

Passing  
Down the  
Memories  
of our  
Churches



Second Chapter  
March, 2003

A Folklore Sharing Project  
Lincoln Chapter  
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

**In May, 2000 the Lincoln Chapter published a collection of stories about growing up in the North and South Bottoms neighborhoods in Lincoln. At that time, the Folklore Committee felt the response was so positive, that we should collect and publish memories of other facets of our lives as Germans from Russia living in the "Bottoms" in Lincoln.**

**Soon after settling in Lincoln, Nebraska, our German ancestors from Russia, organized churches in their areas of the North and South Bottoms neighborhoods. These churches gave our people a sense of belonging and unity and enabled them to perpetuate their use of the German language and traditions regarding baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial customs. Their churches provided a secure, comfortable social outlet for young and old, and helped to maintain these ethnic enclaves in Lincoln for many years. Even the architecture of these buildings reflects a definite similarity to the design of their churches in the old country.**

**Statistical information on the churches was taken from booklets published by the churches when they observed significant anniversaries (50th - 100th) and from "A History of the Churches and of the Present Conference" published by the Nebraska Conference, United Church of Christ. The stories are oral histories, compiled from the memories of the contributors. No attempt has been made to verify the accuracy or authenticity of statistical or anecdotal accounts in this chapter of our memories.**

**With pride and gratitude, we dedicate this chapter of memories to those who established and served these churches.**

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Thanks to all who attended the Folklore Sharing Afternoon, and to those who contributed their stories.

By doing so, you have preserved an important part of history.



Folklore Committee, AHSGR Lincoln Chapter  
March, 2003

Larry Schenkel  
Norma Somerheiser  
Mollie Grenemeier  
Jane Nickolaus, Editor

**Folklore Sharing Afternoon  
Lincoln Chapter  
April 21, 2002**

**Norma Somerheiser:** Two years ago, we met and recalled memories of growing up in the North and South Bottoms. The booklet, *Passing Down the Memories*, was published. Now it's time to write the next chapter in our story.

Next to our homes and families, the church was the most important and influential institution in our lives. We received religious instruction, exposure to the music and traditions of our respective churches, and the church served as a social outlet for all ages. As young people, we could always be sure to receive permission to attend choir practice, Christian Endeavor, or other youth activities at church.

Working with thousands of obituary records on file at AHSGR, we seldom see one in which church affiliation is not mentioned, so let's pass down some memories of our churches and their meaning in our lives.

**Ed Schwartzkopf:** I'm an authority on the Brudergeschaft (prayer meetings). My mother used prayer meeting as my babysitter. She took me to them, for you see prayer meeting was held at our house. Our house at 319 C Street had a little addition to it. The Brotherhood decided they wanted to hold their prayer meetings there, and they talked to my father about it. However, he was a member of Zion at that time, and they belonged to Friedens Lutheran, so he changed his membership to Friedens.

Here I have to digress just a minute and say I'm so proud of all of you here today and of the Germans from Russia. We didn't need any mentoring; you had examples in your house all the time. If you were not doing right, you saw the stars, and it didn't take long. I'm so excited that we are doing this, we have to spend more doing this odyssey from our souls, including our churches, with our hands upon the altar, and tell the folks how proud we are to be Germans from Russia. Growing up I can only remember two guys who got in trouble with the law. We got along with the police. One time we built a fire under a light post, and were roasting potatoes when a police officer came along. He knew us, and just visited with us for a while, and reminded us to be sure to put the fire out when we were done. Yes, we had a good relationship with the police.



Getting back to the prayer house and meetings, I tell you they sometimes got a little hot under the collar. They would assign a passage of the Bible or someone would volunteer, and they would state their interpretation, and they would present it and sometimes there was disagreement on the interpretation, and one would stomp out, but they would be right back for the next meeting.

I particularly liked the ladies there. They liked me, they wanted me to sit by them and they brought me these little mints (pferrermints kücheln). I brought some, though not the same, you can get the idea. I would sing with them. Here I have some, pass these around.

Also they would have conventions, in the North and South Bottoms, and also out at Hastings, and McCook. I had just learned to drive; my brother Sam was not interested in going to Brudergeschaft, so I got to drive my dad to these conventions. H. J. Amen also liked to be the leader and get up and speak at these meetings, and sometimes he would go too.

In Florida, there are still some very active Brudergeschafts. They meet three times a week.

Ladies attended prayer meetings, but they did not talk, just listened. Do you remember when they walked into church, the men walked ahead of their wives.

When I went into the service, all services in the church (Friedens) were in German. Slowly in the early 50's, this began to change. They had one Sunday in English, they gradually increased to two, three, and finally all services were in English.

We did not rebel about going to church. We had no choice, and we went and enjoyed it. I would like to tell a little joke. Billy Graham was in Tupelo, Mississippi for a revival meeting, when he noticed he had a letter in his pocket that he was supposed to have mailed for his wife. He saw a young fellow, and approached him and told the young man who he was and that he needed directions to the Post Office. The young fellow said that isn't hard, I'm surprised you didn't know that, and he told Billy Graham how to get to the Post Office. Then Billy Graham thanked him and invited him to attend the revival meeting that night, and said he'd tell him how to get to heaven. The young fellow was quiet for a while, and Billy Graham said "well, are you coming to the meeting tonight?" The young fellow said "no, he didn't think so." Why, Billy Graham asked. "Well," the young man said, "if you can't find your way to the Post Office, how can you tell me how to get to heaven."

Getting back to the Brudergeschaft. I was in the service four or five years; overseas thirty-two months, and when I got back, the people in the Friedens group were still meeting regularly. I enjoyed seeing these people. There were about fifteen couples and several singles in our group. As I said before there are still strong chapters in Florida.

Nancy Borrell asked how often they met. Ed said three times a week, Wednesday evenings, Saturday evenings, and Sunday afternoons. Did all the churches have Prayer Meetings? Lillian Loos said all of the German churches down North did. Friedens Lutheran didn't, they met at Ed's parents house. Gladys Herstein said Friedens and Immanuel Lutheran didn't have them in the churches. Lillian recalled several prayer houses in the North Bottoms.



**Norma Somerheiser:** Ed, you said the ladies did not speak in the meetings, just listened. My aunt attended regularly and though she did not speak in the meetings she waited until she got home and called many of the other ladies in the group and they did their talking over the telephone.



**Example of a Birthday Greeting**

**Norma Somerheiser:** Did any of you get these in Sunday School on your Birthdays--Geburtstags Grüss (Birthday greetings)? And did you get a spruch (verse or piece) to memorize each week. The one I remember was "He heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecuteth thou me." Persecuteth was a terrible word for a kid who had just lost her upper front teeth.

**Jake Sinner:** I remember one Christmas program I said this piece:

Kristkinder komm	Christ Child come
Mach mich fromm	Make me good
Das ich in Himmel komm.	So I may go to heaven.

**Molly Grenemeier** Katherine Green told me that her grandmother (who was a midwife and worked with several Lincoln doctors) said it was told that the German churches in the North Bottoms provided musical entertainment on Sunday nights for some Lincoln doctors. They would drive down and park near the churches and sit in their cars and listen to the singing. The organ was not used at prayer meetings. The singing was loud, there was no air-conditioning, so the windows were all open and it was easy to hear the singing from the street.

**Jake Sinner:** I remember when all the women and children sat on one side of the church, and all the men sat on the other. We finally figured out why. All of the heat registers were on the east side of the church, where the men sat.

**Lillian Loos:** We (Immanuel Church) still have our Christmas Eve program. The kids say their pieces, they have a little pageant, and they get their sacks. It is one tradition we have kept.

**Mollie Grenemeier:** This was in the early 1950's when television came about, and I was working with the older people at Immanuel Lutheran, and I was taking these old ladies because they had no transportation, and they would just talk and talk among themselves, in German. We tried to get them to pray and sing in English at our meetings because we thought they should be learning the American language. "Ach wir können nyet, wir können nyet singen, wir können nyet sprechen English, müssen Deutch," (Oh, we can't, we can't

speaking English, we have to have German), they said. I'd get them in the car to take them home and they would start in about their soap operas. They knew all about what was going on in the soaps, but they could not understand, pray, or sing in English in the church.

**Harold Bauer:** Do any of you remember the bells at Friedens ringing at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday nights? My grandfather was the originator of that, I don't know how he got started. He tied the bell, he was standing under. I had to ring the third bell. It was too small to be tied. Reinhold Reiter rang the second bell. That put me under the other bells.

**Gladys Herstein:** Do you know why they rang the bells at 5:00 o'clock? This signified the start of the Sabbath, and you were not supposed to do anything. We had just moved to 6th & B Streets, and since I worked, I was still scrubbing my front porch and sweeping my sidewalk at 5:00 o'clock. My neighbor came out and told me to get in.



Gladys and Lillian both said their churches still ring their bells. Gladys said the tolling bell is rung at Friedens when the funeral procession leaves the church. Lillian Loos said the bells at Immanuel are rung when somebody dies if the family requests it.

Ed Schwartzkopf said he sometimes heard bells too when he was playing football.

At Zion Church the bells were rung before the start of Sunday School, church services, and during the worship service when the Lord's Prayer was prayed.

**Helen Schwartz:** Did you have to learn to read German in Sunday School? Ed said yes, everything was in German. Helen remembers when she was little and Pastor Henklemann was their Pastor. We had to learn how to read German as part of our Sunday School. Mrs. Henklemann taught the little children and she would set us on her lap and teach us the ABC's in German, and from then on our Sunday School was in German until we were Confirmed. We read it but I don't think we understood it. Ed said he got so used to speaking German he proposed to Dorothy in German and she didn't know what he was talking about.

Norma asked how many had Confirmation in German. Lillian Loos' class 1943/1944 was the last class at St. John's to be Confirmed using German. Gladys said they used English in 1940 at Friedens, and she was Confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran in 1940 in English.



**Delores Schwartz:** April 9, 2002, will be the 80th anniversary of her mother, and her mother-in-law's Confirmation at Immanuel Church. Pauline Brehm and Katherine Hoffman were Confirmed on April 9, 1922, which was Pauline's fifteenth Birthday. They gathered at Pauline's home on Y Street, and walked together to church, and after church they all went to the minister's home for dinner, and they each got a little glass of wine.



**Confirmation Picture  
Immanuel Church - Lincoln, Nebraska  
April 9, 1922**

Katherine Hoffman Giebelhaus is in the front row, 4th from the left  
Pauline Brehm is in the second row, sixth from the left

The Confirmation Certificate reminds us of the vows we made to God, of our faith, loyalty, and love.



**DENKSPRUCH**

**I Thessalonians 5:23**

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Katharina Hoffman's Confirmation Certificate  
Immanuel Church, Lincoln, Nebraska  
April 9, 1922**

**Norma Somerheiser:** Where could you always count on getting your parents permission to go? Church--for choir practice, Christian Endeavor or other youth group meetings, or some other event you made up. It was a good social outlet for young teenagers. That reminded Ed, that Pastor Koolen at Friedens once gave the young people permission to have parties in the church basement, and some people on the church board complained about these parties in the church. Pastor Koolen's response was, would you rather have them in the church basement or downtown on 10th & P, or 10th & O, in the beer parlors?

This ended our Folklore sharing afternoon.

## GERMAN RUSSIAN CHURCHES OUR MEMORIES

Church:	(German) Ebenezer Evangelical Congregational Church
Location:	8th & B Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska
Founded:	August 16, 1915

Official organizational meeting, August 16, 1915, at the Nazarene Church where by-laws were adopted. Unique in that women members of the congregation had equal voting rights with the men.

First Minister: Rev. J. F. Grove

First Church Board: Trustees; J. A. Wiederspan, H. J. Amen, H. Yost, H. J. Weber. Deacons; Peter Pabst, Jacob J. Hill, W. Weber, C. Hock. Ushers; Conrad Amen, G. David, J. Lebsock. John Pabst replaced Conrad Amen who could not serve because of his work schedule.

First building dedicated, February 14, 1916. Cost \$5,000.

Second building completed on same site, December 18, 1927. Cost \$ 25,000.

A parsonage was built at 3730 St. Mary's Street in 1955.

Baptisms:	334
Confirmations:	307
Marriages:	142
Funerals:	182

(all of the above in the first 50 years)

Pastors: J. F. Grove, organizer; Albert Hild, J. J. Balensky, T. L. Steiger, Ferdinand Sattler, Carl Roemmich, C. George Kuhn, Kal Knudsen, Loren Forbes

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### Ebenezer United Church of Christ

A group of families who had previously belonged to the German Zion Congregational Church decided to form a church. On August 16, 1915 they decided to call the church the German Ebenezer Evangelical Congregational Church. They purchased a lot in November of 1915 on the southeast corner of 8th and B Streets. The church building was completed by February 14, 1916, on which date it was dedicated. In 1927, the original frame structure

was replaced with a much larger brick building at the same location. The church used the Lutheran and Reformed Catechisms and preparation for Confirmation was in the German language until the mid-1930's, when English became the primary language for conducting Confirmation classes.

During World War I, all services were conducted in English. After the war, they once again conducted the services in German. By the late 1930's and early 1940's, both German and English were used in the services.



**The original Ebenezer Church built in 1915. It was torn down to make room for the present building which was erected in 1927.**

## **Recollections of Ebenezer UCC**

*By Elsa Amen  
December, 2002*

When recalling growing up in Ebenezer Sunday School, I think of the tremendous changes from then until now. The first thing that comes to mind, and that I find difficult to comprehend, is how we squeezed 100+ people into that basement room. There were pews, not folding chairs that one could move around. Each class had its designated pew; and when the teacher listened to our memory work, she would manage to get a chair in between the pews so she could face the class. All of the lesson material was standardized and was based on the same scripture portions as the large picture roll that was on the easel at the front of the Sunday School.

Each session began with the opening period of singing, prayer, and offering. In the very early years, the green *Evangelische Lieder* was used for singing. Then came the blue *Hymns of Praise, No. 2*, the red *Devotional Hymns*, and the brown *Christian Service Songs*. When each class was given a choice of a song, the boys' favorite was "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad." This really seemed appropriate since so many of the fathers worked for the



railroad. Later, choruses and song sheets were used -- "Rolled Away, Rolled Away," "Everyday With Jesus," and "Down in My Heart" were among them. Now it is song cards and videos.

After attendance and offering were taken, we anxiously waited for the Secretary to place the green and gold banner class stand next to the class who had the best record for that day. In class, the younger ones chose from a box of memory verses (spruchs) to memorize for the coming week. These were pretty little cards adorned with flowers, etc. Next week, if you'd learned yours, you could draw a new one. In the older classes, one studied from the catechism, doing pre-confirmation work.

After class, was the closing exercise which consisted of reports and the Superintendent (usually) explaining the lesson from the picture roll. If there were any visiting brothers, especially during conference time, they were invited forward to bring their greetings (grüsse -- pronounced grease) from their home churches: Fort Morgan, Brush, Sheboygan, Greeley, etc. The kids would say they "greased" us. Sometimes they also added to the lesson explanation, and their different accents always brought giggles from the kids. There wasn't much of this, however, as strict discipline was the only way a group of this size could be controlled. There was always a closing hymn and prayer. Soon, the pews were removed; and folding chairs were grouped here and there for classes. Some even moved to the balcony, choir loft, kitchen, or any other nook that could give more privacy. Closing exercises were then dispensed with.

**Ebenezer United Church of  
Christ  
8th & B Streets  
Lincoln, Nebraska**



One highlight of the year was the Children's Day program, held in June. The altar would be lined with flowers from the ladies' gardens. Some special props we had were a large wooden cross wrapped in white tissue and wired for electric bulbs and an arbor. In each



case, the Sunday School children would march in carrying a flower which would then be pinned on the cross or arbor. There would then be recitations, skits, songs and musical numbers.

Then there were the Christmas programs with all of their anxieties, mistakes, etc. We felt privileged when one of our Sunday School teachers had access to a color wheel; and from the balcony, he would diffuse the bright light with the different colors shining on the participants. Then one couldn't see all of those faces in the audience. These programs always had their moments of tension, comedy, and frustration -- the pastor always asking for repeats so your family could hear better. Some horn soloist when hitting a wrong note would turn his horn around and look into the bell as if to find the culprit inside. Others would reply to someone in the audience who was tormenting him. Some girls always managed to giggle through their dialogues.

Times have changed, numbers have dwindled, speaker systems carry the voices, but the same message is still heard, "Jesus Loves Me and You!"

After we were Confirmed, we looked forward to being part of Christian Endeavor (the youth group). Most everyone took part in leading the meeting. We used the C.E. lesson guide. Reverend F. Sattler was always asked to comment if he wished to do so. (He was always there for us but never interfered). The C.E. group always held a welcoming party for the new confirmands. These were always exciting, and usually there was a surprise or two. Once, I recall, they showed us a plank that you were to step on and then be lifted up by a person on each side. You were then blindfolded and asked to put your hands on the shoulders of the persons to your sides. Then you were told that they were raising you up. Actually they were stooping down. Then you were asked to jump down. When you tried, what a surprise!

It was also through C.E. that we went Christmas caroling. We would meet at the church on Christmas Eve about 11 o'clock. As most of our members lived in the area, we'd go down "B" Street and up "D" and to a few others that lived outside that close-knit area. Most would recognize us by turning on the porch light. In a few instances, we'd be invited in for cookies and maybe even a warm drink. We also participated in Union C.E., consisting of C.E.'s from First German, Zion, Immanuel, St. Johns, Salem, and Ebenezer. Sometimes we filled those churches to overflowing with young people. That was pre-World War II.

Our first choir robes were the short white "choir boy" type. Next, we received some "hand-me-downs" from the Lincoln Cathedral Choir. Their Director was Dr. John Rosborough, and they held their rehearsals in the Eagle Apartments whose supervisor was our Choir Director, Mr. George Baker. That choir gave several concerts at Ebenezer. Those robes were very different and elegant. The ladies had to remove their blouses in order to wear the three pieces of the robe. There was a net neck piece, then an eggshell-colored top, and a long, silver skirt. The men had only two pieces (top and skirt). We used these for several years before going to the traditional choir robes. During the years of both

English and German services, the choir would sing two anthems: one in English and one in German. The *Choir Herald* was used along with other classical anthems. Through the years, many cantatas were the highlights of the Easter and Christmas seasons.

Another yearly event was Mission Sunday (Mizzions Fest). Each of the German churches would have their specific Sunday. Missions were stressed and special offerings were taken beginning in Sunday School and continuing throughout the day. At the afternoon service, the Pastors and members from the other German churches would participate, filling the church. A special speaker might be a Conference Minister or Pastor from another State. All of the Ministers would be lined up on the platform and read scripture or lead in prayer. Our choir would be seated behind them; and to this day, I can hear Reverend Radach from First German singing, "The call come ringing o'er the restless wave, Send the Light, Send the Light." At the close of the evening service after all those nickels, dimes, etc. were counted, a report was given of the total sum raised for missions. The amount was then sent on to the National Conference Homeland Board of Missions.

The transition from the German to the English language was a difficult time. At one time, the solution was to have the English service close and follow it with a short German service. Showing films and serving cake and punch after C.E. meetings was also a struggle. At times, some of the Brethren would come to prayer meetings early to see that all was proper (in their opinion). The attendance and voting by women in the church business meetings was another point of contention. One old gentleman was heard to say, "You womens belong in the kitchen."

Wedding receptions were not allowed in the church until 1955. Jeans, women's pant suits, shorts, etc. were not considered church attire. We often wondered how the ladies could bear wearing those long, dark skirts year round. We often wonder what our grandparents would say if they were to witness the church today.

*These are just some of my recollections; it is not meant to be an official document.*

**Interior of the  
Ebenezer UCC  
Church Building**



Church:	First German Congregational Church
Location:	First Building - 234 West J, completed March 24, 1889 Second Building - 1st and F Streets, dedicated December 5, 1920
Founded:	First organizational meeting May 1, 1888 Officially organized June 10, 1888

First Minister: Adam Traudt, a student Pastor, then Rev. Johannes Lich.

	<u>By 1920</u>	<u>By 1952</u>
Baptisms:	1,260	1,796
Confirmations:	407	944
Marriages:	142	659
Funerals:	272	438

No officers listed. First 40 charter members: Peter Dreith, Conrad Schelleriff, Heinrich Weckesser, Conrad Nazarenus, Adam Wolff, Christ Betz, Conrad Klamm, Johannes Krieger, Peter Heuser, Heinrich Schwartz, Heinrich Wolff, Heinrich Hueser, Johannes Rieger, Heinrich Betz, Conrad Wolff, Heinrich Hoffman, Heinrich Aschenbrenner, Peter Helzer, Johannes Feuerstein, Johannes Hoff, Heinrich Schleiger, George Eusel, Nikolaus Bloch, Wilhelm Wolff, George Schneider, Peter Wolff, Jacob Kildau, Friedrich Bloch, Jacob Gruen, Wilhelm Reiber, Conrad Ulrich, Heinrich Burbach, Johannes Bloch, Ferdinand Nicolai, Heinrich Amen, George Bauer, George P. Betz, Heinrich Bender, George Schaefer, and Johannes Miller.

Pastors: Adam Traudt (student), Johannes Lich, E. C. Osthoff, Gustave Henkelmann, B. R. Bauman, Paul Jueling, Johannes Frenzen, August Klaus and Jonathan Strong (students), G.J. Schmidt, Theodore Radach, Otto Henn, Ferdinand Zahl, Chris Maedche, Benjamin Rieger, Louis DeGrazia, Earl Schuff, Eugene Wehrl, Jack Scavo, Herb Wenz, Alan Reed, James Pederson, Harold Donis, LeRoy Anson and Eric Bowley.

A flood May 8, 1950, caused extensive damage to the basement of the church. Much of the work was donated, and the total cost of the restoration was only \$1,500.

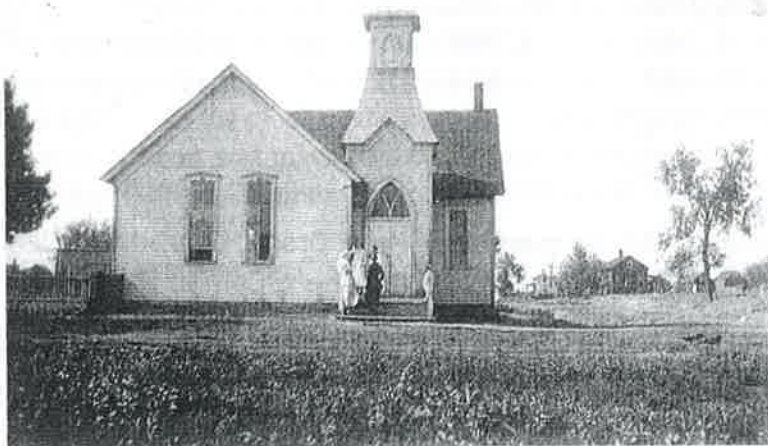
First German was affiliated with the United Church of Christ, and is now a part of the Christian Missionary Alliance.



## **The First German Congregational Church**

*Compiled and reported by John George*

The First German Congregational Church in Lincoln had its beginnings on May 1, 1888, at the old Park School. Forty charter members officially organized the church on June 10, 1888.



**This is the original First German Congregational Church Building. It was located at 234 West J Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.**

A lot was purchased at 234 West J Street, and the first church building consisting of a sanctuary (28 x 48 feet), and a Sunday School room (18 x 26 feet), was constructed there. Total cost was \$1,800.00, and the church was dedicated, debt-free on March 24, 1889.

In 1900, forty-three families left to form Zion Evangelical Congregational Church at 4th and F Streets. Zion later built another building at 9th & D Streets. During this time, members of First German living in the North Lincoln area, left First German and organized the "Braun Church," that in 1901 became Salem congregational Church. During 1907, members of First German Church left to organize Friedens Lutheran Church at 6th & D Streets. Members from Zion left to organize Ebenezer Congregational Church at 8th & B Streets, in 1915.

These changes were necessitated by the growing population of Germans from Russia who needed churches nearer their homes, and by a desire to have worship services conducted as they were in the old country: (many Lutherans had been worshiping as Congregationalists because one of their early churches was built by the Congregational church as a mission project, and they simply wanted to remain Lutheran). The break-offs were not the result of ill feelings.





**Interior of the original First German Congregational Church Building  
234 West J Street**

With the growing population and church membership, First German Church soon outgrew the space at the J Street location. This, plus noise from the railroad forced a move to a bigger and better location. A lot was purchased at 1st & F Streets. A two-story house had to be moved before building could begin. On November 2, 1919, \$2,500 had been pledged so construction could begin. The corner stone was laid on Sunday, May 30, 1920. The new building was dedicated on December 5, 1920. The doors of the new building were opened by Rev. Gustav L. Henkleman, the first minister of the new church.



**First German Congregational Church  
1st & F Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska**

A unique feature of the church was the arch in the chancel which was made of molded plaster and was a replica of the church in Balzer, Russia. It appears to be made of highly sanded wood. When the church was remodeled in later years and a new painting of Christ was put in, contractors didn't feel that the arch could be replicated. An artisan was found who was able to do it. Such artisans are hard to find, but the job was done, and it is there today for anyone to look at and be amazed.



An early dedication booklet was printed that gave a brief history of the new church and showed a list of individual donations which ranged from \$1,000.00 dollars to 50 cents. It must be remembered that 50 cents in those days was probably more the equivalent of at least \$25.00 today. The church was very active, holding two services on Sunday, along with Sunday School and Christian Endeavor. As was the custom those days, the ladies sat on one side of the church and the men on the other. This was true of the Sunday School classes and the early days of Christian endeavor. A minister had his work cut out for him, and when you consider the relatively small salary he earned, he was also expected to make house calls and hospital calls for the sick, and conduct weddings and funerals.

Confirmations on Palm Sunday were a big event. The boys were handsomely dressed in what might have been their first full suit with tie. The girls were prettily dressed in white with white shoes and full length hose, and probably their first "heels." Every confirmand was required to recite a biblical verse or a portion of a Psalm or song from the "Gesang Buch." The most popular gift was a small size leather bound "Gesang Buch." The whole proceeding was carried out in German and the "Gesang Buch," was printed in German.

Christmas Eve was another big event of the church. A super large tree was found and decorated. Electric string lights were not readily available in those days, so the tree lighting was done with clip-on candle holders with candles. The climax of the service was the lighting of the candles with several elders standing by with candle snuffers so the tree would not catch on fire. String lights will never compare with the beauty of a candle lit tree. "O Tannen Baum," was sung at that time. One year a song leader started the song by singing, "O Tannen Baum, O Tannen Baum, wie schwartz sind deine Bletter (your leaves are so black)," which prompted a lot of laughter and giggling which flustered him until he was advised of his goof. He restarted the song and everything went smoothly after.

The early elders of the church were a pretty staid group and usually proscribed at what cadences the German lieder were sung; usually at a pace that made them sound much like funeral dirges. Accompaniment was usually by the old foot pedal organ by not-so-well trained organists. With the installation of the pipe organ, the organist received training to play the organ and play the music as written by the composer. This disturbed some of the elders who complained that was not how it was played at their village church. Eventually, they came around and admitted the music sounded much better.

The Ladies Aid Society sponsored a yearly "Broda Fest," which brought a healthy revenue to the church, and enabled them to underwrite purchases of furnishings for the church. The "Broda" consisted of tender roast beef, stewed carrots and potatoes, sour pickles, rye bread, cake, etc. Almost everything was homemade by those fine cooks of the Ladies Aid. Their expertise did not take a back seat to Emeril LaGasse. The "Broda Fest" attracted not only most of the congregation, but people city-wide including mayors, business bigwigs, and radio station personalities who also came in such numbers that eating was done in shifts. When the downstairs tables were filled, the overflow crowd was seated in the chancel and

given numbers so they could be called as soon as empty places could be found. Everyone got fed and the happy faces that left showed what good cooking was all about.

Another happy event for the church was the "Church Picnic" that was held at one of the City parks. Baseball games, foot races, and potato sack races were popular, and come sunset, hot dogs, potato salad, bottled pop, big cuts of watermelon, and ice cream, were the menu for the day. This was a looked-forward-to event in the summer.

Christian Endeavor was attended by the younger church members after they had been Confirmed and until they had outgrown it. Some of the elders and the minister usually attended the meetings to see that the meetings conformed to church policies. The meetings were held before the evening services. This was a time that various talents were also displayed such as singing, playing musical instruments, etc. My special talent was color photography. The use of color film for general public use was introduced in 1935. I got started with it while it was still in its early stages, (1938) with the Kodak film called Kodachrome.

I was elected to give a program on the subject, and brought a number of slides of my own, plus some furnished by the Eastman Kodak Company, plus a projector, also furnished by Eastman Kodak. A couple of the slides were taken at one of the local swimming pools, which of course, showed a lot of bathers. One of the elders later lodged a complaint that the showing of women's bodies in what they called near nakedness, was not allowed in church. Anyone remembering bathing suits of the era should know the suit covered very much of the body. Comparing them to what today shows up at the beaches and pools, the suit of that era would be deemed very prudish. Men were not allowed to appear without tops at the Muny Pool and that if they didn't like tops, they had to go to the Capitol Beach pool or to Golf Club pools. Some of the guys jokingly said that the ladies should not be bound to the "top" rule. The elders never confronted me directly about the slide show, but rather brought it up to my parents. The minister had no complaints and my parents told the elders that they should have talked to me personally, so I could defend myself. I often wondered if those elders, secretly, didn't mind those bodies, after all.

The church was the victim of several floods until the course of Salt Creek was modified by built-up levees. The church never fully escaped the railroad noises, because of the sets of tracks running east of the church. The freight trains always blew their steam whistles for the "F" Street crossing, which was especially bothersome during the warm months with the church windows open. The whistles always seemed to blow while a sermon was in progress or the choir was singing.

The steep steps on the South entrance leading to the chancel made carrying coffins up and down rather tricky during funeral services. They did provide a place for the boys for "spitting" contests. They would try to spit from the top step clear to the bottom step. The contest would quickly come to a halt when the preacher showed up.

First German Church was honored by being given a place in the National Registry of Historic Places. It was decided to have the church fitted with vinyl siding to circumvent the need for periodic expensive repainting. One widow member, fearing that this would make it lose its place in the Registry, withdrew her contributions to the church. Since this did not alter the appearance of the church, her fears were unfounded, and the church kept its place in the Registry.

A sanitary sewer system was installed in later years which did away with outdoor privies, and the church installed indoor plumbing, which was welcomed by all members. The old "8 holer," outdoor privy was sold to a member of the church and gained its brief moment of fame when it was placed in such a position that Halloween pranksters could not rock it off of its foundation and dump it. It would not lean far enough from its foundation to fall over; and would fall back into its normal position. It became known as the undumpable privy.

The church still proudly stands today looking as good as when it was first built and provides Christian teaching and services, although to a much diminished congregation. Let us hope that this grand church can survive many more years without commercial interests taking over the area and tearing it down. Think of the many stories this church could tell, and the influences for good it provided.



**For thy mercy is great, reaching to the heavens.**

Church:	Friedens Evangelical Lutheran Church
Location:	First building: NW Corner - 3rd and B Streets Second building & present location: 6th and D Streets
Founded:	February 15, 1907

First Minister: E. Pfeiffer, an itinerant Missionary of the German Nebraska Synod

First Officers: President, Adolph Lebsack; Secretary, Conrad Strasheim; Treasurer, Johann Hoff; Elders: George Stroh, George Sitzman, and Jacob Bauer. Trustees: Jacob Rohrig, Jacob Lebsack, and Peter Scheidt. Sunday School Superintendent: Jacob Rothe.

Pastors: E. Pfeiffer, J. F. Krueger, Martin Koolen (twice), R. Kuehne, Herman Goede, Leland Leshner, Benjamin Warrenberg, Frederich Nolte, Royal Peterson, E. Gordon Jorgensen, Wallace Wolff, Fred Wolff, Delmer Clover.

First 50 years

Baptisms:	1,286
Confirmation:	1,119
Marriages:	501
Funerals:	464

A fire, January 25, 1925, caused extensive damage. The church was immediately rebuilt, and a new pipe organ installed.

Four from the congregation became ordained ministers: Stanley Floth, Fred Schmidt, Alex Wacker, and Paul Moessner. Delores Jean Wertz Watson will receive a Master of Divinity degree in May, 2003, at age 66.



**Friedens Lutheran Church**  
*Recollections by Kenneth A. Hardt*

Christmas Eve at Friedens Lutheran Church in the early 1930's was an exciting time for me as a young child. The church had its Christmas program always on Christmas Eve and it would last at least two hours.

I remember one such evening when everything was lit up to the fullest with all sorts of decorations. I believe we always had the tallest tree of any church in Lincoln. Seemed as

though we always tried to out-do the previous year in getting the tallest tree. The tree was adorned with large colored light bulbs, the size that one would use in ones home as a single ceiling light. At that time, the church would be packed with the Sunday School children and their parents, possibly 250-300, with folding chairs in the aisles to accommodate the extra guests. We would all be silent when all lights came on, and then the organist, Helen Moessner would switch on the organ, and as she began to play, all the lights in the church would go out. No one made any sound, we would sit in the dark until someone would place a copper coin behind the fuse. The program would then go on until it happened again. Finally, most of the decorations had to be turned off to continue the program. The presence of Dr. Koolen kept the situation orderly.



**Friedens Lutheran Church  
6th & D Streets  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

In the late 1960's, I was the first lay person at Friedens to assist the Pastor in giving Communion. I assisted for 15 years. I had some interesting moments, two of which were humorous to me.

There was an elderly German Russian lady who insisted on having bread that was broken into pieces, and would take it herself with the Pastor giving her the wine. She refused the wafer, which is used at our church. It was the time that our church no longer had German services, and she began to come to the English service. Having Communion given a different way than she was used to, bothered her. The bread was placed before hand on the Communion platter. When Communion began, I zeroed in on the plate, and sure enough, the bread was there alongside of the wafers. Was I relieved, as I am sure she would have made a scene. All those taking Communion were kneeling at the altar, only she was



standing on the end, ready for me. As I approached, she asked in a strong German dialect, "is the brot there?" She took it with gusto, and it made my day.

Years ago, it was more common to place the wafer on the lips of the people taking Communion. I had some trouble with one older gentleman. He would be kneeling and I had to slightly bend over to do this. The problem was, he would bow his head slightly, he had no teeth, and his nose was rather large. Try as I might, I was not always successful in getting the wafer to his lips. Sometimes I missed and the wafer would flutter to the railing, and then onto the floor. I had to move the wafer out of sight with my foot, as though nothing happened and try again without any hesitation. He was patient, and I tried my best.

When we still had German and English services, the elderly who attended the German services would wait outside of the church until the English service would finish, then enter the church. We noticed one elderly lady that came in on the side door before the English service ended. She made a bee-line for her customary seat in the pew nearby. Of course, it was occupied by a person in the English service. Nevertheless, in no uncertain terms, she strongly told her to get out of her seat, which the person did quickly. Those of us that sat nearby could not believe that she would be so possessive. I am happy to say, that we have not seen that kind of behavior since.

### **One Christmas Eve at Friedens Lutheran Church**

*Contributed by Annie Settell*

Friedens Lutheran Church at 6th & D Streets had a traditional Christmas Eve program in which the Sunday School children said their pieces and sang their songs.

One year the Christmas Eve program began with a beautiful procession. Each participant carried a small lighted candle, which gave the dimly lighted church a magical glow. When all had processed, they stood in rows at the front of the church; the taller boys and girls in the back row, and the others in rows in front of them according to their height.

The magical glow soon became a malodorous cause for great concern when one of the taller girls in the back row accidentally touched the hair of the girl in front of her with her lighted candle. The singed hair was slightly restyled, and fortunately the only serious injuries either girl suffered was embarrassment and damaged pride.

Lighted candles were replaced with interior lighting the next year.

*This is what Annie Lutz Settell heard one of her older sisters tell. She doesn't know whether it is true, but it is a good story.*

Church:	Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
Location:	First Site: 8th & D Streets Present Site: 11th & Plum Streets
Founded:	July 4, 1909

Membership: July 4, 1909, 23 families

First minister: Pastor W. F. V. Baeder

School organized in same building in 1910. K-8 grades until 1947.

Nine pastors, two vicars, one associate pastor, three Directors of Christian Education, and one Minister of Discipleship.

Pastors: Rev. W.F.V. Baeder, Rev. John Heins, Rev. William J. Roesler, Rev. Robert E. Tewes, Rev. Rollin H. Behrens, Rev. Donald D. Loesch, Rev. Mark J. Nicolaus, Rev. Donald Cooper, and Associate Pastor, Walter Rowaldt.

Vicar: Timothy Benninghoff

Directors of Christian Education: Jerry Markin, Arlyn Sprecher, and Brian Anders.

Life members who are also AHSGR members: Frieda Alt, John Miller, and Lydia Spomer.

AHSGR members who are 50 year members: Edna Becker, Pauline Deines, Marie Gannon, Henry and Mollie Grenemeier, John Schneider Sr.



**The second building used by Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church and School**

**845 D Street  
Lincoln, NE**

## Memories of Immanuel Lutheran Church and School

*Frieda Miller Alt*

*January 2001*

Immanuel church was started in 1909 at the request of twenty-three Lutheran families who immigrated from the Volga Colonies in Russia. The families wished for their children to have a Christian education. The German Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, decided to do mission work among the Germans from Russia. Rev. W. F. Baeder was called and installed as a missionary pastor.

Property was purchased and a wooden structure was built on the corner of 8th & D Streets. Pastor Baeder opened a Christian day school and taught until January, 1910.

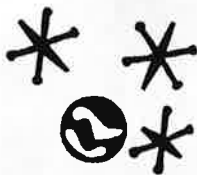
In June, 1910, the wooden structure was moved to another area. A new 2-story brick building was built on the original 8th & D site. Enrollment grew so fast that two rooms in the basement were added.

I was five years old and couldn't speak a word of English when I was enrolled in the school. We left early and returned late in the school term because our family went to the beet fields. I had to go to kindergarten two years. From then on I got along well. Later in life, I heard of other children also attending kindergarten two years.

At that time our teachers were Teacher Deffner and Teacher Braun. Women teachers were hired to teach the lower classes. Teacher Deffner and Teacher Braun were both very strict, but well educated in many subjects, including German and Religion. We had to learn to read and write in both English and German. Singing time occurred after our last class of the day.

To achieve good grades, we had to carry a stack of books home every night to study. If our dining room table could talk, it would possibly say, "Oh my aching back."

I just lived five blocks from school, so I could go home for lunch each day.



During recess, the girls would play "jacks." We gathered little stones for "jacks" and brought a ball from home. Sometimes we played "hop scotch." We had to be careful not to mark the sidewalk in front of the church. The markings were not to be seen on Sunday mornings. The boys got to go across the street to F Street park and play ball.

There were humorous as well as not so humorous times in class. One of my brothers was left handed. Years ago the teacher thought that should be corrected. When Teacher Braun noticed the pencil was in the left hand, he would tap the knuckles of the hand with the ruler. My brother became a right hand writer, but all the while his mind wanted him to be a left hand writer. It didn't seem fair to the students to change because the teacher thought so.

Teacher Braun had three classes--6th, 7th, and 8th grades. One day he had one of his classes go to the front of the room and report on their history lesson. Teacher Braun asked the class to tell about the American flag, and what it stood for. When no student answered, he asked, "was it just a rag?" Well Frieda was listening instead of doing her school work and answered out loud, "well that's all it is." Immediately here comes the teacher with a ruler that collided with my hand. There was no way I could explain my answer or my reason for saying it. When fabrics are new, they are a cloth, and when they become old and worn, they become a rag.

After school, Pastor Baeder would instruct the Confirmation class.

After graduating from the 8th grade at Immanuel School, we attended Everett Junior High School for our 9th grade. We already had learned the required 9th grade English, history, and geography at Immanuel Lutheran School, so we were able to choose most any subject at Everett to get the required hours. I took drama class. I had a part in a play given at the school assembly. I still remember one of my lines, "What's good for the goose, is good for the gander."

Our Sunday church services were held on the second, or top floor of the building. The wide stairs had steps going up about two-thirds of the way; then the stairway divided with steps going east and west. The church seating was divided with men sitting on the east side and the women and children sitting on the west side. The church had a beautiful altar, and the organ and choir seating was on a rounded and raised platform.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church  
11th & Plum Streets  
Lincoln, Nebraska**



Families volunteered to clean the church. The whole family was involved. Our family would do the cleaning on Friday when it was our turn.

Pastor Baeder was such a good and caring person. He would visit church members when they were ill, even baptized the baby in the home when they were very ill. People remember Pastor Baeder for his long flowing beard.

The following is very important to the church's history. The longest running organization at Immanuel ended in June, 1996. It was Immanuel's Ladies Aid that started in 1913. Pastor Baeder led the meetings with prayer and Bible study. I remember the times when the meetings were held in homes. The lady of the house was the hostess. My memories of these meetings were again of prayer and discussions. It was quite an event for the hostess. She had to see that there were enough chairs to seat all the ladies. Often, chairs were borrowed from neighbors. The meetings were once a month. The hostess would serve a treat such as coffee cake, or "grebel," a twisted donut sprinkled with sugar, (so good) and coffee. You haven't had a good cup of coffee until you taste egg coffee. Crush egg shells and all into the coffee grounds, add boiling water, and simmer slightly. Serve with cream and sugar cubes.

The ladies had officers and dues were 25 cents a month. They accomplished so much. They bought dishes and silverware for use at church socials. At times they had bake sales making runzas and rye bread. The money raised was always used for helpful projects.

As our mothers left us for their heavenly home, our generation continued until there were only five members in Immanuel Ladies Aid. (1913-1996)

## **Recollections of Immanuel Lutheran Church**

*Contributed by Lydia Spomer*

My membership in Immanuel Lutheran Church goes back to when I was in my mother's womb--and that's a long time ago! It covers Baptism, Confirmation, and includes Sunday School, Bible Class, teaching Kindergarten Sunday School, choir member, plus soloist for Sunday services and special church events, active member and officer in youth and women's groups, and most of all, happy memories attending our Christian Day School from Kindergarten through eighth grade.

Before I was five years old, I guess I even considered myself an honorary member of the Ladies Aid Society--and that's what I'm going to reminisce about, specifically one incident.

Way back then, it wasn't customary for mothers to leave the children with babysitters. Actually it was a common practice to bring pre-school children along for afternoon social and church events, and in the case of the latter generally with the admonition that the child



be "seen but not heard," at least until time for closing or refreshments with "Pfefferminz" candy tied in mother's handkerchief, as pacifier or advance reward.

Following the Sunday sermon, I was always alert and overjoyed on those Sundays when as the pastor announced the week's activities, particulars of the monthly "Frauen Verein" meeting were given, including the name and address of the hostess at whose home it was scheduled. At these gatherings, the pastor conducted a mini-worship service of devotions, prayer, and singing, followed by a short business meeting.

After not the least of these activities, during Ladies Aid, I looked forward to the refreshments of sandwiches and cake accompanied by coffee (my mother made hers with raw egg and ground coffee in a cloth bag.) I was included in some of the conversation when my mother was the hostess at our house, and felt quite comfortable moving among the ladies and contributing comments here and there, until I got into the livingroom where I engaged in a long, serious conversation with our genial Pastor, finding it quite pleasant to sit on his lap, as I did many times. He was a kind and gentle man of God, albeit with a twinkle in his eyes, who obviously loved children. He had the distinguishing facial features of a long white beard, which seemingly flowed from the wavy silver hair on his head.

Whether I had plotted my bold maneuver earlier or on the spur of the moment in the familiarity of my home, I'm not at all certain. Curiosity apparently overcame me and when my mother looked into the livingroom as she and a friend were arranging the plates in the kitchen, she was mortified to see me parting the Pastor's beard and smoothing the two sections on either of my cheeks.

There was a lot of giggling among the women at my experiment and no doubt to Pastor Baeder's delight, to all of which I was oblivious. Needless to say I didn't repeat this procedure in later sessions of the "Frauen Verein."

By the time I grew up to legitimate membership age, the organization became the Ladies Aid, and met in the church fellowship hall during the afternoon---alas my job didn't allow me to participate.

Church:	Immanuel Reformed Church (Immanuel German Reformed Church)
Location:	10th & Z (Z is now known as Charleston Street), Lincoln, NE
Founded:	1891

**First Building:** The Immanuel congregation purchased their first building from the Presbyterian Church for \$700.

**Second Building:** The first building was moved to the back of the lot and the present church building was constructed on the corner of 10th & Charleston.

**Charter Members:** Adam Blum, Henry Brehm, John Feuerstein, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Giebelhaus, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Hoelzer, Nick Lehl, Henry Schumann, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Frank Schumann, and Mr. & Mrs. John Urbach.

**Pastors:** John Arnold, Conrad Sauer, Carl Brost, John Wacker, Robert Rudell, Russell Jones, Jonathan Dick, Russell Jones, and Robert Rudell.

Immanuel Church is no longer affiliated with the Reformed Church. It is an active independent congregation.



**The original Immanuel Reformed Church.  
10th & Charleston Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska**

## **Immanuel Reformed Church**

*A Visit With Raymond Deines*

*October 3, 2002 -- At Village Manor Living Center*

My name is Raymond Deines. I was born at 1025 North 8th Street. Later my father built a house at 1242 Claremont Street. Then he bought a house at 1042 Claremont, from Mr. Sinner.

I went to Hayward and Bancroft Elementary Schools, and Whittier Junior High School, and Lincoln High. My mother told us to never talk German in school. I think I still remember the Whittier Junior High School song.

Whittier, our junior high school,  
We'll always stand by you,  
Whittier, our junior high school,  
You'll find us all true blue,  
Anywhere you put us, we're never out of step,  
Anywhere you see us, we're always full of pep,  
Whittier, our junior high school,  
We'll always stand by you!

I belonged to Immanuel Reformed church, and the girl I married, Katie Debus, belonged to Salem Congregational Church. I was twenty years old, and we were married in Immanuel Church. It was the custom for the bride to become a member of her husband's church when they were married. Katherine was the prettiest girl in the whole North Bottoms. I went to ask her father for permission to marry her and he asked me only one question; "Can you support a wife?" I answered that I would try.

We had to get a marriage license, so I went to the County Clerk's office to get one and the only money I had was a \$20 bill. The license cost \$3, and I remember waiting quite a while for him to go to the back room and get my change. I was not about to leave without my \$17 change, because my wages for a six day work week were only \$16.

Rev. Sauer, I believe, was the minister there then. It was not a big wedding, because times were hard then, but she wore a beautiful dress and we had a nice meal after the ceremony.

Only German was spoken in the church. One time when I was Sunday School Superintendent, the minister was absent, and they insisted that I conduct the "lesen Gottesdienst," so I read John 3:16.

Also hat Gott die welt geliebt, dass Er seinen eingebornen sohn gab,  
auf das alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden,  
sondern das ewige Leben haben.

Confirmation class was conducted by the minister and was all in German. Several fellows in our class later became stars on the Nebraska football teams; George Sauer, the Harmonie boy, and Henry "Chief" Bauer come to mind. We were Confirmed on Palm Sunday, and we took our first Communion on Easter Sunday. We went up to the front of the church and we took the wine from the one common cup. Somebody said it was all right for all of us to drink from the common cup because God wouldn't allow us to become sick from drinking the Communion wine.

My Confirmation verse:

Ich bin klein,

Mein Herz is rein,

Mach niemand d'rin vohnen,

Als Jesus allein.

I am little,

My heart free from sin,

May only Jesus,

Dwell therein.

It was the custom for the men to sit on one side of the church, and the women and small children on the other. The older men sat in front, and the teenagers sat in the back. It was considered "schweinig," (like pigs) to sit together. The Minister preached from a high pulpit and could see the entire congregation. If a teenager misbehaved, one of the "Vorsteher," (leaders of the church) would tap the offender on the shoulder.

When a child was baptized, the sponsors, several people, who were usually relatives would lift the child and pass the baby from one to the other. If the baby was a boy, the men, his "Fedors" (often pronounced peders) did this, and if it was a girl, the women, or "Gehts" did this. The minister then asked the last person who held the child. "Wie heist das Kind?" (What is this child's name?)



**The Baptism Certificate serves as a constant reminder of the covenant our parents made with God, and the love, hopes and dreams they had for their children.**

My name, Raymond, was not a traditional German name. My brothers were Heinrich, Johann, and Edward, and my sister was Esther. My mother worked for Raymond Brothers Clark Company, so I became Raymond.

When there was a death, the church bells were rung to announce the passing. You could tell by the number of times they rang the bell whether it was an adult, man or woman, single or married, or a child. Twice meant a child, and three times was for an adult. Everybody knew though, who was sick, so when they heard the bells they knew who it was.

The family brought the body to their home, and family, friends, and neighbors, including children went to the house to visit the family and view the body. They usually used the Splain and Snell Mortuary, because they had a person on staff who could speak German. This firm later was known as Hodgman, Splain and Snell; then Hodgman-Splain, and is now Butherus, Maser and Love. In the evening and night before the funeral, family and friends would gather at the home of the deceased and they would sing. One person would start a song and all would join in; then it would be quiet for a while and then another song would be sung. Also, at the cemetery, at the end of the committal service, somebody would start a song, often "Wo findet die Seele?" or "Lass mich geh'n." ("Where will the soul find it's home," or "Let me go").

*Translation assistance on the following songs was provided by Benjamin Griess. Mr. Griess grew up in Sutton, Nebraska. His parents were Black Sea Germans from Russia and were among the first Germans settlers in the Sutton area. He was a member of the "Hofer" church. He has copies of Pastor Hofer's sermons which he still reads. He is 94 years old and now lives at Fairview Manor in Fairmont, Nebraska.*

**Wo findet die Seele die Heimat, die Ruh**

Wo findet die Seele die Heimat, die Ruh?  
Werdeckt sie mit schützenden Fittichen zu?  
Ach, bietet die Welt keine Freistatt mir an,  
Wo Sünde nicht herrschen, nicht anfechten kann.  
Nein, nein, nein, nein, hier ist sie nicht,  
die Heimat der Seele ist droben im Licht!

Where does the soul find its' home its' repose?  
Covered with his sheltering care.  
Oh, the world offers no place for me,  
Where sin does not rule, nor trouble abound.  
No, no, no, no, it is not here,  
The home for the soul is above in the light!



**Lass mich gehn**

Lass mich gehn, Lasst mich gehn,  
Das ich Jesum möge sehn!  
Meine Seel is voll verlangen,  
Ihn auf ewig zu umfängen.  
Und vor seinem Thron zu stehn.  
Und vor seinem Thron zu stehn.

Let me go, Let me go,  
That I might see Jesus.  
My soul is full of longing  
To be near him in eternity.  
And stand before his throne.  
And stand before his throne.

**Memories of Immanuel Reformed Church**

*(excerpts from our conversation)*

*Albert Brehm Remembers*

*November 7, 2002 at Village Manor Living Center*

I'm Al Brehm. I'll be 95 years old on my next birthday, January 4th. There were 13 in the family and I'm the only one left. We lived on 7th & Y. My dad had a grocery store and we lived next door.

We went to Immanuel Church on 10th & Charleston. My wife Margaret went to Salem church on 9th & Charleston. She was Confirmed there by Rev. Wagner. Al's Confirmation class was the last class to have their confirmation party in the "Green House" in 1925. Al and Margaret met singing Christmas Carols in the evening. When we got married, we couldn't afford a church wedding, so we were married by Rev. Arnold at home.

As Al and Mollie Grenemeier reminisced, they related that the "Green" house was on 9th and New Hampshire, right across from Hayward School. It was a big green house. They built it because Pastor Suffa felt that the German Russian people from North Lincoln needed a gathering place. Kathryn Green told Mollie Grenemeier that everyone came to the "Green" house on Sunday afternoons. They would have a gathering there and sing and pray. The people would all walk down the street with their kitchen chairs. The "Green" house didn't have chairs, so everyone brought one with them. There were also showers in the basement of the "Green" House. Al remembered that the people in the neighborhood took their baths in the "Green" house. There wasn't any City water in the area. The people never bathed over once a week, usually on Saturdays.

Immanuel church was called the singing church. They had a lot of good singers there. I know all them German songs from memory. I love them. In those days you had to learn them. If you didn't know them you would get hit in the head with the book. The next Sunday you'd know them.

I sang in the choir, all my life. Margaret sang too. I sang in the German Singers choir at Ebenezer church too. On Sundays in the basement. Katherine Pabst played the piano. I still sing.

At the Maul church (St. John's Lutheran church) the Mauls were a musical family. David Maul and Victor Maul. Victor Maul married that Mollie Lebsock, who used to sing at all the funerals.

I remember all the church records were written in German. Later the ministers couldn't read the German and I had to go down and read the records to verify someone's age, when they wanted to get their Social Security. Now Jake Sinner would be the one who would know about that.

There was a little white building on the back of our church where we went after school. That's where we went to German School. It was right on the alley where Maser's grocery store was. I forgot the teacher's names, boy, they was rough. You'd better know your lesson on Sunday morning too, or you'd get a big whack on the head.

One time it was nice and warm in that building, so we hid in there. We had a lot of the Loos girls there. They were pretty girls. When the Minister came it looked like there was nobody there, when he opened the door. Then we all hollered "surprise." We got the surprise. Usually we had to go to school until noon. That day we had to stay all day!

**In Christi Wunden schlaf ich ein**

In Christi Wunden schlaf ich ein,  
die machen mich von Sunden rein;  
Ja, Christi Blut und G'rechtigkeit,  
Das ist mein Schmuck und Ehrenkleid,  
Damit will ich vor Gott bestehn,  
Wenn ich zum himmel werd eingehn.

Mit Fried und Freun ich fahr dahin,  
Ein Gotteskind ich allzeit bin.  
Dank hab, mein Tod, du fuerest mich;  
Ins ewege Leben wandre ich,  
Mit Christi Blut gereinigt fein,  
Herr Jesu, staerk den Glauben mein!

**I fall asleep in Jesus' wounds**

I fall asleep in Jesus' wounds,  
There pardon for my sins abounds;  
Yea, Jesus' blood and righteousness  
My jewels are, my glorious dress,  
Wherein before my God I'll stand,  
When I reach the heavenly land.

With peace and joy I now depart,  
God's child I am with all my heart;  
I thank thee, Death, thou leadest me,  
To that true life where I would be.  
So cleansed by Christ, I fear not  
death;  
Lord Jesus, strengthen Thou my  
faith!

*A favorite prayer, contributed by Clara Wertz*



**Immanuel Church  
(founded as Immanuel Reformed)**

**10th & Charleston  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

### **My Days at Immanuel Church** *Eddie Loos*

Immanuel Church was first organized in 1891. When they were first organized they met in the houses of the founders. Immanuel's first church building belonged to the Presbyterian Church. In 1881 the First Presbyterian Church established the mission Sabbath School to be located on or near 19th and Q Streets. At that time, this area was referred to as the northeast part of Lincoln. The school was officially known as the First Presbyterian Church Mission Sunday School of Lincoln, Nebraska. Later it became known as the North Lincoln Mission Sabbath School. In 1889 the small building was in great need of repairs. It needed gutters, roofing, sidewalks and a raised platform for the speakers so the people could see them better. It was to become two classrooms. It was decided instead to erect a new building at 10th & Z, which is now 10th and Charleston Streets. The work of the mission school continued until 1892 when the building was sold to the Immanuel German Reformed Church for \$700.00.

This was the first Church Building of Immanuel. A new Church was built and completed in 1906 and the old church was moved back in the church yard and used as a Sunday School.

A new basement was finished and made into the Sunday school with modern bathrooms and benches and divided into classrooms. I think the first Confirmation class who studied in the new basement classroom was in 1937. A short time later, the old church building was torn down and removed. The area became the church yard and parking lot.

I remember going to the old Sunday School which was not fancy or modern. It was just a small building with benches and a raised platform and a desk for the Superintendent at the head of the class. In the middle of the room was a pot bellied stove which served a dual purpose. Not only did it heat the Sunday School, it was also a place the boys had to stand if they misbehaved or were too loud and noisy in class. I remember one fellow who was instructed to stand by the stove. He didn't stop at the stove, but chose to run out the door instead. But he paid for it later, because these old gents stuck together. They simply told your dad and he handled it from there. I don't ever remember a girl misbehaving and having to stand by the stove.

I remember a student who, when they passed the collection plate, reached in and grabbed a handful of coins and ran out. Of course, his dad took care of him also. In those days you didn't see paper money in the collection plate. These were hard times.

**Interior of the  
Immanuel Church**

**10th & Charleston  
Lincoln, NE**



**Blessed are they who hear God's word and keep it  
(translation of the German above the altar)**



I remember in 1928, according to the records when they bought the organ it was paid by collecting mostly nickels, dimes and quarters. It was only donations from businesses that was larger money.

It was not uncommon to get one or two bops with a book if you misbehaved in Sunday School or Church. These old gents believed in discipline, and discipline they did. It wasn't only the parents but it could be a teacher, elder or the pastor.

One Sunday after Sunday School, one of the boys saw a bicycle tire up on an electric wire on the north side of the 10th Street viaduct which was very close by. He took a clothes line wire to get the tire down, but the electric wire was a live wire and in the process he was electrocuted. He lost the fingers on one hand, an arm, some toes and was severely burned. He's lucky he wasn't killed. I recently heard that he was still alive and living in Montana.

We also had Saturday School where we learned the German language and alphabet. You could stand flat footed outside the building and raise a window. It was that simple. One Saturday some of the boys decided to come and play a trick on the pastor. They opened a window and crawled in. When the pastor unlocked the door and entered the building, there sat the boys with a smile on their faces. But the Pastor didn't think it was so funny and the boys got to stay an hour after class, which they did not appreciate.

I remember we had to learn Christmas pieces and recite them on Christmas Eve. One Christmas I had gotten a new pair of shoes to speak in. Of course, anytime you got new clothes or shoes it was quite exciting and a treat. My little brother Richard, who we called "Brother" threw one of my new shoes in the furnace and that was a sad, sad Christmas. Of course we knew if we said our pieces we would receive a sack, which consisted of peanuts, nuts, apple, orange, candy and gum. Knowing this helped us to get through the ordeal. It really wasn't an ordeal for everyone, only some.

So many good memories of the Church and Sunday School. In the early years everything was in German. Then later they started to have one Sunday in English, then two, then three and in the fifties we had the last German Church Service. But whether in English or German, the singing was something to experience. I will always remember and cherish those days. I will forever thank God for the parents we had, for the Christian upbringing we had, and the work ethics they taught us.



Church:	Salem Cong. Church (German Evangelical Cong. Salem Church)		
Location:	9th & Charleston Streets		
Founded:	August 18, 1901		

First Minister: Rev. A. Suffa

First Church Officers: Deacons; Henry Dittenber, Henry Gropp, John Hergenrader; Secretary, George Heinrich, Treasurer, Henry Schaefer, Trustees; Adam Schneider, George Schneider, and Philip Reitz. Building Committee; Peter Sterkel, Emmanuel Sinner, and Henry Dittenber.

First building completed in Autumn of 1901.  
 Second building completed in 1916 on the same site.

To 1967:			
Baptisms:	1195	Marriages:	278
Confirmations:	728	Funerals:	389

Pastors: Revs. A. Suffa, D.B. Schurr, F. Brauchitsch, R. Herholz, Jacob Wagner, John Braun, A. Schiller, H. Uhlman, C. Roemmich, E. Bettenhausen, G. Kissler, C. Roemmich, R.C. Klein, and O. Zimmerman.

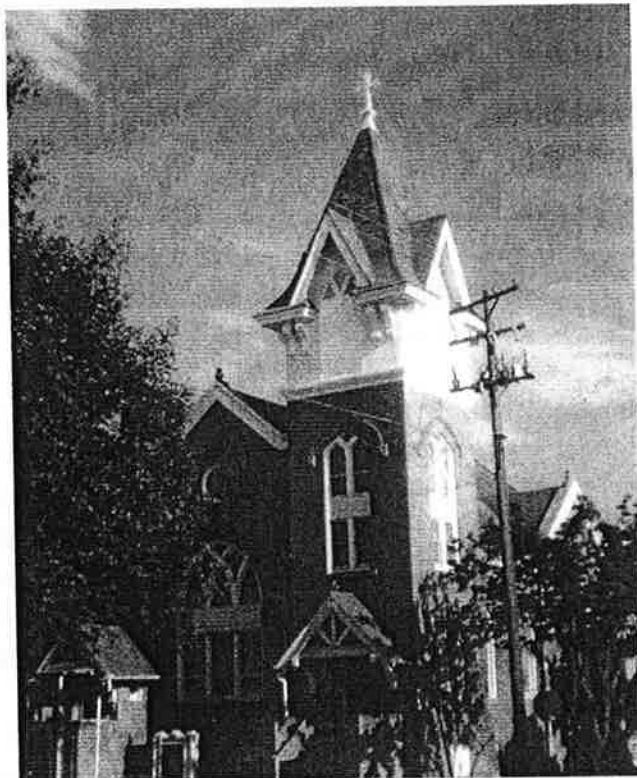
Church:	Faith United Church of Christ		
Location:	901 Charleston Street, Lincoln, NE		
Founded:	February, 1967		

Faith United Church of Christ resulted from the merger of the German Evangelical Congregational Salem Church and the Evangelical St. John's Church. The churches officially incorporated in February of 1967, with the first service of the merged Church held on April 9, 1967 in the Salem Congregational Building, where they continue to meet.

During the first 34 years of its existence, there have been:

Baptisms	94	Marriages:	87
Confirmations	60	Funerals:	263

At the current time, the church is served by ministers and lay ministers provided under contract with First-Plymouth United Church of Christ, under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Otis Young.



**Faith United Church of  
Christ**

**901 Charleston Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

**Faith United Church of Christ**  
(Founded as German Evangelical Salem)  
*Contributed by Barbara Schmidt*

One of the things I can remember from my childhood attending Salem Congregational Church, now Faith United Church of Christ, is having to pay for Communion. The week before Communion was given, they would ring the church bell on Saturday afternoon, and I would walk down to the church with my father and he would pay \$.05 for each person in our family taking Communion the next Sunday. I think it was just my mother and father. Why we did it, I don't know, unless it was to pay for the wine.

Also, on Christmas Eve, we received sacks of "goodies." They would call out your name and however many children a family had, that's how many sacks you would receive. Now, everyone receives one and the custom is still going on at Faith United Church of Christ.

I can remember going Christmas caroling on Christmas Eve. We would meet at the church about 11:00 p.m. and walk all of the streets of the North Bottoms, stopping at our church members homes. Some of them would invite us in for a treat (sometimes liquids for the older ones), or give us something to take back to eat later. We had quite a group as I remember. It usually was the choir and the members of Christian Endeavor. I can't remember going to the church after we finished, so maybe we just went home. Our church still goes caroling, but now we go in cars. It was fun and we always had a good time.

### **Neues Jahr Wünsching**

Ich bin ein kleiner König,  
Gibt mir nicht so wenig,  
Lass mich nicht so lang hier stehen,  
Ich muss' ein Heise (or Heuse) weiter gehen.

Ich wünsche euch ein loch in's Haus,  
Gibt mir gleich ein viertel Taler raus.

Ich wünsche dich ein runde Tisch,  
und in der mit, ein gebachenes Fisch.

*New Years Wishes contributed by Jake Sinner*

### **New Years Wish**

I'm a little king,  
Don't be cheap with me.  
Don't make me stand here so long,  
I have another house to go on to.

I wish you a hole in the house.  
Quick, give me a quarter.

I wish you a round table  
and in its' middle, a baked fish.

Church: St. John's Church (Evangelical St. John's Church)  
Location: 945 New Hampshire Street, Lincoln, Nebraska  
Founded: April 7, 1907  
(merged in 1967 with the German Evangelical Congregational Salem Church to form Faith United Church of Christ)

Membership: April 7, 1907, 67 families  
First minister: Rev. G. A. Neuman

First Church Board: Henry Giebelhaus, Moderator; Jacob Popp, Secretary; John Sauer, Treasurer; George Dinges, Henry Krieger, Henry Paul, Deacons; Henry Giebelhaus, John Schnell, Philipp Hergenrader, Trustees, John Schnell, Sunday School Superintendent

According to the Faith History Book, the first Trustees were: Philipp Hergenreder, Gottfried Belz and Gottfried Reiz.

Building completed Dec. 15, 1907  
Incorporated as German Evangelical St. Johns Church.

Baptisms: 2036 in 50 years.  
Confirmations: 712 in 50 years.  
Marriages: 225 in 50 years.  
Funerals: 315 in 50 years.

Parsonage located at 824 Charleston St.

Pastors: G. A. Neuman, organizer, Rev. F. C. Heinrich, Rev. D. Maul, Rev. A. Saremba, Rev. A. Fuenning, Rev. F. Miller, Rev. C. Meier, Rev. H. Hammelman, Rev. F. Mertins, Rev. F. Sattler, Rev. Ed. Mehlhaffs, M. Schroeder, Interim, Rev. T. Becker.

62 young men served in the armed forces, 3 gave their lives for their country.

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**St. John's Evangelical Church, 10th & New Hampshire, Lincoln, Nebraska**

### **Random Recollections about St. John's Evangelical Church**

*Contributed by Henry Reifschneider*

This edifice was located on the southwest corner of 10th and New Hampshire Streets. It was founded about 1907. Because of declining membership, it was merged with Salem Congregational Church and is now known as Faith United Church of Christ, located on the southeast corner of 9th and Charleston Streets.

St. John's was the only church in Lincoln that had rounded domes, or onion domes, over the bell tower and the altar area. It was a white wooden structure with an east entrance and a lower level that was half-way above ground. This lower level made it necessary to have more than a few steps to the main sanctuary. There was a center aisle with the altar area behind an arched railing, which had a door in the center. Behind the altar was the pipe



organ where a Deacon would be stationed to pump air for the organ. This was later replaced by a more modern pipe organ that did not require such attention.

There were two bells in the bell tower. One was small and a larger one. Only a few were able to ring them alternately. Sunday services were announced with the ringing of the small bell, one hour before services. At the half hour, the larger bell was used and both rang at the beginning of the service. Naturally, they rang for quite some time on New Years Eve.

At services, women sat on the left side of the aisle and men on the right side. Older persons were seated in the front benches, which had no padding, and the younger to the back of them. No woman would attend services without a head cover or "Halstuch". All wore their best Sunday clothes.

I can recall attending, as a youth, a Sunday service and going to sleep. This is something I still do easily today, when the presiding Pastor goes on too long.

Communion was given several times a year. A common challis was used which the Pastor would wipe after each communicant. Gallon jugs of Mogan David wine was used. At the end of the rite, some would remain. One could not put it back into the jug, so the Deacons disposed of it in a satisfactory manner. There was also a traveling Communion set that was employed to give Communion to those that were unable to leave home.

No contribution plate was passed during services. Such plate was held by a Deacon at the rear of the church. The front row, beginning with the women's side was first to exit, followed by the men.

When a member went to the great beyond, it was announced by the ringing of the bells. First, a short ringing, followed by a pause, then a second one also followed by a pause, both bells concluded. If the departed one was younger than 18, the small bell was used and the large bell for adults. Most often a wreath was placed on the front of the deceased person's home. The casket was taken there the evening before church services, and a short memorial service conducted. The following day it was taken to the church and placed in front of the altar rail. At the end of services the casket was taken to the hearse. When the cortege began to move, both bells were employed until the last auto was over the 10th Street viaduct. At the grave site, the lied (song) "Wo findet die Seele die Heimat die Ruh," was sung.

All services were in the German language--Christenings, Confirmations, weddings and funerals, as well as at special services such as Mission Sundays. There was generally a full house at the evening Mission Service. When a familiar song was employed, the rafters would ring. How I wish there was a recording of such.

Palm Sunday was Confirmation Sunday. The girls were in white dresses and the boys in new suits. Each needed to recite a Bible verse. Easter Sunday, the new confirmands were given their first Communion. I was in the largest Confirmation class ever with 32. Today only a few remain, most have gone on to their reward.

The Pastor of my teen years was Pastor Saremba. We finished our day at Hayward School at 3 p.m. At 3:30 we attended German School where the Pastor and his wife were the instructors. If one committed an infraction, the Pastor would give one a stroke with a bamboo cane on your hand. Ouch! This school was three times per week during the regular school season. After Pastor Saremba, we had Pastor Fuenning who conducted only Sunday School.

At Christmas time, a tree reaching to the ceiling was trimmed and at the end of services, a sack of treats was given to the younger people. Sacks were considerably larger than those given out today.

Naturally, there is much more that can be written, but brevity is also to be observed and I have written too much.

### **What the Church Meant and Means to Me**

*Lillie (Geier) Loos*

I attended Sunday School, Saturday School, and was Confirmed at St. John's Evangelical Church on 10th & New Hampshire Street. At Saturday School in the earlier years we had to learn the German alphabet so we could read and write in German. I was the second to the youngest child in our family, so Sunday School I remember was English although we sang many German songs. I loved Sunday School and I remember my class walking to Antelope Park for a picnic on a Sunday afternoon. We carried a sack lunch. Amelia Kolb was my Sunday School teacher. I later taught Sunday School.

The Church services were in German my early years. When I got Confirmed in 1943 it was the last class that still had German. Most of my class got Confirmed in English but I was Confirmed in German. We had the Catechism in both German and English so we could understand what we were saying.

We always had Confirmation Day on Palm Sunday and we would take Communion for the first time. We had Communion on certain holidays such as Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, etc. Each family would sign up ahead of time and let them know how many and who would be taking Communion. A record was kept and you paid a small fee. When we took Communion in the earlier days everyone would kneel in their benches or pews and sang and prepared their hearts. Then the Lutherans kneeled by the altar and received wafers. The Reformed took bread and the wine in the big cup. Usually you went up two by two or three by three or families. This took a lot of time until everyone received

Communion. Now we have Communion more often and we receive the bread and individual cups in our seats.

After you were Confirmed you were expected to attend Christian Endeavor every Sunday evening. This was a service especially for the young people. This was a time for singing, reading scripture, recitations, entertainment and fellowship. Every so often all the German Churches, North and South Bottoms got together and had Christian Endeavor.

In those years our parents would attend prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, Saturday evening, Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening. These "brothers" and "sisters" could really sing and harmonize. They didn't need any accompaniment either. Usually there was a leader who started the song and they all chimed in. It was really wonderful to hear them sing. They put their whole heart and soul into it. Then sometimes they would have "Gross Versammlung" where many German Churches got together. Also Conferences where they came from out of town or state. We usually had company stay at our house during these times. Also, I remember the Pastor's family came for Sunday dinner many times.

Usually in January or the early part of the year they had Prayer Week "Gebets Wocha." During this week, each night they met and sang, studied scripture and prayed. Oh, how they prayed on their knees, out loud and sobbing. It was really something to experience. I believe to this day it was what kept them and got them through the trials, tribulations and hardships they endured. Their faith in God brought them through and I thank God for their faith and the example they set for us. I can't thank them enough for what they taught us.

Singing has been very special to me and singing in the Church Choir was very important and enjoyable. I started singing in the Choir right after I was Confirmed and continue to this day.

My husband, Eddie Loos, was attending Immanuel Reformed Church on 10th & Charleston Streets. We got married at Immanuel in 1947 and at that time they still had some German Services, German choir, etc. I sang in the choir and taught Sunday School. We still attend Church there and still continue some of the traditions of the old German Church.

We have Confirmation instruction and Sunday School. Confirmation Sunday isn't always on Palm Sunday. On Christmas Eve the Sunday School Children recite Christmas pieces and have a pageant, then everyone receives a traditional Christmas sack with apples, oranges, peanuts, gum and candy.

We also start the year with "Prayer Week" which we feel is very important in these difficult times. We still ring the church bells when a member passes away and before and after all services. Times change and we change with them, but let us never forget the important things. Traditions come and go, but we can always keep those which are important and meaningful. We were the most fortunate people on earth to have learned the good work ethics from our parents, and to have had the Christian upbringing we had.

## Memories of St. Johns Church - 10th & New Hampshire

*Contributed by Lillian Eichler Bauer*

Saint John's church holds many fond memories. This church was a part of my family. My grandfather, George Leider was a founder. My parents, John and Anna Eichler, were early members also. My brothers, Henry and Harry Eichler, and myself were baptized and Confirmed there. Later, Henry was married there, as was I. So, we go back a long way.

My early memories are of Sunday School, which was held on the balcony for the younger children. We were taught songs, accompanied by a small electric organ. My first teacher was Louise Becker. All the other classes were held in the basement. Each row was a class, and how we ever heard our teacher is beyond me. The basement was filled to capacity. Some classes were conducted in German, others in English. Wow! Our teachers were saints! We also had a banner. I think it was green and gold. This was moved from class to class for having perfect attendance and also for having the most money in collections.

Saint John's always had a good choir, as everyone loved to sing. We wore black robes, and white collars. We would form our line in the basement, walk outside from the North door, walk to the East side, and go up the steps and into the church. We did this rain or shine, and many times in wind or snow. It was many years later that an inside stair was added. We must have looked good after getting soaked, to say nothing of the odor of our wet robes! Our choir sang to a pump pipe organ that was later made electric. That organ gave lots of sound and sometimes a pedal would stick, and that wasn't so great. Helen Snyder Raymer was one of the first organists, followed by Helen Reifschneider, and Helen Hempel Smith. I guess only Helens were allowed to play!

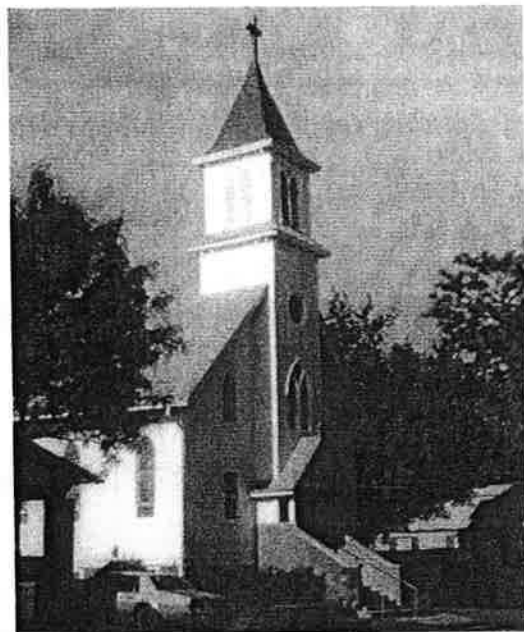
Something I remember that was funny is how we had to kneel in our benches (pews) for preparation before going to the altar for Communion. It was our custom to kneel and face the back of our bench. I will never forget when a rather large lady got stuck between the benches and could not get up and had to be helped by the deacons.

Something else I remember is how on a summer day we had the windows open (no air conditioning) and the church being on 10th Street, just North of the viaduct, and at that time, the fire department was located just South of the viaduct. The Pastor would have to shout to be heard over the noise of the sirens, semi-trucks, and trains, not to mention the birds flying in and the bees and flies. Oh, the flies were many and so the handheld fans were always moving. Remember the fans provided by the mortuaries?

Winter wasn't much better. We had an old furnace and it made a loud noise when it kicked on for heat.

Oh, the wonderful memories. To this day when I drive by the corner of 10th & New Hampshire, I do not see the new building there. I see Saint John's. She was a wonderful church, and I like so many of you, miss her.

## **Evangelical St. John's Lutheran Church**



**The church was originally built as Evangelical St. John's Lutheran Church for the Germans from Russia. It was sold to the Latvians and became Latvian St. Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church. In August of 2001, the building was sold for \$200,000 and became Transfiguration of our Savior Orthodox Church.**

**1324 New Hampshire Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska**



**St. John's Lutheran Church Ladies Aid (Frauen Verein)**



Church:	Zion German Evangelical Congregational Church
Location:	First Site: 419 F Street Second Site: 9th & D Streets
Founded:	January 17, 1900

Membership: January 17, 1900 - 15 Families

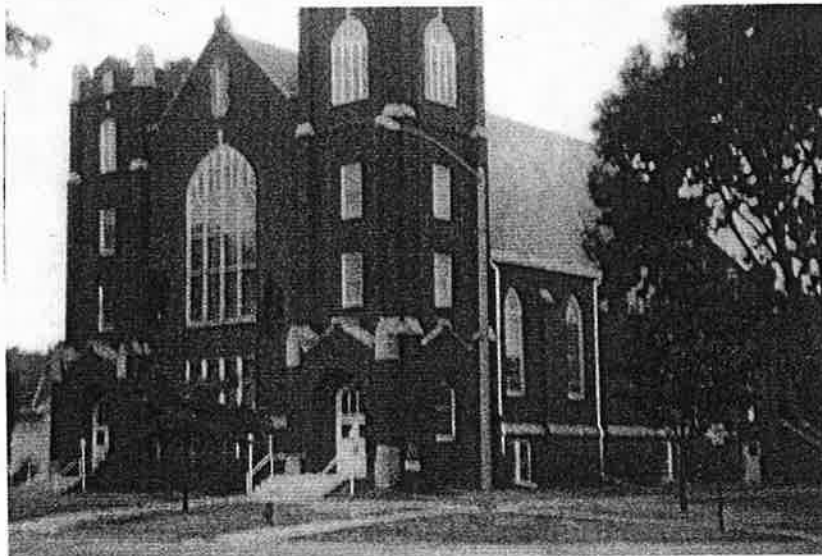
First Minister: Rev. C. E. Osthoff

First Building Committee: Adolph Lebsack Sr., George Herbst, Henry Hopp, John Hoff, and Conrad Sitzman. Treasurer, Jacob Stroh.

First building completed: 1900, cost \$2,638.30; building addition 1907, cost \$2,550.00. Second building at 9th & D Streets completed; February 1928, cost near \$100,000.

Pastors: Revs. C. E. Osthoff, S. H. Schwab, J. F. Grove, George Graff, C. A. Dettmers, G. J. Schmidt, J. