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OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

The History of the Firdale Congregation

Presented by Eileen Weaver

FIRDALE MENNONITE CHURCH—1915-1924 (Extinct) by: Hope Lind writer & Researcher

The Firdale Mennonite congregation was located near Airlie, a small community in southern Polk County with the post office address of Suver; it survived only about nine years.

First Settlers

The Joseph Ewing Glick family, the Menno Blough Weaver family, and his parents, the Emanuel Christian Weavers, were the first Mennonite settlers at Airlie. The Glicks had lived at Nampa, Idaho, leaving there because of alkaline soil conditions and moving to Corning, California. In 1910 they moved to Oregon, living at Albany until the fall of 1913, when they moved to Airlie. The Menno Weavers had moved from Harper, Kansas to Dinuba, California, then to Albany, Oregon about 1911. Emanuel C. Weavers also were at Albany by 1911. Both Weaver families moved to Airlie when the Glicks did in the fall of 1913. Actually, these families lived just across the county line in Benton County, but they had a Polk County address. Ref: (Shetler, p.32; Mary (Glick) Weaver interview, May 18, 1975; Mary Weaver letter May, 1975 GH, Oct. 26, 1911. P?)

There was no school for their children when the Glicks and Weavers moved to Airlie. Joseph E Glick donated land for a schoolhouse. After missing a year of school, his children again went to school, at the new Berry Creek Schoolhouse. (His daughter Mary Weaver remembers the year of no school, as one of fun and good times, the year was 1912) *Mary would have been 11 years old at the time, noted by her youngest son, years later.*

Willard Kennel had given me a pamphlet printed in 1991 about the schools in Polk County. There was a school in the town of Airlie but it was rather far for those folks to go.

In 1914 the Jesse W. Bledsoe family of Idaho and the Odessa Kilmer and Gabriel D. Shenk families of near Dinuba, California, moved to Airlie. Mrs. Kilmer and Mrs. Shenk were sisters, daughters of Barbara (Weaver) Sharer, nieces of Menno B. Weaver and granddaughters of Emanuel C. Weaver. (Shetler; Firdale Church Record p.15; Autobiography of Barbra Weaver Sharer with Family Record; GH, Jan 25, 1923, obit, of Emanuel C. Weaver). Other families soon followed, including relatives of those already there. Some did not stay long. "This the way --- some go others move in," wrote the Gospel Herald correspondent in the fall of 1916. (Oct. 12, p 520)

Early Meetings

The Mennonites near Airlie wanted to organize a congregation and requested this privilege of the Pacific Coast Conference, meeting at Hopewell Church, on October 1 and 2, 1914. The minutes read, "The request from Airlie Brethren for organization was considered and acted upon."

"Moved and seconded that Airlie for the present be accepted as a rural mission station of this Conference, under the care of John P. Bontrager for this conference Year. Carried." (p10)

In a prompt response, John P. Bontrager conducted the first service for the Airlie people in October, 1914, in the home of Menno B. Weaver. At the same time and place, a Sunday school was held, with the attendance of thirtyfive. (Shetler, p. 32-33.)

By February, 1915, the people were meeting in the Berry Creek Schoolhouse, on the corner of the Glick farm. The School Board gave them permission to use it, rent free. By then they had Sunday school every Sunday, with preaching once a month. (GH, Feb. 25, 1945, p 796; Mary Weaver interview)

In May, 1915, John P. Bontrager of Albany and John K. Lehman of Hopewell held a series of meetings at Airlie. J. D. Mishler also participated in these meetings. Of Twentyfour confessions during those two weeks, fourteen were received into the membership of the church, eleven by baptism and three by confession of faith.

It was then that "the brethren", probably the bishops Bontrager and Mishler, decided that the Airlie people should have an exhorter and Gabriel D. Shenk was appointed. *It would seem that this position was similar to that of a licensed minister half a century later.* (Writer's comment) The group also organized a Young People's Bible Meeting, with Menno B. Weaver appointed leader for three months. (GH, June 3, 1915, p 152)

At the 1915 conference meeting in Filer, Idaho, several questions or actions affected the future of the people at Airlie. One item concerned how new congregations should be organized. "New congregations should only be organized where there are sufficient members to hold public services and where ministerial help and bishop and conference oversight are available. Where such conditions are found favorable, the local body should appeal to the conference under whom they wish to labor, to authorize some one to investigate the field and if considered advisable to effect such organization." (Conference Report, 1915, p. 9)

This statement was followed by a resolution. "Resolved that the Airlie Mission be granted to investigation to determine the advisability of organizing a church and ordaining a minister." (Ibid. p.10)

Three months later the committee of bishops, J. D. Mishler, S. G. Shetler and John P. Bontrager preached. (Firdale Church

FALL MEETING

September 17, 2006, 2:30 p.m.

Albany Mennonite Church

3405 Kaiser Avenue NE, Albany, Oregon

Chairman..... Willard Kennel

Welcome and Devotional Meditation Matt Friesen

Congregational Songs

Introduction of Speaker.....Ray Kauffman

Mennonites & Democracy "What Shaped Us?"..... Jim Juhnke

Announcements, Business

Offering

Closing Song and Prayer

Welcome to one and all

Record, p.2; GH, Jan.12, 1916. p.685)

So the bishops organized a congregation of twenty members who agreed to abide by the Rules and Discipline of the Pacific Coast Conference.

Elected to positions of responsibility in 1916 were three trustees: Gabriel D. Shenk for 3 years; Menno B. Weaver, secretary for two years and Odessa S. Kilmer, treasurer for one year. (Firdale Church Record, p.4 & 11) Menno B. Weaver continued in this position as secretary until his untimely death 7 years later in April, 1923. Others elected were Joseph Ewing Glick for the Mission Board and Jesse Bledsoe for the Children's Welfare Board.

That evening, at another meeting, the congregation chose a name for themselves. Of the three names suggested, Sunnyside and Gospel Hill each received five votes and Firdale received eight votes. The Firdale Mennonite Church was named.

At that meeting, a constitution, written by three bishops and committee of three for the Firdale Mennonite Church was read and accepted. Article VII states, "All members of the congregation at the time of organization shall sign this constitution. Thereby agreeing to give it a hearty support." The twenty members listed were Emanuel C. Weaver, Menno B. Weaver, Odessa S. Kilmer, Gabriel D. Shenk, Mrs. Odessa Kilmer, Mary E. Glick, Mrs. Henry F. Pletcher, Martha Glick, Susie Weaver, Ruth Weaver, Mary Jane Sharer, Ada N. Davis, Ann E. Bledsoe, Crystal Morgan, Mrs. Gabriel D. Shenk, Mrs. Joseph E. Glick, Bertha Shenk, Myrta Glick, Joseph E. Glick, Jesse W. Bledsoe. Notes penciled in later indicate that the Bledsoes and Crystal Morgan were from Idaho and Mrs. Henry Pletcher was from Wyoming. Amanda Pletcher was a sister of Mary Jane Sharer, a daughter of Emanuel C. Weaver. (GH, Mar. 12, 1936, 1070 obit of Mary Jane Sharer; Firdale Record Book, p.6)

Other business at this meeting resulted in the election of Menno B. Weaver as conference delegate. The plan for ministerial supply was read and accepted. This specified that Emanuel C. Weaver should be recognized as deacon; it accepted Gabriel D. Shenk's preference to remain an exhorter (*exhorter: A person who urges by earnest appeal or argument; a person who will advise or recommend strongly*) for another year rather than to be ordained and it recommended that ministers be sent to Firdale every two weeks until the 1916 fall conference. All official cor-

respondence was to be addressed to Menno B. Weaver.

In a May, 1916 meeting of the bishops, this schedule was changed to send a minister once a month instead of twice a month for the remaining time before the fall conference. The congregation was permitted to call a minister oftener, with the consent of the bishop in charge, if they made satisfactory arrangements with the minister they called. (Record Book, p. 9-13) The local Mission board would pay the expense of a minister once a month.

Ordained Leaders

Firdale's one and only resident bishop was Gabriel D. Shenk. Appointed first as an exhorter in 1915 (GH, June 3, 1915 p.152), he was chosen by unanimous voice of the congregation and ordained to the ministry for Firdale on December 24, 1916. John P. Bontrager of Albany and Andrew Shenk, Gabriel D.'s father of Oronogo, Missouri, officiated. (Shetler, p.34)

When the Mennonite and Amish Mennonite conferences merged in 1921, it was decided to ordain more bishops for the district. Gabriel D. Shenk was ordained to the office of bishop on August 21, 1921 by bishops Christian R. Gerig, Norman A. Lind, J. D. Mishler and Amos. P. Troyer. (GH, Sept. 29, 1921, p. 503) Shenk served Firdale until he moved to Sheridan in 1924.

One minister besides Shenk served Firdale. On the day Gabe Shenk was ordained bishop; Luke E. Weaver (son of Menno B. Weaver and grandson of Emanuel C. Weaver both deacons of the Firdale congregation) was chosen by lot and ordained minister. Luke was 21 years old, almost 22. Luke Weaver and Mary Glick were married December 12, 1920, eight months before Luke was ordained.

Emanuel C. Weaver was ordained deacon by Bishop Daniel Brundage in 1877 in Marion County Kansas, where there was a group of approximately 27 people meeting. No official congregation was ever formed at that location. (*South Central Frontiers* by Paul Erb, p.165-170) When the Airlie people requested permission to organize a congregation in 1915, Emanuel C. Weaver was then past eighty, and was no longer active as a deacon. However the Airlie people requested that he be given a voice in the conference as deacon and officially recognized in this capacity. (Record, p.9, GH, Jan. 25, 1923, p. 847 obit.)

