



OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Volume 10, Number 1 FEBRUARY 1997

THE PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE: 1906 to 1994

The Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite Conference met in annual session in October 1905 at the Hopewell Church near Hubbard, Oregon. That experience was likely an eye-opener for the visiting delegates as they realized how far away the West Coast really was. We need to remember that the usual mode of transportation to conference in those days was by train, and not a streamliner, either!

It was during the 1905 conference session that delegates to the Kansas-Nebraska conference made the decision to divide their conference district, with the Rocky Mountains as the dividing line. Arrangements for the new conference were made by appointing brethren from the western field for various phases of the work. Names of appointees included David Garber, David Hilty, J. P. Bontrager, J. F. Bressler, Emmanuel Stahly, and C. R. Widmer. A resolution adopted at the conference describes their view of the scope of the field:

“The scope of the western field includes every city, village, hamlet, mining camp, lumberman’s camp, and rural district, and its possibilities are the establishment of Sunday schools, Gospel missions, and churches in every part of this vast territory, and the addition of hundreds, yea thousands of souls, to the Church of Jesus Christ, all through the faithful, earnest work of His consecrated workers, accompanied by the Holy Spirit. This conference would especially encourage the opening of Gospel missions in various places on the Pacific Coast.” 1

Thus was launched the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC). It was comprised of only three congregations: Hopewell, near Hubbard, Oregon; Albany, Oregon; and Antioch, near Nampa, Idaho

(the present Nampa congregation). These congregations had been organized in November and December of 1899 and accepted in October 1900 as members of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. All three of these congregations still exist and two of the three remained members of the Pacific Coast Conference throughout its history.

The first meeting of the new Pacific Coast Conference was held at Nampa, Idaho, November 1 and 2, 1906. Total membership of the three congregations was 135 members. The Rules and Discipline of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference were adopted by the PCC with one exception, and that dealt with the district mission board. Ordained men in attendance at that first session were bishops J. D. Mishler and David Hilty; ministers Noah Hershberger, Levi J. Yoder, J. P. Bontrager and A. M. Shenk; and deacons Alex I. Miller and Emmanuel Stahly. Sessions of the conference were held annually except in 1918 when it was postponed one year because of the influenza epidemic.

New congregations added to the conference included Filer, Idaho, organized in 1914. They hosted the conference meetings in their newly constructed building in September of 1915.

The Firdale congregation, near Airlie, Oregon, was organized in late December 1915.

Mountain View, near Creston, Montana, was organized May 20, 1913, under the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference. In 1915 they asked to be released from the AM conference to become part of a conference geographically nearer and they became a member of PCC in 1916. Plans were for them to host the Pacific Coast conference sessions in 1918. This was the conference that had to be postponed because of the influenza epidemic. Mountain View did host the conference in 1919 with George J. Lapp, a returned missionary from India, preaching the conference sermon.

At the 1915 session at Filer, the conference

unanimously adopted a new constitution, a revised discipline, and a constitution and bylaws for the District Mission Board.

From the beginning, conference sessions included a Sunday school conference as well as the Church conference and usually lasted two days. A few of the sessions were longer.

In 1919, the conference roster included members from Terra Bella and Los Angeles in California, and at that same time the Los Angeles Mission was accepted as a member of the Pacific Coast District Mission Board.

A few actions from early conference sessions included:

1906 — Steps were taken to organize a General Mission Board for the Pacific Coast District, the object of which was to take charge of the evangelistic and mission interests of the district. The Mission Board reported regularly to the conference and in 1919 was granted a half-day session for a public meeting, which became part of the program, beginning in 1920.

1917 — A committee was appointed to investigate the matter of establishing a church school on the Pacific Coast. That, of course, did not happen until 1945.

1919 — Decided on the second week of June as a fixed date for conference.

The winds of merger were blowing in the early twentieth century. In 1916 the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite and Amish Mennonite conferences merged under the name of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. A few years later occurred what J. C. Wenger referred to as the “great merger of 1920-21” when the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference, which included all Amish Mennonite churches in Illinois and all the area west of there, merged with the four Mennonite conferences west of Indiana, which covered all of the same geographical area. This resulted in five Mennonite Church conferences, including a new Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference. 2 The new Pacific Coast Conference covered less territory than before but was still large

geographically: Oregon, Washington, California and Idaho.

