

# OMHGS *Newsletter*

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Our Logo

In the summer of 1990 we announced that we would have a contest in which people could send us entries for a Logo for OMHGS.

We asked three persons to serve as a Selection Committee, to judge the entries received, and to choose the best one. Those asked were Karl Birky, Albany; Evelyn Kenagy, Albany; and Cathy Passmore, Corvallis. This committee met, studied and discussed the entries, made suggestions for slight changes, and came up with a winner.

The best entry was submitted by Mae Etta Kennel, Salem, Oregon, a member of the Western Mennonite congregation. Her original idea and design is shown above. Her award was a year membership in OMHGS. Her comments sent in with her entry are as follows:

The sturdy oak tree grows historically onward. Our Anabaptist roots grew from and extend to all parts of the world. The ellipse around the oak tree signifies the care of God and the influence of the Mennonite church toward growth.

The finished artwork on Mae Etta's basic design was by Margo Butler of the Zion Mennonite congregation, Hubbard, OR.

# Oregon's Early Swiss Mennonites and

THE C.B. STEINER CHURCH  
near Pratum, Oregon, ca 1880-1928

by Hope Lind

In Oregon, the C.B. Steiner Church was probably the first Mennonite congregation, one of only two Swiss Mennonite congregations. The other was Emmanuel Mennonite Church, located for some ninety years on this site where we are gathered today. What makes a person or a congregation "Swiss" Mennonite? Didn't many of our Mennonite ancestors have Swiss roots, whether they came to America from Germany or France (and even some from Russia)? Why aren't they Swiss Mennonites? In general, Swiss Mennonites were so-called in the United States because they or their ancestors migrated here directly from Switzerland or after only a brief stay in a neighboring country, instead of stopping off in the Rhine River valley or elsewhere in Europe for a generation or more. Most of them came from the area of Bern, Switzerland, and are also called Bernese Mennonites. In Oregon, some who were known as Swiss Mennonites were actually born elsewhere, as in Alsace or even in Russia.

As early as 1816, a small number of Swiss Mennonites began to migrate to the United States. Benedict Schrag, who arrived the next year, wrote letters back to the homeland. This encouraged the larger movement of Swiss Mennonites which began in 1819. They first settled in the Sonnenberg-Kidron community, near Orrville, in Wayne County, Ohio. By the 1850s, many more had come, and the United States had four major Swiss Mennonite communities. Three were in Ohio -- in Wayne County, and farther west in bordering Putnam and Allen Counties with addresses such as Pandora and Bluffton. One was in Adams County, Indiana, at Berne. (As might be expected, the Bernese Mennonites gave the town its name.) Sonnenberg was the mother community, and many of the later immigrants stopped off at this first community before moving farther west.

Some of Oregon's Swiss Mennonites came from Sonnenberg and nearby Chippewa (now named Crown Hill), in the oldest and most conservative of the four communities. Other Oregon settlers came from congregations which were less conservative, whether from one of the other older communities or from smaller, newer ones in other states. Differences among those communities influenced Oregon's Swiss Mennonites and the two congregations which emerged in this area.

In April 1876 Christian C. Wenger (usually called C.C. Wenger) and his wife Magdalena, and John Lichty and his wife Elizabeth, both couples with young children, arrived at Salem. Later there were at least two John Lichtys in the area; this John's wife was Elizabeth Steffen, and he spelled his surname without an "e." The other John spelled his surname with an "ei." Wengers and Lichtys settled east of Salem in the Dutch Flats/Howell Prairie area, toward Silverton. Wenger asserted that he and his wife were the first Mennonite settlers in Oregon. Later he mentioned, almost as an afterthought, that John Lichty accompanied them to Oregon. Why did he not include John and Elizabeth Lichty as Mennonites? As I wrote my recently published



history of Oregon Mennonites, I mulled over that question and, after consulting a variety of other sources as well, I concluded that Wenger had simply neglected to include the Lichtys as Mennonites. Accordingly, I identified both the Wenger and Lichty couples as Swiss Mennonite. However, as I worked on this paper, I reviewed my files and again analyzed my source materials (including several sources which I did not have earlier). I am now revising that identification.

First, consider the Wenger couple. Christian C. Wenger was born in Switzerland and was a Mennonite when he moved from Ohio to Oregon. In that sense he could be called a Swiss Mennonite. However, it seems that Wenger and his wife were not part of either Swiss Mennonite congregation in Wayne County, OH. What I've discovered about Wenger is sketchy, but offers a few hints. He came to America at age nine, lived in Buffalo, NY, for a time, and then moved to Ohio. The 1860 census of Wayne County showed Christian Wenger, age 17, living with a David and Elizabeth Zettinger (or Zellinger) family, along with 17-year old Catherine Laighty. Were the two young people orphaned relatives or friends of the Zettingers? The Zettinger family also had a son Christian, age 18, and two daughters nine and six. Perhaps Wenger's family in Switzerland had been Mennonites, and as a young adult he sought out a Mennonite congregation in Wayne County. Possibly he was a member of the County Line (Wisler) Mennonite congregation at the time he moved to Oregon.

Second, consider the Lichtys, who moved to Oregon with the Wengers. While preparing this paper, I did additional research on them, too. They came from Swiss Mennonite families, but like a number of single young men (and perhaps other couples, too) from Ohio Swiss Mennonite communities, they never joined an Oregon Mennonite congregation.

