



# The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

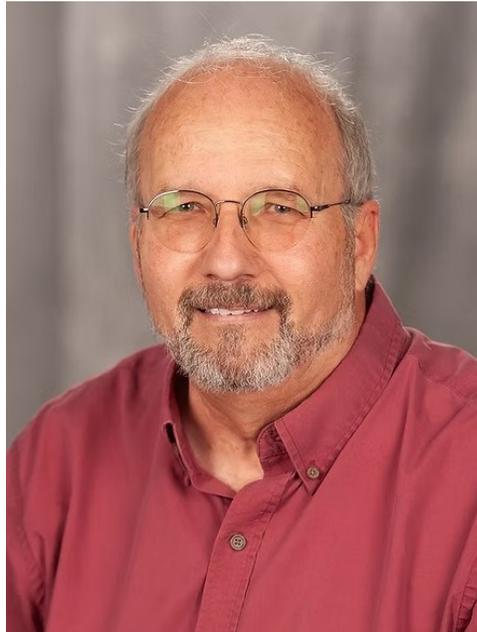
Spring 2026

## Heritage Dinner Presentation: *A Journey Home: Tracing My Ancestry*

The museum's Heritage Dinner will be held on March 21, 6:30 pm, at Tabor Mennonite Church, 891 Chisholm Trail Road, Newton, Kansas. It will feature a special presentation by museum board member Gregg Schroeder, "*A Journey Home: Tracing My Ancestry.*" Gregg's professional life and personal story are deeply connected to the history we gather to remember. As a nursing professor and program director at Hesston College, he prepares future healthcare professionals while emphasizing service, stewardship, and responsibility to community—values that echo the faith and resilience of those who came before us.

Gregg is a passionate historian and storyteller of Mennonite heritage, particularly the families who journeyed from Prussia through Ukraine to North America. A self-described Russophile, he finds meaning in Russian folk art, material culture, and everyday traditions that help us better understand the lives of our ancestors. Through his research, writing, and presentations, Gregg works to keep these stories alive and to connect past generations with our own.

A delicious dinner will be catered by Goessel Grocery and Deli. Ticket prices are \$75 per adult, \$15 for ages 12 and under, and first-time attenders are only \$40 per person! **To make reservations, please contact the museum by Monday, March 16.** Email: goesselmuseum@gmail.com or call the museum at 620-367-8200. The Heritage Dinner is a fundraiser for the museum—join us!



**Gregg Schroeder**

### Upcoming Events:

#### **Museum Hours**

See back page.

#### **Fourth Monday Genealogy Group**

Goessel City Building  
March 23, 7:00 pm  
Program to be determined.

April 27, 7:00 pm  
Brian & Nancy Stucky  
"Autobiographies and Memoirs"

No program in May.

#### **Heritage Dinner**

March 21, 6:30 pm  
Tabor Mennonite Church

#### **Easter Egg Hunt**

April 4, 10:00 am  
Gather at the Prep School

#### **Fire Dept. Celebration**

April 26, 2:00 pm  
Tabor Mennonite Church

#### **2026 Art Show**

LEGO Works of Art  
See page 2.

### Low German Saying

Eene woat oolt auss ne Koo, Enn leat emma meea doa too.  
One gets as old as a cow and always learns more and more.

### Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum Board Members:

Pat Penner, President; Gregg Schroeder, Vice-President; Sandy Duerksen, Secretary; Aileen Esau, Treasurer;\* Fern Bartel, Museum Director;\* Roger Bartel, Lenora Duerksen, Kris Schmucker, Dennis Unruh, Nelson Voth.

\*non-voting members

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

I am guilty: I love history, always have, even in grade school. I do have the perfect job for me. Learning about different families that were part of the migration and visiting with people from all over the country about where their ancestors came from is great fun for me.

I also get to be creative! With the donation of the Jacob Schmidt Russian Mennonite clock, I was inspired to do a “restoration.” Since the original damage had been done to the clock decades ago and there is no photo or evidence of how the original looked, I used rose gold spray paint on the hands, pendulum, and clock weights. 1872 was painted on the face, the year when Johann and Katharine Banman were married, and the letters JB, which stand for Johann Banman. A print showing a wheat harvest scene with wheat shocks was added to the clock face at the top. The guts of the clock are original.

### **Welcome, New Board Member!**

#### **Lenora Duerksen**

Welcome to our newest board member, LeNora Duerksen! LeNora grew up on a farm south of Goessel and married her high school sweetheart, Londell Duerksen. They raised three sons and one bonus nephew/son following the early passing of her sister. Londell and LeNora built their dream log home with a pond and established a longhorn cattle ranch northeast of Goessel.

LeNora spends her time caring for the children at the Hillsboro Community Child Care Center, and also serves part-time at Wiggins Funeral Homes. Her special delights are family, grandchildren and great-grands, reading, biking, kayaking, antiquing, gardening, and woodcrafts.

Her grandparents, Otto and Linda Klassen, greatly impacted her, developing her passion for ALL things old! LeNora and her siblings had an especially close relationship with Otto and Linda because they came nearly every day to help the kids with the farm animals and field work.

### **Become a Member—Join the Family!**

Please take a moment to consider purchasing or renewing your membership in the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum. There are perks: free admission to the museum (except during Country Threshing Days), guest passes to bring friends and family with you to visit, and discounts on store purchases. A membership might be the perfect gift: An “experience” doesn’t add another thing to the cupboard!

