

Preservings

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



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"A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make their history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great." *Jan Gleysteen*

Steinbach: Feature Story

D. Plett, Editor *Preservings*

Introduction.

Anyone who has flown the Minneapolis to Winnipeg Flight on a moonlit winter night has been favoured with a fabulous view of Steinbach: the lights of the diagonal streets in the centre highlighted by orange globes around the square mile, glistening pristinely like a giant diamond on the snow driven prairie.

In 1985 the "Shunning" vaulted local poet Patrick Friesen into national renown. The popular drama also left fellow Canadians with the impression of Steinbach as a community of simpletons ruled by bigoted Bishops whose major form of entertainment on cold winter nights was to isolate, marginalize and drive to suicide any independent thinking parishioners.

The Winnipeg media seemingly loves to portray Steinbach as a group of money mad car dealers who drop "gospel tracts" into the pockets of their customers after they have been emptied of cash. By the 1930s many citizens of the community had abandoned the sturdy but sometimes dour faith of the pioneers in favour of American Fundamentalism. This made Steinbach vulnerable to all manner of Bible Belt stereotypes.

But the articles in this special issue of *Preservings* tell the story of another Steinbach: of clergymen such as Prediger Jakob M. Barkman and Bishop Peter R. Dueck with a vision for building community--starting schools, ministering to the needs of the poor and marginalized; of teachers such as Gerhard E. Kornelsen and Dietrich S. Friesen, who taught Christian values and not merely the 3 Rs; of



A windmill at work in Amsterdam, Holland, April 23, 1996. Abraham S. Friesen (1848-1916) built the Steinbach windmill in 1877. Although it was only used for two years and then sold to a Rosenort consortium, it has been adopted as a symbol of the Town of Steinbach as well as the Mennonite Heritage Village. Photo by D. Plett April 23., 1996.

entrepreneurs such as Klaas R. Reimer and C. T. Loewen who put community before personal profit; of newspaper men such as Jakob S. Friesen and Arnold Dyck, who provided a medium of communication for their people; of pioneer matriarchs such as Elisabeth Rempel Reimer and the sisters Thiessen: Aganetha Giesbrecht and Katharina Warkentin Barkman Loewen, who not only built the community with bare bleeding hands but also provided the emotional strength and fortitude to sustain it.

These were the people who provided the cultural and social ethos which attracted newcomers to the infant village: from people like the influential former delegate Cornelius P. Toews, and book seller Johann W. Dueck; and locals such as Joseph Lambert, b. 1876 of La Broquerie, who got his first job working for Abraham W. Reimer at Pine Hill; to others such as Peter H. Guenther, Heinrich Sobering and Heinrich Kruetzer who came to Steinbach to find employment and refuge from their former homes in Europe.

Together they made Steinbach not just a place of business, but a place to call home; they made it special and truly Manitoba's "jewel of the southeast."

Announcement

Klaas R. Reimer (1837-1906) and Abraham S. Friesen (1848-1916) were two of the most important figures in Steinbach's early history. Excellent biographies of these two dynamic entrepreneurs by Dr. Royden K. Loewen and historian Ralph Friesen, respectively, were presented at the HSHS annual meeting on February 7, 1992. These papers were published in John Dyck, editor, *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, 1994): Royden K. Loewen, "Klaas R. Reimer: From Rags to Riches but not from Village to World," pages 304-312; and Ralph Friesen, "The Story of Abraham S. Friesen: Apostle of Progress, Agent of Change," pages 245-286.

Historical Sketches is a volume of 722 pages of historical material about the Hanover Steinbach area. It is available from the HSHS, Box 1960, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0, for the unbelievably low price of \$30.00 plus postage.

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Steinbach: "Is there any place like it?"

D. Plett, editor

"Steinbach: Is there any place like it?" was the theme chosen by Gerald Wright for his popular history of the community published by Eugene Derksen and Derksen Printers in 1991. The question posed begs an answer as to what factors or traits in fact do make the Town different.

In 1986 Dr. Al Koop and Dr. David Flynn, King's College, London, Ontario, Professors of Economics and Sociology, respectively, compiled a paper comparing the characteristics and traits of Steinbach, Altona and Winkler, the three major Mennonite communities in Manitoba. Professors Koop and Flynn provide some interesting perspectives regarding the differences between them. Their presentation provides a helpful focus to a discussion of the factors which make Steinbach the special place referred to by Gerald Wright.

1) From Denominational to Regional Centre:

Three denominations of Mennonites--Kleine Gemeinde (KG), Bergthaler and Old Colony--emigrated to Manitoba in 1874-6 where they were largely responsible for building Southern Manitoba as we know it today. They each had their own historical, cultural and religious distinctives. Each group in time also developed their own trade centre within the Province. A comparison of the three communities provides some interesting perspectives as to what made Steinbach unique and different.

Steinbach was well located to be the business centre of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) with clusters of villages centred around Blumenort to the north and Kleefeld (Grünfeld) to the west.

By 1876 the nucleus of a Bergthaler trade centre was well established in the Tannenu-Chortitz area, located roughly in the centre of the East Reserve. Because of the huge majority of Bergthaler to KG in the East Reserve (3400 families to 800 or about 4 to 1), the area would undoubtedly have become the trade centre of the East Reserve and in time, of the entire south-east.

But fate intervened when one-half of the Bergthaler families relocated to the West Reserve between 1878-82. The move included many of the early Bergthaler entrepreneurs such as Erdmann Penner, leaving a vacuum which a handful of aggressive KG entrepreneurs in Steinbach quickly filled. Professors Al Koop and David Flynn have written that the more conservative of the Bergthaler remained in the East Reserve where they became known as "Chortitzer".

Altona became the Bergthaler trade centre in the West Reserve.

Winkler was the trade centre of the "Old Coloniers" thus named because the original set-

tlers in the area had most recently come from Chortitz, the oldest Mennonite settlement in New Russia founded in 1789 (Note One). This group was known variously also as the "Fürstenländer" and "Reinländer".

2) Location.

Of the three denominational centres, only Steinbach was founded by the original 1874 settlers. Winkler and Altona were founded by a younger generation: Winkler in 1892 and Altona three years later in 1895. Both of them were railway towns and developed around the railway as transportation nexus. Steinbach remained in its original location and its transportation network had to develop around it; at first, by way of teamsters to Winnipeg, then to the siding in Giroux, and later by way of truckers to Winnipeg, thus explaining why 3 national trucking firms originated in Steinbach.

Steinbach was the only major community in the East Reserve founded in 1874 which remained in its original location. Other communities such as Blumenort, Grunthal and Kleefeld, relocated after 1910 when the *Strassendorf* communal system of land holding was dissolved. Chortitz or Randolph also remained in its original location but the focus moved from the west end--where the church, school and Gebietsamt office of the "old" world village were located, to the east end--where a government school called Randolph was imposed upon its populace in 1918.

In terms of location this is also the appropriate place to debunk the myth that the Steinbachers and other KG chose the East Reserve as their place of settlement because of its remote location. In fact, the very opposite was the case. In Borosenko, Russia, the KG were only some 20 miles away from their business city of Nikopol, much closer to a business centre than they had formerly been in the Molotschna. The entrepreneurs of the KG clearly liked the convenience and chose the East Reserve because of its proximity to Winnipeg.

3) Ethnicity.

Each of the three Mennonite trade centres developed their own ethnic character. Winkler became known as a manufacturing centre, probably stemming from the fact that the original pioneers of the Chortitz Colony in Russia in 1789 were artisans and craftsman more than farmers.

In 1888 the first Mennonite Brethren church began in a village near Winkler, and in time Winkler became a centre for the denomination in Western Canada. Professors Al Koop and David Flynn have written that "The Russian MB

movement was most popular among the landless, who needed some assurance of salvation later to compensate for their lack of power on earth." Of course, they were not quite correct as, in time, the Winkler community prospered and acquired a great deal of power.

Altona prided itself on being a "co-op" town and its residents "played a leading role in developing the co-operative movement in Manitoba during the depression": Koop and Flynn, page 18. Altona was the home to a number of successful community endeavours such as "Co-op Vegetable Oils" and "Red River Valley Mutual Insurance Company".

This reflected the strong community ethos developed by visionary leaders such as Bishop Gerhard Wiebe and Oberschulz Jakob Peters of the Bergthal Colony in Russia. They saw this as a means of making strong progress in the more recently founded settlement (1836) and were thereby able to avoid the extreme factionalism which had sometimes marked the history of the two older mother colonies.

Koop and Flynn have written that the Bergthaler, "... were not a beleaguered minority of the more wealthy, as the Kleine Gemeinde seem to have been, but an island like area far from the factionalism of the main Mennonite colonies, surrounded by people of many ethnic groups." When the new village of Altona was founded in 1895, only the most united and progressive relocated from the "old" village to the "new" a mile away. The result was that the residents of Altona, "... descended from the cohesive Bergthaler, were the most like-minded, were those who favoured the best of the old and the best of the new."

Koop and Flynn argued that Altona is "the most sophisticated of the three towns", "yet its economy is founded on a rural foundation" and its residents have "chosen not to sell community contentment for economic growth."

Steinbach, on the other hand, was more entrepreneurial in nature. The free enterprising spirit stemmed from its origins in the Molotschna Colony which was founded in 1804 by emigrants from Prussia. These pioneers were generally wealthier than their Chortitzer or "old" Colony neighbours and many of them had been landowners and wealthy farmers in Prussia. e.g. Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810), the ancestor of one-third of the 18 founding families of Steinbach, arrived in his new home of Ohrloff, Molotschna, Russia, on June 15, 1805, as a wealthy man with 4 wagons, 7 horses, 18 head of cattle and other property.

KG church teaching was against business and large enterprise on the grounds that there was too much temptation for greed. This was a

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position taken from Peter Pieters, a 17th century Dutch Bishop and writer, much loved and frequently published by the KG. But Koop and Flynn also noted that when the KG split away from the Flemish Church in the Molotschna in 1812, as an austere reform movement, it was "supported by the Frisians from the Old Colony." The result in their view was that, "The original founders of Steinbach, although religiously very conservative, can be seen as somewhat more Frisian in their willingness to accept secular innovation in the economic sphere."

This may explain why a number of future Steinbachers such as Klaas R. Reimer, Kornelius Loewen, Abraham S. Friesen and Peter K. Barkman had already been involved in merchandising and other entrepreneurial activities in Russia.

4) "Old" world village.

Of the three communities referred to, only Steinbach was an "old" world village in the sense that it was transported by way of its people from the "old" world of Imperial Russia, to the "new" in Manitoba. Seven of its original settlers came from the "old" Steinbach in Borosenko, and of the remaining nine families, seven had lived within a 10 mile radius: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, page 1-2.

Steinbach was typically KG or "Kleingemeinschaft", a term which had a negative connotation among some of the less well informed Mennonites who remained in Russia after 1874. But the KG were always known for their thrift and entrepreneurial abilities and Johann Cornies adopted them as his model farmers. The KG-ers were also experienced pioneers and most of them had relocated and rebuilt their homes and farms as many as 3 and even 4 times in the 2 decades prior to the emigration in 1874. e.g. Klaas R. Reimer established himself as an Anwohner with a blacksmith shop in Kleefeld, Mol. in 1857; in 1860 he sold this enterprise to his brother Abraham and bought himself another Anwohnerhaus with some land and built a bigger smithy; in 1864 he moved to Markuslandt where they rented land and farmed successfully; and in 1869, they bought their own land in Steinbach, Borosenko, where they rebuilt again.

Thus the 1874 KG immigrants were among the most economically sophisticated in Western Canada. Because the village community had been transplanted to the "new" world as a functioning unit, including social and economic infrastructure, Steinbachers were much better pre-

pared to take advantage of available economic opportunities.

5) Restitutional.

The KG were restitutional by definition. i.e. The reason for their founding in 1812 was a desire to return to the seminal teachings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith. In this respect the KG were unique among schismatic movements in Russia. e.g. the founding of the MBs in 1860 was articulated by a desire to adopt Separatist Pietist forms of religiosity.

The Bergthaler and Reinländer did not originate from schism but were formed by the development of new settlements (daughter colonies) and therefore exhibited more of the characteristics of their mother colony, Chortitza.

Being restitutional meant that the KG sought for, translated and published and/or otherwise disseminated the "normative" writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and sought to practice the same. As a result, the KG were pioneers in the literary field, translating and publishing the first devotional books among all the Russian Mennonites (1827).

Being restitutional meant that the KG "...had a clearly articulated set of ideas associated with the maintenance of well established ways" (Note Two). The KG were "philosopher farmers" and their value system was not an uninformed clinging to the past, or mere bullheaded opposition to change, but a proactive and philosophically grounded conservatism which sought to apply the proven ideas of the past to the modern day.

Koop and Flynn characterized the KG of Steinbach for their "elite conservatism" compared to the "conservatism" of the "rural poor" found in other Manitoba communities such as Winkler.

6) Minority group.

In one important respect the KG were very different than both the Bergthaler and Old Coloniers; they were always a minority group. Both the Bergthalers and Old Coloniers came from settlements where they were the universal church, as in the case of the Bergthaler, or where they were part of the universal church, as in the case of the Old Coloniers. This distinction articulated many of the differences in view between the KG and the 2 other denominations, as was the case with education, for example.

From their founding in 1812 until their departure from Russia in 1874, the KG maintained a membership of about 3 per cent of the Molotschna Colony population. As a distinct minority, the KG were used to justifying their existence as a separate group and conscious of the need to maintain social and religious boundaries to insure their survival.

As such, they were ridiculed by pietists such as Peter M. Friesen for preserving and seeking to restore the faith of their fathers. Historical perspective can be cruel but just, and these same critics who abandoned their historic faith in favour of the legalistic dogmas and bizarre "eastward" chiliasm of Separatist Pietism now look pathetic by comparison.

As a minority the KG were accustomed to working in a system which they did not con-

trol. They quickly developed social and economic strategies whereby they were able to promote their own values and maintain definitive social boundaries. By and large these strategies were transplanted to the new world without any great difficulty.

Thus KG communities such as Steinbach were secure in their own viability as social entities. In fact, a form of reverse assimilation frequently occurred when others adopted their cultural values. From this base, Steinbach entrepreneurs could comfortably conduct business with the outside world on their own terms and in their own good time.

Conclusion.

The KG community of Steinbach was made up of individuals who were veterans at relocating their community physically but retaining their separate identity. They had developed strategies to maintain their cultural and religious values often in the face of criticism and opposition. They were intellectual conservatives with their own agenda for social development and community ethos. Upon arrival in Manitoba, these "philosopher farmers" were well prepared to take advantage of business opportunities in the new Homeland.

The Steinbach pioneers included religious leaders as well as a cadre of aggressive entrepreneurs who left their mark not only on the East Reserve but indeed on all of Manitoba and North America. In this issue of *Preservings* we proudly feature some of these individuals and their accomplishments.

Notes:

Note One: For an explanation of the name "Chortitza", see "What's in a name: Chortitza," *Preservings*, No. 6, June 1995, pages 22-23.

Note Two: James Urry, "Heinrich Balzer 1800-46: A Biography and Interpretation," in Plett, ed., *Leaders*, page 298.

Sources:

David Flynn and Al Koop, "A sense of community: Three Mennonite Towns in Manitoba, Canada," paper presented at X World Congress of Sociology, New Delhi, India, August 19, 1986, 31 pages, courtesy of Dr. Flynn and Dr. Koop, King's College, London, Ontario, 1987.

Acknowledgment

The Board of Directors of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Council of the Town of Steinbach for their special grant of \$2,000.00 towards this double issue of *Preservings* published in honour of the community's 50th anniversary of incorporation as a Town in 1946, effective January 1, 1947. We especially thank Mayor Les Magnusson and Councillors Ken Friesen, Dwight Reimer, Art Rempel, John Vogt, Carie Penner and Henry K. Friesen, for their generosity. "Thank-you from the board and members of the HSHS"

Menno Simons 500th Birthday

The article by Harvey Plett on the influences of Menno Simons on the Kleine Gemeinde, the founders of Steinbach, will not appear in this issue as planned. Instead, the article, written in honour of Menno Simons' 500 birthday, 1996, will appear in the June 1997 issue of *Preservings*. The article by Dr. John Friesen on the impact of Menno Simons on the Bergthaler/Chortitzer will not appear at this time.

Steinbach Private School 1913 to 1919

by Delbert F. Plett

In 1911 the Steinbach private school was changed to a public school and a new school house was constructed, later known as the Kornelsen School. P. J. B. Reimer writes that the majority of the Kleine Gemeinde did not agree with this and responded by establishing their own church run school. It was built on Mill (First) Street, where the Grace Mennonite Church later stood.

It seems that the Holdemans--established in Steinbach in 1882, and the Bruderthalers--who came 15 years later and still a relatively infant religious group at the time, were the proponents of the change to the public school. Both of these congregations were articulated by varying degrees of American Revivalism (later Fundamentalism), perceived as a medium of mainstreaming into North American social and



Steinbach's private school which operated from 1913 to 1919. The Grace Mennonite Church later stood on this site. It was a 2 room facility with instruction in both German and English. Photograph courtesy of Steinbach Post, April 20, 1965.

religious life. Therefore their position on the school issue would be expected.

Like upper middle class conservatives everywhere, the Kleine Gemeinde wanted to maintain control over what their children were taught even though they had to pay the full cost in addition to the normal taxes. Evidently Jakob W. Reimer and Bishop Peter R. Dueck were two of the major supporters of the private school endeavour.

An exciting discovery courtesy of Ernie P. Toews, Steinbach, has provided a new understanding of the functioning of the private school and its support base. Ernie's father Peter R. Toews had in his possession an ledger book which contained the accounts of the private school in 1919.

The school was owned by 24 shareholders who held a total of 84 shares as follows: [Rev.] Cor. Plett 4, Ger. Unger 1, Is. W. Reimer 4, H. E. Kornelsen 1, Joh. R. Reimer 6, H. H. W. Reimer Jr. 2, Joh. F. Giesbrecht 1, Joh. W. Reimer 2, G. E. Kornelsen 1, Jac. W. Reimer 12, G. F. Giesbrecht 2, H. Wieler 1, Is. W. Loewen 4, P. R. Toews 2, K. R. Friesen 2, H. W. Reimer 12, P. R. Dueck 5, Cor. Kroeker 6, Ja. F. Giesbrecht 2, Loewen & Toews 7, Jac. R. Schellenberg 1, B. Derksen 4, J. B. Reimer 1.

Cost per share for 1919 was \$20.56. The record closes with the notation that on Dec. 13,

\$1441.29 was owned to the widow Jac. W. Reimer and that she was immediately paid \$360.33.

The record is also interesting for the names that were not included. e.g. Peter T. Barkman. Evidently the decision to establish the private school was not totally unanimous. On the other hand, the list also includes some Holdemans like Gerhard F. Giesbrecht.

1919 was the last year of operation for the Steinbach private school. With the death in 1918 of Jakob W. Reimer and in 1919 of Peter R. Dueck, its 2 strongest supporters were gone. In the same year the Provincial Government tight-



The widow Jakob W. Reimer, nee Susanna Wiebe, with her 4 youngest children. Photo courtesy of Steinbach Post, April 27, 1965, page 1.

ened the screws on the Christian private schools imprisoning leaders who advocated their continuation as well as parents who sent their children to attend them.



Jakob W. Reimer (1877-1918) was a conservative intellectual who provided major financial support for Steinbach's private Kleine Gemeinde school. He was not only one of the most successful entrepreneurs of his day, continuing in his father's footsteps as a general merchant in the operation of "K. Reimer Sons", but in the words of Klaas J. B. Reimer; "a richly successful and highly beloved merchant." This is the only photo of him extant. In this photo by son Jakob J. Reimer, Jakob W. R. is leaning against the wall of his house on Main Street, having a friendly interaction with his children. He was otherwise always a very strong and healthy man, who died very suddenly during the Spanish Flue epidemic of 1918 in the best years of his manhood. Photo courtesy of Steinbach Post, April 27, 1965, page 12.

Since the Kleine Gemeinde in the Molotschna Colony, South Russia, had always operated within a school system which they did not control, they also decided to accommodate themselves to the situation.

Sources:

Peter J. B. Reimer, "My elementary Education in a Private School," in *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* (Steinbach, 1974), pages 110-113.

Village Agreement April 8, 1891.

On April 8, 1891, the land owners of Steinbach entered into a "Village Agreement" which was registered at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office on April 15, 1892. Unfortunately the document is no longer on file at the Land Titles Office and may well be sitting in some obscure box in some archives warehouse.

These agreements typically tried to provide a legal basis for the operation of the *Strassendorf* village. One wonders, why such an agreement was necessary 17 years after the

village was founded. Were the village and church leaders concerned, after all these years, that the moral values of the inhabitants were no longer sufficient to ensure the enforcement of traditional procedures and protocols?

Maybe at some future time, some Master's or Ph.D. student will dig out the document like some ancient grail and reconstruct the historical circumstances which led to its composition and registration.

Elisabeth Rempel Reimer: Matriarch of Steinbach

by D. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Elisabeth Rempel Reimer (1814-93).

One of the things which made Steinbach unique was the deeply entrenched and widely held small "c" conservative values of the community, combined with a willingness to take risks and a penchant for business innovation.

These values were exemplified in Elisabeth Rempel Reimer (1814-93), Steinbach's matriarch. Although she never lived in the village, she imprinted the virtues of thrift, industry, perseverance and faith upon the community through her four children--sons Klaas and Johann, and daughters, Elisabeth (Mrs. Peter P. Toews) and Katharina (Mrs. Abraham S. Friesen)--who were 1874 Steinbach pioneers.

In addition, many descendants of her 3 children who settled in Blumenort, 3 miles north, subsequently relocated to Steinbach so that even in 1996, she is probably the direct ancestor of a quarter or more of the inhabitants of the community and certainly of most of the socio-economic elite. To this day, any listing of prominent Steinbachers will include a majority who are her descendants or otherwise related.

Childhood.

Like all people Elisabeth was influenced by her childhood experiences. She was unique among the 1874 immigrants to Manitoba as one of the few who had taken part in an earlier emigration from West Prussia in 1819. One can only imagine what the impact of the 2 month long journey to Russia in the company of the extended Rempel-Janzen family under primitive frontier conditions, had on the 5 year old Elisabeth: see Henry Schapansky, "Kleine Gemeinde Rempels," *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part One, pages 45-6.

Most of the Mennonites moving to Russia after the Napoleonic Wars were relatively poor, at least compared to those who had emigrated and pioneered the Molotschna Colony in 1804/5. But this was not the case with Elisabeth's parents and uncles who were well-to-do and able to obtain their own *Wirtschaften*, or full village farms, within months of arriving in their new homes, something which less than 1 in 4 families could aspire to.

Like many of the later Prussian emigrants to Russia, the Rempel clan had been influenced by Separatist Pietism which was making inroads amongst the Mennonites who had lived peacefully along the Vistula River for several centuries. As a 10 year old girl Elisabeth had an aunt and 2 uncles who fell victim to these fanatical religious beliefs which focused on endtimes prophecies, rejecting of all material comforts, etc. Indeed, her uncle Johann was to die from an illness brought on by the practice of these beliefs.

The consternation in the Peter Rempel *Wirtschaft* in Lichtfelde, as Elisabeth's parents grieved over the apostasy of their siblings and the heartache and family division it brought in

its wake, must have had a dramatic impact upon her. No doubt Elisabeth vowed never to permit such occurrences within her own family.

In June of 1834 Elisabeth was baptised upon the solemn confession of her faith and became a member of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG). Her spiritual views were reinforced by her marriage on Tuesday, February 26, 1835, to Abraham, son of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) of Petershagen who had founded the orthodox religious community in 1812. They lived with his parents until "Tuesday, May 11, 1836, when they moved to Rosenort, Molotschna," where they established their own home.

Thrift and Industry.

However, in another respect Elisabeth's choice of marriage partner turned out to be less than perfect. It quickly became evident that her husband lacked the traits of industry, diligence and hard work which had made his father, the beloved Ohm Klaas, a wealthy *Vollwirt*, and for which most of his KG compatriots were known, even if for nothing else.

Records show that the Abraham F. Reimer family frequently relied on the charity of the church to make ends meet. e.g. In 1856 they received 561 ruble to build a new house on their *Wirtschaft* in Rosenort, Mol.. In fact, Abraham soon became known by the somewhat derisive nickname of "Fula" or Lazy Reimer. One speculates as to what Elisabeth must have felt when the family had to rely on charity, given the financial success of her father and uncles and their parents.

By the 1860s the KG community as well as individual members were organizing new settlements partially as an expansionary measure and at least partially out of a desire to assist the landless within the congregation. Elisabeth and her children were the direct beneficiaries of these programs.

In 1864 they joined sons Abraham and Klaas to move to a new KG settlement at Markuslandt, 15 kilometres east of the Chortitz Colony. Then in 1869 they moved to the village of Steinbach, Borosenko, 30 kilometres northwest of Nikopol, where they had their own *Wirtschaft*. There is no doubt that Elisabeth Rempel Reimer was the matriarch of the "old" Steinbach in Imperial Russia, as 5 of her children and their families also established themselves there.

It was not Elisabeth's nature to sit back and brood over the state of affairs dealt her by fate. Her response, rather, was to assume responsibility for the financial affairs of her family. Records show that she was busy from dawn to dusk with a prestigious coat and hat-making business. She produced 20 fur coats [pelsen], 100-150 caps and all manner of foundation garments in a year. She also set an example of community service as a midwife, nurse and undertaker, who was called upon at all hours of the day to preform her services. Perhaps this is

where her great-great-grandson Ray Loewen of the Loewen Funeral Group gets it from: see *Macleans*, Sept. 30, 1996, page 43.

It was Elisabeth who--no doubt--frustrated with her husband's lack of diligence in material matters, drummed into her children all of these virtues and more, of life's hard lessons for survival.

That she could also be vivacious is illustrated by an incident from 1870. After Lazy R. had commented daily for several months about his wife's poor health and her frequent fevers which restricted her to a sick bed, he recorded on July 3 "that she had gone swimming in the coulee [ritch] for 2 days now and that she was cheerful like she had not been for 2 weeks." Unfortunately the swimming may not have been good for her as 2 days later Abraham recorded that "she was very sick again." It is interesting to picture this 205 pound woman cavorting in the waters of the Basuluk River in scanty garments, as her maid (in Czarist Russia even poor people had servants) stood watch.

Emigration, 1874.

It was Elisabeth who made the major family decisions. In modern parlance we would say she had iron in her stomach.

In 1874 the entire Reimer clan decided to leave their by now rather prosperous farming and business ventures in Imperial Russia and emigrate to North America. The move apparently was motivated at least to some extent by a vision which Elisabeth experienced in which God gave her a clear resolve that the move was the correct decision at the time. Elisabeth and 3 of her children settled in the wealthier village of Blumenort, while 4 of her children, travelling with the last KG contingent to leave Russia in 1874, settled in Steinbach, 3 miles to the south.

Grasshopper plague, 1876.

In 1875 the grasshoppers had eaten the first decent crop raised by the Steinbach pioneers. When it was discovered in the spring of 1876 that the earth was filled with grasshopper eggs which would hatch and surely destroy the crop they were seeding as well "the Reimer clan gathered in council on a warm Sunday afternoon in the spacious premises of son Klaas in Steinbach. They were debating a move from Steinbach where only starvation stared them in the face, to Mountain Lake, Minnesota" (Note One).

The majority assembled in council that day favoured the move. Klaas J. B. Reimer, the community's foremost historian, later described the events leading up to the most important decision ever made in the community:

"After some discussion the elderly ...[Elisabeth] rose slowly to her feet. She pleaded tearfully with her hard-headed sons and sons-in-law to wait another year. She recalled how unwillingly she had left her cosy home and how,

before she and her big family had left for the new unknown land, the Lord God in heaven who had guided her forefathers in their search for homes, had given her a clear vision to trust Him completely. She felt that the plague which had befallen them was only temporary, to test their faith": Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical sketches of Steinbach," page 2.

The result of Elisabeth's tearful plea was that her children relented. Had her sons Klaas and Johann, and sons-in-law Abraham S. Friesen and Peter P. Toews, left as planned, the life of the community would have been stunted and the engine of economic growth undoubtedly would have reverted back to the Schönfeld-Chortitz area, which had the natural attributes to become the region's trade and business centre.

Elisabeth was also a risk taker with a heart of compassion. Historian Royden K. Loewen described the incident where she took in 3 drunken Indians for night who were out during a storm. She made them lie down on the floor and then sat in watch over them all night. In the morning she fed them breakfast and sent them on their way, rested and sober: *Blumenort*, page 217.

Abraham F. Reimer (1808-92).

In a way, some credit for Steinbach's survival and ultimate success is also due to "Lazy R". Although it may appear at first blush that he was an embarrassment not only to his wife, but to the entire Reimer clan as well as the KG all across North America, this is too simplistic a view.

It was Lazy R. who had the intellectual curiosity and an eye for scientific observation which prompted him to record daily the life activities unfolding around him. e.g. In one of his Journals he noted that "a scientist in London had invented a device so precise it could determine measurements a 1000th of an inch thick, and that [another] ... had constructed a device capable of measurements a 1,000,000th of an inch."

Abraham F. Reimer had an interest in astronomy and abstract knowledge. His reaction upon seeing a dam across a river was to do a quick calculation as to the yards of earth it had taken to build it. During the emigration from Russia, he missed a train connection because he was too busy pursuing one of his curiosities.

In pursuit of his intellectual interests, Lazy R. borrowed every book that he could lay hands on. e.g. Sep. 15/79 Unabridged *Martyr's Mirror*; Sep. 20th borrowed a book at Johann Koops; May 19/80 a book from Peter Toews; April 16 story book from P. Toews with 16 stories; May 7 Dietrich Philips book from son Abr. Reimer; Oct. 8/81 the 'big' Holdeman book from [cousin] Cornelius [P.] Friesen."

These were qualities which had little or no value in a pioneer society. As grandson Bishop David P. Reimer so politely put it, "[A.F.R.] is said to have had a real interest in many areas in which others were uninformed." David P. Reimer also expressed it another way: "He [A.F.R.] was occupied with many matters which could not readily be evaluated in dollars and

cents." It is easy to understand that he was considered "Fula" or "lazy" Reimer from the perspective of a busy dairy farmer in a pioneer society.

Both in Russia and America, A.F.R. was especially interested in horticultural and experimented with various species of plants, grafting, etc. On April 11, 1880, he visited at the home of his school teacher cousin Cornelius P. Friesen in Blumenort and noted with envy that "they had a garden book with 166 pages, 33 different kinds of vegetables and 9 kinds of flowers." In a letter of January 26, 1889, he begged his wealthy brother-in-law Martin M. Barkman (1853-96), Jansen, Nebraska, to purchase a certain horticultural book for him the next time he went to the City (possibly Omaha). A. F. R. also sent Barkman 2 flower cuttings, which were "such unusual flowers which I have drawn in a diagram. The more simple one I gave to Abr. Friesen in Steinbach...which he has planted in his garden. But so far, no one has grown the double one in their garden."

So we can credit to Lazy R. the curiosity and inventiveness which inspired pioneers like Klaas R. Reimer and Abraham S. Friesen to experiment with new ideas and to try business innovations. These were and continue to be essential ingredients in entrepreneurial success. Without these traits no people can do much better than survive.

Journal.

Lazy R.'s Journals provide a historical tunnel into the past never before thought possible. With pride he recorded the daily activities not only of his wife, whom he obviously adored, but also of his daughters, sons and in-laws--down, to their weight.

On Dec. 18, 1872, he weighed family members at the home of Abraham S. Friesen (who moved to Steinbach, Bor. in 1873) with the following results: "I was 150 pounds, my wife 205, [son] Kl. R. Reimer 220, [son] Peter R. Reimer 175, [son] Johann R. Reimer 190, [son-in-law] Abraham S. Friesen 175, [his wife] Katharina 170, [son-in-law] Peter P. Toews 190, his wife 180, daughter Margaretha [Mrs. Abraham Penner] 140, Anna [?] 144 and Elis [?] 120."

On Sept. 15, 1882, almost exactly 10 years later, Abraham F. Reimer again weighed himself and his wife, this time at the home of son Abraham in Blumenort. Elisabeth may have invented a new diet as she was 166 pounds compared to 205 previously. Abr. F. Reimer remained constant at 150 pounds, son Abraham tipped the scales at 240, his wife 100, son Klaas 130, and Katrina 26 and Magreta 18.

At 60 years of age Elisabeth Rempel Reimer weighed 205 pounds, considerably more than her husband, but still short of the prestigious 300 pound weight of her twin brother Peter. It was her son pioneer merchant Klaas R. R., who at 6 feet, would later match his uncle's weight. But there was no question that the traditional Reimer pot belly must be credited to her and the Rempel side of the family.

The Journals of Abr. F. Reimer provide us with more information about Elisabeth than almost any other pioneer woman. By 1879 she

seems to have given up much of her busy practice as midwife and nurse, seemingly restricting her services to her own family and even then often assisted by "Dr." Isaac L. Warkentin from the neighbouring village of Blumenhof. Someone else seems to have taken over her work as an undertaker for the Steinbach and Blumenort community.

A.F.R. also recorded many details of interest to Steinbach. e.g. On Sept. 23, 1882, he noted that "the Steinbachers came home from Winnipeg. They bought a threshing machine to be driven by horses. It cost \$700.00." Lazy R. realized, no doubt, that his feverish entries would some day be of intense interest to posterity.

Johann Friesen's Gemeinde, 1866-71.

Above all Lazy R. imbued his family with a fierce sense of loyalty and tradition. This is demonstrated by a mysterious set of entries for Sunday Nov. 21 and 28, 1871: "We, Joh. Reimers and Hein. Brandts were accepted into the Grünfeld [Blumenhof] Gemeinde" and a week later, "Our Toews [daughter Elisabeth] and our Friesens [daughter Katharina] from Rosenfeld and Abr. Duecks from Annafeld were accepted into the Grünfeld Gemeinde" (Note Two).

One might suppose that these people had only just joined the KG. But this is not the case and a brief explanation is warranted. When the KG divided into two congregations in 1866 Johann Friesen, Neukirch, (Note Three) remained as Elder of the "traditional" group and Heinrich Enns, Fischau, became the Elder of the "reform" group. After the union of 1869 only some 10 families, no doubt the most loyal and traditional people in the entire KG, remained with Elder Friesen. By 1871 it was apparent that Friesen was dying and so his followers now considered it appropriate to transfer their membership to the "other" congregation.

Here's the point. These journal entries reveal for the first time who some of these people were. And lo and behold: these stalwart, loyal to the death, followers include Friesen's cousin, Lazy R. and his vivacious wife Elisabeth. Furthermore, these entries establish that 4 of these die-hard conservative families would be among the pioneers in Steinbach, Man., in 1874.

These were the very people who were disparaged and ridiculed by historians such as Peter M. Friesen of Sparrau, Mol., who published his *magnum opus* in 1910. P. M. Friesen maligned the KG for their conservatism and loyalty to the "old ways". The 1990s are neo-conservative times where the values of small "c" conservatism are treasured. From this perspective the KG people and the Steinbach pioneers almost seem heroic in their century long struggle for survival.

The judgement of history is cruel but just, for the bizarre "Eastward" millennialism and narrow legalistic dogma espoused by P. M. Friesen and his pietist-separatist co-religionists during the latter half of the 19th century, today seem pathetic by comparison.

Conclusion.

In any case, whatever sectarians such as P.

Klaas R. Reimer 1837-1906

by Delbert F. Plett

M. Friesen may have thought of the KG was irrelevant to reality. Just as in Russia, where the KG were readily accepted by government authorities and community leaders such as Johann Cornies, the value system of these sturdy pioneers immediately struck a bond with their Scottish, Irish and English neighbours in the Clearsprings settlement as well as hosts of business associates and customers in Winnipeg.

It was the same arch-conservatism and fierce loyalty to family values and tradition stamped upon Steinbach by Lazy R. and Elisabeth, which gave its people their tenacity and determination to survive and excel in the face of adversity.

It was this loyalty which resulted in workers staying at home and working for lower wages than they could earn elsewhere. It was this tenacity which inspired businessmen such as Elisabeth's great-grandson, C. T. Loewen, to hire and help people during the Depression Years because it was a responsibility of wealth.

Such loyalty and confidence in their own community and people also meant that they did not stam pede after every new religious belief and "gospel" which blew in across the American border. Neither were they volatile in their political views. No! The people of Steinbach for the most part, and certainly the middle and upper classes, stayed with the tried and true.

In a community without natural resources, dependant only upon the ingenuity and initiative of its residents, these traits enabled the Steinbach pioneers to persevere and prosper. These values also attracted other people, who joined the Steinbach pioneers in their vision of community and social ethos.

Elisabeth Rempel Reimer represented some of the best characteristics of the pioneer community founded in 1874, and must truly be recognized as "matriarch of Steinbach".

Endnotes:

Note One: A careful review of the sources indicates that there may have been two crisis, not one: see Klaas W. Reimer, quoted in *Reflections*, page 26-7; and Klaas W. Reimer, quoted in *60 Jahrige Gedenkfeier*, as published in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 129; and Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *Carillon News*, 1952, page 2.

Note Two: Bishop Johann F. Friesen (1808-72) was the great-grandfather of Dr. Ben Eidse, Chancellor of Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Note Three: The other family identified as joining the Grünfelder Gemeinde at this time (Sept. 26/71) was wealthy Vollwirt and estate owner Johann Warkentin (1817-88) of Hochfeld, formerly Blumstein, Mol., later of Blumenhof, Manitoba.

Announcement:

The June, 1997, issue of *Preservings* will be our long talked about "Womens' issue". If you are interested in writing an article about some woman of historical significance to the Hanover Steinbach area, please contact the editor at 326-6454 or 474-5031 Wpg line.

Introduction.

The story of Klaas R. Reimer was recounted by Dr. Royden K. Loewen in 1992 in a paper entitled "Klaas R. Reimer: From Rags to Riches, but not from Village to World." His paper forms the basis of this brief sketch. One is humbled by the thought of attempting to write in such a limited format, a few snippets about the life and times of this amazing man.

Early Years.

Born in 1837 in Rosenort, Molotschna, into a poor family, Klaas was sent to work out at the age of 12, at first for his aunt and uncle Peter W. Friesens of Tiege and then for neighbours in Rosenort, where he continued to receive his education. Eventually he was apprenticed as a blacksmith. He was a large man, 6 feet tall, and at one point in his life reached 325 pounds.

In 1857 he was baptised and married Katharina Willms, who was not from the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) faith community. They attended the Lichtenauer Gemeinde. The young couple lived in Kleefeld where he managed to acquire his own blacksmith shop as an Anwohner. Klaas was an aggressive and gifted man and soon he was manufacturing plows in his smithy and also

attempting to farm, renting as he himself writes "expensive land."

Unfortunately Klaas encountered a series of bad crops so that he was threatened by insolvency. Like many Anwohner in the Russian Mennonite setting--where only 1 in 4 families ever achieved anything more than labouring for wealthier neighbours--Klaas was very discouraged by his financial difficulties.

He found comfort in the spiritual values of his upbringing. After much soul searching he decided to rejoin the KG. This church had a policy at the time that they underwrote the debts of all their members. Klaas later recalled that Bishop Johann F. Friesen had interviewed him carefully perhaps concerned about the debts for which they would become responsible.

In 1864 Klaas, brother Abraham and their parents moved to the village of Friedricththal, Markusland, a new KG settlement 15 miles east of the Chortitza Colony. By this time, the church had underwritten Klaas' debts through 2 of his wealthy uncles (Rev. Peter W. Friesen and Klaas F. Reimer, Tiege) and financially things started to turn around.

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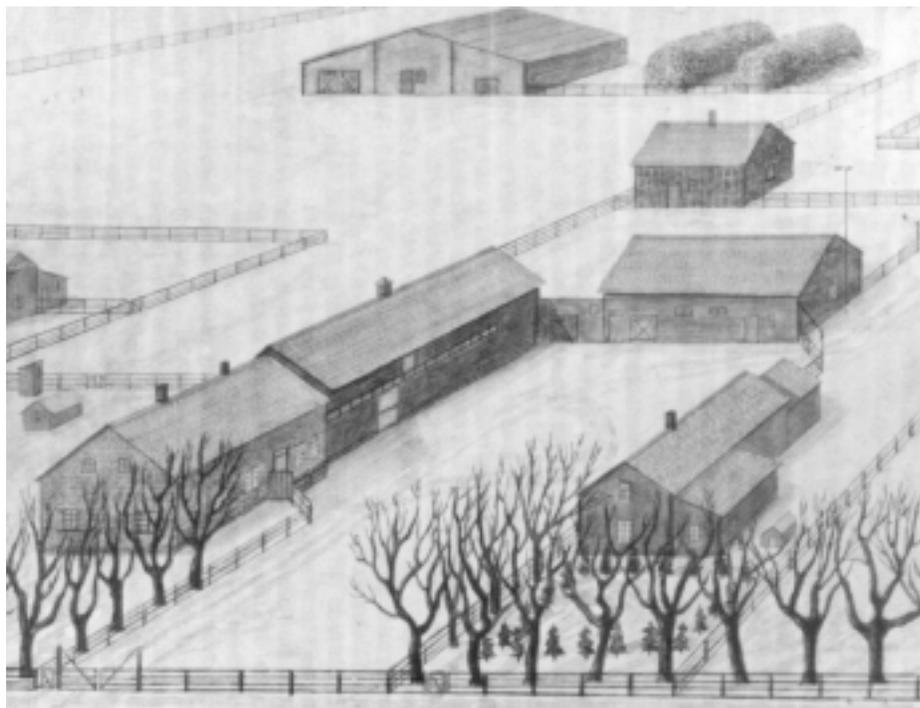


Photo One: The Klaas R. Reimer farmyard where Steinbach Place and the Steinbach Credit Union Ltd are situated today. It shows the original housebarn built in 1875 as well as the larger more substantial housebarn, the barn for which was built in 1877 and the house in 1881. "On a crossbeam in the barn was the inscription 'Klaas R. Reimer builder, Heinrich R. Brandt construction supervisor.'" The large warehouse in the back was added in 1884. According to Kleine Gemeinde insurance records the warehouse was insured for \$2500. The newer housebarn stood until 1936 when it was destroyed by fire started by three pre-school boys smoking behind the barn, namely, Rodney Toews (A.P.T.), Henry Reimer (Jakob H. W. R.) and Willie Reimer (H.B.R.). For photographs of the later housebarn, see Ernie P. Toews' article elsewhere in this newsletter. This sketch of the yard and buildings was drawn by son Bernhard W. Reimer (1879-1934). Courtesy of Royden K. Loewen, *Historical Sketches*, page 307.



Photo Two: Second oldest son Klaas W. Reimer (1864-1944), wife Maria Brandt, daughter Maria (Mrs. J. R. Friesen), daughter Anna (Mrs. John R. Toews), and son Henry B. Reimer. In 1889 Klaas W. Reimer built and operated the first cheese factory in Steinbach in conjunction with a general store. Within a few years he added 2 additional cheese factories in Kleefeld and Blumenort. His products won prizes at exhibitions in Toronto 1898 and at the Pan-American exhibition 1901. Photo courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches." Klaas W. Reimer's son Abe B. Reimer had an interesting career in real estate in Chicago and Los Angeles: See Preservings, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, page 36. Son Klaas B. Reimer was a successful Steinbach businessman who was the grandfather of Mrs. Jim Penner of Penner Foods Steinbach.

continued from previous page

Klaas now had a full village farm, albeit rented, and his first substantial wheat crops coincided with an increase in wheat prices. At the same time his blacksmith shop was doing well and "he hired 2 men to ...[satisfy]... a great demand for 3 and 4 bottom plows." In fact, Klaas' plows were so good that blacksmiths from all over Russia came to see how they could work with such great precision. In 1868 he was also raising sheep which he bought and sold for a good profit.

The next year the family moved to Steinbach, Borosenko, an 18,000 acre settlement purchased by the KG in 1865. The profit from 150 sheep was sufficient to pay for the land he purchased. In addition to owning his own land, Klaas was now farming as a Vollwirt; he had 7 children, a spacious house, farmhands and a maid. In his own autobiography he writes about making a trip back to the Molotschna, to pay his uncles in cash for the debts that they had underwritten which he describes as, "the best and most joyous journey that I ever made in my life."

Illness of Katharina.

Financial success was tempered by the illness of his wife, Katharina, whereby she suffered from delusions and lost her mind. Over Katharina's protests, they sought medical advice but to no avail; her condition worsened.



Photo Three: Son Peter W. Reimer (1868-1946) and wife Gottliebe Schrien, a German immigrant girl from Poland. In the 1890s Peter established a livery barn and cordwood business on Elgin Avenue, Winnipeg. Later he expanded into a lumber and cordwood business with operations in the Sandilands. He also served as a Justice of the Peace. Photo courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches."

She no longer looked after her children although she would nurse her babies. She would dress up in her finest clothes and go out in the night visiting as Klaas wrote "the neighbouring noble folk who lived far away on the steppe and sometimes came home at midnight." One night she came home "bruised and beaten with her clothes torn down to her skin." Seemingly she heeded Klaas' earnest pleading that she stop these excursions for her own safety's sake.

Instead of institutionalizing Katharina or even putting her out of the home, Klaas tried to support Katharina. In fact, his sensitive treatment of her was almost unheard of during those times, especially for Czarist Russia. The deep pain caused by his wife's behaviour was expressed by the fact that a quarter of his personal autobiography revolves around her illness. Again Klaas found refuge in his faith writing that "sunshine must surely follow the clouds, as joy must follow sorrow."

Steinbach, Manitoba, 1874.

