



OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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THE HISTORY OF THE SHERIDAN MENNONITE CHURCH

First, credit to whom credit is due. I'd like to give a big thank you to those of you who so gratuitously shared with me some facts concerning our church's history, without which I could never have done this. My thanks to Mildred Schrock for her records and memories and for loaning me her father's book, History of the Mennonite Churches in the Pacific Coast Conference, authored by S.G. Shetler, Sr. Credit should also be given to Hope Lind and her book, Apart and Together. I also called some former members who were directly involved in some of the outreach ministries. Then my husband, Elmer, who is the only charter member still attending our church, for his memories in those early years. I'll also be including some of my own precious memories of over 54 years since our marriage in 1938.

The Sheridan Mennonite Church is in it's 70th year of making history which was officially organized on December 23, 1923. Forty charter members were registered, of whom 13 are still living. The oldest one is May Larrew at 99 years of age and is living with her daughter and husband, Naomi and Reuben Schrock at Blaine.

You might say, the actual "Seed Bed" began for this church when the

Dan Yoder family, my husband's, moved into the McMinnville area and became interested in the Mennonite faith. They drove the 45 miles to the Hopewell Mennonite Church at Hubbard every other Sunday for worship. After the Jake Hostetlers and some more Mennonite families moved into the area, a request was made to the Hopewell Church to begin a service over here. So in the spring of 1922 a S.S. was organized with A.D. Miller as Superintendent and usually a minister, such as Bishop J.D. Mishler or ministers, Wm Bond or Noah Hershberger would preach for the group in the Durham schoolhouse 2 miles S.W. of McMinnville. Due to the distance, Hopewell Church decided an ordained brother should move into the area to have oversight of the work. Their Deacon, Dan Shenk was chosen. So he with his family moved to a farm in the area in October 1922.

Later this group moved to the Baptist church five miles west of McMinnville. Then on September 9th Brother Dan Shenk was ordained as a minister with Bishops, J.D. Mishler and N.A. Lind of Albany officiating. Two families were taken in as members. That evening, Raymond Mishler and Elsie Nice were united in marriage. Later on he became a minister and Bishop at Sheridan.

Soon after, a number of other Mennonite families moved into the Sheridan area, fourteen miles west of McMinnville. Some of these families were J.M. Mishlers with

his aged father J.D. Mishler (Sheridan's first bishop); John Hamiltons and Ben Emmerts from Hubbard. From Alberta, Canada came the Ed Widemans, Brubakers and Reists. At this time the group then moved to Sheridan on Monroe Street into the old Congregational church. It was rented at first and later bought for \$1,000.

By 1924, a group moved to Sheridan from Airlie which were the Gabe Shenks, O.S. Kilmers, Grant Sharers and Charles Hamiltons.

So what began as a S.S. for progressive Amish and Mennonites soon became a full-blown Mennonite settlement, reaching its peak membership of 360 in 1955 in this present building on Madison Street. By 1939 the old building was "bursting at the seams" so this present building, a 55' x 80' was started and finished by 1941. Most of the work was done by members of the church. There was no doubt a dedication service but no program was located for our poster.

In earlier years, it was not uncommon for the evening service to have an evangelistic appeal with responses at the altar. The Holy Spirit moved in hearts and sometimes it went until 2 o'clock in the morning. A precious memory to those who were there.

Our first minister, Dan Shenk served almost 40 years in various capacities. During a part of this time, he served as deacon, church planter and field worker. As church planter, they lived at Molalla for 4 months in 1934; at Blaine for 4

months in 1946 and also helped some at Logsdon in 1950.

For a number of years as field worker, he walked the streets of Sheridan. He contacted many people, residences or businesses and witnessed for the Lord. He was a man of much prayer and had a burden for lost souls. There were many people won to the Lord through his ministry. He would help with their temporal needs and go whenever called day or night. One couple he had been witnessing to called him at midnight and wanted to get saved right then. He went to their home and they were gloriously saved, as Mildred put it. Another man, Grandpa Page, as some called him, was from Ballston and attended church as long as he was able. Another outstanding conversion was Grandpa Hagey, as we called him, who was an elderly man. When he got saved, his horse and neighbors knew it because of his changed language and treatment of his horse when he went to town. (An extra excerpt) Once when he read in his Bible what David said in Psalms 119:62, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous Judgments," he told the Lord, he would do that if He would awaken him. So a couple brethren from our church thought they'd like to join him. They waited down the road to wait for his light to come on. It did and they joined him and had a blessed time. One more I'll mention is June Shareer Wolff, who got saved through his witnessing. She wrote a poem about him that was

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read at Bro. Dan's funeral which is also on the poster in the back. Some gave him the affectionate title, "Uncle Dan" as he became dear unto them.

Due to the elderly years of Bishop, J.D. Mishler, another bishop was installed. This was Gabe Shenk, who had recently moved here from Airlie, who was already a bishop and served Sheridan from 1924 to 1961. Having the brotherhood at heart, he preached zealously of sound doctrine and some prophetic messages, etc. His "Story Sermons" from the Bible found special favor with the youth and children. I can't forget his last sermon, I think it was. On a Sunday morning, walking quite feeble up to the platform and leaning on the pulpit, he said, he had not been able to come up with a message and asked the audience for a suggestion. I was praying silently and I'm sure others were too. Someone suggested his story sermon of David and Goliath. Suddenly his strength returned and in his usual gestures and manner he made it alive and real. I remember seeing small children sitting on the edge of their seats in rapt attention. When we got home from church one of our teenage daughters said, "When Bro. Gabe aimed David's stone at Goliath, it came right towards me and I "ducked." Then I understood why that chuckle came from the youth group, who always sat in the middle section on the left side and we had a lot of youth in those days as our church was big.

One of the things Bro. Gabe stressed was fasting with prayer at special times. When the District conference was held at Nampa, Idaho in 1934, I believe it was, he called for fasting and prayer for the conference and I'm sure they did for that conference broke into a revival without an altar call. I was there as a youth and got in on it. A mixed quartet from Sheridan sang, "Working the Road to Glory" and also played a part in the revival.

Other ordained brethren also played important roles at Sheridan. The first deacon ordained at Sheridan was Wm. Beachy in 1924. He served until 1938. He had a burden and a vision for a S.S. in Upper Gopher Valley to establish a witness of the Gospel. That was in 1926 and he was one of the S.S. School Superintendents. Others were Dewey Wolfer and Odessa Kilmer. Services were held in the schoolhouse. One of the converts from there is still a member of our church, she is Fannie Berkey.

In 1929, Hugh Wolfer was ordained as another deacon for our church and served until 1947. He also had a burden for a Jewish work in Portland and witnessed there for a number of years and in time Bro. James Bucher joined him in the work.

Amos Kilmer, an ordained minister, moved here from Oronogo, Mo. and served in the ministry from 1931-1945.

Henry Wolfer, a minister and a bishop, was also a part of the ministry at Sheridan from 1943-1945 and again 1947-1955. God also used him with the spiritual gift of healing. I can testify to more than once when he prayed for someone in our home and God blessed. In 1955 he felt the leading of the Lord to move to the Brownsville area where a Mennonite church was organized a little later.

Max Yoder, a member of our church, was called and ordained as another minister in 1945 and served until 1955, preaching the deeper things of the Holy Spirit. Then the Lord led him and his family to Grants Pass to begin a work there. (More about this later)

LeRoy Cowan, an ordained minister from Hopewell Mennonite Church, moved here in 1946 and served with our ministerial body until 1965. He preached, frequently at the Ballston Mission S.S. Later he was instrumental in organizing the Maranatha Mennonite Church there in 1965 and served as their pastor.

In 1947, Ray Mishler was ordained as minister and in 1956 was ordained as Bishop. He also served along with other leaders in the Pacific Coast Conference. In 1962, he was asked by the District Mission Board if he would consider moving to Vanderhoof, B.C. to help organize a Mennonite church there. Ronald Shenks, from our church had moved there earlier along with some other families from Oregon. Among them were Henry Reeders and Merle Kropfs. Then in 1963 Bro. Merle, an ordained minister, was installed as their pastor, after which Bro. Rays moved back to Sheridan.

During his absence, Dave Hostetler, an ordained minister, was asked to move to Sheridan from the Salem area to serve as interim pastor. He then continued serving with the ministers at Sheridan until his health was failing, when they moved to the Albany Mennonite Home in 1981.

Lee Mast also shared in the ministry here while his family resided at Sheridan in 1963-65.

Enos Schrock was chosen and ordained as deacon in 1961, due to Dan Sherk's failing health, who had been filling in for a number of years. Bro. Enos, a very tender-hearted man qualified for such a position to help the needy.

Jim Eigsti, was chosen and ordained as a minister in 1972 and later installed pastor to relieve Bro. Ray of some of his duties. In 1983, Bro. Jim asked for a one year leave of absence for his health's sake, which was granted. Then he returned to his pastoral work.

Joe Kropf, after retiring as pastor of Wildwood, transferred their membership to Sheridan since their home was here. He was asked to fill in as interim pastor for Bro. Jim that year. He still preached on occasion until they moved to the Halsey area.

Marlon Birky was chosen by lot and ordained as a minister in 1984 and brought many good messages until he resigned in August 1988,

moving soon after to Vanderhoof.

Sterling Roth, an ordained minister, who had moved earlier to Sheridan from Hubbard was installed as our pastor and is now serving as interim pastor. He also preaches sound Bible Doctrine. He was instrumental in starting our Annual Church Family Camp-Out at Drift Creek.

In 1989 Clifford Zook was ordained as a younger deacon, to assist our present one, Enos Schrock, for 2 years. Then in 1991, it was decided by vote that leadership roles be exchanged between the two with Bro. Cliff taking the lead, who is also well qualified.

Other brethren ordained from our church to serve elsewhere were:

Jake Kauffman, as a minister for Blaine

Oscar Wideman, ordained to minister at the Portland Rescue Mission in 1950

Eldon Hamilton was ordained to serve as a missionary to Honduras, serving from 1952-62.

Some of the Outreaches of Sheridan:

Besides the one up Gopher Valley referred to earlier and started in 1926, there was a work begun in Ballston about 6 miles S.E. of Sheridan in 1936. A number of families from Sheridan drove out each Sunday to work in the Sunday school, also a minister to preach. One of the converts from there, Helen Kaltenbach Headings, has been an asset to the church. While single, she served over a year in 1953 with the Eldon Hamiltons in Honduras, where she and Maynard were married. They then served on together for the next two years, where Mike was born. They returned to Oregon for a few years before going to serve as missionaries in Mexico from 1960-1972 where their last child, Nancy was born.

There was a S.B.S. and a S.S. for a few years in the Gooseneck schoolhouse in the Buel area some

time in the 40's. Also a series of revival meetings were conducted by Bro. Henry Wolfer, which resulted in the conversion of Allen McLean, who became a faithful member to our church.

A mission work began in Logsdon area out of a fishing trip on the Siletz River by Dave and Nora Hostetler when they learned no Sunday services were held there for 15 years. They were still being mindful of fishing for men. So Dave Hostetler, Dewey Wolfer and Dan Shenk canvassed the area for a prospective S.S. On November 26, 1950, a S.S. was organized with several families driving out from Sheridan each Sunday, 80 miles one way to conduct the S.S., with a minister along to preach. Those who shared in the work were the Hostetlers, Dewey Wolfers, Lowell Wolfers, Howard Nices and Lloyd Nislys. After a year, due to the distance, Dewey and Florence Wolfer decided to sell their 40 head of milk cows, rent out their farm and move to Logsdon area to serve more effectively. In 1955, this work was turned over to the Albany Mennonite Church since they were much closer and some of their families were already living in the area.

I will leave the outreach work of the Wildwood S.S. for Wilma Nisly to share with her Shenk Family history.

The missionary spirit was continuing for more sharing of the Gospel. After much prayer, another group from our church were led to investigate the possibility of church planting in the Grants Pass area. In 1955 Max Yoder, with the approval and blessing of the Sheridan church, the following families moved to the area to assist in the work. They were Berle McTimmonds, Chris Coblentzs, Walter Widemans and Dean Byers along with some others to begin the work. By 1957, a church was organized.

In 1957 some of our members moved to McMinnville and started the "First Mennonite Church" there.

I'd like to share about a very

sad time in our church in 1946, when three children 2 years old and under died within a few weeks of each other. One of diphtheria and two of pneumonia, I understand. At the same time several other families had very ill small children with some of the same symptoms and we wondered would we lose ours too! Another child a few years older and a little later, became very ill and died. Max Yoder recalled being called to their home to pray in the middle of the night. This was truly a time of earnest praying and heart searching wondering what God was trying to say to us as a church! I'm sure it brought us closer to God.

This was a hard crisis for our church in 1967 when we along with a few other churches needed to withdraw from the Pacific Coast Conference. After much prayer, it seemed wise to form the Bible Mennonite Fellowship to preserve our standards, Bro. Ray strongly urged that we show love and understanding and pray for one another.

Here are some of the more recent types of services:

Our Mill Creek Christian School was started in the fall of 1976 with Ann Youngquist as our first supervisor. Our present one is Clifford Zook, who is serving his 9th year as supervisor.

Delvin Zook is serving his 10th year as administrator of the Rock of Ages Home.

A couple from our church, Andrew and Dema Chupp, answered God's call to serve as missionaries in Zacatecus, Mexico, with a commissioning service on December 22, 1985. At present they are taking a rest in Florida and hoping to return to Mexico the first of April.

Jim Eigsti, one of our ministers, has been serving as administrator for the Gospel Echoes Northwest Prison Ministry since March 1987. Their headquarters are located in Sheridan and he is in it full time now. When available, he still serves in the ministry here. Mim Miller, another one of our

members, is working full time in the office. In the recent past Carla Yoder Schrock, Annette Nisly and Marlys Yoder have done voluntary service at Gospel Echoes Headquarters in Goshen, Indiana.

Donavon Zook has been serving with the "We Care" Prison Ministry in Atmore, Alabama since November 1988 where he and his family live.

Loren Nisly is serving on his third term as a youth missionary in Ontario, Canada.

Kathy Galer has served as a missionary nurse twice on the Mercy Ship under the "Youth With a Mission"; two years ago for 6 months offshore of West Africa and more recently for 6 months offshore of Mexico.

We know we have not been a perfect church, but we have endeavored to follow Christ that we might be able to hear Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord" Matthew 25:21. And there is Joy now in serving Jesus -- "Apart and Together", as Hope Lind puts it.

by Hazel Bebb Yoder

Footnote:

Since this article was written, Hazel Yoder's husband, Elmer, mentioned in the article, passed away July 15, 1993.

SHENK FAMILY HISTORY

S-H-E-N-K, S-H-A-N-K, S-C-H-E-N-C-K, and other variations of spelling are apparently of the same origin. There are different stories of how the changes came about. I recall hearing that three or four brothers, originally from Alsace-Lorraine, between Switzerland and Germany, came to America together and each took a different spelling of their last name at that time to differentiate between their families. Another theory is, that because of the language barrier, the immigration officers recorded

names as they sounded to them and that became the official registered surname of that family in America. The S-H-E-N-K family is the one covered in this report.

Very early records were not available for me so I will begin with Henry Shenk as generation one. Henry was born June 14, 1817 in Rockingham County, Virginia. He married Susannah Brenneman of Fairfield County, Ohio. They resided for some time in Hamilton County, Indiana, moving to Elida, Ohio in 1860. Henry died April 19, 1876 in Allen County, Ohio and Susannah at the home of her daughter, Lydia, near Knoxville, Tennessee on October 4, 1908. Both were buried in the Salem Cemetery near Elida.

The second generation would be the nine children of Henry and Susannah.

Their first three children died at a young age:

Jacob - June 25, 1841-October 1, 1842
Anna - August 4, 1843-October 5, 1851
Henry - November 15, 1845-June 21, 1847

The six who grew to adulthood:

John M. born January 19, 1848
Andrew born June 20, 1850
Daniel born September 27, 1853
Catherine born October 30, 1856
Lydia born April 7, 1859
Abraham born February 15, 1862

Daniel was the first bishop of the Denbigh (Warwick River) church in Virginia. He also was instrumental in the start of Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Virginia. John M. and Andrew were also Bishops in the Mennonite church and Abraham was an ordained deacon. Lydia's husband, Henry Powell, was also a deacon.

John M. was the father of Daniel F. and Andrew was the father of Gabriel D. who were minister and Bishop, respectively, at the Sheridan Mennonite Church. This report will be mostly about the

Gabriel Sherk family but I wanted to include Cousin Dan, as we called him, because of the close ministry the two shared. I remember him as a kind, loving, soft-spoken gentleman whose life was a living testimony to what he believed. His ministry was more in personal evangelism; his public messages delivered in a solemn, quiet manner, reflecting the seriousness and importance with which he regarded God's Word. I always felt love and respect for and from Cousin Dan and Cousin Fannie.

Gabriel was opposite in personality...really a cut-up and tease outside of church. He loved to participate in the games with the young people, playing ball, flying dutchman, dare base and such. His sermons were delivered forcefully and animated. Although fun-loving, Church was serious and not a time for laughter. I recall an incident that happened at a home prayer meeting when we young people had an extremely difficult time complying with that. We were in a room where the 'partition' was a blanket, secured at the four corners only. Bro. Hugh Wolfer was sitting in a large chair which tipped over backwards with his head slipping behind the blanket which prevented him from being able to get up and his feet, barely showing, were waving frantically. This, of course, was a very funny sight and it was sometime later with many stern looks from Gabriel, before all the snickering subsided.

This reminds me also of something I read about Gabriel's father, Andrew. As he was preaching one Sunday, some boys sitting in the back of the church were misbehaving. Grandpa Andrew said, "Boys, if you don't behave you are going to see something you've never seen before." When they continued their talking, Grandpa Andrew walked to the back and finished his sermon directly in front of the boys.

The difference in personality of Daniel and Gabriel was not a

detriment but rather complimented each other and as Mildred, daughter of Daniel, said as we were visiting, there was never any quarrel or disagreement between them throughout their many years of labor together. Both were highly respected and long remembered in the community.

Daniel was born at Allen County, Ohio in 1886. He was baptized at age 14 by J.M. Sherk at the Salem Ohio church. In September 1909 he moved to Hubbard, Oregon where he was ordained as Deacon at the Hopewell Congregation. He married Fannie Schragg on November 24, 1910. With his family he moved to the Sheridan area in 1922 where he was ordained as a minister for the newly formed congregation there and with the exception of a short time at Blaine, served the Sheridan congregation faithfully until his health no longer permitted.

Daniel and Fannie's four children were:

Lloyd (deceased). His wife, Lizzie lives in McMinnville and is a member of the First Mennonite Church there.

Kenneth, married to Frances Kilmer, lives in rural Sheridan.

Ronald, married to Barbara Schrock, lives in Vanderoof, B.C.

Mildred, married to Enos Schrock lives in Sheridan. Mildred and her daughter, Doris are the only two direct descendants of Daniel who still attend the Sheridan church. Her husband, Enos, is a deacon.

Gabriel was born October 9, 1878 at Elida, Ohio to Andrew and Susannah (Good) Sherk. He was baptized at Pike church, Allen County, Ohio at age 14. At approximately age 17 he moved with his family to Oronogo, Missouri. It was there he was married to Luella Sharer on May 22, 1904. His brothers and sisters were:

Henry, who failed to return home from work one day and was never heard from again.

Noah and Perry, who were both ministers. Perry was the father of

Esther Berkey, who was the mother of Loyd Berkey, who is a present member of the Sheridan church.

Rhoda, who was married to Hiram Yoder and after his death, married George Webb. They lived in Oregon and were members of the Sheridan Congregation. Rhoda and Hiram's children were: Wayne, Louise, Max, Margaret, Jessie and Robert. Max and Robert are both retired ministers.

Timothy, the youngest of Gabriel's brothers, was killed in a farm accident at age 10.

Mary and Martha were twins and the youngest of the children. Aunt Mary was the wife of Edward J. Berkey, a prominent minister in the Mennonite church. Martha was married to Levi Weaver, who was the second husband of Esther Berkey. Levi was an uncle, by marriage, to Esther and one of her daughters wrote that they had Mom and Uncle Pop for dinner.

Gabriel and Luella's first child, Bertha, was born March 23, 1906 in Missouri. She married Leo Holly of Dinuba and they presently reside at Sierra View retirement home, Reedley, California.

In 1908 Gabriel moved his family to Dinuba where 3 sons, Tillman, Wesley and Vernon were born. Tillman lived only 18 days.

The family moved to Oregon in 1913, living in Albany about a year while a home was being built on property near Airlie. Three more children were born there: Mildred (Mrs. Clifford Wolfer), Helen (Mrs. Walter Donicht) and Jenelle (Mrs. Abner Coblentz).

Gabriel was ordained minister for the Firdale congregation near Airlie on December 24, 1916. J.P. Bontrager and Gabriel's father, Andrew officiated. He was ordained bishop on August 21, 1921. This congregation met in the Berry Creek schoolhouse. The congregation disbanded in September 1924, the three principal reasons being: poor quality of soil which resulted in many of the men seeking employment away from the community; it became

a financial burden to stay, and an unfavorable association for the young people.

The Gabriel Shenk family and others moved to Sheridan where he served as minister and bishop for many years.

Their youngest daughter, Wilma (Mrs. Alvin Nisly) was born at Sheridan in January 1926.

In 1928 the family moved to a home along the main road to McMinnville. They didn't call Mayflower moving service as my sister, Helen, can attest to. At age nine she drove a team of horses with a wagon load of hay to the new home. Jenelle, then five years old, rode with her. Our home became a good rest stop for people traveling to McMinnville. They didn't make the trip in twelve to fifteen minutes in those days, and Mother's good cooking was well known so these stops were quite often at meal time. Mildred and Helen kept record and one week Mother served sixty-six meals other than to her own family. Mildred said she knows because she "washed dishes and washed dishes". One frequent visitor was a Grand Ronde Indian Chief whose horses became so familiar with the stop they would automatically turn into the driveway and head for the barn, where their owner helped himself to hay and oats for them. He would stay overnight, go on to McMinnville the next day and return for the night again before going on home. One time when Papa was really pressed for time, he asked the Chief if he would mind splitting a little wood for Mama. Wesley heard him mutter under his breath, "squaw work" and that was his last stop at our home. The next time they got close to the driveway the Chief cracked the whip and the horses sped on down the road. Papa felt so bad that he had offended him but Mama and the girls didn't really share his feelings.

Our parents really put to practice the Biblical admonition to work with your own hands that you

may have to give to him that needeth. A large garden, several times larger than needed for their own family, was always planted so they could share with others. Often times they shared their home for long periods of time with others. They were 'given to much hospitality' often having all the youth for Sunday dinner or families from the church.

In December 1934 they moved into Sheridan for a brief stay of about fifteen months, moving in March of 1935 to Fort Hill.

In the fall of 1940, they moved back into Sheridan, just two blocks south of the church and resided there until their deaths, Papa in March of 1961 and Mama in November of 1977.

In 1952 Bro. Daniel and Bro. Gabriel canvassed the community of Wildwood to determine if there was interest in establishing a Sunday School there. Alvin and Wilma were living in the community and had taken a foster child, who they later adopted, into their home. He had attended at the little Church in the Wildwood at one time and commented that he wished there were still services there. Several families who lived in the Grand Ronde and Fort Hill area and were members at Sheridan began holding morning services there in March of 1952. In 1961, after the death of Gabriel, the Wildwood congregation was formally organized with Bro. Joe Kropf serving as minister. He had been assisting for several years prior and he and Sister Adah were much loved and appreciated. The present Pastor, Bro. Hugo Krehbiel, truly has a 'servant heart' and deep concern for the church and community.

Three of Gabriel and Luella's children, Wesley, Jenelle and Wilma, still attend the Church In The Wildwood.

Wesley and his wife, Evelyn, have truly reflected the attribute of 'caring for others' as they have served the community through Grand Ronde Good Neighbors food bank and

delivered 'meals on wheels' for many years until health conditions prevent-ed them from continuing. They also have opened their home and 'pocketbooks' to those in need. Some have told them, "you are just being taken advantage of" to which Wesley replied, "I would rather help ten unworthy people than risk turning away one who was really needy". Wesley served many years on the Conference committee and was Conference delegate from the Sheridan congregation. While Wildwood was a part of conference, he also served as delegate from there. Jenelle and Ab live near Grand Ronde and also are 'given to much hospitality', not only to the church family but also to their neighbors. They often have guests for a meal or for pie and coffee and visiting.

Wilma and Alvin live in Sheridan and are active in community activities here but still drive most every Sunday to Wildwood for both morning and evening services.

Although Wildwood is not a part of conference, I have had the privilege of serving as Vice President of Pacific Coast District WMSC. This has been a very rewarding experience and I have gained many lovely sisters in Christ.

Mildred and Clifford have attended and been faithful workers at the Sweet Home Mennonite Church for many years.

Helen was widowed five years ago. In early adulthood she chose to sever her ties with the Mennonite church and has been a strong supporter and leader in the Sheridan Methodist Church. It is a blessing to have your natural family also be a part of the Family of God with you.

Gabriel was gone many times holding Evangelistic meetings or carrying out his duties as Bishop. His wife, Luella, always faithfully supported him and managed things at home. I mentioned earlier about his intensity in preaching. Nothing seemed to cause him to lose his

train of thought; my sister, Helen, recalls one time when our older sister, Bertha, came to the church and wanted to take Helen with her. She asked Mama if she could go and was told she would have to ask Papa. The problem was, Papa was preaching, but undaunted, Helen, probably seven or eight years old, marched up the aisle on to the platform where Papa bent down, granted her request and went right on preaching.

One thing about my Papa stands out to all is children...we never heard him say an unkind word about anyone. In fact, if someone else was saying something he would always defend that individual with something like, "well, I don't think he really meant it that way". He thought the best of everyone to the point that one day his wife said, "Gabe Shenk, you would say something good about the devil if you could find anything good to say."

Several years after his death, a prominent businessman of Sheridan shared with me the deep respect and love he had for my Father. One thing that had really impressed him was Papa's dealing with our older brother, Vernon, who in his early years spent a lot of time in the local tavern. This businessman said he saw our Father come in and sit down, put his arm around Vernon and gently say, "Son, it's time to go home, don't you think?" and then would lead him out the door. To enter that tavern must have taken great consideration for one who so strongly believed in 'abstaining from all appearance of evil' that he would not drink a bottle of soda pop with the threshing crew because someone from a distance might not be able to distinguish it from the beer some of the men were drinking. But 'the greatest of these is love' and the love and concern for his son outweighed the other, and won. We have reason to believe that Vernon truly did 'come home' before his death in

1982.

Gabriel was often spoken of as being extremely strict and dwelling on 'dress' but I can recall him declaring many times that the inward man or spirit of the law was far more important than the letter thereof. Both Daniel and Gabriel have left a legacy of devout devotion to God and the Mennonite church. Although some of the applications of Scripture as understood and taught by them are not upheld today, I am truly grateful for my heritage and the Biblical principles I learned from them both.

Wilma Shenk Nisly March 21, 1993

Oregon Mennonite Archives
and Library (OMAL)

The OMAL is located on the west side of the new chapel building at Western Mennonite High School, 9045 Wallace Road N.W., Salem, Oregon. The OMAL will be open on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be staff persons to help you in your research. Use of the library is free for OMHGS members. There is a minimum charge, or donation, of at least two dollars per day for nonmembers. It will be open by special request by contacting one of the executive committee:

Hope Lind (344-5974)
John Fretz (364-1669)
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Charity Kropf (651-2204)

OREGON MENNONITES CELEBRATE

In June of 1893 an Amish Mennonite congregation was organized near Needy, Oregon, east of Hubbard. First known as the Fir Grove Amish Mennonite Church, the group took the present name of Zion in 1898 when they moved into a meetinghouse located at their present site, 6124 S. Whiskey Hill Road, east of Hubbard. The current building was dedicated in 1958.

The weekend of June 18-20, 1993, was a time of celebration and remembering God's faithfulness and working among us for this past one hundred years and also a time of looking ahead. Guest speaker for the occasion was John L. Ruth, church historian and pastor from Harleysville, Pennsylvania. He helped us look at our roots in the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century and the Amish schism of the late 1690s. He also challenged us to remember and tell our story to our children so they in turn can remind their children of God's faithfulness.

So far as can be determined, there are five children of charter members still living. Three of them attended one or more sessions: Beulah Fretz, Orié Kropf and Milo Schultz. The other two are Julius Schultz and Agnes (Kauffman) Nightingale.

Former pastors, including John and Naomi Lederach from Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania, and Paul and Grace Bruner of Hesston, Kansas, led us in devotional periods. There was much congregational singing as well as special music by both a men's and a mixed chorus made up of singers from up and down the valley and from a distance.

The history of the congregation was presented in various ways: a slide presentation on Saturday afternoon, followed by a time of reminiscing; an historical drama written and directed by Michele Hershberger presented on Saturday evening; and a history book prepared for the occasion. Included in

the Saturday afternoon service were several numbers of music sung by individuals or small groups.

Following the Sunday afternoon vesper service, ground was broken for a multipurpose building which will provide a ground-level fellowship hall, additional Sunday school classrooms, an enlarged kitchen and area for the WMSC, and will include the church offices. We hope actual construction can begin in the near future.

Truly the weekend was a time of fellowship and remembering as well as a time of worship and thanksgiving for God's blessings to us in the past and as we look to the future with Him.

Copies of the church history book, "God At Work in our Midst", are available from the church office for \$15 plus 10% for postage and handling. A centennial cookbook is also available for \$10 plus 10%. Orders should be sent to the Zion Mennonite Church, 6124 S. Whiskey Hill Road, Hubbard, OR 97032.

OMHGS DINNER MEETING

The first dinner meeting of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society was held on June 22, 1993, at Albany Mennonite Church. About a hundred guests were in attendance.

The ladies of the Albany WMSC served a delicious dinner of chicken and noodles, peas, whole carrots, a mixed green salad and rolls. Dessert was cake with a rhubarb topping.

The program was moderated by Perry Schrock who led us in a prayer of thanksgiving before the dinner was served.

Following the meal, our speaker, John L. Ruth from Harleysville, Pennsylvania was introduced. His talk was about "Collecting, preserving and interpreting the Mennonite story over the centuries". By way of introduction he mentioned the Hutterites and the New Hutterites, or Bruderhof, and

the friction that exists in some cases between the two groups. The Bonham Colony in South Dakota is the home of the Hutterite Chronicles, the oldest written record of Anabaptists.

He then briefly traced the writing of the Anabaptist story through the ages and mentioned how meager the written records are in many instances. We have no records from the Mennonite and Amish who settled in Lancaster County, PA. A few early attempts to tell the story came from Benjamin Eby of Ontario, Canada, in 1840, Jacob Stauffer in 1855; and Daniel K. Cassel in 1888-89 in North America. There were also European writers during this time: Ludwig Keller in the 1880s; Anna Brons a little later. The Martyr's Mirror appeared first in 1660 and was updated, with pictures, in 1685. It was printed first in the American colonies in 1748-51. As it became important to the American churches, its importance seemed to decrease in Holland and Europe.

Now in the twentieth century we are seeing the writing of conference histories, family genealogies, and more general histories as well as the rise of historical libraries and archives and historical societies.

A couple of quotes from his talk. "Bad history is better than no history at all." "The more knowledge you have, the more you push against the unknown."

We were encouraged to seek out and preserve primary sources of our history and to tell our stories to our children and those who come after in order to preserve our heritage and our faith.

Margaret Shetler, Secretary OMHGS

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Back issues of OMHGS Newsletter are available for \$3.00 each. Each issue features a Mennonite church and a family history.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A conference entitled, TRADITION AND TRANSITION: AN AMISH MENNONITE HERITAGE OF OBEDIENCE, 1693-1993, will be held October 14-16, 1993 at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Metamora, Illinois. This event commemorates the tricentennial of the Amish movement.

This event will include major speakers, dramatic presentations and a historical tour. The conference is designed to examine the Amish heritage which is present in contemporary Mennonite groups in North America today.

Speakers and presenters will focus on the theme of obedience as an organizing principal and motivator of Amish thought and practice. They will address the ways that this emphasis on obedience developed within various migration groups, settlements and congregations. They will also examine the way in which this emphasis continues to impact the contemporary Mennonite groups which have an Amish heritage.

Co-sponsors of the conference are the Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society and the Historical Committees of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Church.

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Finding your "Family Trails" is a Genealogical Council of Oregon, Inc. conference to be held September 24-26, 1993 at Holiday Inn Portland South. Sleuthing the identities of those people in old family photos, discovering what wagon trail life was like, as well as some very unusual sources for family research are but a few of the seminars offered.

For more information write: Family Trails Conference, Genealogical Council of Oregon, P.O. Box 15169, Portland, OR 97215

OMHGS MEETINGS

The OMHS Fall 1993 Meeting will be held at Zion Mennonite Church, near Hubbard, Oregon on September 19 at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will feature the Amish of Clackamas County and Jonas K. Kauffman by Beulah Fretz and the Isaac Miller Family by Elizabeth Kennedy. Following the meeting will be an Amish-style church Sunday lunch. Costs for the lunch will be by donation. The following books will be available for purchase at the meeting: God at Work in Our Midst (\$15), Apart and Together, Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States, 1876-1976 (\$26.95) and The Zion Mennonite Centennial Cookbook (\$10).

The OMHGS Spring 1994 Meeting will be on March 20 and will feature the Portland Mennonite Mission and Church by Phillip Hostetler and the Snyder Family History presented by Phyllis Snyder Miller.

The OMHGS Fall 1994 Meeting will be held September 18 and will feature the Dallas Mennonite Brethren Church by Erma Neufeld and a Dallas family history by Vivian Schellenberg.

FUTURE PROGRAMS: Tentative plans for the Spring 1995 program are to feature the Bethel Mennonite Church near Canby, Oregon and the Christian and Catherine (Rich) Roth family. The tentative plans for the Fall 1995 program are the Grace Mennonite Church (GC) in Albany and one of the family histories from there.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

We need volunteers to work in OMAL. If you are interested, we will provide training. It is an excellent way to be involved with OMHGS.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

February 23, 1993 This was a joint meeting of the executive committee and the consulting board. Plans were discussed for the Dinner Meeting in June. Ideas for future activities were discussed which included workshops and bulletin boards. One idea was to have a bulletin board at future meetings and invite folks to display the oldest photo in their collection with a brief write-up about it. We could also invite a display of artifacts.

Finances were discussed and reported that there is \$644.45 designated for furnishings and equipment. Our budget doesn't include funds for library acquisitions. The March 1993 Newsletter includes a list of books we would like to have and asks folks to consider donating one to the library. Membership involves at least 103 persons at the present time.

Ideas were discussed of how to make our organization more visible and especially how to interest younger people in it. One suggestion was to send "bulletin blurbs" occasionally to the congregations. Another is to have a contact person in each congregation to relay information from our organization.

July 13, 1993 We met during the lunch hour of a regular scheduled work day. The fall program was discussed along with future program ideas. A financial report from the John Ruth Dinner Meeting was a net of \$213. This will be used for on-going costs. A recent purchase of archival boxes and folders for final inventory and storage of materials cost about \$150.00. We discussed ways to get more people involved with OMHGS. One way is to have persons help with the mailings and working in the OMAL.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A recent acquisition for the OMAL is the Claude Hostetler collection, which consists of approximately seven boxes of booklets, and records.

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On the proposed slate for the OMHGS September meeting will be the expiration of the two-year terms of John Fretz and Margaret Shetler. It is proposed that John Fretz be the vice-president and Margaret Shetler be the secretary for the next two years. This can be opened to other nominees if you contact the nominee prior to nomination to see if they are willing. If you have someone you would like to nominate, you must contact Perry Schrock by September 15.

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Volunteers are needed to help with mailings. This would involve the mailing of the newsletter and the program announcement cards twice a year and a once a year mailing of the yearly membership letter. If you would like to become involved with OMHGS without a large commitment, this would be a good job for you!

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The Spring 1993 OMHGS Newsletter issue on Conscientious Objector stories told at the September 1992 meeting has been sent to the youth leaders in Mennonite and affiliated congregations in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. It is suggested that they use it as a resource for discussions, etc. on the peace issue.

BITS 'N PIECES

An inexpensive way to make copies of old photographs or documents is to have them copied on a laser color copier. Many print shops have them, including Lazer-quick shops. The cost for making a 8 ½" x 11" copy is 89¢ to \$1. To make it even more economical, you may group more than one photo on a sheet of paper. If you have a very small photo, have them enlarge the copy. The cost for reducing or enlarging is included in your copy price. When copying black and white photographs, have them also copied on the laser color copier as you get more contrast than with a black and white copier.

I recently had my great-grandparents marriage certificate from 1898 copied on a laser color copier. The certificate is a colored picture and is 13½" x 18½". This is not a handy size so I had them reduce it to a 8 ½" x 11" size. The resulting copy was very good and one that I could frame or put in my growing notebook of family information.

Another tip for people who are doing family research in Oregon. If you have never been to the Oregon State Archives in Salem, it is worth the trip. It is located at 800 Summer NE and is open for personal research from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. You can look at probate records, census records, death certificates (1903-1942), marriage records, birth records (older than 100 years), etc. There is no cost except for copies that you make on the copier at 25¢ per page. It is an inexpensive way to obtain records. If you send to the Vital Records, death certificates are \$13.00 and at the archives you pay 25¢. For more information about the Oregon State Archives, phone (503) 373-0701.

If you have any tips on family research you would like to share, please send them to me for our next issue of the OMHGS Newsletter. dj

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 purpose. 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 1993

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 _____

Enroll me (please check one):

_____ Student	\$5.00	_____ Sustaining Member	\$50.00
_____ Single Membership	\$10.00	_____ Non-member Contributor	\$10.00 or more
_____ Family Membership	\$15.00	_____ Life Membership	\$500.00
_____ Contributing "	\$25.00	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.

Please send memberships to:

Perry Schrock, OMHGS treasurer
30180 Sodaville-Mt. Home Road
Lebanon, OR 97355

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OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL
AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
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