

110 Years of
NORTH SIDE
•
FORREST

Apostolic-Christian
CHURCH HISTORY

1864-1974

Ben Nussbaum

One Hundred Ten Years

of

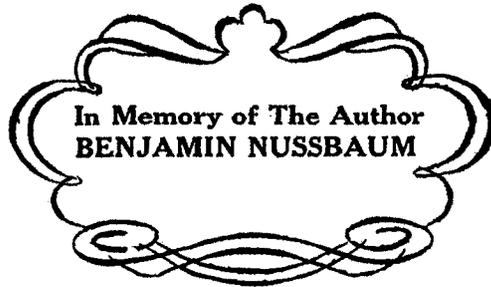
North Side-Forrest

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Church History

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FOREWORD



“Uncle Ben” spent many untiring hours compiling the dates and facts recalling precious moments of our Church members’ conduct, and procedure of living our precious faith, as it is written for us, in the Bible. The Author has so very carefully outlined our “way-of-life,” and has so ably mentioned the “little things” which make this book so interesting.

It is rather sad to note that our “Uncle Ben” passed away approximately six weeks before this book came out of publication. However, he did realize, he did have the satisfaction that it was being completed.

We are so “thankful” to him for his keen interest and taking time to write this for our enjoyment.

His loving wife, Lydia (Munz) Nussbaum, and his son, Wilmer and wife Mary, were instrumental in proofreading this and becoming helpful so this could be accomplished.

May God bless his efforts, for He is the One, who gives us strength.

Submitted by Edith Huette

Recording the affairs and events of an era whose duration exceeds one’s lifetime not only requires that the author have an excellent memory but also that his colleagues be likewise blest. For it is they upon whom he must rely for information of which he is unaware and also for confirmation of those segments which time may have obscured. It has been this generous assistance and unreserved cooperation of those closely associated with the Church that has not only made this book possible but also made my own endeavors so rewarding. Of inestimable value have been the singular efforts of both Reverends Henry Kilgus and Joseph Kaisner who have drawn unsparingly from their intimate and extensive knowledge of the North Side. To you all I proffer my sincere appreciation, hoping that this and the inner satisfaction that accrues from participating in the production of a long-needed and authentic Church history will be ample compensation.

It would likewise be remiss of us all not to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Reverend Joseph Virkler and his family who migrated to this area from Croghan, New York, in 1864 and shortly thereafter was instrumental in the inception of the North Side Church—one of the very earliest of Apostolic Christian faith in the United States. The fertile land, the opportunities, and the Virkler magnetism combined to attract many more AC’s to this area and the increase of their numbers resulted in the subsequent forming of two new churches: one at Fairbury and one several miles south of there. The life of the latter has been recorded in my book: “74 Years of ‘South Side’ Apostolic Church History” published in 1973.

Under Virkler’s able guidance and with the support of a small but ardent membership, no Church ever started under brighter auspices nor held the promise of more Divine yield. So, with reverence and admiration toward these inspired and devoted forefathers whose poignant accomplishments will accompany us to our Final Rendezvous at the End-of-the-Road; this work is dedicated. May your sojourn, as you reminisce through the ensuing pages, be a most enjoyable experience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The compilation of this book would neither have been possible nor attempted without the generous assistance of the following:

Rev. Henry Kilgus
Rev. Joseph Kaisner
Mrs. Lillian Virkler Clarke
Henry Maurer
Frank Honegger
Eli Moser
Reuben Bach
Ed Bach
William Honegger
Charles Tyler
Orie Stoller

PART I

Prelude

The below listed works were freely and appreciatively used throughout the early chapters of this book:

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY, VOL. 1
by Herman Ruegger Sr.

A HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN LEWIS COUNTY
NEW YORK; by Arletha Zerr Bender, B.R.E.

THE STORY OF CIVILIZATION, VOL. 6
by Will Durant.

OUR EUROPEAN LEGACY

Even though Luther's Act marked the advent of extensive changes in Scriptural interpretation and Church liturgy, it was many years before the influence of his and subsequent "Established Churches" abated to the degree that freedom of conscience and worship were permitted. Early Swiss dissenters, meeting secretly in the confines of friendly homes, did so at extreme peril to themselves, their families, and acquaintances for the state-sanctioned Church considered them heretics and punished them accordingly. These early sects, predominantly Baptists and more especially the Anabaptists called Wiedertaufer or Againbaptizers, were persecuted and tortured beyond comprehension. Those who were able fled to the more tolerant European communities, particularly southern Germany, where their beliefs and numbers flourished. Some escaped down the Rhine to The Netherlands where they proliferated as Dutch Anabaptists.

The prolonged political and religious strife that swirled across most of Europe forced many to lead a nomadic existence in their unending search for sanctuary. One of these transitory families who sought asylum in Avricourt of Lorraine about 1730 was that of Peter Virkler (Wuergler) a Baptist who had lived in the Emmenthal (Berne, Switzerland) since 1698. Up until this time, while living in Avricourt, one could avoid military service but as the Napoleonic war enveloped Europe, all young men including Virkler's sons were required to serve and when it became obvious that the grandchildren might be likewise caught up in succeeding conflicts—one grandson, Rudolph, did serve for a short time—the family seriously thought about emigrating to America.

EXODUS TO AMERICA

In 1833 John Kieffer returned to Europe as an agent of Count de Chaumont who had purchased a considerable tract of land in unsettled Lewis and Jefferson Counties of northern New York. This area was known as "French Settlement" and Kieffer, himself an Alsatian, encouraged the Mennonites and Amish Mennonites of Alsace and Lorraine to migrate to this section of America. Land in "French Settlement" was cheap and available. Soon persuaded, these French and German speaking immigrants eagerly settled in and around an area that would later be called Croghan after an army major.

Their rigorous and austere background prepared them well for this new adventure as they were scrupulously honest, exceptionally industrious, and their simple manners and plain dress were outward manifestations of their inner feelings. Many were well-educated and contributed a variety of talents: singing, mechanical, agricultural, woodcraft, and leadership for example. They even accepted public office as long as it did not conflict with their moral and ethical teachings.

THE EMBRYONIC YEARS

Early arrivals came in 1834 organizing an Amish Mennonite Church in 1836. More newcomers arrived in 1838 and in the short span of ten years, twenty families including such well-known names as Farney, Martin, Moser, Virkler, Zehr and others had established themselves here. Joseph Farney had been ordained a Mennonite bishop in France and Rudolph Virkler was an ordained Baptist minister. These two assumed the task of administering to the spiritual needs of all by conducting worship services every other Sunday forenoon in the various homes. Almost everyone spoke both French and German with the latter being predominant and used exclusively at these gatherings. Few could speak English. These services were quite informal and usually commenced when one of the brethren would feel the

urge to lead in song. This singing of the German in the first part followed by chanting from the hymnal called **AUSBUND** sometimes lasted for an hour or more.

These Mennonite preachers often sat around the campfires in peaceable accord with the Indians who still lived there. They expended considerable time maintaining friendly relations with these natives and as the settlement increased and duties became more demanding, Virkler and Farney required assistance. This Baptist settlement immediately sought contact with **Our** Society in Switzerland and asked that a Brother be sent to America. This request was made through Joseph Virkler of Lewis County who in earlier years had heard of one Samuel Heinrich Frohlich. Frohlich was probably the foremost leader and exhorter of the Evangelical Baptists and New Baptists. His parents were French Huguenots, by name de Joyuex, who fled to Switzerland during the reign of Louis XIV. He was born July 4, 1803 in Brugg (Argau). Though for a time he was an ordained minister in the State Church, his theological convictions forced him to relinquish all ties and spend his remaining life (he died in 1857) in missionary and evangelical works throughout Switzerland and parts of Europe. Discouraged by ill-health and constantly frustrated by the authorities, his accomplishments surpass description. In respect, those who espoused his concepts were called, "Die Frohlich." It is no wonder that Virkler responded to him.

Frohlich, in answer to Virkler's request, consecrated and commissioned Benedict Weyeneth to go to America where he would preach among them and found a congregation. He was born in Switzerland on June 2, 1819 and was elected an Elder for this singular purpose. He arrived in "French Settlement" in 1847.

Contradictory information is available which states that Weyeneth arrived upon the American scene in 1850 rather than 1847. This plus the allegation that he was accompanied by another member was of slight import. Let us concern ourselves with Weyeneth's approach in establishing the new church.

The first American Elder was appointed by Weyeneth in 1847. He was Joseph Virkler, the eldest of seven sons of Rudolph Virkler. Joseph was born in September 1816 and died in October of 1866. He was extraordinarily active and traveled frequently in proclaiming the Gospel—even as far as New York City. His successor was his own brother Peter, an eloquent preacher who traveled all over America.

