

Johann J. Derksen

Our dear father, Johann Derksen, was born on September 19, 1881 in the village of Saribash, Russia. His parents were Jacob Derksen and Anna, nee Janzen.

Here he spent his childhood and youth. In his nineteenth year he accepted the Lord as his Saviour. On June 18, 1900 he was baptized in Schoental by David Duerksen and received into the Mennonite Brethren Church, whose member he remained for the rest of his life.

In 1901 he moved with his parents to the Terek settlement. Likely, he assisted his parents in the building of their home but was also active in building the kingdom of God by directing the church choir.

As a young man he came to the Kuban and there found Luise Fischer, his accomplice for life. They were married on September 10, 1908. Ten children were born to them, of whom three sons and three daughters died in childhood. Our parents were able to share joy and sorrow for 44 years. Our dear mother was torn from his side by her death on January 5, 1952, after a short but difficult illness.

This was a hard blow for father. He felt the loss deeply and was often overcome with loneliness. His diabetes grew worse and gnawed at his health. He suffered two strokes from which recovery was slow. On April 14 he submitted to bladder surgery, which proved successful. Already on the day of the surgery he expressed joy at having endured the surgery so well. That evening, however, he suffered a further stroke, severe enough to render him unconscious. He was unable to speak and on April 26, gently and without a struggle, he departed into the presence of Him in whom he had put his trust.

During their life together our parents made their home in a number of places. For the first 16 years of their marriage they lived in the Kuban. Besides looking after his family, he was also Sunday School teacher and director of the mixed choir for a number of years. During World War I he was required to serve for 3.5 years. With the years of revolution which followed, there was much to overcome. Quite often he served as spokesman for the Kuban villages, which at

times put his life in danger. All of that convinced him to live a life detached from the values of this world.

In the fall of 1924 our parents and their children were able to immigrate to Canada, first to Rosthern and then to Gnadenthal. Since farming did not interest him he sold his farm and moved on to Winnipeg, to Winkler, and later for a short time to Whitewater, where he had a small store. Thanks the onset of Mennonite settlement in BC, and the invitation of friends, the decision to move to BC was easily made.

He and his children have been living in BC since 1929. In the early years he served once again as choir director. His business ventures and later his store allowed him to connect with many of the settlers of that time.

He had little to say about his life. When during the night sleep eluded him and his life passed before him, he found his only refuge beneath the cross and regretted not having borne more fruit.

We as children know that father was concerned about our welfare, that he wanted our best, and that in Jesus Christ he had his Saviour, whom he loved and in whom he had found a hold. We will miss him often. Though our eyes are crying, we grant him the rest and anticipate with joy a reunion in the presence of Jesus in the light.

He attained to an age of 73 years, 7 months, and 23 days.

The funeral was held on April 30 in the Yarrow M.B. Church. Serving with the Word of God were Rev. H. Lenzmann and Rev. Frank Friesen. The latter is a nephew of the departed. He came from Morden, Man. for the funeral of his uncle. Serving with appropriate songs was a quartet composed of singers who had earlier sung in the choir directed by the deceased.

He leaves behind one son, David Derksen and family, Yarrow; three daughters: Mary, Mrs. Peter Enns and family, Oliver, BC; Anny, Mrs. Willy Dyck and family, Vancouver, BC; Martha, Mrs. John Plett and family, Vancouver, BC; and one foster daughter, Annie, Mrs. John Dahl and family, Yarrow, BC; 18

grandchildren; two brothers, Gerhard and Julius Derksen, Yarrow, and a wide circle of relatives and acquaintances.

The grieving children