



The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

Fall 2024

Celebrating the Mennonite Immigration: A Fine Start in Kansas!

By Museum Director, Fern Bartel

As the 150th year of celebration has progressed, we have focused on the issues of leaving South Russia (now Ukraine): what to pack and what to leave behind, leaving some loved ones behind, and what will happen on the very long journey. Now, let's look at what life was like on the Kansas prairie after the immigrants were settled.

"C.B. Schmidt, for many years the immigration commissioner of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, was undoubtedly an unusually skilled and highly successful recruiter of European colonists for his employer." (Rempel, David G., "C.B. Schmidt, Historian: Facts and Fiction," *Mennonite Life Centennial Double Issue*, Mid-Year 1974, p. 33.)

In 1877, C.B. Schmidt took a tour of the villages that the immigrants from South Russia settled. He describes the Alexanderwohl Mennonite settlement of Hochfeld:

"We have reached the elevated village of Hochfeld which permits us a panoramic view of the whole settlement and its land distribution. ... However, not all settlers have established villages. The more prosperous farmers who can purchase a whole section prefer living on their land like little estate owners. Such a farmer is Abraham Reimer." (Schmidt, C.B., "Kansas Mennonite Settlements, 1877," *Mennonite Life*, April 1970, p. 53.)

"The interior of the house (of Abraham Reimer) consisted of two rooms, as yet unplastered, looking like the apartments of any thrifty settler who has not yet had time to plaster his walls. ... In the 'best room' the meeting was in progress. The room was quite full, and the visages of all present were as immovable as the green-and-gold face of a Russian clock that ticked on the wall. These clocks are seen everywhere. They sport a long pendulum with a disk as big as a buck-wheat cake, and only heavy hanging weights of brass. ... In every kitchen there is a Russian teakettle—a large affair of copper, lined with tin."

Kansas, continued on page 3

Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours

November:

Tues - Sat: 12 pm - 4 pm

Closed Sundays & Mondays

Open by appointment

December through February

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group

No Meetings in November
or December.

Antonina Broyaka Presentation

November 17, 2024

2:30 pm

See page 4.

150th Commemorative Event

Community Worship Service
sponsored by the

Goessel Ministerial Alliance

November 24, 2024

10:00 am

Alexanderwohl Church

See page 4.

Annual Meeting

February 2, 2025, 2:00 pm

See page 4.

Low German Saying

Paust auss en Sodel oppe Saaj.

Fits like a saddle on a sow (not becoming or appropriate).

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum Board Members:

John Janzen, President; Pat Penner, Vice-President; Sandy Duerksen, Secretary; Aileen Esau, Treasurer; * Fern Bartel, Museum Director; * Roger Bartel, Myron Goertzen, Kris Schmucker, Lloyd Voth, Nelson Voth, Connie Wiens, James Wiens. *non-voting members

Ditt unt Daut (this and that) by Fern Bartel, Museum Director

Last week a couple stopped by to visit the museum. They were an older couple and the man had grown up in the Corn, Oklahoma, area. What he knew of his ancestors was that they had moved from this Goessel-Hillsboro area. He was not aware of the GRandMA OnLine7 (Prussian/Russian Mennonite Genealogy). Upon giving me his parent's name, I was able to find out that his great-grandfather, on his father's side, was buried at the French Creek Cemetery, north of Hillsboro. Great-grandpa was part of the Deutsch Wymischle Mennonite Villages closer to Warsaw, Poland. (Part of the Johannestal group settling north of Hillsboro, they migrated in 1878.) Filling in the gaps of a person's family history is one of the best parts of my job at the museum.

Treasured Sampler Donated

Reproduction Pattern Available to Try Yourself

When 21-year-old Anna Funk learned that her whole family would be migrating to the U.S. in 1874, she asked her friends to design a motif of some sort that could be embroidered as part of a sampler as a remembrance of their friendship. Such a small item could easily be packed with other linens. This treasured sampler safely traveled across the ocean on the S.S. Teutonia and the prairie to the Funk's new home northeast of Hillsboro. This would become the community of Brudertahl.

