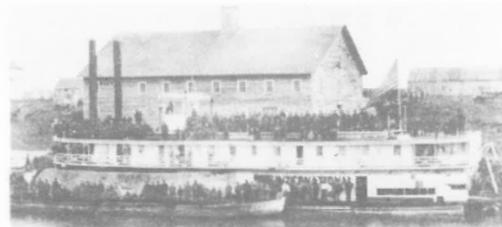


Preservings

-being the Newsletter of the Hanover / Steinbach Historical Society Inc.



No. 2 July, 1993

A Treasure Come Home

Stored within the Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach, Manitoba is a Bible dated 1630. It has a leather cover, is bound together by string and weighs about 15 lbs. The movements of the Bible have been carefully documented through hand inscribed notes on the inside cover of the book. As one follows these notes, one gets a true glimpse into the life of a Bergthaler Mennonite from the years 1630-1993.

The very first note establishes the ownership and gives us the first documented travel route of the Bible:

1793, I, Abraham von Riesen from Neundorf, bought this book for 5 Rubel, 50 Corr.

Abraham von Riesen was born in 1769 in Prussia. He brought the Bible with him when he emigrated to Russia along with his fellow Mennonites. The Bible then travelled to Nieder Chortitza where, upon Abraham's death in 1823, Jacob (Abraham's son) bought the Bible from his mother "als nachlass" (inheritance) for 36 Rubel.

Painstakingly written the notes continue, giving not only the history of the movements of the Bible, but the family tree and other notes and events important to an immigrant family. For example, important to Jacob was the sermon that Cornelius Regier and Cornelius Warkentin preached on April 7, 1794. Cornelius Warkentin preached on the first holiday of Easter having Mark 16:1 + 7 as his text and Cornelius Regier preached on the other Easter holiday choosing the 14th Chapter of the Ep. Paul to the Romans as his text.

Rev. Heinrich Friesen's inscription is dated Nov. 11, 1877. He had bought the Bible from his father Jacob for \$10.00. He was living in the Bergthaler village of Schoenfeld at the time together with his wife's family. It is clear as one reads his notes, that Rev. Friesen inherited a rich past, full of new places, much involvement in the church and close family ties. There is no question that this was an important part of the Friesen luggage as they joined the Bergthaler movement, emigrating to Canada in 1874. The Bible was to winter



— photo by Doris Penner

continued on page 8

Miss Mary Enns with the Friesen Bible.

HSHS Opens a Window into History

"It is exciting to see one's history come alive in a book," stated Dr. John Friesen at a book launching ceremony held at the SBC auditorium on March 21, 1993. Published by the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, the *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* created a stir among the Bergthaler people as they gathered to celebrate the publication of another piece of their history. This most recent publication will, for the first time, enable the Bergthaler people to trace their family tree through information provided in the Church Registry dated 1843-1876. People will be able to find the name of the ship the family travelled on through The Quebec Passenger List as well as the area they settled in when they arrived through the 1881 Federal Census List. With complete indexes by the editor John Dyck and Historical Society worker Cathy Barkman this book "meets the genealogical requests of the Bergthaler people in a way that has not been possible before" replied Rev. Bill Hildebrandt, Bishop of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church.

"Let the story of your family be a window into history," urged Dr. Friesen. Genealogical records such as these contain a lot of information: marriages, baptisms, how many children they had, how many died, etc. "See the joys, the excitements and the pain experienced revealed in these records." These records are a way of telling a faith history in an authentic way.



Left to right: John Dyck, Cathy Barkman, Aron Friesen, Rev. Bill Hildebrandt, Delbert Plett, Dr. John Friesen.

"Faith is not carried by an individual," Dr. Friesen went on to say. "Although a personal faith experience is valid, it is not validated by oneself." One's history is confirmed in a long history of a struggle for faithfulness. The Bergthaler story is part of a long history of people struggling for faithfulness within an ongoing community.

People and institutions who were instrumental in producing this book were recognized as Delbert Plett, president and

founder of the HSHS presented Bill Hildebrandt, representative of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church and Reeve Aron Friesen, representative of the Rural Municipality of Hanover with a copy of the book. The book is available for purchase at The Mennonitische Post office in Steinbach or may be ordered by phoning John Dyck at 326-6451.

— Irene Enns Kroeker

"A Treasure Awaiting Discovery"

For those of us who are descending from a Bergthaler background, the publishing of the "Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch" is a real godsend. Our reaction to this book may range from indifference, (same as talking about "toyoascha schnee") to mild interest, to "This is what I've been waiting for!" Some of our own people refer to this curiosity about where we come from and to whom we are related as a "Mennonite" disease. However, the growing desire of people everywhere to discover their roots leads me to believe that we Mennonites are actually in the vanguard of this movement and need not be apologetic.

