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NEWSLETTER

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

WHAT DREW THE BIRKY FAMIILIES WEST
by Neil Birky

First of all, I think I should express my appreciation. It's not everyday that an old man gets the opportunity to reminisce, and also gets a captive audience along with it. So, thank you.

My parents moved from Colorado to Oregon in 1937 (sixty-seven years ago). I was fifteen, and my younger sister and I were the only children still at home. Our three older siblings were married and on their own.

Making the decision to move was not an easy one for Dad and Mother, for their roots went deeply into that sometimes harsh, unforgiving, yet, at other times promising, inviting, almost seductive part of Colorado. I have memories of the prairie in the late spring and early summer, lying on my back on the thick cushiony grass, gazing up at the bluest sky one could ever imagine, a sky that seemed to go up and up forever. High altitude and low humidity do have some things in their favor. The weather could be absolutely perfect at times, wind still, warm and balmy. Even the prickly cactus would be in colorful bloom. I also have memories of endless, chilly winds in the early spring and late fall, of blizzards that buried fence rows over with snow and piled it up to the eaves of buildings, of cloudbursts and flash floods and, of course, the drouth. But to digress a bit on cloudbursts and flash floods: soon after my father decided to quit farming with horses, he bought a 15/30 McCormick-Deering tractor. It was a big heavy tractor, not one of the monster types, but plenty big. After a couple of years, he sold it to a neighboring farmer, who, unfortunately, left it sitting on the banks of a creek that was normally completely dry. One of these cloudbursts happened, the tractor disappeared, and never could be located. Evidently, it had become buried in the sand of the creek bed. Those flash floods could be pretty drastic.

My parents moved to Colorado from Nebraska soon after they had their first child. It's quite possible that one reason for the move was the offer of free land. As you may recall, in 1862 the U. S. Congress passed an act promising ownership of a 160-acre tract of public land to the head of a family after he had cleared and improved the land and lived on it for five years. So, that's what they did. But I'm sure they didn't have to do much clearing. In that part of the country, trees usually didn't grow on their own. They had to be coaxed, pampered, bribed and, I suspect, even threatened at times in order for them to summon up the will to survive. There were a few, but trees were mighty scarce. I don't even recall any sagebrush. Anyway, that's how they got their first 160 acres.

At that time there was still free range. This was unfenced prairie land and was open for grazing to any settler's cattle. In addition to farming, most of them had cattle, both milk cows and beef cattle. One drawback, however, was that out on the range these different herds would get terribly mixed up, and, if left to themselves, animals could go from one herd to another and end up miles and miles away. It was good grazing though—as long as there was, at least, some rain. The native grass, known as buffalo grass, didn't grow tall as such, but curled down and in on itself, developing at the end of the blades a seed or corn. Cattle could do extremely well on it, in fact, could grow fat enough to market.

So, in the summer, the cattle would be put out on range. My job as soon as I could hang on to a horse was to make sure none of our cattle strayed and the herd didn't get too far away from home. It was a big job for a kid, and I tried to systematize it somewhat by giving each animal a name, listing their names on scraps of paper, and then checking them off the list as they were identified. However, with as many as 130 head to personalize, I ran out of the more traditional names and had to settle for such designations as Big Roan, Little Roan, etc.

My parents bought me a little cow pony. Pony, as we called her, loved to work with cattle. All I needed to do was to direct her to the animal we were after and hang on. She did the rest. I rode bareback, as my folks wouldn't let me use a saddle for fear I'd get hung up in a stirrup, and I didn't use a bridle, just a rope around her neck. If I wanted her to turn, all I needed to do was to lean in that direction, and that's where we'd go! Pony understood perfectly. Something I discovered, quite by accident, was that if I tapped her in the ribs with my heels, she would reach out and bite the animal we were chasing --- and she bit hard. In short order our cattle learned to respect and, yes, even to fear her.

My Dad bought an enormous shorthorn bull. Where the shorthorn part came in, I could never figure because his horns looked awfully long to me. This bull was always wandering off, and he was really mean. No cooperation at all. That is, until Pony changed his attitude completely. Of course, by that time he was minus huge gobs of hair and hide off his back. I'll never forget one time Pony and I were taking him back to where he belonged. We're going full blast across the prairie, I'm hanging on to Pony's mane for dear life, meanwhile kicking her in the ribs. She's taking powerful bites and that big mean bull has just one purpose left in life, and that is to get away from that horse. It must have been quite a sight. I remember a car, driving by on a nearby road, stopping so that the occupants could get a better look. What a horse! Even at fifteen, I had tears in my eyes, when

SPRING MEETING

May 1, *2005, 2:30* p.m.
Albany Mennonite Church
3405 Kizer Avenue NE, Albany, Oregon

Moderator. . . . . Ray Kauffman
Welcome and Devotional Meditation . . . . . Matt Friesen
Guest Speaker: How Stories Shape Our Future John D. Roth
Offering, Announcements, Business . . . . . Willard Kennel
This meeting is open to anyone who is interested, nonmembers and members of OMHGS alike.

Welcome to one and all

we sold her at our moving sale.

Someone else who had deep roots in Colorado was my grandfather. In his younger years, he was involved in mining, but becoming dissatisfied with that, he turned to farming and ranching. He accumulated rather extensive land holdings over the years, and his home place was only a few miles from ours. His was one of the very few fruit orchards around, and it was his pride and joy. Talk about pampering trees! I always admired my grandfather. He was part of the family exodus to Oregon. Although by the time he moved, he must have been in his upper sixties, and most of his money gone because of the drouth and all, he retained his positive outlook and never gave up. When he arrived in Oregon, he went into business, operating a service station until he was forced to retire because of age and ill health. (He finally admitted to old age!)

As was mentioned earlier, the greater share of our neighbors were farmers, who also had cattle. My father fit into that category with one exception. In addition, he also was the unsalaried pastor of the Thurman Mennonite Church. I'm not sure how this all came about, but I'm quite certain he didn't ask for it. In those days, among the Mennonites, the call usually was an internal matter within the local church, and if one were called, it was not to be taken lightly, for it was considered a truly serious matter. I think for my father it was, to say the least, a tough call, for he had some personal problems. He told me that one of them was his addiction to tobacco, and how he had once again resolved to quit, and to reinforce his resolution, he had thrown his pouch of tobacco as hard and as far out into the barnyard as he could, but how later that night, with the help of his kerosene lantern, he went searching for it. It was then, when it struck him how absolutely absurd the whole situation had become, that he finally quit --- for good. Dad was a man of profound convictions and uncompromising principles.

The roots went deep, but times were tough. In addition to the Great Depression and its aftermath, our community suffered through six successive years of crop failure because of the drouth. We attained the dubious distinction of being a part of the great Dust Bowl. And dust there was! Dust on the ground. Dust in the air. Dust everywhere. Dust in the food. I can still taste that dust!

Poor cattle! Feed for them was a real problem. Young growing tumbleweeds were mowed and cured as a substitute for hay. Some farmers even tried burning the stickers off the cactuses on the prairie and using them for feed, but that didn't work out very well. Poor cattle! The hair on their backs would become solidly matted with dust, their bodies would contribute moisture, and, what do you know, tumbleweeds would grow on their backs. Tumbleweeds are tenacious, and seem to thrive despite the most adverse conditions. They have been somewhat romanticized in western song and literature (Tumblin' Tumbleweeds, etc.), but they do have their down side. Once they mature, it's true, they become playmates of the wind, and off they go, rolling merrily along, but piling up along fence rows until they become a regular nuisance. It was much worse in the dust storm days because not only would they pile up, but the whole mess would become a huge dust mound completely burying the fence so that one actually could walk across the top.

Six successive years of crop failure because of the drouth, but year seven started out differently. It finally rained, and the crops looked wonderful. Among the farmers, excitement grew to a feverish pitch. This was the year they'd all been looking for. This was the year when everyone would recoup their losses. It was June, and things couldn't have looked better. But then it happened. A drenching rain during the night, combined with the scourge of that country - hail. That did it! A different world awaited those unfortunate farmers the next morning. The small grain was completely gone. The corn, nothing left but pitiful, denuded stalks.

We feared hail. Some hailstones were actually as large as baseballs and had reportedly killed cattle. And it was not at all unusual for it to hail during harvest time. One moment, you'd be harvesting a beautiful crop; the next, a hail storm would have finished the job for you. I remember one harvest, we were about half through when a hail storm struck, and we all dove into a barley stack for shelter. We had no combine, so the grain was cut, then stacked to be threshed later. Dad was in the barley stack with us, but he couldn't wait to see what damage was taking place, and stuck his head out too soon. He found out the hard way, smack on the noggin. Luckily he wasn't seriously hurt, but he did acquire a lump. Later, we often laughed over the incident, and Dad would join in - half-heartedly.

But to get back to the hail storm that tipped the scales in favor of our moving. Prior to this, there had been a lot of talk among the church members in regard to something drastic needing to be done, if things didn't change for the better, but, up to this point, it had been mostly just talk. However, this last catastrophe broke the camel's back; this was too much!

I trailed my dad out into the cornfield that morning following the storm. I'll never forget the look on his face, as he stood there attempting to assess the damage to his crops and to his hopes. Finally, turning abruptly, he said, "This is it. We're moving!" And he really meant it. In the vernacular of our day, that was his final answer. We held a public sale shortly afterwards. Unfortunately, it wasn't all that successful; no one had any money.

It was painful. Leaving the farm was admitting defeat, which was not easy for my parents, but, I think, leaving the church with its responsibilities and memories was even more difficult.

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Thurman Church was quite small, and was much like a family, very closely knit. They had stood together through good times and bad, and there had been some really bad times. There was the time, August l0th, 1924, when a tornado struck the home of one of the members, while several other families were there as guests for Sunday dinner. It was a terrible tragedy. Ten members of the group were killed then, one died later of injuries. Some were adults, some were children. A brother and sister were buried in one grave, four members of another family were buried in another. Tornados do strange things. One four-week-old infant, still wrapped in her blanket, was found hanging on a barbed wire fence, practically unharmed with the exception of a few scratches, and, as far as I know, she is still living.

We disposed of all but some furniture and personal things, loaded up the truck, and we were on our way! Dad, with mother and my little sister, in the car, and our neighbor and fellow church member, Ira Beckler, with the truck and me. I don't remember much of the trip. It was long and tiring except for one thing: that was dropping from the highlands into the Columbia Gorge. I couldn't believe my eyes! I had never seen so much green! Thoughts of the lost Garden of Eden kept coming to mind, and that was when I fell in love with the Willamette Valley, a love affair which is still very much alive. That was in the fall of the year, and we had no more than gotten a bit settled, when it began to rain. And it rained, and it rained. I don't know whether it was unusually wet or not, but it seemed that way to us, and it required a lot of adjustment. For some reason, it was particularly difficult for Dad, and he announced one morning that it was necessary for him to return to Colorado --- to attend to some urgent business. As though we couldn't recognize home sickness, when it showed that plainly! Upon his return a couple of weeks later, he was completely recovered, and I never heard him complain about rain again. It must have been the same bleak, dusty, arid Colorado that we had left behind.

During those last bad years, our family had a lot of discussion about moving, and where to move, if we actually did move. Western Oregon and Southern California ended up as the favorite choices. To my early teen perspective, California sounded more exciting, with its purported never ending sunshine and luscious oranges. Oregon didn't seem quite as glamorous, and it had this reputation of over abundant rain. However, my parents finally decided on Oregon because the bishop of the Fairview Church at Albany, C.R. Gerig, was retiring and my father was to fill the vacancy.

Shortly after our arrival, my four uncles from Colorado decided to pay us a visit. They weren't ready to move until they saw Oregon for themselves, so they came "to spy out the land." They liked what they found, and the exodus to Oregon was on! They came, my grandparents came, my older brothers and sister eventually came, neighbors and friends from the Thurman Church came. If my count is anywhere close, something like sixteen families moved out here in almost one big move.

I've often wondered what the people of the Fairview community really thought when we all came crowding in. It was a little like the camel who stuck his head in the tent, and then managed to get all of himself in as well. At any rate, however they may have felt deep down inside, they treated us very hospitably.

Lois and I recently had the pleasure of helping celebrate the 99th birthday of one of my aunts who was one of the original immigrants. I was surprised at the number of friends who were there to wish her well, and at the number of descendants of the original Coloradans who had married descendants of the original Oregonians. Speaking of assimilation, I'd say we Coloradans have been truly assimilated. I guess even we old timers who were born elsewhere are what could be termed naturalized Oregonians. The Willamette Valley is a great place and has been very good to us. No complaints from me whatsoever! Personally, I feel it was a great move!

THE FISHERS OF WHISKEY HILL

by Josephine Hagen

THE BEGINNING OF OUR FAMILY

The first time my Mom saw my Dad she and her father, Grandpa Troyer, were walking home from Hubbard. Pa and his brother Steve came walking along and passed them. Mom said she thought he was a fine looking high stepping young man. She didn't know who he was. This was when he and Steve were staying with the Kauffman family in what was later to become the Sippy place.

Pa and Steve had been all over the country before coming to Oregon. They had traveled from state to state and worked wherever they could find a job. They must have been ready to settle down when they came to Oregon or else they just liked it here. They made at least one trip east of the mountains to catch wild horses and bring them to the Willamette Valley. I don't know how many horses they had or how they brought them back but they must have made some money on them. Pa always said he rode into the valley with $40 in his pocket and a good horse.

I don't know how things went from then on but Mom did say he took her to an Ice Cream Parlor which I guess was pretty racy for a young Mennonite girl in 1905.

Anyway, they were married in 1909 and I think they lived in the old Bachman place for a while. He and Steve farmed that place. Somewhere along the way he and Steve parted company and Steve married Lavina and they moved to Colorado.

My folks moved to the old house in Emmy's bottomland and that is where the triplets were born. They were born a couple of months early and were very small and premature. It was a miracle that any of them lived, or Mom either. They were born at home and they did have a Doctor but there was no incubator or any way to take care of babies that small. Grandma Troyer was good at caring for sick people and she took over. They also brought a Registered nurse from Portland for a while. They had to pay her $8 a day! The smallest one, Ruby, only lived a couple of months. The other two were small but somehow they managed to survive. I don't think the folks lived there very long.

They moved to a place near the Dryland School where Pa had a sawmill. This is where they lived when he injured his leg and it never healed. He had surgery some years later but the leg was never right and he was in pain from it the rest of his life. Hazel and John were born while they lived there. The house was built of raw lumber and not painted. The inside was finished pretty well, I think. We used to drive up there sometimes on a Sunday drive and look at the place. Ruth and Rhoda started school while they lived there and went to the Dryland School. Mom remembered one Christmas when she had ordered dolls for the girls from the catalog and they didn't come in time for Christmas. Pa rode a horse to town to buy others so they would not be disappointed at Christmas. He had to ride the horse because the roads were too muddy for a buggy to travel.

Grandpa found out that the Wachtman place which was right

across the road from our Grandparents was for sale. He talked the folks into buying it so they moved to the Whiskey Hill district and that is the home that I remember best.

There was an old Victorian style house there. It had a bay window in the front and an upstairs. It had a wash house built on the back where they did the laundry. It didn't have modern plumbing although I guess they had a pump on the back porch. All I can remember is that there was a slope in the floor between the living and dining rooms and we kids would run our toy cars down the slope. In the bay window was a marble rack that our Grandpa Fisher had made and sent to us. It was better than the regular Amish marble racks because it was round and the grooves that the marbles rolled down were carved to go around rather than back and forth.

Also while we lived in the old house I was attacked by Old Sass, the cranky rooster that ran loose in the barnyard. We had to go past him when we went to the outhouse and before I was rescued he bloodied me up some. Bob remembers being chased by Old Sass too. After my trouble with him we had him for dinner one Sunday.

Chote and Bob were born while they lived in that house. Mom really liked living there. She always wanted to live on a farm and it was right across the road from her folks and around the corner from the church. The school was a quarter of a mile up the road.

Besides having the farm, my father had a sawmill on Rock Creek below what is now the Noah Roth place. They floated logs down the creek and sawed them up. I don't know how long he had the mill. He usually had more than one thing going at a time.

They lived there I think until 1924 and then rented the farm to Roy Troyer and moved to Donald. Pa had bought the Tile Factory to help Grandma and Grandpa out. They had signed a note for their two sons to buy it and the sons could not make a go of it.

I was born in the little house by the tile factory. We must have lived there a couple of years . I can't remember anything about it. Mom hated it there and it wasn't a good place to bring up little kids. The factory was right there and the railroad behind the house. They moved back to the farm and we lived there until all of us were grown up.

THE NEW BRICK HOUSE

I was born in the middle of the roaring twenties (1925). That doesn't mean that we were wealthy or prosperous. I was the seventh of eight children, followed by JoAnn in 1928. We were probably as well or better off than a lot of our neighbors.

We had moved to Donald next door to the Tile Factory before I was born and moved back to the farm when I was a couple of years old. Probably the first really important thing I remember was when JoAnn was born. I was three years old and had been the baby of the family. They took me to Hubbard to Anne Voget's maternity home where she was born and showed me this ugly little creature and told me it was my sister. I looked at her and said, "Her face is wed." I think it was a while before I accepted her as my sister.

My parents seemed to have an awful time naming us. I had been stuck with the name of Josephine because Mom had always wanted to name a girl after her Aunt Josephine Yoder. She intended to name this baby Vera Kathryn. In fact, it was written in the family Bible. Then the rest of the family decided that that name was not good enough and changed it to JoAnn. They thought the names Josephine and JoAnn sounded cute. I always hated my name but JoAnn was probably better satisfied with hers.

She was born in June and our house burned down in October. I remember that well as it made a big impression on a child's mind. We were having Sunday dinner and my Uncle Jess and his family were there. All of a sudden everyone got up and started milling around. Grandpa had seen the flames on the roof from his house across the road and came yelling fire. I didn't know what was up and here I was looking up at all the excited adults rushing around. Someone grabbed me and carried me out to some one's car parked in front of the garage. Later someone came and put JoAnn into the car with me and drove it farther away from the fire.