Members are important to the museum family. Members have voting rights at our annual meeting and elect board members to care for the museum. With a membership, we hope you feel connected, have a sense of belonging and ownership, and are energized by what’s happening at the museum. See the back page for details on how you can join today!

### **2026 Art Show in the Immigrant House Now!**

This year’s art show displays LEGO Works of Art: city buildings, cars, flowers, and lots more! Goessel local Tom Hiebert is an enthusiastic LEGO builder and collector. All ages will enjoy his, and others’, intricate creations.

### **Goessel Fire Department: Serving Others When Called**

In the early 1920s, Goessel lacked many improvements. Recognizing the need for improvements, interested individuals arranged to hold a town meeting. The meeting had a strong attendance. Officers were elected, and competent men took charge of the meeting. The organization was named The Goessel Aid Society.

What was the early Goessel fire department like, and how did people find out there was a fire and that assistance was required? No radios, no cell phones, no sirens! What was used to extinguish the fire? Remember, there were no fancy trucks, ladders, hoses, and sometimes not even enough water.



**Goessel's first fire truck, a 1928 Model A Ford**

Discover how the work of concerned citizens established the modern volunteer fire department, building a skilled team of volunteers prepared to help the community.

Activities will begin at 2:00 pm on April 26 at Tabor Mennonite Church. A faspa will follow the 3:00 pm program, when local historian Ilona Abrahams will relate how the Goessel community learned to protect themselves from one of the most destructive forces of nature: FIRE!

## Russian Clocks Find a New Home at the Museum

When our Mennonite ancestors migrated to Kansas in 1874, one of the first items often packed in their large wooden trunks (suitcases of their day) was a metal wall clock wrapped up in a thick blanket to protect it during the long journey. The clocks are large, with faces between 15-20" and overall length can be 40-50" with pendulum. Families treasured these clocks, some of which may have been wedding gifts. The museum now has two "new" Mennonite Russian clocks that were donated. They have wonderful stories!

### The Jacob and Helena (Schroeder Unruh) Schmidt Clock

Jacob and Helena brought their Russian Mennonite clock, with the face dated 1857, when they migrated from South Russia along with the Alexanderwohl village in 1874. Their family group included their three children: daughter Katharine (Schmidt) Banman, (age 24, married to Johann Banman in 1872, along with her three children), son Johann (age 20), and son Peter (age 14). Jacob died in 1882. In 1884, the youngest son Peter married Helena Unruh. They had 11 children.



**In Showcase #13**

one they were referring to? Their house was blown off the foundation, the west side of the house was torn open, and part of the granary ended up in the boy's bedroom. Fortunately no one was injured.

On June 6, 1906, a tornado hit Goessel. Peter and Helena lived just east of Goessel on the north side of the road. In a tribute to her grandparents recalling the day of the tornado, Olga Schmidt Dyck wrote, "The family was all home during the turmoil and the clock on the wall stopped ticking at 6 o'clock that day." Could this Mennonite clock be the

After the tornado, many people came to Goessel to help with the clean-up. Among these people was 19-year-old Peter Bartel who came from the Hillsboro area. Peter caught the eye of Anna Schmidt, the oldest daughter of Peter and Helena Schmidt. They were married in 1908.

They may have inherited the clock upon the death of Anna's mother in 1911. When Peter Bartel died in 1962, the estate was divided and the clock was passed down to Peter and Anna's son, Roland, and his wife, Betty Bartel. Then it went to their son, David Bartel, He sent the clock to Jerry Toews to be repaired and then donated it to the museum in 2025.

### The Johann and Katharine (Schmidt) Banman Clock

This Russian Mennonite Clock was brought with the Banman family to Kansas in 1874. Katharine was the oldest daughter of Jacob and Helena Schmidt mentioned in the first story. Their son, Jacob J. Banman, was just a baby when the family migrated in 1874.

In 1906, Jacob J. Banman married Helena Pankratz. Their youngest son, John Banman, remembers that his mother brought this old Russian clock to a clock repairman around 1920 or 1930 to get it repaired and running again. When she went back to pick it up, the repairman had taken the original face off and replaced it with the face as well as the pendulum you see on the clock now. John's mother was very upset and tried to get the repairman to put the original face back on as well as the pendulum, but the repairman claimed he had lost the face and pendulum. This made her very upset. So she put the clock in a box and never looked at it again. Years later, John handed it off to Jerry Toews. Later, Jerry donated it to the museum.



**In Showcase #17**



Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum  
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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

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

**Become a Museum Member!**

It's easy to become a member. Choose a membership level below, fill out the form, and return it with your check payable to MHAM to: Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum, P.O. Box 231, Goessel, KS 67053.

**Individual \$20    Couple \$40    Family \$50** (Includes children and grandchildren age 18 and younger)

**Annual memberships** run from Jan. 1- Dec. 31.

Benefits of annual membership

- Unlimited free visits to the museum
- 10% discount on museum store purchases
- One guest pass (two guest passes for couple and family memberships. Not valid for Country Threshing Days)

**Life memberships** \$500 / person

- Membership fee is added to museum endowment fund
- Unlimited free visits to museum
- 15% discount on museum store purchases
- Five guest passes per year (Not valid for Country Threshing Days)
- No annual membership renewal

I would like an annual membership    \_\_\_ Individual \$20        \_\_\_ Couple \$40        \_\_\_ Family \$50

I would like a life membership \_\_\_ \$500 / person        Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send future newsletters to my email address: \_\_\_\_\_