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7) Daughter **Maria T. Barkman** married Johann W. Reimer, son of pioneer merchant Klaas R. Reimer (1837-1906), of Steinbach. They were the parents of John C. Reimer, well-known Steinbach teacher, historian and founder of the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach; and "Gum Sctievel" Jake Reimer, a well-known and famous Steinbach recluse and eccentric.

Notes:

Note 1: It is interesting that the father and uncle of Jakob M. Barkman were originally registered as Bergmanns in the emigration records when they emigrated to Russia: Unruh, *Ostwanderung*, page 360. Ironically Jakob Bergmann (b. 1782), the great-grandfather of Abram P. Bergmann (1887-1971) who settled near the sand pits east of Ste. Annes in 1939, was registered in the emigration records as a Barkman: Unruh, 359.

Note 2: Henry Schapansky, letter October 10, 1992.

Note 3: In fact, Bishop Heinrich Jantzen performed the first baptismal service for the KG in 1815 with 3 baptismal candidates. Jantzen also held a communion service for the KG in Petershagen, Mol. on March 21, 1816, with 33 participants.

Note 4: Unfortunately I have not been able to locate the originals of these sermons and have relied on a summarized version of these sermons as translated by my good friend Mr. John W. Wohlgemuth (1903-89), Hadashville, Man. Klaas J. B. Reimer writes (1964) that at the time of his death 13 of Jakob M. Barkman's handwritten sermons were extant.

Note 5: These letters have been preserved by Toews' descendants and now serve as one of the best sources of information regarding Jakob M. Barkman. They were included in a collection of 74 similar letters published in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, pages 5-76.

Note 6: Father of Isaac F. Friesen (1873-1953), later of Steinbach, Man.

Note 7: For an account of these tragic events see; Peter J.B.Reimer, *Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1825-1875*, 2-4; Peter J.B.Reimer, *The Sesquicentennial Jubilee Evangelical Mennonite Conference*, 39-41; and P.J.B.Reimer, "The Barkmans Come to Canada", *The Messenger*, 1974, September 20.

Note 8: This poem was found in a "Journal" of Gerhard Schellenberg (1854-1932): pages 33 to 34: courtesy of grandson Frank S. Fast, Kleefeld, Man.

Note 9: *Profile 1874*, 52; see Yvonne Lupky, *Doerksen The Genealogy of Gerhard and Helena Doerksen 1767-1984* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1984), 7-33, has a listing of descendants.

Sources:

Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Neunzig Jahre Steinbach in der Ostreserve," *Steinbach Post*, 1964-5.

Klaas J. B. Reimer, "Historical Sketches of Steinbach," *Carillon News*, 1952.

Jakob S. Friesen (1862-1931): "Drekjha Friese"

by great-granddaughter Jeannie L. Hiebert, Henderson Highway, Winnipeg.

Family background.

Jacob Schellenberg Friesen was born in the Molotschna village of Landskrone, South Russia on January 18, 1862 to Heinrich Delesky Friesen (1827-77) and Katherina Schellenberg (1824-1901). His parents were "Anwohner", (landless family) in the village. His father was a painter and dyer of cotton cloth. His parents had moved from Lichtenau to Landskrone and later to the Crimea and then to Sagradovka, Kherson Province. The family always belonged to the Kleine Gemeinde.

In the fall of 1875, the family left Russia for Canada. At the age of fourteen, Jacob and his family arrived in Ontario, Canada. The family overwintered in Ontario. Jacob worked in a mattress factory during the time in Ontario. Here he learned the English language with the help of readers and books which enabled him to teach the much needed language to his relatives and friends in later years.

Moving to Manitoba the following spring of 1877, the Friesen family settled in the village of Hochstadt, Manitoba in the East Reserve where they took to farming. On July 1, 1877 his father Heinrich D. Friesen died. It was said that the hardships of life in a new country were too much for him, and they took there toll. As Jacob was the eldest son at home, he was left with the responsibility to support his mother, Katherina Schellenberg Friesen (1824-1901) and his brothers and sisters that still lived at home. The family was left in difficult straits and the burden of being the provider fell on Jacob since his brothers, Heinrich and Gerhard were already married. Jacob did not have a love for farming.

In 1882, five years after the death of Jacob's father, his mother re-married; she became the wife of Peter Penner Sr. (1816-84). The family moved to Mr. Penners farm in Blumenort, a few miles north of the village of Steinbach. Jacob stayed on the farm with his mother and step-father for a period of three years.

Marriage and farming, 1884.

