



# Neubergthal Notes

*Kohmt trijj nohm Darp*

December 2017

Volume 15 • Issue 3

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add new names for  
Neubergthal Notes contact  
Ken Hamm - 204-324-6424 or  
timekeeper@mymts.net

## Guess the English word:

Wiehnachte  
Jeschentj  
Naetkloss  
Oppraejung

## Klippenstein Housbarn

The Klippenstein barn is being rebuilt a second time. It is a very unique barn. It was built in the East Reserve. It was moved and rebuilt on its present location in Neubergthal (1876). When it was a dairy barn for Lisa Klippenstein (John B) and Eddie Schmidt, the interior was completely reworked for cows and calves. Now it is being rebuilt again.

The exterior of the barn will be restored to early appearance. The interior of the barn will be a large open multipurpose space, for events, rentals, tour groups and community use.

This is part of a larger capital project and fundraising campaign for Neubergthal Heritage Foundation. The barn and the house are to be reworked. A commercial, teaching kitchen is to be built, connected to the barn.

A washroom has been built for the restored Bergthal School, the HF Hamm picnic shelter and the adjacent playground area (former school yard). These two yards together are now called the *Village Commons*.

Over 2 million dollars is needed for this overall plan. Parks Canada has approved a grant for 50% of the cost of the restoration and rehabilitation of the barn; the grant from Parks Canada is approximately \$460,000. NHF needs to raise funds to match this total. Approx \$360,000 has been received or pledged already.

Another million dollars more is needed to complete the overall plan. According to Parks Canada, Neubergthal is the best, most authentic, location on the prairies to experience some of the realities of early (1870's) permanent agricultural settlements on the expansive Canadian prairies.

Parks Canada designated Neubergthal as a national historic site after scouring the prairies to find a place to show and tell stories of agriculture and early settlement on the prairies. The entire village was designated as a national heritage site, having "historical and architectural national significance," with many older original buildings and authentic yard and village patterns.

**HOUSEBARN** continued on page 2

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## HOUSEBARN continued from page 1

The mission of Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation (NHF) is to preserve aspects of this heritage and find appropriate and interesting ways to share and present this heritage.

Part of this mission is to restore and maintain older, original buildings. Two barns, the Klippenstein barn and the Hamm (Ray & Marilyn) Housebarn, date back to the beginning of the village (1876) and many other buildings are from the late 1800's.

The real heritage of Neuberghthal is found in the stories we share. Many visitors feel their own family stories in their bones and NHF strives to create space to relive memories and share stories. We treasure the moments when grandparents are in the barns and tell their children and grandchildren about the barn where they did chores. Many stories of life in the past can still be told and experienced in this authentic setting - stories of land, food, and changing technologies. And new stories continue to be created, particularly with renewed relationships with nearby First Nations and francophone communities.

**We do this for the children and grandchildren, to help us remember who we are and how we got here. NHF invites you to participate in and support the important work of being a trustee of this national historic site and these stories. Your financial contribution is critical to preserving this unique piece of Canadian and Mennonite heritage.**  
*Written by Ray Hamm*

**For more information and pictures go to:**  
[www.neuberghthalheritagefoundation.com](http://www.neuberghthalheritagefoundation.com)

**~ Oppraejung: Excitement ~**

*Your personal support is invited, or, maybe this can be a family project in memory of the pioneers - your grandparents or great-grandparents or great-great-grandparents.*

**Make a donation online:**

Go to [www.neuberghthalheritagefoundation.com](http://www.neuberghthalheritagefoundation.com) and click on donations in the upper menu bar.

OR

**Mail your donation to:**

Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation,  
Box 2429, Altona MB R0G 0B0

*Thank you for your interest and support.*

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## *~ Looking Back ~* (excerpts from *Neuberghthal A Mennonite Street Village*)

### **Ice wells**

*“... Blocks of ice were cut from local ponds; layers were put into 5x5x6 foot wood-lined ice wells; water was poured onto each layer and allowed to freeze before the next layer was added. This well was used to keep milk and other products cool, and the ice would remain frozen for most of the summer. Sheds were built over the wells for shelter.*

### **Wash days**

*... “In winter the clothes were draped over wooden clothes racks, which were carried*

*outside, or the clothes were hung on the lines. They would freeze stiff, and when brought inside to dry, would give off a wonderful fresh scent in the house.”*

### **Winter dances**

*... “In winter, dances were held in homes, usually where parents were gone for the evening. The table and chairs were removed from the Hinjatues (kitchen /dining room), cornstarch was sprinkled on the floor, and the young people were ready to dance”.*

### **Family Christmas at Grandma & Grandpa Hamm (1935)**

*“... Uncle Peter would take us in a bobsled that he had prepared with benches and a small stove with hot coals. We dressed warmly for the four-mile sleigh ride: long johns and knitted woolen stockings, coats and furry aviation caps, scarves and buckled overshoes. We sat on benches wrapped in horsehide blankets, our scarves leaving only a slit for our eyes to see the dazzling white panorama.*

**~ Naetkloss: Santa Claus ~**

# Kohmt trigj nohm Darp – Come back to the Village

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## Celebrating a storied village in a storied place

What do you get when you add storytelling, Low German, live music, donkey cart rides, a scavenger hunt, presentations, horseback rides, housebarn tours, plus soup and platz all on a September Saturday? Culture Day in Neubergthal. A day of storytelling and for story-making.

On September 9 people gathered in Neubergthal for the annual Culture Day celebration. The afternoon included presentations in the Bergthal Schoolhouse on Mennonite history by Dr. Susie Fisher and doing family genealogy research by Conrad Stoesz of the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Rose Hildebrand and Joyce Friesen entertained the crowd with Low German storytelling about growing up in the village.

Up the road live music filled Ray and Marilyn's 'schien.' Dennis and Phyllis Reimer entertained the crowd with some old favourites. Local singer-songwriter Paul Bergman performed his

originals for his fans. Marilyn and Monique shared some classical music for the crowd.

Across the road, at the Friesen Housebarn some special guests came by for the afternoon – a goat and some chickens hung out in the barn, while donkey cart and horseback rides were offered. People also toured the house which smelled of freshly baked bread for the evening's soup and platz supper. Families could also explore the village doing the village wide scavenger hunt.

At 4 o'clock the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation announced the receipt of a \$560,000 matching grant from Parks Canada for the rehabilitation and restoration of the Klippenstein Housebarn to become an education and resource centre and community multi-use space. Local politicians MLA Cliff Graydon, Don Wiebe, Reeve of the Municipality of Rhineland, and Altona Mayor Mel Klassen congratulated the

NHF on its fundraising efforts and expressed appreciation for its dedication to ensuring a space to experience local heritage and stories.

In the evening local musician Warren Friesen, and the family folk, gospel and country band – Lazy Creek Express, from Brandon, entertained an enthusiastic crowd.

Organized by the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation and run by volunteers, Culture Day is a celebration of the history and culture of Neubergthal and area.

The Neubergthal Heritage Foundation (NHF) is a not-for-profit organisation actively seeking to preserve and share the heritage of the storied village of Neubergthal and area. Neubergthal was founded in 1876 by early Mennonite settlers and was recognized as a National Historic Site in 1989.

*Written by Robin Neustaeter*  
**PICTURES** on page 4  
~ **Wiehnachte: Christmas** ~

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## Support for Neubergthal Notes

Even if you do not make a donation to the overall capital project, please consider sending a donation to cover the costs for printing and mailing Neubergthal Notes.

NN costs \$2,000/ year (300 people on our lists). The NHF operating budget is less than \$30,000 /year. In this context, every thousand helps along. (Building projects are in a separate budget.)

Some of you have made such contributions in the past - thank you. A few do send annual support - again thank you. It has been some years since subscription support has been mentioned here.

*Thank you for considering support for Neubergthal Notes.*

~ **Jeschentj: Gift** ~

## Kohmt trigj nohm Darp – Come back to the Village



Neubergthal's Culture Day was celebrated on September 9. Top left: donkey cart rides were a highlight of the day; Karen Braun pulls a loaf of fresh baked bread from the Russian stove oven in the Friesen Housebarn; Conrad Stoesz of the Mennonite Heritage Centre speaks at an afternoon seminar in the Bergthal School; Marilyn Houser Hamm performed songs at the evening program; and Charlie Nelson from the Roseau River First Nation spoke at the evening program. Bottom left: a crowd gathers to visit outside the Bergthal School in between seminars; and an audience gathers in the schien.

