

Summer 2005

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Heritage Horizons

...a memorial book was written in His *presence*, recording those who revered Him
and those who had the highest respect for His name...Malachi 3:16



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Point of View *by Lenore Lang*

We need to be reminded of what other Christians have done in the past to enable us to enjoy what we have today. It didn't "just happen." See below on this page.

Read about an anniversary in Wisconsin in December of last year, and of a place called **Blooming Grove** in Pennsylvania. Page 2.

Then, a dear sister and a faithful brother in the Lord are no longer with us. Read about their lives. Page 3.

Archivist Berneice Westerman has good thoughts for us in her *Armchair Traveler*, and Archives Director George Lang writes about an important Dedication Service. Page 4.

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"Live near to God,
and all things
will appear
little to you
in comparison to
eternal realities."

Robert Murray
McCheyne

LORD We keep forgetting all those who lived before us. We keep forgetting those who lived and worked in our communities.

We keep forgetting those who prayed and sang hymns in our churches before we were born. We keep forgetting what our fathers have done for us. We commit the sin, Lord, of assuming that everything begins with us.

We drink from wells we did not find. We eat food from farmland we did not develop. We enjoy freedoms which we have not earned. We worship in churches which we did not build. We live in communities we did not establish. This day, make us grateful for our heritage.

Amen.

The Printery, Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba

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GRACE CHURCH CELEBRATES 150th ANNIVERSARY

The Grace Baptist Church of Racine, Wisconsin, celebrated its 150th anniversary on Sunday morning December 5, 2004 with special speaker Dr. Phil Yntema, former Executive Director of our NAB Conference.

In a Pioneers for Jesus Newsletter written in October 2004, Edgar and Joyce Hoffman wrote: "All of us remember the history lessons in elementary school about such pioneers as Daniel Boone, Lewis and Clark, Davy Crockett, and others. What about pioneers Rudolph Haab and his wife, Babetta Egli, Franz Hubachek, Julia Amann, and 12 other pioneers....

It is December 5, 1854 and 17 German Baptists began meeting in homes as they started a new church called the German Close Communion Baptist Church. Their homes were probably small with crude furnishings. The smell of burning wood emanated from the **fireplace** which kept them warm from the cold winter chill. Despite the chill outside, their pioneering hearts burned for Jesus!

When these 17 passionate pioneers began their ministry adventure, no one dreamed how God would bless their vision. Almost 150 years later, that small church plant in Racine has evolved into Grace Church, a 75,000 square foot facility on 63 acres of land. The inside of the facility is equipped with high tech equipment, HVAC technology has replaced the **fireplace**, and the initial 17 people have mushroomed into an average Sunday School attendance of 525.

Looking back, all the Grace family can say is, "Look at what **you** have done, Lord!"

Church members made an inspiring 33 minute DVD— "What Christ has done through the Church"—containing pictures of the early history of the church and interviews with older members and with present staff persons.

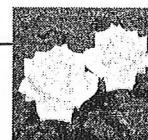
The idea for such a DVD is a good one to share with you, our readers, who might want to make similar DVDs for your own church celebrations!

CELEBRATION OF THE 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLOOMING GROVE CHURCH, LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

To NAB old timers, the name of Konrad Anton Fleischmann is well known. He is the founder of what has come to be considered the "mother church" of the NAB (German Baptist) Conference. What may not be well known is the very important three years of evangelistic and pastoral work that Konrad Fleischmann did among the Germans living in Lycoming County, PA before he founded the Fleischmann Church in Philadelphia. The group of believers among whom he worked were known as the Tunkers, also called the Dunkards or the German Baptists.

These Dunkards looked to Konrad Fleischmann as one of their key early leaders in the planting and growth of some of their churches. In Albert Ramaker's book, The German Baptists in North America, is a picture of an early log-cabin style Tunker Church located in **Blooming Grove**, PA. This year, 2005, marks the 200th anniversary of the Dunkards. Among other notable anniversary events, their present members have built a replica of the log-cabin church, locating it on the very spot where the original log cabin first existed.

VERNA MICHELSON'S HOME-GOING



We have learned that on May 7th of this year, Mrs. Verna Michelson went to be with the Lord in Colorado where she had lived for fourteen years. She and her husband, Edwin Michelson, served as missionaries in Cameroon for a total of sixteen years.

Verna was born on April 28, 1921 to Charles and Emma Rust who lived on a farm near Martin, ND. Verna grew up on that farm, attending grade school and high school in Martin, becoming a Christian at age nine. Her baptism and church membership in the Martin Baptist church were followed by years of faithful service for the Lord in many areas such as choir, Sunday School teaching and youth work. In that church she met Edwin Michelson, her future husband, and eventually their life goals resulted in their going to the mission field in Cameroon, West Africa.

They were there under appointment from 1945 to 1955, returning home to the USA for the education of their five children, serving several NAB churches during that time. More service in Cameroon starting in March 1974 was cut short by Edwin's severe illness in 1980 ending in his death in 1988. Verna will be remembered for her sweet and cheerful spirit of helpfulness, her inspiring, beautifully written letters, and her devotion to the Lord she dearly loved.



