



OMHGS Newsletter

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The Christian and Catherine (Rich) Roth Family

by Milo Shultz

When John Miller was talking I remembered a time when he was at the Bethel church and there was a little girl in the church and a young fellow in the church that wanted to be married. At the time the Millers lived at Nampa, Idaho, but they were over for conference and this was conference time when this happened. Omar Miller (John's father) preached the sermon when my wife and I were wed. I can remember some of the things that were said in that message.

I could have given more of the background of the Bethel church; but that's not my part and the time would get too long. The work was started because of the fact that the Chris Roth family was pretty well located in the community, within a five-mile range of the Bethel church. Grandpa (Chris) Roth gave the land to build a church on. I'll give the family history a little later. Emma Roth Kauffman Headings lived the first house across the creek from Zion - she lived the farthest from the Bethel area. All of my aunts and uncles that were Christians belonged to the Zion church. The work started in the Bethel community where most of them lived because we didn't have any leaders there, so leaders from the Zion and Hopewell churches, men like Ed Yoder, A.P. Troyer, Will Bond and a number of other ministers made their trips into the area, places like the Eby school and Dryland school and other places. They came and would have a church service in those school buildings. Mose Hostetler and Simon Hostetler and some others that were music teachers came into the congregation, so I am familiar with the beginning of the work at Bethel. My wife and I left the Bethel congregation in 1931 or 32 to go into the work in Molalla.

Leo read from Psalm 46. That is one thing I was going to say something about. Also, I was going to say this. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all

generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psalm 90:1,2). "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Psalm 16:5,6). I feel that David realized that the Lord was his lot and that he had a goodly heritage. Well, I feel the way about the Christian Roth heritage that I received, the possession that is mine because of the fact that they were Christian people, and though many times, we are sure, there were things that weren't always the way they should have been, still they were God-fearing people.

Christian Roth, the younger son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Rees) Roth, was born February 17, 1845, in Logelbach, Alsace. He married Catherine Rich on September 9, 1869. She was the daughter of John and Catherine (Klopfenstein) Rich and was also born in Alsace on December 1, 1851. Christian and his older brother Joseph came to America in 1852 with their mother and three sisters after the death of their father. The family lived in Canada several years before settling



From left to right: Elizabeth (Schultz) Nofziger, Lena Nofziger, Bill Roth, Katie Yoder, Emma Headings, Ada Christner and Rose Strubhar.

in Jefferson County, Iowa, near the Henry County border. They had to walk about nine miles to attend services at the Sugar Creek Amish Mennonite Church near Wayland.

The following are some excerpts from a story written by Milo's aunt that was published in Youth's Christian Companion on October 18, 1942. Milo read the story in its entirety. Carl Schultz mentioned in the story was my grandfather on father's side.

"ECHOES OF ARKANSAS" by Lena Roth Nofziger

In the summer of 1881 my father, Chris Roth and a neighbor, Carl Schultz, repaired a mover wagon, hitched a good team to it, and went to spy the country now known as Stuttgart, Arkansas. At that time nothing could be seen there but tall grass, and a little country store and post office. The two bought donation claims, two miles north of the store, each plot containing 160 acres. They then returned to Wheatland, Hickory County, Missouri. Soon after, the Schultzes, with eight children, started for their new home.

Father decided to remain in Missouri another year. That winter rheumatism crippled him so badly that he couldn't work or get around till the summer of 1882. By using crutches, he finished necessary business in Missouri, made sale, and prepared to leave for the "promised land"! Father's two wagons, Anton Scheffel, his brother and little girl from Iowa, and the family proceeded to Grandma Rich's where all helped make and put covers on the wagon. Feed boxes for the horses were made and placed on the back of the wagon. My father's only brother, Joe Roth, and family decided to join us in going west and thus added one wagon and three horses (one extra for pulling up steep grades). The fourth wagon, small and heavily loaded, was occupied by the Cooks and five children. Mr. Luster from Quincy, Missouri, a perfect stranger to us, heard of our train going to Arkansas and sought permission to join us. This added another family, two wagons, and four horses to the train of six wagons, thirteen horses, thirty-one people, and a number of dogs. All were now ready for a twenty-two day trip after gathering at the home of Jake Yoders for last farewells on Monday.

I don't remember of ever camping on the prairie, as the woods was the main traveling route. I was too young to remember many names of rivers and camping places. A great many streams were crossed during our journey. One little creek bed was all slate, so we carried

some nice slabs with us for writing purposes. We older ones, with the men, would run into the woods to hunt nuts and berries, leaving only the mothers and little ones to keep the horses and wagons moving. We sometimes had to run long and hard to catch the wagons. That is when it felt good to sit down!

What a large place we needed for camping! We sat together around the three campfires. We children gathered wood, and didn't have a care in the world, only that we were with our parents after our good watch dog was stolen. At night horses and cattle had to be chased from the camp so they wouldn't take our horses' feed.

We rested on the Lord's day and had a season of worship in the forenoon (all in German). I doubt if one could have said the Lord's Prayer in English. This made it practically impossible to help the unconverted in our train, aside from being kind and sharing the camp, which was like one family, with them.

About supper time the fourth Monday of our journey, we landed at the Schultz home where we camped for the night. They were the first Mennonite family in that country, and a happy family indeed. They were poor in earthly goods, but because of neatness and hard work had a nice homey place in less than a year. The tall grass had been disposed of, and the ground swept clean as a floor a couple rods around the house in order that snakes could be seen, for that was a land of snakes and their house was not snake-proof.

Not one building could be seen from the Schultz home. No wonder they rejoiced that the land owner adjoining their home was present. However, a jolt came when Father said he must look for a plot with buildings on because of his still crippled condition, so the next morning the two Roth families moved quite a distance to a plot of land containing a one-roomed house, a well, and an empty cotton-gin building. Uncle Joes decided to live there awhile, and unloaded. A larger team was put to the wagon, and all the men, with the land agent, went to see the country, while the women and little girls cleaned the home, and did a BIG washing, getting very tired--especially some of the children.

When the men came, the mothers said they couldn't stay there, and showed them the little black bugs (fleas) on us. Some laughed at us for being afraid of such little things, but nevertheless everyone was up early the next morning hurrying to leave that place.

