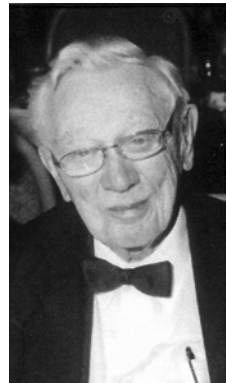


Ted Friesen (1920-2016)



Ted Friesen, who passed away on February 15, 2016, was a profound friend of Mennonite Studies across Canada. He was a community leader, an entrepreneur, and lover of good music. But for historians, he will be remembered in particular for his part in the 1968 founding of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

(MHSC), often recounting his part in initiating the idea on a mid-1960s winter-time train trip to a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, and how he worked closely with Frank Epp, Ted Regehr and others to turn this into a viable idea.

His leadership as president of the MHSC, from 1986 to 1996, serving to guide the Society's unique mandate to foster a national Mennonite historical narrative, will always be appreciated. During his tenure as president he guided the Society to work closely with MCC Canada, turning history to the service of building a strong national Mennonite identity, the undergirding of joint Mennonite action on issues of social justice and economic development. Many Mennonites appreciated his work on family and community history, and in particular, his insights on life in his autobiography, *Memoirs*, (demonstrating his devotion also to his family, to his generous and gracious wife, Linie, and their three sons).

Perhaps he will be most widely remembered for the simple, but profound statements on non-violence in the National Film Board production, "The Pacifist who Went to War," on two brothers' divergent responses to the call to arms in World War Two; remarkably in the movie, John, who went to war, lauded his brother, Ted, the conscientious objector, as the greatest of heroes.

More specifically Ted Friesen was a friend of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. For many years, from 1996 to about 2006, he served on the Advisory Council of the Chair in Mennonite Studies, driving out from Altona to offer his quiet spoken, sage advice. Even after retiring from the Council he would phone me annually to offer encouragement. In the summer of 2015, Conrad Stoesz and I had the pleasure of interviewing Ted on his role as president of MHSC. He and Linie hosted us at their new home at the Gardens on Tenth; Linie served us a delicious *Platz* and Ted recalled the winter-trip to Regina and his friendship with my grandfather, Isaac Loewen, who operated a book store in Mexico in the 1950s.

As always Ted offered his views and memories in his gentle, generous and humble spirit. His many friends in the world of Mennonite history will miss him.

Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg