

# OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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## OMHGS SPRING MEETING REPORT

Held at Grace Mennonite Church, Dallas, OR, April 23, 1989

The meeting was led by Society President Hope Lind, and was attended by seventy-two persons.

In the devotional, John Morris used Psalms 71 as a scriptural basis for these comments: "David prayed for Faith. Let us live a life to be a witness to our families and to the world at large. Let us continue to spread the Gospel".

Larry Graber, a member of Grace church, arranged for several men's quartet numbers which were presented. The quartet was introduced by John Morris, also a member of Grace church.

The Zion-Grace Church history was very well presented by Mrs. Vivian Schellenberg, a member at Grace, and was augmented with the use of pictorial slides.

The Becker Family History was well presented in considerable detail by Mrs. Erma Neufeld, Dallas.

In a brief business period, Hope Lind reported concerning the official organization of OMHGS on October, 30, 1988, and advised the group that articles of incorporation had been filed with the State of Oregon, and that a registration for legal purposes is underway with the Federal IRS.

The newly printed OMHGS brochures were handed out to those attending, as well as a sheet summary of purpose, goals, organization, etc.

A poem entitled "From Earth to Glory", was given entirely from memory (see it on another page) by the author, Nancy Widmer, age 86, of Salem. Her husband, Herbert, age 89, a former pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, led in a closing prayer.

Dan Widmer, Secretary.

## ZION-GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH, DALLAS, OREGON

The year of 1882 several Mennonite families came from the northern plain states and settled in the Dallas area. A small church was built in North Dallas and was known by its leader as the Schrag church. The north part of the town also became known as Germantown.

July of 1982, Grace Mennonite Church entered a float in the annual Dallas parade commemorating 100 years of Mennonite history in this area.

In 1889 and 1890 many families came from Manitoba, Canada and settled 3 miles northeast of Dallas in the Polk Station area. The majority of them had emigrated to Canada in the 1870's from Russia and after 15 to 20 years of homesteading, suffering cold, drought, disease and failing health, many were longing for a milder climate so with the reports that came from these earlier settlers, some 30 families moved to Polk County. Names like Kliever, Hiebert, Wiens, Braun, Penner, Vogt, Unger, Quiring, Esau, Reddekopp, Peters, Dyck and Rempel were recorded in the Polk County Courthouse as purchasers of land. Many settled in the community of Polk Station, possibly because they came by train and the Oregon Limited Railway had a small station there. It also went to Smithfield, Perrydale and Balston.

Some attended the Schrag Church in Dallas but a year later that group purchased a large ranch west of Eugene in the Fern Ridge area known as Irving. They dismantled the church in Dallas and moved it by rail to the new area at Irving.

In 1891, the same year that the Schrag church left, Franz Kliever, who had come from Manitoba 2 years earlier, donated an acre of land just west of the railroad station on which to build a school house. It was known as Polk Station School, District No. 18. It also became the meeting place of the Mennonites and other interested German speaking families.

Sunday School was held several times a month and since they did not have a minister, the men took turns reading sermons from books written by Geroch and Spurgeon.

Leaders and evangelists of both the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference ministered from time to time and in November of 1895, State Missionary Gustov Schunke of the Baptist Conference was asked to come minister to the group. Part of the group then left and held services in the Salt Creek school and later organized the Salt Creek Baptist Church. The Mennonite Brethren also organized a church and later became known as the North Dallas Mennonite church, but were also located in Salt Creek.

It was the remaining Sunday school group that was represented at the first session of the Pacific District Conference of the General Conference when it organized at the Pratum Church the following year in May of 1896. The other two organized churches present were the Schrag Church which was still at Irving, and the Mennonite Church from Colfax, WA. An Amish church from Eugene also attended. Franz Kliwer, Superintendent of the Polk Station Sunday School reported 5 classes with a total of 42 scholars.

The three-fold purpose of the conference was first, to promote fellowship among the Mennonite churches on the Pacific coast, second, to cooperate in the spreading and establishing of the Kingdom of God in our District and third, to give a united support to the work of the various boards of the General Conference. Much emphasis was put on the importance of the Sunday School, missions and Christian Endeavor or Christian Fellowship as we call our evening programs where the people are given the privilege to exercise the talents and gifts that God has entrusted to them.

On October 5 of that same year, the Zion Mennonite Church was organized at the Polk Station School. Rev. Peter Gerig, the pastor at Pratum, visited the church occasionally. The next year on October 13, 1897, Isaak Dyck, Sr. donated an approximate 1 acre triangular shaped piece of property from his farm which had been created by the railway right of way that cut through the farm. A 24 x 40 foot church building was erected and the Zion Mennonite Church was incorporated and hosted the Pacific District Conference that next May, 1898.

H. A. Bachman from Kansas assumed the pastorate that fall and also taught a German school for 6 months. He was to receive a salary of \$100.00 per year and this was to come from the tuition paid by the students. The membership was too poor to continue the school and there was also opposition from the community because the children were taken from public school. The church flourished under Bachman's ministry. They had Sunday School in the morning and since it was quite difficult to get to church, a fellowship meal was sometimes held at noon and prayer meeting in the afternoon. Some walked, others rode horseback or came in wagons and buggies. A long shed was later built for shelter. It was also a good place to play and many still have memories of the old shed and also of watching the train go by right behind the shed.

In 1900 Bachman resigned after being appointed minister at large for the Pacific District Conference, with a yearly salary of \$1,500 plus traveling expense. Two brethren were then appointed to read a sermon at the close of each Sunday School



session. The Kliewers, Peters and Brauns who had come in 1889 were among the leaders of the church. From their families came missionaries, pastors and teachers. Some of these young people were privileged to attend the LaCreole Academy and Dallas College which had its beginning in 1900 and was established by the Evangelical Church.

On September 2, 1902, the congregation extended a call to layman Isaak Dyck, Sr. The area was already being planted to prunes and all cultivation was done with horses. There is no record in the minutes of him receiving a salary. Dyck was ordained December 21, 1903. There was much contention in the group the next two years and a committee was appointed to visit the church to try to settle the dispute and reunite them. Dyck served the church until the summer of 1908 when Zion again hosted the Pacific District Conference. Dyck resigned the first of July and passed away that November at the age of 40.

The automobile was becoming the mode of travel for those who could afford one, but the horse and carriage were kept for use when the roads were not passable for autos.

The church was again without a pastor until the following year when J. P. Neufeld accepted their call and was ordained as an evangelist. He was not permitted to perform marriages or give the Lord's Supper. When the Pacific District Conference was again held in 1916 the meals were served in the Dyck drier which was located in the pasture area just east of the church. There were plenty of prune boxes to sit on. The German language was still being used but when World War I broke out a vigilante committee known as the National Defense Council, came to the church in July of 1918 and asked them to show their allegiance to the United States by having their worship service in English. Finally in September the congregation agreed to do so and sent a delegation to inform the committee of their actions. Their business meetings continued to be in German.

During this time some were returning to their former homes and others were returning to Canada because of the war. There were also new families moving into the area and names like Buller, Nuefeld, Schmidt, Reimer, Toeva, Hiebenthal, Enns and Linscheid were appearing on the church roll. Following the resignation of Nuefeld in 1919, Bernhard H. Janzen from Oklahoma came to serve the church.

This could be the Bruderschaft - a Sunday afternoon board meeting, or it just may have been a deep political discussion. Janzen was followed by John M. Franz who came from Montana in 1923. The church flourished well under his ministry.



Church picnics and gatherings were often held at the young Isaak Dyck home as it was closest to the church. Rev. Franz resigned in 1926 after accepting a call from the Pratum church.

The railroad had ceased operation by this time and the depression was already being felt by many. Farm prices were at a low and many were leaving the farm and moving to town. Some got jobs in the new sawmill and others were retiring. Many of the houses were now vacant in Polk Station. S. S. Baumgartner came twice a month from Portland to hold services at the church. In 1928 the Pacific District Conference and the General Conference suggested the group try holding services in Dallas for six months and if ten new members were gained the church should remain in town. Services were also to be held in English. The Adventist Church building was rented but burned later that year. Not all were happy about the move to town and some tried to keep the church going in the country for a short time. Some went to other churches but many went nowhere, especially the young marrieds. The depression had really hit hard by now.

The small group in Dallas organized under the name Grace Mennonite, purchased an old house on Jefferson Street from the city for \$300.00, with monthly payments of \$3.00. B. M. Beargon accepted the call to serve as pastor in 1929.

Wounds heal slowly but the small group gradually began to grow back together. In 1934 H. E. Widmer came to serve the small group and in 1936 the Adventist Church, which had been rebuilt, was again rented and the old house on Jefferson Street was torn down. A 30 x 54 foot building with basement was erected. Dedication services were held July, 1938 with services in the basement. Pastor Widmer resigned the next year in May of 1939.

God again called a busy layman, this time from a successful drapery business in Salem, Oregon, and Homer Leisy was ordained as pastor on October 15, 1939. The finished auditorium was also dedicated and forty-five new members were added to the membership.

A small inter-Mennonite Bible School had begun in the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1938 and after one year it moved to the vacant school building on Orchard Drive and was known as Beacon Bible School. Many young people as well as a few adults took advantage of this opportunity to study God's Word.

The deserted building and property at Polk Station had reverted back to the Dyck farm from which it had been donated.

The United States was again involved in a World War and many of the young fellows were drafted or volunteered. There were many weddings here in the early 1940's. The dust which had been blowing in the mid-west for several years also caused many Mennonite families to come west. Grace Mennonite church was growing and by 1950 had passed the 300 mark. Young people were also going off to Bible school. One of these students was Helen Thiessen who came back and served our church worker doing secretarial work, visitation and taught children's classes on Wednesday nights and two Sunday nights a month for over eleven years. Others became pastors, pastors' wives, and missionaries.

Junior, Junior High and young people's retreats in cooperation with the Mennonite Brethren and Evangelical Mennonite Brethren churches were well attended. The Lord called Pastor Leisy to his eternal home the summer of 1949. Pastor J. J. Regier came in July of that year from South Dakota. He was followed by Pastor Earl Peterson in 1952.

J. M. Franz returned out of retirement for a short time until Dr. H. D. Burkholder came in 1955. The church had been remodeled, but with a membership of 331 and a Sunday School attendance of close to 360, the class space became very limited and chairs had to be set up in the aisles for worship service. Thus it was decided to relocate and a ten acre site was purchased on East Ellendale Avenue. The house was moved further back, set on a basement and remodeled into a five-bedroom parsonage. A ground breaking service, with Frank Kliever, the oldest member of the church, and also the eldest son of Franz Kliever, had been instrumental in establishing the original church. Dr. E. A. Flaming was chairman of the Board. Work was then begun on the three-story Sunday School unit with basement auditorium. Almost all of the work was done by volunteer labor of the members. The unit was dedicated April, 1960. The entire Sunday School was departmentalized. The south end of the unit was temporarily enclosed for eight years. Dr. Burkholder returned to Grace Bible Institute the fall of 1960 and Helen Thiessen moved to California the next spring.

Rev. W. J. Flickinger served us for the next five years. The body was again divided but not defeated.

J. J. Esau, blind evangelist, ministered to us for almost a year. There was a baptismal group that he instructed and baptized while he was here.

Rev. Olin Krehbiel came in 1966 and served the church until his retirement in

1970. It was during his ministry that the present sanctuary was built and dedicated the fall of 1968. Grace Christian Kindergarten came into being that fall and now has an enrollment in the 80's. Children's Church has also been an important part of the worship service for the children since 1975. Daily Vacation Bible School has also been held for many years.

Following Rev. Krehbiel's retirement in 1970, Ted Fast served as supply pastor and later accepted the call to become full time pastor. Dennis Stauffer and Chris Arney served as student summer pastors during this time. Pastor Fast resigned in 1978 after which Dallas Claussen began his ministry that August.

Tim Epp was installed May 31, 1981 after serving as supply pastor for ten months and was ordained November 8, 1981 when the church celebrated its 85th anniversary. Rick and Denise Woelk, voluntary service workers from Kansas, served among us for one year beginning September of 1984. The church mortgage was burned the spring of 1986. We also called our first associate pastor, Dick Burnham, that summer and celebrated our 90th anniversary that fall. Tim Epp left May of 1987 and Stanley Johnson served as interim pastor until August of 1988 when Dale Bartels was installed as senior pastor.

There have been an approximate 23 full-time Christian workers, as well as 30 short term or voluntary service workers go out from our membership. The Sound Judgment Band is the latest and newest type of ministry to go out from among us.

Mrs. Vivian Schellenberg

#### BOOTHS HELP PUBLICIZE SOCIETY

A booth to display history books, genealogies, etc. was part of the day's activities during the Western Mennonite High School Auction, May 6, 1989, at the State Fairgrounds. Another display was at the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference sessions held at WMHS in June 1989. Brochures were handed out to interested persons, several new members were signed up, and volunteers and officers helped explain the Society and its purposes.

#### ACTIONS NEEDED AT OCTOBER MEETING

Two positions are open for election at the October 22, 1989 meeting. They are Vice President, and Secretary. Please be thinking of persons to fill these offices.

We also need to act on the recommendation made by Hope Lind (see her Report to the Pacific Coast Conference on the next page) at the PCC sessions, requesting that OMHGS administer the archives and historical materials.



REPORT OF THE PACIFIC COAST CONFERENCE HISTORIAN, 1988-1989  
03 May 1989

Recently I worked on archival materials in the vault at Western Mennonite School, boxing a lot of materials previously just stacked on shelves. Acquisitions which Marcus Lind deposited there on April 28 include a record book of quarterly mission meetings. More materials are presently stored in my home and church. Dreams about a new chapel/auditorium for the Western school and congregation, with 400 square feet of space designated for an archives and historical library, seem close to becoming a reality. With such space, we will need some professional assistance and many volunteers to prepare the materials so that they can be available for study and research.

The Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society (OMHGS) organized on October 30, 1988. The purpose of OMHGS is to record and preserve the history of Mennonite and related groups in Oregon, for present and future generations. It is important that the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) formalize a relationship with OMHGS, based on an understanding of the valuable service the OMHGS can offer the PCC. I am recommending a two-part proposal which, first, will maintain an official tie between the conference and the society. Second, it will provide a broader base of support for an archives and historical library and will also have the safety and wisdom of numbers of interested and committed persons instead of placing the responsibility on only one person, the elected conference historian.

RECOMMENDATION for delegate ACTION: (1) that the PCC request that its elected conference historian be included as a member of the OMHGS governing committee or board, as an additional member unless that person is already serving in an OMHGS elective position; and 2) that the PCC request that OMHGS organize, administer and operate the future archives and historical library and that it be the custodian of present archival materials.

In my last report I mentioned the unknown whereabouts of two old books containing minutes of the Pacific Coast Mission Board. While working in the vault, I found record books beginning in 1922, about the time of the OM-AM merger in 1921. I have not yet determined whether these include the two above books which the Mennonite Church Archives in Goshen cataloged as "II-13-3" and then returned to Oregon when the vault was built. I did not find a record book/books of the Pacific Coast Mission Board from 1906 until the merger, and possibly there are such record books presently unaccounted for.

The history of Oregon Mennonites is now in the publication process at Herald Press. Release is tentatively scheduled for 1990, before Mennonite Church General Assembly in Oregon in 1991. Herald Press and the Mennonite Historical Society, which are jointly publishing the book as one of the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History (SAMH) series, are very grateful to the Pacific Coast Conference, as am I, for the generous publication subsidy which the PCC has budgeted for several years. It will help cover publication costs and lower the retail price considerably.

Respectfully submitted,

*Hope K. Lind*

Hope K. Lind

## THE BECKER FAMILY

The oldest record we have found, of the family "Becker", goes back to a Peter Becker who, as far as can be discovered at the time, was born around 1520. He lived in Pomerania, a Prussian province in Northern Germany, south of the Baltic Sea. Peter Becker had founded an Anabaptist church in that region, and because of that reason he was forced to leave in 1556. He was stripped of a public office that he held at the time. From there, the Becker families moved 200 miles east to Danzig, which was also near the Baltic Sea. They lived in this area until the 1780's when they moved 350 miles southeast, just across the border into the Russian province of Volhynia.

Up to around this time they retained their Dutch dialect. This is when the Prussian Government forced them to use the German language in their churches. The Low German language was retained as their house language.

The Beckers moved to the Province of Volhynia along with many other Mennonites, at the invitation of Katherine II who knew about the Mennonites because of her own background. She offered them religious freedom (except, they were not to evangelize), and exemptions from military service.

They settled on land left idle after the Turks were forced out of Southern Russia.

From here we go to where our Becker line begins.

