

Roots and branches

Newsletter of the Mennonite Historical Society of BC

"What we have heard and known we will tell the next generation." Psalm 78

Editorial2
Passing on the Comfort: The
MCC Story 2
Upcoming events 3
Book Review: Rudy Wiebe, Of
This Earth4
Mennonite Heritage Cruise 6
Global Anabaptist Mennonite
Encyclopedia Online 7
Genetic Genealogy: A New
Tool for Mennonite
Genealogists8
Terror on the Baltic 11
Book review: Gunther
Grass, Crabwalk13
Ben and Linda's Ukraine 14
Meet Board Member Ben
Braun 15
In Magic Progress Report 16
Food in South Russia in the
early 1900's 16
Stinging Nettle-Famine food
and spring tonic 17
Cream of Nettle Soup 18
Raising Silkworms 19
Die Schönste Lengevitch 20



Tschongrau Bible School Choir wth conductor Jacob Abraham, 1922-23, Crimea.

The Mennonite Historical Society of BC presents:

Sängerfest: Choir Festival of Praise and Worship

May 6, 2007 at 3pm. See page 3 for details.

Mennonite Historical Society of BC 211-2825 Clearbrook Rd., Abbotsford, BC. V2T 6S3
Phone: 604-853-6177 Fax: 604-853-6246 Email: archives@mhsbc.com
website: www.mhsbc.com Hours: 9am-4pm Monday-Friday

Editorial

There was excitement for Mennonite refugees living in Kapfenburg, Austria, in spring 1948, when a truck with the MCC logo arrived filled with comforters from North America. Soon after, the distribution began. My parents, Henry and Irene Bergen, each received a quilt, plus a baby comforter for me.

One of these comforters, a heavy quilt with thick batting, was made from 4 colourful flour sacks stitched together. The baby comforter was a knotted quilt. The third was the quilt pictured on the right. Late that summer, our family boarded the SS Samaria for the trip across the Atlantic to Canada. The baby blanket served all five of us children. Finally, in rags, it was discarded when grandchildren came on the scene.

I don't remember the flour sack quilt, but the strawberry quilt was always a favourite of mine, so Mom passed it on to me. With age, the material became fragile, and after being used for picnics and play by our children, it became frayed and torn.



'Strawberry blanket' sent to Austria by MCC in 1948 in back; in foreground, comforters made by local quiltiers baled and ready to be sent to refugees.

It was only after it was torn that I realized the value of this blanket for me—one of the very few things we brought to Canada from Europe, and a symbol of what MCC has done for us. Now, I take the blanket with me when I talk to children in school or church about refugees.

One Sunday morning, a few years ago, I brought the blanket to church with me for children's storytime. We talked about refugees, giving, and MCC, and the story of my blanket. Then I spread out a new quilt, ready to be knotted and sent overseas. Several of us helped guide little fingers to tie the knots. One of the children was Merry, who'd recently come to Canada from Africa with her mother and brother.

After the service, Merry's mother came to see me with tears in her eyes. Not too long ago, they'd been refugees and a blanket from MCC had given them comfort. Now Merry had tied a knot in a comforter that would go to another family in need. A circle had been completed.

Over the last 10 months MCC, overall from US and Canadian donors, has shipped 24,988 quilts from donors in the US and Canada to the following countries: Serbia, Tanzania, Ukraine, Zambia, Laos, and Lebanon. About 14,000 of these were sent to MCC partners in Lebanon, after the war there this summer, for displaced persons.

Many of us would not be in Canada if it weren't for MCC. It is important for us not to forget this story. LBP

Passing on the Comfort: The MCC Story: an afternoon of celebration and an evening of reflection, by Ben Stobbe

Some quilts featured at the afternoon quilt show were new, others carried the imprints of years of touching, caressing, covering and folding. Some were in the classical style, others resembled painted scenes. Some were made to look at, others to keep out the cold.

Quilters are easily spotted here. Exclusively women, they step close, squint, check the stitching and then quietly make a comment to a fellow quilter. Then they step back and join the surrounding group of admirers. At this point someone usually makes a comment accompanied by nodding in unison.

In this gathering men are not the detail people. They stand back, view the big picture and if they say anything it probably is in low-german and at best elicits a polite chuckle.



The only disquieting scene was when someone had the nerve to drape a quilt over the upright piano covering even the keys! Now quilts are important in our history but surely they should not silence music. (By the way, that near sin was spotted by a manthe quilters were too busy checking the fabric.)

Among Mennonites, quilting is part of the fabric of MCC. So it was entirely normal to link the afternoon show with the MCC story at an evening lecture. Helen Rose Pauls and Louise Price illustrated how quilts from MCC provided comfort either for themselves or families coming out of wars in Europe. The MCC story was well told by former MCC Director Ron Mathies. Not adverse to taking risks, Ron passed on accolades given to MCC by

outsiders; lest we become too puffed up, he balanced these with criticisms offered by others. He suggested the best accolade came from a Chinese government official who, in trying to describe MCC to another official, said "they are believers in God and followers of Jesus."

A short power-point slide show on MCC work in Sudan illustrated the challenges facing MCC: how to be effective considering the state of our world, how to deal with changes in our supporting constituents, what international programs should MCC focus on, how MCC deals with security concerns and how MCC determines the best resource allocation.

Upcoming events:

May 6, 2007. **Annual General Meeting**. Central Heights MB, 1661 McCallum Rd. Abbotsford at 2:15. The Meeting will be held just prior to the Sängerfest. Copies of the Annual Report for 2006 will be available after May 1, 2007 on our Website www.MHSBC.com or at the meeting.

May 6, 2007. Sängerfest: Choir festival of praise and worship Central Heights MB 1661 McCallum at 3 pm October 13, 2007. Annual Fundraising Banquet. Speaker: Dr. J.B. Toews. Place: Emmanuel Mennonite Church

Join us on Sunday, May 6 at Central Heights Church to celebrate the long standing Mennonite tradition of choral music.

Sängerfest has roots in Prussia where children learned Ziphern, a numbered notation system in schools. Choirs were a national pastime in Europe in the 1800s and Mennonites, who followed many trends in Germany, soon began to hold choir practice. At first the new hymns with four-part harmonies and pleasing melodies were considered pub songs by the old guard, who strongly disapproved. However, youth won the day and *Vorsänger* were eventually replaced by song leaders and hymn books.

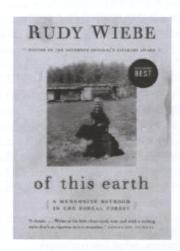
There followed a rich time in our music history. The first choir festival, or Sängerfest, took place in Rückenau, Molotschna in 1893. Seven choirs, 120 singers and 2,000 listeners came from miles around to participate. In 1894, a day-long Sängerfest featured eleven choirs from a 200 kilometer radius; choir festivals had become a permanent institution.

Many of us remember the excitement of joining youth choirs in our churches in the fifties and sixties and finding our 'voice.' These sessions were sweetened by the anticipation of visiting with friends and with the opposite sex on the walk home, and became the favorite night of the week.

Making music together as voices intermingled in song provided a strong sense of community and belonging, and contributed greatly to worship and beauty in our congregations. We hope to capture some of that feeling. Four choirs will perform, as well as a mass choir, and the audience will have opportunity to sing some old favorites as well. Tickets are \$10.00/ adults; \$5.00 /youth at the office or at the door, archives@mhsbc.com 604-853-6177

Book Review: Rudy Wiebe, Of This Earth

(Alfred A. Knopf: Toronto), 2006; reviewed by Robert Martens



When Rudy Wiebe read at MEI in November 2006 from his boyhood memoir, he remarked to his listeners that his story is not, like many others today, a litany of cruelty and abuse. On the contrary, it is a happy, nostalgic recalling. In recent years, Mennonite memoirs have proliferated to the point that they are almost routine. Wiebe's Of This Earth will now surely be the touchstone for the genre. The book tells the story of his childhood years, spent mostly in the homesteading community of Speedwell, Saskatchewan. It is a forceful and poetic remembrance. The simple poignance of the prose may be welcome to those who sometimes find Wiebe's intense style difficult. Of This Earth is a spare and unembellished telling of a childhood desperately poor but paradoxically joyful, of a life fully lived. "Threescore and ten years ago my life began on the stony, glacierhaunted earth of western Canada. Seventy years of refuge, under the shadow of wrath. As my mother said, 'Now it is time.'" (4).