We went out in the country to the land agent's

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home, and set up camp. The next day the agent took the men to another part of the grand prairie which lay in and out through the woods. Father said that no one could build farther away from the timber than two miles on either side. Imagine yourself in a place like that--160 acres of homestead lying side by side for miles, and the first man having choice of any piece, and to say, "This is mine." Father soon found a plot, containing buildings, that was being homesteaded by a bachelor, and bought it. This was ten miles southeast of Schultzes, and because of the scarcity of houses on the prairie, Uncle Joes and Scheffel came to live with us, all now having land. The kind bachelor moved, leaving us a fire in the stove.

We were now ready to set up housekeeping in the "promised land". Wagons were unloaded, supper was cooked, and the horses were made comfortable for the night. In the morning all were ready to view the land. There was a path leading to the road, and one to the well and garden where we found ripe tomatoes. The men then took the wagons and journeyed to the nearest rail station to get some stoves, furniture, and implements Father had sent from Missouri, so that they could store hay yet for the winter. Father's back straightened out and his crutch was no longer necessary. The Scheffels lived with us till their home was built, and Uncle Joes left us, going into their new home. In the spring, when the grass was burned off, we could see droves of deer and coyote pass by.

The cows lived on the prairie, and when they would come home for a drink or to lie in the shade, they were always milked regardless of whether it was noon or not--according to the need for butter and buttermilk to make cornbread. If fruit was wanted, we could go to the woods and gather berries. We prairie people went by the wagon loads to get these berries. Peach trees grew any place, and in the fall there would be wild grapes and other fruits.

Northern horses could not live here. Father traded one of the horses for five fresh cows, each having a calf. All the people began turning to oxen and "bunch grass" horses in the fall of 1883. Jake Yoders and Uncle John Riches, and two Lutheran families came a little later than this, and they were the last to come by team because the cotton-belt train went through in 1884.

The man who owned the post office moved it to the rail station and called it Stuttgart after his home town in the old country. It soon began to become populated, and in less than four years it was an entirely different place. Houses began springing up, the high grass became less and less, and the coyotes didn't cause so much annoyance any more. The people were mostly from Missouri and Ohio, some were from Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Iowa, and a few directly from Germany. A church house was built and a congregation organized. More people continued to come till the house was well filled; but every summer the "anga" fever sent many of them to their graves, thus enlarging the cemetery. The

ninth summer Father contracted the fever for the first time, and the rest of us for the last time.

As Father's helper, and also just a young girl, I drove our oxen seven seasons (as I loved to do this), and plowed the same land that Father plowed with horses. I didn't want to be bothered with lines--my big whip and kindness was all I needed. I worked them on any implement on the farm. If we worked them too late in the evenings they would wobble as though they could not walk straight. I, with this team and the Virginia mower, cut many acres of hay.

The two Roth families moved to Oregon, arriving at Hubbard on January 22, 1892.

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Much of my information was from my brother Julius who was very concerned that the family history be preserved.

Catherine Rich Roth was the first child of John and Catherine (Klopfenstein) Rich and was born in Europe. She came to America with her parents in 1856 and married Christian Roth on September 9, 1869. They lived in Missouri 13 years, 10 years in Arkansas, and then moved to Oregon, arriving here in January of 1892. Both died in Oregon in 1912. Most of the children married in Oregon and have helped populate and develop the state. I underline that to remind myself how much they really did help the state in population. At my mother's 80th birthday we had a little doings for her and there were about a hundred of her descendants at that time already in 1950 so you can imagine what the number is now. There were 52 in her family and only one other family is about as large.

Christian and Catherine (Rich) Roth had a family of twelve children. My mother's name was Elizabeth and my father was Frank Schultz. There were nine in our family and I am the only one remaining besides my wife and Elsie, my brother Julius' widow.

Lena - Magdalena, we always called her by her short name - had four boys. She married Chris Nofziger. One thing I noticed. Uncle Chris was born in about the same vicinity that my grandparents were; he came from that part of the country. The interesting part about it was that in this place, part of the time this land belonged to Germany and part of the time it belonged to France. Chris Nofziger was born in Germany and his brother Henry was born in France in the same house to the same parents! None of the original members of Lena's family are with us any longer.

Catherine, next in line, married Levi Yoder. There were five in that family; the only one remaining is Esther Sweigart, who now lives in Woodburn in a rest home.

Ada, the fourth in the family (and a twin to Catherine), married Chris Christner. There were five in that family; none of the first generation remain.

Mary, the fifth one in the family, died as a

young child in Missouri.

Emma married Samuel Kauffman. She is the one I said lived in the first house over the bridge on the north side of the road, just east of the Zion church. In her family were four children. Agnes, who married Lyman Nightingale, is still living.

Next was Rosie. She married Solomon Strubhar. By the way, Solomon was related to the other side of the house, the Joe Roth family. There were just two in that family, neither one living any more.

Uncle Joe, the eighth one in the family, had one daughter and our last word was that she was still alive, but we have kind of lost track of her.

John died as a small child in Arkansas.

William married Ida Hepler and they had eleven in their family. That is the only family where many of the children are still alive since he was one of the younger ones in the family. Nine of their children are living.

Dan, the eleventh child (ninth to live to be an adult), left as a young man and we don't know just exactly whatever happened to him.

Simon, the youngest of the family, married Eva Lamphere. They are both gone.

In all there were 12 children and 42 grandchildren. Great-grandchildren: 47 counted in my mother's family alone at this time! Betty Garen, here today, is a daughter of Ralph Burkholder, Mae's son, and a member of Zion and worker in the church. We wish you all God's blessing in the work wherever you are.

Al Nofziger, my stepbrother, said he came here today just to hear me say this, and I am glad he is here. My mother, after my father passed away in 1924, married Al's grandfather. Anyhow, we were together as a united family and I'm glad to say that all the dealings we had in our family with that family were very satisfactory according to Mother and to him, I am sure.

My only statement that I would make at this time is that my greatest desire for all of us, even though we have only the written record of it, is that we be thankful we were born into homes that honored God, that really took life in a serious manner.

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Some Personal Reflections on the History of Bethel Mennonite Church

by John M. Miller

I. Some General Considerations

At the outset my intentions were good. I had hoped to invite as many former participants at Bethel as possible to gather in groups to reminisce and reflect on their experiences as a part of this congregation. In the passing of this past year those intentions went awry in the rush of activities and the rigors of procrastination. I did borrow and then return to Levi Strubhar several boxes of musty pamphlets, old conference programs and a book of minutes. Except for the list of charter members, the record of membership over the years, and the aforementioned minutes, I found little of historical value.

Then through the grace of Margaret Shetler, I received a copy of Hope Lind's excellent work on the history of this congregation. There I found a summation of the facts that exceeded anything I could have dreamed of attaining. It is a superb study, and with only the correction of a few minor details, I would strongly recommend that it be made available to anyone wanting to learn Bethel's history. Except for citing a few of the details of Hope's work, I shall not repeat what she has already done.

II. Review of the History

A. Historical roots

Hope Lind describes in detail the movement of the first Mennonite settlers into the area and the beginning of Sunday Schools in schoolhouses at Dryland, Bear Creek and Eby which led to the organization of Bethel Mennonite Church on May 4, 1919. She mentions the names of the 28 charter members. I personally learned to know the majority of those she names. The question that interests me is what currents of life brought these people to settle here. They were mostly descendants of Mennonite immigrants from Europe who had been in the U.S. for several generations. An exception would be, I believe, the Nofziger brothers, Henry and Chris, who were first generation immigrants from the Alsace Lorraine. They had come over from Europe when boys, ages 12 and 8, respectively, first settled in Missouri and moved to Oregon at a later time. I remember well their broken English and how they and others, including bishop, Fred Gingerich, would often feel that some things could be made much clearer in German. Chris made an effort to teach me a few phrases in German that I learned and that have stuck with me: "Vie gehts?" "Semlich gut." "Vie gehts mit sich?" "Langsam und deutlich."

Which brings me to delineate the nature of this particular effort. We moved to the Glad Tidings community in 1937, when I was six years old. From that point on, Bethel Mennonite Church was the nurturing womb of my spiritual development, most truly my alma

mater. I accepted Jesus Christ there during meetings being ministered by Marcus Lind in May 1942, and was baptized in July of the same year. My membership remained at Bethel until sometime in the early 1960s; my parents (and some of my historical connections) continued there until Bethel was closed near the end of 1969. The following represents mostly personal observations and analyses. As such, I recognize that it is biased by the limited nature of my own experience and values. It should be considered not so much empirical history as the historical reflection of a participant-observer. I wish that it might include the memories of others as well.

I believe Hope is correct in her analysis in *Apart and Together* in placing the Mennonite's migration as part of the western movement of European peoples in the North American continent. While there may have been some spiritual motivations, I believe that economic factors were predominant. I recall my grandfather Chris Snyder once telling in a Young People's Bible Meeting at Molalla (remember how there were often times for additional comments and sharing when the speakers had not filled up the full time?) how he had quested for the "golden dream" of economic well-being in his moves from Nebraska to Filer to Alberta to Montana and finally to the Willamette Valley. It does seem that those who ventured into the "far west" were probably more restless or independent. (In the past I sometimes said to my wife, Doris, whose family has remained in Pennsylvania for twelve generations, that those who had any gumption got up and went west; at other times I have confessed that it was probably that the misfits and malcontents who moved on. I am inclined at this juncture to recognize that it was at least the more adventuresome and daring, probably driven by economic necessity and the dreams of a better life that made their way west to settle in the far reaches of this continent.)

At least from what little I know about the early life of those who formed Bethel Mennonite Church, they were hard-working German Mennonites who settled in this fertile area of the Willamette Valley to live in peace and carve out economic survival and well-being for themselves and their families. My sense is that while somewhat conservative in their cultural ways, as were probably most Mennonite communities in that time, the families that made up Bethel were neither particularly close-minded nor isolated from the community around them.

B. Nurture, Growth and Changes

I have no way of knowing the internal dynamics from the earlier days of the congregation. The fact that Fred J. Gingerich, key minister and bishop during all my years there, was placed in charge as resident minister from the time of its organization could well be an indication of the prevailing influences. Hope Lind describes him as a "self-educated man", "highly regarded by his contemporaries", and a "true moderate". I agree

with those descriptions. My perception is that Fred was a capable leader, interested in preserving a faithful expression of Christian faith. In his own business affairs, Fred was quite progressive. I heard that he formed a business partnership with Rex Ross to be able to have some of his registered Jersey herd shown at the State Fair, an activity not permitted by the Mennonite church at that time. He exercised some strictness of discipline within the congregation, but there is testimony that he was understanding and considerate in dealing with those who transgressed. Discipline in dress was maintained. Plain attire was not required, but ties were excluded; following of fashions was frowned upon. Some have felt these emphases were legalistic. My own sense was that though strict, biblical teaching was given to explain what was practiced and the stance was more that of conscientiousness than legalism. Cautious progressive openness might typify the congregation at this time.

In this connection, I think it is important to mention the way there was accountability and mutual discipline. The Communion service was held twice a year, Spring and Fall. This was always done with a serious time of preparation which included a "Counsel Meeting" held some weeks in advance. Generally the Counsel Meeting was open, i.e., each member would state before the congregation whether they were "at peace with God and their fellowmen and desired to take part in the Communion". When serious problems were present, Counsel would be heard by the ministers in private, and at times the Communion service would be postponed until difficulties could be worked through. While a fearful and awesome experience for the timid and the younger members, I still hold in high esteem the validity of this expression of accountability in the community of faith.

Services were held Sunday morning and evening and on Wednesday evening. The schedule of services at Bethel on Sunday morning was Sunday School from ten to eleven and church service from eleven to twelve. We followed a rather standard pattern - two songs or hymns, Scripture reading and prayer, another song, announcements, sermon text, message, closing hymn (if there was time), closing prayer and sometimes the Doxology. The preaching was of varied quality. One preacher had a reputation that of beginning again if he had completed his prepared material early. One of the most popular, at least with us younger ones, was Ernest Bontrager's father, Eli, who visited on several occasions and whose sermons were shorter. He often would finish early, sometimes by eleven-forty or a quarter till twelve. Whether a son's bias or not, I found my father's preaching to be interesting and helpful.