By 1920 Emanuel C. Weaver was 85, and the congregation's request of the conference for permission to ordain a deacon was with reason granted. On October 17, 1920 Menno B. Weaver was chosen by lot and ordained deacon by J. D. Mishler and S.G. Shetler. (GH Oct. 28, 1920. p. 600-601)

Both Weavers, father and son, served until they died, Emanuel C. on December 31, 1922 at 87 years old and Menno B. on April 26, 1923, of cancer at age 55. They died four months apart. (GH, Jan. 25, 1923, p.847; GH, June 14, 1923, p.223 obits.)

Visiting ministers and evangelists who served Firdale during its ten years, in addition to those already mentioned, included Moses E. Brenneman, Noah L. Hershberger, Omar Miller, William Bond, Daniel F. Shenk, Sanford C. Yoder, C. Z. Yoder and N. E. Miller. Perhaps C. Z. Yoder's visit was typical of that of

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many evangelists, although children's meetings are mentioned in connection with his services more than with other ministers. A participant reported to Gospel Herald, "Recently we enjoyed a real feast of good things, when our Bro. C. Z. Yoder came to us and preached eight sermons, each evening devoting an hour to Bible lessons and one half hour to Children's meeting previous to the sermon." (GH, Feb. 26, 1920, p. 905) *It is unlikely that a meeting of such length would have been spoken of so enthusiastically fifty years later!*

Meeting Houses and Cemeteries

Soon after the first meetings, the people began using the Berry Creek Schoolhouse in Benton County as a meetinghouse. By 1920 attendance at Sunday School was from fifty to sixty-five and the schoolhouse was scarcely large enough. The bishops and ministers of the conference encouraged the congregation to build a church building soon, and Menno B. Weaver donated a piece of land. (GH, July 22, 1920, p.333; Shetler, p. 34)

At the December 25, 1920 business meeting the congregation decided to proceed at once with the soliciting of funds for a building. The trustees were to act as a soliciting committee. (Record, p.27)

Apparently they also began to solicit plans for building. S. G. Shetler of Hopewell Church, sent a plan for the thirty by fifty foot building. In the letter which accompanied it, written March 18, 1921, he encouraged them not to build too small. "Better build a little too large, rather than to hang some to it," he advised. He also said, "No gallery. NO! NO! NO! That is the greatest nuisance that Albany has in her church." (S. G. Shetler letter to: Menno B. Weaver, in OMHGS Archives)

John P. Bontrager of Albany submitted a plan also, for at the December 27, 1921, business meeting, the congregation voted to accept his plan. (Record, p. 28) Then, three months later, at a special meeting called for March 23, 1922, they discussed a building at length. There must have been some objections to the Bontrager plan, for at this meeting two plans were voted on, that of S. G. Shetler and of Gabriel D. Shenk. At this meeting the Shenk plan was chosen, with the specification that those not present have a chance to vote on Sunday. (Penciled minutes kept with the Record book) Gabriel D. Shenk, Menno B. Weaver and Joseph E. Glick were elected to be a Building Committee. The "main building" was to be 32 by 46 feet. (Ibid.)

People in the Albany area helped dismantle the old Geisendorfer Church building which had been used earlier by the Albany (MC) congregation. The lumber from this building was to be used for the Firdale building. But a church house was never built at Airlie. Less than a year later, at the annual business meeting, Jan. 10, 1923, they discussed disposing of money donated for the building, deciding to place the money on interest until further arrangements were made. (Ibid.) When the congregation disbanded in 1924, the money was placed in the fund for the Portland Mission Building. (Shetler, p.34) Some time after the Mennonites left the area, the Berry Creek School burned. (Mary Weaver)

During the congregation's existence, a number of persons died, of old age or illness, or as infants. On January 15, 1919, the congregation decided to clean off one and a half acres for a graveyard, surveying and fencing it. (Firdale Records, p.20) This was on the Menno B. Weaver property adjoining the land he donated for a church building. (Mary Weaver letter) Things did not move very fast, and at the next business meeting, Janu-

ary 10, 1920, a year later, they decided to hire someone to clean off the graveyard and burn brush. (P.24) On December 27, 1921, the chairman (of the board of trustees) was appointed to see to the surveying of the graveyard "at once." (p.28)

When Menno B. Weaver died in 1923, he was buried here, in the Berry Creek Cemetery, just up the hill from his home. (GH, June 14, 1923, 223 obit.) It was also called the Firdale Cemetery. (Mary Weaver) Later the Mennonite graves were moved, Menno B. Weaver's to Oaklawn Cemetery in Corvallis, others to other cemeteries. (Bernice Kennel, Mary Weaver) *The cemetery had to be moved at the request of the U.S. Government. When Camp Adair was built the government took over acres of the surrounding land.* Comment by Harold Weaver, March 2006.

Membership

In January, 1920 a membership roll was started. A total of sixty-six members were eventually listed, although it is possible that when the later names were listed, some of the earlier members had moved away. Included in the list were the family names of Weaver, Shenk, Kilmer, Glick, Good, Sharer, Davis, Hamilton, Evers, Boyer, Tyson, Berkey, Steckley, Yoder, Birky and Fuller. (Record, p. 21-22)

Nurture and Service

Sunday school was held regularly through the years of Firdale's existence. The 1922 annual Sunday school report indicated a S.S. enrolment of 80, with an average attendance of 61. Reference is also made to Young People's Bible Meetings.

In addition to having visiting ministers and evangelists, Firdale hosted the quarterly mission meeting at least twice. One time the schoolhouse was filled, and they erected tents for serving dinner (GH, Aug. 3, 1916, p. 337). Another time, with an attendance of about 300, the schoolhouse was too small and the meeting was held in the woods nearby. (GH July 22, 1920, p.333)

The congregation chose members for the district mission board and the children's welfare board, thus participating in district outreach. In 1919 Brother Weaver was chosen to solicit funds for war sufferers.

Business

Annual business meetings were held, with special ones being called occasionally. At the December 25, 1922 meeting, they decided to have two treasurers; one church treasurer and one to be responsible for charity "which shall be the office of the deacon." (p. 26) At the January 10, 1923 meeting, it was decided that the fifth Sunday collections be used to cover the general expenses of the church.

Disbanding

After Menno B. Weaver died, April 1923, his widow moved to Albany. That fall, 1923 the Joseph E. Glick family moved to Terra Bella, California. In the summer of 1924, the Gabriel D. Shenks, the Odessa S. Kilmers, and the C.E. Hamiltons moved to Sheridan, or elsewhere. (Mary Weaver, notes written about 1926 because of writing on back and her comment "We are still here;" Shetler, p.34)

The last service of the Firdale congregation was held in September, 1924. (Shetler, p.34) However the young minister, Luke Weaver, and his wife Mary (Glick) Weaver, kept the Sunday school going for several more years. It was then a community Sunday school. In 1928 they moved to Terra Bella, California.

(Mary Weaver's later interview and letter) At least one young person married a non-Mennonite of the community. (*And relatives of that union still live around Corvallis, Independence, & Monmouth. A great grandson of Menno Weaver has a residence on Airlie road. This comment by Harold Weaver March of 2006*) The main reason for leaving however seems to have been the soil conditions. The soil was not productive for the wheat and other crops they planted. Many of the men had to go elsewhere for work, some at the sawmill at Airlie. In later years, the bishop would tell over the pulpit of the hard years there. On one occasion a Dr. Wallace came to the home to deliver a baby. As he left, he took a loaf of hot homemade bread for his pay. He knew the family was poor and would not be able to pay in money. (As told by Ray Kenagy)

It is of interest that the land these early Mennonites found unproductive is near the farm of Earl Kennel, a prosperous Mennonite farmer, who was a member of the Prince of Peace Community Church, at Adair Village. Grass seed, allowing flexibility, and commercial fertilizers then unavailable have revolutionized the farming possibilities in the beautiful rolling countryside between Airlie and Suver. Earl Kennel's sons still farm the home place on Airlie Road.

The following is a paper prepared by Harold Weaver for the spring program held at the Prince of Peace Community Church at Corvallis Oregon on March 19, 2006

The Families Who Were Charter Members at Firdale

We are truly grateful to several authors who have helped tremendously to be able to research much of this information. First to Daniel D. Weaver & D.D. Blauch for writing *History of the Rev. Bishop Samuel Blauch of Conemaugh Township, Somerset County Pennsylvania and his Descendants, 1921*, and to S. G. Shetler for writing (cir.1932), *Church History of the Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference District*. To Hope Kauffman Lind for her book *Apart and Together*; published 1990 and still in print. To Paul Erb for his book *South Central Frontiers*; published 1974. Last but not least to Wilbert R. Shenk for his book *Autobiography of Barbara Weaver Sharer with Family Record*. We are also grateful to those who worked diligently in setting up the OREGON MENNONITE HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGY SOCIETY, so that generations to follow will have a place to turn to for researching church and family history.

A special thanks to the **Prince of Peace Community Church** for hosting us today for this bit of history that took place close to 92 years ago just a few miles up the road from here. Eileen and I made a trip down to attend the Sunday service here a few weeks ago, and really enjoyed getting to see some old friends and to meet some very nice new ones.

In preparing for this talk today I was made to take a look back into my past and to realize that today we don't think anything of getting in our air conditioned cars and driving 50-60-70 or more miles to talk about the history of our families and our church. While researching this article I became aware of how difficult it was just a few generations ago for people to get to church for worship or the store for supplies just a few miles away. My grandfather Menno would make the trip from Airlie to Albany and take the lists from several families along to pick up those needed items.

In Wilbert R. Shenk's book *Autobiography of Barbara*

Weaver Sharer with Family Record (A copy of this book is in the Archives library) he has put down in her words how difficult travel was in those days. Church services were only held once every four weeks back in the frontier days. They had no highways but rather trails that were in the summer so deep with dust that they each had to travel with their horse and wagon a distance apart or they couldn't stand the flying dust. Then in the wet winter months those same trails became thick with axle deep mud. Not too conducive to wanting to travel very far. The lack of available jobs often made relocating a real chore. While living in Minnesota, on Thanksgiving Day they had a blizzard—one of the worst! Two of the men went to town, 7 miles away. Father Sharer started to town with a load of wood but soon turned around and came back. He said the track on the road was drifted shut and he could not see the road. He was wise to turn around and go back. The other two men had to stay in town all night. A father and his son had gone into the woods to find wood to burn to keep warm. The father left his son and went somewhere to get help. When he came back the boy was sitting by a tree, frozen. Barbara says, "We could not see 10 feet from the house. We had a long and cold winter. The snow was so deep that we could drive the horses right over the top of the fences.