Some of our family histories are already published, others have theirs well started, and then there are those who feel the need to get something started but are at a loss how to get beyond what "Uncle John or Aunt Helen" knew or were not quite sure of. To illustrate the first category I'll use my own history. The Peter P. Hiebert book 1841-1984 was published in 1985, and my mother Mrs. Tina G. Hiebert (who took over

the work of collecting the information) thought that Peter Hiebert of 1841 was as far back as there was information. While searching through the "Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch" I discovered two more generations beginning with Heinrich Huebert, born 1791. Also of note but as yet unexplained is why the name changed to Hiebert around 1825-30.

The "need to get started but don't know where to look" category I think is best illustrated by a friend of mine. Sensing that she had an interest in genealogy I gave her a copy of the "Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch". Inquiring a week later how she liked the book she confided "daut boek haft me aul fail fi siemt." From having no names complete with birthdates beyond 1901, she has now been able to trace her father's family back to 1740, or four more generations. The increasing number of pages of notes tucked between the pages of the book lead me to believe that others will also benefit from her research.

I am indebted and thankful especially to

Mr. John Dyck and also to those who deciphered and typed from the microfilm copies for what must have seemed a long time. The "Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch" is a real treasure just waiting to be discovered.

— Orlando Hiebert

You are invited to join the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society. Your membership will bring you this newsletter, the joy of supporting historical research in our local area, and the opportunity to have your own work brought to public notice.

Send \$10.00 to:

HSHS
Box 1305
Steinbach, MB.
R0A 2A0

“Material Culture” Provides Historical Insight

The Mennonite Heritage Village, hosting the annual Hanover Steinbach Historical Society meeting, set the scene for the topic “Material Culture of the Mennonites,” held on February 12-13. The HSHS had invited Dr. Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen, Curator of the Kaufmann Museum in North Newton, Kansas and co-author of the book *Mennonite Furniture: A Migrant Tradition*.

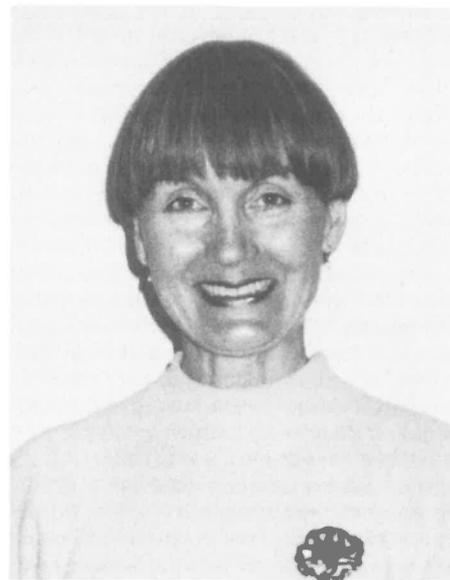
Comparing various items of Mennonite furnishings found in the Prairie States to those in the Russian steppes, Dr. Janzen unfolded a fascinating story of a people whose material “things” depicted a society that remained distinct and separate from the surrounding culture. She led us through a period of immigration via slides and personalized stories of the families and the craftsmen involved in the creation of these furnishings. Mennonites, finding identity and continuity in the midst of chaos through their possessions, often sanctified these objects with Biblical messages and religious decorations. Dr. Janzen replied “Things embody who we are and what we are historically . . . they concretize history.”

Dr. Janzen emphasized the importance of presenting history that focuses not only on the spectacular and the beautiful, but also that which is humble, simple and handmade.

She presented several functional pieces of furnishings important to the survival of a pioneer family: the central kitchen/heating systems, benches, bedding, cream separators and many other items. Also presented were children’s toys, lovingly crafted by grandfathers. These remembered miniatures give important clues to forgotten items of the past.

Dr. Janzen expressed the urgent need to photograph traditional pieces of furniture and other household items, as they are fast disappearing from our Mennonite culture. “Do not be narrow in the time frame of what you collect,” Dr. Janzen urged, “as this will tell a more complete and continuing story of the people.”

Books were on display by *Mennonite Books* and the *Hanover Steinbach Historical Society*. An announcement was made regarding the soon to be released *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* containing four significant documents: a church registry of the members of the Bergthal community from 1836-1876; three early Chortitzer church registers of the East Reserve 1878-1907; the Quebec Passenger List of Mennonite families arriving in Canada between 1874 and 1880 and the Hamburg Passenger List; as well as the 1881 Census list of the East Reserve, the West



Dr. Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen

Reserve and the Scratching River settlement. Preorders are currently being accepted by contacting John Dyck at the HSHS office, 326-3537.

— Irene Enns Kroeker

A Treasure yet to come: Historical Sketches of The East Reserve 1874-1910

Sometime within the next twelve months the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society is expecting to publish the third volume in the East Reserve Historical Series under the title *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve 1874-1910*. The book will be divided into three sections.

