

# Authors' Profiles

**Ervin Beck**, Goshen, Indiana, is Professor Emeritus of English at Goshen College. He has published widely on English literature and Mennonite literature, folklore, and folk arts, including *MennoFolk: Mennonite & Amish Folk Traditions* (Herald Press, 2004), *MennoFolk2: A Sampler of Mennonite & Amish Folklore* (Herald Press, 2005), and *MennoFolk3: Puns, Riddles, Tales, Legends* (CMW online, Oct. 2016).

**Daniel Shank Cruz** (he/they) is a queer disabled boricua who grew up in New York City and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He received his PhD from Northern Illinois University and studies Creative Nonfiction in Hunter College's MFA program. Cruz is the author of *Queering Mennonite Literature: Archives, Activism, and the Search for Community* (Penn State University Press, 2019). His writing has also appeared in venues such as *Crítica Hispánica*, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, *Modern Haiku*, *The New York Times*, and *Your Impossible Voice*. Follow him on Twitter at @shankcruz.

**Leonard Doell** is retired and lives near Aberdeen, Saskatchewan. He is an active member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan and enjoys doing genealogical research and learning more about Mennonite and Indigenous history.

**Timothy Epp** is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Applied Social Sciences at Redeemer University. In addition to studying the social construction of race in Anabaptist history, his writing and research span topics of disability, dementia care, and popular culture.

**Kathryn Fisher** is an Assistant Professor and Lead of Health Sciences in the School of Nursing at McMaster University. Her

expertise is in quantitative research that spans both clinical trials and population-based studies. Her research focuses on aging, multimorbidity, quality of life, and rural health, including work concerning Canadian Old Order Mennonites. Dr. Fisher's recent publications have appeared in *BMC Health Services Research*, *Journal of Comorbidity*, *Canadian Journal on Aging*, and *Canadian Journal of Diabetes*.

**Aileen Friesen** is an Associate Professor of History and the Executive Director of the Plett Foundation at the University of Winnipeg. She has published *Colonizing Russia's Promised Land: Orthodoxy and Community on the Siberian Steppe* (2020) and *The Russian Mennonite Story: The Heritage Cruise Lectures* by Paul Toews with Aileen Friesen.

**Leonard Friesen** is Professor of History at Wilfrid Laurier University in Russian and Soviet history. He is the editor of the recent book *Minority Report: Mennonite Identities in Imperial Russia and Soviet Ukraine Reconsidered, 1789-1945*. Other books by Friesen include *Transcendent Love: Dostoevsky and the Search for a Global Ethic* and *Rural Revolutions: Peasants, Nobles, and Estate Owners in Southern Ukraine, 1774-1905*.

**Jeff Gundy** is Distinguished Poet in Residence at Bluffton University in Ohio, where he has taught since 1984. His twelve books include *Without a Plea* and *Abandoned Homeland* (both poems) and *Songs from an Empty Cage: Poetry, Mystery, Anabaptism, and Peace* (criticism). He held a Fulbright lectureship at the University of Salzburg and was named Ohio Poet of the Year for *Somewhere Near Defiance*.

**Kat Hill** is a Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at Birkbeck College, London who works on religious non-conformity in global contexts. She has published on Anabaptism and Mennonites in Europe and beyond and is about to start a five-year research project on Mennonite migrations from 1525 to the present day.

**Jesse Hutchison** is an instructor in the English departments of the University of Waterloo and St. Jerome's University. His 2015 dissertation examined Canadian Mennonite life writing. His current research examines the various ways that authors and philosophers have approached the concept of work from the early modern period up to today.

**Rebecca Janzen** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and Interim Graduate Advisor—Spanish, at the University of South Carolina. Janzen is the

author of the recently published *Unholy Trinity: State, Church, and Film in Mexico* (SUNY Press, 2021), *Liminal Sovereignty: Mennonites and Mormons in Mexican Culture*, and *The National Body in Mexican Literature*.

**Karen M. Johnson-Weiner** is Distinguished Service Professor in Linguistic Anthropology, Faculty Emeriti, at State University of New York at Potsdam. She is the author of several books on Amish history, including her most recent, *The Lives of Amish Women*. Her other books include *New York Amish: Life in the Plain Communities of the Empire State*, and *Train up a Child: Old Order Amish and Mennonite Schools*.