Wiebe's early years were innocent and secure, spent in the context of an embracing Mennonite community. "In all the strangeness of Canada and 'de Englische,' the English, which to [Mennonites] meant anyone who did not speak Low German, they found groups of Mennonite people they could live and work with and, even more important, a church where they could worship. This was the most powerful way in which they came to feel at home in Canada" (40). Surely an insular way of life, but one for which Wiebe retains great affection. "The light and dark I lived in as a boy were the day and night of the sun; it was changed very little by barn lanterns or the solitary kerosene lamp with its elegant glass chimney on our kitchen table. But wherever I was, I was inside family..." (58). A community of Russian Mennonite refugees, expressing in Sunday morning prayer their immense sorrow and loss. "Prayer after prayer, this became utterance beyond words, beyond persons. I remember the whispers, the cries passing over us as we knelt on that board floor often moved even us little boys, bent over the front bench, to tears" (138).

Wiebe's fondest memories of his boyhood years are those of women. A chapter is devoted to a deeply moving telling of the early death of his "sweet sister" Helen. But his mother dwells at the centre of his heart, an immigrant woman who endures so much hardship. "My stern and loving Mam always so afraid of sin for her children, arms warm and tight around me, is in dreadful pain when she eats, though she says nothing" (19). Wiebe's father is relatively emotionally distant, and appears in a sense at the periphery of Wiebe's narrative. His mother, however, a simple believer in a theology of a perhaps "simpler" time, never ceases to embrace

creation. "I then thought of my mother's life as contradiction: her abiding fear at the immanence of divine, eternal wrath, yet she herself lived a life devoted to goodness and love..." (364).

The notion of divine wrath recurs frequently in this book. One day a solitary stranger appears in Speedwell, paints scripture of judgment upon rock, and then vanishes into the northern woods: "THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON YOU." "This was no gentle Präedja Enns mildly reading a Bible verse; rather, as Jesus once had prophesied, suddenly the very stones were crying out. Here, in our stony country" (81). But the aspens of Wiebe's beloved boreal forest speak to him, even as a child, of a loving, embracing God. "But ... if you lay flat on your back in the furry snow staring straight up, the grey columns reached high, they sprayed out over you and their countless fingers moved in a canopy of grey on blue: a blue ocean of continuous, circular rhythm; all the trees over the whole earth were always and continuously moving. They creaked, they groaned, but in summer they would whisper as well. Or shiver. Something too immense to imagine was always breathing over them. That could only be God" (122).

Wiebe has perhaps been stereotyped as a sombre writer. In Speedwell, however, he was something of a "class clown," but this was not, he laments, later reflected in his writing. "[W]hen in my late teens I began to write stories, I discovered they were rarely funny" (236). Why? Partially because "Life is serious, especially for Mennonites having fled a world destroyed by Communism; God's revelation only

underscores the heavy, mostly murderous, history of mankind" (237). Of This Earth, though, is blessed with "barnyard humour," especially in the telling of Wiebe's sexual awakening. "Why does he do that?" young Rudy asks his mother, after having watched the violent mounting of rooster upon hen. "He's just saying hello to her," his mother replies (146).

Wiebe never saw the lights of the big city until the age of eleven, and urban life seemed simultaneously a miracle and tragic loss.
"Overwhelming as it was, Vancouver was in a way ridiculously simple: nothing to do for light or heat or water, just find a switch or sit on a toilet and everything happened.... It was a Schlarafenlaunt, a fool's paradise, my mother said, all you need to live

here auls eene Mohd emm Schmäah, like a maggot in fat, was money" (290). And the ethnic community of Speedwell inevitably disappeared, victim to the lure of a better and more comfortable life in mainstream Canada. Wiebe's description of the emptying of this tiny northern village is heartbreaking.

Now it is time to remember. "It seems that when you have lost the place on earth where you come from, when your ancestral name has been ground out of existence, you suffer damage" (369). Mennonite memoirs nearly always follow an arc of poverty to wealth, failure to success. The naiveté of Wiebe's childhood was succeeded by success as a writer, but while Of This Earth tells this part of this story, it seems to end rather

abruptly, almost randomly. To some this may appear a weakness, but then living doesn't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Rudy Wiebe's book is written in a style that is often circular, that lacks a straightforward trajectory, but it is perfectly suited to the vagaries of forgetting and memory. At his Abbotsford reading, Wiebe chattered happily with old friends in the audience and frequently broke out in Low German. He felt himself fortunate, it seems, to have lived the childhood that he did. Of This Earth is a narrative of an unrecoverable but treasured time. Concerning his parents, Wiebe writes, "When together they sang such a soaring hymn, carried by heart for centuries across continents and oceans, they sounded like lovers, though I do not remember seeing them kiss" (318).

Postscript: For those of you who know Low German, Wiebe includes the following ditty in his book:

MIENE MUTTASPROAK

Daut disse Sproak dee baste es, Wea haft duat wohl besträde? Sest haud dee Mutta gaunz jewess See mie nie leahd too räde.

MY MOTHER TONGUE

This language is the very best,
Who ever could dispute it?
Or else my mother certainly
Would never have taught me to speak it.

Note Cards for sale at the Archives \$2.00 each, or a package of 4 for \$6.00



1. Coglan Mennonite 1936 (Pen & ink, Mary Lue Braun) 2. BC Electric Rail station, Yarrow est. 1910 (Pen & Ink, Ted Driediger) 3. John I. Haas hop field, Sardis (Photo courtesy Chilliwack Archives) 4. CPR depot, Abbotsford built between 1891-1905 (Pen & ink with ink wash, Dan Sawatzky)



Mennonite Heritage Cruise

by Robert Martens

When I first see the ruins of the Mennonite church in the former Molotschna village of Schönsee, my first thought is of the similarly abiding beauty of Greek temple ruins that I've visited. The Schönsee church, with its lovely neogothic windows and traces of Dutch style, is a simple but stunning architectural achievement. We stream from the tour bus with digital cameras buzzing and clicking. Some of us clamber over stones and bushes into the interior, now open to the skies, as the roof has fallen in. The building, overgrown and slowly disintegrating, is a quiet memory of another time. But Schönsee church may not exist much longer. Its typically red nineteenth century Mennonite bricks, so well manufactured, are being scavenged by poverty-stricken Ukrainian villagers for their own homes.



In autumn of 2006 I sailed, along with nearly 200 other passengers, on the Dnieper Princess of the Mennonite Heritage Cruise. Many of us wondered what our reaction would be upon walking the homelands of our Russian Mennonite ancestors. My own response was a temporary feeling of disassociation, or even dislocation: so little remains of what the Russian Mennonites built. The slow disintegration of the doomed Schönsee church is typical. Often the only Mennonite markers in a former Molotschna village are a gate here, a fence there, a crumbling school building, tombstones with faded names.

Even so, a visit to Ukraine can feel like a homecoming. Midway through the cruise I climbed into a large van which would take about fifteen of us to my grandfather's birth village of Orloff, Zagradovka Colony. At least we hoped it would take us there. The van sputtered and ground to a final halt about an hour out of Zaporozhye, where we'd started. The pessimists among us resigned themselves to being pilgrims without a destination. But the efficient tour staff cell phoned for a new van, and we settled in for an hour's wait. Meanwhile I talked at length with our warm and pleasant tour guide, who happened to be an instructor in world literature in her "real life." In the upside-down Ukrainian economy, it's quite possible that she earns more as a guide than as teacher.

The new van arrived, and we travelled on through the rolling Ukrainian steppe. The climate is dry, with an average of 18 inches of rain a year, but the black topsoil is so rich that crops can flourish nevertheless. Many roads and streets are lined with shelterbelts of poplar and acacia, partly a heritage, perhaps, of the extensive tree planting to which the Russian Mennonites were committed. Many trees, but few road signs. We were soon wandering, getting lost, and asking directions from the locals, despite the map clutched by our tour guide. After several hours of backtracking, circling, and lurching down dirt roads which very likely would have been impassable in the rain, we spotted a large sign in Cyrillic letters of blue: Orlove. "Orloff," I shouted, and everyone cheered.

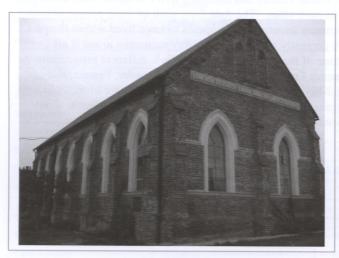
The day turned into an experience of seemingly random blessings. The van stopped at the village community centre, and while we waited, our tour guide emerged with the town administrator who just happened to be there. This lively and intelligent woman then proceeded to show us around Orloff for several hours. We visited a house built by Mennonites and still occupied, quite pleasantly, by an elderly Ukrainian couple. The village school, where my grandfather may have attended and my great grandfather may have taught, was abandoned but still standing. The Orloff administrator contacted her colleague from the village of Tiege, who then showed us his own village, as well as the dilapidated former Mennonite church at Nikolaifeld. Particularly for members of our tour group who had lost family to violence in Zagradovka, the day became a deeply emotional one.