The first section, under the heading “Village Sketches,” will include brief histories of 18 pioneer villages. Sixteen of those villages were not covered in the previous volume, *Working Papers of the East Reserve Village Histories 1874-1910*, and the other two will add information to the previous work.

This will bring to 24 the number of villages on which the society has published sketches and will add substantially to the information readily available on many villages that dotted the East Reserve landscape in the 1870s and 1880s.

The second section, under the heading “Biographies of Pioneer Leaders,” will provide biographies of three pioneer church leaders and four leaders from the business and farming community. All of these were born in Russia and ably served the East Reserve community during the early years.

They each left an indelible mark on the community.

The third section will deal with a variety of topics, including education among the early Chortitzer, the emigration to Paraguay, writing family history, a sample family history, early immigrants from the Puchtin community in Russia, the relationship of early local farmers with the outside world and a review of the print culture of the East Reserve. Each of these articles will stimulate the thinking of readers.

Twenty-one writers have devoted much time and effort to research and write these chapters in order to preserve the history of the early pioneer period of what is now the Rural Municipality of Hanover. They have produced an excellent variety of documents that include something for every reader.

Previous books published by the society include: *Oberschulze Jakob Peters 1813-1884, Manitoba Pioneer Leader*; and the first two volumes in the East Reserve Historical Series: *Working Papers of the East Reserve 1874-1910* and *Bergthaler Gemeinde Buch*.

John Dyck

Books of Ongoing Interest

At Evangel Book Store

Introduction to Mennonite History
C. Dyck, now revised. Available in fall
about \$20.00

At Mennonite Heritage Village

Genealogy Books

Abram & Anna Falk Braun
Family Reflections 1860-1991
200 pp., hard cover w/pic. \$35.00

The Muensterberg Huebert
419 pp. with photos \$37.50

Heinrich Fast Reimer and
Margaret Warkentin Family Book
319 pp. \$14.50

Abram J & Marie Toews Family
104 pp. with pictures \$30.00

Memoirs and Family Book
of Johann B. Toews, 1993
83 pp. \$7.50

The Descendants of Ohm
Abraham Wiebe
1831-1991
304 pp. with pictures, hard cover \$50.00

Heinrich F. Wiebe Family Book
112 pp. \$7.50

Kashubisch

During my 20 years of law practice in Steinbach I have become very aware of the different Low German or Plattdeutsch dialects spoken in the area. In speaking to clients the distinctions such as Old Colony or Molotschna origins, quickly become obvious. Within that context it is even more fun to try to establish people's history from their dialects or accents. e.g. Sommerfelder or Chortitzer and Brüderthaler or Holdeman.

But as a young lawyer I also became aware that Plattdeutsch or Flat German as Armin Wiebe calls it, had no monopoly in this area, and that other dialects were spoken as well. I recall sitting around the horn at Pete's Inn two decades ago when friend Art Mantie would thrill me with a statement like, "Kast all'es hab'e vas de Hein'a le'ge, blosz di E'g'e nicht." Spoken slowly I could barely get the meaning of the phrase, but I was completely lost when it came out in rapid machine gun staccato. Art told me that the language was called Kashubisch but could tell me little else of its origins.

Here was something new and absolutely fascinating. The language was spoken in the area southeast of Steinbach, known as Friedensfeld. The name — as far as I can figure out — was given to the region by the first Kleine Gemeinde pioneers who took out homesteads in the area in 1874. It was named after a village of the same name in the Southern Ukraine where Steinbacher, Rev. Jacob M. Barkman (1824-1875), had lived prior to the immigration. These settlers soon abandoned the inhospitable and in places very stony ground in favour of better land in Greenland and elsewhere. By the 1890s ethnic Germans — some of whom had first worked for Mennonite farmers north of Steinbach — started settling in Friedensfeld. The name is generally associated with German Lutherans today.

Although only a mile or two down the road, Friedensfeld was a world away in some respects. Its culture was fascinating and "Kashubisch" was only one of the components which made it so. Who today has heard of "Schmerkin" parties, "hay mow" barn dances, or the home brew distillers which once made the area famous. I should be quick to add — before I get too many people mad at me — that the average Friedensfelder was a God-fearing, law abiding, hard-working, honest, and church-going, "salt-of-the-earth" type; goodness knows, they had to be, to build up the beautiful dairy farms which one sees in driving around the district today, not to mention, the fields full of stone piles which were gathered by hand in the good old days.

Many — but not all — of these fascinating people spoke Kashubisch. When Professor Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen, addressed our annual meeting on February 13, 1993,

she referred to the Kashubians and explained that they were the indigenous people of the Vistula delta. Immediately "me the lights on went." In her book, Professor Janzen explains "... (that) the Kashubians were a Slavic folk, with a distinctive dialect who specialized in fishing and whose riverside villages were developed on the western edge of the Vistula Delta" (pages 47-8). This was the area later settled by the Dutch and North German Mennonites in the 1540s and onward. So here was the answer to the puzzle that had intrigued me for the better part of two decades.