It was in a small Polish village of Kokotzey, sometime around 1660, more or less, that a child was born into one of the Becker families, and they named him Johann or "Hans" Becker. This territory changed leadership so often that sometimes it was called Prussia and sometimes Poland and even Germany. The boundaries kept changing too. Johann Becker was the forerunner of my husband's mother's line of Beckers. The oldest records of the Przechovka Mennonite Church show that this Johann Becker left the Lutheran Church and became the first Mennonite by the name of Becker. It is believed that all Low German speaking Mennonite Beckers since that time are descendants of this Johann Becker. According to the records, his wife had the last name of Unrauen. Her father was a Unrau. Her first name is not know. The girls in these Dutch families had an E-N added to their last names, so she was known by the name of Unrauen. It is also thought that Johann became a Mennonite partly because he wanted to marry her.

The Przechovka record gives a total of eleven children by this marriage. His second son was named Peter. It is through this line that we have records



going to the present time in the 20th century. My husband's mother was of this Becker line. This gives us eleven generations without a gap.

These earliest Beckers lived in a number of Polish villages near Przechovka including Kunpot, Zigus, and Zeziorka. In this area is also a small village called Beckerzitz. These towns are located about 60 miles south of Danzig, which is now known as Gdansk, Poland.

Here are the names of the Johann Becker children. You will notice that they are all in the Dutch or Low German dialect. The Dutch language was one of the Low German dialects of that day that were located all along the Baltic Sea. There were probably somewhere around 30 of these dialects.

1. Abraham Becker, wife's name unknown. His line ends in our records in 1784.
2. Peter Becker, born 1687. He married Trincke, or Katherine Ratzlaffen. Peter's records bring us to our present time.
3. Sarche, or Sarah Becker, no further record.
4. Grethcke, or Margaret Becker, married a Jeorgen or George Nachtigal. Her records end in 1789.
5. Efcke, or Eva Becker, has no further records.
6. Elsche, or Elsie Becker, was born in 1693 and she married an Abraham Richert. Her line ends in 1783.
7. Trincke, or Katherine Becker, married Hans Decker. This line ends in 1706.
8. Hans, or Johann Becker, married Maricke or Mary Fuhrmans. This record ends in 1727.
9. Jacob Becker, married Sarche, or Sarah Freiens. This line ends with the death of an Anna Becker in 1860.
10. Buschcke Becker - I don't know what this name is in English, married a Jann Richert. Their line ends in 1740.
11. Ancker, or Anna Becker, married Berent or Bernard Voht. This line ends sometime after 1812.

The original Johann Becker that this line begins with, had a son Peter, who had a son Peter, who had a son Peter. Now we are up to my husband, Ervin Neufeld's Great Great Grandfather. We started with his Great Great Great Great Grandfather.

The Becker families had spread throughout much of Poland, into the region of Volhynia, and finally into the Molotschna Mennonite Colony in South Russia on the northern side of the Black Sea.



In the village of Karolswalde, Volhynia, on July 25, 1828 a child was born to old Peter Becker and his young wife, Helena nee Schmidt. Peter Becker had married three times before he married Helena. There were children from the first two wives, none from the third. He had been a widower in his late sixties when he married Helena, who was only 23 years old. The child that was born was their first, and he was named Jacob Peter. When Jacob was 9½ years old he was placed in a foster home.

In 1833 a brother was born. His name was Benjamin. And in 1840, the two boys were followed by a sister, Maria. Old Peter Becker died in the village of Pastwa, Molotschna, Russia, on March 1, 1842, leaving behind his still young widow and his three minor children. This is probably why Jacob was placed in a foster home.

All three of these Becker children became active participants in the birth and early development of the Mennonite Brethren Church, a new Mennonite movement which appeared during the 1860's in Russia. All three of them have many descendants who today still belong to Mennonite Brethren churches in the United States.

Jacob Peter Becker, the oldest of the three, moved to the Molotschna colony in 1836 and settled down in a vaillage called Elizabetthal. By this time the colony had 60 villages, 1200 families, and 6000 people. The Molotschna Colony was 100 miles southeast of the colony of Chortaza on the Dnieper River, which was the original first colony of Mennonites in South Russia.

Jacob Peter Becker was one of the original members of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Shortly after the church was founded on January 4, 1860, Jacob was elected the first Lehrer, or Minister of the new church. His first wife was Anna Goertz, the widow of a certain Heinrich Hooze. She died in 1860, and none of their four children survived infancy.

Jacob's second wife was Margaretha Wiens. They were married on September 30, 1862, causing quite a storm in the Molotaschna Colony. The leaders of the established Mennonite Brethren Churches did not recognize the newly-formed Mennonite Brethren Church, so they declared the marriage invalid since it had been performed by Elder Hienrich Huebert, and he was not recognized as a bona-bide elder by those ruling the colony. Even with this shaky beginning, Jacob and Margaretha enjoyed more than 45 years of married life, and raised six children. All of them have descendants in the Mennonite Brethren Church today.

In 1875 the Jacob P. Becker family came to the United States and settled

for a time in Wakerusia, Indiana. They moved from there to Bingham Lake, Minnesota, and in 1882 to Hillsboro, Kansas. In 1894 a move was made to Fairview, Oklahoma. He died in 1908.

Before he died, Jacob P. Becker was busy rewriting his book, "The Origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church, 1860". This book is available in the English translation from the Mennonite Brethren Publishing House in Hillsboro, Kansas. Jacob P. Becker had saved up many notes and documents while he was still in Russia.

Jacob's brother Benjamin chose to change the spelling of his name. So Benjamin's line has used the spelling B-E-K-K-E-R ever since. Benjamin was also one of the original founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church. He was selected to be the first Reispredigir, or traveling Evangelist of the new church. He married Anna Neufeld, who is from Ervin Neufeld's, my husband's side of the family through his father, A. R. Neufeld. (Ervin's Great Grandfather Heinrich Neufeld, was also one of those early organizers of the Mennonite Brethren Church.) Benjamin and Anna Bekker had 12 children.