Tragedy struck the Funk family in October 1874, when one of Anna's brothers, Heinrich, died. Then in January 1875, Anna's mother Aganetha Wiebe Funk died at the age of 48, leaving four children under the age of 14. Anna took over the care of her younger siblings until her marriage to Kornelius Unruh from Alexanderwohl on August 5, 1879.

Anna, with her treasured sampler, moved to her new home one mile east of the Goessel/K-15 corner and joined the Alexanderwohl Church. She and Kornelius had nine children, and only one did not live to adulthood. Anna made her life in the two-room house, caring for her children and, later, her ailing husband.

Anna was described as a quiet person with a gift for precise, neat needlework, a talent she passed on to her daughters. She also loved flowers and her grandchildren. Years later, one recalled having tea parties in the lilac bushes with Anna.

Anna Funk Unruh was born in Paulsheim, Molotschna, South Russia, to Cornelius and Aganetha Wiebe Funk on November 14, 1853, and died on February 20, 1935, at the age of 82, in Goessel, Kansas.

The sampler passed through several generations before being donated to the museum. Thanks to Linda Stolz, a professional designer, for creating a pattern from Anna's sampler so cross-stitchers can recreate Anna's sampler. Linda's reproduction pattern is available for sale in the museum store.



What else is new?

Also new to the museum store is a revised edition of the book *A Country Midwife: Margaret Hiebert Schroeder, a Pioneer Obstetrician*. Margaret was known as Mrs. Doctor Schroeder to many, delivering babies in the Goessel community and neighboring areas.

Nancy Stucky has created a booklet with the script and slides from the heritage presentation at Country Threshing Days, "From Russia to Kansas: A Story of the 1874 Mennonite Immigration." The program featured firsthand accounts describing the journey of the Alexanderwohl immigrants leaving South Russia and finding a new home in Kansas.

And, don't forget, the museum store offers peppernuts, the Peppernut Plus peppernut maker, Mennonite cookbooks, and other books of local and Kansas history. Stop by to shop local for Christmas, or contact Fern at the museum for mail orders.

Recordings of 150th Events

Do you want to hear a 150th event presentation again or did you miss an event? Recordings of events are available on the museum's website at www.goesselmuseum.com.

Kansas, continued from page 1

"We went next to the house of Peter Schmidt. Had I been an artist I should have sketched Peter Schmidt, of Emmathal, as the typical prosperous Mennonite. He was a big man, on the shady side of forty. His face, round as the moon, was sunburned to a walnut brown. He was very wide fore and aft; he wore a vest that buttoned to his throat, a sort of brown blouse, and a pair of very roomy and very short breeches, while his bare feet were thrust into a sort of sandal very popular with the Mennonites."

Ovens and Fuel

"An immense pile of straw was intended ... for fuel this winter. The Mennonites are economists in the way of fuel, and at the houses are large piles of chopped straw mixed with barnyard manure stacked up for 'firewood.' This kind of fuel destroys one's ideas of the 'cheerful fireside' and 'blazing hearth.' There is not much 'yule-log' poetry about it. Straw sounds and smells better. In order to use it, however, the Mennonites discard stoves, and use a Russian oven built in the wall of the house, which, once thoroughly heated with light straw, will retain its warmth longer than young love itself."

Gardens, Orchards, and Watermelons

"That the Mennonite, the female Mennonite, is not destitute of an eye for the beautiful, was shown by a well-kept flower garden at the end of the house. It is true that the flowers were arranged in straight rows and were such floral old-times as pinks, marigolds and the like, but, after all, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.

"Another source of pride was the apricots. The seed was brought from Russia, and the trees bore plentifully last year. ... Peter Schmidt, showed all his arboreal treasures—apples, cherries, peaches, pears, all in bearing, where seven years ago the wind in passing found only the waving prairie grass.

"The Mennonites have a decided preference for watermelons over every other 'fruit.' They call the melon '*arboosen*,' though we would not be willing to certify that this is the correct spelling."

Mulberries and Silk Dresses

"The most surprising thing about these places is the growth of the trees. I left bare prairie; I returned to find a score of miniature forests in sight from any point of view. The wheat and corn fields were unfenced, of course, but several acres around every house were set in hedges, orchards, lanes and alleys of trees—trees in lines, trees in groups, and trees all

alone. In many cases the houses were hardly visible from the road, and in a few years will be entirely hidden in the cool shade. ...the all-prevailing growth was the mulberry, another Russian idea, which is used as a hedge, a fruit tree, for fuel, and as food for the silk-worm." (Prentis, Noble L., "As Others Saw Them," *Mennonite Life*, April 1970, pp. 59-61.)