The other day, machinery dealer Eldon Fuchs shared a delightful phrase with me. "Gout rup schlau'we, wat 'te fiere" meaning "Giv'em the gas, and we'll get through

(the mud hole)." Recently I again met friend Art Mantie in the coffee shop. No, Pete's Inn is long gone. It is now only a state of mind in the fantasies of rebel Steinbachers such as poet Pat Friesen. Today we meet at places like Robin's, sitting around silly little tables. Art explained that the families that spoke Kashubisch included the Biedlers, Freunds, Fiebelkorns, Manties and Emil Krentz. He added that many families spoke only Kashubisch in the home so that the children first learned to speak German in school. Other German dialects were also spoken in Friedensfeld. Schwabisch was spoken by Karl Eriszt and the "old" Mrs. Miller. But more about this some other time.

— Delbert F. Plett

Visit with Urry

On May 8, 1993, I attended the Symposium on Nationalism held at Concord College in Winnipeg. Professor James Urry from Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand, was one of the speakers. Later he joined me for supper. We sat at a window table in "Mertiens" overlooking the skyscrapers of the inner City. We had a "hoot" of a time, as James would say. Our discussion rambled over everything from the "Platte Kut'a" to his penchant for entertaining during his lectures — a gift which comes from his maternal vaudeville forebears.

It occurred to me that the work of Urry has been most important for a group such as ours. The field of Russian Mennonite history until 20 years ago was denominated by historians who could barely see beyond the edict of Peter M. Friesen, that the Kleine Gemeinde (and presumably all other conservative Mennonite groups) were a Godless lot, and the pronouncement of Frank H. Epp that the Berghaler descendants of the Chortitzer/Old Coloniers were a lower genetic and social-economic race.

In contrast, Urry has come to the field as an outsider with no preconceived notions or baggage of historical misconceptions. As an anthropologist he has also brought to the subject a complete new set of ideas and conceptualizations which fit in well with the modern-day interest in social history as opposed to the former exclusive concentration on "the story of the kings and queens." In fact, this dovetails with the predilection of our researchers who are primarily interested in telling and interpreting the story of

what happened here in our own area and how it is impacting on people's lives today. I believe that the completion of Urry's theses, "The Closed and the Open" in 1978 and the publication of *None but Saints* in 1989 marked the beginning of a new era in Russian Mennonite historiography; an era much more open to new ideas and ways of understanding things and which allows all groups of this background to claim their proper place in history.

James chuckled as he ordered the wild boar. He insisted that it be fresh; he wanted to hear the "shot" — presumably like some rich *Gutsbesitzer* in the steppes of southern Russia, eh? My plate of roast beef was superb. Klassen, the *maitre de*, dropped by to tell us the story of his roots in Brazil. The Henkel-Trokken was great. Who said Henkel was only the name of a German bomber plane in WW2?

Then we got on the topic of the matriarchy — or matriline, as James preferred to call it — and why it was more powerful in the *Kanadier* societies than those that stayed in Russia after 1874. Well, we didn't come to any firm conclusions, but hopefully James will address this question in his forthcoming study of the Grunthal area. I was delighted to hear that he has another year of leave coming up in 1994 and that he intends to use this time to complete this project. This work will undoubtedly represent another important benchmark of the historiography of the East Reserve — R.M. of Hanover.

— Delbert F. Plett

President's Report

This year is not even half over and yet it is already obvious that 1993 will be a significant one for the HSHS. The decision to invite Professor Reinhild Janzen, Curator of the Kaumann Museum in Kansas to speak on the topic of "material culture" at our annual meeting in February (see report elsewhere in the Newsletter) reflected a Board decision that much of the groundwork for the research and study of the villages of the East Reserve from 1874 to 1910 had been laid. No the task is not nearly done — in fact, it is only barely begun. But we can be proud of our success in ferreting out primary source documents and publishing the same and of the numerous excellent articles which have been researched and written.

Material culture is a somewhat stilted phrase referring to the physical objects and spaces which human beings use in their day to day existence, e.g. pottery, tools, buildings, etc. The study of material culture has become a thriving industry in areas such as Waterloo County, Ontario, and among the Amish Mennonites of Pennsylvania. Almost every month, one sees a publication announcement for yet another book on quilts, or *fraktor* art. But the field is almost totally unexplored in Southern Manitoba. It was our hope that a speaker such as Professor Janzen would inspire us in the task of gathering information regarding material culture artifacts. Unfortunately, older people who still know something about these "old" chests, lamps, clocks, linen or dishes are rapidly dying off. This underlines the urgency of our quest. I would encourage readers to submit for publication in our Newsletter, a picture of their favourite antique together with a write-up of the history of the article, e.g. where it was acquired, by whom, and its subsequent owners and locales.