Of course many better-preserved fragments of the Russian Mennonite experience remain. A mill in Molochansk, the former Halbstadt, is still in use (but not as a mill). The Neufeld brewery there stands but is abandoned. The Zentralschule (secondary school) of Halbstadt has been locally renovated with rather unfortunate consequences: the result is something architect Rudy Friesen referred to as "Costco birthday cake style." The splendid Mädchenschule (young women's school) in Chortitza is still in use. And the former Mädchenschule in Halbstadt has been wonderfully renovated, and now operates as the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine. Its presence as a community centre is, in a sense, a gift from the "Mennonite Diaspora."

The Mennonite Centre is a generous response from a troubled past. Ukrainians generally refer to Mennonites as "Germans," a designation that, due to the horrors of World War II, carries some soiled baggage.

Resentment against prosperous tourists is quite evident, as demonstrated by some drunk Ukrainian men who boarded a tour bus and refused to leave until they were given money. And Nestor Makhno, the scourge of Russian Mennonites after the Revolution, has become a patriotic symbol to some. On the other hand, Ukrainians such as the administrator from Orloff are deeply interested in replicating the former Mennonite economic success. Some Ukrainians have also apparently wondered why returning Mennonites, whose families had been driven from their lands after the Russian Revolution, don't bear them a grudge.

The cruise, with extensive lectures from Paul Toews, Alan Peters, and Rudy Friesen, is sometimes "on information overload," and is perhaps better absorbed after it is over. Yet it provides a profound return to the Mennonite past. I was particularly moved by our visit to the Lichtenau train station, from which so many of our ancestors were transported to the slow death of the Soviet gulag. We stood, a small group in a vast steppeland, and sang the Mennonite hymn of parting, "So nimm denn meine Hände" (Take thou my hands).



The Mennonite church building in the former village of Petershagen has been charmingly restored. It now functions as a Mennonite church, although its membership is no longer "ethnic Mennonite" but local Ukrainian. Like Schönsee, the building is uncomplicatedly beautiful. We are invited inside. The pastor greets us with a broad smile, and then a group of young people, eyes gleaming with innocence, sing choruses of joy.

Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

by David Giesbrecht

The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO) is undergoing significant enhancements. The encyclopedia was begun in 1996 as a vision of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, with information primarily concerning Canadian Mennonites. It has now become a global denominational reference source. Our Managing Editor, Sam Steiner, reports that as of January 2007, we have added just over 6,000 entries.

The Editorial Committee is pleased to announce that we now have multiple partners supporting the development of GAMEO:
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Mennonite Central

Committee, the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, and Mennonite Church USA. Moreover, at the beginning of 2007, the Mennonite World Conference also agreed to partner with this project, and through MWC, we anticipate that a representative from the Global South will be appointed to the GAMEO's Management Board.

Thanks to Herald Press, we have been given permission to upload the five volumes of the existing print Mennonite Encyclopedia. This is a labor-intensive undertaking, which we hope to have completed by mid 2008. It is significant that much of this content as well as a large

volume of newly written material is already searchable on our site.

The growth of our database is forcing some extensive technical changes, allowing for a greater degree of content management. While all of the editors from across US and Canada work in a voluntary capacity, technical changes are not free. We welcome donations to cover the approximately \$8,000.00 that this upgrade will cost us.

Access to GAMEO is free to anyone with an internet-connected computer. Please check us out at [http://www.gameo.org] Finding information is user friendly.

Genetic Genealogy: A New Tool for Mennonite Genealogists

by Tim Janzen

In the past six years, DNA analysis has been increasingly used by genealogists as a tool to answer genealogical questions or to confirm assumed relationships. Up to this point most research has focused on the Y chromosome, which is only found in males and is passed down from father to son. If two males share a recent common ancestor then their Y chromosomes should be identical, or at least nearly identical. The more dissimilar any two males' Y chromosomes, the more distantly related they are. Genealogists have been analyzing the DNA samples from many men with the same surname to see if they share a common recent ancestor.

The largest surname project in the world thus far is the Williams project which includes over 400 different males with the surname Williams. In Mennonite circles, Glenn Penner has collected DNA samples from about 30 different male Penners who are not known to be related to each other. The data from each of these people indicates that all but one branch of the Penners descend from a common ancestor who appears to have lived within the past 400 to 600 years. Other Mennonite surname projects are currently underway for many surnames to see if all branches descend from the same male progenitor or if some of the surnames have multiple different progenitors.

Based on the results available at this time, surnames Froese, Hiebert, Janzen, Schroeder, Penner, and Wieler all appear to have more than one progenitor—possibly due to either adoption or illegitimate birth, situations referred to as *non-paternity events* (NPEs). These situations complicate research since it is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine precisely where the NPE occurred and/or who the real father was.

Family Names of the Present day Low-German Mennonite Population¹

Abrahams, Abrams	Adrian	Albrecht	Allert
Andreas, Andres	Arends, Arent	Bachdach, Bagdach	Baltzer, Balzer
Banman, Banmann, Bannmann	Barckmann, Bergmann	Barg, Berg, Barch	Bartels, Bartholomaeu
Bartsch, Bartz	Bauer, Buhr	Becker, Boecher	Behrends, Behrendt
Behrlen, van Baerlen	Bergen, Bargen, van Bargen, von Bergen	Bestvader, Bestvater	Beuningen
Bickert, Bueckert	Blatz	Block	Boese
Boettcher	Bock	Boldt, Boltz	Bollee
Born	Boschmann, Buschmann	Brand, Brandt	Braun, Bruhn
Breuel	Brucks	Buhler	Buller
Busenitz	Casper, Kasper	Claassen, Klaassen, Klassen	Conrad
Conwentz	Cornelius, Cornelsen, Cornies, Knelsen	Dacker, Decker	Dahlen
Daniels	Dau	Decker	Dell, Dill, Doell
Dellesky, Dollesky	Derksen, Dircksen, Dirksen, Doerksen	Dick, Dyck, van Djik, Dueck	Dickmann, Dyckmann
Diederich	Donner, Donnet	Drewke, Drewki	Driedger
Dunkel	Eidse, Eytzen	Elias	Engbrecht, Engmann
Enns, Enss, Ensz, Entz	Epp, Epps	Erdmann, Ertmann	Esau
Ewert	Fademrecht, Fadenrecht	Falk	Fast
Fehr, de Fehr, de Veer, Veer	Feith	Fieguth, Figut	Fisch
Flaming, Flemming	Fock, Focking, Fokk, Fokking	Frantz	Frey
Friesen, von Riesen	Froese	Funk	Gerbrandt
Giesbrecht	Ginter, Guenther	Gertz, Goertz, Gertzen, Goerzen	Goosen
Groening	Hamm	Harder	Harms
Heide	Heidebrecht	Heinrichs	Hempel
Heppner, Hoeppner	Hiebert, Huebert	Holtzrichter	Hooge

¹ Chart from www.mennonitedna.com, accessed March 21, 2007. Used by permission.

Horn	Hildebrand	Isaac	Janzen
Joost	Kaetler, Kettler	Kasdorf	Kauenhowen
Kehler	Kliewer	Klingenberg	Klippenstein
Koop	Krahn	Krause	Kroeger, Krueger
Kroeker	Kropp	Lehn	Lemke, Lemke
Lepp, Loepp	Leppke, Loeppky	Letkeman	Loewen
Mantler	Martens	Mathies	Momber
Nachtigal	Neubauer, Niebuhr	Neudorf	Neufeld
Neumann	Neustaedter	Nickel, Nikkel	Niessen, von Niessen
Olfert	Pankratz	Pauls	Penner
Peters	Petkau, Paetkau	Philipsen	Plett
Pries	Quapp	Quiring	Rahn
Ratzlaff	Redekop	Regehr, Regier	Reimer
Rempel	Richert	Riediger	Rosenfeld
Roy, von Roy	Sawatzky	Schapansky	Scheffler
Schellenberg	Schmidt	Schroeder	Schultz
Schwartz	Siebert	Siebrandt	Siemens
Spenst	Sperling	Sprunk	Steen, van Steen
Steffens	Steingart	Stobbe	Stoesz
Striemer	Suckau	Suderman	Teichgrob, Teichgraef, Deichgraef
Γillitzky	Tessman, Thessman	Tessmer	Tgart, Tiahrt
Γhielmann	Thiessen, Tiessen	Thimm	Thun
Гimmermann	Toews	Unger	Unrau, Unruh
van Almonde	Viegut, Vock	Vocking	Vogt
Voth, Foth	Wall	Warkentin	Wedel
Werner	Westerwick	Wiebe	Wieler, Wiehler
Wiens	Wilcke, Woelke	Winter	Wolf
Zacharias	ce. The recommiss of saldem is		

Mitochondrial DNA

Also of interest to genealogists is mitochondrial DNA. Mitochondrial DNA is always passed down from mother to child; testing can trace the mitochondrial DNA sequence for any given individual's maternal line. Mitochondrial DNA mutates relatively infrequently; on average only 3% chance of mutation in any of the bases in the mitochondrial DNA sequence in any given generation. Thus, if two people share the same great grandmother on the maternal line of descent then they would have identical mitochondrial DNA sequences, or at the most one base that differs. For example, I am currently having selected people tested who descend from the early Loewen families in the Chortitza Colony to help me learn which early Loewen family my great great grandmother Maria Loewen (d. ca 1853)(Grandma #55831) was a member of.

Since humans also have 44 autosomal chromosomes containing a total about 3 billion base pairs there is also a huge amount of information in these chromosomes that is potentially of interest to genealogists. It appears that autosomal DNA will be of most help in determining relationships between people who share a common ancestor within the past 6 to 8 generations. Each parent passes on ½ of their autosomal DNA to each of their children. Siblings share 50% of the same autosomal DNA markers and first cousins share 12.5% of the same markers. The more distantly related two people are to each other the fewer autosomal markers they would share.

In 2004, Amelia Reimer and Glenn Penner began a DNA project for Mennonites and Amish with the company Family Tree DNA (www.familydna.com). So far, 158 members are participating in that project. Of these, 101 people are of Low German Mennonite ancestry. Recently, Glenn Penner and Richard Thiessen set up a web site at www.mennonitedna.com that is focused solely on the DNA results for Mennonites of Low German ancestry. The long term goals are to determine the number of male progenitors there were for each Mennonite surname, to

determine how many female Mennonite progenitors there were, and to use the DNA results to complement traditional genealogical research in determining relationships among various ancestors.

The DNA results that have come in give fascinating insight into the geographic origin of various Mennonite surnames. The Y chromosome results strongly suggest that progenitors with the surnames Epp, Loewen, Wiebe, and Hiebert, as well one line of Janzens and one line of Wielers, were Frisians, originally from Friesland in the northeastern portion of the Netherlands. Progenerators with the surnames Fehr, Thiessen, Neufeld, Friesen, and Wall were of Anglo-Saxon origin, suggesting that they originally lived somewhere in the vicinity of the Netherlands or northwestern Germany, while surnames Dyck, Bartsch, and Reimer suggest that their progenitors lived more along the coast of Europe, possibly as far south as Iberia. Surnames Froese, Ratzlaff, as well as one line of Wielers and one line of Schroeders were likely part of a common European variety called the Atlantic Modal Haplotype.

Family Tree DNA is an excellent resource, but because of its high cost (the 37-marker Y chromosome test for males costs \$259 USD and the mitochondrial DNA test for Hypervariable Regions 1 and 2 costs \$189 USD), many genealogists use the free testing service provided by the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation in Salt Lake City, Utah. This foundation was established in 1999 and is funded by philanthropist James Sorenson. In December 2005, I discovered that one could readily extract ones DNA markers from the foundation's online Y chromosome database at http://www.smgf.org/pages/ydatabase.jspx by changing the marker values on the search screen until all the correct values appear. So far, at least 200 Mennonites have sent DNA samples to the Sorenson Foundation. It usually takes at least 6 to 12 months for one's results to appear in the foundation's databases.

The Sorenson Foundation is currently testing 43 Y chromosome makers, the 3 hypervariable regions of the mitochondrial DNA, and 300 autosomal DNA markers. Their mitochondrial DNA database was released in July and is available at http://www.smgf.org/mtdna/search.jspx. Their autosomal DNA database will be released in about a year. The foundation is comparing the autosomal markers found in the Mennonites who have sent in samples with the genealogical data in the Grandma database and other genealogical information to infer the various autosomal markers that each of our Mennonite ancestors carried in their DNA. This information will then be used to determine relationships among people that can't be determined through traditional genealogical research.

At this point a DNA sample from anyone of Mennonite ancestry, particularly older Mennonites, would be helpful. (Ideally, it would be best to have all older Mennonites tested). If anyone has questions about DNA testing in general feel free to contact Glenn Penner at gpenner@uoguelph.ca and/or me at tjanzen@comcast.net. To contribute a DNA sample to the project, order a free test kit at http://www.smgf.org/pages/request_kit.jspx; and enter "Mennonite project" in the "Additional Comments" section at the bottom of the form. Please let Glenn and/or me know if you order a kit, since we are trying to keep track of the Mennonites who have sent samples to the Sorenson Foundation so that we can extract the results from the databases as they become available. The test requires a sample of cells from the inside of your mouth that comes from rinsing your mouth with a mouthwash, and a copy of your pedigree chart.

The archive of the MHSBC also has Sorenson Foundation test kits and will help you in collecting a sample. If you live in Abbotsford, Richard Thiessen is willing to come to your home to collect a sample if you are unable to come to the archive. Call him at (604) 853-3567, ext. 336 if you are interested in having him do this for you.

UCFV to present History of North American Mennonites course

The Mennonite Historical Society of BC commends the University College of the Fraser Valley for scheduling a course on Mennonite history to be taught in summer of 2007. "History 396G: The History of North American Mennonites" will be taught by well known local resident, Bruce Hiebert (BA, University of Manitoba), MTS (Vancouver School of Theology), MDiv (Mennonite Biblical Seminary), PhD Candidate.

"This course will explore the Mennonite experience in North America from the late 1600s to the present day. Beginning with their roots in the Protestant Reformation, the course will explore how and why Mennonites arrived in North America over the centuries and what they experienced once here. Specific foci of the course will include Mennonite pacifism and the conscriptions of the 20th century; transformations in Mennonites from a rural to urban people; changing relationships between men and women; the current multiplicity of Mennonitisms; and the development of Mennonite Central Committee. While not the focus of the class, the course will pay special attention to the formation of the Mennonite communities in the Fraser Valley." (from UCFV course catalogue) The class will take place in the late summer session, July 3 to August 2, 2007.

Terror on the Baltic as told by Agnes Pauls to Helen Rose Pauls

details about the Gustloff from Günter Grass, Crabwalk (Im Krebsgang), trans. Krishna Winston. Göttingen, Steidl Verlag, 2002 (English translation, Orlando, FL, Harcourt Inc., 2003).

What would have been a seven hour pleasure cruise in better times became a seven day nightmare. We had fled our home in Chortitza, Ukraine, in 1943, as the German army began its retreat. We were fortunate enough to get a train ticket to Danzig, Poland. We settled nearby in Zopot and life was beginning to show some signs of normalcy. My husband had a job. We had a roof over our heads. The two children had enough to eat. Suddenly TERROR stalked us once more as the Russians began to attack Poland with force. My husband sensed our hopeless situation and made hurried arrangements for myself and the children, my two sisters, his sister, and three other Mennonite mothers with small children to be transported to Germany. He and the other fathers had to remain behind to become soldiers in the Volksturm (German army deployed against the Allies as a last desperate measure.) A train took us to Gutenhafen (Gydinia) where we were to board a ship which would continue to Insel Rugen, Germany, a resort town on the Baltic Sea.

The roads and harbors of Poland were filled with thousands of refugees, mostly women and children, in horse carts and on foot, fleeing before the Russian army and the terror of rape, injury and death. The temperature



was minus 18 degrees Centigrade on January 30, 1945. Ice covered the roads. Freezing winds howled.

When we got to the harbor, there were no facilities to handle the crowds of despairing refugees; no food or lodging. People slept on their bundles and ate what food they had been able to bring along. All had a common goal: to get onto ships for Germany. The Russians were not far behind.

Finally, a ship, the Gustloff, entered the harbor. Hope stirred anew through the crowd and they came as a wave to the gangplank. Refugees were forcibly held at

bay while the registered passengers entered; some military personnel and their families, as well as the women and children of the upper class. Once the ship had taken on these passengers, pandemonium broke out as everyone clamored for ship space. The screaming of children and mothers who had lost each other in the press of the crowd, and the shoving for position made organization impossible. Those in charge simply took a rope and made a huge circle, and those inside were allowed up the gangplank. More families were separated in this process and the bedlam increased. Old and young fell to their death from overfull gangplanks; abandoned bedrolls and suitcases littered the harbor. We were left behind clutching our meager belongings. Every breath was a prayer and a cry for help.