The original Pacific Coast Conference, established in 1906 with a membership of 135, had grown to seven congregations with 451 members at the time of the merger. The merger added the three Amish Mennonite congregations in Oregon, with combined membership of 365 members, to the new Pacific Coast Conference: Zion, established in 1893; Fairview, established late in 1894; and Bethel, organized in 1919. The number of congregations remained at ten for some years, but not the same ten.

In 1923 Mountain View at Creston, Montana, asked permission to change from PCC to the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, again the reason being geographical. The Firdale congregation at Airlie disbanded in 1924. However, about the same time the Portland Mission church and the Sheridan church became members of the conference.

The first meeting of the newly established Pacific Coast Conference was held June 7-10, 1921, at the Fairview Mennonite Church east of Albany. That meeting was a time of closing of business and books of the old organization and the establishing of the new, much like we did in 1994. The program consisted of the Sunday school conference all day Tuesday and Wednesday morning; Mission Board meeting Wednesday afternoon; and the Sewing Circle meeting Wednesday evening. Church conference convened Thursday morning and continued through Friday. Except for changes in the name of some of the organizations and occasional reversal of order of the meetings, this continued to be the format of the conference program through 1950. Beginning in 1951, the Mission Board meetings were held in the fall in conjunction with the ministerial meetings. This practice seems to have continued through 1975, the same year a revised constitution was approved. By that time, conference sessions were no longer as well attended by the laity as previously. In earlier days conference meetings were important social events as well as times of worship and nurture and were well attended.

The 1921 merger was accomplished with

OMHGS NEWSLETTER

Published biannually by Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society President Jerry Barkman; Vice-President Larry Eby; Secretary Margaret Shetler; Treasurer Perry Shrock; Librarian Charity Kropf. Edited by: Suzanne Roth. Send general correspondence to Margaret Shetler, 5326 Briar Loop NE, Scotts Mills, OR 97375; Newsletter items to Suzanne Roth, 27910 S. Oglesby Road, Canby, OR 97013. Back issues of OMHGS Newsletter are available for \$3.00 each. “In the interest of free exchange of information, this publication is not restricted by copyright, except where specifically noted. OMHGS does not assume responsibility for errors in these pages, but welcomes all documented corrections if errors occur.”

relative ease but it took a few years before all was going smoothly, at least on the surface. Both groups were united in faith and belief but had differing ideas of how to live out that faith, and these differences were never totally resolved.

Growth in numbers and new congregations was slow but steady. Besides Portland and Sheridan, mentioned previously, Molalla and several churches in southern California as well as one in Idaho joined the conference in the 1930's, and Sweet Home became a member in 1940. In 1948 the California churches became part of the newly established Southwest Mennonite Conference.

By 1950 the conference had established Western Mennonite High School and the Mennonite Home for the Aged at Albany; sponsored rescue mission and Jewish mission work in Portland; become involved with the Lebanon Community Hospital; and had interest in mission work in Mexico.

Again, there were stirrings of change, in Pacific Coast Conference and across the entire Mennonite Church. Young men (and their wives) that had served in Civilian Public Service during World War II had been exposed to new experiences. More young people were going to high school and college. The bishops who had been giving leadership to the conference for many years were growing older. Younger men, some from places other than the Pacific Coast, were being ordained as bishops and becoming involved in conference leadership. Congregations were turning from self-supporting plural ministries to salaried pastors. Gradually congregational oversight changed from that of a bishop to an overseer. A conference minister was appointed in 1970.

Between 1948 and 1969, 17 new congregations emerged. There were no new ones in the 1970s but after 1980 there were about a dozen more, including three Spanish-speaking congregations. Several of these groups were short-lived. The other side of the coin is that there were numerous withdrawals of congregations from the conference after 1960 for various reasons. Also several smaller churches have discontinued. Conference membership peaked in 1965 at 2,435. Membership in June 1994 was about 1,950 in 24 congregations.

I mentioned earlier no annual PCC session was held in 1918 because of the influenza epidemic. In 1937 there was no conference session in June because that year Oregon hosted the Mennonite General Conference at Turner. Also in 1942 there was no

annual conference session because of World War II.

Now for a brief summary of other happenings in the last 25 or so years.

1980 saw the first Spanish church become a member of the conference, Iglesia Menonita in Woodburn. Also, Peace Mennonite in Portland was accepted as the first dual-conference member.