The sister, Maria, married Abraham Regier who was one of the signers of one of the secession documents needed for the founding of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Maria Bekker and Abraham Regier had four children. Only two daughters survived infancy.

The first daughter was Maria Regier, born 1876. She was a deaconess in the Mennonite Brethren Church and served as a missionary at the Post Oak Indian Mission in Oklahoma. She married Dietrich Peters in 1904, but died in childbirth the following year. The infant did not survive.

The second daughter was born in 1879. She was married to Heinrich Bartel, another influential leader of the early Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia. An interesting side-light is related about the first baptism in the Mennonite Brethren Church, which happened on September 5, 1860, when Heinrich Bartel first baptized Jacob Peter Becker, and then Becker baptized three others including Heinrich Bartel. Heinrich Bartel was chosen to perform the first baptism because he was the oldest in the group.

By 1872 there were three churches with 600 members, and their first conference was held in the Chortiza Colony.



The oldest child of Jacob P. Becker and Margaretha Becker was Jacob H. Becker, Ervin Heufeld's Grandfather. He was born in 1865. In 1885 Jacob H. Becker married Florentina Schultz.

Florentina, their second child, was Ervin Neufeld's mother. She was born in 1888.

Ervin's Grandfather Becker and his Grandfather Neufeld both took part in the Cherokee Strip Run for property in Oklahoma. Grandfather Becker settled on land where the city of Fairview, Oklahoma, is now located. This was on September 16, 1893. Many Mennonites, especially from Kansas, rushed to acquire 160 acres of land. This land was homesteaded.

Before the Mennonite people left Russia they had sorted out the largest and best kernels of what was called "Turkey Red Wheat". This is a hard winter wheat. The Mennonites had developed this wheat themselves. It was very hardy and thrived exceptionally well on the prairies of Kansas and Oklahoma. It is well known in farming circles today.

In 1901 Grandfather Becker sold the homestead and bought another homestead located about 4 miles southeast of Fairview for \$2950.

The Becker family attended church services in the South Fairview (Country) Mennonite Brethren Church, one half mile from their home.

A fourth mile from home was a country school where all the children got a thorough English education during the six winter months. Sometimes that was followed by six weeks of German school. About 50 students were taught by one teacher.

The boys often fished for catfish and perch in the nearby Cottonwood and Deep creeks. Turtles were often bothersome and stole the bait. Cottontails were easy to catch in their snow-covered hideouts in winter. Trapping for skunks and civit cats was another sport. Traps were set in the evening. The next morning, before school, the traps were checked and the catch brought home. Sometimes a pet cat was the unfortunate victim. The animals were skinned, furs were stretched on a frame, and scraped and dried. The value of a skunk fur was determined by the width of the white stripe on its back. The narrower the better. This gave the boys spending money.

The farmers had coyote drives where these pesky animals were killed with a shotgun.



Grandpa Becker grew grain and corn on the homestead and on 240 acres of rented land three miles away. There were 10 cows to milk and 12 horses to groom and harness. Lighter horses were used for horseback riding. Young cattle and colts were taken to pasture in the hills during summer.

Grandmother baked six loaves of bread, three times each week, plus all the canning, gardening, and sewing, and then gave birth to fourteen children all told.

There was no electricity. Telephones came to them in 1905. In 1916 Grandpa bought his first car, a 1915 Overland. There were a few drawbacks riding a car instead of a horse drawn buggy. Horses found their way home even if the driver fell asleep on a late evening. The horses could also see the road and arrive home safely on a foggy rainy night, and they didn't need gasoline.

When many friends and relatives started to move to California, Grandpa and Grandma went to find out what was attracting them. In 1918 they bought 40 acres one mile south of Shafter. There was a Mennonite Brethren Church there already. The electric lines had to be extended to the 40 acres, a new Ford car was ordered, a well had to be drilled, and a pump and motor installed. This was all left to Grandpa's brother Frank, while Grandpa and Grandma went back to Oklahoma to sell their land. He harvested the Kaffer corn and Sorgum. The buyer of his farm got the orchard full of fruit. The farm sold for \$9000. He had to pay a mortgage of \$2,479. This left \$6521. A public sale brought \$2500. The wheat he had brought \$3720. He had \$200 in his pockets and \$9690 in the bank. Then they headed for Shafter for the last time.

On the farm in Shafter Grandpa built a large barn. Half the floor space was their home; livingroom, kitchen, and two bedrooms.

The automobile cost \$625. Ten gallons of gas was \$2. Among other things, a cow was \$85, wagon \$63, a team of mules \$225, and a stove \$13.70.

There was much sage brush, and when it was plowed up heavy winds picked up the loose dirt and sent it flying. It was very annoying to say the least.

In 1936 the Grandparents sold their farm for \$7500. There was a \$5000 mortgage. The crop had brought \$500. That left \$3000.

They bought a lot in Shafter for \$150 and moved a two bedroom house onto it. This is where they lived for the rest of their lives. Grandma passed away first. Grandpa lived to be over 84 years old. He drove his car to Oklahoma, and came here to Oregon too, when he was in his 80's.

Those living in the Salem-Dallas area from this Becker clan are: Ervin A. Neufled of Dallas, Greatgrandson of Jacob Peter Becker; Juanita Neufeld Wuerch, Ervin's sister, living in Salem; Juanita's 2 children, Darwin and Debbie Wuerch and Darwin's 3 children; and Earl Becker, who lived in "The Village" here in Dallas, now living in Salem; and Earl Becker's son, Kenneth Becker and family of West Salem. Earl is also a great grandson of Jacob Peter Becker. Then there are our children; Louise Neufeld of Salem, Marilyn Barber and her son of Dallas, and Shirley (Neufeld) Rempel, that is Mrs. Harold Rempel of Dallas. Their children Tami and Phil live in Salem with their families. Tami has 2 children.