Weyeneth introduced a somewhat different teaching—unfamiliar to the Amish Mennonite people. One historian indicated that the change pertained to the "New Birth" experience which placed emphasis on feeling, impulse, and emotion. One also had to subscribe to the doctrine of baptism by immersion rather than pouring water upon the applicant's head as an outward expression of an inner cleansing from sin.

Attending the regular Sunday morning worship service, Benedict Weyeneth was granted permission by Rudolph Virkler to read a song from a book. It is thought that the song being read at the conclusion of the regular meeting indicated the teaching of immersion. He presented to the congregation the importance of these doctrines and later visited them in their homes reviewing the changes that would be required. These views were favored by Rudolph Virkler, who became willing to leave his church to associate and affiliate with Weyeneth. Soon Virkler's family and many of his relatives left the Amish Mennonite Church and started a new Church of their own. It was necessary for everyone to accept this modified teaching and those who joined the "New Faith," as it was called, were rebaptized by being immersed. The first minister ordained for this group was Rudolph Virkler's son Joseph. This Church was organized in 1852; the first of its kind in America. Today they are locally (Lewis County) known as the Virkler or Evangelical Baptist or Apostolic Christian Church.

After many of the Virkler family left the Amish Mennonite Church, other members gradually withdrew agreeing to follow the same precepts. Joseph Farney, our first bishop, was also influenced by the new doctrine. He left two years

after Rudolph Virkler and united with their group. At that time it was called the "New Amish Church."

Many families in the Forrest-Fairbury area were known as "Old Amish" while some, including my parents, considered themselves "New Amish." Inhabitants of an area in and around Arthur, Illinois, presently call themselves "Amish Mennonites." The term "Amish" is derived from their seventeenth century leader, Jakob Ammenn, sometimes spelled Amen. Those who live in eastern Pennsylvania still reject razors, buttons, railroads, automobiles, motion pictures, radios, newspapers, even tractors; yet their farms are among the tidiest and most prosperous in America.

PART II

The North Side's Eighty-five Years



Here is an excellent aerial photograph of the North Side as seen from the Bloomington Pantagraph's aeroplane called "Scoop." It was almost certainly taken and printed in that newspaper early in 1937. No electric poles nor wire are in evidence so it was definitely taken prior to May 26th of that year when the Church was "wired." Even the car ruts, leading in and out of the horse barns, which had been converted into garages sometime earlier, indicate that it was Spring—and a wet one.

The half-mile line appears white as it extends north from the eastern-most end of the barns. This was also the east boundary of the church yard before the addition was purchased from Abersol. This picture was taken about one o'clock in the afternoon according to the shadow angle and those cast by the plowed furrows give the surrounding area a corduroy effect.

Mrs. Joseph (Ida) Kaisner has provided this cherished clipping from her scrap book. We appreciate her permission to reproduce it here that all might share in this nostalgic scene.

FORMING THE NORTH SIDE

Joseph Virkler was both an Elder and Minister in 1864 when he and his family came west from Croghan, New York. One of his first acts was to purchase land in Section Twenty-one of Pleasant Ridge Township north of Forrest, Illinois.

As additional families migrated to the area an opportunity for group worship presented itself and, under Virkler's leadership, services were soon being held in nearby homes. If a house happened to be too small they would congregate in the barn.

About 1868 or 1870 a small two-room Church was built on Virkler's land at the southwest corner of Section Twenty-one. The membership included the following names and probably a few others: Abersol, Honegger, Huber, Keller, Leuthold, Metz, Ramseyer, Scharlach, Stoller, Schwartzentraub.

Basically then, this was the beginnings of the North Side. Though the ground proved unsatisfactory, the building was adequate until about 1875 when they relocated to a higher elevation before constructing an addition.

RELOCATION AND EXPANSION

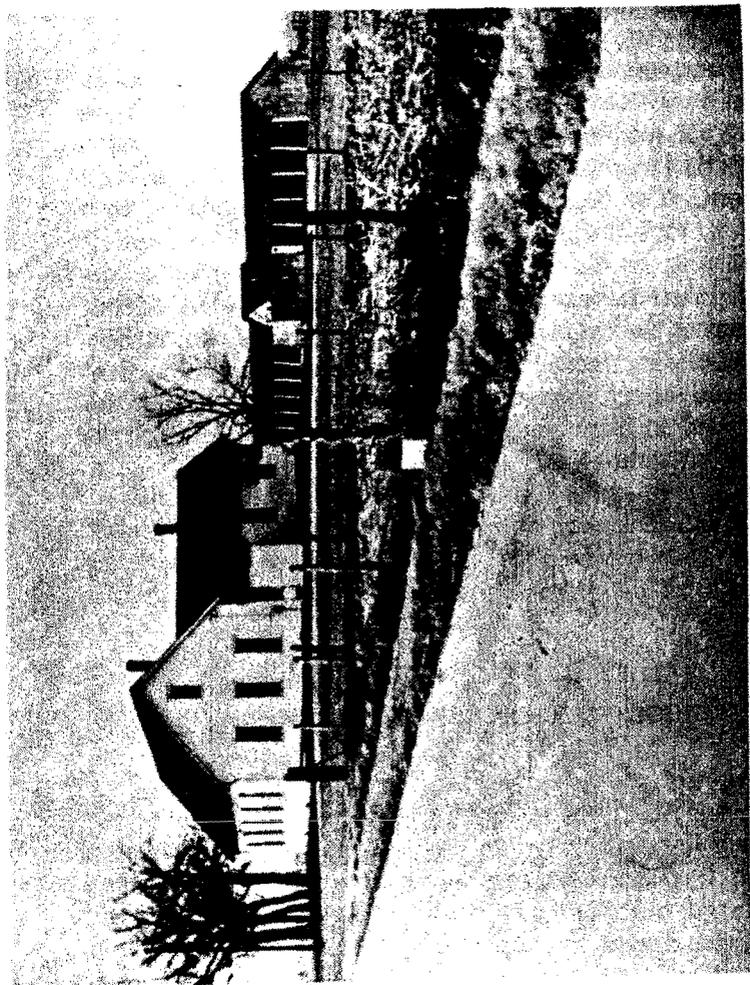
The original corner location was very low and impossible to drain. Rains and melting snows made the churchyard a veritable quagmire. So, when it became necessary to expand in order to accommodate the increased membership they quickly agreed to move the building before affixing a new sanctuary. This new location was on high ground, one-half mile to the east and just west of the half-mile line in that same section.

The moving date—believed to be 1875—is somewhat speculatively based on information from deed recordings and is discussed in greater detail in that chapter. This

addition, adjoined to the south wall of the older edifice, was completed in 1876, and none too soon. More families continued to move into the Forrest region and the Church rolls swelled with these familiar names: Bach, Bollier, Detweiler, Ebach, Fehr, Fortna, Geiger, Haab, Hess, Herstein, Kilgus, Lear, Mauler, Moser, Munz, Nussbaum, Schneider, Stortz, Yackley, and Yoder.

The ever-burgeoning membership necessitated another enlargement in 1893. A new thirty-two by forty-four foot sanctuary was added—again on the south—and when viewed directly from the road it completely eclipsed the older segment. The old sanctuary was then remodeled into a dining room and the old dining room became the Sunday School area and kitchen. During this same period additional land immediately to the east was acquired from Andrew Abersol thus permitting the construction of a vitally needed out-building and extension of the driveway completely around the Church. This facilitated entry to the horse barns and in later years became a much-needed parking area for automobiles.

AN INSIDE TOUR AFTER 1893



This detailed photograph of the Church buildings was personally taken by Alfred Bach-told. He was standing on the road somewhat to the southeast of this complex. As you will note, the white pipe fence has been removed and the electric-power lines have been installed. Alfred granted permission to reproduce this picture here prior to his death in 1974.

After the new thirty-two by forty-four foot sanctuary was added, the completed structure was T-shaped with the dining room and kitchen forming the vertical stem. The forty-four foot dimension ran east to west paralleling the the road. A large double door on the west side was the main entrance—at least for the men—and it entered a narrow cloakroom which extended across the full thirty-two foot width of the sanctuary proper. The cloakroom subtracted enough space as to render this assembly room relatively square and as you entered from one of the two widely-separated doors in the partition between them, your glance would encompass first the large clock on the opposite wall then as you turned to the right, the hand-made pulpit and ministers' bench—capacity of four—centered at the south wall. Five large windows in this wall plus three in the east permitted ample daylight to enter. On overcast days they were augmented by six kerosene lamps suspended from the ceiling by long rods. These were the only source of of illumination until replaced by electric lights in 1937.

Ceilings and walls were painted white and trimmed with a four-foot high wainscoting, a motif that was repeated throughout the building. The pews were hand-made, undoubtedly by the same local carpenters who had built the sanctuary. A wide board made up the seat and a sturdy backrest completed the plain but practical design. They were intentionally not too comfortable. Two main aisles running north to south and in line with the dining room doors divided the seating area into three main sections. Pews in the center and east sections faced the pulpit except for a few in the southeast corner which faced to the west. Those in the west section faced east and were subdivided into three small clusters by narrow aisles that led from the two cloakroom doors to the main west aisle. The total seating capacity was approximately 275. The men and women sat separately with the women occupying the eastern half of the room. Their cloakroom was built outside the juncture of the north sanctuary wall with the east dining room wall. It had three doors; an outside entrance from the east; a door to the sanctuary on the

south and one to the dining room through the common wall. The main entrance to the dining room was through a double door in its west wall directly across from the women's cloakroom.

When services would halt for lunch all the men would file out the west sanctuary aisle into the dining room to the long table that paralleled the west wall. A smaller table near the center of the room was reserved, during the first serving, for Ministers and the elderly members. Along the east wall was a line of tables for the ladies with one table at the upper end placed at right angles to the rest. The door to the kitchen was in the middle of the north wall. To the right of this door was a table for washing dishes and on the west side of the door was a china cupboard storing the necessary dishes and silverware.

A three-seated minister's bench was attached to the south wall between the two sanctuary doors and directly above it was another large clock. Henry Kilgus has managed to preserve this antique seat and the baptismal trough for posterity. They are presently stored overhead in his garage on the farm. Another permanent bench was located along this same wall on the far side of the east door. A third bench faced the minister's bench and was separated from it by a large forced-air register in the floor. These warm-up benches were most welcome to those who had just ridden several miles by team and buggy while exposed to the severe cold and biting wind.

This coal-fired furnace, along with the kitchen cook-stove, supplied ample heat for the whole complex. In earlier years, it is believed, three heating stoves were utilized. Henry Maurer recalls that the basement furnace was in use when he and his family moved to this area in 1908. When the basement was lengthened to provide storage space, the outside fuel house to the north was torn down. Both the dining room and kitchen depended on kerosene wall lamps for lighting until the Church replaced them with electric lights in 1937. At the same time they installed a stoker in the furnace and it was able to maintain a more uniform temperature thereby easing the chores of the attendants.

To alleviate another problem, a nursery was constructed in 1935. It was located in the northwest corner of the dining room. The door opened inwardly and was in the west wall quite near the kitchen.

The north room did double duty as both a Sunday School and kitchen. Entering from the dining room, to the immediate right at eye level, you could see roster of names—chronologically listed by date of membership—which alerted each family as to when it would be their turn to serve the lunch. In the corner was an ice box whose use was limited to cooling milk and butter. It was always filled with ice on Saturdays or very early Sunday mornings. Between the duty roster and the ice box was a bench which was used by mothers to remove the outer garments of their small children. Overhead, at a convenient height, was a shelf for storage of the more cumbersome items of clothing.

Along the east wall were benches that the older students occupied. From their seats they could see a poster on the opposite wall. Hand printed in bold letters, it contained this prudent poem by Mary Nussbaum:

“Sinful thoughts are all forsaken,
Every seat is silently taken,
On this Holy Sabbath day.”

Mary was one of the teachers of the girls' class. When not in use these benches were crowded against the east wall. Seats for the smaller children were borrowed from the dining room tables and placed in the northwest corner while School was in session. At its close, they were immediately returned to the dining room.

To the right of the poster, along the west wall and under a large window, was the work table. Here the bread and rolls were prepared for serving. Pots, pans, boiler for the coffee, and other kitchen utensils were stored in the pantry. It was located in the southwest corner and entry was through the door in its north wall. Halfway between

the east pantry wall and the dining room door was the cookstove. Facing east, away from the pantry, it had the fuel boxes in front and the attached soft water reservoir in the rear. A bucket of drinking water, with its own dipper, rested on a long shelf which had been attached to the pantry nearest the stove. At the opposite end was a lavatory and one could ladle warm water into the basin, wash, and dry on the handily suspended towel by merely pivoting about on the spot where he stood.

To the right of the outside entrance was another resting bench. This door was centered in the north wall and provided easy access to well, cistern, and fuel house.

CHURCHYARD AND BARN

The cluster of buildings typified rural Apostolic-Christian architecture: unpretentious, practical, and sturdy. A solid stone foundation supported the Church proper and wide weatherboarding, neatly painted white, covered all the buildings. The barns, extending along the west and north, not only sheltered the horses but eliminated the need for fence on those sides of the property. Two gates, separated by a length of white picket fence, fronted the south edge of the yard along the township road while woven and barbed wire completed the enclosure.

Entrance onto the horseshoe-shaped, rock drive which encircled the Church could be gained through either of these two gates. Entry from the west was more convenient as one could, after unloading the passengers, unhitch and tether the teams in the easily accessible barns with a minimum of confusion. At night this procedure was well illuminated by two special kerosene lanterns—one on each side of the building—mounted on the pointed tops of six-foot tall, gray-painted, cedar posts.

Normally the barns accommodated about fifty teams. The upper reaches of one stall in the north section served to store the baptismal trough and another stall near the east end was converted into a men's restroom. A separate

facility was erected for the ladies. It was some distance east of the kitchen on the Abersol parcel (after 1893).

The well was at the northwest corner of the kitchen and the cistern was to the right of the northeast corner. This cistern was covered by a large, slightly raised, wooden platform whose opening was protected by a close-fitting, hinged lid. An inherent danger existed here even though it required some strength to open. Any access large enough to accept a bucket was also a peril to overly-curious children and since they frequently used the platform as a rest and game base, temptation was ever present.

Observing this potential danger, Silas Nussbaum designed and built a very unique pump in his home workshop. He crosswise-attached a ten-inch long, wooden handle to the pump rod so that it had to be operated with an up-and-down motion similar to a tire pump. He installed this pump at a height which limited its use to adults. This position likewise prevented the waste of valuable rain water by mischievous youngsters who delighted in drenching each other at the pitcher pumps. Silas remembered his youth.

Other changes, both of necessity and convenience, occurred through the years. The picket fence, which still fronted the Church in the early nineteen hundred's, was replaced by one of pipe: a project in which Henry Maurer was a collaborator. A pair of large holes, about eighteen inches apart, was bored in the cedar poles. The lengths of pipe were then inserted through the holes and coupled. This white-painted, serviceable fence, interrupted only by the two gates, extended across the entire front of the property. It restrained any "untethered" horses during the services and served as a corral on those days that livestock were encouraged to "mow" the grounds. This fence remained for many years, (see the 1937 aerial photograph) succumbing finally to the automotive revolution—a circumstance that also required conversion of the barns into garages. Electric yard lights, attached to the outer walls, replaced the two pole lanterns and the fuel house was de-

molished after the basement had been lengthened to make room for fuel storage near the furnace.

Through the years a goodly number of members have volunteered their services in the upkeep and maintenance of the grounds. Some, who readily come to mind, were:

Jacob Bolliger
John Kilgus
John Maurer
Peter Bach
Ludwig Metz
Henry Kilgus

When Reuben Bach assisted his father 'Pete' with the caretaking, he recalls that they occasionally permitted the outer-yard grass and that along the road to grow quite tall before mowing. After drying, it was worthwhile to cart home for use as hay. The patch of grass surrounding the Church and to the inside of the rock drive was trimmed with a hand mower.



This is a view of the North Side Church as seen from the road when looking northeast. The barns—converted to garages—remain along the north edge of the property.

Photographer unknown.

DEEDS

The original Church property was located at the southwest corner of Section Twenty-one in Pleasant Ridge Township. This slightly-larger-than one-half acre tract measured eight-by-eleven rods and was acquired from Joseph and Jacobena Virkler who owned this entire quarter-section.

The parcel of ground that was selected for the Cemetery also belonged to the Virkler's and the Church purchased it for the modest sum of ten dollars. The deed validating this transaction specified that the south line of the Cemetery was to be forty-nine rods north of the northern edge of the Church property at the corner. There was also a stipulation that required a two-by-seven rod strip be exclusively reserved for the Virkler's and their children. In 1970 Mrs. Lillian Virkler Clarke and her brothers, all grandchildren of Joseph's, nullified this restriction by quitclaim deed to the Forrest A-C Church.

The third property acquired from the Virkler's was the ground onto which the Church relocated in 1875 and, coincidentally, all three deeds to the aforementioned parcels were dated October twelfth of that same year. Why they delayed until late 1875 to obtain titles for these tracts is unknown. Virkler, as owner of the land, Minister, and Elder, probably experienced no prior sense of urgency. Representing the Church and endorsing these documents in her behalf were the following trustees: Nicholas Ramseyer, Frederick Metz, and Rudolph Leuthold.

An additional parcel, to the east and abutting this new location was required for the 1893 expansion. It was acquired from Andrew Abersol and that deed was dated June 23, 1893. In later years, when these buildings had been sold and dismantled, the Trustees issued quitclaim deeds; transferring title of both properties to the two adjoining landowners.

When the first cemetery was about to outgrow its confines, the church added a full-length strip along the eastern

edge. My limited inquiries have failed to disclose any information pertinent to this acquisition. The line between these two parcels can no longer be ascertained by eye and the inconspicuous Virkler plot, which lay along the northern half of the original east boundary, is now confined to a more central position in this seldom-used older section.

The trustees again enlarged the cemetery in 1956. They obtained one acre of the adjoining ground to the south from Charles and Rosy Tyler. The purchase price was one-thousand dollars and the date on the deed was May 29, 1956.

THE CEMETERY

The lonely sentinel at the cemetery entrance is a four-foot tall obelisk upon which these two dates have been inscribed: "1872" and "1959." The latter represents the year of its emplacement and coincides with the first burials in the Tyler addition that had been purchased just three years earlier. Silas Nussbaum, a most orderly and methodical individual, was primarily responsible for the erection of this marker. Always reluctant to acknowledge any of his various achievements lest it be considered boastful, he consequently confided in no one I'm aware of, the significance of this 1872 date. That it might be the year of the first burial is refuted by one barely-legible gravestone dated "1870." It is doubtful this fact would have escaped Silas since he was probably more familiar with the Cemetery than anyone else. It was he who had replaced many of the deteriorating, wooden markers with ones of cement and also prepared very complete drawings: identifying the graves where possible, and outlining the available plots.

Several years ago Silas, and his sister Mary, expressed a desire to be buried in one particular plot. This preference recently became a reality when he succeeded her in death.

Rightfully, the cemetery's development should be related here, but since it can only be substantiated by information

compiled from the deeds; I have utilized the preceding chapter entitled "Deeds" to chronicle both subjects. Readers should not overlook these interesting correlations as they, in my opinion, are essential in visualizing the overall history of the 'North Side.'

The mowing, trimming, landscaping, maintenance, etc. which accounted for the Graveyard's orderly appearance, resulted from the unending labors of the Sextons. Their names appear below in recognition of their many years of unselfish endeavor:

Sam Yoder
Christian Metz
Chris Metz
Ben Stoller
Silas Nussbaum
Ludwig Metz
William Honegger—present Sexton.

HEARSES AND FUNERALS

North Side funerals, during the earlier horse-and-buggy days, depended on makeshift hearses. The open buggy of that pre-carriage period was a two-seater but it could be converted into a spring wagon by removing the rear seat. These wagons—often called 'buckboards'—were used to transport the coffin until 1910 or 1911 when a very serviceable and impressive hearse was purchased from the "R. J. Dixon Livery, Feed, and Sale Stable." It was stored in Dixon's livery barn and leased to other churches in the Forrest locale until—anticipating the imminent acceptance of powered vehicles—they terminated operations.

All of their horses, buggies, and related accessories were forthwith sold at public auction and Henry Kilgus, who attended the sale recalls that the Church, bidding approximately two-hundred dollars, acquired the hearse. This conveyance was sheltered in a stall at the northwest corner of the church yard where the two rows of barns converged and it wasn't until 1925 that auto-hearses, with many obvious advantages, induced the Church to reconsider. These new

auto-hearses were an integral part of the service furnished by the funeral parlors and in addition to providing improved protection from the elements, they consumed "oats" only on the days they were used. No one remembers what happened to the old hearse when this new procedure was approved.

Funeral services at the North Side were held in the sanctuary while the body, under the watchful eye of attendants, reposed in the cloakroom. In later years when double doors were added to the west dining room wall, this symbolic vigil over the casket was conducted in that room.

The solemn procession from church to cemetery—hardly a mile—was time-consuming. Restless teams tested the patience of drivers and riders alike. After the graveside rites were concluded with a prayer, most returned to the church where, after regaining their own composure, they consoled the bereaved and renewed old acquaintances. Donations of food, prepared by the ever-present and indispensable sisters, were shared with friends and neighbors. Those whose appetites had been blunted by the day's events at least partook of the savory coffee.

A SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE IN GERMAN

These morning services would begin, even as today, with the singing of several hymns, led and encouraged by the song leaders. At the conclusion of this prelude, the Ministers would advance single file to their respective seats behind the pulpit. Following a studied interval, one would arise, approach the pulpit, casually open the Bible to an unpreselected page, momentarily study the passages for a text, and begin speaking in the traditional monotone: "Am anfang unseres Sonntag Morgens Versammlung, zum 'Lobe Gottes', wir wollen lesen das siebenten Kapitel von dreizehnten vers an, im Offenbarung Johannes."

Those of us who comprehend German and can remember those magnificent sermons, delivered with such dignity and

simplicity, are still inspired. Fringed with such prayers as:

“Schopfer unseres lebens Der Du wohnst im Himmel, Allmachtiger, Allgegenwartiger, Gnadiger und Barmherziger Gott Himmlischer Vater. Wir haben grosze ursach Dich dafir zu danken Dein Heiligen Namen zu Loben zu Preisen and zu Ehren fur alle die viele gute vollkommene gabe die Du auf uns dust und getan hast. Oh wir solten wir das hoch Schetzen und Teuer Achtung das wir so ein Guten Himmlischer Vater haben. Wir danken und bitten Dich vier und vier . . . Und so weiter.”

Songs from the **Zions Harfe** and the long book called **Heft**, rendered in melodious German voices, provide us of that generation with irreplaceable memories. It is unfortunate that songs like, “Stimmet eure Zionsharfe, Eure Herzen in der Zeit”, lose some of their expression and melody in translation.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Patriarchs of the early Apostolic - Christian Church were convinced that the Creator was German and that He neither spoke nor understood any other tongue. It behove everyone, therefore, who embraced this faith and dedicated their lives to its proliferation, to comprehend German as it was mandatory in the conduct of all worship services and related Church meetings.

Consequently, at least until about 1900, all youngsters were required to study this language. Held in the Church dining room, these winter classes commenced shortly after the conclusion of corn harvest and continued until the resumption of field work the following spring. Jake Stortz is one of several who still recall attending these winter sessions in the dining room although he only went one term. The smaller children, excluded from daily labors, continued their instruction at the rural, one-room school houses through the summer vacation periods. Slowly losing their vitality after 1900, these schools were discontinued by 1910.

It is difficult to ascertain who taught in these early schools. Will Yoder is identified as one teacher and Conrad Munz Sr., prior to 1887 when he moved to Fairbury taught for an indeterminate number of years.

UNWANTED VISITORS

Back in the horse-and-buggy days, bands of roving gypsies would occasionally infest the area countryside. Traveling in a small train of covered wagons, usually trailed by a drove of horses, they wandered north in the summer and south in the winter. They survived by horse-trading—at which they were very shrewd—begging, and stealing.

Once, during this era, a band entered the Churchyard and camped overnight. After closing the gates, they unloosed all the horses to nocturnally graze on the luscious grass; meanwhile refreshing themselves and replenishing their water supply at the well. An inspection of the Church property later revealed that numerous cooking utensils, like the gypsies, had disappeared.

One Sunday morning, many years later, early arrivals discovered that another theft had occurred. This time someone had stolen all of the silverware, the coffee pots, and many of the other utensils. Some were later found in the Vermilion River near the Avoca Cemetery. They partially emerged when the water receded but none of the silverware was ever recovered.

THE CHURCH BUS

Many, many years ago the North Side provided transportation for those Forrest residents who desired to attend the Sunday services. This was a three and one-half mile ride each way in the horse-drawn hack which had been purchased from the buggy maker, Wilhelm Schlipf. He was a blacksmith as well, and it was in his buggy shop that the Church stored this vehicle during

the week. The family, responsible for serving the Sunday dinner, was also obligated to furnish a team and driver.

Entering from the rear, the passengers sat facing each other on the full-length seats along both sides and they were usually engaged in friendly conversation during the entire trip. John Geiger, who owned a shoe store, and Jake Bollier, another store owner, were frequent riders. So were Fred Nagel, the plumber, and J. K. Shick, the tinner. Other regulars were Mrs. Schwartzwalder, the Lear family, Mutter Schneider, and Mutter Weisser.

I recall that a group once traveled to the South Side in this rig; attending the services and renewing acquaintances. No doubt they visited the Fairbury Church on other occasions.

THE UNINVITED DINNER GUESTS

Aromas, emanating from the open windows on warmer Sundays, attracted a large number of flies into the dining room and kitchen. To overcome this annoyance, several ladies would stand to the rear of the diners and wave homemade flychasers.

These chasers were constructed of several thicknesses of newspaper tacked to a three-foot long stick. The paper was then scissored lengthwise into one-inch strips. It resembled a cat-o-nine-tails and, when swished back-and-forth, was quite effective in dispersing these intruders. The eventual advent of window screens minimized this problem and made the North Side Sunday lunches even more enjoyable.

FOOT-WASHING

As a youngster, curious about foot-washing, I engaged in occasional conversations with elderly friends who recalled that early Apostolic-Christian Congregations observed this ritual. The frequency was uncertain. Some felt it was usually held in conjunction with Communion and was similar in form to the ceremony currently practiced by several denominations.

Rev. Wendell Gudeman once discussed this subject with Elder Noah Schrock. He (Schrock) personally recalled having long ago observed this rite on at least three separate occasions each in a member's home. Scriptural authority is derived from John 13:5-17 and justification for conducting it as a home service is based on Paul's second letter to Timothy 5:9,10 when the Saints' feet were washed by the widow. Rev. Schrock additionally remarked that this usually took place at the conclusion of an evening meeting in a brother's home when a basin of water would be introduced and the weary members would wash each others feet. Any sisters in attendance, practiced this act of humility in a separate room and then all would bade farewell and return to their own homes.

Recently, during my visit with Rev. Schrock at the Fairbury Church, he further counseled that this ritual was usually initiated on impulse and not observed at any predetermined date or time. One Elder, who stressed the importance of foot-washing in homes, was 'Mike' Zimmerman of the Congerville, Illinois Church. He had a brother John—nicknamed 'Pap'—who, for many years, lived at the southwest corner of Sixth and Walnut Streets in Fairbury. Rev. Schrock humorously recalled that 'Pap' and Rev. Joseph Virkler once walked all the way to Congerville to visit 'Mike' and participate in the worship services.

YEAR OF DECISION

The fellowship and intimacy that existed within the North Side Congregation transcended any thought of separation. Even though older members preferred traditional language, dress, worship, disciplines, etc., they were willing to suppress these desires in the interests of harmony.

Some members of the other area churches insisted that the "Old Ways" be retained. In 1932 they elected to withdraw and re-establish under another name. It was a time of great turmoil and one must admire the unity displayed by the North Side; not only through this schism, but also the previous one in 1907.

THE LEADERS

The North Side and its successor, the Forrest Church, have been blessed with six resident Elders: Joseph Virkler, Rudolph Leuthold, Jacob Honegger, Peter Bach, Henry Kilgus, and Perry Zimmerman. There were only two intervals in which the leadership was entrusted to outside Elders.

The first occurred after the death of Jacob Honegger in 1920 when the Eldership was conferred upon Martin Steidinger of the Fairbury Church. He held this position until the "Parting of the Ways" on February 7, 1932, when all three area churches became elderless.

Emil Schubert, resident Elder of the Peoria Church, was dispatched to rectify the situation. He assumed command of all three churches and, through his competence and perseverance, soon had more than seventy in this area repenting. Such an exhaustive effort moved Noah Schrock, a visitor during this crucial period, to remark that, "There is a pressing need for a resident Elder in this Community."

On November 20, 1932, Elders Emil Schubert and Elias Winzler ordained Rev. Peter Bach, a North Side Minister, to the Eldership over all three churches. Rev. Bach, relieving the over-burdened Schubert, capably performed the duties of this office until his death on May 5, 1946.

The churches, again without an Elder, chose Henry Kilgus to fill this vacancy. He was ordained on December 24th of this same year and his responsibility included not only his own North Side Church but also the South Side. Simultaneously, the Eldership of the Fairbury Church was bestowed upon Joshua Broquard.

MINISTERS AND ELDERS

The ensuing biographical sketches of North Side Ministers and Elders are here presented in the sequence by which they served. Vague and ambiguous information, especially concerning the earlier leaders, has either been omitted or identified in its proper context.

JOSEPH VIRKLER

Joseph Virkler, the eldest son of Rudolph Virkler, was born in September of 1816 at Avricourt in Lorraine; then a part of France. Rudolph was forty-eight when, in 1834, he brought the family to America and settled in Croghan, New York. There he became the first Elder of the Apostolic Christian faith in America, having been ordained and appointed in 1847 by Benedict Weyeneth—this and other events of his life are recorded on adjoining pages.

Little else is known of his immediate family although several of his brothers were also ministers. He is the grandfather of a well-known Fairburian recently deceased: Lillian Virkler Clarke.

Joseph died on September 23, 1885 at the age of 69. He is buried in the original Virkler plot in the North Side cemetery.

RUDOLPH LEUTHOLD

Rudolph Leuthold came to this country from Zurich, Switzerland in 1868 and we assume that is where he was also born in 1813. With previous pulpit experience in Europe, he was welcomed to the North Side where, in addition to ministering, he shortly replaced Virkler as Elder. Since Virkler was his junior by three years, there was speculation that some jealousy may have existed between the two, although Virkler's health was probably the prime consideration.

Leuthold was both Elder and Trustee to the South Side in its infancy. He possibly served in the same capacity at Fairbury since his 1868 arrival predated that of the Steidingers by about seven years. John Georg Steidinger did not assume the South Side and Fairbury Elderships until sometime after 1875.

Rudolph Leuthold served the North Side long and well as their Elder before relinquishing the position to Jacob Honegger. His death occurred on March 27, 1892 and burial was in the Church cemetery.

JOHN MOSER

This early minister lived diagonally across the road to the southwest from the original corner site of this small church. It was here that he served for several years before moving on to Kansas.

According to Arletha Bender's book, "History of the Mennonites," there was one, John Moser, who left the Amish Mennonite Church of Croghan and joined the "New Amish" faith with other converts including the Virklers. The only date available records his ordination as a minister of this new "Faith" in 1860. Virkler's influence undoubtedly drew him to the Forrest area sometime after they themselves arrived in 1864.

In recent years, an eastern relative requested information from our own Eli Moser—no relationship—in an attempt to trace John Moser's westward migration. None in this area could contribute any data of significant value.

Lacking proof to the contrary, we must assume that the man from Croghan and our own early preacher are one and the same. Unfortunately, all his vital statistics also remain unknown.

JACOB HONEGGER

Jacob Honegger was born in Switzerland on March 8, 1832. He, with his family, came to America in 1866; settling temporarily in Morton, Illinois before proceeding to the Forrest region in the following year. He tilled a farm not far from Virkler's in those pre-building years when everyone still met in neighborhood homes.

He had been a minister in Zurich and when the increasing membership became too much of a burden for Leuthold alone, he resumed preaching. Some years later, Leuthold prior to retiring, conferred the North Side Eldership upon him. Honegger also shared, along with Martin Steidinger, the South Side Eldership after Christian Gerber's death in 1910. According to an old issue of "The Silver Lining," he retained these positions until death overtook him at the age of eighty-eight.

Failing health enfeebled him considerably and he encountered difficulty in standing—especially at the pulpit for any protracted time. To overcome this, Reverend John Maurer Senior built a small table between pulpit and Ministers' bench that could accommodate his Bible. This allowed Honegger to read and then deliver the sermon from his seated position.

He lived on a farm near the church until his death on November 22, 1920. He is buried in the church cemetery.

NICHOLAS KELLER

Nicholas Keller was born in St. Gall, Switzerland on November 20, 1831 and his early life was successfully spent in acquiring an education. He graduated from seminary at the age of nineteen and entered the teaching profession for several years before deciding to emigrate to America in 1856.

After an arduous, thirty-seven day voyage on a sailing vessel he first settled in West Virginia where, as a day laborer, he many times worked with slaves. The following year he moved to a farm in Monroe County, Ohio remaining there for a six year period which included marriage and the birth of a son and daughter. In 1863 the Keller family migrated to Woodford County, Illinois. Here he farmed for another six years before removing to Livingston County where he purchased a farm about one mile west of what is now the town of Wing.

During these years he attended and ministered at the North Side Church which was only two and one-half miles distant. In 1874 illness forced him to relinquish farming and he moved to Fairbury to participate in various business ventures that were not so demanding physically.

As a lifelong member of the church from a very early age, he devoted much of his time and limited energy toward its proliferation. An 1874 list of Trustees for a soon-to-be-founded Apostolic-Christian Church in Fairbury included the name of Nicholas Keller. Records note that he ministered here in his latter years as well as earlier at the North Side and he served them both enthusiastically until his death in July 1890.

GILGIAN STOLLER

Gilgian Stoller was another of the North Side's early ministers. He was born on September 25, 1841 and lived about six miles southeast of the church. His death occurred on July 26, 1919 and interment was in the church cemetery.

Of interest to Fairbury historians was an indenture agreeing to purchase the local Presbyterian Church building on Walnut Street. It was signed by Stoller and five others on March 14, 1874.

JACOB NUSSBAUM

Jacob Nussbaum was born in Canton Solothurn of Switzerland on March 29, 1847. As a small boy, he accompanied the family to America in 1856. They spent forty-four days on a hazardous voyage aboard a ship sailing from Le Havre, France to New Orleans.

Most of his remaining life was spent on a farm three and one-half miles northwest of the Church where he had actively ministered for a brief period of time—five or ten years at most. He died on November 11, 1932 and is also buried in the North Side cemetery.

JOHN MAURER SR.

John Maurer Sr. was born on February 7, 1862. He resided on a farm one mile—directly across the Section—north of the church. His ministerial tenure was quite brief as he retired from farming and moved to Fairbury only three years after his ordination in 1919.

Thereafter he restricted his preaching to the Fairbury Church until February 7, 1932. He died on April 2, 1953 and was buried in East Graceland Cemetery.

EDWARD HONEGGER

Edward Honegger was born in Zurich, Switzerland, on December 30, 1861 and was a mere five-year old when the family migrated to America. They lived at Morton, Illinois, for a year prior to permanently settling on a farm near the Church.

Edward's adult life was spent on a farm three miles south of Forrest: somewhat distant from the North Side

and for many years he attended the South Side. He was ordained a North Side Minister in 1921 about a year after the death of his father, Jacob. He persevered in this inherited capability until his own death occurred on April 26, 1925. He is buried in the South Side Cemetery

PETER BACH

Peter Bach was born on December 10, 1873 and lived on a farm one mile east of the North Side Church. He became an ordained Minister in 1923 and was ordained an Elder on November 20, 1932. The ceremony was performed by Emil Schubert and Elias Winzler. Pete as all his friends called him, was resident Elder for all three area Churches until his death.

The Churches were fortunate to have such a responsible and benevolent leader to assume command during those emotional and unstable times. Loved and admired by everyone, he inspired a loyalty that endured beyond the grave. Mr. Bach died on May 5, 1946 and he was buried in the Church cemetery.

HENRY KILGUS

Henry Kilgus was born near Forrest, Illinois, on August 30, 1892. He lived on a farm one-half mile east of the North Side Church. He became an ordained Minister in May of 1931 and was later ordained an Elder by Brothers Noah Schrock of Oakville and David Mangold of Roanoke on December 24, 1946.

He faithfully performed the duties of these two offices at the North Side until its abandonment and he subsequently continued to execute them at the new Forrest Church. Here he eventually relinquished the Eldership, bestowing it upon Perry Zimmerman in 1970. Mr. Kilgus retired from the ministry about a year later and presently resides in Forrest.

ALEXANDER STOLLER

Alexander Stoller was born near Forrest in the year 1886. His farm, three miles south of the Church, was adjacent to the northern outskirts of the town.

Imbued with the consiliatory nature and exemplary virtues of his Minister father, it was inevitable that Alex would respond to an opportunity to proclaim the "Truth." Aspiration became reality when he was ordained in 1934.

He retired from the farm in 1946 and relocated in Fairbury. At this same time he discontinued preaching in Forrest and subsequently terminated his ministry at the Fairbury Church several years before his death in 1967. He is buried in the North Side cemetery.

BENJAMIN WIEGAND

Benjamin Wiegand was born in 1884. He came to this area in the Spring of 1947 from Taylor, Missouri, where he had previously ministered.

Residing on a farm several miles to the northwest of the Church, he remained active in the Ministry until his death on December 5, 1956. He, too, is buried in the North Side Cemetery.

JOSEPH KAISNER

Joseph Kaisner was born on a farm south of Fairbury on March 13, 1899, and as a youth attended the South Side Church where his father, John Senior, was a minister. After Joe's marriage to Ida Sutter, he spent a number of years on a farm north of Forrest where he attended the North Side and, exhibiting a family trait, became a minister there, being ordained on June 23, 1946.

Sometime after ordination his faith was severely tested when he was beset with failing eyesight. Though this infirmity forced the surrender of his ministerial duties he realized it was God's will and never faltered in his religious convictions. Prayer and perseverance eventually rewarded him with restored sight for which we are all grateful. He is now retired and for several years has lived in Forrest where he is again an active Minister in the Church.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The North Side Sunday School thrived for many years under the instruction of Will Yoder, Tony Miller, Wilhelm Schlipf, and Peter Bach. Records disclose no other teachers, so they undoubtedly also taught the girls' classes.

This School was discontinued for a lengthy interval and not resumed until 1921 or '22. Eli Moser, who attended Church during these intervening years, believes the prolonged interruption was due to a shortage of school-aged pupils.

Peter Bach and Alex Stoller were the first teachers when the Sunday School was reactivated and, after Mr. Bach's ordination in 1923, Henry Kilgus was assigned to replace him. In turn, Ira Nussbaum replaced Henry Kilgus when Henry was ordained, and Ira's brother Silas became a very active and conscientious substitute teacher. Joseph Kaisner and Henry Maurer also served at various times.

Mary Nussbaum, Martha Stoller, and Josephine Zimmerman taught the girls' classes. When Church ceased its activities at the North Side location, Ira Nussbaum and Jake Ebach were the teachers at the final men's class.

SONG LEADERS

Song leaders are chosen because of their knowledge of music and singing aptitude—usually an inborn talent. The following Brethren of the Church have, through the years, contributed their efforts to a more meaningful and beautiful worship service:

Fred Metz
Sam Yoder
Will Yoder
Wilhelm Schlipf
Peter Bach
Ira Nussbaum
Silas Nussbaum
Henry Maurer
Ernest Gerber
Edward Stoller

THE CHOICES

When various options are available, it is usually difficult to get an expression of unanimity from a congregation, and the North Side was no exception. About the same time the South Side was confronted with similar "housing" problems and it was inevitable that impromptu discussions between members of both bodies would result in the espousal of a mutual solution.

The main choices were: To repair and expand the existing edifices; To demolish and build anew at the present site; To abandon and build anew at another site; To abandon and transfer one's membership to another A-C Church. This last option appealed to many "South Siders" but was reconsidered in light of the possibility that a new Church would be erected in Forrest. After all, proximity, as well as where one's friends, neighbors and relatives worshipped were all factors to be considered.

On July 11, 1947, several of the more enterprising brethren, exhibiting serious intentions, purchased one-half of a city block in the northwest section of Forrest. This site was acquired from the local banker, William Follmer, and his wife, at a cost of two thousand dollars.

FORMING THE COMMITTEES

The vast preparations and countless decisions, preliminary to constructing a new church building, were time-consuming despite the impetus provided by the purchase of the lot in Forrest. It was March 5, 1948 when the first organizational meeting was held in the North Side Assembly Room where Brothers from both Congregations gathered at seven o'clock that evening and, after brief discussions, resolved to proceed by authorizing the formation of two committees—Building and Finance.

To staff them, they subsequently elected Ben Stoller, Frank Honegger, Ben Leman, Andy Rieger, and Jacob Ebach to the Building Committee and Sam Honegger, Emil Sohn, Walter Honegger, and Roy Metz to the Finance Committee. These Committees respectively chose Frank and Sam Honegger as Chairmen and the Finance Committee selected Roy Metz to be Treasurer.

THE TRANSITION

After extensive deliberation and meditation, the North Side Church was reluctantly abandoned. She had been both an inspiration and "Beacon" to generations of A-C's and Her demise, like that of all rural Churches, had been hastened by the advent of the automobile. One could travel to town in less time that it formerly required to harness and hitch-up a team. Distance was no longer the problem—conveniently accommodating a larger and more remote congregation was! These and many other factors, including the declining condition of the buildings, had been prudently considered before the proposed decision, to build anew in Forrest, was finally endorsed.

The now-deserted buildings were sold at auction on December 29, 1949. The final bid of \$1,440.00 ignored the enormous sentimental value that had accrued in the hearts of Her members and after these derelicts had been dismantled and carted off that following Spring, only cherished memories remained.

When a friend or an institution (both in this case) expires, those of us with a penchant for nostalgia are occasionally compelled to recount the last days and consequent events. That we may again reminisce, here are some of my more distinct recollections:

The last wedding at the North Side was held on March 21, 1948, when Virgil Koehl and Gladys Maurer were united in Holy Matrimony.

The last funeral rites were held for William Hirstein. He was buried on February 11, 1949 in the Church Cemetery.

Both North Side and South Side Churches held final worship services on December 11, 1949. It is surmised that Rev. Henry Kilgus delivered the sermon at the North Side. The luncheon that followed this final sermon was served by Lena Bach, the wife of the late Elder Peter Bach. A parting hymn and concluding prayer terminated these services for all time. The sorrowful "Goodbyes" and emotional handshakes concealed hopes and prayers that the

new "Forrest Apostolic-Christian Church," as it was to be called, would be the "Guiding Light" that Her predecessor had been.

Rev. Henry Kilgus devoted much of his adult life to the development of both the "Old" and the "New" Churches. His enthusiasm is reflected in the interestingly-chronicled records he kept, and this chapter concludes with one verbatim page that was particularly relevant:

"By this time, the year of 1947, we had already held four meetings feeling that it was time that something should be done to remodel the old church in the country or build a new one. The first meeting was held April 24, 1944, the second was held June 28, 1944, the third was held June 27, 1946, and the fourth was held May 7, 1947.

"In the year of 1947, much planning and deciding was done. The South country church was also in need of improvements. In 1948, the Southside country members were decided for half to come to Forrest and build with us and half planned to go to Fairbury.

"Our new church was built in Forrest in the years of 1948 and 1949. The church was finished and ready for services Jan. 1, 1950. Services were held twice before the church was completed.

"In the spring of 1950, both country churches, North and South, were sold and torn down.

"Dec. 18, 1949, was the first time we gathered to worship in the new church building at Forrest, although it was not yet fully completed. Everyone enjoyed themselves in comfort and were thankful to God.

"We met for the second Sunday on Dec. 25, 1949, with many visitors to witness the Sunday School program which was enjoyed by all.

"Jan. 1, 1950, we met with quite a number of visitors with everything completed. Had open house from 2:00 to 4:00; many came to go through the new building. Bro. Andy Nussbaum, Remington, was visiting minister.

"Dedication services were held at 1:00 on Jan. 2, 1950, Bro. Schrock, Bro. Mangold, and Bro. Getz filled the pulpit with a full house.

"During the year of 1950, we witnessed the blessings with 16 converts, 4 weddings, held the Lord's Supper once, and had only one friend to pass away, Mary Kemp.

"Bro. Andrew Koehl began to minister in the South Country Church in Mar. 1932, and came to Forrest in 1950. Bro. Clarence Kachelmuss was put into the ministry in 1957.

"The present ministers are Elder Henry Kilgus, Bro. Joseph Kaisner, Bro. Andrew Koehl, and Bro. Clarence Kachelmuss.

"Present trustees are Bros. Frank Honegger, Emil Sohn, John Kyburz.

"Our church considers the Sunday School of great importance and is crowded for room, having 191 scholars. Nine brothers and seven sisters are teaching, with Bro. Perry Zimmerman as superintendent.

"This record is brought up to May 11, 1962."

GETTING UNDERWAY

The Building and Finance Committees lost no time in carrying out their mission. Several Committee members promptly made visitations in such widely-located cities as Gridley, Goodfield and Roanoke, Illinois; and Remington, Indiana; and Oakville, Iowa. Members of these Churches provided invaluable information concerning the efficient and practical construction of a church building. A multitude of subjects, from Economics through Logistics, received attention in these discussions. One of the final visits—to Remington—was especially opportune in that the Committee, accompanied by the Building Contractor and the Architect, was able to observe that Church under construction.

The Committees forthwith translated their observations and conclusions into specific plans for edification of the Congregation which, if they approved, could be carried to fruition by the Architect and Contractor. A meeting was held at both Churches to familiarize the Membership with the proposal. Some of the envisioned features included: A Sanctuary that would seat four hundred; A Dining Room with a capacity of approximately one hundred; The Sunday School, Dining Room, and Kitchen would occupy the entire lower floor.

Affirming the Committees' good judgment, everyone expressed their approval and Andy Rieger was ordered to start excavating. Utilizing a crane, the actual digging of the basement commenced on May 28, 1948.

Ralph Snyder of Eureka, the Contractor, agreed to furnish all materials for the project at cost plus twenty percent. This mark-up was to include all of his expenses and a minimal profit.

THE INDEFATIGABLE COMMITTEES

Approval of the building plans by the Congregation by no means concluded the activities of the Committees. Between June 1, 1948 and October 17, 1949 they spent many tedious hours, in regular and special sessions, deliberating and discussing the details and options that constantly required decisions. The color of the brick, the type of basement tile, window glass, terrazzo floors, weight and color of shingles, financing, and pledge cards were only a few of the determinations requiring an answer. A hundred folding chairs and a steel storage cabinet were ordered for the Sunday School. Maurer and Roth were consulted about the lighting, ceiling materials, fans, loudspeakers, etc. Dave Hoerr's advice was to be sought concerning the landscaping.

On April 30, 1949 a meeting was held at the home of Ben Stoller to determine seating arrangements and select the type of pews and furniture to be installed in the Sanctuary. They concluded that two aisles, in line with the doors to the Fellowship Hall, were preferable to one center aisle. Consequently long pews would span the distance between these aisles and shorter pews extend from the aisles to the outer walls. Stopping short of the outer walls left a space which formed a narrow aisle along the walls and allowed pew entry from either end. Cross pews (facing the Pulpit) were to be installed in both front corners of the Sanctuary and pew screens were to mask the front pew of the three main rows. With a seating capacity of four hundred in mind, four Committee Members journeyed to Warsaw, Indiana, where they purchased the pulpit, ministers' bench, pews, and screens from a Church Furniture Manufacturer in that City.

Several problems still unresolved and plans not finalized were discussed at a general meeting held in the new Church on October 17, 1949. The advice of the Church Sisters was sought concerning efficient kitchen design as it would effect convenient food preparation and serving. Their preference for certain utilities and utensils was to be the subject of a later meeting.

PART III

Twenty-five Years in Forrest



This excellent photograph of the Forrest Apostolic Christian Church was also taken by Alfred Bachtold. The view is toward the northwest, diagonally across the street corner.

COMPLETION

Actual construction of the building began on September 1, 1948 and was completed in the middle of December the following year at a total cost of approximately \$140,000.00. The first service was held on Sunday, December 18, 1949 but recollections fail to clarify who delivered the sermon. It was Elder Henry Kilgus' turn, according to the North Side luncheon list, to serve the repast on this first Sunday in the new Church.

Reverends Joe Getz of Morton, Illinois, and Noah Schrock of Oakville, Iowa, officiated at the dedication services on Sunday, January 2, 1950. Reverends David Mangold and Silas Leuthold participated in the concluding services that same evening. Open house was held on January 8, with Reverend Al Fisher of Chicago in charge.

The North Side as far back as anyone can remember, never held mid-week evening services. When they were inaugurated at the new Church it was an innovation to many.

The Forrest Ministers

ANDREW KOEHL

Andrew Koehl was born on a farm southeast of Fairbury, August 11, 1888. His own farm, where he labored most of his adult years, was about four miles southeast of the South Side Church. It was here that he became an ordained minister in March of 1932 and he remained active until the abandonment in 1949. He then moved to Fairbury, fully intending to retire.

His father had previously been a Minister and it proved impossible for Andrew to repress this family trait. Shortly he was sharing in the task of filling the pulpit at the new Church in Forrest. Here he actively preached until his death on June 26, 1969. He was buried in the South Side Cemetery.

CLARENCE KACHELMUS

Clarence Kachelmus (pronounced Kal-moose) was born at Remington, Indiana, on June 27, 1913. He and his family moved to this area from Elgin, Illinois, in 1952. He currently assists in filling the pulpit at the Forrest Apostolic-Christian Church where his ordination to the ministry occurred on June 9, 1957. He likewise resides in the town.

PERRY ZIMMERMAN

Perry Zimmerman was born on a farm near Saunemin, Illinois, on March 14, 1919. He was ordained a Minister of the "Forrest" Church on May 20, 1966. A few years later, the resignation of Henry Kilgus created a vacancy in the Church Eldership and this office was also bestowed upon him. The date of this ordination was December 9, 1970 with Elders Noah Schrock, Leroy Huber, and Joshua Broguard officiating. Perry presently lives on a farm near Forrest.

EARL E. GERBER

Earl Gerber was born on a farm southeast of Fairbury on June 24, 1927. He returned to this area in August of 1966 from Rockville, Connecticut where his father, Ernest—whose footsteps he was destined to follow—had been a Minister. Earl became an ordained Minister at the Forrest Apostolic-Christian Church on September 7, 1969.

ERNEST GERBER

Ernest Gerber was born in Huttywyl, Switzerland, on August 5, 1897 and came to America in 1902, moving to this area in 1917. He removed to Rockville, Connecticut, in 1933 where, on April 24, 1944, he was ordained a Minister of that Apostolic-Christian Church.

Returning from Connecticut in September of 1970, he participated in the services at "Forrest" for a time. He has since retired from the Ministry and presently resides at 708 East Oak Street in Fairbury.

A QUARTER CENTURY IN FORREST

Though somewhat voluminous and laborious, the minutes of business meetings oftentimes reflect the progress and accomplishments of all Churches. In the interests of brevity, I have excerpted a few of the more interesting actions and/or discussions that have occurred at Forrest during the last twenty-five years.

The First Annual Congregational Meeting was held on January 17, 1950. Its main purpose was to elect the Church officers plus resolve any other business which might be presented at the meeting. Some of the election results were as follows: Jake Ebach was elected Sunday School Superintendent; Roy Metz, Janitor; Ben Stoller, Emil Sohn, and Frank Honegger, Trustees; William Honegger, Cemetery Trustees; Andy Rieger, Usher; Walter Honegger, Dinner Treasurer. It was resolved that each Member would be assessed thirty dollars annually to cover meals and other expenses.

