other. My father remembers his grandmother as being a very diligent gardener and good cook. The house was always filled with good food, from pickled watermelon in the basement to sugared popcorn balls in the attic. Peter B. Thiessen died on August 27, 1957.



*Katbarina and Peter B. Thiessen, 1946. Photo - Blumenort, page 314.*



*The Peter B. Thiessen family in front of their new 1926 Model T: l.-r. Margaret (Mrs. John J. Loewen), Kathbarine (Mrs. Isaac L. Penner), Katbarina Plett Thiessen, Sara (Mrs. Ben P. Penner), Peter B. Thiessen, Dietrich, Ben and Frank. Photo - Blumenort, page 456.*

6 Son **David D. K. Plett** (1889-1930) married Elisabeth Esau (1893-1976) in 1910. A biography of Elisabeth and David D. K. Plett was written by nephew Harvey Plett and published in *Preservings* in 1997.<sup>1204</sup> The article is reprinted here with some editing and adaptation. In 1957 Elisabeth wrote and published her memoirs, *Von Unserem Ebeleben seit 1910*, the source of much information.<sup>1205</sup> **Growing Up:** "Elizabeh was the youngest child of Johann and Maria (Unger) Esau. Her mother was the daughter of Peter H. Ungers of Blumenhof.<sup>1206</sup> Her father was the son of Johann Esau (1832-1904), Rosenfeld, Manitoba, well-known Brandältester of the Molotschna Brandordnung."<sup>1207</sup>

"When Elizabeth was 11 months old, her mother died, March 23, 1894. The children were separated and placed in various homes. The four girls were Margaret, Justina, Maria, and Elizabeth.....Margaret and Maria never married. Justina married a Martin Friesen from Rosenort. Martin died in 1947. In 1949 Justina married Heinrich H. Reimer from Kansas. They joined the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde migration to Mexico which had started in 1948. Margaret also moved to Mexico where she died in 1967...."

"Elizabeth was taken in by her maternal grandparents, the Peter H. Ungers of Blumenhof. Grandfather Unger died in 1896 leaving grandmother to raise the little girl. When grandmother could no longer take care of her because of old age, uncle Peter F. Unger and his wife Katherine offered to keep Elizabeth. Elizabeth was now 12 years old. She spent the next five years in the Peter F. Unger home where she was made to feel part of the family...."

**Marriage, 1910.** In 1910, when she was 17, Elizabeth married David D. K. Plett, a young man of 21 years from a neighbouring farm.....After they were married they moved in with David's parents and lived and farmed with them for two years. Since they got married in April and David turned 21 only in July, David worked for his father for no pay until he was 21. Elizabeth earned clothes and food and David earned the rest of the expenses and saved for a house. David's father suggested that the bride was somewhat young. To this son David responded, "People grow older after marriage as well as before."

"After living with the parents for two years, Elizabeth and David bought a house from Mrs. Martin Barkman for \$200.00 and moved it from 'behind' Steinbach to a three acre lot next to David's parents' place. With hard work, taking odd jobs, the Pletts slowly began to build the base for a farming operation. By 1915, they had two children, Helena and Katherina, and four cows. That was quite an achievement."

"How did they manage this? Each had gotten a cow from their parents and Elizabeth purchased a second one from the Ungers with the wages they had given her during her five years there. Her wages were \$25 the first year, \$40 the second year, \$50 the third year, \$64 the fourth year, and \$70 the fifth year. The fourth cow was purchased from the earnings of David."

"It was time to move to a better situation. Father Plett sold them 60 acres and they established their own farm place west of the parents' farmstead."

"David continued to work at odd jobs but also for his father. He operated the steam engine for the threshing machine which meant long hours and thresh-



ing for people far and wide. This meant the men often did not come home for night. So Elizabeth with mother-in-law Plett would hitch Jessie to the buggy and go and pick up the men for the weekend. At times they would have supper at the place where the men were threshing.”

“Haying was an important part of the farming operation. Hay fields were found at considerable distances from home. The Pletts made hay in Prairie Rose. The hay would be cut and stacked in summer on the field, and then in winter they would haul it home by sleigh and horses. A winter trip would take 12-13 hours, leaving home at 4:00 a.m. and arriving home at 4 or 5:00 p.m.”

**Prairie Rose.** “In 1915 or 1916 there was a brotherhood meeting in Blumenort where the question of colonization was discussed. Good farmland for a reasonable price was available in Prairie Rose (Landmark) some 13 miles northwest from Blumenhof. The first settlers, Abram and Peter Penners, moved to Prairie Rose in 1917. In 1918 Isaac Reimers, Cornelius Pletts, and Frank T. Kroekers moved to Prairie Rose. Mrs. Isaac Reimer and Cornelius Plett, were David’s sister and brother. In 1919 the David Pletts moved to the quarter section they had bought, SE 22-8-5E. Grandson Steve Plett is currently dwelling on the farmstead established by the David D. K. Pletts....”

“As one reads Elizabeth’s story it reveals again and again the significant role of women in the life of the family and community. Husband and wife had to be a team in order to survive. David and Elizabeth were a team. While David was out clearing land, hauling wood or feed, or helping someone, Elizabeth milked and fed the animals and kept food on the table and clothes on the backs of the children.”

“Elizabeth planted large gardens, which, with the help of the children, were well kept and supplied a generous supply of vegetables for the winter. She raised chickens for home consumption as well for selling either eggs or meat. The children were in there helping as well. At age seven daughter Lena milked a cow regularly, an easy milker true, but at a rather tender age....”

“That first year they lived in buildings not suited for Manitoba winters. Elizabeth speaks of living in a single-clad summer kitchen because their house in Blumenhof was only moved in winter on sleigh and with horses. She speaks of keeping all the clothes on when they retired for the night because it was so cold. She also speaks of manure freezing in the barn so it could not be hauled out.”

“Fall came early in 1919. One October morning when they got up the ground was covered with snow. For the next while they had to milk out on the snow since no shelter for the cows had been built. When the cattle shelter they were moving to Prairie Rose from Blumenhof collapsed in the process, David’s brothers came to the rescue and quickly built a shelter for the cattle.”

“Hospitals and doctors were not as available as today. This lack of access to medical help focuses the toughness of the pioneer women. Mary was born in January 17, 1920. When labour set in, her sister-in-law Mrs. Sarah (Isaac R.) Reimer came over while Mr. Reimer drove by horse and buggy to Ste. Anne to get the doctor. The road conditions were very bad and so the trip took longer than

usual. By the time the doctor arrived Mary had been born.”

“Elizabeth says, ‘Thank God this baby came fast, my deliveries had been hard and slow.’”

“David went to the neighbours searching for someone to bathe the baby but found no one. Finally the next day Mrs. Frank Kroeker, the first neighbour to the west and a good friend, came to bathe the baby and do some washing. Some more help was given by Mrs. Isaac Reimer by baking some bread. After this, Elizabeth says, ‘...I looked after the baby and did the chores by myself. I soon became strong again and went milking. So we managed on our own.’”

“There is determination and strength that shines through. Again looking back from our very plush conditions we wonder how they did it. Where was David? In her words, ‘Papa was very busy, trying to get enough wood for heating the house, and straw and fodder for the cows and horses. The road conditions were very poor.’ David was so much on the road because he had to haul most of the stuff from Blumenhof since they had just moved to Prairie Rose six months prior to Mary’s birth....”

“Food is always important, especially is this true when people work hard. Threshing time involved hard long hours. Elizabeth’s resourcefulness...is illustrated by the following incident: ‘The threshing outfit had come to David Pletts, a crew of 23 men. It was Sunday so the Pletts went to church which meant travelling to Blumenort. They stayed for the Communion service. When they got home the men had cleaned out all the food that she had prepared for the threshing crew. This included two large cans of Zwieback, one big box full of bread, a big can of cookies and a pot of meat. When the Plett arrived at home Elizabeth discovered the empty cupboard and the men waiting for supper to be served. What to do? Elizabeth headed out to the chicken barn, got a pail full of eggs, made pancakes and fed all 23 plus her family.’”

**Tragedy, 1930.** “A horrible tragedy occurred in....1930.....It was late September when Margaret got very sick followed by son David. After a week of nursing, son David was up again but then the family members who did the choring became so sick that they couldn’t do their work anymore. The Isaac Reimers and the Klaas F. Penners helped as well as David’s parents and family.”

“Then David got sick. After suffering for two weeks at home David’s brothers picked up David with bed and all and transported him to the Prairie Rose church which was converted into a temporary hospital. A nurse had been obtained from Winnipeg at \$6.00 a day but since she couldn’t do much more for the sick than what the family was doing, she was taken back to the city.”

“The whole family except Elizabeth got sick. After the doctor’s visit it was established that the sickness was typhoid fever. David, with children Lena, Tina, Elizabeth, Mary, Sarah, and Johnny were at the church where Margaret Fast, Margaret Goertzen, and Aunt Gertrude Plett cared for the sick under the direction of Uncle Isaac Reimer. Meanwhile son David, Peter, Margaret, Frank, and mother Elizabeth stayed at home.”

“Elizabeth worked tirelessly at home and went to the church every day. At both places the children and husband were deathly sick. The doctor said Frank would die. David and daughter Tina asked for cold water again and again but none was given. The standard treatment for Typhoid at that time did not permit

sponging or giving cold water to the sick. Even ice cream was denied. Temperatures soared to 108 F.”

“On the night of November 20, Elizabeth, grandmother Plett, sister Isaac Reimer and brother John Plett were at the bedside of David. He asked about the weather and when told it was going to storm he said ‘O my,’ and turned his head to the side. Now it was time for Elizabeth to go home to inspect the sick at home. At 11:00 p.m. Tina passed away. Two hours later at 1:00 a.m., November 21, 1930, David died. He had been sick 24 days while Tina had not been sick quite that long.”

“The church was still a hospital for the sick family and so the funeral was held outside of the church. Before the funeral, the bodies were brought to the house so the children could pay their last respects to father and sister. Son David refused to look at them.”

“Winter set in and the sick began to recuperate though the children were very cranky and sensitive as to the food they ate. Thus the short nights continued for Elizabeth. As if that was not enough, when the children had just recuperated from typhoid, several got chicken pox, fortunately a mild case.”

“Amazingly only two people of the many who had helped care for the sick and do the chores, and thus had been in close contact with the germs, contracted the fever. Katherina Barkman caught it but recuperated. Aaron Unger, a young man who helped choring, caught it and died. Elizabeth also did not contract the fever.”

**Widowhood.** “Elizabeth had to go on but how? God had blessed her with very supportive and helpful parents-in-law as well as other in-laws. These were very helpful, helping get ready for the funeral and with the work as well as sterilize the floors where the sick had lain. Also many of the neighbours helped.”

“What to do with the farm? The operation was too big for Elizabeth with her young family to carry on. As a result six milk cows, a number of heifers and horses were sold. The threshing machine, the hard-starting Fordson tractor, crusher and other items were also sold. This was a very painful experience for son David. He lay down on the ‘Schloep -Bank’ and cried and cried. With this selling off of stock and equipment the family could manage.”

“In the spring of 1931, 16 year-old Lena and 11 year-old David did all the seeding. The ‘Geschwista’ helped with the harvest. But after that the family did things on their own. As they adjusted to being without father and husband they did very well under the guidance of mother. They were an independent family and were happy to be on their own. Of course Elizabeth sought for advice from grandpa Plett. He was willing to assist but eventually suggested that Elizabeth’s brother-in-law, Cornelius Plett, who lived about a mile from the David Pletts, become the advisor. Elizabeth accepted the suggestion.”

“In an amazing way the family continued to work and build the farm. They built a new barn and a new house. Friends and neighbours were helpful but they did this on their own initiative. Elizabeth had trained the children well.”

“The family operation was terminated in March, 1951. They sold everything by auction and then divided it among the children. Elizabeth got one-third and the rest was divided equally among the children. Elizabeth also retained 74 acres of land, the buildings, and some cows. She sold her last cows to Frank in 1957.”

“In 1976 she began a planned visit to each of her children before settling into a home. She spent some time at daughter Helena’s place, the Abram Barkmans. She was visiting at her daughter Mary, the Henry Barkmans, when she passed away on March 10, 1976.”

**Conclusion.** The story of Elizabeth Esau Plett is an example of the influence and role of pioneer women. Elizabeth is a model of faith, for again and again she talks of her faith in her writing as well as about the joy of fellowshiping with other Christians.”

“Her influence, however, is exerted not from a public platform but in the quiet deep-running river of commitment and faithfulness whether seen by others or not. She was committed to being obedient to Christ and she did it the best way she knew how. That is why her children rise up and call her blessed.”

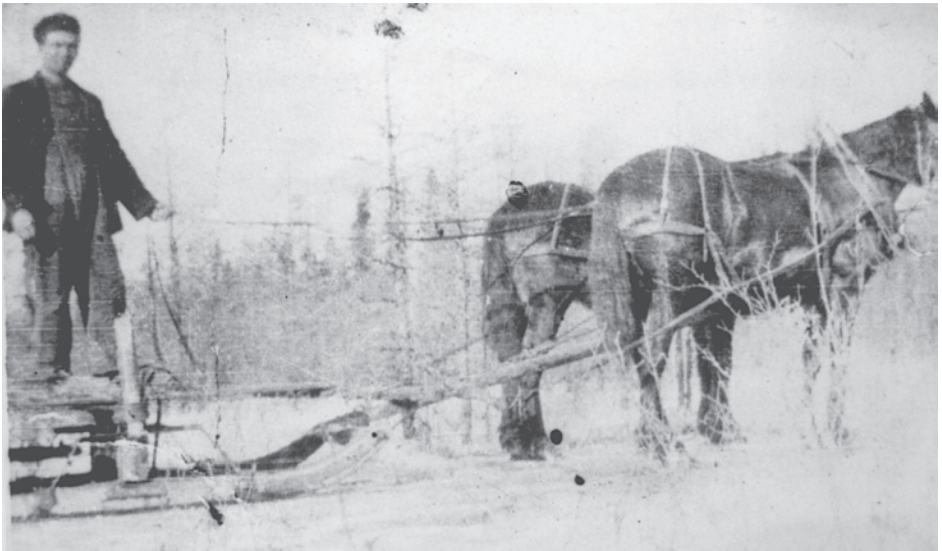
“She is also an example of the many women, how many we do not know, that kept diaries. Elizabeth says, ‘Margaret and I are left alone in the house. It feels very forlorn and unscheduled. I start feeling so dependent on my children, will they come and tell me enough happenings of the farm and so forth? For I still want to keep up my diary.’ Elizabeth kept a diary for some 80 years noting temperatures, beginning of seeding, amount of the harvest, and other events in the community.”

“Her history of her married life begins with 1910 and ends with 1957, some 19 years prior to her death. Her diaries add a lot of details.”

“A question that may be asked is, ‘Why did she write?’ According to son Frank, it was her own interest and initiative that motivated her to do this. She was also concerned to leave a written record for her children and grandchildren of how God had led them. In other words it was her way of seeking to insure that the heritage was passed on.”

“Elizabeth has left a good legacy.”

Written by Harvey Plett, May, 1997



*David D. K. Plett off to the bush for a load of logs, ca. 1920.*

6 Daughter **Helena D. K. Plett** (1890-1964) married Abram R.E. Reimer (1890-1949) in 1910. He was the son of Johann F. Reimer, Hochfeld. Helena and Abram lived the first winter in the old Blumenort village. They had two students in their board when their house burned down and they had to find refuge at their next-door neighbours, Klaas F. Penners, in the middle of the night. Thereafter they purchased the NE17-7-7E in the Ridgewood area. Here they established a home and lived while Father pursued his career as carpenter. In 1920 the parents purchased the NE7-8-5E in Landmark and built a yard and buildings and broke up the land for farming. Here Helena and Abram farmed until 1939 when they bought the John F. Reimer farm, being the SW29-7-6E, west of Blumenort, where they continued with a mixed farm and dairy until they moved to Quellen Colony, Mexico in 1949. Abram died of a heart attack on February 19, 1949, being the first adult to die in the new Kleine Gemeinde settlement.

Helena returned to Blumenort and lived on the old farm until it was sold in 1951. She then purchased a 10 acre property on the NW36-7-6E and had a new house built for her and lived here until her death on January 27, 1964. She died of cancer after a sickness of about a year, having spent the last few weeks in the Steinbach hospital. Abram was a good blacksmith and ran a blacksmith business. In the 1930s he also had a sawmill and sawed lumber at Vassar and other places. Helena enjoyed farming and even in her years as a widow had turkeys raising hatching eggs. Abram suffered much from rheumatic fever before 1920.

6 Daughter **Maria K. Plett** (1895-1073) married Isaac P. Loewen (1891-1973) in 1918. He was the son of Isaac J. Loewen. When the old Blumenort village dissolved in 1910 the Isaac J. Loewen family received the NW 22-7-6E which included that part of the village where their farmyard was located and they did not need to move their buildings. Isaac P. Loewen inherited this property and lived here as a bachelor since 1915 when his mother remarried and moved to Rosenort. In 1937 Maria and Isaac built a new yard and buildings on the gravel ridge just north of the former location where they farmed with hogs and dairy on a modest scale. In 1948 they moved to the village of Springstein, Quellen Colony, Mexico, continuing to farm on a small scale. Isaac also had a woodwork shop, building furniture as well as cages and other wooden items. Isaac was always interested in books and was involved with the selling and distribution of books in Blumenort. In Mexico he also had a book store. Isaac died on August 22, 1963, of a heart attack during a trip to visit his family in Blumenort. Maria then moved back to Blumenort and lived with various of her other children for several months. Thereafter she moved to the Resthaven in Steinbach where she resided until her death on September 17, 1973 after suffering from heart disease.

Isaac had an inquisitive mind and was interested in history and geography. He enjoyed accounting and his special interest was his service to the Blumenort cheese factory as its bookkeeper for approximately 12 years, starting in 1935. He was also involved with the move to Mexico, taking part in the surveying and layout of the villages. Maria was a hard worker but not in the best health. Their children include Ältester Bernhard P. Loewen, Mexico, and David P. Loewen and Rev. John P. Loewen of Blumenort, Manitoba, and grandson historian Royden Loewen.

6 Son **Cornelius D. K. Plett** (1892-1967) married Susanna D. Reimer (1897-1986) in 1916. She was the daughter to Rev. Heinrich R. Reimer. Cornelius and Susanna lived the first three years in a house located on his parents' farm about 650 feet west of the David K. Plett yard. For some time Cornelius also served as engineer for the threshing outfit of his uncle Jakob L. Plett. In 1919 they purchased the S ½ of the SW23-8-5E in Landmark where they moved later the same year. Cornelius and Susanna farmed with a mixed farm and dairy until 1925 when they moved to Satanta, Kansas. They were hoping the change in climate would be beneficial to her thyroid and heart condition. However, they returned to Landmark in 1926 and continued farming. They later purchased the W ½ of NW 22-8-5E and the west 40 acres of the SW 27-8-5E. The dairy was sold in 1944.

Cornelius and brother-in-law, Abram F. Penner, in partnership, had a threshing outfit, doing custom threshing during most of the 1940s. In 1944 they started a sawmill at Birch Lake, Manitoba, moving to Norquay, Saskatchewan, for 1946-1948 where they sawed lumber for Plett & Co. From 1949-1951 Cornelius had a lumber camp at Timberton and Kennville, Manitoba, in partnership with son Archie and others. After another year in partnership with Abram F. Penner at Mafeking, Ontario, Cornelius retired from the lumber business in 1953.

When Cornelius and Susanna retired from farming in 1962, they built a new house on the northwest corner of their farm where Susanna still resided in 1981 together with daughter Hulda. Cornelius died on December 7, 1967, of a stroke. He had served some 25 years as trustee of the Landmark school district and also for many years as usher for the Landmark church. They both enjoyed travelling.

Their descendants include Archie Plett, founder of Landmark Plumbing (now Landmark Mechanical), Henry Plett, owner of Landmark Transfer, and Ellen Plett, Mrs. John P. Plett, Wawanesa, Manitoba.



*Susanna and Cornelius D. K. Plett on a trip ca. 1940.*

6 Son **John D. K. Plett** (1896-1984) married Margaretha Penner (1898-1979) in 1918. She was the daughter of Klaas R. Penner. John and Margaretha purchased a farm in Greenland, the N ½ SE 3-8-5E, from Martin K. Friesens. Later they purchased additional land, the E ½ NW 3-8-5E and the S ½ NW 2-8-5E. In 1936 they moved to Premont, Texas, hoping the change in climate would be beneficial for John's health. In 1937 they returned to their farm in Greenland and continued farming with a mixed farm and a dairy.

In 1966 the John and Margaretha retired and purchased a lot in Blumenort and had a new house built for them. They lived here until 1978 when they moved to the Resthaven in Steinbach. Margaretha died on November 9, 1979 of a heart attack. John was residing at the Resthaven in 1981. He enjoyed reading and they both enjoyed travelling.

John served several terms as trustee for the Montezuma school district in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In his younger years he had enjoyed very much his involvement in his Father's threshing business. When I interviewed John in 1981, he still remembered that the funeral for his grandfather Cornelius Plett in 1900 had been held at the home of his uncle Abraham.

John D. K. Plett's descendants include son Bennie Plett, killed in a tragic automobile accident in British Columbia on March 9, 1982. Grandson Wes Plett, Blumenort, owns Southeastern Farm Equipment in Steinbach.



*Margaretha and John D. K. Plett enjoyed travelling. Around 1955 they went on a trip to Meade, Kansas, together with cousins Elisabeth and Cornelius A. Plett (couple at the right). They visited Bishop Jakob F. Isaac and wife (couple at the left). Photo courtesy of John D. K. Plett, Blumenort, Manitoba.*



*Passport photos, 1948. John D. K. Plett and Margaretha Plett.*



6 Son **Peter D. K. Plett** (1899-1989) married Elisabeth Loewen (1902-93) in 1921. Peter and Elisabeth made a yard and constructed buildings on the W ½ NW 27-7-6E in Blumenort, which she had received from her parents, Isaac J. Loewen. She also received the E ½ SW 27-7-6E, originally a slough which took great effort to make into productive farmland. In 1930 they purchased the W ½ SW 27-7-6E from Abram P. Loewen. In 1948 they purchased the S ½ NE 4-8-6E from Abram R. Pletts who were moving to Mexico and a short time later an additional 55 acres. They usually milked about 15 cows. Until 1935 they also had around 30 sheep. Peter and Elisabeth's greatest joy was farming. In 1959 they retired building a new house a quarter mile east of their farm yard. Son David L. Plett took over the farm and is still residing there today.

Peter D. K. Plett served as trustee for the Blumenort school district from 1930 to 1950 and as usher for the Blumenort church from 1928 to 1950. He was on the board of the Hilfs-Verein (and also treasurer) from 1930 to 1945. He served on the Board of Directors of the Resthaven Nursing Home from 1948 until 1962 and as board chairman from 1949 to 1962.

Their descendants include son John L. Plett, Blumenort, and daughter Helen, Mrs. David J. Reimer, Blumenhof. Grandson Barry Plett is the Pastor of the Blumenort E.M.C. Church. Grandson Steve Brandt, owns "Steves Livestock Hauling," Blumenort.



*Elisabeth and Peter D. K. Plett, 1968.*



6 Daughter **Gertrude D. K. Plett** (1900-89) was still living and working at home when her mother died in 1940. She stayed and looked after her father until his death in 1953. She inherited their 40 acre retirement property after her father's death. Gertrude resided here until her marriage to David R. Plett (1906-69) on July 5, 1959. He was the son of her cousin Heinrich E. Plett. Gertrude had adopted a daughter Amanda (Molly) in 1953. Upon her marriage she became step-mother to a large family. She lived with her husband on his farm in Hadashville until his death of cancer on July 9, 1969. Gertrude then moved back to her former yard where she lived in a housetrailer until 1971. She then moved to an apartment at 299 Kroeker Street, in Steinbach.

*Gertrude D. K. Plett shopping in Winnipeg, 1949.*

*The David L. Plett farmyard on Section 36-7-6E. After 1938 the farm was owned by son Jakob D. K. Plett. Photo - Bev Penner, The Jakob D. K. Plett 1926 1998 Family (Steinbach, 1998), page 58.*



6 Son **Jacob D.K. Plett** (1902-79) married Justina Goertzen (1902-32) in 1926. They purchased the Abram L. Plett's old 'immigrante' house which they moved to the old yard where brother David K. Plett formerly lived. In 1938 when David L. Plett retired Jakob purchased his farm with 200 acres.

Jakob D. K. Plett's first wife died of complications during childbirth on December 11, 1932. In a letter of December 16, 1932 David L. Plett describes the death of his daughter-in-law: "Indeed, now with news of grieving, for it has pleased the Lord in His wise counsel to take our beloved daughter-in-law, Mrs. Jakob D. K. Plettsche, who has become so precious to us, by death from him, after a four hour suffering during childbirth on the 11th of this month. That was a very difficult Sunday for us. At 5 o'clock in the morning Jakob came to get us, and, likewise, the doctor was immediately brought; and thus she had to suffer severely and endured, and after this was finally [completed] with great exertion, she soon said that her breath was hard [enge], and that she wanted to be laid somewhat differently, but it was already not for long, and then, one and a half hour after the birth, she at the end fell asleep calmly, namely, at 2 o'clock after dinner....she left behind in life her spouse who had come to love her deeply and three children; the fourth, which was stillborn, we could lay in the coffin together with her....He, namely, Jakob together with his children, is here with us, and always goes - with a heavy heart - to look after the cattle. Yet, the girls help him do the chores, and the children are being nurtured out of sympathy and love. But the love that has always stood so faithfully besides him, he says, he must now learn to live without; but the Lord who directs such things will also help him further. And thus we see that in this world we are always in a constant state of change....the funeral was held on the 14th of December on an extremely cold winter day; yet, the church was almost full of participants, but the weather may have kept many back. Song No. 705 was sung, which we had already sung here one evening at Jakob's request, for he felt that she would approve [of the words] if she could speak to us. For she, in fact, gladly wanted to remain here with her loved ones, but was also willing - if it was so appointed - to die, for she said yet, that she wanted to fully commit herself unto the Lord."

After Justina's death, Jakob D. K. Plett married her sister, Margaretha Goertzen (1906-87), on October 22, 1933. They had a mixed farm and dairy until retirement in 1973 when they moved to Blumenort. Jakob suffered a severe heart attack in 1974 from which he never fully recovered. He died on April 28, 1979 of a heart attack. Margaretha died February 23, 1987. Jakob had served as school trustee for the Blumenhof school district for 27 years and also on the church board of the Blumenort church for 12 years. He was interested in family history and actively involved with the preparation of the "Plettbook" in 1953 and also co-publisher of the Koopbook in 1975. He also enjoyed visiting and traveling. In 1929 Jakob had an accident when his team of horses stampeded while he was raking causing the hitch of the rake to spear the earth with the result that the rake threw him up over the back. As a result Father's right hand was permanently crippled. Their descendants include dairy farmers David G. Plett, Kleefeld, and Frank G. Plett, Steinbach, and Esther, Mrs. Erwin R. Plett, Wawanesa, Manitoba.<sup>1208</sup>



*Coffin picture of Justina Goertzen, December 14, 1932.*



*Jakob D. K. Plett and Margaretha Goertzen, wedding photo, October 22, 1933.*



*1960 Jakob D. K. Plett family photograph, 1970. Back l-r: Emmeline (Mrs. John E. Poettcker), Frank, Jacob, Eleanor (Mrs. Henry Epp), Joseph, David, Linda. Front l-r: Diana (Mrs. Levi Reimer), Minna (Mrs. Jake P. Friesen), Margaretha and Jakob D. K. Plett, and Estber (Mrs. Erwin Plett). Photo - Bev Penner; The Jakob D. K. Plett 1926 1998 Family (Steinbach, 1998), page 61.*

6 Son **Abram D. K. Plett** (1903-83) married Anna L. Penner (born 1909) in 1929. She was the daughter of Blumenort merchant Peter R. Penner. Abram and Anna lived the first six months with her parents in Blumenort. They then bought Henry R. Plett's old house from Plathof and moved it just south of the grandparents' yard on the east side of the driveway. Isaac K. Pletts lived just across the west side of the driveway. Here they farmed, operating a dairy and renting land from his parents and sharing the dairy barn with Isaac K. Pletts. In 1934 Abram and Anna purchased the N ½ NW 14-8-5E in Landmark, and constructed buildings and made a new yard. They had a mixed farm and dairy. They purchased an additional 320 acres of land. In 1968 they retired and built a new house on their yard where they were residing in 1982. After Abram's death, Anna lived in the Fernwood Apartments, Steinbach. Son Stan Plett served as President of the Steinbach Bible School in the 1990s.



*Anna and Abram D. K. Plett at their home in Landmark in 1981.*

6 The youngest **Margaretha K. Plett** (1907-90) married John U. Dueck (1909-89) in the 1936. The first winter they lived at Vassar, Manitoba, and worked for Plett & Company. The next winter they lived in brother Isaac K. Plett's house and looked after his cattle while he and his family were living in the lumber camp where he worked. In 1938 Margaretha and John purchased 80 acres of land from her father, the W ½ of E ½ of E ½ of Section 36-7-6E. They also purchased the Isaac K. Pletts' old house which they moved to the south end of their property where they made a yard and started farming. Later they purchased an additional 40 acres on the NE 36-7-6E. They farmed until their retirement in 1972. At first they had a mixed farm and dairy but sold the latter in 1953, focusing on poultry until 1964, and then, hogs. Upon retirement, they moved to Blumenort where they lived for a year and then moved to Steinbach where they resided at 78 Autumnwood Drive. Later they moved into the Parkside Apartments, Steinbach. Daughter Levina and her husband Frank R. Thiessen took over the family farm.



*Mr. and Mrs. John U. Dueck (nee Margaretha D. K. Plett) at their home in Steinbach, 1981*

6 Son **Isaac D. K. Plett** (1906-88) married Augusta Goertzen (1909-90) in 1929. She was a sister to Justina and Margaretha who married Jakob. Isaac and August worked the first winter for his parents. They built a home just west of the driveway from Abram K. Pletts and started a mixed farm and dairy, renting part of his parents' land and buildings. In 1938 they purchased the east 80 acres of Section 36-7-6E from his father. In 1938 they purchased the west 160 acres of Section 16-8-5E in the Linden district where they moved and started a yard and built a set of buildings. They had turkeys and purchased an additional 100 acres on the NW9-8-5E in 1948. The dairy was sold in 1960. In the last several years before their retirement the parents also purchased 200 acres on Section 17-8-5E.

Isaac and Augusta retired in 1976, building a new home on P.R. 210 in Linden. Isaac served from 1940 to 1958 as trustee for the Linden school district and as Sunday School teacher, Sunday School superintendent, and treasurer for the Prairie Rose church. In 1955 Isaac was elected a deacon.

They were the parents of Edwin Plett, former pastor of the Landmark E.M.C. church, Harvey Plett, former President of the Steinbach Bible School, Eva, Mrs. Melvin Penner, and Ron Plett, former board chair, Hanover School Division.



*Isaac K. Plett, 1920. Photo - Peter A. Plett.*



*Augusta and Isaac D. K. Plett, 1946.*

5 Son **Jakob L. Plett** (1864-1931) married Maria B. Koop (1868-1918) on November 14, 1885. She was the youngest sister to Anganetha, Gertruda and Helena B. Koop who had married his older brothers.

In 1884 Jakob and brother David took over their father's farming operations. They each acquired half a village *Wirtschaft* consisting of 160 acres and a 30 acre woodlot. In 1886, for example, the assessment records show each of them owning 95 acres of which 15 was cultivated. David had 3 horses, 2 cows and 8 cattle under 3 years, with a total assessment of 599, and Jakob had 2 horses, 2 cows and 3 cattle under 3 years, with a total assessment of 587. In 1888 brother David L. Plett moved to Neuanlage, with his part of the village farm being continued by Jakob. On the dissolution of the Blumenhof village in 1887, Cornelius Plett Sr. obtained the NE24-7-6E which he sold to son Jakob L. Plett for \$900 by Deed of Land registered on March 9, 1889, as No. 7393.

Maria and Jakob established their home on the ridge along the north side of the NE24-7-6E, adjacent to the road named in honour of C. S. Plett in 1996.<sup>1209</sup> Originally Jakob and Maria lived in a house that had been moved out of the old Blumenhof village. Around 1890 they built a new house and barn joined together under one roof line.

Jakob L. Plett enjoyed farming and was progressive in his financial affairs. He had a mixed farm and dairy. The brothers Abraham, David and Jakob L. Plett each had 100 acre River Lots, a mile west of Ste. Anne, which they used as hay land. In 1904 Jakob purchased 240 acres of land in the Ekron district, being the SW1/4 and E 1/2 of NW 31-6-7E, where he helped a number of his children to get established. In 1915, anticipating a move south, Jakob purchased half a section of land (320 acres) in Satanta, Kansas. Nephew Bernhard D. Doerksens owned the other half of the section.

**Workers:** Starting in 1890 the Mennonite farmers in the East Reserve hired ethnic Germans who had recently emigrated from Russia or Poland. Frequently these workers originated in Prussia and were referred to as "Prie'se", meaning Prussians. Often these workers were already familiar with the Mennonites from the "old" country. Nephew Peter A. Plett recalled that Prussians were frequently hired for special jobs such as clearing brush from the pasture, cutting firewood, and of course, during the busy harvesting seasons.

One of the earliest Prie'se working in the area was 13 year-old Johann Reidel, listed in the 1891 census as a worker with the Jakob L. Plett family. Clements Richter was another "Preis" who worked for the Pletts and others around 1895. On March 6, 1895, Maria together with employee, Clements Richter, went to brother-in-law Cornelius L. Pletts' to help butcher hogs. It seems that Jakob was busy elsewhere that day.

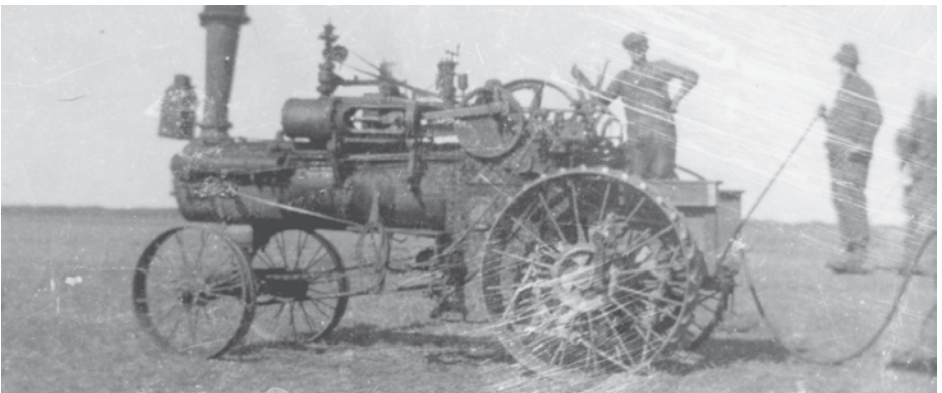
Maria and Jakob had 15 children of whom 12 reached adulthood. Only two were boys and so in the Plett family, the girls had to do the work of boys. This meant choring, making hay, plowing, and whatever else needed to be done. It stands to reason that Jakob L. Plett needed more hired help than brothers Abraham and David.



*The Jakob L. Plett threshing outfit ready to roll. Belching and snorting, the big steel monster made its way from farmer to farmer in the district.*



*The water wagon was an important element of the threshing outfit, supplying water both to the threshing workers and horses, as well as for steam engine boiler.*



*Jakob L. Plett Case 15/30 steam engine with Friedensfelder workers. Threshing machine photos - courtesy of Mrs. C. J. K. Plett.*

**Threshing:** As a young man Jakob had helped with his father's threshing outfit, learning the business. Around 1890 Jakob and brother Abraham purchased an upright stationary steam engine and went into the custom threshing business. In 1981, Jakob W. Friesen recalled that in 1904 Jakob L. Plett purchased a new Case 15/30 Steam engine to replace his previous 15/30 Case steam engine.

Jakob's eyesight was poor and so he usually hired an engineer to run the outfit for him. His nephews Peter P. Wohlgemuth and David P. Reimer worked for him for many years. In the later years sons Cornelius and Jakob also worked on the threshing outfit. Historian John C. Reimer, Steinbach, worked for Jakob L. Plett from 1918 to 1920 as "separator man." Many of the men in the threshing gang were Prussians. Reimer recalled that Plett was a fair employer who paid a reasonable wage and treated employees with respect and courtesy. The food was good and the tools and equipment needed to maintain the machinery were in good order. Reimer noted that these traits were not that common among employers at the time.<sup>1210</sup>

Jakob did custom threshing most of his adult life. It was a great joy and interest to him. He had a string of regular customers in the Blumenhof, Ekron, and Friedensfeld districts. The steam engine was sold in 1930 causing Jakob many a tear as it left the yard for the last time. His 50 year involvement with custom threshing and steam engines had left him fond memories.

**Journal, 1905-6:** At the centre of this large family and busy enterprise was Maria Koop Plett, a dynamic and well-organized woman who was intricately involved in every facet of its operation. She faithfully kept a journal from 1905 and onward, a source of much information regarding the family.

The journal opens with the matter-of-fact title; "noteworthy events". Her mind for the first several days was preoccupied with the forthcoming marriage of her daughter Sara. She wrote: "On Nov 11, Sara held her Verlobung [engagement party]. On the 12th we were in Blumenort for the worship services. On the 11th we took the bridal couple to Neuanlage and visited at [brother] Johann Koops and [sister] Peter Klassen. On the 14th the bridal couple went to Heuboden [near New Bothwell and Kleefeld] and Katharina and Margaretha went to Penners. It snowed very hard. On the 19th of November David Siemens, Sara Plett, Johan R. Toews and Anna B. Reimer were betrothed."

On December 3, Maria noted that her niece Katharina, daughter of sister Gertrude and Abraham L. Plett, married Martin K. Friesen. This notation heralds the close relationship between the three brothers Plett - Abraham, David and Jakob, married to the three sisters Koop - Gertrude, Helena and Maria. Even their families were similar: Maria and Gertrude had 12 children each, Helena had 13, all 37 of the double cousins having several playmate cousins similar in age, outlook and even resembling each other. They also shared the same names and in order to keep everyone separate, they added the initial of their father's first names before their mother's maiden name, so that the Jakob L. Plett children, for example, were known as Maria J. K. Plett, etc. The three couples sometimes stayed overnight when they visited each other, even though they only lived a mile apart. It was said that when the three sisters got together to visit they



would talk and laugh so hard that their stomachs and limbs would shake.

On Dec 8, 1905, the relationship became even closer when daughter Maria, age 19, married Klaas K. Friesen, twin brother to Martin who had married Maria's closest friend and cousin Katharina A. K. Plett only five days earlier.<sup>1211</sup> The strong Vollwirt tradition among the Plett and Koop clans was evident from the fact that both Katharina and Maria Jr. were subject to some teasing from siblings regarding the suitability of their marriages to sons of a "poor" pioneer school teacher.

By the 20th of December Maria turned her attention to more routine matters. On the 20th they slaughtered pigs, on the 25th - Christmas Day, "visiting at David Pletts". On January 29th, 1906, "father and [son-in-law] Klaas go to the forest" returning on Feb 3, leaving Maria completely in charge of the Wirtschaft. On the 5th they went again.

Maria was conscious of events in the community. She noted when merchant Klaas Reimer, Steinbach, died February 9th and that "his funeral was held on the 13th." The 21st and 22nd they ground feed, "they" referring presumably to father and son-in-law Klaas. On the 22nd Klaas went to the forest, joined the next day by a second son-in-law David Siemens. On the 24th, David Pletts together with Maria's widowed mother Katharina Koop came for a visit. On the 26th the men folk went to the forest returning the next day.

Maria developed a relatively consistent pattern in her recording: the cyclical operations of the farm, the activities of the children often as related to farm work, visiting and visitors, attendances at worship services - usually in Blumenort or Steinbach, deaths, births and marriages in the community and weather. During the months of April and May, for example, Maria was preoccupied with seeding operations, although on April 11 she made a relatively rare reference to domestic chores: "father split wood and we washed." The next day a more typical entry, April 12, "we cleaned seed wheat" indicating she herself was involved.

Easter was upon them and like traditional Mennonites everywhere they followed the ecclesiastical calendar, celebrating the birth of Christ over a one week period. May 12, was Good Friday, and "worship services were held here." Although the Blumenhoffers were included in the Blumenort church district, they regularly held their own worship services in the school house commencing in 1904.

On May 14, Jakob L. Plett, whom Maria always refers to as father, wrote a letter to Heinrich Loewen [cousin and minister in Jansen, Neb.]. On the 15th, Easter, Jakob and Maria visited at Abraham Pletts. The next day, they attended worship services in Blumenort and visited her brother Jakob after church. On the 17th they attended an auction sale at the Klaas Reimer store and "father wrote a letter to Johann Friesens. After faspas, we went to the railway [Giroux]". On April 18th, they were again at the railway and "father started to seed." Maria's entry for the 19th revealed that the Pletts had gone to the railway station several times to help her younger brother Peter B. Koop, nephew Abraham A. K. Plett, and neighbour Jakob Schellenberg, entrain for Herbert, Saskatchewan, as they left at "3 o'clock in the night."

On April 23rd "father finished seeding the wheat." On the 25th, a nice

rain; on the 26th they ploughed the garden and started making the garden, on the 28th, finished seeding oats, and received a card from H. Loewen. The 29th, worship services and "Jakob Reimers from Steinbach were here".

And so on and so forth, Maria recorded the passing of the seasons, the lives of the family, all in a factual and unpretentious way: "May 1, planted potatoes, May 2, a fine rain, May 3, I planted in the garden." She must have been fond of horses. On May 14th she noted: "Dall's foal died." Maria generally noted only one or perhaps two significant items in an entry.

On May 15th Jakob L. Plett left for Herbert, Saskatchewan, again leaving Maria with full responsibility for the farm. On the 16th she and daughter Maria went visiting at brother Jakob Koops. On the 20th, she and daughter Tien attended the worship services in Steinbach. On the 21st and 22nd, "we washed". On the 23rd, daughter Maria and her husband Klaas went to Winnipeg. The 24th was Ascension Day and "there were two worship services here [Blumenort]. The ministers Cornelius and Jakob Friesen [from Nebraska] preached. Mother came here for night. On the 25th, mother, the David Plettsche, and I went to Johann Janzens." On the 26th "Peter Pletts had returned from Herbert." On the 27th "I attended worship services two times in Steinbach. Jakob Kroeker [Bishop from Rosenort] and Martin Doerksen [Meade] preached. On the 28th "father returned from Herbert and we were at David Pletts. The girls cleaned in the church."

**Journal, 1916:** Maria started her journal in 1905 when her family was relatively young. It seems worthwhile to take another extract from the journal from about 10 years later, to see whether any changes in patterns are evident.

Certainly the farm and the family have grown significantly during the decade. Aug 14, "We again drove to the other farm. I went along to Klaas Friesens" who by now had purchased part of the Ekron farm. "We were also in Steinbach at the store and I stopped in at uncle Peter [K.] Barkman." Sunday, the 16th, "We were at Abram L. Pletts to visit grandmother", meaning Maria's mother who made her home with her sister Gertrude. The 22nd, "We were at the funeral for the Tante Abr. Reimersche. I plucked the old goose." The 24th "They went with the threshing outfit to Cor. P. Wohlgemuths and started with the threshing." The 25th, "[Daughter] Marie was here." The 27th, "I went to Heinrich R. Reimers." The 28th, "I went to David L. Pletts, and in the evening to Klaas R. Reimers to pick up father, Cor. and Jakob." The 28th, "Father cut the last seeded oats. After dinner Cor. again went to the threshing machine."

Sept 2, 1916. "They came to Klaas Friesens with the threshing machine and threshed. The 5th, "They threshed at Peter Klassens." On the 6th, "They started threshing on the farm at our place."... Sept. 13th, "Cor. was plowing. Jakob was working the summerfallow." Sept 22. "Grandmother was here. In the evening the girls went to Klaas Friesens to bring their children to our place." The 28th, "We started to dig out potatoes." Oct. 5, 1916. "Father and Johann again went to the threshing machine."

It seems that Maria is less involved with the actual farm operations that she had been 10 years earlier. To some extent this reflects the fact that the family had prospered. For example, Jakob - who had poor eyesight - now hired a

foreman to run his threshing outfit.

Maria was closely involved with her family which by now included many grandchildren. She had more time for visiting with her sisters and other women in the community. The Pletts were receiving more company. This was around the time when Jakob's older brothers, Cornelius and Peter, and their families were moving to Satanta, Kansas. The Pletts were sure to attend the worship services when the Ohms from Kansas are visiting, reflecting their own interest in a southward move.

**Character:** Maria's journals reveal certain character traits. However, her organized, matter-of-fact recording of daily events, does not tell a great deal about who she was as a person. In 1997 two of Maria's daughters - Elisabeth, Mrs. Jakob K. Dueck, born 1902, and Aganetha, Mrs. John F. Warkentin, born 1907 - were still alive and able to relate a few anecdotes about their mother. The sisters also had the distinction at the time of being the last two survivors of the 75 grandchildren of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) and Elisabeth Loewen (1822-1903).

Aganetha recalled that she and sister Minna, being only a year apart, always slept together in the parent's bedroom on the main floor. Their parents would regularly kneel in prayer at night before retiring. In keeping with Biblical teachings, prayers at meal time were silent.

Evidently Maria suffered frequently from the "Kolcjhe" or colic. This was particularly problematic when they were plucking geese, which was done from time to time during the summer. Whenever she plucked geese she was sure to get nauseous almost as if she was allergic to something in the feathers. She suffered from *Kolcjbe* (colic) whenever she got upset, such as in 1916, when her daughters Sarah and Katharine and their families were boarding the train at the station in Giroux, on their way to new homes in Satanta, Kansas. Maria was so upset while they were saying goodbye that she got the Kolcjhe and vomited.

On one occasion, Maria had said something, to which daughter Aganetha replied, "Shame on you" being somewhat aggravated. To this Maria merely said, "Some day you will be sorry for what you said." Only rarely did Maria punish or threaten her children. One time, Aganetha and Minna, who were next to each other in age and always together, decided they would smoke and went to the outhouse where there were old catalogues which they used for rolling a cigarette made of dried leaves. This was the only time that Aganetha remembered that they were punished by their mother.

On another occasion, mother had found out that Minna had matches. She came to Minna, talked to her calmly and took the matches. The girls had enough respect for their mother so that punishment was usually not necessary.

Physically Maria was of medium build with blue eyes. Her facial features were resembled a lot by grandson Jakob P. Friesen. She generally wore long wide skirts with a pleated top and usually wore a kerchief. Jakob was the shortest of his brothers, being only 5' 6". He and brother Abraham resembled each other except that Abraham was several inches taller and of slightly bigger build. Jakob L. Plett was a little more reserved than some of his brothers when he met someone for the first time, but in a short time he would be very friendly and hospitable.<sup>1212</sup>

**1918 Influenza:** In 1918 the Hanover Steinbach area was struck by the Spanish influenza epidemic which killed over 20 million people worldwide. Some 30 people died in the Steinbach area alone within a period of little more than a month, including prominent local merchant Jakob W. Reimer. In most instances the tragedy and pathos of these events has long ago dissipated into the darkness of unrecorded history. In a few cases the memory has been kept alive in oral tradition and contemporary journals.

The story of Maria Koop Plett and her daughter Maria Plett Friesen is one of these instances. Familial love would not allow their memory, their voices and their stories, to pass untold. Through the journal of Maria Koop Plett and the vivid and dramatic memory of granddaughter Maria Friesen Peters, some details of those tragic events have been preserved.

Maria's journal for September and October reveals a busy but happy family. The tragic events unfolding were framed by a family gathering on Sunday, September 22, 1918, when the entire Jakob L. Plett clan was gathered.

"On September 18, 1918, the threshing was finished. Sept. 22, 1918 the girls had gone to worship service in Steinbach. We had many visitors. Peter and Lein came from Morris and also Klaas Friesens. Also Dav. and Cor. Siemens. So we once again had all our family together, and our joy was great."

"Sunday, October 6, 1918, Martin K. Friesens were here. Gerd and Trud were digging out their potatoes. Corn went for oats. On the 9th Mrs. David L. Plett and Mrs. Isaac R. Reimer were here. The girls helped Tin. cleaning house. On the 11th they helped Sara clean rooms. The weather is very nice. Sunday, the 13th, in the morning we had baptismal service here. In the afternoon we again had worship service and Rev. John K. Friesen from Morris presented the Word. On the 14th school started and Peter P. Wohlgemuth and Peter Klassen are the teachers."

"On the 19th Trud, Anna, Lies, Agnes, Minna and I drove to Klaas Friesens as they were threshing there. There is a funeral in Blumenort. They had buried the Elder Abram Penner. Sunday, October 20, there is a worship service in Steinbach. We were at Peter T. Wiebes together with Cor. K. Siemens. The 22nd, I was at David L. Pletts to visit grandmother [Mrs. John Koop Sr.]. Klaas came in the evening and got Gerd and Lies as they wanted to leave for Winnipeg on the 23rd. Sunday, the 24th, we had a worship service in the new church. We were at the sister, the Peter Reimersche. On the 28th they finished the threshing. We brought in cabbage."

"On November 1 Sara and Cor. Siemens were here. On the 3rd there was a worship service in Steinbach and we were at Klaas Siemens. On the 4th the boys finished the plowing at the farm there. On the 5th father drove to Steinbach for brotherhood. Gerd and Trud were at Klaas Friesens. They wanted to bring their potatoes into the basement. On the 6th we slaughtered hogs. John B. Reimer was here. On the 8th Peter and Ann P. Wohlgemuth were here. On the 9th we were at Abr. L. Pletts at grandmothers. On the 10th worship service was held here. None of us went. In the evening Klaas Friesens were here. On the 11th I had gone along with father to the sister Wohlgemuthsche. On the 12th father

went to the sister Wohlgemuthsche. I was at David Siemens. The girls are washing.”

“On the 13th Father had gone to Steinbach for flour...”

**Deaths:** And then it all “stopped”. By November 13, 1918, Maria was so ill that she unable to continue making her daily entries. Nonetheless, she never referred to her own illness or suffering. Husband, Jakob L. Plett now took over keeping the family journal, providing a day-to-day log of the unfolding tragedy.

“My beloved wife has kept this book until now. As she is no longer able to do so I will try to continue this record in her place.”

“On the 14th Gertruda and Elizabeth drove to K. Friesens to wash and found that Maria was sick. On the 16th they returned and they both were also sick. However as Friesens were in great need of help, mother and Anna drove there on the 17th. By the 18th Anna was also sick already. However as things had not improved with Maria, mother and I again went to Friesens and brought the little Gret home with us. We had the hope that things were improving with Maria. By the 19th Corn., Margaretha, Aganetha, and mother were also sick.”

“However as matters had again become more serious with Maria they phoned and we drove over and also had to return Gret to them. Maria did not expect to become well again. As mother already felt too sick to drive over, I and Mrs. Corn. Siemens went there and stayed overnight. During this night Maria was very troubled regarding her salvation. On the 20th I drove home. [Katharina stayed there another night]. When I came home Jakob was also sick so that only I and Minna were not yet confined to a sick bed. Although Minna and I became sick it was not that serious. Gertruda was now somewhat better so that she could help us a little. [Later she was again completely confined to bed]. On the 21st Katharina also returned home and Margaretha Fast stayed there [at Friesens] for night. On the 22nd David Siemens drove there and stayed for night. Maria again had great concern over her salvation. During the night Margaretha was also in great anguish over her salvation. Corn. Siemens were here. Then also Joh. R. Toews, Klaas F. Penner, Cor. F. Unger and Jakob T. Wiebe were here.”

“On [Friday] the 23rd the wives of Cor. Siemens and Martin Friesen drove to K. K. Friesens and as Maria’s condition was very serious, Cor. Siemens also went there for the night. During this night Maria died at 3 a.m. in the morning [of Sunday the 24th]. Joh. K. Klassens and Ab. L. Pletts were here for night. Sunday, the 25th, David L. Pletts also came here for dinner and also stayed overnight.” “During the night, mother was seriously ill for a time. I do not know what occurred on the 26th. On Tuesday, the 27th, they - namely, Martin K. Friesen and David L. Plett, brought Maria [to the window] in her coffin for viewing and she was buried after a small funeral. Margaretha Fast [who had been nursing Maria in her home] came and stayed for night on the 28th and [the next day] did the wash and cleaned the floors.”<sup>1213</sup>

**Daughter Maria:** Daughter Maria had been sick of tuberculosis already for some time when she got the flu. When Maria, Mrs. Jakob L. Plett, realized that daughter Maria was mortally ill, she said to her, "Now we must part."

Maria, Mrs. Klaas K. Friesen, died on November 24, 1918. After her death her body was brought to the window of the Jakob L. Plett home in Blumenhof so the family could see her once last time. The whole family was so ill they could not even attend the funeral. Maria was buried in the Blumenhof cemetery.

Maria's funeral was held at the Blumenhof meeting house where she was also buried. Abe P. Friesen, Blumenhof, remembered attending the funeral of Mrs. Klaas K. Friesen held at the "old" Blumenhof school on SW25-7-6E, where the memorial cairn was erected in 1991. Only about 25 people were present. He also remembered that his mother, Katharina Plett Friesen heated tar on the stove as the smoke was supposed to protect against the flu.

Maria, Mrs. Jakob L. Plett, on seeing her daughter so peacefully at rest, is to have remarked from her death bed: "If only she also could be at rest like her daughter." And so it was to be. Mother passed away from the flu on December 13, 1918.

The other children were all sick in bed at the time. It was recalled that the whole family had come to a momentous spiritual peace during this time of affliction.

But Jakob L. Plett was devastated by the tragic and untimely death of his wife and eldest daughter and suffered a nervous breakdown. At the 1945 *Plettentag*, son Jakob J. K. Plett described the situation: "It was a dismal time which always will vividly remain in our memories. Father had to live through a time of severe testing. A short time later father drove to a funeral in the Morris area where three persons had died of the flu and were carried together to rest in their graves. This, however, in our opinion he should not have done as his own personal suffering was still too fresh in his emotions and so his nerves gave way. Accordingly he was brought home by son-in-law Peter Siemens. For some time thereafter he was in considerable anxiousness respecting his salvation and spent much time in prayer and supplication. From this time forth it seemed he was very preoccupied with writing poetry and frequently wrote his thoughts down on paper in the form of poems."<sup>1214</sup>

Jakob L. Plett was so distraught he was unable to continue the journal entries for a time.<sup>1215</sup> He made his last entry in Maria's journal on November 27, 1918, the day of daughter Maria's funeral.

**Remarriage, 1920:** After he had been widowed for about two years, Jakob L. Plett remarried to Aganetha Kroeker (1861-1930), the widow Jakob K. Rempel, and daughter of Ältester Jakob M. Kroeker of Rosenhof.<sup>1216</sup> They shared some ten years of joys and sorrows together. By some accounts it was not a successful marriage. Just after his remarriage Jakob L. Plett built a spacious two-story house in which his grandchildren Ruth and Waldon Doerksen are still living today.

On November 18, 1921, Jakob again started making entries in the journal which his wife had maintained for so many years and continued the record until April 25, 1925.



*Young people having fun in front of the Jakob L. Plett house, ca. 1940. The Peter Harms children, siblings to Justina, wife of Cornelius J. K. Plett. View to the east.*



*Photo on the front porch, ca. 1920. Jakob L. and Maria Plett had 10 beautiful daughters. Anna, later Mrs. John U. Kornelsen, on the left. Photos courtesy - Mrs. C. J. K. Plett.*

**Poetry:** Jakob L. Plett was a poet. He collected his own poetry and that written by others in journals. At least one of his poems was published in the *Steinbach Post*. His poems were written in the beautiful Danziger High German vocabulary used among the Russian Mennonites. Historian Royden Loewen writes that “Jakob L. Plett is remembered as a gifted poet.”<sup>1217</sup>

One of his poems “When I recall the Yesteryears” was translated by Margaret Penner Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan in 1983. It deals with Jakob’s time of grieving and reflection after Maria’s death, reflecting his spiritual journey.

When I recall the yesteryears  
When I was young and strong,  
When mid its joys and pleasures  
No care was found among,  
O, how could life have been so good  
When I could work as strong men should  
    Yet as the years rolled onward  
They brought with them their sorrow;  
Life’s troubles crowded on me  
And had less joy to borrow.  
With each increase in family  
So, too, responsibility,  
And cares began to weigh.

    For when my children all were young  
And innocence was theirs,  
Life still went well; I did not see  
Its pitfalls and its snares.  
But as their childhood days took wing,  
Their innocence a bygone thing,  
As one needs must, I awakened.