The book launch for Volume Two of our "East Reserve Historical Series" published under the name *Berghal Gemeinde Buch*, more than anything else, shows the maturing of our Society. It means that many of the primary sources for research on the Manitoba Mennonites are now available in published form. What was only a faint dream at the time of the founding of the HSHS in 1988 is now a reality. What is more, Volume Three of this series is presently nearing completion for publication under the title *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* which will be a 400 page collection of articles written by local researchers and historians.

It has been exciting to see a number of "new" people such as Kathy Friesen Barkman, Linda Buhler and Irene Enns Kroeker becoming active in researching and writing. Surely, there are others who will also want to become involved. There is material here for literally dozens of Master's and Doctor-

al Theses. Hopefully some of our local university students will also choose to pursue this opportunity to get involved in ground-breaking research of great significance to the history of our Province.

In looking at the years ahead, I think that our recently launched Newsletter under the able editorship of Wilmer Penner, will prove to be most significant. It will serve as a means of recording our own activities and of communicating the same to our membership and constituency — which consists of the populace of the R.M. of Hanover and Town of Steinbach. But it will also provide our researchers with a vehicle for publication of tidbits and anecdotes which do not warrant an article in our Historical Series, and yet, which often are the most interesting. Some suggestions for the Newsletter include a series on "interesting" characters of the area, historical homes and buildings, century farms, and a series of biographies about local historians and history makers.

An issue which needs to be looked at in the future is the relationship of our Society with respect to the Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach. Our objective is to foster research and writings. We see ourselves as supplementing the work of the Museum. We are most certainly not competing or conflicting with it in any way. And yet, the ques-

tion remains, are there ways in which we could work closer together. One suggestion has been to co-sponsor meetings and seminars together. The hosting of a speaker such as Reinhild Janzen is very expensive and the idea of several organizations sponsoring such an event together, certainly has merit. Another area which will need to be addressed in the forthcoming years is whether the activities of the society should be expanded to include genealogy. This is an important category of study with an active group of researchers in the area.

Finally, in these times of recession and budget cut-backs, we too have seen a curtailment of our financial support. This has meant that we have temporarily had to lay-off our research director John Dyck. We are hopeful that the various funding agencies will approve our funding for 1993 and that our research program will not be unduly restricted. The collection of data, the writing and publication of historical material of the village period, 1874-1910, of the East Reserve (now R.M. of Hanover) remains our number one objective and it would be a tragedy if our efforts in this regard would have to be curtailed.

— Delbert F. Plett

And then there was the "Haube"

After attending both of Dr. Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen's presentations on Mennonites' material culture, I realized how much there was to learn about our material traditions. My growing interest focussed on a recently acquired "haube" which I had found at a local MCC Thrift Shop. Dr. Janzen's recommendation to read Melvin Gingerich's book *Mennonite Attire Through Four Centuries* proved to be an eye opener. It had never occurred to me that the progression of Mennonite clothing would have been such a complicated issue.

After discussing the "haube" (a married woman's head covering) with a number of people, it became obvious that each Mennonite branch seemed to have its own version. Some women had worn only a black kerchief while others had worn their kerchiefs over their "haube". Women in the more conservative churches had ribbons to tie them under the chin. The Chortitzer women had clung to its usage much more religiously than had some others. A haube belonging to a Mexican Mennonite woman had a much longer lace "train" which hung well

onto the shoulders.

The "haube" was a source of pride (and sometimes rivalry) even among the more humble women. While there was no time for women to do crafts as we enjoy them now, their creativity and handiwork were displayed in the sometimes ornate caps which they trimmed with ruffles, ribbons, rosettes and even beads — all in black, of course. For those women in the West Reserve who could afford to have one custom made, a new one could be bought in the 1920s for as little as \$10 from Mrs. Bernard Wiebe in Altona. The cost for repairing or remaking one was \$6.

The more well-to-do women owned two — one for everyday and one for Sundays and visiting. Since it was the custom to be buried wearing the better one, there are few left other than those in our museum or those that have been handed down in the family.

After seeing the intricate hand stitching and fine workmanship it seems appropriate to say "hats off" to these pioneering women.

— Linda Buhler

Book Report

Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 370 oages. Paperback. \$24.95 available at Mennonitische Post, the Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba and Evangel Book Store.

Born and raised on a turkey farm in Blumenort, Manitoba, Royden K. Loewen is known locally mainly for his 1983 community study *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Man., 1983), 669 pages. This was a groundbreaking work which tapped the abundant records and writing of the pioneers who settled in the Steinbach area in the 1870s and demonstrated that these early settlers were a people of rather impressive cultural and religious achievements.