Our grandson, son of Shirley and Harold Rempel, is the Archivist for the Mennonite Brethren Conference and works in the Fresno Pacific Library building in connection with the Mennonite Brethren Seminary of Fresno.

About a year or so ago I received a call from a suburb of Chicago, Illinois from a man that identified himself as Robert Baker. He said his mother was a Becker. He had been in the Dallas area a few weeks before, looking for his Becker relatives. He hadn't found any Beckers, but later discovered Earl Becker's name who was then living in "The Village" here in Dallas. They gave him my name and telephone number.

He said his great grandfather, Johann Becker, born in 1830 in South Russia, immigrated to the states in 1878. He is buried in Dallas, Oregon. He was married to an Agatha, last name not known. Johann had owned 200 acres of land out on the end of Ellendale where the bridge is. That would be west. He had died in Independence, Oregon. They had four children, Johann J. Becker who was born in 1854, Peter J. Becker, Agatha Becker, and Abraham Becker Sr.

His son Johann J. Becker married Katharina Boese. They also immigrated to the states in 1878. They had twelve children. The rest of the families are listed on the papers he sent me. He also send a photo-copy of the property in Polk County Oregon that Johann Becker had owned. There were also two sisters in Polk County by the name of Becker.

The second child of this last Johann Becker was a Katharina (Katie) Becker born in 1880 at York, Nebraska. She married Frank Kliever. She died April, 1929, at Dallas, Oregon.

So I used the telephone to call around to people I thought may give me a

lead. One of them told me to call Hank Kliever. So I did and got his wife. Hank was not available at that time. I read this list to Hank's wife and she told me Katie and Henri Kliever were Hank's parents. I sent this information to Robert Baker. I haven't heard any more since.

Now there are all of those Becker lineage of Hans Becker children that stopped long ago in the 1700's and 1800's. If we could find the bridges between one of them to our present time, who knows what we may find.

So far I have about 1650 direct descendants, more or less, of the Johann Becker that was born around 1660. Of course we have only one line that comes down to our time without a break.

I almost forgot - there is another line that has a representative in Polk County. Mrs. Lloyd Enz's maiden name is Zelda Becker. The Enz's attend the EMB Church. In her records she has given me there are two Peter Beckers that head each line, both father and mother's side of her family, going back to the early 1800's.

Some day, who knows, we may fill in more of the puzzle. For now we just have to wait and see who we hear from next.

Oh yes, I must not forget Jacob H. Becker had a daughter Florentina. She married Abraham R. Neufeld. These are my husband's parents. We, the Ervin Neufelds, have four children, eight grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

End of the line so far.

P.S. I called Hank Kliever. He says it has been verified that the Chicago Baker is his relative.

Mrs. Erma Neufeld

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Editor - John L. Fretz

Consulting Editor - Hope K. Lind

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### LOGO CONTEST

We are looking for entries for a Logo for the OMHGS. If you are an artist, or an interested person, send us your sketch or finished artwork. A One Year FREE membership will be given to the winner. We are setting a deadline of February 28, 1990 as the final date for entries. Just draw your logo on a plain sheet of paper in black-and-white, send it to either President or Vice-President as listed in this issue.

### DISPLAY ITEMS NEEDED

Please bring items of interest to be displayed at the October 22, 1989 Meeting. Books, genealogies, artifacts, etc. would make an interesting addition to the meeting. Look around your home, in your attic, and talk to your friends.

### DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

We continue to ask you to consider giving items to the Society. Such things as books, Bibles, hymn books, charts, household items, old style clothing, genealogies, publications, letters, pictures, artifacts, church records, deeds, wills, diaries, maps, documents, or whatever. It has been feared that many such items can be lost or discarded, but can be a valuable addition to OMHGS if donated. Talk to one of the officers for more information.

### WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO TELL US?

We need your suggestions and ideas to make a better and more informative Newsletter. What would you like to read about? What do you like about it? What do you not like? How can we use it in a better way to convey information to our readers? Send your letters in care of the Editor.

### OREGON MENNONITE HISTORY BOOK UPDATE

The book on the history of Mennonites in Oregon and neighboring states, by Hope Lind, is in the process of publication. It will be available in late 1990 or early 1991 according to present plans.

### CORRECTION

The first word in line 6 on page 13 of the February 1989 Newsletter should be "procedures", not "proceeds", as printed. We are sorry for this error.

## FROM EARTH TO GLORY

When our life on earth is ended  
And our body turns to clay,  
Our last enemy is conquered -  
There's a Resurrection day.

Tho' the grave contains the body  
It can never touch the soul,  
Heaven is a place of Mansions  
And our Saviour calls the roll.

One by one we leave earth's portals  
For our mansion in the sky,  
No more pain or death or sorrow  
In our Blessed Home on high.

Safe forever in His keeping,  
Where all tears are wiped away  
And the tree of life is blooming  
In the land of endless day.

Death can never separate us  
From that Blessed Golden Shore,  
It's the gateway into Heaven  
Where we meet to part no more.

So --

From earth to Glory -- Blessed Thought  
The Highway safe -- The ticket bought,  
The landing sure -- The Mansion free,  
A future trip for you and me.

The Angels will our pilots be  
To guide us to eternity.  
We'll only need the one-way fare  
No one returns from over there.

Our Home will be the Glory Land  
Surrounded by the Angel Band --  
Where streets are paved with purest gold  
And many beauties yet untold.

No History in our land relates --  
The joys inside THOSE PEARLY GATES.

- by Nancy (Mrs. Herbert) Widmer



## LETTERS FROM READERS

From Clarence Reeser, 111 S.W. 10 Road, Othello, WA 99344:

We were glad for the presentation about Grandpa Schrock. The history of the Fairview Church was good. I think I remember where the pump, with the tin cup, was located.