The unified budget method of giving was in place from 1981 through April 30, 1989.

Western Mennonite School campus has continued to grow. The newest building erected is the church-chapel building. The school celebrated its 50-year anniversary Jubilee in June of this year (1996).

The Mennonite Home is alive and well. They have expanded and continue to expand both facilities and services, including the Mennonite Village for independent living.

Conference leadership expanded to include lay persons as well as ordained. Women served as conference delegates and members of various committees and one or two as pastors. Besides the Executive Committee there was a Leadership Committee. Congregations were grouped geographically into "clusters" with regular meetings of the ministers in each cluster. The conference minister became full time in the early 1990s and he and the missions minister were the only salaried conference personnel in 1994.

Three times the Pacific Coast and Pacific District conferences met in joint session. After the first such meeting in 1986, interconference relationship discussions began, leading to integration in June of 1994.

At the 72nd session of the Pacific Coast Conference held in joint session with the Pacific District Conference in Reedley, California, June 1994, the PCC was formally disbanded in favor of integration with the PDC and the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC) was established, comprised of former PCC and PDC congregations in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

1 Shetler, S. G.: "Church History of the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference District," Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, ca. 1932, p. 54

2 Wenger, J. C.: "The Mennonite Church in America," Herald Press, Scottdale, PA 15683, c1966, p. 121

Sources of information have included:

S. G. Shetler, Church History of the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference District, 1932

J.C. Wenger, The Mennonite Church in America, c1966

Hope Kauffman Lind, Apart and Together, c1990;
Herald Press, Scottsdale PA

Unpublished materials from Hope Lind as well as her collection of reference material used for preparing the manuscript for Apart and Together.

Information gathered as I have been working at cataloging and organizing conference materials in our OMHGS Archives and Library.

—Margaret Shetler

This history is very similar to one that I gave at the final session of the PCC in Reedley, California, in June 1994.



PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE BEGINNINGS by Vivian Schellenberg

The well-known slogan, "Go West, young man," had taken a firm grip in the lives of many Mennonite people. As early as 1876, Mennonites had traveled to the West Coast. Some settled in the Willamette Valley in Oregon; others went to California in 1887, Washington in 1890 and Idaho in 1905. These early pioneers came from the northeastern states as well as the midwest, and in 1890 a large number came to Oregon from Manitoba, Canada. They brought with them a well-rooted desire and dedication to worship God regularly.

Whenever several families located in a community, arrangements were made for Sunday worship — sometimes in homes or if a larger place was needed, it could be in a school house or warehouse.

Sunday school classes were arranged for. Sermons were often read if there was not a minister among them.

The General Conference had a traveling minister who made it part of his program to find and visit these newly formed and sometimes isolated groups. Some would invite the pastor of their former church to come for a visit. Reverend J. B. Baer was the first to visit in Oregon in 1878. These visits encouraged the organization of churches and the choosing of ministers.

The first group he visited was at Enger (now Pratum). The first families had come from Ohio in 1876 and located in Marion County between Silverton and Salem. A year later they were joined by a much larger group, mostly of Swiss descent, some even direct from Switzerland. Some belonged to the Reformed Church and others belonged to two or three different Mennonite churches. In 1888 when Rev. Baer visited them, services were held in several homes. A small German Reformed church had been abandoned and was rented by the Mennonites. It was known as the Waldo Hills Mennonite Church until 1890 when it was organized as Emmanuel Mennonite Church. It was here that the Pacific District Conference was organized in 1896. Emmanuel Mennonite Church built their first church in 1904 about one and a half miles closer to Salem. They left the conference in 1984.

In the years 1886 and 1887, a few families and young people originally from Switzerland moved from Pulaski, Iowa, to Washington Territory and located in Whitman County. For several years the small group worshiped with a few Methodist families. They were also visited several times by Rev. Baer. In the spring of 1893 a small congregation of 21 members was organized. It was known as the Colfax Mennonite Church. The next day they elected and ordained the first pastor, Rev. P. R. Aeschliman, who served them for 43 years. They worshiped jointly for many years with the Methodists. This church left the conference in the mid-1960s.

Mennonite history began in the Polk County area the fall of 1882 when five Schrag families left their farms and homes in Dakota that November. They boarded the train in Yankton, which took them south and then west to California, arriving in San Francisco nine days later. From the bay they sailed out into the Pacific and after several days they sailed up the Columbia River and then into the Willamette

River where they docked at Portland. Once more they boarded the train for a 35-mile trip south where they were welcomed by the small Amish settlement at Hubbard.