While all this was going on, the KG made the decision to emigrate as did Klaas. Arriving in Steinbach late in the year, September 15, 1874, they established a new home, the 4th in 17 years. Aided by his oldest sons, Klaas built a semlin 30 feet by 14 which was the barn and house. The next year they "built a better barn with wooden blocks" and presumably a new house.

Katharina passed away on Monday, March 3, 1875. Her condition had worsened over the years and she was emaciated. How Klaas takes his farewell of Katharina speaks volumes for his character. Through his autobiography he opened a window on this intimate event:

"On Saturday, I had thought she might die and asked her, "to which she quite sanely said 'yes', which I had not heard from her for many years. Her eyes shone at me so full of trust. Then I asked her if she would forgive me of everything that we had together and she said 'yes'...I said I did the same for her... Then I asked her if

we wanted to pray together and so we prayed; but because she had forgotten everything through the years, she repeated the Lord's prayer after me, and we asked our Father to forgive us. I indeed hope our prayers will be answered."

Life went on and with 8 children ranging in age from 4 to 17, Klaas followed the custom of the time and remarried quickly. His second wife was Helena Warkentin, daughter of Peter, whose widow had married the Steinbach minister Jakob M. Barkman.

In spring of 1876 the famous Reimer family council took place in Klaas' home. His mother eloquently persuaded her children to remain in Steinbach and not move to the United States as others were doing.

Business, 1877.

By now Klaas R. Reimer was firmly established in the heart of the pioneer village and his business successes followed rapidly one after the other. In 1877 he started the first store in Steinbach using his original log house: an English merchant R. J. Witla provided the goods on consignment (Note One). No doubt Klaas was very aware that Erdman Penner, the store owner at Tannenau, had relocated to Gretna, leaving a vacuum in the East Reserve. In 1880 Klaas became a major partner in the Steinbach flour mills which eventually also owned the lumber yards.

In 1884 Klaas built a new store. By this time, he had accumulated substantial assets which were insured with the KG insurance system: housebarn \$700, accessory building \$200, warehouse (store) \$2500. His inventory in 1887 was insured for \$1000.

In 1885, Klaas married for the third time to Margaretha, daughter of Johann Klassen.

By now Klaas, his sons Heinrich, Jakob, Abraham, and son-in-law Peter T. Barkman, more-or-less controlled the 2 entire business blocks of Main Street, between Barkman and Reimer Ave. By the early 1890s Klaas and his sons owned "3 general stores, 75 % of the flour mill, 4 cheese factories, and a sawmill; in 1898 they paid almost half, 45.5 per cent of Steinbach's taxes (78 households): Royden K. Loewen, page 308.



Photo Four: Son Bernhard W. Reimer (1879-1934) and his bride Rose Bush (b. 1890), at their wedding in Winnipeg in 1906. They later moved to Chicago. Photo courtesy of Steinbach Post, April 13, 1965.



Photo Five: 1913. Son Martin K. Reimer (1891-1947) with his bride Ella Alphine Kittleson (1890-1949) in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The bridal couple is seated in front and the witnesses are standing. Photo courtesy of Steinbach Post, April 13, 1965. Martin K. Reimer served in WWI, stationed in Anthler, a prison camp in northern Ontario. Later he lived in Winnipeg.

But Klaas' interests were much more diverse: he also had a large greenhouse operation and "later built an irrigation system driven by a windmill to irrigate the garden." In his spacious yard he grew a variety of fruit trees. In 1898 Klaas sold a share in his own business to his sons Jakob and Cornelius. In 1905, just a year before his death, he and his son Jakob built a big new store, later known as "Centre Store".

Character.

Much about Klaas R. Reimer is revealed through his autobiography, the writing of which represented the continuation of a tradition already started by his grandfather, Klaas, the founder of the KG.

Klaas R. Reimer also maintained a considerable letter correspondence. He received letters from all over North America and even from Russia from people asking for his assistance, usually financial. Often he tried to help sending a small gift of money, sometimes with sage advice. Sometimes people asked for a job, sometimes for credit, invariably granted.

Klaas had a sentimental streak and felt closely bonded with his community. When his wife and her parents went on an extended visit to Minnesota, Klaas wrote an apologetic letter stating that "I always find it difficult to leave my family for I love them dearly and leave taking is always a painful experience for me."

Klaas also had a profound religious faith that was the antithesis of the shallow empty verbalizing so much in vogue in some circles. His replies to letters from these type of religious zealots are generally polite but firm in their inward conviction. This is illustrated by an incident from the 1890s when Separatist Pietist evangelist Johann Warkentin, Winkler, showed up in Steinbach, presumably hoping to proselytize and turn people away from the faith of their fathers. The village Schulz (mayor) and Council gave Warkentin the advice that they were well served

with their own faith and had no need for his evening services, which presumably would result in family divisions and strife if he should be successful to lure some of the marginal people in the community. The rejected Warkentin required night quarters which he gladly received at the home of Klaas R. Reimer. Warkentin later acknowledged the friendly hospitality that he had been given.

Klaas R. Reimer was also subjected to criticism from his own faith community where his large business endeavours were viewed with apprehension. Subjected to scrutiny at brotherhood meetings he would plead his position with tears in his eyes.

Certainly one of Klaas' greatest strengths was his profound ability to deal with people: whether Ukrainian servants or Russian nobility back in the old country; Winnipeg merchants such as R. J. Witla, Metis teamsters who transported his goods, Anglo-Saxon customers and friends such as the Mooneys or Carltons in Clearsprings, or even the religious zealots already mentioned: he treated them all with dignity and respect.

Conclusion.

At the time of his death in 1906 at the age of 69 Klaas was the wealthiest man in southeastern Manitoba. After having been semi-retired for some time, he still had substantial business assets and \$70,000 in cash of which each of his 17 surviving children received \$2300. His widow received the same amount plus the farmyard, 220 acres of prime farmland and the "Martyr book, 1 Menno Simons book and a Bible." His widow and her children moved to Dalmeny, Saskatchewan, to homestead a year later.

Klaas R. Reimer's funeral was attended by 500 people which speaks for the respect and love in which he was regarded.

No other person has had such a lasting and beneficial impact on the development of southeastern Manitoba and beyond as Steinbach pioneer Klaas R. Reimer and his family.

What makes the story of Klaas R. Reimer unique and special is the fact that he was not merely an entrepreneur who made a lot of money, but one who put much more back into the community than he took out. He was an intellectual conservative if you will, whose immense and impressive business acumen was always in a dynamic interaction with his sense of filial duty and love for community.

In many ways, Klaas R. Reimer, represented the best of the KG tradition of his ancestors as well as the ability to accommodate to new situations and to find strength in adversity. Where certain later entrepreneurs found it easier to send money to save souls across the ocean, Klaas knew no other way than to live his faith among his people, finding his salvation in the betterment of their lives. He was truly a renaissance man, with the ability to apply old world values to new world situations.

In the absence of photographs which the wealthy merchant studiously avoided as prescribed by his faith, there is perhaps no better way of describing Ohm Klaas than the words

he himself wrote at the end of his life reminiscing about the difficulties with his first wife, surely the love of his life and by far the most extreme crisis he ever encountered: "Even though I had a daily cross to carry," he wrote, "... nevertheless we experienced many blessed hours for which I still long for even today. For it appears that without a cross to carry there will be no peace for the soul; where there are many burdens to carry in a household, there will also be many prayers; and after many entreaties and much supplication, blessed hours are also granted" (Note Two).

Notes:

Note One: It was not a Jewish merchant as earlier written: see Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on our Heritage*, page 83. In fact it is doubtful whether there were any Jewish people in Manitoba in 1877.

Note Two: Quotations from Klaas R. Reimers Autobiography are from *Storm and Triumph*, pages 21-4.

Sources:

Abraham F. Reimer, "Journals."

Klaas R. Reimer, "Autobiography and Letter Book."

Royden K. Loewen, "Klaas R. Reimer: From Rags to Riches, but not from Village to World," in John Dyck, editor, *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, 1994), pages 304-12,



Photo Six: Son Franz K. Reimer (1903-77) served in the Canadian Army (#2330497) managing to talk his way into the service in 1917 at the age of 14. He was wounded in service in France in 1917. This photograph was taken in Paris in 1918 while he was on leave. He lived an adventurous and romantic life. Later he settled in New Westminster, B. C. Photo courtesy of Robert Brandt (b. 1947), youngest son of Franz K. Reimer and youngest of more than 100 grandchildren of Klaas R. Reimer, the oldest of whom were born in 1883. Robert Brandt is a major shareholder in Double R Farm Equipment Ltd, Steinbach, Manitoba.

News and Announcements

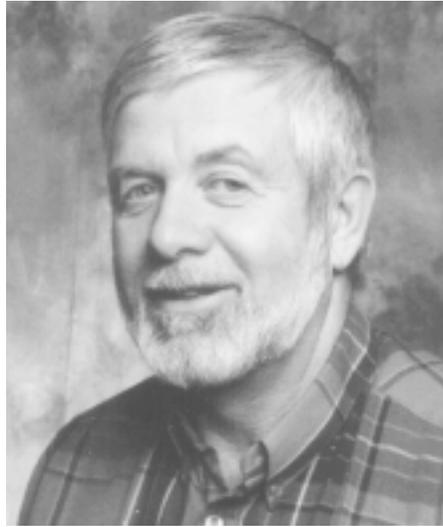
President's Report

By Orlando Hiebert, Box 8,
Tourond, Manitoba, MB R0A 2G0,
President of the Hanover Steinbach
Historical Society.

Nineteen Ninety Six has almost come to an end. In reflecting on some of the events in our district and in particular those that affected HSHS a few events come to mind. With the help of a grant from the Town of Steinbach we were able to publish a double issue of Preservings which had as its focus the pioneers and events which figured in the early development of this town.

It is very gratifying to hear the many compliments from you our readers about the size and content of our news letters I would like to thank the many people who have taken the time to research, write and then submitted articles to us. Also we are indebted to Delbert Plett who I am sure has spent many hours compiling, editing articles and searching out and encouraging people to write.

In the spring of this year HSHS moved its office to the Mennonite Heritage Village from its former location at Steinbach Bible College.



Orlando Hiebert, President of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society

On behalf of the HSHS board I would like to thank the College for the use of their facilities and at the same time thank the museum for providing space for us.

Our researcher John Dyck is hoping to be in the office one day a week to continue his research projects and also to be of assistance to

any one who has some questions. John is also continuing with the editorial work for the proposed Volume Four of the *Hanover Steinbach Historical Society*. Additional submissions of articles and papers are still welcome.

In late spring at the request of the Provincial Historical Department. HSHS was the facilitator of a meeting between Pat Baeditscher of the Department and those people who had descendants buried at the newly discovered Schoenfeld grave site. While a solution was not reached the meeting gave all a chance to air their views on a number of proposals put forward.

HSHS has also submitted a number of resolutions to the R M of Hanover in regards to the naming of C.S. Plett Road, Chortitz Road (now Randolph Rd.), and will also ask for the naming of Schantz Road.

We at HSHS are also pleased to have been able to nominate one of our board members, Dr. Roy Loewen to be our representative on the board of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

In future issues of Preservings we hope to focus on themes such as pioneer women and also devote an issue to public works in the Hanover Steinbach area. I would encourage you the readers to record, research and write about those people and events that have significance in your locale and/or family history.



On June 18, 1996, 22 writers attended a launch for the June, 1996, Issue No. 8 of Preservings. The enthusiastic group enjoyed fellowship and coffee and checked out each other's articles in print.

Rear: left to right: President Orlando Hiebert*, Rev. Harvey Kroeker, Rev. Cornelius P. Dueck, Cathy Barkman*, Linda Buhler, Rev. Cornie Rempel, John K. Friesen, Elma Peters Plett and Dr. Royden K. Loewen*; Middle row: Helga Froese, Frieda Neufeld, Katherine Friesen Wiebe, Irene Kroeker*, John Dyck HSHS Research Director, Wilmer Penner and Wendy Dueck; Front: Ernie P. Toews, Lori Scharfenberg, Marjorie Hildebrandt, Peter Bergen, Evelyn Gerbrandt and Delbert Plett*. Missing from the photo is Randy Kehler, HSHS board member. *Members of HSHS Board of Directors.

NEWS - From the Editor

John Henry Warkentin visits.

On September 1, 1996, I had the privilege of meeting and visiting with Professor John Henry Warkentin, author of the famous thesis, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba*, 1960, University of Toronto. Dr. Warkentin did his research back during the 1950s when historical research and writing was not popular as it is today. He is considered a guru and pioneer of historical research among the Mennonites of Manitoba. No writer of history of Southern Manitoba can dare to put pen to paper without a serious study of his work.



Dr. John H. Warkentin visiting Steinbach, Sept 1, 1996.

Professor Warkentin is widely recognized as a leading scholar in his field as a North American geographer. He is currently on the faculty of the Department of Geography, York University, North York, as Professor Emeritus, lecturing on the geography of Canada.

Dr Warkentin's roots are in the Winkler area. His grandfather Johann Warkentin was an MB evangelist and his father Isaac Warkentin was a school teacher in various communities in southern Manitoba including Steinbach. Dr. John H. Warkentin was in Steinbach to visit his sister Mrs. Arnold Rempel and family.

Significant articles.

Recently we received a short note from Professor James Urry, Department of Anthropology, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand, stating that he "was still in the land of the living."

Professor Urry also forwarded two articles of significance to the Hanover Steinbach area: 1) James Urry, "Writing about the 'Russian Mennonites': Concerning Peoples, Places and Identities in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union," in *Ontario Mennonite History*, Volume XIV, Number 1, March 1996, pages 1-5.

The article provides a highly informed discussion of the appropriate names for the places of residence of Mennonites in southern areas of the old Imperial Empire of Russia. Professor Urry has concluded that it is appropriate to refer to "Russian Mennonites", but suggests that they be referred to as "Soviet Mennonites" after the Revolution.

2) James Urry, "Forschungsbericht: The Mennonites of Russia and the Soviet Union: Recent Perspectives from English language sources," in *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Ruszlanddeutschen* 5/1995, pages 129-145. In this article Professor Urry reviews the state of scholarship about the Russian Mennonites and provides an update regarding recent research and publications on the topic. In particular, Professor Urry makes positive mention of the recent advancements in research and writing relative to the *Kanadier* Mennonites who settled in Manitoba in 1874-6.

Mennonites in Canada, Vol. 3.

The third volume of *Mennonites in Canada*, written by Professor Ted Regehr from the University of Saskatchewan, was launched on Sep-

tember 14, 1996. Some 100 people attended a lecture by Dr. Regehr at the St. Stevens United Church, Broadway Ave. in Winnipeg. This was followed by a reception by the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba at Government House attended by some 150 invited guests. The event was sponsored by the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

Ted Friesen, Altona, and other members of the Historical Society of Mennonites in Canada, are to be congratulated for completing this momentous undertaking.

Magaretha Plett Kravetz, Hierschau, Mol.

Members of the "Kleine Gemeinde Heritage Tour" to Ukraine and Russia were delighted to meet Margaretha Plett Kravetz on April 9, 1996. She is a descendant of the Hierschau Pletts and related to Dr. Helmut Huebert of Winnipeg, author of the book *Hierschau*. Mrs. Kravetz is therefore also related to all the thousands of Pletts in North America descended from the families of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) and his four sisters who emigrated from Russia dur-

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Klaas J. B. Reimer (1897-1966).

Much research and writing by a prestigious group of scholars and writers has been done in preparation for this special issue of *Preservings*. As the work progressed it became more and more evident that Steinbach is richly blessed in terms of its historical heritage far beyond that even dreamt of by most other communities.

It also became clear that the existence of much of this historical treasure trove was due to the pioneering work of Klaas J. B. Reimer. His most significant writings were "Historical Sketches of Steinbach" published in the *Carillon News* in 1952 and his "Neunzig Jahre Steinbach in der Ostreserve" serialized in the *Steinbach Post* in 1964 and 1965. In most cases the latter German articles contained much new and additional materials not included in the earlier English version.

For Klaas J. B. Reimer this work was a labour of love for which he has not yet received due recognition. In this issue of *Preservings*, we salute him for his momentous research work and historical writing. What Homer and the *Iliad* were to Ancient Greece and Gibbon was to the Roman Empire, Klaas J. B. Reimer was to Steinbach.

Were it not for his work, the early pioneers of the community would be little more than straw figures with birth and death dates. Klaas J. B. Reimer described them as they were: humble, persevering and God-fearing, but also imaginative, resourceful and community-minded. His descriptions of the people and community he so obviously loved, breath substance into their persona, and make them come alive as historical personages.

The historiography of a community is important as it will determine how its residents see and define themselves and will articulate their subsequent goals and conduct. It is im-



Klaas J. B. Reimer (1897-1966): Steinbach's Gibbon. Photo courtesy of Reflections on our Heritage, page 33.

portant, therefore, that a community find ways to insure that its written history does not become a pathetic and shallow "George Babbitt" boosterism, valued only for the money and recognition which it garners for the community.

Those who genuinely appreciate their historical heritage for what they can learn about themselves and the foibles and follies of their community, could certainly do no better than to follow in the footsteps of Klaas J. B. Reimer. One hopes that others will step forward to continue his work and to build upon the foundations already laid.

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ing the 1870s.

Mrs. Kravetz was delighted to meet our group and invited us into their home for an impromptu visit.

Margaretha Plett married Andre Kravetz who was from a Russian family which had moved to Hierschau after the Revolution. After the war the couple fled on the great trek but came back to Hierschau where he worked as the tractor boss and Margaretha as the calf boss in the local collective farm.

Margaretha Plett Kravetz is the daughter of Heinrich Plett and Anna Benger. Heinrich's father was Cornelius Julius Plett (1859-95) and Margaretha Sperling. His father was Julius Plett (1817-92), whose father Johann (1786-1854) was a first cousin to Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900).

Cornelius Julius Plett had a sister Gertrude Plett (1869-1924) who was first married to a widower Braun and secondly to a Johann Willms. Their daughter Katharina Willms married Gerhard Huebert, and they are the parents of Dr. Helmut Huebert of Winnipeg. Information regarding the family of Margaretha Plett Kravetz is courtesy of Helmut Huebert: see Helmut T. Huebert, *Hierschau* (Winnipeg, 1986), page 345.

Schors Collective Farm.

Later the same day, members of the "Kleine Gemeinde Heritage Tour 1996" had the privilege of visiting the "Schors Collective Farm" with a population of 1,000. The Collective Farm is located in the eastern portion of the former



Margaretha Plett Kravetz and Delbert F. Plett visit April 9, 1996, Hierschau, Molotschna, Ukraine.

Molotschna Colony, not far from villages such as Contentiusfeld and Sparrau where Kleine Gemeinde families once lived and farmed back in the 1840s and 50s.

After a tour of the farming operation, the group was hosted to a traditional Ukrainian supper. Viktor V. Kovdryo, the Manager of the Collective Farm, served as the host and spoke to the group about some of the problems encountered in farming in the "new" economy.

John Schroeder dies Sept. 21, 1996.

John Schroeder, widely known tour operator and owner of Assiniboine Travel, Winnipeg, Manitoba, passed away September 21, 1996. He was 58 years old.

John was a pioneer in organizing tours for Mennonites wishing to visit their former homes in the Soviet Union during the late 1960s and 70s. These were the days when any travelling behind the Iron Curtain was fraught with difficulty. Over the years, hundreds of people partook of these tours and experienced something of their Russian and Ukrainian heritage.

John had a warm and winning nature and a real gift for dealing with associates, customers and friends. Members of his tours invariably felt a real attachment to him by the time their tour was over.

John Schroeder was keenly interested in his heritage and was a regular supporter of numerous cultural and community institutions. His untimely passing is a shock to all his family and friends. He was will be sadly missed by many but not forgotten.



John Schroeder (1938-96). Photo courtesy of Doreen Plett, on the occasion of the visit of Olga Shmakina, Ukrainian tour guide to Steinbach, Manitoba. Nov. 25, 1995.

Bishop Peter Rempel, Bielefeld, Germany.

The City of Bielefeld--1000 years old and the first to be destroyed by Allied carpet bombing in WWII--is now the home of Mennonites who fled the Soviet Union since 1970. Known locally as *Umsiedler*, they have prospered and made Bielefeld their new home.

On April 21, 1996, members of the 1996 "Kleine Gemeinde Heritage Tour" were favoured with a guided tour of the City by Peter Rempel, Bishop of the Mennonite Gemeinde. The 2500 member congregation has 5 worship houses, a Bible School, Senior Citizens Home and printing operation. The last 2 churches built in 1993 at a cost of 2.8 million each are already overfull.

The Bielefeld Mennonite Church has an active aid program with its own tractor trailer transporting food and material goods to Russia, going as far east as Siberia. Many members of the church left Russia in the past several years and know where such assistance will be most

effective. Some recent emigrants who are members of the church speak only Low German and Russian.

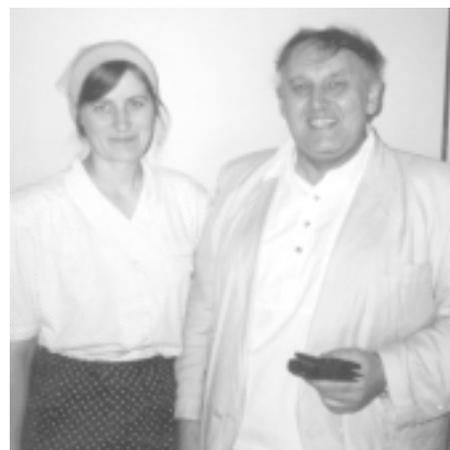
The congregation follows teachings and practices that are orthodox by North American standards but not legalistic. I had the sense that members of our local Sommerfelder or Reinlander congregations, or Kleingemeinde from Belize and Mexico, would feel a deep kinship with the members of the Bielefeld Gemeinde. The members of our tour group were spiritually inspired by the loving and sharing nature of these pilgrims whose families survived 4 generations of Soviet repression and Gulag exile.

Steinbach History Book.

In a time of shrinking budgets and deficit reduction, government funding for cultural activities and particularly heritage preservation and the recording of history, tends to be first on the chopping block. Therefore we salute the Town of Steinbach which found a way, not only



Viktor V. Kovdryo, General Manager of Schors Collective Farm, and tour guide Olga Shmakina. Photo courtesy of Peter Hiebert, Nanaimo, B.C.



Bishop and Mrs. Peter Rempel, April 21, 1996. Peter Rempel is an energetic and loving leader of his people.

of funding its new history book, but of actually making money with it.

How did they do it? The answer is simple: get 28 businesses to shell out \$1,000.00 apiece to have a page of history on their firm in the book. These funds still finance the printing of the book and should also allow for a healthy profit. Our hats are off to the Town of Steinbach, for this innovative idea. No doubt, it will be the

envy of every community in Manitoba.

Family Gatherings.

Every year a number of families in the Hanover Steinbach area hold major family reunions. *Preservings* would gladly publish both a notice and a report of these gatherings. Please submit your article with photographs to the Editor, *Preservings*, as soon as possible after the fam-

ily gathering has been held. The following are three gatherings held in 1996: Gerhard Kliever Descendants gathering June 1, 1996, Steinbach; Klaas B. Friesen Descendants Gathering July 7, 1996, Niverville; and Abraham L. Plett Descendants Gathering August 25, 1996, Mitchell.

It seems to me that a written report is an important aspect of these gatherings thereby documenting the event for posterity.

Letters to the Editor.

H.& Wm. Schroeder
832 Wicklow St.
Winnipeg, Man.
R3T 0H7

July 16, 1996

The Editor,
Preservings, HSHS
Box 1960, Steinbach, ROA 2A0

Congratulations on your recent double issue. The many articles on individuals and families do indeed preserve a treasure trove of memories. The feature article "Education in the East Reserve", provides some new perspectives and much (for me) new information.

Further to the article on the old Schoenfeld cemetery (page 30, Part I) and the reburial of the skeletons. I submit the following anecdotes.

As a child in the 1930s I occasionally played around a chokecherry hedge well east of the cemetery site, just west of the present farmyard of Les and Elaine Schroeder. (Mr. Schroeder, no relative, is a Councillor of Hanover, I understand.) My playmates were members of the Frank J. Nickel family who resided there then. Our family lived across the Blatz Road and somewhat to the southeast, in the Rosengard School District.

We were unaware of the cemetery site, but some of us encountered spooky feelings by vague but persistent stories that dead people had been buried where we were running around. About a year ago Mr. Les Schroeder told me that there were still stories of graves at two different locations, and of some remains having been moved. I speculated that it might have been from a family burial plot to the community cemetery. Possibly by now those stories have been clarified, and the remains can finally come to rest.

In a striking coincidence, about a month later in the Ukraine, I "discovered" Voskressenka, formerly Schoenfeld village in the Mennonite Colony of Schoenfeld, east of Zaporozhye. In nearby Brasol I found three surviving warehouses built by my great-grandfather, Gerhard Peters, early in the century. Behind the middle one the mutilated body of an uncle had been found and furtively buried in 1919 by his father, my maternal grandfather, himself in grave danger from the marauding and murdering Machnov bandits. The family had to flee and the body could never be transferred to that Schoenfeld cemetery. The victim's name was Gerhard Doerksen. Who knows, he might have been a distant cousin of the Jake Doerksen

named in your article.

But this preoccupation with dead bodies inside or outside of two Schoenfeld cemeteries, many thousands of kilometers apart must not distract us from our Christian conviction that the real deceased persons now reside elsewhere.

Sincerely, Wm. Schroeder

P.S. I am not the same William Schroeder who authored the article on Menno Simons in Part II of the June issue of *Preservings*.

July 5, 1996
Henry Schapansky
914 Chilliwack St.
New Westminster
B. C. V3L 4V5

Dear Editor:

Re: Cornelius Fast (1840-1927) article.

I have been reading the June issue of *Preservings*, page 22. The father (ancestor) of Peter Fast (baptised 1785) was "Kornelius Fast 1722-1807 Bröske 1776: 7 sons, 2 daughters, mm"; not Peter Fast.

The second wife of Kornelius Fast (1840-1927), Helena Fehr was the daughter of Jakob Fehr (1809-76) and Helena, nee Fehr b. Aug. 10, 1820, not Maria as indicated in your article. See also the Reinlander Gemeindebuch #3-2, for further confirmation (Bernhard Bergen 1846-78). The widow of Jakob Fehr, nee Helena Fehr, is found at Hoffnungsfeld, West Reserve, in the 1881 census.

Yours truly
"Henry Schapansky"

May 22, 1996
Peter Hiebert
283 Cilaire Dr.
Nanaimo, B.C., V9S 3E6

Preservings
HSHS
Box 1960, Steinbach
Manitoba, ROA 2A0

Dear Editor:

Re: Hiebert Family Cemetery.

September 3rd, 1995 culminated a year that has to be one of the highlights of my three score and fifteen years.

On the 27th of March 1995 we joined a group of fellow pilgrims from Canada and the United

States, in an effort to retrace the homelands of our forefathers. We visited the villages of Bergthal, Heuboden, Schoenthal, in the Bergthal Colony, Ukraine, to walk where our grandparents had once walked, and to see the fields where they had once toiled. We also visited the cemeteries where they had laid loved ones to eternal rest.

We found but one building which was readily identifiable, the "Vollst" Municipal Office which was built around 1860. Some years ago this building was remodelled inside, and, used as a furniture store, but is vacant now.

My wife and I also toured some of the surrounding area before returning to Zaporozhye to rejoin our group. We had but a short tour of Chortitza and Rosenthal. We went to see where Einlage once stood; it's now under water. It was the home of my great-grandparents and my mother's grandparents.

From here we went to Poland and Elbing where the Hieberts came from--to Thiensdorf, home of the Heinrichs. We then went to Holland and the Pingjum-Witmarsum area and from there on to Zurich in Switzerland. We also visited a Mennonite Congregation in Strassburg, France.

Returning home we visited the landing site of 1874-75 at the junction of the Rat and Red Rivers, just upstream where we used to swim in the Red River as teenagers.

On September 3rd, 1995, we held the dedication ceremony of the Hiebert Memorial Cairn on the homestead in Canada of Jacob and Katherine Hiebert: a memorial cairn joining time and place, past present and future [see article elsewhere in this issue, Part Two].

I became even more aware of the importance of this cairn on our return to the lands of our forefathers in 1996, for a more in depth search
Yours truly "Peter Hiebert"

Sept 19/96
HSHS - Editor

I am sending along some information....I would like to say thank-you to the HSHS, Delbert Plett, and all the others who have collected and recorded the ... History of the East Reserve. You have made this information available to people like me who want to get started on their family history....It has made researching my family history easy and enjoyable.

It is important to collect and record our heri-

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tage. We are all a part of Canadian history and it should be preserved and recorded for our children and the future.

Keep up the great work.

Thanks "Jeannie L. Hiebert", Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, R2K 2M2.

York University
Department of Geography
October 29/96

Editor *Preservings*, Dear Delbert,

I greatly enjoyed the morning I had with you in Millers.

Just as pleasurable for me has been *Sarah's Prairie* which you so kindly gave me. I have read it once and now skimmed it before writing this note of appreciation. (And I'll dig into it thoroughly again).

My did I learn a great deal about Mennonite life and growing up in the Blumenort area, close to Steinbach, Clearsprings and Sainte Anne, that I did not know before.

Your depiction of the interrelationships between Russländer and Kanadier ring especially true to the extent that I experienced it.

Most important of all, you poignantly and effectively convey a sense of what it is to grow up in a Mennonite rural community--in this instance a village close to a town. And that is where I learned so much from you.

Your novel should be read by anyone who wants to do serious academic work on Mennonite topics. You skilfully, comprehensively, take us into a society very few of us know. Sure I saw some of it from the outside, but from a great mental distance.

An astonishing enterprise the HSHS is. I knew nothing of it. The kinds of information you have unearthed on the East Reserve, especially the people who created it, moves us into a new empirical level of research. More significantly, this is the heartbeat of community.

I have only browsed in *Historical Sketches...1874-1910* so far, but I will read it with great interest. And the same holds true for *Preservings*, which I have only paged through but will read closely.

Many thanks for all this!

"Maybe our children will be interested some day," [says Mary Jane Stapleton in the epilogue to *Sarah's Prairie*.]

Yes--that is what happens.

All good wishes, sincerely John

[Warkentin
Department of Geography, York University,
Ontario]

On Dec. 7, 1996, Dr. Royden Loewen was also elected as President of The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada at a meeting in Waterloo, Ontario.

Milestones

Royden Loewen wins Award.

Dr. Royden K. Loewen, recently appointed to the Mennonite Chair, University of Winnipeg, has been awarded the "Outstanding Contribution to Manitoba's Heritage Award" by the Manitoba Heritage Federation. The award is given annually to someone who has made significant contributions to the preservation of Manitoba's heritage. Loewen was nominated for the award by the Rural Municipality of Hanover. The award was presented on November 9, 1996, at a ceremony in Dauphin: see article *Carillon News*, Oct. 30, 1996, page 11A.



Friends and local representatives travelled to Dauphin to celebrate Royden's "Outstanding Contribution...Award." Left to right: Mary Anne Loewen, Royden Loewen, Sieg Peters and Irma Peters (rear), representing the Rural Municipality of Hanover; and Lenore and Ed Wiebe, representing MCC Manitoba. Also attending the event were Cari Penner, Deputy Mayor, and Dwight Reimer, Councillor representing the Town of Steinbach.

C.S. Plett Road Naming.

On June 26, 1996, R. M. of Hanover Council named the "east and west" Municipal Road 1 mile south of Blumenort, "C. S. Plett Road" honouring Cornelius Smit Plett (1820-1900) one of the significant pioneers of southeastern Manitoba: see article in Part Two of this newsletter. The first road signs were posted along P.T.H 12 in late November 1996.



Councillors Sieg Peters and Norman F. Plett (left) of the R. M. of Hanover pose with one of the road signs for C. S. Plett road which are being put up along the 10 mile span of "C. S. Plett Road" which starts 4 miles east of P.T.H.12 in the R. M. of Ste. Annes and goes west up to P.R. 206. In the background is the cairn for the 2nd Blumenhof community cemetery, where C. S. Plett and his wealthy son Johann L. Plett were buried in the same grave.

Falk Reunion, July 12-14, 1996

by Lydia Falk, Box 305, Niverville, Manitoba, R0A 1E0

Over 200 people attended the 8th Falk Reunion held at Providence College, Otterburne, Manitoba on July 12-14, 1996. All Falks were encouraged to come.

The Falks meet every three years. The Province of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Albert and

sent out as well as aired over radio. The walls of the gym at Providence College were lined with the genealogy charts of Jacob and Margaretta Falk and their 13 children. Programs had been planned for different times during the weekend.

Genealogy was the highlight of Saturday's agenda. Many came to find where they fit into this family. The Saturday morning session consisted of introduction of the genealogy, how it had been collected and how the colour and number on their name tag identified them. During



200 people attended the 8th annual Falk reunion July 12-14, 1996, at Providence College, Otterburne. Here some of the attendees pose for the camera. Photo courtesy of Lydia Falk.

B.C. take turns organizing a reunion. In 1996 it was Manitoba's turn. Since Ontario has fewer Falks they helped Manitoba with the programs.

Falk relatives came from all five Provinces, US, and Germany. They arrived by plane, U-drives, campers, and cars, ready to get to know relatives and renew acquaintances.

The family of Jacob and Margaretta Falk came from Russia at different times till as late as 1930. They have settled in the above mentioned Provinces. These reunions have played a vital part in keeping the family together.

A committee consisting of five couples spent one year preparing for this reunion. They were: Victor and Susan (already deceased) Falk - Crystal City, Edwin and Mary Plett - Winkler, Hugo and Kaye Pauls - Winnipeg, Willie and Anita Falk - Winnipeg, and Alvin and Lydia Falk - Niverville. Announcements and invitations were

Registration started on Friday at 3 pm. Friday evening was open for visiting and studying genealogy. The evening was concluded with some singing and a meditation by Cornie Thiessen from Winkler. Some spent the night at the College in the dorm or in campers. Others stayed with relatives in the area or went home.

the question period questions like "Where do we come from and when?" as well as "Where does the Falk name come from?"

Pictures were taken of the various clans present on Saturday afternoon. The remaining

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Henry E. Plett History Awards, 1996

by Martha Hiebert, Steinbach Bible College

The Genealogy and Family History Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society awarded the Henry E. Plett History Awards to Tanya Barkman and Pamela Penner of the Steinbach Christian High School at the June 23, 1996, school graduation service. The award is given annually to two Manitoba high school students for research and documentation of a Mennonite Family History.

Tanya received the first prize of \$100.00 for her research on "The Barkman Family." The second prize of \$50.00 was given to Pamela Penner for her project on "The Von Riesen Family."

Tanya is the daughter of Menno and Linda Barkman of Blumenort. Pamela is the daughter of Cornie and Evelyn Penner of Greenland, Manitoba.



L. to r.: Tanya Barkman and Pamela Penner, winners of the 1996 H.E. Plett History Awards. Photo courtesy of Henry Fast.



Four generations present at the Falk Reunion from Niverville: Left to right: Ryan Falk, Seldon Falk, Alvin Falk and Ben Falk. Photo courtesy of Lydia Falk.

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time was spent getting to know relatives and renewing acquaintances over coffee.

Saturday evening there was a variety program consisting of reminiscing, poems and songs on a volunteer basis. Many participated and enjoyed the evening which Karen Falk from Ontario chaired.

The Sunday morning worship service was led by Rev. Edwin Plett from Winkler. Rev. Plett served with a German meditation. Rev. Peter Falk from Ontario served with an English message. Both messages related well to the occasion. A choir from within our group performed under the capable direction of Elona Schellenberg, Winnipeg, accompanied by Ernie Koslowsky, Winnipeg. Elona was in charge of the music for every session during the weekend.

Pictures of previous reunions and older Falk pictures were on display all weekend.

Clan members came from far and near. Since it was in Manitoba, the biggest attendance came from within the Province. Some relatives from Germany had planned their holidays in such a way that they could attend this reunion. In fact they had four generations present. Laughter and hugging was going on everywhere.

The Niverville Falks also had four generations present: they were Mr. Ben Falk, his oldest son Alvin, his oldest son Sheldon and Sheldon's three children. In fact Sheldon and Cynthia Falk celebrated their 6th Anniversary



The planning committee for the 8th annual Falk Reunion. Left to right: Hugo and Kaye Pauls, Victor Falk, Mary and Edwin Plett, Willie and Anita Falk, Alvin and Lydia Flak. Photo courtesy of Lydia Falk.

at this reunion.

The oldest guest present was Mary Warkentin, Winnipeg. She was 90 years old.

Eleven people 80 years old and older had registered. Eleven couples who had or will cel-

ebate 50 years together or more were present.

Even though our average age present was 59.6. Young and old had come to have a good time and to give God the glory to be able to live in a free country.

Cole Camp, Missouri - Low German

The Ozarks-Hanover Connection

by Wilmer Penner, Box 1305, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0

Language is, of course, the basis of all community life. And so the study of language becomes one of the surest ways of establishing the connections of different societies in any historical research. In this way a visit Delbert and I made to the *Plattdütsche Fast* in Cole Camp, Missouri, on October 11 has historical importance. We felt so instantly at home with these folk from Nether Saxony that the story of our connectedness may have general interest for the people of Hanover-Steinbach.

While they speak Low German, these Missouri Germans are not Mennonite. But our *te Hus* feeling is no accident. Picture it this way: two thousand years ago, we were all living off the coast of the North Sea. There on the bleak moors and in the heart of the forests, our parents worked and hunted, played and sang, made war and finally accepted Christianity. The dividing line between Holland and Germany was basically undefined: the language from Amsterdam to Danzig was Low German. When he needed refuge, Menno Simons was as much at home in German East Friesland as he was in the West Friesland of Witmarsum. Then five hundred years ago, religious persecution came to this region.

But the Reformation that drove the followers of Menno from the North Sea coast to the Baltic coast of West Prussia brought to the others in this region the protected state church of the Lutherans. Here came the split that divides us from these Missouri Germans: we adopted the *Plautdietsch* of the Vistula Delta, slightly different from the Saxon; and the upheaval of the Reformation finally hardened into the institutions of two different Protestant churches.

But while, in contrast to the Mennonites, these folk remained loyal to the state church, their community life centred around their church as deeply as it did here in East Reserve. In their first years, the Church established the schools; the Church fought for use of the German language; the Church was the place where the most important events of a person's life were played out: birth (christening), confirmation, marriage, and death. Even today, in the homes we visited and in the background of the plays of the *Fast*, the importance of the church was visible. In the home were the reminders of prayer in the wall-mottoes. And in one of the plays, *Gott ist die Liebe* was sung so warmly that the childhood memories evoked brought tears to my eyes.

Military service was an issue that brought these settlers here. But not over a 'peace theology'. Rather it was the result of the fierce conscription policies of a king who believed that his garrison training should be so severe that going into battle was a relief for those boys. So the emigration lists are heavily weighted with young men of military age.

Unfortunately, they had been here only a few decades when the Civil War broke out. Missouri was a state divided between 'free' and 'slave', and Cole Camp was on the border line of this division. The Germans were loyal Unionists, and so the skirmishes over four years of guerrilla strife (1861-65) left several hundred German settlers dead (Exact records cannot be found). While this is a much smaller loss than that suffered by our communities in the Russian Civil War, their lives too were cruelly disrupted by the ambushes of patriotic or criminal "bushwhackers". Even today relations between 'Union' Cole Camp and 'Confederate' Warsaw ten miles to the south are embittered by these war memories.

As were our forebears in Russia, these settlers came from farming stock, and so for them too the idea of cheap homesteads was a power-

ful attraction. This was particularly true for their version of our "Anwohner". These were farmers who had been given 38 acres when they were freed from serfdom. But the land they received was buried in six feet of peat; to clear it took three generations. The pain is expressed in this *Sprejchwuat*: *Den iersten det Dood, den twenten de Noot, den drutten dat Brood.* (The first was death, the second was need, the third had bread) Their hunger for good land brought them to the American West as surely as it brought many of our people to Kansas and Nebraska, where their C.O. status was not affirmed.

Less savoury were those emigrants who were fleeing debts or prison- the community history estimates that about 5% were in this category. Our triumphalist historiography seems to ignore this element- but surely our insight into human nature would benefit from the unearthing of the stories of these less noble community members!

These Germans came in 1836, we came in 1874, so they beat us here by forty years. But as we listened to the buzz of activity, much of it in *Plaut*, we felt an ancient kinship from our similar roots. We felt very much at home sitting in this *Plattdütscher Fast* in Benton County High School. It was almost like an All Ameri-

can Family Reunion. On one side sat two families from Iowa; in front was a couple from Illinois. A busload of *Plautdietsche* had come from Ohio. Others were from Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, even from the birthplace of the lan-

Hier Snackt Wi Plattdütsch, edited by Leonard Brauer and Evelyn Goosen, published by the City of Cole Camp, Missouri "in Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Community". It is 358 pages, well-bound, and illustrated

with art work and photographs. Entirely the work of the community residents, it was good enough to win the Concordia Historical Society Award in St. Louis. A goal to aim at?

The editor, Leonard Brauer, can be reached at Rt 3, Box 28, Cole Camp, MO 65325. Other interesting contacts made were:

Herr Diethard Wittholz, director of a theatrical troupe of children *Jan un sien' Rappelsnuten*, Ringstrasse 10 23 617 Stockelsdorf, Germany. Tours the world in *Plaut*.

Ost Friesian Heritage Society, 18419 205th St.

Grundy Center, IA. 50638 Teaches classes in *Platt*, sponsors a Platt Gab Fest; genealogy resources (Ortsippenbuch); Sept. 14- Ostfriesian Heritage Fest. In '97 a Men's Chorus is coming from the German Ostfriesland; planning a National Platt Conference in Davenport.

Is Plautdietsch really an endangered species?



The singing group of "Jan un sien Rappelsnuten" from the Lübeck area of northern Germany, delivered a stellar performance of Low German skits and drama on October 11, 1996, in Cole Camp, Missouri.

guage in Germany itself. We heard of a renaissance of the language in all these places- of evening classes and reading revivals and live theatre performances. Low German defies the prophets who have predicted demise. Mark Twain (himself from Missouri) puts it well: "The report of my death was an exaggeration."

Our historical society will be encouraged that the information here comes from a book titled

Schönfeld Cemetery Burials

by Randy Kehler, Box 20,737, Steinbach, R0A 2T2

Introduction.

A review of the death records of the Rural Municipality of Hanover reveals the following burials in the Schönfeld cemetery. In some cases the burial place is identified only as "Schönfeld" and in others by references to the cemetery on NW14-6-5E, or by references to Section 23-6-5E where 2 cemeteries were located. Hopefully the list of burials will assist those who are responsible for the reburial of the skeletons uncovered at the cemetery on NW 14-6-5E in 1995.

Burials 1890-1912.

Cornelius Dyck died 18 Jan., 1892, age 1 day, born Schönfeld; Diedrich Dyck died 2 May 1893 in Schoenfeld age 2 months, born Schönfeld; Jakob Penner died 8 Feb. 1898 age 7 weeks, born Schönfeld; Heinrich Dueck died 25 July 1898 age 2 months 23 days, born Schönfeld; Peter Siemens died 1 Apr. 1901 age 7 months 3 days, died in Schoenfeld.

Note: Death records in the R.M. of Hanover list no details (cause of death or burials) for the years 1881-89.

Schönfeld area burials 1913-20.

Peter Groening born 24 Jan 1842 died 15 Aug. 1913 11:30 a.m., burial, Section 23-6-5 on Aug. 17, son of Johann Groening born in Germany [Prussia] mother Helena Krause, born S. R. Peter was born in Mariupol, South Russia, length of illness 5 days.

Agatha Dueck (nee Siemens) born 29 June 1865 died 21 Jan. 1915, place of burial, Schönfeld cemetery, father Cornelius Siemens, former place of residence NW23-6-5E;

Ben Friesen born 29 May 1915, died 11 Nov. 1915, place of burial 23-6-5E, father Johann P. Friesen, mother Maria (Groening) resided 23-6-5E, place of death Schönfeld.

Johann Groening born 4 December 1839, died 30 Sept. 1916 (single), place of burial, Schönfeld cemetery, son of Johann K. and Hel-

ena Groening;

Jakob Unrau Born 26 Sept. 1917, died 17 Nov. 1917, place of burial Schönfeld cemetery, father Jakob Unrau, mother Katharina Ginter, place of death SE 23-6-5E;

Heinrich Koop, born 18 May 1918 died 3 Dec. 1918, place of burial 14-6-5E, father Johann N. Koop, mother Aganetha (Siemens), place of residence 23-6-5E;

Anna Peters born 25 Nov. 1868 died 22 Dec 1918, place of burial 23-6-5E, father Cornelius Dueck, mother Anna (Kauenhofen), resided Section 23-6-5E;

Comments:

The burial records listed here are according to the Rural Municipality of Hanover archives. The death records on microfilm are from 1881 to 1920, however, burial permits which listed the exact location of the cemetery were only required from 1913 and after.

Kliewer Get-Together June 1, 1996

by Elsie Kliewer, Box 20999, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2T2

It was on June 1 of 1996, that an exciting get-together took place for the Kliewer clan. Some 83 descendants of the late Helena and Gerhard Kliewer (1836-96) (who, incidently was the first Reeve of Hanover Municipality) gathered at the Immanuel Free Church in Steinbach to become acquainted.

It was short notice, but guests were here from California, Phoenix, Vancouver, Killarney, Winkler, Altona, Carman, Homewood, Winnipeg, Niverville and Steinbach.