    A sinner, I, and sinner still,  
E’en through my best endeavour;  
O, could I be more as I ought,  
And all sin’s urges sever!  
Through godly walk and wisdom’s lore,  
And set a good example.

    O Lord, look down upon my pain  
And help my load to bear;  
Where I have sinned and gone astray,  
Prevent me from complete despair,  
Teach me, if error I should make,  
That I might change the course I take  
While life and breath is mine.

    For swift and swifter fly the hours;  
Each moment death is nearer.  
So help while it yet is day  
To see the way still clearer.



My children all, who follow me,  
Grant each Thy heaven eternally!  
O Lord, to us grant mercy!

There we will praise with grateful joy,  
Our adoration bring,  
With new tongues hallelujahs raise,  
A new song we will sing.  
There never will the foe molest,  
And there at last for aye we'll rest  
From weariness and sorrow.<sup>1218</sup>

An interesting poem entitled, "Ein Bruchlied aus Prieszen" (A Breach Song in Prussia), recounts the tragic flooding and devastation in the village of Fürstenwerder, when the mighty Vistula River overflowed its banks. Fürstenwerder was the Plett ancestral village in Polish-Prussia, where Jakob's grandfather and older aunts had been born and raised. As such it speaks for the power of oral tradition over time and space and also the three hundred year-old spelling forms and expression used by that generation.<sup>1219</sup>

1. Ach Gott wie groesze herzeleid,  
Begegnet uns zur Winterzeit,  
Ein Grausam Flut und Eis,  
Schikt Gott das uns der Dam zerreiszt.

5. Am Freitag war um Sechsuhr,  
da kamen alle Leut hervor,  
Mit haender ringen angst geschrei,  
Ach was es fuer ein jammer sie.

8. O weh und jammer grosz gefahr,  
Schrie Man und Weib noch immerdar,  
Das Arme Vieh das Lit gefahr,  
Das war der Tod vor Augen dar.

9. Am neuen Jahr den ersten Tag,  
Da Kriegt der Dam ein groszes Loch,  
Wir Arbeiten mit grosz und Klein  
Bis das der dam auch Fiel hinein.

10. Da braust das Wasser grusam sehr,  
Wie ich auch jetzt noch melden werd,  
Fuenf Heuser nahm er mit sich fort,  
Und bracht sie hin am andern Ort.

13. O weh des Feorster Werder Land,  
Das ist verschommen und versand,  
Gedenken wird es Kindes Kind,  
Wie Grausam unser Land verrint.

15. Triebt dich Wasser und Wellen fort,  
Ja gae an einem andern Ort  
Sei unverzagt, sei wohl gemuth.  
Gott hat ein herz das immer ruth.<sup>1220</sup>

**Letters, 1924-1929.** Jakob L. Plett enjoyed writing. He corresponded with brother Cornelius in Satanta, Kansas. A number of these letters, starting December 18, 1924, and continuing until Feb. 18, 1929, have been preserved.

The first letter dated December 18, 1924, opens with a well composed exposition of Jakob's spiritual views: "I can report to you, firstly, that we are still in the spiritual battle field, in order that we might attain the victory and the crown. although only in great weakness; for let us not cease to resist the evil enemy of our souls even though the flesh often finds this very difficult, to constantly stand embattled, so that the good spirit that works the good within us is very inhibited through the lusts of the flesh, and at times, is almost vanquished. And when we do not have the power-generating teaching and example of our Saviour and His Apostles as a guide before us, then we may well entertain thoughts of abandoning the fight, but now we are always again newly inspired to climb higher in order to overcome the tall mountain of all our temptations, for there - beyond the starry sky - there is our beautiful land, etc."

Jakob notes that B. D. Doerksens have been visiting in the area and "are presently in Morris and want to leave for home this evening." It was quite cold "...too cold to go to church...the covered sleigh was already full with the children who had gone and were already back by half one [o'clock]." He complained about the cold and that it "is costing much firewood and feed."

Jakob writes about the material situation, noting they have "...a large haystack in the farm by Klaas Friesens...but the people dearly wish to buy it from us." They had also made hay "11 miles south of here, 10 tons at 70 cents a ton." They have purchased a good supply of firewood, "for the total of \$20.00, approximately 25-30 cord, most of it already cut down but not hauled home, although it is not far, approximately one mile, purchased from neighbour Gorrie."

Jakob reviewed grain and livestock prices noting that based on the prices they should not be raising any pigs at all, "but prices fluctuate....we live in hope, whether it be in the temporal or also in the spiritual realm. The greater the diligence one puts into the temporal Wirtschaft, the more returns one can expect therefrom. And likewise also in the spiritual; and the harder the struggle and strife against the sin which is always seeking to cling to us, the more glorious shall be our victory..."

Jakob reported that "this year we have actually seeded somewhat more wheat than last year and have received 25 bushels per acre and already have it dry in the granary, also the barley, rye and most of the oats."

Like his brother David, Jakob is extremely concerned regarding the battle for the Gemeinde. He noted: "A person cannot receive anything if the all-wise, world-ruling heavenly Father does not allow it to happen. For then all human knowledge and preconceived conceptions are in vain. And thus various efforts and attempts and changes are being made - or at least being attempted - in the spiritual and Gemeinde work and Ordnung. For example, the way it also is now with the punishment and admonition of Gemeinde members who had fallen away will not be sufficient in every case, for one who no longer allows himself to be led by the spirit of God, will - in the final analysis - not be helped enough by

all the admonition and finally even shunning. What kind of fruit the Gemeinde will receive from such a change will be demonstrated over time. Let us hope for the best.”

Jakob L. Plett is happy to note that son Jakob and daughter Aganetha were both among the current group of baptismal candidates, “which makes us truly glad, if only they might have truly converted themselves to God and not only to people, which is already so often the case in these perilous times, namely, that they might rightly convert themselves to God.” Evidently some of his younger children must be playing instruments and singing upstairs, as Jakob adds, “The way I presently also hear singing by both sexes above my head, and harmony singing at that: is this supposed to be understood as serving God? If only that might be the case. The children have much company, notwithstanding the great cold...”

On December 7, 1924, there was a brotherhood in Steinbach and the issue of harmony singing had come up. Jakob was disturbed: “We, however, were more or less united, that we should not permit the same, only a few younger brethren wished to oppose this. In this the newly immigrated Russlander will be damaging to us, and yet, if we did not already have such brethren who were already supporting this in the worship services, then the Russlander by themselves would not be so impolite. And thus other things sneak in such as the use of playing instruments, which some already cannot see as damaging, even if not in the worship services, then at least in the houses. And likewise also the smoking of tobacco, so dearly wishes to slip in....Indeed, it would be so much easier for our youths to press forward upon the narrow way, if they could see a brighter light shining from those of us who hold ourselves as being converted and enlightened.” Jakob himself acknowledged his failings: “I myself still do not feel completely free in the knowledge that I cannot go forth as a model to my children as I would wish, with good works and admonitions. Indeed, far too often my fallen nature wishes too much to press forth, if at times I am placed under too much testing, for then I am often lacking much in love and gentleness. But, in that case, I know of no other counsel but to confess my misdeeds and again to seek to do better. For so dearly, I would wish to be saved together with my children. And the time of my departure, speeds closer with the close of every year....”

Jakob concludes with family news: “....Our daughter Helena with her youngest son Jakob was here as guest for a week. She came with daughter Anna (who is there working for Gerhard Siemens) by railway, and also departed that way with our children Margaretha, Jakob and Minna, up to Winnipeg, where Peter Siemens had come to meet them. Greit and Jakob are having their teeth brought into shape there. Son Corn. came home Tuesday, the 16th, who was also there working for Ger. Siemens. They are enlarging their house....”

In Jakob's letter of November 8, 1925, he mentioned their recent trip to Satanta, Kansas, and that “...it was not yet so very long since we were personally there.” He mentioned that they have done very little visiting and “we have not yet even been at the Geschwister Abram and David Pletts. That is too little.” Jakob explains that “mainly the reason is that the sister-in-law Isaak Plettsche is here in our care, already since August 17, and [we] want to keep her here until she has

been here three months....” He also notes that it is too cold for old people to be doing a lot of travelling, “like the Isaak Plettsche, for in the warm room she is fairly mobile and energetic, but the room must also be very warm.”

Jakob reports that although it is a little early they have already done their slaughtering: “We have already slaughtered for the winter and summer, namely, one cow and four large pigs. On the 26th, Monday, we slaughtered two pigs, of which I brought 153 pounds of lard to H. W. Reimers on Tuesday, the 27th, and received 25 cents a pound for it. We kept six gallons at home. Wednesday, the 18th, we slaughtered the cow. And on Thursday, the 29th, we slaughtered another two fat pigs. The beef froze immediately, and so I put it into bags and buried it in the barley, but then it got warm for a few days, so that the pork did not immediately freeze, and then I thought that perhaps we had been too impatient with the slaughtering. But now I think that the danger is past, for now everything is frozen hard. We also made ourselves a bunch of beef sausages, which I had also preserved in the barley like the last hog sausages, after I had smoked it well. We have also done our slaughtering this fall only with our own children, except for one day when Da. Pletten children, Abram and Margaretha, helped us. And yet, we have not yet finished the slaughtering, namely, hens and geese, still need to be done. This will also happen shortly.”

Jakob reported some news that their daughter had married: “The 3rd day of October was Verlobung and that with Johann U. Kornelsen, and [they] were married on the 11th by Peter P. Reimer in Steinbach. We believe this, but did not see it ourselves, for I, my wife, daughter Minna, together with the Isaak Plettsche, had not gone to the wedding; firstly, because we could not drive with the Plettsche, and also, because Minna had a very sore throat exactly at that time. The youngest, although not the last married couple, are presently still here; he goes out to work when possible, but this apparently will not be for long, for then they want to establish their hearth by his mother, for he and his brother Abe together have rented her land.”

At quarter to 5 p.m. Jakob noted that he must stop writing as “today he again has no servant to do the chores.” After finishing the chores Jakob returned to the house and resumed writing. He noted the fall of Ohm Martin T. Doerksen at Meade, “I can hardly believe it,” he lamented.

Jakob closed by passing on the Isaak Plettsche’s request that Cornelius should come to Manitoba “for she wants to see you one more time.” Jakob noted that if Cornelius has any thoughts of coming he should not delay for too long for “...she is tired of life and would gladly die soon. But it does not always go according to human wishes. She is often anxious regarding her son Isaak, which is partially not surprising.” Jakob requested confirmation that Peter L. Plett’s Sarah “is getting married and to whom?” He noted, “Apparently she is still under the ban” and that “her situation seems lamentable and this must be hard for Peter Pletts.” Jakob expresses positive thoughts for Sarah and his wish “That the living God might bring her to a righteous acknowledgement of her sins, in order that she might become saved, for it would certainly be horrible to fall into the hands of the living God.”

On March 8th, 1926, Jakob mentioned the death and funeral of the widow of Maria's cousin Cor. K. Rempel in Morris (Rosenort). But getting there at that time of year was not always easy: "And if we want to go to the funeral, then we must already depart from Giroux by train tomorrow at half nine in the morning. For it is not possible by car on this side and on the other side we cannot go by sleigh. Therefore we have no choice but to go by railway."

On March 5, 1926, Jakob thanked Cornelius for his letter of December 15, 1925, "which we received exactly on my birthday, namely, December 24, and read with great interest." Jakob was interrupted in his writing explaining: "I was interrupted in my writing, which happened thus: I was sitting in the guest room and writing while my beloved wife was in the kitchen and making supper for the children, namely, Corn. and Minna, who came from Morris to Giroux and had been picked up from there. Then I heard there was somebody at the door and talking hurriedly. I went to see who was there, and it was Cor. P. Wohlgemuth with his son Johann's bride, who are celebrating their wedding today, and for this purpose the mother of the bride had come along from Winnipeg with our children, and now Cor. Wohlgemuth wanted to pick her up from here."

Jakob also reported about his children: "Yesterday, we received guests, namely, our children Johann U. Kornelsens came with their daughter Margaretha - they had also been visiting at Morris for two weeks. And as guests we also had daughter Gertruda with son Anton and David Siemens' son Jakob, who had been brought to Niverville by Gerhard Siemens with his auto and from there Johann Kornelsens had picked them up by sleigh. For around here it is not possible to drive everywhere by auto."

The well-known newspaper correspondent Heinrich Rempel, Steinbach, had died "...having already completed his [last] report for the *Steinbach Post* on Feb. 27." Jakob referred to the tragic death of Johann Isaak, Ekron (son of cousin Peter Isaak): "It is an earnest warning to those still living [for someone] to actually fall dead while getting a load of wood in the forest, and before the load was even full. She, his wife, had had herself picked up by our Klaas Friesens to help Maria make a wool blanket. She had told him yet he should not go as it was too hard for him, for he had already had difficulties with his heart the entire summer and for this reason was in poor condition. In the evening when she had arrived back home, one of the school [age] children had already come to greet her with the lantern and had said, Papa is not even home yet. She had immediately gone to search for him. He was [found] on their land about a quarter mile away. She had found him there shrunken together, dead. Oh, what an instantaneous parting."

"The Isaak Plettsche," Jakob reported, "has gone from us....to Peter Ungers....and from there she came to P. U. Kornelsens....and in the meantime also a while at her daughter-in-law, the Isaak Plettsche. What do you think, will we also have to move around like that some day? Let us hope not." He writes that "Geschwister Abram Pletts to a certain extent want to go into retirement, in that they have sold the farm where they lived to Johann R. Penners, and will also have to move. They want to hold an auction sale at the end of this month....In the evening Abram Plett stopped in here on his way home from the woods."

The battle over the Gemeinde is never far from Jakob's mind: "On the 20th we had a long and important brotherhood, and the saddest part was that a couple, the Ab. D. Reimers, had to be put into the ban.....Indeed, it finally had to come to that, for we have had so much to do with him regarding the smoking of tobacco.....and now a much bigger sin has emerged of which we were not even aware. O, if only he could now make righteousness working penance, and convert himself to God and not to people, that I would wish from the heart. Further there was also much talk about the Sunday Schools, which have already been implemented in Steinbach. The reason for the Sunday Schools is given that the children will have an opportunity to be instructed in German. The Blumenhof school district now has the arrangement that we can send the children to school on Saturday mornings in order to learn German."

On July 6, 1926, Jakob L. Plett wrote about a day of visiting: "We had actually wanted to go to Johann E. Friesens' but since we had not been at the sister Wohlgemuthsche for so long and needed to drive over her yard anyway, we wanted to properly visit her if she was home. Since she was not home, we drove to Friesens, but they had gone to Prairie Rose for worship services and possibly also brotherhood for as we had heard they might possibly again receive the Abram D. Reimers (who had been under excommunication for some time). Then we drove back and wanted to visit at the widow Kl. R. Pennersche, but she was not home. Then we drove further and wanted to visit at the sister P. Reimersche, surely she would be home, but that too was in vain. At this point, we gave up and during the drive back home I thought over our dilemma, why this might be happening to us in this way, and then it occurred to me, I should certainly write a letter to you. When we arrived at home, my wife wanted to go to C. F. Ungers. I replied, but they are not home. Yes, she said, they have guests, Dietrich Bartels are there. I said, you can go, for now I wanted to go to Kansas.....and I sat down and gave myself over to the journey."

The brothers Abram, David and Jakob believed in traditional names. When son Cornelius named his son Archie, David L. Plett is to have said, he would not ruin a nice looking boy like that with such a foreign name. In his letter Jakob L. Plett writes: "Further take notice that our children J. K. Pletten have a daughter since the 26th, her name I do not understand nor do I know how to write it. I find it remarkable. They are presently living in Prairie Rose, where they have built a cottage for themselves by her parents."

Jakob often wrote about the farming situation: "...At places we have conditions too fertile, for the barley is already lodged before it even has ears, and before it has righted itself, rain and wind already come again, and then it is lodged even better since it is always getting taller and heavier. The rain here is going in strips. Before yesterday, it had rained here so hard that we could not work the summer fallow yesterday. Whereas there were not even dripping at the other farm by K. K. Friesens and, in Blumenort, not a lot either. We also had some hail here....Indeed, this time we were spared hail damage, but what can still come before we have cut the harvest we certainly do not know. It would surely be every farmer's prayer that the beloved God would protect us from

weather damage, but our God knows best what is good and beneficial for us. Oh, may we too truly be a blessing and pleasing unto Him and bring forth a good many fruits, that should surely always be our greatest endeavour. For like fruit trees in the garden, we too shall be known by the fruits.”

The letter of November 7, 1926, opened with a quote from the 23rd Psalm: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” Jakob has heard that Cornelius’ eyesight is becoming poorer. “Will you really not be able to write anymore letters?” he queries, going on to commiserate: “And how long will the days not be for you, especially on the Sundays, when you cannot even see enough to read, for reading is certainly the last diversion of time for old people who are no longer able to farm.”

“We have also sold some land,” Jakob reported. “Namely, there by K. Friesen, we have sold to the neighbour Thiessen for \$25.00 per acre without downpayment....but from the moment he must pay four percent interest....In the beginning I found this difficult, to sell the land, but what is the use, for I can no longer look after it the way I would like. Especially the last fall when there was so much rain on the land, so that it was almost impossible to do anything and then always the driving there and back. I think I will still have work enough on this farm, for our workers also always seem to be getting fewer.” Jakob referred to the constant rain that fall and that “Brother David is still in Rosewood with his machine and cannot finish the threshing there either.”

On June 6, 1927, Jakob reported that they have been “invited for the funeral in Steinbach of the aged sister-in-law Isaak Plettsche at one o’clock in the afternoon. She died on the evening of the 25th at Isaak R. Reimers in Pr. Rose....”

In his letter of October 16, 1927, Jakob reported that they “are well physically, except for the occasional rheumatism or lumbago.” Jakob again testified of his faith, voicing a remarkable understanding of the Holy Gospel: “And we still also find ourselves upon the battle field and pilgrim’s way toward our home on high, where I would wish that all of us together would once be able to reach and where no more parting and being separated from each other will ever again cause us pain. But it costs more that one thinks in the beginning, to be true with the gifts bestowed unto us and to remain in the strength of the first love and until we are seen departing the battle ground. Indeed, we are met by so many temptations and often quite difficult [issues] in the material and spiritual respects. It is particularly important to me what Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter five, verse 13: ‘For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.’ The question now is, what all do we understand as being included in the freedom to which we have been called? I understand it that he has the law of Moses in mind, of which we have been freed, but not, however, from the law of the good Spirit, for in verse 16 he says, ‘This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.’ Now the question arises again, what all do we understand as belonging to the lusts of the flesh? Oh, they are so many, and often want to take over in our works. And in the same chapter in verses 19, 20, 21, Paul described what all belongs to works of the flesh and says, that ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.’ And therefore this always remains

for us to reflect upon as long as we wile here, that through the freedom within which we live, we do not give too much liberty to the flesh, be it in whatever it may."

"Indeed, beloved brother, the natural eyesight has been taken from you," Jakob continued, trying to comfort Cornelius. "But you nonetheless have a very good light according to the spirit - a much better one than I, and you are able to peer much better into the future than I, and thus you are finally much better off than I. For although I still have fairly good eyesight physically, yet, every thing which we see with our natural eyes is perishable and only of short duration. I certainly do not wish for myself to be physically blind, but I would certainly wish to see better in the spiritual [realm] in order to finally be able to find the portals of heaven together with all those whom He has given me. May God grant it unto me, this is my most heartfelt wish." Jakob's faith is especially inspiring when compared to the dead and empty religious traditions and man-made laws and doctrines of Evangelical Fundamentalism adopted by many of his descendants.

Jakob also reported regarding their temporal circumstances: "...we have the summer behind us so to speak and know that we have again brought in the harvest, although only little, but - God be thanked - enough for our necessities. Indeed it seems somewhat constrained to us that we have only received so little here and in Kansas, almost nothing. Yet, we want to be very satisfied, for around here it is not the most serious. In Morris it has even been worse because of much rain, for our children, Jakob K. Duecks were not even able to seed everything they had planned in spring, and now they are still unable to cut that which has grown. and Gerhard W. Siemens have only been able to cut very little - it is not worth talking about and this is the same for many others there. The last news is that some there who were able to cut something are now unable to get it off the land because the sheaves are standing in water. Nor is everything here on this side cut either."

Jakob goes on to report about his own harvesting: "We have not been able to [cut] everything either, but it is only in the sloughs. Of Cornelius Wohlgeomuths' we recently heard say that they still have 60 acres of barley standing. We have threshed everything which we were able to cut. We are now plowing, which also has its difficulties because of the much rain, especially on the south side of our land where the soil is somewhat clayish. There the ground was already packed so hard together because of all the rain last fall and in spring and now again, that it is not possible to get the horse plow into the ground, and with the Fordson it is not possible either, for it must first dry....Son Cornelius together with David Pletten Abr. have gone out on a job, 220 miles behind Winnipeg, apparently to the west. Jakob J. K. Pletten have bought themselves a small farm of 40 acres in Prairie Rose from H. W. Reimer for \$40.00 per acre. It is all good cultivated farmland and the school is on their land....Son C. K. Siemens has again had bad experiences for a time: for one part, because his son Cor. has been sick to dying for a time - although better now, and in addition daughter Maria is again almost completely blind, so that they have to nurse her instead of her helping them."



In his letter of June 10, 1928, Jakob complimented Cornelius that his writing is better than expected. He must go and receive some guests for "Elisabeth, our daughter, has come here. She had come along yesterday evening with G. B. Kornelsens to P. B. Kroekers. From there she phoned that she wanted to be picked up and so Minna went with the horse and buggy, and picked her up together with her little daughters. G. B. Kornelsen's reasons for coming here was to visit their sick father (of which you will already have read in the *Steinbach Post*)."

"On Ascension Day," advised Jakob, "we went visiting to Morris with our children Johann F. Warkentins." Although his wife had been quick sickly, she "enjoyed it," but "once we were again home, other difficulties arose, or better said, her kidney disease deteriorated and in addition thereto a very painful bout with haemorrhoids....Son-in-law K. K. Friesen has not even once been at our children Jakob Plett, and since he was in such poor condition with his horses, he asked whether we might not be going and could take him along?"

Jakob himself had problems with rheumatism and had "had himself treated by doctor Kroeker..." a recent Russian immigrant. "I had myself electrocuted six times, and he also gave me a cream to rub on myself. I have also become much better." Jakob had taken his granddaughter Maria [Cornelius] Siemens to doctor Kroeker because of her trachoma, and she had stayed there for treatments: "On Ascension Day we drove with her to her father and brothers [in Morris] and at that time she could already see to read and write, and will apparently now soon be able to come home....but it again cost Siemens a lot of money, certainly \$60.00 or more with Kroeker."

Jakob referred to Cornelius' eyesight problems and encouraged him in that he "...believed firmly that in his youth he would have made himself familiar with the Holy Scripture and would already know much by memory, which will be a real comfort in your now perhaps not so enjoyable times."

"Something about our Wirtschaften," he added. "We have done the seeding together with our sons this summer. Partially because of my rheumatism but mostly because they have no horses and I had too many, and so I gave them the horses and equipment, and they first seeded ours and then their's in Pr. Rose....I also want to plow the fallow, but first want to spread the manure on the land, which shall start tomorrow if I have my way. I have hired my son Cornelius and A.Reimer's Heinrich for that purpose."

Brother Abram L. Plett had made some observations about the emigration movement in the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde in his letters and Jakob does likewise: "Things with the immigration do not truly want to go forward. The delegates had gone too early and had not been able to see anything there in two feet of snow. They seem to be completely discouraged, but apparently now have more optimism to continue farming here contently. Some, however, say that the issue is not completely dead yet. But of Isaak W. Reimers I have been told that they had sold their land and have bought different land in Pr. Rose."

Jakob tried to encourage brother Cornelius with his letter writing: "I had your letter, as well as that of G. D. Doerksens, along to Morris," he wrote, "and

there Johann W. Dueck read them. At our children's, Joh. P. Siemens, I also spoke about the letters, where the widow, the Peter Reimersche, and her son Peter also came, as well as Frau Jakob F. Dueck. But they already had no time to read them....At G. W. Siemens' [place] where all our children there were gathered I read the letters to them. On the 8th on Friday, the Geschwister David and Abram Pletten were here and at that time David also read the letters [aloud] for us. Therefore you can see that your letters are much appreciated here."

In the last letter of February 13, 1929, Jakob shared what was uppermost in his mind: "Further beloved Geschwister, please know that we are still alive and standing in the battle against flesh and blood in order that at the end of our perishable lives we might attain unto the eternal rest for the unperishable soul, and the same we expect also of you, that you also will still have your battles to fight. Even though you are several years older, the flesh will certainly not leave the soul in peace, for that is how I find it within myself in so much as the evil one transforms his appearance, and he certainly will not rest and seeks to mislead us, at first one way and then another, only the purpose always remains the same, namely, to win us for his Kingdom, and for this he knows he has only little time; and even if we get old, it is only a little time compared to eternity. If the evil one is unable to win us for his kingdom here in this short time, then he has lost us for ever, and that he does not want. For that reason he also applies such a great force. Jesus says, watch and pray, watch for you know neither the day nor the season in which the Lord shall come, and it is certainly very necessary to be watchful."

"The experience has taught us this lesson in many ways, and it has also been confirmed again last night regarding Jakob Wiebe, who went to bed healthy, and by the morning he was a corpse....Indeed, this is how things happen; one dies faster and the other even faster, the way it was with our daughter Helena; that seemed very unexpected for us, but that which is nearest to us also certainly lays the most heavily upon our hearts. How the events occurred with her sickness and dying you will already have read in my letter to B. D. Doerksens."

Jakob also updates Cornelius regarding his farming operations: "Regarding our temporal affairs there is not much happening, other than that I work a little in the smithy. I made a large Grapen oven for our children Johann F. Warkentins. Today I had to repair the wheelbarrow wheel, for which it was really too cold in the smithy. I really had to heat a lot but it had to be done, and what has to be done, also can be done. For we cannot survive even a day without a good wheelbarrow. We have a grandson, namely, Cor. P. Friesen, to chore our livestock. He is only 14 years-old, but is big and strong. Son Cornelius is in Morris already since January 8. He has helped a little there at D. K. Siemens, breaking lose the ice, hauling hay and also freighting water. But little of anything has been accomplished during all this bear-cold weather...."

Jakob also reported regarding some of their visiting which amounted to a survey of the Plett clan in Blumenhof: "Today, the 14th, I again arose healthy after completing my rest. I made the fire in the oven and now I am again sitting at my table and writing my letter further. The beloved wife is possibly still in bed, she is still not very well, for her age is also starting to press upon her, and in

addition, she now also has rheumatism in her right shoulder and arm. But we were nonetheless able to go and do some visiting together with D. K. Siemens. She has not yet been once in the worship services this year. This was February 3. On the 2nd, D. K. Siemens had come here, and then we drove with them to the worship service. After dinner we had many guests, like D. L. Pletten, Joh. R. Toews, M. K. Friesens, D. K. Siemens, Joh. U. Kornelsens, Jak. J. K. Pletten, Joh. F. Warkentins, K. K. Friesens with his two sons Jak. and Franz, also Korn. K. Siemens' two sons Cor. and Johann - the latter two came here on Jan. 25th. but have gone back home already. They too have had to allow the doctor to treat the trachoma in their eyes. And now Jakob is supposed to be treated as well. Both of the aforementioned were in quarters at Joh. F. Ungers. Doctor Kroeker is now living in the former Joh. G. Barkmans premises."

"Now I have completely strayed from [the topic] of visiting. Monday, the 4th, we drove with D. K. S. to Pr. Rose to J. J. Pletten with a temperature of 23 or 24 degrees cold. Tuesday, the 5th, we drove with them for dinner to Johann P. Reimers; sister Maria is currently in quarters here and she was well according to the way she has been, but somewhat hard of hearing. She had related to my wife that she had recently had a stroke of which we had not yet heard anything. From here we went for Vaspa to H. E. Pletts; he Plett was quite badly off with his health, he had earlier gotten quite sick because of constipation for which they had brought doctor Kroeker over and of which he had also more or less recovered. But then he had gotten a sore tongue, which was still quite sore, so that talking was difficult for him. I was also hardly able to understand him. He was only able to eat very thin food. Now they had brought Dr. Schilstra since they were unable to have doctor Kroeker very well. Nonetheless they did talk about bringing Kroeker down, which they apparently did the next day. We have not heard further. For night lunch we were at the sister Wohlgemuthsche. She is all alone in the house with daughter Anna. But it seemed to me she was quite happy and healthy. For night we again drove with them to our place."

"Wednesday, the 6th,....we drove with Siemens to Abram Pletten for dinner. They too are only three souls in the house, namely, the two of them and Anna. For Vesper we drove to D. L. Pletten. As it appeared to me, they were also well. They still have four children at home, namely: Abram (he is in the bush in winter), Isaak, Gertruda and Margaretha. I have written wrong, for from the Wohlgemuthsche, Johann E. Friesens took D. Siemens along with them to their place for night and the next day Friesens came with them to Ab. L. Pletten and D. L. Pletten. From there they again drove along to our place for night. On the 7th we had gone with them to Cor. F. Ungers for dinner, and then Siemens drove with their own vehicle to Abram P. Reimers. For evening and night again to our place. Friday, the 8th, after breakfast, they got ready and drove away from here to K. K. Friesens, where they wanted to be for dinner, and then stopping in Steinbach at the store to pick up something and then for evening and night to J. U. Kornelsens and then to drive home the next day."

"Now to close, a greeting to you and all your children and Geschwister, indeed, to all those who will hear or see this....Jakob L. and Aganetha Pletten"

**Death, 1931:** On August 6, 1925, sister Maria Reimer referred to Jakob L. Plett in a letter and that they had also visited C. L. Pletts in Kansas. "I also visited them soon, namely, the following Sunday. The brother was quite sickly and not happy. All sorrows and worries seem to be so hard for him. I thought he would have interest to tell me something from there. But he did change and also the good wife that he has did also relate of many things and she had also remained well."<sup>1221</sup>

Agatha Rempel Plett passed away quite suddenly of a stroke on July 27, 1930. "This again put [Jakob L. Plett] into great sorrow. He again felt so lonely. Consequently, when he received an offer from John Ungers and David P. Reimers to go along to Kansas, he took advantage of the opportunity and went. He had commented yet, that he wanted to visit his beloved brothers Cornelius and Peter once more and then he wanted to die. This then also came to pass, approximately one month after he returned."<sup>1222</sup>

Jakob L. Plett died on November 4, 1931.

**Estate:** In a letter to brother Cornelius L. Plett written shortly after his second marriage in 1920, Jakob L. Plett described the "Waisenamt" settlement he made in favour of his children all of whom "...had to come to the Theilung, which we had also postponed until Saturday in order not to disturb the children too much from their work...We have distributed \$600.00 for each child, which makes \$7,200.00 in total, to be paid out in five instalments or payments, the first payable January 1, 1921, at five percent interest. And so, I have recently again gone into much debt which I really would not have had to do, but [did so] in order to follow the Gemeinde regulations and to be wedded, I was willing to do so....For my minor children I have appointed as Vormünder Jakob B. Koop and David L. Plett. And for K. K. Friesen's they are Peter Thiessen and Johann K. Friesen. My beloved wife did not need to distribute because she has made herself a Testament [will] that her descendants were to inherit everything....But according to assessment I have distributed the half."

After Jakob L. Plett's death in 1931, brother David was appointed as the Executor of the Estate by the children. At first the thinking had been that all assets including the property would be sold. The half section in Satanta, Kansas was sold to nephew Bernard D. Doerksen. In the spring of 1932 an auction sale was held and most of the equipment and livestock was sold.

The children eventually decided to settle the Estate by the division of the remaining property. Daughters Aganetha, Elisabeth, and Gertrude each received 40 acres of the Ekron farm. Sons Cornelius and Jakob, and daughters Margaretha and Minna each received 20 acres on the NE 24-7-6E and a quarter share in the buildings. Daughters Sara and Anna each received 40 acres of the balance of this quarter section. Sara apparently sold her 40 acres and purchased the 20 acre "woodlot" on the NE 36-7-6E. The children of the three daughters, Maria, Katharine, and Helena who had predeceased their parents, each received \$2000.00 in cash.

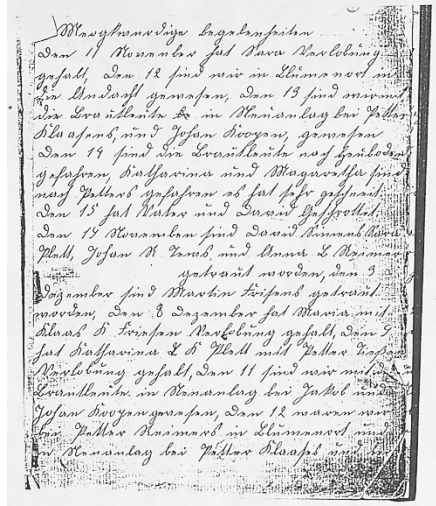
Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Jakob L. Plett</b>	Dec 12, 1864		Nov 4, 1931
m	Maria B. Koop	Jun 10, 1864	Nov 14, 1885	Sep 13, 1918
6	Maria J. K. Plett	Nov 2, 1886		Nov 24, 1918
m	Klaas K. Friesen	Mar 3, 1881	Dec 15, 1905	Nov 18, 1961
6	Sara J. K. Plett	Nov 30, 1887		Sep 13, 1967
m	David K. Siemens	Apr 6, 1878	Nov 30, 1887	Aug 28, 1960
6	Katharina J. K. Plett	Mar 30, 1889	Mar 12, 1911	May 31, 1920
m	Cornelius K. Siemens	Jun 15, 1884		Aug 14, 1950
6	Margaretha J. K. Plett	Jul 16, 1890	Apr 24, 1932	May 18, 1979
m	Peter W. Siemens	Jan 2, 1894		Aug 5, 1990
6	Gertrude J. K. Plett	Dec 19, 1891		Sep 7, 1892
6	Helena J. K. Plett	Jun 28, 1893		Oct 11, 1928
m	Peter W. Siemens	Jan 2, 1894	Jun 13, 1915	Aug 5, 1990
6	Gertruda J. K. Plett	Nov 29, 1895		Feb 10, 1987
m	Gerhard W. Siemens	Aug 8, 1896		Nov 16, 1952
6	Jakob J. K. Plett	Apr 25, 1897		Oct 16, 1900
6	Anna J. K. Plett	Jan 9, 1899	Oct 1, 1925	Nov 27, 1992
m	Johann U. Kornelsen	Dec 21, 1902		May 2, 1981
6	Cornelius J. K. Plett	Sep 25, 1900		Aug 28, 1976
m	Justina F. Harms	Aug 18, 1917	Jun 2, 1940	
6	Elisabeth J. K. Plett	Mar 17, 1902	1923	Oct 2, 1999
m	Jakob K. Dueck	Oct 31, 1896		Feb 2, 1972
6	Jakob J. K. Plett	Feb 5, 1904		Sep 14, 1974
m	Helena P. Reimer	Mar 17, 1906	Jul 26, 1925	Jun 1, 1988
6	Aganetha J. K. Plett	May 24, 1905		Mar 27, 1906
6	Aganetha J. K. Plett	Jun 4, 1907		
m	Johann F. Warkentin	Nov 13, 1903	Nov 28, 1926	Nov 23, 1984
6	Minna J. K. Plett	Aug 26, 1909		Nov 20, 1995
m	Heinrich M. Toews	Sep 28, 1909	Jun 9, 1946	Dec 21, 1964
5	<b>Jakob L. Plett</b>	Dec 12, 1864		Nov 4, 1931
m	Aganetha Rempel	Jun 4, 1861	Oct, 1920	Jun 27, 1930



*"Ready to move out." The Jakob L. Plett threshing outfit near Ste. Annes, ca. 1918. Photo courtesy of John C. Reimer who worked for the Pletts as steam engine engineer for a number of seasons. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part Two, page 35.*



Jakob L. Plett, 1930, a year before his death. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 53/Plett Picture Book, page 133.



Opening page of Maria Koop Plett's "Journal", November 11, 1905. Courtesy of daughter-in-law, Helena Reimer Plett, Steinbach, who preserved it. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part Two, page 34.



Maria Koop Plett (1868-1918) in 1918. Courtesy of granddaughter Maria Friesen Peters, Steinbach, Man. Photo - Pres., No. 10, Part Two, page 34.



*The Jakob L. Plett threshing outfit near Ste. Annes, 1918. Peter P. Woblgemuth, left, fireman, and David P. Reimer, right, the engineer. Photo - Klaas P. L. Reimer family/Blumenort, page 114.*



*Justina Harms, Mrs. C. J. K. Plett with her children. The original Jakob L. Plett house-barn is the left. These buildings may have been moved out from the "old" village of Blumenhof. Courtesy - Mrs. C. J. K. Plett.*

6 Daughter **Maria J. K. Plett** (1886-1918) married Klaas K. Friesen (1881-1961) in 1905. They lived and worked the first winter at her parents. In the spring of 1906 they moved to Jakob L. Plett's farm in Ekron, consisting of the Southwest Quarter and east half of the Northwest Quarter of Section 31-6-7E. Maria and Klaas made their home near the north limit of the SW31-6-7E (just east across the road from Deerfield Estates). They purchased 120 acres from her father. He had a mixed farm and dairy usually milking 10 or 12 cows. He loved horses and for all his time as a farmer did all his farm work as well as travelling and visiting with horses. Klaas K. Friesen farmed until his health failed in the fall of 1960. He was hospitalized until his death on November 18, 1961. He enjoyed fairly good health all his life with the exception that he suffered from convulsions in his younger adult life. The last year he suffered from bladder failure. Klaas K. Friesen was deeply moved by the death of his wife on November 24, 1918.

### **Memories of Maria Plett Friesen, 1886-1918.**

In 1997 daughter Maria Friesen Peters, Steinbach, recalled the time of her mother's death during the 1918 flu epidemic:

The experience of losing my mother, Maria Plett Friesen, and my grandmother, Maria Koop Plett, during the influenza epidemic of 1918 was a devastating one. I remember some things quite clearly.

My mother suffered from tuberculosis and was receiving medical treatment from Dr. Hiebert. But when the flu time came she was weakened and became very sick. My father, Klaas K. Friesen, also fell victim. By late November he was confined to the hospital in Steinbach. But my mother was already too sick and Margaretha Fast was hired to nurse her in our home.

I remember minister Peter B. Kroeker visiting at our place during this time while my mother was very sick. He sat in the summer kitchen rocking my younger sister Greta in her cradle and singing the song, "Kristi Blut und Gerechtigkeit." This song has always stayed in my memory.

My uncle Martin K. Friesen did the chores while my mother was sick and father was in the hospital.

Saturday night November 23, 1918, the boys were at aunt Klaas P. Reimers', Blumenort. The Peter R. Toewses, our neighbours, were visiting at our home that day and took me and Greta along to their place for the night.

The doctor had been at our place that day but gave no hope for mother that she would live till morning.

Sunday morning. The phone rang at the Peter R. Toewses home. Mrs. Toews answered the phone. She answered and started crying very hard. She hung up and came to me. She said, "Now your mother is gone. She has passed away."

I remember that on Monday, November 25, the Peter R. Toews girls wanted to go to our place as they wanted to see my mother. They wanted me and Greta to come along which we did. But I refused to see my mother. I definitely did not want to see her. I could not countenance the thought that my mother was dead. My mother's body lay in the granary as there were no funeral homes in Steinbach at the time.



I refused to go along with the Toews girls to see her. I stayed in the buggy for a while and then I went into our house to look around; everything looked so surreal and foreign, cold and grimy, and smelled smoky.

Then I went alone to the summer kitchen to look around. When I opened the door a small cat stood there. The cat knew me. I had played with it before. The cat was hungry and “meowed.”

Just then my uncle Martin K. Friesen, who was doing the chores, came by. I told him he should kill the cat because there was no one at home to look after it. My uncle did so.

For night Greta and I went back to Peter R. Toews' place.

Tuesday, November 26. The funeral. Margaretha Fast came by to Peter R. Toews' to pick me up to take me to the funeral.

Grandma herself was too sick to go to her daughter's funeral and so the coffin was brought to the window of the Jakob L. Plett residence prior to the funeral, so that grandma could see her daughter one last time. When she saw her daughter lying so peacefully in her coffin, Grandma lamented, “That if only she also could be at peace like that.”

My brothers, Jakob, Cornelius and Frank, were staying at grandparents at the time, and Cornelius later told me he had personally witnessed this incident.

The funeral was at the Blumenhof school house, at that time located on SE25-7-6E, right beside the community cemetery. Only a few people attended the funeral as most people were too sick to come. I remember my uncle Martin K. Friesen was there.

The funeral was held outside in the yard, but I stayed inside.

My cousins - the Cornelius Janzen girls and the Klaas P. Reimer girls - came to me several times and pleaded with me that I should come outside with them to see my mother in the coffin. I refused. I could not stand the idea that she was dead. But finally I did agree after all. I went and stood beside the coffin, and looked at my mother. I cried and cried. I was only 10 years old.

After the funeral I went along with grandfather, Jakob L. Plett, to his place, a half mile east of the cemetery. Greta stayed at the Peter R. Toews' home for a few more days. But then the Toews family also got sick with the flu and Greta had to leave there and also came and stayed at grandparents.

Grandma wanted both Greta and me to stay at their place. But because she was so sick, we were soon taken to my aunt Aganetha, Mrs. Cornelius Janzen, where we stayed until grandmother died. I went along to her funeral.

When my father returned from the hospital and after he was well enough he drove around and gathered his other children together. The boys were staying at aunt Klaas P. Reimers in Blumenort and Greta and I were at grandparents' place.

Grandparents always had delicious meals and I enjoyed eating there.

When father came to grandfather's place to get me, he stood and begged for me to come along with him. But I held back and refused to go. I was scared of being at home in the house without my mother. Finally father persuaded me and I also went home with him. It took a long time for all of us - the children as well as father - to get used to life without our mother.

Greta stayed at grandfather's place as she was so young - not even a year old, and father couldn't look after her. Greta became their foster daughter. She lived with grandfather until she was grown up and married. She was looked after by a host of aunts.

My father suffered from epilepsy, something I did not know until after my mother died.

One time, possibly about a year after my mother died, my father was making the fire in the morning. We children were all sitting on the schloape benk, watching. Father was lighting some shavings which caught nicely and flared up in flames.

Then, all-of-a-sudden, father fell over on his back. His arms and legs were jerking, spasming, and saliva started frothing from his mouth.

I was so scared. I ran outside.

At that moment Abe P. Toews, the teacher in our local school, came driving on our yard, as he picked me up every morning to give me a ride to school.

I told him, "My father is dead."

Mr. Toews rushed into the house and helped my father to sit up on the chair. He helped my father try to walk again, but he stumbled. He was completely dark around the eyes. I was horrified that my father would also die and then we children would have nothing.

On January 25, 1931, Klaas K. Friesen married for the second time to Helena Unger, daughter of Cornelius W. Unger, a Chortitzer family. Together they had a daughter, Helen, who married Dietrich Friesen. Later after my father remarried, he received medical treatment for his epilepsy and remained free of these terrible attacks.<sup>1223</sup> Helena Unger Friesen died on March 8, 1978 of a heart attack, having suffered for some time from diabetes.



*Maria Plett Friesen, 1918, just before her death. Taken from the garden photo published in the Plett Picture Book, page 134. Courtesy of The Shunning, back cover.*



*Klaas K. Friesen, 1904. From the group photo published in the Plett Picture Book, page 136.*

Patrick Friesen, Vancouver, B. C., grandson of Klaas and Maria Plett Friesen, is a nationally recognized poet. In 1980 he wrote "The Shunning" at least partially a fictionalized version of the events surrounding his grandmother's death and the impact it had on his grandfather and their children. In the poem, "klaas friesen's dream," Klaas reflects about losing his wife:

to wake finding november at the window  
my wrist shrunk to bone  
but to wake again  
earth still fat with october  
shivers beneath white wind  
here on this farm  
between la broquerie and blumenort  
now in this hardening month 1918  
they say she has gone  
and though I hear myself say it isn't true  
I know it is because the house is cold  
I dream a blizzard  
barney and prince flounder  
snow whirling from treetops  
spinning where wind twists one way then another  
snow drifting to their chests  
melting on muscle forelegs driving  
and wallow and barney strikes the rise where snow is thin  
leans against a poplar deadstill  
I turn my eyes back to the hollow  
snow rising like pillars as wind swoops  
but there is no prince  
and when I look to the trees there is no barney  
snow fluttering against glass  
and I'm wondering how hard the earth  
shovels flashing at noon iron strike iron  
how they lowered her then  
snow and dead leaves wheeling across her casket  
I lie facedown on her side of the bed  
the warmth the musk of her  
this I cannot bear<sup>1224</sup>



*Patrick Friesen, 1994.*  
*Photo - Blasphemer's Wheel, backcover.*

6 Daughter **Sara J. K. Plett** (1887-1967) married David K. Siemens (1878-1960) in 1905. He was the son of Gerhard T. Siemens. Sara and David lived on her parent's yard in their own little house. In 1907 they moved the house to the Ekron farm, SW31-7-6E, adjacent to K. K. Friesens'. They lived here until 1912. Thereafter the house was used by Jakob L. Pletts' and their employees working on the Ekron farm or threshing in the district. From 1912 to 1916 the parents then rented the SE31-6-7E. Jakob L. Plett was interested in moving to Kansas, and bought a half section of land in Satanta. The David K. and Cornelius K. Siemens family moved there with the idea that the Jakob L. Plett family would follow. This did not materialize. In 1918 both David K. and Cornelius K. Siemens returned to Blumenhof. Sara and David lived in the Abram L. Plett "Immigrant" house. C.K. Siemens lived in an old house of John F. Ungers. In 1919 David and Sara moved to Rosenhof and farmed until 1928 when they moved to Steinbach. In 1929 they moved to her father's 20 acre woodlot on the NW36-7-6E. In 1942 when David retired they moved a house to the home of children the Abram J. P. Friesens in Greenland. In 1955 they moved the house to Ellice Ave., Steinbach. David was a labourer and enjoyed gardening. Sara was knowledgable in medical matters and treated many. In her later years she did much knitting for MCC. David died on August 28, 1960. Sara suffered from a stroke and died five weeks later on September 13, 1967.



*Sara and David K. Siemens, 1930. Courtesy Maria and Abe P. Friesen.*



*Sara and David K. Siemens, 1917. Courtesy Maria and Abe P. Friesen.*

6 Daughter **Katherina J. K. Plett** (1889-1920) married Cornelius K. Siemens (1884-1950) in 1911. He was David's brother. They lived in Herbert, Saskatchewan until 1916 when they also moved to Satanta, Kansas. They returned to Manitoba in 1918 because of the persecution of Mennonites in the U.S.A. They stayed the winter in Blumenhof and in spring of 1919 moved to Rosenhof where they rented a farm. Katharina died on May 31, 1920 of cancer. Cornelius continued farming in Rosenhof until 1930 when he moved to Meade, Kansas. He remarried to Margaret Reimer. He died on August 4, 1950.

6 Daughter **Helena J. K. Plett** (1893-1928) married Peter W. Siemens (1894-1990) in 1915. He was the son of Peter H. Siemens, half-brother to David K. and Cornelius K. Siemens. Helena and Peter made their home on 80 acres received from his mother's Estate. They had a grain farm. Peter also worked at Trump Oil for many years. In the later years he started a plumbing business together with brother George. Helena Plett Siemens died on November 11, 1928, of an infection of the womb. She suffered severely the last few weeks.

6 Daughter **Margaretha J. K. Plett** (1890-1979) married Peter W. Siemens, Helena's husband, in 1932. Margaretha had worked for her parents until her marriage. She was a capable and loving mother. She also enjoyed reading and spent much of her spare time reading.

During the flood in 1979 Margaretha and Peter moved to Blumenort and stayed with sister Minna Toews. Here Margaretha suffered a blood clot. She died a week later of lung failure. He then lived with children, Simon Isaacs in Steinbach until fall. Peter W. Siemens moved into the Eventide Home in Rosenort. He was interested in artifacts. Around 1960 he started collecting antiques for his museum.

*Peter W. Siemens of Riverside, 1980. Among the artifacts he collected were some stone hammers found on the Jakob L. Plett farm in Blumenhof, part of a native tool collection. He also preserved the cradle he slept in as a baby. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 451.*





*Katbarina and Cornelius K. Siemens. Photo - Mrs. C. J. K. Plett, 1982.*



*Gertrude and Peter W. Siemens. Photo - daughter Susan and Simon Isaac, Steinbach, 1982.*



*"Off to church." A unique photo of a two-seater buggy. Mr. and Mrs. Peter W. Siemens may be the couple in the rear seat. Photo - daughter Susan and Simon Isaac, Steinbach, 1982.*

6 Daughter **Gertruda J. K. Plett** (born 1895) married George W. Siemens (1896-1952) in 1921. He was Peter's brother. The following biography was written by Laura Siemens: As a girl, Gertruda got a job in the Morris area for awhile. She did housework at Cornelius Siemens'. His nephew, George, dropped in sometimes. He noticed young Gertrude. What a neat person she was! He admired her blue eyes and her fair lovely skin.....Gertrude was glad to see him come. He was tall, dark and handsome. He was fun to be with and had many friends. His interests were many - horses, singing, music, writing. What a leader among men! And he loved her - Gertrude!

That fall they celebrated their engagement at Gertrude's home in Blumenhof. George came out on the train. He'd lost his wallet on the way so Gertrude gave him train fare back. They were married in the old Rosenhoff School which also served as a meeting house. That was on October 3, 1920. The bride was lovely in her long dark dress, apron, and black kerchief. For wedding presents they received a frying pan, a pot, and two bowls. Of course they also got four pillows, a woollen comforter, a cow and a calf from their parents.

The first winter they moved in with George's Mother. George received 80 acres of land from her, one mile north of the Peter W. Siemens' place. In spring they built a two-storey farm house on the barren prairie, three miles southwest of McTavish. Now they were ready to start up housekeeping on their own. Here they raised their family. They were now Mom and Dad Siemens.

The bald prairie soon changed. Dad and Mother Siemens planted trees. Soon they had shade. They started to pick fruit from their own orchard. Vines grew around their house and gave it a settled look. A big flower garden was the joy of Mother Siemens. Clipped hedges surrounded part of their well-kept grounds. Vegetables were grown every year for home use.

Dad Siemens worked hard on their little farm. He broke in horses. With horses he worked the fields. He mowed grass beside the railroad for hay. In the heat he refreshed himself from a jug of lukewarm water. Their cooler was a tank of cold water in the barn. It was very good for cooling water, "Mos", or butter. In threshing time neighbours worked together to get their crops in. Mother Siemens did her share of the farm work. In busy seasons she fed the animals. Sometimes she drove the tractor. Dad Siemens also did plumbing jobs to supplement the farm income.

In time they purchased 160 acres of land in McTavish. Later George inherited 60 acres of land from his mother's Estate.

Dad Siemens loved people - visiting with them, writing about them. He was a *Steinbach Post* news reporter for 13 years. When company from "Jahntseed" came, he might send a child to the pond for water for coffee. He'd probably say loudly, for the benefit of the visitors, "Be sure to chase away the frogs first."

May 9, 1929 started like any ordinary day. Mother Siemens seeded a row in the garden. She was expecting a baby. Their first baby had died. Tony was almost six years old. Annie was almost three years old. The closest doctor was six miles away. That was far away. So when the pains came they summoned the midwife, Mrs. Abram Eidse. What a surprise for Mrs. Eidse and for Mother Sie-

mens! A son, Elmer was born. A daughter Susie, was born next. Then Mother Siemens had another son Joseph. But Joseph didn't breathe. The boys weighed about six pounds each and little Susie, five and a half pounds. The triplets had arrived. The neighbour commented, "What a nestful of children!"

Life was busier now. They needed more supplies. For the two babies they had 24 diapers - 12 good ones for Sunday and 12 for everyday. Often one cranky baby would wake up a sleeping one. Sometimes Mother Siemens would sit and rock, rock, rock. Two cradles – one for each hand. Back and forth, back and forth.

A few years later a double birthday was celebrated for two proud children. The two were seated on top of the table on little chairs. Each got a pair of new jeans with a big S on the pockets. But the elastic was tight. So dad Siemens hung them in the garage. He attached weights to stretch the elastic.

Life flowed on. Margaret was born four years after the triplets. The family was now complete.

When Elmer and Susie started off to school the teacher took one look and said, "So you are twins". "No", Elmer said "Well you're the same age so you must be twins", the teacher insisted. "No", Elmer explained, "We're triplets".

George and Gertruda were grain farmers. In his younger years George W. Siemens was interested in spirited horses which he enjoyed breaking and training. In the later years he also went into the plumbing business together with brother Peter. George died on November 12, 1952 of a brain tumour. Gertruda continued farming with son Elmer until 1962 when she sold the farm. She purchased a small bungalow on Riverside Drive, Rosenhof, where she resided with daughter Margaret.<sup>1225</sup>



*A good day's egg production. George W. and Gertruda Siemens and daughter Margaret. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 449.*



6 Daughter **Anna J. K. Plett** (1899-1992) married John U. Kornelsen (1902-81) in 1925 at Steinbach, Manitoba. Within a short time they settled on a farm in the Heuboden district. They farmed until 1934 when the depression conditions made it impossible to continue. They then lived for a year at the Jakob L. Plett property. In 1936 they moved to the Morris area at Riverside. John worked as a carpenter that first year. They lived on the SW8-7-7E close to John F. Warkentins'. In 1939 they moved a house onto the George W. Siemens property.

In 1937 John started to work for Trump Oil Co., and stayed there seven years in the refinery as fireman and stillman. Off and on he also worked as a carpenter. In 1945 P.T. Kroeker put his transfer business, "Kroeker's Transfer", up for sale so brother-in-law John F. Warkentin (former driver) and John U. Kornelsen bought it as a partnership. They operated it as Rosenort Transfer PSV. In 1948 John and Anna moved their house onto a lot they had purchased in Riverside.

In 1951 they sold the business to Jac. L. Loewen. Again John worked at carpentry and odd jobs, finally going back to Trump Oil. It had been sold to an American, and this business venture didn't last too long. The employees were laid off work at New Year's, 1956. In February, 1956, John started work as stillman for Radio Oil Ltd. in Winnipeg. The business ran into repair problems and the job only lasted six months. In July, 1956 John received a phone call from Canada Wire and Cable, who needed a boilerman. Since he had a class 4 Boiler Licence, he got the job. He worked for the company for eight years.

In 1964, John started to work as custodian at the Rosenort Collegiate and stayed there for eight years. In 1972 John retired. John was gifted as a chiropractor and for many years assisted people from his home as a sideline. Anna and John celebrated their golden wedding in 1975. They had a family of 10 children, all married. Just before John's death on May 2, 1981, they moved to the Eventide Home.<sup>1226</sup> Their children include son Delmar, farmer in Riverton, and son John, school teacher. Daughter Florence and husband Jac P. Friesen are farmers in Rosenort. Daughter Elda is married to Werner Rempel, Steinbach, retired teacher.



*Anna and John U. Kornelsen. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 440.*

6 Son **Cornelius J.K. Plett** (1900-76) worked for his father until 1929 when he together with younger brother Jakob purchased their father's steam engine and threshing business. They sold the steam engine replacing it with a new Titan tractor in 1930. In addition they farmed together with sister Minna, renting the land their sisters had inherited as well as their own. The partnership was dissolved in 1943 after having experienced financial difficulties.

After Jakob L. Plett's death in 1931 Cornelius, brother Jakob and sister Minna rented a farm in Clearspring where they lived until their father's estate was settled in 1933. When Cornelius married Justina F. Harms (b. 1917) in 1940 they made their home in the former Jakob L. Plett residence until Minna got married in 1946 when they moved into the old Jakob L. Plett house. In 1953 Cornelius and Justina purchased the southwest 40 acres of the SW30-7-7E. They moved their house onto this land and continued farming. They also purchased an additional 55 acres on the NE24-7-6E from the other heirs. From 1953 to 1957 they farmed with row crops and thereafter with dairy. For the last number of years they also worked at the killing plant in Blumenort. Cornelius died on August 28, 1976, of a stroke. In 1979 Justina purchased a new home in Blumenort, later moving to Steinbach. Cornelius was a talented blacksmith and was able to repair his own equipment on the farm. He was also a finish carpenter.



*1920. C. J. K. Plett playing his fiddle. Young people organized social evenings where they danced and visited. After confessing their faith and being baptised, such activities were not considered appropriate. Photo - Mrs. Justina Harms Plett, 1981.*



*Cornelius J. Plett plowing with the Jakob L. Plett's Fordson, 1920. Photo - Simon Isaac, Steinbach.*

6 Daughter **Elisabeth D. K. Plett** (1902-99) married Jakob K. Dueck (1896-1972) in 1923. He was the son of Johann W. Dueck.<sup>1227</sup> Elisabeth and Jakob established their home on 80 acres of land on the SE33-5-1E, approximately seven miles north west of Morris. Later they purchased an additional 40 acres on this quarter as well as 62 acres near Osborne. They farmed all their lives with laying hens and raising grain. In the 1930s Jakob served several terms as trustee for the Cloverplains School District.