They were informed that land was much cheaper around Dallas, which was about 45 miles southwest of Hubbard. The land was hilly, wooded and not as fertile, but it appealed to them and there were several places for sale or for rent within an area of a few miles. Thus the first settlement of Mennonites was founded in Polk County about three miles south of Dallas.

For the first few years, church was held in their homes. Christ Schrag led the group until their minister, Jacob Schrag, came. Other relatives and friends also came and settled in other areas around Dallas. The northern edge of Dallas became known as German Town. This was where they organized and built their church around 1885. It was known by the name of its leader, as the Schrag church.

In 1889-90 and 1891 a large number of Mennonites and other German-speaking families moved to Polk County from Manitoba, Canada, and most settled on farms north of Dallas, possibly because the Oregon Limited narrow-gauge railroad had been built north to Ballston in 1885. Some of these attended the Schrag church, but in 1891 the Schrag group bought a large tract of land at Irving west of Eugene. They dismantled their church building and moved it by rail to their new location.

Franz Kliewer, who had come in 1889 with the large group from Manitoba, purchased a farm three miles north of Dallas at Polk Station. He donated an acre of land from the northeast corner of his farm on which to build a school.

According to Mennonite Brethren history, a number of the families that came from Manitoba in 1890 and 1891 were Mennonite Brethren. They settled several miles farther north in the Salt Creek area. A number of these families had been led to faith in Christ by Elder Heinrich Voth of Minnesota. When Elder Voth heard that these families had settled in the Dallas area, he came to visit in 1891. Feeling they needed spiritual fellowship, he gathered various Mennonites and German-speaking families and formed a temporary and rather loose organization under the Mennonite Brethren name. Thus the gathering at Polk Station became the first Mennonite Brethren congregation on the West Coast. Records indicate there were 12

members when the group was organized.

Sunday school was held several times a month and since they did not have a minister, the men took turns reading sermons from books by Geroch and Spurgeon. Leaders and evangelists of both the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference ministered from time to time. Four years later, State Missionary Gustav Schunke of the Baptist Conference was asked to come minister to the group. Franz Kliewer had the key to the school and one evening when Schunke came, the school was still locked so he went to Mr. Kliewer's house and was told that his son had the key and was out in the field. (I'm sure by this time there had been some controversy — possibly over baptism). Part of the group then left and held services in the Salt Creek school.

The next summer on July 17, 1896, the Salt Creek Baptist Church was organized. Seven Mennonite Brethren were involved in the organization of this new Baptist church, bringing to a close the presence of an organized Mennonite Brethren church.

Also that spring Rev. J. B. Baer, who was then the Field Secretary of the General Conference, was planning a larger meeting of churches who still felt isolated and had a desire to be tied to others in the work of missions as well as assisting the various boards of the General Conference. It was at this meeting that the Pacific District Conference (PDC) was organized on May 25, 1896, at Enger (now Pratum), Oregon. Organized churches attending were Emmanuel Mennonite of Pratum, Colfax Mennonite of Colfax, Washington, and the Schrag Church of Irwin (west of Eugene, formerly of Dallas, and later the Menno Mennonite Church, after a move to eastern Washington, 1899-1900). Also attending was the remaining organized Sunday school from Polk Station which organized as the Zion Mennonite Church that October 25th and joined the conference.

The next ten years brought in five California churches and one from Idaho. By the 50th Jubilee there were 21 churches in the PDS in four states. Arizona came in in the early 1960s, which made the PDC the largest conference in area with only 24 churches. Just before the merger with the Pacific Coast Conference in 1994 the Pacific District Conference numbered 29 churches. Many had come and gone, some had merged and others left the conference. The two that remained that were at the organizational meeting in 1896 are the Schrag (Menno Mennonite Church of Ritzville,

Washington, after moving from Dallas to Eugene to Ritzville) and the Zion Mennonite Church which moved from Polk Station into Dallas and changed its name to Grace Mennonite.