The prime reason for this gathering was the presence of Ala Garlock and her sister Goldie Appell, two elderly Kliewer cousins from California and their nephew Ken and Claire Kliewer from Phoenix, Arizona.



Photo One: Claire Kliewer of Phoenix with a chart of the eight clan members, putting us in the space where each one belonged. All photographs in this article are courtesy of Elsie Kliewer, Steinbach, Manitoba.

When Gerhard and Helena Kliewer came from South Russia to America in 1875, they had four children. In total they had 14 children, but only

eight grew to adulthood and married here in Canada. Six of these eight families were represented at this gathering.

Of the 16 surviving first cousins in this clan, 13 of them were present, the oldest being Eva Kliewer, of Rest Haven, formerly of Niverville. Eva had just celebrated her 90th birthday the week before. In the Kliewer history, no one else has ever attained that milestone age.

The guests began to arrive at 9:30 A.M. when fresh 'schnetki' and coffee were on the menu. The noon meal was a potluck lunch, where you soon realized the many skilled cooks in this clan.

The day continued with lovely conversation, and trying to put together where everyone fit in. Claire Kliewer of Phoenix is very much into the family history, and has logged a great deal of information by now, which was of interest to everyone.

It was certainly termed a successful event, and the memories are rippling on. Since then, we have

been in contact with members of the other two clan families, and the next gathering should be even bigger and better.



Photo Four: L to R. Our Reeve Aron Friesen, Mitchell, and George Wiebe, Killarney. Aron is married to Agatha Peters. He is our present Reeve, whereas 115 years ago the first Reeve was Agatha's great grandfather Gerhard Kliewer.



Photo Five: Some of the Kliewer first cousins - rear l. to r.: Ida, Ken, Claire, Elsie and Jake - all Kliewers: Front Row: Agnes Friesen, Steinbach; Alma Garlock, California; Eva Kliewer, Rest Haven; Goldie Appell, California; and Anna H. W. Reimer, Steinbach.

Tribute to Jakob D. Barkman (1886-1971)

The editor wishes to acknowledge the photographic work of Jakob D. Barkman, pioneer photographer of Steinbach. It is largely due to his interest and excellence in his work that enabled the photo essay "Steinbach Main Street Part Two" to be as complete as it is. What Peter T. Friesen's photographs were to the block of Main Street, north of Reimer Avenue, Jakob D. Barkman's photographs have been to the 2 blocks between Reimer and Barkman.

Jakob D. Barkman's life was intricately entwined in the physical domain which he photographed. Following his father-in-law's footsteps, he worked for most of his life in Steinbach Flour Mills across the street from his home. He was obviously interested in the workings of the machinery in the mill and the construction of the two mills which he witnessed and of which he created an extensive photographic record.

But his interests went far beyond: he took photographs of many of the people he met and



Self-portrait. Jakob D. Barkman and Mrs. Barkman, nee Anna E. Barkman, in their garden on a pleasant Sunday afternoon after church, circa 1920.

places he saw, whether on one of his frequent trips to Mountain Lake, Mexico, Kansas, Saskatchewan, or Oregon, or photos of his neighbours down the street, or visitors from afar. When his six sons went to war, he proudly collected photographs of their campaigns and various postings.

Jakob D. Barkman was from the realism school of photography, he photographed life as he saw it--whether it be the funerals of his neighbours and friends (see article on "Funerals in Steinbach 1923-1937" in Part Two of this newsletter), or the people and physical landscape around him. He did not dress up or pose the poor people of his community or alter or angle his shots to create an artificial or euphoric euphemism of life. For a work of this genre, see Gerhard Rempel, *Forever Summer, Forever Sunday* (St. Jakob's, Ontario, 1981), unpaginated.

History has affirmed the photographic work of Jakob D. Barkman in reproducing the life and times of his community, warts and all. He has created a time capsule of life in southeastern Manitoba which although exceedingly blunt and literal speaks well for the values of the people and landscape within which he lived.

The HSHS wishes to acknowledge Jakob D. Barkman whose interest in life and the physical domain within which he lived and his commitment for a "truthful" and not merely an artistic reproduction, has provided the citizens of Steinbach with an historic record of an earlier time much of which would have otherwise gone lost. We pay tribute to his work and vision.

Steinbach Pioneer Monument June 23, 1996

by Rev. Harvey Kroeker, Box 74, Steinbach, Manitoba, ROA 2A0

On Sunday, June 23, 1996, the Honourable Yvon Dumont, Lt. Governor of Manitoba had the privilege of unveiling the cairn commemorating the eighteen Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite families that founded the village of Steinbach in 1874.

A steady drizzle accompanied the 150 people who attended the ceremony in the Pioneer Cemetery at the corner of Reimer Ave. and Second Street in Steinbach. At the last minute a protective tarpaulin had been put in place among the



Photo Five: Rev. Jac P. Dueck, son of Kleine Gemeinde Aeltester Peter R. Dueck (1862-1919), gave the dedicatory prayer. His grandparents were Franz M. Kroekers.

oak trees, sheltering the on-lookers.

Ernie P. Toews, chairman of the cairn committee, welcomed the Lt. Governor Yvon Dumont, the Mayor of Steinbach, Mr. Les Magnusson and the Rev. Jac. P. Dueck.

The Mayor of Steinbach, Les Magnusson introduced Lt. Governor Yvon Dumont and his family to the audience. He was born in St. Laurent, Manitoba in 1951 and married Lyla Klassen in 1975. They have three children. Mr. Dumont has been active in the Manitoba Metis Federation for many years, and is known for espousing Metis causes. He won the prestigious National Aboriginal Achievement Award in public service category.

Mr. Dumont spoke warm words of appreciation for the wonderful history lesson given by Ernie Toews. He emphasized the achievements and contributions of the Mennonite immigrants and other pioneers and how each had helped Manitoba to become the Keystone Province of Canada. He said that Manitobans had learned to respect in peace the different cultures of its peoples and this had helped to establish Canada as number one of all nations of the world. He congratulated the people of Steinbach for their memorial and for their religious faith which they had inherited but also continued to practice. The unveiling followed the Honourable Yvon Dumont's address.



Photo One: Ernie P. Toews, chairperson of the Cairn Committee, chaired the unveiling ceremony for the Steinbach pioneer cairn June 23, 1996. In his opening address Mr. Toews stressed the inter-relatedness of the various groups who pioneered in Manitoba and who, in partnership with the native people who were here before, built the Province. In this photo we see the names of 9 of the 18 pioneer families, being those who settled in Lots 10 to 20. For a complete listing of the 18 family heads see: Preservings, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, page 1.

Clint Toews, the soloist for the occasion, was a fourth generation descendant of one of the original settlers. He sang a traditional song "Manitoba" that had been well known in the community in the first half of the 20th century. He also sang a popular German hymn of the original pioneers called, "Grosser Gott, wir loben dich (Great God, we praise thee)".

Rev. Jac. P. Dueck, a minister and retired pastor of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Steinbach, formerly called Kleine Gemeinde, spoke the dedicatory and concluding prayer of the service. His grandfather had been one of the original 18.

The Hanover Steinbach Historical Society wishes to acknowledge the work of the Steinbach Pioneer Cairn Committee consisting of Chairperson Ernie P. Toews, and committee members John Henry Friesen, Albert Goossen, Rev. Harvey Kroeker, Harold Unger, and Secretary of the Committee, Harvey Bartel.

As a group of volunteers these men have preformed a great service for their community by conceiving and executing this project. One can only imagine the countless hours involved to design the cairn, collect some \$15,000.00 to pay for it, and to organize the unveiling ceremony. The community is indeed greatly enriched by this undertaking and we salute the committee for their work and vision.



Photo Two: The Honourable Yvon Dumont, Lt. Governor of Manitoba, addressed the crowd of some 150-200 people who braved the drizzle to attend the event.

For previous articles on the Steinbach Pioneer Cairn Project see: Harvey Bartel, "Steinbach Pioneer Monument," in *Preservings*, No. 5, January 1995, page 10, and Harvey Kroeker, "Steinbach Pioneer Cairn Monument," *Preservings*, No. 6 June 1995, page 17. The latter article includes a picture of the "Cairn" committee.

Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Annual Meeting- Jan. 18, 1997

First Joint Annual Meeting and Banquet of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society and the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society celebrating the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Steinbach.

DATE: Saturday, January 18, 1997
PLACE: Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach

Agenda

5:00 BUSINESS MEETING - The M.M.H.S. and the H.S.H.S. will hold their respective business meetings, election of directors, Presidents' reports, etc.

6:00 COCKTAILS - Come early. Enjoy the punch and get acquainted!

6:30 BANQUET - Enjoy a traditional Mennonite meal of ham, farmer sausage, Verenike, fried potatoes, catered by the Museum auxiliary. Supper will be served in the historic Museum display hall.

7:45 AFTER DINNER SPEAKER - Al Reimer, English Professor and distinguished novelist, now retired and living in Arizona, returns to Steinbach as our after dinner speaker. Dr. Reimer will entertain the audience with enchanting stories of characters he remembers as a boy growing up in Steinbach. He will also read excerpts from his forth-coming novel set in Steinbach.

8:45 Break

9:00 ENTERTAINMENT SESSION: The fabulous "Heischraitje & Willa Honich" have entertained 1000s all over North America. Tonight the group will do a special performance in honour of their Steinbach roots. The "Heischraitje" are among the best musicians in Manitoba. Come and hear them perform. Low German entertainment at its best!

Dr. Al Reimer



Photo courtesy Steinbach: Is there any place like it?, page 162.



The Heischraitje & Willa Honich Left to right: Gerald and Dennis Reimer, Grant Plett, Ray and Pat Plett.

Tickets \$15.00

\$15.00 per ticket includes banquet. The entertainment deal of the century!

For tickets contact Centre for MB Studies (669-6575)
or Mennonite Heritage Centre (888-6721)
or Plett, Goossen & Ass. (326-6454)
or any of the HSHS or MMHS directors.

Articles

Kleine Gemeinde Giesbrechts

by Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5

Gerhard Giesbrecht 1742-1827, Krebsfeld, Prussia.

The family name Giesbrecht, like other Prussian and Russian Mennonite surnames appears to have originated in a first name, although there are records of Giesbrecht being used as a surname from the 1500s. This first name was considered as old-fashioned in West Prussia Mennonite circles, and was rarely used. There was a Giesbrecht Neudorf listed in the 1776 census, and he had a son Giesbrecht, but this was probably the last time the name was used as a first name. Incidentally, the older Giesbrecht Neudorf was probably the ancestor of most known Russian Neudorfs.

An unknown Wilhelm Giesbrecht, probably from Heubuden, was the father of several Giesbrechts who immigrated to Russia between 1788-1820. The three Giesbrecht brothers, David (b. 1750), Jacob (b. 1764) and Wilhelm (b. 1767) who went to the Old Colony in 1788-89 appear to be the sons of the Wilhelm Giesbrecht of Heubuden.

It is tempting to think this Wilhelm was the Wilhelm Giesbrecht who was the father of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1747-1827) who immigrated to Russia in 1802, and is the ancestor of many Manitoba Giesbrechts of today.

This Gerhard Giesbrecht appears to be listed at Krebsfeld in the 1776 census, although he is listed as having two daughters and one son, whereas it is more probable that he should have been listed with two sons and one daughter.

We do not know the name of his first wife, but his second wife was Susanna Heide (b. 1762), a daughter of Peter Heide of Augustwald of Ellerswald Gemeinde. [Gerhard Giesbrecht emigrated to Russia settling on Wirtschaft 7 in Muntau, Molotschna. According to the 1835 census Gerhard settled owned Wirtschaft 1 and died in 1824.]

Children.

The children of both marriages of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1742-1827) include:

1. **Katherina** (b. circa 1769)
2. **Wilhelm** (1770-11.4.1812). He married Anna Kroeker (1771-1831) and lived at Stobbendorf, West Prussia.
3. **Gerhard** (1772-1826). He was married four times. His first wife was Eliesabeth Wiebe,



The cottage style retirement home of the widow Gerhard Giesbrecht, nee Aganetha Thiessen (1825-1912) situated on her Homestead in Lichtenau, the NW 22-6-6E, 1 mile south and 1/2 mile west of Steinbach. She must have been a strong and courageous woman to Homestead on her own in an untamed wilderness land. She filed for her Homestead on Sept. 2, 1876. Judging by the Model T in the photograph it must have been taken shortly after her death in 1912. The letter correspondence of Aganetha Thiessen Giesbrecht with relatives in Russia from 1874 and continuing to her death in 1912, reveals a vivacious woman with an genuine interest in life and one who valued her extended family network highly. Aganetha did not follow her two sons and one daughter who joined the Holdeman movement in 1882 preferring to remain with her faith once received, a position common among many of the older generation at the time. Photo courtesy of great-granddaughter Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.

the second Helena Reimer (1784-1808), and the third Maria Dyck (1762-1817), the widow of Jacob Letkemann. In 1817 or 1818, he immigrated to Russia and settled at Muntau, Molotschna. About this time he married a Helena (b. 1788), family name as yet unknown. Gerhard G. owned Wirtschaft 10 in Muntau. After his death, his widow married Franz Niessen.

His children include: Gerhard (b. 1797) who married Margaretha Toews (1800-74), Wilhelm (1800-73), Jacob (b. 1820), Peter (1823-90) and Helena (b. 1826).

[Wilhelm Giesbrecht (1800-73) married Anna Boldt (1797-1869). The couple owned Wirtschaft 11 in Muntau. They were the parents of Justina G. (1836-1923) who married Cornelius K. Loepp (1833-1916). Loepp served as the Schulz in Blumstein and received a gold

medal for services during the Crimean War. Loepp in turn was the nephew of Anganetha Loepp (1808-81), wife of Kleine Gemeinde (KG) minister Jakob W. Friesen (1808-89), parents of Bishop Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917), Jansen, Neb. and later Meade, Ks. Cornelius K. Loepp was the grandfather of Abram Loepp (1894-1991) (father of Menno) and Hans Loepp (b. 1912) who later lived in Steinbach: Margare

ret Loepp, *The Kornelius K. Loepp Family*, page 4.]

[Son Peter Giesbrecht (1823-90) married Katharina Rempel (1825-83) of Halbstadt, Mol. He was a heavy-set man who was a great eater. His favourite saying was "Wann eena biem oasz sett, es et schwoa, nicht dovon toe eati." After his death, his dog lay on his grave every day for three years until it died. His daughter Justina G. (1858-92) married Johann Dueck of Muntau. They were the grandparents of John P. Dyck, farmer and genealogist of Springstein, Manitoba. *Klaas Dück and Descendants*, page 18.

4. **Justina** (b. 1785). She went to Russia with her father and younger siblings where they settled at

Muntau, Molotschna in 1803.

5. **Jacob** (b. 1787) appears to have married Margaretha Wiens (b. 12 11 1788). His children include at least two members of the KG, namely, Gerhard and Eliesabeth. Jakob went to Russia with his father in 1803, and is found in the 1835 census at Muntau [as the owner of Wirtschaft 17.] Among his children are Margaretha (b. 1813), Gerhard (1816-63), Jacob (b. 1824), Eliesabeth (1830-58), and Wilhelm (b. 1833).

Gerhard Giesbrecht (1816-63) married twice, first with Eva Ratzlaff (1817-47) and secondly with Aganetha Thiessen (1825-1912). Eva Ratzlaff was the daughter of Adam Adam Ratzlaff (b. 1783), Wirtschaft 19, Franzthal, Mol: 1835 census. Thus Eva was the aunt of Rev. Heinrich Ratzlaff (1848-1922), Jansen, Neb. Aganetha Thiessen, was the daughter of



Photograph of Jakob T. Giesbrecht (1861-1953) presumably taken at his mother's farm in Lichtenau. "Ohm Jakob" never married. Johann W. Dueck writes about Jakob that he "was a very neat person.... and the teacher [Peter L. Dueck in the village of Blumenhof, Bor., Russia] often used him as an example for the rest of us. Indeed during Calligraphy class he never got his fingers black and he always had his finger nails trimmed and short. In fact his whole demeanour was very exemplary compared to mine: History and Events, page 100. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz. Steinbach, Manitoba.

Jakob Thiessen (b. 1785) and Anna Enns (b. 1797), Wirtschaft 20 in Neukirch, Mol.

[Gerhard lived in Prangenu. He was not very healthy and suffered financially and therefore was allowed to operate a small business by the Gemeinde. There is record of assistance being given by the Gemeinde: see Biography of Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht elsewhere in this issue].

Gerhard's widow and children immigrated to Manitoba in 1874. Sons Gerhard (1846-1907) (of the first marriage) and Wilhelm (1849-1917) are found at Steinbach, Man. in the 1881 census [where Gerhard was serving as the village mayor in 1883: see *Preservings*, No. 8, page Part 2, page 30, for photo of son Gerhard K. G. (1872-1945). Daughter Aganetha Giesbrecht (1848-1918) married Jakob T. Barkman: see article on Peter K. Barkman elsewhere in this issue. Daughter Margaretha Giesbrecht (1852-1936) married Jakob S. Friesen, son of Jakob K. Friesen who drowned in the Red River in 1875. Daughter Elisabeth Giesbrecht (1865-1910) married teacher Gerhard E. Kornelsen of Lichtenau.

The widow Gerhard Giesbrecht and her son Jacob (b. 18.6.1861) are listed at Eigenfeld, Man. in the 1881 census. [The widow Giesbrecht, nee Aganetha Thiessen, had a sister Mrs. Jakob Becker, nee Justina Thiessen living in Marienfeld, Crimea.]

Eliesabeth Giesbrecht (1830-58) married Jacob M. Barkman (1824-75), [son of Martin J. Barkman of Rückenau, Mol. The family lived in Waldheim, Mol. and later in Friedensfeld, northwest of Nikopol. Jakob was elected as a minister in 1873. He served as a the leader of an emigration group in 1874 and drowned in

the Red River the following year. His son Johann G. Barkman served as Schulz or Mayor of Steinbach for 25 years: see article on Jakob M. Barkman elsewhere in this newsletter.]

[In a letter to the *Menonitische Rundschau* (M.R.), May 28, 1890, Johann G. Barkman asks for the addresses of his uncles Jakob Giesbrecht of Blumstein and Wilhelm. In a letter to the M.R. of March 29, 1899, Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht writes that he has uncles Jakob and Gerhard Thiessen living in Russia as well as a widow aunt Aron Thiessen and uncle and aunt Johann Siemens in the Crimea. References to M.R. are courtesy Henry N. Fast, Stb. 1989.]

6. **Peter Giesbrecht** (1794-1842) appears to be the first surviving child of the second marriage of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1747-1824). [Peter G. married Maria Harder (1795-1856) and settled at Blumstein, Mol. where her family lived. She was the aunt of Johann P. Harder (1811-75), long-time Bishop of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Gemeinde and Johann H. Toews (1826-95) who settled in Gruenfeld, Man. in 1874.] The children of Peter Giesbrecht (1794-1842) include: Helena (1815-15), Gerhard (b. 1817), Johann (b. 1824), Eliesabeth (b. 1824), Helena (b. 1828), Isbrandt (b. 1830), Jacob (b. 1832-32), Abraham (b. 1833), Katherina (b. 1837), and Jacob (b. 1839).

7. **Susanna** (b. 1796).

8. **Eliesabeth** (1808-79) married Peter Thiessen (1798-1881) of Muntau, Molotschna, [son of Peter Wilhelm Thiessen (b. 1780) who emigrated to Russia in 1809. Eliesabeth's sons David (1830-1906), Johann (1839-1926) and Wilhelm Thiessen (1842-1927) emigrated to Jansen, Nebraska, during the 1870s: see H. Fast, "Jansen, Neb." *Profile*, 111.]

9. **Maria** (b. 1806).

Jakob Giesbrecht, Neuteicherwald, Prussia.

Another Giesbrecht of note in the KG is Jakob Giesbrecht (b. 1772) of Muntau, Mol. Jakob was a son of Jakob Giesbrecht of Neuteicherwald, Prussia. The senior Jakob was deceased in 1776, and his widow is listed at Neuteicherwald in the census of 1776 with two sons and four daughters, who were Bernhard (b. 1764) Halbstadt, Mol. 1808, 1835, Helena (b. circa 1766), Eliesabeth (b. circa 1769), Jakob (b. 1772), Aganetha (b. 1773), and one unknown daughter.

Jakob Giesbrecht Jr (b. 1772) married Katharina Wiebe (b. 1772) and immigrated to Russia in 1803 settling in Muntau, Mol. where he is found in the Revisions Listen of 1808 and the census of 1835 [Wirtschaft 4]. His children include Maria (1800-55), who married Isaac Regier (1791-1840), and whose second husband was Johann de Veer. Maria had many descendants in the KG: son Jakob Regier (1832-1906) settled in Rosenfeld, southwest of Mitchell in 1874; daughter Maria de Veer married Klaas B. Friesen (1838-1932) who settled in Steinbach in 1874, see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part 2, pages 10-12; son Isaac de Veer married the widow of KG deacon Heinrich Wiebe, who died in a blizzard in 1876. The Isaac de Veer family lived in Blumenort, Man. and moved to Needles, B. C. in 1911: see *Preservings*, No. 8, Part 2,

pages 30-31.

The other children of Jakob Giesbrecht (b. 1772) include Jakob (b. 1802) who married Justina b. 1807--family name not known, Katharina (b. 1804), and Anganetha (b. 1813).

Conclusion.

While there are other men and women who are descendants of Giesbrechts and who married into KG families, it would seem that the descendants of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1747-1824) have had the largest continuing relationship with the KG.

Further information on these families can be found in the KG Historical Series of Delbert Plett, most notably Volume 4.

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Plett, D. Volumes I-VI of the Kleine Gemeinde series. Steinbach, 1982-1993.
Unruh, B.H. *Menonitischen Ostwanderungen* (Karlsruhe, 1955).
References to the *Menn. Rundschau* are courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Man.



Mrs. Johann G. Barkman, nee Margaretha Schierling Friesen (1858-1946) and her sister Mrs. Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht, nee Katharina Schierling Friesen (1855-1938). In 1875 their father Jakob K. Friesen drowned in the Red River. He was the son of Johann von Riesen of Ohrloff, Molotschna. The two sisters were neighbours on Wirtschaft 2 and 3 in Steinbach for 35 years. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, a granddaughter of Katharina Friesen Giesbrecht.

Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht 1849 - 1917

By son Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Man., translated by Delbert F. Plett from a manuscript transcribed by Abram A. Vogt, Mennonite Genealogy Inc., circa 1950.

Father Wilhelm Giesbrecht was born July 16, 1849 in the village of Prangenau, South Russia [Molotschna Colony]. His father was Gerhard Giesbrecht born March 25, 1816 and died February 16, 1863. Grandfather's father was Jacob Giesbrecht and his mother was Aganetha Thiessen born July 6, 1825. Her father was Jacob Thiessen.

Our father received only little education as his father was a sickly man who could not perform hard work. Therefore he operated a small store (handel) with the blessing of the Gemeinde. As a result father had to start working out for farmers at an early age. He was only small in stature and received 20 ruble per year. His father died when he was only 13 leaving his mother and 4 siblings in impoverished circumstances.

As he got a little older it happened that he came to work for Franz Kroekers who had a shoemaker shop. Here he learned the trade of shoemaker whereby he was later able to achieve a better income. He also continued making and repairing shoes for us children here in America. He said that he had also had to repair shoes in the barn during the night at certain farmers.

He related to us that he had also frequently prayed, "and when I recognized my lost condition, and when I saw Jesus on the Cross, my fear and worry was gone; and I was a blessed person." "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" Jeremiah 31:3.

These were the circumstances in which our father received his education. He was baptized in the Kleine Gemeinde in the 20th year of his life. In 1873, in his 24th year, he married an Elizabeth Harms, an 18 year old woman. But this joy was only to be for a short time. She was torn from his side (by death) on May 10, 1874 (Note One).

The Holdemans Gemeinde in Steinbach, Manitoba, had its beginnings with 18 baptized members in 1881/2. Father Wilhelm Giesbrecht became a minister on January 4, 1884 and served in this position for 33 years. At the time the worship services were held in the homes. By 1883 the Steinbach school house was finished and so it was utilized for worship services.

In 1911 the assembly house was built at a cost of \$1,466.00 and in which preaching has taken place for 49 years already and where peace has been disseminated in accordance with Matthew 11:29, "Peace unto your souls" and John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd and know those that are mine, and I come for them": and likewise also Romans 6:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Father Wilhelm Giesbrecht was the leader

here in the Steinbach area after brother Peter Toews moved to Alberta. He served for 5 years as editor of the church paper (Messenger of Truth). From 1917 to 1921 the Steinbach congregation had no minister but brother Cornelius P. Wohlgenuth devotedly took responsibility and served as a minister.

A son was born to them whom they gave the name Gerhard. The young mother died on May 10 after 12 days of severe illness. She was buried on the 13th. Her life had consisted 19 years, 7 months and 10 days.

While all this was going on the plans were finalized and completed for the journey to America which was to commence on the first of June. Father with the 2 month old baby went along as well as this had been planned before the mother died. Later Father related to us that it would have been better had he stayed there longer for it was a sad and very hard time for him with the 2 month old baby on such a long journey.

When they arrived here in Manitoba the wise Heavenly Father, in His all wise council, took the little orphan into His care. The small baby was immediately buried by the Red River.

Father took out a homestead in the Kleefeld area on Section 21-6-5 E. On January 10, 1875, our father entered into the state of holy matrimony with the young woman, Katherina Friesen. They lived on this homestead for 4 years and continued farming. 3 children were born to them there, one of whom died young.

In the year 1879 the parents moved to Steinbach where they had bought 160 acres of land and whereby they became citizens of Steinbach. The reason for their move apparently was because father's mother and siblings also lived in Steinbach. In those days it was better to live in a village with respect to social life and schools: it was also easier to ward off poverty.

Mother's mother and siblings were also orphaned ever since the drowning of her father Jakob Friesen in the Red River on June 2, 1875 in Winnipeg. It had taken so long until the body was found, that the corpse was immediately buried in Winnipeg. After the loss of the grandfather, mother's mother and her three orphaned children (daughters) came to Steinbach in order to live here.

And so they made a new start to carry on with farming with new courage. The supply of work, labour and poverty was abundant. Many hardships had to be endured during this time.

When Johann Holdeman came in the year 1880, it became clear to him [W.T.G.] that more emphasis be placed on conversion and that only such members should be served with baptism who were born again. Also that discipline among the members should be conducted according to the teachings of Menno Simons, the way the

Holdemans members currently practise the same. Accordingly our parents united themselves to this teaching, apparently in the year 1882, and became members of the Church of God in Christ, through baptism, for which they felt _____[?].

In the year 1884 our father was elected as a minister and he was ordained Jan. 6. Thus he laboured in the affairs of God's Kingdom among the families of the village. He also served those who were physically sick as well as the searching souls. He held worship services for the Lutheran Church members and also conducted their funerals and preached on special occasions.

Our parents were only poor but we always had enough food and clothing. 14 children were born to them of whom 4 died in childhood. 2 died after they were already grown up, and 8 siblings are still alive (in May 1960). They were always concerned over us children, to teach us the way to heaven and also to go before us with example and deed. The morning devotions were not overlooked. Father would read a number of verses from the Holy Scripture, and we would also go down on our knees and he would lead us in prayer.

Father was only a small man and wore a full beard. He was the editor of the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* for 5 years (Note Two).

I have taken the following out of father's daily journal:

"In the year 1888 he was travelling for 40 days, in Ontario, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana in order to preach the Word of God. In 1895 he was travelling for 45 days in Kansas and Nebraska. In 1899 he was away from home for 32 days in work on the matters of the Kingdom of God in South Dakota and Nebraska. In 1901 he served for 31 days in South Dakota, preaching the Word of God."

"From 1901-5 he was away from home 69 days in the course of conference work. From 1905-8 he was also travelling for 79 days in order to bring the message of salvation to lost souls. In 1908 he preached for 8 days in North Dakota. In 1909 he stayed in North Dakota for

Coming in the Next Issue

A biography of Anganetha Thiessen Giesbrecht (1825-1912) will appear in *Preservings*, Issue No. 10. She was born in Neukirch, married Gerhard Giesbrecht from Muntau, resident in Prangenau, widowed at age 32, emigrated to Manitoba at age 49 with her five children, homesteaded on her own in Lichtenau where she farmed with son Jakob. She corresponded extensively with relatives back in Russia. These letters are the source of information for this biography.

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6 days helping in the work of the church. On Nov. 14, 1909 he left for Kansas where he attended the conference, serving as leader. He was there for 28 days. In 1910 he went for 6 days to North Dakota."

"In 1916 the parents went to Kansas for a short visit as mother had a sister living there."

Neither of the parents was very strong physically. Our beloved mother was often alone with her children. She survived our father by 21 years and reached the age of 83 years. She died on October 22, 1938.

During the last time of his life, father became continually weaker, and during the last week he remained completely in bed. His illness was stomach cancer. He departed from this world and went home into eternal rest in 1917.

We also allow a number of verses to follow here which our father composed (Song No. 266 in the small songbook):

Wie Gross ist dein Erbarmen,
Du Gnädiger Vater mein!
Wie liebest du mich Armen,
Und nennest mich auch dein
Trotz aller meiner Sündenschuld;
Drum pris' ich deine Güte
Und Vaterliche Huld.

How great is they compassion
Thou gracious Father mine
in spite of my transgression
I can be wholly thine.
Thou hast forgiven all my sins
I praise Thee for Thy mercy
and for thy love divine.



Steinbach young men. Left to right: Johann F. Giesbrecht and Peter F. Giesbrecht, sons of Wilhelm T. G., Peter T. Loewen and Martin F. Barkman. Peter F. Giesbrecht (1888-1918) later had a barber shop in Steinbach. In 1916 Peter F. Giesbrecht and Gerhard W. Reimer, son of Steinbach pioneer Klaas R. Reimer, had the opportunity to go on a land inspection trip to Nicaragua. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.



1950. Sons of Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht: L. to r.: Cornelius, David, Isaac, John, Dietrich, George (Gerhard) and William (Wilhelm). David was the father of Dolores Pankratz. John was the grandfather of Ken Loewen of Misty River Marine in Kleefeld, Gerhard was the father of Ernest Giesbrecht of Mitchell. Wilhelm was the grandfather of Bill Giesbrecht of Diamond Concrete, Steinbach. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.



"Tante Trienjche" Katharina Giesbrecht (1880-1971) was the only daughter of Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht. She never married. In 1965 she was still living by herself in the parental home on Main Street. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ben D. Penner, nee Anna L. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Credit: A slightly different version of the biography of Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht was published in Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, editor, *Memoir of Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1966* (Steinbach, Man., 1966), pages 11-13.

Endnotes:

Note One: Dolores Pankratz has in her possession a funeral letter written by the recently bereaved husband Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht in 1874 after the death of his first wife. In the letter he invites friends and relatives to attend the funeral and a fellowship meal.

Note Two: The *Botschafter der Wahrheit* founded in 1897 by Bishop Peter P. Toews, Kleefeld, Man., was the denominational journal of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. It was the first denominational paper founded and sponsored among all the Russian Mennonites: Plett, "Print Culture of the East Reserve," in *Menn. Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1994, No. 4, pages 524 to 550.



Circa 1900. Photographs of Gerhard F. Giesbrecht (1878-1967) and Elisabeth T. Loewen (1884-1948) with son George. Courtesy of Mrs. Ben D. Penner, nee Anna L. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Man.

Dietrich S. Friesen 1849-1901: Pioneer Teacher

By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Family Background.

Dietrich S. Friesen was the son of Jakob K. Friesen (1822-75) who was born in Ohrloff, Molotschna. Jakob was the son of Johann von Riesen (1789-1840) who had taken over his father's (Abraham von Riesen) Wirtschaft 11 in Ohrloff and, therefore, the family was referred to as the "Ohrloff" Friesens. Johann von Riesen was the brother to Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), second Kleine Gemeinde (KG) Bishop, and Helena (1787-1846) who married KG founder Klaas Reimer: see *Preservings*, June 1996, No. 8, Part 1, pages 49-51.

Dietrich's mother was Katharina Schierling (1823-1912), daughter of Durk Jakob Schierling (b. 1785), Wirtschaft 7, Marienthal, 1835 census.

The Jakob K. Friesen family lived in various Molotschna villages: Marienthal, Alexanderkrone and Klippenfeld. By 1870 the family was resident in Nikolaithal, Kherson Province. In 1874 they emigrated to Grünfeld (Kleefeld), Manitoba. Jakob's older brother and former school teacher, Johann K. Friesen and family settled in Harvey County, Kansas. His younger half-brother Cornelius H. Friesen emigrated to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1874 (Note One). The rest of Jakob's 9 siblings remained in Russia where all contact with them was lost after the 1917 Soviet takeover.

On June 3, 1875, Jakob together with Steinbach minister Jakob M. Barkman drowned while crossing the Red River on their way to Winnipeg.

Marriage.

Son Dietrich S. Friesen lived with his father's cousin Abraham F. Reimer in Steinbach, Borosenko, in early 1870. On May 12, 1870, he married Katharina Friesen, daughter of veteran Molotschna school teacher Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-92). The wedding was held at the home of the bride's parents in Annafeld. His wife had served as a maid at the home of delegate Cornelius P. Toews.

Dietrich was a school teacher in the village of Rosenfeld, Borosenko, Russia and maintained a valuable diary, extracts of which were published in 1986: see also *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part 2, pages 22-23 (Note Two). The family emigrated from Russia in 1874 departing on May 29. During the ocean voyage Dietrich sought help for fellow passenger Heinrich Ratzlaff's wife.

He settled in Grünfeld where he served as the pioneer school teacher. On December 7, 1874, Dietrich wrote a letter to Bishop Peter P. Toews in Russia, datelined Gruenfeld: *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 44-5.

Settlement, 1874.

There is some question as to whether Jakob S. Friesen or his brother Dietrich S. Friesen was the original owner of Wirtschaft 7 in Steinbach.

The lists of pioneers published in the 1934 and 1949 *Gedenkfeier* books show this to be Jakob. However, in his article Klaas W. Reimer has added in brackets after the name of Jakob S. Friesen on Wirtschaft 7, "(Two years later 1877)". This presumably means that Dietrich lived in Steinbach the first two years.



Dietrich S. Friesen (1849-1901). A rare photograph of one of the original Steinbach pioneers. This photograph has previously been published but with very poor reproduction. The original is presently in the possession of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba, who has graciously made it available for reproduction.

This seems to be confirmed by Gerhard G. Kornelsen in his 1915 article "Steinbach: Then and now," where he stated that "Dietrich S. Friesen settled on number [7]. He gave over his pioneer work in 1878 to his brother Jakob S. Friesen and moved to Blumenfeld. Two years later however he returned to teach school in Steinbach": *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 258.

This information is confirmed by homestead records which list a Dietrich Friesen as having received a homestead grant in the Steinbach village plan on SW 25-6-6E on May 20, 1880 which he acquired on October 19, 1875, the date on which the previous owner Johann Dueck Sr., filed a cancellation.

The KG deacon records show that "\$100.00 was advanced to Jakob Friesen of Blumenfeld [in 1874] for the purchase of an ox, a cow and potatoes": *The Golden Years*, 351. At the same time homestead records show that on Oct. 2, 1874, Jakob Friesen Jr. applied for a Homestead on NE 21-6-5E, just east of present-day Kleefeld.

What is puzzling, however, is the fact that Dietrich S. Friesen is credited as being the first teacher in Grünfeld where he is also listed in the KG Fire insurance records: Johann Esau, "Brandbuch," page 51, but the coverage is

stricken as of December 18, 1875. At the same time, Bishop Peter P. Toews has recorded that Jakob S. Friesen settled in Steinbach: "Genealogy Register" *Profile*, page 43.

Dietrich S. Friesen must have originally intended to settle in either Grünfeld, Rosenfeld or Blumenfeld as he originally applied for a homestead on NE 33-6-5E which he cancelled on October 12, 1874. In 1877 the land was acquired by his brother Jakob Friesen Jr. who filed a cancellation in 1880 in favour of Jakob Bartel. By 1886 the Steinbach tax rolls showed SW 25-6-6E to be owned by Jakob Friesen indicating that a sales transaction had taken place.



Cornelius F. Friesen (1876-1980). Another rare photograph probably taken around 1896. Cornelius F. Friesen married Maria G. Kornelsen (1882-1941), daughter of pioneer teacher Gerhard E. Kornelsen, thus joining two of Manitoba's premier teaching families where the father and grandfather on both sides were professional teachers. Cornelius F. Friesen was a machinist who lived in Steinbach and Winnipeg: see Wright, Steinbach: Is there any place like it? page 26.

It seems likely that by late fall of 1874 Dietrich S. Friesen had made up his mind to settle in Steinbach and that he negotiated a land swap with Johann L. Dueck, the result of which was that Jakob moved to Blumenfeld, Dueck received land in Gruenfeld, and Dietrich moved to Steinbach.

Here he joined his brother Johann (1853-1937), who had already settled on Wirtschaft 17 in Steinbach, and his wife's brother Klaas B. Friesen (1838-1922) on Wirtschaft 1: *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, pages 10-12.

What is interesting is that Dietrich took the job of teacher in Grünfeld in 1874/75 and not Steinbach. Dietrich left Russia in May 29, 1874, and not in July together with the rest of the Steinbach group. Perhaps he had already committed himself to teach in Grünfeld by the time the Steinbachers came and got organized. But

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then, the Steinbachers could have hired Cornelius Fast on Wirtschaft Two, who had already served as their teacher in Steinbach, Russia. What gives?

Dietrich's move to Steinbach was followed two years later by his brother-in-law Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht who purchased Wirtschaft 3 originally owned by Gerhard Warkentin. At about the same time (1878), brother-in-law Johann G. Barkman purchased Wirtschaft 2 from Cornelius Fast. By the 1880s the "Ohrloff" Friesens were firmly established in Steinbach where all 7 of the Jakob K. Friesen children resided at one time or another prior to the turn of the century.



Dietrich S. Friesen's sister Mrs. Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht, nee Katharina S. Friesen (1855-1938) and brother Johann S. Friesen (1853-1937). Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ben D. Penner, nee Anna L. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Career, Dietrich S. Friesen.

Dietrich S. Friesen lived in Steinbach for 2 years and then moved to Blumenfeld, selling his property to his brother Jakob--or perhaps exchanging? But 2 years later he moved back to Steinbach where he taught again from 1880 to 84.

The family joined the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite in Grünfeld in 1882. His wife passed away in 1895.

Peter P. Toews has recorded that Dietrich S. Friesen was resident in Steinbach in 1895. He served again as assistant teacher in Steinbach from 1897 until his death in 1901, on August 18, 1901. He died of brain paralysis only a few months after his school classes had finished for the year.

Klaas J. B. Reimer reported that Dietrich S. Friesen "enjoyed great affection from among his students in those times."

Notes:

Note One: Cornelius H. Friesen was the great-grandfather of Rev. David K. Friesen, long-time administrator at the Steinbach Bible College.

Note Two: The original of Dietrich S. Friesen's "Journal" does not seem to be extant and the present source for the document is a transcription made during the 1950s by Steinbach genealogist Abram A. Vogt, founder of Mennonite Genealogy Inc. The journal is quoted extensively in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 6-13.

Penner's of Friedensfeld, Russia Part Two

by D. Plett

Background.

In Part One: "The Penner's of Friedensfeld, Russia" *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, pages 33-36, Wendy Dueck, Kleefeld, Manitoba, recounted the story of the children of Jakob Penner (1829-ca.95) and Helena L. Dueck of Friedensfeld, with particular emphasis on her family line, being son Peter D. Penner (1854-1925), Riga, Russia and later Winnipeg, Man.

Part Two of "The Penner's of Friedensfeld, Russia" tells the story of Jakob Penner (1829-ca.95) and his parents Peter Penner (b.1799) and Anna Dyck (b. 1801), daughter of Jakob Dyck (b. 1776) and Anna Bartel (b. 1779) of Krongarten. Anna Bartel was probably a cousin to Prediger Johann Bartel (1764-1813) of Krongarten whose sons Peter and Jakob later moved to Molotschna and joined the Kleine Gemeinde (KG): see *Preservings*, No. 4, July 1994, pages 11-12, and No. 6, June 1995, page 24.

Students of Mennonite history have long been confused by the two Penner families in the KG. Both lines had a patriarch named Peter and neither was listed in the 7th Revision, a census of the Molotschna Colony in 1808.

The recently discovered 1835 census or 8th Revision has allowed some important clarifications to be made. The ancestry of Peter Penner (1816-84), Ohrloff and later Margenau, Mol. and after 1874, Blumenort, Man., can now be ascertained and was outlined in "New discoveries: The Penner Family," *Preservings*, No. 3, January 1994, pages 6-7.

Peter Penner (1770-1820) Schönwiese, Chortitza

The other Peter Penner (b. 1799) of Prangenau, Mol. was the son of Peter Peter Penner (1770-1820) who emigrated to Russia in 1795. He took over the Wirtschaft of David Schapansky in the village of Schönwiese, Chortitza Colony (Note One). In 1801 Peter Penner was serving as mayor or Schulz of the village: Unruh, *Ostwanderung*, page 303, # 24.

On October 10, 1814, Jakob Friesen, Muensterberg, Cornelius Jantzen and Klaas Reimer of Petershagen, Molotschna visited Peter Penner in the Old Colony. It was at Penner's home that the KG leaders met Johann Wiebe, Bishop of the Chortitza Gemeinde who was also staying there for night: see *Leaders*, page 132. Schönwiese and Krongart were both Old Colony villages settled by Frisians who were associated with the KG in the Molotschna during the early 1800s.

Peter Penner (b. 1799) Prangenau, Mol.

By 1821 Peter Penner Junior (b.1799) had married Anna Dyck (b.1801), daughter of Jakob Dyck (1776-1839) and Anna Bartel (1779-1850) of Krongarten. It appears that Anna Bartel was

a cousin or otherwise related to Johann Bartel (1764-1813): see *Preservings*, No. 4, July 1994, pages 11-12, and No. 6, June 1995, page 24.

The connection with Dyck family is of interest as several children of Anna Dyck Penner's older brother Jakob Dyck (1800-69) came to Canada individually between 1876 and 1902 (Note Two). A sister Ewwa Dyck (b. 1806) married Abram Peters and her family came to Canada during the 1870s as part of the Old Colony immigration. Another sister Maria (1808-48) married Jakob Friesen and lived in the Bergthal Colony where their son Jakob Friesen (1828-99) served as the Gebietsschreiber and later as the first Mennonite School Inspector in Manitoba (Note Three).

In 1825 Peter Penner Jr. immigrated to the Molotschna where he settled on Wirtschaft 17 in Prangenau. The 1835 census lists the family as follows: Peter Peter Penner age 36, wife Anna 34, children; Peter age 9, Jakob 6, Anna 11, Maria 7 and Katherina 5.

Peter Penner (b. 1799) became a minister in the Molotschna. It seems that the meeting between his father, Klaas Reimer and the other KG leaders must have made an impression on Peter (b. 1799) as by 1835 he had joined the KG where he continued to serve as a minister. He first signed official correspondence as a minister of the KG in 1838.

In 1847 Peter Penner was removed from the ministerial "for questionable dealings": *Golden Years*, pages 279-307. Peter Penner (b. 1799) was frequently referred to in the journal of colleague Johann Dueck (1801-66) of Muntau who stopped at the Penner home in Prangenau on his ministerial journeys through the Molotschna. In 1850 Dueck stayed overnight at the Penner home on February 5 and again on March 5. On July 23 Dueck was at the Penner home for dinner.

On January 1, 1853, the KG ministerial used the Penner home as the location of a ministerial meeting. On December 14, 1857, Penner was dismissed from the Gemeinde but was reaccepted a week later. It is obvious that Penner continued as a respected member of the KG notwithstanding his dismissal as a minister. Johann Dueck always refers to Penner as "Ohm", a sign of respect.

Notes:

Note One: Genealogical information regarding the ancestors of Peter Penner (b. 1799) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5

Note Two: They were the great-grandparents of John Dyck, 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, Research Director of the HSHS.

Note Three: The information regarding the family of Jakob Dyck (1776-1839) and Anna Bartel (1779-1850) is courtesy of John Dyck, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Son Jakob Penner Loewen (1855-1941) son of Jacob and Anne Loewen at age 16 in Russia in 1871. He became a skilled chiropractor with a busy practice. He was the father of Dr. Sol Loewen: see Preservings, No. 8, June, 1996, page 31.



Jakob and Anna Penner Loewen. He was a brother to Kornelius Loewen of Steinbach.
Photo courtesy of Jakob Loewen Family book, page 17.

Peter Penner Children.

The children of Peter and Anna Penner of Prangenau married into prominent KG families:

1) Anna Penner.

Daughter **Anna Penner** (1822-1907) married Jakob W. Loewen (1820-1901), son of KG deacon Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) of Lindenau,

Mol. After their marriage they settled in the vil- lage of Waldheim. In 1867 the family moved to the KG village of Friedensfeld, some 50 kilometres north of Nikopol. The Jakob Loewen family was moderately well-to-do and owned a grist mill. In 1875 they immigrated to Kansas, U.S.A. where they settled southeast of Gnadenu near modern-day Hillsboro.

Elisabeth W. Loewen (1829-1906). She was a sister to Jakob W. Loewen who married his brother. This family lived in Friedensfeld. This couple became surrogate grandparents to the children of Sarah Loewen Plett and Jakob J. Thielmann as her parents and the rest of the Plett family had moved to Manitoba in 1875. The Peter P. Penner family joined the Mennonite Brethren and remained in Russia to experience

2) Peter P. Penner, Friedensfeld.

Son **Peter P. Penner** (1826-94) married

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The Peter Penner family, Friedensfeld, Russia.