In 1884, Jacob S. Friesen married Katherina B. Toews of Blumenort on April 28, 1884. Her parents were Peter Wiebe Toews (1831-1922) and Aganetha Klassen Barkman (1828-99), a sister to Peter K. Barkman of Steinbach. On the day of their wedding, Peter Penner Sr. passed away. Thus Jakob was now a married man and his mother once again a widow.

After three years of widowhood, his mother re-married and Peter Baerg (1818-1901), the senior Kleine Gemeinde minister in Manitoba, became his step-father.

In 1887, Jacob built a new house and barn in Blumenort, Manitoba. Although Jacob had been farming before his marriage, he was more interested in machinery. His specialty was steam

engines. Jacob had developed his knowledge in this line to such an extent that he was employed as an engineer at the sawmill, as well as with threshing machines. He went out in the fall to operate steam threshing machines and he had also been in charge of engines in the flour mills at Steinbach and Winkler.

In 1888 the school board was elected in Blumenort and Jacob became the secretary. Jacob was active in many of the local community organizations.

Langdon, North Dakota.

In 1889 Jacob decided to leave the 80 acre farm in Blumenort where he had resided after his marriage and moved his family to North Dakota, USA. They took up a homestead in a small settlement of Mennonites situated 8 miles west of Langdon, North Dakota. His brother Gerhard S. Friesen also lived in this area. Jacob and Katherina, together with their two daughters, Katherina (1885-1965) and Agnes (1887-1976), managed to exist on this homestead for a period of four years when it became necessary to leave.

Jansen, Nebraska.

Because they had acquaintances in Jansen, Nebraska, the family packed up and moved once more. It was here in Jansen that Jacob set up a pump and windmill business and struggled to earn a living. However, a drought hit that part of the country, forcing him to close the business. A son Peter (1893-1983), and a daughter Anna (1895-1976) were born during the years in Jansen, Nebraska. In January 1897, Jacob sent his wife, Katherina and their four children to live with relatives in Manitoba. He followed them in April 1897.

Gruenfeld, Manitoba, 1897.

They now made their home in Gruenfeld (Kleefeld Post Office) and Jacob went to Winnipeg to take a course in cheesemaking, with the result, he followed this trade to Gruenfeld for seven years. Since the cheese factory operated only in the summer, Jacob supplemented his income by working with the threshing crew in the fall seasons. This work took him south, as far as North Dakota where Jacob operated the steam engine for his brother Gerhard. He earned as much as \$5.00 per day.

In order to earn a living in the winter months he began to repair clocks and watches and sold eyeglasses.

In 1903, the cheese factory was discontinued. After purchasing a farm at the village of Rosenfeld (east of Kleefeld) where they lived for about 3 years. Jacob purchased a quarter section near Blumstein, 4 miles southwest of Kleefeld. Since the farm at Blumstein had a large amount of bushland and had a creek crossing it

with the creek being fed by springs along its bank, the land was very suitable for mixed farming.

The family members were able to take care of the work on the farm, so Jacob paid more attention to his watch repair business. Once again he went back to cheesemaking in the cheese factory in Gruenfeld for several summers. In the winter months, the family travelled by sleigh drawn by 2 horses. They would use the sleigh and horses to go to the general store to pick up needed supplies.

Stock on the farm consisted of cows, heifers and pigs. Jacob would buy young pigs in the spring and kept them some distance from the cheese factory, where he fattened them on whey. In the fall he sold them. Katherina (1885-1965) and her brother Peter (1893-1983) would travel to Winnipeg with horse and wagon and sold the pork to a butcher shop on William Ave. They always brought a good price. The whey tank was in the ground with an opening in the top. The pigs, when bigger, would brake down the fence and manage to get over the 2 foot edge around the whey pit and fall in. They would hear the screaming in the factory and have to come and fish the pigs out. None ever drowned. Firewood was cut from the surrounding poplar bush and was sold for income.

One summer Jacob expected a good wheat crop; it was a lovely field of wheat, no weeds, which would yield a lot. When it was ready to be cut, a heavy rain and hail storm passed over and destroyed the wheat completely. Jacob often mentioned that he wanted to move to town and try to start a business. The farming relatives could not understand this and they always discoursed him.

Printing, Giroux, 1908.

In 1908, Jacob became interested in the printing trade. He purchased a small hand-fed Gordon Press in Winnipeg, and tried his hand at printing. He sold the farm in Blumstein and purchased land in Giroux. By the fall of 1910 the Friesen family moved into the new house that Jacob had built. With the small press he started printing letterhead. The neighbours were very interested and he got some printing work. The plates for the press were 8" X 12". They cut the paper with a kitchen knife.