The conference served us well as it was organized to:

- 1st, Promote fellowship among our Mennonite churches on the Pacific Coast;
- 2nd, Cooperate in the spreading and establishing of the Kingdom of God in our district; and
- 3rd, Give a united support to the work of the various Boards of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

At the first session, a Program-Business Committee of three members was elected to which all the work was assigned until the appointment of the first Resolution Committee in 1904 and the election of a permanent Evangelization Committee in 1908. The president and secretary were elected at the beginning of each session until the close of the third session. From this time on, they were elected in advance for the ensuing year.

At the second session, it was decided to purchase a book to record the minutes, and the proceedings of the conference have been carefully preserved. All was written in German until the late 1920s. All were translated into English by Oscar Franz of Dallas in 1977. It was also decided at the second session that the representation of the churches at the conference sessions shall be one vote for every ten members or fraction thereof. This arrangement continued until the dissolving of the Pacific District Conference. An itinerent minister, Brother P. R. Aeschliman, was employed and a treasury was created and a treasurer elected to provide funds for this work. In 1904 they devised a plan of each church member paying \$1.00 to carry on this work.

In 1907 a constitution was drafted which was accepted in 1908 with a few minor changes and printed. There was always interest in missions and it was counted a special privilege if a missionary attended the annual conference.

The PDC had always taken an active interest in education and began in 1906 to consider the erection of an academy for teaching German and Bible, but deemed themselves too weak. In 1922 they decided to have a representative on the Bethel College Board of Directors.

A tuberculosis sanitorium was built in California in 1913 and after four years it was turned over to the General Conference.

An auxiliary of the conference was the Ladies' Missionary Society, which cooperates with the General Conference women's organizations and supports projects suggested to them by the Home and Foreign Mission Boards. Since 1908, the women's organization has had charge of a service at the annual conference session.

The young people meet in conjunction with the PDC. Each state held its own youth retreats and the Oregon churches organized themselves into an Oregon Fellowship. Junior and junior high retreats were well organized and included children from the Mennonite Brethren, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren and several community churches.

In 1948 the laymen of the conference organized a Men's Fellowship. Some of the conference projects were financing African young men attending Bible school, the purchase of a house for students at Elkhart, and promoting the Tenth Man project of the General Conference. Men were also encouraged to promote local building projects and programs.

SPRING MEETING

We have been invited to hold our spring meeting at the Lebanon Mennonite Church as part of their 40th anniversary celebration. Following is a brief outline of their program for the two days of celebration.

"Celebrating God's Grace"
for the past, present and future
March 15 and 16, 1997

Saturday afternoon 1:00 to 3:00. Open house and refreshments.

Saturday evening 6:00. Dinner followed by a program with skits.

Sunday 10:15. Worship with former pastors Millard Osborne, Dan Longenecker and conference person/s.

Sunday afternoon, 2:30 to 4:00 or 4:30. Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society Program. A program for the afternoon program is included with this Newsletter.

A REVIEW OF MENNONITE WOMEN OF LANCASTER COUNTY:

A story in photographs from 1855-1935

by Suzanne Roth

(MENNONITE WOMEN OF LANCASTER COUNTY: A story in photographs from 1855-1935 is by Joanne Hess Siegrist, published by Good Books, c.1996)

Joanne Hess Siegrist begins her fascinating book by telling about the sources of the photographs that make up the bulk of it, and the reasons for her decisions to compile those photographs. From 1984 to 1996, she "harvested" more than 2,000 photographs about Mennonites of Lancaster County from over 300 households. The 2,000 were "the classics" selected from scores of prints reviewed during those twelve years. As to why, she states in the book: "I continually felt the pressure of time, needing to gather photographs before they were sold, lost or destroyed, along with the unwritten stories that belong with them. There is the matter of preserving the artifacts themselves. There is the equally important task of inspiring others to learn stories of their own past, and thereby lighting fires that

warm family ties." She also has said in correspondence that her reasoning included a desire "to bridge generation gaps and increase self-understanding of one's birthmarks."

The book consists of twelve divisions of photographs, each built around a particular theme. Joanne Hess Siegrist says, "This is an unprecedented book, holding the largest known published collection of documented photographs from 1855 to 1935 about Mennonite women of Lancaster County." The first division is "An Overview of Lancaster Mennonite Women—Their Many Faces, Their Open Lives, Their Secret Selves." Because few women kept journals or spoke about intimate feelings, family members have had to rely upon oral histories of day-to-day activities performed by the Lancaster County Mennonite women of the early twentieth century. The introduction to this section details what many of those women were like. It also explains how the enactment of the strict, plain dress code at the end of the nineteenth century brought some women security, while leaving others wrestling with bitterness.