Circa 1880. From left to right: First couple - Peter Funks, father to John Funk, San Jose, grandfather to Peter J. Funk who worked for the Mennonite Brethren Board of Trustees and lived in Hillsboro, Ks., at one time; second Couple - Peter Penners; third couple - Franz Peters; Grandmother Penner, nee Helena Dueck, and daughter Lena; Grandfather Peter Penner and son Jakob; fourth couple - Abraham Thiessens; fifth couple - Philip Isaacs, parents to Mrs. Penner, 47 Broadway, Chilliwack, B.C. Photo and caption courtesy of Dr. Sol Loewen, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1982. Dr. Loewen was a fourth cousin to the Loewens of Steinbach, Rosenort and Blumenort, Manitoba.

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the ravages of the Revolution and Machnov times.

3) Jakob Penner, estate owner.

Son **Jakob Penner** (1829-ca.95) married Helena Dueck (1828-ca.99), daughter of KG minister Johann Dueck (1801-66) of Muntau. Jakob Penner and his family lived in Prangenu, Mol. On February 13, 1861, Jakob Penner was listed in a KG ministerial election held in Neukirch. He must have been well liked as he was the fourth in the election with 27 votes with 110 members voting. In 1867 the family moved to Friedensfeld, northwest of Nikopol, Russia. Here they prospered and became exceedingly wealthy. Nephew Johann W. Dueck describes their financial circumstances as follows:

“To the Penner family one could aptly apply the verse, ‘These are simple things for God, to enrich the poor and impoverish the rich’. The Penners had a very large enterprise in Friedensfeld of which I myself still have many remembrances from when we lived in the village, even though I was only six or seven years old. I can still remember that they had a very large massive two story dwelling house, built of kilned bricks and a roof covered with plates of kilned clay. A fine carriage with glass windows drawn by three horses was their mode of transportation when they went visiting.

“At the time we lived in Friedensfeld they at times had in excess of one hundred workers. It was not unusual for them to have draught animals consisting of one hundred pair of oxen and one hundred pair of horses. Through land dealings and efficient enterprises the Penners aspired more and more to a large empire. After we had been in America for about ten years they were at the highest point [of their prosperity] as their cash assets consisted of about one hundred and twenty thousand ruble in deposits at Banks and loans owing to them. Then came the crash!

“Uncle Penner bought many thousand desjatinen of land, paying--according to what he himself wrote us in a letter--forty thousand ruble down and signing promissory notes for the balance. From the balance of this sum they now had to purchase agricultural implements and hire thousands of workers; soon this money was all expended. Then what happened? Many bad years came one after the other so that there was barely enough production to maintain this impressive farming enterprise. The interest compounded by many thousand of rubles every year and could not be paid. The mortgage holders--from whom uncle Penner had bought the land--threatened to repossess it, if it was not paid for by a set deadline. Through all this trouble and worry it happened that uncle Penner died of a heart attack after he had lain speechless for three or four days.

“After uncle Penner’s death the mortgage holders took the land, livestock, equipment and so on, all of which had also been given as security. So the Penners were completely bankrupt and came into poverty. Aunt Penner died some years after this bankruptcy. Now we friends in America collected and donated money, and in this year--1903--have already helped three of the Penners’ children to come here to America. These are: Johann D. Penners, B Janzs’ (Penners’ daughter Helena) and H. Siemens (Penners’ daughter). Also there still is a Johann Siemens family that would dearly like to be helped over here”: Johann W. Dueck, “Historie und Begebenheiten . . .,” *History and Events*, page 86.

4) Katherina Penner.

Daughter **Katharina Penner** (1830-68) married Peter M. Friesen (1827-92), son of KG minister Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) of Rosenort, Mol. In 1874 the Peter M. Friesen family immigrated to Kansas where they settled in the Hillsboro area. They belonged to the Bruderthaler Gemeinde. Peter M. Friesen died in 1892 at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, where he was on a land scouting expedition. His son Peter P. Friesen was a mortician and owned the funeral home in Hutchison, Kansas, which was operated by his son Ernest after his death in 1938.



The Jakob Penners of Friedensfeld, Russia, and children.

Circa 1880. The couples are numbered from left to right. (1) Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Friesen, (2) Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Siemens, (3) Mr. and Mrs. John D. Penner, (4) Mr. and Mrs. John W. Neufeld, (5) Miss Margaret Penner, (6) Parents Mr. and Mrs. Jakob Penner, (7) Mr. and Mrs. Peter D. Penner, (8) Mr. and Mrs. John F. Siemens, (9) Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Janz. Photo and caption courtesy of Dr. Sol Loewen, whose grandmother was a sister to Peter Penner and Jakob Penner Sr. He sent me these photos on August 9, 1982, with a note that the originals were in the possession of John P. Siemens, Dinuba, California.

5) Helena Penner.

Daughter **Helena Penner** (1840-1908) married Peter H. Penner (1839-1916), oldest son of Peter Penner (1816-84) of Margenau. With this marriage the two Penner lines in the KG were joined together. The couple lived in Waldheim, Molotschna, where their daughter Helena was born in 1861. Later they moved to Friedensfeld, Borosenko, from where they emigrated to Kansas, USA in 1875. After one year the family moved to Blumenort, Manitoba. In 1891 they moved to Greenland several miles north.

Children: Daughter Helena married Johann I. Friesen, and lived in Steinbach, Manitoba, where he ran the flour mill: see *Preservings*, No. 4, July 1994, pages 10-11. Daughter Katharine married Klaas I. Friesen: see *Preservings*, No. 8, pages 54-55. Johann and Klaas were sons of Abraham M. Friesen: see article elsewhere in this issue. Son Peter P.

Penner (1875-1949) married Margaret, daughter of deacon Johann L. Dueck of Gruenfeld. The Penner family lived on NW 18-7-7E in Ridgewood. He was a deacon in the Holdeman church. His sons Ben D. and George D. Penner were well-known in the Steinbach area.



Peter P. Friesen (1862-1938) was the son of Katharina Penner and Peter M. Friesen. Peter P. Friesen owned and operated the Funeral home in Hutchison, Kansas, for 40 years: Obituary, Hutchison, Kansas News, September 6, 1938.



1940 Passport photos of Peter P. Penner and Margaret Dueck Penner. Courtesy of Mrs. Ben D. Penner, nee Anna L. Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Johann W. Dueck (1865-1932)

Johann W. Dueck (uncle of former Steinbach mayor A. D. Penner) was the first book store owner in Steinbach. Upon the death of his father Peter L. Dueck, Johann took over his book store and moved it from Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) to Steinbach where he operated it out of the H. W. Reimer store. On April 25, 1887, his book inventory was insured with the Kleine Gemeinde mutual insurance for \$200.00. Johann W. Dueck moved to Rosenort, Manitoba in the 1890s.



Johann W. Dueck (seated) with younger brother Peter W. Dueck. Photo courtesy of Prairie Pioneer, page 54. Both attended the teacher training school in Gretna during the 1890s.

Peter and Anna Penner Children

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Death</u>
1	Peter Penner			
m				
2	Peter Penner	1780		1820
m				
3	Peter Penner	1799		
m	Anna Dyck	1801		
4	Anna Penner	Sep 11,1822		Aug 11,1907
m	Jakob W. Loewen	Dec 27,1820		Jan 15,1901
4	Peter P. Penner	Aug 14,1826		Oct 4,1894
m	Elisabeth Loewen	Aug 2,1829		Mar 13,1906
4	Maria P. Penner	1828		
m	_____?			
4	Jakob P. Penner	1829		ca.1895
m	Helena Dueck	1828		ca.1899
4	Katharina Penner	Jun 30,1830		Apr 4,1868
m	Peter M. Friesen	May 11,1827	1851	Apr 4,1892
4	Helena Penner	Jul 12,1840	Sep 24,1860	Jan 18,1908
m	Peter H. Penner	Jul 26,1839		Oct 16,1916

125th Anniversary

Announcement:

Readers are reminded that **1999 is the upcoming 125th anniversary of the settlement of the Hanover Steinbach area.** If you have any suggestions as to how to celebrate this important event, contact any members of the Board of Directors of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society.

Anna Bartel Eidse 1889-1954

by Lori Loewen Scharfenberg, Box 10, Grp 1, R 1, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1K0

Childhood.

On May 4th, 1889 Jacob W. Bartel (1864-1947) and his wife Justina, nee Isaac (1866-1935) (Note 1), welcomed their first little girl and second child into their home in Rosenfeld, East Reserve, some 6 miles west of Steinbach, Man. They named her Annie.

As Annie grew up she began to take on more responsibilities in the home. She began to attend school when she was eight and enjoyed the three winters of schooling that she had under the beloved teacher Mr. Heinrich Rempel. Before she left for school in the morning she would help with the milking and do the dishes and as soon as she arrived home after school she helped make butter. At the age of 11 she had to quit school to help at home. Annie continued to teach herself English by spending as much of her free time reading as she could when she was not involved in her daily household chores.

The Bartels lived in a farmhouse that was attached to their barn. The house had two entrances: one for guests, and one to the barn to make it easier to take care of the animals in the stormy winter times. As a family they participated chiefly in dairy farming and owned between 160-180 acres of land. In summer Annie enjoyed going to get the cows. She usually went early because her father was very strict about when the cows should be home. She often took time to explore the woods with her pocketknife (because of garter snakes). She loved nature and learned as much as possible about the twittering birds, their nests and eggs. At least this entertainment was free. Her best chums were the Dueck girls (cousins) but she only got to spend time with them on Sunday afternoons.

Annie was a very jolly, out-going person. She never learned to swim or skate or ride a bike, but she loved swinging and climbing trees. She knew how to make kites, bow and arrows and willow whistles. She was educated by teaching her younger siblings how to study. She became very fluent in both German and English despite the fact that she worked on the fields like a hired hand at home.

Annie had sparkling brown eyes, a rosy, tanned, clear complexion and natural wavy brown hair that hung down to her waist when she had them open. She was about 5'4" tall. A unique feature that most people never noticed about her was that she had a small round circle on the crown of her head. When she was around 7 years old, she and her cousins played hide and seek in the barn. A horse bit her and partially scalped her.

Annie dearly loved her mother and they were a lot alike in character but she had some difficulties with her father because he was very strict and suspicious. She became reluctant to go home to her parents because of some remarks he'd made previous to her marriage. She felt she had served her parents well at home and had en-

dured a little too much responsibility for a young girl. Later in life the two of them settled up their differences. She apologized to her children when she thought she had wronged them because she felt that parents should apologize for failures.



Annie Bartel Eidse (1889-1954), from her wedding photograph. Courtesy of Tina Loewen, Rosenort, Manitoba.

Baptism and marriage.

Annie was baptized by Bishop Peter R. Dueck on July 29th, 1907 at the age of eighteen. She had a bit of a hang-up about her baptism because her handkerchief had been pulled too far over her face so she wondered if she really had been baptized or just her kerchief. She told her girls to pull their kerchiefs far back for baptism so they would have no doubts.

In her youth, Annie was interested in a young non-Mennonite boy from Hochstadt but her father refused to let them see each other. A few years later she met a handsome bachelor by the name of Abram K. Eidse at her brother Dietrich's place in Kleefeld. Her brother was married to Abram's cousin. The second time they met was a month later and they chatted together while Mrs. Bartel made fasha. It seems they were both mutually impressed with each other. They were never allowed to date properly and only saw each other under supervision because her father was a very suspicious man. Abram would come with horse and buggy in summer and sleigh in winter to see his sweetheart.

In later life, Annie confided to her children that she was really attracted to "A.K." because of his bright blue eyes and that she had hoped that their children would also have his eyes. Abram finally worked up enough nerve to ask Anna's father for permission to marry her and he gave a very reluctant "yes". Since Annie was

the oldest and her mother was sick, her father felt he needed her at home.

Annie was 21 at the time. Because of her father's wishes, Annie waited 2 years until her next sister turned 11, before she got married to "A.K.". Before she and Abram were married, she made it quite clear that her children would all have a childhood and not have any difficult chores until they were past the age of 11. She felt somewhat deprived of a childhood herself.

Annie received a pendant style watch that had a golden chain studded with amethysts as a wedding gift from Abram. They were married on June 16, 1912. Annie was almost 23 and Abram was 30. Soon after they were married Abram taught his sweetheart how to drive a car.

Character traits.

Annie was an open, warm woman, very direct and honest but very affectionate. She laughed a lot and yet cried easily about sad things. She laughed more than cried and enjoyed life to the full. Annie always had a way with animals also: cows, horses and dogs all loved her. She lost her temper mostly when she was disobeyed by her children.

Annie believed that the greatest virtues in life were to be honest in everything, to serve the Lord, to be God-fearing. Dependability and cleanliness were important as well.

She did not appreciate if children begged and begged. She taught them to ask once but never twice. Although she had a resilient personality, she did face a lot of disappointments in life. The first was having a mother that was sickly and not being able to continue her education. She was not happy that her first boyfriend was sent away by her father either. She lost her twin boys: one at birth, the next in a kerosene fire.



The horses "Daylight" and "Mabel" are hitched up to the top sleigh ready to take Abram, Annie and their daughters, Tina and Margie to Church in February, 1941. Photo courtesy of Tina Loewen.

When her son Frank died during the flu of 1918/19 she went into quite a depression that of her first four children only Dick was still alive. She loved her young son deeply but sorrowed for those she had lost. Abram took her on a trip to Alberta and B.C. to help her over her depression but she had not enjoyed the trip much and upon coming home actually felt worse. She said she would never run away from

her problems again; she would face it and be done with it.

It was thrilling for both Abram and Annie that they had a little girl named Helen. Annie became pregnant again shortly after with her second little girl (Tina). One night she was scared by a mentally unbalanced neighbour when it was dark outside. She ran away but went into premature labour. Little Tina fought for her life but developed pneumonia because her lungs were not fully developed. She passed away shortly after.

After this disappointment, Annie and Abram were blessed with five more healthy children: another set of twins, Annie and Mary, Abie, Tina and Margie. Abram's mother, Helena Klassen Eidse, delivered all of the children: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part One, pages 51-54.

Activities.

Annie was a very hard worker and when she gave the 5 a.m. wake-up call her children got in the cows, while she and Abram would put feed in the cribs. She milked 6 or 7 cows in the morning and then fed her chickens. Everyone would take time for breakfast and then she would remind her husband of his chores for the day. You might say she was the foreman of the farm. Later she strained the milk and sent it to the cheese factory and cleaned the cans when they came back from factory.

On washday she organized everything and put her daughters to work. Often she and Abram would head out on the light truck to do the fencing. Abram would stretch the wire while she put on the hasps. They worked well together and taught all the children to do all the jobs on the farm. Annie did not do the plowing but did cut the grass. She could fix anything from a truck box to a hammer-mill and was well acquainted with all the tools. She always sharpened her own garden tools in the blacksmith shop on the yard.

Annie also made her own money by selling butter and eggs, but preferred to keep meat rather than sell it for less than it was worth. She was the book-keeper for the farm, however, both Annie and Abram did the grocery shopping. Annie also baked every other day. Her specialty in home-made meals was kjielke, schmaunt fat and home-cured ham.

Abram and Annie smoked the meat together. Abram did the hard labour like gathering and splitting the wood while Annie did the actual smoking. They cured sausage, ham and bacon in early spring and sometimes later in fall. Annie was very particular about how high the hams were hung and also how long they were smoked. She followed the same pattern always - the meat was smoked for 1 and 1/2 hours and then the fire was extinguished. This went on for 5 days in a row. The meat was left in the smokehouse until warm weather came and then the sausage was canned and the hams treated and covered with cheesecloth.

The smoke house was in the middle of the yard. Abram was a bit innovative and put up a ladder to the top, set a big barrel on the top of it, and filled it with water. The smokehouse could easily serve as a shower house for the children

or farmhands. It was also a good place to be alone with lots of magazines to read and a big window that allowed in a lot of light.

Annie did a lot of sewing on her second-hand sewing machine. Since her work days were often from 5 a.m. to 12 or 1:00 p.m. she accomplished a lot. She had learned to sew on her machine from a Jewish salesman. He taught her to sew aggressively. It was operated with a foot peddle. She made a lot of quilts for MCC and also was excellent at crocheting. She loved flowers and gardening. Her favourite plant was the bleeding hearts that she had in the middle of her garden.



Abram and Annie outside their home. Summer 1946. Shortly after Abram suffered his first stroke. Photo by Tina Loewen (daughter).

Child raising.

Annie would often tell bedtime stories out of the Bible. She loved reading serialized stories like "Dorn-Rosjell. Because she was a full-time farm labourer she had little time for community service but she did make food for poor people.

Annie disciplined her children herself. Sometimes she used a twig or a small willow switch (seldom). Discipline did not have to happen often because the parents were agreed and retribution was quick. Their children learned not to disobey. Abram and Annie prayed with the children at bedtime and when they were naughty. When Annie or Abram were wrong they usually asked for forgiveness of their children as well.

Annie also had a saying about guests, "Visitors are only visitors for three days, after that they are a burden." She put her guests to work after that amount of time if they chose to stay longer.

Annie told her children the facts of life when they were quite young, especially to protect

daughters from hired hands. Abstinence until marriage was stressed. She was very matter of fact about it all as she was about most everything.

Death, 1954.

Annie's health was excellent but she especially hated getting earaches. She taught her family simple rules of medicinal care and expected them to follow them without having to show them twice.

After Abram passed away she was very lonely and sat and read her Bible a lot. She missed the prayer times they had together kneeling at their bedside. She was fairly matter of fact about death and even chose a dress for her own funeral in advance.

After a good day of visiting with some relatives from Kansas, Annie suffered an aneurism in her brain and died on October 25, 1954. She was buried at the Rosenort church cemetery.

Notes:

Note One: Justina Isaac (1866-1935) was the daughter of Dietrich Isaac (1831-1902) and Anna Esau (1840-1919), Rosenfeld, Man. Anna Esau was the daughter of Johann Kornelius Esau (1805-55), Wirtschaft 21 Fischau 1835: "Esau Genealogy," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 332.. Dietrich Isaac was the son of Justina Doerksen (b. 1807) and Peter Isaac (b. 1799), son of Dirk Abraham Isaac (1772-1833): Wirtschaft 11 1808 - Unruh, page 310; Wirtschaft 9 1835. It seems quite likely that Dirk Abraham Isaac, Wirtschaft 9, Fischau, was a brother to Abraham Abraham Isaac, Wirtschaft 20, who was the father of Jakob Isaac (1813-81) who married Sarah Sawatzky (1816-94), of the KG Von Riesen family: *Profile 1874*, 276.

It is noteworthy that Peter Abraham Isaac's (b. 1799) brother Abraham (b. 1806), was the step-father of the children of Cornelius Toews (1802-31): see *Profile 1874*, page 225.

Attention Readers:

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Abram K. Eidse 1882-1947

by Lori Loewen Scharfenberg, Box 10, R R 1, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1K0

Childhood.

Abram K. Eidse was born July 7, 1882 to Reverend Abraham and Helena Klassen Eidse in Rosenhof, Manitoba. He was their second child but the oldest to survive.

Abram began attending school in fall of 1889 at the Rosenort School #61. He enjoyed school tremendously but had some frustrations with his studies because his long-term memory and his depth perception had been damaged because of an accident when he was seven. He was struck by a heavy timber in a swinging accident and this caused a blood clot to form within his brain. He enjoyed his childhood despite his handicap.

Abram was the oldest and only son in the family for a number of years and he was given a lot of responsibility. His parents owned between thirty and forty horses and he was often up early breaking, plowing and harrowing their land. He also worked on his father's threshing crew and eventually became the engineer.

His boyhood chums were Gustav Schellenberg, Peter Siemens and George and P. U. Brandt. During his teen years he enjoyed playing on a local soccer team that competed against various villages. His grandfather, David Klassen, taught him to skate on the Scratching River. This was a winter past-time he loved. The river also provided other entertainment for Abram such as his passion for fishing. The river was teeming with fish and he caught a variety of fish including rainbow and speckled trout, perch, pickerel, catfish and suckers. He and his mother had a fondness for fish fries and often ate them twice a week.

His teen years were somewhat frustrating with his mother busy with mid-wifery and his father being a minister and a full-time farmer as well. Often it was his Grandpa Klassen who took time to talk with him. He did not appreciate the pressures of being a minister's son at all although he did adore his father and claimed that his father had been born with both feet in heaven.

Baptism and marriage.

Abram rebelled against the church in his youth and learned to play the piano accordion and went to dances. When Abram was eighteen, his beloved grandfather David Klassen passed away and a year later his crippled younger sister Aganetha died at the age of 5 1/2. These must have been difficult times for him. He did not surrender his life to the Lord at an early age but finally in June of 1911, at the age of 29, he gave his heart to Christ and was baptized by Bishop Peter R. Dueck.

After several years of courting a dear girl by the name of Annie they finally were able to be married. They made their home with his parents for the first year and a half until they were able to establish their own farmyard on SE 29-5-1E. This quarter of land had been originally



Abram K. Eidse in wheelchair, Annie in background. Photo taken in fall of 1946. Note the wheelchair. Photo taken by Tina Loewen.

purchased by his father A.E. Eidse from Crown School Lands in 1900. Perhaps this land was a wedding gift from his father. They built their barn in 1913 and then their farmhouse in 1914.

The farm.

Abram worked hard to build up his farm. In the winters there was always wood to haul from Marchand and coal from McTavish for heating. Ice always had to be cut and hauled as well for drinking water for both the livestock and the family. Since he and Annie had up to 20 cows and eight horses in their barn he had to clean out the manure at least twice a day. The pigs also had to be fed their chop and it had to be hammer-milled every two weeks. He also readied and repaired all the farm machinery and fixed the harnesses for the coming seeding time.

At farrowing time he took care of the piglets, rubbing them down carefully to keep them alive and he also kept watch through the early cold spring nights during calving season. During harvest he would ride the binder and set stooks with the other farm-hands as well. These were only a few of the many farming duties that he performed to keep the farm running smoothly. At the height of their farming operations they owned over 700 acres of land. Both Abram and Annie were very proud of their registered dairy herd of Jerseys. Each cow had three names and the bull had five. Each cow had to be individually hand-drawn when it was registered.

Abram was also a salesman of Jersey cream and butter and advertised and sold it personally to the ladies in the Town of Morris. His pitch always included the fact that Jersey butter didn't turn sour when it was hot outside and it didn't turn rancid easily.

Gardening.

Abram also worked hard in his hobby of gardening. He was very talented at growing and grafting fruit trees. His grafts never failed once and he grew mulberries and plums and pear trees with great success. These he had ordered from Russia as seedlings. Both the Morden Experimental Farm and Stevenson's nursery kept a close eye on his developments. His pride and joy in the flowering plants were his long row of peonies. They were supported by a specially invented low steel fence that kept the peonies supported even when it rained heavily. He often won first prize at the Morris Agricultural Fair for his flower arrangements and also won many blue ribbons for his cattle. He loved to compete.

Traits.

Abram was a good-looking man who usually wore dress pants and a vest accented with a gold pocket watch. On Sundays he always wore a tie. He had water-blue eyes and dark brown hair. He was only about 5'6" but very wiry in strength. He always wore wire-rimmed glasses except when he was reading because he had almost lost his eyesight due to trachoma in his youth. He had a great rapport with people and was very hospitable and easy-going. Children gravitated toward him and enjoyed the opportunity to sit on his lap.

Abram was a perfectionist in all that he did and yet because of his poor memory he often felt frustrated with himself. His greatest disappointments in life involved the deaths of his young children and especially the little son who died of burns. He had put out the fire with his

bare hands and carried scars for the rest of his life. It was not something he discussed at length with anyone. He cried most when there was rebellion in the family although he also wept openly when his mother died.

Marriage relationship.

Abram and his wife Annie had a loving relationship. They held hands and even kissed in front of their children sometimes. After short trips away for dairy meetings or threshing he always came home with affectionate hugs and greetings for his darling.

He sometimes brought her small gifts such as live flowers to plant in her garden. One time he brought her a plant named hens and chicks. She was not impressed with that one because she told him she had never liked to have chickens in the garden in the first place never mind planting them there! One year he also gave her a dinner set for Christmas and it brought tears to her

eyes. One contribution he made to the family diet was that of tomatoes. Annie had grown up thinking of them as only being useful for chicken feed and believed they were poisonous for human beings. He taught her to truly enjoy them although she ate them with salt, pepper and vinegar while he ate them with sugar.

Refugees.

For several years after the end of W.W.I in 1918, Abram and Annie sponsored more than a dozen families across from Russia and Germany through the organization of the Mennonite Central Committee. These immigrants carried names like Stark, Rabe, Janzen, Letkeman, Braun and Unrau only to mention a few. The Eidses not only paid for their journey but often took the families into their home and supplied them with jobs as well. Many settled permanently in the area and what the Eidses had sacrificed financially was paid many times over with the strong friendships they shared with these families.

Abram and Annie were both very hospitable people and their motto seemed to be "there is always room for one more". One summer they hosted up to twenty farm workers that lived in the north-wing room of their farmhouse and in their bunkhouse. They had two couples with one child each staying in another room and six other unmarried children scattered about the house, sleeping in the living room under tables, in day beds or sharing other cramped quarters. At the same time two girls who were relatives were also boarding in their house so that they could be employed in the community. Needless to say

there were at least three shifts of dinner guests and one can not imagine the lineup for the out-house.

Community man.

Besides providing jobs for area residents, Abram also served the community in several other ways. He was a founding member of the Rosenort Credit Union and helped canvass for its beginnings. He also helped campaign for all-weather roads to be established in the Riverside-Rosenort area.,



Abram K. Eidse house and barn in the flood of 1950. The house is now owned by Margie, a daughter of Abram K. Eidse. Photo by Cornie B. Loewen, courtesy of Tina Loewen.

Abram had a very gracious and Christlike spirit. He believed that it was better to pay a debt twice than not at all. This was at times difficult for the family to accept because others took full advantage of his poor memory and charged him two or three times for the same goods and services. He was unselfish and always lent out his farm equipment to anyone who asked for it. The only time he regretted it was when they brought it back in need of repair without so much as an explanation or a thank-you. He took time to teach his children the practical things in life, even his daughters, such as shingling, how to fix harnesses and fences.

Abram and Annie also managed to celebrate their 25th anniversary together in June of 1937. They hosted a garden party for many guests. A highlight was that Abram had supplied the guests with a huge store-bought box of cookies which was a real change from the usual home made ones! There were many friends and relatives that came and shared in the program on that beautiful sunny June day. Later that fall they took a short trip with two of their daughters to Dryden, Ontario. They enjoyed a short vacation in a cabin on the lake and he managed to spend some time indulging in his youthful hobby of fishing.

Illness and death, 1947.

Abram enjoyed fairly good health most of his life although he suffered from a hernia in his later years. Abram went to the States once to seek treatment for the blood clot that he had but was told that it was too close to the brain.

He could have had an operation but the chances were extremely high that he would have died or been paralysed. He and Annie agreed that it was better just to live out his life. He had two vehicle accidents that further complicated his long-term memory however it was the third accident that triggered the illness that would finally take his life.

In March of 1946 Abram was taking eight full cans of milk to the cheese factory with horse and sleigh. Someone passing by with their car tooted their horn at him and the horses were startled. The sleigh jerked suddenly and a full canister of milk rammed into the back of his head. He managed to make it home but he suffered greatly from headaches from that time on. He thought that he would die. He decided to turn management of the farm over to his family because he felt so unhealthy.

A month after the accident he had his first stroke because the blood clot had moved. Throughout the next year he suffered several light strokes. Some made him weak and paralysed and affected his speech while

others seemed to have the opposite effect. His family took care of him at home. For a few months in between he was up and around and working on the farm again. Several times when his mind cleared he said his 'goodbyes' to the family.

On February 5, 1947 his mind was clear and he asked for the family's forgiveness for any wrongdoing. He died peacefully at home, surrounded by his loving family on February 6, 1947.



Abram K. Eidse at age 18. Studio photo. Note the Union Jack pin on his tie. Very patriotic. Courtesy Tina Loewen.

“The one with the hat”: Peter B. Reimer (1885-1966)

by daughter Charlotte Reimer Kennedy

The one with the hat.

“The one with the hat,” we children pointed out unanimously, “that’s father.” From the sanctity of father’s cubicked 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, no-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.”

Childhood.

Hatless, he came into the world on November 12th, 1885. His formal education consisted of Grade Three, with highest honours in “Schoenschriften” (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



An early photograph of some of Steinbach’s handsome young men 1904. Left to right. Rear: Peter B. Reimer, Johann E. Barkman, Johann R. Toews, Jakob J. Barkman, Linden, Alberta, Jakob F. Barkman; Middle row: Jakob G. Friesen, Mount Lehman, B.C., Cornelius T. Loewen, Diedrich F. Giesbrecht, Hanover Street North, Klaas B. Reimer; Front row: Bernard W. Reimer (died in Chicago), Sebastian Rieger, J. F. Giesbrecht, Abraham E. Schellenberg. Photo courtesy of Amanda Reimer, Winnipeg.

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.

Business and marriage.

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 (1915-1963). 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 for some inexplicable reason], 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.

Second marriage, 1920.

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 (1923-1924), 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 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, eighteen hours a day, six



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. Johann 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.

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.

Fire, 1943.

"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



Mrs. Peter B. Reimer, nee Katharina Friesen (b. 1894), daughter Henrietta Reimer, and Mr. Peter B. Reimer (1885-1966). Photo is taken at Schloszkinderreich, view to the south, circa 1954. Photo courtesy of Amanda Reimer.

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

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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.



Mr. and Mrs. Peter B. Reimer celebrating a birthday, 1955. Photo courtesy of Amanda Reimer.

Moral values and faith.

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."

Retirement.

In 1961 "Schloszkinderreich" was almost empty (see Amanda Reimer, *Preservings*, No. 6, June 1995, page 21). 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 faengt 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 Wohlgenuth 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."

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Gerhard

Family Background.

Gerhard Kasdorf Schellenberg was born on December 13, 1827 in Blumstein, Mol. Colony, South Russia, son of Gerhard Schellenberg (1797-1837) and Elisabeth Kasdorf (1792-1864). In 1835 Gerhard Sr. was farming together with his parents Aron Schellenberg (1773-1853) and Helena Neubauer (1769-1842) on Wirtschaft 18 in Blumstein, Mol.

Aron's sister Agatha was married to Abraham Kornelsen (1769-1831) and they were the parents of Gerhard S. Kornelsen (1816-94) of Lichtenau, Mol. and later Lichtenau, west of Steinbach, Man. Two of Aron's daughters Justina and Maria were married to Johann Schroeder (1807-84) of the Bergthal Colony: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, pages 44-47.

Aron's brother Jakob Schellenberg (b. 1772) owner of Wirtschaft 6 in Tiegenhagen, Mol. was the grandfather of Abraham Schellenberg (1839-1924), a pioneer of the village of Grunfeld (Kleefeld), Man. in 1874. In 1805 Jakob joined Kleine Gemeinde (KG) founder Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) and another wealthy pioneer Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) of Blumenort, Mol. in negotiating for the 1,000,000 ruble Volenko estate with the idea of settling there instead of the Molotschna.

Baptism and Marriage 1847.

In May, 1847, Gerhard Schellenberg was baptised in the KG upon his solemn confession of faith. Elisabeth Warkentin (1819-1905) of Blumstein was baptised almost 7 years earlier on June 2, 1840. Her father Cornelius (1777-1847) was a wealthy farmer who specialized in breeding spirited horses. He died on October 14, 1847.

On December 25, 1847, some two months after his death, Elisabeth and Gerhard were married. Elisabeth was eight years older than Gerhard. One can only speculate over the reasons for the match for she was a talented woman. It is known that her father was very opposed to the KG faith.

In 1841 Elisabeth drew a beautiful book plate for her *Gesangbuch*, which was featured in a 1980 book about *Fraktur* art: E. Abrahams, page 96. Elisabeth was knowledgeable in medicine matters and likely served as a midwife. By 1863 she had prepared her own book of medical remedies and prescriptions. The booklet included many folk remedies such as treatments for great thirst, jaundice, rheumatism, snake bite, headaches, coughing, to name a few.

Elisabeth's continued interest in art is revealed by the sketch of a Red German cow which she drew on the back page of this booklet.

The family lived in Ohrloff where they were neighbours to Jakob A. Wiebe, later Bishop of the Crimea Kleine Gemeinde (KG), and Gerhard's brother Aron.

In 1864 Gerhard and Elisabeth became mem-

K. Schellenberg 1827-1908

by David K. Schellenberg, Box 1661, Steinbach, R0A 2A0

bers of the KG by transfer of membership. In 1865 he wrote a letter to his brother Aron who in the meantime had moved to Annafeld, Crimea, for which his beloved brother "greatly rejoiced."

In 1866 when the KG divided into the "Friesens" and Reform Gemeinde, Gerhard Schellenberg chose to remain with the congregation of Bishop Johann F. Friesen. In the same year, the Gerhard Schellenberg family moved from Ohrloff, Mol. to Rosenfeld, a new village founded by the KG in the 18,000 acre Borosenko settlement 20 miles northwest of Nikopol.

Ministerial Election, 1866.

On November 23, 1866 the "Friesens" Gemeinde under Bishop Johann F. Friesen held a deacon and ministerial election with the following results: Gerhard Schellenberg 36 votes, Jakob L. Dueck 5, Jakob Klassen 2 and Isaac Friesen 1. The votes cast for minister were as follows: Gerhard Schellenberg 41 votes and Klaas F. Friesen 3 votes. Gerhard Schellenberg served this office faithfully for five years. Letters, sermons and journals provide a good deal of information about his ministry.

Gerhard Schellenberg's first sermon dated December 11, 1866 opened with the greeting of the apostle Paul in Galatians 1:3-5 "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father. and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father; To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen".

This sermon, titled #1 on the first page, begins with the verses of a hymn which were sung or recited as a prayer. The first verse goes like this:

May you hear, O Lord
The request I yearn from Thee
Out of grace may You give
What I require
O faithful God, for all my life.

Reunification, May 14, 1869.

The members of the KG ministerial had to deal with various crisis. One of these was the reconciliation and reunification that was established between the "reform" branch of the KG originally under the leadership of Heinrich Enns, who resigned in 1868, and three ministers and the majority of the "Friesens" Gemeinde. After many meetings and negotiations a formal agreement of union was signed on May 14, 1869.

Gerhard Schellenberg also took part in the reconciliation. The result was that Schellenberg and two other ministers Abraham F. Friesen and Isaac Friesen left Bishop Johann Friesen's Gemeinde and joined the "reform" group, which later came to be known as the Blumenhof Gemeinde. About 10 families continued to worship with Johann Friesen. The move was to have fateful consequences for Schellenberg as shall be seen later.

The KMB Secession, 1869.

Not even three months later the KG was shocked by another crisis, the secession of a good part of the congregation in the Crimea under Bishop Jakob A. Wiebe.

[Editorial note: One of the afflictions of the time among the Mennonites in Russia was the proselytizing of Separatist Pietist missionaries from Germany. These no doubt well-meaning but naive people propagated their doctrines which were practised on an extremely fanatical and legalistic basis.]

[These teachings included the following: 1) only those who were baptised by a certain form of immersion (forward while in water) were Christians; 2) various versions of millennial interpretations which usually held that the Imperial Czar would be the Saviour of the church in the end times and that the Second Coming of Christ would occur in Russia--the date was initially set for 1836 and then revised to 1884; 3) only those who believed in their specific assurance of salvation doctrine and their particular style of conversion experience were Christians and would be saved. Those who did not accept these beliefs were condemned as heathen and unsaved.]

On August 1, 1869 Jakob A. Wiebe, a KG minister in the Crimean congregation made a startling decision to secede from the KG and started his own denomination, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, based on the teachings of Separatist Pietism. Ironically only a few months earlier Wiebe had written his brethren in Borosenko and pleaded with "you, so dearly beloved Ohms Abraham Friesen of Neukirch, Gerhard Schellenberg and Isaak Friesen... that you sincerely accept the reunification as an obligation..."

On September 28, 1869, Gerhard K. Schellenberg wrote Wiebe to express his concerns about this sudden and surprising decision. Boldly Schellenberg remonstrated with Wiebe regarding his narrow and one-minded view of baptism; "Therefore I beg you, my beloved, turn around. We do not find in the whole New Testament that Christ was immersed in the water. . . of immersion we find nowhere in the Testament."

Another point which Gerhard refuted was Wiebe's assertion that the KG were not Christians because Johann F. Friesen, the Bishop who had baptised most of them, had himself not been baptized according to Wiebe's legalistic standards. Gerhard's articulate and well reasoned letter reveals that he had a sound knowledge of Scripture and biblical exposition. Eloquenty he put forward the KG position that the only requirement for salvation was "a true heartfelt remorse and repentance upon which we are promised salvation, and which is the foundation of every conversion."

The matter was of more than academic interest to Gerhard as his own brother Aron (1833-85), who had settled in the Crimea, also joined

Wiebe and his secessionists. In 1874 Aron and his family settled in Gnadenu, Marion County, Kansas, together with the rest of the KMB. Unfortunately Wiebe did proceed to secede from the KG and subsequently refused to have spiritual fellowship with his former brethren.

Bishop Ordination, Oct 26, 1870.

In 1870 Gerhard Schellenberg wrote out a handwritten copy of the 20 article KG Confession of Faith. This was probably a sign that he was recognized as a senior minister and given the responsibility of instructing the baptismal candidates in the faith for which he would have required a copy.

On September 10, 1870 he was one of four candidates for the position of Bishop of the Gemeinde. He received only 8 votes to Peter Toews' 65.

Schellenberg was chosen to preach at the ordination service for Toews on Oct. 26, 1870 which showed the high regard in which he was held by the entire church as well as his fellow ministers.

At the ordination service Schellenberg spoke the following words of exhortation and encouragement for Toews: "Therefore I say with the beloved Apostle Paul, be strong my brother. Do your job diligently according to Joshua chapter one: that you keep and perform all things according to the law of Christ and His Apostles; that you do with wisdom all your endeavours..."

Schellenberg felt unworthy that he was giving the challenge on this occasion, but rallied boldly. "Now my beloved minister brethren: I feel as the least among us, and yet I want to remind ourselves about our duty that we together with our beloved Bishop are as if we were the walls of Jerusalem, ordained in the spiritual Zion to be watchmen and care givers for all souls..."

He had a word for the congregation as well: "And you dear Gemeinde, sisters as well as brethren, pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12) and pray always to God our Father; also for our dear Aeltesten (James 5)..."

A number of Gerhard Schellenberg's sermons are still extant and currently in the possession of the writer. Gerhard Schellenberg was also interested in the writings of the faith. On August 20, 1871, he ordered a "large" *Martyr Spiegel* (Martyrs' Mirror) for 9 ruble. This was part of a major shipment of devotional books which KG Bishop Peter P. Toews ordered from John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana.

As a member of the KG, and particularly as a minister, Schellenberg did a great deal of travelling between the various congregations in the Molotschna, Crimea, Markuslandt and Borosenko. In the course of these travels Schellenberg and most members of the KG became very well familiar with the Russian and Ukrainian people and culture in which they lived as well as with the numerous ethnic groups who lived all around and amongst them.

Removal as minister, 1871.

The decision to leave the "Friesens"

continued on next page

Gemeinde and lead the majority of his parishioners into a union with the Enns (“reform”), or later Blumenhof group, was a fateful one for Gerhard Schellenberg. Within a few years he and both Friesens, who made the move with him, had been removed from their positions as ministers. This reflected the fact that the members of the “reform” group no longer had confidence in the ministerial of the “Friesens” Gemeinde.

In 1871 a complicated case arose when Schellenberg crossed a boundary while hay making, which apparently was not intentional. After a number of church meetings about this he was removed from the ministry on August 29, 1871.

Jakob T. Barkman of Heuboden later recalled that Rev. Schellenberg had been removed from his office because the ministerial felt his repentance had not been deep enough. Barkman had not agreed with the action feeling that it was not needed (Note 1). Schellenberg was never restored to his position on the ministerial.

The KG required a very high standard of conduct from its ministers and it was not totally unusual for a minister to be impeached. Usually they continued to serve their community with honour and distinction in other capacities.

Neighbours, 1871-2

Gerhard Schellenberg was a friend of Abraham F. Reimer (1808-92) of Steinbach, Bor., son of KG founder Klaas Reimer. On Sunday Nov. 21, 1871, he went to Steinbach for worship services which were held at the home of Gerhard Siemens. After the service Schellenberg gave friend Reimer a ride home. On Sunday, Oct. 8, 1872, he stopped at Reimer’s home in Steinbach and took him along to worship services in the new KG worship house in Blumenhof, Bor.

On December 25, 1872, Gerhard Schellenberg ordered a *Spiegel der Taufe* (Mirror of Baptism) when Bishop Peter P. Toews made another large order for devotional books from Funk.

On February 22, 1872, the former Bishop Johann F. Friesen requested that Bishop Peter Toews of Blumenhof attend at his place in Rosenfeld to conduct a worship service with him. Also present was neighbour and former minister Gerhard Schellenberg as well as Jakob Regehr and Dietrich Friesen. At this occasion Johann Friesen gave custody of the formal church documents and records into the care of Peter Toews.

Waisenvorsteher, 1873.

Gerhard Schellenberg was appointed as the Waisenvorsteher of the KG Waisenamt or Orphans and Trust Office to replace Jakob M. Barkman, Friedensfeld, who had been elected as a minister on January 20, 1873: see article elsewhere in this newsletter. This was an im-

portant position, especially during the critical emigration period when all the estate and orphan accounts had to be transferred to America.

On January 16, 1874, Schellenberg wrote a letter, recorded as number 20, to Bishop Peter Toews in which he asked for approval of certain regulations and forms which were to govern the devolution of estates “So that no disorder



Looking for landmarks on the former Gerhard K. Schellenberg Homestead SE 27-5-6E. George K. Schellenberg (left) and Gus Dueck (right). Photos for this article are courtesy of David K. Schellenberg.

might arise ... during or after the emigration”: *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 5-6. It must have been a considerable task to draft these regulations. Prior to the out-emigration from the Molotschna, the KG people were under the jurisdiction of the Molotschna Waisenamt.

Emigration, 1874.

On June 1, 1874 the Schellenbergs with son Gerhard, aged 22, daughter Margaretha age 13 and foster children Jacob Bartel and Katherina Goossen joined the migration and came to Canada. As a respected Ohm it was natural that Gerhard Schellenberg would play a leadership role during the journey. In Odessa, Peter Wiebe Gerhard Schellenberg and another person drove to Maiback where they received a letter written to Schellenberg from David Klassen in which he described the events of the journey from Odessa onward.

Gerhard Schellenberg was also quite willing to assist his brothers and sister with menial work. Heinrich Ratzlaff described how everyone in the group was sick by the time they arrived in Toronto with the result that the house where they were quartered was an absolute mess by the next morning. It was Franz Froese and Gerhard Schellenberg who took it upon themselves “to clean the floor.” The 65 families were the first contingent of Mennonites who arrived in Manitoba on July 31, 1874.

The Schellenbergs had left their homes in Russia and come to a new land that was strange to them. Although they were accustomed to living in an alien culture, one can appreciate the language barriers with which the immigrants had to cope.

The story goes that Gerhard Schellenberg purchased a team of oxen in Winnipeg which knew only English commands. So the commands, “whoa” and “get-up” were recorded in a notebook. However while on the way home the oxen spied a waterhole some distance to the

side of the road. This prompted the thirsty team to head for the place where they could get a drink.

Meanwhile Schellenberg had forgotten the English commands and before he could look in his notebook for the proper words, the oxen were down in the deep mud. It took great efforts to get the team back on the road again (Note 2).

Settlement, 1874-76.

On August 26, 1874, Gerhard Schellenberg Sr. took out a homestead on the SE 27-5-6E, two miles east of modern-day Kleefeld. On February 24, 1875, his son Gerhard Jr. filed for a homestead on NE 22-5-6E. Together with Johann Esau, KG Brandaeltester, NW 22-5-6E and Jakob Regehr on SW 27-5-6E, and Dirk Isaak NW 27-5-6E, they founded a small village or hamlet known as Rosenfeld. The village was named after the village which Johann Esau and Gerhard Schellenberg had left behind

in Russia.

The Gerhard Schellenbergs were quite well-off. They immediately built a substantial home large enough to accommodate worship services which were held there on Christmas Day, 1874:



Great-grandsons Rev. David K. Schellenberg (E.M.C.) and brother George K. Schellenberg pause at the grave site of Rev. Gerhard K. Schellenberg (1827-1908) at the village cemetery in Rosenfeld. Photo courtesy of David K. Schellenberg.

letter of Corn. Toews Dec 13, 1874, *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, page 51. According to KG fire insurance records, Gerhard Schellenberg was insured for the following property: buildings \$250.00, cattle and equipment \$250.00 and feed and inventory \$200.00.

A letter of April 30, 1875, mentioned that Gerhard Schellenberg was one of only two settlers in the area who already had two horses: the other was D. Unger. Two others had one horse each.

Gerhard Schellenberg was a letter writer. On January 25, 1875, he wrote to Bishop Peter P. Toews in Russia in which he sent “hearty greetings from me, my wife and children. Our [foster] children Jakob Bartel and Katharina Goossen, send greetings to their Geschwister at

Isaac Warkentins." Unfortunately most of this particular letter is lost.

The Schellenberg family experienced tragedy when their daughter Margaretha died in 1875.

Gerhard K. Schellenberg also had a sister Katherina (1824-1901) who married Heinrich D. Friesen (See *Preservings*, No. 5, January, 1995 and No. 6, June, 1995). The Friesen family immigrated to Manitoba in 1875. They were the parents of Jacob S. Friesen founder of the *Steinbach Post*. Another son was Gerhard S. Friesen (1852-1922), grandfather of Dr. Archie Penner, Kola.

