



The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

Spring 2025

Prep School to Turn 120 Years Old in 2026

By Museum Director, Fern Bartel

The original Preparatory School building was the first “Goessel High School” and it operated from 1906–1925.

The tornado of June 6, 1906, wrecked the original building being constructed at the west end of town. The building frame had been put up and the side boards nailed on. The structure was completely flattened to the ground. More funds were immediately gathered and the building was completed. The one-room structure was ready for school to begin in October, 1906. A second room was constructed in 1912, requiring a second teacher.

The school was originally named Alexanderwohl *Gemeindeschule* (community school). Then the name changed to Goessel *Vorbereitungsschule* (preparatory school). The school drew its students mainly from the Alexanderwohl Church and later from the Tabor and Goessel Churches as they were organized.

Eight students graduated the first year. During the school’s twenty years of existence, 260 students graduated from it. In the beginning, the tuition was

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The Goessel Preparatory School and the boarding hall
(Museum photo, circa 1920, from the Goessel Church area to the southeast)

Low German Saying

Dee Apel fallt nijch wiet fomm Staum.

The apple falls not far from the tree. (This must be true in all languages!)

Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours

March and April:
Tues - Sat: 12 pm - 4 pm
May - September:
Tues - Sat: 10 am - 5 pm
Closed Sundays & Mondays

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group

March 24, 7:00 pm
Goessel City Building
Kris Schmucker presenting
“Unlocking Your House’s
History”

Heritage Dinner

March 29, 6:30 pm
Tabor Mennonite Church
See page 3.

Easter Egg Hunt

April 19
See page 2.

Ferd Graevs’ Art Show

Summer, 2025
See page 2.

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

*non-voting members

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

One of the wonderful things I enjoy about working at the museum is that sometimes a person tells you who constructed an artifact. It's been a mystery who created the Prep School clock, on display in the Prep School. The only clue was "B 81" on the back, done with a wood-burning tool.



The Prep School Clock

Mike Buller came in one day and asked if the wooden clock his father had made was still in the Prep School. Irvan "Pete" Buller was the answer as to who made the clock, as a work of art.

Welcome, New Board Members

Gregg Schroeder

Gregg was born and lived in Newton, KS, until moving with his parents to Eaton, CO, when he was nine. He moved to the Goessel area in 1984 while he was in nursing school at Hesston College. Living in Goessel since November, 1985, Gregg and his wife raised their son, Jason, here. Gregg is the Director of Nursing Education and Health Studies at Hesston College.

Dennis Unruh

My parents were in 1-W Service in Larned, Kansas, where I was born. I grew up 2-3/4 miles west of Canton. Lanita Koehn and I were married on October 7, 1974, and have lived southeast of Canton all our married life. I really enjoy learning about the history of our heritage.

Your Name Here?

The museum board is looking for someone to fill a three-year term ending in 2027, a two-year term ending in 2026, and a one-year term ending in 2025. This is an excellent way to discover if being a museum board member is right for you! Call Fern at the museum today!

Goessel Community Easter Egg Hunt

Bring your children or grandchildren for an Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday morning, April 19, at the museum and the Bethesda courtyard. The hunt is sponsored by Goessel Church, Bethesda Home, and the museum.

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 also be the perfect gift. Giving 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. We welcome you to the museum's family! See the back page for details on how you can join today!

2025 Special Exhibit

The unusual, creative talents of Ferd Graevs, a well-known local personality and barber, will surprise you at this summer's art show. More information will come soon.

What's Old is New Again

New to see at the museum is a dowry chest on loan from Sheryl Ratzlaff Dunavan. Her great-great grandfather, Heinrich Schroeder, built the chest for his daughter Elisabeth in 1891. Made of pine, the six-board chest has dovetail joints with wooden wedges and painted graining in amber, greys, and brown. Portraits of five Prussian and Russian royalty decorate the inside of the lid.

The description is from [Mennonite Furniture: A Migrant Tradition \(1755-1910\)](#), by Reinhild Kauenhoven Janzen and John M. Janzen, © 1991, page 151.



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\$15 for six months, paid in advance. The last year's tuition increased to \$20.

Teachers occupied an important place in the community. Their leadership was considered to be almost on the same level as that of evangelists and ministers. Teachers included Rev. P.P. Buller, 1906-1924; Rev. J.M. Janzen, 1912-1913; Rev. J.J. Banman, 1913-1926; H.C. Voth, 1924-1925; Oswin K. Galle 1925-1926. Galle and Rev. Banman brought the school to a close in 1926.

Salaries were always a problem. Tuition had to be kept low, so that as many students as possible could attend. Salary increases were few and very modest.

On April 27, 1907, the Board of Directors authorized the building of a boarding hall. This gave the students living at a distance a place to stay and also placed them under the direct supervision of the teacher. Rev. P.P. Buller and family lived in the boarding hall, serving as house parents through early 1919. Then the Rev. J.J. Banman family took over as house parents until the school was closed.

Some classes were Bible and world history, grammar and spelling, German, geography, and singing.

In 1926, the building and boarding hall became the Goessel Rural High School. In 1934-35 the new brick high school was built. At that time, the Prep School was re-situated on high school grounds and used for the woodworking classroom. The boarding hall was moved to Bethel College, North Newton, for use as a men's dormitory.

In 1970, plans to raze the building were the impetus for fourteen people to meet in November to discuss plans to save the building. They purchased it for \$501 in 1971. It was moved to its current location, becoming the first building on museum grounds.

In the summer of 1980 as a college credit project, Steve Nikkel operated The Old Prep School Restaurant in the building. Then Lynn Schmidt took over, operating it as The 1906 Restaurant before starting The Barnstormer at the Goessel/Hwy K-15 corner in 1983.



Lynn Schmidt says, "The pickle design was hand drawn by me. The pickle was just something odd and funny to attract attention. I leased the building from the Museum Complex and ran the 1906 Restaurant, but I'll have to look back through some things to remember the exact dates. It was the early 80's though. My fondest memories, of working at restaurants in Goessel, were in that building. It had so much character and potential. But being young, I had grander dreams that led to the creation of The Barnstormer."



Heritage Dinner March 29

Save the Date for the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum's annual Heritage Dinner at 6:30 pm on March 29 at the Tabor Mennonite Church, 891 Chisholm Trail Rd, Newton, Kansas.

Our program this year will feature Donna Becker.



Donna Becker

Her presentation, "What Were They Thinking?," will represent the voice of a fictional Mennonite immigrant woman around 1879. What does Helena Schroeder think about—leaving her home in South Russia? Her marriage to Ben? Women's place in the church or the home for that matter? Ben wanting more children? A longing to stretch beyond the roles that are defined for her? The audience will listen in while Helena shares what's

on her mind. The portrayal uses anecdotes, recipe books, and imagination.

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 24, by calling 620-367-8200 or email: goesselmuseum@gmail.com. The Heritage Dinner is a fundraiser for the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum.



Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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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

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 _____

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