Through his son-in-law, John I. Loewen who operated a concrete block factory in Giroux, Jacob became acquainted with four businessmen, David Langill, farmer and judge, his brother John Langill, who owned the General Store. Mr. Seymour, who owned the Butcher Shop and Mr. Lawson who was the CNR Sta-

tion Agent for Giroux. He was contracted by them to print a newspaper for the group, agreeing to pay his salary of \$100.00 a month, he would provide the paper.

Jacob went to Winnipeg and purchased a larger press, a paper cutter, type and paper in different sizes and started printing the newspaper. This weekly newspaper was named the *Giroux Advocate (Volks Bote)*. The first issue was printed on March 12, 1912. The paper was printed for one year. Eleven issues in all. To boost the circulation of the *Advocate*, one page was printed in the German language for the Mennonite community situated west of Giroux, including Steinbach. Most of his printing business was obtained from this area. Departures and arrivals at the train depot in Giroux were



Photo One: A beautiful summer scene of Steinbach Post Printery as it appeared between 1915 to 1924. It was situated on Main Street where Steinbach Dry Cleaners is located today: see Preservings, No. 8, June 96, page 19. The photograph also shows a residence in the background, probably a home on the newly opened Hanover Street. To the right can be seen the veranda of the C. T. Loewen house. Note the horse and buggy tied up at the hitching rail at the left. The photographs in this article were taken by son Peter T. Friesen. This particular photo came from the album of daughter Margaret Friesen Hiebert, the author's grandmother. Courtesy of Gertrude Friesen.

reported in the *Giroux Volks Bote*.

Jacob first rented John I. Loewen's factory office and put the printery up there, but later decided to put it all in one half of the downstairs of the newly built house. The paper was 8 pages, four of them were "Ready Print". The rest of it was set up by Jacob and his family. Some of the reading material was supplied by the four men.

Unfortunately, the company responsible for the *Advocate* ceased to exist. Pretty soon they found out they could not put up the cash every month, and they could not run the paper without money. Jacob was left high and dry with all his printing equipment. So there he was with the equipment not all paid for and out of work. Jacob started thinking, what to do now.

Then it struck him, that there was no truly independent Mennonite paper being printed. There were papers like "Die Bote" and "Die Rundschau", but they were more or less church papers. So he decided to start his own. Jacob set off for Winnipeg and purchased German type and after planning the form and size of the paper, he started off. At first it was a four page paper, 9 X 7 inches. He decided to call it *Volks Bote* ("The Peoples messenger"). He printed 500 copies of four pages each and sent them out to

500 people in Canada and the USA as sample copies and set the price at \$1.00 a year. This was a weekly paper: that was in December 1913.

Jacob was a man of faith, and was rewarded for it, as by the time the third weeks paper was ready to send out, he had 500 subscribers already. Son Peter T. Friesen sold subscriptions for the "Bote" newspaper in the surrounding rural areas and rode his bike in all kinds of weather. One winter it was so cold that his pen, in his jacket pocket, froze. The ink had frozen solid. In the first issue Jacob including a letter of introduction;

Letter of Introduction, by Jacob S. Friesen.

"This paper I am sending you is a sample copy of the "*Volks Bote*" which we plan to publish after New Year 1914.

We intend it to be a link between far apart living Mennonite people, to be able to hear from each other more often. And we will be very thankful for news correspondents from all parts of Canada and USA. We have printed 500 copies and are sending them out to our people in Canada and USA. We expect to get a number of subscribers as the price for it will be only \$1.00 a year. We will try to give only the newest and respectable items. This paper will be printed only in a Christian (idea) and if we include stories they will be such as being of clean content. We will not print any romantic or such stories".

Jacob wanted the paper to be entertaining in a newsy and Christian way. This was no easy task. But Jacob's faith and the great support from his wife, who was very Christian herself, made it possible. The two oldest daughters were married by this time. The others at home, except those in school, all worked to help with the paper. Peter T. Friesen, the son, was living in Alberta at this time. Soon after, Jacob was also asked to print the "Messenger of Truth", which was a church paper of "The Church of God in Christ", of which he was a member.

This was a small eight page paper, which Jacob's wife Katherina undertook to "set". All the type setting was done by hand. This little paper was printed for many years. It was printed in German.

1914 Typhoid.

In September 1914, tragedy struck when Typhoid fever broke out in the family which afflicted Jacob and Katherina as well as two of the older daughters, bringing them all close to death. It left no one to operate the printery. The only son, Peter who had been working at the printery, was at this time employed in a print-

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Photo Two: Family picture 1917. Left to right: Gertrude, Elisabeth, Peter, Anna, Maria. Jakob and Katharina Friesen seated in front. The family photograph was taken in the back yard of the Printery. From the album of daughter Margaret Friesen Hiebert and courtesy of Gertrude Friesen.