A history of the Jakob K. Dueck family is found in *Furrows on the Valley*: "As a young father, Jakob would cycle to work in the neighbourhood, labouring for under 20 cents an hour. As the family grew and times became easier, mixed farming became their main objective. With two of his sons, Wilbert and Alfred, they became one of the leading custom balers of the municipality from 1955 to 1965. Also during these years, Elisabeth Plett Dueck became one of the foremost strawberry producers of the district, selling up to 100 pounds a day. Jakob K. Dueck was a hard working man, which was halted by a stroke in 1968, and a subsequent heart failure in 1969. He died suddenly on February 2, 1971, in his home."<sup>1228</sup>

Elisabeth continued farming together with son Alfred until 1974 when she built a new house 1 ½ miles east of Rosenort where she resided for many years living together with daughters Mary and Norma. Oldest daughter, Elma, married Levi Dueck.<sup>1229</sup> Sons Edwin and Wilbert started a rafter and lumber business in Rosenort.



*Bible study. Elisabeth Plett Dueck and husband, Jakob K. Dueck, Rosenort. Photo - courtesy daughter Elma and husband Levi Dueck, Rosenort.*



*Neighbours Jakob K. Dueck and George and Elmer Siemens making feed. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 402.*

6 Son **Jakob J. K. Plett** (1904-74) married Helena P. Reimer (1906-88) in 1925. She was the daughter of his cousin Sarah and Isaac R. Reimer. Jakob and Helena lived and worked for his father until 1928 when they purchased a farm in the Linden area and farmed for a year. In 1929 Jakob and brother Cornelius purchased the Jakob L. Plett threshing business which they operated until 1943. Except for 1928 and 1932 Jakob and Helena lived in the old house on the Jakob L. Plett yard.

In 1942 they purchased the north 40 acres of the SE24-7-6E where they started butchering hogs which was their livelihood until 1962. In 1949 they purchased a property on Mckenzie Road, Steinbach (where Robin and Bluejay Place are located today). Starting in 1962 Jakob and Helena worked for the Blumenort killing plant. Jakob died on September 14, 1974 of a heart failure. Son Cornie R. Plett is a retired minister and son Jakob R. Plett was a finish carpenter in Steinbach.



*L.-r.: Jakob J. K. Plett, Abram D. K. Plett, and John F. Warkentin. Photo - courtesy Minna Toews.*



*Four Plett sisters, l.-r.: Anna (Mrs. John U. Kornelsen), Minna (Mrs. Henry M. Toews), Gertruda (Mrs. George W. Siemens), and Aganetha (Mrs. John F. Warkentin). Photo - courtesy Mrs. Minna Toews.*

6 Daughter **Aganetha D. K. Plett** (born 1907) married John F. Warkentin (born 1903) in 1926. He was the son of Maria E. Friesen and Heinrich D. Warkentin. The following history of Aganetha and John F. Warkentin was published in *Furrows in the Valley*: "...[John] had all his schooling in small church schools. He walked many miles to school or drove horse and buggy or sleigh. John and his brothers were kept busy at home with barn chores. They always had household chores besides. John grew up on his father's farmstead....on Section 8-6-1E....."

"1918 was the infamous flu year, and John was of an age to stay healthy enough to do all the sick neighbours' chores. Although the flu gripped many of his own family they were grateful there were no deaths. Mother never seemed to recover though."

"When mother died [in 1923], the older ones in the family, namely, son Henry, and son-in-law, George Kornelsen, rented the farm....John decided he was independent for a while. He promptly went to the Steinbach area where he'd been introduced to a lovely lady, Aganetha Plett. There was a strict father in this household, who kept exact record of each of his 10 daughters, so John's courtship had to be lengthened somewhat. Having relatives he could live with in Giroux, he entered a working world of many vocations. He worked on a railroad gang building up rails in the Marchand area...."

"In the spring of 1926, events happened in a way that allowed John and Peter to take their turn at renting the farm. Their father, Henry, had remarried, built a new house in Steinbach, but kept an active role in his Rosenort farm....That long wet fall, John decided to remedy his own situation, why should two people be so lonely and far apart! Besides, travelling to Steinbach was expensive and time consuming especially in that mud! John and Aganetha got married and moved into the farmstead, in November, 1926."

"Those following winter months, father Henry decided it would be in everyone's interest to sell the farm for a good price, and all move to another farm closer to the Steinbach area. It would bring the family unit closer together again, besides everyone's partner seemed to have come from that vicinity anyway....."

John and Aganetha rented a farm close to Steinbach, which is the Mitchell District today. After renting for a while, he decided to buy his own farm at Giroux. There followed seven years of mixed farming, hard work, and little success. These were now depression times and it was a daily goal to provide for a growing family. There came a day on that farm in Giroux, when a cow ate John's one and only cap, liking the salty taste of long use, that he knew it was time to make a drastic move again. After all, caps cost money too!"

"With his family of five children, they moved to McTavish and John started driving truck for Loewen Transfer in Rosenhof. They'd live wherever houses were available, each time closer to his places of work. At one time he had to walk five miles to get to work, often daily. If weather got too drastic he'd stay overnight at the boss' house."

"After a few years of country driving, they moved into Morris town, where John drove for Morris Transfer. When the opportunity came, some years later, he went into partnership with John U. Kornelsen and bough Rosenort Transfer....."

“Times were prosperous until the 1950 flood which disrupted business badly. Most livestock was gone, roads and bridges not readily repaired and trucks damaged by flood servicing. John’s own house was inundated and declared unfit for further use. Their family had grown to 11 children by now, so something had to be done. Getting a good offer for their business they decided to sell out. John went into a freelance, private delivery service for a number of years.”

“In the meantime they bought an older two-storey house and moved it on to the new basement. Among the tall trees, and above flood level (as was proven in the 1979 flood) it still is in use today, still a striking looking building.”

“After a few years John was offered a job as maintainer operator for the R.M. of Morris. John loved this work and stayed at it for 13 years. One morning while preparing his machine in the usual manner, his fingers got caught and he mangled his hand quite badly. He lost half a finger, crippled up two others and was off work for three months.”

“That they both love old heirlooms, buildings, etc. is evident. Their house itself is 70 years old but in restored shape. Their lot is the spot where once stood the old village grist mill and the community blacksmith shop. An old fashioned log building called an ice house, covered in creeper ivy in summer, is a desired spot for picture taking. An original smokehouse still stands [1980] on the yard....For the third time now they have had to evacuate their home due to a major flood. They were gone for over a month in spring 1979, but could come back to a dry home.”<sup>1230</sup>

Their children included Hilda (Mrs. Art Schwartz, Kleefeld), Rose (Mrs. Art Cornelsen, Rosenort), Margaret (Mrs. Walter Sawatzky) and sons John and Jake, both school teachers.



*Aganetba and John F. Warkentin on their 50th wedding anniversary in 1976.  
Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 398.*

6 Daughter **Minna D. K. Plett** (1909-95) worked at home until her father's death in 1931 and thereafter farmed together with her brothers until 1943. For most of 1932 she enjoyed a trip to Oregon and Meade visiting relatives. She married Henry M. Toews (1909-64) in 1946. They farmed together on her father's farmyard. The first years they farmed with row crops and turkeys. Later they farmed with broilers and laying hens. Henry died of a stroke on December 21, 1964. Minna with laying hens as well as working at the Blumenort Co-op. In 1976 she sold the yard and buildings to her children Ruth and Waldon Doerksen and purchased a new home in Blumenort where she resided for many years.

Henry M. Toews was a colourful character who led an adventurous life during his youth. On December 18, 1964 the *Carillon News* carried a story dating to Christmas Eve, 1931, when Henry, like thousands of the others during the depression, was riding the rails and wound up in Oakland, California. He ripped his pants while getting off the train. Penniless, he walked around in the dumps finally meeting another hobo. The man took him to a secluded spot where he had a Salvation Army uniform. Wearing the uniform and telling Henry's story of great need, they soon raised the funds needed for new clothes.<sup>1231</sup> Henry served in the Canadian Army during WWII. Being one of the first in the area to raise turkeys, Henry came to be known as "Turkey Toews".



*Minna D. K. Plett playing guitar in her parents' home, 1930. Photo courtesy of Minna Toews.*



*During the winter slow down, Mennonite farmers would often work in the bush camps to make logs for building projects or simply to earn extra cash. Martin P. Friesen (left) and Henry M. Toews relax after a hard day's work, 1956.*

## Section Eight: Karolina Plett, 1822-87, Rosenort, Molotschna.

4 Daughter **Karolina Plett** married Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), son of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810), Ohrloff, Molotschna. Klaas Friesen lived with older sister Helena and her husband Klaas Reimer for about a year after the death of his parents in 1810. He came to regard his brother-in-law as a second father.<sup>1232</sup>

In 1816 Klaas married the widow Johann Friesen, nee Margaretha Mathies, daughter of Jakob Mathies (1760-1804) who emigrated to Altonau, Molotschna in 1804.<sup>1233</sup> Genealogist Henry Schapansky has written that after the death of Jakob Mathies, his widow married Franz Thiessen and settled with him on Wirtschaft 4 in Rosenort, Molotschna in 1805.<sup>1234</sup>

Margaretha Mathies was married for the first time to Johann Friesen (1773-1816) of Altonau.<sup>1235</sup> He was the son of Isaac Friesen (1748-1818) who settled on Wirtschaft 10 in Altonau in 1804 and a brother to Isaak Friesen who married Regina von Riesen, sister of Klaas.<sup>1236</sup> Margaretha and Johann owned Wirtschaft 11 in Altonau.<sup>1237</sup> Johann died in 1816 after 14 weeks of marriage.<sup>1238</sup> Margaretha had a son Isaac (1816-86) by her first marriage who married Susanna Reimer (1820-95)<sup>1239</sup> and lived in Waldheim.<sup>1240</sup>

In the same year, 1816, Margaretha Mathies married for the second time to Klaas Friesen from the village of Ohrloff located three miles northeast along the banks of the Kurushan River. After the marriage Klaas became the owner of Wirtschaft 10 in Altonau where the couple continued farming. Klaas was intelligent and enjoyed writing and collecting documents of historical worth. On November 13, 1821, he copied an account of an incident experienced in the city on November 28, 1813. It was common for Kleine Gemeinders to collect writings of this sort, as devotional reading and to serve as moral instruction.<sup>1241</sup> Although the document itself is no longer extant, the page with his explanatory note bearing his signature, "Klaas von Riesen" was preserved by niece Helena Jansen of Beatrice. The document contains a reference to brother Peter von Riesen's three visits to Russia and a listing of his children.<sup>1242</sup>

Klaas was elected as a deacon of the Kleine Gemeinde on January 13, 1824, with 20 votes out of 29 cast.<sup>1243</sup> An election for minister was held at the same time where Klaas received 10 votes and Heinrich Wiebe, Ohrloff, was elected with 15. In 1833 Klaas assisted older brothers Peter and Abraham in the publication of the Menno Simons' *Die Fundamente der seligmachenden Lehre unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, aus Gottes Wort kurz zusammengefasst*<sup>1244</sup> ("Foundation of Christian Doctrine") as a three volume set.<sup>1245</sup> In what must be one of the most bizarre events of Mennonite history, the Prussian Mennonite leaders confiscated these books after the printing was completed. Ältester Peter Toews referred to Ohm Klaas' role in this publication effort as follows: "The key players in this occurrence ....are Peter von Riesen and his brother Abraham; but there was a third brother by the name of Klaas who was also involved. For the printing of the books was approved by the latter two brothers in their capacity as ministers of the so-called Kleine Gemeinde. I remember the latter very well. He was known as uncle to a large family circle and as 'Ohm Klaas' to the writer of this article. Since his brother Abraham had died long before then, he was a co-heir, together with Kornelius Jansen - at that time resident in Berdjansk - as the son-in-law of P. v.



Riesen, of these exiled books when they were finally released and allowed to come to Russia. At this time the present writer was fortunate enough to also come into possession of a set of these *Fundamentebücher* of Menno Simon's which had become so rare. And in regard to this exile - and otherwise in general as well - I hold him in the highest regard."<sup>1246</sup>

Klaas Friesen corresponded with brother Peter von Riesen in Prussia. In a letter of 1834 he referred to difficulties encountered regarding the publication of the Menno Simons books and counselled Peter in that regard.<sup>1247</sup> He also reported the circumstances of his family and "...that a son had been born to them on December 8, 1834, whom we have given the name Abraham." The birth had been a difficult one for his wife but she is okay for which he is very thankful: "Yes, may God be thanked, for His grace and support, which He continues to allow us to enjoy." He goes on to relate that their daughter Elisabeth has died on January 17 at 2 o'clock in the morning "...after a five-day long very severe sickness and coughing, and which death is extremely painful for those of us who remain; and yet, we want to say that what God does is done for the best."

At the time of the 1835 census the family is listed as the owners of Wirtschaft 11 in Altonau: "Klaas Abraham Friesen age 41, wife Margaretha 42, children Katerina 14, Klaas 10, Peter 8, Susanna 6, Margaretha 3, Elisabeth 2, and Abraham 1/2." Also listed with the family is step-son Isaac Johann Friesen age 18,<sup>1248</sup> and Abraham Gerhard Braun age 29, wife Helena 24, son Abraham 1 and daughter Anna 2. Possibly Braun was an Anwohner working for the Friesens. Brother-in-law Klaas Reimer had died in 1837, and was replaced as Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde on April 3, 1838, by brother Abraham. Another minister was now required and an election was held on June 26, 1838, from among three deacons, Klaas Friesen, nephew Johann Friesen and Isaak Loewen, with 59 votes cast. Johann and Klaas were tied at 21 each and lots were cast, the choice falling on Klaas.<sup>1249</sup>

In 1838 sister Regina and his husband Heinrich Neufeld were leaving for Prussia to visit brother Peter. Klaas quickly wrote a letter which he sent along with them writing that "brother-in-law Klaas Reimer has died, which death is extremely painful for us." He "hopes and trusts that he [Reimer] has now found rest from the labours and work with the Gemeinde of which he had much." He reported that "Heinrich Wiebe of Tiege died on March 29, 1838, after a long and difficult sickness; I think he was already a minister of our Gemeinde when you were here, but his place has not been filled yet." "But," Klaas writes, "the office of Ohm Reimer has fallen upon our brother Abraham Friesen, and who must now take over this difficult task." Klaas states that their intentions regarding the Menno Simons book are as written by brother Abraham. Klaas also acknowledged receipt of Peter's letter of January 3.<sup>1250</sup>

June 10, 1843, Klaas Friesen married for the second time to Karolina Plett, daughter of Johann Plett (1765-1833), listed as owner of Wirtschaft 47 in Sparrau, Molotschna, in the 1835 census.<sup>1251</sup> On August 23, 1843, Klaas wrote another letter to brother Peter in which he mentions that "brother Abraham was

sickly for a time but is well at present as is also my wife.”<sup>1252</sup>

In 1848 Klaas Friesen sold the Wirtschaft in Altona and moved to Rosenort where they purchased Wirtschaft No. 15. and continued farming.<sup>1253</sup> Karolina’s mother, nee Esther Smit, stayed with the family during her sickness and died there in 1855. Mrs. Klaas R. Brandt (nee Margaretha Friesen) was employed with the Klaas Friesen family during this time as a maid.<sup>1254</sup> The school registers for Rosenort for 1861/2 show children Klaas 7 and Anna 11 attending school together with the Heinrich Epp (1811-63) children next door, Gerhard 13, Bernhard 7 and David 7.<sup>1255</sup>

The “Ministerial Journal” of colleague Johann Dueck reveals that by the 1850s Klaas Friesen had become a senior minister of the Kleine Gemeinde.<sup>1256</sup> He was often responsible for the instruction of baptismal candidates on the Sundays prior to the baptismal services and officiated at many weddings. A number of sermons of Klaas Friesen were preserved by son Johann P. Friesen and are still extant.<sup>1257</sup> His sermon on Luke 18:9-14 written in 1863, just before his retirement from the ministry, was published in 1993.<sup>1258</sup>

Klaas Friesen was historically inclined and recorded various events and occurrences for posterity. Ältester Peter Toews relied on Klaas’ writings as one of five major sources for his *Sammlung...zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde* which he compiled in 1874.<sup>1259</sup> For example after the death of Klaas Reimer the Kleine Gemeinde requested an Ältester ordination from the Ohrloff Gemeinde. Toews quoted Ohm Klaas who assessed the situation as follows; “Here we were given to understand that if they were to establish an Ältester for us we would have to accommodate them: namely, that we should no longer consider infant baptism, the swearing of oaths, and the bearing of arms to be quite so unchristian - as one member from our Gemeinde allowed himself to express this position. In addition, we were no longer to receive members from other Gemeinden without proper certificates. As we were unable to accept these stipulations, the ordination was completely denied to us.”<sup>1260</sup> Another example of his important historical contribution is “Eine Kurze Beschreibung” or a “Closing admonition, 1849” - a short meditation by older brother Abraham written in contemplation of his death - which Ohm Klaas recorded and preserved for posterity.<sup>1261</sup>

Klaas Friesen was well read in the writings of the faith and his library included various works, including Dutch writers such as Claas Ganglofs. This book had great influence on his nephew, Ältester Peter Toews, after Friesen’s death. Toews described this event as follows: “I found among the filed away papers and books of an aged minister, which his widow, my aunt, did not want to take along to their new home [in Manitoba], a Dutch booklet regarding the *United Undivided Church of God* written by Claas Ganglofs. This book contained truths which I had never before observed in such a manner...”<sup>1262</sup>

Klaas Friesen’s exemplary ministerial career came to an end amidst a number of unfortunate controversies which beset the Kleine Gemeinde in the mid-1860s. In his “*Sammlung...zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*,” Peter Toews has noted only that “by a majority of votes on the 16th and 23rd of February, 1864, the minister Klaas Friesen of Rosenort, was removed from his position. He

fell into a distrust of the minister Johann Dueck - perhaps without even being the cause -and became unreconcilable and loveless, and therefore unworthy of the office."<sup>1263</sup>

Although the matter was complicated and influenced by a number of factors, singing by Ziffern or numerals was one of the issues. In 1860 teacher Heinrich Franz of the village of Gnadenfeld, Molotschna Colony, had published his *Choralbuch* which used a system of numeral notes or Ziffern. It quickly became popular among Mennonite congregations throughout Russia. It became a divisive issue between conservatives and progressives (those in favour of abandoning the Holy Gospel) as can be seen from the diary of Rev. Jakob Epp from the Chortitza or "old" colony congregation.<sup>1264</sup>

The "numbered" melodies had gained acceptance in the Kleine Gemeinde by 1866. In December of 1866, Rev. Peter Toews (as he then was) ordered a quantity of *Choralbücher* from cousin, Gerhard P. Goossen, Liebenau, Molotschna Colony.<sup>1265</sup> The older ministers such as Ohm Klaas felt that this was too big a departure from the established ways and voiced their opposition. These events are described by Ältester Heinrich Enns in a letter which he presented to the brotherhood on January 3, 1866: "You also accuse me of having the greatest fault in the matter of Ohm Klaas Friesen of Rosenort. We shall have to leave this up to the Lord. If the spirit of God had not given us a completely greater inspiration I would have unknowingly and unwillingly collaborated in doing wrong. For when we sat in judgement for the first time regarding Ohm Klaas, I said, 'We will have to consider carefully whether or not we should abandon singing by numerals, because it was like a thorn in the eye of Ohm Klaas.' Whereupon Jakob Friesen from Blumstein said, 'The numeral melodies by now are favoured,' and the matter was not discussed any further. Jakob Friesen, Blumstein, at one time said; 'The matter with Ohm Klaas could be tolerated no longer.' When we again sat in council with regard to removing him from his office, I said as follows, 'Let us overlook this for him once more.' But because I saw that the matter was destined to end this way I also voted for removing him from his office. Before and after the vote mostly numeral melodies were being sung. Because Ohm Klaas was offended by this, I talked very earnestly with the song leaders; but, by and large, it was quite fruitless. Not that I thought that we should sing no numeral melodies but rather that we could have refrained from using them for a time."

Ältester Enns continued: "In so far as the matter between Johann Dueck and Ohm Klaas is concerned, I will not say very much. But Ohm Dueck and I know very well how I advised him. I also drove with him to the home of Ohm Klaas and from a true heart I counselled him that he should help in the matter by conceding as much as he knew how and as much as he was able. In my opinion he could possibly have done more and been more accommodating. But I left this up to him, as he said that he had done as much as he knew how. In which regard I am also satisfied with Dueck, because everyone knows best the status of their relationship with God."<sup>1266</sup>

It seems that a conservative retrenchment took place in both branches of the Kleine Gemeinde after the 1866 division so that the views of Ohm Klaas were

vindicated to a certain extent.

Klaas Friesen was blind for the last seven years of his life, losing his eyesight in about 1863. Consequently he was no longer able to read and write and to carry on his farming operations. The disability evidently contributed to his strong opposition to the numbered melodies as well as his apparent resentment towards some members of the ministerial regarding other matters such as insufficient admonition against pride in the Gemeinde.

Klaas Friesen seemingly had a particular concern regarding his ministerial colleague Johann Dueck. The background to this unfortunate situation is explained in a letter by friend Heinrich Reimer (1871-1884), Muntau, Molotschna. He encouraged Ohm Klaas to forgive Dueck and to put the matter behind him: "Alas, my dearly beloved friend, how is this even possible? I must repeat it again, I have never known you to be thus from former times even until this very hour. Nor have I come to know you that way although we frequently came together and have always stood in good harmony, and as far as I know, always had a good confidence in each other..."<sup>1267</sup> According to a letter of nephew Peter Toews, Klaas Friesen came under a deep conviction and remorse regarding these difficulties just prior to his death.<sup>1268</sup>

Another issue which became a concern for Klaas Friesen was the landlessness amongst his congregation. His niece's husband, Isaac Harms (1811-91), Alexanderkrone, and others, were actively involved in the process of renting and purchasing land where the landless could be resettled.<sup>1269</sup> Some of these purchases were made by the Gemeinde as a community which required the signatures of the membership. Heinrich Enns writes of one such occasion where the documents were at the home of Klaas Friesen where the others were to sign them: "Another matter which I wish to put to you for your consideration is the great tumult and unrest respecting the leasing and purchasing of land. Who will have the most fault in this regard? It first started with Ohm Klaas in Rosenort, where the writing lay unexecuted. When I came there I earnestly declared that I did not see good results in this..."<sup>1270</sup>

Apparently Ohm Klaas supported the renting and purchasing of land which was taking place. The primary purpose of this activity was to assist the landless and young people in the Gemeinde to be able to obtain their own farms. This was something which only one-quarter of Russian Mennonite families were able to aspire to at the time.

Klaas Friesen must have encouraged learning and reading as all his sons were good writers and articulate.<sup>1271</sup>

Klaas survived all of his seven siblings by 13 years. As the last member of his generation he served as a role model for a large body of nephews and nieces and great-nephews and grand-nieces who came to know him affectionately as "Onkel Claasz." The esteem in which Ohm Klaas Friesen was held by the extended von Riesen/Friesen family circle is seen after the death of brother Peter von Riesen in Prussia in 1847 when Peter's family sent his fur coat (Stadtpelez) to Russia as a gift for their dear uncle Klaas.<sup>1272</sup>

Ohm Klaas had a busy family and social life as was to be expected. e.g. In

1866 brother-in-law Heinrich Enns of Fischau wrote that “Our in-law from Rosenort [Klaas Friesen] was also here together with one of his sons and one of his daughters. His wife and her daughter have driven somewhere, but if it is possible they want to visit us during the holidays. They are all well.”<sup>1273</sup>

Klaas Friesen sold his Wirtschaft #15 in Rosenort to Wilh. Berg in 1869.<sup>1274</sup> Klaas Friesen died in Rosenort on October 12, 1870.<sup>1275</sup>

In the Fall of 1870 widow Karolina Friesen and her unmarried children moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko.<sup>1276</sup> They settled next door to the Wirtschaft of her nephew Ältester Peter Toews. Their farm at this point consisted of 140 acres.<sup>1277</sup> Karolina continued farming together with her family.

Prior to emigrating to Manitoba, Karolina disposed of her late husband’s books giving them to nephew and neighbour, Ältester Peter P. Toews, including a copy of *United Undivided Church of God* by Ganglofs, already referred to.<sup>1278</sup>

As a widow Karolina Friesen had various business matters to take care of: September 20, 1873, “the old Kl. Friesensche accompanied Abr. Reimer, Abr. Penner, and Pet. Kroek. to Katrinoslav.”<sup>1279</sup> In 1874 the Wirtschaft in Blumenhoff was sold together with the 140 acre farm of nephew Peter Toews for 3800 rubles (or \$2800.00 at 1874 exchange rates) to Jakob S. of Hochstadt.<sup>1280</sup>

In 1874 the widow Karolina Friesen emigrated from Russia crossing the ocean with the first contingent of Mennonite immigrants on the S. S. Austrian. They arrived in Quebec City on July 17 and at the confluence of the Red and Rat Rivers in Manitoba on August 1, 1874. The family settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, with Karolina taking out a homestead on the SW27-7-6E in her own name. She was insured in the Brandordnung (Wirtschaft 10) \$37.50 for buildings, \$150 for livestock and equipment, and \$123 for inventory. Her insurance was cancelled on Dec. 24, 1877.

In 1877 Karolina married for the second time to Isaac Harms (1811-91) of Jansen, Nebraska. Upon her marriage she moved to Jansen with her younger children. Karolina with her youngest three children are listed with Isaac Harms in the 1880 Cub Creek census. The oldest sons Cornelius and Johann stayed in Manitoba. Karolina and her second husband lived in the so-called “Harms” village in the northwest corner of Cub Creek Precinct. Karolina died in 1887.<sup>1281</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Karolina S. Plett</b>	Mar 7, 1823		Feb 11, 1887
m	Klaas Friesen	Oct 6, 1793	Nov 2, 1816	Oct 12, 1870
5	Cornelius P. Friesen	Mar 18, 1844		Aug 8, 1899
5	Johann P. Friesen	Dec 18, 1845		Dec 1845
5	Johann P. Friesen	Oct 20, 1846		Oct 20, 1846
5	Johann P. Friesen	Oct 20, 1847	Dec 21, 1869	Dec 18, 1920
5	Anna P. Friesen	Dec 23, 1849		Oct 27, 1912
5	Klaas P. Friesen	Feb 2, 1954	Feb 5, 1878	Dec 18, 1926
5	Heinrich P. Friesen	Aug 14, 1857	single	Feb, 1885
5	David P. Friesen	Nov 4, 1860		
5	Maria P. Friesen	Aug 12, 1866	Mar 11, 1894	Nov 5, 1906

5 Son **Cornelius Plett Friesen** (1844-99) was interested in history and the world around him. At the age of 20 he gathered various poems and historical writings in a journal.<sup>1282</sup> The collection included a poetic eulogy for uncle Johann Isaac of Schönau as well as a poem composed by "C. R." (possibly Kleine Gemeinde founder Klaas Reimer) which he copied on February 8, 1866, while still resident in Rosenort.<sup>1283</sup>

In 1869 Cornelius P. Friesen married Agatha T. Klassen, daughter of Martin Klassen (1823-ca.88) and Elisabeth Toews (1821-54) of Paulsheim.<sup>1284</sup> Agatha was the niece of Ältester Peter Toews.<sup>1285</sup>

Agatha and Cornelius made their home in Blumenhoff, Borosenko. In Russia Cornelius was a carpenter making furniture and other small articles. Two fine examples of his craftsmanship, a "Kjist" and "Prush", are still extant.<sup>1286</sup> The family immigrated from Russia in 1874 arriving at the Forks in Winnipeg with the first group of Mennonite pioneers on July 31. They settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, together with his mother, and brother Abraham, establishing their home of Wirtschaft 12. Their first house was a semlin, a pit dug into the ground with a straw roof.

Since he had a good education Cornelius served as a school teacher. He is described by historian Royden Loewen as "a capable 30-year-old man who kept a well-stocked library, knew carpentry and some medicine. His wage for the first year was a flat \$50.00 plus oats, hay and firewood. After being hired, Friesen quickly went to work fashioning crude benches and tables for the school. . . . Here 20 students assembled at the beginning of November, 1874, to put in 86 1/2 days of class time until the last day of school on April 30."<sup>1287</sup> School during the first year was held in Heinrich F. Reimer's semlin which was partitioned off as a classroom and a wooden floor installed.

A booklet No. 8 of writing exercises or Schönschreiben is still extant from the first year.<sup>1288</sup> It is interesting to note that the subjects of the writing lessons were from ancient and medieval church history and in effect served a dual purpose as history lessons. Four of the items dated December 10, 12th, 21st and 27th, 1874, respectively, were written by Abram P. Reimer (1862-1933), so-called "Brandt'e Reima," who later moved to Garden City, Kansas; and one item dated December 1, 1876, was by Klaas P. Reimer (1864-1937), who later married for the second time to Cornelius' daughter Anna. Six samples of Schönschreiben from 1874 were published in 1983.<sup>1289</sup>

The next year, 1875, Cornelius and Agatha built a better house of logs with a straw roof, 18 by 40 feet. Their new house was entered in the insurance records in 1877 for \$100. An additional assessment of \$50 was added in 1883 and a new barn was entered for \$125 in 1885.

The Kleine Gemeinde teachers in the East Reserve continued a system of teacher's conferences and mutual examinations (Prüfungen) as they had in the Borosenko and Molotschna Colonies in Russia. Cornelius took an active role. On April 13, 1876, for example, colleague Abraham R. Friesen recorded that school examinations were held in Blumenhof and that teacher Cornelius Friesen from Blumenort was present as well as elder Peter Toews, several ministers and

other senior members of the Gemeinde. School was held in private homes until 1880 when a separate building was erected to be used as a school and church. A few years later this facility was mentioned by the Provincial School Inspector as being the only Mennonite school in Manitoba to have two blackboards. Cornelius' handwriting appears on a one page "Ink Practice Sheet" dated October 22, 1882, a firm and crisp writing style. It lists the names of the 12 sons of the patriarch Jakob, each name forming the beginning of a line in a poem and illustrates the pedagogical techniques he used to gain the interest of the students.

Cornelius P. Friesen was a deeply religious individual. In 1882, when one-half of the Kleine Gemeinde went with Ältester Peter Toews to join with Johann Holdeman, Cornelius P. Friesen "...gave his impression of the division by quoting Psalm 30:31, Matthew 7:24-27. and I Corinthians 3:4, each of which emphasizes the idea of steadfastness and a firm spiritual foundation."<sup>1290</sup> These scriptures were noted on the title page of Cornelius P. Friesen's transcription of the sermon which Nebraska Ältester Abram L. Friesen preached when he came to Manitoba to help his brethren.<sup>1291</sup>

On August 18, 1881, Cornelius went to Winnipeg together with cousin, Ältester Peter Toews, indicating the important role which he played during these events. Cornelius owned a Holdeman book which he lent out to his neighbours including cousin Abraham F. Reimer, who borrowed the book on October 8. But even during this time, life was not completely consumed by religious division: August 5, 1882, Cornelius came home from Winnipeg where "He had seen an elephant and a giraffe and the tusks of the elephant. The elephant is 12 feet high and 130 years old."

Cornelius P. Friesen taught in Blumenort from 1874 until 1890. Granddaughter Elizabeth Penner recalled that sometime around 1890 Cornelius P. Friesen attended school in Gretna to take a teacher upgrading course thereby becoming entitled to a higher salary.<sup>1292</sup> After missing one year Cornelius taught again in Blumenort from 1891 to 1894.

Cornelius also farmed and was a full farmer or Vollwirt in the village. According to homestead records the NW16-7-6E was registered to his name although the family always lived in the village. Assessment records in 1883 show his assets were modest: house \$150.00, furniture \$150.00, 1 horse, 2 cows, 2 yearlings, 1 calf, 2 pigs, 3 sheep, and a plow \$15.00. With a total assessment of only \$325.00 he was one of the poorer farmers in the village. By 1889 the situation had improved with Cornelius P. Friesen moving more into the middle level assessment among his fellow villagers although he was never remembered as a very successful farmer. Grandson Abram P. Friesen recalls a story from around the time when the twin sons, Klaas and Martin, were only young lads. One day Cornelius P. Friesen had taken them along to get a load of hay. As they were returning, about a quarter mile from the village, the hayrack overturned, dumping the load. The twins were very upset and scampered home to their mother, leaving their father to reload the hay by himself.<sup>1293</sup> Cornelius also served as the village veterinarian.

Daughter Anna had a close relationship with her father whom she adored. She spent many hours by candlelight copying various of the writings which he

collected for his reference. Since the family was quite poor she had to work out as a maid and if she was mistreated or overworked it was usually her father she appealed to and not her mother.<sup>1294</sup>

Cornelius was artistic by nature and was known for his *Fraktur* cutouts. In 1998 granddaughter Elizabeth Penner still had in her possession two “Irrgarten”. The “Irrgarten” was a traditional Mennonite artform, with roots in the medieval monastic tradition. It was a paper cutout with the words of a poem or puzzle incorporated into the design. The poem or puzzle in the “Irrgarten” was usually of a didactic or moralistic nature and was used for teaching purposes. Historian Royden Loewen writes that “Cornelius P. Friesen emphasized *Schönschriften* very much. He had each student make his own book of writings. Friesen, himself an artist, would prepare covers for the student’s booklets by drawing *Frakturen*, a complex of circles and curls, which in their whole constituted a picture.”<sup>1295</sup>

Cornelius P. Friesen helped out other teachers by lending them books, e.g. Kehler in Bergthal. He sold small quantities of ink, paper and books to neighbours and friends. He owned various books which he would lend to neighbours such as cousin Abraham F. Reimer. On April 11, 1880, cousin Abraham F. Reimer visited Cornelius at his home and noted with envy that “they had a garden book with 166 pages, 33 kinds of vegetables and 9 kinds of flowers.” Cornelius, it seemed, had a close relationship with cousin Abraham “Fuella” Reimer, who frequently noted Friesen’s activities.

Cornelius was concerned about keeping up with developments in the teaching profession. In 1893, he together with three other Kleine Gemeinde-associated teachers - Heinrich Rempel, Franz K. Goossen and Gerhard E. Kornelsen - drove to Gretna to attend an “upgrading” course. Cornelius continued to be actively involved in the teacher’s conferences. According to a record of these conferences for 1895, Cornelius acted as a “senior” teacher or examiner, as he signed or initialled the minutes for four of the conferences held in that year.<sup>1296</sup>

After a number of years Cornelius and Agatha were making some financial progress. By 1898 the family had moved solidly into the middle class in terms of property assessment. Family historians Martin K. Friesen and Johann E. Friesen have written that, “In later years when their children were grown up, they built a new house which had a full basement constructed with fieldstones. He [Cornelius] knew how to work with lime and prepared his own lime with his own kiln using limestone.”<sup>1297</sup> Sons Cornelius, Martin and Klaas were still at home at this time and helped their father by bringing the logs out of the bush and then in building the house.<sup>1298</sup> Cornelius worked hard to build this house and over exerted himself which apparently contributed to his early death a few years later. This house was later attached to the west end of old Peter B. Toews’ house.<sup>1299</sup>

Cornelius P. Friesen was an intelligent man with a well-stocked library which included the canon of Mennonite devotional literature. He collected various writings of the faith including two sermons written by father Klaas Friesen (1793-1870). One of these sermons written in 1863 on a text from Luke 18:9-14 has been translated and published in 1993.<sup>1300</sup> The other sermon was written on December 30, 1845, and was transcribed by Cornelius’ daughter Anna on May 20,



1900. One of Cornelius' journals which is still extant includes the famous treatise *Faith and Reason* by theologian Heinrich Balzer of Tiege, Molotschna.<sup>1301</sup> An undated journal which Anna copied included letters by Peter P. Isaac, Rev. Peter Baerg and Klaas Reimer, and several poems of farewell from Russia, and poems by his wife's distant cousin Bernhard Harder, theologian Heinrich Balzer, and an epic poem about the Prussian Ältester Kornelius Regehr. A journal dated April 11, 1870, includes a poem by Heinrich Balzer about the death of Kleine Gemeinde founder Klaas Reimer as well as another poem about the death of deacon Heinrich Wiebe, Blumenort. A small hand-sewn booklet contains a biography of Ältester Kornelius Regehr and the poem about Ältester Regehr already mentioned.<sup>1302</sup>

Cornelius taught in the village of Blumenhof from 1895 until his death. He was remembered as a good teacher. Abram P. Reimer (1882-1961), a former student, remembered that Cornelius was not a strict disciplinarian. During the time that Cornelius was teaching in Blumenhof it occurred that the twins Martin and Klaas, who attended the school in Blumenort, had misbehaved and were punished by having to kneel on blocks for a time. This apparently caused some consternation in the Friesen household as father was not used to such methods of punishment. Cornelius was a colourful story teller who kept his class enthralled with his anecdotes. He taught some English in his classes which attracted unfavourable attention from the church. It stands to his credit that over his quarter century teaching career his students included the ancestors of some of Manitoba's most prosperous business and farming dynasties as well as notable church leaders and family matriarchs.

Brothers Cornelius and brother Abraham were close and often helped each other. In his Journal for 1889, Abraham recorded that on Saturday April 2, he "went to Cornelius' place and helped slaughter pigs." On November 26th he recorded "After dinner I helped slaughter a cow at Kor. Friesens." And again on February 15, 1890, Abraham "helped slaughter two pigs for Kornelius." A granddaughter recalled the two brothers enjoyed studying the Bible together and "one week Abraham would go to Cornelius' house where they would sit and study and the next week Cornelius would go to Abraham's place where they would have Bible study together."<sup>1303</sup>

Cornelius was only sick for a short time before he died. His cousin and former Ältester, Peter Toews, wrote that Cornelius died of inflammation of the intestines.<sup>1304</sup> Son Cornelius K. Friesen nursed his father during his sickness because the mother was sickly. The funeral was held according to the old custom, "No preaching and only a few songs were sung. Hans von Steen was quoted."<sup>1305</sup> This was indicative of the Gospel-centric teachings which were treasured in this family.

Cornelius' library was lost when fire destroyed the home of son Klaas K. Friesen in 1920.<sup>1306</sup> In 1981 Elisabeth Penner recalled that her grandfather was resembled the most by son Cornelius. She also recalled that he had a good posture and walked very upright, like son Martin. A biography of Cornelius P. Friesen was published in 1996 featuring some of his artwork.<sup>1307</sup>

The neighbour Mrs. Isaac Wiens later recalled that Mrs. Cornelius P. Friesen

had often come over to visit at their house and that she had been a talkative and friendly lady.<sup>1308</sup> Mrs. Friesen was not very healthy in her later years and had high blood pressure. She passed away suddenly while eating supper at the dinner table. She had made Kjielchje for dinner that day and all the boys except Klaas were sitting around the table with her eating dinner: Klaas had gone to Steinbach to buy some rubber boots. Mrs. Friesen was just eating a fork full of noodles when she collapsed and died.<sup>1309</sup> Her sons later recalled that their mother had a dream the night before she died that she was crossing some water on a narrow path and that suddenly the boardwalk had collapsed so that she fell into the water. She awoke with a scream. She had interpreted the dream to mean that she would soon die.<sup>1310</sup>

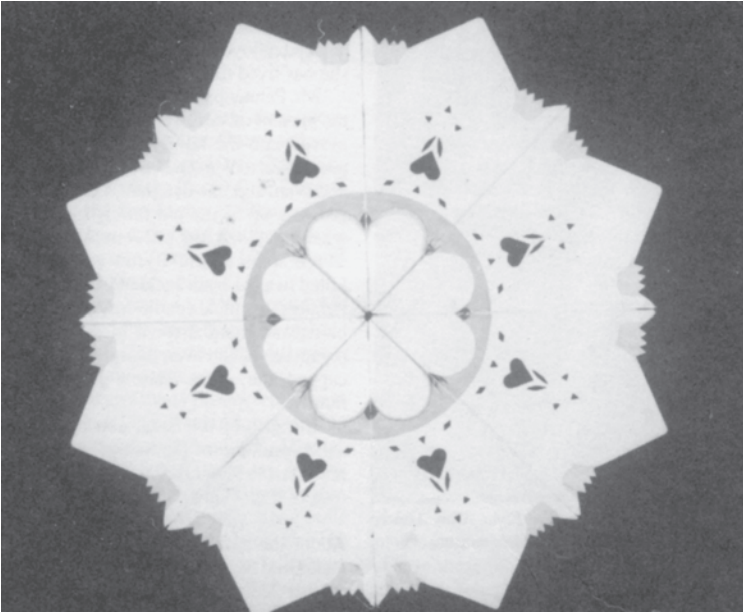
Another granddaughter, Mrs. Jakob R. Plett, nee Gertrude Friesen, remembered being told by Mrs. Cornelius W. Brandt of Blumenort, Manitoba, that she resembled Mrs. Cornelius P. Friesen, nee Agatha Klassen. Every time she would be visiting there, Mrs. Brandt would tell her how much she reminded her of Mrs. Cornelius P. Friesen, “physically, in her actions, etc.” For this reason, Mrs. Brandt had always felt very close to Gertrude as she had been a good friend of Mrs. Friesen’s.<sup>1311</sup>



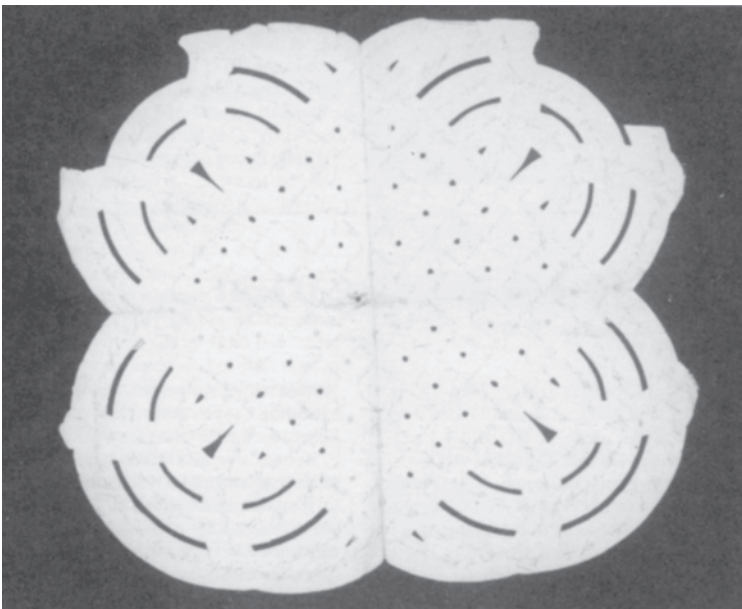
*Elizabeth Penner, daughter of Klaas P. and Anna Friesen Reimer, displays an “Irrgarten” and an uncompleted paper cutout prepared by her grandfather Cornelius P. Friesen. Elizabeth and husband P. K. Penner were the founders of the “Penner International” trucking firm of Steinbach. Photo - Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 57.*



*Mrs. Anna Friesen Reimer, Mrs. Klaas P. Reimer, visiting at her son John F. Reimer, Fowler, Kansas, 1946. Anna lovingly preserved some of the artwork and writings of her father: Photo - Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 56.*



*Partially completed paper cutout about 16 inches in diameter. The work demonstrates how teacher Cornelius P. Friesen showed his students how to use geometrical principles and patterns to design their pieces of artwork. The colouring is incomplete, but the colours already used were saffron in the middle surrounding the hearts, and gold-yellow on the crown-like leaves decorating the circumference. Photo Jim Peters - Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 56.*



*Irrgarten prepared by Cornelius P. Friesen. The "Irrgarten" is about 16 inches in diameter.<sup>1312</sup> Mennonite Fraktur art and Schönschreiben had roots in the Medieval monastic tradition, the spiritual fountain of the Flemish Mennonite community which gave birth to the Russian Mennonite community. Photo Jim Peters - Pres., No. 8, Part Two, page 56.*

**“The Kjist and Prush of Cornelius P. Friesen (1844-99),” by Glenn Kehler, 680 Buckingham Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3R 1C2.<sup>1313</sup>**

In addition to being a teacher, Cornelius Plett Friesen was a gifted craftsman, who enjoyed carpentry. We have only two items he created - a wooden chest and crib, but from these works it is apparent that he was very meticulous.

The Kjist was made in Russia and brought along to Canada in 1874. It measures 51" x 26" x 19" high. Cornelius must have picked his materials very carefully as the wood he used is a clear, knot-free fir, similar to the fir that grows in British Columbia.

The ends and sides are of one piece, 7/8" thick by 18" wide. The top and bottom are made up of three 8 1/2" pieces, 1 1/8" thick. The corners are beautifully dove-tailed to a perfect fit. The bottom is fastened to the sides with 3/8" diameter dowels, placed at a 45 degree angle, and possibly glued in place.

Inside the chest, Cornelius made a small box with a lid along one side, known as the “till” and a standard feature on Mennonite chests. This was where the small valuables were secured for the voyage to Canada.

The hardware was another very practical part of the kjist. The drop handles and the lock were factory items. A sturdy brass flush lock, with a rather large key provided a sense of security. The rounded drop handles have a very intricate design, which became evident only when all of the layers of paint were removed. The hinges, bolts and nuts were all made in the local blacksmith shop. For the long strap hinges, black strap iron was heated, bent and shaped to fit and the exposed bolts were covered with brass domes. One can only imagine which of the treasured belongings were contained in the kjist, as most household items would have been left behind, either sold or given to relatives.

The underside of the lid indicates that various photographs were originally displayed in the Kjist. This was where Mennonites mounted colourful artwork and often photographs of their rulers. They may have been removed by someone who did not realize the significance of these drawings and pictures.

The Kjist was passed down to the oldest son, Cornelius Klassen Friesen (founder of Friesen Drillers). “C.K.” remained a bachelor until the age of 33 and lived with his parents until they both passed on. The Kjist stayed with Cornelius upon his marriage to Katharine Penner Friesen, the oldest of the Klaas I. Friesens girls (see *Pres*, No. 10, Part Two, page 55-56).

The Kjist passed down to their oldest daughter Erna Friesen Thiessen, who then gave it to her oldest child, Katherine Thiessen Kehler, the present keeper of the chest. Kathie spent much of her spare time one winter lovingly removing layer after layer of paint to reveal what we all consider a beautiful memory of her great grandfather. After 125 years, it is evident that Cornelius had good reason for his design and choice of wood, because there is not one crack nor any sign of warping evident.

One of the first items of furniture in every Mennonite home was a “Prush” or crib. The “Waiej” or cradle was used for babies and the Prush or crib for infants. In most Mennonite families a child was born every year or two and the parents would have the youngest two with them in their bedroom, the baby in

the cradle and the toddler in the Prush.<sup>1314</sup>

This example of a prush was crafted by Cornelius Plett Friesen (1844-99). The average prush was used by eight to 12 children and became a permanent fixture in the parents' bedroom for close to 20 years.

Cornelius built this Prush for his children and it has passed the test of time.

The Prush is 43" 23" x 22" high. This size would allow the child enough time to merge in with the older children, away from the parents until they were displaced by a younger sibling.

The design is very simple, but the construction is quite intricate. The sides and ends are mortised into the four corner posts, not one mortise but a double mortise and tenon, all done by chisel and hammer, to a perfect fit. This was then held together with wooden dowels - no nails or screws.

All of his children; Aganetha, Anna, Margaretha, Cornelius, Johan, Martin and Klaas slept in the Prush. It was then given to their neighbour and nephew, Klaas I. Friesen, who then used it for all of their children; Katharina (Mrs. C. K. Friesen), Helen (Mrs. C. T. Loewen), Margaretha (Mrs. J. T. Loewen), Frank, Anna (Mrs. J. R. Barkman), Paul, Maria (Mrs. P. D. Reimer), Pauline (Mrs. H. D. Reimer) and Alfred.

The prush was then taken back to the Cornelius P. Friesen home by his son Cornelius K. Friesen, who later took Katharine, the oldest daughter of Klaas I. Friesen as his bride. The prush was once again put to good use by their children - Erna (Mrs. John P. Thiessen), Albert, Margaretha (Mrs. Isaac P. Penner), Walter, Anna (Mrs. Henry P. Unger), John, Tony and Virginia (Mrs. James Woodard).

The Prush then went to C. K. Friesen's oldest daughter, Erna F. Thiessen, whose daughter Kathie also slept in it. Since then it has been used by numerous other great-grandchildren. The prush is still usable and is in the care of Kathie Kehler, who is considering removing the many layers of paint that have accumulated.



*The Cornelius P. Friesen Kjist, showing the intricate hardware, the handles and lock. The five pedestal base on which the Kjist traditionally stood has been replaced with wheeled rollers. Perhaps this too can be restored? Photo - Pres., No. 13, pages 120-121.*

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Cornelius P. Friesen</b>	Mar 18, 1844	Apr 20, 1869	Aug 8, 1899
m	Agatha T. Klassen	May 10, 1848		Apr 12, 1902
6	Agatha K. Friesen	Jul 18, 1871	Dec 25, 1892	Jun 29, 1942
m	Cornelius P. Janzen	Nov 1, 1863		Feb 11, 1941
6	Anna K. Friesen	Jul 15, 1874	Nov 26, 1893	Mar 31, 1963
m	Klaas P. Reimer	Nov 5, 1864		Oct 3, 1937
6	Margaretha Friesen	Jun 30, 1876	Jul, 1899	Jun 28, 1954
m	Jacob R. Reimer	Apr 25, 1874		Aug 18, 1900
2m	Klaas W. Reimer	Dec 1, 1861		Feb 18, 1944
6	Cornelius K. Friesen	Sep 11, 1877	Oct 16, 1910	Sep 22, 1953
m	Katherina Friesen	Jun 11, 1890		Dec 15, 1971
6	Johann K. Friesen	Dec 5, 1879	1906	May 2, 1925
m	Rosena Geschefske	Dec 18, 1855		Oct 5, 1931
6	Martin K. Friesen	Mar 3, 1881	Dec 3, 1905	Nov 6, 1976
m	Katharina K. Plett	Jan 7, 1886		Oct 2, 1971
6	Klaas K. Friesen	Mar 3, 1881	Dec 15, 1905	Nov 18, 1961
m	Maria J. K. Plett	Nov 2, 1886		Nov 24, 1918
2m	Helena Unger	May 22, 1897		Mar 8, 1978



*Erna Friesen Tbiessen poses with the Kjist with lid open. Photo - Pres., No. 13, page 120*



*The Prush, side view. Granddaughter Erna Friesen Tbiessen and her daughter Kathie Tbiessen Kebler pose with the Prush. All photos for this article are courtesy of Glenn and Kathie Kebler, 680 Buckingham Rd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3R 1C2.*

6 Daughter **Agatha K. Friesen** (1871-1942) married Cornelius P. Janzen, son of Johann Jansen (1841-1905) of Heuboden, Borosenko, and later Blumenhof, Manitoba. When Cornelius and Agatha married in 1892 they lived with his parents in Blumenhof. "The next they moved two miles southeast to *De Krim*, where Cornelius' brother Johann had just settled."<sup>1315</sup> They owned the SW 29-7-7E.

Daughter Agatha Fast and son Klaas F. Janzen, write: "They built a ...slab barn which then served as living quarters. The barn and other farm buildings...[Cornelius] built of slabs....Later the same summer Father built their first home by two by fours stacked one on top of the other. This later also became their last home.....[later] this house was moved about 150 yards south and became the home of the newly married couple, our parents having built a large home for their growing family....In 1919, Father also built a big new barn on the farm."<sup>1316</sup>

Cornelius P. Janzen also acquired the west half of the adjoining Section 20-7-7E, owning three quarters of outstanding ground in one block. In the 1920s they mortgaged their homestead to purchase a quarter section of hayland in Greenland. During the depression years they were unable to make the payments. In 1933 they lost their homestead and were forced to move to the farm in Greenland. Their old house was moved to Greenland, remodelled, and became their retirement home.

Agatha Fast and Klaas F. Janzen have written about their parents: "Father still kept a few cows and a few chickens and enjoyed woodwork. He was also

fond of gardening, especially planting and pruning fruit trees....

Mother....was never very strong....she loved learning....Being the oldest child...the responsibility of helping her teacher-father with the chores and firewood became her job. For the latter she used a bucksaw....Mother enjoyed hard work and spent much time at spinning, knitting and making quilts."<sup>1317</sup>

Cornelius P. Janzen died suddenly of a heart attack. Agatha suffered from stomach cancer spending the last winter of her life at the home of her daughter, Agatha, Mrs. Henry C. Fast.<sup>1318</sup>



*Cornelius P. Janzen and Mrs. Janzen, nee Agatha K. Friesen, in front of their Greenland home. Photo - Blumenort, page 281.*

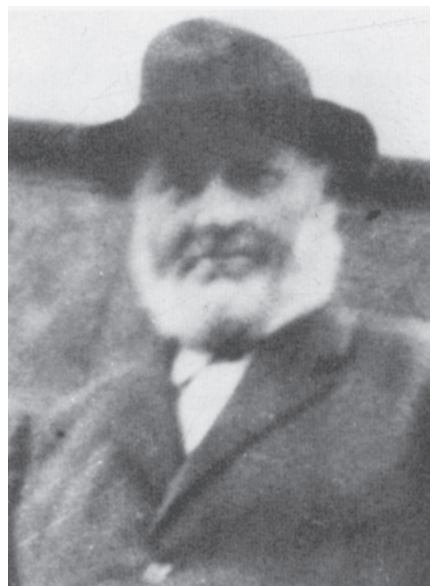
6 Daughter **Anna K. Friesen** (1874-1963) married widower Klaas P. Reimer, son of deacon Abraham R. Reimer of Blumenort. The family biography states: "Since her parents were poor, she had to start work for other people at a very early age. Her work and loneliness was very hard for her sometimes. In 1893 she married a widower with six children. Together they had another 14 of whom nine predeceased her."<sup>1319</sup>

Klaas acquired the former village farm of Peter B. ("Groute") Toews, including the house which Toews had built as well as the big barn. Anna and her husband also bought the home her father had built in 1898 and moved it onto the yard and "attached it to the west end of the house so that the complex looks like one big house."<sup>1320</sup> Anna's unmarried brothers then lived elsewhere until they got married "one here and the other there." Historian Royden Loewen has written "After Abraham R. Reimer died in 1891,...Klaas P. Reimer, continued the [blacksmith] business to a limited extent. While he did the regular blacksmith work of sharpening plowshares, he was particularly noted for devising and making mechanisms such as thresher-feeders and blowers, steel plows and seeding mechanisms....His shop was located across the road from his farmyard. It was equipped with a huge forge and bellows...." In the 1890s Klaas P. Reimer was one of the first to acquire one of the new "....upright [steam] engines costing \$1000 a piece."<sup>1321</sup>

When the Blumenort village broke up in 1910 Anna and Klaas P. Reimer were among the fortunate families who did not have to relocate their farmyard. As their share of the village lands, they received the east half of Section 22-7-6E and the NE28-7-6E (the former village pasture). Klaas P. Reimer was a large scale farmer in Blumenort, Manitoba. His widow remained living in the family homestead together with son Ben F. Reimer, often known as "Groafarusch Bjeent". After her death, son Ben acquired the homestead, now farmed by his son Mark.



*Mrs. Klaas P. Reimer, nee Anna K. Friesen. Photo - son Henry F. Reimer, Blumenort, 1981.*



*Blacksmith and farmer Klaas P. Reimer. Photo - Blumenort, page 303.*



6 The *Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy* biography of daughter **Margaretha K. Friesen** (1876-1954), presumably written by her children, states as follows: "Margaretha Friesen married the first time to Jacob R. Reimer in about the beginning of 1899. This marriage was blessed with two sons. Cornelius who predeceased her at the age of 22 years, Jakob, second son was born after his father died. He was a watchmaker by trade. Mother remarried in February 1902 to Mr. Klaas W. Reimer, a widower with six children, so she had a family of eight right away. Mother was a good nurse and was always ready to doctor us when we were sick; and most of the time we got better without the aid of a doctor. She liked to read and consequently was good at telling stories which we always enjoyed. We were taught to pray at a young age."

"Father was known to be the first cheesemaker in Blumenort and also at Steinbach. He was a business man at heart and at one time owned a general store. Later on he went into butter making and won a gold medal (still a family possession) for the best butter made. This medal was given to him by V.F.M. and Company at an Exposition 'International' in the year 1900-01. In 1903 they moved to the farm two miles northwest of Steinbach where they lived till 1926. During this time father operated two butchershops at different times. He also went into slaughtering on a fairly large scale on the farm. After we moved into Steinbach in 1926 he again operated a butcher shop. This time for another firm. He was about 69 years when he went to semi-retirement."