The Gustloff was not a Red Cross transport or a cargo ship but a pleasure cruiser built in 1936 in Hamburg by the Blohm and Voss company, commissioned by the German Labor Front and its subsidiary 'Strength through Joy,' which took laborers and white-collar workers on excursions on the Baltic Sea. It was named after a Party comrade shot [martyred] by a Jew. The ship was christened in May of 1937 by Gustloff's widow as Hitler looked on. The ship had cost 25 million Reich marks, was 208 meters long, had 8 levels and a glassed in promenade deck against the bitter Baltic weather. Projected crew was 417 with 1,463 passengers. It was to have only one passenger class and set an example for the desired unity of the German people. For the duration of the war, it had lain in port, used first as a war hospital and then barracks for a military training facility supplying a constant stream of cannon fodder for the German army. Now it was pressed into service.

A second large ship, the Potsdam, came into view and had room for us. Flotillas of other ships, large and small, were taking their places to rescue the refugees like another Dunkirk. We struggled on board the Potsdam that had been built for 2,000 passengers. Now 10,000 persons clung to every ladder, rail and post. Fog was thick. The Baltic Sea was heavily mined and two mine sweepers accompanied us as we departed and the ship groped through the fog and the darkness. First a rumor and then the truth swirled throughout our ship. The Gustloff, which had left the harbor 15 minutes before us, was sinking. Those on outside decks could hear the shouts and cries of those going under. Our

ship was in turmoil. Some cried and prayed their last prayers. Others screamed. I silently bowed my head. After all that I had been through and survived: losing my ancestral home in Russia when Stalin took power, escaping from the gulag death camps as a young women, fleeing to Danzig with my husband and two small children during the war--now I and my children, my sisters and my friends would die on this ship and sink into a watery grave. One of the mothers with us kept screaming and crying, "I will never see my Abraham again!"

The Gustloff registered 6,600 passengers the night of January 30, 1945, but the officers ceased counting as approximately 4,000 more pressed onto the decks. Of the over 10,000 people, 1,230 were rescued, among them an embarrassing number of men. Apparently some of the lifeboats were missing and others had mechanisms that were iced up. The crew was inexperienced and unfamiliar with the apparatus. The front part of the ship was locked off and these passengers along with a 1,000 more in the glassed-in promenade deck could not escape. Only one minesweeper escorted the ship and the U-boat locater was frozen. Life jackets were insufficient and all were adult size. Of those 8,000 and more who perished that night, 4,500 were children, many of them found the next morning floating upside-down in oversize life jackets, their little frozen feet poking up.

On the Potsdam, there followed seven days of terror and misery. Food for only a one day journey had been placed on the ship but few could reach the dining halls for the press of the crowd. We rationed what was in our rucksacks, and my sister would line up for water, which was rationed so guardedly that we suffered constant thirst. We slept in the aisles, pressed together in one big room, or standing up, sitting on stairs or our belongings. My listless children were able to double up on a cabin bunk. My every breath was a prayer for safety and a cry for help. I was sure that we would go down at any time!

But somehow, we survived the trip, and the ship entered the harbor at Insel Rugen amid as many shouts of joy as parched and aching throats could muster. What should have taken seven hours took seven days, but we walked off the ship, exhausted, starving but not hopeless. Many children and old people had succumbed during the voyage, their bodies pitched overboard. There was a makeshift refugee camp where we landed at Insel Rugen, with straw to sleep on; with food and water. But we had to move on. My sister-in-law had an address in Dudestadt of an officer she had worked for and we managed to find a train in that direction. By a string of amazing circumstances, I was reunited with my husband after the war and eventually came to Canada, settling on a farm in Chilliwack, British Columbia. Not a day goes by that we fail to be thankful for freedom and safety in this wonderful country; for warmth, for food, for shelter, for life itself.

Years later, Heinz Schön, survivor and assistant ship's purser on the Gustloff, painstakingly researched this disaster. Gunter Grass shed more light on this disaster in his novel *Crabwalk*. For many years there had been silence about the Gustloff. It was as if the worst marine disaster in history had never happened. After the wall came down in 1990, a reunion was planned for the survivors. Five hundred gathered to share their memories. None had forgotten the collective death cry when the ship sank, and some hear it still, every day.

Photos of Gustloff from Kappes, Irwin J. "Wilhelm Gustloff: The Greatest Marine Disaster in History... and why you probably never heard of it," retrieved 2007, February 14 from http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/articles/wilhelmgustloff.aspx. Used by permission.

Operation Hannibal was a <u>German military operation</u> involving the withdrawal of German troops and civilians from <u>East Prussia</u> in mid-January 1945 as the invading <u>Soviet Red Army</u> advanced.

By early January 1945, <u>Karl Dönitz</u> had realized that Germany was soon to be defeated and, wishing to save his submariners, had radioed a coded message on January 23 to <u>Gdynia</u> (Gotenhafen) to flee to the west and the operation <u>codename</u> "<u>Hannibal</u>." Dönitz's avowed aim had been to evacuate as many people as possible away from the Soviets.

However, as late as April 1945, <u>Adolf Hitler</u> believed the war had to go on. The flood of <u>refugees</u> eventually turned the operation into one of the largest <u>emergency evacuations</u> by sea in history (over a period of four months some 1100 German ships (including ore haulers, freighters, naval vessels and fishing boats) would transport over two million people across the <u>Baltic Sea</u> to Germany.

Operation Hannibal. (2007, February 16). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:58, February 26, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Operation Hannibal&oldid=108549074

Book review: Günter Grass, Crabwalk (*Im Krebsgang*), trans. Krishna Winston. Göttingen, Steidl Verlag, 2002 (English translation, Orlando, FL, Harcourt Inc., 2003). by Robert Martens

"...[I]t still seems as though nothing can top the Titanic, as if the Wilhelm Gustloff had never existed, as if

there were no room for another marine disaster, as if only the victims of the *Titanic* could be remembered, not those of the *Gustloff*ⁿ (63). In his compelling novel, *Crabwalk*, German writer Günter Grass asks why the sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, the greatest marine disaster in history, is unknown to most of the world. Russian U-boat torpedoes sank it in 1945, killing about 9000-10,000 people. The *Gustloff* and its convoy were loaded far beyond capacity with German refugees, Mennonites among them, who were fleeing the atrocities of the advancing Soviets in the waning months of



World War II. To be sure, the ship listed a fair number of military personnel among its passengers. Most who died, however, were women and children. The sinking of the *Gustloff* has been ignored primarily for ideological reasons: it was a ship under the command of German fascists. Paul, the narrator of *Crabwalk*, feels compelled to resurrect this story. "...I still feel uncomfortable with anyone who has one thing, and one only, on his mind..."(71), he says, indicating his dislike of ideology of any kind, and the novel goes on to reconstruct the tragic history of the sinking.

The book's premise is that Paul was born either on the *Gustloff* or a rescue ship on the night of the sinking. His overbearing mother, fascist son, and he himself are captives of this story, and Paul seeks, by retelling the incident, to free himself from the past. "But I'm still not sure how to go about this: should I do as I was taught and unpack one life at a time, in order, or do I have to sneak up on time in a crabwalk, seeming to go backward but actually scuttling sideways, and thereby working my way forward fairly rapidly?" (3) With its seamless interweaving of real events and fiction, Grass's book reads almost like a memoir. In fact the first half of the novel focuses primarily on the history leading to the sinking, and on the three men most closely linked to the tragedy.

Wilhelm Gustloff, born January 30, 1895 (the Nazis were to seize power, coincidentally, on January 30, 1933), was an organizer on the far right anti-elitist wing of Hitler's National Socialist party. In 1936 he was assassinated in Davos, Switzerland by David Frankfurter, a German Jew who claimed he acted on principle. The third individual in this triad was Aleksandr Marinesko, the hard-drinking Soviet U-boat captain who ordered the firing of torpedoes on the *Gustloff* on January 30, 1945. It is a fascinating history that seems random and yet somehow mysteriously connected.

The Wilhelm Gustloff, named after the German "martyr," was christened in 1937 with Hitler and party stalwarts in attendance. It was a wonderfully constructed cruise ship, designed to relieve the stress of party members through sea vacations, and intended to do so classlessly, with rich and poor, connected and unconnected, mingling on all decks. During the war the Gustloff was utilized as a military ship, and finally as one of many boats leaving Poland with desperate German refugees on board. On the night of January 30, 1945, Marinesko ordered the firing of four torpedoes on the Gustloff, which quickly sank. Ironically, the torpedo painted with the inscription, FOR STALIN, misfired. How many died that night will never be exactly known. "The numbers I am about to mention are not accurate. Everything will always be approximate. Besides, numbers don't say much. The ones with lots of zeros can't be grasped.... This raises the question, to which no answer can be hoped for: What does one life more or less count?" (162)

With the telling of this history, the novel is more than half over. Paul is urged to write his own story by "the old man," never named, but probably Günter Grass himself. Paul is then further compelled, within the frame of the narrative, to pursue the story when he discovers a website devoted to the "martyr" Wilhelm Gustloff and the sinking of the ship. To his horror, he learns that the webmaster is his son, Konrad. An online debate takes place between Konrad and an individual who uses the pseudonym David, after Gustloff's assassin, David Frankfurter. Paul, ignorant of his true father, attributes his aimless journalist's life to fatherlessness, disconnection. And perhaps for this reason he is unable to create a relationship with his son, and to prevent the ensuing tragedy.

