



The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

Fall 2025

The Schroeder Barn

By Museum Director, Fern Bartel

The Schroeder Barn was built in 1902 by Jacob J. Schroeder as a wedding gift to his son Jacob H. Schroeder and his bride, Susanna (Susie) Janzen. The couple lived in the two rooms at the north end of the barn for eight years. Their four oldest children were born there, delivered by Jacob's mother, Margaret Schroeder, a midwife in the Goessel area. In 1910, the family moved into a new house, and the living quarters in the barn were converted to grain bins.



Jacob and Susanna Schroeder

Although the Schroeder Barn is really not a combination house/barn, it was common for Mennonites to build house-barns prior to the 1890s. Mennonites' use of these structures can be traced to Russia, Prussia and the Netherlands. It was also common practice in the Goessel area at that time to build the barn first and then live in it while building the house. The Schroeder family's living in the barn was clearly seen as temporary, although perhaps their original intention was not to live in it for as long as they did.

The original home of the Schroeder Barn was 3 miles west and 2½ miles north of Goessel. The barn featured horse stalls, oat bins, and a large hayloft on the second floor. The barn has a gable roof with a hay hook.

Jacob Schroeder and his family moved off the farm in 1935. Edward, Jacob and Susie's sixth child, lived on the original homestead until 1956, when it was sold to Edwin Ratzlaff, a farmer near Moundridge. Mr. Ratzlaff donated the barn to the Mennonite Heritage Museum in 1988.

The descendants of Jacob H. and Susie Schroeder and Jacob's second wife, Justina, donated time, money, and hard work to restore their family's barn. The restored living quarters display period furniture and other items, as well

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Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours

November:

Tues - Sat: 12 pm - 4 pm

Closed Sundays & Mondays.

Open by appointment

December - February.

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group

Goessel City Building, 7 pm

December

No meeting

Christmas Shopping at the museum store

Tuesdays - Saturdays

noon - 4 pm

until December 20.

Annual Meeting

January 25, 2026, 2 pm

Alexanderwohl Mennonite

Church

See page 2.

Low German Saying

Hee haft sikj daut Bad jemoakt; dan mott hee uck doabenne schlope.

He's made his own bed; now he must sleep in it.

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, Bob Kasitz, Kris Schmucker, Gregg Schroeder, Dennis Unruh,
Nelson Voth.

*non-voting members

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

As Museum Director, I get to meet the most interesting people who visit the museum.

This month, a gentleman came in ahead of his family. He was interested in having a guide to walk around with them to answer any questions they had about the Mennonites who settled in this area. Well, the guide turned out to be me!

Then the family came in: 11 children, all ages. They were from Tennessee, and all dressed in what I would term as Amish. (Not horse-and-buggy Amish; they came in a van.) The one-month-old baby girl was handed to him and he tucked her into a "football hold" on his arm. She was so content the whole tour of the museum! I just had to comment on how comfortable she looked, and he said, "You figure it out after eleven of them."

Christmas shopping in the museum store: Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 4:00 pm, until December 20, 2025. Consider giving the gift of museum membership!

Museum Annual Meeting

The museum will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 2:00 pm at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. Following the business portion, Kris Schmucker will give a presentation on the Voth-Unruh-Fast house.

In 1974, Mennonites in South Central Kansas commemorated the 100th anniversary of migration from Russia to Kansas. As part of the celebration, an unassuming three-room wood house was moved from one mile east of Goessel to the grounds of Kauffman Museum. The story of the Voth-Unruh-Fast house is the story of a family and a story of preservation. As a descendant of Kornelius and Anna Funk Unruh, Kris will explore the



Kris Schmucker

our traditional fropa of zwieback and cheese and visiting with other museum supporters.

family, the move, and how the house illustrates a "typical" Mennonite home of the 1870s in the Goessel area. Kris is a member of the MH&AM board and the collections manager for Kauffman Museum.

Come early to purchase or renew your annual membership. Following the presentation, enjoy

A Big Thanks

to all the volunteers who helped at the museum this year!

A quilt show warmed the Friesen House during the Goessel Harvest Festival on October 11. Committee members were Sandy Duerksen, Sharon Adrian, Kim Funk, Sharon Unruh, and Laura Unrau. 30 quilts were artfully displayed in all the rooms of the Friesen House. The museum had free admission that day.



Ladene Herrick, Ilona Abrahams, Clarice Voth, and Elaine Banman continued entering artifacts into the PastPerfect database.