Volunteers, Donors Fulfill Mission!

The first mission of the museum is "To preserve and share the story of the Mennonites who migrated from villages in the Molotschna Colony, South Russia (currently Ukraine) to this area of Kansas in 1874." Volunteers and donations have always fueled our Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum. This year has been no exception.

Through your donations and willingness to volunteer we have been able to present amazing programs to appreciative and growing audiences: **January** - Rod Ratzlaff, "Origins of Alexanderwohl, Hoffnungsau, and Lone Tree: The Legacy of the Old Flemish Mennonites of Przechowko"; **February** - Mark Jantzen, "Fifty-three Years in the Russian Empire"; **April** - Heritage Dinner with Mayleen Vinson, "Packing for the Journey"; **May** - Talking Tombstones and cemetery flags; **June** - Arlin Buller, "A Mennonite Story Timeline: The Big Picture"; **July** - Pauline Sharp and Annette Voth, "Kaw People and Alexanderwohl People: Side by Side Stories"; **August** - Nancy Stucky, "From Russia to Kansas: A Story of the 1874 Mennonite Immigration"; **September** - Elementary School Field Trips: "Journey of a Lifetime" and "Immigrant House Pilgrimage."

In our September programs at the museum, we reached an audience of over 200 elementary students with about 35 adult chaperones. About 20 volunteers each put in over 20 hours of presentation time and many more hours preparing for the presentations.

The Sunday afternoon "Immigrant House Pilgrimage" reached an audience of about 275. Over 50 volunteers totaled 100+ volunteer hours on Sunday. Countless more hours were spent planning and preparing the event, fixing the bridge, trimming the trees, roasting the zwiebacks, preparing scripts for the tours, developing and printing the brochures, finding and organizing the volunteers, directing traffic, putting up and taking down the flags for the immigrant houses, the cemetery and the ship, etc.

A huge THANK YOU to the museum board, 150th Commemoration Committee, organizers, volunteers, and donors for keeping the mission alive!



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Museum Hours:

March, April, October,

& November:

Tues - Sat: 12 pm - 4 pm

Closed Sundays & Mondays

Open by appointment

December through February

May - September:

Tues - Sat: 10 am - 5 pm

The Heritage

Written & edited by:

Fern Bartel, Director

Aileen Esau, Treasurer

Museum Board Members

Anne Harvey

Annual Meeting to Feature Dale Schrag

The museum will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, February 2, 2025, 2:00 pm, at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Following the business portion, Dale Schrag will speak on the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism.

Dale Schrag retired in 2014 from a position as director of church relations and campus pastor at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Dale graduated from Bethel College with a degree in history in 1969. Additionally, Dale holds a Master's of Library Science from Indiana University, and a Master's of Arts in history from Wichita State University. To the extent that he has any historical specialties, they would focus on the 16th-century Anabaptist movement and the 16th-century Christian humanist, Desiderius Erasmus. Dale lectures frequently in area churches on topics related to Anabaptism, and he just completed teaching a course on Erasmus at Bluestem University.

Dale is married to Margaret (Margo) Loewen. They have two adult children and seven grandchildren,

all of whom live within two miles of North Newton, Kansas. Life is good!

Come early to purchase or renew your annual membership. Following the presentation, enjoy visiting with other museum supporters and some zwieback and cheese for *faspa*.

Fleeing Ukraine in 2022

Antonina Broyaka and her two children fled Ukraine in 2022, coming to live in Kansas with Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, who grew up at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Antonina will present a program about leaving her homeland and coming to Kansas at Alexanderwohl on November 17, 2024, at 2:30 pm.

150th Event: Community Worship

The final 150th commemorative event will be a community worship service on November 24, 2024, 10:00 am, at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, sponsored by the Goessel Ministerial Alliance. Join in person or via this Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83006222370?pwd=8KuMkQvGWevdb4YdfHgqnuF8P8MYLa.1>
Meeting ID: 830 0622 2370 Passcode: 154516