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ery in Calgary, Alberta. With the help of a special nurse, the stricken members of the Friesen family gradually regained their health. In the mean-time, Peter was summoned urgently to come home where he found the printery completely idle. With the help of friends, Peter did his best and carried on until his father was back to work again.

It was at this time when Jacob decided to publish his own weekly newspaper. Not only was the paper not being printed, but there were doctors and nurses to pay for. That was \$300.00 each. The good English neighbours got together with the doctor and nurse and made a plan for the family. The doctor and nurse both decided to settle for half the first mentioned price and Mr. Steele, who was the Reeve in that municipality, offered to pay them and let the family work off the debt with printing the voters list, etc.

Not only did the neighbours help out with money, but they also brought tempting foods and much needed goods. While the family was sick they had to have an ounce of Gin a day each, and the hotel manager supplied that for free. He was a Frenchman by the name of Rongeau.

Steinbach Post, 1915.

In the spring of 1915, the Steinbach business people saw how Jacob's printing business was progressing. They asked Jacob if he would be willing to move the printery to Steinbach. After thinking this over, Jacob sold the property in Giroux and bought a place in Steinbach on Main Street from George D. Goossen, Lot # 9, next to C.T. Loewens.

The front half was taken for the printery and the back half and upstairs for living quarters. This was a very wise move. The Steinbach business gave them much more work in printing and

advertising. This is what the paper needed, as subscriptions did not pay for running a paper.

Now it seemed the name of the paper "*Der Volks Bote*" was not suitable any more, and so the name was changed. The most fitting name was "*Die Steinbach Post*" and so the name was changed effective June 9, 1915.

The paper became known as the "first and only German Mennonite weekly in Canada", and was intended as a newspaper for the family. Every issue contained an instalment of a serialized story, one that Jacob had carefully read beforehand to check its suitability. There was always a correspondence page with letters from such faraway places as Oklahoma, Ontario, Kansas, Mexico, Saskatchewan, Washington, Oregon and Alberta. Local news from the Steinbach area was printed on page four. The front page usually included a poem, an editorial on such things as the debate about district and one-room schools and news items about the immigration of Mennonites to Canada in 1923, for example. Of course the newspaper also provided an opportunity for Steinbach businesses to advertise their wares.

Son Peter T. Friesen opened a book store across Main Street, next to the Barber Shop on Lot# 31. Altogether there were five family members that were able to work in the printery. The work was difficult at times, not so much on the body as on the mind. Each page had to be set by hand, and it took quite a bit of lead type to fill a page. A proof of the page was then printed in order to check for errors. Good quality newsprint was available until 1916, when the war began to affect its supply.

Inferior paper had to be used until 1922 when better paper once again became available. The newspaper was 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size and eight pages in length.

The War Years, 1917.

Near the end of the First World War federal

legislation prohibited publishing in an "enemy alien language" such as German. In November 1917 the *Post* came under criticism for refusing to run an advertisement for the Victory Loan Bond sale. The Chief Press Censor of Canadian government tried in vain to stop the circulation of German papers.

The following June, Jacob was in trouble again but this time for printing resolutions passed at a church conference which reaffirmed the Mennonite position on nonresistance. The Censor considered these to be "most objectionable matter, which encourages opposition to practically all the war measures of the government". That storm too was weathered by Jacob, but effective October 1, 1918 the publication of virtually all papers in German was forbidden. When the next two issues of the *Post* (Oct 2 and Oct 9, 1918) still appeared in German, the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Regina, filed a protest report, objecting that, "the whole edition does not contain even one reference to the War, neither editorially nor in the news, which in itself is proof of it's pro-Germanism".

The October 15, 1918 issue came out in English, reduced in length to four pages. Jacob gave no hint of the reason for the language change in this issue and by the following week the paper was back to its usual eight pages.

On November 13, 1918 the front page headlines announced; "Peace, The World War is at an End". Five days later Jacob wrote to the Chief Censor for permission to print the *Post* in German again now that the war was over. The request was denied. It was not until January 7, 1920 that the return to German was permitted. In that issue readers finally received an official explanation from Jacob why their beloved *Post* had appeared in English during the past fourteen and a half months.

Editor Jacob S. Friesen writes;



Photo Three: Family photograph 1927. L. to r. Maria, Nick, Agatha Enns, Peter T. Friesen, Anna, Cornie, Gertrude and her husband Abram D. Friesen, and friend Katharina. Seated in front are the parents Jakob S. Friesen and Katharina Toews Friesen. The family photograph was taken in the backyard of the Printery. From the album of daughter Margaret Friesen Hiebert and courtesy of Gertrude Friesen.