One of the stories told later had it that Mom grabbed the baby under one arm and her new Singer sewing machine under the other and rescued them both. I always wondered why she didn't rescue me but someone else did. I never could remember who.

The house burned to the ground. The fire was caused by a defective flue. Fire shot out of the chimney and caught on the roof which was dry after a long hot summer and fall. I can remember seeing the two by four studs standing after the rest of the wall had burned. I wondered whether the house had been setting on those long poles as I had no idea what they were.

There were a lot of heroics that day. Uncle Jess threw a dresser out of an upstairs window and jumped out after it. A lot of things that were thrown out the windows burned on the ground before anyone could move them. One of the drawers was lost out of that dresser and we used it for years with an empty space until Mom made a drawer for it.

In the evening after the fire had burned down, people were standing around and looking at the ashes. I can remember sitting down on the ground and taking off my shoes and socks as it was a warm day like summer. I saw Mom and some other people looking at the ashes and decided to go where she was. I ran right across the hot ashes and coals and burned my bare feet badly. I remember someone holding me while someone put something on my feet to ease the pain. I was screaming and crying.

After the fire, they cleaned out the old garage and moved what furniture we had left into it. I think Ruth and Rhoda were living away from home at that time and Hazel stayed at Aunt Lindy's up the road. My parents and brothers and JoAnn and I lived in the garage. I was sick in bed from the effects of the burned feet and I also had some swelling of the glands in my neck and couldn't move my head. I don't know how long I was sick but I can remember people coming and bringing me things. My Grandma from across the road brought me a pretty plate with cookies on it and I had that plate for many years. Someone made a little cupboard out of a crate and nailed it to the wall by my bed. I kept special things in it that people gave me. One thing was a tiny wooden cup that we got out of a Cracker Jack box as a prize. The rest of my life every time I had a box of Cracker Jacks I looked for a little wooden cup in it.

Mom had her hands full with JoAnn a little baby, me sick, and the family to cook for and take care of. Grandpa would come and sit with JoAnn and me while Mom and the boys helped clean up from the fire. I only had two dresses that were not burned in the fire. Most of JoAnn's things must have burned too because Mom had to wash every day. I can remember seeing the clothes on the clothes line.

They got right to work on the new house. It was to be built of brick and have a fireproof roof so we would never have to go through this again. The plan was a California Bungalow, a style that was popular during the twenties. It was to have modern conveniences like a wood lift to bring the wood up from the basement. We stored firewood in the basement for both the cook stove in the kitchen and the furnace in the basement. We had lots of fun getting into the wood lift and having someone crank it up till we got to the top. It also had a clothes chute that you could send dirty clothes from upstairs to the basement where the laundry was done. In the kitchen we had a contraption called a dumb waiter. It was a narrow cupboard that could be lowered into the basement. That was to keep perishable foods cool. We didn't have a refrigerator or icebox. There also was a screened cupboard on the back porch where we kept our milk and cream.

The construction of the house went fast. It was awfully crowded in the garage and everyone wanted to get into the new house as soon as possible. Everyone who was able helped. The walls were made of wood lath and plaster. Everyone but JoAnn and I helped nail lath in place. The furnace was installed in the basement to help dry the plaster walls faster.

The brick layer was named Finch. He was supposed to be one of the best. He took a liking to Chote and let him help lay up one wall. Chote always remembered which bricks he had laid on the east side of the house.

The carpenter's name was Jim Good. He brought his little boy with him one day to play with me and he was a mean little devil. Jim Good built me a doll house with scraps of lumber and that was my Christmas present that year. He also gave the family a glass serving dish with small dishes to go with it. I believe it was carnival glass and would be worth something now if we still had it.

In December while the house was still building, everyone got sick with the flu. I guess the boys were sick first and they put beds into the new house for them and kept them warm with the furnace. Grandpa would come and sit with the sick and help out.

We moved into the house for Christmas but it was far from finished. We managed to live with very little furniture since most of ours burned with the house. Pa bought a whole houseful of furniture and dishes from a used furniture store in Woodburn. The people from the church had a shower for us of canned goods and other necessities. It was years before our house was fully furnished.

Building was cheap by today's standards but people had very little money at that time. Our house burned in 1928 and the market failed the next year and the depression set in. It lasted clear through the thirties. We were better off then most people because we had a new house with indoor plumbing and other modern conveniences.

There were many people out of work and many people went hungry. We always had plenty to eat because we raised a good part of our food. We had meat because there was no market for it so we ate our own livestock. When one family in the neighborhood butchered a beef, they would trade quarters of beef with each other since we didn't have freezers or refrigeration. Mom would can some meat and we had smoked sausage, ham, and bacon. We had our own smoke house. Later on in the thirties we were able to rent a locker in a cold storage place so we could wrap and freeze our own meat.

For other food, we always had a big garden. This was Mom's job with whatever kid-power she could command. She would can huge quantities of fruit and vegetables. If we had more than we needed of anything there was always someone else who needed it. We had a couple of cherry trees, a couple of late apple trees, and a prune orchard. What we couldn't eat or give away we fed to the pigs. Our grandparents lived across the road and they had lots of fruit trees too. We always got the windfall Gravensteins and that is how I developed a taste for Gravenstein applesauce.

For years after the fire, Mom had scraps of lumber that she saved from the building. She and the boys built me a playhouse in the back yard. They used the floor of a storage shed that they used while the construction was going on and the walls were of lath. She built a little blue davenport which she covered in the material from an old coat. They built me a little table and chairs and a cupboard that were painted pink, my favorite color.

I don't see how Mom did it, but she was always busy. The three oldest girls were away from home most of the time I can remember. Ruth and Rhoda stayed away from home when they were in the last years of high school and later went to normal school. I can remember when Hazel was in high school and then she went to Portland to work as a housekeeper. We thought the people she worked for were very rich.

One year the people she worked for rented a house at the beach for a month and she went with them. We went to visit her one Sunday while she was there. We took food along and stayed in a campground where we could cook and eat our food. This was a big treat and I think it was the first time I saw the ocean. We played on the beach and had a lot of fun. We did all of this in one day.

Hazel worked for those people for several years and each year they would go to the beach at Neskowin and rent a house. This was while she was going with Wayne. He would visit her on Sundays during the month that she was there. There was a big rock at Neskowin, surrounded by water. It was called "Proposal Rock" and we always thought that Wayne popped the question there while they were climbing the rock. Anyway, they got engaged about that time.

Again, we were lucky because we always had a car and the money it took to run it. Our parents had to work very hard and the kids had to pitch in too. When we were teenagers, JoAnn and I picked berries and beans to earn money for our school clothes. This was a big deal. We would get a ride to Hubbard and take the Greyhound bus into Portland and shop the whole day. You could buy a lot of clothes for seventy or eighty dollars.

In some families, the kids had to use their bean and berry money to help support the family in the winter time.

The boys in the family had to work both on the farm and the Tile Factory from the time they were little boys. Pa bought a ditcher so they could install the drain tile for people. Later on he bought another ditcher and I think at one time he had three. Times were more prosperous in the later thirties and then the war came and anyone could get a job.

We girls were supposed to help Mom in the house and garden. By this time the three older girls were married and had families of their own. One year Pa was going to show us how to make money. He planted a couple of acres of bush beans and we were supposed to cultivate them and pick them. We didn't do too well. I think we ended up the season with about $30 each and we could make more by working for other people.

One summer JoAnn and I had to patch burlap bags which were used to store grain. It was during the war and you couldn't

buy new bags. It seemed like we spent the whole summer sitting in the barn patching sacks. In between times we would chase our free-range chickens and catch them. We had a system where one of us would chase them to a hole in the barn wall and the other would catch them when they came through. We had a lot of good chicken dinners that summer. We would catch them but we wouldn't kill them. Mom would have to chop their heads off with an axe and scald them and pick the feathers off.

For several years, Pa planted onions in the bottom land of our place. We kids had to weed them on our hands and knees and harvest them when they were ready. I remember doing this when I was about seven and Bob was nine. Chote had to do other work. We thought JoAnn should have to help. Mom said she could help for a while but if she heard one sound from her she could come to the house and not work. This was when we were a little older. She was probably about seven. She would stand at the bottom of the hill and scream and Mom would tell her she didn't have to work. We would not have laid a hand on her at that time. Later on we would catch her and teach her a lesson. Raising onions was miserable hot work.

We must not have worked all the time because I can remember going swimming in Rock Creek. We would build a fire and cook the crawdads that we caught and think they were good. One summer Bob and some of the boy cousins built rafts out of old planks and logs that they found in the creek. You couldn't go too far because there were log jams that halted navigation. None of us ever drowned but it had to have been pretty hazardous. I never did learn how to swim but played in the water for years.

Our cousins**,** the Kenagys, had what they called the Big Swimming Hole. Only boys could go there because they didn't wear swim suits but swam nude That was later when we were older.

I'll write more later about when we were teenagers.

WHISKEY HILL SCHOOL

The store at Whiskey Hill is the old school building. My father, Joel Fisher, bought it and moved it across the street when the new consolidated school was built. At that time, five school districts consolidated to form a larger district. Most people would have preferred that the school be built in the middle of the larger district. Of course the Whiskey Hill people wanted it at the site of the old school.

My father, in order to keep it from being moved to a different location offered to give them enough land at Whiskey Hill to build the new larger school. The people of the district wanted the free land, but they didn't want the school clear on the western side of the district. The board accepted the land and built the school there.

Then the people of the other districts ganged up on us and insisted on changing the name. My Dad went all over the district trying to convince everyone that the name should be Whiskey Hill. He was defeated in the end and the school was named Hawthorne. They thought that this would be a more dignified name.

The location had been named Whiskey Hill because there supposedly had been a still in the woods across the street from the school. There also was supposed to be money buried at the site. When I was a child, people would come to our house wanting information about where to look for the money. No one ever found it.

After the fuss about building the school and naming it, no one wanted to call it Hawthorne, so it ended up being called Ninety One, which was the name of one of the previous schools.

My Dad bought the old school building and moved it across the road and made it into a store. He put the name Whiskey Hill Community Center on the building. He turned it over to Albert Yoder and his wife to run. They ran it for some years and then retired and it was bought by Roy Kenagy.

There had been a school at this location since at least the turn of the century. I think the original building was replaced by a one-room school, The four oldest in our family attended school in that second building. Later on, when the enrollment increased, the two-room school was built. The four youngest of us attended that school. That was Chote, Bob, JoAnn and me.

We had two teachers, one for the primary grades in the little

BOOK REVIEW

Eyes at the Window

by Evie Yoder Miller

This is a gripping historical novel about early Amish emigrants who came to this country around 1810 and settled first in Pennsylvania. The author features eight different characters, with one of the eight talking in each chapter about life as he or she was experiencing it, from falling in love, marrying, giving birth, doing daily chores, and how they felt about their partners and other people they associated with.

The mystery of a seven-month-old baby who was killed in its own house has been passed along among the Amish since it happened in 1810. The author has included this incident in the book, and lets us read what the various characters might have been feeling as they faced the tragedy, and how they dealt with the man who was accused of the murder. We also read of the accused man's thoughts. He was, of course, excommunicated, even though he declared his innocence. We learn how the characters dealt with it when the murderer finally confessed 50 years later.

Eventually some of the settlers had heard about Ohio and many of them moved there through the years after hearing the farmland was better than in Pennsylvania, and the land was cheaper. Besides it was a chance to leave their troubles behind and get a new start.

The author changed the names of the individuals involved in parts of the story, but used familiar Amish names throughout. She also used Pennsylvania Dutch words occasionally and included a Glossary in the back of the book for most of those words. Eileen Weaver

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room and one for the four older grades. For many years, Loney Yoder was the teacher of the big room. The teachers in the little room, mostly young women, came and went.

My sister Rhoda taught there for one year when I was in the second grade. The next year Miss Welch taught the lower grades for two years and she boarded with us.

In those years most teachers were not paid enough to have their own place. Loney Yoder had his own home but he must have made part of his living from farming. His children attended school there and had him for a teacher. His son Dwight was in my grade. His son Stanley was in Bob's grade. His son Junior was not in JoAnn's grade until the eighth grade. JoAnn skipped the seventh grade and graduated in the same class with Junior.

Each teacher had to teach four grades, all subjects. Loney was a superior teacher for teaching the basics. I can still remember the pages in the Arithmetic book that we used. He kept good order in the school. There were stories about him hitting kids but I never saw him do it.

Loney must have read and studied a lot because he brought up subjects that I didn't hear other people talking about until much later. He told us that in Germany they built the big manufacturing plants out in the forests. The trees acted as scrubbers to clean the air. I also remember him telling us about the electoral college and how it worked. We learned about elections where one candidate got the popular vote and the other the electoral vote. We have been hearing a lot on that subject lately. He continued to teach and was principal for a few years after the new school was built.

Of the women who taught the little room kids, the ones I remember were Mrs. Hastings in my first year, Rhoda in my second, Miss Welch in my third and fourth. When I was in the fifth grade there were so few kids in the lower grades that the fifth grade stayed in the little room. The teacher that year was Miss Conyne.

The time finally came when there were not enough children to have a two-room school. Loney Yoder became the teacher for all eight grades. After the war and the baby boom there were plenty of children and new state laws made it necessary to consolidate and do away with the small one-room schools.

People now think that kids have to have fine school buildings and all kinds of fancy equipment in order to learn. Our books were pretty much up to date, but a lot of other things weren't. I remember using maps that showed Europe before World War I. After that war a lot of countries changed and had different names and boundaries.

The books that we had in our school library were pretty limited. We used to get books from the State Library that would be moved from one school to another. While I was in the little room I soon had read all the books in the little room library and was allowed to go to the big room library. It used to scare me to walk into that room with all the big kids. I always liked to read. I would stay inside at recess and read my library books instead of going out to play. We were supposed to practice our penmanship in our spare time. We learned the Palmer Method of writing. I would get my writing paper out on my desk and hold a book in my lap and read. I kept a list of books I read and averaged two a week. Sometimes I had to re-read books that I had already read.

All of us learned the basics of education. When we went to high school at Canby, the kids from Whiskey Hill stood out because they knew their arithmetic and English grammar. When I started my Freshman year at Canby High School my English teacher was Miss Sparks. She gave us a test the first of the year to find out what we knew. She told us that there was only one student in the class who passed but wouldn't tell us who. The last day of school she told us and it was I. I don't think I was smarter than the other kids but I had a good background in English. Also the reading helped a lot.

Going back to Whiskey Hill School, it was also a big part of our social life. We would have programs about four times a year and had the parents and anyone else in the community come. We would usually have potluck afterwards. We also had a picnic on the last day of school which everyone came to. We had ball games with the other country schools and we nearly always won because Loney was a good coach. The other schools usually had young women teachers and they didn't do so well.

All eight of us attended school there. Also my mother had gone to school there for part of her education. All of my brother Chote's kids went there and all of Ruth's. Some of John's kids went there when they lived at the Sippy house.

Looking back, it seems like that was a different world. My years there were during the depression when no one had much money. Some of the kids were poorly dressed and none of us had expensive clothes. Mom used to make JoAnn's and my dresses and we usually had two school dresses and one Sunday dress. Lots of my clothes were made out of my big sister's clothes.

We also didn't have much in the way of school supplies. At the first of the year we would get a writing tablet, a couple of pencils, and a box of crayons. Even that was a lot for some parents to buy. Later on, I collected things like a ruler, a protractor, and other odds and ends. We also had a special spelling tablet. Most of these things were to last us all year. We would get new writing tablets when we needed them. We also liked to have a nice pencil box which I had when I was in the higher grades.

We never had crayons or coloring books at home. The box of crayons that we got at the first of the year had to last us all year. Along about mid year we would run out of some colors. All of the crayons would be broken into small pieces. Sometimes we needed to trade a piece of one color with one of the other kids to get the color we needed. At the end of the school year we could take our crayons home. By that time they would all be broken, some would be all used up and the original box was long gone. We would keep the pieces we had left in an old match box, the kind that wooden kitchen matches came in.

We had a hand pump with a drinking fountain for drinking water. Someone would have to pump while someone drank. We had two out-houses, one for boys and one for girls. Nobody minded because that is what most of us had at home. For heat we had a big iron stove. There was a woodshed behind the school where the wood was kept. In the good weather in the spring someone would put up a teeter totter made with a plank and a sawhorse. Some of the country schools had slides and swings but we didn't.

Besides the ball games, we had a track meet in the spring. We had races, sack races, high jumping, broad jumping and relay races. All of the little schools would come to Whiskey Hill and we nearly always won. The Lais girls were the fastest runners. They would take all the ribbons in the class and there was a Lais in every class.

Mom always made us come home for our lunch because we lived close to the school. Once in **a** while she would be going

WHISKEY HILL SCHOOL:

TOP; Two room building in its original setting

CENTER; School year 1927-28.

BOTTOM; School year 1924-25. (Editor would like your help naming as many students as we can name).

Pictures from Mae Strubhar Lenhert Collection

Whiskey Hill, 1927-28
1st row: Harold Yoder, George Wintermute, Leland Kocher, Tim Strubhar, Emery Jones, Leo Kropf, Lorene Kropf, Clysta Headings. Row 2:Jack Blosser, Clifford Strubhar, Leland Kropf, Harry Reed, Milo Kropf, Howard Jones, John Fisher. Row 3: Teacher Loney Yoder, Fred Strubhar, Bob Reed, Mae Strubhar, Florence Owings, Verda Kropf, Helen Murphy. Row 4: Walter Petrovich, Ivan Headings, Esther Sharp, Alice Hostetler, Verna Kropf, & Thelma Hostetler. (Photo Courtesy of Mrs. Loney Yoder)

somewhere and would let us take our lunch which I always thought was a treat. We didn't have special lunch boxes like the kids have now but used a paper sack.

We only had about a quarter mile to school but some kids had to walk a couple of miles. I used to envy them because they seemed to have so much fun walking to and from school together. Some of them had bikes in later years.

I wonder what kids today would make of a school like ours. We thought it was fine because we had never known anything different. I also wonder how our school budget would compare with the budgets of modern day schools. Of course our homes are a lot different too.