The museum hosted an organ recital by Dr. Donna Ratzlaff Hetrick at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church on



Donna Ratzlaff Hetrick

October 18. The recital was originally performed in the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Chelmno, Poland, in 2024, in memory of her Mennonite ancestors who lived in Poland between 1600-1800.

Board members worked on projects, including outdoor lighting, Prep School remodeling and repairs to other buildings and property, maintenance on mowers and vehicles, and managing our Facebook page.

During Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church's community service day, September 27, four volunteers helped paint Immigrant House window sills and trim. Two more dug out grass from the Friesen House flower garden.

All the helpers at Country Threshing Days.

Anna Beth Birky, Jan Yartz, Harriet Woelk, and LeNora Duerksen were Saturday docents who greeted guests.

The mowing crew of Herb Penner, Ron Plenert, Rick Duerksen, Richard Drake, Tom Hiebert, Lloyd Voth, and Roger Bartel kept the grounds looking cared for.

We remember with gratitude the contributions of Steve Banman, long-time volunteer and board president from 2013 to 2020, who passed away October 22, 2025.

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as sections of the original walls. The planks for the flooring in the rest of the barn were sawn from local ash and hackberry timber.

Alden Schroeder's Memories

Alden Schroeder was the youngest son of Jacob H. Schroeder and his second wife, Justina Regier. During the Schroeder family's celebration of the barn's 100th year in 2002, Alden shared these memories:



Susie Janzen's parents paid \$200 toward building the barn. The timber cost two cents a board-foot. The living quarters in the barn were wallpapered.

Jacob J. Schroeder owned the land, and built the barn on a new farmstead in the middle of the section, believing that this deterred thievery. Originally, it had a rock foundation. Then a house was moved closer to the road; the barn was moved to the area of the house in 1910.

The name of one of the workhorses was Molly. The pony, Pat, was hitched up to the buggy to take the children to Pleasant Valley School, 1 ½ miles away. Pat stayed the day in a horse barn at the school. Pat knew the way home; so when it was cold, the kids could put blankets over their heads. Pat was also a good cattle horse. If a cow went through the fence, he'd jump over the fence after them.

The wheat harvest hands were picked up at the train station in Canton and slept in the barn. The hands would stay 1-2 weeks or longer, depending on rain delays and other factors. Harvest hands were paid \$1-\$3 for the total of their work. Then Jacob would take them back to the train station.

Jacob's son Ed took over the farm in 1935.

After the horse era, the barn was used for grain and machinery storage. Kept cattle and horses until about 1940.

When the hay was piled high, the children played in the cupola. Sometimes they caught young pigeons and took them to their mother, who cooked the birds.

The barn went out of use in about 1957.



The Schroeder family celebrated the barn's 100th in 2002.

Donated Dollars Double!

"Working together to make rural communities thrive" is the mission of the Patterson Family Foundation (PFF), and because of their generosity, the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum has an amazing opportunity to receive matching funds! PFF is offering a \$100,000 matching grant to the Goessel Community Foundation and the charitable funds under its umbrella, which includes the museum.

Your donation and the resulting matching funds will increase the museum's endowment fund, providing benefits year after year. Matching funds will be split equally between the museum and the GCF Impact Fund (50% each).

To be eligible, donations need to be given directly to the museum (not GCF) and received by December 29. Please make checks payable to MH&AM with "Patterson Matching Funds" in the memo line. Mail to P.O. Box 231, Goessel, KS 67053, or drop off your check at the museum. Thank you for considering this exciting opportunity to grow our endowment fund!



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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

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Written & edited by:
Fern Bartel, Director
Aileen Esau, Treasurer
Museum Board Members
Anne Harvey



KPTS Channel 8.1, December 4th and 9th, 7:00 pm

Grains of Glory: The Kansas Mennonite Story is a new PBS Kansas documentary. Produced by Jim Grawe, the documentary follows the story of German-speaking Mennonites in the 1870s journeying from Russia to the plains of Kansas, bringing with them Turkey Red Winter Wheat. The documentary not only describes how this shaped Kansas agriculture, but also portrays their faith and resilience, building lasting institutions, and remaining steadfast through the challenges of World War I.

The Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum, Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, and the Goessel community are prominent in this presentation. There are many snippets of interviews with local people.

We highly recommend viewing this documentary! The on-air premiere will be on December 4th and 9th at 7:00 p.m. on KPTS Channel 8.1. The documentary premiered at Bethel College, North Newton, on November 6.