



# Neubergthal Notes

*Stories Live Here*

Fall 2019

Volume 17 # 2

## PRESENTATIONS AND PICTURES FROM SEPTEMBER 14. DARP DAY 2019

Neubergthal Heritage Foundation Board members for 2019-2020 (the Annual General Meeting elects or appoints board members)

Brad Braun  
Danyne Hoepfner  
Joe Braun  
John Giesbrecht  
Karen Martens  
Lori Dueck  
Monique Scholte  
Shaun Friesen  
Susie Fisher

Ray Hamm - part-time staff.  
Harv Heinrichs is the keeper of numbers in the \$ \$ books.

Board members can be contacted through [neubergthalheritagefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:neubergthalheritagefoundation@gmail.com) OR by calling 204 324 4115

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Photos by Wes Friesen

Darp Day 2019- September 14 - was wonderful. People, visiting, laughter, learning about Mennonite history and culture, great food, good music, warm and sunny weather. Then in the second half of September came the rain -- more than 6 inches. And on Thanksgiving weekend, a storm brought 10-15 inches of snow, wet snow!! Wheat and cereal grains and canola harvests were done, some soy beans and the corn are still standing in the fields.

*crop*

## Aileen Friesen, University of Winnipeg

At Darp Day, I presented on stories from my research on NKVD (KGB) files that are available in Ukraine. Using funds from the Paul Toews Fellowship, the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg has initiated a project to help Mennonites access information on lost family members. As part of this work, I have been digging through files related to the repression of Mennonites in the town of Khortitsa. On my trip, I was able to discover the file of Aron Toews, whose arrest in 1934 paved the way for the closure of the Mennonite church in Khortitsa. The file reveals the process by which NKVD agents gathered information through the interrogation of Toews and other members of the community. While these interrogations show the power of the Soviet state, they also offer a glimpse into the important role that Toews continued to perform as the leader of the church despite the repressive techniques used by state officials against the church.

I also presented briefly on files from the late 1930s, a time during which many Mennonite men were arrested, imprisoned, and then shot on the basis of invented charges. Although these cases have become infamous within the Mennonite community, the existence of interrogation records of women who were captured by Soviet forces in Europe after the Second World War and sent back, is not as well-known. These files offer a unique entry into the experiences of women during this period.

*bicycle*



Photo by Wes Friesen

**Margruite Krahn** lives in Neubergthal and has been involved with the village for many years in research and restoration. Her studies of old buildings in Neubergthal and other West Reserve villages led her to become especially interested in two specific areas: the patterns



women painted on the floors of their homes(housebarns)at one time; and the traditional colours used in painting the buildings. Giving her lecture in the *schien* of the Friesen Housebarn museum, she discussed both topics, describing the influence of Mennonite reformer and agriculturist Johann Cornies on establishing colour schemes for Mennonite settlements in Russia back in the 1800s. Addressing the disputes among scholars and others about what the traditional colours looked like, Krahn produced panels, doors, etc., salvaged from various heritage structures to illustrate the exact hues of the original paints chosen by the Kanadier immigrants who settled the West Reserve. Similarly, the colours used to paint patterns on wooden floorboards were originally very specific. Krahn discussed how the patterns and colours changed through the early 1900s, and then proceeded to guide the audience on a tour through the museum, pointing out the faded designs on the floors.

NOTE Photo by Lois Braun

*bicycle*



## EVENTS THIS FALL

- Art Exhibit- October 17, 19, 24, 26, featuring art by Cristiane Pravaz
- Drumming Circle 7:30, November 7, Dolores Gosselin
- Music concert Nick of Time, 7:30 November 9

### Projected events

- Reconciliation / Treaty awareness event
- Genealogy workshop

For information call 204 324 4115 or go to [www.neubergthalheritagefoundation.com](http://www.neubergthalheritagefoundation.com)  
[facebook.com/neubergthalcommons](https://facebook.com/neubergthalcommons)

*Here are a few Low German words. Find the English translations elsewhere in this Neubergthal Notes*

1 Drohtaesel

2 Arnt

3 Blaut

4 Tjarps

*Bleefft mol jesund (be well/ healthy)*

**Roland Sawatzky** — Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature — Land ownership and Village life  
Mennonites developed a strip lot settlement pattern over a period of three centuries that was strongly associated with community and village power structures. When Mennonites arrived in Manitoba in the 1870s, they chose to ignore Canadian survey land divisions, and instead imposed their own street village and land use patterns. Their system, however, began to dissolve within a generation in the Manitoban landscape. This change had particular consequences for Mennonite identity, community and social control, while at the same time the shift to Canadian, individualistic landholdings was neither complete nor inevitable.