Barbara tells about the many illnesses that the family suffered through the years. There was typhoid fever and scarlet fever that these pioneers had to deal with. Many times these illnesses resulted in death or if they survived it was a long recovery time. After 6 weeks on the road going from Portland to Sweet Home then on to Mittelon, Idaho (not found on any map today) they stayed there for a year and half.

I tell these brief glimpses into the past because it is so easy for us in our modern world to forget the difficulty and hardships that our forefathers went through to just survive.

Barbara Weaver Sharer was my great aunt and since I was never able to know my grandfather Menno Weaver or my great-grandfather Emanuel Christian Weaver she, through her notes on the back of calendar pages and brought some of my family history to life for me. Barbara was to me the true meaning of living the Christian Life to its fullest. She was a delight to visit and a loving, caring person to all with whom she came in contact.

It is interesting to note that often several families would either migrate to another state together or if one family moved on to another state it wasn't long until other families of acquaintance or even related would move to that same area. This was true of the Weavers, Shenks, Kilmers, Sharers, Hamiltons, and Horsts.

The Weavers that we are talking about today began in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

The Shanks as far back as I have traced them began in Ohio.

The Kilmers go back to Pennsylvania and Indiana.

The Sharers were from Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

The Hamiltons were from Cullom, Illinois.

The Horsts were from Pennsylvania and then Oronogo, Missouri.

The Schrockes were from Holmes County, Ohio.

The Glicks were from Weyers Cave, Virginia.

These families came together in Oronogo, Missouri and some in Peabody and Harper Kansas. Then as some ventured on west a few went up into Idaho, and a number of families moved to Dinuba, California. It was from Dinuba that they then began to venture north to Oregon. Joseph Glick then moved to Nampa

Idaho from Peabody and Harper, Kansas, where the Schrocks also had located. This is where Joseph Glick met Alice Schrock and they married and several of their children were born at Nampa. Often these families merged through marriage of each other's children and then would move along with their extended families to new frontiers.

It seems to me that safety and security and their love of getting together for worship services or just being able to visit with one another helped in their feeling of community. Most all of these were members of the Mennonite church, however some for lack of a Mennonite church nearby would worship with other denominations. I think it was in Idaho where the Glicks and Schrocks worshiped with the River Brethren Church. Later as they moved closer to Mennonite communities they would again worship with the Mennonite believers.

Times were difficult back in the 1800s and early 1900s.

Just to point out a few of the items at that time, in 1904 the average wage was 22 cents an hour.

The average (?) US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

Only 14% of the homes in America had a bathtub.

Only 8% of the homes had telephones. A phone call from Denver to New York City cost \$11.00.

More than 95% of births in the US took place at home.

Sugar cost 4 cents per pound, eggs were 14 cents a dozen, coffee was 15 cents a pound.

Most of their food supply had to be raised in a family garden and even the family garden was shared beyond the individual home and out into the community. It was a good plan they had begun, and is even carried on today. Many food sharing services are still patterned after this plan. Our ancestors often would acquire enough land so that they could raise their own beef, pork and chickens, thus, being able to provide milk, butter, eggs and meat for their families. The old plan of 'Mennonite Barn Raisings' has been followed up with 'Habitat for Humanity' type projects. Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mutual Aid, Mennonite Disaster Service were all born out of the idea of caring for others and have taken that not only to communities but also to the far corners of the world.

Bringing family history down to the more recent years.

The gatherings of people in southwestern Missouri and in southeastern Kansas were: The Shenks, Kilmers, Weavers, Hamiltons, Sharers, and Glicks. Gabe Shenk and Luella (Sharer) were married in Oronogo, Missouri, where the families had come together.

While living in California they mostly settled around Dinuba and Terra Bella; in the central part of the state, in the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Some of the families other than the Weavers who settled in California were Shenks, Kilmers, Sharers and Horsts just to name a few. They probably would have settled here longer but the cost of land was too high. Also the hot arid summers of central California were at times unbearable.

I remember as a child living in California that we always looked forward to spring and summer because we moved our beds out under the trees in order to be able to sleep at night. The inside of the house was too hot even at night. Remember this was a time before central air conditioning and even before electric fans were used extensively. Farm land in California even in those early years was more expensive than most of these fami-

lies could afford. From there they migrated north to the Albany and Corvallis areas of Oregon and mainly settled around Suver, Airlie, and Berry Creek. These areas are just to the west of Albany and North of Corvallis. Being of Mennonite heritage and farmers, they were looking for fertile land to raise cattle and farm products.

The longest trek of their journey was the move from Kansas to California, which I have noted that back in those days was no easy task.

A little diversion here:

- Gabriel Shenk was the son, of Bishop Andrew Shenk (b. August 19, 1850 in Hamilton County Indiana) & Susanne (Good) Shenk; they resided in Indiana, Ohio and in Oronogo, Missouri. The family moved to Oronogo from Elida, Ohio in 1895. Three of their sons, Noah, Perry, and Gabriel, were ordained ministers. Gabriel was ordained minister and a few years later bishop at the Firdale Mennonite Church at Airlie, Oregon. He and his wife Luella Sharer Shenk moved from Harper, Kansas to California and from California to Airlie, and later to Sheridan, Oregon.

- A note here about Bishop Andrew Shenk: The discipline in the White Hall Church in Missouri was always somewhat strict. Bishop Shenk required immersed people to be re-baptized, and the wearing of neckties was forbidden. A number of people from non-Mennonite background became members. In the early years there was some objection to the preacher using notes in the pulpit. Evangelistic meetings were held at Whitehall and one of the evangelists was J.S. Coffman. One person remembers Coffman saying in a sermon on justification that his mother justified him by taking him across her knee and proceeding with the laying on of hands; evidently there was no objection to a little humor in the pulpit back in those days. Of course this was long before 'spoiling' the child came into vogue.

- I see after all these years where Bishop Gabriel Shenk got and "held onto" his beliefs that the wearing of neckties was forbidden. *I was sitting in the balcony of the Sheridan Church one Sunday morning, soon after arriving from Winton, California, to attend Western Mennonite School, and I was staying with the Melvin Mishler family on weekends. 'Cousin' Gabe chose that Sunday to preach on neck attire and here I sat in the balcony wearing a bright red necktie. I knew without a doubt that he was talking about and directly to me as I was the only person in the entire church wearing a necktie. I always took Cousin Gabe with a bit of humor. The next Sunday I humored him by wearing a beautiful hand-painted toned down 'blue' tie. I knew him well since he had visited often in our home in California so although surprised by his proclamation from the pulpit I realized that this was one of his sermon shockers that he enjoyed using. As a teenager my thinking was that my necktie wasn't anymore superfluous than the tails on his 'frock' coat. There are two Mennonite ministers who come to mind when the words energetic or acrobatic in the pulpit are mentioned and those two are Gabe Shenk and James Bucher.*

The Menno Blough and Emanuel C. Weaver families moved to Oregon and settled for a short time in Albany and later in the Suver, Airlie and Berry Creek areas. After a year without the benefit of a school, one was built on land donated by my maternal grandfather, Joseph Ewing Glick. The building was used as

Berry Creek School and also for Sunday services. Two of the teachers at Berry Creek School, at separate times, were Sarah Birky, wife of Joseph Birky, (Luke Birky was born while Joe and Sarah lived at Airlie). The other teacher was Laura Evers, who later married my uncle John Weaver.

The names of those attending services at Firdale

Earl Berkey (note spelling)

Joseph Birky

Sara Birky

Althea Boyer

Cecil Davis

Dewitt Evers

Laura Evers

Wesley Fuller

Susie Fuller

Joseph E. Glick

Alice Glick

Benjamin Glick

Martha Glick

Mary Glick

Myrta Glick

Ruby Glick

David Good

Lizzie Good

E.E. Good

Earl Good

Lizzy Good

Mary Good

Minnie Good

Tillman Good

Charlie Hamilton

Esstella Hamilton

Vernon Hamilton

Violet Hamilton

Titus Hamilton

Walter Hamilton

C.J. Kilmer

Emily Kilmer

Odessa Kilmer

Orva (Sharer) Kilmer

Ada Sharer

Barbara (Weaver) Sharer

Effie Sharer

Grant Sharer

Milo Sharer

Mary Jane (Weaver) Sharer

Bertha Shenk

Gabriel Shenk

Luella (Sharer) Shenk

Wesley Shenk

David Steckley

Sylvia Steckley

Emma Tyson

George Tyson

Glenn Tyson

Issac Tyson

Katie Tyson

Daniel Weaver

Emanuel C. Weaver

John Weaver

Luke Weaver

Menno Blough Weaver

Paul Weaver

Perry Weaver

Ruth Weaver

Susie (Detwiler) Weaver

Hiram Yoder

Louise Yoder

Rhoda Yoder

Wayne Yoder

Of the 64 attendees at Firdale, 32 were related to each other.

When the Firdale Church disbanded in 1924 the Shenks, Sharers, Kilmers and Hamiltons moved over to the Sheridan area. Once the church disbanded, and people began moving away my father and mother (Luke & Mary Weaver) chose to stay at Airlie and they kept the Sunday school going until about 1928. Then they moved to California and Dad found work where ever he could. Later as his boys grew up he was able to work on dairy farms, owned by others and Dad and the boys did the milking and farming. Some of the other jobs Dad took were irrigating vineyards and one job I remember he had was as a shepherd up in the foothills. He was gone a full week at a time and would only get off so that he could return to his family and church duties on weekends. All of Dad's brothers and sisters stayed in Oregon. Ruth his youngest sister lived in northern California for a few years and then moved back to Oregon. Several of the brothers were in the logging, lumber and related industries. I remember that Uncle Dan had a farm outside of Philomath. Uncle John had a farm up at Colton. So the farming was in their blood and they wanted to carry on this type of work. My Aunt Bessie (Weaver) Nendel always lived close to the Airlie area and raised her family there. Some of her children still live in the area.