PAUL LOTH'S LIFE JOURNEY ENDS

It is significant that in the obituary of Dr. Paul E. Loth, in lieu of flowers and in his honor, memorials were directed to the Evangelical Training Association for the distribution of ETA books to Caribbean Bible Colleges.

As a former pastor of a Baptist church, Dr. Loth knew the benefit that proper materials provide to Sunday School teachers. Eventually his own experience and education qualified him to serve as president of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association, (now shortened to Evangelical Training Association), an alliance of more than 200 colleges and seminaries that distributes educational materials for lay ministers worldwide. Dr. Ted Faszer of our NAB seminary stated that each year a number of our seminary students get "credentialed" in this outstanding program.

Dr. Loth, 89, of Carol Stream, IL served as the association's president from 1961 to 1987. Prior to that he had served as pastor of NAB's Bethel Baptist Church in Buffalo, NY for 13 years.

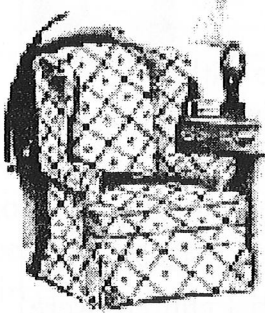
He had worked odd jobs when he was 12 to help

support his family after his father died. After graduating from high school, he worked full time while his older brother finished college, and then began his own education, graduating from Columbia Bible College in 1940, and subsequently earning Bachelor and Masters degrees from other universities, plus a doctorate of education from Temple University in Philadelphia and a conferred DD from Trinity College in Florida. He was the moving spirit and inspiration for the Caribbean Association of Bible Colleges. What a great legacy by a devoted servant of our Lord! His death came on Thursday February 3, 2005 in Illinois where he lived.

While in college he had chosen "Living for Jesus" as his life hymn and requested it be sung at his funeral which was held on February 7th in Glen Ellyn, IL. Janet, his beloved wife of 59 years, preceded him in death in Feb. 2002. His three children, four grandchildren and one great grandchild remember him as a kind and gentle man who loved the Lord and reflected that love in both his personal life and ministry.

THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELER

by *Archivist* Berneice Westerman



- ♦ Travel back with me 92 years — to **1913** ! That was the year the Cathay Baptist Church agreed that stained glass windows should be a part of their new church. Mrs. Selma Moulton, granddaughter of Mr. Frank Leitner, tells us that her grandfather went to Lithuania to buy the windows and bring them by boat to Ellis Island, New York, next by train to North Dakota and probably by horse and wagon to the Cathay church site.
- ♦ In 2005 Ernie Zimbelman and Jim Sievers brought the windows to Sioux Falls by U-Haul and they are now installed at the NAB Seminary at several

strategic places as

indicated in the winter issue of Heritage Horizons. I wonder how many other Shepherd Windows are in our churches. I know there is one in the Forest Park Church as well as in our Ellinwood, Kansas church. Both are different from the one in the Seminary. If your church has such a window, let me know. We now have a photograph of the Cathay, North Dakota church showing the Good Shepherd Window in place, from the **inside** of the church building. In the early years a tree was planted near the window. As the tree grew tall it became difficult to take pictures of the window from outside.

NOTES from George W. Lang, Archives Director:

On May 21st just before Seminary Commencement, a very important event took place in the NAB Seminary Chapel: the dedication of the stained-glass window exhibit referred to in the *Armchair Traveler* above. This Exhibit celebrates the ministry of NAB's Town and Country Churches. Part of the Exhibit features the **Jesus the Good Shepherd Window** enhanced by display tables which focus especially on the life and ministry of Rev. Arthur Fisher whose primary ministry was serving rural churches.

Rev. Fischer and his wife, Lenora, served in seven different Town-and-Country churches in the South Dakota and North Dakota areas during his almost 50 years of ministry; also during this time he supplied pulpits in four additional rural churches. In one of the displays, **other** rural pastors will be featured in the future.

The Fischers' four children — two sons and two daughters, — all came with their spouses to be present at the Dedication Service, arriving from California, Missouri and Minnesota. These children contributed significantly to the funding of the exhibit. Included in the exhibit area is a wall-hanging giving a description of the Cathay Baptist Church from which the window was taken. The Cathay church was where Missionary Laura Reddig was a member before going to Cameroon. The Cathay church closed in 1995.

Another part of the exhibit is found in the Seminary's Chapel located on the second floor of the Seminary's Worship and Leadership Centre. There are four smaller stained-glass windows from the same Cathay church, two mounted on the north wall and two on the east wall. They have been framed and lighted to enable the "message" and the beauty of the windows to be seen clearly, together with dedicatory names. They add to the worshipful atmosphere of the Chapel and are especially meaningful to people who have memories of similar windows in the churches they attended during their childhood years.