**Maxwell Kennel** is a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto where he is currently working on a project called “Critique of Conspiracism” under the supervision of Pamela Klassen. His recent work includes a dissertation on “Ontologies of Violence: Jacques Derrida, Mennonite Pacifist Epistemology, and Grace M. Jantzen’s *Death and the Displacement of Beauty*” (McMaster University, 2021), a guest-edited special issue of *Political Theology* on Mennonite political theology (May 2021), and a forthcoming book called *Postsecular History: Political Theology and the Politics of Time* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

**Doreen Helen Klassen** is an anthropologist, ethnomusicologist, and folklorist, who retired from the Social/Cultural Studies Programme at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland, in 2019. She is currently working on autobiographical narrative among Low German-speaking Mennonite women in Mexico and Belize.

**Shelisa Klassen** is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Manitoba. Her dissertation examines the public discourse about race, identity, land, and immigration in Manitoba during the 1870s focusing on local newspapers and immigration pamphlets.

**S. L. Klassen** is a Mennonite humour writer with a PhD in history. Her first book, *Menno-Nightcaps: Cocktails Inspired by That Odd Ethno-Religious Group You Keep Mistaking for the Amish, Quakers or Mormons* (Touchwood Editions) is scheduled for publication in fall 2021.

**Mary Ann Loewen** lives in Winnipeg with her husband. She has three grown children and two grandchildren. She taught Academic Writing at the University of Winnipeg and at Canadian Mennonite University, and has edited two non-fiction

anthologies, *Sons and Mothers* and *Finding Father*. Now she has fun with blog posts, writes sermons now and then, entertains herself at the piano, cuts onions and other vegetables with elation, goes for walks with earbuds spilling out her favourite podcasts, and spends much time smothering her grandkids with love.

**Royden Loewen** is a Senior Scholar at the University of Winnipeg. He is the author of the forthcoming *Mennonite Farmers: A Global History of Place and Sustainability* (Johns Hopkins, fall 2021). His recent books include *Horse-and-Buggy Genius: Listening to Mennonites Contest the Modern World* and *Village among Nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916–2006*. Loewen's current SSHRC-supported research project is "Transnational Flows of Agricultural Knowledge."

**Tanis MacDonald** is Professor in the Department of English and Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Her essay "Lectures about Mennonite Literature that I Will Never Give" is online at *Hamilton Arts & Letters*, with thanks to Grace Kehler.

**Kimberly D. Schmidt** is a Professor of History (retired) at Eastern Mennonite University and director of the Washington Community Scholars' Center. Her publishing, including two books and several articles, has focused on Mennonite, Amish, and Cheyenne women's history.

**Margaret Steffler** is Professor of English Literature at Trent University. She is the editor of P.K. Page's *Mexican Journal* (2015) and *Metamorphosis: Selected Children's Literature* (2020), Volumes 2 and 6 in the *Collected Works of P.K. Page*. She has published on the work of Miriam Toews, Carol Shields, Alice Munro, L.M. Montgomery, Sylvia Fraser, Rudy Wiebe, and David Bergen.

**John Thiesen** is Archivist and Co-director of Libraries at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. He is the author of *Mennonite and Nazi? Attitudes among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America 1933–1945* (1999) and, most recently, co-editor of *European Mennonites and the Holocaust* (University of Toronto Press, 2021).

**Paul Tiessen** is Professor Emeritus, English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University. With Hildi Froese Tiessen his Mennonite publications include L.M. Montgomery's letters to Ephraim Weber (UTP) and Woldemar Neufeld's Canadian landscapes (WLUP). He has published essays on Mennonite novelists Miriam Toews, Sandra Birdsell, and Rudy Wiebe, and on

relationships between Marshall McLuhan and Wilfred Watson. With international colleagues he edited a trilogy of novels by Malcolm Lowry (UOP). He has work underway on Wiebe and on Lowry.

**James Urry** is a retired academic of the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, where he was Reader in Anthropology. He is the author of *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* and *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe – Russia – Canada, 1525 to 1980*.

**Kathleen Venema** is an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Winnipeg, where she teaches in the areas of Canadian literature and life writing about illness and disability. Her first book, *Bird-Bent Grass: A Memoir, in Pieces* (2018), uses letters, written while she was with MCC in Uganda, as memory prompts when her mother is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. *Bird-Bent Grass* was shortlisted for the Manitoba Book Awards non-fiction prize.

**Jeremy Wiebe** is the Communications and Finance Officer of the Plett Foundation, an associate member of the Centre of Transnational Mennonite Studies, and teaches in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

**Hans Werner** is a Senior Scholar at the University of Winnipeg. He is the author of *The Constructed Mennonite: History, Memory, and the Second World War* and *Imagined Homes: Soviet German Immigrants in Two Cities*. Werner's current research is described as "Mennonite Immigration and Settlement, 1525 to 2014: A Historical Atlas."