Sunday School was an important part of congregational life. Alice Rogie was the long-tenured teacher of the smaller children's class. In addition to the S.S. cards that were regularly distributed, she was

IN MEMORY OF

The following present or former members of OMHGS have died in the past several months:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Grace, Mrs. Daniel Widmer | Ethel Snyder |
| Julia Snyder | Marcus Lind |

popular with the children for the piece of candy we got each Sunday. One of the more powerful influences in my own life was Julius Schultz, the Sunday School teacher for the high school boys. Julius would go home after church on Sunday evenings and begin studying next Sunday's lesson. During the week as he performed the routine work at the sawmill, he would think about the teaching. Though in later life Julius expressed regret that so many of the young men that had gone through his class had not continued faithfully in the church, his teaching was one of the strongest positive influences that I experienced.

Children's meetings and Young People's Bible Meetings were also regular activities by the time we became part of the church there in 1937. Sunday evening the meeting went from seven to nine, with Children's Meeting for one-half hour, Young People's Bible Meeting for forty-five minutes and preaching for the remainder of the time. Attendance at both Sunday services were expected; I've sometimes said, if you missed Sunday evening service you were thought to have begun to backslide. Attendance at the midweek service was more optional. This service was often held in homes.

In the children's meetings there was a strong emphasis on Bible teaching - knowing the books of the Bible, how to find particular verses, memorizing verses and lessons of faith and morality from the Bible stories. While many persons took their turns at leading these, outstanding in my memory are Anna Snyder (thorough and strict about Bible knowledge), Aaron Nofziger (creative and interesting illustrations), and Ida Bontrager (creative and teacherly).

Young People's Bible Meetings were a pattern in the larger Mennonite Church at that time. At Bethel, these programs were planned by a committee elected by the congregation. When the program was read on Sunday mornings, at the end of one person's term this would be announced and the successor elected on the spot. Topics were assigned to all from old to young. In respect to the proper roles of men and women in the church, men gave talks and women read essays. I often found the essays to be as or more stimulating than the talks. Except for Julius Schultz, who it seemed to me, always had something interesting and edifying to say.

The congregation had a good number of gifted

singers. As I recall, the Schrocks, the Snyders, and the Rogies were most frequently used as song leaders, sometimes called "choristers". Of note were Allen and Anna Snyder (who generally could lead any song requested by the congregation) and Mary Nofziger, whose voice had outstanding quality and strength. After they came, both Ernest and Ida Bontrager used their musical gifts in the congregation. When we moved to Bethel, the *Church Hymnal* was the hymnbook. Later *LifeSongs No. 2* was added, and at a later time *Songs of the Church*.

In addition to the congregational singing, special music played a significant role. I believe there were women's groups as well as men's, but strongest in my memory was the male quartet composed of Alvin Rogie, first tenor, Jonathan Zook, second tenor, Allen Snyder, baritone, and Ernest Bontrager, bass. Hopewell customarily had a chorus program on Christmas Eve and Zion on Christmas evening. Bethel regularly had a chorus program at Easter time. A Cantata, the Easter Evangel was a tradition for a number of years.

One of my conclusions about these patterns I have described above is that there was a high level of participation and a low level of professionalization in the church. In committee work, song leading, ushering, YPBM talks, S.S. treasurer, and many other ways opportunities were made for all to participate. Especially for those of us growing up in this environment there was a sense that we were a part of the community of faith and that our gifts were needed.

A significant element in the life of the congregation was the commitment to mission. Hope Lind mentions that Bethel hosted the quarterly mission meeting for the first time in 1916, and from 1921 was included in the regular schedule. She also states that as early as 1926 Chris Snyder became enthused about the possibility of rural mission work. The Summer Bible Schools which were begun in 1929 had a strong focus on reaching children of the community. This clear emphasis on evangelism and reaching persons from the community stands out clearly as a significant part of the church's self-understanding. This interest culminated in the call of Ernest and Ida Bontrager in 1938 for a ministry of outreach to the community around the Bethel Church.

This mission effort became a most significant influence in the life of the congregation. The Bontragers brought a high commitment to the evangelistic ministry. When I recall the small (about 8' x 14') mobile home parked by one of the horse sheds, I now wonder how they were able to manage. My recollection is that they did extensive visiting in the community and some people from the community did attend services and a few made decisions for Christ and were baptized. One of these was Rhoda Holtzman, who later became my Sunday School teacher. It was out of this venture that the outreach to Porter began that led to the establishment of a daughter

congregation. I eagerly anticipate a fuller account of this part of the Bethel story when Sister Ida Bontrager publishes the second part of her and Ernest's life histories.

I think that it is fair to say that the Bontragers brought another influence into the congregation. They represented a conservative viewpoint from the East with regard to some practices of dress, most notably the cape and plain suit, that was stronger than had been prevalent in the congregation before this time. I suppose that their influence strengthened and helped to maintain the conservative stance of the congregation.

Another activity carried on for a number of years was the Literary Society. Hope Lind states that it "was intended to provide opportunity for young people to associate together in a Christian way and to spend time in worthwhile activities". Many of you will remember that Society as the stepping-stone into adolescent social life. Programs were planned around cultural or religious topics of interest, songs were sung and games were played. One must commend the dedication of the Literary sponsors. And how well I remember the Christmas caroling, a frigid activity of riding around in sub-freezing temperatures over miles of country roads on the back of the Gingerich truck.

"On September 7, 1948," Hope Lind records, "Bethel opened the first Mennonite elementary school in Oregon" with sixteen students and Lois Roth as teacher. My sense is that Bethel sought to provide a more protected and Christian education at the grade school level. I think a more serious study needs to be made of this effort. My impression is that a good rudimentary education was provided, but that there were some serious limitations on the full range of knowledge acquired.

C. Years of decline

One of my earliest memories has to do with watching the attendance figures as they were posted. In the earlier days of our attendance at Bethel, I can remember that occasionally the number of attendance went over 100. Hope Lind states that the high was reached in 1942-43 with a peak attendance of 89. I assume that was average or regular attendance. As the years passed I remember it dropping into the 80s, and then later into the 60s. Hope indicates that Bethel had about 35 members when it closed in 1969. One must ask the question, "what led to this decline?"

Hope Lind in her history attributes the decline to modern transportation and improved roads which brought Hopewell and Zion closer. She also says, "Some members especially young people, preferred the less strict position of Zion in matters such as dress," and notes that "some families moved to other places." There is a hint here that strictness of the congregation may have contributed to the decline. And yet Hopewell, to which some members went was, or has become, more strict than Bethel was at the time. I think it is true that in later years

as the Mennonite communities became more open to the cultural influences around the strict emphasis on dress became intolerable for some.

It may be that a general pattern of decline in farm communities and better transportation contributed to Bethel's demise. But I do not see that there has ever been the loss of population in the area that has contributed to the decline of churches in more remote agricultural communities. Therefore, I must conclude that internal factors contributed more than those of surrounding sociology.

It seems to me, and this is a delicate matter, that other factors are involved. One of the most significant has to do with the calling of leadership. For some reason that I have never been able to understand, Julius Schultz, one of the most gifted teachers in the congregation was not called into ministry. There were other decisions that were made that may have affected the potential of this church. Though I was not around at the time, there are reports that when the replacement for Fred Gingerich as bishop was selected, the one receiving the most support in the voice of the congregation was eliminated by the presiding bishops from the lot. The ordination of Jonathan Zook, was contested on the conference floor as irregular, but in the end was approved. This in not a criticism of Jonathan; he was caught in the pattern of events for which he was not responsible. I, and I believe most others considered him a good and faithful man who had served well as deacon. It seems that leadership at the level of bishop was not the most appropriate use of his gifts, and others might have given stronger leadership.

III. Some concluding observations

It must be evident from the tenor of my reflections that I have a deep-seated appreciation for my experiences of the church as I grew up at Bethel. In past months I have conversed with a few others and find that not all share my strong sense of the positive benefits derived from experiences in the life of this congregation. Some have described life at Bethel in more drab terms, that "it was a place to go to church", or have recounted some difficulties with the conservative patterns. What has stood out for me is the reality of faith in God, concern for the gospel and integrity of life and witness. These are attitudes that I imbibed in the meetings, in the preaching, in the prayer meetings where there was a serious concern about the issues of salvation and the condition of the lost who did not know Christ.

The major purpose in reviewing history is not to experience pleasant nostalgia but to reflect and learn. One thing that I believe we always learn when we look at the church is the reality that we experience the treasure of God's grace in "earthen vessels". Most surely there were manifestations of humanity - limited understandings, personal biases, human weakness, failing and offense. But, at least in my own experience, this is overwhelmed

by the reflection of deep concern for integrity of life.

I think that it is important to note that, while rooted in the currents of economic life, the founding and growth of Bethel Mennonite Church took place because of a heritage of commitment to biblical Christianity nurtured in the Anabaptist movement. In the early days those who ministered in this community did so with great effort, and sometimes sacrifice. There was an abiding concern for the integrity of the gospel, the obedience to all of Scripture, and a practice of the "all things" of Jesus' commission to the church. Though lived out in the humanness of the church, the glory of God's salvation could be experienced.

And perhaps I may be permitted a personal opinion that some of the benefits of the earlier impulses were lost when attention was diverted to preservation rather than moving ahead. Dave Kauffman, one of the charter members, is reported to have expressed in later years concern that the concepts of God's grace were not adequately emphasized. It seems that the leadership that carried responsibility in the later years was more focused on conserving rather than venturing. I believe this is one of the strongest lessons to be learned from this history. Leadership that in earlier years ventured in moderation turned later to maintaining positions long held. The church, if it is to survive in a demanding world must find ways to express the essence of its faith appropriately to the world in which it lives. It seems to me that Bethel did not find ways to translate the idiom of the daring faithfulness of its earlier years into the demanding reality of the world it faced at the end. For some reason it was unable to call forth leadership able to meet the challenges of its changing circumstances, and therefore its institutional life came to an end.

But for me, and many others, it has had a lasting influence in shaping our understanding of what it means genuinely to be the church. For that I am thankful.

BOOKS At present, OMHGS does not have a budget for purchasing books for the OMAL. We are very grateful for all the books that have been donated to date, and we invite your continuing donations. We invite either an outright donation of the books or contributions towards their purchase. If you would like to donate one of the following books, please contact Charity Kropf or Margaret Shetler.

Heritage Remembered by Gerhard Lohrenz. A history of Mennonite life in Russia and Prussia. \$25.00.

Daydreams & Nightmare \$5.00. Diary of Anna Baerg 1916 - 1924 \$9.00. Reflections of two Mennonite women who lived through the tumultuous Russian revolution.

The Turning Point by Alex Sareyan. The story of the

Civilian Public Service Mental Health program. \$16.95 softcover/\$43.50 hardcover..

NEW BOOKS The following books have recently been added to our library, thanks in part to the generosity of those attending the March meeting.

Brunk: David Heatwole and His Descendants
Ferguson: The Barkman Family - 2 volumes
Harder: Seventy-Five Years at Aberdeen
Hertzler: The Hertzler-Hartzler Family History
Lehman: Sonnenberg, a Haven and a Heritage
Lehman: Where There is Vision: The Laurelville Story, 1943-1993

The following two books were donated from the Western Mennonite School library:

Lehman: Creative Congregationalism (the story of the Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Ohio)
Sauder: The Weaverland Mennonites

SPRING MEETING

The Spring meeting was held March 19 at Zion Mennonite Church at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was called to order and a welcome extended by Frank Morris.

Leo Zook conducted devotions. He read Psalm 46 and Psalm 61:1-5, and led in prayer.

The day's program featured the Bethel congregation which was established in 1919 and disbanded in late 1969. First on the program was special music prepared by Elizabeth Miller Kennedy. She had a core group of singers and also invited anyone who had attended church at Bethel to participate. They sang two numbers from the Church Hymnal: "Hark, Ten Thousand Hearts and Voices" and "If Ye Then With Christ Be Risen".

John Miller, son of minister Omar G. Miller, gave an interesting history of the congregation. He entitled his presentation "Some Personal Reflections on the History of Bethel" and included some of his own memories and observations.

The featured family of the afternoon was the Christian and Catherine (Rich) Roth family. Chris Roth gave the land on which the Bethel church building was built. Many of his children and grandchildren were active members of the congregation throughout its life.

Vice-president Edna Kennel made a few closing remarks and acknowledged the indefinite loan of the Chris Snyder family Bible to the Archives. The Bible was on display at the meeting. Chris Snyder served as deacon at Bethel until his death in 1948. She also encouraged those present to consider attending the August dinner meeting when Kevin Enns-Rempel will be guest speaker.

An offering of \$137.60 was received which will be used for the purchase of books for our society library.

Ninety-nine persons signed the attendance register.

Margaret Shetler, Secretary

When We Went West

by Katie Lind

This is the final part of a three part story. The first part was in the December 1994 issue and the second part was in the March 1995 issue.

Papa and Mamma studied the Blue Book several evenings, talked with friends and relatives, and decided to go to Nampa, Idaho, for our next layover. We took the old scenic route along the Columbia River and absorbed as much of the beauty as we could. One last visit to the various falls - Multnomah, Horsetail, Bridal Veil - and the Vista House and on to eastern Oregon and into Idaho.

At Nampa we moved into a furnished apartment in the upstairs of the Mennonite Church building. The kitchen was equipped with a square dining table, chairs, a kitchen cabinet and a small iron coal-burning stove to cook on. It was hot that day so Papa set the little gas campstove on top of the coal stove. Mamma readied the beds for sleeping, deposited canned goods and other foods in the cabinet. We set the empty suitcases and the wonderful wardrobe trunk in the store room. Papa brought ice for the icebox that set in the hall, and other needed groceries and we felt "settled" for a month.

The next morning Harold and I went with Papa to pick up a paper so he could find a job. We still carried the traveler's checks but still wanted to save them. Mamma was ironing the wrinkles out of our clothes in readiness for our stint of "town life" when we returned. I can still see us - Papa sitting at the paper reading the paper, Harold drinking the cocoa left in his cup at breakfast time, I was busy with my current doll and Mamma humming softly while she took the cooled sad iron to the campstove to exchange it for a better one, when the quietness was suddenly broken by a frightened call from Mamma. She was looking at the pipeline leading from the burner to the small gas container and we saw a small flame angrily licking along it. Papa was at her side immediately, just in time for the whole thing to explode. Papa grabbed the rug from the floor to quell the flames, then grabbed the little stove and ran down the hall to the door where he then tossed the stove out into the grassy yard and the flames were stopped. However, we had seen the flames on Mamma's hair and licking at the collar of her dress and we watched in horror as she ran down the hall and into the last room. We were seeing Papa at the same time as he ran down the hall with the flames eating at his left shirt sleeve, then go into the same room Mamma had gone. Somehow the door was closed so that we did not see anymore and assumed they were now a pile of ashes like paper made when burned. We tore out the door and down the outside steps and out to the street screaming so loudly we soon had a crowd around us. A policeman came through the mass of people and we informed him that our parents were "burning up" which we believed to be true. On the other side of the

churchyard lived Lou Hilty and his wife Martha. He was at work but she came hurriedly and consoled us, taking us home with her. We were two bewildered children as we sat and watched the many neighbors crowded on the wide steps leading up to the apartments.

In the meantime Papa and Mamma had smothered the fire. Martha Hilty had called around and help had come for the folks. The day was one doctors had taken off so it was difficult to find one. The accident was on the wrong day and most doctors were on holiday but finally Dr. Fink was located and came to their aid. Mamma said later that they had no idea of the throng on the steps for only two women were in with them. One followed her as she paced the floor in her misery splashing warm coconut oil on the blisters rising fast on Mamma's face and forearms. Her burns were mostly light compared with the two spots where clothing held the flame close to the skin, on her neck and under one arm. There were second degree burns on her hands and up to the elbows and over her face, singeing the front hair from her head. She carried some marks for the following sixty plus years.

Papa was burned on his left arm; one spot near the elbow was burned to the bone.

When Dr. Fink came he had them both put to bed and finally, at supper time, we were allowed to see our parents. What a shock! Our small Mamma's face was swollen big and looked black to us. She had no eyebrows and some of her front hair was singed off. Her hands and arms were in bandages. I gave her one frightened look and turned my eyes over to the other bed. Papa looked no better. Sure we cried, for we have never ever felt more forlorn and alone than that time. By then Tina Burkhardt, a nurse, was caring for the patients, assisted by Viola Wenger and it was thought best we go back across the yard and live with the Hiltys until Mamma was more able. Papa ended up in the hospital where he stayed for six weeks and there were times when we didn't expect him to come home again for the treatment of burns was not aided by miracle drugs at that time. The little doctor who had answered our call that terrible day proved to be a competent man, just out of World War I, who had some fine ideas for the treatment of burns. One of his treatments was an experiment - grafting skin taken from a healthy area and grafting it all up and down the arm. I recall seeing the tiny flecks of good skin on the burned area. It proved unsuccessful and there was infection which caused lots of pain. One morning Dr. Fink picked all the flecks off and Papa was in dreadful pain when Mamma visited him.

We found the people of Nampa were true friends. Mamma often came to the icebox and found fresh vegetables and meat there which we had not put in. Many errands were run for her. The Hostetlers furnished milk daily. Grandpa and Grandma came from Iowa, too, which also relieved Mamma and Papa considerably. Their

coming was a complete surprise because we had been looking for our mail in the post office - general delivery - and had received no letters from home for several weeks.

Papa was finally released from the hospital but was still a bed patient for some weeks. Grandpa and Grandma went to Lewiston, Idaho, to visit Uncle Dave and his family who had moved there from Tacoma. Before they left Harold and I made a wonderful discovery which really startled the four older folks. Our extended family is one whose menfolks have thin hair, some with receding hairlines and others have little hairless spheres on the crown of the head while still others have only a fringe of hair around the head. At 28 Papa's hair was thinning on the back of his head and we were elated. That day when Harold and I bent low to look carefully at a frog catching flies with his remarkable tongue I spied the "crown" of his hair. My elated shout of "Harold! You're getting bald," brought his head up with a start, and after thoroughly examining it I assured him it was true. We hastily scrambled up the long staircase, barged into Papa's room, ran to his bed and in great excitement showed our wonderful discovery of Harold's latest move into maturity! Yes, we surprised them!