John and Elizabeth and their son Alexander Lichty (and perhaps other children, too) did attend services at the nearby Apostolic Christian Church, and John and Elizabeth were buried in its cemetery, she in 1899, he in 1904, as were two infant children in 1894 and 1899. However, their grandson Grover Lichty said they were not Apostolic Christian Church members. That agrees with Apostolic Christian Church tradition. Perhaps they were buried in the Apostolic cemetery because they attended there regularly.

The surviving children of John and Elizabeth Lichty (and some of the spouses) were Minnie, wife of Gideon Welty; William, married to Bertha Myers; Henry, Matilda, Alexander, and Bertha; Josephine, married to James B. Rogers; and Lillian, Lida, Ruth and John. Minnie and Gideon Welty, William Lichty, and Henry Lichty are named in the Emmanuel Church register. Perhaps others of their children were members there, too. Family tradition says that about half of the children of John and Elizabeth Lichty became Mennonite members.

Swiss Mennonites who came to Oregon in 1877, the year after the Wenger and Lichty families arrived, included the families of Christian Geiger, Peter Geiser, Peter Neuenschwander (in Oregon he shortened the name to Neuschwander), Nicholas Lichty, and John Heyerly. Two other persons who came were Barbara Steffen, who was John Lichty's



mother-in-law; and Jacob Geiger, who was unmarried. (The above Nicholas Lichty was not the later Nicholas Leichty of Albany who married Magdalena Maurer.) In an April 1878 letter to Herold der Wehrheit, the German counterpart to Herald of Truth, C.C. Wenger named the above persons and added, "at present we are, all together, fourteen members of the Mennonite Church." (HT, May 1878, 86) Assuming the families named included a husband and wife who were members, adding in the two singles, and including Wenger and his wife, this made fourteen members.

C.C. Wenger wrote, near the end of his letter which identified the 1878 Mennonite members, "Our greatest need at present is that of a minister; then we would be satisfied with our condition... We trust...that the Lord will send us those that will preach us his word in truth." He acknowledged that they had the New Testament by which to encourage their hearts, but reminded his readers that "where there is no shepherd, the sheep become scattered, so that they will follow their own way." (Ibid.)

No Mennonite minister responded quickly to Wenger's letter, and his warning about sheep scattering was prophetic. About a year later, C.C. Wenger left the Mennonite Church and joined the Apostolic Christian Church.

The Apostolic Christian Church had begun about 1832 in Switzerland, where dissatisfied Mennonites comprised one group in the first congregation. Other congregations soon organized among Mennonite settlements on the other side of the Swiss border, in Alsace, Lorraine, Baden and Wuerttemberg. In 1846 seven members of this faith emigrated to Ohio, settled among Swiss Mennonites in Wayne County, and found a following among them. In the next decades the Apostolic people settled in other states, often near Mennonites or Amish Mennonites. The Apostolic Christian Church emphasized a warm piety and a definite conversion experience, with baptism by immersion being a central doctrine.

C.C. Wenger had lived near members of the Apostolic Christian Church in Ohio, and he wanted to know more about them. Perhaps it was about 1878, when he wrote letters to the Herold der Wahrheit, that he also wrote to elders of the Apostolic Christian Church, inquiring about their beliefs. In 1879 an Apostolic elder from Lewis County, New York, traveled all the way to Oregon to talk with Wenger, and it was probably then that he baptized the Wengers as the first members of the Apostolic Christian Church in Oregon. About that time a number of Apostolic families moved to Oregon, and other baptisms followed in the next years. By 1883, if not before, the Dutch Flat Apostolic congregation was well established, with an elder and with deeded property for a church building and cemetery. How many other Mennonites joined the Oregon congregation is not known. Perhaps few or none, for a Mennonite bishop soon came into the picture. However, some Mennonites did attend Apostolic services at least for a time, and a number of gravestones in the cemetery bear surnames common among Swiss Mennonites.

Bishop C.B. Steiner of the Chippewa congregation (now Crown Hill Mennonite Church) in Wayne County, Ohio, made his first visit to



Oregon in the fall of 1880. Certainly he was greatly concerned about the influence of the Apostolic people on Oregon's Swiss Mennonites. He knew from the experience of his Ohio congregation that if the Apostolic Christian Church attracted Mennonites, families could be divided and the church weakened. Perhaps it was on his 1880 visit that he ordained Christian Geiger as minister and organized a congregation. With a resident minister, the Swiss Mennonites could have regular services. This may have influenced other families to remain Mennonite, but for the Wengers, it was too late.

Steiner made his second visit to Oregon in 1883, when he baptized at least two persons. He came again in the summer of 1884 and baptized four persons, including John Beer, age twenty-five. Several days later he ordained John Beer as a minister, at the time that he ordained Christian Geiger as bishop and Peter Neuschwander as deacon.

After Steiner's 1883 visit, he made plans to move to Oregon, and in March 1884 he sold his Ohio farm for \$2000, two-thirds of what he paid for it in 1856. But the buyer backed out of the bargain, and in March 1885 Steiner resold it, this time for only \$1500. Why did he move to Oregon? Perhaps he thought he could recoup his losses by buying comparatively inexpensive land in Oregon. Likely the need of Oregon's Swiss Mennonites for spiritual leadership was a stronger motivation. Although the Oregon people did by then have a resident bishop, minister and deacon, apparently they requested that Steiner move to Oregon. In addition, his daughter Barbara and her husband David Beugli had moved to Oregon in the spring of 1880 and perhaps they encouraged her family to follow. Perhaps there were also other reasons. In April 1885, C.B. Steiner, almost sixty years of age, his wife Catherine, and most of their other unmarried and married children, moved to Oregon. Steiner purchased and settled on a farm several miles east of Salem, near the MacClay Cemetery.

Besides Barbara, C.B. Steiner's other children who lived in Oregon, some for a few years only, included: Leah, married to Adam Neuenschwander; Caleb, married to Fannie Amstutz; Manassa, married to Marianna Amstutz; Elias, never married; Ephraim, married to Martha Steiner; and Lydia, married to Samuel Messinger.

By this time and in the next several years, larger numbers of Swiss Mennonites moved to Oregon. People named Mueller, Beutler, Biery, Beugli, Dapp, Amstutz, Blosser, Gerber, and Sutter came, in addition to those already named. In 1889-1890 another group of families arrived, with names including Ramseyer, Rich, Wenger, Martins, Roth, Stauffer, and the large Peter Gerig family. Some of them were not Swiss Mennonites by strict definition. By 1900 and perhaps much earlier, other names included Herr, Sommers, Hofstetter, Kauffman, Moser, Meyers and Welty. Some had lived in an established Swiss Mennonite community in America from their birth; others, including most of the 1889-90 group, were recent immigrants who settled briefly in Ohio, Kansas, Michigan, Indiana or Wisconsin before moving to Oregon.

This area in Oregon was much advertised as the American Switzerland, and perhaps this was one attraction for Swiss Mennonites. By 1883 the community had the name Switzerland, and in 1887 a post



office with that name was established about five miles southwest of Silverton. Later the town was named Pratum by Mennonites of the area. The name means "meadow" in Latin. Apparently someone of them had studied Latin.

The Mennonites to whom C.B. Steiner ministered were scattered geographically. Those with scant financial resources had to buy or rent cheaper, less developed land, six, ten, twelve or more miles from other Mennonites. Meeting to worship in a pre-auto era with primitive roads was a major undertaking, and at first they met only monthly, in homes. Later they met bi-weekly. As more Mennonites settled in the area, the Swiss Mennonites gradually grouped informally according to conservative or progressive views. The influx of families in 1889-1890, which included a minister, John Rich, strengthened the progressive element and defined it more clearly. Rich immediately stepped into leadership, apart from Steiner, Geiger, and Beer. In the fall of 1889, soon after his arrival, Rich obtained permission to use the German Reformed Church's vacant building, a mile-and-a-half east of Pratum on what was called the Kissling (or Kipling?) place. At first Rich preached there monthly, then twice a month. The conservative group, by then known as the C.B. Steiner Church, also used the building for a few months. Rich requested permission to take turns preaching with Steiner, Geiger and Beer, but they refused because they regarded Rich as too liberal.

In the spring of 1890, the C.B. Steiner Church ministers invited the more progressive Mennonites to attend their Good Friday service, called a "Discipline Meeting." Perhaps this was to precede a communion service on Easter Sunday. At the close of the service, the bishop read a paper outlining church regulations. Sunday school, singing school, and the wearing of mustaches were among the forbidden practices. The progressive group could not accept such restrictions, and a clear break occurred. The more liberal group gathered under Rich's leadership, and about two months later, with the help of J.B. Baer, General Conference Mennonite traveling minister, they organized the Waldo Hills congregation, later named Emmanuel.

The C.B. Steiner group, which comprised about ten families, resumed meeting bi-weekly in their homes. Because of their scatteredness, those who lived farthest away often came to the host home on Saturday evening. Women and children slept on beds on the floor, and the men, in the barn. There were two services on Sunday, morning and afternoon, with the host family serving a light lunch at noon. The people sat on make-shift benches of blocks and boards. Each family brought its own German songbook for the services, with singing before and after the long sermon. Once, about 1892, when services were to be held at the Peter Neuschwander home in Brooks, the food for the Sunday lunch mysteriously disappeared during Saturday night. The family found discarded containers scattered in the field between the house and the nearby railroad tracks, and they surmised that some hobos had helped themselves to a good supper. So two young men went to Salem on Sunday morning to buy food. I wonder if grocery stores were open on Sunday in those days, or if they had to find a grocer willing to help with that emergency.



Between 1893 and 1895 the Steiner group built a meetinghouse a mile and a half from Pratum on an acre of land donated by John Heyerly, Sr. Tradition says the building was small, but the Pacific District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church reported that over three hundred people attended a Sunday afternoon meeting there in 1899. Perhaps there was a large overflow crowd in the churchyard! It was called the Cemetery Church, because a cemetery was established beside it. People from Waldo Hills/Emmanuel also used the cemetery.

The C.B. Steiner Church had fraternal relationships with (Old) Mennonite and Amish Mennonite groups but it remained independent. Mennonite preacher David Garber from Nampa, Idaho, visited the group in 1899 and encouraged them to observe foot washing at communion services, which they agreed to do, although Swiss Mennonites did not historically hold to that tradition.

The Steiner group did not use their new building for long. Their numbers dwindled when a few joined the Waldo Hills congregation and several others, including John Heyerly, Jr., and his wife's family, the Peter Neuschwanders, moved to Linn County and became members of the Fairview Amish Mennonite Church near Albany. It seems that while the meetinghouse was in use, some of the Steiner group also had services in a schoolhouse in the Silverton Hills, called "Beer's." (Perhaps it was on minister John Beer's property and he preached there.) Why did they use the schoolhouse? Did part of the group not favor a meetinghouse? Was it simply closer to their homes? Was it a division of sorts? We do not know. In late 1899, several years after the death of C.B. Steiner's wife, he moved to his son Ephraim's home "up on the hills" near Beer's schoolhouse. Perhaps by then most of the other church families also lived in that area. Apparently they decided that they no longer needed the more distant meetinghouse beside the cemetery. C.B. Steiner wrote to his brother Adam that "when we moved ... there are two preachers ... now we must have preaching here, so we united." (from Clayton Steiner, "From Switzerland to Sonnenberg," 19) For whatever reason, between 1900 and 1907 they tore down the meetinghouse, and the Emmanuel congregation took over the adjoining cemetery.

Bishop C.B. Steiner was a conscientious and dedicated leader, often staying up late at night to study his Bible. But he was also a down-to-earth person whom children loved. To the children's delight, Steiner and his wife usually supplied their pockets with little round peppermint candies, white, pink and green, to hand out. One time Steiner had a bag of walnuts instead, which he distributed by dumping them on the floor, then watched the children scramble to pick them up. He died in 1903 and was buried in the cemetery on the land adjoining the meetinghouse where he had preached for a time.

About the time C.B. Steiner died, or soon after, the remaining families moved to Clackamas County to an area about twelve miles east of Hubbard. It seems this must have been yet another area than that surrounding the Beer's School. In Clackamas County they held monthly services in their homes, using the German language and their Swiss dialect. They had special instruction for new members before baptism but still no Sunday school. Besides bishop Christian Geiger and minister John Beer, others who preached for them at times included

Peter Christner and Mose Miller, who were probably Amish Mennonites.

Bishop Christian Geiger and his wife Kathryn Beugli had four daughters and five sons who survived them. They were: Dinah, married to Joe Lehman; Cora, married to John Schumacher; Mabel, married to Lester Conrad and mother of former Zion member and missionary Paul Conrad; Leah, married to a Lackey; and sons Gilliam, Jacob, Ephraim, William, and Oren. Minister John Beer, rather late in life, at age 43, married Anna Hofstetter, who came from Ohio to Oregon as a widow. When John Beer died at age 69, two step-sons and one step-daughter survived him. They were: Christian Hofstetter, married to Mary Roth; Benjamin Hofstetter, married to Ethel Darby; and Fannie Hofstetter, unmarried.

Sometimes in later years C.B. Steiner Church people would visit at Zion Mennonite Church near Hubbard on Sunday evenings. Occasionally the Geiger sisters or someone else furnished special music at Zion. The Steiner church tried to preserve their Swiss ways, and some people regarded them as clannish. Their women wore a black scarf tied under the chin as a prayer veiling. When one elderly widow married an Albany man, she had to take off her black scarf and wear a white covering before she could commune at Fairview.

Christian Geiger died in 1913, John Beer in 1928. After Beer's death, the remaining members disbanded and united with such congregations as Zion Mennonite, Calvary Mennonite, a Lutheran Church or a United Church of Christ congregation. Although the congregation disbanded more than sixty years ago, even today descendants of C.B. Steiner Church members contribute to the cause of Christ in Mennonite and other congregations in Oregon.

I would welcome additional information about the C.B. Steiner Church and its families, should any of you have such information.

(Besides my Apart and Together, sources include Mennonite Encyclopedia; Mennonite Historical Bulletin; Herald of Truth; Gospel Herald; notes from interviews with or letters from John Lichty (grandson of the 1876 settler), John Lais, Mabel Giger Conrad, Norman W. Kellerhals, Vail King, Walter Hari; 1860 U.S. Census Records; obituary of C.C. Wenger in Silverton newspaper; Clayton Steiner's family history "From Switzerland to Sonnenberg;" James Lehman's histories: Sonnenberg: A Haven and A Heritage, and Crosswinds: From Switzerland to Crown Hill; Perry A. Klopfenstein, Marching to Zion, a history of the Apostolic Christian Church; Portrait and Biographical Record for John Lichty biography; notes from cemetery of Apostolic Christian Church; copy of Emmanuel Mennonite Church record. Full bibliographical information available on request.)



# The Heyerly Family History

presented by Ron Heyerly, Coburg, OR.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Oregon Mennonite Historical Society for selecting the Heyerly family history for this meeting.

A story is told about a preacher whose name was drawn from a pool of ministers to conduct a funeral service for someone he did not know. During the graveside service, he continually called the deceased by the wrong name. When he finally discovered his error, he became so nervous that he took a few steps backward, falling into the grave. Now, being a portly fellow, he had to struggle to get himself back out of the hole, and in so doing he ripped the seat out of his pants. When he finally did crawl out, he was so embarrassed that he finished his service from behind a tree -- 20 yards away.

This is where I talk about the Heyerlys, isn't it? If I call someone by a wrong name, I will not step backward! The Heyerly history I will share with you today was taken from many sources -- some written, some verbal -- from the book "Sonnenberg"; from talking to members of the family; and from an autobiography written and tape-recorded by my grandpa John Heyerly. A family tree tracing three generations is also on display today.

At this point, I feel a little history is in order: The Anabaptist Mennonite movement was born in Switzerland within the first decade of the reformation in the 16th Century. Laws had been passed to outlaw adult baptism. But on the evening of January 21, 1525, just three days after the government had reinstated mandatory infant baptism, six men met and baptized one another as adult believers. They were: Conrad Grebel, Feliz Manz (who was later drowned), George Blaurock, Ras Castleberger, Wilhelm Reublin, and Michael Sattler. Many of the early believers were harrassed, even martyred for their beliefs. Some were drowned, or burned at the stake. There were frequent hearings regarding the Anabaptist "problem".

Mennonite migrations around the world will show that American and Canadian Mennonites have direct ties to Switzerland. They left their homelands for their beliefs. It has been said that when these folks left their homelands, they became Americans and simply left the old world behind.

The history of the Heyerly family is unclear before John Heyerly I. All that is known is that he was born in 1832 around the Jura Mountain area of Canton Bern, Switzerland, in the northwest section. John I sailed to America on the ship "Sully" when he was only 11 years old. It can only be assumed that he was sponsored by someone on the trip, and had a sponsor to come to America. This information is a little cloudy, as there is a record of a John Heyerly who came to America on the Sully in 1828. Our John would have come around 1844. It is possible, however, that the two John Heyerlys were related.

Our John went to Dalton, Ohio, in Wayne County, as did many other Swiss Mennonites. No record of his mother or father has ever

been found. John I is remembered by Inez as an extremely sensitive, kind man who loved children and would always take the time to encourage, talk to, listen to, and instruct them.

In 1858 John I married Elizabeth Schneck, daughter of Bishop Peter Schneck. The marriage license was recorded in Wayne County, Ohio, at Sugar Creek Township, on September 16, 1858. From this marriage, there were eight children born: Ben Heyerly, Sarah Mantie, Judith Heyerly, Dinah Eberhardt, Barbara Heyerly, Mary Kampf, John Heyerly, and Elizabeth Savage.

The spelling of the Heyerly name has been changed several times: Hegerle, Huerchley, and Heierly. See "Sonnenberg", pages 73, 92, and 84.

As a young boy, I had the privilege of sitting in grandpa John II's house and listening to his stories of the trips and the events in his life. I will now read parts of his autobiography, made in December of 1950. I remember him making this autobiography. It was also tape-recorded by my sister Glorene on a 1950 "state-of-the-art" wire tape recorder, which is now buried in a storage shed somewhere in Fresno. At some point, I would like to have this preserved on a more modern cassette tape.

This is John Heyerly speaking: I was born June 4, 1865 near Dalton in Wayne County, Ohio. My mother's name was Elizabeth Schneck before her marriage, she was a daughter of Bishop Peter Schneck. He was a bishop in the Swiss Mennonite church in Sonnenberg, Ohio. He was the first Mennonite buried in that cemetery. My father was born in Switzerland and he came to America when 11 years old. I don't remember much about my grandfather Schneck, but I remember my grandmother very well. She used to come to our house and take my brother Ben's and my measurements so she could make our little suits that we would wear to church. We lived near Dalton, Ohio till 1876, then we moved near Bluffton, Ohio in Allen County. We lived here till September, 1878, then we went to Oregon.

When we went to Oregon, I had six sisters and one brother. We came to Oregon on the immigrant train. This was an old steam engine type so we didn't make much time traveling. We went on the train to San Francisco, and from there we took the ship to Oregon. This ship was called the Ajax -- an old ship -- and the next trip it took, it sank. We landed at Astoria and from there we took the boat to Portland and from there took the train to Salem. Our trip from Ohio took about two weeks. There was one of our old neighbors living near Salem, and we went to his place. This immigrant train was so slow, some would go out and shoot prairie dogs. They would hit one once in awhile and cripple it. I was 13 years old at this time.

Another thing I remember about this trip on the train was the Indian squaws with their babies, or their little papooses, they would come up to us and ask us for firewater. You know what that is. They told me it's whiskey.

I started to school near Dalton, Ohio and went to school about thirteen months. Half of that was German and half English. I was in the Second Reader -- I think that is about the Second Grade.



After we got to Oregon, they didn't send me to school anymore. I had to stay home and work. We had a man teacher. His name was Andy Colley, he taught both German and English. There was a big German settlement about one mile from school. We didn't have papers or pencils -- and we used a slate to write on.

When we got to Oregon there were no Mennonite churches around Salem. There was a group of Amish people living at Hubbard that used to have two meetings in their houses, but that was too far from Salem to travel by horses or by foot. Then a few years later Bishop Chris Steiner came out from Ohio, and Peter Gerber came with him. He was one of our neighbors in Ohio. Chris Steiner was here a couple months then he went back to Ohio. Later he moved out here. Then we had church about once a month and later every two weeks, and they had it in houses. The people used to take turns having church. They used to fix benches with blocks and boards. We used to have dinner after church. There was about six or seven families that used to meet. We had no Sunday School -- just preaching. My father used to lead the singing. We used to sing in German. A few years later, it must have been in 1894 or 1895, they built a church house on my father's place near Pratum. I think it was the first Mennonite church in Oregon, which is, by the way, just a mile and a half up the road here. My father gave an acre of land to build the church on. Chris Steiner started this church. A little later on they ordained Chris Geiger for preacher and later they made him bishop, when Steiner got older. They ordained John Beer later on for preacher. Steiner, Geiger, and Beer died, then they didn't have no preacher, and the people scattered out here and there, and they had no church at all any more.

About in 1900 this building was torn down and all that is left is now the graveyard. My father, my mother, my sisters Mary, Sarah, and Dinah, and Barbara are buried there. My brother Ben is buried in the Smyrna cemetery near Yoderville -- my sister Judith is buried in Salem cemetery.

I was at home yet. We lived here about two or three years, then bought a ten acre place near Salem, which is right out here about a mile and a half. My brother Ben and I stayed at our Mt. Angel (?) and ran that place. Later Ben and I bought a little place near Salem. Then we sold it and I got married and moved to Linn Co. in 1897. I married Elizabeth Neuschwander, she was the oldest child of Peter and Emma Neuschwander. Her father was the deacon of our church till we moved away to Linn County. He lived to be 92 years old and he was living near Harrisburg, Oregon at the time of his death. Elizabeth lived only a short time after our marriage. We had one child, Bertha, who is now Elmer Schrock's wife. Bertha was about a year old when her mother died.

Grandpa Neuschwanders kept Bertha till I got married again. In 1898 I got my church letter and joined what is now called Fairview Mennonite church. At this time Jake Roth was the bishop. In 1900 I married Katie Erb, the daughter of Dan and Katie Erb. Dan Erb was the preacher at Fairview church. Katie's mother was a sister of Jake and Dan Roth. To us were born eleven children, nine boys and two girls. The two oldest, Dan and Jess, died in accidents. Dan in an auto accident, and Jess by a falling tree. The rest are all living -- they were in 1950 -- now there are only three left.



Amanda married Elvon Nofziger, he is one of Chris G. Nofziger's boys; Dan was the next oldest, he died in July of 1929; Jess was married to Gladys Berkey, one of John W. Berkey's girls; Jess died in 1932. Next is Adeline; then Ed, married to Anna Schlegel, daughter of John M. Schlegel; next is Elmer, married to Georgia Mishler, one of Dan Mishler's girls; Ernest is married to Mabel Stutzman, one of Ira Stutzman's girls; Joe is married to Olivene, also one of Ira's daughters; Percy is married to Mildred Yoder, she is Loney Yoder's daughter; and Mel is married to Inga Marcoff, and then Wilmer was the youngest. My second wife died in 1941, she was 62 years old. (At the time he wrote this he had 27 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren -- which is now multiplied time and time again).

When we came to Oregon in September of 1878 my father rented a farm three miles northwest of Silverton, which is now called the Dutch Flat -- they called it that because so many German people moved there and it is right below the Waldo Hills area. We farmed with horses then, some farmed with oxen. Steiner's son-in-law had oxen and they used to run away from him sometimes. That was slow plowing. They didn't get much done in one day. We had no machinery to harvest our grain. We cradled and bound our grain by hand and later on we had a self-rake. We had four stations and five persons to bind. I and one of my sisters took one station, my brother and my oldest sister took a station each, and my mother too. Father would run the machine and I think the neighbor took the other station. When they got wire binders some had what they called leaders.

The first car I ever owned was a Studebaker. I still own a farm of 170 acres. Percy and my boy is farming the place. The place I own is near the Grand Prairie school. I was school Director for twenty-one years there. I was Sunday School superintendent one year at Fairview. We used to have church owned by the Dunkard people till we built the Fairview church. The Dunkards let us use the building. C. R. Kennel was the main carpenter on the church, lots of others helped. I hauled most of the lumber for the church with a wagon team, from Albany. I hauled the benches from Albany too. C. R. Gerig was the bishop at that time. Dan Erb was the preacher. Pete Neuschwander was the deacon. At the present time we have an average attendance of 350 to 400. That old building has since been torn down which I'm sure you know, as it says here. We are also building a new church right beside the old one. We are making a bigger building to take care of our larger congregation.

I am now in my 85th year and enjoying good health. My legs bother me quite a bit, but I'm still active, able to hoe the garden, and go to church nearly every Sunday. After my wife died, I stayed on the home place for awhile, then stayed with Bertha Schrock for awhile. Then I stayed with Ern's and Joe's. I am staying with Ed, my oldest boy living. I like to play the piano and sing. My favorite songs are Home, Sweet Home; I Would Not Be Denied; Jesus Lover of My Soul, and Sitting at the Feet of Jesus. I'll play "Jesus Lover of my Soul" for you now. (End of John speaking).

Three of the early Heyerly farms are still in the family. One is Ben's farm, west of Molalla, where Vern, Ron, and Ron's boys farm. This is now into the 5th generation. One is John I's farm, about two miles east of here, Pratum, Oregon, where he gave the acre of



land to the church, and where the graveyard is located. The farm is occupied by Albert Mantie. This is now also into the 5th generation of Heyerly descendants. The last is John II's farm in Albany, on Grand Prairie Road and I-5. This is still owned by Percy's wife and boys, and is where Ern and Mabel live.

For the most part, the children of John I remained in the farming industry. The children of the 8 children branched out into restaurant owners, farmers, State Legislator, dairy farmers, a peach farmer, a truck farm in Salem, Voget's sausage, founder of Fircrest Farms, and accountant.

There are still four members of the family involved in the ministry: John Heyerly (Ern's son); Linda Jacobson and her husband (Joe's daughter); John and Dora Willems (Bertha's daughter); and Nell Wheelles (Mel and Inga's granddaughter).

I would like to note, with honorable mention, that there are more Heyerlys with many similarities to ours, living around Fort Wayne and Ossian, Indiana. It is not known at this time if they are related to us, but their John Heyerly I came from Switzerland when he was 11 years old, as ours did. Perhaps in time we will know. There are still 11 sons and daughters of the 8 children living.

Again I would like to say "thanks" to the O.M.H.G.S. for honoring our family here today. After researching our family's history and fully understanding why they gave up their homeland, migrated to America, settling here in Oregon, and becoming instrumental in starting an early Mennonite church, I have grown to appreciate the commitment John I had. Ours is a family that is rich in early Mennonite history, and we can all appreciate and be touched to be part of this family.