Bishop John P. Bontrager, one of the early Bishops at Albany Mennonite Church, helped organize the Firdale Congregation. After some of the families moved to California he made a trip south and helped organize the Los Angeles mission work and also the Winton Mennonite Church. J. P. Bontrager was for many years bishop and minister at Winton Mennonite Church. My father, Luke Weaver was also a minister Winton.

My Impression of Mennonite bishops was formed as I grew up under J. P. Bontrager's guidance. He was a shepherd type person. He loved working with and guiding children, and adults and showing them the way to Jesus. I was saved when I. Mark Ross of Kansas came to Winton to hold revival meetings and through J. P. Bontrager's guidance and instruction came to understand salvation and baptism more fully. J. P. Bontrager also held the baptism service in which several of us young people were baptized into the church. Bontrager children were my Sunday school teachers over the years.

I was the only one of five boys born in California. The other four were born at Airlie I was the second to migrate to Oregon. My brother Lyle moved to Portland on the offer of a job. His wife's sister, Nora Hostetler, was living in Portland and that was

a drawing card for them to move to Oregon. I came because my parents wanted me to attend Western Mennonite School. It was with their encouragement that I moved to Oregon. A couple of years after graduating, Eileen Reist and I were married. My parents once again decided to move to Oregon. They worked at the Mennonite Home for the Aged at Albany for a couple of years,

then took jobs at a retirement home in Portland and worked there for several years. My father Luke, passed away December 3, 1972 and my mother, Mary on November 23, 1984.

I am happy to see that after many years a Church affiliated with the Mennonite Church has located near Firdale location. Times change, and people move on, to what are perceived as

S. G. SHETLER
EVANGELIST

"I HOPE IN THY WORD"

PACIFIC COAST
BIBLE SCHOOL

HUBBARD, OREGON, March 18, 1921.

Dear Brother M.B. Weaver,

Greeting:

I received your letter of recent date. Thank you for the receipts. The "Whittier" is Bro. Daniel Rose, Johnstown, Pa. Wish you would write to him. Regret that I forgot to give you his name.

find
Enclosed plan for the proposed church at Firdale. Wish it would be standing there already. I did not know just exactly what size you wanted. You could cut down the figures proportionately. I think that it should not be much smaller, if at all. Better build a little too large, rather than to hang some to it.

The folding doors should be the only ones into the two rooms, because any entrance from the 6 ft. hall will give some mischievous people a chance to get into them and rowdy around there before coming into the main audience room. Albany has that experience. Nogallery. No, NO, NO! That is the greatest nuisance that Albany has in her church.

The two rooms at the end with folding doors make fine recitation rooms for the S.S. Then you can have a few classes in the basement. These with the main audience room gives you ample room for the S.S.

I wish that you would get some estimate as to what the church might cost before conference. I think I mentioned before that it would be good to bring something before the conference. That will give a chance to get it before the people and to solicit the help of some other congregations. Sometimes in a case like that a conference committee is put in to assist the local building committee in getting the funds together. I really think that would be a help to you. What do you think about it?

We began meetings here on Wednesday evening. Rain caused a small attendance the first night. Last night it was good. Remember the work in prayer.

May the Lord richly bless you.

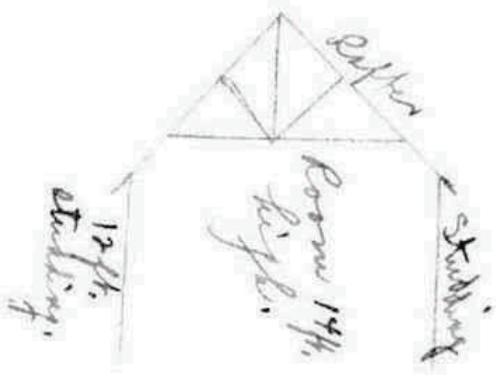
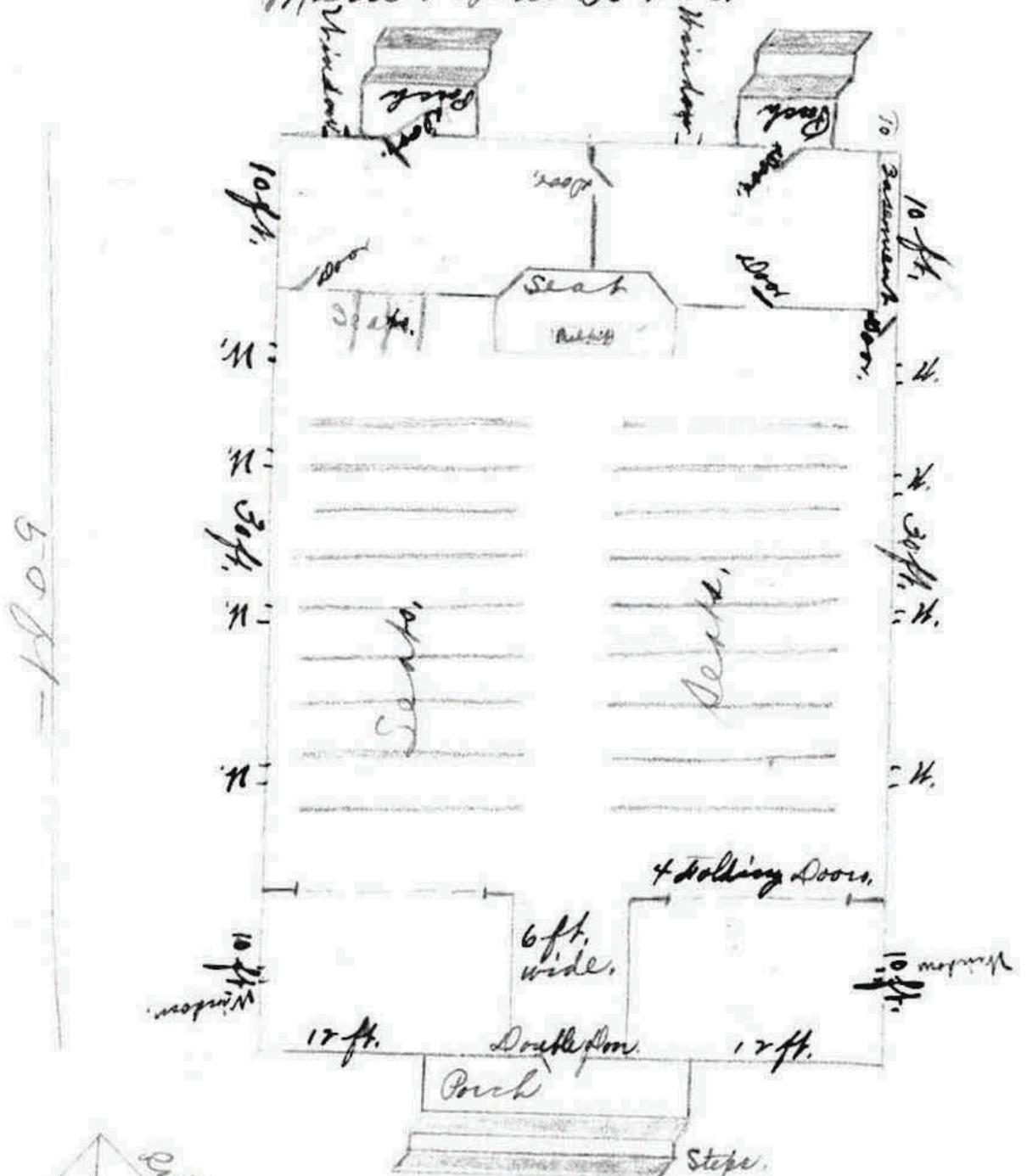
Yours fraternally,

S. G. S.

P. S. We nominated you and Bro. Lind for assistant moderator for the coming S.S. Conference in June. Now, if you would like to get in, start to electioneer. Ha! Ha! I know that is just what you would not do.

S.G.S.

Building 30 x 50,
Main Room 30 x 30.



Front End.
Road.

greener pastures. These moves contribute to the making of history. It has been a pleasure to 'look back' at my parents past and research that part of history realizing it was our previous generations that helped to write these pages.

Postscript to the program: A big THANK YOU to all of you who were able and took the time to attend this meeting. It was very rewarding to see the excellent turn out, there were 98 in attendance. A special thank you goes to Wilma (Shenk) Nisly for leading the singing and for making arrangements with the Hamilton Men's Quartet. The songs chosen were from the 'Old Church and Sunday School Hymnal, c1902. The copy we have has my grandfather Joseph E. Glick's name in it and was handed down to my mother and then to me. The men's quartet was a joy to hear. One of the songs they sang "*I Would Like to go Back to that Old Country Church,*" was a good choice, as it was fitting to the subject and involved the audience by having them sing the chorus each time.

As near as I can recount there were 42 plus descendants of families who had resided in the Airlie and Suver areas and whose parents had attended Firdale Church. There were five in attendance who were born while their parents were living in the Airlie-Suver area.

MY TRIP TO POLAND ON THE SS MEXICAN, A CATTLEBOAT OCTOBER 26, 1945 TO JANUARY 26, 1946 by Clarence Reeser

I registered with Selective Service for the draft, on my 18th birthday, August 25, 1945. I was soon called to Portland, Oregon for my physical exam. Even though I had registered as a conscientious objector to war, I failed my physical, getting a 4-F classification. I was told the reason for my test failure, a Latin-sounding word, gotten from the local draft board to our family doctor, and he said it meant that I was prone to easily catch diseases.