I'm getting foggy about who some of the people from early Fairview were. I see from your article that Kathryn Maurer was Anna Schrock's mother. I think Anna had a step-mother, who may have been another Maurer daughter. I think others of that family were Mrs. Nick Leichty and maybe Mrs. Dan Ropp, Sr. Would it be good to further identify people by who they married? Also, it would be better to identify dates, when possible. On page 6 (February 1989 Newsletter) the date of the first Bible School should have been given. Also the dates when Tangent and Bethany left should have been more definite.

From Mrs. Florence Petersen, 2725 Grosvenor Road,  
Victoria, B.C. V8T 3M8:

Requests information about OMHGS and wondered if we have a newsletter. Two sets of her grandparents moved from Manitoba, Canada to the Dallas-Rickreall area in 1885 and 1889. The Vogt family returned to Manitoba, but the Quiring family stayed.

From Weldon D. Neuschwanger, 3616 S. Quince, Olympia, WA 98501:

He has donated a copy of the Neuschwanger Family History (see Books Donated section). He has copies of the 580 page book available for \$20. plus \$2.50 shipping. The book includes family group sheets, documents, obituaries, pictures and more.

## QUERIES

NEUSCHWANGER: I would like more information about: 1. Henry Schweitzer, b. 1870 in Ontario, Canada; d. 1940 at Ashland, OR; 2. Clarence D. Shellenberger, b. 1884 in Osborne County, KS; d. 1969 at Stayton, OR; and 3. Dan A. Neuschwanger, b. 1903 at Birchtree, MO; d. 1959 at Jefferson, OR. Who were Dan's daughters, and do any of his descendants still live in Oregon?

- Weldon D. Neuschwanger  
3616 S. Quince  
Olympia, WA 98501

SCHRAG: I want any information about the Schrag's of Polk and Lane counties in Oregon from the 1890's.

- Julia Garbin  
2409 Glade Bank Way  
Reston, VA 22070

(continued next page)

(Queries, continued)

OVERHOLZER / KINDIG: Wants information about the Overholzers and Kindigs from the Franconia area in Pennsylvania.

- Becky Perry  
21721 S.E. Borges Road  
Gresham, OR 97080  
Phone 658-5951

SPRING 1990 MEETING

Tentative planning for the next meeting will feature the Albany Mennonite congregation, and possibly the Widmer family in Oregon. More details in the February Newsletter.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF May 6, 1989 MEETING

The meeting was held at Oregon State Fairgrounds during the WMHS Auction. All four members were present.

Discussion was held concerning possible addition of a fifth member to the Committee. Hope Lind had in mind something akin to a Librarian, someone who would collect and organize various things donated to OMHGS and she will contact Marjorie Nofziger concerning the idea, since she has expressed considerable interest in such a position and will ask her to present a job description and other ideas to the Committee for further consideration and action. Marjorie was contacted and she accepted.

The desire was expressed to continue keeping the organization as simple as possible.

John Fretz will proceed with the printing of the Letterhead Stationery. It was agreed that no names will be printed on the letterheads.

There was discussion concerning fees from memberships, contributions for specific purposes, etc. It was estimated that it would require a minimum of twenty annual memberships to cover ongoing expenses.

Newsletters will include reports given at the general meetings held twice each year.

Encouragement was given toward use of the following statement: "This is a grass roots organization. We wish to involve as many persons as possible"

The Committee was advised to be thinking of someone to replace Dan as Secretary at completion of his term this year, since he will be unable to continue serving due to other numerous commitments.

The next meeting of the Committee will be called when deemed necessary.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Widmer, Secretary



## RECENT BOOK DONATIONS

Donated by John and Elizabeth Fahndrich, Albany, OR:

Descendants of Jacob Rediger and Catharina Schertz (1986)

Donated by John and Beulah Fretz, Salem, OR:

First Census of the United States (1790) Pennsylvania  
(partial)

William Franklin Shirk (b. 1888) Family History (1979)

Mennonite Research Journal (bits and pieces) from

April 1960, January 1964, October 1964 issues

Many back issues of Christian Living, Festival Quarterly,  
Gospel Herald, Canadian Mennonite, Mennonite Reporter,  
Mennonite Weekly Review, Mennonite Life, Missionary  
Evangel, The Mennonite, and Amish publications: Family  
Life, Young Companion, and Blackboard Bulletin.

Donated by H. Harold Hartzler, Goshen IN:

Two volume King Family History

Donated by Mrs. Ralph Hernley, Scottdale, PA:

Vignettes and Collages: Persistent Memories of an Idaho  
Childhood (1981), by Miriam Sieber Lind

Donated by Clif and Lois Kenagy, Corvallis, OR:

Bender, H.S. - Menno Simons' Life and Writings

Bender, Harold S. - Biblical Revelation and Inspiration,  
focal pamphlet #4

" " Two Centuries of American Mennonite  
Literature

Bender, Wilbur J. - Non-resistance in Colonial Pennsylvania

Brunk, Emily - Espelkamp - MCC - Settlement for German  
Refugees

Burkholder, J. Lawrence - The Church and Community, focal  
pamphlet #2

Christopher Dock Bi-Centennial Commemorations

Civilian Public Service Directory - addresses of those in  
CPS, May 1941 to March 1947

Concern Pamphlet Series, # 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13,  
14, 15, on Christian Renewal, by many Mennonite  
authors

Cosco, Ethel Reeser - Christian Reeser, the Story of a  
Centenarian (1952/53)  
(donated earlier)