Konrad is living near Schwerin, Gustloff's birthplace, with Paul's mother, who provides no moral compass for her grandson. Paul compulsively returns to Schwerin, in order to attempt an understanding of his son's

behaviour. He visits the largely destroyed monument built by the Nazis to commemorate the murder of Gustloff (the monument to Lenin, however, is still standing!), but neither his trip nor his dispassionate research on the sinking of the ship are capable of saving his son. On April 20, Hitler's birthday, Konrad meets with "David" and fires four shots into his body, as David Frankfurter had done years ago.

"Must this story keep repeating itself?" (225) Does history bind or free us? David Frankfurter spent some years in prison, then moved on to Israel, where he served as an official in the Ministry of Defense. Aleksandr Marinesko did not receive the honours he thought he deserved for the sinking of the *Gustloff* until after his death; in fact, the Soviets, possibly somewhat embarrassed by the mass deaths of women and children, temporarily exiled him to Siberia. And on the fictional side of *Crabwalk*, the characters confront history without being changed by it. Paul still drifts through life, unable to find a moral centre. His mother remains a controlling medusa, and Konrad continues with the "coherent insanity" (208) of fascism. "It's the evil that needs to come out" (228). The novel ends with a cry of despair: "It doesn't end. Never will it end" (234). So is there any point to remembering the past? Although the narrative of *Crabwalk* ends inconclusively, the underlying feeling of the novel is a prayer for coherence, for completeness. The characters may arrive nowhere, but the reader does not. The remembrance of things past in *Crabwalk* provides a sense of meaning within the whirlwind of history.

Ben and Linda's Ukraine

from letters by Ben and Linda Stobbe, summer 2006

We felt much more comfortable coming back to work here the second time around. We knew what stores sold which items and which clerks would be most helpful. We had developed back-up plans in case we got into trouble. So when I told Linda and Kate that I could go to the milk store to buy water I thought this was very straight forward. Here is my best recollection of the dialogue as I picked up two 4 litre jugs of water.

Ben – "Vada, nyet gas" (water, no gas). I expected her to say "da" (yes)

Bemused clerk --- lkdjwieraya, safdoewiru,diur (in Russian or Ukrainian)

Ben ---- nyet gas? (no gas?)

Bemused clerk ---lksdjjfoiaya, sklkrwe (or something similar)

Ben ---making contorted face "nyet gas!"

Smiling clerk --- kdjfsdopfaya, kjsfiewui (or something similar)
Ben, taking out cell phone and phoning Kate to ask her to explain to clerk, "I want no gas in my water." Hand phone to clerk so she can talk to Kate.

Laughing clerk – jsdfjpeuruaya, lkjrewur (or something similar)

At this point I have to take my chances, hoping Kate has told her I want water with no gas. I don't want to lug two jugs home, up a flight of stairs, only to hear a fizz when I open them. Thankfully when I opened it, it didn't sound like a bicycle tire going flat.

One of the amazing things you find is that when the locals realize you don't understand a thing they are saying, they talk louder and simply add more words. They must assume that eventually they will hit upon one of the 200 Russian words we do understand.... Same chance as seeing a Ukrainian wearing a seat belt...

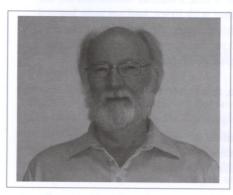
We only had Kate for a little more than half the time we were here. She spent one week being the nurse at the teen camp and then took an additional two weeks leave. While that was a challenge it also was very good for us. Kate is very competent; however, sometimes bringing a translator along can leave you with the feeling that that you are not connecting directly with the locals. So we make do. For example, when Linda and Hilda went to Zaporozhye to meet with the breast cancer support group a translator was arranged for them. Olga, our receptionist, was a great help when we needed translation. On Thursday night at the Ukrainian Independence Day celebrations in Molochansk we met Marina, a school principal, who speaks German. We had the benefit of her translation services and her numerous contacts. Today we went to Neukirch, a village south of here, and the group we met with found a young university student who speaks passable English. We also have the Aussiedler missionaries here who speak German. We have a watchman who speaks some English, and our maintenance man, Vitalya, is remembering key

English words and phrases. Our receptionist's granddaughter helps us with her English. And, after the initial nervousness they all seem eager to help. And their status goes up in the eyes of the locals.

And the most encouraging news we heard came early this week from an Aussiedler German lady who was with a group touring the villages of their parents. When we started to describe what the Centre is all about, she interrupted us and said, "we have already heard all about you. In every village where we went, when the Ukrainians and Russians heard that we were Mennonites, they told us about the wonderful Mennonite Centre in Molochansk that is helping so many people." She said that as Aussiedler they could now talk to the Ukrainians in a way they never could before. And the week ended with a 77-year old Ukrainian lady in Neukirch describing how, as a little girl, she joined her Mennonite friends in the Mennonite Church and listened to the choir singing in the balcony, accompanied by an organ. Her closed eyes were a bit moist when with a sigh she said, "kraseevay" (beautiful). They don't forget-nor should we.

Meet Board Member Ben Braun

by Helen Rose Pauls



Ben Braun is the friendly man often spotted in the archives, working on a computer. He is in charge of the MHS of BC website and is the treasurer. Ben is on the Cemetery Committee, indexing and photographing gravestones. He also scans Mennonitische Rundschau into the computer. "Twenty years are done," he says, "with another 110 years to go." Ben joined the board of MHSBC when the former treasurer, Henry Martens, asked him to take his place.

Ben's parents, Ike Braun and Anne Reimer, were the first to be married in the Sardis [now Greendale] M.B.Church building in 1940. Ben arrived in 1942 and lived his early years in Chilliwack. Soon after his birth, his dad had to go to the CO camp in Radium Hot Springs. His most unforgettable adventure was the flood of '48. "We had 13 feet of water at our farm on Chadsey road

and the house shifted on its foundation, held only by the hydro wires. The chicken barn floated over the creek and when the water went down it was half in and half out. One day after the water went down my dad and I were checking the property and dad got a telegram telling him that his brother John had died in a mining accident...my earliest memory of seeing adults cry." The family was resettled to Cultus Lake and later the hopyard cabins, where his sister Julie [Floodie], a red-haired beauty, was born. Two more children, Walter and Ken, joined the family, but all of Ben's siblings and his parents have passed on, leaving him the only remaining family member.

Ben began school at Greendale Elementary and remembers teachers Ella Adrian and Kay Fast. He attended Chilliwack Junior High, Sardis Junior High and later Chilliwack Senior High where he met Mary Luella Hildebrandt from Eden Mennonite Church. It was a mixed marriage [MB/GC]. Ben took an Industrial Electronics correspondence course from DeVry Institute and ended up computer programming in Toronto and has been enjoying that ever since. Karen and Janice were born there. In 1980. the Brauns moved to Langley, transferred back to Toronto in 1987,

and came back to Clearbrook in 2001, closer to their aging mothers. In 1992, Ben began Ben Braun Software and served a variety of clients in mainframe computer programming and web design, including the gideons.ca website.

Ben and Mary's daughter Karen is now a computer programmer for the Bank of Canada and lives near Ottawa with daughters Natalie and Ashley and husband Dan Westrup. Janice, a wildlife biologist, and Steve Arndt live in the West Kootenays with children Justin and Bethany.

Ben says he often has to spell his last name and people either call him *Brown* or *Brawn*. "My dad thought that Anglos should get our name right, as they managed Audi, Strauss and Chrétien [Kretchen]. Then I noticed that in Low German it was pronounced *Brun*, so if we can't get it right in Low German, how can we expect the English to get it right?"

"My favorite color is brown of course, and my favorite car is still my first one: a two-tone 53 Meteor, automatic, V8. My hobbies are genealogy, computers and digital photography, all of which I can pursue at the archives.

In Magic Progress Report by Lora Sawatsky and Erica Suderman



Volunteer Lou Enns working on InMagic.

"More than one year ago we began implementing the InMagic program at the archives," says Erica Suderman. Approximately 15 volunteers are working with Erica toward the five-year objective of implementation. "There are three basic steps to this process," Erica explains. "At this time our job is to arrange and describe our records so they conform to the Rules of Archival Description (RAD). When our records conform to RAD, they will also conform to the InMagic fields of description. After these two steps are completed, we are ready for step number three which is to enter this description into the computer."