The photographs in this section are of Mennonite women in various settings. One is actually a painting of Barbara Buckwalter Hershey, (1878-1896), who died in a train-buggy accident near Paradise, Pennsylvania in 1896. Her escort, Enos Barge, died a day later. The deaths of these two young people had a



Joanne Hess Siegrist holding her book

Lancaster Newspapers, Inc. *Intelligencer Journal* photo

far-reaching effect upon the lives of young people in Lancaster County. Before this happened, young people would sow their wild oats and then marry before church membership, some not joining until the age of thirty-five or forty after parenting several children. Now preachers begged the young people to join the church prior to marriage. The train accident so impacted the situation that hundreds of youth became church members. They shed their fancy Victorian clothing and instead adopted a new plain Mennonite dress style, as well as new activities such as hymn sings, Bible studies and mission efforts. One page in this section shows a young woman in two separate pictures: First in her "Saturday social outfit" in 1916, and then in her plain clothing in 1918.

A following section is about Mennonites and early photography, and features many of the studio portraits that required the subject to sit, sober-faced, for a period of time so that the shot would not be blurred. The earliest photograph in the book is in this section — an 1855 photo of two newlyweds. A few Mennonites became professional photographers and one, John Kreider Miller, (1859-1945), especially liked to take pictures of his young daughter, Annie. At the age of 93, Annie recalled debates with the leaders of the Elizabethtown Mennonite Church on the appropriateness of John's work, which resulted in his expulsion in 1903.

A section called "Running Around" contains pictures of young women and men in their modest swimming gear, and in the surf at Atlantic City. It also contains several pictures of "girl crowds," groups of young Mennonite women who would meet at Mennonite homes on Saturday evenings.

"Farm Life and Work" contains photographs of Mennonite work life, from hoeing vegetables to barn raisings to a corn husking bee.

Young Mennonite women are pictured in "Church Life and Faith" at a trolley stop, next to a trolley car, as they often traveled ten to twenty miles by trolley on Saturday. Since the church forbade travel by trolley on Sundays, the young people would instead travel by horse and carriage to church services. In this section, it is noted along with a picture of Paradise Mennonite Church that the women of Paradise "formed the first organized sewing circle of the Mennonite church in the United States."

Many people from Lancaster County went west to settle, and among those were the Hess

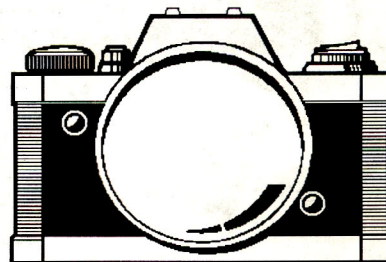
family, pictured in a 1918 family photo. The parents, Anna and Abe Hess, donated the land on which Hesston College and Bible School was built.

One of the last sections, "Quilting and the Arts," pictures Anna (Huber) Good, (1876-1969), who loved to quilt and would quilt all day, every day of the work-week. In her retirement years, she made forty-two quilts for her children. Also featured is Mary (Weaver) Harsh, (1902-1994), who sewed a pieced quilt at the age of five with the assistance of her grandmother, who drew pencil lines on the pieces.

Joanne Hess Siegrist says, "In many ways the book tells the story of rural east coast Americans, whether Quaker, Lutheran, Reform or other backgrounds. Today scores of descendants from these women live throughout America as well as around the world. This book is a collector's item of heirloom photography to provide warmth for family and friends." In addition, she says, "Some university persons in women's studies are using this book as a helpful thesis resource."

I found the book to be difficult to put down although I am not a Mennonite by birth. It was fascinating to see the origins of plain clothes in the Lancaster County area. I also was impressed by the industry and diligence of the women, coupled with their calm faces and smiling eyes. I could easily see the value of the photographs as well as the entire book, not only to Mennonites of Lancaster County but to members of the Mennonite Church everywhere.

Copies of Mennonite Women of Lancaster County: A story in photographs from 1855-1935 may be obtained from Good Books, P.O. Box 419, Intercourse, PA 17534, phone 800/762-7171 or FAX 717/768-3433.



ABOUT RECORDS

by Margaret Shetler, Secretary, OMHGS,
and PNMC Conference Historian

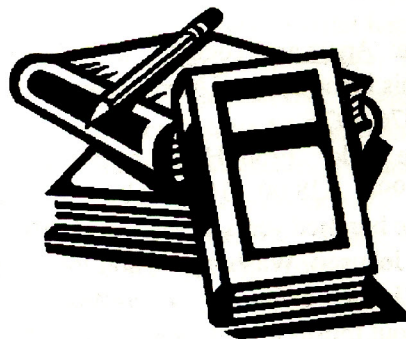
The stated purpose of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society is **to record and preserve the history of Mennonite and related groups in Oregon, for present and future generations.**

At a recent Executive Committee meeting we asked ourselves how we are doing at fulfilling the above purpose. We are doing fairly well at preservation. We have many conference records which are being organized and cataloged. If you have any conference records in your possession, please check with us to see if they are records that should be in the archives. The same applies to records from your local congregation. These are not your personal property and belong in your church archives, if you have one, or you may deposit them with us. If you have a church archives, we would still like to have a copy of any pertinent documents and information.

We also appreciate the personal collections from people in our area who have been and are active in our churches. These, too, are being organized and cataloged. We always welcome more of such collections.

As to recording our history, we could do much better on this one. Do you have a family historian—someone who keeps records for the family, has the history written down, has a collection of photographs which are identified as to time, place and people on them? Have all those stories been written or at least preserved on tape? Have you given to the Archives any written stories you do have? We recently have received a Kennel family record as well as a life story written by Nora (Mrs. James) Hostetler. And we have other family histories from folks in our area. But we would like to hear from each of you and your family.

We would like to know who in your family is the historian, designated or otherwise. And if you need help with writing down memories and records, we are here to help with that also. You may contact us at the Archives by phone on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month (9 to 3) (503) 363-2000 Ext. 248; or you may write to us at 9045 Wallace Road NW, Salem, OR 97034.



NEW BOOKS

Books recently added to our library collection include:

Headings, Daniel J. and Saloma: Headings' History, Happenings and Genealogy.

Published privately in 1996.

Visser, Piet, and Mary Sprunger: Menno Simons: Places, Portraits and Progeny

c1996. Published by Friesens of Altona, Manitoba, and Masthof Press, Morgantown, PA

Toews, Paul: Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970.

c1996, Herald Press, Scottdale, PA.

This is Volume 4 in the Mennonite Experience in America series.

Regehr, T.D.: Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: a People Transformed.

c1996, University of Toronto Press, Toronto. This is the third volume of the Mennonites in Canada series.

Roth, Lorraine, compiler: The Family of Jacob Kropf.

1969. This is two mimeographed volumes.

BOOKS AND ITEMS FOR SALE

There are still a limited number of Menno Simons Frakturs @\$25.00 each; also of the Menno Simons notecards, a pack of 4 for \$3.00.

We have the following books for sale:

Lind, Hope: Apart and Together, c. 1990. \$26.95. This is the story of Mennonites in Oregon 1876-1976.

Lind, Katie Yoder: From Hazelbrush to Cornfields, c1994. \$38.00. This is about the first one hundred years of the Amish Mennonites in Johnson, Washington, and Iowa counties of Iowa, 1846-1946. Interesting stories about those early stories and their families. An excellent resource.

Shetler, Margaret, comp.: God at Work in Our Midst, c1993. \$15.00. A history of the Zion Mennonite Church of Hubbard, 1893-1993.

We also have one copy of the above-mentioned book on Menno Simons which is for sale.

All of these books will be available at our meeting in March or you may contact one of the officers or call the Archives when open if you are interested in any of them.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Dinner Meeting. A dinner meeting is being planned for April 29, at 6:00 p.m. at the Salem Mennonite Church. Guest speakers will be Les and Gwen Gustafson-Zook who will be sharing their spiritual pilgrimage with us. More information will be available later. Make plans now to attend.

Fall Meeting. Jerry Barkman, our president, will be speaking about the Kleine Gemeinde at our meeting on September 21, 1997. Tentative meeting place is the Kingwood Bible Church in West Salem.

Look for our table at the Western Mennonite School auction on May 3 at the Fairgrounds in Salem.

In this issue we are beginning the publication of a diary kept by Daniel J. Kauffman for the year 1895 and on into March of 1896. The diary went through a fire in the early 1960's and received smoke and water damage, thus some places were difficult, if not impossible to read. The entries were made with indelible pencil (how many remember them?) and that will smear when wet. The entries have been copied with punctuation and spelling as written. The writer used very little punctuation! Identification of people named is given if we know it.