Photo by Susie Fisher



Photos by Wes Friesen



To inquire about or book a wedding or reception (or other events), call 204 304 1968, or 204 324 4115, or send a note to [Neubergthalheritagefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:Neubergthalheritagefoundation@gmail.com)

## Ernest N. Braun

By way of introduction - this presentation was to be done by **Dr. Jack Thiessen**, but he was unable to come and so I stood in for him. I outlined the history of Jack's famous dictionary: his early information garnering, his academic work in German with the *Westpreussisches Wörterbuch*, - *Deutsche Mundarten Ost und West Preussens*, his Ph.D thesis on the Low German dialect, and then his series of dictionaries, 1977, 1996, 2003, and now the reprint of the 2003 edition.

As a postscript it should be noted that a fifth edition of the dictionary has just been published in Germany, with Part II given in High German instead of English.

The presentation argued that, like every other language, Low German is the expression of a people's world: its values, culture, and life-style. From the simplest child speak, to basic vocabulary, idiom, expletive or even the most profound proverb, every word or phrase provides a little glimpse into that world. Mennonites are an agrarian people, and so a large part of the vocabulary provides insight into world.

Mennonites are a migratory people, and its vocabulary reveals the attitudes and mindset that accompanies such a lifestyle. Even nonsense rhymes or expletives contain hints of the living conditions of this people. I obtained my examples from Jack Thiessen's dictionary which is an encyclopedia of Low German with all its nuances.

*leaf*

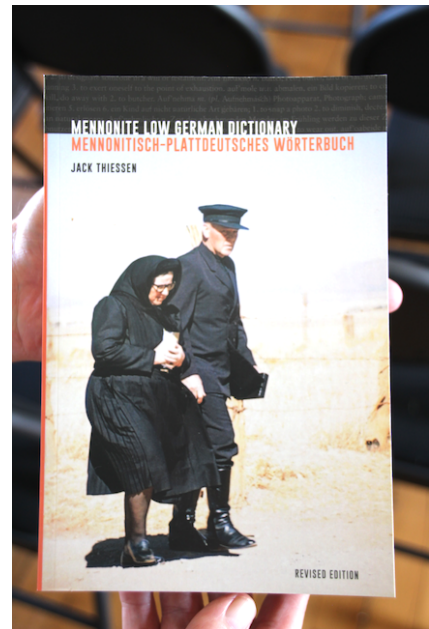


Photo by Wes Friesen

**Music in the Darp** filled the day and toe-tapped its way into the evening as Darp Day hosted both emerging local performers and professional bluegrass artists from Southern Manitoba.

At the Hamm Housebarn, two young singer-songwriters-Altona's Ryan Boyes, and recent MCI grad Scott Richards (La Salle)— entertained their audiences as each displayed energetic and reflective vocals and instrumentals. Both recently performed in the Young Emerging Artists at the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Darp Day was brought to a high-energy peak in the evening's concert at the Commons Barn with the incredible skills of Stanley County Cut-Ups. The newly-formed combination of five professional Manitoba artists — *well-known husband-wife duo Jeremy Hamm and Jess Reimer, mandolin and upright bass, lead vocal; Jeremy Penner, fiddle; Tim Osmond, banjo; T J Blair, lead guitar and vocals*, brought continuous moments of amazement and delight as Jeremy's highly- developed mandolin skills were matched with equal banjo and fiddle play — taking centre stage or happily in support of the incredible vocal and communication skills of Jess with stand-up bass in hand.

Darp Day was privileged to have the support of these artists who brought a wonderful day to a fabulous toe-tapping conclusion.

*pumpkin*