

The following is an account of a trip to the old Mennonite cemetery at Whatshan provided by Greg Nesteroff

With the Arrow Lakes Historical Society we last week to see the old Mennonite settlement at Whatshan, and in particular its incredibly obscure cemetery, which I only knew about because of the book *Just Where is Edgewood*. I'm pleased to report we were successful, thanks to a couple from Enderby who helped us. Ramona Damen's great grandparents were among the original settlers there from 1911-18.

These are the rough directions, although I'd like to go back with a pedometer to measure more precise distances: coming from Vernon, make a left onto Whatshan Settlement Road. It is the last road before the hairpin curve towards the ferry landing. Drive approximately 2 km until you see the old airport hanger on the right. Park towards the far end of it.

The cemetery is on your left, through the bush. Look for a pond, and keep to the right. There is a path, but it may be hard to find. There are two marked graves with a plastic white picket fence around them. The first is of Barbara Krebs, who died in 1913. The second is of Elizabeth Wiebe, who died in 1912. This was Ramona's great grandmother; the painted stone marker was only placed there last year. She figures there may be a third burial as well, of a Friesen baby who died in 1912.

The Damens also gave me some genealogical info on the Krebs family, which was great since I had no luck on my own. Herman Krebs (1860-1950) married Barbara Reichel (1870 - 26 Jun 1913). Barbara's mother had a reputation as an excellent midwife and nurse. They had ten children: Fritz, Lena, Peter, Fred, Mary, Ferdinand, Herman, Willy, Elizabeth, and Constantia, the last of whom was born the same year Barbara died. Herman then married Katherine Friesen (1882-1924) and they had Alexander (1920-24) and Annie.

The other really neat thing we went to see is a huge tree planted in 1912, which since 1967 has had a sign imploring would-be fallers not to cut it down. It is on the opposite side of the road from the cemetery. Walk along the old road past the far end of the airport hanger and look for a rose bush, which has a bit of a path next to it up the hill.