InMagic is a computerized database indexing specifically designed for archives and museums and is set up to conform to the standards of Canadian Council of Archives. MHSBC received the InMagic

software in June of 2005. This was followed by a 3-day workshop with Linda Willis, a teacher-consultant for the Archival Association. By the beginning of November 2006, volunteers, together with Erica, had not only learned the process, but had rearranged and re-described the files of more than 50 archival boxes. In addition, volunteer Jake Geddart had scanned and described 450 photographs to conform to RAD requirements. Erica adds that the biographical and subject sections of the vertical files are being arranged in alphabetical order.

Much of this material is newsprint and, since newsprint deteriorates with time, this material has been copied in order to provide a more permanent record.

Although this is a lengthy and tedious process, our volunteers are keeping in mind the goal of accessing records efficiently through computerized indexing. We are looking forward to the time when all materials relating to a particular subject field of inquiry can be accessed with the computer. Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers!

Food in South Russia in the early 1900's

Spring time to Mennonites living close to the land in Ukraine meant a welcome change in diet. Cows freshened, and gave rich milk. Cottage cheese Vereniki (pirogies), coffee with cream, cream gravy, clabbered milk and milk Mus appeared on the table along with eggs—chickens were finally laying. The first fruit of spring, rhubarb, pushed out of the ground.

Here are the menus for breakfast, lunch and supper. Fesper, the mid-afternoon break, had little variation, and consisted of white bread (bulki) or rye bread, and jam or syrup. Drinks were tea, coffee, and milk (fresh or clabbered).

Menu for one week of March, April and May²

Sunday	Breakfast	Rührei, brown bread, white coffee, Zwieback, jam
HAR SEP BAY	Lunch	Boiled potatoes (skinned), cream gravy, brown bread, glass of milk
	Supper	Fried potatoes, brown bread, sweet milk Mus
Monday	Breakfast	Fried potatoes with egg, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
PLY SECULIFIE	Lunch	Tjieltje with fried onion fat, brown bread, a cup of milk
THE SEPTEMENT	Supper	Boiled potatoes (skinned), gravy, one cup milk
Tuesday	Breakfast	Rührei, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
	Lunch	Roll Kuchen, jam, one cup of milk
10.1484	Supper	Salad with egg, onion, potatoes, vinegar, dill pickles, clabbered milk

² From a manuscript by D. Peters, translated by John B. Toews, transcribed by Katherine Hooge. (see Roots and Branches, Vol. 12 N. 2 for more details.)

Wednesday	Breakfast	Fried potatoes with egg, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
resins \$10	Lunch	Cottage cheese Vereniki with cream sauce, a glass of milk
- Activity (July)	Supper	Fried potatoes with egg, one glass of milk
Thursday	Breakfast	Fried onions, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
- Length Start Little	Lunch	Boiled potatoes (skinned), cream sauce, fried ham, brown bread, milk
- Medigis	Supper	Salad with egg, onion, potatoes, vinegar, pepper, clabbered milk
Friday	Breakfast	Fried potatoes with egg, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
14岁18月	Lunch	Waffles [with] rhubarb sauce, clabbered milk
Tong (tile)	Supper	Boiled barley soup, buttered brown bread
Saturday	Breakfast	Fried potatoes, brown bread, white coffee, Bulki, syrup
cating and eat	Lunch	Beans with fried onions, brown bread, clabbered milk
of one of the	Supper	Rhubarb Platz, sweet tea with fruit sauce

The menu above reflects the diet in the early 1900's. By the 1930's, famine stalked the land and these foods became a distant memory.

Stinging Nettle--Famine food and spring tonic

by Louise Bergen Price

I don't like gardening in gloves, but several times a years I pull them on and prepare to tackle the stinging nettles that thrive in the forest loam soil of our garden. Always, I remember my great-grandparents, banished to Siberia, who likely supplemented their starvation rations with nettles; my frustration as I tug out the long runners is tinged with gratitude.

Stinging nettle has been used as famine food in many areas of the world, from the Great Potato Famine in Ireland, 1845/49, to famines in Scandinavia, Ethiopia, and North India. Chronicler Gerhard Trunkhan writes about a famine in Musikantendorf Hundeshagen in 1772/73 when over a hundred died in the village. There was no grain; sometimes two, three or four weeks went by without a mouthful of bread or anything to cook. "Gras und Brennessel musste man essen wie das Vieh. Gott behüte jeden Menschen für solch eine Zeit." (We had to eat grass and stinging nettles like cattle. May God save each one from experiencing such a time.)³ In another famine in Germany in 1816, the poor mixed stinging nettles with bran to make bread. ⁴

After the second world war, Mennonite refugees living in Germany learned to eat nettles steamed with butter. After a winter of root vegetables, nettles provided variety and nourishment. One of these refugees, Helen Pauls' friend Henry, continues to use stinging nettles. "I dry them each year and crumble the flakes into my Yerba Matte tea. It cuts the bitterness and gives the tea a better flavor."

said (mennonite) louise

it's stinging nettle season, said louise, makes excellent soup, i replied, but you'll need rubber gloves for picking, no, said louise, i use ordinary garden gloves, pick the nettle low on the stem -[recipe for martyrs' mirror soup: 1 tsp. flame from heretic's pyre ½ cp. tongue screws 1 cp. spikes from iron maiden 1/4 cp. cord from drowning sack 2 tbsp. elder's chastisement 2 cp. bitter tears of penance 3-4 tbsp. shunning, as required for taste 0 tsp. alcohol, tobacco, dancing 2 cp. moralizing, whipped until rigid large dash of humility 1 lifetime guilt, for preservative Combine all ingredients and beat well. Heat with sulphur until the pain justifies existence. Set aside to ferment in vale of tears. Dish will be ready on judgement day.] - and anyway, said (mennonite) louise, it must be good for me because it hurts.

by Robert Martens

http://www.musikantendorf-hundeshagen.de/html/biogra.html, accessed Mar 20, 2007.

http://www.museumonline.at/2000/aurolzmuenster/chronik.htm accessed Mar 20, 2007.

Here in BC, people of the Shuswap nation ate cooked nettles as greens; so did early pioneers. Rolf Knight writes: "Each spring Phyllis picked and put up batches of stinging nettle tops as a kind of spinach. They have to be gathered when they are young and tender. You blanch them, cook them with bits of bacon and preserve thirty sealers full to eat with potatoes."

With the recent boom of the health food industry, nettles, which are high in calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, and vitamins B and A, are again becoming popular. Seed catalogues sell nettle roots, so folks can grow their own nettle patches. Health food stores sell nettles in the form of dried leaves, pills and tinctures to cure a lengthy list of ailments including gout, arthritis, hair loss and goitre. Flogging with nettles is said to cure arthritis and chronic rheumatism. Nettle tea is a spring time tonic. Pick the nettles while under 8 inches, cover with boiling water, steep, and serve. Some may prefer to take their tonic in the form of Stinging Nettle Schnapps! 6

Interested in reading more about stinging nettle and other herbs? *A Modern Herbal*, published by M. Grieve in 1931 and published electronically by Botanical.com, lists 800 herbs and contains 'Medicinal, Culinary, Cosmetic and Economic Properties, Cultivation and Folk-Lore of Herbs.' The article on nettles lists recipes for nettle pudding and nettle beer, as well as myriad other uses for the nettle. To conclude her article on the common nettle, M. Grieve quotes the following passage from Les *Misérables* by Victor Hugo: "One day he (Monsieur Madeleine) saw some peasants busy plucking out Nettles; he looked at the heap of plants uprooted and already withered, and said, "They are dead. Yet it would be well if people knew how to make use of them. When the nettle is young, its leaf forms an excellent vegetable; when it matures, it has filaments and fibres like hemp and flax. Nettle fabric is as good as canvas. Chopped, the nettle is good for poultry; pounded it is good for cattle. The seed of the nettle mingled with fodder imparts a gloss to the coats of animals; its root mixed with salt produces a beautiful yellow colour. It is besides excellent hay and can be cut twice. And what does the nettle require? Little earth, no attention, no cultivation. Only the seed falls as it ripens, and is difficult to gather. That is all. With a little trouble, the nettle would be useful; it is neglected, and becomes harmful."

Cream of Nettle Soup

by Robert Martens

The young spring shoots must be gathered with care (ie, a pair of gloves and scissors!) but the effort is well worth it. The shoots can be steamed and eaten like spinach, but a favourite recipe of many is cream of nettle soup. Some recipes call for a boiling of the nettles in two lots of water but this destroys the flavour and the nutrients and is not necessary in order to denature the acid contained in the tiny hairs that is responsible for the stinging.