The 1/2 given in many entries indicate he worked at that particular job for half a day.

The Diary of Daniel J. Kauffman, 1895-March 1896

and some facts told to me by my mother
Amanda Kauffman Roth

by Beulah Roth Fretz

Daniel J. Kauffman, an early Oregon pioneer, was one of the first Old Order Amish to move to Oregon, arriving here in January of 1879 at the age of 27. He came with his wife Susannah Yoder Kauffman, and two small children, Amanda, age two, and Amos, age six months. In the same group were two brothers-in-law about his age, who came with their wives and small children. They were the Jacob K. Millers and the Daniel Yoders, mentioned in the diary.

Daniel eventually settled and built his house and barn at the end of what is now Kenagy Lane, approximately one-quarter mile east of the present Zion Mennonite Church. (Mike Kenagy's house now stands at this location.) Their address was Needy, a small village with a post office, store, blacksmith shop, and several houses, none of which remain today.

Daniel was a true pioneer who cleared land and built a lane through the stumps from the main road (now Whiskey Hill Road) to his place. The area was covered with dense growth of a variety of hardwoods and Douglas firs, so he had an ongoing supply of wood and timber. Whatever he needed he built, such as beds, cupboards, desks, dry sinks, outdoor oven, and machinery. He also kept bees, sold honey, milked

cows, sold butter and cheese, and dried prunes.

The persons mentioned in the diary are Daniel's relatives and Amish neighbors who lived within walking distance. Henry Deetz was his brother-in-law. D. C. Schrock and M. Borkholder were Amish neighbors. C. J. Schlabach was the father of Al Schlabach (now living at Hubbard). J. (Jonas) Kauffman was Daniel's father, and bishop of the Old Order Amish group in the Needy area. "The Boys" were his sons Amos, Noah, and Dan. Amanda was his oldest daughter and Susannah his wife. His youngest daughter Ida is not mentioned in the diary. J. (John) Kramer, an Amish neighbor, was grandfather to John Hershberger (of Hershberger Motors in Woodburn). I. S. Miller (Isaac) was great-grandfather of Elizabeth Miller Kennedy of Hubbard. M. (Manuel, commonly used for Emmanuel) Kenagy was grandfather of Edward "Kelly" Kenagy of Silverton, Oregon. Amish church services were held in all these various homes.

Daniel kept most of his bees at the Bee Ranch. It was located about twenty-two miles southeast of Molalla, along the Molalla River. Here the bees had access to fireweed flowers, and wild huckleberries were plentiful. It is still called the Bee Ranch on local maps.

In the October 3 entry, Daniel and Susan (as he called his wife Susannah) went to Portland with Jonas (could have been either his father or brother). The "babit" (or babbitt) mentioned here was a metal alloy used in lining bearings on machinery.

Daniel was very innovative. He could look over a piece of machinery and figure out how it was made, and at times would make one for himself. For

each of his daughters he made a china cupboard, kitchen table, dry sink, and a desk/medicine cabinet combination. He also made several spool bedsteads.

Daniel lived in Oregon the rest of his life but did not remain Amish. He joined the Zion Amish Mennonite Church sometime between 1907 and 1916. He died on September 14, 1980, and is buried in the Zion Mennonite Church Cemetery with his wife Susannah.

The "wheel" that is mentioned regularly, a bicycle, was one of his main means of transportation to Needy, Hubbard, Barlow, and to his neighbors. He used it much and according to his diary had to repair it often. He rode long distances, even to the Bee Ranch which is probably close to thirty miles from his home. When he needed to take bee supplies to the Bee Ranch he used his wagon and team. He seemed to prefer his "wheel" whenever possible. Sometimes he would ride his bicycle to the Bee Ranch and back on the same day, a distance of about sixty miles or more. Cousin Morris Kauffman stated that he is somewhat amazed at grandpa Dan's physical stamina, but we must remember that at the time the diary was written grandpa was in his early forties, not the elderly grandpa we knew.

The Diary now is in the possession of Daniel's grandson Morris Kauffman of Lincoln City, Oregon. It came to him from his father, Amos, the oldest son of Daniel J.

* * * * *

January 27, 1997

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This was a loose milk receipt that was in the book.