-- September 15, 1991

\* \* \* \* \*

OMHGS FALL 1991 MEETING

This was held at the Emmanuel Bible Church (formerly Emmanuel Mennonite), on September 15, 1991, near Salem, Oregon. About 110 persons attended.

The meeting was moderated by John Fretz. A devotional was read, and welcoming remarks were made by Stanley Steffen, formerly a member of this congregation.

The program featured the history of the early C. B. Steiner Church in this area, and which later had some influence on the beginning of the Emmanuel congregation. This was presented by historian and book author Hope K. Lind, of Eugene, OR. Her recent book, "Apart and Together: Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States, 1876-1976", contains reference to this history.

The history of the Heyerly Family, early pioneers connected with the early Mennonites in this area, was presented by Ron Heyerly, from Coburg, OR.

A short business session followed, and the meeting concluded with prayer.

## Coming Meetings

### THE SPRING 1992 OMHGS PUBLIC MEETING.

To be held at the Calvary Mennonite Church, Aurora, OR. Featured will be the history of this congregation, presented by Harold Yoder, one of it's members. The history of the Jacob Roth family, of the Albany, Oregon area, will also be presented by members of the Roth family still in the Calvary congregation. More details on a separate program sheet with this issue. The date: March 15, 1992, 2:30 p.m.

### THE FALL 1992 OMHGS MEETING.

We will feature the Civilian Public Service (CPS) experience during World War II. This meeting will be held at the Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR.

Four speakers, all men who were in CPS, will talk of their experiences. Another will relate some experiences of men during World War I. A quartet of CPS men will present several music numbers. There will be an "open microphone" time when others can share their comments. There were CPS camps or units at La Pine, Roseburg, Cascade Locks, Elkton, and Waldport, in Oregon. They were operated by the Mennonites, Friends, and Brethren.

This program will also be of interest to students at Western Mennonite High School, and tentative plans are to present it during the following week at a chapel service there.

The meeting will be held at the Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, on September 20th, 1992. More details later. If you have questions or comments, contact one of the OMHGS officers.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **SPEAK UP**

One of the difficult things about editing a newsletter is wondering if we are doing it the way our readers want it.

Are there things you would like to see that we have not included?

Are you satisfied with the way it is being published?

Does it address concerns which you think are important?

What can we do to make it more interesting and valuable to more readers?

Instead of sitting here and wondering, we are asking you to tell us what your thoughts are.

Please take a few moments to make comments, or call us with your suggestions.

Thank you! Editor.



## **News, Announcements, Items of Interest**

DONATIONS. Those wishing to make donations to OMHGS should first contact one of the officers to make arrangements for delivering their items. Please do not deliver directly to the Archives and Library Room on the WMS campus, as the room is not completely ready.

We want to thank the many persons who have already given books and other items for our collection. We welcome donations of artifacts, books, documents, etc., items of historical importance to our north-west Mennonite area.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR OMAL. The official name of our archive library is "Oregon Mennonite Archives and Library". A letter was sent in early 1991 to members and past members asking for cash contributions to help purchase furnishings for OMAL. There was good response, but we do need some more to properly equip the room, and for supplies and equipment. We will try to purchase good used items when we can.

We want to continue to work with all Mennonite and affiliated congregations in Oregon and we desire their blessings on our activities. For more information please talk to one of the officers.

CAN YOU VOLUNTEER? We need volunteers for various tasks of OMHGS. We are anxious to have you contact us if you have some interest in our work. We will be training persons as they are available for the different things to be done. We have moved many items into the Archives Library on the Western Mennonite High School campus in the new chapel building, and will be moving more in during the coming months. Please contact one of us if you have an interest in helping.

HOPE LIND'S BOOK, "Apart and Together, Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States, 1876-1976", is available for \$26.95, plus 10% for postage and handling (if mailed). Make your check to "O.M.H.G.S.". It can be ordered from any officer of OMHGS.

OMHGS CONSULTING BOARD. A consulting board of five members was chosen by ballot. This board will represent a more inclusive base of membership than may happen to be on the Executive Committee at any one time. It represents one member of an Unaffiliated Mennonite group; one member of the General Conference Mennonites; one other-than-Mennonite OMHGS member; and two members-at-large, OMHGS members representing either Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church, or other groups not represented on the board or Executive Committee. This board will meet once or twice annually with the OMHGS Executive Committee to offer comments, advice and suggestions, assist with designated responsibilities, promote interest and support for OMHGS, and envision future possibilities.

Those chosen were Shirley Boshart, Shedd; Mavis Morris, Molalla; Edna Kennel, Eugene; Thelma King, Albany, and Charity Kropf, Canby.





## Executive Committee Highlights

September 4, 1991. Perry Schrock reported that there has been a good response to our fund raising letter for finances to buy furnishings for the Archive Library. Some used shelving has already been purchased.

We discussed the need for a Consulting Board. Some of that Board's responsibilities would be to meet with the Executive Committee at least once or twice annually; to offer comments, advice, and suggestions about OMHGS; to assist with designated duties; to promote interest and support of OMHGS; to dream. We suggested five persons for this Board. We would like representatives of the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren, Conservative Mennonites, and others. Names of persons were suggested and will be contacted. This Board would give us a broader base of interests, ideas, and enthusiasm and would represent a broader base of membership.

We discussed progress in the Archive Library room -- what still needs to be done to make it ready for use -- what supplies and equipment are still needed -- and regarding the Memo of Understanding with W.M.S.

November 8, 1991. We met at the Archive Library room for a work day and committee meeting. We set up shelving and began arranging things which have been stored in various places.

Nominations were made for the Consulting Board. These persons will be contacted, a ballot will be prepared and mailed to members. These will then be returned by mail.

We received a check for \$1100. from WMS to replace money which had been inadvertently used as part of the chapel building fund. This will be used for furnishings and supplies for OMAL.

We began placing boxes of stored items on the shelves, and brought some items from the WMS library which have been stored there and designated for the archives.

November 20, 1991. We met for another work day and committee meeting. We worked on a mailing for membership renewals and the ballot for the Consulting Board.

We talked about the spring meeting to be held at Calvary Mennonite Church, Aurora. These plans are being finalized.

We discussed purchasing shelving and an order was placed from a Portland business. We also decided on other archival supplies and placed orders for storage boxes, file folders and labels.

December 16, 1991. We had planned a work day/meeting for this date, but because of a funeral at Fairview Mennonite, we decided to meet there after the funeral for a brief meeting. We discussed final plans for the Fall OMHGS Meeting, which will feature the Civilian Public Service experience during World War II. We made a list of persons who will be asked to be on the program, these people having served in CPS. The program is planned for September 20, 1992 tentatively, and meeting at the Albany Mennonite Church. Because we feel this program will also be of value to students at Western Mennonite School, we will make contact there about giving the program in Chapel sometime during the week following its presentation.

We counted the ballots for the Consulting Board, and the results are under News & Announcements on another page in this issue.

## Book Donations

Donated by Alfred and Marjorie Nofziger:

Directories of Lebanon Mennonite Church,  
1964 (1), 1967 (2), 1970 (2), 1971 (2), 1974 (1), 1975 (1),  
1983 (2), 1984 (1), 1985 (3), 1987 (1), 1989 (1), 1991 (2).

Church Directories:

Community Mennonite Church, Markham, IL (1985)  
" " " " " (1978)  
Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, IL (1968)  
Winton Mennonite Church, Winton, CA (1953)  
Grace Mennonite Church, Phoenix, AZ (1988)  
New Covenant Community Church, Tigard, OR (1983)  
Evanston Mennonite Fellowship & Friends (1984)  
Bried Historical Sketch of Albany, OR Mennonite Church,  
1899-1974, by Gerald Brenneman  
Albany Mennonite Church, Albany, OR (1956)  
" " " " (1963)  
" " " " (1965)  
" " " Pictorial (1966-67)  
Logsdon Mennonite Church, Logsdon, OR (1956)  
M.B.A. directory (1974)  
Illinois Mennonite Conference Yearbook (1979)  
" " " " (1984)

Donated by Muriel Fahndrich, Albany, OR:

Family Register of Fairview Mennonite Church, Albany, OR (1961)  
" " East Fairview Mennonite Church (1961)  
" " Plainview Mennonite Church (1961)  
" " Fairview Mennonite Church (May 1972)  
" " " " " (1978)  
" " " " " (1980)  
" " " " " (1982)  
" " " " " (1985)  
Pictorial, Fairview Mennonite Church (1894-1972)

Donated by Alfred & Marjorie Nofziger:

Directory of Fairview Mennonite Church (1952)  
" " " " " (1955)  
" " " " " (1958)  
" " " " " (1976)

Donated by Hilda W. Krahn, Newton, KS:

Cornelius Krahn, August 3, 1902 - August 3, 1990

Donated by Vira Brenneman Lemons, Albany, OR:

The Jacob and Barbara Brenneman Family Calendar 8/89 - 7/90  
includes 5 generations of family pictures.

Donated by Emerson Martin, Albany, OR:

Mennonite Settlement, 1887-1915, May City, IA, Osceola Co.,  
by Ezra Martin, brother to Emerson's mother..



## Membership Information

Membership in the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society is open to persons or groups who are interested in and supportive of OMHGS and its purposes. Dues are payable annually, and will be effective from January 1 to December 31. Individuals wishing to make a contribution of \$10.00 or more annually, in lieu of membership, will receive the Newsletter, and will be informed of the Society's activities.

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### Membership Form for 1992

I want to become a Member of, or Contributor to, the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society. I will be informed of all Society activities; will receive the OMHGS Newsletter; and as a Member will be eligible to serve on committees of the Society. My contribution is enclosed, payable to O.M.H.G.S.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enrol me (please check one):

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Single Membership	10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-member Contributor	10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family "	15.00		or more
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing "	25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership	500.00

payable in one sum, or increments of not less than \$100.00 a year for five (or fewer) years.

OMHGS is a non-profit organization and is supported solely by membership dues and contributions. The first \$7.00 of your dues or contribution represents services rendered by OMHGS, such as Newsletter and library use; amounts above that are tax deductible.

### OBITUARY

Berneice Kennel, wife of Earl Kennel, of Monmouth, Oregon, passed away on October 15, 1991. She was born August 8, 1923, daughter of Alvin and Elsie Hooley of Hubbard, Oregon. Her funeral service was held at Prince of Peace Mennonite Church, Corvallis, OR. on October 18, 1991.

She was always active in church and conference work. She was a member of the Prince of Peace congregation. She was involved in working with foreign students. She was also a member of O.M.H.G.S. She was an outgoing, positive person, an "idea" person, anxious to actively get things accomplished.

## OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL  
AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
675 Elma Avenue S.E.  
Salem, OR 97301

## FIRST CLASS

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