THE SIPPY HOUSE

I always thought that if I were to write a book of fiction I would base it on the old Sippy house because our family seems to have been concerned with some of the things that went on there.

The house was built by an Amish man named Kauffman for his family. At one time there had been a settlement of Amish in the area. The house was built with movable partitions so that they could be moved to make one big room to hold church services in. The Old Order Amish held their services in their homes.

When my father and his brother Steve came to Oregon, they looked up the Kauffman family and stayed with them for a while. They came from an Amish family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and it wasn't unusual for young men from Amish families to look for an Amish family to board with.

I don't know who lived in the house next. The first people I remember living there were the Simpkins family. There was old Oscar Simpkins and his wife, Jenny. By the time I knew them their children were grown up and gone.

I was always fascinated by the big house which had a porch clear across the front both upstairs and down. They had a full attic and I always thought it would be a good place to play, but of course we never went near it.

The reason we called it the Sippy house was because we used to call Jenny, Mrs. Simpkins and then we changed it to Mississippi. From there we shortened it to the Sippy house.

One night the Kenagys heard their dog Tooney barking in the Simpkins woods all night. In the morning, Jenny came and told them that Oscar had gone after the cows the night before and had not come back. Some of the Kenagys went looking for him and found him dead. Tooney had kept watch over him and kept the pigs away from him.

Years later when I was grown up my father bought the Sippy place. He had sold our home place to Art and Ruth and they and their family were living there. My parents were to live with them until they built a smaller house on the home place for them to live in.

My Mom got tired of not having her own house and picked up and moved to the Sippy place. It was in terrible condition and needed to be cleaned and remodeled. It didn't have a bathroom or any indoor plumbing, but it did have an outhouse which had been tipped over into a brier patch. Mom got a car jack and proceeded to set it upright. It was usable but we were used to inside plumbing and really didn't care for it. Some time later, Mom got Bill Kenagy to come and put in a bathroom.

Mom kept working on the place and cleared out trash and made a new kitchen. I stayed there some of the time because I was expecting and couldn't work. Just after Susie was born I moved in with the folks and a few days later Chote's house burned down and they moved in with us. They ripped the cabinets and the plumbing fixtures out of Chote's house while it was burning and Mom got Bill Kenagy to put the cabinets in the Sippy house kitchen and fix up the bathroom.

It wasn't so bad living there in the summertime but in the winter there was no real way to heat the whole house and it got pretty chilly. Cbote had rescued an oil heater from his house while it was burning and he installed that. We had a wood cook stove in the kitchen and that was all the heat that we had.

At the same time, the folks' new house was being built and Chote's were also building a new house. It was soon after the war and it was hard to find a lot of the materials needed for the new houses. It dragged on all winter. Joyce was born in March while we were all living together. We somehow got along with all of us there together. The house wasn't very comfortable or convenient but we managed.

The folks and I moved into the new house in May. It wasn't completely finished but we were glad to have all the modern conveniences again. Chote and Relda's house was finished sometime that summer and they moved in.

BOOK REVIEW

The Society was recently sent two books for review. Following is a review of one of the books.

House Calls and Hitching Posts:

Stories from Dr.Elton Lehman's career among the Amish as told to Dorcas Sharp Hoover. c2004

This book chronicles experiences of a Mennonite doctor who spent his entire professional life as a country doctor in Wayne County, Ohio where a large part of his practice included patients from the large Amish community.

Dr. Lehman started his practice in 1964 as a newly graduated Osteopathic Physician with definite ideas of what were and were not acceptable medical practices at the time. It was a time when house calls were something from the past and babies were born in antiseptic conditions in hospitals. The book tells of the give and take between and compromises of both doctor and patients over the several decades of his practice. He did make house calls and when it was necessary he could and did deliver babies at home! Both mothers and babies thrived just as well as if the deliveries had been in the hospital. Because of his willingness to adjust some of his ideas, his patients were willing to adjust some of theirs when he felt hospitalization was necessary because of the nature of the illness or medical problem.

This is the heart-warming story of a Christian doctor who was willing to go the second mile when needed, and sometimes even a third or fourth mile. He respected his patients and they, in turn, respected and loved him.

I found the book well-written and readable, with very few errors, and the contents both serious and entertaining. It depicts well the day-by-day incidents and activities of a busy country doctor in the latter half of the twentieth century. I feel it gives an accurate account of life in that particular Amish community, not one imagined by some story-telling writer of fiction.

The book is available in hard cover with dustjacket for $19.95 plus postage from Good Books, PO Box 419. Intercourse PA 17534-0419; phone: (717) 768-7171 or email: custserv@goodbks.com

Margaret Shetler

After that, Bob and Fern lived there for a while and later on a hired man lived there.

Pa used to keep cattle there and he had ponies for the grandchildren to ride. The kids all liked to go there.

Later on, John bought the place and his family lived there for several years until John was killed in a hunting accident. Rita sold the farm to Mike Kenagy and that was the last our family had to do with the place.

It is still there and looks pretty good considering the age of the house. I think everyone who lived there added something to it. The last time I was in the area I took some pictures of the house and I think it looked better than I had ever seen it.

ZION CHURCH

I haven't written much about religion in my family. It did play a big part in the background of my family.

In the first place, my Great-grandfather Peter Troyer donated the land for the Zion Mennonite Church and the cemetery. The land he gave was adjacent to his farm. His farm was across the road from the farm we lived on most of my early years.

The Troyers came to Oregon from Missouri but before that had lived in Ohio. The family before Great-grandfather Peter belonged to the Amish faith. Somewhere along the line they left that church and became Amish-Mennonites. Back in those days there was not so much difference in dress and customs of the Amish and Mennonites as there was in later years. The Amish-Mennonites were more progressive and had cars and farm machinery when it became available. They also did not dress as conservatively as the Amish.

When my grandparents, Amos Peter and Delilah (Yoder) Troyer came to Oregon there was not a regular Mennonite church. There were a few Amish families but they met in the members homes, as Old Order Amish still do.

Several families of Amish-Mennonites had come to Oregon from Missouri and knew each other and had belonged to the same church there. They met for a while at the Rock Creek Church and later built a church building near Elliot Prairie. When they wanted a bigger building and a cemetery, Peter Troyer donated land and a church building was erected.

There were no frills but it was an adequate building for the membership at that time. Grandpa was selected as Deacon and later on as Bishop of that congregation.

My grandparents inherited Great-grandfather's farm and lived right around the corner from the church. Later on, my parents bought the farm across the road from Grandpa's and we lived there from then on except for a couple of years when we lived in Donald next to the Brick & Tile Works.

We always went to church and Sunday school at Zion. We had lots of cousins who also went there. Some of the things that happened I have mentioned in other chapters.

When Grandma Troyer died, all of us met at Grandpa's house and we marched behind the casket to the church. I think there were sixty grandchildren at that time. The oldest son of each family were pall-bearers. The casket was carried at the head of the procession. Grandma's children and their spouses marched next and the grandchildren next. There must have been enough of us to fill the church. I was nine years old at the time and remember it very well.

Not much more than a year later, Grandpa died and the same procession was repeated. There were so many people at Grandpa's funeral that the church couldn't hold them all, Some people sat on the fence outside and tried to look in the windows. After the ceremony, everyone marched through the church past the casket. The old church shook from the tread of the many feet. Grandpa was very well liked by his own people and also by the others in the neighborhood. I always thought he was as good as a person could get. He never cared about money and possessions and was willing to share with anyone who needed help. He was always good to children and had a great sense of humor.

We always felt fortunate to live across the road from our grandparents. I can remember Grandpa preaching in the church and also in leading the singing. Zion had very good congregational singing and sang without an organ or piano. They always had a Christmas program of singing on Christmas night. People came from far and near to hear it.

One time when Grandpa was traveling in the east, he visited our Grandma Fisher in Pennsylvania. He wrote me a letter telling me about the visit and telling me that when he came home he would take me for a buggy ride. I still have that letter. Mom saved it for me in the family Bible and I have always kept it with my valuable papers. I don't think any of the other grandchildren have a letter from Grandpa.

My father in addition to the farm also had a sawmill for a while and later on the Brick and Tile Works at Donald. He was always busy and rushing from one place to the other. My brothers had to work both places from the time they were little boys. My father could not get all the work done during the week so he started doing some work on Sunday. The Deacon at that time called him on the carpet and he was excommunicated (or as we called it he was "churched"). He could have made a confession of wrong doing and been re-instated, but he didn't until much later when he was on his deathbed.

This was very hard on Mom and on us children. My older sisters were members of the church and so was Bob, but JoAnn and I never did join. I always thought the people at the church looked down on us as a family and I also didn't want to follow the rules as to dress and other things. I felt that there was a lot of hypocrisy and could not see the reason behind some of the rules.

In following years, a lot of those rules have fallen by the wayside, so the people at the church dress and act like most other people. Mom used to say "Man looketh at the outward appearance but God looketh at the heart."

In the 1950s a new church was built on the same site. It is still in use and has had at least one new addition. My two oldest sisters' 90th birthday was celebrated there last January. It was held in the fine new addition of a kitchen and social hall.