Papa continued his recovery and Mamma was healed up again when Grandpa and Grandma returned from Lewiston. Now plans were made for our return to Iowa for the doctor pronounced Papa ready to travel. During the time of preparation Harold and I were introduced to one more exciting experience. The airport at Nampa was small but Papa had heard that planes sometimes came in and that we could watch them leave. Grandma and Mamma were far too busy to go with us but Papa took Grandpa, Harold and me to see the action at the airport. There stood the airplane, about the size of our Model T, but with wings and a tail. There were three or four newsboys examining it. Their paper pouches were already emptied and hung limply from their shoulders. We also walked around the plane, examining every corner, while Papa and Grandpa discussed more heavy matters. Finally the pilot came, pushed and pulled on things on the dash, then walked to the front of the plane and began turning the propeller until the engine began to roar and the propeller picked up speed, creating the wind the newsboys were waiting for. Slowly they lost their place and were pushed backward to the fence. As for us, at the first roar Harold began climbing Grandpa and by the time the roar was a steady noise, he was sitting on Grandpa's shoulder. At six one does not climb up one's Papa so I pressed close against him and held his hand tightly. What a relief when things quieted down and what a story to tell Mamma and Grandma!

Papa's arm still needed fresh bandages daily when we started out for Iowa. Everyone felt it was too risky for him to drive across the mountains so John Kauffman, from Nampa, offered to do the driving. No

Model T had space for seven people to sit inside for such a long trip so it was decided that Grandma and Harold would take the train to Cheyenne and we would all spend time with Uncle Henry and Aunt Sarah. With circumstances as they were, we did not plan to camp along the way. The trunk rack was still used for luggage but we sent the wardrobe trunk by freight. Somehow there was a mix-up and that trunk never did arrive in Iowa. We slept in hotels and ate in small restaurants, all of which created a few problems. One time in eastern Idaho we stopped at a cafe and thought to order a steak dinner. Papa had talked so much about it that we all were ready for such a meal. The waiter came for our order and returned to the kitchen while we sat back and relaxed. Suddenly he came from the kitchen and went out the front door. Papa chuckled and said, "There he goes to kill the cow." Sure enough, after a half hour or so he returned via the front door carrying a package. We heard the sizzling from the kitchen and got hungrier than ever. John became restless, but finally we were served a very good steak dinner.

Once we traveled along without any excitement when the road led to an old railroad bed and we drove along on top of the ridge for many miles. I can't recall meeting any cars while we were using the improvised thoroughfare. We passed empty, falling-down houses which were monuments to someone's discouragement. One time we passed a ghost town where all the houses had their windows nailed shut and beside each house was a pump, all of which added to my longing for a drink. I was given the swallow of water from the water bag but Papa and John seemed to think it quite necessary to conserve this supply for the Ford. Finally we spied a clear, bubbling spring alongside the road and Papa asked John to stop. Papa got out and ceremoniously tested the water, then gravely invited the rest of us to come and partake. We all accepted the invitation and I took a great mouthful of the awfullest tasting stuff I had ever had in my mouth. Lukewarm mineral water. Believe me, Papa was the only one laughing until we could get our mouths empty.

Once when we were driving along beside a stream John began to mourn about the performance of the Ford, saying something was wrong. In spite of all his efforts to provide gas, the car was still slowing down. John voiced his feelings about the adequacy of the Ford and they certainly were not complimentary. Then someone noticed that although we appeared to be on level ground and even tending toward the downgrade, the water was flowing the wrong direction. Grandpa looked back and lo, we were going up a right nice-sized grade. John had made such degrading remarks about the poor Ford that he wouldn't dare believe such "junk". Papa



insisted the car be stopped so we could all witness the phenomenon. Of course, John had to believe it but he did not have to admit to anything.

Out in the desert we broke an axle. I looked as hard as I could but could see nothing wrong with the axle even if the three men were so sure it was a fact. While we were all standing around trying to decide what to do next and discussing whether Papa should start walking to the next town which we judged to be some 20 miles distant, a car came along with only the driver's seat occupied. He kindly offered Papa a ride along with him back to the last town we had seen and Papa took the offer. We sat another long time and then a car came from where we had been and this driver offered Grandpa, Mamma and me a ride. We drove and drove. The sun set and darkness fell and finally we spied a light in the distance which we took to be an approaching train. To our surprise the driver crossed the tracks and we were in Wamsutter, a fact which did not ease Mamma's tension one bit. Could Papa and John ever find the tiny town when all the lights were out? About midnight I was shoved around and awakened long enough to know that I was being transferred to a bed on the floor and to hear the blessed sound of Papa's voice.

Once out on the desert, where one could see nothing but sagebrush and sand, we had a flat tire. Naturally we all climbed out in order to stretch our legs. Papa and John busied themselves with the removal of the tire from the rim and proceeded to patch the tube. I had a very loose tooth and may have been getting on others' nerves with the endless action of a six-year-old when a tooth nearly falls out. Be that as it may, Grandpa invited me to walk out over the desert with him. Much as I always fought to keep my teeth, he somehow managed to pull this one. On our return he stubbed his toe on a small piece of sagebrush which when he picked it up was found to be petrified. Today I own the sagebrush by virtue of my bravery for I did not cry when he touched the tooth and it fell into his hand.

At last, in spite of all John's dire predictions that the Ford would not hold together that long, we arrived at Cheyenne. Now it was Grandpa whose eyes were opened to new things and we knew our way around. John gladly accept the offer of returning to his home in Nampa instead of taking us all the way to Iowa, and we said good-bye to the teenager who must have wished many times he had never taken the chance to drive our car. I am not sure if we picked up Grandma and Harold in Cheyenne if they were already at the ranch when we arrived. What a reunion! Grandpa and Grandma, Uncle Henry and Aunt Sarah were together after two decades. My parents were both well enough to be with us all.

Papa still did not have the full use of his left arm and Mother's skin was so delicate she was always peeling" from the effects of sun and wind.