"At the age of 70 years he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he recuperated to the extent that he could walk with the assistance of a cane. He lived to be 82 years during which time he suffered another three paralytic strokes but always recovered to an extent until the last one. His mind always remained clear for which we were very thankful. All this time mother lovingly cared for him."

"After father passed away mother travelled a bit. She visited son Martin Reimer at Goshen, Indiana. Also son Isaac Reimer in Waterloo Iowa. Later in 1949 to 1950 she spent some time in Fort William where daughter Kay lived at that time. Here she ailed quite a bit and in 1950 she entered the Resthaven home in Steinbach where she remained until her passing in June 1954. Above all we were brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord."<sup>1322</sup>



*Margaretha K. Friesen, Mrs. Klaas W. Reimer, circa 1930. Photos for this section are courtesy of grandson Garnet Reimer; Box 2767, Steinbach, Manitoba, ROA 2A0.*

6 Daughter **Margaretha K. Friesen** was married for the first time to widower Jakob R. Reimer, son of Blumenort deacon and blacksmith Abraham R. Reimer. She remarried to his cousin, Klaas W. Reimer, son of pioneer merchant Klaas R. Reimer, Steinbach.

Klaas W. Reimer was the owner of three cheese factories in the Steinbach area.<sup>1323</sup> "In 1889 he built and operated the first cheese factory in Steinbach in combination with a general store at the north end of the village." In 1893 he established a cheese factory in Blumenort.<sup>1324</sup> Historian Royden Loewen has written: "The cheese factory was, no doubt the most important business in the community.....Around 1910 Klaas W. Reimer sold the factory to a cheese co-operative, formed by Blumenort area farmers."<sup>1325</sup> In 1934 Klaas presented some recollections of the pioneer years at the 60th anniversary of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba which were translated and published in 1990.<sup>1326</sup>



*Klaas W. Reimer. Photo - Reflections, page 48.*<sup>1327</sup>



*Klaas W. Reimer Family portrait, l.-r.: rear, Jakob F., Martin F. (Gosben), George F., John F., Paul F., Abram B., Henry B., Isaac F. and Klaas B. Reimer. Klaas was the Massey-Harris dealer in Steinbach.<sup>1328</sup> Front: Katharine F. (Mrs. Bill Kelly), Elma F. (Mrs. Joe Leach), Elizabeth F. (Mrs. Art Regebr), owners of Betty's Groceries, Steinbach, Margaretha (Mrs. Klaas W. Reimer), Minna (Mrs. Bill Toews), Margaret (Mrs. John Wiebe), and Anna B. (Mrs. John R. Toews), Blumenhof.*

6 Son **Cornelius K. Friesen** (1877-1953) married Katharina Friesen, daughter of his cousin Klaas I. Friesen, Steinbach livery barn owner and teamster.

**“Borum Schtita Friese,” by Glenn Kehler, 680 Buckingham Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3R 1C2.**<sup>1329</sup>

**Background:** C.K. Friesen was a man who “marched to his own drummer”, and to describe him one would have use adjectives like non-judgemental, determined (possibly stubborn), broad-minded, curious, innovative, caring, generous, with a very dry sense of humour.

Cornelius was born in the family home in the village of Blumenort, and could be deemed a true pioneer for his contribution to the Mennonite community and beyond. His father was a school teacher in Russia, and carried on with his profession as the first school teacher to be hired in the Blumenort area. Since getting established in a new country was top priority, teachers pay was rather low and the Friesen children had to find employment wherever they could, to help with the upkeep of the home.

**Daring-do:** As a young man Cornelius bought a bicycle, and being curious and adventurous he asked some friends to join him to go harvesting in Kansas. This was great experience to see the world for a couple of young farm hands from Blumenort. I am sure by the time they arrived in Kansas, they were in top physical form, peddling the 1890s version of the bicycle. One can visualize them peddling over dirt roads, through the wild west Dakota Territories to the more settled areas of Nebraska and Kansas.

When the adventurers came back they had to face the “Brudaschuft” who revoked his church membership for such a daring feat, I guess the bicycle was too modern a vehicle, but he was later reinstated.<sup>1330</sup>

We are told that Cornelius had a rather dry sense of humour. When he was a young lad, the Friesens and Klassens were neighbours. Mr. Klassen, like most Mennonites had a nickname. He walked with his head tilted up (possibly because he was short in stature) and was called “Schtern kijkja Klosse”, but only behind his back, which Cornelius supposedly did not know. Being young and “uschuldich” he met Mr. Klassen and greeted him with “Gouden dach Ohmche, Schtern kijkja Kloose” (Good day Mr. star gazer Klassen).

Mr. Klassen was so offended that he told Cornelius’ father about his disrespectful son, and was told to promptly go over and apologize to Ohmje Klosse. Cornelius went over and said, “Papa said I should apologize for calling you Shtern kijkja Klosse, and if you forgive me for calling you Shtern kijka Klosse, I will never call you Shtern kijka Klosse again.” We assume he was reluctantly forgiven.

**Well Drilling 1892:** In 1892 as a young man Cornelius started his lifelong career providing potable water for the farms, towns and villages. According to oral tradition, he started working on well-drilling for others at the age of 15.

This was no easy task, and required skill as well as muscle and stamina, lifting heavy pipe, drill chisels, and screw pipe together with a four-foot-long pipe-wrench all day. This built strong character too. During the early years of his career there was no machinery available and wells were dug with pick and shovel,

or pipe driven into the sand or gravel with rather large sledge hammers.

Eventually Cornelius designed and built his own drilling rig when much of the structure was made of wood, including the large cable reels and the rocker arm that lifted and dropped the heavy chisel ever deeper into the rock. The mechanized energy was provided by a water-cooled one-cylinder stationary engine.<sup>1331</sup>

**Inventions:** C. K. Friesen grandsons, the present owners of Friesen Drillers managed to salvage some very interesting documents. One being a bill of sale dated January 13, 1926, from "His Majesty the King in the Right of Manitoba represented herein by the Honourable Minister of Public Works" for the purchase of two "Austin Well Drilling Machines" numbers 11 and 17 for the sum of \$40.00, \$10.00 down and the balance to paid by April 1, 1926. The agreement was signed and sealed by the Deputy Minister of Public Works and two witnesses.

They have the original Patent 4240701 - issued by The DOMINION OF CANADA dated June 10 1924 and Patent number 1555918 issued by THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA dated October 6, 1925. These patents covered "The Artesian Well Tool", a device Cornelius invented and manufactured in his workshop, which he used in his wells as well as selling them to competition.

The tool is very simple and yet an ingenious device. Cornelius had very little formal education, but had the ability to figure out why some wells with ample water supply and ample pressure, would not push the water up. He then reasoned that some wells would lose their pressure higher up in fractured rock or gravel. Once he had figured out what was happening down there, he went to work on a device to plug the lower high pressure aquifer, thus directing the water under pressure to rise only through the pipe, and it worked.

Since the patent officer must be assured that no similar device existed in North America, we also can be assured that he was the first individual to understand what was really happening down there in the unknown and devised a way to overcome the situation.

Because there was no way to monitor or control the use of the patent information, it was exploited throughout North America and is still being manufactured and used today. Every plumber carries various sizes of test plugs in their tool truck, based on the exact same principal as Cornelius' well tool.

**Marriage:** Going back to his younger years, would find Cornelius still living in his parental home [in the village of Blumenort, even though his parents had both died in 1899 and 1900. His siblings were all married before he was. Until 1894] one of the neighbours in the village was cousin Klaas I. Friesens [son of Abraham M. Friesen], who's first born daughter Katharina, was destined to become Cornelius' bride. Cornelius as a 14-year-old lad (so they say) had been seen pushing his future bride in a baby carriage or wagon, oblivious to the path, destiny would lead them.

We assume with a family of pretty girls so near, he was content to wait for another 19 years to take a wife. Other like-wise suitors were C. T. Loewen, Jac. T. Loewen, John R. Barkman, Peter D. Reimer, and Henry D. Reimer.

We can see from many pictures that they had a long courtship, which included a rather active young peoples' group from Steinbach and area. Some of the group played musical instruments which initiated much singing and was

always enjoyed by all.<sup>1332</sup>

Katharina told her granddaughter that there were times when they had joined the Chortitzer group of young people, and had even joined them at dances at Diedrich Ungers. She recalled dancing with Andreas Blatz (the local Fred Astair) with his handlebar waxed mustache, bowler hat, spats on his shoes, who cut quite the figure. However this was before the ministerial banned all such behaviour including the owning and playing of musical instruments.

When Cornelius and Katherina were finally married in 1910, he already had his drilling business well under way.

**Steinbach:** Cornelius also had a property in Steinbach where they would live together for most of their lives, a rather large lot now occupied by the Victoria Square.<sup>1333</sup> Cornelius had built a two-storey "Schmade", a well equipped blacksmith and machine shop, with living quarters upstairs, where they lived for a few years, when Cornelius bought a house which had to be moved from out in the country. Unfortunately, during the move the house caught fire, possibly from the steam engine pulling it and was destroyed.

In 1914 they built a new house on the premises, a two-storey structure with full basement and a fine spacious building for the times. Cornelius being rather innovative, installed a hot water furnace, circulating hot water through registers throughout the house, but first it went through a large food warmer in the dining room, another one of Cornelius' good ideas. I guess he liked his food hot.

There was also modern plumbing on both floors, with water supplied by his artesian well and driven up by a "Ram", a device as close to perpetual motion as I've ever seen. The cold water entering the house was piped through a rather large steel refrigerator which Cornelius built.

The water ran continuously keeping the contents at a constant cool 42 degrees Fahrenheit summer and winter, except for the times during the winter, when there was a fire in town, and the pumper tank was filled with a rather large hand pump from a well that Cornelius drilled, tapping into the same underground aquifer as his own well. This lowered the water pressure and consequently froze up the Friesen refrigeration piping, which Cornelius would have to unthaw.

The house was well-built and one of the first to include modern plumbing in Steinbach. However the house was eventually sold and moved to the Friedensfeld district, and has since been destroyed by fire.

Cornelius was well acquainted with the use of dynamite and used it on a regular basis to get rid of underground boulders in the way of the drilling chisel. He found other uses for it as well.

Daughter Erna recalled the following incident:

Cornelius had a habit of getting up early and making fire in the kitchen stove. He would go to work in the machine shop until Katherina would call him in for breakfast. He would often put a few thin slices of dynamite (made up of sawdust, wax, and nitroglycerin) under the kindling, to start the fire which worked real well.

One such morning Katharina was startled by a series of loud explosions coming from the kitchen. She jumped out of bed, ran to the kitchen where she saw the stick of dynamite, which Cornelius had forgotten, on the edge of the

upper shelf of the stove. The heat had melted the nitroglycerine laden wax, which had slowly dripped onto the stove and each drop caused a small but loud explosion shaking the house. Cornelius quickly removed the dynamite and went back to work, and no doubt Katharina was rather shaken up for the rest of the day.

**Local Foods:** The well drilling business expanded to the neighbouring towns and outlying areas, which allowed Cornelius to associate with and make many good friends of various nationalities and religious backgrounds. When further away from home the people would offer room and board as part of the well drilling deal.

This further introduced him to ethnic food and customs from various cultures which he really enjoyed. He would bring home samples and encourage his family to also enjoy the new food. Some was not appreciated, but Cornelius was always ready to try something new at least once. No matter how humble the host's accommodations, or how different the meals were, he never complained or was critical of these people, and thus enjoyed lasting friendships.

The first grandchild Kathie remembers many times when Grampa would come home with strange food, and wanted his family to join him in a snack. When they all declined and ran for cover, he would pay Kathie 25 cents to try a piece of blood sausage, which she would chew, take the money, and run to spit it out. Grampa liked her courage and never asked for the quarter back.

The Friesens enjoyed having friends over for visit and a good meal. On one of these occasions, he brought home a (supposed) pork roast which Katharina prepared for the expected company. Cornelius sensed that everyone had enjoyed the dinner, and asked how they liked the pork roast. They all agreed that it had been very good, and Cornelius informed them that it had in fact been bear meat they had eaten.

There were some very shocked diners who must have given him a strange look, but nothing like the reaction he got from his wife, she threw the roaster into the garbage, never to use it again.

Being half-a-century ahead of the times Katharina had not eaten any of the bear meat because she was a vegetarian, but she felt put out for her friends sake. Katharina had probably never read a book on the benefits of being a vegetarian. She just did not like meat and the fat associated with meat, and stuck to her simple diet of fruit and vegetables and whole wheat bread, cheese and tea.

Katharina gave birth to 10 children which included two sets of twins (the first twins did not survive) yet she never exceeded 95 pounds. They raised their eight surviving children in their large house and life was good.

**Social Life:** The oldest daughter Erna recalled that in 1929 her father drilled a well for the Grunthal Cheese Factory. The job had gone very well and upon completion he had made enough to buy a new Chevrolet four-door sedan with a trunk and spare tire on the back. He ordered the car from the P.T. Loewen Garage, Steinbach, and paid cash in advance for a factory order.

Shortly after getting married, he had purchased a new touring car, which he then converted into a truck by cutting off the back half and adding a box to be used for hauling pipe and other essentials.

During the winter evenings Cornelius would make a skating rink for his

children and the young people in town. His was the first outdoor rink with lights, placing large coal oil lamps around the periphery which did the job and charged a small fee to offset expenses.

Other evening recreation during the winter months was playing checkers, which Cornelius was very good at and took very serious. Daughter Erna remembers times when the playing disks were lost or misplaced, she saw her father play with raisins and the opponent played with prunes, but play they did, and when he went to call on friends, the checker board would be tucked under his arm, ready for a challenge.

To supplement his income, Cornelius had built a saw rig to saw logs into stove length fire wood. This would keep him and his boys busy during the winter when all of the repairs and upgrading was completed on the drilling rigs. **Bible School 1937:** In 1937 after the children were grown up Katharina fulfilled a lifelong dream of going back to school, and enroled in the Bible School, which held classes in the MB church. She attended full time for two years, with the full backing of her husband and children. This was very fulfilling for her, and helped her in her every day life as well as teaching Sunday school which she enjoyed and kept up for much of her adult life. She loved teenagers, and her Sunday school students, consisting of teenage girls, loved her. Katharina would often invite the girls over to her house, and they would have devotions, and then make candies or bake cakes or other activities which they all loved.

There were those that took exception to Cornelius allowing his wife to follow her own ambitions. Since he was not a domineering person who wanted to control every aspect of his family's lives, of which there were many, he encouraged his wife and children to explore and follow their dreams.

During the winter of 1938 the Friesens went to visit a Mr. G. Siemens from Rosenort, who spent his winters at a bush camp in Vassar owned by H.E.Plett and later his sons Jacob and George. When Mr. Siemens found out that Mrs. Friesen went to school, he wrote a letter to the *Steinbach Post*, publicly admonishing Cornelius for not having proper control of his wife and not able to keep her in the house where women belonged.

The following is Cornelius' reply:

Steinbach Post

December 28 1938

"Not long ago, G. Siemens wrote that we had visited him in Vassar, and then added the comment that I sent my beloved wife to Bible school in order to maintain peace in the household. Although this does not contain truth, yet it will be understood completely false by many people; they will believe that we live in such discord - wrong, by far.

"But the Bible school does bring us joy and peace, and I believe that many would do well if they would follow our example. After my wife has returned from the school, has looked after the house, caught up with the domestic duties, and the evening meal is cleared away, then we seat ourselves peacefully and comfortably, and she relates what she has learned during the day."

“We talk about many things, and many [verses] are re-read, and the evening passes by in the most pleasant peace.

“As I understood during my visit, Siemens wants to spend the winter in the woods. I don’t know, doesn’t the farm bring him enough any more, that he can feed his family, for he says he wants to nourish himself this winter from oak kittens (squirrels). Either he only wants to play trapper and sell the pelts, or actually eat the flesh, I do not know. Otherwise I wish him peace and good fortune in the bush”. “C.K. Friesen”

**Leisure:** The C.K. Friesens were possibly the first local family to go on frequent fishing holidays. A couple of times during the summer, Cornelius would load up the car with tent, fishing gear, and Katharina loaded plenty of food and pails for berry picking, and off they went to Whitemouth Lake or Whitemouth River and have a wonderful time. But first they had to fill the pails with berries, and Cornelius went off by himself with most of the pails. It usually it did not take too long, before he was back with his pails full. He did not want to waste precious time looking for berries when there were fish waiting to be caught, and he had waited all winter for a shore lunch of fresh jack fish.

What one of the older children suspected was that he knew where the professional pickers would be, and bought up all of their berries with their promise not to mention a word of it to his family.

With the picking out of the way, it was time for fishing and leisure activities.

One could surmise that the Friesens were a family that were taught that the world was much larger than the Mennonite community that surrounded them and were encouraged to explore it.

**World War Two:** When in 1939, W.W.II got under way and their sons talked about joining the army, they like most parents must have agonized over the matter, and hoped and prayed that the boys would decide against it, but when Walter and John and later Tony had made their decision, Cornelius stood by his sons, and that was the way it was for all of the children, that once they had decided on careers etc. he backed them up.

Although Cornelius’ work was tough and his fists might have been strong as steel, I’m told they were lined with velvet. As a young single man, still living as a bachelor in his parents’ Wirtschaft in the Blumenort village, it was Cornelius who would make sure the widows in the village had enough fire wood to heat their homes during a blizzard. He would also check in on the elderly during snow storms.<sup>1334</sup>

In the drilling business, there were many people who could not afford a well, but desperately needed one. Cornelius would drill a well with the understanding that when they had surplus eggs, chickens or other produce, he would accept this as payment. In one instance he took a piano in trade for a well. It was this piano that directed their youngest daughter Virginia’s future. Many wells were never paid for and Cornelius refused to make an issue of, or discuss these rather generous acts, and it was the recipients of these deeds who would tell of them, never Cornelius.

Cornelius lived his life the way he saw fit. Some people would label him



a bit worldly and that was fine with him. He was not bothered by public opinion as he knew full well that in the final analysis, their opinion would count for nothing.

**Death, 1953:** In 1946 Cornelius suffered a debilitating stroke, and the company was taken over by his sons John and Tony. Cornelius died in 1953.

Cornelius K. Friesen left an ongoing legacy to his children and grandchildren, the most visible being Friesen Drillers.

In 1971 John's sons James and John joined the company, taking over ownership in 1987. The fourth generation - three great-grandsons - are now very actively involved in the business. And by all accounts they will take over the reins in a few years and guide the company into the new millennium and enter a third century of Friesen Drillers.

Cornelius worked his machine for about 50 years and drilled possibly 700 to 900 wells (an educated guess by the grandsons). Since 1962 the rotary drills replaced the cable drills, and they could drill that many per year.

They have drilled three 10" diameter by 230 feet deep wells for the City of Steinbach. The water is good and adequate, with reserves for many years. The first well was drilled during the 50s and the other two during the 80s.

In 1980 Friesen Drillers got into the oil patch, in Kansas, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. When the oil industry experienced a downturn, they got out of it for a while and are back in again, and going strong. Their motto still is "We go in the hole for you".



*1910. Cornelius K. Friesen and bride Katharina Friesen pose in a Reo car, identical to the car which Cornelius owned at the time. Although the oldest of four brothers, Johann, Klaas and Martin, Cornelius was the last to get married. Photo - Pres., No. 13, page 121.*



*C.K. Friesen at the helm of his rig, possibly one he built early in his career, circa 1910. Photo - Pres., No. 15, page 140.*



*C. K. Friesen family photo - ca. 1929, before the Depression. Cornelius and Katbarina in front of their new Chevy with children (l.-r.): Albert, Cornelius holding Wellington Cornelius Leroy - better known as Tony, Katbarina, Anna (Mrs. C. Froese), Ema (Mrs. John P. Thiessen), Margaret (Mrs. Isaac P. Penner), John, Walter; Virginia (Mrs. J. Woodard) would be born in 1933. Photo - Pres., No. 15, page 139.*

6 As a young man, **Johann K. Friesen** was boarding at the home of sister Agatha, Mrs. Cornelius P. Janzen. Historian Royden Loewen has written: "The story goes that once, when John Friesen was working on a crew that was threshing at Loewens, their maid, Rosena, kept offering him coffee. Apparently John noticed Rosena's overtures, and the next spring they were married."<sup>1335</sup>

**"Biography of Johann K. Friesen and Rosina Geschefske," by son Neil Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, ROA 2A0.**<sup>1336</sup>

Our mother Rosina was born December 18, 1885 in the village of Solomki in the Province of Volhynia in Russia to Mr. and Mrs. Herman Geschefske, nee Elizabeth Otto. Mother immigrated to Canada in 1899 together with her sisters Pauline and Augusta. Pauline was married to Mr. Friedrich Moenchinger before they left Russia so she had taken the responsibility of taking care of her two younger sisters, as both of their parents had passed away very young in Russia.

Their boat docked at Halifax harbour on the east coast and they were transported by train to Manitoba. They were taken off the train at a station called Niverville, about 20 miles northwest from the village of Steinbach. They were taken to the Friedensfeld area south of Steinbach where another sister Amalia was staying. She had come over with the John Schmaltz family a few years before. Mrs. Schmaltz was a sister to their father Herman Geschefske.

Rosina, our mother, was taken in by a family by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Janzen who lived about eight miles northeast of Steinbach....While our mother was employed at the Janzens, Mrs. Janzen's brother John Friesen, who was teaching in the area, was also staying with the Janzens. Apparently Rosina and John became interested in each other and subsequently got married on March 6, 1906. They moved into an old house on the Janzen farmyard where they lived for four years, during which time two sons, Herman and John were born.

By this time our father had started to look around for some farmland of his own and he found a parcel of homestead land consisting of 160 acres [NW29-6-7E] three miles east from Steinbach. Our parents with their two young sons moved into their own farm in 1910. The land they had acquired was covered with bush and the soil was a poor quality and full of stones. As a result they experienced some extreme hardships trying to eke out a living on this land. Father started to clear off some of the bush and stones to get some land under cultivation, which in those days had to be done manually by pick, axe and horses, and it was extremely hard work. Apparently our father never was a very strong person and the very hard work and harsh conditions started to affect his health as far back as I can recall. Father always suffered from poor health which kept deteriorating as the years passed. Except for Herman and John the rest of us children were all born on this farm. We were always very poor and all of us children had to work hard helping with the farmwork as soon as we were able to. We raised most of our food to eat on the farm but there was no money for luxuries.

I remember at Christmas we would always look forward to the Christmas parcels coming from our relatives in the United States as those were the only Christmas gifts we would get.

Our farmland had very light soil and about the only crops we could grow

were oats and barley as feed for our livestock. All the field work was done with horses from seeding to cutting it with the binder and stooking the sheaves by hand. I can recall the great big steam engine and threshing machine coming to thresh our few acres of grain.

Very little fruit was grown in the area because the summer was too short. The fruit we got was mostly grown wild consisting of blueberries, wild plums, choke cherries, cranberries and, if we were lucky, we might find some wild strawberries.

If we had time we would go digging seneca roots which apparently were used for medical purposes. These were bought by the merchants in Steinbach for about 50 cents a pound and if we worked very hard for a day we might have one pound. This was our spending money and reason to celebrate. In the winter we would earn some spending money by trapping some of the fur bearing animals in the area which were quite plentiful in those days. Although the area where we lived was quite remote we only lived one mile from school, so we did not have to walk very far. Some children had to walk up to four miles along bush trails.

I recall the first visit we had from our aunts in the United States when Aunt Augusta came to visit us in 1921. We lived about eight miles from the nearest railroad station which was the only means of transportation from outside the area. Father went to pick up Aunt Augusta at the station with the horse and buggy. The train arrived sometime late in the evening and the trip home along a bush trail in the darkness apparently was quite an adventure for Aunt Augusta. Aunt Augusta's visit was quite an event for us children. She made all kinds of good things to eat. In fact that was the first time I ever tasted chocolate cake, and as I recall I didn't even like it.

A few years later Aunt Pauline and Aunt Mollie came to visit us, again by train as it was the only transportation into the area. Apparently we had not received the message of their time of arrival as there was no telephone service into the area. Telegrams had to be delivered by messenger. There was a stage operating from the railroad station to Steinbach, a distance of about 10 miles.....Apparently, the two sisters convinced the operator to transport them to our farm. They were dropped off some time during the night, and, of course, we were all asleep. We had a very aggressive dog at that time and evidently the sisters had quite a scare fighting off the dog and trying to arouse somebody to let them into the house. They eventually were able to wake up somebody in the house and overcame their hairraising experience unharmed. We thought they spoke a strange kind of German compared to our language.

Our type of farming consisted of about a dozen milk cows, some chickens and a few pigs. We would always slaughter a couple of big pigs for our own use. The hams were salted and smoked for meat for the summer. That was the only meat we would have during the summer, refrigerators and freezers were unheard of in those days. The milk from the cows had to be transported to the nearest railroad station by horse and wagon for transport to Winnipeg which was our nearest city, about 45 miles away. The money for the milk very often was the only cash income we had.

The feed for the livestock had to be hauled quite a distance from better

agriculture land....I recall father having to go for a load of feed in severe cold weather in spite of his failing health. By this time his condition was thought to be tuberculosis. However, the nearest medical help available was in Winnipeg, therefore, going to see a doctor wasn't a very simple task, so an official diagnosis was never made.

Our father became quite sick during the winter of 1925. He passed away on May 2, 1925 at the age of 47 years. I still recall some of the uncles building a coffin out of lumber in the kitchen for his burial. Funeral home services were not available in the area.

It was then left up to the older boys to take charge of operating the farm. By this time mother also started to show signs of failing health. Although she never complained it became obvious that all was not well with her. She was suffering severe headaches and was losing the sight of one eye.

In September of 1925 our youngest sister Pauline became quite sick suffering from what was commonly known as "summer sickness" in those days and again with no medical help available she passed away on September 22, 1925 at three years of age.

Our mother's health continued to deteriorate gradually becoming partly paralysed on one side and finally went into a coma for some time and passed away on October 9, 1931 at the age of 47 years. Her illness was diagnosed as a brain tumour. Father, mother and sister Pauline are all buried in the old Pioneer Cemetery in Steinbach. The death of our mother left the family devastated. It was decided that we would stay on the farm together as a family.

Elizabeth and Agatha were still quite young to take over the household chores so we had a maid assist with the housekeeping until Elizabeth and Agatha were able to take over.

We were by now into the depression years, later referred to as the "dirty thirties". A severe drought settled over the Western Canada prairie provinces and large areas were literally turned into a dust bowl....The Steinbach area where we lived was not as badly affected by the drought because it was mostly covered with trees which provided shelter for vegetation growth and prevented the dust storms. The trees also helped to supplement our meagre farm income. There was always a market for firewood in Steinbach. In the winter we would be busy cutting wood selling it to the merchants in Steinbach. The price was about \$1.50 a cord and of course we had to take merchandise as payment. I still recall my first job as a farm labourer. I was earning 35 cents a day. There was not enough work for all of us boys on our small farm so some of us would take other employment and with the extra income our situation at home improved a lot. In 1935 and 1936 Herman, John, Elizabeth and Agatha got married and settled on farms of their own. At this point the old homestead was sold and everybody went their own way.

I worked at various jobs for a few years. Lumber camps in the winter and construction work in the summer until 1938 when I took a job at the hotel in Steinbach. Most of the family members were engaged in farming in the Steinbach area, except Ed who was involved in mink ranching for some time. Martin and family lived in British Columbia for a few years, but they have now moved to the

Steinbach area.

In September of 1939 World War II broke out and conditions started to improve rapidly. Numerous jobs became available and wages went up, and the depression was over. In 1940 Aron Kroeker (Agatha's husband) and myself enlisted in the Canadian Army to serve our country in time of war. Aron went overseas shortly after enlistment and spent several years in England and was involved in the "D" Day invasion. I served a few years in Canada on both coasts before going overseas....After my discharge...I resumed my former job at the hotel until I got the appointment of Postmaster for Steinbach and Supervisor for the Northern Region. After the war there was a drastic change in the economy of the country. Employment was good and farmers were getting better prices for their products and starting to prosper.

By now several members of the family have passed away. John died June 16, 1980, Fred died May 4, 1982, Herman died June 1, 1984, Aron, Agatha's husband died May 7, 1985. John, Fred and Aron are buried in the Steinbach Cemetery, and Herman is buried in the Blumenort Cemetery. The rest of us are living in the Steinbach area enjoying retirement. Grandson Art Friesen is the President of Brookdale Pontiac, a car dealership in Steinbach, Manitoba.



*Rosina and Jobann K. Friesen, Ekron, ca. 1920. Photo - Blumenort, page 235.*

6 Son **Martin K. Friesen** married second cousin Katharina K. Plett, daughter of Abraham L. Plett of Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>1337</sup> The Pletts were successful farmers and disappointed at first that their daughter would marry the son of a “poor” school teacher. Martin and Katharina farmed on SE3-8-6E in Greenland, Manitoba. They built up a farmyard on land which her father had bought for them. In 1917 they bought the SE35-7-6E located kitty-corner across the road from her parents in Blumenhof, Manitoba. They worked hard and raised their family of nine children.<sup>1338</sup>



*Martin K. Friesen family, 1948 - l-r: Margaret and husband Cornie Siemens, Helen and Ben P. Friesen (partially bidden), Edward P. Friesen and wife Anna, Jakob R. Plett and wife, nee Gertrude P. Friesen, Martin P. Friesen, Elizabeth Plett Friesen, partially bidden behind husband Erwin P. Friesen. Photo - Gertruda Friesen Plett.*



*1950. Three brothers Friesen - Klaas K., Kornelius K., and Martin K. Friesen, standing on the south side of the Martin K. Friesen residence in Blumenhof. Photo Gertrude Friesen Plett - Pres., No. 11, page 50.*

6 Son **Klaas K. Friesen** married his second cousin Maria J. K. Plett, daughter of farmer and threshing company owner Jakob L. Plett of Blumenhof. The family settled on 120 acres of NW 31-6-7E, which they purchased from Maria's parents. Klaas was devastated by the death of his wife during the 1918 flu epidemic.<sup>1339</sup> Their house was destroyed by fire in 1920.

**Klaas K. Friesen's House Fire, 1920.**<sup>1340</sup>

The story of "Klaas K. Friesen's fire, 1920," as told by daughter Mrs. Henry Peters, nee Maria P. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, born 1908, to her daughter Norma Hiebert: Our home burned down Sunday, June 29, 1920, exactly on my 12th birthday. It was on a Sunday. It was an old fashioned house-barn. The fire was started when one of my brothers played with fire and then one of them came inside and told Father. Father went and extinguished the fire or so he thought. But in the night the fire started up again and burned. (Jacob had played with matches).

It was between 11 and 12 P.M. and we were all sleeping. Father woke up with a start. It was so bright in the kitchen from the flames, as if it was day time. There was a crackling sound like rain and father closed the window because he thought it was raining.

Then he shouted, "Fire! Fire!"

Everyone jumped out of bed and ran out and father ran to the phone and called "central" and reported the fire.

I was still in bed. In the meantime the boys all ran out to my grandfather's (Jakob L. Plett) place. Grandfather had some land and farm buildings nearby where my uncles stayed while they worked the farmland.

At that time I always followed Papa wherever he went. He started to carry things out of the house and I helped him. He knew exactly what he wanted to save: wall clock, chest and sewing machine and a large commode.

Later I remember thinking how sorry I was that we hadn't taken out mother's fine china which was very old.

The boys had run back into the house and laid down on the schloope bank where they had fallen asleep again. If I and Papa had not gone back into the house they would have all burned.

Papa went around the house and reached through the window and tore out the phone. I don't know why or what he was thinking as the phone was screwed down.

Then to my horror, Papa fell down writhing on the ground. Oh, No! He had one of his convulsions ("aunschtot").

I almost panicked but then I pulled and dragged him onto the yard away from the fire, so he wouldn't burn. I remember I had torn his shirt while I was pulling him.

While all this was going on, the family dog, "Watch", crawled under the porch where it was barking and howling. There was a room between the house and barn and the dog had crawled under that part. This was where Watch always slept.

I stood and cried, "Papa. get up!"

I felt all alone. Our home was burning, and father lay before me as if dead.

The dog was still under the house yowling. I was extremely frightened.



For some reason I remember becoming cognizant that I had only one sock on.

Then all of a sudden aunt, Margaretha, Mrs. K. W. Reimer (father's older sister), came and she was very excited.

Minutes later "Central" Toews from Steinbach arrived with some men but they could not save the buildings.

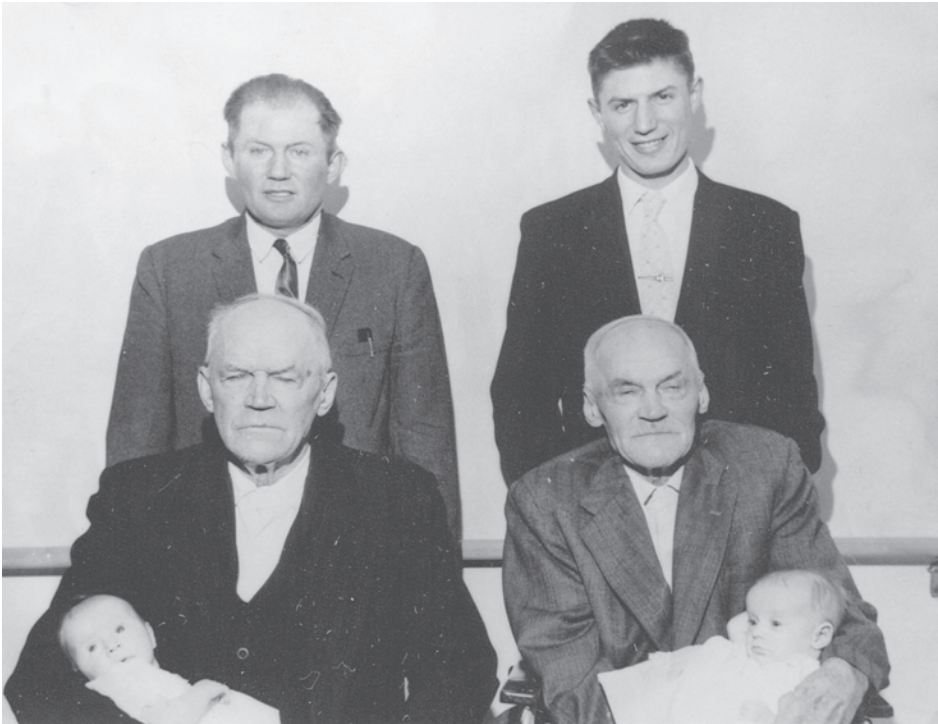
So we moved into grandfather's house nearby.

A few days later a group of men came from Blumenort and helped us rebuild the house and barn for free. The only cost to us was the food. At this time we also added an addition to the house as well as a porch and summer kitchen. In the meantime we could live for free in my grandfather's property.

One of the tragedies about the fire was that all my grandfather's (Cornelius P. Friesen's) books and papers were destroyed in the conflagration. He was a school teacher all his life and an educated man. I think my father had these papers in his possession as he was the most interested.

Klaas K. Friesen later courted Cornelius Barkman's, Anna. She was the school teacher in Ekron. But her parents did not allow it as they also had a son with epileptic convulsions "aunschtot" and they were worried that it would have bad results.

Klaas K. Friesen continued farming in a small way just east of Steinbach, Manitoba, on SW 31-6-7E, using only horses even in the 1950s.<sup>1341</sup>



1960. Twin brothers Klaas K. Friesen and Martin K. Friesen (left), with Klaas's son Jacob, his son Peter, and Peter's twin daughters, Joanne and Janet. Martin and Klaas were named for their respective grandfathers. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Maria Friesen Peters.



*View to the east. On the far left is the Klaas K. Friesen house which was destroyed by fire in 1920. The larger house in the middle of the picture was owned by grandfather Jakob L. Plett and family who used it as a "camp" when they were working their farmland on Section 31-6-7E, then known as Ekron. The Rebaus family originally owned the farm and built the granary, almost 100 years ago (1994). The granary is still standing today on the farm yard currently owned by Harvey Toews. Photo - Pres., No. 9, Part Two, page 63.*



*The Klaas K. Friesen house on SW31-6-7E where they lived after the first house burned down on June 29, 1920. View to the west across the present-day Herschfeld Road towards Steinbach. Son Jakob is on his bicycle in front of the door, with sister Maria standing in the doorway together with one of her Friesen aunts. Photo - Pres., No. 11, page 49.*

5 Son **Johann Plett Friesen** (1847-1920) was interested in poetry and in 1859 he made himself a copy of a 38 stanza poem which is still extant. He also compiled a small booklet of proverbs and prayers dated September 19, 1860.

In 1869 he married Marie E. Eidse, daughter of Abraham Eidse of Fischau. The couple lived in Fischau at the home of her parents. Sometime later the family moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko, where his mother and brothers lived.

The Johann P. Friesen family emigrated from Russia in 1875 travelling with his uncle Cornelius Plett and family. Although some sources indicate they settled in Rosenort, Manitoba,<sup>1342</sup> the Brandordnung and homestead cancellations show they first settled in Blumenort, on Wirtschaft 11, between his mother on Wirtschaft 10, and brother Cornelius on Wirtschaft 12. By 1877 the Wirtschaft was sold to Johann Klassen and the Johann Friesen family relocated to Rosenort. The family was resident in Rosenort at the time of the 1881 census. Johann was listed as an Anwohner in the 1882 Scratching River Brandordnung.<sup>1343</sup> A family history reported "The John P. Friesen family...had to take over this community pasture service of herding all cows and calves on this [community] pasture."<sup>1344</sup>

Johann P. Friesen visited at the homes of brothers Abraham and Cornelius in Blumenort. Jan. 4, 1885, Abraham wrote, "Johann P. Fr. came here [for a visit]." On Tuesday, July 19, 1887, "Cornelius, Johann and I [Abraham] went to Winnipeg with oxen, with hens and eggs." October 29, 1890, Johann Friesen, P. O. Morris, wrote the *Rundschau* providing information regarding some of his wife's relatives. He "would like to hear from friends in his old village of Rosenort [Russia]. His school teacher had been Peter Holzrichter."

Johann P. Friesen's genealogy journal bears the inscription "1888 April 13, Blumenort."<sup>1345</sup> Son John E. Friesen has written that "They soon moved to Heuboden and after a two year stay, moved on to Blumenort, and from their back again to Rosenort in 1895."<sup>1346</sup> The family is listed in Heuboden, E. R., in the 1891 census. Brandordnung records show Johann P. Friesen entered in Heuboden, April 25, 1891, with coverage of \$200 for inventory and household goods and \$50 for feed and supplies.

Johann and Maria Friesen continued farming in Rosenort together with sons Cornelius and Peter.<sup>1347</sup> From 1901 to 1904 they lived in the village "on the exact spot where the prospering town of Rosenort is now on....In 1904, they moved to the homestead commonly known as the 'Woodbury' homestead..."<sup>1348</sup> at "...a site south across the river from where Bartels live today - east of Rosenort and west of Mctavish."<sup>1349</sup> "Here the family grew up and left the main household."<sup>1350</sup>

Son John E. Friesen has written: "Father Friesen seemed to have more than his share of misfortune in farming which brought battles and trials. The neighbours were good and used the parents very often for butchering hogs. Once he had been asked to help dress a beef, and neighbours were waiting anxiously in the house for Eidse - Friesen to show up. After some time they decided to start on their own and walked out to the barn, wondering how they would manage, when upon opening the barn door, they saw Father had beaten them and had nearly finished skinning the beast."<sup>1351</sup>

Johann and Maria encountered difficulties in their marital situation. Great-

granddaughter Junia Loewen has written that Johann P. Friesen “did not always live together” with his wife.<sup>1352</sup> Historian Lorilee Scharfenberg has written that this was “upon recommendation of the church.”<sup>1353</sup> April 7, 1909, Johann P. Friesen lived in McTavish from where he wrote the *Rundschau*. October 30, 1912, Johann P. Friesen, McTavish, wrote the *Rundschau* asking about cousin Mrs. Heinrich Reimer, daughter of Joh. Friesen, Ohrloff.” During the last years he lived in a little house on the yard of son Johann in Greenland while his wife lived in Rosenort.<sup>1354</sup> February 14, 1914, Johann P. Friesen wrote the *Rundschau* giving his address as “Greenland”. This is where he was living in 1916.<sup>1355</sup>

Johann was not a very successful farmer but also travelled around selling goods. Great-nephew Edward G. Friesen remembered Johann coming around to their home in Ekron, two miles east of Steinbach, in the winter of 1916 on his cutter with all sorts of knickknacks for sale.<sup>1356</sup> The R. M. of Morris history book described him as, “...a man of many talents, a jack of all trades. In his lifetime, he was a farmer, a butcher, an undertaker, and a door to door (by buggy) salesman. He sold patent medicines, like Alpenkreuter, Magalo, Heil Oil, Farney products and sometimes oranges and fish. He measured land for the settlers, a surveyor of a kind. It is reported that he wrote a diary....”<sup>1357</sup>

Son John E. Friesen has written: “Because of hard times, we children had to work outside as soon as old enough. I myself have served as town herdsman in Rosenort....Father has had his hardships and struggles during the hard pioneer years, especially because of the cold winters, buildings being what they were, cold and drafty. Father used to say that in our home the diapers froze stiff while changing and taking them from baby to the stove, where they were dried. I can still very vividly remember that as a five year-old, I went along with Father to Morris to pick up a plow from the banks of the Red River, which had been dropped off there.....” John also remembered “....the big rock in the ditch along the Highway now [in Heuboden], which I used to eat lunch.”<sup>1358</sup>

Johann was an avid genealogist and his family records were invaluable in preparing the Eidse, Enns, Plett and Friesen family sketches.<sup>1359</sup> He collected and preserved many of the writings of his father. Johann carried on an extensive correspondence. A letter from Peter P. Goossen, Lindenau, Russia, to Johann P. Friesen, dated April 8, 1904, referred to various previous letters which Johann had written.<sup>1360</sup> On December 14, 1910, Gustav Schulz, Fürstenwerder, Prussia, responded to a written inquiry for information regarding the Plett family from Johann Friesen, McTavish. Against his wishes, Johann P. Friesen was frequently referred to as “Eidsen Friese” to distinguish him from the other Johann Friesens living in Rosenort.<sup>1361</sup> He always said he was a “Plett Friesen.”

A sad series of events related by son Peter E. Friesen, was “....the birth of three Annas in the family. The first two died within a very short interval, while in Russia, one was three and the newborn arrived just before the burial of the first Anna. She was named after the deceased sister, died before the funeral, was buried, thus sharing the same grave and name. The third Anna died in Canada, while still single, reportedly very pretty and under 30.”<sup>1362</sup>

Son John E. Friesen has written: “1920 was an especially trying year for the

family when three members in successive months were buried. Abraham was the first one in October, next my sister Anna, who after suffering a long time, became weaker and weaker and finally breathed her last in November. Father followed in December....”<sup>1363</sup>

Johann died at home of his children Johann E. Friesens in Greenland, Manitoba.<sup>1364</sup> Although Johann had various spiritual struggles it is reported that “on his deathbed, [he] refused to eat breakfast because, he said, ‘Jesus would have breakfast prepared and waiting for him.’ He died within the hour.”<sup>1365</sup> These were his last words which made his family “....rejoice in thoughts of the great reunion at the judgement day.” His body was carried into his little house on the yard. That evening a group of young people, including niece Gertruda P. Friesen, wanted to see him. At their request Johann E. Friesen held a prayer with them and reverently led them to see the body, holding a lantern to light the way.<sup>1366</sup>

Maria Eidse Friesen continued farming in Rosenort, Manitoba, together with sons Cornelius and Peter.<sup>1367</sup> Historian Lorilee Scharfenberg has written that “She lived with her son Peter and Cornie’s place in the bushfarm, one mile east of Rosenort village and worked diligently with her sons to build up a nice farm. Marie had a blue bowl that contained little wooden eggs. Children were allowed to play with those eggs. Although she was not born that way, she became a hunchback and had to be laid on her side in her coffin.”<sup>1368</sup>

On January 5, 1934, cousin Heinrich P. Enns reported having visited the Joh. P. Friesensche: “She sat on the sofa, her head supported by a pillow. She was completely stooped over and enveloped with blankets. She only raised her head when she said something.”<sup>1369</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
3	<b>Johann P. Friesen</b>	Oct 20,1847	Dec 21,1869	Dec 18,1920
m	Maria E. Eidse	Sep 15,1848		Mar 4,1934
4	Marie E. Friesen	Oct 5,1870	Feb 8,1891	May 4,1923
m	Heinrich Warkentin	Mar 19,1868		1948
4	Anna E. Friesen	Sep 18,1872		1874
4	Anna E. Friesen	Dec 21,1874		Dec 21,1874
4	Anna E. Friesen	Mar 6,1876		Nov 6,1920
4	Helena E. Friesen	Mar 17,1878	Apr 13,1902	Nov 26,1962
m	Cornelius Sawatsky	Dec 2,1879		Dec 22,1922
4	Johann E. Friesen	Jan 20,1881	Jan 1,1906	Sep 8,1971
m	Gertruda Plett	Sep 8,1887		Mar 2,1948
2m	Helena N. Koop	Oct 23,1891		
4	Abram E. Friesen	Oct 9,1883		Sep 15,1920
4	Margaretha Friesen	Sep 17,1885	July 1903	Apr 13,1914
m	Jakob Sawatsky			
4	Cornelius E. Friesen	May 12,1888		Sep 21,1950
4	Peter E. Friesen	May 30,1890		1986
4	Klaas E. Friesen	Apr 9,1892	Apr 2,1922	1969
m	Agnes Isaac	Apr 22,1899		

6 Daughter **Maria E. Friesen** (1870-1923) married Heinrich D. Warkentin, son of Martin Warkentin (1824-91) from Blumstein, Molotschna, and later Rosenort, Manitoba. In 1926 Heinrich D. Warkentin remarried and built a new house in Steinbach. Presently he decided to sell the farm in Rosenort and "So, N.W.8-6-1E was sold to Jac D. Rempel, also a newly married man looking for a place to raise his family. Prices of land had gone up considerably from the day Henry bought it from the Hudson's Bay Co., but by now there were adequate buildings on the place, and all but 15 acres had been cleared. With this transaction an interesting foundation was laid for the future generations. A Rempel son would marry a Warkentin daughter and live in the original house (still in marvellous condition) built by grandpa Henry. Which speaks well for the type of houses built in those days, and giving rich history to the family living in it now."<sup>1370</sup>

**"Henry D. Warkentin," son John F. Warkentin, Rosenort, Manitoba.**<sup>1371</sup>

Henry D. Warkentin was born to Martin and Anna on March 31, 1868, near Nikopol, South Russia. He was a lad of six years when they crossed the ocean as a family in 1874. They were among the first settlers to come to the Morris area. Even in later years Henry could tell trilling stories to his grandchildren of the long voyage, from the view point of a six-year old. He remembered how some food was prepared for the long trip, who knew how available it would be in that big strange world! One staple food was toasted buns "rheuschache" (like our melba toast of today). A day was set aside for each family in one village to toast (dry) buns by sacks full which lasted until they got on the steamboats for the last leg of the journey to Winnipeg. People were very nauseated while crossing the rough ocean. Many children were buried at sea, making a lasting impression on a young lad.

Grandpa Henry had a meagre education, but he learned to read and write. Before the schools were set up in separate buildings, classes were held in individual homes, where and how it could be arranged. He grew up in his father's house and learned the ways of farming.

He married Maria Friesen (daughter of John P. Friesen). For a few years they lived on Father Friesen's land, east of Rosenort. When the opportunity came he bought 160 acres of virgin land just north of Rosenort. This land belonged to the Hudson's Bay Co. and they sold it at \$8.00 an acre. All land north of Rosenort was community pasture up until the time it was sold for farming purposes, even then it was kept for a number of years until actual clearing was complete. The John P. Friesen family (Henry's in-laws) had to take over this community service of herding all cows and calves on his pasture. Early every morning a lad would walk along the village road blowing a horn. Farmers had to bring their cattle to the main road, thus by the time he reached the pasture he had quite a herd. In the late evening he followed the same routine, blowing his horn as he came trudging home, each owner coming to the road to gather up his own cattle.

Having barnyard animals in those days was a must for basic food supplies, so Henry and his family always had something of everything. Enough to keep his children busy, and food for all. As the boys grew older, they helped out more and more in breaking and clearing the land. They had horses by now, a great improvement over the oxen that Martin had had.

Henry also did mail delivery by horse and buggy for a few years, before regular routes were established. Meeting the train in McTavish, three times a week, he would exchange mail bags and deliver back to Mr. Enns' store in Rosenort.

Henry was a farmer by profession, of average build and wore a beard in his later years. His pleasant, good nature, love for people would have made him the ideal salesman, or businessman had he been born a century later.

They had moved their first small house on to their own land when they purchased it. Some new buildings were added in those first years, mostly by their own family labour. Eventually, a new bigger two-storey house was built in 1921. (The tiny, old house still stands in this neighbourhood, used as a storage shed on a farm). They had a family of five children raised to adulthood, a few were lost in infancy. A pair of twin girls was a great delight till one of them died at six months of age, of diarrhoea (then the most prevalent cause of death among small children).

Grandma Maria was known to be a tall, strong woman of remarkable reputation. She was a very busy person, raising a family and dealing with all the hardships and inconveniences of pioneer living. On top of all this, she became a midwife for the northern part of the settlement. She was compassionate by nature, thus she naturally followed in her mother and aunt's footsteps. She received excellent training even in her teen years by accompanying her elders on calls. In spite of being in her own home, she would always have her satchel packed and ready to go at a minute's notice. Grandpa Henry would have the horse hitched to a buggy, all ready, when they knew an expected birth could occur any hour. Most of the time people would come, pick grandma up and return her. Since they had no telephone, no advance notice was received if any emergency happened.

The last 15 years were painful, having developed dropsy. She died at 53 years of age, having spent only one-and-a-half years in the new house that was such a delight to her.

7 The oldest daughter **Mary F. Warkentin** married Abram Loewen from Blumenort and moved next door to the parents. In this way grandma had the help of her oldest daughter, and Mary had the privilege of a built-in medical woman. They had a family of four girls and two boys, when she died in child birth, only a short while after the death of her mother. Mr. Loewen remarried shortly, and the children had a good mother. They had a grain farm and dairy cows. We remember Abram Loewen driving his horses and wagon with the load of milk cans to the cheese factory, half a mile east of the church, in the '40s. The Loewens left for Mexico with the mass exodus in 1948, with their whole family, except one. The youngest son, John, bought the home place in Rosenort and made the farm very productive. They had their family here, but in the 1950s they sold out and moved to Arborg where they continue their successful farming. Many of the Loewen-Warkentin descendants live in the British Honduras today.

7 Son **Henry F. Warkentin** chose a bride Katharine Unger, from the Giroux area. They tried farming near Rosenort for a few years, but the wet years drowned out the crops. They moved to the town of Morris where he served as labourer

and mail man to the rural areas. He served many years driving old model cars on muddy roads, horse and sleigh hitched together! This delivery route was a daily run, except Sunday. It was a 20 mile route, many a frozen sandwich as lunch in wintertime. In later years they moved back to Giroux where they took up mixed farming. They had a family of six children. Henry passed away in the 70s. His widow lives in Steinbach now (1980). Daughter Dora married to Cornie Fast, Blumenort.

7 Daughter **Anna F. Warkentin** also married a Steinbach man, George S. Kornelsen. Their first years of married life were spent with grandpa Henry, trying to help out as house-keeper and farm help. They then moved to the Steinbach area where they raised a big family. Two children are living in the Morris area today. Alvin Kornelsen has purchased a home close to Rosenort and is a teacher in the Rosenort Elm. School. The Stan Pletts (Elma) purchased the Jac B. Kroeker residence when Stan was employed by the Morris McDonald School Division. They have recently returned from a two year teaching project in Belize, Honduras. Anna Warkentin Kornelsen passed away in June, 1978, and her husband in 1976.

7 Son **John F. Warkentin** followed example and married a Steinbach girl, Aganetha Plett. They had a family of 11 children of whom only three daughters live in the home district now, the rest are scattered all over the world.

7 Son **Peter F. Warkentin** married a local girl, Helen Kroeker and farmed in the district all his life. They had a family of five, only two living in the home area, the rest busy in distant places. Peter passed away in Sept. 1977. His widow lives in Rosenort (1980).

Grandfather Henry Warkentin stayed on his homestead farm a few years after his wife died. His youngest sons were now old enough to take over. They did so for a few years but grandpa's heart wasn't in it anymore and he decided to sell. The family as a unit moved to the Steinbach region. He passed away in 1948, having reached the age of 89 years.



*Henry D. Warkentin, 1940s. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 396.*

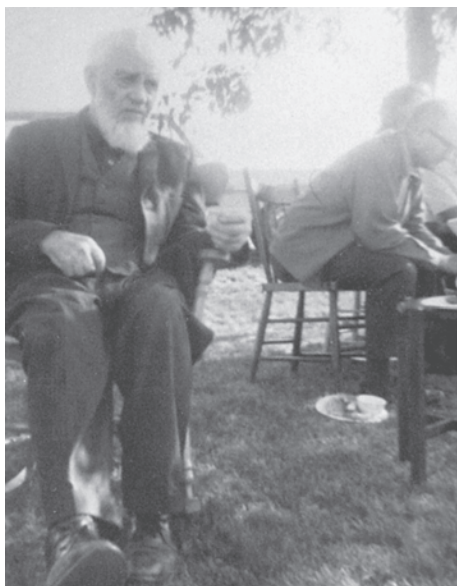


*Two-storey house built by H. D. Warkentin in 1921. Photo - Furrows in the Valley, page 396.*

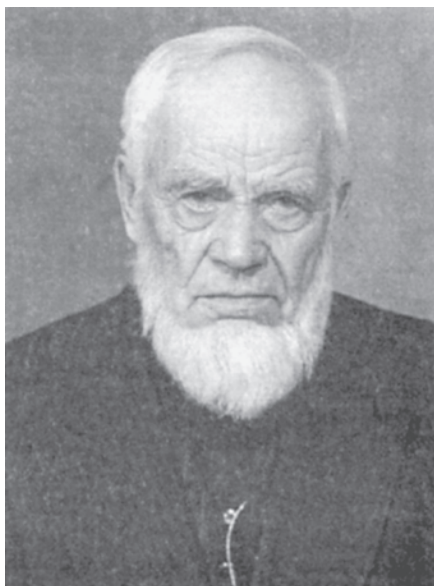


6 Son **Johann E. Friesen** (1881-1971) married second cousin, Gertruda K. Plett, daughter of Abr. L. Pletts of Blumenhof. "The first years of their married life they lived at her parents. In 1907 they bought the NE3-8-6E from his parents-in-law," in Greenland. He was a close friend with his brother-in-law and cousin, Martin K. Friesen. They had a threshing outfit. In 1933 Johann bought his own threshing machine. In 1945 they made a trip to visit Gertruda's brother Abram in Oregon. Regarding Gertruda's death, granddaughter Junia Loewen has written: "In 1947 the people were checked for tuberculosis and a spot was found on Gertruda's lungs. On January 3, 1948, she was admitted to the General Hospital where she received 27 treatments. February 7, she came home and health was hoped for. After a few weeks she was again very sick with extreme suffering. Sometimes her breathing was so heavy and difficult that she would cry out, "Where shall I go? Lord help me." The last night she pleaded, "Lord be merciful to me!" On March 2, her wish was fulfilled. The funeral was on March 5th with John Barkman, C. R. Penner, Jakob R. Klassen and David P. Reimer speaking."<sup>1372</sup> It was at the time of Gertruda's illness that the Red Cross discovered a rare antigen in the blood of some Pletts and tested many family members, including descendants of Cornelius Plett's (1820-1900) four sisters.<sup>1373</sup>

Johann E. Friesen remarried to the widow Mrs. Jakob N. Koop, nee Helena P. Doerksen, of Satanta, Kansas, and later Blumenort, Manitoba. Johann continued the collection of writings started by his father. He had a real interest in Geography. He was a pious and kindly person, conservative in his views. He wore a big white beard in his later years. When John E. Friesen died, brother-in-law Martin K. Friesen felt very alone as he had been the last one of the family circle in his age group.