Gingerich, Melvin - Service for Peace

Gratz, Delbert - Bernese Anabaptists

Hathaway, Oney - Uncle Oney's Stories

Horsch, John - Menno Simons, His Life, Labors, and Teachings

" " Modern Religious Liberalism

" " The Failure of Modernism

" " The Principle of Non-resistance as Held by  
the Mennonite Church

Horsch, John - Symposium on War  
 Hostetler, John A. - Annotated Bibliography on the Amish  
 " " Amish Life 1952  
 " " Mennonite Life 1954  
 " " Mennonite Life 1962  
 Kroeker, Abraham - My Flight from Russia  
 Lehman, M.C. - The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work  
 Mennonite Publishing House - 1936 Summer Bible School Course for Youth of High School age  
 " " " Mennonite General Conference at Turner, OR. 1969 Reports  
 " " " A Statement of Concerns 1951, adopted at a study conference sponsored by the Committee on Industrial Relations of the Mennonite Church  
 Mennonite World Conference 1978 - Visual Arts  
 " " " " Parable of the Kingdoms  
 " " " " Program and Information  
 " " " 1984 Proceedings  
 " " " " Kingdom of God  
 Metzler, Edgar - Let's Talk about Extremism  
 Miller, Paul M. - Pastoral Care of Demonized Persons  
 Merntzer, Thomas - Theses Concerning T.M. by Committee 1489-1989  
 Peterson, David Chris - Children of Freedom, or Children of Menno? The Oregon Mennonite Church in the Two World Wars (1981)  
 Rich, Elaine Sommers - Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow, (VS in Mental Hospitals)  
 Smith, J.B. - Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament  
 Toews, J.A. - A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church 1975  
 Warkentin, A. - Who's Who Among the Mennonites, Part I (1937) with Melvin Gingerich  
 Wenger, John C. - Separated Unto God  
 Yoder, Gideon G. - The Nurture and Evangelism of Children

Donated from the Lebanon (OR.) Mennonite Church Library:

Erb, Paul - Don't Park Here  
 Hernley, H. Ralph - The Compassionate Community (compiled)  
 Strubhar, Naomi - He Leadeth Me

Donated by Weldon D. Neuschwanger, Olympia, WA:

Neuschwanger from Germany to North America 1846 - the Descendants of Henry and Froenika Neuschwanger and Abraham and Elizabeth (Doney) Shellenberger (1988)

Donated by Alfred and Marjorie Nofziger, Lebanon, OR:

I Promise (1984), a story of the Lebanon Community Hospital, by Doris Neeley Haralson  
 Joint Effort of the Schowalter Oral History Collection and M.C.C. Peace Section - Sourcebook - Oral History Interviews with World War I Conscientious Objectors



Tennessee School District No. 102-C 100th Anniversary,  
1889-1989

The Nicolaus Schlegel Family History and Genealogy (1986)  
Nofziger, Harley - Genealogy of Christ R. Nofziger 1827-1968  
(reprint)

Donated by Vernon L. Roth, Salem, OR:

Family Record of Joseph W. Roth and Barbara (Eicher) Roth  
and Their Descendants (1988)

Donated by John R. Smucker, Manson, IA:

Jonas Smucker Ancestors and Descendants

Donated by Daniel M. Widmer, Salem, OR:

Brief Genealogical and Historical Sketch of Christian R.  
and Barbara Roth Widmer and Their Family

Donated earlier to Pacific Coast Conference Archives, and  
Transferred to OMHGS:

BURCK - Lovina Miller Burck Genealogy, compiled by Viola  
Burck Kropf, 1974 (copy donated by Hope Lind)

MILLER - The Miller Book: A Genealogy and Directory of the  
Descendants of Levi J. and Mattie (Zook) Miller, compiled  
by Margaret Shetler, 1988 (donated in 1983 by Margaret  
Shetler

ROTH - The Genealogy of Christian and Catharine (Rich)  
Roth, compiled by Harvey and Norma Hamilton Reeser, 1953  
(copy donated by Hope Lind)

ROTH - The Christian N. Roth Family Genealogy, 1857-1938,  
compiled by Mary Buckwalter Roth, 1980 (donated by James  
Roth, 1983)

YUTZY - A Branch of the Yutzy Family Tree: Solomon and  
Magdalena Kemp Yutzy and Their Descendants, compiled by  
Ella Yutzy and Esther Youngberg, 1978 (donated by Hope  
Lind)

FAMILY LIFE Magazine, August/September 1978, with article  
"The Amish in Oregon", by David Luthy (copy donated by  
Ellis J. Stutzman)

#### WHERE ARE THE OMHGS ARCHIVES?

Books and other items that have been donated to the Society, and that have been listed in this and the two previous Newsletters, are located temporarily at the home of Al and Marj Nofziger, at 777 Binshadler Street, Lebanon, OR. Call (503) 451-4868 first if you wish to visit. Back issues of the Mennonite Weekly Review, Gospel Herald, The Mennonite, Christian Living, Festival Quarterly, and others as listed in this issue, are at the home of John and Beulah Fretz in Salem.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership in the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society is open to members of Mennonite and affiliated groups, and other persons or groups who are interested in OMHGS and its purposes.

Dues are payable in advance annually, and will be from January 1 to December 31. Individuals wishing to make a contribution of \$10.00 or more annually, rather than becoming a member, will receive the Newsletter, and will be informed of the Society's activities. Your cancelled check will be your receipt, unless you request otherwise.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Enrol me (please check one):

_____ Student	\$5.00	_____ Sustaining Member	50.00
_____ Single Membership	10.00	_____ Non-member Contributor	10.00 or more
_____ Family "	15.00		
_____ Contributing "	25.00	Individual Life, and Family Life Memberships to be announced later.	

OMHGS is supported solely by membership dues and contributions. The Society is a non-profit organization. Gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

## OMHGS Newsletter

OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL  
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