3 cups water 5 tbsp. butter ½ cup flour 1 cup cream 2 pounds young stinging nettle leaves

5 cups stock 2 egg yolks

1 tsp salt, pinch of pepper

In a large pot bring water to a boil. Drop nettle leaves in slowly so that the water continues to boil, then quickly remove from heat. Drain leaves and set aside. Melt 5

tbsp of butter in a large sauce pan, add flour and stir for a couple of minutes to cook the mixture. Add the stock and stir until the soup thickens and is creamy. Simmer.

In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and the cream. Add about ½ a cup of the soup base, whisk, and then whisk this mixture back into the soup pot. Add the chopped nettles and seasonings and serve

⁵ Rolf Knight. Voyage through the Midcentry. www.sfu.ca/~cknight/VoyageT.doc accessed Feb 20, 2007

 $^{^{6}\} www.danish-schnapps-recipes.com/stinging-nettle-schnapps.html$

⁷ Mrs. M. Grieve. A Modern Herbal. Harcourt, Brace, 1931. Electronic version 1995, by Ed Greenwood, Arcata California, USA. Website http://www.botanical.com; accessed Mar. 15, 2007.

Raising Silkworms

by Lena Giesbrecht Isaac (Village of Unsettled Yearnings, p. 126-127)

My mother, Elizabeth Wittenberg Giesbrecht, born November 13, 1884, in Altonau, Molotschna colony, was an enthusiast who was always eager to start a new venture. Settling in Yarrow in 1928, however, and raising a family of 10 during the miserably lean years of the Great Depression, meant endless hours of demanding chores. Yet the hard work did not quash her creative energies. Invariably she found the time and passion for unique projects. One such project early on was learning the English language. What could better facilitate this than using the Eaton's catalogue as a textbook? Many an hour was spent with the postmaster, Eva Siddall, writing out catalogue orders, and the two developed a close friendship. During one of their sessions, Mother was encouraged to take up silkworm cultivation, a hobby she had practised back in Russia.

The silkworm industry had been strongly promoted among the Mennonites in Russia by Johann Cornies (1789-1848), a successful farmer, businessman, and political leader. By 1845 some 207 families in 35 colonies were involved in this enterprise. Cornies invested much of his own time and money to further the silkworm industry, including building a special girls' school in Orloff, in the southern Ukraine, that offered instruction in silk reeling. Eventually, however, competition from the French and Italians and a silkworm plague resulted in the death of the industry.

After settling in Yarrow, Father, always ready to cooperate with Mother's ventures, responded to her new interest by planting a hedge of some 20 mulberry bushes. These grew very quickly, and within two to three years the leaves were ready for harvesting. In 1940, Eva Siddall contacted government officials in Ottawa, who then ordered and imported silkworm eggs from Japan. Mother was able to start her project.

There are four stages in the life cycle of a silkworm: egg, larva, chrysalis, and adult. The eggs are round, somewhat flattened, and about the size of a turnip seed. Mother kept the eggs in cold storage until the greening of the mulberry bushes in spring, then placed them in the rearing room, where the temperature was 70 to 75° Fahrenheit. The eggs hatched within 10 days. The larvae, about 1/8 inch in length, were immediately ready to receive food. To prepare for feeding them, Father had constructed a raised platform of about 3 1/2 by 15 feet in a small farm building. Here, the larvae were placed on trays with fresh mulberry leaves. Since the larvae fed most of the time, the leaves were quickly devoured and needed replenishing three or four times daily.

The worms grew rapidly, until they were about three inches long. This period of growth lasted 30 to 40 days, during which time the larvae underwent four stages of molting. During each stage, they held their heads up, were motionless, and appeared to be asleep, indicating that feeding would cease for at least 24 to 26 hours. The final molt was the most critical, and disease lurking in the worms would manifest itself at this time. While the worms were molting, special precautions had to be taken: the worms could not be disturbed or fed stale, damp leaves, and trays had to be cleaned twice daily.

When the worms were ready to form cocoons, they crawled over the leaves, shrank somewhat in size, and became transparent. Restless now, they raised and waved their heads as if searching for something to climb upon. And they began to throw out threads of silk. When she noticed these signs, Mother placed branches with small twigs on the trays so the worms could mount the twigs and spin between them. It took three days for the worms to surround themselves with silken strands. The outer threads, known as floss, were spun first to serve as a network. After securing the network, the chrysalises discharged from their inner spinnerets yard upon yard of silken strands, winding the threads around themselves until they finally became invisible in their cocoons.

Eight days after the first worms had begun their spinning, a number of cocoons were set aside to allow moths to emerge, thus ensuring a supply of eggs for the following season. The chrysalises in the rest of the cocoons were then destroyed using one of several methods: placing the cocoons for several hours in an oven set at 70 to 75°, exposing them to the hot rays of the sun, or steaming them. After this, the silken cocoons were ready for reeling.

In the summer of 1942, Mother raised 400 cocoons and experienced much pleasure from the use of her spinning wheel, handcrafted by John Ratzlaff Sr. of Yarrow. After the silk had been spun, she knitted socks, stockings, scarves, sweaters, and shawls for members of the family. These were always very much appreciated.

Village of Unsettled Yearnings: Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise, edited by Leonard Neufeldt. Victoria: Touchwood Editions, 2002. Used by permission.



Have you seen our website? Here you will find past and future events (including texts of various lectures and presentations), lists of family histories, newsletters, lists of major holdings, genealogy resources (including obituary listings from Der Bote, Die Rundschau and other publications) and links to other sites.

The site is maintained and updated by Ben Braun, and designed by Eldon Koop; Mennonite Historical Society of BC, c2001

Look it up at: http://www.mhsbc.com

Die Schönste Lengevitch

Den andern Abend ging mei Frau Und ich a Walk zu nehme'. Of course, wir könnten eine Machin afforden, but ich claime wer forty Waist hat, wie mei Frau, soll exerzeiseh, ennyhow.

Und wie wir so gemütlich geh'n elang die Avenoo, da bleibt a Couple vor uns stehn. Ich notiss gleich ihr' Schuh', und sag zu meiner Frau: "Christine, Ich mach a Wett' das sein zwei Grüne.

A Greenhorn kennt man bei sei Schuhs (Das muss ich euch erkläre). Ich wunder wie sie's stende tun so tighte boots zu weareh. Es gibt mir jedesmal a paindoch dass iss somet'ing else again.

Der Mann stared mich a while lang an als wollt er etwas frage, denn blushed er wie a Kid bis an sei hartgeboilten Krage', und macht a Bow, und sagt zu mir: "Pardong, Sir, holds ze tramway here?"

"In English," sag ich "oder Deutsch da kann ich fluent rede, but die Sprach wo du talke tuhst die musst du mir translehteh." "Sie sprechen Deutsch? Na, lieber Mann, wo hält denn hier die Strassenbahn?"

"Ah, wo die street-car stoppeh tut!" sag ich, "das willst du wisse'! Well, schneidt hier crast die empty Lots, der Weg is hart zu misseh', und dort wo du das Brick House siehst, da turnst du und läufst zwei Block East."

"Ich fürchte ich beläst'ge Sie," sagt er, "mit meinen Fragen; doch würden Sie so gütig sein mir das auf Deutsch zu sagen?"
"In Deutsch!" schrei ich. "Na, denkst denn du
Ich talk in Tschinese oder Soouh?"

Bietet der Nerf nicht eigenes? By gosh, es iss zum lache' In vierzehn Tag vergisst der fool sei eig'ne Muttersprache. Wenn's net fuer uns old Settlers waer, Geb's bald kei Schönste Lengevitch mehr.

Kurt M. Stein

Stein, Kurt M. Die Schönste Lengvitch. Chicago, P. Covici [1926] (in the public domain)

Look for the forthcoming volume, *Windows to a Village* (Pandora Press), which will tell the life stories of a number of people who once called Yarrow, BC home. Edited by Harvey Neufeldt, Maryann Jantzen and Robert Martens, the book attempts to recreate the hothouse atmosphere of this once ethnically Mennonite village.

Roots and Branches is a publication of the Mennonite Historical Society of BC and is mailed three times per year to those who donate \$25.00 or more per year. All donations will be receipted for tax purposes. Your contributions are needed to further this work!

Directors: Ben Braun, David Giesbrecht, Ed Hildebrand, John Konrad, Robert Martens, Peter Neudorf, Helen Rose Pauls, Louise Bergen Price, Lora Sawatsky, Ben Stobbe, Richard Thiessen & John B. Toews. Editor: Louise Bergen Price. Contributing editors: Helen Rose Pauls & Robert Martens Archive Director: David Giesbrecht Staff: Mary Ann Quiring Copy editing: Hugo and Jean Friesen