*Johann E. Friesen at a family gathering, ca. 1960. In the right, rear, is son-in-law John P. Loewen, senior pastor of the Blumenort E.M.C. during the 1980s.*



*Johann E. Friesen, passport photo. Photo - Abraham L. Plett book page 339.*

6 Daughter **Helena E. Friesen** (1878-1960) worked out a lot for others as a young girl as her parents were poor. She worked a lot for her uncle Abram Eidse, a minister. She married Cornelius Sawatzky. In 1923 the family moved to Portage la Prairie, joining a Plymouth Brethren (dispensationalist religion) Church. In March 1962 she became sick of dropsy and gangerine suffering much during the last eight months of her life.<sup>1374</sup>

6 Son **Abraham E. Friesen** (1883-1920) "...was struck on the head by a horse, which brought very severe consequences. Because of this, Abraham received epileptic seizures, which was very hard to bear. He was at Selkirk and Brandon Hospitals several times after, suffering at home for some time. He died in Brandon at 37 years of age."<sup>1375</sup> The R. M. of Morris history book reports that "After his death, his body was shipped home by freight train. The casket arrived C.O.D., creating financial stress for the family, and needless to say, also emotional."<sup>1376</sup>

6 Sons **Cornelius E. Friesen** (1888-1950) never married. Cornelius was a hermit and had a large beard. He and brother Peter farmed with their mother in Rosenort, Manitoba. The brothers had their own threshing outfit. Peter was the manager. He was quite bright and well-groomed. Like his father and grandfather before him, Peter collected historical documents.<sup>1377</sup>

6 Son **Klaas E. Friesen** (1892-1969) married Aganetha Isaac, daughter of David Isaac (1874-1912).<sup>1378</sup> Klaas and his family lived in McTavish, Manitoba. They were members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, at Rosenort. Klaas died of a heart attack in 1969. Mary, their oldest child, married to Albert L. Penner, died in childbirth. Their son Frank I. Friesen (1923-94) lived in Whitemouth. Son Nick died in an accident when his truck flipped over during the night and was found dead in the morning, pinned beneath the vehicle.



*Helena, Mrs. Cornelius Sawatzky, daughter of Johann P. Friesen. Photo - Furrows, page 393.*

*Cornelius E. Friesen. Photo - Furrows, page 393.*

*Peter E. Friesen on his motorcycle. Photo - Furrows, page 393.*

6 Son **Peter E. Friesen** (1890-1986) lived on the family homestead known as the “Woodbury” farm which he owned until his death. The R. M. of Morris history book reports that “From 1916-1979, the family remained living on the quarter of the 40 acres that Peter still lives on [in 1980]. He has managed to retain much of the original bush land, which served as pasture for many years.”<sup>1379</sup>

The following article written about Peter E. Friesen was published in *Furrows in the Valley*: “Peter E. Friesen was born the youngest son of the John P. Friesens on May 31, 1890. He and his brother, Cornie, were bachelors and farmed together. He is now (1980) residing at the J.F. Warkentin home (a nephew) and still drives his truck back and forth where he spends his day in a self constructed workshop or cooking his own meal in his own farm house (if weather and health permit). He is somewhat arthritic but has a sound memory and a will to live. He is now 89.”

“Upon interviewing and seeing a map kept from the centennial celebrations, he filled in between the gaps. He knew of people who lived between the main farms, who were not on the map. These were the forgotten folk who came in as labourers to help the farmers – also pioneers, but often without permanent homes. He also remembers many incidents, the recent one when the wood ticks were so thick the horses would become sick from an epidemic of infestations which he believed resulted in ‘sleeping sickness.’”

“His memories include the early days of cattle herding. Rosenort and Rosenhoff had separate herd setups. For the Friesen boys, it meant early rising, from 1898 on. John, Cornie and Peter lived at the north end of the village. With leather boots (that caused sore heels) they walked two miles south very early (7:00 a.m.) and gave bugle calls along the village road. On the way back, the farmers were expected to open the gates and let out the milked cows, calves and grazing stock. This included the whole village cattle population of about 100 head. Two dogs had been their assistants. One very intelligent dog was “Fanny” who was so useful that they fed her exactly as the boys were fed, almost human.”

“For lunch, they carried homemade foods such as pearl barley, fish from the Morris River, cottage cheese, processed Mennonite-style into “devoye”, and possibly homebaked foods.”

“The wages he couldn’t remember (maybe \$35.00 a season possibly \$1.25 per head per summer). It was a seven day week, with Grandpa often taking the Sunday shift. Peter is an inventor by nature. The product of one of his endeavours is a horse and cart, running, lifelike and natural looking, run with electric power.”

“Today, he is living with the Warkentins, having his nighttime snack and trudging upstairs to his bedroom at about 10:00 p.m.”



*Peter E. Friesen with his invention of an electrically-run horse and cart. Photo - Furrows, page 394.*

5 Daughter **Anna Plett Friesen** (1849-1912) married widower Klaas Koop, son of Heinrich Koop from Landskrone, Molotschna.<sup>1380</sup> Koop's first wife was Katharina Barkman, a sister to Rev. Jakob M. Barkman of Steinbach who drowned in the Red River, Manitoba in 1875.<sup>1381</sup> The family settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in a village called Rosenfeld, which included the three brother-in-laws married to Barkman sisters, namely, Koop, Peter I. Fast and Franz Kroeker. Klaas Koop lived to a ripe old age. Anna Koop, nee Friesen, died childless. In 1902 folk historian Peter P. Isaac visited the Koop family in Jansen, Nebraska and reported that even at the age of 72, Uncle Koop "was still quite active but that he did have difficulty in throwing a sack of wheat over his shoulder and walking away."<sup>1382</sup> Klaas had two sons from his previous marriage, Martin and Klaas.<sup>1383</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Anna P. Friesen</b>	Dec 23, 1849	1882	Oct 27, 1912
m	Klaas Koop	Aug 8, 1825		Sep 22, 1916

5 Son **Klaas Plett Friesen** (1854-1926) married Maria Rempel, daughter of Gerhard Rempel of Mariawohl who settled in Jansen, Nebraska in 1874.<sup>1384</sup> The family lived in Jansen where Maria died in 1907. October 9, 1907, the *Rundschau* reported that "Peter Brandt and widower Klaas P. Friesen expect to visit in Manitoba." Gerhard T. Thiessen writes that "at Jansen, he [Klaas] was known as 'Russian Klaas Friesen.'"<sup>1385</sup> Klaas Friesen moved to Meade, Kansas, as a widower with his grown-up children where "he purchased the Kelley Allen relinquishment." August 12, 1908, the *Rundschau* reported "K. P. Friesen and P. L. Friesens' houses are about finished." In 1909 Klaas P. Friesen built "a splendid new barn with wagon shed, a place for farm implements and buggies with granary attached." In the same year he was building a "commodious residence."<sup>1386</sup> Klaas P. Friesen died in Meade.

6 Daughter **Anna R. Friesen** married cousin Jakob R. Classen, son of Cornelius J. Classen. Their Verlobung or engagement party took place at the home of the bride and was described in the *Meade Globe*, the local newspaper: "The bride and groom appeared in the room after the guests had all been seated and took their seats at one end of the room where their friends entertained them some time with a song service. All the preliminary ceremony was in the German language, hence we may not be able to give the facts, however the whole service was impressive. . . Luncheon was served to 60 to 75 guests. We are informed that Jakob and Anna will visit with each other until March 14 and if then they are the same mind at 9:30 o'clock at their church the final ceremony will be held, after which all will repair to the home of . . . the groom's father where song service and dinner will complete the marriage service."<sup>1387</sup> On March 18, the *Meade Globe* carried the story of the wedding, "A. M. Doerksen preformed the last ceremony and a large crowd of 100 persons of the neighbourhood repaired to the home of C. J. Classen where a sumptuous wedding dinner was in waiting. Old and young partook of the joviality of the occasion. Jakob is a splendid young man and Anna a good girl, so we predict a happy married life." The couple made their home in Meade, Kansas. By March of 1909 Jakob Classen had "a well-drilling outfit putting down a well." He was "spending his honeymoon digging a

cellar.” Jakob R. Classen married for the second time to Maria B. Bartel, daughter of Johann F. Bartel and Maria Barkman of Meade.<sup>1388</sup>

6 Daughter **Maria Rempel Friesen** married Heinrich H. Friesen. According to the *Rundschau*, September 26, 1907, she was known as the “Krimische”.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Klaas P. Friesen</b>	Feb 2,1854	Feb 5,1878	Dec 18,1926
m	Maria Rempel	Jan 1852		Mar 17,1907
4	Elizabeth Friesen	Jan 7,1880		1946
4	Maria Friesen	Aug 22,1882	Aug 1906	Sep 1907
m	Henry H. Friesen	Feb 14,1884		Jan 14,1958
4	Gerhard Friesen	May 29,1884		Apr 1944
4	Anna Friesen	Mar 4,1886	Mar 14,1909	Nov 27,1952
m	Jacob R. Classen	June 28,1886		Aug 9,1956
4	Klaas Friesen	Jan 13,1888		Mar,1917
4	Margareta Friesen	Sept 4,1889		Dec,1961
4	Aganetha Friesen	Dec 23,1891		
4	Johann Friesen	Sept 20,1893		

5 Son **Heinrich Plett Friesen** (1857-85) never married. January 31, 1883, the *Rundschau* reported that January 7, 1883, Heinrich Friesen “accompanied Ältester A. L. Friesen to Manitoba.” Heinrich suffered from epilepsy (“Fallsuch”).<sup>1389</sup> He died of this illness in Jansen in 1885. February 25, 1885, the *Rundschau* reported “Heinrich Friesen, step-son of old Isaac Harms, was found dead.”

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>Heinrich P. Friesen</b>	Aug 14,1857	single	Feb,1885

5 Son **David Plett Friesen** married Elisabeth Klassen, daughter of Martin Klassen and a sister to Mrs. Cornelius P. Friesen. The family lived in Jansen, Nebraska, where he died in 1902. He must have been a heavy-set man as Gerhard T. Thiessen wrote that David P. Friesen was known as “Ohm Doaft” and as “Dickchja Doaft” in Jansen.<sup>1390</sup> There were two sons of the marriage.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
5	<b>David P. Friesen</b>	Nov 4,1860		Feb 23,1902
m	Elisabeth Klassen	May 7,1852		
6	Cornelius Friesen	ca.1883		
6	David Friesen	ca.1885		

5 Daughter **Maria Plett Friesen** married widower Cornelius J. Classen, son of Jacob Classen (1832-98) in Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>1391</sup> Cornelius was married for the first time to Katharina F. Rempel (1866-94), daughter of Gerhard Rempel (1843-79) who died in Jansen, Nebraska. The Cornelius J. Klassen family is frequently mentioned in the “Journal” of his brother Jakob. Cornelius was a farmer in Jansen, Nebraska, owning a 200 acre spread on NW Section 17 in Heuboden where his father had settled in 1874. He moved to Meade, Kansas, in 1906, purchasing the

old Van Duesen place. December 4, 1907, the *Rundschau* reported "C. J. Classen is building a 52 x 58' barn, the largest around here." In 1908 he completed a "commodious addition to his residence." According to an article in the *Meade Globe* "With his large barn and splendid house Mr. Classen is nicely arranged for living."<sup>1392</sup> In a letter to the *Meade Globe* on July 15, 1909, Cornelius J. Classen has written, "It was not until 1907 that I left Nebraska to get an acreage to suit me, and here it is, broad enough, smooth enough, deep enough, good enough for anyone. I first bought 160 acres and soon following that purchase I took in nine more quarter sections, that I might have my desired farm. I farm possibly a small percentage of the acreage, but I have 120 acres in wheat, which will make full and perhaps above average yield."<sup>1393</sup> Cornelius J. Classen married for the third time to Helena S. Friesen, daughter of Johann S. Friesen who moved from Manitoba to Jansen, Nebraska in 1880.

6 Daughter **Maria F. Classen** married Bernhard H. Doerksen, son of Bernhard D. Doerksen and Helena R. Plett of Blumenhof, Manitoba, and later Satanta, Kansas. The Bernhard H. Doerksen family farmed in Satanta, Kansas.

6 Daughter **Elisabeth F. Classen** married Peter J. Rempel. They both died in Phoenix, Arizona.

6 Daughter **Agatha F. Classen** married Isaac W. Loewen, son of Kleine Gemeinde minister Heinrich F. Loewen of Jansen, Nebraska, and later Meade, Kansas. Isaac W. Loewen farmed at Meade. He was a half-brother to the Loewen brothers who were large scale farmers at Meade.

6 Daughter **Anna F. Classen** married John F. Kroeker who died in Jansen, Nebraska.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Maria P. Friesen</b>	Aug 12, 1866	Mar 11, 1894	Nov 5, 1906
m	Cornelius J. Classen	Feb 8, 1863		Apr 4, 1931
6	Maria Classen	Nov 4, 1894		Jan 14, 1895
6	Maria Classen	Aug 22, 1896	Sep 26, 1920	May 3, 1959
m	Bernhard Doerksen	Jul 19, 1896		
6	Elizabeth Classen	Mar 8, 1898	Dec 15, 1916	Apr 30, 1979
m	Peter J. Rempel	Dec 15, 1986		Oct 14, 1991
6	Agatha F. Classen	Sep 15, 1899	Feb 9, 1919	Jul 23, 1965
m	Isaac W. Loewen	Dec 16, 1899		Jul 23, 1965
6	Cornelius F. Classen	Feb 19, 1901	Sep 4, 1925	
m	Marg. L. Reimer	Sep 13, 1903		
6	Anna F. Classen	Mar 6, 1903	Feb 27, 1955	
m	Johann F. Kroeker	Sep 2, 1906		Jan 6, 1894
6	Marg. F. Classen	Aug 24, 1904	Sep 30, 1934	
m	Nick R. Reimer	Sep 22, 1909		
6	Lena Classen	Nov 3, 1906		Nov 26, 1906

**Part D: Anna Plett, 1766-1807.**

3 Daughter **Anna Plett** (1766-1807) married Franz Isaac. The information for this section is taken from Elsie Friesen, *The Descendants of Franz Epp and Franz Isaac* (Henderson, Neb., n.d.), 36 pages.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
3	<b>Anna Plett</b>	Feb 23, 1766		Nov 27, 1807
m	Franz Isaac	Dec 14, 1744		Nov 27, 1807
4	Franz Isaac	Dec 13, 1789	Jan 26, 1815	Feb 7, 1871

4 Son **Franz Isaac** married Sarah Fast.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
4	<b>Franz Isaac</b>	Dec 13, 1789	Jan 26, 1815	Feb 7, 1871
m	Sarah Fast			Feb 6, 1828
5	Anna Isaac	Nov 13, 1815	Jan 6, 1835	Feb 28, 1840
5	Sarah Isaac	Dec 25, 1825	1841	Nov 18, 1886

5 Daughter **Anna Isaac** (1815-40) married Jakob Epp.

6 Son **Franz Epp** had four children: Jakob, Helena, Helena and Peter. No further information available.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Anna Isaac</b>	Nov 13, 1815	Jan 6, 1835	Feb 28, 1840
m	Jakob Epp	Mar 1, 1809		Dec 1, 1892
6	Jakob Epp	Dec , 1836		Mar 14, 1838
6	Franz Epp	Aug 22, 1838		Aug 24, 1871
m	Katharina Thiessen	Mar 8, 1826		

5 Daughter **Sarah Isaac** (1825-86) married her older sister's husband Jakob Epp. The Jakob Epp family emigrated to America in 1876 together with their three children. They settled in Henderson, Nebraska.

6 Daughter **Catarina Epp** (1847-74) married Jakob Penner. They had one daughter Barbara Penner born Feb 12, 1873. No further information available regarding this family.

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
5	<b>Sarah Isaac</b>	Dec 25, 1825	1841	Nov 18, 1886
m	Jakob Epp	Mar 1, 1809		Dec 1, 1892
6	Sarah Epp	Dec 13, 1843		Jan 8, 1844
6	Jakob Epp	May 12, 1845		Dec 4, 1847
6	Catarina Epp	Oct 14, 1847	Nov 23, 1871	Feb 4, 1874
m	Jakob Penner	Feb 12, 1847		
6	Sarah Epp	Jan 30, 1852	Feb 13, 1875	May 5, 1922
6	Anna Epp	Jan 20, 1854	Aug 28, 1884	Mar 3, 1923
6	Jakob Epp	Nov 12, 1856	July, 1883	Feb 18, 1921

6 Daughter **Sarah Epp** (1852-1922) married her third cousin Cornelius Plett, son of Michael Plett of Kleefeld, Molotschna (see Part B, Section Two). Cornelius and Sarah Epp immigrated to America in 1877 together with his parents. Sarah Epp Plett was not well at the time suffering from tuberculosis. They made their home with his parents near Lushton, Nebraska. Family historian Lydia Plett Balzer writes: "They worked hard and exercised thrift." There were Mennonite churches in Henderson and Fairbury, Nebraska, but none at Lushton and so the families here were served by ministers from other congregations. In 1886 the Cornelius Plett family joined the KMB. In 1892 Cornelius Plett purchased a farm in Marion County, Kansas, in order to establish himself on a larger acreage. The farm in Lushton, Nebraska, was sold for \$2500.00. They purchased 160 acres "plus a heifer and a few pigs for a total of \$2925.00, about three miles west of Lehigh." They attended church at Gnadenu until the Springfield Church was built in 1894. In 1901 Mrs. Cornelius Plett became ill of inflammatory rheumatoid arthritis. Family historian Lydia Plett Balzer writes: "She was bedfast and for two years had bouts with high fever and severe pain, often not knowing whether she would live. She was left crippled and had to spend 21 years of her life in a wheel chair."<sup>1394</sup> In 1915 the Cornelius Pletts retired and moved to Lehigh where they lived for the remainder of their days.

7 Daughter **Sarah E. Plett** remained at home looking after her parents. Son **Jakob E. Plett** died the first night after his parents arrived at the new settlement in Nebraska. Son **Cornelius E. Plett** married Elisabeth Fast. They lived in Hillsboro, Kansas. They had nine sons and one daughter. They are the parents of Lydia Plett Balzer, family historian, and Cornelius F. Plett (b. 1910), former moderator of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference.<sup>1395</sup> C. F. Plett was the author of the KMB congregational history, *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church*, published in 1985, shortly before his death.<sup>1396</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Sarah Epp</b>	Jan 30, 1852		May 5, 1922
m	Cornelius Plett	Oct 26, 1849	Feb 13, 1875	Nov 25, 1880
7	Katharina E. Plett	Dec 31, 1875		Feb 21, 1878
7	Jakob E. Plett	Nov 22, 1876		Jun 22, 1877
7	Sarah Plett	Jul 5, 1878		Jul 27, 1944
7	Cornelius E. Plett	Oct 10, 1879	May 24, 1903	1973
m	Elisabeth Fast	Nov 10, 1882		
7	Jakob E. Plett	Oct 18, 1881	Dec 30, 1903	
m	Maria Heinrichs	Jul 6, 1883		
7	Johann E. Plett	Sep 7, 1883	Mar 8, 1911	Dec 19, 1935
7	Tine Isaac	Oct 31, 1888		Jun 27, 1938
7	Peter E. Plett	Sep 7, 1883	Dec 13, 1906	Dec 23, 1958
m	Helena Penner	Dec 7, 1887		Oct 10, 1967
7	Heinrich E. Plett	Oct 31, 1885	Apr 8, 1907	Apr 28, 1951
m	Maria Heinrichs	Aug 12, 1885		Jan 10, 1948
7	Abraham E. Plett	Aug 17, 1887	Mar 10, 1910	Oct 12, 1968
m	Tina Klassen	Jul 1, 1890		



7	Franz E. Plett	Oct 27, 1889	Oct 10, 1912	May 27, 1972
m	Annie Harder	May 7, 1893		
7	Isaac E. Plett	Jul 17, 1891	Sep 17, 1916	
m	Lydia Steinert	Mar 29, 1893		Aug 31, 1964
7	David E. Plett	May 20, 1893	Mar 11, 1917	
m	Helena Pankratz	Jan 22, 1937		

6 Daughter **Anna Epp** (1854-1923) married the widower Aron Schellenberg of Gnadenau, Kansas, brother to Kleine Gemeinde minister Gerhard Schellenberg of Ohrloff, Molotschna, and later Manitoba. Aron Schellenberg was one of the charter members of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren when that group separated in 1869. In 1874, Aron Schellenberg emigrated from Russia, settling in the village of Gnadenau, Kansas. Aron Schellenberg was one of the first followers of KMB Elder Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921) who referred to him as his "Jonathan". Aron Schellenberg (1833-85) was afflicted with rheumatism and was not strong. Both parents died at a relatively young age so that some of the children were raised by Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe.<sup>1397</sup>

6 Daughter **Anna Schellenberg** (1868-96) married Peter A. Loewen, son of Peter Paul Loewen (1837-1926) and Anna Wiebe (1842-93).<sup>1398</sup> His parents lived at the home of their grandparents in Goldberg (?) from 1861 to 1870 when they moved to Margenau. After their immigration they settled in Hoffnungsthal, south of Hillsboro, Kansas. The Peter A. Loewen (1865-1953) family lived in the Marion County area in Kansas.<sup>1399</sup> Daughter **Maria Schellenberg** (1871-1923) married Peter F. Schmidt in Ebenfeld, Kansas. The family moved to Korn, Oklahoma.<sup>1400</sup> Daughter **Katharina Schellenberg** (1875-1924) married Jakob Z. Wiebe, son of Heinrich Wiebe (1845-1910) of Margenau, and later of Hoffnungsthal, a brother to Ältester Jakob A. Wiebe. Jakob Z. Wiebe was a teacher in Jansen, Nebraska, and was elected as a minister in 1910 in Minneola, Kansas. Son **Abraham Schellenberg** (born 1876) married Helena Thiessen, daughter of Johann F. Thiessen (1841-1917), of Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>1401</sup> Daughter **Elizabeth Schellenberg** (1878-1965) married Frank Z. Wiebe, brother to Jakob Z. Wiebe above. The Frank Z. Wiebe family moved to Korn, Oklahoma.<sup>1402</sup> Daughter **Margaretha Schellenberg** (1880-1916) married Peter J. Baerg, son of Johann Baerg (1844-1919) of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna, and later of Hoffnungsthal, Kansas.<sup>1403</sup> The Peter J. Baerg family lived in the Gnadenau, Kansas, area. The couple had one son Peter A. Baerg (born 1902). After the death of her first husband, Margaretha Schellenberg (1880-1916) married for the second time to Jakob G. Jansen, of Fairview, Oklahoma, with whom she had another four children.<sup>1404</sup> Son **Aron Schellenberg** (1885-1942) was married at Gnadenau, Kansas, and died in Enid, Oklahoma.<sup>1405</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Anna Epp</b>	Jan 20, 1854	Aug 28, 1884	Mar 3, 1923
m	Aron Schellenberg	Oct 23, 1833		Apr 15, 1885
7	Aron Schellenberg	Aug 23, 1885		Feb 17, 1942
m	Elizabeth Penner	Nov 5, 1883		

6	<b>Anna Epp</b>	Jan 20,1854	Jan 10,1886	Mar 3,1923
2m	David Dalke			Mar 3,1923
7	Jakob E. Dalke	Dec 28,1888	Oct 27,1935	Oct 25,1974
m	Edna Klein	Feb,1909		

6 Son **Jakob Epp** (1856-1921) married Margaretha Siebert. In 1877 the family emigrated to Henderson, Nebraska, together with his parents. In time they took over his parents farm. In 1916 they built a new home in Henderson where they lived during their retirement.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
6	<b>Jakob Epp</b>	Nov 12,1856	July,1883	Feb 18,1921
m	Margaretha Siebert	Mar 26,1856		Aug 23,1922
7	Sarah Epp	May 21,1884		Jun 4,1957
7	Katharina Epp	Jul 5,1885		Dec 18,1958
7	Margaretha Epp	Nov 28,1886		Jun 17,1962
7	Jakob Epp	Jun 4,1888		Oct 10,1951
7	Johann Epp	Jan 22,1890		Feb 2,1890
7	Maria Epp	Feb 20,1891		May 28,1942
7	Anna Epp	Dec 13,1892		May 30,1943

#### **Part E: Maria Plett, born 1767.**

3 Daughter **Maria Plett** married Jakob Dyck, son of Gerhard Dyck, Neustädterwald, Prussia. Gerhard Dyck was listed in the 1776 census: 3 sons, 2 daughters. Henry Schapansky writes that Jakob Dyck was baptised in 1785 and that the family lived for a time at Neu-Münsterberg, where they had the following children. Heinrich, Abraham and Heinrich."<sup>1406</sup>

In 1819 the Jakob Dyck family immigrated to Russia. They are listed in the immigration records: Dyck, Jakob, Kleinemausdorferweide, born 1765, Neustädterwald, Landwirt, to Schardau, married Plett, Maria, Kl. Mausdorferweide, to Schardau. On April 30, 1821, they delivered a release with respect to various inheritance monies in Halbstadt."<sup>1407</sup> The family is listed on Wirtschaft 24 in Schardau in the 1835 census: Jakob Jakob Dueck, arrived in Russia 1819, died 1828, son Jakob to Pastva in 1821, Gerhard Dueck age 11, son Abraham Dueck age 27, to Landskrone 1839, wife Katerina 37, son Jakob 7 and daughter Katerina 5. According to Henry Schapansky, only Gerhard Dyck was the son of Maria Plett, the others were her step-children.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Maria Plett</b>	1767		
m	Jakob Dyck	1765		
4	Gerhard Dyck	1824		

**Part F: Heinrich Plett, 1769-1843.**

3 Son **Heinrich Plett** married Anna Isaac, daughter of Peter Isaac (1732-1807) and Justina Schroeder (1743-1803) of Bärwalde, Prussia. Anna and Heinrich Plett lived in Vierzehnhuben, Prussia, where Heinrich died on October 7, 1843.<sup>1408</sup>

Anna Isaac Plett lived several years after the death of her husband, as a widow. In 1846 her brother Peter Isaac from Tiege, Molotschna, came to visit her in Prussia. The following is an account of his journey as recorded by great-nephew Peter P. Isaac: "The love for my sister, whom I had not seen for 43 years, urged me to visit her in Prussia once more. I had the opportunity of a free trip with a man by the name of Konrad of Tiegenhagen, who travelled with team and wagon. When we had travelled about half that distance, my companion took sick and died. (He may have been a father to the Konrad whom I had known in my youth in Tiegenhagen, Russia.) After this sad interruption of the journey, I decided to continue to travel, although alone. When I arrived in Prussia, I had someone drive me to Vierzehnhuben where my sister lived."

"On entering her house, I asked her if the widow Anna Plett lived here. She said, 'yes', but paid no further attention to the stranger who was standing in front of her, rather shabby from the trip and with a half-grown beard, and went on with her housework. Then I asked her for a drink of water which she coldly handed me but paid no further attention to me. I asked her then if she really was the widow Anna Plett. 'Yes', she answered roughly but nothing else, and possibly fostered the thought in her mind that, 'Would this person find it convenient to leave my house!'"

"I now thought that I must try to bring her into a better mood, so I told her that I had some deliveries and greetings to bring her from her Russian friends. Then she asked in a more serious tone of voice than ever, 'Who are you?' Now I could not resist it any longer, went to her, fell upon her neck, weeping, and said, 'I am your brother, Peter, from Russia.' Although she was not at all the emotional type, she was deeply moved and we wept together. Several times she repentantly confessed for having been so loveless to me. I tried to console her and set her at ease, telling her that she could not have acted differently to a stranger. Thus far the account of great-uncle, Peter Isaac. This occurred in the summer of 1846, a few months before I was born."<sup>1409</sup>

Anna Isaac Plett was well-to-do and died childless in Vierzehnhuben, West Prussia, on April 11, 1850.<sup>1410</sup>

<b>Gen</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>Death</b>
3	<b>Heinrich Plett</b>	1769		Oct 7, 1843
m	Anna Isaac	Nov 18, 1777	1800	Apr 11, 1850

## Endnotes: Johann Plett, A Mennonite Family Saga.

1. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, pages 97-102.
2. Peter P. Isaac, *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern Vom Jahre 1694 bis auf die Gegenwart* (Stern, Alberta, 1916), 89 pages; trans. John R. Friesen, and published in English under the title *A Family Book From 1694 to 1916 and Personal Experiences* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1981), 61 pages, and republished as "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, 1990), pages 179-224, with footnoted annotations. All references to the "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern" in this work will be to the *Pioneers and Pilgrims* publication.
3. As quoted in D. Plett, ed, *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 179.
4. Calvin Redekop, "The Embarrassment of a Religious Tradition," in *Mennonite Life*, Sept. 1981, pages 17-21. Although Dr. Redekop addresses the former Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference, in particular, his comments would be equally true, if not more so, with respect to the E.M.C. and E.M.M.C. Conferences centered in Manitoba, who consistently propagate a view of Mennonitism which is not supported by the historical facts and highly misleading.
5. D. Plett, "From Steinbach to Flanders Fields," in *Preservings*, No. 13, page 49.
6. Helmut Huebert, *Hierschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life* (Winnipeg, 1986), page 332.
7. George K. Epp, *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland: Band II Die Gemeinschaft zwischen Fortschritt und Krise* (Lage, Germany, 1998), page 49.
8. James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, 1989), page 134.
9. Verheyden, *Anabaptism in Flanders* (Scottdale, 1961), page 10.
10. Verheyden, pages 67-69.
11. Horst Penner, *Die Ost und Westpreussischen Mennoniten* (Weierhof, 1978), 532 pages.
12. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 432 pages.
13. H. Schapansky, *The Old Colony (Chortitza) of Russia* (New Westminster, 2001), page 38.
14. Johan Sjouke Postma, *Das niederländische Erbe preußisch-rußländischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika* (Leeuwarden, 1959), page 97.
15. On October 21, 1980, Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, my mother's uncle, shared with me that his father, Abraham L. Plett, had told him that the Pletts were originally Prußen, or Prussians, and had married into the Mennonites. This folklore is not necessarily inconsistent with the currently available information about our family roots.
16. Maralyn A. Wellauer, 2845 North 72nd Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, 53210, letter to author, 21 July, 1992.
17. The ancestral file of Marx Plett, dated April 24, 1992, is marked "4WAT-87", courtesy of the Morman Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, received courtesy of Leslie Plett, 923 Midridge Dr. SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2X 1H5.
18. Information on Plettenberg, South Africa, and Joachim van Plettenberg, Leeuwarden, Netherlands, and the city of Plettenberg, Germany, can be obtained from various websites.
19. Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy: A Six Generation Family Saga* (Box 363, North Newton, Kansas, 671127, 1999), page 3.
20. Neuheide - Elbing Lutheran Church Records, West Prussia, LDS #245,607 Mennonite deaths 1730-1769, transcribed by Glenn Penner - [www.mmhs.org/prussia/neuheide.htm](http://www.mmhs.org/prussia/neuheide.htm)
21. Glenn Penner, 201-33 Cardigan St., Guelph, Ontario, N1H 3Z5, letter to author February 22, 1989.
22. "Mennonite Burials 1710-1808," Fürstenau Lutheran Church Records, West Prussia. LDS #208,100. Transcribed by Jeff Wall and Glenn Penner.
23. Glenn Penner, letter to the author February 22, 1989.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Dr. Glenn Penner notes that Peter, Elisabeth, and the next brother could also have been children of the first marriage. The second son Plett could have been a child of the first or third marriage.

26. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C. V3L 4V5, letter (and Plett family charts) to author Sept. 6, 1992. Schapansky does not make the connection to Johann Plett of Ellerwald. In a letter of Jan. 7, 1995, Henry Schapansky writes that "the connection of Peter Plett (1740-1783) with Peter Riett of the 1776 census was made by me."

27. For photo with a view of the Tiegenhagen worship house from the north, see *Pres.*, No. 19, page 74.

28. Peter J. Klassen, "Historic Church Building Destroyed by Fire," in *Mennonite Historian*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, June 1990, page 8.

29. According to Henry Schapansky, Sarah Plett Penner died in Fürstenwerder.

30. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Box 387, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

31. Glenn Penner, letter of Oct. 8, 2002.

32. Horst Penner, *Die Ost und Westpruszischen Mennoniten*, page 452.

33. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Pres.*, No. 18, page 100.

34. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," page 190.

35. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," page 212.

36. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 22, 1992 and Plett Family Charts.

37. Katie Peters, "Plett Family Chart," unpublished compilation; M.B. Archives, Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

38. Letter to the author, October 6, 2002.

39. Another photo of the Fürstenwerder church is found in *Men. Life*, July 1948, page 11.

40. Horst Penner, page 456.

41. Glenn Penner, letter to the author July 8, 1982. Dr. Penner gives his source regarding the Peter Plett family as the "Gemeindebuch of the Markushof Gemeinde, Births, Marriages and Deaths 1776-1807".

42. Glenn Penner, letter to the author August 3, 1982.

43. Glenn Penner, letter to author January 1, 1997. He writes further, "I'm hoping that eventually we'll be able to more completely piece together the early Plett family and show that Johan and Peter were brothers and that they were sons of Johann Plett who lived in Ellerwald in the 1730s-50s."

44. Glenn Penner, letter to author August 3, 1982.

45. Glenn Penner, letter to author July 8, 1982.

46. Urry, *None but Saints*, page 47.

47. Peter Jakob Plett, "Family-Record of Peter J. Plett," as edited and continued by son-in-law Peter P. Fehr, unpublished family records, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1979. Peter J. Plett was the son of Jakob Johann Plett (1836-93), son of Johann Michael Plett (1786-1854). It is often difficult to interpret old records such as this correctly, records which have been transcribed and rewritten several times over the decades, frequently by descendants who no longer knew personally the villages and places referred to. The "Family Record of Peter J. Plett" states that Michael Plett was also born in Jankendorf, which seems unlikely given several reliable sources as quoted in Part A, Section Three, that Johann Plett II lived in Fürstenwerder, at least from 1759 until his death in 1791. The Peter J. Plett record also states that Michael Plett died in Danzig which is incorrect given that he only immigrated to Russia in 1803.

48. Peter Johann Plett, "Family Book written by me on December 3, 1854," unpublished journal, as continued by son Heinrich G. Plett (1887-1950) and transcribed and annotated by his son Peter H. Plett, Apt. 804, 525-75th Ave., S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2V 1R8, courtesy Leslie Plett, Calgary, Alberta. Peter Joh. Plett was the son of Johann Plett (1786-1854). The document records the time of day of the births.

49. *Men. Rundschau*, December 14, 1910, page 8.

50. B.H. Unruh, page 344.

51. Unruh, pages 305-6.

52. 1835 Census records, Peter J. Braun Collection, file 357, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993, translated and transcribed by Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1993, henceforth cited simply as the 1835 census or Revision.

53. Peter Joh. Plett, "Family Record," page 2.

54. Peter Jakob Plett, "Family Record," unpublished journal, compiled August 6, 1944, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 18 pages (paginated by the author).

55. Unruh, page 326.

56. A. Redekopp and R. D. Thiessen, editors., *Mennonite Migrations to Russia 1788-1828* (Winnipeg, 2000), page 99.

57. Peter Johann Plett, "Family Book....Dec. 3, 1854," *ibid.*; Peter Jakob Plett, "The Family-Record of Peter J. Plett", *ibid.*; and an untitled family record listing the children of Johann Michael Plett and a few of their children, sent to me by Linda F. Plett, 114 Floral Drive, Hillsboro, Kansas, 67063, letter to author January 17, 1989. I believe she was a niece or otherwise related to Cornelius F. Plett, Hillsboro, well-known historian of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren.

58. Peter Jakob Plett, *ibid.*, page 7.

59. "Verzeichnisse Ueber Den Schulbesuch In Den Molotschnaer Mennoniten Kolonien 1857-58," from the Peter J. Braun Russian Mennonite Archives, file 1841, 55 pages, photocopied at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993.

60. "Verzeichnisse Ueber Den Schulbesuch In Den Molotschnaer Mennoniten Kolonien 1862," from the Peter J. Braun Russian Mennonite Archives, file 1932, 136 pages, photocopied at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993.

61. David A. Haury, *Index to Mennonite Immigrants on United States Passenger Lists 1872-1904* (North Newton, Kansas, 1986), page 74.

62. Stanley Voth, ed., *Henderson Mennonites: From Holland to Henderson* (Henderson, Nebraska, 1981), page 253.

63. Lydia Plett Balzer, *Michael Plett Family Record 1812-1971* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1971), 99 pages.

64. Lydia Plett Balzer, page 34.

65. Their son Dr. Jake Plett died in Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 22, 1984. *Star Journal*, Hillsboro, Kansas, Oct. 24, 1984, and *Christian Leader*, Oct. 20, 1984.

66. Cornelius F. Plett, 206 South Floral Dr., Hillsboro, Kansas, 67063, letter to the author December 12, 1980.

67. Cornelius F. Plett, *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1985), page 338.

68. He died at age 99 in Hillsboro, Kansas. *Hutchison News*, July 4, 1981, and *Hillsboro Star-Journal*, July 15, 1981, *Christian Leader*, August 25, 1981.

69. Lydia Plett Balzer, page 80.

70. The information for this section is based on information gathered and provided by Julia E. Millsap, 207 Gorrion Ave., Ventura, California, 93004-1332, letters to author January 10, 1995, January 30, 1997, and three family charts - one for each Katharina Quiring (1843-98), Maria Quiring (1847-88) and Gertrude Quiring (1847-80).

71. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 44.

72. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 47.

73. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 118.

74. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 95.

75. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 95.

76. Information about the family of Abraham Julius Plett (1841-1913), including considerable detail about their grandchildren, is found in John Ashworth, "Plett: The descendants of Michael Plett (1761-1826) and Anna Thun (1764-1794)," unpublished compilation, 540 Blueridge Ave., North Vancouver, B.C., V72 2J2, 133 pages.

77. Katie Peters, "Plett Family History."

78. Book Committee, *A Tale of Three Cities: Marion Monroe Dolton* (Marion, South Dakota, 1979), pages 384-385.

79. Courtesy of Jo Ann Kurh, AHSGR Research Director: letter Jan. 4, 1995.

80. Obituary, *San Jose News*, October 18, 1981.

81. Courtesy of Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta. The obituary was likely published in the *Bote or Rundschau*.

82. A David Thessmann family from Marienthal is listed among the pioneer settlers in the Mountain Lake area, but does not appear to be listed in the 1880 census. List published in *Der Berichterstatter*, Aug. 12, 1879, pages 1-2, as reprinted in Gary Richter, *Mountain Lake 1886-1986 Minnesota* (Mountain Lake, Minn., 1986), pages 159-160.

83. D. A. Haury, *Index to Mennonite Immigrants*, page 53.

84. This compares with an age of 32 in the ship lists: D. A. Haury, page 53. Therefore, the November 9, 1842 birth date is accepted.

85. "Church Register of First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota," courtesy of Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta. For some reason the Johann Julius Plett family, however, is not included in the list of charter members as of 1878, as published in the church centennial book, Brunno Penner, ed., *First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1878-1978: A Century of God's Grace Centennial Observance October 8, 1978* (Mountain Lake, 1978), pages 93-96; cf. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 90.

86. The reader is indebted to Les Plett, Calgary, who saw John Plett at the Water Valley Campground, Alberta, in 1995, and took the time to talk to him about his Plett family. Because of the horrors experienced by the family, John was reluctant to talk about it, but did eventually share the tragic account when Les paid him another visit: Les Plett, letter March 26, 2003.

87. Katie Peters, "Plett Family History."

88. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 210.

89. Peter Johann Plett, "Family Records," *op. cit.*, page 10.

90. Helmut Huebert, email April 5, 2003.

91. For a photo, see Helmut Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 345, although the family is not identified because of the political situation under the Soviets. For a later photo, see *Preservings*, No. 9, Part One, page 12.

92. As quoted in A.A. Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer: Band 2 Der große Leidensweg* (Clearbrook, B.C., 1954), pages 93-94.

93. From her obituary, courtesy of Leslie Plett, Calgary, Alberta.

94. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 314.

95. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 230.

96. Village historian Helmut Huebert mentions that Gerhard Plett wrote an official letter of thanks for American Mennonite assistance to the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, August 9, 1922, pages 11,12, supplement. A note by him and an evaluation of the previous several years was included in a book by relief worker D.M. Hofer, *Die Hungersnot in Russland und Unsere Reise um die Welt* (Chicago, 1924), pages 157-159; see Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 160 and 362.

97. Aron A. Toews, *Mennonite Martyrs: People Who Suffered for Their Faith 1920-1940* (Winnipeg, 1990), pages 167-174.

98. Heinrich Goertz, "Plett, Gerhard (1860-1933)," ME IV, pages 194-5.

99. Les Plett has the information that the execution took place on May 5, 1938. But son Johann states that his father was shot in 1937.

100. Telephone interview Oct. 5, 2002, with Ältester Johann Plett, Bechterdissen, Im Kleine Werder 11, D-33818 Leopoldshöhe, Germany. The Bielefeld Gemeinde was a daughter church of the Bechterdissen Gemeinde. See Reger and Plett, *Diese Steine* (Steinbach, 2002), page 529. See also *Der Bote*, April 31, 1984, for a report on Johann Plett's 25th anniversary of service to his Gemeinde.

101. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 117.

102. Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 205 and 207.

103. Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 289 and 290.

104. Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 248-249.

105. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 309.

106. Presumably what is meant here is the *Forstei*, the alternative service forestry camps run by the Mennonites in Czarist Russia.

107. Maria Baerg's mother, Maria Baerg (1840-1909) was the niece of Kleine Gemeinde minister Peter Baerg (1917-1901), Grünfeld, Manitoba. See *Dynasties*, pages 11-32, for the Baerg family history.

108. An excellent biography of Gertruda Willms, on which this summary is based, is found in Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 122-128.

109. Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 291-298.

110. Huebert, *Hierschau*, 404 pages.

111. As quoted in Leland Harder, ed., *Harder Family Review*, Issue 2, April 1988, page 8.

112. Huebert, *Hierschau*, pages 117 and 119. Jakob Stobbe on Wirtschaft 4 is listed as one of the original settlers of the village in 1848, and thus, the Jakob Stobbe on Wirtschaft 8, was likely his son.

113. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 147.

114. Huebert, *Hierschau*, page 289.

115. E-mail to the author, Oct. 29, 2002.

116. The marriage to Jakob Harder is based on the family record of Peter Jakob Plett. Katie Peters has recorded that Elisabeth Plett (1832-99) married a Heinrich Harder of Friedensruh.

117. The biography of Peter Jakob Plett and Helena Wall was recounted by son Heinrich Plett, Winnipeg, Telephone interview - October 10, 2002. In 1980 Henry Plett compiled his life's story "Recollections - Aus Meinem Leben," 44 pages.

118. Vollmacht, April 11, 1838, Halbstadt—courtesy of Ken Reddig, Centre for M. B. Studies, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1988.

119. Elisabeth Neufeld was the wife of Jakob Wiebe (born 1764) listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen, Wirtschaft 8, Ohrloff, Molotschna: Unruh, page 324.

120. Anna Neufeld was the first wife of Peter Friesen (born 1768) listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen on Wirtschaft 1 in the village of Lindenau: Unruh, page 311. He was the son of Jakob Friesen, Reinland, Prussia, listed on the 1776 Konsignation and a brother to Johann Friesen (1763-1830) who settled in Schönau in 1804. Unruh, 308—courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author of January 20, 1991. Johann Friesen (1763-1830) was the senior minister of the Molotschna Gross Flemish Gemeinde at the time of the division of the Ohrloff Gemeinde in 1824. He was the father of the "Neukircher" Friesens, including Johann Friesen (1808-72), Neukirch, third Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde: see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), pages 270-274.

121. Katie Peters, "Plett Family Records," has record of a son Michael Plett born November 13, 1814. Since the Vollmacht of 1838, shows another son Michael Plett born in 1819, the earlier Michael Plett must have died prior to that date. The records of Katie Peters also show that Michael Plett (born 1790) married a Barbara whose last name is not provided. If this information is correct, she must have been a first wife who died young: Katie Peters, "Plett Family Records."

122. Information courtesy of Katie Peters, "Plett family records."

123. Plett, *Plett Picture Book: A Pictorial History of the Children and Grandchildren of Cornelius Plett (1820-1900) and Sarah Loewen (1822-1903)* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981), pages 143-144.

124. Much of the detail for the family of Peter Michael Plett of Friedensfeld, Sagradovfka, was supplied by granddaughter Gerda Plett, Box 242, Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada, R0A 2A0. Telephone interview October 12, 2002.

125. In his ancestor section, however, Cornelius contradicts himself, stating that his great-grandfather was "Michael Plett" who also was the ancestor of the "Hierschauer" Pletts (they were actually descendants from Johann, son of Michael). At the end of the same paragraph, he wrote that "The Hierschauer Pletts descend from Johann Plett," which someone has struck out and added a question mark - Cornelius Plett, "Lebenslauf des Cornelius Johannov Johannov Michailowitsch Michailowitsch Plett," unpublished memoirs, 99 pages, courtesy Adina Reger, Weißenthurm, Germany, 1999.

126. *Mennonitische Lexikon*, Band II, page 7.

127. Reger and Plett, *Diese Steine* (Steinbach, 2002), pages 311-312.

128. Courtesy of A. Reger, Weißenthurm, Germany, 2000. In 1974 these memoirs were translated into English by daughter Hilda Plett under the title of "Autobiography of C. J. Plett," unpublished, 73 pages.

129. Katharina Reimer Plett, "Meine Lebensgeschichte," in A. Reger, *Familienstammbuch und Geschichte der Familie Reimer 1740-1995* (Großwallstadt, 1998), pages 81-86.

130. Published by "Homeward Mission," Coaldale, Alberta, and J. Kank, Volksmissionar [sic], 7541 Neusatz über Neuenbürg, Deutschland. Received courtesy of A. Reger, Weißenthurm, 2000.

131. Henry Plett, *Wings of Hope One family's ordeal with a liver transplant* (Herald Press, 1990), 152 pages.

132. Story as related to Leslie Plett, Calgary, Alberta, by Maria Harder Plett in the Invalid Home in Coaldale, a month before she passed away.

133. The connection of Jakob Jakob Plett (1872-1924) and Klaas Jakob Plett (1877-1921), to Jakob Michael Plett (b. 1833) has apparently been made on the basis that he is the only possible father based on the currently available data.

134. Courtesy Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta.

135. The reader is indebted to Rudolph Plett's son Bernie Plett, Winnipeg, Manitoba, for submitting the story of his grandparents as written by his aunt Maria Plett.



136. Courtesy of Les Plett, Calgary, Alberta.
137. Some details such as birth and death dates previously unavailable are found in the genealogical journal of grandson Johann P. Friesen (1847-1920): Johann P. Friesen, "Journal," untitled journal, unpublished, Rosenort, Manitoba, in the Johann E. Friesen document collection, 38 pages—courtesy of Rev. Jakob P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982, herein cited as Johann P. Friesen, "Genealogical Records."
138. *Rundschau* December 14, 1910, page 8.
139. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch," page 212.
140. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 100.
141. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch," page 212.
142. Henry Schapansky, letter August 22, 1992.
143. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," page 74. This citation is to the original German edition since the poem was omitted from the English edition.
144. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 100.
145. It is interesting here to note another connection between the Frisians in the Chortitza Colony and the basically Flemish Kleine Gemeinde in the Molotschna.
146. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 215.
147. Redekopp and Thiessen, editors, *Mennonite Migrations*, page 207.
148. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," page 51-52.
149. The aged widow Brandt referred to was Margaretha Friesen Harms Brandt (1838-1933), niece of Ohm Klaas Friesen, Rosenort, Molotschna, and later a well-known midwife in Rosenort, Manitoba; see Plett, *Saints and Sinners* (Steinbach, 1999), page 182.
150. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848 to 1862," in *Leaders*, page 472.
151. Johann P. Friesen gives her birth year as 1784 and also as 1782. He shows the year of marriage as 1808 and her death date as March, 1855.
152. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 100. Cf. Ralph Friesen, "Kleine Gemeinde Dream Culture," in *Preservings*, No. 21, pages 106-113.
153. A history of the Johann Harder family was published in 1990: Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 361-386.
154. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch," pages 49-50, states that his aunt Elizabeth was over 20 years older than his mother who was born in 1813.
155. Unruh, page 351.
156. Unruh, page 305.
157. Associated fellowship includes not only actual members but those families with significant kinship links with, or children in, the Kleine Gemeinde.
158. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 429.
159. Plett, "Martin Warkentin Genealogy 1764-1853," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 467-491.
160. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register, in *Profile 1874*, page 10; see also "Ship lists," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, page 62 and H. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in *Profile 1874*, page 111.
161. Their son Johann Fast (1794-1864) married Elisabeth Warkentin, daughter of Martin Warkentin, and they were the parents of Johann W. Fast (1837-1924), school teacher in Jansen, Nebraska, and Hillsboro, Kansas, publisher: Plett, *Profile 1874*, page 103. See Plett, "Martin Warkentin Genealogy," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 474-77.
162. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 387-413.
163. The family head is actually listed as Johann Abraham Harder, but Henry Schapansky and other experts have concluded that this is a transcription error, and that the correct reference should be Johann Johann Harder.
164. They were the sons of her cousin Johann Plett (1786-1854), see Section Two, Part B; see also Helmut T. Huebert, *Hierschau*, for additional information regarding the village.
165. *Harder Family Review*, Issue No. 2, page 8.
166. Quoted from the *Harder Family Review*, Issue 2, April, 1988, 8.
167. Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*, page 13.
168. *Harder Family Review*, Issue Three, 1988, page 2.
169. *Harder Family Review*, July 1988 Issue.

170. Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*, pages 26-36.
171. For a full listing of her family, including several siblings immigrating to the United States, see Johann Harder (1836-1930), "Family History and Genealogy", pages 2-3—courtesy of Dr. Leland Harder, Box 363, Newton, Kansas, 67117, 1983. For excellent historical accounts of the Schulz family see also; *Harder Family Review*, Issue Three, 1988, pages 4-5 and 11-13.
172. *Blumstein Legacy*, page 27.
173. Abr. J. Harder, "Autobiography," 1899, in *The Harder Family Review*, No. 6, page 2.
174. Abraham J. Harder, "Autobiography von Pred. Abraham J. Harder," Alexanderwohl, 1899, as quoted in *Blumstein Legacy*, page 51-52.
175. *Harder Family Review*, Issue No. 3, page 4.
176. Leland Harder, e-mail, January 28, 2003.
177. Jakob W. Friesen was the son of the widely known Kleine Gemeinde Ältester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff: see Plett, ed, *Dynasties of the Kleine Gemeinde* (Steinbach, 2000), pages 541-543.
178. Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*, page 18.
179. Abraham J. Harder, "Autobiography," in *Blumstein Legacy*, page 13.
180. "George Schulz Family Records."
181. As found, for example, in the work of Ältester Dirk Philips (1504-68) in attempting to resolve the worsening schism between the Flemish and Friesian Mennonites in the 1560s, see Doornkaat Koolman, *Dirk Philips: Vriend en Medewerke van Menno Simons* (Haarlem, 1964), 235 pages; also available in an English edition: *Dirk Philips: Friend and Colleague of Menno Simons, 1504-1568* (Kitchener, 1998), 234 pages.
182. P. M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia* (Fresno, California, 1978), page 715; see also Plett, *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, 1985), page 142.
183. More complete details are found in Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, pages 104-105.
184. *Ibid*, page 107.
185. Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte derselben* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), pages 159-173.
186. Peter Toews, "Sammlung...zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten," unpublished manuscript, 1874, as quoted in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 153-154.
187. James Urry, *None but Saints*, page 180.
188. J. J. Hildebrand, *Hildebrand's Zeittafel* (Winnipeg, 1945), pages 212-213.
189. P. M. Friesen, page 236.
190. P. M. Friesen, pages 239, 241 and 255.
191. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, page 129.
192. *Ibid*.
193. *Ibid*, pages 129-130.
194. John Neufeld, "Toward an understanding of conversion - Part One," in *Preservings*, No. 21, pages 33-36. Available at [www.hshs.mb.ca](http://www.hshs.mb.ca)
195. Karl Stumpp, *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862* (Lincoln, Neb. 1978), pages 27-28.
196. Henry Schapansky, *The Old Colony (Cbortitza) of Russia*, pages 87-9.
197. Readers interested in knowing more about this episode will find interesting reading in Fred Belk, *The Great Trek of the Russian Mennonites to Central Asia* (Scottdale, 1976).
198. M. B. Fast, *Mitteilungen von etliche der Großen unter den Mennoniten in Rußland und in Amerika* (Reedley, California, 1935), page 9.
199. P. M. Friesen, page 570, and James Urry, *None but Saints*, pages 226-227.
200. See Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, pages 307-321, for extracts of his correspondence and various references to the publication of this work, as well as a complete copy of the English translation prepared by John F. Funk.
201. Delbert Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, page 309. A facsimile of the original was published in *The Harder Family Review*, No. 3, page 16.
202. Johann was probably referring to the fact that his most intimate friend, cousin and associate minister, Bernhard Harder, had embraced a premillennial view and was preaching it from the pulpits of the Molotschna churches.
203. Delbert Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, page 275.

204. James Urry, *None but Saints*, page 227. For an example, of how the differences in religious culture impacted on those favouring immigration and those opposed, see comments of veteran school teacher Jakob Wiens, Kronsthal, Chortitza Colony, as published in *Old Colony Mennonites in Canada*, pages 90-91.
205. *Storm and Triumph*, page 327.
206. Abraham J. Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 4.
207. *Ibid.*
208. Peter I. Fast, "Wiederholtes Tagebuch und sonstige wichtige Chroniken angefangen den 8 Januar 1907," unpublished journal, page 66—courtesy of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas. February, 1989. Translation by John W. Wohlgemuth, Elma, Manitoba.
209. Peter I. Fast, "Wiederholtes Tagebuch," page 68.
210. John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno, California, 1975), pages 42 and 380.
211. Plett, "Daniel Fast Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 344-346.
212. See Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 50-58 and 71-82.
213. A derogatory term for those who had converted themselves to Separatist Pietist religious culture, since they considered themselves "holier than thou" than all the others, and they made the ridiculous assertion that only they were "saved" whereas the others supposedly were not saved, and were - according to their bizarre fanatical conceptions - completely and utterly cast away and separated from the kingdom of God and His boundless love unless and until they submitted to their ritualized conversion procedures and then submitted to the further unbiblical requirement of being dunked under water in accordance with the commandments of their Separatist Pietist and Baptist Mullahs. Editor's note.
214. As quoted in the *Harder Family Review*, No. 8, page 6, and also extracted in Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*, pages 56-57.
215. In a letter of October 4, 1864, Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), Annenfeld, Crimea, testified that having joined the Kleine Gemeinde they had "...both covenanted obedience anew with hand and voice before God and his Kleine Gemeinde, namely, we have renewed the covenant which we previously made with God, not ever to depart therefrom in our lifetimes," *Leaders*, page 783.
216. Leland Harder, *Harder Family Review*, No. 11, page 1.
217. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 344.
218. *Harder Family Review*, No. 13, page 5.
219. Menno S. Harder, "A Brief Biography of Johann Harder 1836-1930," unpublished paper, n.d., 3 pages.; see also Johann Harder, *From Annenfeld to Kansas in 1874*, trans. and ed. by Evangeline Kroeker, (Clovis, California, 1983), 69 pages; see also William J. Johnson, ed., *Pictorial Highlights of Gnadenu* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1874), page 8, for a picture of Johann J. Harder. A listing of the descendants of Johann J. Harder is provided by Menno S. Harder, *The Harder Family Book* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1952), unpaginated, approximately 100 pages.
220. Menno S. Harder, "Johann J. Harder (1836-1930)," ME 2, page 661.
221. Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 10.
222. Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 46.
223. Helena Klassen and Jakob Klassen were the children of Jakob Klassen (1832-1918) leader of the Zoar KMB congregation at Inman, Kansas: John H. Klassen, *The Genealogy Record of the Jakob Klassen Family* (Inman, Kansas, 1960), pages 21-33.
224. For a brief biography, see: Menno S. Harder, "David E. Harder (1872-1930)," ME 2, pages 659-660.
225. Plett, "Wiens Family in the Kleine Gemeinde," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 514.
226. Leland Harder, letter Dec. 18, 1989. Dr. Harder writes that information about their life in Hooker is found in Matilda Wiebe Suderman, *Homestead Memories* (Newton, Kansas, 1987).
227. Plett, "Daniel Fast Genealogy," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 350-352.
228. Abraham J. Harder, "Autobiographie von Prediger Abraham J. Harder Alexanderwohl, Russland, Geschrieben im Jahre 1899," unpublished journal, 1899—received courtesy of Leland Harder, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, 1987.
229. Dr. Leland Harder, letter Dec. 18, 1989. Dr. Harder noted that the details of the sudden death of the second wife of Abram J. Harder are found in the *Rundschau*, July 25, 1900.