Since that time Royden has gone on to complete his doctorate in 1990 at the University of Manitoba. He has earned wide recognition as a scholar contributing frequently to various academic journals and presenting learned papers at conferences all over North America. But a prophet is not known in his own land, they say, which is also true here. This, however, will change with the publication of his second book *Family, Church, and Market*, in which he has rewritten his doctoral dissertation in a book form for a wider audience.

In academic circles the book will enhance Royden's reputation as a recognized scholar in the field of ethnic studies and rural social history. The book is a case study of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde which originated as a reform group in the Molotschna Colony in Imperial Russia in 1812 and emigrated *en masse* to Steinbach, Kleefeld, Blumenort and Rosenort, Manitoba and Jansen, Nebraska, during the 1870s.

In this pioneering work, the author successfully presents the position that the conservative Mennonites who came to Manitoba in the 19th century, carefully orchestrated their emigration, choosing economically viable locations for settlement and consciously articulating the continuation of these communities in order to preserve their religious and cultural ethos. This thesis is a direct contradiction of the views of earlier scholars such as Frank H. Epp who presented conservative Mennonite groups such as the Kleine Gemeinde as a hapless band of reactionaries, witlessly driven from pillar to post by forces completely beyond their control. For this reason *Family, Church, and Market* is one of the most important books writ-

ten in recent years relative to Manitoba Mennonites, comparable, perhaps, to James Urry's classic 1989 study of the Mennonites in Russia *None but Saints*.

But the book is much more than merely a ground-breaking academic work. It is well-written in concise and yet very readable prose. Royden has done extensive research on his topic, travelling as far afield as Kansas, Nebraska, Mexico, and Belize to gather the abundant primary source materials which he used to develop his presentation. He tells the story of the Kleine Gemeinde for the first time from a cultural and socio-economic perspective as opposed to a merely religious standpoint.

It is fascinating to read of the strategies for survival which this group successfully developed in Russia during the 1820s and 30s, and which were recast in the North American context 50 years later, to ensure their continued cultural survival. This is also the first major historical work with special chapters devoted to the role of women in these pioneer communities. In addition, the influence of the matriline and matriarchy within long established "old order" communities such as the Kleine Gemeinde is outlined relative to major decisions made by the settlers, such as in which village to settle and so on.

Of great value to the general reader is the fact that each chapter is filled with anecdotes and stories. These will be of interest to family historians and genealogists who will be exposed for the first time to valuable primary sources such as the Russian era diaries of Abraham F. Reimer (1808-1892), who had the interesting nickname of "Fulla Reimer." Reimer is the ancestor of 90 percent of the population of Blumenort and a goodly portion of Steinbachers today.

Family, Church, and Market will be essential reading for anyone with even a passing interest in the culture and history of the Steinbach/Hanover area. The Hanover Steinbach Historical Society is very proud of the national acclaim which Royden has achieved. We are also very conscious of the positive impact which the publication of this book will have on the culture and identity of our community.

We salute Royden for choosing to expend his rich talents on a topic relative to his home community rather than a purely academic subject which might well have been more beneficial to the development of his professional career. Since the writing of history articulates the self-identity of a people which in turn impacts integrally on their success and

happiness, we are glad that Royden has made this choice. We congratulate him for this rather significant achievement.

Delbert F. Plett, Q.C.
Steinbach, Manitoba
June 26, 1993

En Baat Silberfeldschet Spoß

As I look back on my childhood I'm filled with many fond memories. One that I seemed to appreciate more and more as I grow older is that I was able to spend the first 24 years of my life living with my grandfather. We lived in Silberfeld. His name was Cornelius Krause, well-known farmer, butcher, and trucker. He was the son of the original settler that moved into Silberfeld area. When he was about eight years old his parents moved into the "Britte Staape", opening up off reserve land to the Mennonites. As I think back upon my childhood I think I can truly say that even though I never experienced pioneer life I had the fortune of being able to share some of the customs and maybe even some of the folklore with them firsthand.

One thing that sticks out in my mind about my younger years is those terrible encounters with the much dreaded "Yale Tain" (Yellow Tooth). I always thought that probably all Mennonite children got to know this individual but recently I was surprised to learn that he probably only lived in Silberfeld and never went outside the community. As best as I can remember he probably was a friend of my grandfather's. At least it was through him that I got to know this ever-smiling, yet dreaded character. Somehow he always appeared at our window, gazing in at us when my brothers and I were at our very best irritating our grandfather. Many times when we were hard at it, he would say, "Look there is the 'Yale Tain' watching you through the window." We would look and sure enough there was the rascal. His big golden yellow tooth was clearly visible in his pitch black face. Many times this "Yale Tain" spoiled our evenings of terror and it wasn't until many years later that my youngest brother mentioned to me that now since the "Yale Tain" was gone from Silberfeld he wondered if it couldn't have just been the reflection of the glowing coal oil lamp in the window that spoiled our otherwise wild and noisy evenings.

