



THE ZION COMMUNITY AT HUBBARD OREGON

by Emma Sommers



The Zion Church at Hubbard, Oregon, has a membership of about 260. In the lower picture is an interior view of the church during a morning service in the summer of 1948. The church had its beginning in 1876 and the years following when families moved to this part of Oregon from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri.

Flax has been grown in the Willamette Valley almost from the time of the early settlements. Below is a field of flax in shock on the farm of Arthur Neuschwander. Note the high pine trees in the background.

Between the Cascade Mountains and the Coast Range of Western Oregon, lies the beautiful fruitful Willamette Valley. This valley was the goal of the first settlers who came to the Oregon country. Its treeless prairies, abundant rainfall, mild climate, and easy access to the sea were its attractions. Besides these there were the great isolated snow peaks of the Cascades, the mighty Columbia River, and the heavily timbered slopes and forests, which were later to constitute one fourth of the timber supply of the United States. It was to this beautiful valley that Mennonites soon found their way. I will try to give a brief history of the Zion Mennonite community and also a present-day description as I saw it during my visit there in the summer of 1947. For much of the historical facts I am indebted to Kathryn Yoder.

A Church Is Planted and Grows

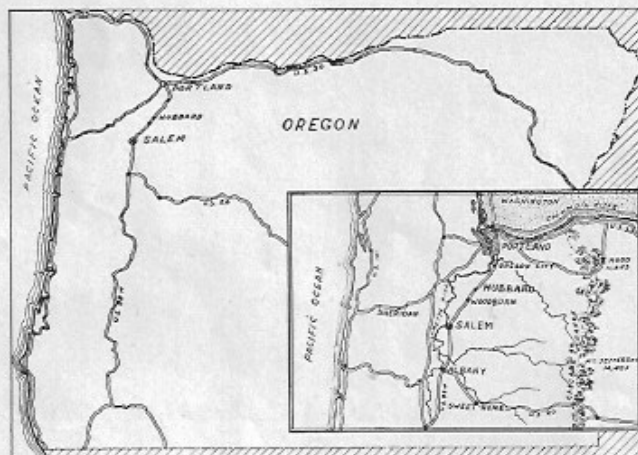
In 1876 Gideon Lantz moved from Douglas County, Illinois, to Oregon. He was soon followed by other families from Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, and other states. This early group re-



maintained together for a few years at Hubbard, Oregon. Most of this early group scattered to different parts of Oregon and only a few remained near Hubbard and formed the Zion Congregation. Heads of families were: John Lais, Joseph Roth, Christian Roth, John Kropf, Daniel Kropf, Israel Yoder, Levi King, Emanuel Kenagy, Amos P. Troyer, and Daniel Erb. Sunday school was held in a house four miles east of Hubbard and also in the homes of some of the members. The attendance numbered between thirty and forty. George Hostetler, a deacon, from Cass County, Missouri, was superintendent and also preached for this small group. The services were conducted in German. On June 19, 1893, Joseph Schlegel, a bishop, from Milford, Nebraska, and Jacob Roth, a minister, from Thurman, Colorado, organized a church at the Rockhill Methodist church. Daniel Kropf was ordained a minister and Amos P. Troyer a deacon.

In 1894 a small church was built about five miles east of Woodburn, but this location proved unsatisfactory. In December 1897 Peter Troyer gave two acres of his farm for a new building site. This was located three miles east of Hubbard. A small one-room building was built and this was later enlarged to include a basement, cloakrooms, and an additional room was added to the main room. The seating capacity is approximately six hundred.

On June 18, 1895, Amos P. Troyer was ordained to the office of bishop by Joseph Schlegel. Under his capable and understanding leadership the congregation grew to be one of the largest on the Pacific Coast. Sunday-school attendance grew from twenty to approximately two hundred. He was able to lead his congregation through the severe tests at the time when the congregation of Amish background was making a transition from the more strict ideas such as the wearing of hooks and eyes and the usage of the German language. In 1911 around



As early as 1844 there are records of successful fiber-flax production in the Willamette Valley. In 1876 a twine plant was operated at Albany for the purpose of making twine out of fiber-flax. About 5,000 pounds of twine were manufactured monthly in this plant which was later destroyed by fire.

There are now 13 plants in operation in the state according to information from Oregon State College.

Below are Urban and Dan Widmer combining a field of vetch and oats. Oats are planted with vetch to support it and are then separated in harvest. The crop is peculiar to the valley.

To the right below is Sanford Yoder loading loganberries on his trailer. Raymond Kauffman (right), one of the pickers, is helping. Berry picking is done mostly by young people on Yoder's sixteen-acre berry patch. Oregon ranks high in the production of small fruits and berries. Raspberries, blackberries, and boysenberries are made into jam and jelly.





twenty members moved to Harrisburg, Oregon, and formed a separate congregation that is now part of the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference.

In July 1936 A. P. Troyer ordained C. I. Kropf, who was serving as a deacon, to the office of bishop in order to have the needed aid in his work. In October 1936 A. P. Troyer died. In all the forty-one years of his service, he never missed administering communion to his congregation. He had charge of his last communion service the Sunday before he died.

This congregation (Zion) now has a membership of about 260. It has grown to be one of the strongest and most active congregations in this district. The various activities of this church community center around the church itself. Unlike many Mennonite communities, only about forty per cent of the people are farmers. I recall the beautiful and artistic fields of the Neuschwander farm located just around the bend from the church. This is a 150-acre farm, and about one third of it has been cleared for farming during the past six years. These farms are not based on the large scale program of our midwestern farms. The average farmer here raises alfalfa and corn for feed and ensilage, a few acres of sweet corn for the cannery, and oats, corn, and clover for seed crops. Besides these crops the farm also has chickens, lambs, pigs, and cows. Because of his German background (or is it a Mennonite characteristic?) the Oregon Mennonite farmer is the master of a well-ordered farm with its clean fence rows and painted buildings. He can be satisfied as he bestows his toil upon this plot of God's earth.

Fruit Is Grown

Fruit growing, together with the canning and preserving of fruit, has become an important industry in Oregon. Oregon ranks near the top among the states in the production of small fruits, including the different kinds of berries such as Munger black raspberries, Willamette red raspberries, thornless loganberries, thornless boysenberries, and thornless evergreen blackberries. During my visit in this community I spent some of my time in the berry patch of Sanford Yoder. This is a berry farm of about sixteen acres. "Sandy" employs about twenty-five people to help harvest the fruit crop each year. These berries are sold to the North Marion Fruit Company, which is a marketing agency. Most of the berries are made into jam and jelly. Since many of the people employed are young people, this gives employment to the school age young people of the church during the summer months.

Lumbering Is Important

The most important of Oregon's industries is lumbering. This too has found its way into the Mennonite communities. Ivan Kropf has a sawmill which now employs about twenty-

Chester Kauffman, recently ordained to the ministry of the Zion Church, is hoeing in his garden. He is giving full time to church work.

John Gahler standing in his onion seed field. He has raised onion seeds for many years. He is a native of Switzerland and came to this country as a boy.

Joe and Sandra Neuschwander are together in a field of sugar beet seed. The field is on the farm of their father, Arthur Neuschwander. Seed crops are important in this area.

Marvin Headings and his sons, Maynard and Robert, load bales of straw on a tractor-drawn wagon. Maynard and Robert attend Western Mennonite School which is located at Salem.

six Mennonite persons. This sawmill was started in 1934 on a very small basis and undoubtedly with extremely limited capital. In 1941 he moved the mill to the present millsite which is a mile or so from where the original mill was located. It is now one of the finest medium-sized mills in the country and represents many thousands of dollars. The operation in a sawmill begins with the logs. They are brought in by truck and unloaded either into the log pond or onto the stock pile or "cold deck" and then eventually into the pond. From the pond, after first being cut to various lengths, the logs are pulled up the log chute by means of the log haul chain powered by an electric motor. The main saw is located near the top of this chute and after the logs are placed on the log carriage, the log is then sawed into either lumber or into cants. From here the lumber goes through the edger which cuts it to the desired widths, from there to the trim saw which cuts it to the desired lengths, and from there to the green chain where it is sorted for size and grade. The cants, which are simply large rectangular timbers, are conveyed from the main saw to the trim saw which cuts them to lengths and from there they are conveyed to the gang saw which rips them into boards of any desired thickness, usually one or two inches. The boards are then conveyed to the green chain as were the boards of the lumber from the main saw, also to be graded and sorted. As the lumber moves along on the green chain a lumber grader marks each piece for the grade and then the men beyond him pile the lumber in packages according to the grade and size. At this point the lumber is both rough and green and may be sold as such or it may continue on for further processing. As the lumber goes through the planer it may be run to various patterns, such as flooring, tongue and groove, etc., though usually the lumber from the Kropf sawmill is simply planed on four sides as ordinary boards and dimensional lumber. This lumber is sold to many lumber buyers and shipped throughout the United States and to consumers direct both in carload lots and locally in small packages.

Besides farming, berry farming, and lumbering, the people in this community have found themselves engaged in school

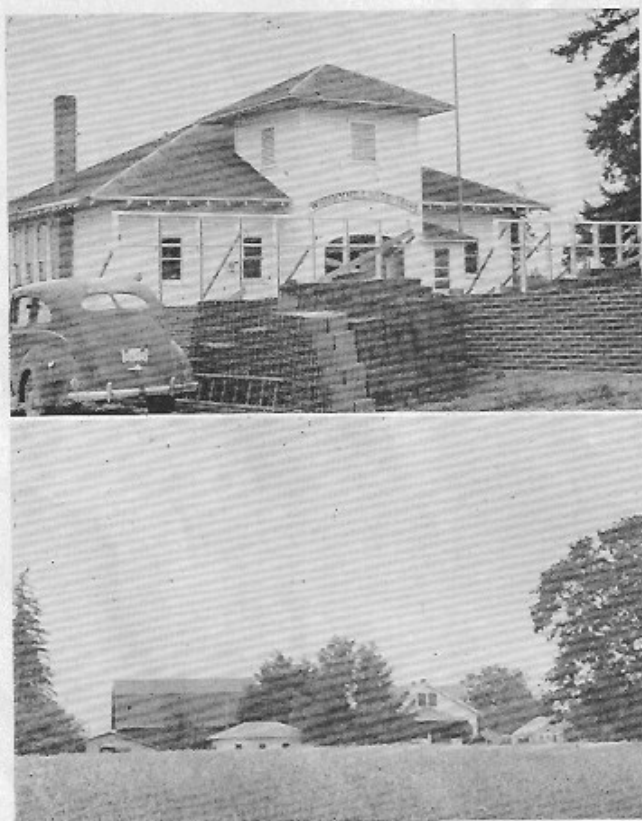


(Upper) Dan Widmer examines one of his English walnut trees. On his farm are five acres of walnut trees.

The home of Arthur Neuschwander is built of brick and surrounded by attractive trees and shrubs.

A street scene in Woodburn which is an important fruit center. It is located about five miles from the Zion Church and is one of the trading centers of the community.





The Whisky Hill Public School has a number of children attending from the near-by Mennonite community. A new brick building for the school is going up in the foreground.

The farm buildings of Lovey Yoder are located near the Whisky Hill School where Yoder has taught for more than fifteen years.

teaching, nursing, butchering, operating tile factories, employed in the canneries, and some have gone to the cities near by to work.

An Active Church Program

These people have always been interested in the work of their church and also the church at large, although at times they feel a little too far from the centers of our church. The ordained brethren now giving their services to this church are C. I. Kropf, Edward Yoder, Chester Kauffman, and John Gingerich.

Their mission interests are manifested in their active services through various organizations. The Sewing Circle which meets every other Wednesday has done a lot of sewing for local needs and also for the larger needs of missions and for the Mennonite Central Committee. About five years ago a building was erected on the church grounds for the sewing work of the church. It is a very useful building not only for the Sewing Circle, but also serves as a cooking center during conferences, or classrooms during Bible School. The Sewing Circle also aided in drying and preserving a large amount of food during the past several years.

Summer Bible schools have proved to be a mission outreach in several communities. During the past summer three of these schools were conducted by the local church. Edward Kenagy had charge of the Bible school at the local church. Sanford Yoder had charge of the one in the Silverton hills. And Chester Kauffman conducted the Bible school at Meadow Brook. Plans

Amos Roth's herd of purebred Jerseys average 6.0 per cent butterfat. His son Oliver is shown with the herd in the pasture. In the background is Filbert's orchard.



are now being formed to build a church up in the Silverton hills before next summer. Many people feel that this is a great field because the people have responded very well to the program of the summer Bible school.

The first Sunday of each month services are conducted at the Multnomah Old People's Home by the ministers and a quartet. The young people of the church have worked at a mission project. And this church also helps sponsor the summer camp for the four groups of boys from the city of Portland who spend several weeks each year in the open country. This church has always been active in missions. Brother E. Z. Yoder told me that when our mission first started in India fifty years ago the people gave regularly to this work. Today this church is still active in giving to the mission work of the General Mission Board.

Music has also been an active part in the life of this community. For nearly thirty years the church chorus has presented a program during the Christmas season. People come for miles to hear this program of beautiful religious music. This year there were sixty voices singing in this chorus under the direction of Edward Kenagy. Several organized quartets give spice to the music life of this community.

The Young People's Literary, Camp Magruder (the Pacific Coast Mennonite Youth Camp), the Sunday School, the church library, and the active work in the activities of the conference district all should be mentioned as a part of the life in this community.

It is here in this community that work and worship, activity and song merge into one unified pattern to do all to the honor and glory of God.

A log begins at the main rig on its way through the Kropf sawmill. Clarence Kropf is owner and operator of the mill. Lloyd Driver is mill foreman. About twenty-six Mennonite people are employed here.

A large gang saw cuts up a complete log into boards at the same time. Jenkins Schultz is operating the saw.

A large truck is loaded with finished boards at the mill. The boards will be taken to the railroad station and shipped to Kropf's Lumber Yard in Hesston, Kansas.

The main building of Kropf's Sawmill is located beside a pond from which logs are elevated to the mill. The cover scene shows the pond from another view.