230. Leland Harder, *Harder Family Review*, Issue 6, page 13; also footnote 69.
231. For detailed information on this family, see: Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their descendants* (229 Home St., Wpg, 1987), pages 231-240.
232. Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 46.
233. Johann Harder, letter to the *Rundschau*, July 25, 1900—courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
234. Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 46.
235. Johann J. Harder, “Family history and genealogy,” page 7. The names of many of the grandchildren have been published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 371, and in much greater detail in Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*.
236. Plett, “Jakob Barkman Genealogy,” in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 288.
237. As quoted in Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 47.
238. M. B. Fast, *Reisebericht und kurzer Geschichte der Mennoniten Nebst Autobiographie des Verfassers und Kurze Geschichte der Mennoniten bis jetzt* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1910), page 77.
239. Leona Wiebe Gislason, *Rückenau: The History of a Village in the Molotschna Mennonite Settlement of South Russia From its Founding in 1811 to the Present* (Winnipeg, 2000), page 116.
240. M. B. Fast, *Reisebericht*, page 86.
241. Information courtesy of Jo Ferguson, December, 1988.
242. Johann Harder, “Family History and Genealogy.”
243. Martin B. Fast, *Reisebericht*, page 170. The reference is not totally clear since during the drive to the house of Boschmann’s, Martin B. Fast refers to the road going to Fürstenwerder, although presumably he was merely describing the locality.
244. *Blumstein Legacy*, page 63-65.
245. *Blumstein Legacy*, page 125-126.
246. *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 127-128.
247. *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 128-129.
248. *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 130-131.
249. *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 114-118.
250. Johann J. Harder, “Family history and genealogy,” page 8.
251. For an explanation of this physical regimen, see Arthur Krueger in *Pres.*, No. 21, page 18.
252. *Blumstein Legacy*, pages 132-134.
253. John A. Harder, ed., *From Kleefeld with Love* (Kitchener, 2003), 198 pages.
254. Now also available in an English translation.
255. Leland Harder, *The Blumstein Legacy*, pages 47-49.
256. Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 25.
257. The biographies of the siblings of Ältester Johann P. Harder (1811-75) are based largely on the information contained in the “Family History and Genealogy” (“Stammbuch”) of son Johann J. Harder (1836-1930).
258. He appears to be the son of Peter Harms (born 1764) owner of Wirtschaft 9 in Blumstein: Unruh, page 315.
259. Her son Wilhelm Harms (1843-1930) married the widow Jakob T. Goossen, nee Anna Goossen (1856-1939). The family moved to Enid, Oklahoma, where they are buried in the M.B. cemetery: see Dorothy Darnell, *Wiens: Family History 1758-1988*, pages 37 and 150.
260. Agatha Harms (born December 2, 1841) married Abraham Willms on March 21, 1865. It appears that the children of Wilhelm Harms immigrated to America, following their mother and step-father Johann Wiens (1823-85), who settled in Dolton, South Dakota.
261. Anna Harms (born November 16, 1845) married widower Isaac Enns on Oct. 12, 1884.
262. Plett, “Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde,” in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page .

263. It is noted that the record of nephew Johann J. Harder (1836-1930) indicates that their son was called Isaac. However Dorothy Darnell, *Jakob Wiens Family 1758-1986* (Box 165, Mount Chasta, Cal., 1986), page 36, indicates that the son of Helena Harder and Johann Neufeld was called Jakob. The correct interpretation seems to be that both Jakob and Isaac survived and raised families. For a listing of the Neufeld family see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen 1756-1810, in *Profile 1874*, page 290; also Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 493-495.
264. Leland Harder, *Blumstein Legacy*, page 25.
265. Plett, "Martin Warkentin Genealogy," page 469.
266. Marcellus Duerksen, "A History of the J. J. Kroeker and Johann Warkentin Families," unpublished family study, Fresno, California, 1977, unpaginated.
267. *Rundschau*, January 18, 1888 - courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1988.
268. Marcellus Duerksen, "J. J. Kroeker and Johann Warkentin families."
269. *Rundschau*, January 8, 1910—courtesy of Henry N. Fast.
270. George Dyck and Verne Ediger, *Kornelius Ens 1819-1884: A Record of his Descendants In Canada and The United States* (West Valley City, Utah, 1988), 178 pages, have a listing of his descendants.
271. Dyck and Ediger, *Kornelius Enns 1819-1884*, page 80.
272. Dyck and Ediger, *Kornelius Ens 1819-1884*, page 86.
273. Heinrich L. Janzen was the father of W. Rudie Janzen, 2222 Skyline Dr., Bartlesville, Ok., 74006. W. Rudie Janzen is in the process of publishing a genealogy of the Janzen family.
274. *Rundschau*, January 8, 1910.
275. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," pages 211-212.
276. Peter Toews, "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes an den Herzen Meiner Lieben Kinder Von Johann Toews," unpublished manuscript, Fischau, Molotschna, 1866, pages 66-90, is the source of much of the biographical information for this section.
277. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, pages 97-102.
278. For a detailed listing of his family see Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 361-386.
279. Peter Toews, Letter Collection.
280. Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes*, page 71.
281. Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Sugarcreek, Ohio: Schlachab Publishers, 1980), page 125. The title pages bear the inscription "Johann Toews 1828" and then "Peter Toews 1870". Three pages later Peter Toews has noted he received the book from his father in 1870. Another one of the title pages has a handwritten extract from Menno Simon's "Fundamentbuch". The original of this book is presently at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 800 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba; courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1980.
282. Two Wiebe families are listed in Rosenort, Molotschna in the 1808 Revisions-Listen, namely; Heinrich Wiebe (1778) on Wirtschaft 3 and Duerck Wiebe on Wirtschaft 20: Unruh, pages 328-329. It is possible that Johann Toews (1793-1873) married the widow of one of these two men although this is pure speculation at this point.
283. For a listing of Kleine Gemeinde-related families in Fischau, see: Plett, "Heinrich Enns (1801-1881) Biography," in *Leaders*, pages 379-386.
284. This Wirtschaft was originally settled in 1804 by Albrecht Boschman. Unruh, page 310.
285. Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A History of a Mennonite Community Transplanted from Russia to Canada and the United States 1850-1930* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1991), pages 33-34.
286. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, July 9, 1913, courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
287. Unpublished journal, 90 pages. I am indebted to Milton Toews for allowing me photocopy these and other documents in the *Schriftentum* of Peter Toews (1841-1922).
288. This booklet was translated by Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982), a great-grandson, and published in *Leaders*, pages 599-606, under the title "The Watchful Eye of God".
289. For a description of this book see above.

290. One of the prizes of this writer's library is a copy of Schabaelje, *Die Wandelnde Seele* (Stuttgart, 1863), 530 pages. This volume bears the inscription "Received from the bookbinder on the 24th of June, 1861, by Johann Toews in Fischau." A later inscription, also on the front fly leaf page, states "Maria Toews in Blumenhoff, 1869." Presumably the book was originally purchased by Johann Toews (1793-1873) in 1861 and then passed on to his youngest daughter, Maria, in 1869.

291. Another prize possession in the writer's library is Peter Peters, *Ausgewaehlte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1865), 388 pages. This volume bears the following inscription "Received by Johan Toews in Friedrichsthal January 17, 1866." A later inscription reads "Received on June 28, 1881, in memory of my grandmother in Kansas. Johann Toews, Grünfeld."

292. Peter P Toews, *Sammlung von Briefen und schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten: Wie dieselbe in Suedruszland, an der Molotschna ibren Anfang genommen, die Ursachen ibres Ausgangs, Bestebung, Trennungen und Fortbestebung* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1873), 476 pages.

293. As related by Peter Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, page 57, footnote.

294. This poem was published in Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes* (Kleefeld, Man., 1908), pages 23-24: the poem has since been republished in *Leaders*, pages 605-606.

295. The poem itself is difficult to decipher. It was contained in the Abraham M. Friesen Collection, Bethel College, Newton, Kansas: see Plett, "New Discoveries: Part Two," in *Pres.*, No. 4, pages 10-11.

296. Johann Toews, "Two Poems," in Plett, ed., *Leaders*, pages 607-611.

297. Peter Toews, "Five Poems," in Plett, ed., *Leaders*, pages 863-866.

298. The details of this transaction are confirmed also by the "Memoirs" of Heinrich F. Wiens (1830-1901) the purchaser of the Wirtschaft. The Wiens family was associated by intermarriage with the Kleine Gemeinde. In 1876 H. Wiens settled in Inman, Ks.: see Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in *Pioneer and Pilgrims*, page 507.

299. Peter Toews, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in Manitoba 1874," in *Storm and Triumph*, page 333.

300. The manuscript version of "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes" (page 77) states that Johann Toews settled "on Markus by Harms" and later that Johann Toews lived with son Cornelius Toews.

301. Peter P Isaac, "Stammbuch", in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 216.

302. Isaac Loewen, Letter to Peter Toews 1865, in *Leaders*, page 559.

303. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Ministerial Journal," in *Profile of the Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, 1987), pages 159.

304. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Ministerial Journal," in *Profile of the Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, 1987), page 161.

305. Peter Toews, "Toews Family Chronicle, 1900," *Preservings*, No. 18, page 101.

306. An abridged biography of Johann and Maria Toews was published in 1999: Plett, *Saints and Sinners* (Steinbach, 1999), pages 259-260.

307. *Leaders*, pages 592-611.

308. Cornelius Toews, "Letter to the brethren," in *Storm and Triumph*, page 205: cf. Peter Toews, "Letter to the Gemeinde," in *History and Events*, pages 43-47.

309. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my Grandparents, Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," in *Profile 1874*, pages 209-211.

310. Johann F. Toews, *Aufzeichnungen aus meiner Jugendzeit, dreissig Jahre in der Klauen des Bannes, und vier Jahre im juristischen Kampf mit der Gemeinde Gottes in Christo* ("Jottings from the Years of My Youth, Thirty Years in the Claws of the Ban, and Four Years in a Court Battle with the Church of God in Christ") (Steinbach, Man., 1928), 36 pages), the first part of which deals with Johann's boyhood experiences and has been translated by D. Plett and published as Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 157-161.

311. See Chapter Two, "Jakob Bartel 1764-1813," in *Dynasties*, pages 33-56, for additional information regarding the Bartel family.

312. References to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* are courtesy of historian Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.

313. Genealogical notes by Peter Toews attached to "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes," unpublished handwritten transcription of his father Johann Toews' (1793-1873) memoirs.

314. For some background regarding this excommunication see, Plett, "Peter Toews 1841-1922: Biography," in *Leaders*, page 821.
315. Cornelius Toews, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna and the Crimea in Ahnenfeld, March 1868," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 204-206.
316. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Ministerial Journal," *Profile*, page 160.
317. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 159.
318. Peter W. Toews, "Life's Chronicle," in *Pioneer and Pilgrims*, page 128.
319. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 158.
320. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Ministerial Journal," in *Profile*, page 165.
321. Cornelius Toews, "letters," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 20-21.
322. Cornelius L. Toews *et. al.*, eds., *Cornelius P. Toews 1836-1906* (Steinbach, Man., 1973), 85 pages, provide a listing of descendants.
323. "Cornelius Toews, letter to Peter Toews, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 67.
324. Peter W. Toews, "Life's Chronicle," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 137.
325. Henry Fast, "Kleine Gemeinde 'Brandordnung'," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 277.
326. Henry Fast, "Kleine Gemeinde 'Brandordnung'", in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 269.
327. Peter L. Dueck, letter to the *Rundschau*, March 1, 1883.
328. According to oral tradition as recalled by historian Henry Fast, Steinbach, both Heinrich Fast and wife Charlotte (Maria) Fast, are buried in Fischau.
329. Cornelius Toews, letter to Funk, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 103.
330. Cornelius L. Plett, Diary, as published in *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach 1981), page 29.
331. Henry E. Toews, "'Introduction to the Genealogy of Cornelius P. Toews," in Cornelius L. Toews *et. al.*, eds., *Cornelius P. Toews 1836-1906*, page ii.
332. See Bartel Chapter, *Dynasties*, pages 33-56.
333. Abe Warkentin, ed., *Reflections*, page .
334. Peter I. Fast, "Wiederholtes Tagebuch....," page 41; page 62 of the English translation by John W. Wohlgenuth.
335. Henry Fast, "The Fast of Fischau," in *Pres.*, No. 4, pages 8-9.
336. Brother-in-law Jakob S. Friesen, Harvey County, Kansas, letter to the *Rundschau*, February 17, 1886, which may be this deaf mute son. According to oral tradition a child died and was buried at Fischau - telephone call with Historian Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 26, 2002. The Cornelius Toews family book, however, does not list a child born between Heinrich (born 1880) and sister Maria (born 1882), which may then be this deaf mute child.
337. R. M. of Hanover Assessment Records as published in *Profile 1874*, page 77.
338. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahren," *Steinbach Post*, March 9, 1965.
339. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 22.
340. Johann F. Toews, *Aufzeichnungen aus meiner Jugendzeit...* (Steinbach Manitoba, 1928), 36 pages. Part of this book was republished in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 157-161.
341. Ernest P. Toews, "Steinbach Main Street: Part Three," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part One, pages 73-74.
342. See *Preservings*, No. 18, page 36, and No. 16, page 106.
343. A photograph of their farmyard at Linden, Alberta, is published in *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung* (Steinbach, 1949), page 144.
344. C. L. Toews, "Cornelius F. Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Win, Memoirs of the Sunnyslope Pioneers* (Sunnyslope, Alberta, n.d.), pages 250-251.
345. Telephone interview with Mrs. Ben E. Toews, Steinbach, Manitoba, November 7, 1994.
346. I. Brown, "Cornelius L. Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Win*, pages 435-436.
347. See Ernest Toews, "Steinbach Main Street - Part Four," in *Pres.*, No. 12, pages 82-83.
348. See *Dynasties*, pages 457-527, for the Toews family tree.
349. See *Pres.*, No. 17, pages 89-90, for their biographies.
350. See Ted de Veer, "Whatshan Valley, Needles, B.C.," in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, pages 30-31.

351. Royden Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 219.
352. K.J.B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahren," *Steinbach Post*, 1964-65. For a biography of the marvellous Dr. Bergensche, see *Diese Steine*, pages 576-78/*Preservings*, No. 18, page 16. In conservative Mennonite culture, the medical field was traditionally dominated by women: see *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, page 13, and *Saints and Sinners*, pages 207-8.
353. An article by Alma Barkman, "Free Home Deliveries," in L. Klippenstein and J. G. Toews, eds., *Mennonite Memories* (Altona, 1984), page 297, takes a look at the pioneer years before doctors and hospitals and the process whereby some women became involved in the medical field.
354. Alma Barkman, "Home Remedies," in *Mennonite Memories*, pages 285-291.
355. Alma Barkman, "Remedies," in *Mennonite Memories*, page 297.
356. Cathy Barkman, "Anna Toews (1868-1933)," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 50-53.
357. Ernest P. Toews, "Steinbach Main Street, 1930, Part Four," in *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 80-81. According to my step-father, Ben P. Wiebe, the Peter C. Toews family was sometimes referred to as "Ekche" Toews because his wife was an Eck and they also lived on a corner.
358. Her husband, John K. Schellenberg, was the author of *Schools: Our Heritage* (Steinbach, 1985), pages 280.
359. In the meantime, new buildings had been constructed on the yard by Cornelius B. Loewen, who had purchased the property after the Cornelius P. Toews' had lived there. Telephone interview with Mrs. Ben E. Toews, Steinbach, Manitoba, November 9, 1994.
360. Interview John C. Reimer, Steinbach, Oct. 17, 1982. After the his death in 1934 the Holdeman Church withdrew from the organization. Interview John P. Dueck, Greenland, Oct., 26, 1984. For a photo of Peter H. Wiebe with his fellow board members on the Mennonite Colonization Committee, see *Men. Exodus*, page 123.
361. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 454, has additional information on this family.
362. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," page 13, Family No. 17.
363. See *Preservings*, No. 11, pages 85-87.
364. For a genealogical listing of the Martin M. Penner family, see Gary Penner and Irene McDonald, *The Martin M. Penner Family: A Genealogy and Address Book* (Steinbach, 1994), 32 pages.
365. Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 105. See also page 135, regarding M.M. Penner's light plant.
366. Henry E. Toews and C. L. Toews, *Cornelius P. Toews*, page 80.
367. Peter Toews, "Appendix Number Two," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 558-559.
368. *Ibid.*
369. Peter Toews, Letter to the *Rundschau* July 9, 1913, in *Storm and Triumph*, page 186. Courtesy Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
370. Peter Toews, "Family Chronicle, 1900," in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 101.
371. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 34.
372. Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's experiences," in *Profile 1874*, page 177.
373. Letter to the *Rundschau*, August 2, 1912.
374. No author, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Wun*, pages 441-444.
375. Peter Toews, letter to the brethren in the Molotschna, Crimea and Markuslandt, October, 1866, in *Storm and Triumph*, page 202.
376. *Ibid.*
377. Peter Toews, letter to Wiebe in the Crimea, December 1867, in *Storm and Triumph*, page 203.
378. Klaas C. Penner, ed., *Zwei Briefe zur Frage der Lehrerwahl* (Steinbach, Man., 1931), 8 pages.
379. Peter Toews, letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna December 1868, in *History and Events*, pages 43-47.
380. Abraham L. Friesen, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in Manitoba January 10, 1882," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 569.
381. Peter Toews, letter to the Crimean Gemeinde January 14, 1869, "Thirty most important letters," Peter Toews Collection, pages 13-14, transcribed by Peter A. Plett, Landmark, 1982.



382. Peter Toews, letter to Jakob Wiebe in Annenfeld, March 16, 1869, in Peter Toews, "Thirty most important letters," Peter Toews Document Collection.
383. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in *History and events*, page 49.
384. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," page 50.
385. Peter Toews has written: "Dear reader: To put all this material together in an orderly manner would alone make up a book. It may also occur that sooner or later (if it is the Lord's will) a collection of all noteworthy writings pertaining to this matter can be published," in Anhang N. 1," in *History and Events*, page 51.
386. This position was later apparently amended so that the Kleine Gemeinde were sometimes considered as half-brothers and sisters.
387. Peter Toews, letter to the so-called Kleine Gemeinde in the Crimea August 31, 1869, in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 215-217, and again in *Pres.*, No. 20, pages 36-39.
388. The correspondence by Baerg to Toews is extant and the contents of same are critical to an understanding of the Crimean division of 1869; some of these letters have been published in *Leaders*, Part Twelve, Chapter Two.
389. Peter Toews, letter to Ohm Baerg in Annenfeld October 25, 1869, in Peter Toews, "Thirty most important letters," pages 24-25.
390. The reader is referred particularly to Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in *Profile 1874*, pages 151-171, which contains a record of most of these events for the period indicated.
391. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," page 164.
392. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, page 325.
393. A considerable correspondence dealing with this whole matter and the impact it had on their mother, Maria Plett (1811-95), who also moved to Kansas to be with her two youngest daughters, is contained in the Peter Toews Document Collection.
394. Peter Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*, 324 pages.
395. Abraham Klassen, Prangenu, letter to Peter Toews, March 11, 1871, in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 268-269.
396. Peter Toews, letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna, November 28, 1872, in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 270-271, also page 275.
397. Toews' collected writings include a number of such collections dealing with issues relating to the history of the Molotschna.
398. Peter Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," page 157.
399. *Ibid.*, pages 157-158.
400. *Ibid.*, page 158.
401. Isaac W. Toews, "Aus und Einwanderung," in John C. Reimer, ed., *75 Gedenksfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung*, page 33.
402. Peter Toews, letter to Cornelius Toews July 1, 1873, in *Storm and Triumph*, page 301.
403. *Ibid.*, pages 303-304.
404. This was a mistake as according to the 1872 Dominion Lands Act only males were eligible. I am indebted to Royden K. Loewen for drawing this to my attention.
405. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in *History and Events*, pages 35-81.
406. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, pages 5-59.
407. This again illustrates the influence of the matriline in conservative Mennonite culture.
408. Quoted by John C. Reimer, "Our schools," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 236.
409. A brief history of the Kleine Gemeinde Waisenverordnung as it was organized in Manitoba is provided in Plett, *The Golden Years*, page 119.
410. These regulations are published in John C. Reimer, "Our Schools," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 237-238.
411. Peter Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," page 169.
412. *Ibid.*, page 170.
413. This issue is dealt by Dr. Clarence Hiebert in a paper entitled "The Holdeman attraction for Peter Toews," in *Leaders*, Part Sixteen, Chapter Five.
414. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 180.
415. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal," as quoted in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, pages 24-25.
416. The full text is published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 553-558.

417. Peter L. Dueck, "Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 542-544; see also Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten aus früherer Zeit und der Gegenwart," unpublished journal, Rosenort, Manitoba, pages 414-419.
418. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 182.
419. No author given, *Histories of the Congregations* (Hesston, Kansas, 1963), pages 176.
420. Peter Toews, "Appendix number two," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, in 560.
421. Johann B. Toews (1865-1967), "For the 50th Anniversary Commemoration," a series of articles published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* (No. 14, 15, 17, 19 and 21-23, Volume 32, 1931), trans. Otto Isaac, Fort Vermilion, Alberta, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 583-587.
422. Clarence Hiebert, *The Holdeman People: The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1859-1969* (South Pasadena, California, 1973), page 143.
423. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 161.
424. Peter Toews, "A letter to my mother in Kansas, June 28, 1892," as transcribed in a journal entitled, "Copie Verschiedenen Briefe gemischter Inhalt," unpublished letter book, Grünfeld, Manitoba, Peter Toews Collection Three. The letter book contains various letters which Toews wrote regarding his decision to join with Holdeman, as well as letters to his family in Kansas.
425. Peter Toews, "Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinden der Mennoniten an der Molotschna" (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1873), 502 pages. Other collections such as those of Franz Isaac, Peter M. Friesen and J. J. Braun, were only assembled later.
426. These letters are published in *Storm and Triumph*, page 291.
427. Peter Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," pages 156-157 and 159.
428. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, pages 318-335, provides a history of the various publications of the Kleine Gemeinde from 1827 to 1875.
429. This work found wide interest among the "old" Mennonites in North America where it was reprinted in German in 1888 by John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana. It was translated and published in English by Funk in 1913. This work was most recently reprinted in English by the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite and is distributed by its publication arm, Gospel Publishers, Greenland, Manitoba.
430. The events relating to the publication of this book are described in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 307-310.
431. Clarence Hiebert, *The Holdeman People*, page 217.
432. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 119.
433. Al Reimer, "The Print Culture of the Russian Mennonites 1870-1930," in Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lobrenz* (Winnipeg, Man., 1989), page 229.
434. A good example of this is a series of articles published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* in 1910, which have been translated and edited by Otto Isaac, Fort Vermilion, Alberta, and published in a book format: Peter Toews, *By their fruits shall ye know them* (Roblin, Man.: C. W. Friesen, 1983), 47 pages.
435. Peter Toews, *Biblische Speisekarte der Altväter* (Kleefeld, Man., n. d.), 8 pages. Courtesy of Irene Enns Kroeker, St. Anne, Manitoba, 1992.
436. Unfortunately the name of the author of these poems is not given. In all likelihood it was Peter Toews himself.
437. Peter Toews, *Wie Gott das Gebet einer Mutter erbört* (Hochstadt, Man., 1910), 7 pages. Courtesy Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
438. Peter Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit Angeben der durch Peter von Riesen von Schidlitz bei Danzig in Preußen in Druck gegebenen Menno Simons Schriften* (Hochstadt, Man., 1911), 27 pages.
439. Menno Simons, *Die Fundamente der seligmachenden Lehre unsers Herrn Jesu Christi aus Gottes Wort kurz zusammengefasst* (n.p., Prussia, 1833-1834), in three volumes.
440. Peter M. Friesen, *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Ruszland (1789-1910)* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1911), 773 and 154 pages; an English edition of Part One was published in 1978.
441. Peter P. Toews, *Der Köstlichere Weg in Liedern* (Stern, Alta., 1912), 14 pages. I am indebted to Rev. David K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba for referring this work to my attention, 1992.

442. Published in *Preservings*, No. 18, pages 97-102.
443. Both poems in German and with the English translation by granddaughter Margaret Penner Toews were first published in *Preservings*, No. 18, pages 101-102.
444. All references to *Men. Rundschau* articles in this book are courtesy of historian Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
445. The role that Toews played in the development of Grünfeld will be dealt with at greater length in the study of that community being written by historian, Henry Fast, Steinbach.
446. Peter Toews, "Trip of Peter Toews and wife," *Messenger of Truth March 1910 to December 1911*, Volume 8, September, 1910, No. 9, (Rosenort, Manitoba: Prairie View Press, 1984).
447. No author given, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Wun*, pages 441-444.
448. See Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's experiences," in *Profile 1874*, page 184, for a sample of such a poem, written by Toews as a tribute to Klassen's deceased wife, also his sister-in-law.
449. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, Aug. 2, 1912. Courtesy Henry Fast, Steinbach.
450. This poem has been published in its entirety in the *Mennonitische Post* (December 4, 1992), page 3. The English translation by granddaughter Margaret Penner Toews was first published in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 136.
451. No author, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., in *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Wun*, page 443.
452. For comments in this regard see, Plett, "Emigration for principle or profit? Socio-economic considerations of the 1870s Russian Mennonite emigration to Manitoba," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 261, updated and republished in *Journal of Men. Studies*, Vol. 18, pages 114-128.
453. James Urry, *None but Saints*, 328 pages.
454. Henry Schapansky, *The Old Colony (Chortitza) of Russia...*, 519 pages.
455. Samme Zijlstra, *Om de ware geente en de oude gronden: Geschiebenis van de dopersen in de Nederlanden 1531-1675* (Leeuwarden. 2000), 544 pages.
456. John J. Friesen, "Reinländer Mennoniten Gemeinde," in *Old Colony Mennonites in Canada*, pages 3-20.
457. Only one sermon has been translated and published: see *Leaders*, pages 886-901.
458. For a further discussion of this point see Plett, "The Print Culture of the East Reserve Mennonites 1874-1930," in Dyck, *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, 1994), pages 686-715, and *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (October 1994), pages 524-550.
459. Peter G. Hiebert, "Peter Toews (1841-1922)," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Volume IV, page 736. This biography seems to be based on the work of John M. Penner, *A Concise History of the Church of God* (Ste. Anne, Manitoba, 1951), page 84-85.
460. No author given, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on the Mi-Cbig-Wun*, pages 443-444.
461. Plett, "Peter P. Toews 1841-1922 Biography," in *Leaders*, pages 819-858.
462. Margaret Penner Toews, "Anna Warkentin Toews," in *Preservings*, No. 10, June 1997, Part Two, pages 23-25.
463. His memoirs provide information regarding this family: Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's Experiences," in *Profile 1874*, pages 173-185.
464. Johann W. Dueck, Diary, as published in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pioneer*, page 114; see also pages 149-150 for a letter by Johann W. Dueck to P. P. W. Toews referring to Dueck's investment in the land and some of the problems with the properties, such as delays in planting apples trees, loss of saw mills at sea, etc.
465. John W. Dueck, "Journal," in *Prairie Pioneer*, pages 253-255.
466. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, 323.
467. Lloyd Penner, "Jakob T. Wiebe," in *Preservings*, No. 9, Part One, pages 50-53.
468. Peter K. Bartel and Harvey Bartel eds., *Bartel* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1991), pages 68-76, has a family history and a listing of descendants.
469. No author cited, "John W. and Elisabeth Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Win*, pages 257-259.
470. Peter W. Friesen, *Homesteading in the Near North* (Crooked Creek, Alberta, 1984), 45 pages.

471. No author cited, "Cornelius W. Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Win*, pages 434-435.
472. *Preservings*, No. 11, page 55.
473. No author cited, "John W. and Elisabeth Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Win*, pages 255-257 (Includes family photo).
474. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in *Profile 1874*, pages 164-165.
475. H. Enns, letter to Peter Toews, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 11.
476. Anna Klassen Goossen, letter to Peter Toews, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 46.
477. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," page 166.
478. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 218.
479. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 160.
480. Heinrich Enns, "An epistle from Gnadenu, Kansas, January 16, 1877," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 535.
481. John R. Goossen et al, *Gerhard Goossen Family Book Born 1811 Died 1854* (Rosenort, Man., 1982), pages 8, 12, 107-110, has additional information regarding this family.
482. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 216.
483. Erma Neufeld, "The Kornelius Doerksen (1824-1888) Genealogy," unpublished genealogy, has a listing of this family.
484. Gnadenu Gemeindebuch, family 56.
485. Heinrich B. Friesen, "Geschlechts Register," unpublished manuscript, Inman, Kansas—courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1988, has a listing of the family of Kornelius Doerksen (1789-1878).
486. Katie Peters, "Kornelius Duerksen (1789-1988)," unpublished genealogy, courtesy of Mennonite Brethren Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
487. David A. Haur, *Mennonite Immigrants*, page 28.
488. Kornelius Duerksen, "Day Book," unpublished account of the immigration journey, courtesy of Erma Duerksen Neufeld, Dallas, Oregon, 1986.
489. Cornelius Duerksen, "Diary July to September 1874," and "Rules and regulations for the Corporation of the Immigrants to America," in no author, *The Family History of Cornelius F. Duerksen: Family Tree Book From 1881 to April 1971* (n.p., 1971), pages 1- 5.
490. Kornelius Duerksen, letter to Johann T. Enns, Rosenort, Manitoba, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 565-566.
491. Johann T. Duerksen quoted in Jo Ferguson, ed., *Jakob Sawatzky Family 1856 - 1988* (3105 Holman Ct., Midwest City, Oklahoma, 73110, 1988), pages 45-59.
492. Anyone requiring general information regarding the Mennonite settlement at Korn and Weatherford in Oklahoma is referred to Lloyd Chester Penner, *The Mennonites on the Washita River: The Culmination of Four Centuries of Migrations* (dissertation, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1976), 309 pages.
493. Peter Toews, "Genealogy register," page 30, family 66.
494. Jo Ferguson, *Jakob Sawatzky Family 1856 - 1988*, 45-59, has additional information regarding this family.
495. Erma Neufeld was the mother of Kevin Ens Rempel, Archivist at Centre of Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, California.
496. *Dynasties*, page 510.
497. Korn KMB Gemeindebuch, page 12.
498. Allan Teichroew, "Gordon Friesen: writer, Radical and Ex-Mennonite," *Men. Life* (June, 1983), Vol. 38, No. 2, pages 4-17.
499. Gordon Friesen, *Flametbrowers* (Caxton Press, Caldwell, Idaho. 1936).
500. *Dynasties*, page 580.
501. Menno Duerksen, *Dear God, I'm, only a boy* (233 Crestmere Place, Memphis, Tennessee, 38112, 1986), pages 7-8 and 25.
502. Menno Duerksen, pages 416.
503. The history of the Warkentin family is found in *Dynasties*, pages 685-715.
504. Margaretha Thiessen was the sister to Heinrich Thiessen, a prominent entrepreneur in Ekatherinoslav - see H. Schapansky in *Preservings*, No. 21, page 135. A photograph of his large mill still in use in the modern city of Dnjepropetrowsk, is published in *Diese Steine*, page 42.
505. *Dynasties*, pages 193-242.
506. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 188.

507. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile*, page 24.
508. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 189-190.
509. Abraham Isaac, "Reminiscences of the Past," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 171.
510. *Ibid.*
511. Cornelius Toews, letter to Peter Toews, Dec. 8, 1874, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 47.
512. Heinrich Enns, letter to Mrs. Johann Isaac and Mrs. Klaas Friesen, Gnadenuau January 16, 1877, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 533-535.
513. Johann Esau, "Brandbuch," unpublished journal, 1895, courtesy Henry Fast.
514. Abraham Isaac, "Reminiscences of the Past," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 171.
515. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," in *Leaders*, page 543.
516. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 191.
517. Abraham L. Dueck, Brandordnung records for Annafeld, as quoted in *Storm and Triumph*, page 194.
518. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 71.
519. *Ibid.*, page 106.
520. *Ibid.*
521. For the story of Jakob Wiebe and his 1870 *Martyr Spiegel*, see Plett, "Jakob Wiebe 1829-1901 - Martyrs' Mirror," in *Preservings*, No. 14, pages 132-133.
522. Johann Wiebe was one of the 18 family heads who founded the village of Steinbach in 1874. I have not yet found any direct genealogical link between the two Wiebe families.
523. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 321.
524. Peter L. Dueck, letter to H. Ratzlaff, Jansen, Nebraska, May 1, 1884, in Levi Dueck, editor, *Prairie Pilgrims* (Rosenort, 1999), page 54.
525. Peter B. Friesen (1838-1900), was the grandson of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde, see *Dynasties*, pages 541-553.
526. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 321-322.
527. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 363-364.
528. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 321-322.
529. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 277.
530. Contained in the Johann I. Friesen Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.
531. John C. Reimer, "The history of our schools since 1874," in Abe Unger, editor, *Sesquicentennial*, page 169.
532. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial journal," page 477.
533. Abraham M. Friesen, Family records—untitled notes. The reference to Isaac Harms in Lindenau is interesting and is confirmed by the 1835 census. Another source states that Isaac Harms lived in Alexanderkrone which is presumably incorrect.
534. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal," page 477.
535. Peter Pieters, *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1865), 388 pages, courtesy Archives, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba.
536. Johann I. Friesen Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.
537. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 47.
538. *The Von Riesen-Friesen Genealogy*, page 136.
539. Helena Jansen, letter to Abraham Friesen, June 22, 1875, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 77-78.
540. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 272.
541. Franz Isaac, letter to Abraham M. Friesen May 13, 1882, Abraham M. Friesen Collection—courtesy of Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, 1982.
542. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 121.
543. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 147.
544. Abr. M. Friesen journal.
545. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 217.
546. Abraham M. Friesen, "Diaries 1884-1889, 1889-1897, and 1905-1908," unpublished ledger style journals—courtesy Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, 1983.
547. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 272.

548. *Preservings*, No. 9, Dec 1996, Part One, pages 48-49.
549. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten," in *History and Events*, page 100.
550. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 272.
551. Johann I. Friesen, Memoirs as presented at the 60th anniversary of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba and published in *1874 60 1934 Das 60-jährige Jubiläum der mennonitischen Ost-Reserve* (Steinbach, 1935), pages 29-32, and translated and republished in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 130-132.
552. Klaas W. Reimer, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 129.
553. A. Rempel, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Volume One, page 405.
554. Helena Penner (1840-1908) was a sister to Katherina Penner (1830-68), who had married Abraham M. Friesen's older brother Peter.
555. See Plett, "Peter K. Barkman 1826-1917," in *Preservings*, No. 9, Part One, pages 40-46.
556. *Friesen-Von Riesen Genealogy*, page 137.
557. Amanda Reimer, "P. B. Reimer Residence," in *Pres.*, No. 6, page 21.
558. He had been married for the first time to Katherina Penner of Ohrloff.
559. Alexander Rempel, "Friesen, Johann Isaak (1860-1941)," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, page 405.
560. Johann I. Friesen, "Anhang oder Beilage," in Peter P. Isaac, *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern* (Stern, Alberta, 1916), 4 pages, published as an appendix.
561. *1874 60 1934 Das 60-jährige Jubiläum der mennonitischen Ost-Reserve*, pages 29-32, and translated in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 130-132.
562. A. Rempel, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Volume I, page 405.
563. Plett, "New Sources: Part Two," in *Preservings*, No. 4, page 10-11.
564. *Carillon News*, June 17, 1952, quoted in *Pres.*, No. 14, page 92.
565. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 99-100.
566. Charlotte Reimer Kennedy, "'The one with the hat': Peter B. Reimer (1885-1966)," *Mennonite Mirror*, No. 8, June 1974, pages 9-11/*Pres.*, No. 9, Part One, pages 34-35.
567. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 272-273.
568. The names of Johann Wiebe's parents are not known, but according to a report in the *Men. Historian* (Sept., 19770, page 7, by Helen Hiebner, Edmonton, Alberta, his son Johann was born in Sparrau, Molotschna in 1863. In a letter to the *Men. Rundschau*, Jan. 30, 1889, Johann Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba, wrote for the address of his half-sister Justina Regehr, from Sparrau, now Sagradowfka: "Name of husband not known."
569. According to her death certificate, Maria Neufeld was the daughter of Peter Neufeld and Anna Wielms.
570. E. Toews, "Steinbach Main Street, 1930: Part Two," in *Pres.*, No. 9, Part One, page 61.
571. History book committee, *Excelsior Echoes* (History book Rush Lake), pages 675-676.
572. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 273.
573. Lydia Schroeder, "Abraham I. Friesen and Maria Wiebe Friesen Family," in *Preservings*, No. 14, pages 83-84.
574. Plett, "From Steinbach to Flanders Fields," in *Preservings*, No. 13, page 49 and *Carillon News*, Nov. 9, 1998, page 6B.
575. Report of H. E. Kornelsen, *Rundschau*, Nov. 16, 1927.
576. Reprinted from an article first published in Abram P. Friesen, et.al, editors, *The Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy 1756-1966* (Steinbach, 1967), pages 145-146, republished in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part One, pages 54-55. An obituary of Klaas I. Friesen was published in the *Rundschau* November 16, 1927.
577. See *Preservings*, No. 9, Dec 1996, Part One, page 61, for photos of these premises.
578. Mary Ann Loewen, "Katharina Penner Friesen 1871-1952," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 55-56.
579. Mary Hoepfner, "C. T. Loewen 1882-1960, Steinbach," in *Pres.*, No. 17, pages 114-116.
580. *Dynasties*, pages 89-91.
581. Henry E. Friesen et. al., eds., *Peter I. and Anna Friesen Family Book 1873-1981* (Greenland, Manitoba, 1981), 21 pages, has a listing of this family.
582. Some of the details for the biography of the Abraham M. Friesen children were provided by Mr. and Mrs. Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, interview Sept. 17, 1982.

583. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in *History and Events*, page 52.
584. Available from Box 897, Teulon, Manitoba, R0C 3B0. Rollin's column, "The view from Greenfield," is heard weekly on CBC's "Radio Noon" in Manitoba.
585. *Dynasties*, pages 472-473.
586. David F. Thiessen (1834-1906) was the son of David Peter Thiessen (b. 1802), Muntau, who was the son of Peter Wilhelm Thiessen (b. 1780), Muntau, 1835 census, *Wirtschaft 27*: see *Dynasties*, page 148, footnote 74.
587. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, December 15, 1909. See *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 10-13, for the story of "Drecka Friese" and a photograph of Katharina with her family.
588. I am indebted to Walter Braun. Kleefeld, Manitoba, for providing additional information regarding the Johann Plett Isaac section.
589. See Herman and Frieda Isaac, *Family Book of Jakob W. Isaac 1879-1964* (Kleefeld, Man., 1993), 39 pages, for a listing of descendants and brief family history.
590. Jakob W. Isaac, as quoted in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on mi-Cbig-Wun*, pages 175-176.
591. Bernhard Friesen (1810-66) was the son of Heinrich Friesen (1786-1842) and Justina Warkentin (1789-1855), sister to Margaretha Warkentin, wife of Franz Isaac (1784-1853).
592. Franz Isaak, letter to beloved mother and siblings together with all beloved relations, May 13, 1882. The script in the letter is barely legible and hard to decipher. Nevertheless, it provides a rare glimpse at the dynamics of the Isaac family at this time.
593. For a photograph showing Maria and Jakob D. R. Loewen standing with his in-laws in front of their farm house in Hochstadt, see *Preservings*, No. 18, page 36.
594. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 193-194.
595. *Dynasties*, pages 558-560.
596. Peter Fast, letter to the *Rundschau*, February 10, 1904.
597. Abr. M. Friesen Collection, courtesy of Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, 1981. The letter was attached to one of the journals.
598. Henry Fast, "Kleine Gemeinde in the United States," in *Profile 1874*, page 105.
599. See *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 473-474.
600. Maria Reimer, letter to C. L. Plett, August 6, 1925.
601. See *Dynasties*, page 237., footnote 31.
602. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 202-203. Peter Isaac details many aspects of his eventful life which are most interesting to read.
603. *Dynasties*, pages 472-473.
604. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," in *Profile 1874*, page 199.
605. Johann K. Esau, "Esau Family Tree," page 199.
606. Carl and Noah Isaac, "Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Isaac," in *Footprints on Mi-Cbig-Wun*, pages 173-175.
607. Telephone interview with Sol Isaac, Valhalla Centre, Alberta, January 11, 2003.
608. "The Family Tree of Abraham Isaak" printed in 1970 and updated in 1985 and 1995 contains Abraham Isaak's own memoirs, "Reminiscences Of The Past," translated by Abe J. Unruh and published in *Pioneers And Pilgrims*, pages 171-177.
609. J. F. Toews, "Remembrances of Johann F. Toews," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 157.
610. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch . . .," pages 206-207.
611. See *Dynasties*, page 127.
612. All of which is described in some detail in Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," and in Abram Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 171-177.
613. John C. Reimer, "Our Schools," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 243.
614. Plett, "Education in the East Reserve," in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part One, page 8.
615. Clarence Hiebert, *The Holdeman People*, page 143.
616. Abr. F. Reimer Journals.
617. Based on an interview with Jakob I. Bartel, Maplewood Manor, Steinbach, Manitoba, November 10, 1980.
618. Interview with Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, 1980.
619. Klaas J. B. Reimer, et.al., *Das 60-jährige Gedenkfeier*, pages 8-9, translated to English and republished as "Mitteilungen," in *Preservings*, No. 15, page 25.

620. Gerhard F. Wiebe, "Ausschwung im Wirtschaftsleben der Mennonitischen Ostreserve in Manitoba seit der Ankunft von Ruszland anno 1874 bis 1949," in John C. Reimer, ed., *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung*, pages 107-110; translated to English as Gerhard F. Wiebe, "Economic Development of the East Reserve," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 225-234.
621. The obituary was supplied courtesy of David Penner, Kleefeld, Manitoba. It was translated with the help of Albert and Daisy (Isaac) Penner and Alphae Penner.
622. Roger Penner, "Abraham P. Isaac (1852-1938), Grünfeld, Borosenko, Kleefeld, Manitoba: Pioneer Educator and Preacher," in *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 69-73.
623. *Leaders*, pages 523-524.
624. Used by permission of Dr. Vic Ratzlaff.
625. Rhoda Loewen Regehr, Box 243, Linden, Alberta, T0M 1J0.
626. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 187-189.
627. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 189-190.
628. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 250-251.
629. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 190-191.
630. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 197.
631. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 191-193.
632. Plett, *Saints and Sinners* (Steinbach, 1999), page 287.
633. For a biography, see H. Gratz, *Footprints of the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 336-338.
634. Mary Benson, "History of Mrs. Jakob R. Loewen," in H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 342-343.
635. H. Gratz, *Footprints on the Mi-Chig-Wun*, pages 334-335.
636. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree," in *Profile 1874*, page 200.
637. Unruh, page 373.
638. Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," in *Dynasties*, pages 347-348. Johann Goossen was the father of Heinrich Goossen (1814-93), charter member of the Mountain Lake Mennonite Gemeinde in 1878, and Ältester; see Bruno Penner, ed., *First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1878-1978*, 95 pages.
639. Unruh, pages 315, 319, 320 and 327.
640. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 18, 1993.
641. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family," in *Profile 1874*, page 200. Johann K. Esau was the son-in-law of Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-72).
642. Woltner, *Die Gemeinde Berichten von 1848 die Deutsche Seidlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), pages 94-96.
643. Peter Isaac "Stambuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 217, reports that, "...he was only five years old when his parents moved to Schoenau in February of 1851, so that he could not personally remember his uncle Gerhard Goossen; even through they had lived close to the school house. . ." Isaac writes his oldest five siblings had attended school with Goossen as their teacher.
644. Jakob Woelk, letter to Peter Toews, Grünfeld, Manitoba, August 21, 1876, in Peter Toews, Document Collection, courtesy of M.L.A., Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1982.
645. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, pages 325-7, has an account of Enns' involvement in these publications.
646. Menno Simons, *Die Fundamente der seligmachenden Lebre unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, aus Gottes Wort kurz zusammengefasst von M.S.* ("The Fundamentals of the Salvation Yielding Doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ, briefly composed from the Word of God by M. S.," Danzig, 1833; Vol. I, 335 pages; Vol. II, 278 pages; Vol. III, 414 pages).
647. Verzeichnisse ueber den Schulbesuch in der Molotschnaer Mennoniten Kolonien, 1862.
648. These letters are published in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 154-60.
649. Peter P. Goossen, Lindenau, Molotschna, letter to Johann P. Friesen, Manitoba, April 8, 1904, 8 pages, in Abraham M. Friesen Papers, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, October 29, 1993.
650. This matter is explained in a short note by Ältester Peter Toews in his "Anhang N. One," in *History and Events*, pages 41-42.
651. Jakob Woelk, letter to Toews, Peter Toews document collection.
652. Heinrich Enns, An epistle from Kansas, and, A short explanation of my own condition and that of the Gemeinde, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 533-540.



653. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 218.
654. Heinrich Enns, letter to Peter Toews, March 22, 1867, in *Storm and Triumph*, page 48.
655. Six letters by Heinrich Enns are published in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 5-76.
656. Heinrich Enns, letters 1866-1896, in *Leaders*, pages 387-400.
657. Heinrich Enns, An epistle from Kansas, and, A short explanation of my own condition and that of the Gemeinde, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 533-540.
658. Plett, "Heinrich W. Enns 1807-1881 Biography," in *Leaders*, pages 379-386.
659. Johann K. Esau, "Esau Family Tree," *Profile 1874*, page 201.
660. Plett, *The Golden Years*, page 132, provides considerable detail regarding some of the Kleine Gemeinde teachers and their relationship to the Molotschna school system.
661. This is based on the information that he retired from teaching at the time of his move to Grünfeld, Borosenko, in the fall of 1868 or shortly thereafter.
662. Gerhard Goossen, "Reports from school teachers on moral condition of the community," in Peter J. Braun Collection, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
663. Mrs. Martin Barkman, nee Anna Doerksen, writes that Gerhard P. Goossen was a teacher in Fischau in 1864 when he was released by the village assembly. Anna Barkman, "Memoirs," unpublished journal—courtesy of Sidney F. Barkman, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1991.
664. This poem was found in the document collection of Cornelius P. Janzen, courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985. Transcription for computer and primary translation completed in November of 1992 by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Dr., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G OY1. This poem was also included in a journal of fellow teacher Peter L. Dueck (1842-87), Grünfeld, Manitoba, unpublished ledger, 80 pages, courtesy of A. D. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, June 30, 1993. Another copy of this poem was found among the papers of Gerhard Doerksen (1825-82) of Fischau, Molotschna, and later Rosenfeld, Manitoba: Gerhard Doerksen Document Collection, courtesy of Garth Doerksen, Winkler, Manitoba, 1994.
665. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. One," in *History and Events*, page 40.
666. As related to the author in 1981. What is interesting is that this story made little sense to me at the time. It was only later—through further research—when I realized the connection to Abraham Isaac (1827-1906) of Pordenau, Molotschna, the uncle to Abraham P. Isaac, that the story made sense. The incident illustrates that the Kleine Gemeinde was much more integrated into Molotschna society than people have realized.
667. Abraham P. Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 171.
668. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. One," in *History and Events*, page 42.
669. Published in *Leaders*, pages 736-738.
670. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. One," in *History and Events*, page 41.
671. See *Preservings*, No. 13, page 87/*Diese Steine*, page 452.
672. Published in *Leaders*, pages 719-740.
673. Gerhard P. Goossen, letter to Peter Toews September 17, 1868, published in Part Thirteen, Chapter Two, as letter sixteen.
674. Peter Toews, Ein Brief an Baerg und Wiebe in der Krim, Blumenhof, December 4, 1868, in Peter Toews, Document Collection - courtesy of M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, 1982. This letter was contained in a letter book entitled "Thirty most important letters 1866-1870," pages 8-9, as transcribed by Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, 1992; cf. Abraham Klassen, letter to Peter Toews March 11, 1871, in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 268-269.
675. Peter Toews, Ein Brief an die Goosche in Grünfeld waehrend sie krank war, in Peter Toews Document Collection. The letter is undated but presumably written in 1870 as it the last letter in the collection entitled, "Thirty most important letters 1866-1870."
676. Abraham Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," in *Profile 1874*, page 171.
677. Johann K. Esau, "Esau Family Tree," in *Profile 1874*, page 201.
678. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 217.
679. Peter I. Fast, quoted in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 223, footnote 48. Peter I. Fast, was the father of Martin B. Fast, author and long-time editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.
680. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. One," in *Profile 1874*, page 65.
681. Peter Toews, "Appendix N. Two," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 559.
682. Peter Toews, "Genealogy register," in *History and Events*, page 25, family 50.
683. Abraham F. Reimer, "Journal."

684. Anna Klassen Goossen, letter to Peter Toews, December 7, 1874, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 45-46.
685. From *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 45-46.
686. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, compilers, *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1875* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), pages 113-120, have a listing of their descendants.
687. *Ibid.*, page 7.
688. *Ibid.*, pages 57-71.
689. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley The Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Man., 1980), page 327.
690. John R. Goossen, eds., *Goossen Family Book*, 187 pages.
691. Kl. J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahren," *Carillon News*, 1952.
692. John K. Schellenberg, *Schools: Our Heritage* (Steinbach, 1985), pages 98 and 102.
693. *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, page 57.
694. J. K. Schellenberg, *Schools Our Heritage*, page 15, does not list Franz Goossen's years of teaching in Blumenhof, but Royden Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 151, gives them as 1909-1910.
695. Telephone call with grandson, Jonas Goossen, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 11, 1992. I am indebted to Jonas for providing much of the information and photos for the Franz K. Goossen section.
696. Printed in the *Steinbach Post*, October 29, 1924. Translated by Ralph Friesen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, President of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 2002. Extracts from the Franz K. Goossen presentation were also published in Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 23-24.
697. See *Pres.*, No. 9, Part One, pages 75-76, for their biography. John D. Goossen was the father of Steinbach lawyer Ernest R. Goossen who was the writer's partner in the practice of law from 1975 to 1984.
698. See *Preservings*, No. 21, page 113.
699. No author given, *History of the Congregations* (Hesston, Kansas, 1963), page 170. Franz Froese was the son of Johann Johann Froese who settled in Wirtschaft 17 in Rudnerwide in 1826 where he died in 1827: Plett, "Book Notes," *Pres.*, No. 5, page 15 and No. 11, pages 97-99.
700. Peter W. Toews, "Life's Chronicle," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 141.
701. For their biography, see "Franz Froese' Menno Simons Book," in *Pres.*, No. 11, pages 97-99.
702. See *Dynasties*, pages 274-275.
703. *Profile 1874*, pages 193-202.
704. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 416-417.
705. John R. Goossen, et. al., eds., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book*, page 8.
706. Peter Toews, Letter Collection 1870-1877, pages 113-116, as photocopied by the author - courtesy M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, 67117, 1981.
707. Peter P. Goossen, letter to Johann P. Friesen, February 28, 1904, 8 pages.
708. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 217.
709. Johann K. Esau, "Esau Family Tree," in *Profile 1874*, page 201.
710. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents, Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," in *Profile 1874*, pages 209-212, provides the history of Klaas Friesen, Paulsheim, and his siblings.
711. Johann F. Toews, "Aufzeichnungen...," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 157, recalls some of the pioneering experience in the new settlement.
712. Peter Toews, Letter Collection - courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981.
713. Abraham L. Dueck, "Records," in *Storm and Triumph*, page 194.
714. John R. Goossen, eds., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book*, page 8.
715. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach, then and now," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 258.
716. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree," in *Profile 1874*, page 202.
717. John R. Goossen, eds., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book*, page 11.
718. (Steinbach, Man., 1920), 41 pages. See my article, "Print Culture of the East Reserve," in *Historical Sketches*, page 699.
719. He was incorrectly identified in the photo as his cousin, Peter D. Goossen.
720. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, page 325.
721. Peggy Goertzen, Tabor College Archivist, email April 11, 2003.

722. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," page 202.
723. John R. Goossen, eds., *Goossen Family Book*, page 8.
724. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 320.
725. Notes, possibly from obituary, from John D. Goossen collection, courtesy of Ernest R. Goossen estate.
726. John R. Goossen, eds., *Goossen Family Book*, page 7.
727. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 7.
728. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach, then and now, 1916," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 257.
729. Ted de Veer, "Watshan Valley Settlement, Needles, B.C.," in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part One, page 59. The article also includes a photo of Gerhard K. Giesbrecht.
730. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 157 and 279.
731. Plett, "Cornelius Eidse Genealogy," in *Profile 1874*, pages 253-259. For additional information of this family, see: Waldo Giesbrecht and Delma Friesen, *G. K. Giesbrecht Reunion* (Ulysses, Kansas, 1967), 85 pages.
732. Peter Friesen was the son of Heinrich Friesen (1822-95) of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna: Mike Hornbaker, *The Bergen History* (Box 192, Maize, Kansas, 67101, 1983), pages 100-104, has a listing of descendants.
733. Isaac Friesen, *Genealogy of Johann Warkentin 1817-1886* (Inman, Kansas, 1961), 117 pages, photocopied.
734. See *Dynasties*, pages 408-415, for the Abraham Rempel family.
735. Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's Experiences," in *Profile 1874*, page 179.
736. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 218.
737. Maria Reimer, to C. L. Plett, Feb. 5, 1934.
738. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 50.
739. Johann W. Dueck, 1910 Diary, in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pioneer*, page 94.
740. John T. Enns, *The Thiessen Book 1833-1972: The David F. Thiessen Family* (Looseleaf compilation, Rosenort, Manitoba, 1972), pages 47-59. David F. Thiessen was the son of David Peter Thiessen (b. 1802), Muntau, son of Peter Wilhelm Thiessen (b. 1780), Muntau, 1835 census, Wirtschaft 27; see *Dynasties*, Koop Families in the Molotschna, Part A, Section Four.
741. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 50.
742. *Men. Rundschau*, January 17, 1894. Courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach.
743. Lenore Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 404-405 and 476, contains information regarding the sons of Heinrich Enns (1807-81) who settled in Rosenort, Manitoba.
744. Peter Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pioneer: The Writings of Johann W. Dueck*, pages 57-62.
745. Johann W. Dueck, letter to the *Nordwesten*, September 26, 1903, in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pilgrims*, page 92.
746. *Der Volkes Bote*, May 22, 1914, in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pilgrims*, page 98.
747. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 218.
748. Telephone interview with grandson Joe Froese, Steinbach, December 25, 1999.
749. H. Enns, letter June 4, 1934, *Men. Rundschau*, June 13, page 6. I am indebted to Dr. James Urry, Wellington, New Zealand, 1990, for referring this article to my attention.
750. Maria Reimer, letter to C. L. Plett, Feb. 5, 1934.
751. H. Enns, letter June 4, 1934, *Men. Rundschau*, June 13, page 6.
752. Henry E. Toews, ed., *Cornelius P. Toews 1836-1908*, pages 15-30, has a listing of descendants.
753. Cornelius L. Toews was my mentor during the late 1970s as I was starting my interest and research into the history of the Kleine Gemeinde. He was the first to start deciphering the material in the Peter Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde* (Blumenhoff, South Russian, 1874).
754. "David T. Enns," in Lenore Eidse, editor, *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 404-5.
755. Source for the birth date of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) is the "Seelenlisten for the village of Blumenhof" submitted to the R.M. of Hanover in 1883; published in John Dyck, ed., *Working Papers of the East Reserve Village Histories 1874-1910* (Steinbach, 1990), page 160.
756. The Schönwiese connection is of interest. Like Kronsgarten, Schönwiese was a Frisian village, and the Frisians were allies of the Kleine Gemeinde during its early years. During the 1820s and 30s four Frisian families moved to the Molotschna and associated with the Kleine Gemeinde: Regehrs, Bartels, Penners, and Bergens: see *Saints and Sinners*, page 64.