To our Readers and Friends

“Now that the government of our country has again allowed us to publish our newspaper in the German Language, we greet all our readers with a happy “Gruss Gott!”

“First and foremost, we must thank all our beloved readers who, despite their difficulties in reading the English Language, regularly paid their subscriptions to the paper during this difficult time. Although we did often appeal to the good nature of our readers, we also repeatedly wrote to the Secretary of State to ask for permission to print in German. The latter was to no avail and of the former, many did not want

to donate their dollar ... At the start, many seemed to think that we printed in English out of sheer arrogance. We hope that all of our readers will help us further and with new courage by submitting good, high-quality news and by encouraging as many new, paid-up subscribers as possible....” signed “Jacob Schellenberg Friesen”

During this time the paper got all kinds of letters. Some quite interesting and funny or amusing. One went so far as to say that rather than let his children see a Mennonite paper printed in English, he would have his paper in white, as he had paid for his year’s subscription. So Jacob sent this man the eight page paper in white for the remaining nine months of his one year subscription.

Jacob wrote all the news himself as long as he printed the paper. There were some that sent news in weekly, from when he was in Giroux. Peter T. moved to Winkler in 1921-22 and opened a small printing business.

Retirement, 1924.

The paper was printed until 1924, when Jacob and Katherina decided to retire and give up the printing business. They sold the business to Arnold Dyck, but kept the property and lived in retirement. Jacob went back to repairing clocks and watches again. He often remarked on how glad he was that he had been able to make something of the printing business and that he owed nothing to anybody in the financial line.

Soon after this Jacob’s health began to fail, but he kept on with the watch repair, which he enjoyed. He had a few years with more leisure time and less worry.

Death 1931.

Jacob passed away at his home in Steinbach on May 16, 1931. He was laid to rest in the Steinbach Pioneer Cemetery on May 19, 1931. He died of Myocarditis (chronic), malignant tumour of the right kidney. He was ready and happy to go to his heavenly home.



Photo Four: Jakob Schellenberg Friesen (1862-1931). Photo taken in 1931 just three months before he died. From the album of daughter Margaret Friesen Hiebert and courtesy of Gertrude Friesen.

The April before he died, he was looking out the big front window at the bare trees saying, “I do not expect to see those trees in leaf again. By that time I will be where the trees will be much more beautiful.” And that came true as he passed away on May 16. He was 69 years old when he died.

Jakob S. Friesen’s Christian faith and belief had guided him to affiliation with the Bruderthaler Church. At the same time, he retained his membership in the Holdeman Church.

The funeral was held in the Bruderthaler Church, Steinbach, on May 19, a cold and rainy day. The mourners filled the church to capacity with standing room only. Rev. Gerhard F. Giesbrecht read the scripture at the funeral service and Rev. Jakob F. Barkman conducted the graveside service. Interment took place in the Steinbach Pioneer Cemetery.

Farewell thoughts from the Editor: March 26, 1924

With this issue of the Steinbach Post I am giving up the position of editor of this newspaper I must say that it is difficult to resign from this calling, one which has been both pleasurable and painful and through which I have made so many new and beloved friends. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep and heartfelt thanks to all friends and patrons for the friendly assistance they have given us. We value this highly and will never forget it.

I was partially, although not directly, forced to give up this position because our family and thus our potential help was continually decreasing in size; therefore, we are passing on this job, which is steadily demanding more and more time and with which we can no longer successfully cope, to younger and more capable hands.

I also ask for forgiveness from those readers whom I may have offended, or otherwise hurt.

As for my future plans, I will likely return to the watch repair business which I gave up after going into the printing business.

I shall remember you often my dear readers, and ask that you remember me as well. God be with you.

Jakob S. Friesen

Sources:

1. My great-aunts Gertrude Friesen and Anna Barkman and my great-uncle Peter T. Friesen and family.
2. Henry Fast, “Jakob S. Friesen,” *Preservings*, No. 2, July, 1993, page 7, and Henry Fast, “Gleaning from the 1835 census,” *Preservings*, No. 5, Jan. 1995, page 11, and Henry Schapansky, “Hermann Friesen, circa 1750-1819,” *Preservings*, No. 6, June 1995, page 25.
3. Warkentin, Abe, *Reflections On Our Heritage* (Steinbach, 1974).
4. Loewen, Royden, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, 1983).
5. Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Manitoba.
6. John Dyck, editor, *Historical Sketches of the East Reserve* (Steinbach, 1994).
7. Plett, Delbert, *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, 1990).