Both my parents' funeral services were held in that church. In the little cemetery by the church, two sets of Great Grandparents, Grandparents, Parents, Brothers and Sisters are buried. Also many Uncles and Aunts and cousins.

That area between Pudding River and Rock Creek is our home territory.

THE EIGHT OF US

Ruth and Rhoda of course were the oldest. They always did everything first. I don't really remember when they lived at home. They lived away from home part of their high school years and then lived at Monmouth while they went to Normal School. You only had to go to school two years then before you could teach. Both of them taught for a year or two and then quit to get married and raise their families. Later they took classes and completed their work for a degree and taught for many years when they were older.

When they were in school they would come home weekends. Rhoda taught school at Whiskey Hill one year when I was in the second grade and then married and went to live in Eastern Oregon. Ruth taught in a country school near Albany for a year.

When they were at home weekends their boy friends used to come calling. They were going with brothers, Ed and Art Neuschwander. Art had a Chevrolet Roadster with a rumble seat that we kids thought was really cool. They also had a windup phonograph which was the first record player I ever saw. Art was a very handsome young man. They got married and lived at Albany. At one time, when Charles was a baby they lived with us for about a year. Art worked for Pa but then got a job back at Albany. Later on he got a job working at the Carl dairy farm at Hubbard. They lived in the house that John later bought at the S curve between Whiskey Hill and Hubbard. Art got a job back in Albany where he worked on the Nebergall farm and later at the Nebergall Meat Packing Plant. Then they lived at Albany until they bought the family farm in 1946 and moved back to Whiskey Hill for good.

Ruth used to come home with her kids and visit. We made a big fuss over the nieces and nephews. Charles, the oldest, was only four years younger than JoAnn.

Rhoda met Kenneth when she went to teach in Eastern Oregon and broke up with Ed. We thought Kenneth was really something. He came to visit her the summer after she taught there. It was around the Fourth of July and when he came he brought two huge bags of fireworks which he and the boys set off in our front yard. He wore a cowboy hat and cowboy boots with green butterflies on them. He also wore an orange western shirt.

Of course we thought he was a real cowboy and I guess he really was. Rhoda stayed at home the next year and taught at Whiskey Hill and the next summer they were married.

Rhoda and Kenneth lived out on the Owyhee River when they were first married but had to move when the land was flooded by the Owyhee Dam. They lived at Harper after that. We used to go out there to visit and thought we were really in the wild west. We usually went during pheasant season so the boys could hunt.

I can remember seeing them roping and branding cattle and Kenneth would do fancy trick riding like standing on his head on a horse.

It would take us a full day to drive out there. When they lived on the Owyhee they were 75 miles from town and there was a very rugged road to get there.

We would start out at 4 o'clock in the morning and sometimes get there after dark. Cars were not very good in those days and we often had a breakdown or flat tire. That was as far as any of us ever traveled. I was a teenager before I was ever out of the state of Oregon.

The other big sister was Hazel. She went to work in Portland and often came home week ends. Her boyfriend was Wayne. John teased her because she was taller than Wayne. She said some short people were important and mentioned that Napoleon was short, so we called him Napoleon or Nappy for short. He had a Model A Roadster with a rumble seat. We used to get to ride in it once in a while.

After they were married they lived in Portland so we got to visit the big city once in a while. After they had their three oldest boys, they sold their Portland house and moved to West Linn.

John got married about 1940 and Chote about a year later. We had lots of in-laws and nieces and nephews. We usually had Christmas dinners at our house and there would be about 30 people. We also would have family get togethers in summer. It was a lot of fun and there were lots of funny stories told. John was always kidding Hazel and sometimes she would become offended and they would leave.

I have pictures taken at some of those times. The last year Mom lived (1949) we all went to Chote's for Christmas dinner. We had a sit down dinner for more than thirty. We had one long table in the living room and one in the dining room. That was the last time we were all together.

Living with a big family is an experience that not many people have any more. You learned a lot from your brothers and sisters and you also learned to work because there was too much work for your parents.

OUR AMISH RELATIVES

I haven't written anything about our Amish relatives. My father was born into an Amish family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. It was a large family of, I believe, eleven children. They lived the way Amish people did in those days. It must not have been too different from the way other farm families lived then. Everyone drove horses and buggies and did their farm work with horses and mules.

His father was one of six sons who owned quite a bit of land. He was able to give each of his sons a farm when they married. Most Amish young men were willing to stay on the farm and it must have been a good life. Lancaster County had some of the finest farms in the world and the Amish were good farmers.

My grandfather, however, thought he would like to try his luck on the frontier and I guess some land speculators sold him a bill of goods. Anyway, they sold their farm and most of their possessions and moved to Kansas. My father was only about four years old at the time. The whole family, along with another Amish family and their hired man moved together.

My Uncle Joe who was eight or nine years old was really impressed with the train. The Engineer let him help run the train and he never got over it. When he grew up he left the Amish church and went to work for the railroad. He was a Railroad Engineer for many years until he retired.

The family stayed in Kansas, I believe, only three years. They never made a crop and could not stay there with no income. They moved back to Pennsylvania and I don't think they were ever able to own a farm again, but had to live on farms owned by other people.

My Grandma Fisher was always bitter about the move to Kansas and I suppose she thought that was why her sons did not stay with the Amish religion. A good Amish father provided a farm for each of his sons and of course Grandpa Fisher could not do that. All of the sons left and made their way in some other kind of work.

My father left school and went to work when he was in the sixth grade and never had any further education other than what he learned from travel and doing different kinds of work. He worked as a hired man for other farmers and then left Pennsylvania and traveled around the country working at whatever jobs he could get. He had been in every state except one or two.

He came to Oregon in 1905 with his brother Steve. They went to Eastern Oregon and rounded up wild horses and brought them to the valley to sell. He and Steve had a farm together for a while, but they parted company after my parents were married.

THE TROYER SIDE

Mom's family was Mennonite and Pa's family was Amish. They were both from farming backgrounds.

Mom was born in Garden City, Missouri in 1886. Grandpa and Grandma Troyer were originally from Ohio but had moved to Michigan and then to Missouri. Grandpa's health was not very good and the cold winters in Michigan and the hot summers in Missouri were not good for him.

Grandma's parents and brother had moved to Oregon and a lot of their neighbors in Missouri had also moved west. They heard favorable reports about the weather and living conditions in Oregon and Grandma decided to take a trip west and see for herself. It seems strange for those times that she was the one to go, but she was a strong-minded woman and knew what she wanted to do.

She traveled by train. The railroads had not been in existence very many years at that time, She traveled to California and then north to Oregon. She was favorably impressed with the new country and decided that they should move here.

To get ready to move, Grandma went to Dr. Schoor who was their doctor there and asked him to supply her with medicines that they would need for the family as there were not many doctors in Oregon. He must have been a Naturopathic doctor. He fitted her out with a black doctors bag and the remedies that were in use at that time and taught her how to use them. Grandma doctored a lot of people with that kit. She did not do midwifery as there were other women doing that.

They also needed to take their livestock with them and feed for the livestock. They were shipped in a boxcar. Grandpa and Uncle Jess traveled in the boxcar and Grandma and the girls traveled in a chair car. They took all of their food for the journey with them. I don't know if there was no dining car on the train or if it was just too expensive to feed such a large family in the dining car. At that time the family consisted of Lizzie, Kate, Nora, Grace, Ida (Mom), Alice, and Jess.

Mom used to tell us stories about the trip and about their early life in Oregon. Her stories sounded like something out of Little House On The Prairie. Things were pretty primitive then compared with now or even compared with the way we lived when I was a child.

When they got to Oregon they were met by Mom's Uncle Zeph. He and his family had moved west earlier. Mom said she remembered going to his house. His son who was about Mom's age hid behind the door and counted all the girls as they came in the door.

Grandpa built their first house out of raw lumber. He even made the doors and I suppose they had real windows. They had very little money and had to trade work for building materials. They had brought their chickens along on the train and they had to trade the eggs for the things they needed from the store. There weren't too many chickens in the area at that time.

Mom told about one of their first Christmases. The children slept in the attic and there were knot holes that they could look through to see downstairs. Grandma had them place their plates around the table in their regular places. In Missouri they had hung up their stockings but there was no money for presents this year. The children looked through the knot holes to see what Santa had brought and saw that each of them had some home made taffy on their plates. That was a treat as they didn't have money for sugar. That was one of the things they had to trade eggs for. Grandma never frosted her cakes because she said it was a sin to put more sugar on the outside of the cake than on the inside.

I don't know how long they lived at that first place. Later they lived in the Marks Prairie School district and then at what Mom always called the Fiking place near Woodburn. Eventually they lived at Whiskey Hill near the Zion church.

Those first years they did not have a church building of their own. They had church in the Rock Creek church building for a while and then I think they had a building near Elliott Prairie. Grandpa's parents moved out from Missouri and settled where Zion church is now. They donated the land for the church and cemetery.

After they moved to Oregon Emma, Ern, and Dan were horn. They also had a little sister named Mary who died in infancy. Grandma doctored her own family as well as a lot of other people. Most of the people in the Zion congregation had moved out from Missouri and knew each other.