757. Plett, "Isaac Loewen 1787-1873: Biography," in *Leaders*, pages 509-590.
758. Gerhard P. Thielmann and David P. Reimer, eds., *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1945), pages 41-42. This booklet was translated by myself in 1981 and the reference on the English version is page 23.
759. See *Saints and Sinners*, pages 271-275.
760. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," in *Leaders*, page 450.
761. Cornelius L. Plett, "Familienbuch," unpublished memoirs, 16 pages, as transcribed from the original by granddaughter Marie Doerksen Heinrichs, Ulysses, Kansas, 1981.
762. "Verzeichnisse Ueber Den Schulbesuch In Den Molotschnaer Mennoniten Kolonien 1857-58."
763. *Ibid.*
764. Johann F. Harms, *Eine Lebensreise* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1943), pages 1-9.
765. Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, page 64.
766. Gerhard P. Thielmann and David P. Reimer, eds., *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945*, page 33, English translation, page 17.
767. Johann F. Harms, *Ein Lebensreise*, pages 1-9.
768. He was the brother to Kleine Gemeinde Ältester Johann Friesen (1808-72): Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 38. He was married to the daughter of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873).
769. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 17.
770. A brother to one-time Kleine Gemeinde minister Peter Thiessen (1808-73) of Schönau.
771. He was the grandson of Gerhard Neufeld (1758-1817) of Lichtenau and a nephew to Michael Plett (born 1790) who was married to his aunt Catarina Neufeld (1787-1824): see "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769 Genealogy," *Dynasties*, page 345.
772. Klaas R. Reimer had a brother-in-law Johann Willms but this connection has not yet been established.
773. Abraham Wiens (1824-99) was married to Margaretha Neufeld. She was the daughter of Heinrich Neufeld and Regina von Riesen who was the sister of the second Kleine Gemeinde Ältester, Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) of Ohrloff, Molotschna.
774. Johann P. Friesen Document Collection.
775. Abram P. Isaac, "Reminiscences of the Past," in *Storm and Triumph*, page 171.
776. Interview with Jakob I. Bartel, Maplewood Manor, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1980. Jakob I. Bartel was the son-in-law to Rev. Abraham P. Isaac.
777. Previously described in *Storm and Triumph*, page 18.
778. The story of Isaac and his widow Maria Brandt Plett was published in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part One, pages 78-80.
779. Johann W. Dueck reported that it had as many Wirtschaften as a two-rowed village.
780. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in *History and Events*, page 54.
781. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in *Profile 1874*, pages 154-58.
782. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten," in *History and Events*, page 99.
783. It is my belief that this 1871 edition of the *Martrys' Mirror* was later inherited by son Abraham L. Plett and in turn passed on to his son Peter A. Plett.
784. Cornelius P. Toews, letter to Peter P. Toews, Dec. 13, 1874, in *Leaders*, page 52.
785. Cornelius Toews, Letter to Peter Toews, May 6, 1875, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 75.
786. Plett, "Matriarchies of the East Reserve," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, pages 17-26.
787. I recall my mother telling me this story when I was a teenager. I believe her great-grandmother, Mrs. Katherine Barkman Koop had told it to her.
788. Peter L. Dueck, Letter to parents and Johann Loewens, February 20, 1875, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 96-97.
789. *Profile 1874*, pages 166-167.
790. An account of this journey by Anna Doerksen has been published in *Preservings*, June 1997, No. 10, Part Two, pages 1-4.
791. David L. Plett quoted in Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 49.
792. Interview with Erwin P. Reimer 1983.

793. Additional information on the Plett family is contained in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, page 159 pages; Gerhard J. Thielmann, *Plettentag am 2 Juli 1945*, 52 pages; and Ältester David P. Reimer, *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Groszeltern Kornelius and Sarab Plett* (Blumenort, 1953), 140 pages.

794. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 74.

795. Johann Esau, "Brandbuch," March 1890, unpublished journal, 194 pages.

796. Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's Experiences," in *Profile 1874*, pages 177-8, describes the scale in which his father-in-law added to his barn in 1878.

797. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 49.

798. Peter Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," in *Profile*, page 169.

799. The original documents are still on file at the Hudson Bay Archives. Courtesy of Hudson Bay Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Land Sale Agreements No. 453 and 454.

800. This letter was passed on to daughter Maria, Mrs. Peter R. Reimer, who passed it on to son Klaas P. L. Reimer, who passed it on to son Abraham R. Reimer, Blumenort, who gave it to Alfred Redekopp, Sarah's great-grandson, in about 1970. Alfred Redekopp published the letter in *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their Descendants* (229 Home St., Winnipeg, 1987), pages 29-32.

801. As remembered by Dick and John P. Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba.

802. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal," unpublished ledger, quoted in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, pages 24-25.

803. Sarah Janzen, Letter to Johann Janzen, June 26, 1881, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 79.

804. Peter Warkentin letter to Gerhard S. Kornelsen, June 17, 1881, in Gerhard S. Kornelsen letter collection, courtesy of John K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba.

805. Courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach.

806. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 553-558.

807. The full text of Peter L. Dueck, "Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession," is published in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 542-544; see also Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten aus früherer Zeit und der Gegenwart," unpublished journal, Rosenort, Manitoba, pages 414-419.

808. This incident was related to the author by Don Toews, Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1986.

809. As recalled by Dick P. Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1981.

810. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius P. Doerksen, November 8, 1982. This was related to them by David L. Plett and Jakob L. Plett when they were visiting in Kansas.

811. Interview with Dick P. Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba, December 28, 1994.

812. Interview with Don Toews, as related by Johann W. Reimer, Blumenhof, Manitoba, to Cornelius W. Friesen, Roblin, Manitoba.

813. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 296.

814. Johann Esau, "Brandbuch," page 87.

815. Isaac Harms (1811-91), Lindenau, Molotschna, and later Jansen, Nebraska, was instrumental in establishing the new settlement of Markuslandt in 1864, to provide land for the young and landless farmers in the Kleine Gemeinde.

816. The original of this Deed is still contained in the files of Abraham S. Friesen, now in the possession of the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, courtesy of the Ernest R. Goossen Estate.

817. "Georg Hansen book, 1892," in *Preservings*, No. 9, June 1997, Part One, page 69.

818. However, the Deed of Land is only dated May 31, 1897 and shows a consideration of \$1200.00.

819. Extracts from Cornelius L. Plett's diaries published in *Plett Picture Book*, pages 27-31.

820. David P. Reimer, "Erklärung über unsere Vorfahren Pletts," in *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945*, page 8.

821. Maria Plett Reimer quoted in Plett, "Peter R. Reimer Biography," in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches*, page 364.

822. Leslie Plett, "Dish of the Centuries," in *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 98-99.

823. Peter Pries, letter to editor, July 20, 1998, in *Preservings*, No. 13, page 36.

824. Plett, "Sarah Loewen Plett: Cream Pitchers," in *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 96-97.

825. See my articles "Pioneer Women of the East Reserve" and "Matriarchies of the East Reserve," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, pages 1-26, for a more detailed discussion of matriarchy and the role of women within the Kleine Gemeinde.
826. *Leaders*, pages 253-254.
827. Plett, "Pioneer Women of the East Reserve," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part One, pages 1-16.
828. Gerhard P. Thielmann and David P. Reimer, eds., *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945*, page 8.
829. *Plettentag*, pages 1-42, English version pages 7 and 23.
830. *Plettentag*, page 9.
831. *Plettentag*, page 38.
832. Telephone interview with Sarah Doerksen Penner, Mrs. Cornelius R. Penner, January 1, 1983.
833. Interview with John R. Unger, March 6, 1981.
834. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile*, page 32.
835. Harvey Bartel, "Blumenhof Cemetery SW 25-7-6E," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 75-77.
836. Courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach.
837. Cornelius L. Plett, Journal.
838. See *Preservings*, No. 9, Dec. 1996, Part Two, pages 53-56.
839. Franz Kroeker (1799-1853), was the son of Julius Kroeker (1747-99) and Margaretha Kroeker (b. 1772) listed in Schöneberg, West Prussia, in the 1776 Konsignation (Census). Margaretha remarried to Jakob Wiebe, and immigrated with him to Russia in 1803, where they settled in Blumstein, Molotschna: letter from H. Schapansky, April 21, 1993. See also *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 580-581.
840. Royden Loewen, *from the Inside Out: The Rural Worlds of Mennonite Diarists 1863 to 1929* (Winnipeg, 1999), page 237.
841. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," in *Leaders*, page 255.
842. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 36.
843. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *Carillon News*, 1952. Quoted in Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 41.
844. Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker*, page 32.
845. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches," *Carillon*, 1951. *Reflections*, page 41.
846. Loewen, *from the Inside Out*, pages 237-245.
847. Kl. J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahren," *Carillon News*, 1952.
848. Cornelius P. Dueck, "Grandmother's Clock, 1819," in *Pres.*, No. 8, Part Two, page 60.
849. Peter R. Dueck, letter to Corn. L. Plett, Feb. 20, 1918.
850. The official "Vormünder Appointment" by Waisenvorsteher Gerhard Schellenberg, Rosenfeld, was published in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, page 13.
851. Katie Kroeker Barkman, "Katharina Toews Kroeker (1866-1938)," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, pages 81-82.
852. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," in *Pioneers and pilgrims*, page 255.
853. Katie Kroeker Barkman, "The Cornelius Kroeker House," in *Preservings*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 65-66.
854. Katie Kroeker Barkman, "Katharina Toews Kroeker (1866-1938)," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, pages 81-82.
855. For her biography, see Ernie Toews, *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, pages 12-15.
856. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches." *Carillon News*, 1952.
857. Katie Barkman, "Katharina Toews Kroeker," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, page 82.
858. From the obituary, in *Preservings*, No. 12, page 78.
859. Katie Kroeker Barkman, "Cornelius P. Kroeker," in *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 77-78.
860. Hildegard Adrian, "How McKenzie Road got its name," in *Pres.*, No. 17, pages 98-99.
861. Obituary, *Christlicher Familienfreund*.
862. *Dynasties*, pages 398-399.
863. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," page 256.
864. As translated and published in *Preservings*, No. 15, pages 146-153.
865. John Dueck, ed., *Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck 1839 1986* (Steinbach, 1986), page 35.

866. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 256.
867. *Jakob and Maria L. Dueck*, page 44.
868. Interview with Rev. Abe P. Unger, Landmark, Manitoba, March 2, 1983. Rev. Unger mentioned that his father and Joh. B. Reimer held Bible studies and promoted assurance of salvation, a teaching irrelevant for those who are genuine disciples of Jesus in the medieval Monastic Gospel-centric tradition.
869. Helen Rosenby, "Anna Siemens Neufeld," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 61-63.
870. *Descendants of Jakob and Maria L. Dueck*, page 71. The fur coat was later made into a blanket still in the possession of the Dueck family.
871. R. Loewen, "Challenges of Peter R. Dueck," in *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 29-30.
872. Lee Toews, "Johann E. 'Cluck'ke' Toews," in *Pres.*, No. 12, page 90.
873. Royden K. Loewen, "Peter R. Dueck Biography," a paper presented at a history symposium of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Steinbach, Manitoba, March 13, 1987, has additional information on Peter R. Dueck and the role he played in the church and community.
874. Royden Loewen, "Challenges....," *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 29-30.
875. As quoted in *Plett Picture Book*, page 39.
876. Jakob R. Dueck, "Leichenverzeichnis des Aeltesten Peter R. Dueck," in John R. Dueck, ed., *Stammbuch des Voreltern Jakob und Maria L. Dueck* (Steinbach, 1986), page 11.
877. e. g. Peter R. Dueck, letter to Abraham Friesen March 5, 1908, 12 pages; letter to A. K. Friesens, April 21, 1909, 12 pages; and letter to A. K. Friesens January 30, 1912, 8 pages, in Abraham M. Friesen, letter collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1993. Other important letters were written by P. R. Dueck to "uncle" Cornelius L. Plett after he moved to Satanta, Kansas, in 1915.
878. *Leaders*, pages 449-498.
879. Loewen, *from the Inside Out*, pages 210-236.
880. Loewen, *from the Inside Out*, pages 210-236. Royden Loewen writes that "The diary as preserved by Peter's wife, Sara Dueck, along with her grown children, moved to Chihuahua State, Mexico, and they took the diary with them. It was retrieved to Canada by Dueck's son, Reverend Cornelius P. Dueck (Blumenort), where he and Henry Loewen (Steinbach) also transcribed it from the Gothic handwriting. It was translated by Peter Dueck's grandson, Peter U. Dueck (Steinbach), and by Royden Loewen. A photocopy of the original diary is located at the Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives, Steinbach, Manitoba."
881. Royden Loewen, "Challenges....," *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 29-30.
882. From Loewen, "Peter R. Dueck Biography," a paper presented at a history symposium of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Steinbach, Manitoba, March 13, 1987.
883. See *Preservings*, No. 21, page 37.
884. Royden Loewen, "Challenges....," *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 29-30.
885. C. P. Dueck, "Grandmother's Clock, 1819," in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, page 60.
886. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 241-242.
887. This memorial was published in *Leaders*, pages 636-637, together with other writings by Maria's grandfather.
888. The death of Isaac L. Plett is described by Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten....," in *History and Events*. page 97.
889. Isaac L. Plett, letter 1871, in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 221-223 and in the *Plett Picture Book*, page 41.
890. The report in *Plettentag*, page 14, gives the death date as July 27, 1871.
891. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 219.
892. Neuanlage is believed to have been located between Friedensfeld and Grünfeld, although the term - literally meaning new settlement - was sometimes also used generically for any newer place of settlement.
893. Isaac Plett, age 8, is listed among the Blumenort school's first students: see Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 150.
894. Letters in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 43 and 63.
895. D. K. Schellenberg, "Gerhard E. Kornelsen," in *Preservings*, No. 18, page 82.
896. P.J.B. Reimer, "Kleefeld Church (Gruenfeld)," in *The Sesquicentennial Jubilee* (Steinbach, 1962), page 53.

897. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahre," *Carillon News*, states, apparently incorrectly, that Maria Brandt Plett lived the first seven years in Blumenort.
898. Elisabeth and H.E. Plett, letter to C.L. Plett, April 26, 1926.
899. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 256.
900. A. Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 114.
901. K. J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahre," *Steinbach Post*, June 1, 1965.
902. *Plettentag 1945*, page 42.
903. Leslie Plett, *Abram L. Plett.....* (Steinbach, 1999), page 554.
904. Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahre," *Steinbach Post*, 1965.
905. Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 113-114.
906. Peter L. Dueck, letter to Bernhard L. Duecks....April 14, 1888, in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pilgrims*, page 48.
907. Isaac D. Plett, "Elisabeth R. Dueck," in *Abram L. and Elizabeth Dueck and their Descendants* (Steinbach, 1965), pages 36-37.
908. David L. Plett, letter to Cornelius L. Plett, Sept. 24, 1932.
909. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 113-115.
910. See *Furrows in the Valley: R. M. of Morris*, pages 356, 405-406, for additional information regarding this successful enterprise and its founder Abram D. Plett.
911. See also *Furrows in the Valley*, page 348, for two additional photos.
912. The insurance records lead me to believe that Johann S. Friesen had built the house in 1881, insuring it for \$300.00. Friesen joined the Holdemans in 1882 and his insurance coverage as cancelled. In 1883 April 24, the dwelling house coverage for \$300.00 was added to the coverage of the widow Isaak Plett, with the statement "Auf die Wirtschaft" ("on the Wirtschaft"). In 1886 a barn was added to an addition \$100.00 in coverage.
913. The material on the Thielmann family is from Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker*, pages 29-53. Alfred Redekopp is the current Director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
914. Gerhard J. Thielmann, Report for Plettentag, July 1945," in *Plett Picture Book*, page 48.
915. The reference here is to deacon Johann L. Dueck (1833-94), Alexanderkrone, and later Grünfeld, Manitoba. Johann was married to Jakob Thielmann's sister Anna who died only a few months after this letter was written.
916. Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker*, pages 30-32.
917. Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker*, pages 32-53.
918. Johann Epp, *Iwanowka: Die Geschichte der Familie Heinrich Epp....* (Bielefeld, 19992), 330 pages.
919. See Colin Neufeldt, "The Flight to Moscow, 1929," in *Preservings*, No. 19, pages 35-47 (check it out on the website: [www.hshs.mb.ca](http://www.hshs.mb.ca)).
920. *Dynasties*, pages 107-154.
921. For the story of Dr. Bergensche, see *Preservings*, No. 18, page 19, and *Diese Steine*, pages 576-578.
922. This Volume One of Menno Simons' "Fundamentabuch" was later inherited by her daughter Sarah E. Plett, who married Gerhard D. Doerksen.
923. *Dynasties*, pages 391-421.
924. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," research paper, University of Winnipeg, 1878, quoted in Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 72.
925. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 103.
926. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," research paper, 1978, page 5.
927. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 126-127.
928. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 82.
929. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 108.
930. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 167-168.
931. Peter F. Unger diary.
932. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 173.
933. Interview Nov. 10, 1980.
934. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 166.



935. Peter R. Dueck, "Journal," in Royden Loewen, *from the Inside Out* (Winnipeg, 1999), pages 210-236.
936. Interview Bernard P. Doerksen, Oct. 8, 1981.
937. Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, page 54.
938. Interview March 6, 1981.
939. See Plett, "1922 Delegation to Mexico," in *Preservings*, No. 14, page 104, for several photographs of the delegation, two of which include C. L. Plett.
940. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 217.
941. Jakob J. Thielmann, letter to C. L. Plett, April 19, 1926. The C. L. Plett collection contains two or three letters by Jakob and one or two by brother Gerhard J Thielmann.
942. Interview, October 8, 1981.
943. Royden K. Loewen, "The Mennonites of Waterloo, Ontario and Hanover, Manitoba, 1890s: A Study of Household and Community," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History* (Gananoque, Ontario, 1993), pages 187-210, uses C. L. Plett's journals to compare Mennonites in Manitoba with those in Southern Ontario.
944. *Plett Picture Book*. pages 27-31 and 62.
945. See also *Plett Picture Book*, pages 53-60.
946. Cornelius L. Plett, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 16 pages courtesy of Rev. Bernhard P. Doerksen, Blumenort, Manitoba.
947. A least one more letter in the correspondence between these two men exists. In February, 1984, Peter B. Dueck, Arbog, Manitoba, sent me a copy of the first page of a nine page letter by Plett to Kroeker dated May 26, 1909.
948. The writer has an American silver dollar that his father Jacob R. Plett received from his grandfather, C. L. Plett during this visit.
949. Interview, March 9, 1981.
950. I am indebted to John K. Reimer, Spanish Lookout, Belize, for making copies of these letters and sharing them with me. He was the son-in-law of Heinrich R. Plett, who received the letters from his parents, H. E. Pletts.
951. Additional information about Cornelius L. Plett and his children will be found in Loewen, *Blumenort*, 669 pages.
952. Interview Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius P. Doerksen, Steinbach, March 8, 1982.
953. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," page 6.
954. Jacob W. Friesen, interview April 2, 1981.
955. Royden Loewen, "The Mennonites of Waterloo, Ontario and Hanover, Manitoba, 1890s: A study of Household and Community," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, page 198.
956. Klaas R. Reimer, journals, in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 119.
957. *Dynasties*, page 567.
958. Peter R. Reimer, "Account Book, 1892-1918," courtesy of Gerhard R. Reimer, Goshen, Indiana.
959. *Dynasties*, page 601.
960. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," page 6.
961. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 144.
962. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," page 7.
963. Jacob W. Friesen, interview, April 2, 1981. Son Klaas R. Plett also definitely remembered his grandfather moving to Friedensfeld in 1908: interview Sept. 10, 1981. The deed itself was only completed and registered in 1914, just before Cornelius left for Kansas: *Plett Picture Book*, page 54 and footnote 7, page 60.
964. Interview February 6, 1981.
965. Interview, Sept. 10, 1981.
966. *Plett Picture Book*, page 60.
967. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 108.
968. Interview, Feb. 25, 1981.
969. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 145-146.
970. Interview Feb. 18, 1981.
971. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 112-115.
972. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," page 6.
973. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 257.
974. Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family," page 7.

975. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 262.
976. Peter P. D. Reimer, interview Feb. 25, 1981.
977. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 260.
978. E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, Manitoba, 1955), pages 231-2.
979. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 394-996.
980. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 472-473.
981. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 474.
982. Interview Ben R. Plett, March 26, 1981.
983. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 344.
984. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 376.
985. Jacob W. Friesen, interview April 2, 1981.
986. Ben R. Plett, interview March 26, 1981.
987. John R. Unger, interview, March 6, 1981.
988. Interview, Feb. 25, 1981.
989. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 364.
990. Telephone call with nephew P. K. Reimer, Steinbach, Man., Jan. 19, 2003.
991. John K. Schellenberg, "Memoirs of John K. Schellenberg," Steinbach, 1984, pages 13-15.
992. Circa 1984, son Henry H. Doerksen, Satanta, Ks., brought the originals of the C. L. Plett letter collection to Steinbach, Manitoba, while on a visit to his mother-in-law Anna Barkman (Mrs. Jakob D.), in Steinbach. Presumably the letters from 1916 to 1924 have not survived.
993. Interview March 3, 1981.
994. Interview, August 17, 1982.
995. Interview, April 1, 1980.
996. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 419-421.
997. See Gerhard G. Thiessen, "Die Probe," in *Mennonite Mirror*, Nov. 1984, pages 28-29, for a worker's perception of the Plett & Co. lumber camp at Roblin.
998. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 379-385.
999. A copy of the auction bill is reproduced by Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 366.
1000. *Plettentag, Juli 2, 1945*, page 17. Son Klaas R. Plett also recalled his father telling this story. Interview, April 4, 1985, at Quellen Colony, Mexico. This had supposedly occurred when H. E. Plett was a three year-old.
1001. Interview, March 4, 1981.
1002. As related to the writer by my mother.
1003. Biography of Elizabeth Reimer Plett (1870-1947), by Lynette Sarah Plett, Toronto, Ontario. It is based on the memories of her father, Jacob K. Plett, and uncles and aunts, the children of Abraham R. Plett.
1004. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 545-546.
1005. He is the author's older brother.
1006. Telephone interview, Sept. 14, 1984.
1007. Report by executors Cornelius and Henry R. Plett, dated June 9, 1954.
1008. At a Vaspa during the H. E. Plett gathering in Jagueyes, Mexico, grandson Albert Plett, then Ältester of the Gemeinde, suggested singing the song as a table grace.
1009. Heinrich and Elisabeth Plett, "Eine nützliche Unterweisung zum Anfang des Christlichen Ehestandes. Euer Hochzeit Tag war am 4ten Oktober 1931, und geschrieben am 18ten Januar, 1932," unpublished essay, 12 pages.
1010. For a history of the Doerksen family from Fischau, see *Dynasties*, page 57-73.
1011. Interview Mr. and Mrs. Corn. P. Doerksen, Steinbach, March 8, 1982.
1012. Gerhard D. Doerksen, Account Book 1895, as recorded by the writer Nov. 10, 1981.
1013. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 147.
1014. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 345.
1015. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 468.
1016. Gerhard B. Doerksen and Yvonne Lupky, *A Genealogy of Gerbard and Helena Doerksen 1767-1984* (Steinbach, 1984), 93 pages.
1017. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 33-34.
1018. *Preservings*, No. 16, pages 92-93.
1019. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 418-419.

1020. Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, page 116.
1021. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 139.
1022. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 270.
1023. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 56.
1024. Plett, "Isaak Harder 1794-1870, Muntau," in *Dynasties*, pages 183-192.
1025. See Plett, "Susanna Warkentin Siemens 1869-1943," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, page 26.
1026. Klaas R. Reimer, "Familienbuch," quoted in *Storm and Triumph*, page 23.
1027. See *Dynasties*, pages 266-267.
1028. Peter Toews, "Genealogy register," in *Profile 1874*, page 16, Family 26.
1029. Peter Toews, "Genealogy register," page 54. According to the *Rundschau* March 8, 1893, Maria Peters was originally from Prangenau and Gerhard Siemens is referred to as being from Neukirch. I am indebted to Henry Fast for drawing this reference to my attention.
1030. Committee, *Excelsior Echos*, page 1094.
1031. Mary Kornelsen and Betty Kehler, *Family Register of Abraham Cornelsen and Maria Wiens* (Box 21085, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 3T3, 1994), 150-165; see *Dynasties*, page 86.
1032. For a photo of the farm, see Leona Banman, "Peter B. Penner (1846-1922)," in *Preservings*, No. 15, page 112.
1033. Ed R. Brandt, *Peter H. Unger and Justina Friesen Family Record* (Steinbach, 1984), pages K1-K13.
1034. This biography is a somewhat shortened version of a paper published in John Dyck, editor, *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve 1874-1910* (Steinbach, 1994), pages 338-372. At the same time, several sections of new material have also been added.
1035. See *Dynasties*, pages 598-602.
1036. For a biography, see *Dynasties*, pages 394-397.
1037. See *Preservings*, No. 21, page 116.
1038. Related to me by Mr. Peter J. B. Reimer in a telephone conversation in 1984 or so.
1039. Abram P. Reimer, "Biography des Peter R. Reimer," in John C. Reimer, *et. al.*, eds., *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Klaas und Helena Reimer: mit Biographien der ersten drei Generationen* (Steinbach, Man., 1958), pages 215-18. This biography is also published in Abe C. R. Reimer, compiler, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1984), pages 4-5.
1040. *Ibid.*, page 218.
1041. *Dynasties*, pages 564-568. Abraham's brother Johann (1808-72), was a prominent Ältester of the Kleine Gemeinde.
1042. *Dynasties*, pages 444-450.
1043. Royden Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto, Ont., 1993), pages 31-32.
1044. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market*, page 41.
1045. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market*, page 43.
1046. Thielmann and Reimer, eds., *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945* page 33. This booklet was translated in 1981 and the reference in the English version is page 17.
1047. ". . . Heinrich W \_\_\_\_ [wanted to be] married to Corn. Pletts' Maria. [However,] this did not occur. He was chased away," as quoted in *Plett Picture Book*, page 19.
1048. Thielmann and Reimer, eds., *Plettentag*, pages 31-32.
1049. Isaac Loewen, "Epistle to a beloved granddaughter, Maria Plett," in *Storm and Triumph*, pages 224-225. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. and Mrs. Martin P. Penner of Ridgewood, Manitoba, for sharing this item with me in 1981. This letter by Ohm Isaac is truly an historical gem of priceless value. I understand that Mrs. Penner received the item from her father, David P. Reimer.
1050. There is some discrepancy here regarding the name of this little girl. In the *Plettentag*, 33, Bishop David P. Reimer states that his parents left Russia with a six week old daughter named Sarah. But according to the Hamburg ship records, transcribed by Kathy Friesen Barkman and John Dyck and published in John Dyck, ed., *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* (Steinbach, Man., 1993), page 273, the family had a daughter Maria, age 1/2 year at the time. The latter is accepted as correct.
1051. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, pages 293-305, publishes letters and diary descriptions of the journey of delegate Cornelius P. Toews (1837-1908)—Maria's cousin.

1052. Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in *Profile 1874*, page 166. In his "Genealogy register," *Profile 1874*, page 19, Toews recorded they left Russia on July 21, 1874. Is the latter date possibly based on the Julian calendar and the date they actually left the sea port at Kherson?
1053. Thielmann and Reimer, editors, *Plettentag*, page 33.
1054. Abram P. Reimer, "Biographie des Peter R. Reimer," page 216.
1055. John Warkentin, "The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba: A Study in Historical Geography" (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, Toronto, 1960), page 72.
1056. Johann Esau, "Brandbuch, 1895" unpublished journal.
1057. At the Peter R. Reimer Reunion held at the Steinbach Bible College on July 25, 1993, the David P. Reimer family displayed an old planer from Russia belonging to Peter R. Reimer which may very well have been the same.
1058. Abraham R. Reimer, "Rechenbuch zum Jahr 1879: Abraham Reimer Blumenort," unpublished journal, courtesy of Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981. Reimer had bought the blacksmith shop from his wife's step-father, Johann L. Plett, who was Maria's younger brother.
1059. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 307.
1060. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 136.
1061. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 166.
1062. Plett, "Sarah Reimer Barkman's 'kjist,'" in *Preservings*, No. 12, page 95.
1063. As quoted by Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 87.
1064. Another excellent source of information for the early years in Blumenort are the diaries on Abraham M. Friesen, who served as one of the early Schulzen or mayors of the village. These diaries are extant for the years 1885 to 1918.
1065. Some of the higher assessments are due, no doubt, to the fact that these farmers had expensive threshing machine outfits taxed at full value as personal property, whereas other farmers whose wealth was in a land base were assessed for less since land was assessed at \$4.00 per acre.
1066. For a detailed description of the exciting saga of the threshing company days in the Blumenort area which lasted from the 1880s to the 1920s, see Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 110-15 and 145-6; and *Plett Picture Book*, pages 148-55.
1067. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 242-64, provides an excellent description of the breakup of the "old" communal villages of Blumenort, Blumenhof, and Neuanlage, and their reconstitution as North American-style agrarian communities. The fact that this transition took place in relative peace and harmony speaks well for the community.
1068. Peter Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in *History and Events*, page 65.
1069. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 166.
1070. See "Georg Hansen books, 1892," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, page 69.
1071. Peter R. Dueck, "Ministerial journal," is courtesy of Royden K. Loewen, July 23, 1993.
1072. Sermons 1 to 5, and 8 to 10, inclusive, are courtesy of Henry R. Reimer, Riverton, Manitoba, 1981. Sermons No. 1 and 5 have been translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, in July of 1993 and edited by the writer in anticipation of the Reimer reunion to be held on July 25, 1993.
1073. This sermon is courtesy of Mrs. A. D. Kroeker, nee Helen Barkman, July 20, 1993.
1074. This sermon was found among the papers of Steinbach historian Klaas J. B. Reimer. December 3, 1981.
1075. John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches*, pages 597-624.
1076. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 172-173.
1077. These letters are courtesy of granddaughter Mrs. A. D. Kroeker, nee Helen Barkman, July 22, 1993.
1078. The letter was found among the papers of Ältester Abraham L. Friesen in Meade, Kansas. Courtesy Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.
1079. Courtesy Royden Loewen, Steinbach, Manitoba, July 23, 1993.
1080. Peter R. Reimer's brother-in-law, David L. Plett, continued the "Sterbe Register" after his death. In his "Sterbe Register" Plett noted that Johann Esau of Rosenfeld, maintained such a record until his death in 1906 after which Reimer took over the responsibility. When Reimer died in 1915, Plett took over continuing until 1948. The "Sterbe register" of Johann Esau is extant but the record maintained by Peter R. Reimer has not yet surfaced.

1081. Interview with daughter-in-law Gertrude Friesen Plett, Blumenort, February 6, 1982.
1082. Interview Klaas R. Plett, Quellen Colony, Jagueyes, Mexico, April 4, 1985.
1083. Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Martin P. Penner, Ridgewood, Manitoba, 1981.
1084. The Cornelius L. Plett letter collection was carefully saved and preserved by his daughter Helena in Kansas, and then by her daughters, Anna Doerksen, and Marie Heinrichs, after her death. The total collection of some 200 letters consists mostly of letters from relatives in the Steinbach, Blumenort, Rosenort, and Cuauhtemoc areas.
1085. Courtesy of Elizabeth Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, daughter of Klaas P. Reimer. Received July 21, 1993.
1086. Courtesy Helen Kroeker, nee Barkman, daughter of Sarah and John G. Barkman. Received July 23, 1993.
1087. It is my impression that Maria had a mind of her own and that she was quite an independent thinker, characteristics which were not fully accepted in a "old" woman at the time—although apparently tolerated in Maria's case because of her prominent standing in the community.
1088. In this regard I note that it was always a saying in our family that the Reimers had round stomachs and the Pletts big rears, and my father and uncle George - as the joke went - unfortunately had the worst of both.
1089. As told to my mother by her mother-in-law Elisabeth, Mrs. Heinrich E. Plett.
1090. The speech was first published in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches*, pages 373-377.
1091. Sara Loewen, "John F. Unger," in Edward Brandt and Jacob U. Klassen, editors, *Peter H. Unger 1841-1896 Justina Friesen 1836-1905 Family Record 1765 to 1983 inclusive* (Steinbach, 1984), page Joh-1.
1092. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 419.
1093. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 317 and 448.
1094. Sara Loewen, "Biography of Maria P. Reimer," in A. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book* (Steinbach, 1984), 72.
1095. Loewen, *from the Inside Out*, pages 261-294. An original copy of the diary, written in Gothic handwriting, was obtained from Peter U. Dueck, Steinbach, Manitoba. It was translated by Margaret Toews, Winnipeg and by Royden Loewen.
1096. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market*, pages 220-224.
1097. Ben P. D. Reimer, "Biography of Peter P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, page 92.
1098. Margaret Fast Reimer, *Familien Register von Witwe Peter P. Reimer geb. Margaretha Fast* (Steinbach, 1963), page 4.
1099. Joh. K. Klassen was possibly also involved. Interview, P.P.D. Reimer March 6, 1981.
1100. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 113.
1101. John R. Dueck, editor, *Descendants of Jacob and Maria L. Dueck 1839 1986* (Steinbach, 1986), pages 205-206, translated from the original published in Ben P. D. Reimer, et al., *Stammbuch der Voreltern Jakob und Maria L. Dueck* (Steinbach, 19560, pages 41-42.
1102. For a listing of the Friesen family, see Levi Dueck, editor, *The Henry L. & Anna Friesen Family Then & Now* (Rosenort, 2001), pages 238-300.
1103. Peter H. Dueck, *Abrabam L. and Elizabeth Dueck and their descendants* (Steinbach, 1965), pages 64-67.
1104. *Dynasties*, pages 172-182.
1105. Ben P. D. Reimer, "Biography of Peter P. Reimer," page 92.
1106. Margaret Fast Reimer, *Familien Register*, pages 4-5.
1107. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 432.
1108. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 421-423.
1109. Peter P. D. Reimer, interview Feb. 25, 1981.
1110. As quoted in Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 426-427.
1111. Jakob U. Kornelsen, *Fünfundzwanzig Jahre in Mexiko: Beschreibung Von der Quellenkolonie 1948-1973* (Jagueyes, 1973), page 8.
1112. Margaret Fast Reimer, *Familien Register*, pages 4-5.
1113. See *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 431, for the Schellenberg genealogy.

1114. Abram R. Reimer, "Biography of Cornelius P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, page 114.
1115. Interview Feb. 20, 1981.
1116. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 357.
1117. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 441.
1118. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 308.
1119. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 533.
1120. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 428-429. At an interview with Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Penner, H. A. Reimer and Ben A. Reimer, Mar. 12, 1981, they informed me that the *Steinbach Post* had done a story on their parents, but they did not have the date or issue number.
1121. Adapted from "Biography of Abraham P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, page 133.
1122. Adapted from John R. Dueck, ed., *Descendants of Jacob and Maria L. Dueck*, pages 299-300, from the original in Ben P. D. Reimer, *Stammbuch der Voreltern Jakob und Maria L. Dueck*, pages 53-54.
1123. Elizabeth Reimer Friesen, "Jacob T. Barkman (1848-1935), Heuboden," in *Preservings*, No. 13, pages 68-70.
1124. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 268.
1125. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 387.
1126. The poem is published in Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 191-192.
1127. Adapted from Margaret Klassen, "Biography of Sara P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, page 142.
1128. For biography, see *Preservings*, No. 12, pages 65-66.
1129. Interview, March 6, 1981.
1130. H. B. Reimer, "Biography of John P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, page 151.
1131. For a biography, see *Preservings*, No. 9, Part One, pages 53-55.
1132. *Steinbach Post*, Nov. 16, 1927. Giesbrecht appreciated the visiting, adding "Right on!" in his letter.
1133. See L. Scharfenberg, "Johann K. Friesen," in *Preservings*, No. 20, pages 106-112.
1134. Adapted from Sara Reimer, "Biography of David P. Reimer," in Abr. C. Reimer, editor, *Peter R. Reimer 1845-1915 Family Book*, pages 167-168.
1135. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 582-584.
1136. John R. Wohlgenuth, *The Peter Wohlgenuth Genealogy 1805 to 1963* (Peabody, Kansas, 1963), 1-2, provides a listing of their descendants.
1137. *Storm and Triumph*, pages 272-273.
1138. *Storm and Triumph*, page 563.
1139. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius P. Doerksen, November 8, 1982. This was related to them by David L. Plett and Jakob L. Plett when they were visiting in Kansas.
1140. Jonas Toews, ed., *Henry E. Wohlgenuth Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1991), page 78.
1141. *Henry E. Wohlgenuth Family Book*, page 5.
1142. Interview with Bern. P. Doerksen, *Blumenort*, Jan. 4, 1981.
1143. Ben Sobering, "Heinrich and Magdalena Sobering," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 44-46.
1144. Interview with Dick P. Loewen, *Blumenort*, Manitoba, December 28, 1994.
1145. Interview with Don Toews, as related by Johann W. Reimer, *Blumenhof*, Manitoba, to Cornelius W. Friesen, Roblin, Manitoba.
1146. Royden Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 298.
1147. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Wiebe and Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Wiebe, *Steinbach*, Manitoba, Oct. 7, 1982.
1148. Jakob W. Reimer, "Memoirs," in *Heinrich Fast Reimer and Margaretha Warkentin Family Book* (Rosenort, 1991), page 210.
1149. Interview Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Wiebe, *Steinbach*, Sept. 8, 1982.
1150. Dick P. Loewen, interview August 26, 1983.
1151. Interview Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Wiebe, *Steinbach*, Sept. 8, 1982.
1152. Interview Oct. 7, 1982.

1153. Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in *Dynasties*, pages 301-306, has additional information regarding Johann M. Koop (1831-96).

1154. See *Dynasties*, pages 409-411, for brief biographies of her siblings, parents and cousins.

1155. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 215.

1156. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 298.

1157. For their biography, see *Preservings*, No. 13, pages 71-73.

1158. Leslie and Marian Plett, *Family Register of Peter F. Plett 1884-1990* (Calgary, 1990), pages 4-5.

1159. As recalled by grandson Clarence Plett, Mapleridge, B.C., see *Pres.*, No. 21, page 131.

1160. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 85.

1161. Jakob L. Plett had celebrated 50 years of custom threshing when he retired in 1930, and thus it seemingly makes sense to assume that this mortgage was for a steam engine and threshing machine. A copy of the mortgage is published in Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 238.

1162. Peter F. Unger, Journal, Blumenhof, transcribed by Peter A. Plett, Landmark.

1163. "Maria Koop Plett," in *Preservings*, No.10, June 1997, Part Two, pages 33-35.

1164. Clarence Plett, email January 20, 2003, in *Preservings*, No. 21, page 131.

1165. Interview with Elizabeth Penner (Mrs. Peter K.), Steinbach, March 2, 1996.

1166. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 343.

1167. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 494.

1168. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 469.

1169. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 348.

1170. "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic," in *Preservings*, No. 11, Dec 1997, pages 48-50.

1171. As related by son Norman Penner at the A. L. Plett gathering in Morweena, Manitoba, August 24, 2002; see *Pres.*, No. 21, page 131.

1172. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 419.

1173. According to Peter A. Plett this practice of informal lending based on a verbal promise came to an end with the arrival of the Russländer in 1923 and thereafter.

1174. Klaas R. Barkman later became the first mayor of the Town of Steinbach after its incorporation in 1947. Peter L. Barkman, his son, is President of Barkman Concrete, Steinbach, Manitoba. Peter believed his parents might have taken a photo of the four men as they were leaving that morning of Oct. 15, 1934, but does not know where the photograph stayed, as all their parent's photographs were divided among the children.

1175. This account of Abraham L. Plett's tragic death is based on the obituary written by Bishop David P. Reimer in the *Familienfreund*, No. 8, 1945, pages 12-14, supplemented with information from other sources such as the *Plettentag* and interviews with Peter A. Plett.

1176. This section is fictionalized and not based on any information other than the essential historical facts and the recollections of granddaughter, Mrs. Isaac Reimer, nee Gertruda Plett, Alymer, Ontario. Gertruda was present at her Grandma's house the day the events took place. She remembered that Mrs. Johann Penner was the first to arrive.

1177. See my articles "Pioneer Women of the East Reserve" and "Matriarchies of the East Reserve," in *Preservings*, No. 10, Part One, pages 1-26.

1178. Henry P. Friesen, "Abraham L. and Gertruda Plett's Kjist," in *Pres.*, No. 21, page 131.

1179. Interview with Peter A. Plett, Landmark, February 14, 1985.

1180. Gottlieb Janhke moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan to homestead in 1904. He was the great-grandfather of the so-called "Janz Evangelical Team".

1181. The *Martyr's Mirror* was purchased by Peter A. Plett at the auction sale of his father's goods. He showed me the book in 1981. I wonder which one of his sons was fortunate enough to inherit this marvellous book. Unfortunately, neither Cornelius Plett Sr. nor Abraham L. Plett had signed their name in the book to authenticate its pedigree.

1182. Much of this biography was based on notes I made during interviews with Peter A. Plett and Margaret Plett, Landmark, Manitoba: Feb. 5, 1981, Aug. 25, 1981, Aug. 26, 1981, Aug. 28, 1981, June 9, 1981, Sep. 14, 1981, Aug. 7, 1981, Aug. 11, 1981, Mar. 25, 1981, Mar. 4, 1981, June 8, 1981. I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to uncle Peter for mentoring me as I struggled to understand the spirituality of the Kleine Gemeinde and other conservative Mennonites.

1183. See "Poetry: A Great Mennonite Tradition," in *Preservings*, No. 13, pages 102-103.

1184. Those who wish to read the poems in the German original will find them published in the *Plettentag* book at pages 39-41.
1185. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 369-370.
1186. Published in the *Plett Picture Book*, page 136, and also Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 208.
1187. For more information regarding the role of pioneer women within their society, see my articles "Pioneer Women of the East Reserve" and "Matriarchies of the East Reserve," in *Pres.*, No. 10, June 1997, Part One, pages 1-26.
1188. Maria Friesen Peters, "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic," in *Pres.*, No. 11, pages 48-50.
1189. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 419.
1190. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 371.
1191. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 355.
1192. D. Plett, "Print Culture of the East Reserve," in *Historical Sketches*, pages 714-715.
1193. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 32-33.
1194. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 246.
1195. A copy of this mortgage is published in Royden Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 238.
1196. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 111-112.
1197. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 108. Loewen reports the date of purchase of the American Able as around 1910.
1198. See *Plett Picture Book*, pages 152-153, for additional information regarding the Plett threshing outfits.
1199. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 146.
1200. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 365.
1201. Elisabeth Esau Plett, letter to Corn. L. Plett, Jan. 15, 1932. There are several more letters by Elisabeth in this letter collection.
1202. Verification of location of photo and date, courtesy of Alfred Redekopp, Winnipeg, son of Elly Redekopp. Email, March 26, 2003.
1203. Carol Thiessen, "A Thiessen Family History," in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches*, pages 642-648.
1204. Harvey Plett, "Elisabeth Esau Plett 1893-1976)," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 58-61.
1205. Elisabeth Esau Plett, *Von Unserem Ebeleben seit 1910: Mutter David K. Plett* (Steinbach, 1961), 20 pages. Her children translated it and published an English edition.
1206. See *Peter H. Unger (1841 1896) Justina Friesen (1832-1905) Family-Record - 1765 to 1983, inclusive* (Steinbach, 1984), pages M-1-M-10.
1207. The Esau genealogy is traced back to Cornelius Esau (born 1772), owner of Wirtschaft 19 in Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in 1808: *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 329-335.
1208. Bev Penner, *The Jakob D. K. Plett 1926 1998 Family* (Steinbach, 1998), page 72.
1209. Plett, "Road Naming: 'C.S. Plett Road,'" in *Pres.*, Part Two, pages 53-56.
1210. Interview, John C. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, Sept. 11, 1981.
1211. See *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, pages 55-58, for the story of the Friesen family.
1212. The material on Maria Plett's journal is taken from Plett, "Maria Koop Plett 1868-1918 Journal," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 33-35.
1213. The material relating to Maria's death, is adapted from "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 48-49.
1214. G. J. Thielmann and D. P. Reimer, editors., *Plettentag*, page 26.
1215. Sources for the section regarding Maria's death include: interviews with granddaughter Maria Friesen Peters, Jan 15/97, daughter Aganetha Plett Warkentin, Jan 17/97, grandson Abram P. Friesen, Jan. 20/97, daughter Elizabeth Plett Dueck, Jan. 20/97, and the Maria Koop Plett, Journal 1905-18, unpublished ledger. The journal was in the possession of daughter-in-law Mrs. Jakob J. K. Plett who was kind enough to allow me to photocopy it in 1980 while researching the *Plett Picture Book*.
1216. See *Dynasties*, pages 264 and 412.
1217. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 301.
1218. Published in German in *Plettentag am Juli 2*, pages 44-45. Published in English in Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 190-191.
1219. See Plett, "Poetry: A Great Mennonite Tradition," in *Pres.*, No. 13, pages 102-3.



1220. It is possible that Jakob may have heard the poem from his parents or elsewhere and merely recorded in his poetry album. The complete text of the poem is published in *The Golden Years*, page 160.
1221. Maria Reimer, letter to C. L. Plett, August 6, 1925.
1222. Thielmann and Reimer, *Plettentag am Juli 2 1946*, page 48.
1223. The material relating to Maria Plett Friesen's death, is adapted from "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic," in *Pres.*, No. 10, Part Two, pages 49-50. The article was based on the journal of Maria Koop Plett, extracts as published in *Plett Picture Book*, pages 39, 44 and 147, and interviews with Maria Peters Jan. 15, July 29, and Aug. 1, 1997.
1224. Patrick Friesen, *The Shunning* (Winnipeg, 1980), page 63.
1225. Adapted from Laura Siemens, "Twins or Triplets? The George W. Siemens Story," in *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 449-450.
1226. Adapted in part from *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 440-441.
1227. Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pioneer*, pages 357-361, has a listing of their family.
1228. Adapted from *Furrows in the Valley*, page 402.
1229. I am also indebted to Levi and Elma Dueck, Box 174, Rosenort, Manitoba, for assisting with identifying photos and providing the death dates of her uncles and aunts.
1230. Adapted from *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 397-399.
1231. A. P. Toews, *The Chronology of the Toews Family* (Steinbach, 1967), pages 162-3.
1232. Klaas Friesen, letter to Peter von Riesen 1838, 5 pages, Johann I. Friesen Collection, M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, October 28, 1993, courtesy Archivist John Thiesen.
1233. Unruh, page 351. cf. Gerhard T. Thiessen, page 5, has recorded the information that Jakob Mathies was born October, 1760 and died December 13, 1804; and that his wife, a Wiens, died March 22, 1832.
1234. Quoted in *Leaders*, page 402.
1235. Cornelius P. Janzen, unpublished family records—courtesy Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986: Abe P. Friesen *et. al.*, eds., *Friesen-von Riesen Genealogy 1756-1966*, pages 6-7, has a listing of the Isaac Friesen family as well as all the descendants of Klaas Friesen (1793-1870).
1236. Unruh, page 317. The family of Isaak Friesen (1748-1818) had several Kleine Gemeinde connections: son Jakob Friesen (born 1774) Münsterberg was an early member of the Kleine Gemeinde; son Johann Friesen (1783-1816) married Margaretha Mathies; son Isaak Friesen (1788-1814) married Regina Friesen. Another daughter Susanna Friesen (1785-1819) married Dirk Warkentin (Wirtschaft 11, Altona), and their son Dirk Warkentin (1815-69) replaced Heinrich Wiens as the Ältester of the Petershagen-Lichtenau Gemeinde: see Plett, "Prussian Roots of the Kleine Gemeinde," in *Leaders*, page 71.
1237. 1835 census.
1238. Gerhard T. Thiessen, page 4.
1239. Daughter of Ohm Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau.
1240. Isaac Friesen is listed as one of the candidates in the Kleine Gemeinde ministerial election of 1861: see "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in *Profile 1874*, pages 239-245. Isaac and Susanna Friesen had a daughter Susanna (18850-1934) who married an Isaac Neufeld (1849-1922), whose great grandson Harold Neufeld was the Energy Minister of the Province of Manitoba in 1988.
1241. For a discussion of such "morality literature" and the role it played in Kleine Gemeinde culture, see Plett, *Saints and Sinners*, pages 146-147.
1242. This document is attached to a letter by Helena Jansen, Beatrice, Nebraska, February 8, 1909, to Johann I. Friesen and eventually found its way to Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, courtesy of Archivist John Thiesen, October 29, 1993.
1243. Abraham L. Friesen, "Wahl-Liste," in *The Golden Years*, page 268.
1244. (Danzig, 1833), Volume I - 335 pages, Volume II - 278 pages, and Volume III - 414 pages. The title would be translated as 'the foundation of Christian doctrine.' The work was usually referred to in Low German simply as 'daut Fundamenteböck'.
1245. A number of letters by Peter von Riesen and Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) relating to the publication of these books are published in *The Golden Years*, pages 268 and 279.
1246. Peter Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit* (Hochstadt, 1911), page 4.

1247. This letter was contained in what was believed to be part of the Johann I. Friesen Collection, courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, Archivist John Thiesen, October 29, 1993; see Plett, "New Sources: Part Two," *Preservings*, No. 4, pages 10-11.
1248. According to the 1835 census Isaac Friesen moved to Waldheim in 1846.
1249. Abraham L. Friesen, "Wahl-Liste," *The Golden Years*, page 279.
1250. Klaas Friesen, letter to Peter von Riesen 1838, 5 pages.
1251. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 220.
1252. This letter is not extant but it is referred to by Johann I. Friesen in a brief survey of the von Riesen family published in 1916: Johann I. Friesen, "Anhang oder Beilage," in Peter Isaac, *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern* (Stern, 1916), 4 pages, published as an appendix.
1253. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch," page 220, writes that "they moved from Altonau to Rosenort, Russia, soon after their marriage, as brother-in-law Abraham has told me." The *Wirtschaft # 15*, is from a letter by son Johann P. Friesen, Mctavish, to the *Rundschau*, April 7, 1909.
1254. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 220.
1255. In a letter of 1904 Peter Goossen, Lindenau, Molotschna, writes to his cousin Johann P. Friesen, Rosenort, Manitoba, and refers to Heinrich Epp's (1811-63) sons Abraham and Bernhard, as Johann's former boyhood friends from Rosenort, Molotschna, "together with whom he had grown up and gone to school": Peter Goossen, letter to Vetter Johann Friesen, April 8, 1904, in Abraham M. Friesen Collection, M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, October 29, 1993. Heinrich Epp (1811-63) was the great-grandfather of Frank Epp, well-known Canadian Mennonite historian and author.
1256. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," in *Leaders*, page 449-498.
1257. The Johann P. Friesen document collection, courtesy of Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba, contains approximately 12 sermons. Although most of these sermons do not bear the name of the minister, about half can be positively attributed to Klaas Friesen by comparison of the dates they were presented with the "Ministerial Journal" of Johann Dueck (1801-66), Muntau: *Leaders*, pages 449-498.
1258. Plett, ed., *Leaders*, pages 413-426. Courtesy of Mrs. Peter K. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986, who has in her possession some of the writings of her grandfather, Cornelius P. Friesen. Another sermon written on December 30, 1845, was preserved through granddaughter Margaretha K. Friesen (1876-1954), the mother of Mrs. Peter K. Penner.
1259. Peter Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*, foreword page iv.
1260. Peter Toews, *Sammlung*, page 170, as published in *The Golden Years*, page 280.
1261. Published in *The Golden Years*, pages 364-366.
1262. Peter Toews, "Anhang No. 2," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 559.
1263. Peter Toews, "Sammlung," page 360.
1264. Harvey Dyck, ed., *A Mennonite in Russia: The Diaries of Jakob D. Epp 1851-1880* (Toronto, Ont., 1989), pages 67, 134-6; cf. James Urry, *None but Saints*, page 216.
1265. Gerhard P. Goossen, Letter to Peter Toews, Blumenhof, December 17, 1866, Peter Toews Letter Collection, courtesy of M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, 1981.
1266. Heinrich Enns, Letter read to the assembly January 6, 1866, as quoted in *Storm and Triumph*, page 166.
1267. H. Reimer, letter of admonishment to Klaas Friesen, 1864, in *Leaders*, pages 637-639.
1268. Peter Toews, Letter to Peter Baerg, Annenfeld, March 23, 1871, in Peter Toews, Document Collection—courtesy of M.L.A., North Newton, Kansas, 1982.
1269. Isaac Harms (1811-91) was married for the first time to Anna Sawatzky, the daughter of Klaas Friesen's sister; see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in *Profile 1874*, pages 275-276.
1270. Heinrich Enns, Letter read to the assembly January 6, 1866, page 167.
1271. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 272, refers to Abraham M. Friesen as one of the most learned men in the East Reserve, Manitoba. This book includes considerable information about the Klaas Friesen family and descendants.
1272. G. Reimer and G. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar* (Newton, Kansas, 1956), page 12.
1273. Heinrich Enns, letter to Peter P. Toews December 12, 1866, in *Leaders*, page 390.
1274. Son Johann P. Friesen, letter to the *Rundschau* February 4, 1913.
1275. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 220.
1276. Klaas and Anna Koop, letter to the *Rundschau*, August 14, 1912.

1277. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, page 328. Peter Toews, "Die Wachsame Auge Gottes," unpublished journal, with genealogical notations by Peter Toews, page 68.
1278. Plett, ed., *Leaders*, page 472.
1279. Abr. F. Reimer, Journals.
1280. Peter Toews, "Die Wachsame Auge Gottes," page 64, as reported in *History and Events*, page 135, footnote 35.
1281. This biography of Klaas and Karolina Friesen is a compilation of the biographies published in Plett, "Klaas Friesen 1793-1870 Biography," in *Leaders*, pages 401-412, and in *Dynasties*, pages 619-622.
1282. Cornelius P. Friesen, "Journal," unpublished, courtesy of Elizabeth Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba.
1283. If this is correct it is the only poetry by Klaas Reimer extant today.
1284. See *Dynasties*, pages 468-469; cf. Plett, "Cornelius Toews 1737-1800," in *Profile 1874*, pages 220 and 226-227.
1285. This biography of Cornelius P. and Agatha Friesen is based on an article in *Pres.*, No. 8, Part Two, pages 55-58.
1286. Glenn Kehler, "The Kjist and the Prush," in *Preservings*, No. 13, pages 120-121.
1287. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 149.
1288. Courtesy of Mrs. Peter K. Penner, nee Elizabeth F. Reimer.
1289. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 159-161.
1290. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 182.
1291. These sermons by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen were published in *Leaders*, pages 677-706, courtesy of Agatha Plett, nee Reimer, Landmark, Manitoba, 1981.
1292. Interview with Mrs. Peter K. Penner, December 17, 1981.
1293. Telephone interview with grandson Abram P. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, July 20, 1994.
1294. Telephone call with daughter Elizabeth Penner, Mrs. P.K. Penner, February 1, 1996.
1295. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 158.
1296. Gerhard E. Kornelsen, journals—courtesy of D. K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba.
1297. Martin K. Friesen and John E. Friesen, "Cornelius P. Friesen family," in Martha Goering and Abe P. Friesen, eds., *Von Riesen-Friesen Genealogy*, pages 167-8.
1298. Telephone call with Ben F. Reimer, Blumenort, February 16, 1996. Mr. Reimer, who is a grandson of Cornelius P. Friesen claimed to have a photo of the house constructed in 1898.
1299. *Volks-Bote*, March 12, 1914.
1300. Plett, ed., *Leaders*, pages 413-426.
1301. Cornelius P. Friesen, "Journal," handwritten document passed on the daughter Helena Friesen, Mrs. Klaas P. Reimer, and currently (1994) in the possession of Elizabeth Penner, Mrs. Peter K. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba.
1302. Ältester Kornelius Regehr was highly regarded in the Kleine Gemeinde and the biography and poem found their way into several collections.
1303. Telephone interview with Mrs. Peter K. Penner, July 20, 1994.
1304. Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," in *Profile 1874*, page 33.
1305. Letter to the *Rundschau*, Nov 8, 1899—courtesy Henry N. Fast, Steinbach.
1306. Interview with Henry F. Reimer, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1991.
1307. Plett, "Cornelius P. Friesen: Irrgarten," in *Preservings*, No. 8, Part Two, pages 55-58.
1308. Telephone call with Abram P. Friesen, July 20, 1994.
1309. Mrs. Friesen had died so suddenly that the undertaker, Mrs. Peter R. Reimer, nee Susanna Loewen (1852-1918), had said that she had taken some noodles out of her mouth when preparing her for burial. Telephone interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Penner, July 20, 1994.
1310. Telephone interview with granddaughter Maria Peters, February 1, 1996.
1311. Interview with my mother, nee Gertrude P. Friesen, December 16, 1981.
1312. The wording of the puzzle is similar to that of the Jakob Doerksen "Irrgarten" featured in the December, 1995, issue of *Pres.*, page 47.
1313. Adapted from *Preservings*, No. 13, pages 120-121.

1314. Since the Prush was not listed by Reinhold Kauenhoven Janzen as part of the Mennonite furniture tradition it may have been incorporated into the canon later: see *Pres.*, No. 12, pages 87-92.

1315. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 280.

1316. *Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy*, pages 168-9. See *Plett Picture Book*, page 151, and *Blumenort*, page 261, for a photo of the barn being moved by C. T. Loewen's steam engine outfit.

1317. *Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy*, pages 168-9.

1318. For a listing of the Cornelius P. Janzen family, see Lorna Penner, *Jobann S. Janzen Family Book* (Blumenort, 1992), 49 pages. See also *Janzen Cookbook and Memories* (Blumenort, 1995), 248 pages.

1319. *Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy*, page 176.

1320. Jakob S. Friesen, *Giroux Volksbote*, March 12, 1914, quoted in Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 329-330.

1321. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 107 and 139.

1322. *Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy*, page 183.

