



The Heritage

www.goesselmuseum.com

Summer 2021

Goessel Centennial Memories Revisited

by Fern Bartel, Museum Director

Summer is here, along with heat, humidity, and hard work. As the harvester sits in the air-conditioned cab to combine the wheat and the truck driver transports the wheat to town in relative comfort, it is a good time to remember how things were in the “good old days.”

I have been reading and filing Goessel Gazette newspapers. The Gazette published several articles, starting on July 5, 1995, based on interviews with then 100-year-old Anna Buller Schmidt. Suzanne Lawrence was the reporter and the interviews were done in honor of Goessel’s centennial. Anna, the daughter of Rev. Peter Buller and Maria Klassen Buller, was born one month before the town of Goessel was named. Their fifth child, she was born in 1895 and died in 1999.



Anna Buller Schmidt

Farm life from Anna’s first twenty years—1895-1915:
“We girls had to clean the chimneys of lamps (the only source of light before electricity). Besides the housework, we pitched in on the farm work. We started with taking care of the chickens. As we grew older, we had to milk the six cows, take care of the milk, and feed the calves. That was all the work we girls did outside, but there was so much work in the house. On Saturdays, we churned the cream for butter, washed the wooden floors, and shined the silverware and the family’s Sunday shoes. The boys cleaned the barn.”

Harvest time, possibly of the ‘30s: “Almost every farmer had a tractor. But harvest time was still a lot of work. They still had to cut, shock, stack and thresh the wheat. Neighbors helped with the stacking and a seven man crew went from place to place with a threshing machine. Harvest was hard work for the women, too. We had to feed all those men. Sometimes it started the night before. The place they had just finished did not think the last meal was their duty, so the crew came to us hungry. Then we had to get up while the threshers slept and make zwieback for breakfast and lunch. Serving them while fresh, they didn’t last long. We were expected to serve five meals a day. (I don’t want to live that over again.) Taking big

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Low German Saying:

Schmatjt goot; tjeep di uck.
Tastes good; buy some for yourself, too.

Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours
See pg 4 for our summer hours

5th Annual Art Show
Now through September
Clarence & Martha Klassen’s wood carvings and quilts

Country Threshing Days
August 6—8
(See pg 4 for details)

Small Town Saturday Night Workshops
(See pg 2 for details)

Wooden Door Hanger
by Kristin Kaufman
July 24

Paper Crafting
by Janice Voth
August 28

Natural Wreath Making
by Sandy Duerksen
September 25.

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum Board Members:

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

Windmill or Steel Skarecrow?

I was not familiar with the term “steel scarecrows” until the museum booked the group Steel Skarecrow for our Friday night entertainment Aug. 6 during Country Threshing Days. The group’s leader, Kurt Shobe, said that when he was growing up, the term was applied to windmills.

Probably the best known of windmill manufacturers in Kansas from the 1880s up to the mid-1940s was the Currie Windmill and Pump Company. The Currie windmills gained a reputation as sturdy, reliable machines. Since the Currie prices were economical, it came to be called “the poor man’s windmill.” In the 1930s, the average price was \$28. Its reasonable price and durable construction made the Currie windmill a common feature on prairie farms and ranches.

The wheel of the Currie is one of its easiest identifying characteristics. A steel band completely encircles the outer edge of the steel, and an inner rim is placed at the extreme inner edge of the blades. The company advertised “Our mill is bolted together-- wheel sails fastened

with bolts, vane bolted together, in fact there is not a rivet in the mill. So in case any part gets broken or damaged, it can be replaced with a screwdriver or monkey wrench.” *

The vane has a striking appearance. It is made from corrugated galvanized sheet steel with bolted braces. Our museum’s model has a shorter pattern introduced about 1930. The vane directs the wheel into the wind. In higher winds, however, the off-center wheel vane tilts upward on a pivot, allowing it to serve the additional role as a governor weight.

The museum’s Currie windmill can be seen inside the Wheat Palace.

The musical group Steel Skarecrow will have you dancing and laughing all night long, playing songs from Merle Haggard, Brooks and Dunn, Dwight Yoakum. Buck



Owens, George Strait, Alan Jackson, John Pardi, and many others! Steel Skarecrow also plays original music. Come on out and enjoy an evening of the best music in

the area with Steel Skarecrow! This performance is to benefit the museum; donations are appreciated!

* *Information from Kansapedia—Kansas Historical Society and museum files.*

The museum’s Currie windmill.

Small Town Saturday Night Workshops

By Sandy Duerksen

The museum has started something new and exciting! We are hosting workshops at the Prep School that feature learning new skills or creating an awesome project in a small, intimate setting. We are hoping to collaborate with other people to develop workshops for our community—do you have an idea?

The first workshop was held on June 12: Hand Lettering by Brooke Nafziger. Three more workshops will be held this summer:

* **Wooden Door Hanger** by Kristin Kaufman on July 24; register by July 10.

* **Paper Crafting** by Janice Voth on August 28; register by August 14.

* **Natural Wreath Making** by Sandy Duerksen on September 25; register by September 11.

To register for a workshop, call or email the museum, 620-367-8200 or goesselmuseum@gmail.com. Sign

up for one workshop or all of them! Each workshop is limited to ten crafters. Cost is \$15 for museum members and \$20 for non-members, payable at the workshop. So, where will you be on a Saturday night in small town USA?