— Jac Doerksen

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Jacob S. Friesen

Jacob S. Friesen, also known as "Dretja" Friesen, had a significant influence on the development of the East Reserve through the publication of a local German newspaper first known as the *Volks Bote* and later the *Steinbach Post*. While his intention was that of providing a newspaper with Christian ideals it also inadvertently became a vehicle of entrepreneurship of the increasingly fast growing business community in the Steinbach area. It is difficult to imagine the rapid growth of these enterprises without the opportunity of extensive and sometimes embellished advertising in this local paper. It complimented and supported the economic growth of a community which otherwise was not particularly favoured in terms of its geographic location.

Jacob Schellenberg Friesen was born in the Molotschna village of Landskrone on Jan. 18, 1862. Likely his parents were anwohner in this village since by trade his father, Heinrich D. Friesen, was a painter and dyer of cotton cloth who had moved from Lichtenau to Landskrone and later to the Crimea. At the age of 14 Jacob arrived in Canada with his parents. They overwintered in Ontario and then proceeded to the new village of Hochstadt in the Manitoba East Reserve in 1877.

The family had few relatives to offer support in their difficult pioneer years since none of this Friesen clan had made the migration to North America. Jacob's mother, Katherine had one brother, Gerhard Schellenberg, living in the near vicinity. When Jacob's father passed away on July 1, 1877, the family was left in a difficult strait and the burden of being the provider fell on Jacob since his older brothers, Heinrich and Gerhard were already married.

It is perhaps small wonder that Jacob never loved to farm. Over the years he was involved in numerous occupations and enterprises. His son Peter, in a brief biography, states that his father worked as an engineer on threshing outfits for a number of years. He helped in the windmill and pump trade in Janzen, Nebraska for four years. After attending cheesemaking classes in Winnipeg he served as cheesemaker in Gruenfeld for seven years. In winter he repaired watches and fitted eyeglasses. During these years of occupational changes Jacob with his young family lived in Langdon, North Dakota; Janzen, Nebraska; Gruenfeld, Rosenfeld and Blumstein.

Finally in 1909, in Gruenfeld, Jacob bought a small printing press and began producing letterheads and other small printing jobs for his neighbors. This venture developed into a full-time occupation when a number of Giroux businessmen invited Jacob to publish a small newspaper, the *Giroux Advocate*. With the promise of support from

these men, Jacob moved his family to Giroux, bought a larger printing press and began a publishing business. The paper, however, was not as successful as originally hoped for and was soon terminated.

With the help of his family Jacob then published a small German paper which he called the *Volks Bote*. The first issue of December 1913, solicited subscriptions from interested readers in Canada and the U.S.A. Getting good reader support, Jacob moved the business to Steinbach and renamed the paper the *Steinbach Post*. The business community of Steinbach and area very quickly became aware of the value of advertising and filled the pages with new and wonderful accounts of the products they promoted. In this way the *Steinbach Post* had a significant role in the growth of Steinbach.

In 1924 the Friesens decided to retire and sold the business to Arnold Dyck. Jacob in his early retirement years again enjoyed the work of watch repair. However, shortly after this his health began to fail and he passed



away on May 16, 1931.

— Henry Fast
May 20/93

Pennerings

We need your articles.

This second edition of the *Preservings* shows us again the possibilities that a local history window offers all of us. Your particular interest can be put on public record.

Henry's article of Jacob S. Friesen may remind you of an interesting character in your community's past. The evocative talks given by Dr. Janzen on material culture inspired Linda to write about the "Haube". What artifacts are in your possession that show the daily life of our people? Not all need be as rare as the Bible Irene reports on to be interesting. Royden's important book reminds us that more and more of our peo-

ple are bringing out books on our Mennonite life—we need to hear about them. Orlando's response to the *Bergthal* book reports helps us seek out significant readings. Houses and places and names have valuable histories worth recording.

And of course, articles such as Jake's "SpöB" and Del's "Kashubisch" remind us that the range of articles is limited only by the alertness of your eye- or ear.

So all readers! Send me your article for publication in the January *Preservings*.

— Wilmer Penner
Box 1305
Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0

Book Review

Regina H. Neufeld, compiler, *Hiebert Heritage 1883-1993: Descendants of Jakob S. and Katharina Hiebert* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1993), 208 pages, \$32.50. Reviewed by Irene Enns Kroeker.

As I paged through the family book *Hiebert Heritage 1883-1993*, I was impressed with the vast amount of information which it contained. Along with genealogies and pictures, the families have been brought alive through touching stories which have been repeated over the generations and now have been recorded for everyone to read.

Compiled by Regina H. Neufeld, the idea for the book had its beginning as a result of several Hiebert reunions. Included in the book are 2224 descendants of Jakob (1883-1906) and Katharina Hiebert

(1855-1916). This couple lived in the village of Schoenthal in the Bergthal Colony, South Russia, and immigrated to Canada in 1875. They settled near Niverville (Schanzenfeld), and many of their descendants still live in the area today.

Grateful for their heritage, the family acknowledges their strong faith in God which had led them throughout the generations. The Hiebert family has challenged all of us through their statement: "As we page through the book may we be challenged to uphold the beliefs and ideals of our forefathers and keep faith that God will guide and protect us in the future as He has throughout the years. Ours is a rich heritage, one to be cherished and remembered."

A Treasure Come Home

in Ontario for a season before stopping for a time in East Reserve, namely Hochfeld, Manitoba.

Serving Rev. Friesen well during his ministry years, careful plans were made for the preservation of the Bible. The following is a diary entry of Rev. Friesen, dated April 22, 1904:

“The boys were all here. We talked about the big Bible and the land and what we will do when we sell it. The Bible will go to Jacob and the land to Heinrich and Abraham for \$6.00/acre that is, here in the village. The 80 acres hayland for \$5.00. David will also get a portion of the hayland.”

The importance that was placed on the value of God’s written word is evident in this brief diary entry. It was to be the Bible that would be passed on to the firstborn son; the land rights would be divided between his other sons. When Rev. Friesen died on Sept. 12, 1921, he was comfortable in the knowledge that his most cherished possession

was well looked after in the hands of his oldest son.

The Bible however, was to continue to lead an exciting and very full life. It was lucky enough to witness a period of immigration to Paraguay, disappointment with this untamed land, reestablishment in British Columbia and a trek to Minnesota.

Giving the Bible to his daughter Agatha, Jacob was the first Friesen to pass it on to a female. She took it with her when she and her husband A.J. Harms emigrated to Paraguay in 1948. They were quick to return to Canada however, settling near Agatha’s parents in British Columbia.

A grandchild to Agatha, Mr. Abraham J. Friesen, offered to buy the Bible from Agatha for \$25.00, and Agatha was quick to agree. Abraham lived in Butterfield, Minnesota and was to pay a further \$2.00 for the shipping costs.

The last inscription, written in English and dated April 14, 1950 reads:

I bought this family Bible from my uncle Abraham J. Friesen for \$30.00, being the fifth generation to own this book.

signed: Jacob L. Friesen

The Bible is currently in the proud possession of Jacob T. Friesen, a son to the last mentioned Jacob L. Friesen. He is the sixth generation to be in possession of this Bible. Living in North Newton, Kansas, he had stored the Bible within a controlled environment in the Bethel College Historical Library. Last year, travelling to Manitoba and touring the facilities of the Mennonite Heritage Village, he offered the museum an indefinite loan of the Bible.

It is fitting that, in 1993, the Friesen Bible has found its resting place in the lap of Mary Enns, a loyal member of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church (the established church of the Bergthaler people of the East Reserve) in Steinbach, Manitoba, and a granddaughter to Rev. Heinrich Friesen.

— Irene Enns Kroeker

“New Years Wish” of Johann Koop, Muntau, 1808

This beautiful “Schönschreiben” was received by the Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, sometime in the 1970s. When I came across the document during some research in 1982, no history was available; so I decided to do some detective work. I found out that the article had been donated by Gertrude Klassen (1892-1986), a well-known Chiropractor of Kleefeld, Manitoba.

According to Anne Klassen, a foster daughter and niece of the donor, this item was originally in the possession of the donor’s grandfather Johann Koop (1831-1897). She remembers that it was always carefully stored away in the “Schlopebank.” It was a treasured family heirloom passed on from one generation to another.

Johann Koop (1831-1897) was a wealthy farmer formerly from Muntau, Molotschna, who established the village of Neuanlage (presently Twincreek), three miles northwest of Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1878, together with three sons and two son-in-laws. Additional information about this family is found in the *Koop Family Register 1801-1974* and in Roy Loewen’s book on Blumenort.

According to family records, the father of Johann Koop (1831-1897), was Johann Koop (1801-1838). The family has always been associated with the village of Muntau. Benjamin H. Unruh, in his book *Die Mennonitische Ostwanderung*, page 307, has record of a Johann Koop family living on Wirtschaft 14 in this village in 1808 who had a son Johann who was six years of age at the time. This was the author of the “Schönschreiben.”

The “New Years Wish” of Johann Koop, 1808, is a beautiful example of its genre. A copy of the document and an English translation is published by Ethel Abrahams in her 1980 *Frakturmalen und Schönschreiben*, page 50. Unfortunately she incorrectly described the document as being from Muntau, Prussia.

The story of an artifact adds immeasurably to the enjoyment of its beauty and an appreciation of its cultural significance. The “Schönschreiben” of Johann Koop is a work which all his descendants and indeed, all Russian Mennonites can be proud of, for it speaks well for the society which it represented.

D. Plett, 1984