In 1876 the fire insurance coverage on Gerhard Schellenberg's buildings was increased to \$350.00. In 1882 the coverage was stricken. The following year he was again insured for 2 wagons.

Journal, 1880.

Gerhard K. Schellenberg was interested in the writings of the faith and of his Gemeinde and made handwritten copies for his own reference. One of his "Journals" entitled "Dieses Buch gehört Gerhard Schellenberg in Rosenfeld, Geschrieben am 1880 im Februar, Worin etliche Erklärungen und Verant Wortungen Enthalten Sind," unpublished, 53 pages. This journal contains the following writings: 1) Letter by G. Schellenberg to Jakob Wiebe, 1869, already referred to; 2) A declaration regarding baptism translated from Dutch by Gerhard Kornelsen, Lichtenau, 1869; 3) A short extract from the Menno Simons "Foundation of Christian Doctrine" dealing with shunning, translated from the Dutch by Ohm Klaas Reimer; 4) An answer and defense written by Klaas Reimer in Petershagen, 1830; 5) A 1 page summary of Mennonite settlement in Russia and emigration to America by Gerhard Schellenberg himself.

Life in Rosenfeld, 1880-82.

In the meantime, the pioneers missed former neighbours and relatives who had settled elsewhere in North America. In a letter of January 19, 1880, the Franz Wiens' of Jansen, Neb., send along a greeting to the Schellenbergs stating that, "They often think of them."

On Sept. 3, 1881, Gerhard Schellenberg hosted an engagement party or Verlobnis for Peter K. Barkman, an old friend and former neighbour from Rosenfeld, Russia. Barkman, the Steinbach mill owner, was a widower and was getting married to Elisabeth Warkentin, a spinster who worked for various people from the Grunfeld-Rosenfeld area.

Gerhard K. Schellenberg continued to correspond with friends and relatives in Jansen, Nebraska, and elsewhere. In 1882 he wrote to Aeltester Abram L. Friesen, Nebraska, who had

come to help them elect additional ministers after the Holdeman split. He mentioned the love and service he had given their "destitute group", explaining, "When you ministered the word of truth to us and comforted us in our trials."

On March 12, 1882, during the Holdeman schism when the KG was down to only 3 ministers, Gerhard K. Schellenberg "preached and led in prayer" at a worship service in Steinbach when none of the ministers were able to attend: A.F. Reimer, Journal.



A labour of love. George K. Schellenberg cutting grass at the restored Rosenfeld cemetery east of Kleefeld, 1996. SE 27-5-6E

Waisenvorsteher, 1882-84.

Gerhard Schellenberg continued to preform the duties of Waisenvorsteher. On January 2, 1882, Gerhard issued a receipt for \$40.50 to KG Brandaeltester Gerhard S. Kornelsen, confirming his instructions to deliver these funds to the Chortitzer Brandaeltester Jakob Stoesz who lived in Blumstein, close to Rosenfeld. Some 2 weeks later, on January 15, 1882, Schellenberg issued Waisenamnt Order No. 3, appointing Franz Kroeker of Steinbach, Man. as the Vormund or children's advocate for the children of the widow Peter Toews, nee Elisabeth Reimer: see *Preservings*, page 13, for a copy of this order.

In February, 1882, Johann L. Dueck of Gruenfeld attended at the home of Gerhard Schellenberg in Rosenfeld to obtain an appointment as administrator for the orphans of his

brother-in-law Johann Loewen, wealthy farmer and deacon of Rosenhof who had just died.

Another example of Gerhard Schellenberg's duties was to review and approve the accounts of a deceased and the proposed division of an estate (known as a "Theilungs Vertrag"), much like a Probate Court or Court's Master would do in modern times. The distribution or "Thielung" of the Johann Loewen estate was settled on July 21, 1882, at the home of Johann L. Dueck, Gruenfeld, with Gerhard Schellenberg

present; each of the heirs received \$650.00. Two days previous Dueck had stopped in at the Schellenberg home in Rosenfeld, no doubt to discuss the proposed settlement.

On December 2, 1884, the "Theilung" for the aged patriarch Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Gruenfeld took place and the contract was subsequently filed with Schellenberg for his approval and signature.

1883 Assessment.

According to the 1883 R. M. of Hanover tax records Gerhard K. Schellenberg had the following property: 22 acres cultivated land, 128 acres pasture, buildings valued at \$300.00, furniture \$250.00, 2 horses \$80.00, 1 ox, 2 cows, 2 yearlings, 1 calf, 2 pigs, 1 feed crusher, 1 mower, 1 rake, 1 grain cleaner, 2 wagons, 1 plow, 2 harrows, 1 sleigh, for a total assessment of \$669.00.

Correspondence, 1888.

As always Schellenberg was concerned about spiritual conditions in his faith community. In 1888 he wrote to Heinrich Ratzlaff, Jansen, Nebraska, who had led a group to break away from the KG there. He admonished Ratzlaff "that he may be choosing the wrong path." He quotes 1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians chapter 1, and Romans 12 as biblical authority against such a division for a "division ... brings with it hostility, which then brings slander and all kinds of evil between good friends and brothers."

Gerhard quoted the martyr Jakob de Roohr, "What is easily torn apart may be difficult to heal later on" and "that this has brought many a simple soul into ruin." Gerhard concluded with the ringing words, "Therefore, I beg of you, fear God and humble yourself before him, and let go of your pride, and give God the glory." Unfortunately, Gerhard's eloquent appeal was not heeded and Ratzlaff proceeded to lead a group to join the Isaac Peters Gemeinde which later became known as the Bruderthaler or EMB.

Village Life, 1887-95.

Notwithstanding the Holdeman split, inter-



"Ruhet Sanft". Close-up view of the memorial plaque for the Rosenfeld cemetery listing 17 people buried at this location.

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action between neighbours continued almost as before: Gerhard Schellenberg sold a boar to his friend Johann L. Dueck of Gruenfeld, which was slaughtered on April 16, 1887. Two days later, on the 16th, the Johann Dueck family went to Rosenfeld to visit the Regehrs and dropped in at Schellenbergs as well.

In 1890, when neighbour Johann Esau took over as Brandaeltester, Gerhard Schellenberg Sr. was again fully insured through the KG Brandordnung with the following coverage: buildings \$300.00, equipment and cattle \$200.00 and inventory \$150.00.

On March 11, 1892, Johann L. Dueck recorded "Both young and old Gerhard Schellenbergs were here and also Cor. Eidse was here for an hour." On Feb. 27, 1893, the Johann L. Duecks, Grunfeld, "went to the Senior Schellenbergs after dinner. As they were not home, we went to the Elder Regehrs." On March 8, the Duecks tried again: "Went to visit old Schellenbergs this afternoon."

On Dec. 3, 1893, the hamlet of Rosenfeld was cast into sorrow at the death of a dear friend Mrs. Jakob Regehr, nee Anna Toews. The villagers assisted the bereaved family as they could. Johann L. Dueck has recorded that "Mr. Regehr got Anna to help prepare for the funeral which is to be at Schellenbergs."

On Feb. 16, 1894, Dueck recorded that "old Schellenbergs came for a visit after dinner." A few months later, on May 24, Johann L. Dueck himself passed on to meet his maker.

On Jan. 17, 1895, Rev. Cornelius L. Plett and his wife from Blumenhof drove to Rosenfeld and were at Esaus for dinner and the Senior Gerhard Schellenbergs for Faspas": C. L. Plett, "Diary".

Rosenfeld Village, 1896.

The 1896 tax rolls of the R. M. of Hanover provide a view of life in Rosenfeld. Six residents are listed: Gerh. Schellenberg Jr. NE 22-6-5E; Jakob Regehr SW 27-6-5E; Derk Isaak NW 27-6-5E; Gerhard Schellenberg SE 27-6-5E; Johann Esau NE 27-6-5E; Ludwig Korlowfrki (no land probably a worker); and Jakob Bartel NE 33-6-5E. The villagers except for Korlowfrki are all assessed in the range of \$650.00, except for Bartel at \$1095.

Death of Elisabeth, 1905.

After retirement, the Schellenbergs had a little house close to son Gerhard. On July 5th, 1905, Elisabeth suffered a heart attack while preparing dinner. She had just gone to fetch the butter. Through her repeated cries, her husband was made aware of her plight. Because he was not able to put her into bed, he had to call the children, where they lived on the yard, to come and help. The first day she still spoke some words, but after that, no more. She never regained consciousness after that. She died on July 10th after "five days of suffering."

The Schellenbergs had a marriage of over 57 years. Elisabeth had reached the age of 85 years. It is recorded that Gerhard Sr. found it hard to lose, this, his faithful support through life. Could it be that this "support" included the numerous

home remedies listed in the small hand written book of folk remedies which she left behind?

After his wife died, Gerhard Sr. had a small room in close proximity to his son's house, maybe semi-attached.

Death of Gerhard K. Schellenberg, 1908.

Gerhard K. Schellenberg died on November 28, 1908. He was sick for only four days, but had been sickly for some time already. And it was evident that he had been getting weaker. It is recorded by one who visited him shortly before his death that he seemed quite encouraged. The guest was his nephew, Jacob S. Friesen, who later wrote that his uncle related things about his father to him, various episodes of his life. Gerhard Schellenberg reached the age of 80 years. The funeral was held on December 2, 1908.

The late George S. Fast of Kleefeld remembered his great-grandfather as "a very old man". This is understandable because Mr. Fast's memories went back to his childhood. He was around seven years old when Mr. Schellenberg died.

From coming into this home Mr. Fast also remembered there was a braided cord attached over the bed, likely to facilitate getting out of bed. He also recalled that, one or both, wore night caps to bed. A keen observation for a youngster of his age. He also remembers seeing Mrs. Schellenberg lying in bed after she passed away.

Descendants.

With the death of their daughter Margaretha in 1875 the Gerhard Schellenberg's were left with only one child, namely, son Gerhard W. Schellenberg (1854-1932). Gerhard Jr. married Anna T. Regehr (1858-1938), daughter of Jakob Regehr and Anna Toews. Gerhard Schellenberg Jr. and his family also lived in Rosenfeld.

Among the children of Gerhard Jr. and Anna Regehr Schellenberg is their son, the well-known and long-time store keeper John R. Schellenberg of Kleefeld Man. There is also grandson Henry K. Schellenberg (1914-1990), the widely known Bishop of the Chortitzer Church of many years. A daughter Elisabeth Schellenberg married Heinrich L. Fast, and from her are descended the "S" Fasts of Kleefeld, Man.

Notes:

Note 1: As recalled by great-grandson George S. Fast of Kleefeld.

Note 2: K.J.B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," page 18.

Sources:

Johann L. Dueck, Diary, 1881-1887.

Abr. F. Reimer, Journal, 1870-74.

Editor's Note

We hope to have an article in the next issue describing how Elisabeth Warkentin (1819-1905) defied her Grosse Gemeinde father and her pietistic sister to join the KG returning to the vision and faith of her grandfather Cornelius Warkentin of Halbstadt, Prussia.

Peter

Family background.

Peter K. Barkman (1826-1917) was the son of Jakob J. Barkman (1794-1875) who was born in Prussia and emigrated to Russia in 1818 together with his brother Martin J. Barkman (see article elsewhere in this issue on Jakob M. Barkman). Another brother Julius (b. 1800) lived in Fürstenaerweide, Prussia, where son Julius Bergmann (1838-90) later served in the German army.

Jakob J. Barkman settled in Rückenau, Mol., where he became a prosperous Vollwirt: Wirtschaft 17, 1835. He served for many years as the mayor or Schulz of the village. In 1845 he was under the ban.

Peter K. Barkman's mother Gertrude was the daughter of Peter Klassen. On July 30, 1845, KG Bishop Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) wrote Gertrude a letter and admonished her to hold the ban against her husband. Evidently the shunning was successful as the Barkman family remained loyal members of the KG community.

Peter K. Barkman married Anna Toews, daughter of Jakob Toews of Lindenau, Mol. who moved to Prangenau in 1846. Anna was a cousin to KG Bishop Peter P. Toews.

Anna's brother Peter W. Toews was married to Aganetha K. Barkman, a sister to Peter, so their children were double first cousins. Peter W. Toews as well as his mother settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, in 1874. Peter's children included teacher Jakob B. "Busch" Toews, Hochstadt, teacher John B. Toews, sister Aganetha (Rev. Martin Penner), Greenland, sister Katharina (Mrs. Jakob S. Friesen, pioneer printer), and Peter B. "Grote" Toews, whose son "Central" Toews was well known in the Steinbach area.

Another sister Katharina K. Barkman (1832-1923) married Johann M. Koop (1831-97), Muntau, Mol., and settled in the Blumenort/Twin creek area where their sons Jakob and Johann were large-scale farmers. The Koop daughters Aganetha, Gertrude, Helena and Maria B. Koop married Peter, Abram, David and Jakob L. Plett of Blumenhof, respectively.

Peter K. Barkman grew up to adulthood in Rückenau, Mol. He was baptised into the KG upon the solemn confession of his faith in May, 1846. On Jan. 18, 1848, P.K.B. married Anna Toews, daughter of Jakob Toews (1805-73) who had moved from Lindenau, to a Wirtschaft in Prangenau, Mol. in 1846. Anna had already been baptised in May, 1843.

Peter K. Barkman, Margenau, Mol.

The Peter K. Barkman family moved to the village of Margenau sometime after their marriage. Brother-in-law Peter W. Toews also lived in this village as did other KG families including David Klassen, Peter Penner, Abraham Rempel, Franz Kroeker Sr. (1799-1853), Jakob Wiebe (father of KMB founder), Peter Harms and brother Johann Harms who served as vil-

K. Barkman 1826-1917

by Delbert Plett



Peter K. Barkman's brother Jakob (1820-1902) a wealthy merchant in Waldheim, Mol. His daughter Elisabeth (1841-1917) married Peter B. Friesen (1838-1900) and settled in Blumenort, Man. in 1874. Another daughter Gertrude married Peter Rempel (1844-1915): see Preservings, No. 8, June 1996, pages 45-46. Photo of Jakob K. Barkman is courtesy of Gertrude K. Plett (b. 1900), Steinbach, Man., 1980, photo identification courtesy of Anna Barkman (1887-1986), Steinbach, 1981.

lage mayor, and teacher Cornelius F. Friesen.

In addition to his Wirtschaft, Peter K. Barkman was a miller and millwright by occupation. Son Peter T. Barkman was born in Margenau in 1861: *60 Jahrige Jubilaeum*, page 32.

Rosenfeld, Bor., 1865-72.

During the mid-1860s the family moved to the village of Rosenfeld, Borosenko, 20 miles northwest of Nikopol. On June 17, 1870, friend Abraham F. Reimer from Steinbach, Bor., reported that he "was again on the mill of P. Barkman in Rosenfeld." Only a month later on July 5, the Barkman family had the grievous misfortune that their buildings "burned down" (Note 1).

At this time they rebuilt their entire operation including a Holland style windmill and a very fine set of buildings. Historian Royden Loewen has written that Peter K. Barkman "owned a large 9,000 ruble wind-powered mill" in Rosenfeld, Bor.: Royden Loewen, *Family Church and Market*, page 156.

A great deal of visiting and business interaction took place within the KG community in Borosenko. On April 13, 1871, friend Abraham F. Reimer, Steinbach, reported that "the Peter

Barkmans from Rosenfeld were visiting there." On Wednesday, June 9, A. F. R. wrote that P. K. B.'s father "old Barkman was here for vesper." On July 6, and again on Sept. 19, 1872, A.F.R. visited "old Barkman in Rosenfeld."

In November 1872, misfortune struck again when the Barkmans' buildings were destroyed by a fire: "They were unable to save anything since both the Barkmans were working in the windmill at the time. Father Jakob J. Barkman had been very sick at this time and son Peter K. Barkman had also been sickly" (Note 2).

Life in Borosenko, 1873.

The busy social life in Borosenko continued. On Feb. 5, 1873, "Old Jakob Barkman from Rosenfeld visited" in the Reimer home on Steinbach and also "Peter Barkmans who took" their father home again. May 10, A. F. R. was visiting at Peter W. Toews' in Rosenfeld and "Barkman was also there." July 11, A.F.R. again "went to Rosenfeld to old J. Barkman."

On August 14, "old Abr. Rempels and P. Barkmans from Rosenfeld" were at Reimer's home in Steinbach. Dec. 24. "old J. Barkman was visiting at his grandchildren Peter Friesens in Steinbach."

Cousin Julius Bergmann (Barkman) (1838-90), a Prussian army veteran, later advised his relatives to get out of Russia while they could. 1874 pioneers such as Peter K. Barkman were always amazed that the Mennonites who adopted Separatist Pietism as their religion--and the bizarre "Eastward" chiliasm espoused even by mainline Mennonites such as Evangelist Bernhard Harder, were so blinded that they could not see the turmoil and social injustice waiting to explode in Russia: James Urry, *None but Saints*, page 227.

Emigration 1874.

In 1874 the Peter K. Barkman family accompanied by Father Jakob J. B. emigrated from Russia travelling on the S. S. Austrian which arrived in Quebec City Aug. 31, 1874. During the emigration from Russia, Peter's father Jakob J.B. had made a temporary loan of \$466.33 to the KG treasury. These funds were then used to help less fortunate people with loans.

Peter K. B. joined the Steinbachers who arrived at the junction of the Red and Rat Rivers on Sept 15, 1874. His oldest son Jakob T. B. was already married and had left Russia June 1 travelling with the first group of 65 Mennonite families who arrived in Manitoba on August 31, 1874.

In the same immigration party was P.K.B.'s sister Katharina (Johann M. Koop) and her family. His sister Anganetha (Peter W. Toews) arrived a few weeks later with the next group of KG settlers. Travelling with the Toews family was Peter's 73 year old mother-in-law Mrs. Jakob Toews, nee Anna Wiebe. Both the Koop and Toews families had already put their stakes

down in Blumenort four miles north and Peter's father decided to live there as well.

Jakob T. B. settled in Grunfeld (Kleefeld) and "When he heard the steamer's whistle in the morning, he came with a "car" [wagon] to get us." The weather was nice and warm as they went ashore in the morning."

Son Peter T. B. described the early settlement experience: "So we loaded our things on to the cart, also helping my mother onto it. Father and we children walked. When we came to a soft spot on the road and the ox almost stopped, Father called out "Haowach" (Whoa). In Russia we said "Haowach" to the horses when they were supposed to pull hard. Now, however, the ox stopped.

"My brother Jacob was displeased and told Father not to say this, for here in Canada "hoa" meant to stop (stand still). Father promptly promised to keep quiet. Soon we came to another soft spot and the word "Haowach" did come over his lips again. Although my brother is really quite patient, he impressed upon us, that we were to say "Hoa" (Whoa) only when the ox was to stop."

"We did arrive on that same day to where Jacob's hut stood, at the place where the Kleefeld Post Office is now located. After this it took almost 10 days before we began to make hay and to build dwelling places here in Steinbach."

Settlement in Steinbach, 1874-75.

Peter K. Barkman and his family decided to settle in Steinbach, Man., where they were among the 18 founding families. According to the above description it would have been Sept. 24 before they actually started working on the site of their new homes. Peter K. B. "...had to exercise leadership at the time of the founding of Steinbach ..., when on returning to their quarters after locating Steinbach, a number of his comrades believed they had come from the south, where in fact they had come from the east. Indeed at the appropriate time, the sinking sun emerged from the clouds, to indicate they were facing west": G.G. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," page 256.

On Oct. 3, 1874, P. K. B. filed for a homestead on the SW 36-6-6E. A month later, on Nov 4, son-in-law Johann S. Friesen filed for a homestead on the adjoining SE 36-6-6E. When son J. T. B. realized that his father and siblings were settling in Steinbach, he abandoned his Homestead and joined them. Later he applied for a Homestead on SW 34-6-6E.

After the village was surveyed into 20 parts the villagers drew lots to determine where they would live. Trading was allowed to enable family members to settle beside each other. Peter K. Barkman and his family settled in a cluster towards the south end of the village: Peter himself on Wirtschaft 16, oldest son Jakob on 15 immediately to the north, and daughter Anna and her husband Johann S. Friesen on Wirtschaft 17, immediately to the south.

Klaas J. B. Reimer has written that the first winter of 1874 son Jakob T. Barkman "joined

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his father and younger brother and built a warm shelter for joint occupation. This building was two feet into the ground, 18 feet wide and 48 feet long. Light rails were used on the roof, closed tight with long grass and mud. The front 30 feet were partitioned off for living quarters and the other 18 feet held stable room for oxen and probably a milk cow": Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches," page 14.

This humble abode was insured by the KG brandordnung for \$25.00 with additional coverage of \$150.00 for livestock and equipment and \$200.00 for inventory and supplies.

At a brotherhood meeting on May 30, 1875, Peter K. Barkman was chosen to accompany his cousin Rev. Jakob M. Barkman and Jakob K. Friesen to Winnipeg to purchase supplies. On June 2, 1875, the group left for Winnipeg. The next day, the other two men attempted to cross the river into Winnipeg in spite of very windy and rough conditions and drowned.

Another sad farewell took place when Peter's father died at the home of his sister Aganetha in Blumenort on December 4, 1875. Thus ended the career of a man who had accomplished two major emigrations as an adult and had been a successful farmer and community leader in his day.

By 1876 Barkman had built a more substantial house and on Dec. 16, the insurance coverage was increased to \$125.00.

Pioneer Mills, 1876-79.

Peter K. Barkman's talents as a millwright and builder of windmills were quickly put to use in the infant settlement. The story of the milling industry in southeastern Manitoba for the first quarter century is really the story of Peter K. Barkman.

But the story does not begin with Peter K. Barkman as a water-driven mill already existed on the Seine River near Ponte des Chenes, a small Metis settlement, later the modern-day village of Ste. Anne. But only limited traces of this operation could be located during the 1950s when Dr. John Warkentin did his thesis on the Mennonite settlements in Southern Manitoba.

In 1876 the first real crop was harvested. As a result there was a need for much expanded milling facilities. However, the first mills were not built in Steinbach and in fact all signs indicated that the business and trading centre of southeastern Manitoba would develop in the Chortitz-Niverville area which was much more centrally located.

In fall of 1876 the first mill was built in Schönwiese, a mile northwest of Chortitz. It was a small steam driven mill owned by Peter Wiens and Johann Braun. A windmill was also built in 1876 in Grunfeld by former delegate Cornelius P. Toews. In 1877 two windmills were moved from the Red River to the East Reserve. Peter K. Barkman was the building contractor in charge. One of the windmills was located at Tannenau and owned by Johann Janzen and the other at Eigenhof later owned by Gerhard Schroeder. P. K. B. received wages of 50 cents per day (Note 3).

At Christmas time, 1876, P. K. B. also took the job of hauling 825 tree trunks from 13 miles east of Steinbach. Since he was still busy with the mills at Tannenau, son Peter at age 15, "also hauled wood from the forest for Hespeler with 2 oxen and a sleigh...[while] mother, ...older sister and ... younger brother remained at home to look after everything."

The Steinbach Windmill, 1877-79.

In May, 1877 neighbour Abram S. Friesen decided to build a windmill in Steinbach. Again the job went to Peter K. Barkman who "was hired to be the building foreman." The wages again were 50 cents a day. By August the windmill was ready for use to cut the boards with which to cover the outside.

Because there was so much bush around Steinbach the windmill did not work to its full potential and A. S. Friesen sold it to a syndicate from Rosenort. Again the contract to relocate the mill went to Peter K. Barkman. By March, 1879, he was busy loading the mill on sleighs and setting it up in its new location.

Peter K. Barkman also built several mills on the West Reserve: "Mr. Barkman was asked to build a grist (flour) mill on the West Reserve. (He had built a number of similar mills in Russia.) In order that he could get to the West Reserve, he swam across the Red River and worked there until the mill was completed. On his way home, after what must have been a number of weeks, he again swam across the Red River. While still near the River, he bought a fishhook from a boy, caught a fish and took it to a house nearby where the occupants prepared the fish dinner for him, before he proceeded on his way home" (Note 4).

First Steinbach flour mill, 1880-92.

The decision by A. S. Friesen to sell the windmill also meant that the Steinbach community was now without a flour mill. Many people encouraged P. K. Barkman to build a mill as he had been "a miller from his youth" (Note 5). A new steam driven mill was a huge investment beyond the resources even of the Barkman family. Money was also extremely scarce during the pioneer years.

Son Peter T. Barkman described how P.K.B. raised the capital to fund the huge project: "A suggestion was then made that the farmers in the district would pledge as they were able, from \$25.00 to \$50.00." This was Steinbach's first joint stock company or syndicate type venture and over \$2,000.00 was raised. Notes were given for \$25.00 and up. Abr. F. Reimer has recorded that on Dec. 18, 1879, son Klaas R. Reimer made the rounds in Blumenort, accepting pledges."

On Jan. 7, 1880, "... P.K. Barkman travelled to Waterloo, Ontario," by the new rail line through Moorhead which had been completed the previous fall. In Ontario he contacted the Schneider family in Berlin, now London. As they trusted the integrity of the Mennonites they "lent him the money against the pledges at 6% interest." Barkman was able to purchase used milling equipment for \$2500.00. It was still old fashioned in that it utilized grinding stones for the milling process.

On Feb. 4, 1880, P.K. B. returned home from Ontario. "His travelling expenses, not including his return ticket, were 75 cents. His food he brought along from home, and in Ontario the Mennonites provided him with food for his trip back."

The wheels were immediately set in motion for the construction of a new mill. "The wood for the building had already been hauled in winter from the forest about 10 or 12 miles southeast of Steinbach and cut into proper dimensions at A.S. Friesen's sawmill." Klaas W. Reimer later described how the wood was prepared: "Peter T. Barkman, Johann T. Barkman, my brother Abram and me [Klaas W. Reimer] freighted the wood for the framework out of the bush in the winter of 1879. Two of us took care of the transportation with two pairs of horses and two pairs of oxen and the other two cut down the trees. Throughout we slept under the stars at 30 degrees below zero.

According to K. J. B. Reimer the steam engine and milling equipment purchased in Ontario had arrived in Niverville on the rail line through the States by the end of March, 1880. Abr. F. Reimer has recorded that on "April 6 Klaas R. Reimer went to his relatives in Blumenort seeking to borrow oxen to get the steam engine." The next day, Klaas R. R. and Peter K. Barkman went to Winnipeg, to get the steam engine. They returned from Winnipeg 2 days later on the 9th at 2 A.M. in the night with the steam engine. On the same day, Johann R. Reimer took 5 wagons and 10 oxen for the entire steam outfit. Abr. R. Reimer's boys Klaas and Abram drove two of the wagons.

P. K. Barkman also took in several partners to help him with the construction and operations of the rolling mill. The major partner was pioneer merchant Klaas R. Reimer with a 3/8 share. Barkman's son Jakob T. B. had a 1/8 share as did son-in-law Johann S. Friesen. Since Reimer "was a master at blacksmith work, he prepared the iron work for the mill." Son P. T. B. later recalled that "by the time we began making flour in August of 1880 it cost a little over \$5,000.00." Another source says the cost of the mill was \$6,000.00.

The mill itself was erected on the "Kattstelle" for Wirtschaft 15, i.e. on the west side of Main Street. This lot was originally owned by son Jakob T. Barkman. The mill was housed in a three storey structure and powered by a 30 h.p. steam engine which powered 3 milling gears. Neighbour Kornelius Loewen has written that the steam mill "was erected on May 28" and by June 27 the "company milled its first commercial flour [Beutelmehl]."

The mill was finally in operation. Abr. F. Reimer made a note that his son-in-law Peter Toews of Steinbach would get up at 6 A.M. to "heat the steam engine for the steam mill." Accidents also occurred and on Oct. 28, 1880, Peter K. Barkman's son Peter "badly injured his hand as it got caught in the rollers."

Death and Remarriage, 1881.

Abraham F. Reimer's Journal for 1880 and 1881 reveals that Peter K. Barkman was a frequent guest in the Reimer home in Blumenort.

As a leading local businessman Peter K. Barkman had other social obligations as well and on August 26, 1880, he "had rich visitors from Oklahoma, one named Steinder and the other Roesler."

On August 5, 1881, Peter K. B.'s wife died "after being sick for only 4 hours." She was buried on the 6th. Her mother, Mrs. Jakob Toews, nee Anna Wiebe, living with her brother Peter W. Toews in Blumenort died on August 1 and was buried on the 2nd.

In 1881 Peter K. Barkman married for the second time to Elizabeth Warkentin, daughter of Gerhard Warkentin, formerly of Pordenau and later Lindenau, Molotschna. The Verlobnis took place "after dinner" at the home of former Rosenfeld neighbour and friend Gerhard K. Schellenberg of Rosenfeld, Man. on Saturday, Sept 3, 1881. On Sunday, Sep. 11th, Barkman and his bride were betrothed by Rev. Peter Baerg in Rosenfeld.

The Steinbach Mill.

The flour mill was by far the most valuable property carried in the KG insurance system being insured on July 19, 1880, for \$3000.00. On August 25, 1881, a barn was added for an additional \$300.00. On April 25, 1883, the coverage was increased by an additional \$500.00. The closest comparable properties insured are Klaas Reimer's warehouse and contents \$2,500.00 and A. S. Friesen's grain elevator in Otterborne and his sawmill for \$1,000.00 each.

In 1881 Abraham W. Reimer married Aganetha, daughter of Peter K. B. Shortly thereafter P. K. B. sold a 1/4 interest in the mill to his new son-in-law, retaining only a 1/8 interest. In 1890 son Jakob T. B. sold his 1/8 share to brother Peter T. B. who was also married to Klaas R. Reimer's daughter so that the Reimers now acquired the majority ownership of the mill.

The 1883 assessment rolls of the R. M. of Hanover, show that Peter K. Barkman had a quarter section of land, 1 horse, 2 cows and a small amount of equipment. In the 1884 tax records he is assessed at 1812 of which 1675 is for buildings, possibly including his share of the mill. In 1884 Barkman was the third highest assessed taxpayer in the village, next only to Klaas R. Reimer at 2486 and Franz Kroeker at 1843.

A change took place around January of 1892 when Abraham W. Reimer went to Johann I. Friesen (1860-1941) in Blumenort "at midday and offered ...[him] a job at the flour mill in Steinbach." After due consideration Johann I. Friesen decided he "would like to do this" and so "they sold their farm implements and cattle by auction" and "in February they moved to Steinbach."

Fire, 1892.

Misfortune struck the blooming venture on August 16, 1892, when the mill burned down. Peter T. B. described the tragedy as follows: "On the evening of August 15, 1892, after I came home from M. McCaskills where I had assembled a Massey Harris binder, I went to bed. My wife was still up and around and suddenly heard them calling out on the street, 'The mill

is burning!' She woke me right away and I grabbed my pants and ran, but nothing could be done except to save the adjacent buildings. P.H. Gintners' residence was so close to the mill it also fell prey to the flames. After this Gintners lived with us in our house for a year."

The mill was insured for \$4,000.00 at the time of the loss, plus \$650.00 in related coverages. After settlement of the claim the mill was no longer insured with the KG Brandordnung.

Retirement, 1892.

It was around this time, after the fire destroyed the second mill, that P. K. Barkman decided to retire (Note 6). He sold his Wirtschaft 5 to son Johann and moved across the street to "Kattstelle" no. 16 where he built a residence for his retirement. By now he was in his mid-60s and no doubt hoping to enjoy some of the fruits of his labours. Now that he no longer had a Wirtschaft to look after and only a minor interest in the mill, P. K. B. had time to pursue his hobbies of gardening and raising chickens.

Second Mill, 1893-1920.

The company immediately decided to rebuild. This time it was merchant Klaas R. Reimer who went to Ontario, to purchase a new mill. He "bought a cylinder mill with a 75 barrel capacity from John Engels" in Toronto. This was a state of the art fully modern rolling mill powered by a 50 h.p. steam engine. Expert machinists and builders came out from the East to build the new mill and set up all the machinery.

Katharina Friesen Reimer, a daughter of Johann I. Friesen, later recalled some of the details 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 book-keeper and kept things in order": *Friesen-Von Riesen Genealogy*, page 137.

The mill stood 5 stories high and had a height of 50 feet. The site was again lot 15, but set back some 500 feet west of Main Street. In August of 1893, exactly 1 year later, the mill was in production.

A change took place in the ownership in that Abram W. Reimer sold his shares and joined A. S. Friesen in the lumber business.

Another 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 who had recently been hired as accountant. Friesen also acquired a 1/8 share in the enterprise possibly purchasing the shares of Johann S. Friesen. The business now operated under the name "Reimer, Barkman, Friesen."

In addition to the flour mill, the firm also operated a large lumber and building supply business somewhat 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 was operated there until the 1960s.

Peter T. Barkman continued as mill foreman "operating the mill" a position he had to give up in November of 1896 when he suffered severe rheumatism in his legs. At this time Peter R. Toews took over as mill foreman and Peter T. B. "went into selling machinery."

In 1896 the flour mill was assessed at \$12,000.00 by far the highest assessed property in Steinbach rivalled only by that of Klaas R. Reimer Sr., store keeper, also at \$12,000.00 and

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Steinbach's second mill built in 1892. The roller rail went to the large grainery located closer to Main Street. The mill burned down on October 18, 1920. There is no known photograph of the first mill. Photo courtesy of Reflections on our Heritage, page 55. Photo by Peter T. Friesen

continued from previous page

the store of son Heinrich W. Reimer at \$10,750.00.

Johann I. Friesen was to become inexorably associated with the Steinbach flour mill and acquired the nickname "Maella Fries'e." He held the honourable position of General Manager for 26 years and made numerous friends in the business. The "houses and buildings of miller Johann I. Friesen and his assistant Reichel were located to the south of the mill itself."

K. J. B. Reimer later described the significance of such an enterprise in the pioneer days: "In the early years a local flour mill played an entirely different part in a community than it does today. From thirty miles around the farmers came in the fall of the year, to bring their load of wheat, and have it custom gristed to take home a year's supply of local flour. It was a common sight to see dozens of teams waiting at the flour mill to be served."

Retirement, 1894-1917.

Peter K. Barkman lived in his home on the northwest side of Main Street for many years "being occupied with gardening and chicken



The old house of P. Barkman Sr. burning down. One of the earlier house fires in Steinbach. The Peter K. Barkman house was built around 1892 and stood close to where the last flour mill was located on Main Street. At the time of the fire the house was occupied by a local worker, Rudolph Schilke and his family. Photo by Peter T. Friesen. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Abram D. Plett, Rosenort, Man. 1980.

raising": G. G. Kornelsen, "Steinbach: Then and Now," page 256. This house was later destroyed by fire.

Peter K. B. was a man of some charity. When friend and neighbour Klaas Reimer collected money to help a Johann Warkentin in Colorado, on Dec. 10, 1894, P.K.B. contributed \$1.00 and son Peter \$2.00.

By 1896 Peter K. Barkman is no longer mentioned in the tax assessment rolls, a sign that he had divested himself of real estate.

Peter K. Barkman was still as interested as always in new developments taking place around him. Klaas J. B. Reimer has written that "[he] was very gifted with new inventions and that shortly after 1900 he was among the very first to be serviced with a telephone connection with his children, the Peter T. Barkmans, living

somewhat to the north of him."

Peter's second wife, nee Elisabeth Warkentin, died in 1911.

On Nov. 8, 1911, P. K. B. wrote a letter to the *Rundschau* in which he reported the death of his second wife and reminisced somewhat about the Warkentin family.

"Finally P. K. B. too reached the age where he laid down his work and moved to his children." In 1915 Peter K. B. was living at the home of his children, Peter T. Barkmans.

Peter Klassen Barkman died on January 5, 1917. He had lived to the ripe old age of 91 years enjoying a long and productive life.

Prologue.

In 1915 Gerhard G. 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 1917 Johann I. Friesen's wife died and for various other reasons the mill was sold for



Peter K. Barkman in his retirement years, circa 1915. Photo courtesy of Reflections on our Heritage, page 55.



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. John P. Friesen later became a Wall Street Banker. Letter courtesy of Ernie P. Toews, Steinbach, Manitoba.

is certainly one of the most fascinating chapters in the early economic history of Manitoba.

Children of Peter K. Barkman

1) Son **Jakob T. Barkman** married Aganetha Giesbrecht, daughter of Gerhard Giesbrecht (1816-63) of Prangenau, Mol. In 1874 they emigrated from Russia with the Grunfeld group about six weeks prior to the Steinbach settlers. "When his parents and the rest of the family decided to locate in the Steinbach area, Jakob also left his temporary shelter in Grünfeld to start over again in the new village of Steinbach." He located on lot 14 where the residence of the late A. W. Reimer was still standing in 1952.

In 1915 G. G. Kornelsen wrote that Jakob T. B. was the first small shopkeeper in the village. "Even before the situation reached normality, oil, cheese, etc. where added to the wares and sold. Later also farm tools, machines and fence wire were sold."

Jakob T. B. was a 1/8th shareholder in the



Jakob T. Barkman with second wife Maria Fast (1851-1937), circa 1925. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

flour mill in Steinbach which was built on his Wirtschaft on the west side of Main Street in 1880. He also worked in the mill.

In 1890 Jakob T. Barkman sold his interests in the mill as well as his Wirtschaft and moved to a farm in Heuboden (north of Kleefeld). Here he farmed and also operated a store until 1918. His wife died of the flu in the fall of that year. Klaas J. B. Reimer writes that with her death the last married couple of the 18 pioneer families of Steinbach was parted. In 1921 he married for the second time to Maria Fast, who had previously been married 3 times. After the marriage they moved to Grünfeld near where he had taken out his first homestead in August 1874.

2) Daughter **Anna T. Barkman** married Johann S. Friesen, son of Jakob K. Friesen who drowned in the Red River in 1875. She was a brave and feisty woman. This is illustrated by an incident during the emigration from Russia to America which is described in an old journal: "On one occasion he [Johann S. Friesen] went sightseeing in the city of Odessa on a prolonged stop. As he had all his savings with him, which amounted to 24 rubles, he was very careful, but after walking for some time, he was aware of being followed by two ruffians who tried to stop them. Here he pays tribute to his resolute young wife who seeing him in danger, knocked one of the would-be robbers flat. His



Johann S. Friesen (1853-1917) and Anna Barkman Friesen (1854-1923) and son. Photo courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches."

accomplice got cold feet and beat it posthaste": Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches," page 18.

The Johann S. Friesen family settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874. They located on lot 17 and built their first permanent building in 1880. This was the oldest building in Steinbach in 1952 being occupied by Isaac D. Plett, whose grandmother Mrs. Isaac L. Plett purchased the place from the original owner when the Friesens sold out and moved to Hochstadt. Klaas J. B. Reimer writes that after their family was grown up the Friesens lived for a number of years in Winnipeg, but in later years they moved back to Steinbach.

Johann S. and Anna Barkman Friesen were the parents of Jakob B. Friesen and Peter X. Friesen who married daughters of KG delegate Cornelius P. Toews. A number of the Johann S. Friesen boys moved to Saskatchewan to homestead.

3) Daughter **Aganetha T. Barkman** married

Abram W. Reimer, eldest son of Klaas R. Reimer (1837-1906), pioneer merchant in Steinbach. For the first 10 years after their marriage, Abraham was a shareholder and employee of the flour mill. Later the family operated a restaurant in

continued on next page



Abram W. Reimer and Mrs. Reimer, nee Aganetha Barkman, circa 1920. They owned the "Reimer Trading Co." with operations in Giroux, Winnipeg and Steinbach. In 1952 Aganetha was the oldest resident of Steinbach. She died in 1955. Photo courtesy of Steinbach Post, May 4, 1965, page 6.

<u>Gen</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Death</u>
4	Peter K. Barkman	Mar 21,1826	Jan 18,1848	Jan 5,1917
m	Anna W. Toews	Aug 9,1827		Aug 5,1881
5	Jacob T. Barkman	Nov 14,1848	Sep 21,1869	Jul 11,1935
m	Aganetha Giesbrecht	Mar 2,1848		May 26,1918
2m	Maria Fast	Jun 28,1851	Mar 6,1921	Mar 15, 1937
5	Anna T. Barkman	Jun 13,1854	Jan 27,1874	Jan 24,1923
m	Johann S. Friesen	May 17,1853		Oct 5,1937
5	Aganetha Barkman	Aug 20,1859	Dec 31,188_	Apr 24,1955
m	Abram W. Reimer	May 27,1860		Feb 25,1930
5	Peter T. Barkman	Feb 10,1861	Jul 1,1883	Mar 17,1936
m	Katharina Reimer	Jul 15,1868		Sep 15,1940
5	Johann T. Barkman	Apr 28,1862	Oct 1,1882	Nov 8,1900
m	Agatha Enns	Oct 5,1863		Jan 19,1890
4	Peter K. Barkman	Mar 21,1826	Jan 18,1848	Jan 5,1917
2m	Elisabeth Warkentin	1837	Sep 11,1881	1911

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Giroux. Their oldest son Abraham A. Reimer got to be well over 100 years of age. Their second son Peter B. Reimer was the father of Frank F. Reimer, founder of "Reimer Express", a nationally known trucking firm: see article "The one with the hat: Peter B. Reimer," elsewhere in this issue.

4) Son **Peter T. Barkman** operated a farm machinery dealership in Steinbach in the location where the Brookdale Mall stands today. His son Jakob was known as "farmer" Barkman and served as Reeve of the R. M. of Hanover from 1946-7 and from 1952-6. Jakob's son Gordon became a Judge of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench. In 1947 Peter's son Klaas served as the first Mayor of the incorporated Town of Steinbach and his sons founded "Barkman Concrete" a nationally known supplier of concrete paving stones: see article by Cathy Friesen Barkman elsewhere in this newsletter.

5) Son **Johann T. Barkman** was married to Agatha Enns. She was a great-niece to the Thiessen sisters who were married to Jakob M. Barkman and Gerhard Giesbrecht. Johann worked for the Steinbach flour mill of which his father was part-owner. Johann lived on the original P. K. B. yard until his death in 1900. At that time a new house was built on the property by Abram I. Friesen who then lived there for a time. Johann T. B. was the father of Anna Barkman who married Jakob D. Barkman, pioneer Steinbach photographer, who moved into this new house in 1905.

Notes:

Note 1: Abr. F. Reimer, "Journal," translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner.

Note 2: Peter Fast, "Wiederholtes Tagebuch und sonstige wichtige Chroniken angefangen den 8 Januar 1907," Jansen, Nebraska, unpublished journal, page 41; courtesy of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas. February, 1989.

Note 3: Peter T. Barkman, "Steinbach and its Mills," *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 133.

Note 4: Maria Doerksen, et.al., *Genealogy of Peter K. Barkman 1826-1975*, page 1.

Note 5: The inference here is almost as if his father had a mill in Rückenau, Mol.

Note 6: G. G. Kornelsen writes that Peter K. Barkman sold his Wirtschaft to Johann and retired on the west side of Main Street in 1885. Klaas J. B. Reimer writes that P. K. B. retired around 1892 after the second mill burned down.

Sources:

A. F. Reimer, "Journal 1870-74."

K. J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *Carillon News*, 1952

K. J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahre," *Steinbach Post*, 1964-5.

Cornelius Bartel Loewen (1863-1928)

by daughter Mrs. Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, nee Elisabeth T. Loewen (1884-1948), Steinbach, Manitoba, as published in the book *Memoirs of Gerhard F. Giesbrecht* (Steinbach, Man, 1966), pages 13-14.

Father [C. B. Loewen] was 11 years old when he came to Canada from Russia with his parents in 1874. He was the oldest in the family and experienced much poverty and hardships of the first years in a new country.

In 1882 he married our mother Anna Toews [daughter of Peter and Elisabeth Reimer Toews: see article by Ernie P. Toews, *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part 2, pages 12-15.] The first years of their married life they lived in a room 12' by 12' at our Grandmothers. My brother Cornelius, I, and my sister Anna were born here. This house stood close to where C.T. Loewen's Lumber Yard now stands close to Main Street.

In April, 1886 they moved to Lichtenau 2 miles from Steinbach, where father went to work. Isaac was born here. After 2 1/2 years they moved to Steinbach where Kreutzer's Blacksmith shop now stands.

Grandfather Loewen and uncle Isaac Loewen lived with us for quite a few years. Grandfather stayed with us till he died.



Cornelius B. Loewen (1862-1928): courtesy of Reflections on our Heritage, page 42.

There were hard years for our mother. The children were small, Grandfather sick, and father away working. In the winter he always went to the bush to work. Cornelius had to split wood, take care of the cow and do other chores after school.

Later our parents had a small farm. Father was in the bush in the winter and in summer he built and moved houses. A small brother Peter died after we had been in Steinbach for a year.

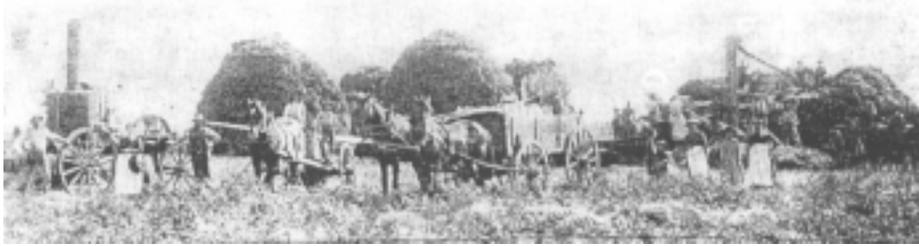
We lived in Steinbach for ten years and then in 1899 Father bought a farm 1 1/2 miles south of Steinbach [SW 26-6-6E which they purchased from delegate Cornelius P. Toews]. Here we farmed but Father worked in the bush, moved houses, planed lumber and went out threshing.