The Second Annual Meeting was held on January 29, 1951. Ben Stoller, reporting for the Trustees, stated that the last collection amounted to \$3,825.00. A motion was considered to purchase a new lawn mower. In January, that's really thinking ahead!

A special meeting to consider incorporation was called for May 21, 1956. It was held at eight P.M. in the Church

and, after proper discussion, Silas Nussbaum moved that Forrest Apostolic-Christian Church be duly registered as a "Religious Corporation." William Honegger seconded the motion and, after its approval, the Trustees were authorized to properly record this decision at the Court House in Pontiac.

The twelfth Annual Meeting was held on January 23, 1961. A motion made by Raymond Wenger would convert the present heating system from oil to gas. It was seconded by Silas Nussbaum.

Several members suggested that a water cooler be installed on the Sisters' side of the upstairs hall. Others requested the addition of another stove in the Kitchen.

February 19, 1962: A discussion affirmed the need of a telephone in the Church. Its location and installation were at the discretion of Roy Metz and the Trustees.

January 6, 1964: Frank Honegger requested that the Trustees purchase a vacuum cleaner. Roy Metz seconded the motion.

January 4, 1965: Andy Lehman made a motion that a microphone with reel and adequate cable be purchased and installed in the most utile location. The motion carried after a second by Silas Nussbaum. Christian Metz was elected to be in charge of both microphone and telephone for a term of one year.



This picture clearly shows the new addition with its convenient canopy. The view is looking northeast across the parking lot.

January 4, 1966: Another microphone was requested for the Assembly Room and also a first aid unit with oxygen. The Trustees were authorized to purchase and install same.

The obvious inadequacies of these facilities, due to increasing attendance, had for some time evoked unofficial discussions concerning expansion and remodeling. At the October 28, 1967 meeting, Stoller and Maurer, Fairbury contractors, were retained to build what would later be called, "The West Addition."

January 8, 1968: Roy Metz resigned after having served as janitor for twenty years. Emil Anliker was chosen to succeed him. Sidney Leman asked that the Congregation consider air conditioning for the Auditorium.

January 29, 1968: Leman's request got quick action. They not only decided to air condition the Auditorium, but carpet it as well. Maurer and Roth of Fairbury received the contract to install the air conditioner.

Plans for enlarging and remodeling were unveiled on March 19, 1968. The Kitchen and Dining Room were to be removed from the lower floor and relocated in the new addition on the same level as the Sanctuary. The enlarged Kitchen could now accommodate a much-needed dish washer and other modern conveniences while the up-to-date Dining Room would now be able to seat 128. A nursery was located in the southwest corner with access from the Sanctuary. The seating capacity of the Sanctuary was to be changed only slightly while the Sunday School, which would then occupy the entire lower floor, could accommodate nearly twice as many students as previously.

The plans were well-received and it was agreed that the project should get underway immediately. To facilitate this, it was decided to temporarily borrow the necessary funds.

There was a period of four weeks, early that Summer, when it was impossible to use this edifice—probably due to laying of the carpet. As a result, many accepted an



Interior of the Sanctuary showing pulpit at the north end. Carpeted east aisle (foreground) indicated that picture was taken after remodeling.

invitation to worship at Fairbury, while others took the opportunity to visit Churches at Gridley, Cissna Park, and elsewhere.

In appreciation, Forrest invited the entire Fairbury Congregation to participate in their services on the evening of August 7. At the close of worship, an inspection tour followed the serving of a most delicious lunch.

The entire facility, new and remodeled, had been carpeted and air conditioned. Another improvement which attracted considerable attention was the west entrance to the new addition. A permanent canopy, large enough to drive under, protected the passengers as they disembarked during inclement weather. This elevated driveway required a minimum of steps to enter compared to the front entrance at the South.

A general open house was held on August 25. The guest Minister that day had been Ben Maibach of Detroit, Michigan. He visited the Fairbury Church the evening of that same day.

January 13, 1969: The cost of the addition and the remodeling was presented to the Congregation in a detailed report by Albert Wenger. The total was \$172,272.43. A decision to raise the members' annual due from \$30.00 to \$50.00 was also approved.

1973: The present Church Trustees are: Glen Zimmerman, William Honegger, and Albert Wenger. Emil Sohn is the Janitor and has held this position for some time.

DESIGN AND BUILD THE ADDITION

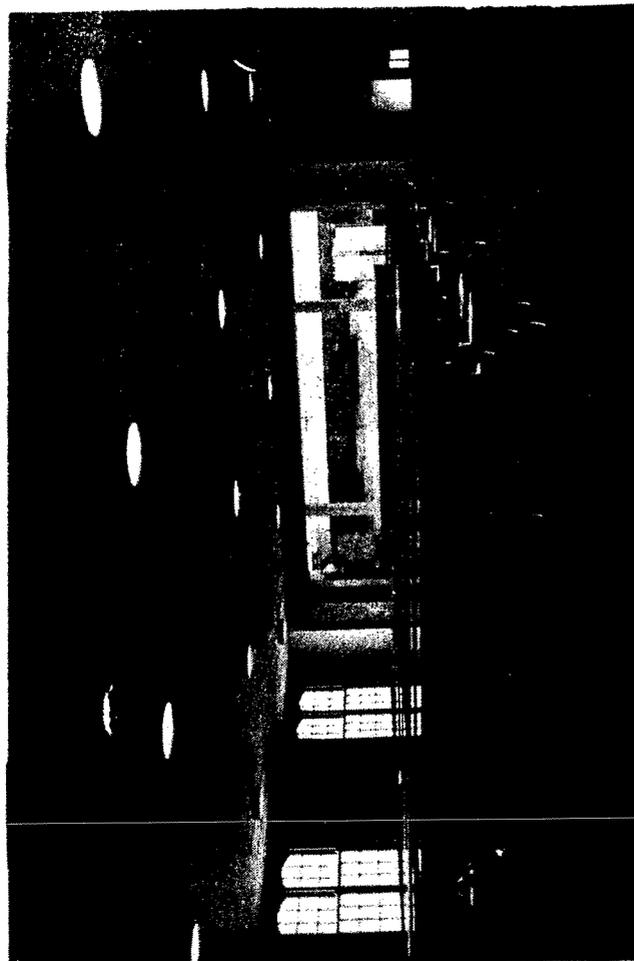
Architect: O. Kleb and Associates of Aurora, Illinois.

Contractor: Stoller and Maurer of Fairbury, Illinois.

Sub-contractors: Maurer and Roth of Fairbury.

Rigsby Electric of Fairbury

Weber Plumbing and Heating of Fairbury.



Inside the new addition one observes the dining room with its efficient, horseshoe-shaped counters, surrounded by countless benches and stools. The kitchen appears through the opening at the far (north) end.

ACQUISITIONS FOR PARKING

The blacktopped parking lot to the West, between the Church and the street, is of considerable size and proved adequate for a good while. In 1957 the large lot, across the street South of the Church, was purchased for \$2,710.00.

On May 12, 1964 the lot, immediately across the street East of the Church, was obtained for \$2,000.00. Thus the parking facilities have kept pace with growth in the Church membership.

A SPECIAL THANKS

I have attempted to justly credit in the "Acknowledgments," those who have contributed so much to this composition but it would be remiss of me not to give special recognition to Rueben J. Bach. His encouragement was so essential during those adverse periods when completion seemed impossible.

He has also unselfishly volunteered to underwrite the entire printing costs of this book plus handling, its sale (at cost), and distribution—an assiduous task in itself. His address is Rural Route #1, Fairbury, Illinois.

THE CHALLENGE

It is my hope that some enterprising person, after reading this book, may perceive the importance of a continuing Church History and accept the challenge that writing it offers. I can attest that, despite the perseverance and self-discipline required, it will be a most satisfying and rewarding endeavor—ample compensation for an avocation.

Do not wait 110 years to compile the history of the Forrest A-C Church. Start now, and restrict the scope to the writer's lifetime. After all, "Today's" events become "Tomorrow's" history and it could be garnered firsthand!

A NORTH SIDE MARKER

The North Side Church occupied the second of her two sites for a much longer period of time. And now that twenty-five years have elapsed, since Her buildings were abandoned and removed, a number of members have expressed a desire to erect a marker at this final location.

Three miles north of Forrest on Route 47, then left (west) one-half mile along the north side of that country road, the marker could concisely describe both sites. Standing ever so invitingly, it would beckon history lovers, sentimentalists, and the ever faithful but diminishing North Side Alumni.

This past summer a marker or stone has been erected on the site of the old country church. This is what it says:

SITE OF
NORTH APOSTOLIC
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
1876 — 1949

FINIS

The North Side-Forrest years have encompassed an inspiring and prolific era. I humbly thank God that He has permitted me to be a part of them and I therefore present this book to you, my lifelong friends, as an outward expression of that gratitude.

BEN NUSSBAUM