In our church papers I read that personnel were wanted to care for livestock that were to be shipped to war-damaged areas in Europe. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. would pay for shipping costs, Christian farmers would donate springer (pregnant) heifers and/or horses, and people were needed to care for the livestock in transit. Candidates paid their way to New Windsor, Maryland, where the Brethren Service Center was located, and paid their way home after completing the livestock journey. We would each get \$150 for the trip. I completed the necessary application process, via mail, (including another physical, which I passed this time) and was invited to report to the Maryland facility. Bernard Stutzman, an Oregon friend, applied to go and arrived at New Windsor before our ship left port and went on our ship.

Following is a diary of my adventure. I am rewriting it as it was written, with no editing. If I insert any explanations, they will be enclosed by brackets. I was 18 years, 2 months. and 1 day old when my journey began. It was my first trip away from home, where I traveled alone.

I left Albany (Oregon) by train on Friday, October 26, 1945, and arrived at Portland at 8 o'clock. I fooled around in Portland all day and left there at 8 pm that evening on the Northern Pa-

cific railroad for Chicago. We arrived at Pasco, Wash. at 1:30 A.M. on Oct. 27 and waited 6 hours there for a train from Seattle. When we left Pasco we were 2 hours late. The land around Pasco and eastern Wash. is flat and sandy with lots of sagebrush. We arrived in Spokane at 10 A.M. and left there at 10:30. We crossed the Wash.-Idaho-Montana state lines 12:50 P.M. There's lots of big rugged mountains around here. Its part of the Rocky Mt. range. We reached Mt. Standard time at Paradise, Mont. from 2 P.M. to 3 P.M. We reached the Mont-North Dakota state line at 12 A.M. on Oct. 28. Most of Montana that we passed through was used for grazing. I saw several truck farms on the Yellowstone River. In N.D. we saw lots of wheat ranches. We reached Central Standard time at Mandan N.D. from 3 P.M. to 4 P.M. We reached the N.D.-Minnesota state line at 9:15 P.M. and arrived at Minneapolis at 1:15 A.M. on Oct 29. We crossed the Minn.-Wisconsin state line about 6 A.M. From St. Paul we followed the Mississippi river for several hours. There's lots of corn raised here. We arrived at Chicago at 12:15 P.M. We left Chicago at 3:40 P.M. on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad for Baltimore. We had a real nice train. It was a streamliner and was called "The Columbian". It was pulled by a diesel electric locomotive. It went lot faster than the other train. We reached Eastern Standard time at 9:30 to 10:30 P.M. We went through northern Indiana and Ohio and on to Pittsburg, Penn. From there we turned southeast and went through West Virginia and Maryland till we arrived at Washington, D.C. at 9 A.M. on Oct 30. We left Wash, D.C. and on through Maryland to Baltimore. We arrived there at 10:15 A.M. I had to wait until 4:40 P.M., when I took a train on the Western Maryland railroad to New Windsor (where the Brethren Service Relief Center is located). I arrived there at 6:15 P.M. On the train from Baltimore to New Winsor I met Ross Nofsinger from Iowa and Willard Bontrager from Michigan. Both went to Poland on the same boat I took.

On Oct 31 I fooled around the relief center and then on Nov. 1 I went to Baltimore. I had to take my physical examination over again because I had no record of the one at Portland. It was different than the one I took at Portland and I had to talk to them for awhile till they passed me. On Nov. 2 I went to Washington, D.C. and went to the Capitol building, the Library of congress, the Smithsonian Institute, the Pan American building, the Washington Monument and the place where they print paper money and War bonds, etc. I forgot what they call it. On the 3rd and 4th of Nov. I fooled around and on Nov 5 Willard Bontrager & I went to Baltimore and looked the town over and went down to look at the ship (that we were to take the cattle on). On the way back we run across Bernard Stutzman (my friend from Oregon). He had just arrived. On Nov. 6 we went back to Baltimore and Bernard took his physical and got his papers fixed up. It took all day and in the evening we went out to the ship and stayed there (on board) all night. The next day we fooled around and we left Baltimore at 1:30 P.M. (for Poland) on Nov. 8. There's 31 cattlemen on board and Ross Nofsinger is our leader. We reached the high seas some time that night and are traveling about 10 knots an hour. On Nov. 9 two guys lost there breakfast. The sea is quite calm but there are some swells. I was sick for several days from my shots but I soon got over it. On Nov. 10 we lost our first cow and on Nov. 13 we lost our first horse (The dead livestock were dumped overboard. for the sharks). The ocean is getting rougher now and the ship rocks quite abit. We lost our second cow on Nov.

14. We're hitting the waves different now and the ship rocks a lot side ways now. On Nov. 17 we lost our second horse. Luke Bomberger fell down some stairs and broke his rib and a plank fell on Mahlon Baumen. We're eight hours ahead of home now. We lost our third cow on Nov. 19 and third horse on Nov. 20. At midnight on Nov. 20 we entered the English channel and saw the first light house at 2 A.M. The water was very smooth now. We saw some porpoise's this morning. We're going wide open at 13 knots now. About 11:45 A.M. we thought we saw a mine on the port side but we weren't sure. At 11 P.M. an Englishman came on board to pilot us through the Dover Strait. We were through it at about 1 A.M. on Nov. 22 and we stopped there until 1 P.M. We anchored off the coast of Deal, England. I got several stones off the anchor after it was pulled up. Its getting colder here. We saw 27 ships in Dover Strait. Tonight we stopped from 11 P.M. till 4 A.M. on Nov. 23 on account of mines. It was 2 (degrees) above zero this morning. We're off the coast of The Netherlands now. We saw some Dutch fishing boats and a mine sweeper. We lost our fourth cow and our first bull and our fourth horse last night.

SAT. NOV.24, 1945

We stopped from 8 P.M. till 7 A.M. last night. We passed Belgium today and came to Luxhaven, Germany at about 4 P.M. and arrived at the western end of the Kiel Canal at 6 P.M. We went through a town at the beginning of the Canal but I don't remember its name. There were some locks at the beginning of the canal. The canal is about 100 yards wide and there are lights all along it. Its pretty cold with a stiff wind blowing. I wish I had a cap with some ear flaps on it. When we went through the first locks some Germans came on board and bought some cigarettes from some of the crew. I had a notion to run down the gangplank to land and then come back on again but I didn't.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1945

We continued through the Kiel canal last night and arrived in Kiel, Germany this morning. There were about 75 good sized ships anchored in the harbor. German guys would come on board and trade cigarettes for stuff. They didn't seem to want much else. Bernard talked to some of them (He could speak some Pennsylvania Dutch). He couldn't understand them very good but he could get what they meant. There are a lot of sunken German ships here. Some are sunk with the masts sticking out, others are on their sides, and others were down at one end. We left Kiel at 12 noon and started for Danzig. We could have made it in 16 hours if we would have gone straight across the Baltic but we have to go way up north and out around on account of mines. We stop every night on account of mines, too. We lost our fifth cow last night.

MONDAY, NOV. 26, 1945

Today it snowed for the first time. It all melted right away. The wind is blowing very hard and its a cold wind. It makes my ears cold. We passed two ships that were capsized. We are anchored off the coast of Sweden now. There is a small town on the shore. I wish I could go over there. You can see cars moving on the shore. There is a beacon light that goes in a circle and shines all over. Ray Leatherman is giving Ivan Fox a haircut now. He cut his ear. We have 10 calves on our deck now. We only went about 8 hours today on account of the mines. This afternoon we lost our course for about two hours and went

through a mine field. Nothing happened though. It was hazy and the visibility wasn't very good and we were lost all afternoon. We stopped about 4:30 P.M. They measured the water then and it was only 36 feet deep. This ship draws about 30 feet of water so the bottom wasn't very far off.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1945

We went all night last night because the waters were chartered. We expect to get to Danzig tomorrow. The sun was shining today and it is pretty outside. One of the deck hands has a bad appendix.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1945

We came in sight of land at 10 A.M. We saw several ships that had run aground on the shore. We anchored out from the harbor at 2:30 P.M. and waited until 4 o'clock when a tug came out and pulled us in. The harbor entrance is narrow and there is a wrecked ship there. It was bombed and gutted by fire. It was a German ship. The whole business district is torn up by bombs. The railroad cars are short and only have four wheels.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1945

We went to Danzig today (from the harbor). We go on a trolley and it costs six zlotych or schloties or something like that. Its about 3 miles. Practically all of the big buildings have been bombed or burned. Two American girls took us around. They came out here before the war and haven't been able to get back home yet. Their mother and brother are here, too. Most of the things that are sold in Danzig are sold in little booths along the street. All the cars are owned by government officials. The Russians don't take Sundays off but they take one day off every three weeks.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1945

I bought a loaf of bread today. It cost 27 schloties. The Poles who unload the ship bring cans and milk the cows that are fresh. They milked one that was fresh only one day. Bernard and I cut each others hair tonight.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1945

We went to Danzig today again. I bought a mouth harp for 230 zlotys. When we got back to the ship I traded it for a bayonet from Oliver Eckels(I have no idea what I did with it). The Santiago Iglesias, another cattle boat. arrived yesterday at noon. The last cow went off (our) the ship at 2:30 P.M. this afternoon.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1945

This morning we could stay in bed as long as we wanted because we didn't have any animals to take care of. We had church services this morning. Then we wanted to go to some church in town. We split up in two bunches and our bunch never found any church that was conducting services so we went back to the ship. The other bunch found a Catholic church and stayed for awhile. We had ice cream for supper.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1945

We went to Gdynia today. We took the trolley to Danzig and a bus from there. I bought a wooden plate and a picture. Its quite cold here now. The Santiago Iglesias is to leave tonight for Gdysaia to unload their fertilizer, etc, there. They drove their cattle off (the ship) instead of using the winches. They had 380 some cattle on and no horses. There was 18 cattlemen on it.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1945