This first year on the farm we had a very small crop. Isaac, Peter, Abe and I had to look after the crop. Cornelius was older and had to help with the threshing. Mother was always ill. Peter, Isaac and Abe had to look after the cows and pigs. They had to go to Steinbach to get the grain chopped and also bought feed for the pigs.

In 1902 Father and Cornelius did not get home from threshing until November. It was very cold when they brought the machine home. November 10th we got ready to butcher pigs to sell. Mother was quite sick that evening. Cornelius had to go for the doctor with horse and buggy for seven miles in a cold, dark evening. It was late when he brought Uncle



A historic photograph of the three oldest children of Cornelius B. Loewen and Anna R. Toews, probably dating from 1900. L. to r.: Cornelius T. Loewen with sisters Elisabeth T. Loewen (1884-1948), Mrs. Gerhard F. Giesbrecht, and Anna T. Loewen (1886-1934), Mrs. Jakob F. Giesbrecht. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ben D. Penner, nee Anna L. Giesbrecht, Steinbach. Elisabeth was the author of the biography of her father C. B. Loewen.



A threshing scene in the village of Steinbach in 1897. It is C. B. Loewen's outfit and here the reader can see the women band cutters on the machine platform and the men building the straw-stack. Mr. C. B. Loewen is in front of the steamer, sons C. T. and Isaac are on the water cart. The ladies standing against the threshing machine are Mrs. Loewen and daughters. Photo and caption courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches." Very likely the women have just finished bringing faspera to the field for the working hands.

Isaac Warkentin home. He was our doctor at that time. Mr. Warkentin spent the night there but Mother died the next morning, November 11, 1902.

Mother had coughed a great deal the last few days. She had pneumonia and dropsy. Her death was heart breaking for all of us but we believe she was ready to meet God. Our parents were converted and led a God fearing life.

But our life had to go on. The next week we butchered pigs. After Christmas Father went to the bush to cut lumber.

Father got married again June 21, 1903 to Mrs. Maria Reimer from Blumenort. A great change for our family took place. Father gave up working away from home. He stayed home and tried to make a living on the farm. Our parents would sometimes go visiting during the week. That was very strange to us. Soon Father built a new house and a big barn.

In 1912 Father sold this farm and bought a better farm north of Steinbach. For a while things worked out very well. Then Father bought a car, a tractor and 640 acres of land at Isle de Chenes, Manitoba. Then everything got

cheaper, debts had to be paid, so Father sold his farm to pay debts.

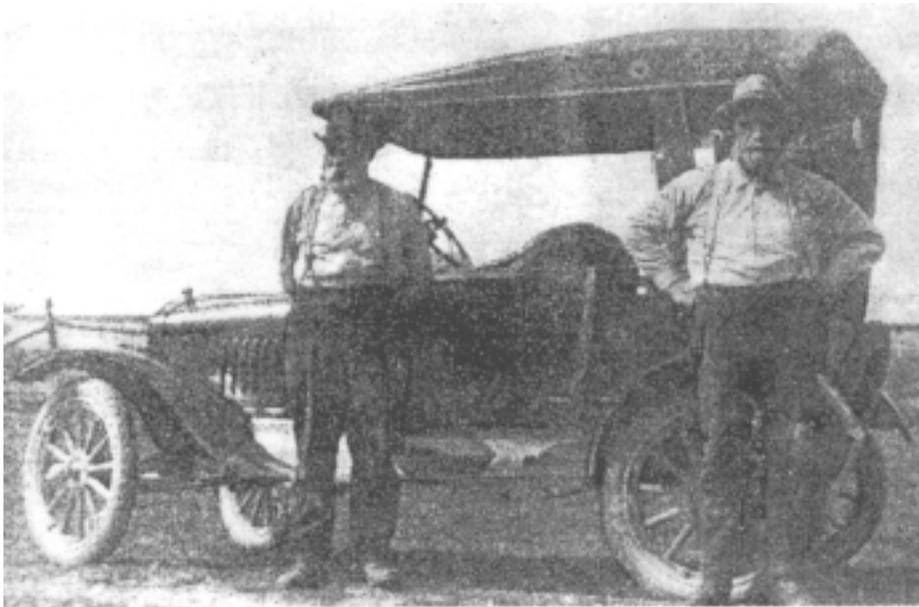
Then our parents moved to Steinbach and rented a house there. Soon they moved to Morris and opened a store there. This was not successful so they moved back to Steinbach.

One winter they moved with their family to the pulp camp to cook. This camp was operated by brother Cornelius [T. Loewen].

In 1928 our parents went to Meade, Kansas to help with the wheat harvest. This proved to be too hard for Father. It was very hot and Father got very sick. After a five days illness he died on July 26, 1928. Father came home in a coffin which was very hard for Mother and the children. Father lived to the age of 64 years, 9 months and 3 days. He was born October 22, 1863.

Written by his daughter, Elizabeth, Mrs. G. F. Giesbrecht

Editor's Note: Cornelius B. Loewen was the father of Cornelius T. Loewen, founder of Loewen Millwork, and Abraham T. Loewen, founder of Loewen Funeral Homes.



Cornelius B. Loewen 1863-1926. Farmer, house mover, saw mill operator, thresherman and Councillor for the R. M. of Hanover from 1921 to 1922. On this picture, Mr. Loewen stands at the left and Mr. James Steel at the right, in their capacity as councillors for Hanover and Ste. Annes, respectively, inspecting inter-municipal roads in 1921. Photo and caption courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches".

Letter to Cousin Heinrich F. Loewen, Jansen Nebraska, 1897.

Cor. & Anna Loewen

Steinbach, Man.

April 28, 1897

Dear Brother and Family,

Your letter which spoke of your well-being arrived some time ago. But how soon things have changed since your writing. God's ways are incomprehensible and His ways past finding out, so that no man can lengthen them.

In regards to our physical well-being I may state that we all are well, but in regards to the soul, things could be better, so that we are not counting ourselves to have apprehended, "but forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."

Well, beloved brother, you cannot find yourself otherwise aright [but to hold] that "things work together for good to them that love God." Yes, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveths."

Dear brother, do not take the matter too seriously. But if I would be in your stead, I do not see how it is possible that a mother of so many young children could be taken away, so that one almost thinks how could the Lord be so merciless. Yet at all times He seeks the very best for us and leads us to bring forth more fruit. Usually He has some good objectives for us. But we do not want to hear His voice. Often times He calls one here and another there out of this world unexpectedly to lead us to repentance.

Accept this writing in love the way I have written it. Best greetings to you and the children,

Your Siblings, Cor. & Anna Loewen.

Anna died at Johann Klassens. She slowly faded away. The funeral is to be held today.

We are seeding and the weather is changeable. Isaak Klassen also is well. What are Bartels doing? They are not writing at all. Extend greetings to them and also to all friends.

This letter is from the A. M. Friesen\Johann I. Friesen Collection at MLA, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1994. The C. B. Loewen letter is written to his cousin Heinrich F. Loewen (1860-1935), a Kleine Gemeinde minister and large-scale farmer at first in Jansen, Neb. and later in Meade, Kansas, where his sons continued to farm in a big way, seeding for example 1010 acres of wheat in 1910. The letter of 1897 is written to console Ohm Heinrich over the recent death of his wife, nee Margaretha R. Friesen.

Abraham M. Friesen 1834-1908

by Delbert Plett



A historical photograph of Abraham M. Friesen and wife Margaretha Isaac Friesen, probably taken around 1900. Note that Margaretha is not wearing a "Haube". Photo courtesy of LaVerna Klippenstein, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Family background.

Abraham M. Friesen was born in 1834 in the village of Altona, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, where his minister father Klaas (1793-1870), owned a successful Wirtschaft. Shortly after the death of his mother Margaretha Matthies in 1843, his father married Carolina Plett, and the family moved to Rosenort, Mol. where many other Kleine Gemeinde (KG) families lived.

Abraham M. Friesen, like his brothers, had received a good education. John C. Reimer later wrote that Abraham M. F. was the most learned man in the East Reserve: *Sesquicentennial*, page 169.

Marriage.

In 1856 Abraham M. Friesen married Margaretha Isaac, daughter of Johann Isaac and Anna Plett of Schoenau (Note One). 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" (Note 1). Abraham M. Friesen himself has written that "they held their Verlobung on June 4 (June 16 according to the new calendar), and we were married after the worship service by cousin Abraham Friesen from Neukirch, in Lindenau at Isaac Harms in the Scheune [hay barn]": Abraham M. Friesen, Family records--untitled notes.

Abraham and Margaretha farmed on their Wirtschaft in Kleefeld, Molotschna, a village

which was founded in 1856. Abraham was well-liked in the congregation and at the young age of 27 he was appointed as a song leader or Vorsaenger after a worship service in Rosenort, held on February 19, 1861: Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal," 477.

In 1869 Abraham M. Friesen wrote a thirty-two stanza poem in which he reflected regarding the unfortunate strife which had befallen the KG and other Mennonite denominations in Russia. He encouraged his readers to be uplifted and encouraged in their Christian pilgrimage: Johann I. Friesen Collection, MLA, Newton, Ks. Some-time later the Abraham M. Friesen family moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko.

Blumenort, Man.

In 1874 Margaretha and Abraham settled in Blumenort, Man., being one of 22 pioneer families to settled in that village. They owned a double farm. In 1877-1878 Abraham served as the teacher for the neighbouring village of Blumenhof, Manitoba: Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, 272.

During the time of the Holdeman schism in 1882 Abraham was very concerned. He transcribed a copy of a letter dated May 13, 1882, written by his wife's brother Franz to brother-in-law Abraham Loewen, in which Franz raised questions about the movement but reiterates that he will continue to love his brothers[-in-law] even though they were leaving the church. No doubt writings such as these influenced Abraham

and Margaretha in their decision to remain with the KG: Franz P. Isaac letter to Abraham M. Friesen May 13, 1882, courtesy of Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, 1982.

During the 1880s Abraham served his village as Schulz. Abraham was also a good shoemaker. On January 19, 1890, he recorded in his journal that he "made a pair of boots for Peter Penner". In 1892 the Friesen family moved out of the village and established their own farm on SW 35-7-6E where they farmed for the remainder of their days. In the same year Abraham M. Friesen helped his oldest son Johann move to Steinbach where he became manager of the flour mill.

Like his father, Abraham had a sense of historical consciousness and collected various records and writings many of which were preserved by his son Johann I. Friesen and by his brother Johann P. Friesen. Abraham also enjoyed writing and maintained a diary. The journals covering 1884-1889, 1889-1897, and 1905-1908 are still extant and form an invaluable source of information on pioneer life in the Steinbach-Blumenort area (Note 1).

Abraham M. Friesen enjoyed reading and studying the Bible and the seminal writings of his faith. His library included an 1872 Elkhart edition of the Dietrich Phillips' *Enchiridion* which is now in the writer's possession.

Retirement.

Abraham M. F. was a poet and "is known to have written much poetry for his grandchildren."

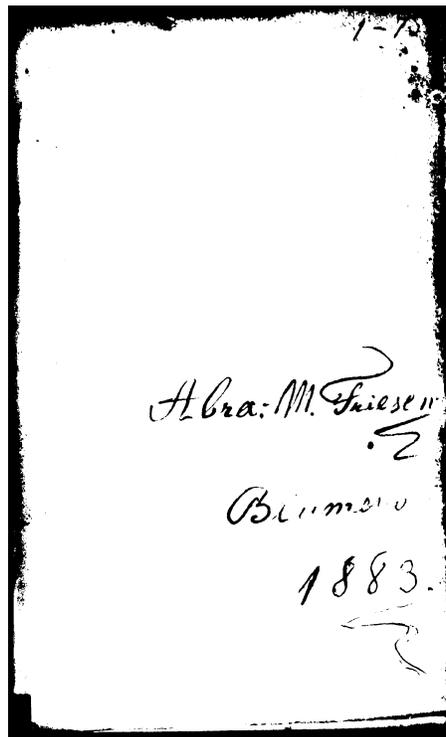
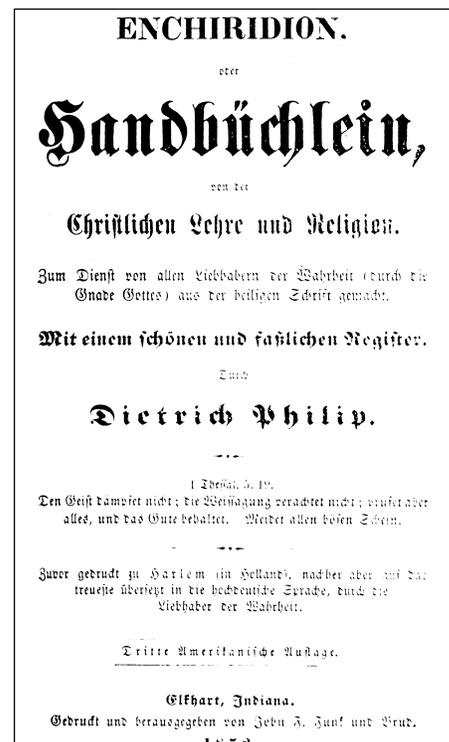


Photo of book plate and title page of 1872 Elkhart edition of the Dietrich Phillips' *Enchiridion*. A fine leatherbound bound book, using brown cow leather instead of the dark leather used by the Kleine Gemeinde for the six devotional books it published in Russia between 1827 and 1875.



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." Abraham M. Friesen was also artistically inclined and made many "Irrgarten" or paper cutout puzzles which he gave to his older grandchildren.

Abraham M. Friesen loved his family and particularly his grandchildren. Granddaughter Margaretha Friesen Loewen recalled that Abraham M. F. 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."

Death.

Abraham M. Friesen died on October 10, 1908, "of a sore foot which would be called diabetes today." He was buried in the second Blumenhof community cemetery located on SW 25-7-6E.

During her widowhood Margaretha, Mrs. Abraham M. Friesen, sometimes stayed at the home of her youngest son Peter in Greenland where grandson Henry E. Friesen remembered her as an elderly woman.

Children.

1) Son **Johann I. Friesen** was an excellent calligrapher who excelled at Schönschrieben (Note 4). He married in 1880 and farmed in Blumenort. In 1884 he was induced by the late A. S. Friesen to move to Steinbach where he worked as fireman and engineer for Friesen's sawmill. After 2 years the family returned to their home village and farming. In 1892 Johann and his wife

Helena Penner again moved to Steinbach, Manitoba, where he was part owner and manager of the flour mill. In 1918 he moved to Meade, Kansas, where he married for the second time to the widow Abraham K. Friesen, nee



Photo of Johann I. Friesen and Helena Penner Friesen circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches, pages .

Katherina Ratzlaff, the daughter of his cousin Susanna Thiessen (1853-1917) and Bernhard Ratzlaff (1835-1918).

Johann I. Friesen was very interested in genealogy. Unfortunately the only genealogical work of his which has been preserved is an "Anhang" which was published with Peter Isaac's "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern in 1916 (Note 5). He also collected the papers of his father and grandfather and some of these papers were later deposited at Bethel College by his son Abraham, "a famous American physicist" who taught there: *Preservings*, No. 4, July 1994, pages 10-11. Johann's daughter Helena married Peter B. Reimer of Steinbach, Manitoba, and they were the parents of Frank F. Reimer, the founder of Reimer Express Lines, Winnipeg, a national trucking firm in Canada (Note 6): see article on Peter B. Reimer elsewhere in this issue; see also *Preservings*, No. 4, July 1994, page 10-11.

2) Son **Abraham I. Friesen** married Maria Wiebe, daughter of Johann Wiebe, pioneer settler in Steinbach, Wirtschaft 14. In the 1880s

Abraham I. Friesen started a farm machinery business on the "Kattstelle" for this property, on the west side of Main Street. In 1889 he entered insurance coverage for a new building in the amount of \$200.00. He was the sales agent for "Peterson Farm Equipment." Around 1905 they moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan. Their daughter Maria married "George Starfield, a Steinbach barber." Their son Peter "died in action in WWI" on Nov. 11, 1917.

3) Son **Klaas I. Friesen** married Katharina Penner, a sister to the wife of brother Johann I. Friesen. The couple made their home in Greenland on S1/2 SE 3-8-6E. Klaas I. Friesen was a teamster. Around 1905 he bought the premises of Peter W. "Schmet" Toews in Steinbach, where he ran a livery stable: see photo in article by Ernie Toews on Steinbach Main Street elsewhere in this issue. In 1920 Klaas I. Friesens acquired a farm in the Landmark area. His daughter Helena married

Cornelius T. Loewen, and their son Cornie established "Loewen Windows" in Steinbach: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part One, pages 54-55.

4) Son **Peter I. Friesen** remained on his father's farmstead on SW 35-7-6E near Blumenort which they acquired in 1905. In 1911 they sold the farm and moved to McPherson County, Ks., 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 on Section 4-8-6E in Greenland which they purchased several years thereafter. The family belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (Note 7).

Notes:

Note 1: For the history of the Isaac family, see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 189-212.

Note 2: Johann Dueck, "Ministerial journal," 477.

Note 3: Abraham M. Friesen, "Diaries 1884-1889, 1889-1897, and 1905-1908," unpublished ledger style journals--courtesy Henry E. Friesen, Greenland, Manitoba, 1983.

Note 4: Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten," in *History and Events*, page 100.

Note 5: Johann I. Friesen, "Anhang oder Beilage," in Peter P. Isaac, *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern* (Stern, Alberta, 1916), 4 pages, published as an appendix.

Note 6: Plett, "New Sources: Part Two," in *Preservings*, No. 4, June 1994, 10-11.

Note 7: Henry E. Friesen et. al., eds., *Peter I. and Anna Friesen Family Book 1873-1981* (Greenland, Man., 1981), 21 pages.

Sources:

Royden Loewen, *Blumenort*.
Margaretha Friesen Loewen, *Friesen-Von Riesen Genealogy*, pages 131-132.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Abraham M. Friesen	Dec 6,1834	June 28,1856	Oct 10,1908
m	Margaretha Isaak	Dec 24,1833		Feb 1,1919
4	Klaas I. Friesen	Nov 26,1856		Dec,1858
4	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
4	Abram I. Friesen	June 10,1862	July 31,1887	Sep 2,1938
m	Maria Wiebe	Mar 27,1867		Feb 2,1964
4	Margaretha Friesen	Nov 14,1864		Dec 16,1838
4	Klaas I. Friesen	Feb 19,1868	Sept 1,1889	Oct 9,1927
m	Katherine Penner	Jan 14,1871		Oct 12,1952
4	Isaac I. Friesen	Nov 18,1870	1901	Aug 27,1920
m	Emilie Koenig			
2m	Rosa Eichel			
4	Peter I. Friesen	Dec 3,1873	Mar 5,1899	May 30,1966
m	Anne Eidse	July 1,1875		Jul 18,1973

Jakob T. Wiebe 1872-1965

by grandson Lloyd Penner, Box 1658, Settler, Alberta, T0C 2L0

His Childhood

He experienced a trans-Atlantic voyage before the age of two. He was a participant in a historic event: the beginning of the Mennonite migration from Russia to North America. As he was less than two, he found the voyage rather strenuous. He became my grandfather, Jacob T. Wiebe.

My story begins with great-grandfather Heinrich Wiebe, a resident of Molotschna Colony of Ukraine, who was born in 1851 in Schoenau which had been the home of the Wiebe family since 1804.

In 1871 Heinrich Wiebe married Anna Barkman Toews, daughter of Peter W. Toews of Margenau, Mol. Shortly thereafter they established themselves in the village of Heuboden, 20 miles northwest of Nikopol, where Heinrich served as the village school teacher. Friday, January 21, 1872, Heinrich bought his own farm (Feuerstelle) in the nearby village of Rosenfeld from Abraham S. Friesen for 3,000 ruble.

In the same year, on Oct. 25, the Wiebes were also blessed with their firstborn son, Jacob. On Jan. 30, 1873, another momentous event took place in that Heinrich was elected to the office of deaconry in the Kleine Gemeinde church.

Pioneering, 1874.

When the emigration to North America began in 1874 this family was among the first to leave. They were now a family of five, including baby Peter and 12-year-old foster son, Peter Fast, son of Kornelius Fast: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, 22-23. Peter's own parents being too poor to care for him, Heinrich Wiebe had undertaken to act as his guardian in return for his help, until Peter turned 21.

After a long and arduous journey, their new homeland was reached, and Great-grandfather homesteaded on a quarter section at Blumenort, Manitoba in August, 1874. After haying, a dug-out or zimlin was built. Very little land was plowed the first fall, as there were a hundred and one other things to do, but they did break up enough for a garden.

Next summer a fine garden crop was planted and the Wiebe family eagerly anticipated eating fresh vegetables. One day a cloud appeared in the sky, and presently they were horrified to see grasshoppers dropping from the sky. Suddenly Great-grandmother shrieked, "My garden!"

She flew out with her willow broom, shouting at three-year-old Jacob to come and help. She lit a pile of hay and began sweeping up the insects and throwing them into the fire. It was no use. Grasshoppers swarmed in from all directions, and mother and child saw the heart-breaking scene of insects working busily until the ground was bare.

Needless to say, the winter of 1875-76 was rough, especially as the season's last flour shipment, imported from the U.S.A. by Winnipeg

merchants, froze in the ice at Emerson. There were some long hard hauls from Emerson to Blumenort.

Diversions were few in those days, and one of Jacob's first recollections was of sitting by the window with little brother Peter and observing the world, one might say, from a worm's-eye view. In the sod walls of the semlin were nests and tunnels built by mice, and if they gazed at the window steadily enough they were occasionally rewarded by the sight of a mouse scampering across the window sill. Then they shrieked with glee and resumed their vigil.

Death of Heinrich Wiebe, 1876.

Pioneering is never easy, for a new land means new hazards. The unexpected harshness of the Canadian winter took its toll of this family. On a warm December day in 1876 when Jacob was four, his father went for the day to the forests east of Giroux for a load of wood.

At home that afternoon the child was at his favourite spot at the window. He recalled later how a sudden blast of wind, then snow, frosted the window instantly, The storm took the life of his father. Next morning the children saw the stooped, frozen body of their father being unloaded from a sleigh.

Three years later, Great-grandmother Anna married Isaac de Veer. In 1895 they moved to a new homestead in Greenland, just north of Blumenort.

His Youth.

Because the family was poor, from age 15 Jacob worked wherever he could to supplement their family income. At 18, he worked at a saw-mill for \$15 a month, working from dawn to dusk. That winter he cut some logs for the family's use but the spring thaw came before the lumber was sawn--he'd worked all winter for nothing.

He also got jobs working first at "Groti Toewsi" for \$15.00 per month and later for his grandparents in Greenland, helping them develop their farm after they moved on to it. He even worked as a plasterer at the high rate of \$1.25 a day. When on a threshing crew, he worked from dawn till dark; one morning the foreman sent them back to bed for half hour because it was too dark to work. At age 18, he was head carpenter of the crew building his uncle Jacob B. Toews' house in Kleefeld.

Once Jacob and foster-brother Peter Fast hauled a load of potatoes to Winnipeg--at least they started. The road through Prairie Rose was so muddy that several times the wagon got stuck. Each time they had to unload the wagon, carry the sacks of potatoes past the mudhole, and then re-load. Oak Island (Ile des Chenes) was as far as they got by nightfall. Finally arriving at Winnipeg the next day, potatoes were sold for \$.27 a dozen.

These experiences of working and of being

the oldest in the family no doubt helped prepare him for the responsibilities laid on him in later life.

God Calls a Youth.

Jacob was a person to whom heaven and hell and Christian living were very real. He looked inward, analyzing his own feelings and his relationships to God and to his fellows.

In school he once lied to a boy but then couldn't rest until he had confessed. Nevertheless, as he matured, the world looked attractive. Then at the age of 15, the Lord drew near to him and he confessed his wrongs to his mother. These good intentions didn't last; his aim now was to be a respectable man "who wouldn't walk behind the plow all his life" as he put it. Yet he frequently thought about his soul's salvation and often after a Sunday's reckless activities, although retiring late enough, he couldn't sleep. His thoughts were: If I should die, then what? Thus the forces of good and evil struggled within.

One day Grandfather was going to the field with a yoke of oxen to break sod just as the village cattle were being driven to pasture. The oxen decided to follow and stampeded! The rein (rope) was wrapped around his fingers, and as the oxen took off, they took one joint of one finger with them. Jacob's first thought was, I'll bleed to death all alone in the field and I'm not converted! He jumped off the bouncing wagon, intending to confess to his mother before he died. Then he noticed that the finger wasn't bleeding! Ah, the crisis was over and he needn't prepare to die after all!

During his recovery, however, various visitors reminded him of how serious the consequences could have been. An older deacon spoke seriously to him. When the visitor left, his mother sat down beside him and very soberly and very emphatically said, "Jacob, if you have anything to confess, then confess now--right now." That was the turning point. He confessed his wrongs and prayed earnestly to God for forgiveness.

Within a few hours Jacob experienced such a change in his life that he could not contain himself but must tell his closest friend of his new-found joy. That night he slept peacefully. He was baptized in the fall of 1890 into the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (the Holdemans) which his mother and step-father had joined in 1881-82.

Spiritual struggles, however, were not over; after he was baptized in the Fall of 1890, he was plagued with doubts. Had he really met the Lord? One day he wondered, "Is my problem unbelief?" He prayed, and an overwhelming joy flooded over him. Doubts about his salvation had been laid to rest.

Finding a Wife.

In time, Jacob's thoughts turned to finding a

life's companion, and with typical modesty wondered if he would ever find a girl willing to take him. He thought of Anna Reimer, daughter of Heinrich Reimer (1818-76) of Blumenhof, Man., and the step-daughter of Johann L. Plett.

But Jakob hesitated to propose because the family was well-to-do and he being poor, felt he might not be accepted. But after prayer, he related later, God "in a miraculous way" helped him. Jacob Wiebe and Anna Reimer found each other and spoke their vows on February 18, 1894. He was 21 and she was two years older, having been born September 1, 1870 in South Russia.

Grandfather's Household

During the first year of their married life the couple lived with Anna's mother and stepfather, helping with the work and sharing the expenses of the farm. After earning money from employment for a year, Grandfather bought 240 acres of sod on Section 5-8-6E in Greenland from the Hudson's Bay Company for \$2.75 an acre, onto which they moved an old log house. Later he added 170 acres more to his holdings.

Why so large a farm? Grandfather had vision and ambition. As the family grew, so did the farm, providing employment for all the children.

In the spring of '95 they moved into a log house on this farm where they lived all their lives. After 101 years, the farm remains in the family, being presently owned by grandson Rennie Wiebe.

The house that I remember, however, was built ten years later, in 1905. I will let a son, Uncle Aaron, describe it:

"The new home had two stories with four bedrooms on the second floor. On the ground floor there was a master bedroom at the end of a large room which was the guest room when we had company. The other part of the main floor had a kitchen, a dining and living room. A lean-to served as pantry and entrance. There was a small cellar under the house which was completely dark in winter."

"The cellar had at least two functions. One was that of storing a hundred sacks of potatoes, some salted ham, salt pork in brine, sauerkraut, cabbage hung from the ceiling, carrots packed in garden soil, shelves of canned raspberries, wild strawberries, wild currants, rhubarb, chokecherries, pin cherries with rhubarb for pie, stone crocks of wild plum and high bush cranberry jam, a barrel of pickled cucumbers or water melons, stone crocks of cracklings and lard, pickled pigs' feet and head cheese, big rennet bottles full of watered-down wild currants, which we usually had for breakfast together with a generous helping of cracklings."

"The other function of the cellar was that of punishment. Whenever I did not behave, my mother or an older sister would put me in the cellar, in the dark until I repented. This did not take long, as a rule. The very words, 'I'll put you into the cellar,' was usually enough to keep me in order."

Every fall Grandfather took enough wheat to the flour mill to have a year's supply ground for the family. A cow or steer and about four

hogs were butchered. The meat was cured and some of it smoked in spring; the rest was packed in snow and left in God's deepfreeze. Thus they never went hungry.

The old log house was the birthplace for the first of seven children, the new house for six more. Of these, five are still alive: Aunt Lizzie, Uncle Gerhard (George), Uncle Ben, and identical twins Caroline and Agnes, of whom Agnes is my mother. Grandfather's aunt, Mrs. Peter B. Toews, was midwife at every birth except when she could not arrive on time and Grandfather had to take over.

Actually, Grandfather had always been interested in medicine, but accepted the fact that it would not be possible for him. He did simple surgery such as lancing boils I have scars on my own neck since the age of three which are living evidence of his work.

Tragedy.

Tragedy struck the family in 1903. Grandfather spent almost all winter in the woods to cut lumber for a new barn, though as a rule he returned home for Sunday. One day their youngest son, Isaac, grabbed the coffee pot and drank the scalding liquid from the spout. The lips were burned, but as the child did not cry too badly, the parents were not too concerned.

When the child's breathing became difficult, however, someone went to Blumenhof for Dr. Isaac Warkentin, who arrived at midnight. The doctor said the child could not survive, and at eleven o'clock the next morning his spirit fled.

"It was an incident on our way through life," Grandfather wrote later. The statement suggests a note of trust in a loving Father who does all things well.

In 1924, Grandmother died suddenly of a stroke during a Communion service in Steinbach. It was a dreadful shock, and the children remember on one occasion hearing Grandfather crying aloud. He was well-versed in Scripture and found comfort in them, especially the Psalms.

He remarried a year and a half later to Maria W. Toews, the only grandmother I knew. She was the daughter of Elder Peter P. Toews, Swalwell, Alberta, and a little younger than his first wife, having been born in Manitoba on December 17, 1877.

Our second grandmother died in 1951. Grandfather died in 1965, leaving 12 children, 101 grandchildren, and 187 great-grandchildren.

Farming.

The old log house had become a well-equipped blacksmith shop. The sons have vivid and almost tormented memories of cranking the soft grindstone in the daily sharpening of mower blades.

Grandfather was mechanically inclined. In 1909 he and his brother Peter H. Wiebe bought a one-cylinder International tractor which they used primarily for plowing and threshing. It was an immense machine with a platform large enough to accommodate six men. This tractor was later used in the Watchan Valley in B.C. for breaking sod. It was returned to Manitoba in 1917 and repaired; Grandfather and the older

Handwritten ledger titled "Greenland Shareholders" with columns for names, shares, and amounts. Includes entries for P. B. Toews, Isaac W. Toews, etc.

Handwritten ledger titled "Greenland Shareholders" with columns for names, shares, and amounts. Includes entries for P. B. Toews, Isaac W. Toews, etc.

Cheese factory Shareholders, 1907

Jakob T. Wiebe was a community minded man. In 1907 he was 1 of the 15 founding members of the Greenland Cheese factory with 4 shares. Courtesy of Lloyd Penner, Settler, Alberta.

boys used it for breaking brush and for threshing. It the early 20s it was sold for \$25 for scrap.

Grandfather had as many as 13 horses, but in 1918, to ease the load for them he purchased a Titan tractor, which was much easier to handle than the International. After the big threshing rigs lost their popularity, he purchased a small, 21-inch thresher, the first such machine to be shipped into Manitoba. The smaller machines changed harvest to more of a family-sized affair. Some horses were sold when he purchased a steel-wheeled Fordson tractor. Although the tractor proved to be quite an aggravation, it did help to speed up the field work.

A 1918 Model T Ford was his first car, which he bought used in 1919. By this time there were quite a few cars among the Holdeman church membership. Although Grandfather was mechanically inclined, says Uncle Aaron, that inclination did not show up well in the way he handled a car. In fact, he could become quite unpredictable in a minor traffic problem. Fortunately for all of them, he never had a major accident.

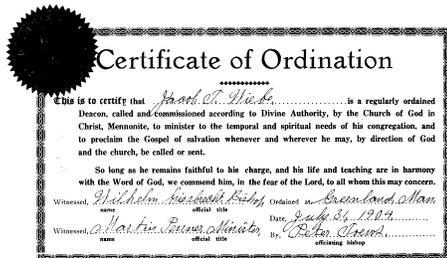
In 1926 he bought a new Model T. This was followed later by a used 1930 Model A Ford, which he kept until he could no longer drive. Some grandsons including myself had the privilege of driving it occasionally.

A Higher Call.

There is another story to be told, a story of labour and love for a Lord who had graciously forgiven his sins when he was a young man.

God saw that here was a capable man. Accordingly the Holdeman church, which chose their leaders from among their own ranks, ordained him to the diaconry in Greenland, Manitoba in 1904.

Grandfather was happy to serve in this capacity, relieved that he had not been called to the ministry, for which he really felt quite incapable. Privately he consoled himself that the church had never called deacons to the ministry, but he was shocked when the 1909 conference decided (Article #2) that it was possible. Sure enough, the next summer, in 1910, Jakob T. Wiebe and Cornelius P. Wohlgemuth were ordained to the ministry.



Certificate of Ordination

Jakob T. Wiebe was ordained as a deacon on July 31, 1904, by Bishop Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht and minister Martin Penner. The original certificate was embossed with the words "F. C. Fricke Bishop of the Church of God in Christ Mennonite. Centre words: Ithaca, Mich." Courtesy of Lloyd Penner, Settler, Alberta.

Though Grandfather felt his weaknesses and shortcoming keenly, working for the Lord was a labour of love. He was always busy guiding the flock of believers, comforting and helping the bereaved, rejoicing with those who found salvation, travelling far and wide sometimes for long periods as he helped other growing congregations.

His travels took him by horse and buggy to the closer churches, by train to far-flung places in Canada and U.S.A. At times some of these churches were unable to share much of the expenses, but Grandfather went because he loved the Lord and His kingdom. He never complained, nor did his wife, as she and the children took care of the farm.

In the fall of 1914 Grandfather and Minister J. G. Friesen made a long trip to visit various churches. They visited congregations in South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Michigan, and Ohio. After two and a half months of travelling, visiting, and preaching they arrived home. Other long trips were taken, such as the trip to Alberta and B.C. in 1916; this time Grandmother and the four-year old twins (Alberta oldtimers tell me they were "cute") were along.

Grandfather was not your traditionalist minister. He was preaching at revival meetings in one congregation, and there were problems--not strange with us humans--and the problems were not only in the laity. So at one service Grandfather turned his back to the laity and preached to

the preachers. They solved their problems!

In personal work, too, he seemed to have words that spoke to the need. A grandson relates that after he and his wife started farming a hailstorm levelled his first crop. Grandfather told him it was a good thing--then explained. He related how two couples started out in life. One couple had a bumper crop the first year and adjusted their lifestyle accordingly; later there were financial struggles. The other couple started farming with a poor crop and were forced to adjust their lifestyle accordingly; they had easier going financially.

Grandfather writes of the doubts about his own ability that plagued him in his ministry. He called it unbelief--lack of faith that God would carry him through. Others, I think, called it humility. Obviously, these doubts did not exist in other people's minds. One day, in a letter from elder Peter Toews, then living in Alberta, these words were written: "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee"--spoken to Elijah."

The implication was that as Elijah had shepherded the Israelite nation, Grandfather would one day shepherd the Manitoba churches. Grandfather understood, and some time later this responsibility was laid on his shoulders. When Bishop Wilhelm Giesbrecht died, he suggested that the Manitoba bishopric be passed to Grandfather. But Grandfather was never ordained as a bishop, although the title was used informally.

Grandfather's humility was again evident years later after something had happened in a ministers' staff meeting of Greenland congregation. After the meeting, he knew he would have to apologize to the others. Then he thought, Why not be ever more humble and confess to

them at the upcoming general members' meeting? I recall how he asked each minister in turn, "Can you forgive me?"

How I Remember Him.

Grandfather was, as I remember, a tall man with a stately bearing. He had-snow-white hair and a long, flowing, white beard. Observing him in his suit behind the pulpit, as a boy, I thought to myself, It would not do any good for Grandfather to wear a necktie because you could not see it anyway.



Jakob T. Wiebe, Passport photograph, circa 1950. Photo courtesy of granddaughter Mrs. Abe J. Unger, nee Francis Toews, daughter of Martin Toews, Greenland.

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.

I remember Grandfather as a generous, helpful person. In his old age, when he stayed at the homes of his children, he tried to be helpful wherever he could; he had candy for the little ones, and often he would rock and croon the baby to sleep. Whenever the Wiebe clan gathered, he would express his thankfulness that all 12 children were converted, and then plead with children and grandchildren to continue in this Way.

Yet he had a sense of humour and would laugh heartily at some amusing event. His tolerance and good nature were illustrated by this remark: "If boys unknown find pleasure in hang-

AUCTION SALE!

Wednesday, March 25, 1936

on the farm of
JACOB T. WIEBE

1 Mile south and 1/2 mile west of Greenland Church. 5-8-6.

Starting at 1. o'clock P.M.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Gelding 6 yrs. 1 Gelding 3 yrs. 2 Set harness 1 Set breeching 1 30 Run disk drill 1 7 Ft. binder 1 Tractor cultivator 9 ft. 1 Horse cultivator 6 ft. 1 12 inch gang plow 1 14 inch sulky plow 1 Walking plow 1 6 Piece harrow 1 4 Piece harrow 1 Disc harrow 1 Pender Tractor in running order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Wagon gear 2 Wagon boxes 1 Farm truck 1 Hay rack 2 Bob sleighs 1 Demoreset 1 Top buggy 1 Grass mower 1 Sulky rake 1 12 inch ginder 3 Oil Drums 1 Grain blower 1 Fanning mill 1 Harrow cart 1 Top cutter and smaller articles (to numerous to mention)
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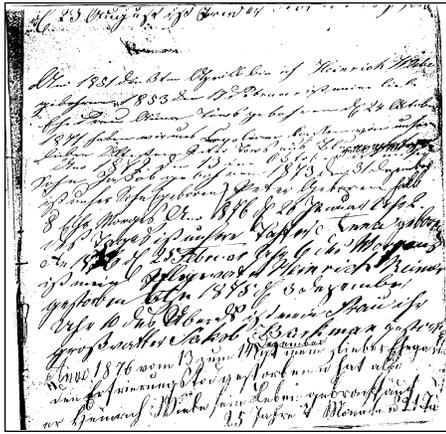
TERMS: Cash

TOM. WIEBE Auctioneer **JACOB T. WIEBE** Owner

We have a quantity of sweetclover seed which we sell for 2 1/2c. per lb.

Auction Bill, 1936

By 1936 Jakob T. Wiebe was slowing down in his farming operations and held an auction sale of some of his farm machinery. Auction bill courtesy of Lloyd Penner, Settler, Alberta.



Dirk Philips Book

Jakob T. Wiebe had a handwritten copy of Dirk Philip's book. On the book plates at the rear, he kept family records which were continued after his death by Isaac de Veer. Details of grandfather's birth and marriage are reproduced here. Courtesy of Lloyd Penner, Settler, Alberta.

ing my stoneboat from the windmill on Halloween, such pleasure I gladly grant them!"

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.

Though Grandfather is gone, memories linger about visits to their old house. I remember the way he drummed his fingers on the table, the finger with the missing joint making a sharp rap. We'd seldom go into the murky basement but we'd often climb the long stairway and look around upstairs and play with their toys. That house had some things we didn't have: a clock that struck the hours; a roll-top desk; and even a typewriter that we might be allowed to use.

Before we left, we'd pray, while the rest of us knelt by our chairs, Grandfather would kneel in an erect manner, hands clasped in front of him, praying as loudly as if a whole congregation was listening and not just our family. I recognized certain phrases. He always prayed for "zerschlagenes Herzen" (broken spirits), and that we might be strengthened in the "inwendigen Menschen" (inner man).

Wait! Another scene comes to mind. A few weeks before he died, my mother and her twin visited him. His mind was failing, yet his spiritual eye remained clear. "I'm on my way to

heaven," he said. "You're welcome to join me."

Those prayers! That message! They are for his posterity and for my readers.

by Lloyd Penner, grandson June 18, 1996

The Jakob T. Wiebe family have compiled and published two family books over the years: Jakob T. Wiebe, *Autobiography* (Greenland, Manitoba, 1965), 12 pages; also Edwin Wiebe and Edwin Penner, editors, *The Jakob T. Wiebe Family Book: And Experiences by the Children and Grandchildren* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1978), 61 pages. On August 1, 1992, the descendants of Jakob T. Wiebe held a family reunion at the Steinbach Bible College with 7-800 people in attendance.

Descendants.

Jakob T. Wiebe and Anna W. Reimer had 100 grandchildren including Rennie Wiebe who lives on the home place, 1 mile south of the Greenland church, 1/2 mile west, on the north side of road; granddaughter Mrs. Ben Wohlgenuth, Landmark; granddaughter Alma Rempel, Rosenort; grandson Marvin Penner, Greenland; grandson Ted Wiebe, Benito, Man. Randy Wohlgenuth, Team Landmark, is a great-grandson.

Abraham P. Reimer 1862-1933

by grandson Peter K. Reimer, Box 479, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 20A

Birth and Youth.

Abraham P. Reimer was born to his parents Abraham R. Reimer and Helena Poetger in 1862 in the village of Kleefeld, Mol.. As a young boy his family moved several times: in 1864 to Markuslandt where they settled in the village of Friedrichsthal and in 1869 to the Borosenko areas northwest of Nikopol where they settled in the village of Blumenhof.

In 1874 when Abraham was 12 years old, his family joined the emigration movement and moved to Manitoba where they settled in Blumenort.

In the same year, young Abraham attended school with teacher Cornelius P. Friesen and learned the art of Schönschreiben. Four examples of his work, dated Dec. 10, 12, 21 and 27 are still extant: see *Preservings*, June 1995, Part 2, pages 55-6. He was baptised upon the confession of his faith on February 22, 1882, by Bishop Abraham L. Friesen of Jansen, Nebraska, and became a member of the Kleine Gemeinde.

Marriage 1882.

On March 29, 1882 Abraham married Anna Brandt (1860-1910), daughter of Heinrich R. Brandt (1838-1909) from the neighbouring village of Steinbach. For the first year after the marriage, Abraham and Anna made their home with his in-laws who owned Wirtschaft 4 in the village.

The move to Steinbach was interesting as Abraham's father was a large scale farmer and blacksmith in Blumenort with sufficient means to make substantial loans to his neighbours including some of the Clearspring farmers. All of Abraham's brothers remained in Blumenort in-

cluding Klaas P. Reimer, who was a large scale farm operator in his day.

Abraham's help was apparently badly needed in the Heinrich Brandt operation in Steinbach, as Anna's oldest brother was only 15 years old and her other brothers were much younger.

Because there were 2 Abraham Reimers in Steinbach of approximately the same age, Abraham P. Reimer acquired the nickname "Brandt" Reimer to distinguish him from his cousin Abraham W. Reimer.

In 1883 Abraham and Anna's first and only son Abraham was born. A year later Anna had a traumatic accident which was to seriously alter her life. "She was sitting with her year old child in her arms and had to rise to reach up for something. In the meantime her chair was taken away without her noticing. When she sat back down she flopped down on the floor. This caused her to become very ill." Prior to this Anna had always been a healthy woman.

Farming in Steinbach.

In 1883 Abraham and Anna started farming on their own and built a set of buildings on the west side of Main Street on the "Kattstelle" for Wirtschaft 6 previously owned by Cornelius P. Goossen. Goossen sold half his Wirtschaft in 1882 or 1883 and it appears that it was purchased by Abraham P. Reimer.

Brandt Reimer immediately built a new set of buildings on the west side of the street, "which were built in the traditional style with house and barn under one roof, and so stable that when the building was demolished in 1940 much of the lumber could be reused": K.J.B. Reimer,

"Neunzig Jahre." These buildings were insured for \$400.00.

These buildings stood were the R. M. of Hanover offices stand today. They are clearly visible on a photograph of Steinbach's Main Street taken in about 1900: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, pages 8-9. Later they were occupied by August Schulz, a local labourer. By 1884 Abraham P. R. was assessed for \$625.00 consisting of 20 acres cultivated land, 200 acres pasture, house \$400.00, 2 horses, 3 oxen, 2 cows and a yearling.

Illness, 1886.

In the meantime the illness of Anna, Mrs. Brandt Reimer, continued. She had been bed-ridden ever since her accident in 1884. In 1886 the family decided to seek help and heard of a Doctor or "Trajchtmoaka" (chiropractor) by the name of Mrs. Thiessen in the West Reserve (Morden) who might be able to help.

Brandt Reimer loaded his wife on a wagon, bed and all, and then they were off on their anxious journey. It was too far to get there in one day and as the sun was sinking in the west he started to look for a farm house where they could get accommodation for the night. Finally he saw one that looked promising because it was not overly pretentious: it looked as if humble people lived there. He took the horses and wagon into the yard and inquired if they had room for them for the night. "No way!" was the answer; they would have none of that.

By this time of the evening it was too late to be choosy. The next farm was a very up-to-date, well-to-do looking place. Nevertheless, Brandt Reimer pulled in and asked for accommoda-

tions. Well these people had a different attitude and, in fact, they could not do enough to make things pleasant for the Reimers. Subsequently, Brandt Reimer always said, "We can not judge people by what we see outwardly."

After many weeks of treatments, Mrs. Reimer felt so good that she sat upright on the return journey back to Steinbach. This they greatly regretted later as she subsequently had a setback which caused her to be a sickly woman for the remainder of her days.

In 1888 the family was established enough to have a maid to help Mrs. Reimer with the household chores. By this time also she was pregnant with her second child, daughter Anna. Grandfather Abraham F. Reimer has recorded that on September 26, "Brandt Reimer was at the young Cornelius Friesens. He wanted a maid from them but he did not get any. Their other maid had already left on Sunday. His wife is in [sick] bed again. They are busily threshing in Steinbach."