1323. For a photograph of Klaas W. Reimer with his first wife, see *Pres.*, No. 14, page 107.

1324. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 104-5.

1325. Loewen, *Blumenort*, pages 136 and 140.

1326. *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 127-130.

1327. Another photo of Klaas W. Reimer in older life is found in *God, Working through us*, page 95.

1328. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 43-44.

1329. This article was originally published in *Pres.*, No. 15, pages 138-141.

1330. There was considerable travelling back and forth between the Kleine Gemeinde settlements in Manitoba and Nebraska and Kansas and thus the journey of C. K. Friesen and his brother during the 1890s would not have been that unusual, except that the travelling was usually by train. It was somewhat different, however, as the brothers were rumoured to have spent some of their time shooting out milk cans along the road with their pistols in order to drink their fill of milk and even raiding milk houses along the way for supplies: see Roy Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 207. Upon their return the brothers were disciplined by the Kleine Gemeinde by excommunication, a punishment usually revoked upon contrite remorse and penitence after a week or two of Biblical shunning by the community.

1331. A tragic accident occurred on the C. K. Friesen drilling rig on June 25, 1922. One of his long-time employees, Peter X. Friesen (1877-1922) was operating the rig when a coupling fell from the derrick that hoisted the pipes hitting him on the head. He was fatally injured and died two days later: see *Cornelius P. Toews family book*, page 75.

1332. One such photograph from 1904 is published in the *Plett Picture Book*, page 136, and *Pres.*, No. 8, Part Two, page 58, showing Cornelius with a group of young people including brothers Martin and Klaas and their future brides. Another such photograph from 1914 is published in Abe Warkentin, *Reflections*, page 89, showing Katharina, Mrs. C. K. Friesen, and her sister Mrs. C. T. Loewen, with a group of Steinbach young people.

1333. In 1912 the Cornelius K. Friesen family settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, on the south side of present-day Loewen Boulevard, to the east of the road allowance between section 34 and 35. In 1915 the family built a spacious new house on the site: Gerhard E. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 258.

1334. Cornelius K. Friesen could be quite curt and gruff. He was also not above teasing people on occasion. At the same, he also had a heart of gold for those in need. He was invariably referred to as "Cea Kau Friese" and also, as already mentioned, as "Borum Schteta Friese". Editor.

1335. Loewen, *Blumenort*, page 275.

1336. This article is taken from Neil Friesen, "1883 - Pauline Geschefske - 1981," unpublished history of the Geschefske family, courtesy of son Martin G. Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1998.

1337. See Abraham L. Plett Section.

1338. See *Plett Picture Book*, pages 101-102.

1339. See Maria Friesen Peters, "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic," in *Pres.*, No. 11, pages 48-50.

1340. Maria Friesen Peters, "Klaas Friesen house fire," in *Pres.*, No. 9, Part Two, pages 62-63.

1341. Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, pages 136-137.
1342. No author, "John P. Friesen," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 392-393.
1343. David Klassen, "Brandordnung Records 1880 and 1882," in *Profile 1874*, pages 83-84.
1344. John Warkentin, "Martin Warkentin," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 396.
1345. Johann P. Friesen, "Family records."
1346. John E. Friesen, "John P. Friesen Family," in Abe P. Friesen, et. al., compilers, *The Von Riesen-Friesen Genealogy 1756-1966*, pages 205-206.
1347. Junia Loewen, "Johann P. Friesen Family," term paper for Grade 12 history course at Steinbach Bible School 1982, 26 pages, has additional information regarding this family.
1348. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1349. No author, "John P. Friesen," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1350. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1351. *The Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy 1756-1966*, page 205.
1352. Junia Loewen, "Johann P. Friesen Family," has additional information regarding this family.
1353. Website: [www.rosenort.com/history/early\\_pioneers.htm](http://www.rosenort.com/history/early_pioneers.htm)
1354. Junia Loewen, "Johann P. Friesen Family," page 2.
1355. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 218.
1356. Interview with Mr. Edward G. Friesen, Mitchell, Manitoba, January 27, 1994.
1357. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, 393.
1358. *The Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy 1756-1966*, pages 205-206.
1359. *Dynasties*, pages 75-154 and 529-684.
1360. Johann P. Friesen Document Collection.
1361. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 392-394, has additional information regarding Johann P. Friesen and his children.
1362. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1363. *The Von Riesen - Friesen Genealogy 1756-1966*, page 205.
1364. I remember my mother telling me how she and a group of girl friends were visiting at Johann E. Friesens where aunt Gertruda had taken them to the summer kitchen where uncle Johann P. Friesen was on his death bed.
1365. No author, "John P. Friesen," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1366. Interview with Gertrude Friesen Plett, Blumenort, Manitoba, September 13, 1983.
1367. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 392-394.
1368. Website: [www.rosenort.com/history/early\\_pioneers.htm](http://www.rosenort.com/history/early_pioneers.htm)
1369. Maria Reimer, letter to C. L. Plett, February 5, 1934.
1370. John F. Warkentin, "Henry Warkentin," in *Furrows in the Valley*, page 398.
1371. Adapted from John F. Warkentin, "Henry D. Warkentin," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, pages 395-397.
1372. Junia Loewen, "Johann P. Friesen Family," page 4.
1373. *Plett Picture Book*, page 113, footnote 14. On September 15, 1981, I spoke by telephone with Judy Barnes at the Winnipeg offices of the Red Cross, who confirmed they have done a lot of testing of the blood of Plett family members. As well as I can understand her explanation, some members of the Plett family have a rare antigen in their blood which can be used to develop antibodies to combat rare diseases or viruses. If anyone in the family is a blood donor, they automatically check the antigens.
1374. Based on the essay by Junia Loewen, "Johann P. Friesen Family," page 3.
1375. *Friesen - Riesen Genealogy*, page 205.
1376. *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1377. He had a large collection of documents at the time of his death, including a collection of letters written to him between 1910 and 1915: courtesy of Cornelius P. Friesen, Riverton, Manitoba.
1378. He was the son of Peter Isaac, author of the *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern*, frequently referred to herein.
1379. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley*, page 393.
1380. Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," *Dynasties*, pages 319-320.

1381. Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 286-287.
1382. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 221. Peter Isaac includes additional information for all the Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) children.
1383. Gerhard T. Thiessen, page 7, writes that son Klaas married Anna Heidebrecht Thiessen. Klaas died in Long Beach, California, on December 30, 1952.
1384. Courtesy Henry N. Fast.
1385. Gerhard T. Thiessen, "Family Album," page 7.
1386. *Meade Globe*, May 14, 1908 and July 23, 1908—courtesy of Alma Regier, Box 784, Meade, Kansas, 67864, December 29, 1994.
1387. *Meade Globe*, March 11, 1909—courtesy of Alma Regier.
1388. See *Dynasties*, pages 282-285.
1389. Peter L. Dueck, letter to Abram L. Friesen, April 21, 1884, in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pilgrims*, page 48.
1390. Gerhard T. Thiessen, "Family Album," page 7.
1391. *Ibid*, 7. Gerhard T. Thiessen writes that they were the parents to Mrs. Jakob R. Friesen.
1392. *Meade Globe*, May 14, 1908—courtesy of Alma Regehr, Dec. 29, 1994.
1393. Corn. J. Classen, letter, *Meade Globe*, July 15, 1909—courtesy of Alma Regier, Dec. 29, 1994; cf: Johann W. Dueck, "Diary 1910," in Levi Dueck, ed., *Prairie Pioneer*, page 79, who reports that Cornelius J. Classens, Meade, "...own 10 quarter sections of land near Meade and two near Herbert. One of the quarter-sections near Herbert he sold at \$9.00 an acre when they were there."
1394. Lydia Plett Balzer, page 34.
1395. Cornelius F. Plett, 206 South Floral Dr., Hillsboro, Kansas, 67063, letter to the author December 12, 1980.
1396. Cornelius F. Plett, *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1985), 338.
1397. Raymond F. Wiebe, *The Groening/Wiebe Family 1768-1974* (Hillsboro, 1974), page 150.
1398. Unruh, page 363, for possible connections on this Loewen family.
1399. The Peter P. Loewen (1837-1926) adobe house was moved from Hoffnungsthal to Hillsboro where it was made into a museum: Raymond F. Wiebe, *The Groening /Wiebe Family 1768-1974*, pages 124-148. Son Peter S. Loewen (born 1891) was a medical doctor in Wichita, Kansas. See Jakob Z. Wiebe, "Schellenberg Genealogy," unpublished compilation, 16 pages; cf: "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 443.
1400. Jakob Z. Wiebe, *op.cit.*
1401. Plett, *Profile 1874*, page 111. For a picture of Johan F.Thiessen (1840-1917) and his wife, nee Anna Duerksen, see Matilda Wiebe Suderman, *Homestead Memories* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1987), page 96. This book was written by the daughter of Lizzie Thiessen a sister of Helena Thiessen (1881-1961) and includes interesting information and pictures of the Kleine Gemeinde settlement at Jansen, Nebraska. For a listing of the children of Abraham Schellenberg (born 1878) see, Martha Goering, *Friesen Von Riesen Genealogy*, pages 21-24.
1402. Raymond F. Wiebe, *The Groening/Wiebe Family*, page 168-172.
1403. Johann Baerg (1844-1919) was born in Fürstenau, where he was brought up by his father's brothers, who were leaders in that village: see K. Jeanette Rogers, *The Johann Baerg Family* (San Rafeal, California, 1970), for a listing of descendants - courtesy of Tabor College, Hillsboro, 1989.
1404. Jakob Z. Wiebe, "Schellenberg Genealogy."
1405. Frank Z. Wiebe, *op. cit.*
1406. Henry Schapansky, letter August 22, 1992.
1407. Unruh, page 369.
1408. According to the "Sterbe Register der Mennoniten Gemeinde Fürstenwerder 1800-1943", page 74 for the year 1843, Heinrich Plett died in Vierzehnhuben on October 7, 1843.
1409. Peter Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 182.
1410. Anna Isaac Plett, nee Isaac, died on April 11, 1850 - Church Records courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, 1980. Microfilm No. 555 789.

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Eidse, Abraham Spent (1811-91) Fischau/Rosenhof, Man.,	321,784,
Eidse, Cornelius E. (1840-1914), Neuanlage, Borosenko	275,361,
Ellerwald, Prussia,	16,17,18,26,
Enns, Cornelius (1874-1943), Moundridge, Ks.,	166,
Enns, Cornelius F. (1832-79) Blumstein/Gnadenu, Kan.,	203,300,323,
Enns, Heinrich <i>Ält.</i> (1807-81) Fischau,	201,215,225,233,298-300,303,321,329,421,494,497,669,752-4,
Enns, Heinrich H. (1876-1944), <i>teacher and deacon</i> , Blumenhof, Man.,	354,587,
Enns, Heinrich P. <i>teacher</i> (1858-1935), Rosenort, Man.,	321-24,786,
Enns, Isaak (1847-1934), Inman, Ks.,	166,
Enns, Jakob P. <i>deacon</i> (1856-1917), Rosenort, Man.,	320,322,
Enns, Johann T. <i>minister</i> (1850-1917), Rosenort, Man.,	422,587,
Enns, Wilhelmina ("Minna") Plett, <i>matriarch</i> (1815-64), Fischau,	298-300,323,
Epp, Claasz <i>cbiliast</i> (1838-1913),	116,
Epp, David <i>minister</i> (1781-1843), Chortitza, Russia,	379,
Epp, David (b. 1852), Alexanderwohl,	127,140,159-160-1,
Epp, George K., <i>historian</i> , Winnipeg,	9,
Epp, Heinrich (1811-63), Rosenort,	751,



Epp, Jakob (1809-92) Henderson, Neb., .....	796,
Epp, Jakob D. <i>diarist</i> (1820-1890) Judenplan, Imp. Russia .....	379,
Epp, Johann (1892-1955), Kitchener, Ont., .....	90,
Esau, Gerhard (1895-1966), Germany, .....	89,
Esau, Johann K. <i>memoirs</i> (1867-1946) Alexanderfeld, Kan., .....	304,311-12,312,
Esau, Johann Peters (1832-1904) <i>Brandaeltester</i> Fischau/ Rosenfeld, Man. ....	693,
Evangelicals .....	522,524,552,
Ewert, Heinrich H., <i>educator</i> Gretna, Man., .....	283,386,
Ewert, Wilhelm, Charleston, Neb., .....	40,

## F.

Fast, Bernhard <i>Ält.</i> (1783-1861) Halbstadt, .....	109,110,128-9,
Fast, Cornelius W., <i>teacher</i> (1840-1927) Steinbach, Man., .....	236,280,331,358,361,509,544,
Fast, Cornie <i>contractor</i> (b. 1922), Blumenort, Man., .....	467,477,481,
Fast, Heinrich (1826-90) Steinbach, Man., .....	181,186,357,372,
Fast, Johann (1813-92), Schönau/Gnadenau, Ks., .....	121,
Fast, Martin B., <i>editor</i> ; (1858-1949) Reedley, Cal., .....	139,217,
Fast, Peter Isaac (1831-1916) Rückenau/Jansen, Neb., .....	119,181,304,
Fast, Verner <i>contractor</i> (1920-77) Blumenort, Man., .....	467,477,481,
Fehr, Peter P. <i>minister</i> (1908-95), Morden/Steinbach .....	70-71,
Flemish Mennonites, .....	6,7,9,10,15,111-112,174,211,
Francis, E. K. (1906-94) <i>sociologist</i> , .....	439,
Frantz, Heinrich <i>pietist teacher</i> (1812-89) .....	116,752,
<i>Friedensreich Christi</i> , .....	117,208,
Friesen, Abraham <i>Ält.</i> (1782-1849) Ohrloff, .....	168,220,238,349,498,749-50,
Friesen, Abraham F. <i>Rev.</i> (1807-91) Neukirch/ Jansen, Neb., .....	239,409,432,508-9
Friesen, Abraham I. (1862-1938), Herbert, Sask./Dallas, Oregon, .....	242,255,
Friesen, Abraham L. <i>Ält.</i> (1831-1917) Jansen, Neb., .....	201,204-5,207-8,343,361,365,378,515,518-20,756,
Friesen, Abraham M. <i>Schulz</i> (1834-1908) Kleefeld/Blumenort, Man., .....	226,234-5,239-241,244,257,259,272,274,326,345-7,514,516,600-1,649,750,755,757,784,
Friesen, Abraham P. <i>professor</i> (1887-1953), Georgetown, Texas, .....	246-7,249,
Friesen, Abraham R. <i>teacher</i> (1846-84) Lichtenau/Blumenhof, Man., .....	118,329,331,333,335,421,510,573,600,755,
Friesen, Abraham S. <i>entrepreneur</i> (1848-1916) Steinbach, Man., .....	227,244,346,384,432,508-9,
Friesen, Abraham W. (1812-89), Rückenau/Jansen, Neb., .....	168,
Friesen, Abraham W. (1896-1969), Satanta, Ks./Heuboden, Man., .....	593,
Friesen, Cornelius F. <i>teacher</i> (1810-92) Margenau/ Blumenort, Man., .....	536,589,
Friesen, Cornelius K. <i>well driller</i> (1877-1953) Steinbach, Man., .....	196,257,266,632,649,757-8,761-2,768-75,780,
Friesen, Cornelius L. <i>Rev.</i> (1841-1923) Jansen, Neb., .....	361,711,
Friesen, Cornelius P. <i>teacher</i> (1844-99) Blumenort, Man., .....	312,345-6,360,516,649,754-63,782,784,
Friesen, David A. <i>Oberschulz</i> (1807-93), Halbstadt, .....	110,112-113,
Friesen, Dietrich S. <i>teacher</i> (1849-1901), Steinbach, Man., .....	296,
Friesen, Gordon, <i>novelist</i> .....	228-9,
Friesen, Heinrich E., Greenland, Man., .....	449,
Friesen, Heinrich L. <i>farmer</i> (1851-1910), Rosenort, Man., .....	361,366,519,
Friesen, Isaac (1816-95), Waldheim, .....	749-50,
Friesen, Isaac W. (1905-2001), Heuboden, Man./Jagueyes, Mex., .....	237,507,
Friesen, Jakob (1869-1933), Blumstein, .....	89,
Friesen, Jakob B. (1875-1939), Crooked Creek, Ab., .....	182,185,196,
Friesen, Jakob E. (1874-1955), Weatherford, Ok., .....	228-30,
Friesen, Jakob F. (1874-1969), Swalwell, Ab., .....	296,326-7,
Friesen, Jakob K. (1822-75) Nikolaithal, Kherson/ Grünfeld, Man., .....	209,308,
Friesen, Jakob R. (J.R.) <i>car dealer</i> (1879-1950), Steinbach, Man., .....	269,380,427,435,492,
Friesen, Jakob S. <i>editor</i> (1862-1931) Landskrone/Steinbach, Man., .....	268,371,
Friesen, Jakob W. <i>Schulz and deacon</i> (1808-89) Blumstein/ Jansen, Neb., .....	104,107,752,
Friesen, Jakob W. <i>folk historian</i> (1892-1981), Kleefeld, Man., .....	237,353,433-5,439,599,677,
Friesen, Johann (1869-1935) <i>Ält.</i> Neuenberg, West Reserve, Man., .....	378,
Friesen, Johann <i>Ält.</i> (1808-72) Neukirch/ Rosenfeld, Borosenko., .....	109,110,113,199,201-2,204,228,234,300,326,409,750,
Friesen, Johann E. <i>farmer</i> (1881-1971), Blumenort, Man., .....	328,499,604,623,631,634,649-50,658,685,723,757,784-6,790,
Friesen, Johann I. <i>flour mill operator</i> (1860-1941), Steinbach, Man., .....	239,241,243-7,254,
Friesen, Johann K. <i>minister</i> (1857-1934) Rosenort, Man., .....	361,378,381-2,427,461,463-4,540,567,569,606-7,713,
Friesen, Johann K. (1879-1925), Ekron, Man., .....	568,651,729,776-9,
Friesen, Johann P. <i>genealogist</i> (1847-1920) Rosenort, Man., .....	100,241,345-6,658,754,784-7,
Friesen, Johann S. "Asel Friese" (1853-1937), Steinbach/Hochstadt, Man., .....	400,

Friesen, Johann S. "Siemens Friese" (1852-1920), Jansen, Neb., .....	462,520,795,
Friesen, John P. <i>banker</i> (b.1892), New York, .....	248-9,
Friesen, Karolina Plett <i>matriarch</i> (1823-87) Rosenort/Jansen, Neb., .....	103,208,
Friesen, Katharina Plett (1886-1971), Blumenhof, Man., .....	649-57,710,750-4,
Friesen, Klaas <i>Obm</i> (1793-1870) Altonau/Rosenort, .....	239,357,749-54,757,
Friesen, Klaas <i>patriarch</i> (1774-1839) Lindenau .....	173,
Friesen, Klaas F. (1813-56), Paulsheim .....	173,316,
Friesen, Klaas I. <i>teamster</i> (1868-1927), Steinbach, Man., .....	242,255-9,266,521,761,759,
Friesen, Klaas K. (1881-1961), Ekron, Man., .....	614,653,710,713-5,719,723-4,726,728,733-7,756,758-9,780-2,
Friesen, Klaas P. (1854-1926), Meade, Ks., .....	793-4,
Friesen, Klaas R. <i>minister</i> (1870-1942), Steinbach, Man., .....	405,495,525,
Friesen, Margaretha Isaac (1833-1919), Blumenort, Man., .....	345,
Friesen, Maria Isaac (1840-1908), Jansen, Neb., .....	232,274,
Friesen, Maria Plett (1886-1918), Ekron, Man., .....	649,652,711,713-5,733-6,
Friesen, Martin K. <i>farmer/story teller</i> (1881-1976), Blumenhof, Man., .....	234,473,487,604-5,608,610,614,618-21,623-5,629,634,649-57,709,713-4,728,733-4,756-7,780,782,
Friesen, Patrick <i>poet</i> Winnipeg, Man., .....	736,
Friesen, Peter Brandt (1838-1900) Neuanlage, Man., .....	236,
Friesen, Peter Barkman (1867-1933), Neuanlage, Man., .....	236-8,593,
Friesen, Peter E. (1890-1986) Rosenort, Man., .....	784-6,792,
Friesen, Peter I. (1873-1966), Greenland, Man., .....	242,601,
Friesen, Peter L. (1847-74), Heuboden, Borosenko, .....	176,
Friesen, Peter M. <i>historian</i> (1849-1914) Sparrau, .....	8,
Friesen, Peter R. (1842-1904), Jansen, Neb., .....	274,282,359,520,
Friesen, Peter W. <i>Rev.</i> (1815-92) Tiede/Jansen, Neb., .....	282,
Friesen, Peter W. (1895-1917) <i>war fatality</i> , Rush Lake, Sask., .....	7,255,
Friesen, Peter X. (1876-1922), Steinbach, Man., .....	182,185,196,367,
Froese, Franz (1825-84) Rosenort, Man., .....	176,311-12,330,353,
Fürstenwerder, Prussia .....	18,20,22-26,
<i>Fundamentabuek</i> .....	421,749-50,
Fundamentalist/Revivalist (American) religious culture .....	465,489,491,517-8,
Funk, John F. <i>publisber</i> (1835-1930) Elkhart. Ind., .....	171,174,181,235,331,

## G.

Ganglofs, Clausz, .....	208,211,754,
Gelassenheit, .....	10,128,132,141,
<i>Gesangbuch</i> , .....	618,637,
Giesbrecht, Gerhard K. (1872-1945), <i>teacher</i> Blumenort, Man./Montezuma, Ks., .....	222,319-20,563,567,
Giesbrecht, Gerhard R. <i>mayor</i> (1846-1907), Steinbach, Man., .....	319,360,
Giesbrecht, Wilhelm K. (1878-1943), Swalwell, Ab., .....	182,185,196,
Gnadenau, Kansas .....	123,318,
Gnadenfeld Gemeinde, Molotschna, .....	112,121,
Goertz, Abram <i>Alt</i> , Ohrloff, .....	117,119,
Goossen, Anna Klassen <i>widow</i> (1839-1927) .....	225,301,303-4,
Goossen, Cornelius P. (1836-1916), Steinbach, Man., .....	173,225,300,316,321,
Goossen, Franz K. (1862-1929) Hochstadt, Kleefeld, Man., .....	213,267,304,307-311,321,757,
Goossen, George D. <i>poolball operator</i> (1886-1958), Steinbach, Man., .....	266,309,
Goossen, Gerhard (b. 1788) Blumenort, .....	298,
Goossen, Gerhard <i>teacher</i> (1811-54) Schönau .....	225,298-300,
Goossen, Gerhard K. <i>farmer</i> (1859-1937), Rosenort, Man., .....	309,311,
Goossen, Gerhard P. <i>minister/teacher</i> (1836-72) Lindenau/Grünfeld, Bor .....	128,201,267,280,282,300-7,398,752,
Goossen, John D. <i>notary</i> (1884-1951), Steinbach, Man., .....	309-10,
Goossen, Johann P. (1842-1904) Gnadenau, Kan., .....	170-1,180,204,209,213,225-6,306,318,330,
Goossen, Peter B. <i>book store owner</i> (1895-1978), Steinbach, Man., .....	316-7,
Goossen, Peter D. <i>farmer</i> (1890-1972), Greenland, Man., .....	309,654,
Goossen, Peter K. <i>farmer</i> (1870-1944), Rosenort, Man., .....	312-3,
Goossen, Peter P. (1838-1922), Lindenau, .....	300,314,331,785,
Goossen, Susanna Toews (1844-1912), Gnadenau, Ks., .....	171,180,204,214,225-6,318,
Grosse Flemish Gemeinde, Molotschna, .....	8,111-2,204,302,

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Halbstadt church building dispute .....	111,
Hansen, George <i>Aeltester</i> (1636-1703), Danzig, Prussia .....	203,211,346,391,516,
Hamm, Abraham, <i>Russlander refugees</i> , Blumenort, Man., .....	466,
Harder, Abraham A. <i>orphans' bome founder</i> (1866-1941), Grossweide, .....	127,132-4,136-7,

Harder, Abraham Heinrich (1879-1933), Kleefeld, .....	150-2,156,
Harder, Abraham Johann <i>minister/chronicler</i> (1840-1927), Alexanderwohl, .....	104-5,108-9,119,124,126-37,
Harder, Bernhard <i>Evangelist and poet</i> (1832-84) Halbstadt, .....	107,111,114,118,119,121-3,140-1,312,758,
Harder, David Johann (1850-1923), Lichtfelde, .....	127,157-8,160-1,
Harder, David E. <i>professor</i> (1872-1930), Hillsboro, Ks., .....	125-6,
Harder, Elisabeth Plett (b. 1790), Blumstein .....	101,104-5,323,
Harder, Gerhard Johann (1899-1988), Grande Prairie, Alberta, .....	67,
Harder, Heinrich Johann (1848-1907), Kleefeld, .....	123,124,127,132,140-56,159,
Harder, Isbrand (1842-ca.1926) Altona, .....	127,132,138,151,
Harder, Isbrand Heinrich (1886-1942), Gnadenthal/Ufa, .....	153-4,
Harder, Johann <i>patriarch</i> (1764-1827), Blumstein, .....	6,104,168-9,
Harder, Johann (1789-1847), Blumstein, .....	104,105,
Harder, Johann Abraham (1863-1935), Borden, Sask., .....	126,132,
Harder, Johann Abraham, <i>historian</i> Arnaud/Vineland, Ont., .....	152,154,
Harder, Johann Heinrich (1876-1933) .....	143-145,156,
Harder, Johann Jakob (1861-1914), Friedensdorf, .....	67,
Harder, Johann Johann <i>Ält.</i> (1811-75) Blumstein. ....	105-21,128,140,168,206,215,323,
Harder, Johann Johann <i>minister/teacher</i> (1836-1930), Hillsboro, Ks., .....	106,115,121-7,131,138,140-1,159,161-2,
Harder, Johann Johann <i>SDA teacher/minister</i> (1860-1949), Shafter, Ca., .....	125-6,141,
Harder, Leland <i>historian</i> , North Newton, Ks., .....	6,105-164,
Harder, Maria Heinrich (1888-1939), Kleefeld, .....	154-6,
Harms, Isaac <i>Obm</i> (1811-91) Lindenau/Jansen, Neb., .....	170,200,239,346,753,
Harms, John F. (1855-1945), <i>publisber</i> .....	325-6,
Harms, Karolina Plett Friesen <i>matriarch</i> (1822-87) .....	342,752-4,
Heese, Heinrich, <i>teacher</i> (1787-1868), .....	109,
Heinrichs, Marie Doerksen (b.1909), Satanta, Ks., .....	504,619,
Hespeler, William <i>Consul</i> (1830-1921) .....	210-11,244,281,340,
Hiebert, Johann (1816-90) Alexanderwohl/Grünfeld, Man., .....	306,311,
Hildebrandt, Maria Doerksen Toews (1854-1918), .....	171-2,179-80,209,227-9,
Hildebrandt, Gerhard <i>Ält./professor</i> , Göttingen, Germany, .....	49,53,
Holdeman, Johann <i>Ält.</i> (1832-1900), .....	181,211-12,215,220,246,311,341-3,364,422,574,756,
Holdeman's Gemeinde .....	181,186,188,213,218,257,320,342,379,383,422,515,521,585,587,
Hooge, Johann, Friedensruh, .....	33,
Huebert, Heinrich <i>Ältester Ausgetretene</i> (1810-95), .....	113,
Huebert, Helmut, <i>surgeon and historian</i> , Winnipeg, .....	46,60,

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Isaac, Abraham (1827-90) Pordenau, .....	282,302,
Isaac, Abraham F. (1883-1962), Swalwell, Ab., .....	278,
Isaac, Abraham L. (1881-1962), Kleefeld, Man., .....	288,
Isaac, Abraham P. <i>Rev. and teacher</i> (1852-1938) Schönau, Man., .....	181,211,213,233,257,272,275,280-88,302-4,321,327,521,
Isaac, Anna Plett (1766-1807), .....	20,796,
Isaac, Anna Plett, <i>widow</i> (1813-87) Schönau/Kleefeld, Man., .....	231-3,235,280,
Isaac, David F. (1874-1912), Rosenort, Man., .....	275-7,279,320,
Isaac, Frank L. (1894-19790), Kleefeld, Man., .....	287-9,
Isaac, Franz (1784-1853), <i>patriarch</i> Tiede, .....	231,
Isaac, Franz P. (1838-1928), Alexanderfeld, .....	232-3,235,240,272,321,347,359,
Isaac, Franz W. <i>Minister; historian</i> (1816-1900) Tiede, .....	7,107,114,118,129-30,202,205,231,
Isaac, Margaret Loewen (1855-1930), Kleefeld, Man., .....	285-87,
Isaac, Jakob F. <i>Ältester</i> (1883-1970), Meade, Ks., .....	378,427,429,630,632,700,
Isaac, Johann F. (1881-1926), Ekron, Man., .....	277,722,
Isaac, Johann P. (1836-1920), Grünfeld, Bor./Kleefeld, Man., .....	204,232-3,235,267-70,272,281,304,307,344,
Isaac, Johann W. (1809-64) Schönau .....	231-4,298,
Isaac, Peter (1780-1877), Tiede, .....	800,
Isaac, Peter <i>folk historian</i> (1846-1924), Swalwell, Ab., .....	6,21,101,102,231-4,236,267-8,273-80,284,304,359,399,758,

## J.

Jahnke, Helena Friesen (1859-1919), <i>journal keeper</i> , Blumenort, Man., .....	537,
Jahnke, Gottlieb (1854-1938), Blumenhof, Man., .....	367,425,535,537,
Jansen, Helena von Riesen (1822-97), Shidlitz, Prussia/Berdjansk, .....	240,749,
Janzen, Cornelius P. <i>farmer/journal keeper</i> (1863-1941), Ridewood, Man., .....	678,734,764,776,
Janzen, Johann (1842-1905) Blumenhof, Man., .....	496,599,677,
Janzen, Sarah Siemens <i>matriarch</i> (1809-85), Grossweide/Jansen, Neb., .....	342,

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Käpplé, Sara Helena (b. 1912), .....	147-7,
Kirchenkonvent .....	109,117,
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Klassen, Abraham B. <i>Rev.</i> (1850-1935) Swalwell, Albt., .....	222,275,
Klassen, Abraham Regehr <i>minister</i> (1828-1906), Prangenu/Alexanderfeld, Ks., .....	203-5,209,329,331,
Klassen, Cornelius J. (1863-1931) Meade, Ks., .....	428,
Klassen, David <i>delegate and Brandaeltester</i> (1813-1900) Margenu/ Rosenhof, Man., .....	174,176,178-9,506,
Klassen, Eduard and Christine, <i>barpist</i> , .....	63,
Klassen, Jakob (1832-1918), <i>KMB Ält.</i> , Inman, Ks., .....	125,
Klassen, Johann (b. 1838), Heuboden/Steinbach, Man., .....	358,365-6,373,
Klassen, Martin (1823-ca.1888) Fischau/ Paulsheim/ Hoffnungsfeld, Kan., .....	755,
Klassen, Peter B. (1852-1930), Neuanlage, Man., .....	602,633,
Kleefeld, Molotschna, .....	140-56,326-7,
Koop, Bernhard, Tiegerweide, .....	58,
Koop, David N. (1904-75), Landmark, Man., .....	593-4,
Koop, Heinrich <i>Ält.</i> , Alexanderkrone, .....	50,
Koop, Jakob B. (1858-1937), Neuanlage, Man., .....	591,621,624,626-7,631,634,711,729,
Koop, Jakob N. (1890-1951), Satanta, Ks./Blumenort, Man., .....	424,499-501,569,790,
Koop, Johann (1831-97) Mariawohl/Neuanlage, Man., .....	339,512,589,586,598,604,644,676-7,
Koop, Johann B. (1863-1935), Neuanlage, Man., .....	591,626-7,631,
Koop, Katharina Barkman <i>matriarcb</i> (1832-1923), Mariawohl/Neuanlage, Man., .....	618,711,713,
Koop, Klaas (1825-1916), Jansen, Neb., .....	242,359,793,
Koop, Peter B. (1870-1956), Neuanlage, Man./Herbert, Sask., .....	591,605,620,626,631,677,682,710,
Koop, Peter S. (b. 1914), Steinbach, Man., .....	440,452-3,455,458-9,460,
Kornelsen, Abraham E. <i>deacon</i> (1845-93), Heuboden, Man., .....	515,
Kornelsen, Cornelius U. <i>cheese maker</i> (1904-63), Blumenort, Man./Jagueyes, Mex., .....	493,
Kornelsen, Cornelius W. (1876-1951), Heuboden, Man., .....	507,
Kornelsen, Gerhard E. <i>teacher</i> (1857-1933), Lichtenau, Man., .....	245,400-1,462,
Kornelsen, Gerhard G. <i>teacher</i> (1878-1958), Steinbach, Man., .....	288,384,757,
Kornelsen, Gerhard S. <i>teacher and Brandaeltester</i> (1816-94) Lichtenau/Steinbach, Man., .....	210,321,373,
Kornelsen, Heinrich E. <i>correspondant</i> (1860-1931), Steinbach, Man., .....	353,359,
Kornelsen, John U. (1902-81), Rosenort, Man., .....	716,721-2,742,745,
Krimmer Brüdergemeinde .....	123,125,140,176,203,213,229,318,
Kravetz, Margaretha Plett, Hierschau, .....	46,
Kroeker, Abraham Toews (1896-1933), Steinbach, Man., .....	367, 392,
Kroeker, Cornelius Plett <i>farmer</i> (1862-1942), Steinbach, Man., .....	359,361,365-71,373-4,381,392,395,537,569,664,
Kroeker, Cornelius Toews <i>oil dealer</i> (1888-1960), Steinbach, Man., .....	358,366,368,371,381,
Kroeker, Franz (1799-1853), Margenu, .....	357,
Kroeker, Franz M. (1827-1905), Kleefeld, Mol./Steinbach, Man., .....	170,326-7,332,343-4,357-63,365,372-4,400,426,506,511,516,
Kroeker, Franz T. (1892-1928), Landmark, Man., .....	366,694-5,
Kroeker, George C. (1890-1972), Arnaud, Man., .....	58,
Kroeker, Gerhard (1893-ca.1944), Neu-Schönsee, Sagradovka, .....	82,
Kroeker, Henry T. (b. 1902), Steinbach, Man., .....	369,
Kroeker, Jakob M. <i>Ält.</i> (1836-1913) Rosenhof, Man., .....	178,316,359,361,373,378,425-6,515,518,711,715,
Kroeker, Jakob B. <i>Ält.</i> , Rosenort, Man., .....	461,522,543,569,590,
Kroeker, Johann T. (1906-96), Steinbach, Man., .....	369,
Kroeker, Margaretha Plett (1842-1920), Kleefeld/Steinbach, Man., .....	273,319,348,350-3,357-63,374,377,421,426-7,511,527,619,
Kroeker, Peter B. <i>minister</i> (1873-1955), Steinbach, Man., .....	366,370,541,556,726,733,
Kroeker, Peter M. <i>Rev.</i> (1840-1915) Rosenort, Man., .....	178,331-2,359,361,506,510,754,
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Lange, Johannes, <i>minister/pietist</i> .....	116,
Loewen, Abraham D. (1864-1961) Rosenort, Man., .....	374,
Loewen, Abraham T. (1856-1944), Swalwell, Ab., .....	187,240,272,
Loewen, Abraham T. (1893-1970), Steinbach, Man., .....	290-97,
Loewen, Abraham W. <i>minister</i> (1833-86) Hierschau/Kleefeld, Man., .....	190,206,290,305,331,422,512,
Loewen, Cornelius B. (1863-1928), Steinbach, Man., .....	384,387,524-5,558,
Loewen, Cornelius T "C. T." (1888-1960), <i>entrepreneuer</i> , Steinbach, Man., .....	259-66,371,406,475,477,483,762,769,
Loewen, Cornelius W. (1827-93) Grünfeld, Borosenko/Steinbach, Man., .....	329,339,341-2,360-1,372,573,
Loewen, David W. (1836-1915) <i>chutor owner</i> , Lindenau/ Hochstädt, Man., .....	187,311,339,421,

Loewen, Heinrich F. <i>minister</i> (1862-1935) Jansen, Neb., .....	353,359,710,795,
Loewen, Heinrich R. (1859-1946), Fairbanks, Texas, .....	524,
Loewen, Isaac <i>deacon</i> (1787-1873) Lindenau .....	170,173,200,206,325,510,750,
Loewen, Isaac P. (1891-1963), Blumenort, Man./Jagueyes, Mex., .....	445,689,698,
Loewen, Isaac W. (1845-1926), Rosenort, Man., .....	374-5,
Loewen, Jakob T. <i>building mover</i> (1895-1961), Steinbach, Man., .....	265,477,484,762,769,
Loewen, Johann D. (1862-1934) Rosenort, Man., .....	374,
Loewen, Johann W. <i>deacon</i> (1823-81) Kleefeld/Rosenhof, Man., .....	326-7,329-30,334,339,
Loewen, Margaretha Friesen (1894-1975), Steinbach, Man., .....	241-2,259,262,266,
Loewen, Peter W. (1825-87) Hierschau/Hochstadt, Man., .....	280,339,357,
Loewen, Peter W. <i>minister</i> (1853-1917), Neuanlage, Man., .....	361,378-9,
Loewen, Wilbert, Steinbach/Winnipeg, Man., .....	258,

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Markuslandt .....	200,234,
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Martens, Peter (1847-1929), Henderson, Neb. ....	35,
<i>Martyrs' Mirror</i> .....	211,235,240,331,388,393,494,523,637,
Mathies, Jakob (1760-1804), Altona, .....	749,
Mathies, Peter (1863-1935), Tiegerwiede, .....	66,
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Penner, Anna Plett (1909-85), Spanish Lookout, Belize, .....	628-9,631,640,673-5,
Penner, Archie <i>Rev. and theologian</i> , Kola, Man., .....	259,
Penner, Aron M. <i>farmer</i> (1887-1963), Greenland, Man., .....	309-10,
Penner, Abraham <i>Waisenman</i> (1847-1918) Blumenort, Man., .....	516,535,644,754,
Penner, Abraham K, <i>contractor</i> , Blumenort, Man., .....	525,558,
Penner, Abraham R. (1874-1956), Twincreek/Steinbach, Man., .....	487,502,557,620,679,
Penner, Cornelius (1854-99), Blumenort, Man., .....	234,267,588,
Penner, Cornelius R. <i>minister</i> (1882-1963), Blumenort, Man., .....	444,462,632,790,
Penner, Elisabeth Reimer (b. 1904), Steinbach, Man., .....	756-9,
Penner, Glenn, <i>genealogist</i> , Glueph, Ont. ....	15,16,20,22,
Penner, Isaac C. (1904-64), Neuanlage, Man./Spanish Lookout, Belize, .....	617,623,633,673-5,
Penner, John I. (1893-1973), Kleefeld, Man., .....	187,271,284,289,
Penner, John R. <i>farmer/bridge builder</i> (1879-1952), Blumenhof, Man., .....	602,618,620-1,623,629-30,632,642-4,652,722,
Penner, Klaas F. (1875-1939), Blumenort, Man., .....	443,673,698,714,
Penner, Martin R. <i>Rev.</i> (1849-1928) Blumenort/Greenland, Man., .....	213,234,281,
Penner, Martin M. (1882-1963), <i>businessman</i> Steinbach, Man., .....	182,185,197-8,
Penner, Peter H. (1839-1916) Blumenort, Man., .....	225,235,244,
Penner, Peter <i>patriarch</i> (1816-84) Margenau/Blumenort, Man., .....	234-5,240,267,
Penner, Peter A. <i>minister</i> (1878-1956), Greenland, Man., .....	6,192,284,575,580,654,
Penner, Peter K. <i>trucker</i> Steinbach, Man., .....	447,478,525,759,
Penner, Peter R. <i>mercant</i> (1877-1951), Blumenort, Man., .....	449,644,653,705,
Penner, Sarah Doerksen (1892-1994), Blumenort, Man., .....	348,350,
Penner, Sarah Plett (1881-1939), .....	629-30,642-4,
Peters, Johann, <i>doctor</i> Grünthal, .....	361,373,
Philips, Dirk, <i>Ältester</i> , (1504-68), Danzig, .....	203,241,243,637,
Pieters, Pieter <i>Ältester</i> (1574-1651), .....	169,211,215,239,391,495,518,528,637,
Plett, Anna Isaac (1777-1850), Vierzehnhuben, Prussia, .....	800,
Plett, Abraham Abraham (1875-1913), Clearbrook, B.C., .....	42-43,
Plett, Abraham D. <i>entrepreneur</i> (b.1895), Steinbach/Rosenort, Man., .....	405-8,
Plett, Abraham Julius (1841-1913), Mt. Lake, Mn./Rosthern, Sask., .....	42-43,

Plett, Abraham L. (1859-1934) Blumenhof, Man., .....	6,322,329,339,344-5,347-8,352,359,403,422,447-9,488,496,514,525,527,535,548,568,585,587,589,596-641,650,653,667-8,677,685,703,707,720,722,737,
Plett, Abram A. K. (1884-1955), Dallas, Oregon, .....	486,603-4,607,616,630-1,646-8,710,
Plett, Abram D. K. Plett (1903-83), Landmark, Man., .....	705,745,
Plett, Abram F. (1900-48), Blumenort, Man., .....	490,499,591,594,
Plett, Abram Nikolai (1902-87), Abbottsford, B.C., .....	93-95,97,
Plett, Abram Peter (1887-1967), Friedensfeld, Sagradovka, .....	77-80,
Plett, Abram R. (1897-1979), Greenland/Blumenort, Man., .....	422,436,448,461,464,479,481,487,523,701,
Plett, Ben R. <i>farmer</i> (1911-87), Blumenhof, Man., .....	338,436,441,446-50,468,471,490,493-4,502,625,661,
Plett, Bernhard Julius <i>Schulze</i> (1861-1916), Hierschau, .....	56-57,
Plett, Cornelius (1849-1920), Lehigh, Ks., .....	31,797,
Plett, Cornelius <i>Schulz</i> (1820-1900) Kleefeld/Blumenhof, Man., .....	6,146,208,210,212-3,235,274,280,312,323,325-56,358-9,400,409,425,496,506,514,516,573-4,585,596-7,600-1,707,784,
Plett, Cornelius A. K. (1896-1970), Linden, Man., .....	610,616-7,623-4,629-30,646,664-5,672,700,
Plett, Cornelius D. K. (1892-1967), Landmark, Man., .....	590,622,680,684,694,699,
Plett, Cornelius F. <i>conference moderator; historian</i> (b. 1910), Hillsboro, Ks., .....	36,797,
Plett, Cornelius F. (1885-1944), Blumenort, Man., .....	589-90,593,
Plett, Cornelius, J. K. Plett (1900-76), Blumenhof, Man., .....	711,716,722,725,743,
Plett, Cornelius L. <i>Rev.</i> (1846-1935) Kleefeld/Blumenhof, Man., .....	5,181,225,316,322,325-7,329-30,344-5,347,350,352,354,358-9,361-3,378-9,381-2,399,401,409,421-3,433,443,496-7,502,516,520-3,521-7,538,546-8,561-2,567-9,573-4,575,585,587,589-90,597-8,600,606,619,677,681-6,707,719-29,
Plett, Cornelius R. <i>deacon</i> (1891-1971), Blumenort, Man./Jagüeyes, Mex., .....	437,443,448-9,461,469-71,476,610,629,631,662-3,
Plett, Cornelius Wiebe (1849-1920), Marion Co., Ks., .....	36-38,
Plett, David Abraham (1886-1981), San Jose, Ca., .....	43,
Plett, David D. K. (1889-1930), Landmark, Man., .....	680,682,686,693-7,699,703,
Plett, David Julius (1863-87), Hierschau, .....	58,
Plett, David L. (1863-1953) Blumenhof, Man., .....	6,319,322,335,345-6,350-2,438,451,487,496,502,514,525,527,579,585,589,590-1,596-7,599,604,619-22,626-7,631,633,635-6,652,660,676-90,693,702,707,713-4,719-20,724,729,
Plett, David R. (1906-69), Blumenhof/Hadasville, Man., .....	446,449,464,702,
Plett, Elisabeth Esau (1893-1976), Landmark, Man., .....	693,
Plett, Elisabeth Reimer (1870-1947), Blumenort, Man., .....	432-95,509,513,523,527-9,
Plett, Esther Smit Merkers <i>matriarch</i> (1778-1855), .....	98-103,
Plett, George R. <i>lumber merchant</i> (1909-60) Blumenort, Man./St. Catherines, Ont., .....	446,451,456-7,459,475-86,491-2,
Plett, Gerhard Gerhard (1888-1938), Hierschau, .....	7,53,56,
Plett, Gerhard Gerhard <i>minister</i> (1882-1937), Fürstenwerder, .....	64,
Plett, Gerhard Julius (1860-1933) <i>Ält.</i> Hierschau, .....	8,49-55,
Plett, Gerhard Kornelius <i>minister</i> (ca.1891-1937), Hierschau, .....	8,47,
Plett, Gerhard Peter (1857-1931), Tiegerweide, .....	64-65,
Plett, Gertrude D. K. (1900-89), Blumenhof, Man., .....	681,687-9,695,702,
Plett, Gertrude Friesen (1913-93), Blumenort, .....	468,473,490,605,630,655-6,759,
Plett, Gertrude Koop (1861-1943), Blumenhof, Man., .....	575,596-641,685-6,
Plett, Harvey, <i>Rev. and historian</i> , .....	697,706,
Plett, Heinrich (1769-1843), Vierzehnhuben, Prussia, .....	20,800,
Plett, Heinrich E. <i>farmer, entrepreneur</i> (1870-1953) Blumenort, Man., .....	5,322,347,401,421,422,426,428-9,432-97,502-4,513-5,520,523,525-6,530,535,541,600,615,662,690,702,728,772,
Plett, Heinrich Gerhard <i>chronicler</i> (1887-1950), Herschel, Sask., .....	64-65,
Plett, Heinrich Jakob (1877-1929), Münsterberg, Sagradovka/Winnipeg, .....	69,
Plett, Heinrich Michael <i>minister</i> (b. 1852), Alexanderfeld, Sagradovka, .....	73-74,
Plett, Heinrich R. <i>businessman/Vorsteher</i> (1896-1976), Blumenort, Man./Jagüeyes, Mex., .....	428-9,448-50,453,455,461,469-71,476,492,618,625,653,663,669-70,705,
Plett, Henry (b. 1912), Henderson Hwy, Wpg, .....	69-71,
Plett, Helena Smit (1809-29), Schönwiese, .....	101,103,
Plett, Isaac B. <i>Eisenkünstler</i> (1867-1933), Steinbach, Man., .....	360-1,372,400-7,564,684,
Plett, Isaac D. <i>inventor</i> (b. 1887), Steinbach, Man., .....	264,405-8,
Plett, Isaac D. K. (1906-88), Linden, Man., .....	705-6,
Plett, Isaac L. (1844-71) Friedensfeld, Borosenko, .....	330,398-99,
Plett, Isaak Jakob (b. 1906), Morden, Man., .....	92,
Plett, Jake, <i>Evangelist</i> (1936-78), Calgary, Ab., .....	87,
Plett, Jakob D. K. (1902-79), Blumenhof, Man., .....	686,703-4,
Plett, Jakob F. (1897-1973), Satanta, Ks./Blumenort, Man., .....	499,561,590,594,
Plett, Jakob Jakob (1872-1924), Schönwiese, Slavgorod, Siberia, .....	91,
Plett, Jakob Jakob (1895-1938) Altai, Siberia, .....	91-92,

Plett, Jakob J. K. (1904-74), Steinbach, Man., .....	462,689,711,715,720,725-6,745,
Plett, Jakob Johann (1836-93), Pordenau, .....	68,69,
Plett, Jakob Julius (b. 1854), Plescanowo, Neu-Samara, .....	44,
Plett, Jakob L. (1864-1931) Blumenhof, Man., .....	322,345-6,348,353-4,426-7,462,496,502,514,524-5,527,585,587,596-7,599,601,604,608,614,619,621-2,624,634,636,649,676,678,683-4,699,707-32,733-4,738,742-3,781,783,
Plett, Jakob Michael (b. 1833), Ohrloff, .....	91,
Plett, Jakob R. <i>lumber merchant</i> (1908-69), Blumenort, Man., .....	428,431,445-6,448-9,451,454,467,471,475-86,491-3,
Plett, John A. K. (1883-1957), Linden, Man., .....	350,602,606,614,623,629-30,645-6,678,
Plett, John D. K. (1896-1984), Blumenort, Man., .....	604,649-50,680,684,696,700,
Plett, John F. <i>centenarian</i> (1887-1989), Satanta, Ks./Blumenort, Man., .....	589-90,593-5,
Plett, John R. (1899-1943), Blumenort, Man., .....	397,427,447-8,473,
Plett, Johann <i>Stammvater I</i> , Ellerwald, Prussia .....	6,11,12,15,16,
Plett, Johann <i>Stammvater II</i> (ca 1730-ca.91), Fürstenwerder, Prussia .....	16,20,21,22,27,
Plett, Johann <i>III</i> (1765-1833) Sparrau, .....	5,6,20,21,23,28,98-103,168,325,750,
Plett, Johann Gerhard <i>Ält.</i> (b. 1927), Bechterdissen, Germany, .....	53,
Plett, Johann Heinrich (b. 18900, Neu-Schönsee, Sagradovka, .....	75,
Plett, Johann Joh. (b. 1821), .....	62,
Plett, Johann Johann (1860-1922), Schöntal, Barnaul, Siberia, .....	83-84,
Plett, Johann Johann (1881-1933), Neuland, Paraguay, .....	84,
Plett, Johann Julius (b.1842) Mt. Lake, Mn./Oregon, .....	44,
Plett, Johann Michael (b. 1786), Pordenau, .....	31,
Plett, Johann Michael (b. 1829), Neukirch, .....	83,
Plett, Johann Michael (1840-19140, Inman, Ks., .....	34,
Plett, Johann L. (1855-1900) Blumenhof, Man., .....	339,343-4,348,352,355,496,523,538,574,585-8,598-9,601,604,634,
Plett, Johann (Hans) Peter (1891-1978), Neuland, Paraguay, .....	77,81,
Plett, Julius Joh. (1817-92), Pordenau/Hiertschau, .....	41,50,
Plett, Katharina W. (1884-1933), Blumenhof, Man., .....	538,
Plett, Klaas Jakob (1877-1921), Schönwiese, Slavorod, Siberia, .....	93-97,
Plett, Klaas R. (b. 1900), Jagueyes, Mex./Arborg, Man., .....	428,433-4,438,447,449,487,492,520,616,
Plett, Kornelius Julius (1859-95), Hierschau, .....	46,
Plett, Kornelius J. J.M.M. <i>pentecostal proselytizer</i> (1891-1961), Alma Ata/Coaldale, Ab., .....	85-86,
Plett, Leslie, <i>genealogist</i> , Calgary, Alberta, .....	6,591-2,602,648,
Plett, Margaretha Warkentin Reimer (1841-1913), Blumenhof, Man., .....	343,
Plett, Maria Brandt <i>widow</i> (1843-1927), Friedensfeld/Steinbach, Man., .....	357,359,373-4,398-402,511,525,573,720-2,724,
Plett, Maria Koop (1868-1918), <i>journal keeper</i> , Mariawohl/Blumenhof, Man., .....	707-32,
Plett, Michael (1761-1826), Halbstadt, .....	6,7,20,28,29,104,
Plett, Michael Joh. (1812-80), Kleefeld/York Co., Neb., .....	34,36,146,326-7,797,
Plett, Michael Michael (b. 1790), Neukirch, .....	72,
Plett, Michael Michael (1819-99), Ufa, Russia, .....	73,
Plett, Nikolai Klaas (1903-94), Schönwiese, Altai, Siberia, .....	95-97,
Plett, Peter (1740-83), Tiergarten, Prussia, .....	16,27,
Plett, Peter A. <i>folk historian and deacon</i> (1898-1990) Landmark, Man. .....	5,283,524,550,599,607,610-8,620,629,634,636,638,640,646-7,653,663,665-8,
Plett, Peter F. (1884-1970), Neuanlage/Landmark, Man., .....	524,589,591-2,
Plett, Peter Jakob (1881-1954), Rudnerweide, .....	31,69,
Plett, Peter Johann <i>chronicler</i> (1830-1907), Tiegerweide, .....	31,64,
Plett, Peter D. K. <i>farmer</i> (1899-1989), Blumenort, Man., .....	434,677,688,701,
Plett, Peter L. <i>deacon</i> (1858-1944) Blumenhof, Man./Satanta, Ks., .....	344,352,358-60,380,423,427,496,499,527,561,569,574-5,585,589-597,599-600,610,634,651-2,678,721,
Plett, Peter Michael (1861-1925), Friedensfeld, Sagradovka, .....	77,
Plett, Peter Peter (1867-1920), Tiegerweide, .....	66,
Plett, Peter Peter (b. 1904), Hershel, Sask., .....	66,
Plett, Peter R. (1894-77), Blumenort, Man./Spanish Lookout, Belize, .....	448-50,455,463,469-71,476,493,496,605,618,620,623,653,662,670-2,
Plett, Sarah Loewen (1822-1903), Blumenhof, Man., .....	325,344,353,522,
Plett, Sarah Toews (1849-72), Fischau, .....	299,347-9,421,498,
Plett, Willi, <i>hockey player</i> , .....	81,
Plettenberg, Joachim von (1739-93), Leeuwarden, .....	13,
Plettenberg, Germany, .....	13,
Poetker/Petker, Gerhard (1845-1908), Henderson, Neb., .....	39-40,
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Redekopp, Elly (b. 1912), Virgil, Ont., ..... 419-20,688,  
 Regier, Jakob (1832-1906) Hierschau/ Kleefeld, Man., ..... 176-7,306,421,  
 Regier, Cornelius *Ältester* (1743-94) Rosenort, Prussia ..... 497,758,  
 Reimer, Anna Friesen (1874-1963), Blumenort, Man., ..... 756-7,759,765,  
 Reimer, Abraham D. (1886-1954), Blumenhof, Man., ..... 605,608,610,623,631,633-4,648,660-1,682,723,  
 Reimer, Abraham Friesen "*Fuela*" (1808-1892) Rosenort/Blumenort, Man.,  
 ..... 171,174,234,280,304,326,330,332-3,336,339,341-4,346-7,357,399-400,432,506,508-10,514,516,528,596-8,756-7,  
 Reimer, Abraham P. ("Brandt") (1884-1933), Steinbach, Man./Satanta, Ks. .... 566,755,  
 Reimer, Abraham P. (1882-1961), Clearsprings, Man.,  
 ..... 434,463,511-14,523,525,527,530,538,548,556,558-61,569,728,757,  
 Reimer, Abraham R. *deacon* (1841-91) Kleefeld/ Blumenort, Man.,  
 ..... 234,326-7,339,343,423,509,512,514,528,585,597,765,  
 Reimer, Abraham R. *deacon* (1915-81), Blumenort, Man., ..... 429,477,482,566,754,  
 Reimer, Abraham R. E. (1890-1964), Blumenort, Man., ..... 689,698,  
 Reimer, Abraham W. *lumber merchant* (1860-1930), Steinbach/Giroux, Man., ..... 389,  
 Reimer, Aganetha Barkman (1863-1938), Steinbach, Man., ..... 191,  
 Reimer, Aron W. (1865-1944), Littlefield, Texas, ..... 535,582,  
 Reimer, Ben D. *educator/dispensationalist*, Steinbach, Man., ..... 491,545,  
 Reimer, Cornelius P. *farmer* (1880-1946), Steinbach, Man., ..... 427,434,513-4,523-6,530,535,556-8,561,569,  
 Reimer, David P. *Ält.* (1894-1963) Blumenort, Man., ..... 6,326,347,349,350,427,459,463,515,521-2,524-7,530-1,533,537,544-5,549,554,558,564,567-72,628,630-1,684,708,729,732,790,  
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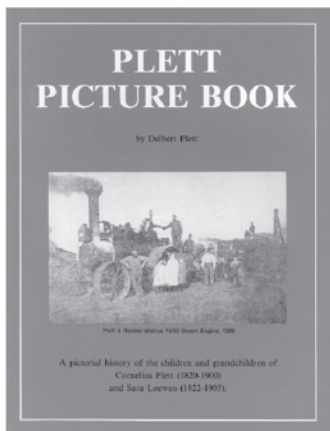
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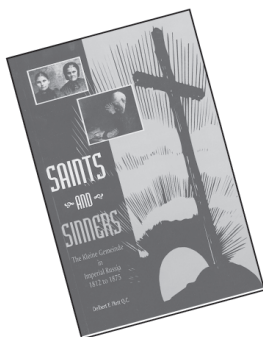
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