



The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

Winter 2022

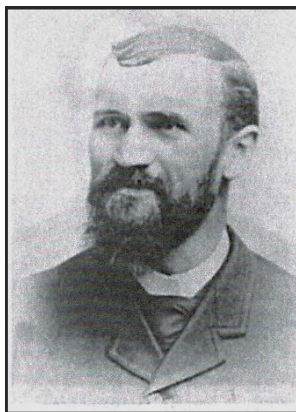
Mennonite Spies!

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February, 2022, names of places brought back our collective Mennonite immigrant memory. In 2024, we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of our ancestors' 1874 migration from the steppes of Ukraine (then South Russia) to the prairies of Kansas.

From August 26 to November 11, 1973, the Hutchinson News published a series of articles by John F. Schmidt, archivist, of the Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas. Museum Director Fern Bartel mined the series, paraphrasing the stories of the Mennonite "spies." Be sure to contact the museum if you'd like to read the actual articles!

By 1870, rumors reached our Mennonite ancestors of new national Russian policies: No more religious tolerance and no control of their own schools and local government. And—the most important for Mennonites—no more exemption from military service. Our ancestors were reluctant to consider migration, thinking that personal representatives sent to the czar was all that was necessary to keep these privileges in place. They sent representatives to St. Petersburg to speak directly to Czar Alexander II, but to no avail.

In 1872, two young men, friends David Goerz (a school teacher) and Bernhard Warkentin played a vital role in getting the migration underway. Their trip to America was hosted by different Mennonite preachers long established in the eastern United States. Warkentin, the son of a successful miller, must have had definite thoughts of farming opportunities and of the potential of Turkey Red hard winter wheat.



David Goerz
(1849-1914)



Bernhard Warkentin
(1847-1908)

Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours

December-February:
Call for appointment

Spring hours begin in March
Tuesday—Saturday
12 noon—4 pm

Annual Meeting

January 22, 2023, 2:30 pm
at Goessel Church
Speakers: Jason Schmidt &
Miriam Goertzen-Regier
See page 4

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group

January 23, 2023
in the Goessel City
Community Room
See page 2

Mennonite Spies, continued on page 3

Low German Sayings

Oost, wast—Tus ess et baste. East, west—Home is best.
Fäl' Henj Moake schwinn en Enj. Many hands make quick work.

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum Board Members:

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

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

Grateful for Volunteers

As the year again comes to a close, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the many individual volunteers who help to make this Mennonite Heritage and Agriculture Museum a success.

The museum board members—help with events—decorating, food preparation, and serving—and create new events! They keep the museum's '34 Ford, fire truck and mower running, maintain the grounds, clean and repair buildings, and paint. They keep computers and printers working, and edit newsletters and posters.

Community volunteers—serve in many ways during Threshing Days.

Promotion of the museum—regular Facebook posts keep the museum relevant and interesting. Volunteers staff the museum admission desk and store.

Behind the scenes—entering artifact information into the computer and consulting on artifacts, updating mailing lists, and preparing newsletters for mailing.

Mowing crew—mow the grounds weekly in season.

Donors—who have a heart for the museum, contributing financially to keep it going.

Looking towards the near future

We at the museum are looking forward to the 150th celebration of the Mennonite migration to Kansas. We're seeking to form a committee to plan for 2024. Might you be that volunteer? I hope so!

Membership

Finally, consider this your invitation to purchase an annual or lifetime museum membership. All memberships come with unlimited free visits to the museum!

You can stop by the museum or send payment with your contact information to the museum. The annual meeting on January 22, 2023, (see page four for details) is a great time to renew! We hope to see you there!

Happy 2023!

I would like to extend to all of you wishes for a wonderful new year!



Genealogy Group Began Meeting Again in November

A meeting of the Fourth Monday Family History & Genealogy Group met in November for the first time since covid put meetings on hold. Clarice Voth shared from her personal journal about the days surrounding the tragic death of her sister-in-law in 1994. The focus of Clarice's presentation was to encourage writing about family events.

The Fourth Monday group replaces the Second Monday group that was active before covid. It will meet in the Goessel City Community Room most months. January and February, 2023, will be "sharing" meetings—diaries, journals, whatever people are thinking about. March through June are yet to be planned. No meeting will be held in July. Meetings will be publicized through church and community newsletters as well as by email.

Questions or suggestions for meetings? Call or text Anna Beth Birky at 620-386-0381.

Heritage Lecture Draws Large Audience

About sixty people attended the Heritage Lecture in October at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Author Carolyn Zeisset spoke about her historical novel, *Then the Rules Changed*.

Her presentation included background details of the 1870s emigration and made connections between historical context and current events in Ukraine.