Daughter Anna was born on December 12 weighing only 2 pounds. Evidently some of the neighbour ladies came over to help look after the baby. When Brandt Reimer overheard them talking that "it would be a good thing if the baby would die" he sent the women packing. Brandt Reimer dearly loved the little girl. He must also have realized, given his wife's health, that this would likely be her last birth.

He decided to look after the baby himself. But after she had been making a fuss the entire first night his resolve was tested severely. Finally he gave the baby a slap, after which he had no trouble with her.

Farming, 1892-96.

"Brandt Reimer" was an aggressive farmer. In addition to his original farm buildings insured for \$400.00 and furniture for \$75.00, feed and inventory was added to the insurance coverage for \$150.00 in 1891. On August 25, 1892, insurance was added for a barn \$200.00 and a further \$50.00 was added on Dec. 24, 1892.

By 1894 Abraham P. Reimer was in the threshing business himself, operating in partnership with Cornelius P. Kroeker. In that year, they purchased a new Case 15/30 steam engine. Custom threshing was done with the main customers being in the Steinbach and Friedensfeld districts. There were 4 threshing outfits in Steinbach area during the 1890s, namely: Cornelius B. Loewen, Jakob R. Friesen, Isaac B. Plett, and "Reimer and Kroeker".

By 1896 Abraham P. Reimer had acquired a total of 370 acres of land located on SE 35-6-6E, SE 12-6-6E, SE 32-6-6E and including his half Wirtschaft in the village registered on NW 27-6-6E. Of this acreage 70 acres were cultivated. He was assessed for 1790 which was equal or greater than that of Steinbach's most established farmers.

Moving to the Land, 1896.

Sometime shortly after 1896 Abraham P. Reimer acquired the East 1/2 of Section 26-6-6E from the Hudsons Bay Company where they established a prosperous farm.

In 1906 A. P. R. was assessed for 240 acres of land (SE 26-6-6E and W 1/2 NE 23-6-6E) with 90 acres under cultivation, personal property of \$1285.00 for a total assessment of 1920. This compares favourably with much older more established farmers. The assessment of his threshing outfit partner Cornelius P. Kroeker, generally considered to have been one of the



Abraham P. Reimer and his third wife nee Anna Neufeld, with his cherry trees. Photo courtesy of Peter K. Reimer.

larger farmers in his day, was only slightly higher being in the \$2200.00 range.

The Abraham P. Reimer farm operation in 1906 included 4 horses, 1 bull, 10 cows, 10 cattle under 2 years, and 15 pigs. A quick review of the assessment records reveals that "Brandt" Reimer had one of the larger dairies in the Steinbach area.

On June 27, 1910 tragedy struck when Abraham's wife Anna died. The following year he sold his 320 acre farm on Section 26-6-6E to his friend and one-time threshing company partner, Bishop Peter R. Dueck.

Meade, Kansas.

In 1912 Abraham P. Reimer married for the second time to the widow Jakob B. Friesen, nee Margaretha K. Sawatzky (1852-1924) (Note 1). Their plans were to settle in Meade, Kansas, but for several years they remained in the Steinbach area in order to liquidate his extensive assets. They lived on SE 14-7-6E 2 miles northeast of Steinbach, which Brandt Reimer had earlier purchased from Jaminson. He and his daughter Anna and her husband Klaas P. L. Reimer lived here from 1912 until they moved to Kansas. This land was later owned by Brandt Reimer's brother Klaas P. Reimer from Blumenort.

In 1915 the Abraham P. Reimer family finally moved to Meade, Kansas, where they settled on the Jakob B. Friesen family farm. Several other families including Rev. Cornelius L. Plett and his children the Bernhard Doerksen

family who lived a mile east of Abraham P. Reimers' place, moved to Kansas, at this time as well, but they settled in the Satanta area.

Garden City, Kansas.

In 1917 the A. P. Reimer family moved to Garden City, Kansas, where a new settlement of 26 Mennonite families was being established. The settlement consisted mainly of K.M.B. people. Here Abraham P. Reimer bought a half section of land--the S 1/2 Section 7-22S-30WPM, 20 miles northeast of Garden City. They built a brand new set of buildings and continued with dairy and a mixed farming operation.

Both sets of children Abraham B. Reimers and Klaas P. Reimers also moved to Garden City. Abraham B. Reimers settled on North 1/2 6-22S-30W and son-in-law Klaas P. Reimer settled on South 1/2 of 6-22S-30W. In 1922 Abraham B. Reimers moved to Satanta, Kansas, where there was a KG congregation.

On Dec. 3, 1924 Abraham's second wife died. The pre-funeral was held in grandparent's living room. Only a few of the immediate neighbours attended. I had the privilege to sit on grandfather's lap during the service. After the service the casket was loaded crosswise onto the back seat of grandparent's touring car and then grandfather took it to Meade, Kansas, himself.

The official funeral and burial took place there. Only our parents from the immediate family attended the funeral.

In 1925 A. P. Reimer married for the third time to the widow Daniel Schmidt, nee Anna Neufeld. Her sister Neta, a spinster, also joined the family at this time, and Abraham built a small addition to the house for her to live in.

Character Traits.

Abraham P. Reimer resembled his brother Klaas, being of medium height 5'9" and stocky build weighing in excess of 200 pounds. They had a cherry orchard in which they took great pride. With the aid of irrigation this orchard was quite successful. In 1926 they picked 2000 pounds and sold them for 9 cents a pound.

He was also an avid horseman and enjoyed driving a spirited team with tight reins. His horses were always well fed and groomed. He had a favourite horse called "Nel" which he kept in the barn for 12 years. Due the drought conditions of the 1930s he finally consented to allow the horse to be harness broken by his son-in-law Klaas P. Reimer.

Abraham P. Reimer was a good socializer and a captivating story teller who knew how to entertain a group. He made very determined statements. He was quite interested in genealogy and could be very unequivocal when he reached a conclusion about a certain family connection.

Abraham P. Reimer bought a new model "T" in the early 1920s. Once a week he went to

Garden City taking cream and eggs to market. He would always stop in at Klaas P. Reimers and pick up their cream and eggs as well, and brought home groceries for them.

When I was a young lad I sometimes had the opportunity to accompany him on these trips. It was always a real treat. Together we would go to the "Sievers Cafe" where grandpa would order a full meal for each of us. I was so excited listening to the music playing on the jukebox and watching all the activities going on around me, I was far too preoccupied to eat. My grandfather found this amusing and teased me. Then he ate his meal which he had ordered and when he was done he ate my untouched meal as well.

The Abraham P. Reimer always maintained close ties with their former neighbours and relatives in Manitoba. In 1929 the Klaas J. B. Reimer family from Steinbach visited them in Garden City.

Death, 1933.

Abraham P. Reimer passed away in his home in Garden City, Kansas, August 12, 1933. He suffered from liver and stomach disease and was sick for almost a year before he died. The last few weeks he suffered extremely and often prayed "that if it be the Lord's will, that he would be released from his suffering."

Abraham P. Reimer was buried in Meade, Kansas. I was one of the pallbearers for his funeral.

Although he did not grow up in Steinbach, "Brandt Reimer" lived and farmed in our community for 30 years contributing the vitality and energy of his early manhood during the period when the viability of the community as a regional trade centre was being established and secured.

Descendants.

In 1938 daughter Anna and her husband Klaas P. Reimer and family returned to Manitoba where they settled a mile north of Blumenort where many of their descendants live today.

Many of Abraham P. Reimer's descendants live in Steinbach area today. Granddaughter Katharina Reimer, Mrs. John K. Reimer (daughter of son Abraham B. Reimer), lives in Blumenort. Great-grandson Danny Friesen is part owner of Imperial Metal. Great-grandson Garnet Reimer is a farmer and church deacon in Blumenort. Great-grandson Wes Unger is part owner of Homelife Reality and his brother Ralph is pastor of the Ridgewood E.M.C. Church. Their sister Irene is married to Eldon Penner of K.K. Penners & Sons of Blumenort.

Endnotes:

Note One: She was the mother of Mrs. Abram L. Reimer, nee Maria Friesen, the mother of Walter F. Reimer, founder of "Reimer Overhead Doors" in Steinbach. Maria Friesen came to Steinbach with her mother in 1912 and met her future husband Abram L. Reimer at that time.

Sources:

Abraham F. Reimer, "Journal."

Klaas J.B. Reimer. "Neunzig Jahre Steinbach in der Ostreserve."

Obituary by Klaas P. L. Reimer, *Steinbach Post*, Sept. 20, 1933.

**Please note that your membership subscription for HSHS is due January 1, 1997
No other notice or reminder will be sent.**

Steinbach Main Street 1930: Part Two

by Ernie P. Toews, Box 75, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0

Introduction.

The second in a series of articles describing Steinbach's Main Street and the various properties and businesses between the years 1930 to 1935. Part One in the series dealt with Lots 7 to 10, being that part of Main Street between the present-day Elm Avenue and Reimer Avenues: see *Preservings*, No. 8, June 1996, Part Two, pages 15-21, henceforth cited as "Part One". This article covers the next six lots going south down Main Street, being lot 11 to 16, and situated between Reimer and Barkman Avenues.

A good deal of information regarding the properties along Main Street and their various owners is found in a series of articles published by Steinbach historian Klaas J. B. Reimer in the *Steinbach Post* between November 17, 1964 and June 22, 1965. Part Three and Four of this series are to follow in the June and December, 1997, issues of *Preservings*.

Part Three will cover Main Street from Barkman Avenue south, and Part Four, Main Street from Elm Avenue north, including development along Townline Road. Through out these articles an attempt has been made to the extent possible to use new and previously unpublished photographs. Certain pictures of course have been republished because they are so foundational to a graphic conceptualization of the Main Street layout. In some cases, especially in latter years, there are numerous photos to chose from and an attempt has been made to select those which were typical and representative.

Klaas R. Reimer (1837-1906).

In 1874 Klaas R. Reimer settled in the centre of the village of Steinbach on Lots 11 and 12, lying immediately to the south of Reimer Avenue. Reimer Avenue in the early days was only a trail leading to the pioneer cemetery. It was Friesen Avenue and not Reimer, which was the village's first true cross street.

Lot 11 was the northerly of the two lots and became Klaas R. Reimer's garden and site of Steinbach's first private school in fall of 1875:



Photo One: Drawing of Steinbach's first school built in the fall of 1875. The school stood in the back garden of Klaas R. Reimer's Feuerstatte, but close to the street where the TD Bank is located today. Courtesy of Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches."

see **Photo One**. The school was located close to the northerly boundary of lot 11.

Klaas R. Reimer built his residence and farmyard on lot 12. He also built and opened his first store here in 1877, i.e. three years after arriving in Canada. Klaas R. Reimer and his sons soon became the premier businessmen in Steinbach: for an excellent biography of Klaas R. Reimer and the role he played in the early development of Steinbach, see Royden K. Loewen, "Klaas R. Reimer: From Rags to Riches, but not from Village to World," in John Dyck, ed., *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, 1994), pages 304-312.

Lot 11, East Side of Main Street.

Although the "Feuerstatte" for Lot 11 was the site of Steinbach's first school from 1875-

80, its primary use was as the garden plot for the Reimer family until about 1906. In that year it became the home of Heinrich Neufelds, son of Peter Neufeld (1820-1921) who settled in Ebenfeld in 1874: *Steinbach Post*, March 30, 1965, page 10. Well known descendants of the Neufelds are grandsons Harry Neufeld of Southeast Farm Equipment and Ernie S. Toews of Barkman Concrete.

In 1910 Heinrich W. Reimer purchased Lot 11 and built his residence there. The site where the first school was built in 1875 became the location of the Post Office in 1937.

Lot 11, West Side of Main Street.

Steinbach's second school house was built on the "Kattstatte" for Lot 11 in 1880. It was built parallel to Main Street and about 30 feet



Photo Two: This photo shows the north corner of the H. W. Reimer residence and the Post Office as it was in 1940 lot 11 east side. The "new" Post Office built in 1937 later became the offices of the Town of Steinbach. The building was demolished in the mid-70s. The property was then sold to the Toronto Dominion Bank which is currently located here. The south side of Loewen Garage can be seen at the left side of the photo, and a few residences along Reimer East. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Three: Another photograph of Steinbach's second school house. The photo is reprinted here as this is the only photo which shows the building relative to other buildings on Main Street. It was built parallel to Main Street in accordance with Mennonite tradition that public buildings such as churches and schools were laid out parallel to the street as opposed to private buildings which were usually built perpendicular to the street. The building to the right hand of the picture is the famous "H. W. Reimer" Store, but before it was enlarged in about 1914 when the building was extended right up to Main Street. Between the school and the store is visible the kiosk of the George D. Goossen butcher shop across the street on the east side of Main Street. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman, courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Steinbach Main Street 1930

by Ernest P. Toews, Steinbach

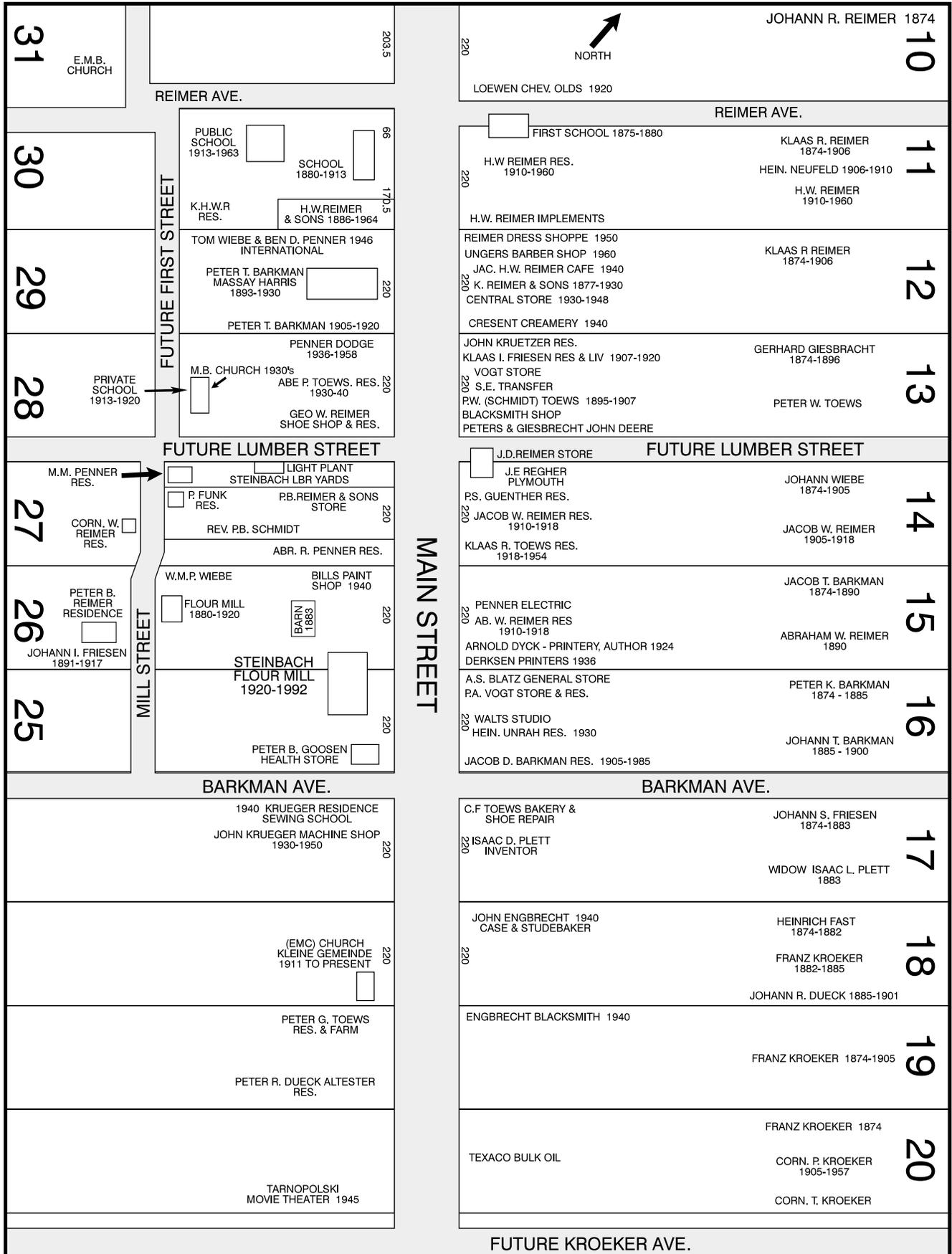




Photo Five: A photo of the H. W. Reimer store as it looked as it was demolished in 1964. The original part of the store was first insured in 1886. Of particular interest in the picture is the first H. W. Reimer house immediately to the south of the store. This is where the H. W. Reimer family lived until 1910 when they built the spacious new house on the east side. The old house later served as the residence for son Ben H. W. Reimer. Photo courtesy of grandson Wes Reimer.

continued from previous page

north of where H. W. Reimer later built his store. Heinrich W. Reimer, the son of Klaas R. Reimer, built the store in 1886 and enlarged it in 1914. After the enlargement it was reported to be the most up to date store (with plate glass show windows) in rural Manitoba: see Warkentin, *Reflections*, pages 123-127.

The store was operated by the H. W. Reimer family until 1964 when it was torn down for the lumber. Today Shoppers Drug Mart sits on the site of the Reimer Store and the Post Office is located where the school house formerly sat. Lot 11 also became the site for Steinbach's first public school built, in 1913 and torn down in 1963 when Steinbach's Civic Office building was erected on the school site: see Part One, page 20 for photograph.

A public community well was located directly in front of where the second school house stood prior to 1912. i.e. exactly where the Veterans Memorial Stone is situated today. "Abe's Pop-in" restaurant, a portable kitchen on wheels was located here during the 1930s owned by



Photo Four: Jakob D. Barkman postcard showing the original H.W. Reimer house on the west side of Main Street and the hardware store as they appeared around 1900. The postcard seems to have been erroneously labelled as school and hardware store.

Abr. Warkentin, a grandson of Gerhard Warkentin, one of the original 1874 pioneers.

Lot 12, East Side of Main Street.

Klaas R. Reimer built his housebarn on the Feuerstatte for Lot 12. (Photo Six and Seven). In 1877 he also built Steinbach's first store on the site where the large "K. Reimer Sons" Store



Photo Six: H. W. Reimer house and K. R. Reimer housebarn to the right. For Another excellent photograph of the H. W. Reimer residence to the left see article by Heather Dram, *Preservings*, No. 7, Dec 1995, pages 44-45. From the vintage of the car in the foreground the photo must date from around 1915. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.



Photo Seven: Another view of south side of H. W. Reimer residence (left) and the full view of the Klaas R. Reimer housebarn. According to KG insurance records the house was built in 1881 and the barn in 1884 replacing the original buildings, which were located somewhat to the South where the store later stood. The K. R. Reimer household was destroyed by a fire in 1936. The photo probably dates from around 1915. The young people in the car are Margaret H. W. Reimer (Mrs. Henry T. Kroeker) driving, John H. W. Reimer in passenger seat. Behind the driver is believed to be Maria Fast (Mrs. K. R. Barkman). The other passenger is presently unidentified. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba. For a more complete drawing of Klaas R. Reimer's farmyard as it appeared in the late 19th century; see Royden K. Loewen, "Klaas R. Reimer: Rags to Riches...." page 307.



Photo Nine: A funeral procession on Main Street, circa 1930, on its way to the Pioneer Cemetery after the funeral service at the "South End" Church (Kleine Gemeinde). The photograph provides an intriguing image of Steinbach. At this time, the area south of Reimer Avenue was still largely Kleingemeinschaft, and in the church was where the major decisions were still being made. The tradition of a funeral procession probably stemmed from the former practice of the mourners walking behind the casket from the home of the deceased, where Mennonite funerals were traditionally held, to the village "Kirchhof" or cemetery. The "front" of the butcher shop at the left of the photo has now been redone. This reflects the fact that George D. Goossen is no longer the owner and the building has now been acquired by H. W. Reimer who operated same as an implement shop. The building just to the south of the "K. Reimer Store" is Crescent Creamery which had replaced the Campbell Law Office in the late 1920s. The building at the extreme right of the photo was originally the blacksmith shop of Peter W. Toews or "Schmet" Toews who sold it to Klaas I. Friesen in about 1906 who used it as a livery barn. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba.



Photo Eight: The "K. Reimer Sons" store circa 1925. "It was built in 1905 at a time when the aged father Klaas R. Reimer himself still frequently sat behind the store counter." The building on the left was George D. Goossen's butcher shop for a number of years. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman. This photo was reproduced as a postcard about Steinbach by Mr. Barkman who produced a series of such reprints.

later stood (Photo Eight). During the 1930s this store was known as "Central Store" and was owned and operated by Steinbach Milling Co. by this time consisting of brothers-in-law Benjamin P. Janz and Jacob S. Rempel (whose wives were granddaughters of both Peter K. Barkman and Klaas R. Reimer). Today the Steinbach Place office building is on this site.

The Steinbach Credit Union is located where several grandsons of Klaas R. Reimer had been in various businesses: John H. W. Reimer had "Reimer's Dress Shoppe"; Peter H.W. Reimer had a fuel and hay dealership there during the 1940s; John R. Unger, married to a granddaughter, had "Unger's Barber and Jewellery"; and Jacob H. W. Reimer's had a Cafe, which became "Johnny's Grill" after the Reimers retired in about 1950.

On the south side of "K. Reimer Sons" store a cream collection depot was built and owned by Crescent Creamery of Winnipeg and operated by Johann E. (Schmaunt) Friesen and later by son-in-law John P. Wiebe. This building became Albert Buss' "Modern Shoe Shop" during the 1960s.

Lot 12, West Side of Main Street.

Peter T. Barkman (father of Klaas R. Barkman, Steinbach's first mayor after incorporation in 1947) built a residence and Massey Harris farm implement dealership here in about

1900. The Massey Harris dealership building was later owned by J. R. Friesen when it was a McCormick Deering International Harvester outlet. J. R. Friesen sold the business to Tom M. Wiebe (auctioneer) and Ben D. Penner (who later operated Hanover Motors) in the 1940s.

Thereafter it was owned by L. A. Barkman who had the building remodelled and later replaced to become the auto dealership known as Brookdale Pontiac Buick. Today the property is "Brookdale Mall".

Aron K. Reimer, another son of Klaas R. Reimer, had a shoe repair shop to the north of the Massey Harris building during the 1940s, having relocated from the east side of Main Street where Jolly Miller is located today. Addis Video Store is on the site today: see *Steinbach: Is there any place like it?* page 128.

Lot 13, East Side of Main Street.

Lot 13 was originally settled by Gerhard R. Giesbrecht (1846-1907), Steinbach's mayor in 1883. He moved to a farm in Greenland in 1896 and the property was later acquired by Peter W. Toews, known as "Schmet" Toews. Toews was not only a great blacksmith but also a very com-

petent businessman who became quite well-to-do, with land holdings and farming operations in Friedensfeld, etc.

In 1907 Toews and his family moved to Swalwell, Alberta, and the property was acquired by Klaas I. Friesen, a teamster, who used the former blacksmith shop as a livery barn. At this time Heinrich Kruetzer, Toews' loyal long-time employee, acquired his own property and established Kruetzers blacksmith shop just south of the present-day Riegers Clothing.

The Campbell Law Office was located on the extreme northerly edge of Lot 13. This building was relocated to the west side of Main Street in about 1930: see **Photo 14**; see also Photo One in the article on "Funerals in Steinbach", Part Two of this newsletter. The Crescent Creamery building was built on this site in the late 1920s.

The larger part of Lot 13 had been the property of Peter W. (Schmet) Toews from 1895 until 1907. His blacksmith shop later became a Wippet car dealership owned by Jac J. Klippenstein in the 1920s. Some time during the 1930s this became a John Deere dealership owned by Wm. S. Giesbrecht who also had a

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Photo Ten: The Peter T. Barkman house and Massey Harris farm implement dealership, 1908. Standing near the door post is Peter T. Barkman and beside him is his son Peter who died of a sudden heart attack in 1912. Another one of Jakob D. Barkman's Steinbach postcards. The older house visible in the background between the two buildings is the first Peter T. Barkman house. The newer Peter T. Barkman house remained on the site until 1940 when A. D. Penner removed the building to build his Dodge Desoto dealership which later became Koop's Body Shop. Photo courtesy of Audrey Toews, Steinbach.

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grain crushing shop on the same property and became known as 'Schrowda' Giesbrecht. Henry H. Peters (grandfather of Pat Peters accountant) became a partner in the tractor deal-

home of South East Transfer in the 1940s.

J. E. Regehr's Chrysler Plymouth dealership was built during the 1940s where the present Lumber Avenue was built in 1963 on the east side of Main Street. P.S. Guenther's residence was located there before Regehrs built their

Jewish trader Moskewich came with a huge herd of wild bucking broncos, large and small. These were herded into the corral of Schmet Toews and then farmers from far and near came and purchased their horses."

During the 1920s and 30s this property was occupied by several residences. A house occupied by Jacob S. Rempel during the 1920s stood on the corner of Main Street and Lumber Avenue. This was the home of several families until it was occupied by George W. Reimer who also had a shoe repair shop close to Main Street in the 1940s. Campbells Law Office was also relocated to this location in about 1930.

The locally well known school teacher A. P. Toews later lived in the house built by Schmet Toews. This house was located to the north of the George W. Reimer house. Today the Plett Law Office (formerly Hildebrandt Music) is on the same site.

Steinbach's Private School of 1913 to 1920 was on Lot 13 facing First Street. This building became the home of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the 1930s, and several other congregations after the M.B.s built their new church building at the corner of Lumber Ave. and Second Street. Most lately it was the home of the Grace Mennonite Church. The shareholders of the private school had also acquired the former Schmet Toews house, in which N. S. Campbell and later Abr. P. Toews lived: see article on the private school elsewhere in this issue.

Lot 14 East of Main Street.

Lot 14 was settled by Johann Wiebe in 1874. The Wiebes moved to Saskatchewan in 1905, and "Abraham A. Reimer then purchased the house and yard. The appurtenant quarter section of land was purchased by Abram Wiebe of Lichtenau with the approval of the village Gemeinde." In 1908 the Feuerstatts became the property of Jakob W. Reimer, son of Klaas R. Reimer. He was the "much loved" operator of the K. Reimer Sons store on Lot 12 until his untimely demise of the flu in 1918. He was the father of Steinbach's long time insurance broker and real estate tycoon, Peter J. Reimer.

The old Wiebe residence was removed and Jac W. Reimers built a modern two story residence there in 1910. The barn on the property



Photo Eleven: Lot 12, East side. Peter T. Barkman's machinery dealership and house. The building at the right side of the photo is presently unidentified. It is ironic that this extremely rare shot of Main Street was probably inspired by the young fellow doing cart wheels. Photo courtesy of Dolores Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba. A wide angle street view photo of this area of Main Street can be found in Reflections on our Heritage, page 146.



Photo Twelve: A. D. Penner's first residence and sales office, 1937. This property which A. D. Penner rented from the Heinrich W. Reimer family, was located on the east side of Main Street, just north of Central Store, where the Steinbach Credit Union Ltd is today. Lot 12, East side. A. D. Penner and his young bride were living here when they lost a baby. In 1938 A. D. Penner acquired land on the west side of Main Street, just north of Gerhard W. Reimer's house and shoe repair shop, and built a new garage 51 x 60. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

ership during the 1940s. This site is today the home of Jolly Miller Restaurant. Peter D. Reimer owned a dry goods and second hand clothing store beside the tractor dealership during the 1930s and 40s.

The house on the left side of photo 12 was the residence of Klaas I. Friesen from 1907 to 1920. It became the home of several families during the 1920s and it eventually was owned by the brothers Abr. A. Vogt and John A. Vogt. They built a store in front of the house which was known as Vogt Bros. Store. A lean to added onto the "Vogt Bros." store became the first

garage. The garage was owned by Frank Saskowsky after Regehrs and was destroyed by fire.

Lot 13, West Side of Main Street.

Already in the 1880s a Grunfelder by the name of Peter W. "Schmet" Toews built a house, smithy and cattle barn on the Kattestelle 13. In 1895 he purchased the Gerhard R. Giesbrecht house and farmyard on the east side and moved his home and smithy across the street. Klaas J. B. Reimer has written that "a wild and exciting event took place here every spring when the



Photo Fifteen: Vogt Brothers Store, circa 1940. Lot 13, East side. The Wynola sign underneath the "Vogt Bros." sign was so large that many of the local wags referred to it as the "Wynola Store". Note the lean to at the south side of the store. According to Leona Reimer, the house built by her grandfather "Schmet" Toews was incorporated into the store structure, today known as "Tony's Shoe Repair". Courtesy of A Vogt Family History, page 79.



Photo Thirteen: Historic photo of Main Street, circa 1910. Seemingly the occasion for the photo was the arrival in town of several vehicles owned by native people, one of which is pulled by oxen. The photo appears to have been taken from the front of the store to the north of Peter T. Barkmans farm implement dealership. The background on the photo provides a beautiful picture of Klaas I. Friesen's livery barn, originally the blacksmith shop of "Schmet" Toews. Lot 13, East side. Behind the trees to the left is the Klaas I. Friesen residence and to the right of the picture can be seen the house in which teacher Peter S. Guenther later lived, and behind it, almost hidden by trees, is the spacious Jakob W. Reimer residence, Lot 14. Photo by Peter T. Friesen. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Peter D. Reimer, nee Maria P. Friesen, and her daughter LaVerna Klippenstein.

remained in place for a number of years and the house became the home of the Klaas R. Toews family in 1931. In about 1948 Klaas R. Toews operated the Grey Goose Bus Depot out of a small building close to the street. Mrs. Toews passed away in 1937 and Klaas R. Toews, a pioneer son of Steinbach, passed away in 1954. Today the Pic & Pay Shoe Store and Tina's Florist are on the site of the former Jakob W. Reimer - K.R. Toews residence.

Lot 14 West Side of Main Street.

In the 1880s, Abraham I. Friesen, son-in-law of Johann Wiebe, started a machinery dealership on the west side of Main Street on the Kattestelle for Lot 14. He was the agent for the "Peterson Machinery Co". Around the turn of the century this property was acquired by the "Reimer Barkman and Friesen" company; namely, Klaas R. Reimer, son Abraham W. Reimer, son-in-law Peter T. Barkman, and manager Johann I. Friesen. This company also owned Steinbach Flour Mills and now started a lumber yard at the corner of Main Street and Lumber Avenue.

Klaas J. B. Reimer has written that "Peter B. Reimer also had the first barbershop here. The first doctor that I can remember, Dr. Duford, had his offices here. Previously, around 1895, a young Doctor, Dr. Graham, had his offices here in this primitive building."

The lumber yard became the property of Martin M. Penner in the 1920s and the firm soon



Photo Fourteen: Photo of the east side of Main Street (Lot 13) taken on the occasion of the funeral of Ed Rempel who died Oct. 13, 1923. The photo is taken from the Jakob S. Rempel yard on the west side of the street, where Klassen Insurance Services is located today. At the extreme left of the picture is "Campbell Law Office"; Radke's Shoe Repair; to the south, and directly across the street is another view of the Klaas I. Friesen residence. Klaas I. Friesen sold the property in 1920 and moved to a farm in Prairie Rose. The livery barn has already been torn down by this time. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Sixteen: Another excellent shot of Main Street, Lots 12 and 13, East side, this time from the south. The former Klaas I. Friesen (Schmet Toews) residence is clearly visible although a store front has been added. At the extreme left is the K. Reimer Sons store. Next to the south are the Crescent Creamery and another business presently unidentified. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

continued on next page



Photo Seventeen: Circa 1930. Steinbach Service Garage, located exactly where the raised part of the Jolly Miller Restaurant is located today. The Steinbach Service Garage was owned by Jakob J. Klippenstein, operating a Wippet dealership. The sign to the left of the photograph reads "Watchmaker". The house behind the garage became the second hand store of Peter D. Reimer, and adjacent to the right of it was the shoe repair shop of Aron K. Reimer. The former Jakob W. Reimer residence is seen at the far right side of the picture. Lot 14, East side. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

continued from previous page

became known as "M. M. Penner & Sons". This company erected a millwork plant behind the Lumber Yard office and manufactured windows, doors and beekeeping supplies until a huge fire destroyed both the lumber and hardware store as well as the millwork plant in about 1943.

The M. M. Penner Co. also built a diesel powered light plant on Lumber Avenue to ser-

vice the entire town with electrical power in 1936 at the height of the depression. The company was known as "Steinbach Light & Power Co.": for a photo see *Reflections*, page 136. The company also owned the electrical distribution facilities, ie. poles, wire and street lights until the Manitoba Power Commission came into Steinbach just before World War II., M.P.C. purchased the electrical power company from the Penners firm in 1943.

Mr. & Mrs. M. M. Penner raised a family of eight sons and two daughters in their home at the corner of First Street and Lumber Avenue. Of the Penner sons Joe founded Penner Electric, Linden operated Steinbach Shoe Store, and George the George Penner Insurance Agency, all in the town of Steinbach. Son-in-law Henry Ketler, in partnership with Ben P. Wiebe, were the owners of Steinbach Creamery during the 1960s.

Reimer's "Red & White Store" was located on the south half of lot #14. In 1917, Peter B. Reimer, son of Abraham W. Reimer, moved from Giroux where they had owned a slaughter house and meat market. At first the store was operated out of a conglomeration of several old buildings and storage sheds and a store building that Mr. P. A. Vogt had built beside it in 1932 and had been purchased by Reimers in 1935. This entire store was destroyed by the fire that also consumed the "Steinbach Lumber Yards" in 1943.

Peter B. Reimer had by this time been joined by several sons and the company was known as P.B. Reimer & Sons or more commonly 'Butcha Reimash'. After the fire a large new store was built which today is the home of Budget Furniture. The firm of P.B. Reimer & Sons also built and operated a large feed mill known as 'Shur Grain Feeds' in the 1940s and 50s until a spectacular fire destroyed the mill in 1964. The feed mill was located on Lot 15 on the west side of First Street, just to the north of "Schloszkinderreich": see article by Amanda Reimer, "P. B. Reimer house," in *Preservings*, No. 6, June 1995, page 21.

Lot 15, East of Main Street.

Lot 15 was originally settled by Jacob T. Barkman, eldest son of Peter K. Barkman the windmill builder. In about 1884 it became the home of Abraham W. Reimer, eldest son of Klaas R. Reimer. A large house was built which was the home of first Abraham W. Reimer; then son Abraham A. Reimer (1908) and after that a cousin Abraham J. B. Reimer (1925). This house was the only one built in Steinbach with what Dr. John Warkentin characterized as "Russian Mennonite style angled gables", the same feature as the second school house built in 1880. K. J. B. Reimer referred to same as "angled Hollandisch gables".



Photo Eighteen: Circa 1935. Lot 13, East side. The Steinbach Service Garage has been purchased by Jakob E. Regehr and renamed. Under Regehr's ownership it became a "Chrysler and Plymouth" as well as a "John Deere" dealership. In the background is J. J. Reimer's house, later sold to John Kruetzer. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Nineteen: J. E. Regehr's new garage circa 1940. Lot 14, East side. The new garage was situated where Lumber Avenue is located today, where the Peter S. Guenther house had previously stood. To the left, is Peter D. Reimer's second hand store and Aron K. Reimer's original shoe repair shop. These two buildings were later removed and the "new" part (lower part) of Pete's Inn built in their place, present day Jolly Miller Restaurant. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Twenty-Three: The Abram W. Reimer house to the left. Lot 15, East side. Note the angled gable on the house as well as the barn in the rear. To the centre right, is the printery of Arnold Dyck, where the Steinbach Post was printed after 1924. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Twenty: Steinbach's first medical clinic. Lot 15, West side. "Peter H. Guenther is standing in this picture. The lady on the right is Mrs. Abram Sawatzky. The other woman is unknown. The man seated is August Schultz, well-known labourer in Steinbach during the 1890s." Abram K. Sawatzky (1861-1936) who moved to Steinbach from Jansen, Nebraska, in 1900 was the nephew of pioneer Franz M. Kroeker. "The screen door in this building opened to the offices of Steinbach's first M. D., Dr. Graham who came here in about 1895. The building was located where the P. B. Reimer store (Payless Furniture) later stood. Peter H. Guenther was the first photographer in Steinbach." Unfortunately his pictures were not available at the time of this publication. Photo and photo identification is courtesy of K. J. B. Reimer; "Historical Sketches."



Photo Twenty-One: The Steinbach offices of the Abr. W. Reimer trading company built in 1917. Lot 15, West side. To the right are the premises of Steinbach Lumber Yards, in which Abr. W. Reimer had been a shareholder during the 1880s. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman. The main operations of the company at this time were in Giroux and Winnipeg.

In 1936 Rev. Jac P. Epp married the widow of Abraham J.B. Reimer, nee Margaretha P. Toews, granddaughter of Steinbach pioneer Peter Toews. The Jac. P. Epp family lived in this house where their son Jake was born in 1939. Young Jake later became the Honourable Jake Epp, cabinet minister in Federal Government in Ottawa. Today the Chicken Chef Restaurant sits on the site of the old house.

The south half of lot 15 became the home of Steinbach Printery in about 1924. Mr. Arnold Dyck, the well known author of the Koop & Bua series of Low German books had purchased the "Steinbach Post" and printing machinery from Jakob S. Friesen. Arnold Dyck set up shop in a building that housed the print shop at the street and had living quarters at the back. Mr. Dyck sold the printery and became a full-time writer in 1936. The Printery was purchased by Gerhard S. Derksen who together with sons Eugene, Bruno and George operated it and published the well known German weekly newspaper *Die Steinbach Post*.

In 1946 Derksens launched the English newspaper *Carillon News* which has become one of the most successful weekly newspapers in Canada. The printing firm Derksen Printers eventually enlarged and today is also using about half of Lot 16 immediately to the south of the first print shop.

Lot 15, West Side of Main Street.

Klaas J. B. Reimer has written that in the 1890s a large granary was built here on



Photo Twenty-Two: The same property now operated as a butcher shop by son Peter B. Reimer, under the "Red and White" stores name. To the right, the buildings of Steinbach Lumber Yards by now owned by M. M. Penner & Sons, and to the left, a warehouse of the P. B. Reimer Co. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Twenty-Four: The granary of P. T. Barkman Sons, 1923. Built in 1883. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Twenty-Five: The Peter T. Barkman Sons granary as seen from the south, from besides the flour mill. The buildings of Steinbach Lumber Yards are visible to the rear. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



"Bill's Paint Shop" owned by William P. Wiebe, later Barkman Hardware. To the right is the home of Abraham R. Penner. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

Kattestelle 15. (1883) It was demolished in about 1954.

At the very northerly edge of Lot 15 an auto body and paint shop was operated for several years during the 1930s and 40s. This body shop was owned by Wm. P. Wiebe and operated under the name "Bill's Paint Shop".

When Klaas R. Barkmans moved to Steinbach in the mid 1940s it was purchased by the Barkman family and was remodelled into a store known as Barkman Hardware. Barkman Concrete and Barkman Plumbing and Heating had their beginnings in an addition to the back of the store. This structure houses Solomon's Furniture store at present. "The property was controlled by Jewish merchants for a time before Klaas R. Barkman and his sons bought it."

Lot 16, East Side of Main Street.

Millwright Peter K. Barkman settled on Lot 16 in 1874. In about 1892 Peter K. Barkman sold the farm to son Johann T. Barkman and moved to Kattestelle 16 where he built a new home and retired from farming. Johann T. B. and his family lived in the Feuerstatte until his death in 1900.

At this time a new house was built on the site by Abram I. Friesen, brother to the mill manager Johann I. F. In 1905 the property was sold to Jakob D. Barkman, son-in-law of Johann T. B.. The Jakob D. Barkman family lived in this property on the south half of Lot 16 for the next 50 years.

The east side of Lot 16 remained mostly a residential farmyard until after the turn of the century. Sometime around 1915 Mr. Andrew S. Blatz as a single young man built a confectionary store and barber shop on the north side of lot 16 about 100 feet north of the Jakob D. Barkman residence.

After Mr. Blatz's marriage the young couple lived above the store and in 1929 sold the property to Abr. A. and John A. Vogt who enlarged the building and opened a general store that operated under the name of Vogt Bros. **Photo 27 and 28.** In 1936 the store became the property of their brother Peter A. Vogt who renamed it Economy Store. A residence was added to the back of the store and the Peter Vogts raised their family of six sons here. Today the entire site is owned by Derksen Printers at present.

After 1946 when the soldiers returned from the war in Europe, Walter Barkman opened his photography shop known as Walt's Studio between the Economy Store and Jacob D. Barkmans' - his parents - residence.

Lot 16 West of Main Street.

In 1880 the first steam powered flour mill was built close to Mill Street (later renamed First Street). It seems to have been located on the boundary line of Lots 15 and 16. After this mill was destroyed by fire a new mill was built close to Main Street in 1892. This mill also was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt in 1921. The third mill also burned down and was rebuilt in 1932. This last flour mill was in operation until 1993 when it was demolished.

There had been an active flour milling industry on this site for about 120 years. Art and Emdar Rempel, great-grandsons of Peter K. Barkman the first mill owner and builder, were the owners of the mill when it was demolished. Today the site is owned by Derksen Printers. A photograph of the 1892 flour mill is included in the article on "Peter K. Barkman" elsewhere in this newsletter.



Photo Twenty-Seven: A photo of the east side of Main Street taken from the site of the new flour mill which had burned in 1920 and was being rebuilt. At the left hand side of the picture is an unidentified building, a small shed to the south and the confectionary store and barbershop of Andrew S. Blatz, further south, and immediately to the right is the home of Heinrich Unruh (and Henry Coote before 1918), the first minister of the MB church in Steinbach. Jakob D. Barkman's residence originally built by Abram I. Friesen, is at the far right of the photograph. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman. For a photo of the Jakob D. Barkman house see Preservings No. 6, June 1995, page 27.



Photo Twenty-Eight: This photograph again taken from the yard of Steinbach Flour Mills shows the same area some 10 years later. Materials are in place for the reconstruction of the Mill 1932. To the right hidden behind the trees, the Heinrich Unruh residence. Beside it is the original Vogt Brothers store owned by John A. and Abr. A. Vogt which they sold to Peter A. Vogt in 1936 who renamed it Economy Store. The two storey section of the store at the south side was the original Andrew S. Blatz confectionary store and barbershop. Notice how the small building seen in the previous photo has been incorporated into the structure. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Twenty-Nine: Famous panoramic view of the south end of Steinbach's Main Street business section, circa 1920. The photograph was shot from the roof of the flour mill. Buildings identified in the photo are: C. T. Loewen lumber yards # 9; Loewen garage # 10; Heinrich W. Reimer residence #11; K. Reimer Sons # 12; N. S. Campbell Law Office # 13; Radke's Shoe Repairs #14, at the right hand side of the photo is the beautiful home of Jakob W. Reimer; probably the finest at the time, and later the home of Klaas R. Toews. Immediately to the north is the home which later became Peter S. Guenther's residence. The open lot next to the north was the site of the Klaas I. Friesen livery barn, formerly Schmet Toews smithy. To the rear of this lot is the old "Schmet" Toews' barn and later part of the Klaas I. Friesen property. The house immediately above or behind Klaas I. Friesens' house, was the residence of John R. Toews in 1914, on Lot 9 east side creek, before they moved to the farm in Blumenhof. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Thirty: A view of the west side of Lot 16. The Abram R. Penner residence to the right, and Steinbach Flour Mills to the left. This is a photo of the fourth and last mill built in 1932. The occasion for the photograph appears to be the school children marching down Main Street. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Thirty-Two: A view of the block between Lumber and Barkman and construction following after the fire of 1943. From right to left: Steinbach Lumber Yards, P. B. Reimer store, Barkman Hardware and Steinbach Flour Mills. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.



Photo Thirty-One: The second part of Jakob D. Barkman's famous panoramic view covers the west side of Main Street. The following buildings have been identified: #1 Johann W. Reimer farm; #2 EMB church; #3 Kornelsen school; #4 H. W. Reimer store; #5 Peter T. Barkman Massey Harris (T. M. Wiebe & Co.); #6 J. E. Regehr residence; #7 Steinbach Meat Market; #8 Steinbach Meat Market. The building immediately to the north of the flour mill is the Abram R. Penner residence. The house to the extreme left of picture is the home of Rev. Peter B. Schmidt on Lot 13 west of Mill Street. He was also the Bishop of the EMB Conference. The house at the corner of Reimer and Mill Street belonged to Erdmann B. Peters who was a wealthy retired farmer. To the left of the school (#3) along Friesen Avenue is the home of school teacher Heinrich R. Rempel until 1925 when his children Jakob S. Rempels moved in with him and where he lived until his death. The building in the bottom left hand corner is the grainery of the Flour Mills. Built in 1883. Photo by Jakob D. Barkman.

Entrepreneurial Legacy of A. S. Friesen

By Ralph Friesen, 306 Montgomery Street, Winnipeg, R3L 1T4

This article is a summary of several chapters of a book on which my cousin, Hilton Friesen, and myself have been working for a number of years--a journey of discovery centering on the life of our great-grandfather, Abraham S. Friesen (1848-1916), but going back several generations before him, as well as extensively documenting our grandparents' generation. We expect the book to be published in late 1997.

The photographs accompanying this article, courtesy of the collections of various family members, were digitized and computer-enhanced by Hilt Friesen. There are many individuals to acknowledge as sources for stories and pictures, but at this time I will only state that the story of Peter R. Friesen, which appears below in abridged form, was originally written by his granddaughter Dr. Vera Fast. Regrettably, I have not been able to achieve a balance in the length of each of the stories of the children of A. S. Friesen, as much more source material is available for the men than for the women. This article concentrates narrowly on the business accomplishments of the Friesens, but the book will be much more comprehensive. Comments are invited.