We were supposed to go out to some farms today but the trucks

we would ride in didn't show up. It snowed about an inch last night but it rained all day. It looks like there might be a silver thaw. Its still cold and the wind blows all the time. It gets dark about 3:30 P.M. and the sun sets about 3 o'clock here.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1945

This afternoon the Polish Minister of Agriculture came to the ship and took us out in the country to a place where they had some of the cows that we brought over. There was a lot of people there and they had a dinner for us. The Governor of Poland and some other guys like that were there. They made a lot of speeches. They had several different kinds of meats, several different kinds of salads, bread, cookies, ersatz coffee and vodka. They would try to get us to drink some of the vodka but most of us wouldn't do it. On the way back to the ship we ran out of gas and a car sideswiped us. We left at 11 A.M. and got back at 7 P.M. We went in the back end of a truck. As we were going to this place we saw a truck run into a car. It sure went fast (the accident) and it looked funny.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1945

It snowed some today again. The trolley didn't run so we didn't go to Danzig as we had planned. We looked Nowy Port over again and sat around all afternoon. Nowy Port is a suburb of Danzig and is its seaport. It is at the mouth of the Vistula river. Ervin Shank bought a grandfather clock and paid \$30 for it. It is an awful nice one.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1945

The "Rockland Victory" arrived last night with 850 horses. They lost about 50 horses on the way over. They came from New York and made it in 2 weeks. They didn't take much stuff out of the ship today. I'm beginning to think we might make it home by the fourth of July. It snowed some more today and its quite cold.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1945

This morning I went up town and looked around and bought some post cards and went to the post office and came back to the ship and ate dinner and slept awhile and read in a Readers Digest and ate supper and talked and that is all.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1945

It was a nice day today. The sun shone all day and the wind didn't blow very much. This morning some guys from the "Rockland Victory" came over and we had church together. This afternoon Bernard and Bondy (Willard Bontrager) and I walked around awhile and took some pictures. Its about 10 degrees above zero and the harbor was froze over with ice. We had ice cream for supper tonight.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1945

I bumped my head this morning. I can still feel it. I sat around and read all day. I think Bernard and Bondy are getting sea sick.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1945

Last night someone shot at the first mate and just missed him. The guy used a sawed off shotgun and the mate had been drinking and just before the guy shot, the mates head dropped down because he was drunk and could not control his head right, so the bullet missed him and hit a bench and then went into the wall. It was probably a Pole or a Russian who shot at him. This afternoon Bernard, Bondy, Ray and I went to Gdansk. I spent 5 bars of soap for some dishes and now I don't have any Polish

money or any American money or anything to trade so I am ready to go home.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1945

The temperature stays around freezing now. This afternoon Bernard and I walked down to the "Rockland Victory" and fooled around awhile and then we came back to the ship. I just got done bumping my head again. About every other day there is a Swedish passenger and freight ship comes in. It hauls railroad cars, too.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1945

It has been snowing off and on all day. I fooled around all day. We went down to the "Rockland Victory" again. It is a nice ship and was built at Portland, Oregon in 1944. I think they will get all the fertilizer out by morning (on our ship). Then they will have the manure all on yet. "I wish we would leave once."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1945

They finished unloading the fertilizer today and have started on the manure. We went down by the beach today. While down there we ran upon a dead man who had washed up on the sand. He had been dead for quite awhile and was mostly decayed away.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1945

It rained all day today. I fooled around all day again. Tonight a bunch of us went down to the "Rockland Victory" and talked awhile. David Lehman of Mich. and a Holdeman guy from Kansas were on it.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1945

This morning several of the guys from the "Rockland Victory" were over for Sunday School and Church services. We walked around town this afternoon because, they said, if we would clean the horse stables we would leave the next day and we wanted to look the place over for the last time.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1945

This morning we heard that we would leave here at 10 A.M. but it was 2:30 P.M. when the tug came and 3:30 P.M. when we were out of the harbor. We went for another hour and then stopped on account of mines. The harbor at Nowy Port is on the Vistula River. Its about 100 yards wide here. We found one stowaway this evening on board. He was a Pole.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1945

Today we all helped clean the horse stables. It took us nearly all day. There was sure a lot of manure. We're traveling pretty fast and are going to go all night.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1945

We arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark today at about 3 P.M. It's a pretty town and hasn't been damaged by the war. We went part ways up town this evening and expect to go to the main part of town tomorrow. We're getting ballast here and they are using sand for ballast. We're supposed to leave here Friday morning.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1945

Today we looked the town over. It is a pretty town and has over a million inhabitants. There are a lot of city parks around and they have statues all over them. All the educated people around here can talk English. There's some large department stores and banks here. In a lot of ways this seems like an American city. We can buy ice cream here but its not as good as at home. We

ate dinner at a restaurant and it cost 5 crowns.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1945

We went uptown today, again. We get 4 crowns and 70 ores for a dollar. The people here seem to be more civilized or cultured than in Poland. They finished putting ballast on and we're supposed to leave at daybreak tomorrow. When they get ballast (sand) here they take boats out in the ocean and put a pipe down into the sand and suck the sand up. There's quite a few cars here and a lot of horses. Most of the cars are American makes but they look different than the ones at home.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1945

We were supposed to leave Copenhagen at daybreak but it was to foggy and we had to wait until 11 A.M. when we started. Some of the guys almost got left and they would have if it hadn't been foggy. After we had went for about an hour we stopped and dropped anchor. We waited for about 1 1/2 hours until the fog lifted and then we went on. At about five P.M. we left the Baltic Sea and came into the North Sea. There was a narrow channel that we had to go through. The first mate and several other guys initiated all the rest of us who had never been through before. They rubbed lampblack all over our faces. If we washed it off they said they would cut our hair off. About 7 P.M. the first mate came down dressed as King Neptune and Jim Farrel, the U.N.R.R.A. man, was supposed to be his wife. The mate had us all get together around him and then he had several of the guys get a bucket of water and some other stuff and set it around him and then he made a speech. When he was through he dipped his hands down into the water and threw it all over us and that was all there was to it. This evening the starboard engine broke down but they fixed it already. It was a valve went out or something like that.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1945

We had Sunday School this morning. About 10 A.M. we could see part of Norway and we could see it all day. The water is getting rougher all the time and it is supposed to get rougher all the time here on the North Sea. This evening we had another meeting. Several days ago deckhand Jack and another guy took the King of Denmark a Christmas greeting from the S.S. Mexican. Today he sent a Christmas greeting by radio to us.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1945

Yesterday a gale started up here along the Norwegian coast. Last night it was blowing 60 miles an hour and it was down to 45 miles per hour this morning. We turned around and headed into the wind and now they're running the engines slow and we are in the same place as we were last night. The ship is rocking quite abit. The coastline of Norway has lots of rugged mountains rising straight out of the water. This afternoon we went down into the #1 hatch and played ball. Tonight we had a program. there were several dialogues and songs. etc. We drew names for Christmas and I got Alvin Hitz's name. I got him a little cardboard doll with a round bottom and if you tip it over it bounces right back up again (I don't know where I got it, and did I buy it? I thought I was out of money?). I received a Danish coat-of-arms on a little pin but I don't know who it was from. Tonight Ross (Noffsinger, the cattlemen's leader) said the Skipper told him to tell us to be sure to pray for him tonight that he would bring this ship safely through

this storm.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1945

Its still windy. This morning we started out for Scotland and went until noon but the sea was rougher out away from shore so we turned around and went back. We had turkey and lots of other stuff for dinner. We had two slices of ice cream for supper. We had another meeting tonight. Part of the time we sang and the rest of the time different ones of us told how we spent Christmas at home.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1945

Last night we stayed up until 1:15 A.M. At 4 A.M. this morning we started for Scotland again. the wind isn't blowing much now. We expect to see Scotland tomorrow. We played ball last night. I washed some of my clothes this morning. I kept putting it off until I had a big pile.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1945

We sighted land about 9 A.M. this morning and entered the firth of Forth about noon. We're supposed to go to Edinburg now instead of some place on the north coast of Scotland. We arrived in the locks here at 7:30 P.M. (to refuel). Bernard and Bondy and I got off and walked up to Grangemouth. Its a small town about 20 miles from Edinburg. Everything is closed here. They close about 7 P.M. We took a bus to Falkirk. It cost 2 1/2 pence. Everything was closed there, too. The busses are double-decked here. We came back to the ship about 11 P.M. We're supposed to leave here tomorrow morning.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1945

We left Grangemouth at 11 A.M. and at 12 noon we ran aground on a sand bar in the Firth of Forth. They reversed the engines and tried to back off but we didn't move. We waited till 9 P.M. when the tide came in and we made it. Grangemouth is a suburb of Edinburg. We're supposed to go through the English Channel now.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1945

Today nothing much happened. Some of the guys are playing table tennis now. This evening we took some boxing gloves down in the #1 hatch. It was a lot of fun but it wears a guy out pretty fast.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1945

This morning we passed through the Straits of Dover. The Captain said if nothing happened we would reach the States in two weeks. I got some rocks off the anchor. We had ice cream for supper tonight.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1945

We could still see England this morning. The ocean has lots of swells and the ship rocks quite- a-bit. I felt a little sick today. Tonight we had a Dr. 1.Q. program. The questions were simple but it was quite-a-bit of fun. I stayed up until midnight tonight.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1946

Nothing much happened today except the regular routine. The sun was shining most of the day. We had turkey for dinner and a pile of other stuff. Tonight we had two slices of ice cream. We got an iron from the steward and Bondy ironed our shirts.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1946

This morning an American aircraft carrier passed us on the

starboard side. It was about a mile away. It was called "The Grote" or "Grotta" or something like that. Tonight I talked to a guy in the engine room and he said it would take about 12 days to get to the States.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1946

The sun was shining most of the day. Today they finished playing off the ping pong tournament. Andrew Nafziger beat and Willard Bontrager was runner up. Tonight we played ball again.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 1946

The deck crew is cleaning out the rest of the manure. They are just about done. We heard that we would probably go to Baltimore instead of New York now. We're about half way across the ocean now.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1946

Today we heard that we are to go to Boston and are due there Friday noon. We have been having nice weather the last several days. The sun shines most of the time. Several birds have been following us across the Atlantic.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 1946

We had Sunday School and church services this morning for the last time. It rained this afternoon. About noon some of the guys saw some porpoise's on the port side of the ship.

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 1946

Early this morning we went through a storm. It was over by morning though. It is still a little on the stormy side with some rain. We only went 229 miles today.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1946

The ocean was quite rough today. One time we were on the front end of the ship and we hit a big swells and the front end went clear out of the water. Several times the propellers were practically out of the water. When they come out of the water the spray really flies. Its getting colder all the time. Today we went 226 miles.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 1946

Last night I went to bed about 10 P.M. I could not sleep though, so at 3:30 P.M. (A.M.?) I got up and went in the dining hall. All the mustard and catsup jars had slid off the tables onto the floor and broke. A bunch of dishes had fallen on the floor and broken, also. The ocean was real rough and the most the boat rolled was about 25 degrees. I thought it was going to roll over but the steward said it could roll to 45 degrees and not turn over. We only went 175 miles today because it was rough and the propellers were out of the water quite abit of the time.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 1946

This morning when we got up the ocean was very calm and the ship didn't hardly rock. This afternoon it was very rough, though. We went 266 miles today and at noon we had 348 miles to go yet.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1946

This morning the wind was blowing hard against us and the tide was going out and we didn't go very fast for awhile. About 3 o'clock it turned and we have been going pretty good since. Tonight the starboard engine is balking and it is running half speed. We went 180 miles today.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 1946

We arrived at Boston. Mass. at about 11 A.M. this morning.

Then the custom officials came on board and we had to declare everything we had bought on a sheet of paper. Then we took everything down on the dock and they looked through our baggage to see if there was anything there. After that we signed off the ship and received our two cents pay (Did the ship's owners have to pay us a token wage of one cent a month, to let us work on board?). We were finished then and we went to the railroad depot and left for New Windsor (MD) on the N.Y., N.H. & H railroad to New York and from there on to Pennsylvania. We arrived at Baltimore at 11 P.M. We found a guy who said he would haul us out to New Windsor for \$3 each. so he hauled us out here as no train was running then and we arrived at 3:15 A.M. on Sunday morning (I have no idea how I could get train tickets, if I had already run out of money while still in Poland. Maybe U.N.R.R.A. was responsible to get us from Boston to New Windsor?).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 1946

We got up about 8 A.M. this morning and ate and then fooled around all morning. We're supposed to get our money (wages, \$150) tomorrow. This afternoon Bernard & I & two other guys were in New Windsor fooling around. While there we found a good-sized chicken brooder that had just caught on fire. It had started from the brooder stove some way and the floor was burning in one spot. We put water on it and had it part ways out when two fire engines arrived and they finished it. It didn't hurt many of the chickens in it but they were starting to get droopy from the smoke. I'm going to bed early tonight. Ross Noffsinger left for home this morning. Paul Holdeman is staying for awhile. He was on the "Rockland Victory" and it arrived about a week ago. He is Ivan Holdeman's brother. The "Santiago Iglesias" got here two days before us.

MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 1946

We (Bernard Stutzman and I) left New Windsor on the eight o'clock train. When we arrived in Baltimore we cashed our checks (for \$150) and left for Wash. D.C. and arrived there at 1 P.M. We went on a sightseeing tour taking in Arlington Cemetary, Mt. Vernon, Alexandria, Va., and lots of other places besides. It cost \$3.50. We saw (where Lincoln was shot) Fords theater and then the place where he died. We went to the tomb of the unknown soldier in Arlington Cemetary. It is guarded by a soldier all the time. We got a room in the Com-mode Hotel. The room number is 417. It cost \$4.50.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1946

This morning we went on a sightseeing tour of the government buildings of Wash. D.C. We got through with it at about 2 P.M. and at 3:45 we left for New York on the B&O R.R. We arrived in New York at 8 P.M. and we started looking for a hotel. We looked in about a dozen different ones and they were all filled up so we finally decided to leave for Chicago that night yet. We had intended to look around in New York tomorrow but now I guess we won't. We left New York at 11:35 on the New York Central R.R. for Chicago.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1946

We were going to stop off at Niagra Falls on our way west but we would have had to wait for several hours on a train there so we just kept on going. We passed through Goshen, Indiana on the way. We arrived in Chicago about 5 P.M. and from there we took an elevated train to the Greyhound Bus Depot. We left Chicago at 6:15 P.M. for Nebraska and arrived in Omaha at 11

A.M. the next day.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 1946

We passed through Illinois last night and part of Iowa. It was moonlight though, and I could see quite a bit of the country anyway. We went through Des Moines and Council Bluffs and arrived in Omaha at 11 A.M. this morning. At noon I left for Lincoln and Bernard left for Wood River at 12:30 P.M. (where he had relatives. We traveled on alone the rest of the way home) I arrived in Lincoln at 2 P.M. I thought Fred Yeackly's lived at Shickley (Nebraska) so I bought a ticket to there and waited till six o'clock when the bus would leave. (Fred Yeackley was a first cousin of my mother's. In about 1944 Fred and Lydia Yeackley, with their youngest children Ray and Ruth, spent about a year living around Albany, so I knew them well). After I had wait awhile I thought I'd better call long distance down there and make sure so I called and the telephone operator said they didn't have any number for Fred Yeackly's so I figured they didn't live there then. I then looked in the Milford telephone book and saw several other Yeackly's so I had my ticket changed to Milford. I left Lincoln at 6:10 P.M. and arrived in Milford about 7:40 P.M. I called them up from the bus depot and Fred came after me. I guess I surprised them a little bit. When I came in the house Ray introduced me to another girl there. He said she was his girl friend. A little later I found out they were going to be married on Sunday.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1946

Today I helped Fred with his turkeys. We chased about 650 into his turkey shed and put saddles on about half of them (to protect their backs from the tom's claws when breeding). Tonight Ruth (Yeackley) and Glen and Erna Salzman and I went to the Fellowship Hour at the East Fairview Mennonite Church. Eva (Fred's sister) was there and she told the leader I had been to Europe and so they called on me to get up and give a talk. I was scared but I lived through it.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 1946

Today we fooled around with the turkeys some more. Fred's are busy getting ready for the wedding. This afternoon I went to Milford. I saw Dave Redigers (an Albany friend) brother there.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 1946

Today I went to church with Freds. Ray and Evelyn are to get married this morning. Ruth (Yeackley) and Phyllis Stauffer are the bridesmaids and Clarence Lickty and Ellis Lickty are the best men. There are between 350 and 400 people go to the East Fairview Church. They were married right after Sunday School and then after church they had a wedding dinner at Freds place. There were about 100 people present (at the dinner). This evening I went home with Glen Salzman. While at their place I tried to call Wood River to get a hold of Bernard to see when he wanted to leave (for home). I called to some Swietzers place. He wasn't there but they said they would tell him to call back to Freds tomorrow (We never did talk, and both went on home alone). I went to the East Fairview Church in the evening again and then went home with Eva Yeackley. She and her mother live about 8 miles out in the country. I'm supposed to stay here tonight.

MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 1946

This forenoon I went with Eva to a farm sale. Some of the

women from church are serving lunch there. I fooled around there all day and then this evening I went out to Bert Stutzmans (sister to Fred) place. I ate supper there and then after supper there oldest boy Merle, took me down to George Yeackleys. I stayed there about two hours and then we went back to Stutzmans again. George Yeackleys have one boy in the navy and three others at home and one girl. Bert Stutzmans have two boys and two girls. There youngest boy can't talk and something, is the matter with him. He is seven years old. I will stay here overnight tonight.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1946

This morning Merle took me in to Joe Zimmerman's place (more relatives). They have two grandsons living with them. Jimmie is 11 years old and Richard is seven. I helped Joe put in a sewer pipe this afternoon. After supper I went skating with Glen and Erna (Salzman) and two of there neighbors. I was always falling down. We skated about two hours and then I went up to Fred's place. They were at Orville Yeackleys. They had a reception for Ray and Evelyn. I was invited but I wanted to go skating instead. It was after ten o'clock when we quit so I got in Freds old Model A pickup and went rattling over to Orvilles place. I got there in time for the ice cream.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1946

I thought I'd get away this morning but Fred's would have had to take me about 15 miles away so I waited till 8 P.M. and took the train to Grand Island. I got there about 11:30 P.M.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 1946

I left Grand Island at 2:30 A.M. on the Greyhound bus. We reached Chyenne, Wyo. about noon. The wind was blowing real hard. After we left Chyenne we had to go slow for quite aways on account of the wind. We reached Salt Lake City at 8 P.M. that night. While we were there we had to change to a bus that goes through Reno and Sacramento because the bus drivers were striking on the run between Salt Lake City and Portland. It was dark and I couldn't see any of Great Salt Lake. Practically all of Nevada we crossed was desert with sagebrush.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 1946

The land here in Nevada is rolling with lots of sagebrush. We see signs along the way that point off to one side and say that a town is off about 30 miles. There's just a little trail going off through the sagebrush and I can't imagine what kind of a town is way out there. The driver goes 70 miles per hour sometimes and we're rolling along. This morning we saw a herd of about 25 antelope by the side of the highway. When we left Grande Island we were on U.S. highway #30 and when we got to Salt Lake City we changed to U.S. #40 into Sacramento. After we left Reno we started climbing the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Donner Pass, at the summit is about 7100 ft. above sea level. There's several feet of snow on the top. We reached Sacramento at 8 P.M. and left at 9 P.M. on U.S. #99 for home.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 1946

At Weed, Calif. we changed to the Dalles-Calif. highway through Klamath Falls and over the Willamette highway to Eugene. The high water has damaged some of the highway. I got to Albany at 1:30 P.M.

ROSTER OF CATTLEMEN ON THIS TRIP

NAME	AGE	PLACE
John S. Baker	18	New Enterprise, PA
William Barkdoll	73	Naperville, IL
Mahlon Bauman	17	Maugansville, MD
Luke R. Bomberger	18	Mount Joy, PA
Leon H Buckwalter	22	Comins, MI
Willard L. Bontrager	22	Bareville, PA
Charles H. Deal	35	Scottville, MI
Elmer H Diehl	53	Sterling, IL
Oliver Dove	25	Manassas, VA
Oliver B. Eckles	18	Elkhart, IA
Ivan M. Fox	20	New Holland, PA
Albert Guyer	19	New Enterprise, PA
Alvin Hitz	48	Polk City, IA
John Hollinger, Jr	19	Ephrata, PA
L. J. Hoover	42	Tippecanoe, IN
Ray L. Leatherman	22	New Paris, IN
Harold M. Mordeall, Jr.	17	Gainesville, VA
Paul E. Martin	22	Ephrata, PA
Lester E. Martin	17	Hagerstown, MD
Raymond G. Martin	18	East Earl, PA
Wilbur H. "Biz" Mellinger	19	New Holland, PA
Simon S. Miller	59	Des Moines, IA
Andrew J. Nafzieer	18	Gap, PA
Ross L Noffsinger	28	Elkhart, IA
William R. Pellman	21	Lancaster, PA
Calvert R. Petre	16	Hagerstown, MD
Clarence Reeser	18	Albany, OR
Paul D. Reitz	21	Lancaster, PA
E. S. Rowland	62	Hagerstown, MD
Irvin S. Shank	29	Hagerstown, MD
Bernard Stutzman	17	Lebanon, OR

SPECIFICATIONS OF S.S. MEXICAN AND THIS VOYAGE

This ship was built in 1907
 Length of ship: 489 feet
 Width: 50 feet
 Depth at center: 40 feet
 Empty weight of ship: 5,024 tons
 Maximum load: 8,030 tons
 Load this trip: 2,500 tons
 Speed traveling 11 1/2 knots
 Crew needed to run ship: 54 men
 Ship has two 2500 HP steam engines
 Ship moves 17 feet each prop revolution
 RPM's of props: 72 RPM's
 Prop size: 15 feet in diameter
 Shafts from engine to props: 14 1/2 inches in diameter
 Oil needed when going for 24 hours: 315 barrels
 Ship distills 22 tons of water daily
 Ship had 4 anchors. Each weighed 5 tons. 700 ft. of chain on each anchor
 Number of livestock when leaving Baltimore: Cows 444, Bulls 14, Horses 202. Calves 2
 Number livestock lost: Cows 4, Bulls 1, Horses 4, Calves 2
 34 calves were born on this trip
 Number of pounds of provisions: Meat 23,000, Sugar 3,300, Coffee 2,000, Flour 6,200
 Bales of hay 5,721; Straw 1266
 Cost to transport one animal: \$150
 Wages per cattleman for trip: \$150
 These expenses paid by U.N.R.R.A.; Farmers donated livestock
 I hope the readers will forgive my grammatical errors. I tried to

type it exactly as it was written. In September, 1946, I entered high school as a 19-year-old freshman.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT MY CATTLE BOAT TRIP

I think I purchased the booklet that I used as a diary, after we arrived in Poland. I have a hunch that I decided to keep a diary after we had reached Europe. I think the thoughts given before November 24 were given from memory. I am assuming that I started writing daily on November 24, because that is the first identified date in my account, and transferred those thoughts to the "diary" after it was purchased.

Permission is given to OMHGS to use any of this account in their records. Clarence Reeser – May 3, 2006

A STORY BEHIND THE STORY by the Editor

In April 1907 a ship slips off the launch pad at the Union Iron Works of San Francisco, California and splashes nosily into the water. This ship is christened the "SS Mexican" and is soon flying the flag of its owner the American Hawaiian Steamship Company of New York City. It is likely that SS Mexican carried sugar from Hawaii and goods through the Panama Canal between the two coasts of the United States for the first nine years. But in 1916, owners wished to take advantage more lucrative wartime trade in the North Atlantic.

The War Department found it needed more horses in Europe in World War I and on December 10, 1917 chartered SS Mexican to transport them.

The use of the SS Mexican was acquired by the Navy, December 23, 1917 and commissioned the same day.

With the War ended and troops needing transportation home, December 1918 saw the USS Mexican converted for the purpose.

She was decommissioned, August 4, 1919 and returned to her owners (American-Hawaiian Steamship Company) and civilian operation.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was established November 9, 1943.

The Governments or Authorities whose duly authorized representatives have subscribed hereto, Being United Nations or being associated with the United Nations in this war, Being determined that immediately upon the liberation of any area by the armed forces of the United Nations or as a consequence of retreat of the enemy the population thereof shall receive aid and relief from their sufferings, food, clothing and shelter, aid in the prevention of pestilence and in the recovery of the health of the people, and that preparation and arrangements shall be made for the return of prisoners and exiles to their homes and for assistance in the resumption of urgently needed agricultural and industrial production and the restoration of essential services, Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

There is hereby established the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

From Pamphlet No. 4, PILLARS OF PEACE by the Book Department, Army Information School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., May 1946

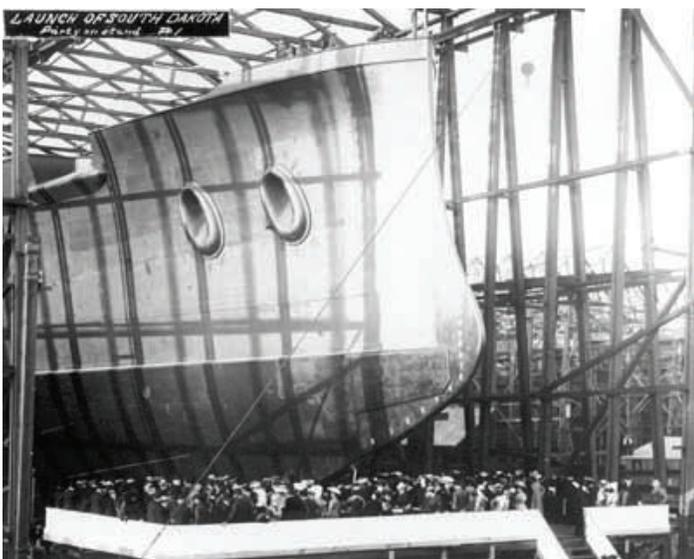


SS Mexican

(In researching this article I noticed that many of the American Hawaiian Steamship Company ships had names of countries, states and cities)
U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph

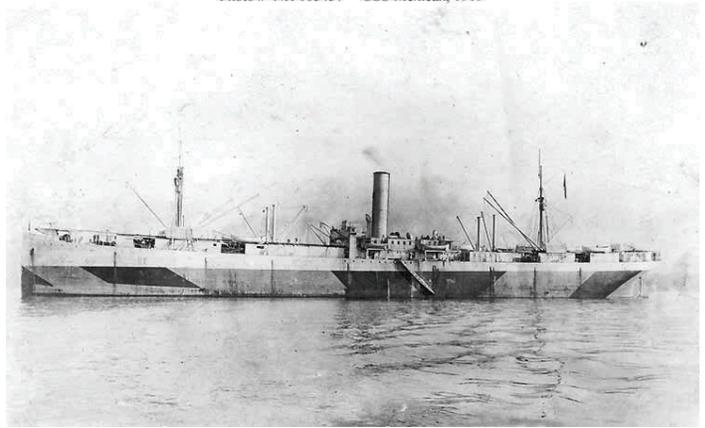
March 28, 1944: Joint Resolution of the United State Senate and House of Representatives To Enable the United States To Participate in the Work of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is hereby authorized to be appropriated to the President such sums, not to exceed \$1,350,000,000 in the aggregate, as the Congress may determine from time to time to be appropriate for participation by the United States (including contributions in funds or otherwise and all necessary expenses related thereto) in the work of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, established by an agreement concluded by the United Nations and Associated Governments on November 9, 1943.



Launching platform
 Union Iron Works, San Francisco, California
 (ship in picture is South Dakota)

Photo # NH 103457 USS Mexican, 1919



USS Mexican, 1919

**Displacement 19,550 t.; Length 488' 3"; Beam 57' 2";
 Draft 32' 6"; Speed 13 kts.; Complement 108;
 Armament one 6" and one 6-pounder.**

U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph

1945: Brethren Service Committee of the Church of the Brethren under contract with the UNRRA places ads in newspapers across the country reading:

"Two thousand men wanted to serve as livestock attendants on board UNRRA ships carrying livestock to Europe to replace killed-off animals. Applicants must be able to work with animals, willing to do manual labor, and of good moral character. Men especially desired who will conduct themselves without reproach in foreign ports. Age 16-60. Trip takes 4 to 6 weeks. Pay \$150.00 per trip. Apply Brethren Service Committee, New Windsor, Maryland."

Also in 1945; Clarence Reeser saw the advertisement or a reference to the ad and responded. On November 7, 1945 SS Mexican and Clarence Reeser left for Poland on a relief mission.

While we have no evidence of the fate of the SS Mexican, we do know the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company experienced a hostile takeover in 1955 by billionaire ship builder Daniel K. Ludwig (one of the world's largest independent ship owners) and the ships were sold. It could be the SS Mexican was sold for scrap because of the age of the ship and the end of the steam era. Most new ships built since 1960 have had diesel engines. A few steam ships were converted to diesel power; one of the most notable being the Queen Elisabeth II.



**FLAG (white on blue) OF THE
 AMERICAN-HAWAIIAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY**

drawing by Editor