Zeisset's book is available for purchase at the museum.



Heritage Lecture

Mennonite Spies, continued from page 1

Warkentin decided to stay in America where he became the guest of state and railroad land agents. Meanwhile back in South Russia, things were going nowhere when Mennonite representatives tried talking to the Czar. Warkentin's letters back home

Alexander II



Photograph, 1878-81

Emperor of Russia

may have caused the Russian Mennonites to think of America as the "promised land." The children of Israel had sent spies to the "promised land" to evaluate the prospects and bring back a report. So, this procedure was not unfamiliar to the Mennonites in Russia.

Delegates were chosen by various communities and congregations wherever

migration was a serious option. That the delegation finally numbered twelve was a sheer coincidence as the various groups of Mennonites acted quite independently in selecting their delegates. Three groups of delegates traveled independently of each other in the early stages of their journey. They spent time in Canada, then Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, and Nebraska.

Among these twelve delegates were Elder Jakob Buller from the Alexanderwohl village and Wilhelm Ewert, who later settled near Hillsboro. They made the trip to Kansas escorted by Warkentin. Buller, at first, was not convinced that Kansas would be a good choice, feeling that Kansas was too warm. He did come around eventually after the Santa Fe Railroad agent C.B. Schmidt laid out the really good deal the Santa Fe was prepared to offer our Alexanderwohl group.

The delegates met with Mennonites in Pennsylvania before the end of the trip. These brethren in Mennonite faith were instrumental, helping finance the migration of our ancestors. Before the close of 1873, a Board of Guardians was put in place with the goal of financing any Mennonite group from Russia and Prussia planning to migrate to America. The Board solicited gifts and loans of money from the Eastern Mennonite groups and even Quakers in England contributed to the immigrant fund. This

ensured that even those who were destitute could be included in the migration.

Preparations now began for a mass exodus. This meant selling property—often at a fraction of its value—disposing of household goods, having clothing made, getting passports, and selecting items to take to the new world. And so, the journey began.

Thanks for the Mowing!

Two museum volunteer mowers have decided to retire. The museum appreciates Pete Unruh and Donovan Schmidt's long-time dedicated service. Thank you, guys!



Pete Unruh

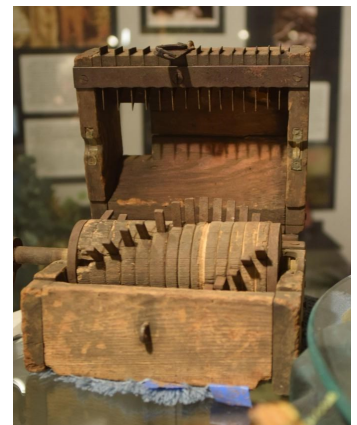


Donovan Schmidt

In related news, the museum is looking for new mowing volunteers! Who is interested in running our brand-new mower?

What is it?

This mystery object was recently donated to the museum by Bob Jantz of Hillsboro. What do you think it might be?





Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum
200 N Poplar
P.O. Box 231
Goessel, KS 67053

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

(620) 367- 8200

goesselmuseum@gmail.com

www.goesselmuseum.com



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 by:

Fern Bartel, Director

Editorial Staff:

Museum Board Members

Museum Annual Meeting January 22, 2023, at 2:30 pm

Say "cheese" with Jason Schmidt and Miriam Goertzen-Regier of Grazing Plains Farm at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum on January 23, 2022, at 2:30 pm at Goessel Church.

Jason Schmidt is the proprietor of Grazing Plains Farm LLC, a fifth generation dairy farm located southeast of Newton that specializes in artisan cheese. On his farm, Jason strives to make small farming work by using sustainable agricultural practices. His diverse educational background and Mennonite heritage shape the way he lives his life and manages his operation. Following his utopic dream, Jason strives to operate his farm and raise his family in a way that understands the intersection between ecological health and the well-being of people.

Miriam grew up loving the south central Kansas prairie on her family's farm east of Newton. Her deep curiosity about food and the science behind it first led her to develop a line of small cookies for a local grocery store; she now engages that curiosity through cheese-making for Grazing Plains.

Jason and Miriam's presentation will follow the business portion of the meeting. After the program, the faspa (light meal) will include cheese samples from Grazing Plains Farm.

Membership Choices for 2023

The annual meeting is the perfect opportunity to purchase or renew your annual museum membership! Pick the membership level that works best for you:

Individual \$20

Couple \$40

Family \$50

(includes children and grandchildren age 18 and younger)

Lifetime \$500 per person

All memberships include unlimited free visits to the museum (not valid for Country Threshing Days), enjoy a discount at the museum store, and more! If you miss the annual meeting, memberships can be purchased at the museum when you visit.