Small Town Workshop - Hand Lettering
Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum
Goessel, KS

Small Town Saturday Night Workshop, June 12

Centennial Memories, cont'd from page 1

pans of food into the field, so they didn't have to stop working, we gave them lunch in the morning and also in the afternoon. For dinner, we usually served pies for dessert. I remember one time I had a Wedel girl, helping me. We had baked enough pies for dinner and were cooling them on a window screen laid across the backs of some chairs. The Wedel girl was so proud of those pies. They looked so good. In came my little daughter, she was just the right size to run under this rack and bumped her head tipping the pies over.

"Well, what do we do now?" The pies were all on the floor. Being an inventive girl, she slid something under them, lifted them all up and put them back.

"Now, if we serve them each a piece, instead of putting the whole pie out, no one will know what happened." she said.

When threshing season was over, we all were so tired, but each one had an incident they wanted to tell, a story they were eager to exchange."

The Cook Shack

paraphrased from a document compiled by Tracy S. (Schmidt) Isaac

Local farmers and their families knew the threshing season had begun when the cook shack accompanied



unidentified individuals;
museum file photo

the threshing "rig" as it moved from one farm to another. The threshing "rig" consisted of units that operated together during a threshing season. These units were the steam engine, separator, water wagon, and coal wagon. Another vehicle was provided

to make daily trips to the grocery store. The cook shack served as the kitchen, dining facility, plus sleeping quarters for the cooks. But more than just that, it was the headquarters for the entire threshing "rig."

The cooks served three meals a day and were responsible to deliver two coffee breaks to the field at 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. A hired girl in Saskatchewan during the 1928 harvest season describes the meals like this: *"Breakfast consisted of bacon, eggs, hash brown potatoes, and a gallon of coffee. For dinner at 11:00 a.m. we cooked a 15 pound roast, 2 types of vegetables, and what seemed to me to be a ½ bushel of potatoes. All men liked pie for dessert, so we baked three pies everyday. At 3:00 p.m. we took lunch out to the field. This was another*

gallon of coffee, sandwiches, and cookies. For supper we had cold meats, potatoes, salads, and cake for dessert." These five meals made it necessary to keep the wood-burning stove hot nearly all day. Later, kerosene burning stoves were used.

Locally, cook shacks reached their peak during the late steam engine era (1900-1920). The cook shack was

about eight feet wide, sixteen feet long and seven feet high. It sat on high wheel wagon gear. To enter, a set of portable steps were necessary. Two small screened windows on either side of the cook shack allowed for some ventilation to occur. On all four corners guy ropes to anchor the shack were driven into the ground. The space beneath the floor was used as storage for potatoes, canned goods, and cleaning supplies. The hole in the center of the floor made it easy to access these supplies.

Next to the cook shack, lavatory facilities consisted of wash basins set on benches. Towel racks were improvised by using a nail partially protruding on the outside wall of the cook shack. A mirror and comb were attached to the wall in the same manner.

When it was time to move the cook shack, the steps were placed inside on the floor. It was pulled by two horses or mules. The driver stood in the doorway with the screen door open so that he could see the rough road that lay ahead. When going over rough roads several men walked on either side of the shack so that it didn't tip over. Thus, the cook shack was on its way following the threshing "rig" to the next destination.



L-R George Franzen, Sarah Franzen, and Anna Franzen.
Doyle Franzen collection

Come visit the Turkey Red Wheat Palace and see one of the very few original traveling food wagons in existence. This cook shack was originally used by Elden Decker in the Moundridge/Elyria area in the 1920s. Then it was moved to Blackwell, Oklahoma, where it eventually was abandoned in a grove of trees. Marvin Dester rented and farmed the land on which it was located. When he heard the Mennonite Immigrant Historical Foundation at Goessel was building a museum complex, he contacted the Horton Flaming family of Augusta, KS. They donated the shack in December, 1975. Ralph Janzen, Goessel, renovated this "Threshers Chuck Wagon." (Ralph Janzen was the father of John Janzen, the current President of the MHAM board.)



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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 by:
 Fern Bartel, Director
 Editorial Staff:
 Museum Board Members

Fully vaccinated people need not wear face masks or socially distance at the museum and museum events.

48th Annual Country Threshing Days

presented by:

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum
 www.goesselmuseum.com

& Wheat Heritage Engine and Threshing Co.
 www.wheatco.org

August 6, 7, 8, 2021, Goessel, KS

\$5 admission charged at entrance, good all three days. Gates open at noon on Friday.

Downtown parade on Saturday, August 7, at 9:30 am.

Friday, August 6, 2021, entertainment by the country music band Steel Skarecrow, 7:30 pm

(Doors open at 7 pm)

Goessel High School Auditorium

Donations Welcome—A benefit performance for the Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum.

Please join us for a fun evening!

Featuring Antique Construction Equipment and J.I. CASE

Uncle Milt's Shed — Children's Activities

Pedal Tractor Pull

Demonstrations: Sawmill, Draft Horse, Threshing & Field, Steam Tractors, Large Stationary Engines

Come Hungry on Saturday!

Low German Meal

Saturday, August 7 only, from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm, at the Goessel Elementary School. Priced per item.

Verenika with Ham Gravy, Bierocks, Cherry Moos, German Country Sausage, Zwieback, Cole Slaw, New Year's Cookies

Food in the 1906 Prep School

on the museum grounds, Saturday, August 7 only. Priced per item.

BBQ Beef Sandwiches, Bierocks, Chips, Monster Cookies, New Year's Cookies Pop, Water, and Coffee