We stayed with Uncle Henrys a week or two, then drove to Chappell, Nebraska, where Grandpa and

Grandma truly enjoyed visiting with their friends Chris and Annie Yoder. Here we received a telegram telling of the death of Mamma's stepmother, Mrs. Jonas Yoder. It took all night for her to think through the possibility of taking the train to Kalona for the funeral. By morning she had decided to stay with us and so it was that the six of us stopped near Des Moines for another visit with Grandpa's brother Nick and family. We must not have stayed very long for it seemed everyone was more than eager to "get home".

When we drove into Grandpa's Outside Yard that afternoon we were greeted by Aunt Sadie who had mixed feelings. Seems most of her well-set plans had not worked out. The Ford traveled faster than she expected and she had a wash tub full of last-of-the-garden pickles setting in the kitchen ready to process in glass jars. I have no idea how many quarts she filled but I do recall the happy conversations that went between us all that evening.

Papa could not give us a formal education but Harold and I had learned so much first-hand. We now knew what a mountain looked like, had seen a big dead whale as well as a live one spouting water out in the ocean. We waded in irrigation ditches and became acquainted with the principles of irrigation, stood near an airplane, gazed into the tall waving firs of Oregon, were dampened by the spray from a world-renowned waterfall, had seen the effects of fire on the human body, tasted our first grapefruit, knew about petrified wood, learned to not believe what we saw when it was a mirage, spent time at a fish hatchery along the Columbia River, and smelled skunk cabbage that grew in the swamp along the Pudding River. That was the beginning of what we learned.

Furthermore, Mamma's health remained fairly stable and she lived to be 95 years old. Papa died at the age of 55.

--A talk given by Katie Yoder Lind at the Second Dinner Meeting of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society at the Salem Mennonite Church, Salem, Oregon on July 18, 1994.

To join the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society you may send your name, address and membership fee to Perry Shrock, OMHGS treasurer, 30180 Sodaville-Mt. Home Road, Lebanon, OR 97355. Memberships are as follows: Student \$5.00; Single \$10.00; Family \$15.00; Contributing \$25.00; Sustaining \$50.00; Non-member contributor \$10 or more; Life membership \$500.00.

OMHGS MEETINGS

The OMHGS Fall 1995 Meeting will be held September 17 at the Living Water Christian Assembly in Albany, which is the former Grace Mennonite Church (GC) building. The meeting will feature the history of that congregation by Leon Widmer and the Emanuel Kenagy family history by Edward (Kelly) Kenagy.

The OMHGS Spring 1996 Meeting will be held March 17 at the Salem Mennonite Church and will feature the history of that church as they will be having a 35th anniversary. The meeting will feature the Daniel B. Kauffman family history.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

April 18, 1995 - Plans were finalized for the joint meeting of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and the Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church on May 19-20, 1995 in Oregon. Meeting sites, meals and tour were planned.

July 11, 1995 - Edna Kennel and Charity Kropf reported on work that is being done on the vertical file. Periodicals are being placed in acid-free boxes and arranged on the shelves in alphabetical order. To date we have accessioned 1058 items for the library.

There will be a bonus Newsletter in November this year which will include a renewal form.

Final details were finished for the annual dinner meeting on August 10 at the Albany Mennonite Church. The speaker will be Kevin Enns-Rempel, archivist from Fresno, California, who will be speaking about the phenomena of western migrations of Mennonites. Admission is by donation, with any amount over \$6.50 per person being tax deductible.

Final details were discussed for the September 17 meeting in Albany.

It was decided that we will charge 5¢ a copy for members and 10¢ for non-members to use the copy machine in the OMAL.

Dr. David Kliever from Corvallis and Jerry Brenneman of Albany joined us to be a part of our discussion about hosting the Mirror of the Martyrs exhibit. It was discussed whether it would be possible to raise the funds to bring it here and possible sites.

July 25, 1995 - This was a meeting of the Executive Committee and the Consulting Board. It was decided to extend the terms of the Consulting Board members to three years rather than the present two. Thus termination

dates will be 1996 for Floyd Kropf, 1997 for Mavis Morris and Leo Schlegel and 1998 for LeRoy Chupp and Lydia Ann Kennel.

It was discussed about our Society hosting the exhibition of the Mirror of the Martyrs display. The group seemed to be enthusiastically in favor of bringing this exhibit to Oregon. We will look at a date sometime in late January or early February of 1996 for a period of at least one month. A fund-raising committee is working on raising the funds to bring it here. Possible sites were discussed for the display.

The terms of vice president, secretary and librarian expire this fall. The secretary and librarian are willing to serve again. Edna Kennel as vice president chooses not to continue in this office. Members are invited to nominate persons for these positions. The person to be nominated must agree to the nomination prior to submitting their name and the nomination is to be submitted to Hope Lind or Perry Shrock prior to the September 17 meeting.

It was reported that Ivan Kropf has offered the Abner Miller barn located next to the Zion Mennonite Church to our Society. Discussion centered around ways it could be used if we should acquire it. Some possibilities included a restaurant, a museum, and our Archives.

Other topics of discussion were future plans for the Society, future activities and future programs. Some suggestions for future program topics included Drift Creek Camp, stories from the Depression era, Menno Simons, Pacific Coast Conference and the Deaconess Hospital in Salem.

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BITS 'N PIECES

If you have a completed research or book that has been published, please let us know for inclusion in future issues. Recently my aunt, Marilyn Bond and I completed "My Memories" by Cora Emmert. Cora was mother to Marilyn, grandmother to me and a daughter of Christian and Lydia (Miller) Schlabach. This is a story written by her before her death about her life from childhood through marriage. Included are photos, recipes, poems, drawings and letters written between my grandparents before they were married. It is softcover, 103 pages, spiral bound and is available from Marilyn Bond, 1038 Ruge St. NW, Salem, OR 97304 for \$8.50 including the postage to mail it.

I am working on two other projects which are to be printed this next year. One is a collaboration with my great uncle Allen Schlabach on "The Family of Christian J. Schlabach". Others in the Society working on family projects are: Edna Kennel - Kennel Family; Hope Lind - Landis & Garber Families; Leo Schlegel - Schlegel Family; Perry Shrock - Roth & Shrock Families; and Margaret Shetler - Pursley Family.