A. S. Friesen (1848-1916).

Abraham S. Friesen (1848-1916), "a man gifted with outstanding ambition and courage,"¹ was one of the most successful of pioneer entrepreneurs in Steinbach, a community that has given rise to many stories of remarkable economic success achieved under difficult circumstances. Abraham and his wife Katharina (a daughter of Abraham F. Reimer (1808-92) and a granddaughter of Klaas Reimer, founder of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG)) came to Canada in

1874 with three small boys [see Ralph Friesen, "The Story of Abraham S. Friesen: Apostle of Progress, Agent of Change," in John Dyck, ed, Historical Sketches of the East Reserve 1874-1910 (Steinbach, 1994), pages 244-286.

In South Russia, they had been "Vollwirtschaft" owners and Abraham had run a rolling mill and specialized as a glazier and machinist in addition to running his farm. By the time the Friesen family settled on lot #8 in Steinbach, Abraham, though only 26, was al-

ready an experienced businessman, with some accumulated assets transferred from the old country.

Although "money was from time to time very tight during the first few years,"² the Friesens arrived in the new world with some means, judging by the purchases of machinery and buildings Abraham made shortly after arriving in Canada, and the range of enterprises he began. His list of "firsts" includes: the first song leader in the Steinbach KG (c. 1874); first mayor of Steinbach (c. 1875); first lumber camp and saw mill (1876); owner-operator of the first threshing machine in the district, along with John Carlton of Clearsprings (1876); owner of the first upright stationary steam engine and a Dutch-type windmill (1877); first postmaster (1884); first notary public (1891).

Soon after he became the postmaster he began to act as a land conveyancer, being responsible for the legal work on most of the land transactions in the district for many years. Contrary to church teachings, Abraham also financed some of his ventures with borrowed money; between 1887 and 1905 he raised \$8300 by mortgaging different properties.³

In 1890 he built a general store in Steinbach and then in 1892 started a machine repair business called "A. S. Friesen & Sons," in partnership with his sons Klaas and Peter. By the time he withdrew from this business in 1903, he had reached a stage of semi-retirement, no longer running a saw mill or machine repair shop, but still farming on a small scale and doing a lot of land conveyance work. He and Katharina moved to a retirement home on Friesen Avenue in 1910 where they lived for two years until Katharina died. Abraham married again and moved to Dallas, Oregon, where he died in 1916.

Abraham and Katharina had six children who survived into adulthood: Abraham (1869-1923), Klaas (1870-1942), Peter (1872-1933), Jacob (1879-1950), Helena (1883-1946) and Elisabeth (1886-1964). At Katharina's death in 1912 Abraham wrote, with some pride: "The six children are all married and living on their own, with their own households."⁴ The word "household" appears in German as "Wirtschaft," which has connotations of owning a farm and running a kind of domestic economy. In fact, none of the children lived on farms--but all ran their own businesses; or, in the case of the daughters, married men who did.

Although the KG had a historical mistrust

Zones of Steinbach, 1920

All three churches in Steinbach shared the use of the second school house located at the corner of Main Street and Reimer Avenue for their worship services until 1911 when they built their own houses of worship: the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) at the south end, the Holdemans at the north end and the Bruderthaler in the middle. In fact the KG church came to be referred to as the "south end" church to distinguish it from the "north end" church, the Holdeman's worship house. The Bruderthaler church was built in the middle and often referred to as the "Central Church".

The flurry of church construction was seemingly inspired by a decision of the Bruderthaler and Holdemans in 1911 to register the existing school as a public school and the construction of a new public school house behind the existing building which became known as the "Kornelsen School." The more affluent and establishment KG did not agree with this decision and decided to establish their own Christian private school.

This location of new worship houses built in 1911 did not come about by accident. The north end of the village was owned and occupied by Holdeman people (Lots 1-3) and the site for the church was donated by their local minister Wilhelm T. Giesbrecht. In 1920 the entire area south of Lot 9 (Peter Toews, and later the home of the burgeoning C. T. Loewen enterprises) was still solidly KG. South of Reimer Avenue all major decisions before 1920 were made by KG like the influential brothers Reimer: Klaas W., Heinrich W. and Jakob W., and son-in-law Peter T. Barkman, who probably controlled or articulated a good part of the commerce in southeastern Manitoba during these years.

The "south end" church was located on the former Lot 17, originally owned by pioneer settler Heinrich Fast and shortly thereafter acquired by the wealthy Franz M. Kroeker family. It also happened that Kroeker's son-in-law Peter R. Dueck was the Bishop of the entire East Reserve KG and as such one of the most important men among his contemporaries.

Lots 8 and 7 became a tentative Bruderthaler wedge and buffer between the Holdemans and KG after the turn of the century. The Bruderthalers' first Main Street adherents were the sons of pioneer entrepreneur Abraham S. Friesen who joined the infant Revivalist (and later Fundamentalist) articulated church, which was less restrictive with respect to their business dealings.

The situation changed rapidly after the end of WWI. The KG hegemony was dealt a devastating blow by the twin deaths of the beloved merchant Jakob W. Reimer and the highly respected Bishop Peter R. Dueck. These two men were conservative intellectuals who according to K. J. B. Reimer almost singlehandedly established and sustained the KG Private School in 1913.

The situation changed rapidly after 1919. Peter T. Barkman left Main Street and moved to the farm. H. W. Reimer was getting older and his energy and vitality was not to be replicated by any one of his sons. At the same time, other sons of pioneer settlers were choosing to adopt American Fundamentalist forms of religiosity as part of their "assimilation" process.

Others such as H. W. Reimer and C. T. Loewen were able to continue to expand their business interests within the context of their own cultural and spiritual experience, a process known to sociologists as "accommodation".

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Peter R., Klaas R. and Abraham R. Friesen (left to right) with their father, A. S. Friesen, in front of their machine shop, probably around 1900, when the company was called "A. S. Friesen & Sons."

continued from previous page

of the profit motive, and discouraged its membership from any occupation except farming, the pattern for entering into business life could not have been more clearly set out for the Friesen children. Not only was their father exceptionally industrious in diverse financial fields, their mother's brothers, particularly the general store owner Klaas R. Reimer, were also active in commerce. Clearly the Friesen children were expected to go out and make their own way in the world, become established, and raise children of their own. They were not simply shown the door, however; their parents went to great pains to get them started.

All of the boys worked in their father's saw mill, and probably all of them also worked in his lumber camp at Pine Hill, southeast of Steinbach.⁵ All helped out on the family farm. All became familiar with farm implements and steam engines, and learned about their maintenance and repair. And all learned about merchandising. Having this common base that their father had provided them, they proceeded in different directions as they became adults, determined by their particular personalities or by circumstance.

Although the Friesens were one of Steinbach's well-known families, not all of them were so loyal to the community as to remain there. Two of the brothers decided they would try seeking their fortunes away from their home town. Abraham, the eldest, waited until he was

38 before leaving, but when he did go, he never returned, except to visit. Peter, the third, took his family to live on the American west coast a number of times, but each time returned, until finally settling back in Steinbach. Klaas refused offers to uproot and move elsewhere, while Jacob travelled extensively but never lived anywhere but in Steinbach. Helena and Elisabeth remained in Steinbach with their families.

Given their bent for business, it is perhaps not surprising that all of the children except for Klaas eventually joined the Brudertaler (Evangelical Mennonite Brethren) church, which was

much more tolerant of the world of commerce than was the KG. Even A. S. Friesen joined the Brudertaler congregation when he retired to Dallas, Oregon, in 1915.

Of the enterprises begun by A. S. Friesen and his sons, only Friesen Machine Shop is still in family hands today. Fairway Ford, for many years J. R. Friesen & Son, is still located on Main Street at Friesen Avenue where its founder built it, though no family connections remain.

Abraham R. Friesen (1869-1923)

As the eldest son, Abraham R. Friesen



Family of Abraham R. and Helena Friesen on the front porch of their house in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan, April, 1911, on the occasion of the marriage of eldest son Abraham to Helen Lutke, the first non-Mennonite in generations of Friesens.



General store of A. R. Friesen in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan, between 1907 and 1913.

seemed at first destined to be a saw miller in Steinbach--the occupation listed on his eldest daughter's birth certificate on June 23, 1892, when he was 23. He had married Helena Unger of Grunthal on December 15, 1889 at Steinbach. She was of Bergthal Gemeinde (Chortitzer) background, and joined the KG when she married.

Abraham's name first appeared on the community tax roll in 1893 together with Klaas, their

combined worth being assessed at \$650 in land and buildings and \$300 in personal property, including one horse, four oxen and two cows.⁶ The modesty of their land holdings and animal ownership suggests that, although they were farming, it was on a scale large enough only to support their own families (Klaas married in 1892). Probably, their father had for all intents and purposes turned over the operation of the saw mill to them.

Even though his father held the formal title of postmaster in Steinbach from 1884 to 1908, in 1896 the younger Abraham's occupation was listed as "postmaster" on the municipal tax roll and again on the voters' list in 1903.⁷ It is likely that he did the actual postmaster work, then, for at least 10 years (he left Steinbach in 1907) while the official responsibility remained with his father.

As far as is known, Abraham helped with his father's saw mill business from his teen-age years until October, 1902. At that point, when he was 33, he established a "spacious" general store at A. S. Friesen's Main Street post office location in Steinbach. "We hope that he'll be getting a lot of customers," commented the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.⁸ Apparently he did, as he found it necessary to expand the store in February of the next year.⁹ Under pressure to provide for a large, young family--by this time there were eight children, ranging in age from one to 11, he supplemented his income by hunting wolves, bringing in five for a bounty of \$7.50 in May, 1904.¹⁰

At the beginning of 1906 Abraham was appointed Secretary-Treasurer for Hanover Municipality. In carrying out the duties of land management and quasi-legal functions, Abraham again found himself doing the type of work for which his father had become well-known in the district.

In the winter of 1907, however, he and his wife Helena made a momentous decision: they

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K. R. Friesen and his three eldest sons on the yard of Friesen Machine Shop, 1907.

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pulled up stakes and moved with their family to Dalmeny, Saskatchewan, near Saskatoon. Here he opened another general store, and, together with Helena, joined the Brudertaler church.

After several years of business in Dalmeny, Abraham, lured by the prospect of an expanding west coast economy based on lumbering and fruit orchards, moved his family again, this time to Dallas, Oregon. They arrived in Dallas, a community of about 4,000 among whom a significant number were Mennonites, in November of 1913. Abraham found work in F. J. Coad's sash and door factory, known as the Dallas Planing Mill, quickly established a reputation as a good carpenter, and began earning an income. By then there were 14 children to be provided for. Without delay, Abraham and Helena bought a 20-acre plum orchard at Polk Station in 1914.¹¹

There was a Brudertaler congregation in Dallas, and the Friesens quickly became members. In 1915 Abraham was appointed Sunday School superintendent, a position he held for eight years, until his death.¹² The KG, of course, did not allow Sunday School at the time. By the summer of 1915 he had bought a car, a purchase the KG would also not have permitted.

In August of 1915, A. S. Friesen and his second wife, Maria Ediger, moved to Dallas from Steinbach. Abraham had left home nearly eight years before and during that time had seen very little of his father. Now, after this long period of separation, father and eldest son were reunited for the last year-and-a-half of A. S. Friesen's life.

The orchard provided an important source of income to supplement Abraham's wages. In 1917 the family made a profit of \$1,200, enabling Abraham to make a return visit to Steinbach. Although he was glad to see his relatives and friends again, the visit seems to have confirmed in his mind that he had done the right thing in leaving his home town. The Steinbach Post editor reported: "He says he is finished (verbraucht) with Steinbach!"¹³

By early 1918 Abraham had accumulated enough capital to open his own enterprise, a small factory which produced wooden trays and crates for fruit packing. He sold the orchard and bought a much larger property.

In spring of 1920 he made the most important business transaction of his life. Together with his sons Peter and John (the latter having recently returned from overseas service with the U. S. Army) he bought F. J. Coad's planing mill. It was a busy enterprise, with 14 people working at manufacturing drying trays for the plum harvest.

As he got older, Abraham became increasingly eager to have news of his home town. At the close of 1921 he wrote to the Post rather strenuously urging the editor to print more local news:

"Dear Editor, are there really no longer any local news items to present? Or are you not permitted to print local news? I know that for you the local news shows, so to speak, its heels,

but we who are far away long for it even if those in the immediate vicinity don't care about it at all. So please, more local news."

Aware that he had perhaps overstated his case, he softened his almost belligerent tone and concluded: "Perhaps I have written in rather a foolish way, please don't think badly of me, as I still love you and the Post."¹⁴

It seemed that Abraham and his sons were well on their way to repeating the familiar pattern of a business begun and handed down by A. S. Friesen. The business seemed well on its way to major expansion. Late in 1922 the mill received a large order from Portland for 2400 4 x 8-foot garage doors with glass panes. Then in January, 1923, Abraham died when he was suddenly stricken with pneumonia. It is not known whether the sons attempted to carry on the business, but it soon fell out of their hands and gradually the assets Abraham had accumulated were lost.

Abraham R. Friesen was buried in the International Order of Foresters Cemetery in Dallas, far from his "beloved old home" in Manitoba.

Klaas R. Friesen (1870-1942).

The second son, Klaas, grew up with the roar and clank of machinery all around, and in this environment of blades, gears, rods and cylinders, a life-long passion was nurtured: "Even as a child nothing interested him more than machines--anything that turned, and the reason that it moved. As he grew in spirit and knowledge, so also did this interest grow."¹⁵



K. R. Friesen (centre) at inventors' convention in Chicago, 1913.

Klaas married Katharina Janzen of Blumenhof in 1892, and they began their life together with high hopes and good prospects. But Katharina died in childbirth less than two years later. In 1894 Klaas married Helena R. Dueck, daughter of KG Aeltester Abraham L. Dueck of Gruenfeld. Helena bore 10 children during the course of the 19-year marriage, which ended upon her sudden death at age 38 in 1914. Eight of the children survived to adulthood.

By 1891 Klaas, at age 21, had become a partner with his brother Abraham in "Friesen Bros.



Thresher with attached straw blower, an innovative technology designed and built by K. R. Friesen.

Saw Miller" in Steinbach. Probably A. S. Friesen maintained control of the company, however, as he still advertised his services in that year's Henderson Directory as "saw and planing mill, and agrl impt [agricultural implement agent]." The next year, 1892, a new company called A. S. Friesen & Sons, with Klaas and Peter as partners with their father, was founded. This included a machine works operation which continues today as Friesen Machine Shop.

The machine shop became a going concern, largely because of the mechanical genius of Klaas. Regularly, in early summer, big steam boilers and threshing machines were brought there for repair. A correspondent for the Winnipeg-based German-language Nordwesten, visiting Steinbach in March of 1895, referred to the "machine repair shop of Friesen & Sons and their saw mill with a shingle-cutting apparatus and a planer."¹⁶

Many innovations came out of the shop, including a straw blower built in 1899, modeled after one purchased in the U. S. Early threshing machines were built without blowers, requiring several men to carry the straw away after it came out of the machine. A great deal of labour was saved with this simple but effective new technology. Klaas built 46 blowers over the years, mostly in the evenings when the shop was closed for business. This production slowed when threshing machines started to be manufactured already equipped with blowers in 1914.

By 1907 Klaas was left as sole owner of the machine shop. A great variety of machinery and machine parts were repaired or built, such as a well-drilling unit requisitioned by the Pries brothers of Grunthal¹⁷ and a 44-foot chimney for the Reimer Trading Company in Giroux.¹⁸

While developing the machine repair business, Klaas also specialized in watch and clock repair, a skill he may have picked up from his father, who had repaired clocks in Russia. After a day of working in the machine shop he repaired watches in the evening. He was sometimes known as "Watchmaker" Friesen. During his working life, about 7000 watches passed through his hands.¹⁹

In 1912 Klaas embarked on his most ambitious project ever, the building of a dredge in partnership with Klaas W. Brandt, husband of his sister Helena. The dredge was a huge, 60-ton machine with "walking feet," with which, assisted by a winch, it could move on its own. Originally commissioned by James Forestall of St. Pierre, the machine took seven months to build.²⁰ Shortly after it began operation, Brandt and Klaas bought it themselves. Soon after, Klaas sold his share in the enterprise to K. W. Brandt, and returned his attentions to the machine shop. The dredge was later used in the construction of the Winnipeg Water Line in 1916.

Friesen Machine Shop was the second business in Steinbach to set up its own electrical power source (the first was Steinbach Flour Mills). In 1909 the shop purchased a six-horsepower motor and set of batteries which also supplied power to the J. R. Friesen implement shop and John D. Goossen's general store. In 1911 the plant was moved to Main Street and shares in the venture were sold to other businessmen, forming the "Steinbach Light Company." Klaas, as chief engineer for the company, oversaw the purchase of a 15-horsepower diesel engine in 1916. Electricity was sold at 32 cents a kilowatt hour, a price that townspeople apparently found prohibitive.²¹ In 1924 Steinbach Flour Mills took over the electrical supply business.

Klaas's great passion was for ideas; his head was so full of projects that he could hardly wait to finish one before starting another. He was regarded by some as a mechanical genius. Among his inventions were a bee-keeping container called a "queen excluder," a machine that mixed mink food, a cheese press, a "gumming machine" for sharpening the large circular saws used in bush camps around eastern Manitoba, and a device that cut wood blocks into ready-made shingles. He was not particularly interested in large-scale manufacturing; for the most part he sold the patent to his inventions and let others produce them. A fellow inventor, Isaac Plett, once told him: "Klaas, you don't know how to make money."

When on February 1, 1918, Klaas was elected a minister of the KG, he was distraught, thinking that he did not have the gift for this calling. He was a quiet man without a natural talent for public speaking. "I sought to get free and found all sorts of excuses to prevent me from accepting," he wrote later, "yet it seemed after all that there was nothing for it, that no objection could be of help." He went on to lead the Gemeinde, balancing traditional and progressive factions, until his retirement from ac-

tive church duties in 1936.

Starting at some point in the 1920's Klaas began to show symptoms of diabetes. In the years that followed his health gradually deteriorated, and in 1941 he suffered a stroke which temporarily paralysed him. He recovered sufficiently to continue to do the machine work that he loved: "He could not simply sit still with his hands in his lap. Even in the last year of his life he designed and built a few machines. Even



Peter R. and Margaretha Friesen with their four daughters at Cawston Ostrich Farm, California, 1913. Peter R. Friesen wearing his trademark bowler hat and watch chain.

though his eyesight had almost failed, the quality of his work in the machine shop did not really decline."²²

He died the following year.

Peter R. Friesen (1872-1933).

Peter, the third of the brothers and the last to be born in Russia, worked in the saw mill, as Abraham and Klaas had done. According to one version of events, Katharina Friesen was determined that one of her sons at least should work the land. After much cajoling, Peter was persuaded to spend one year on the homestead, with the provision that if it was not successful or that he still did not enjoy the work after that time, he could return to business. At the conclusion of the year even his mother reluctantly agreed that he was no farmer; consequently, in 1892, at the age of 20, he joined his father and brother Klaas as a partner in the A. S. Friesen and Sons machine shop.

Peter and Klaas eventually took over the business from their father and ran the shop as partners until 1907, when Peter turned his attentions to the family saw mill operation.

Peter was baptized in the KG church in

Steinbach in July, 1891. In 1902, in the same church and in a double ceremony with his sister Helena and Klaas Brandt, he married Margaretha G. Kornelsen (1884-1902), daughter of the village schoolmaster, Gerhard E. Kornelsen. Four daughters were born to the couple in the next six years.

In 1912 the family decided to explore the possibilities of emigrating to the American west coast. They stopped for a month in Reedley, California before continuing on to Dallas, Oregon, arriving on February 4, 1913. Here, Peter worked as a carpenter. Although the girls and their father loved Oregon, Margaretha disliked the winter rains and missed her family. Therefore, when she again became pregnant, Peter agreed to return to Manitoba.

This marked the beginning of a series of moves between Dallas and Steinbach. The Friesens returned to Steinbach in 1914, went back to Dallas, then returned to Steinbach for the birth of their last two daughters in 1916 and 1918. From September, 1921 to May, 1925, they again lived in Dallas before coming back to Steinbach for good.

Peter was very active in commerce and town affairs in Steinbach, beginning 1916. He advertised in the Steinbach Post such diverse items as a "new, 65 ft. 7 in. rubber belt," and school texts and other books.²³ On December 29 he was elected mayor of Steinbach. He was also unanimously elected vice-president of the Steinbach Light Company. By early 1917, construction of a new furniture store was being contemplated, as Peter needed a place to house the goods he was already selling: "Peter R. Friesen aims to open a furniture store. Actually, he already has one, except that for the moment he has not found a suitable building in which to house the furniture. As we understand it, he will have one erected very soon, south of the K. B. Reimer store."²⁴

The store, in which brother-in-law John D. Goossen was a partner, opened for business in March. Later that year Peter ran the occasional 1/4-inch ad in the Post:

"FURNITURE!

New and Second Hand

Second hand cooking and heating stoves, garden tools, wood-working tools, etc.

--sold, bought and traded. Extra favourable buys at

PETER R. FRIESEN

Two doors northwest from the Post Office"

In 1918 he was made responsible for collecting fire insurance premiums for the Menno-

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nite Mutual Fire Insurance Association. He advertised in the Post, in slightly awkward but passable English (the government had forbidden the paper to publish in German that year) that he would "be in the District School House of Steinbach on Thursday the 12 at 8 p. m. for the purpose of making the annual collecting the Insurance Money."²⁵ Through his involvement in important community institutions he was becoming an established citizen of Steinbach.

But as time went by, ads appeared less often in the Post. On January 8, 1919, Peter's furniture ad read, "I am still at the old stand," as if he wanted to remind his customers of where they could find him. His restless spirit prompted him once again to begin planning a return to Oregon, when Margaretha, never very robust, became quite ill and was hospitalized in Winnipeg for some weeks. So the family stayed in Steinbach, and Peter contented himself with a trip to the west coast with some friends, in January and February of 1920. He probably continued in the furniture enterprise, though he also helped his brother Klaas with machine shop business now and then.

In September, 1921, the Friesens moved to Dallas again. During this last stint in Oregon, Peter seems to have worked at various things--in his brother Abraham's saw-mill, carpentry, different types of business. Although the entire family picked fruit and hops in season, and the older girls babysat on a regular basis, there appears to have been no shortage of money in spite of Peter's unconventional work patterns. The family was able to buy a house and a car.

When they came back to Steinbach in 1925, they moved back into their house on Main Street, which they had rented out while they were gone. Peter built a grocery store and also maintained a small German-language lending library on the premises. The store, rebuilt as "Modern Grocery," was later taken over by his son. Even after the Great Depression was underway the Friesens must have been doing reasonably well, as they traded in their old Dodge for a new Ford sedan in May, 1930.²⁶

Peter was sociable and enjoyed entertaining friends and extended family. He took pride in his appearance, keeping his hair and beard well-trimmed, and usually wearing a bowler hat (later in life he changed to a soft cap) and a gold watch and chain. An excellent mathematician, he was also an astute businessman, investing heavily in the Winnipeg real estate market, as well as in stocks and bonds. With the stock market crash in 1929 this money was all lost. One measure of the man is that, at this difficult time, he refused to foreclose on a loan made to a friend who could not repay.

Peter was one of the first in Steinbach to own a car and one of the most vivid memories shared by his children is of his great love of travel and his interest in new places, sights and experiences.



Young J. R. Friesen, circa 1900.

On July 1, 1933, while sitting on the screen porch waiting for his son-in-law Albert Frey to give him a haircut, Peter Friesen suffered a fatal heart attack.



44 foot chimney which Friesen Machine Shop built for "Reimer Trading Co." (A. W. Reimer) in Giroux, circa 1915.

Jacob R. Friesen (1879-1950).

Jacob R. Friesen married Maria Reimer on April 18, 1903, when he was 23 and she only 18. Maria was the second child and eldest daughter of Klaas W. Reimer (1861-1944) and Maria Brandt (1863-1901). Her grandfather was Klaas R. Reimer, Steinbach's most prominent pioneer businessman, who was also Jacob's uncle (his mother's brother). K. R. Reimer was also a frequent business partner of Jacob's father. The marriage represented a union between two of the most economically powerful families in the village.

Among his many enterprises, A. S. Friesen sold farm machinery for a brief time, and this was the line that Jacob took over in 1903 when he opened an implement shop, selling ploughs, harrows, mowers and buggies out of a 40 x 60 frame structure. Soon he became an agent for "International Machines," having developed connections with the International Harvester Company in Winnipeg. The shop handled a diversified line of equipment, including DeLaval cream separators, Advance-Rumley and American Abell and Thresher Co. steam threshing outfits, Cockshutt, McCormick and Deering implements, McLaughlin carriages and Fish Brothers wagons. For some time his brother-in-law Klaas B. Reimer was a business partner, but Jacob bought out Reimer's share in 1912.²⁷

It was cars, however, that fascinated him the most. As early as 1905 he helped C. F. Broesky, a local farmer, hand-build the first automobile in southeastern Manitoba. The car was a converted carriage with a two-horsepower engine mounted on the rear, providing for a top speed of 10 m.p.h. Broesky operated it for some three years, maintaining it at the shop.

Jacob must have known that he would cause a big uproar among the KG brotherhood when he bought the first factory-built car in the community, a Model N Ford, in 1912. The objections came thick and fast. A car could not be used for harvesting or cultivating. It could not power a saw mill. Was it not, then, just a symbol of worldly vanity? Would it not be easy for members of the community to travel great distances, to un-Christian places, whenever they liked? The brotherhood decided that car own-

ership was too worldly for a true Mennonite, and Jacob was told to get rid of the vehicle.

But he did not share the elders' vision of the car as a means by which people would be led astray. To him, it was a technology as useful as the threshing machine, in its way. He must have sensed, too, that not all KG members were convinced, even by their own arguments. So he held firm, refusing to sell his Model N. In response,

Chryslers, etc.

In 1916 the original garage was torn down and replaced by a larger building. In 1917 sales almost doubled, to 40 cars, rising again to 49 in 1918. In these early years, many, if not most, of the sales were accounted for by Ukrainian, French and English customers. After a few ups and downs a steady climb began, from which there was no looking back.



Wedding picture of J. R. & Maria, 1903. This marriage represented the union of 2 of Steinbach's most powerful families.

the church suspended him. Some accounts say that he was excommunicated, but it is almost certain that he was "put out" of the church, and not formally excommunicated. The Bruderschaft minutes do not mention excommunication.

Whatever the case, Jacob never showed rancour over this incident. Years later when cars were in common use by Gemeinde members, he was approached with the suggestion that he could re-join if he apologized. He politely refused, having already begun to attend the Brudertaler church, which he continued to do, with some interruptions, to the end of his days.

Jacob understood that Steinbach was a growing concern, and that transportation would be vital to its development. Since the railroad did not pass through the town, motor vehicles were the logical alternative form of transportation. In 1914 he wrote Henry Ford, requesting a Ford dealership. Mr. Ford agreed, and on June 6 Jacob became the first automobile dealer in Steinbach and the first Ford dealer in rural Western Canada. He sold one car that year, to P. K. Hiebert of Niverville district. In subsequent years Fords at first enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the car market, though many individuals, including some who had learned the business as employees of J. R. Friesen Garage, soon started competing garages featuring Chevrolets,

Although cars accounted for a growing percentage of the garage's sales, Jacob continued to sell farm machinery. He became the first dealer in Canada for Fordson tractors in 1916. In his later years he recalled that "the hey-day of the implement business was in 1918-19, when farmers stood in line at the Giroux loading platform, money in hand, and waited as the Fordson tractors were unloaded from the cars."²⁸ The arrival of tractors each year became what the Steinbach Post called "a harbinger of the coming spring."²⁹ It was always an exciting day in town when seven or eight tractors would chug in and up Main Street, having driven from Giroux where they had been unloaded from the train.

Jacob was very aware of the importance of Giroux as the rail link to Winnipeg, particularly in the years before good roads between Winnipeg and Steinbach existed. In the latter part of the 1920s he devised a Bombardier-type of vehicle, really a car with caterpillar treads, for winter travel, and this early snowmobile was in frequent use for picking up passengers from the Giroux station when roads were blocked by drifts.

By 1922 there were 65 private car owners living in Steinbach, not counting farmers in outlying areas. Of these, 45 were Ford-owners.³⁰ Jacob had taken a big risk when he started

his dealership but being first gave him a competitive advantage that he never lost. Not that he rested on his laurels: in 1923 he became an agent for Firestone tires and in 1926 took on the dealership for British American bulk oil, both natural complements to the car business.³¹ In the winter of 1926, as well, the garage was enlarged to include a large showroom with genuine plate glass windows.

Jacob genuinely appreciated people and treated his employees with consideration. You would have to make gross and repeated errors in order to be fired. In one of the occasional patrols around the garage which he took each day he came across an employee who was supposed to be sweeping out the garage. The young man was leaning on his broom handle and dreamily gazing out at the sky through a window. Jacob took him by the arm, led him to an open garage door and said, "Here, now you'll be able to see the sky much better." The young man briskly started to sweep.

Composed though he usually was, Jacob could get angry when provoked. Strangers from Winnipeg, driving a Chandler automobile--an unusual make--stopped by the garage one Sunday afternoon. They had a flat and needed a replacement tire. Jacob dutifully took the time to open the garage and search for a suitable tire, but could not find one. At this, the Winnipeggers turned nasty. Jacob was so provoked that he flew into a rage and chased the Chandler-owners out of the garage, which they left in a fright, driving on their wheel rim, without any tire at all.

The Friesen business, like others, was hit by the Depression in the 1930s. Jacob adapted, however, first by manufacturing snowmobiles in the winter when the car season was over, and then by starting a fur farm as an auxiliary business. The farm, at which silver foxes were raised, was located at the eastern edge of town. As many of his customers, especially farmers, were unable to pay off their debts in cash, he hired them to work off their indebtedness by such means as building the cages in which the foxes were kept. The farm was eventually sold to the Hudson's Bay Company.

It was in the 30s, as well, that the Ford company manufactured Model A sedans and Phaetons equipped with chrome-plated head lamps and radiator shells. Some models also had a stripe of paint running alongside the body just below the windows. By this time, even the most conservative community members had found a way to reconcile automobile ownership and faithfulness to church teachings, but they were still strongly opposed to any kind of worldly display. They wanted to own cars but did not want to be thought of as flashy or proud of their possessions. Jacob found a way to accommodate them, as described by his son William:

"As a boy during summer holidays in the early 30s my job was to paint out the chrome with black enamel. The stripes were eliminated by someone with more skill. On occasion young truck drivers would swap their standard black radiator shells for the chromed types, which

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seemed to please all concerned immensely.”³²

As the business in Steinbach grew, Jacob branched out to surrounding communities. For a number of years he ran a garage and sold cars in Ste. Anne. In 1933 he added a service station. For some time he also ran a service station and repair shop in LaBroquerie. The latter was not open for long, apparently because of a problem with theft. Eventually the Ste. Anne operation was also closed. Jacob was apparently more interested in building a family enterprise than a big empire. In 1938 he discontinued the sale of farm implements and concentrated solely on tractors and cars and trucks.³³

The garage and a small sales office completely burned down in February, 1939. As was typical of his dauntless nature, Jacob opened for business the following day in a place across the street. Never wavering in his intention to rebuild, he went after the insurance company aggressively and got every cent of coverage. Construction was soon begun on a new building, which is still operating today as Fairway Ford.³⁴

Jacob was not beyond the occasional venture into the unconventional. In the early 30s he invested in the Pietenpol aircraft which two of his sons-in-law, Bill Wiebe and Frank Sawatzky, built from plans they found in a 25-cent magazine called *Popular Mechanics and Inventions*. As a business enterprise, the Pietenpols were not a success, but they did not damage the health of Jacob's business, either. More than anything, they captured the interest and enthusiasm of townfolk and others for miles around, and confirmed Jacob's reputation as a visionary, adding to the impressive list of "firsts" that his father had begun before him.

Jacob once asked, rhetorically, "Why should I advertise--everyone knows where I am." He was by nature a quiet person and had grown up in a community, and a family, in which modesty and humility were greatly valued, so that the concept of advertising in itself was somewhat suspect. One was not to declare one's own virtues; these were to be made visible through the life one led.

Yet he saw the value of promotion from the very beginning of his business career, and developed a subtle genius for it. The German-language Steinbach Post came on the scene in 1914, the same year that Jacob became the first Ford dealer in rural western Canada. Soon, regular J. R. Friesen advertisements were appearing in the Post, such as one illustrating a 1916 Ford Touring Car, "with electric horn," priced at \$570.

As early as 1921 Jacob introduced other forms of advertising, most notably two- or three-day "tractor schools" which included film nights--probably the first movies shown in

Steinbach. Jacob also sponsored "Ford Days" at which promotional materials were handed out by company officials; in 1925 400 people attended the event. Though other dealers copied Jacob in using film as a promotional device, he stayed one step ahead of them. On July 21, 1934 the first "talkies" ever seen in Steinbach were



Wedding picture of Helena & K. W. Brandt, 1902.

shown at the J. R. Friesen garage. The titles were: "The Why of the V-8" and "Rhapsody in the Barn."³⁵

Often Jacob would offer the garage, or the repair area behind it, as space for entertainments for townfolk. Before the high school was built there was no auditorium big enough to accommodate school concerts or plays, so Jacob made the garage available for such events. Nail kegs with boards set on them provided the seating.

Jacob was a trustee of the Steinbach School District for 12 years, being first elected in July, 1924 when he was 46 years old, and continuing until 1937, with a two-year hiatus in 1932-34. For most of this time he was chairman, first becoming chair in 1926 and repeatedly re-elected as such until retiring. Jacob saw the board through its first big initiative, the building of a new six-room school, including high

school, in 1936. A \$20,000 loan was floated from the Royal Bank to finance construction. The building still stands today as Steinbach's public library. Jacob's son Ed later also served a trustee, continuing the family tradition.

Jacob died in 1950 at the age of 71, having retired and passed on the business to Ed, who built upon the foundation his father had established, presiding over a thriving business for many years.

Helena R. Friesen Brandt (1883-1946).

As females, the two daughters in the A. S. Friesen family would not have had the option of becoming entrepreneurs in the Steinbach of their day. Yet each of them was entrepreneurial in her way. Both married men who became prominent in the commercial life of Steinbach.

Helena Friesen was born in Steinbach in 1883, the fifth child and first daughter of the family. In 1895, when she was 12, the Friesens moved to a farm north of Steinbach in the English settler district of Clearsprings. It was here she learned English, quite on her own, as she had almost no formal education except in German. She became fluent in both languages.

Helena married Klaas W. Brandt (1876-1954) in 1902, shortly before turning 19. He was the son of Steinbach pioneer Heinrich R. Brandt. The young couple lived on a farm in Clearsprings for a while before moving to Steinbach, allowing Klaas to pursue his surveying and machine work interests.

As Klaas was often away surveying in different parts of the province she took on sewing for other ladies. She sewed suits and dresses and even foundation garments, which were in demand by those who wanted to look more prim and proper. She was frugal, and sewed all the children's clothes and overcoats, which, though very often made over from hand-me-downs, were tastefully done. The children, knowing they were very well-dressed, were pleased with their clothes. According to her daughter Elma, "She knew how to make things out of nothing."

She loved crocheting and in her younger years had the lady school teachers over on Monday nights to teach them how to crochet baskets. The group soon produced 40 little baskets, which the teachers handed out as Christmas gifts to their pupils.

Helena was the first Brudertaler Church Ladies' Sewing Circle president. She was also a charter member of the Steinbach Women's Institute and participated in Steinbach's annual fairs.

In the latter 1920s she and Klaas bought their parents' estate. They lived there and in 1935 opened a small restaurant, which they called "Brandts' Café." Helena had the larger responsibility in the business, as she was the cook. She



The dredge owned by K. R. Friesen and his brother-in-law K. W. Brandt, which was later owned solely by Brandt, who used it in the construction of the Winnipeg water line, 1916.

loved this work, trying new recipes and taking pride in serving her customers well. People would sometimes knock on the door of the Brandts' house at 11 at night after a long and busy day and say they hadn't eaten since noon, so Helena, tired but unable to turn anyone away, would prepare a good meal. It soon became known that, at Brandts' Café, nobody went away hungry.

Next door, Klaas and his son Henry set up a plumbing business. Later an iron smelting shop was added. Klaas continued his surveying work as well, having been hired by the provincial government as a civil engineer in 1926.

Helena died very suddenly. On the evening of Friday, July 5, 1946 her son Henry and his wife and her daughters Elizabeth and Elma came over to visit. The family was happy together, talking and singing. But she fell ill, became unconscious, and never woke from that state, until quietly, 24 hours later, she passed away. It was her son's birthday, to the very hour.

Elisabeth R. Friesen Goossen (1886-1964).

Helena's younger sister Elisabeth, born in 1886, was the last of the Friesen children. She was expected to help both her parents as she grew older, her mother with household duties and her father with his legal work. As a young woman she witnessed innumerable signatures. She later recalled that many of the visitors who sought legal advice also took advantage of the Friesens' hospitality, staying for dinner and having their horses fed as well.³⁶

In 1909 a young man in a Holdeman family, John D. Goossen, became interested in this tall young woman with the reserved and dignified personality, and they were married in 1910, when Elisabeth was 24. She left the KG and John left the Holdeman congregation upon marriage, in order to join the Brudertaler church. Elisabeth became her mother's primary caregiver in the latter's last years and this may be why she waited relatively long to get married.

As married women both living in town, Elisabeth and Helena established a custom of each making soup on Saturday mornings, then getting a child to carry a bowl of soup to the other's house. In this way they entertained and

pleased each other. They were also enthusiastic participants in the "Kaffeekraenzchen," the social group of sisters and sisters-in-law who met every other Monday afternoon to have coffee and talk.

Elisabeth belonged to the Sewing Circle in the Brudertaler church, and attended faithfully every second Thursday. She was also active in the Children's Aid Society.

In 1917, or before, Elisabeth inherited part of the original Lot Number 8 owned by Abraham S. Friesen. The Goossens built a fine house on Friesen Avenue. The house was one of very few in Steinbach at the time to have an indoor bathroom. Three rooms were added in 1929. Elisabeth enjoyed her home and took pride in it, making sure that the furniture, rugs and drapes were of good quality. She grew a flower garden with hollyhocks on one side of the house, taking the same pleasure in flowers that her mother had. See Preservings, No 1, 1993, p. 1-2 for additional information on the Goossen house.

Unusually for a Mennonite family of the time, the Goossens had no children until six years after their marriage. On January 6, 1916, a boy was born. Elisabeth wanted to name him Abraham, after her father, as had been the tradition in the extended Friesen family for generations. John was not enthusiastic about the name but Elisabeth insisted on it, and prevailed. Elisabeth's children were born just at the time when Steinbach was being subjected to more and more influences of the outside world, including non-traditional names. It took all of John's considerable charm and persuasive power to convince her to name another son "Ernest Ralph," the names of partners in a Winnipeg law firm with whom he had done business. Ernie Goossen would go on to open his own law office in Steinbach in October, 1949.³⁷

John D. Goossen's first attempt at making a living, following his marriage to Elisabeth, was a general store on the corner of Main Street and Friesen Avenue in Steinbach, which he opened in 1910 and ran for four years, to 1913. John had trained to be a teacher, but it is not known that he ever practised the profession. In 1913 he became a notary public, like his father-in-law, and maintained that position all his life.

John held the post of Secretary-Treasurer of Hanover Municipality for over 20 years, until 1944. Combined with his work as a land conveyancer and other legal duties, this earned enough income for the family to be able to afford a new car every two years. He also found time to serve as trustee of the Steinbach school district. First elected for a three-year term on July 21, 1919, he was immediately appointed Secretary-Treasurer, a position he held until 1932. For most of these years he formed a kind of executive team with his brother-in-law J. R. Friesen, and was an important influence in gradually raising the standard of education in the community.³⁸

His extensive business connections assisted John in his active life in public affairs. He was

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Announcement:

The Board of Directors of the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society is pleased to announce that Randy Kehler has been appointed "Photo Archivist". He will be responsible for a program of scanning photographs of historical value and storing them in a computer memory bank.

All residents of the Hanover Steinbach area and others who may have such photos are asked to contact Randy at 326-3139.

With the scanning technology now available photographs can be scanned in a matter of minutes and returned to their owners. In this way, valuable historical photographs can be preserved for posterity. If you have any such photos or have any questions regarding the program, please call Randy at 326-3139.



Wedding picture of Elisabeth R. Friesen and John D. Goossen, 1910. He was the grandson of KG minister and veteran Molotschna school teacher Gerhard P. Goossen (1832-72) whose brother Kornelius was one of the 1874 Steinbach pioneers. See Leaders, pages 707-740.

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president of the local Victory Bond drive during World War II, secretary of the agents association of the Mutual Fire Insurance Society of Portage la Prairie, a board member of the Red River Health Union, and board member of the Children's Aid Society of Eastern Manitoba. He was probably one of the few Manitobans to travel to England in 1937 for the coronation of the King, and wrote a short travelogue book about the experience.³⁹

John D. Goossen died in 1951.⁴⁰

Elisabeth continued to live in the house on Friesen Avenue, passing away in 1964 at the age of 78.

An Independent Life

When A. S. Friesen died, his son Abraham wrote, "the first years in Manitoba were difficult, yet through hard and exacting work, which was blessed by God, he was later able to have an independent life."⁴¹ This drive for an independent life was passed on to his children, each of whom managed the same. The siblings, then, each went his or her own way. Those brothers who had at one point or another been business partners did not remain in these partnerships. When Abraham R. Friesen came to Steinbach from Dallas on a trip in 1917, he diplomatically stayed overnight with or at least visited the house of each sibling, but did not stay very long.⁴²

The brothers, though they sometimes worked and visited together, seem to have kept a social

distance between each other. The individualism promoted in the A. S. Friesen household may have contributed to the children's adventurousness and self-reliance, but it also was the beginning of a great diaspora. Today, the descendants of Abraham and Katharina are scattered through the U. S. and Canada. Most remain unaware of the eventful lives of their ancestors.

Endnotes:

- 1..K. J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *The Carillon News*, January, 1952.
- 2..Obituary of A. S. Friesen, *Mennonitische Rundschau*, January 10, 1917.
- 3..Royden Loewen, "Family, Church and Market," PhD thesis, University of Manitoba, p. 258.
- 4..Obituary, *Mennonitische Rundschau*, September 18, 1912.
- 5..G. G. Kornelsen, *Der Nordwesten Kalender 1949*, pp. 177-180.
- 6..Hanover Municipality Tax Roll, 1893.
- 7..Hanover Municipality Voters' List, 1903.
- 8..*Mennonitische Rundschau*, November 12, 1902. The *Rundschau* refers to Abraham as "A. K. Friesen," but there is no mistaking his identity, as no one else would have started a store in the post office run by A. S. Friesen.
- 9..*Mennonitische Rundschau*, February 25, 1903.
- 10..Hanover Municipality Accounts, 1904.
- 11..A. R. Friesen letter dated April 17, 1919 to the *Steinbach Post*, April 23, 1919.
- 12.. "A Historical Sketch of the Churches of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren," printed by D. H. Epp, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, p. 47.
- 13..*Steinbach Post*, November 28, 1917.
- 14..A. R. Friesen letter to the *Steinbach Post*, dated November 29, 1921, published December 7, 1921.
- 15..K. R. Friesen obituary, *Steinbach Post*, April 15, 1942.
- 16..*Der Nordwesten*, March 28, 1895.
- 17..*Steinbach Post*, July 18, 1917.
- 18..*Steinbach Post*, February 20, 1924.
- 19..K. J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *The Carillon News*, 1952.
- 20..K. J. B. Reimer says that it was built in 1910 for the Préfontaine brothers of St. Pierre (*Die Post*, March 9, 1965).
- 21..Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage* (Steinbach: Derksen Printers, 1971), p. 134 and *Steinbach Post*, September 20, 1916.
- 22..*Steinbach Post*, April 15, 1942.
- 23..*Steinbach Post*, September 26, 1916.
- 24..*Steinbach Post*, January 17, 1917.
- 25..*Steinbach Post*, December 11, 1918.
- 26..*Steinbach Post*, May 28, 1930.
- 27..*Mennonitische Rundschau*, December 25, 1912.
- 28..*Carillon News*, June 19, 1953.
- 29..*Steinbach Post*, December 21, 1927.
- 30..*Steinbach Post*, June 14, 1922.
- 31..Lawrence Klippenstein and Julius G. Toews, eds., *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* (Altona, 1974), p. 214.
- 32..Dr. William J. Friesen, letter, January 14, 1996.
- 33..Obituary, *Steinbach Post*, August 9, 1950.
- 34..Helen Zuchowski, interview, July 16, 1996 and Olga Friesen, interview, July 25, 1996.
- 35..Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage*, p. 108.
- 36..K. J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *The Carillon News*, 1952 and *Die Post*, March 2, 1965.
- 37..*Carillon News*, October 21, 1949.
- 38..Steinbach School District minutes, Manitoba Public Archives.
- 39 John D. Goossen, *Meine Reise nach Europa 1937* (Steinbach, 1937), 45 pages.
- 40..Obituary, *Steinbach Post*, April 4, 1951.
- 41..Handwritten obituary found among Abraham R. Friesen's papers.
- 42..A. R. Friesen, letter to the *Steinbach Post*, January 23, 1918.