I think Great-grandpa Troyer divided his land up among his children. Grandpa got the biggest part of it right next to the church and cemetery and his three sisters each got smaller parcels of land just west of there and next to Whiskey Hill school.

Times must have been really hard. Everyone had to work hard and the children didn't get more than an eighth grade education. Mom and most of her sisters married young men who came from hack east. Uncle Dan never did get married and Aunt Nora's first husband was killed when she had only one child but all the rest of them had big families. We had lots of cousins and we seemed to he related to about half of the people in the church.

Grandpa moved the family to the farm his father left him right next to Zion Church.

There was a big house there but it later burned down and they built a smaller house for just him and Grandma. It was right across the road from where we lived when I was growing up.

We always felt privileged to live so close to our grandparents. Grandpa always kept several cows and one of my earliest memories was seeing him herd the cows down the road in front of our place to the barn to be milked. We kids would go up there and watch him milk. Sometimes he would tell us to open our mouth and he would squirt milk into it. He had a little banty rooster who used to sit on his hand and pick the grease off his hand. He would grease his hands before he milked because his hands were stiff.

He used to take his horse and buggy and drive to Needy to the feed mill to have grain ground for feed for his cows. We kids would sometimes get to ride along with him and then he would stop at the Needy store on his way home and buy us candy.

Grandma was never in good health as far back as I can remember so we kids were not allowed to bother her much but we trailed around after Grandpa all the time. He liked kids and was always playing tricks on us. I was ten years old when he died and we really missed him. He was very well liked in the neighborhood as well as in his church.

ENTERTAINMENT

I have been thinking of the differences between now and the way we lived when I was a child. It could have been in another world. We didn't have television, computers, calculators, VCRs, Videos, any kind of electronics.

I can remember our first radio. We hadn't lived in the new brick house very long when Pa brought home a big console ra-

dio. Mom was very upset because we had hardly any furniture in the house. What little we had were a few pieces patched up from the fire and some used furniture bought from a second hand store. We never had new furniture. And here he came with this huge extravagant piece of foolishness that nobody needed.

Mom retaliated by going upstairs in the evenings to the big room. We would sit by the heat register and she would read to us. She read whatever books she could get. Some of them were really not meant for children but we understood at least part of it. Some of the books I remember were "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "Ben Hur", and Hurlburt's story of the Bible. We read that through at least once a year. Other books I remember were the Anne of Green Gables books and Heidi. We also read a lot of books about wagon trains and pioneers.

Another favorite book was called "Mother, Home, & Heaven". It had very old fashioned sentimental poems and stories. Most of them were very sad and sometimes we would cry. I like to think that we learned compassion from those readings. She also had a book with a brown cover. I can't remember the name of it but it had really sad stories. One was about a flood of the Mississippi river where children were left alone in the house. They had a boat but it was too small for all of them so the oldest girl put her younger brothers and sisters in the boat and she stayed in the house and drowned. Mom thought a little sorrow was good for children.

When we got older we would bring home books from the school library and we would take turns reading while Mom quilted or mended or knit. She never sat and did nothing.

Anyway I don't know if the bringing of the radio caused all of this reading, but it certainly was better for us. We learned to love books and this has been a comfort to me all my life.

We did at times listen to the radio. Pa liked to have political stuff on the radio. I can remember hearing Hitler speaking. He sounded like a maniac and I think people should have caught on to him sooner than they did.

We also listened to things like Amos and Andy and Lum and Abner. After school we kids would listen to Jack Armstrong and Little Orphan Annie. JoAnn even sent away for an Orphan Annie secret decoder pin. We listened to Buck Rogers and the 21st Century. I wonder what ever happened to the flying belts that Buck and Wilma used to wear. Just strap them on your back and you could fly anywhere you wanted. This was supposed to be a wave of the future.

We never ever heard of Television until after the war. Then it seemed everyone got them and all people did was watch TV.

Some of the other entertainment we had was the school programs. We would usually have one in the fall, one before Xmas, and one in the spring. Loney Yoder taught the upper grades at Whiskey Hill and he had lots of funny plays. We had some kids who could act but all of us did something. The little room teacher usually had plays where we dressed up in costumes which our mothers had to make or maybe the teacher made them, We sometimes had a combo of older guys in the neighborhood play and sing cowboy songs. One year Bob dressed in a cowboy outfit and sang while Wayne's brother Raymond played the guitar.

After the performance we would have food which the mother's would bring. During the war, they elected Mom to be on the eats committee. She refused to furnish food as she said we shouldn't be celebrating while people were killing each other. That was the end of the eats for a while.

We always had a last day of school picnic. Everyone brought goodies and shared them. Mom used to make cream puffs and were they ever good. Sometimes people would bring their hand cranked ice cream freezers and someone would bring ice and we had some really good home made ice cream.

The only entertainment at these picnics was a ball game. The school kids would play the "old stiffs." They were anyone who had finished the eighth grade and were still hanging around. Whiskey Hill always had a good team because we had a man teacher - Loney Yoder - and he would coach the kids. Most of the country schools had women teachers who were not good at playing ball.

On the subject of ball games, they also had a Thanksgiving football game. It was for the older boys who were either in high school or out of school. They really played rough and most of them would be limping around for weeks after the games.

There also were programs at church. About half of the kids in school went to our church and we would have children's meetings on Sunday nights. Kids would sing songs and give recitations. On Christmas we had a nice program and then we got a sack of candy and other goodies. There was always an orange and hard candy and peanuts in the shell. Lots of kids who didn't go regularly to that church would come for the Christmas program and the treats, That was the only candy that some of the kids had during the depression years.

We also had treats at the school Christmas program and we would draw names and everyone got a present.

At home, the kids always got presents at Christmas. We girls would always get a doll and clothes for the doll. The boys would get toy cars or a wagon or tinker toys. Someone got an erector set one year. We always had blocks and we built all kinds of things with them.

In one of the other chapters I mentioned my Mom and my brothers built me a playhouse after we built the new house. There were lots of lumber scraps left over and for years we had those to make things out of. Bob and Chote built a platform in the walnut tree behind the house and we called it a space ship. We made telephones out of tin cans and string and called each other from ground to air.

Mom made furniture for the playhouse too. There was a dark blue davenport that she made and upholstered with an old coat, There was a little table and chairs painted pink because that was my favorite color.

We girls would always make mud pies. We would put them on a post in the sun to bake. Then we would take fresh mud and frost them and they really looked like chocolate cakes.

In the wintertime we played in the house. We had the big room upstairs to play in and it was sometimes knee deep in cut paper. We used bottles for dolls and dressed them in clothes we cut out of wallpaper sample books. We never had enough bottles and one time Bob and I were supposed to be hoeing corn or some such job and we took off and went to the dump that was by the Pudding River bridge. We got a lot of very fine bottles.

We would have the bottles as people and we would build them houses. The houses would be just an outline or floor plan made with blocks. We got pretty good at designing houses and I always liked to look at houseplans the rest of my life.

All of this doesn't sound very exciting, but we were happy with what we had and didn't mind entertaining ourselves. Just living on a big farm with farm animals and a creek to play in and things to make our own toys were enough.

Our cousin, Josie Kenagy used to spend a lot of time at our

house. She was the only girl in a family of five boys and was the youngest. She was near JoAnn's age and they got along well. They used to make up games to play. They would play church on the front steps of our house. John complained that whenever he was around and wanted to sit on the porch, they would take up a collection for the poor people in the Silverton Hills and expect him to ante up.

In the summer we would play in the woods and sometimes make playhouses in fence corners. We would take pieces of broken dishes and pretend they were whole dishes. We would make shelves to put them on.

I was always catching poison oak from playing in the woods and really suffered from it. JoAnn for some reason never caught it.

Anyway, we managed to entertain ourselves and learned a few things along the way.

WHY BOTHER THE DOCTOR

In my family we saw very little of doctors. We were fairly healthy and Mom was able to take care of us through most illnesses. People didn't have Medical Insurance then and money wasn't plentiful. Anyway, Grandma Troyer taught all of her daughters how to take care of their families.

Before my grandparents moved to Oregon from Missouri, Grandma visited Dr. Schoor, who had taken care of most of her family while they lived in Missouri. He must have been a Naturopathic Physician because he taught her how to make medicine. She had a little Doctors' Satchel in which she kept the makings. She had heard that there were not many doctors in Oregon so wanted to be prepared to take care of her family's sicknesses. After they moved to Oregon she did just that. Dr. Schoor's son, who was also a doctor moved to Oregon later and he took care of some of the same families his father had taken care of in Missouri.

When Grandma's daughters got married, she supplied them with a Doctor's kit like hers and they were able to take care of the ordinary illnesses of their families. Grandma kept on doctoring her family for the ordinary illnesses until Prohibition when she couldn't get the alcohol that she used in the medicines.

There was another woman in the neighborhood named Carrie Kropf who made a kind of salve she would put on a person's chest if they had pneumonia or any bronchial trouble and it would loosen up the congestion. She called this stuff "Bronschmear." I don't know if that is the right spelling. When one of us got sick and didn't respond to regular treatment, such as Bengay or Vicks, Mom would threaten us with getting some "Bronschmear" to treat us. It was vile smelling stuff and we would hurry up and get well so we didn't have to use it. I don't remember ever having it used on me. She also believed that a dose of Baking Soda would take care of most illnesses and insisted that we take it by the spoonful.

The few times any of us were sick enough to go to the doctor, we would go to Dr. Schoor and he would treat us with some of the medicine he would mix himself. We always said there were only two kinds. One was called Forty Eight and one was called Thirty Eight. I think Forty Eight was if you were really sick and the other if you weren't so sick. You would get a bottle of the medicine and would put a couple of teaspoons full in a glass of water and then you would take a teaspoonful of that. It must have been powerful medicine because none of us stayed sick very long.

Dr. Schoor didn't do surgery so if any of us needed that we went somewhere else. Bob had bad tonsils and Dr. Schoor said he should have them out. Pa had done some ditching for a Dr. who was located in Molalla and he owed us some money so Pa decided to take it out in trade. Since one kid needed their tonsils out it was decided that the rest of us might as well have ours done too. I don't know if they got special rates for more of us. Bob and Chote and I were supposed to go at the same time. JoAnn was considered too small, I guess.

I remember that Bob and I didn't want to go so we ran off and went down to the Creek and intended to hide out until they had gone without us. We thought we had stayed there an awful long time and I guess we got hungry because we went back to the house and they had not only not gone without us but hadn't even missed us.

They loaded us all into the car and took off for Molalla. The Dr. did the surgery in his office. Mom took me out while they were doing the boys because I was scared and she didn't want me to hear what was going on. When we came back, we had to climb a long flight of stairs and I could hear Bob roaring. He had a very loud voice for a kid. Of course that scared me worse.

He did give us anesthetic but we must not have been out long because it wasn't too long before we were out of there and on our way home. We were really sick and Bob's throat bled. Pa wanted to turn around and go back to the Dr. but Mom said no, that crazy Dr. would probably kill us. She always called him "That Horse Doctor" after that.

We stopped at the Heyerlys, I think it was Vernon Heyerly's folks. They had a refrigerator and had ice. Mom took ice and packed Bob's throat. We managed to get home all of us alive but it took several days for us to recover. The Dr. had removed not only our tonsils and adenoids, but also our uvulas, the little thing that hangs down in your throat and maybe that is why we had bad "schluckers" the rest of our lives.

When we went to the doctor for the surgery, Mom left JoAnn with our Aunt Mary who lived up the road from us. We didn't often get left with anyone and JoAnn got mad and tried to run away and go home. Aunt Mary caught her and because she wouldn't mind and stay there, she tied her up. She had heard Mom say that she had to do that sometimes when JoAnn got ornery. Later on, while we were recuperating, JoAnn didn't get the attention that she was used to so she ran off and went back to Aunt Mary's, so she must not have minded being tied up.

We were quite a while healing and had to have special food. We did not have a refrigerator at that time so Pa would bring a big chunk of ice from town and Mom would keep cold milk on the ice. She made us eggnogs and they were ice cold and felt good on our sore throats. We also had been told that we should chew gum because that would make us swallow a lot and would help to heal. We also got ice cream a couple of times. JoAnn was envious of us because we didn't ordinarily get treats like gum and eggnog and ice cream, so she would sneak some of our food and gum.

That was the only time I remember having any kind of surgery until I was pretty old. None of us had appendicitis or any of the usual things that kids get that require surgery. We never had a broken bone until John got his arm caught in a chain on the ditcher but he was grown up when that happened.

Hazel had a pretty bad accident that injured her leg when she was a teenager. She was running the cream separator and when she took it apart to clean it, she took off the part that spun around before it had stopped spinning and it hit her on the leg and made

a big hole in her leg. She had to go to the Dr. with that one. I can still remember her screaming for someone to come and help her when that happened. I was pretty small at the time. It took quite a while for that to heal and she had the scar on her leg for a long time.

There was another time we had a lot of excitement. We had a mean bull and Pa was leading him to the water trough when the bull got loose and knocked him down. The bull had his horns on Pa's chest and tried to gore him but he was able to hold him off by grabbing the ring in his nose. The boys were at the barn doing chores but they were not able to stop it. There were two men who had been there talking to Pa on business and they were just leaving and heard the commotion so they came back and were able to get the bull under control. We didn't keep that animal around very long after that.

Pa had an accident when they lived at the sawmill and injured his leg. It injured the nerves in his leg and his foot was turned sideways and the calf of his leg wasted away and was getting worse, so he consulted a specialist in Portland. He decided to have surgery to straighten his foot. I was about ten years old at that time so it must have been 1935. They didn't have antibiotics at that time and he got an infection in the bone that he was never able to get rid of. He was In the hospital in Portland for about six weeks. He hated being in the hospital but the Dr. would not release him. Mom decided that she was going to bring him home and she had John drive her to Portland to the hospital. She wanted the nurses to show her how to change the dressings on his foot so she could take him home. She said he would die if he didn't get out of that hospital. The Dr. wouldn't release him but she insisted and took him out without the doctor's okay. I guess they did show her how to do the dressings because she did it. He got better when he came home. He had to use a wheelchair for a while and then crutches but was soon back to doing the things he normally did. The leg never did heal but he lived with it the rest of his life.

Mom always said that hospitals were the dirtiest places on earth and people were better off to stay out of them. That was where all the germs were.

We kids never had inoculations when we were babies the way kids do now. If one of us had in infectious disease Mom made us stay in the little downstairs bedroom and be isolated from the rest of the family. I remember Bob getting measles and JoAnn and I never got them because he was kept in that room. I never did have the measles or mumps. We had chicken pox and we had whooping cough before I was old enough to remember.

When we were sick enough to be isolated Mom would bring us meals on a tray. She had a black enameled oval-shaped tray and she had an embroidered tray cloth that just fit it. I always thought the food you ate off that tray was special. One of the meals you got when you were sick was a poached egg on toast. That was special too because well people got their eggs boiled or fried.

Somewhere at the end of the thirties, I guess, someone decided that kids should be inoculated for diphtheria. There were four of us in school at Whiskey Hill at the time. The county health nurse came around and did them at the school. We were all lined up according to age. JoAnn and I were in the little room and Chote and Bob in the big room. They did the little kids first. JoAnn got her shot and walked out the door and passed out. I got my shot and I walked out the door and passed out. When they got to Bob and then Chote, they passed out too. All of the Fisher kids were laid out on the grass outside. All of us had a tendency to faint and I still have a problem with it. Of course everyone thought we were having fits or something like it. Other than that we were very healthy though.

When Jeanne, Butch, Jack and Mike were little, Mom used to go to the Dr. with their Moms to help control them when they got their shots. I don't think she thought all of that was necessary but it was a different age and a different generation.

I guess people are healthier and live longer now that we have medical insurance and Medicare and Medicaid.

I think Medicare is keeping people alive longer. People never used to have yearly physicals or any regular medical care. They only went to the doctor when they couldn't take care of themselves any more. Our Troyer grandparents died in their mid-seventies. Our Grandma Fisher lived till her nineties and Great Aunt Lindy did too. They were the exception though. Mom died at 63 of heart disease. Just a few years later they started doing open heart surgery which might have saved her . Pa died of colon cancer which now can be cured if you catch it in time. There are lots of other diseases that used to take people that we now have a cure for.

It is amazing that we survived through all this. Before antibiotics people used to die from pneumonia and also from childhood diseases like measles and scarlet fever. People also use to die from tuberculosis and that is practically wiped out now. The older kids in our family had smallpox and recovered from it. Chote was the baby at the time and had one pock and had a scar from it. We were supposed to have smallpox vaccinations at school but I stayed home that day because I was afraid I would faint and the kids would make fun of me.

I never have had a smallpox vaccination. I had never had a tetanus shot until a few years ago. My doctor asked me if my tetanus shots were up to date and I told her that I had never had one. She was horrified and had me take a series of shots like they give kids now. We used to run around barefoot on the farm and I stepped on many a nail and ran around in the dirt but never got tetanus.

Anyway, Mom said that if you were clean and stayed out of the big cities and hospitals where the germs were you would be okay.

I N MEMORIAM

Ralph Shetler of Scotts Mills died at home on October 18, 2004, after an illness of a year and a half with inoperable stomach cancer. He was 84. Ralph was a member of OMHGS since its beginning in 1988 and spent considerable time helping out in the archives and library as well as attending nearly all of the public functions of the society. The last function he attended was the September 2004 meeting at the Zion Mennonite Church. He put forth a special effort to be at that meeting.

Wilton Smucker, age 65, died November 2004. He and his wife, Mary, were more recent and also current members of OMHGS. Wilton was a descendant of Christian C. and Elizabeth (Yoder) Smucker who came from Ohio by way of Kansas and Cass County, Missouri to the Hubbard, Oregon area in the late 1890s.

Pete Breck, age 78, died March 3, 2005. He had been a resident of Oregon for the past nearly 60 years and also a member of OMHGS for a number of years. He recently donated a story of mission work in the Ukraine to the society library. Burial was in the Prairie Rose Evangelical Mennonite Cemetery at Landmark, Manitoba, where other family members lie buried.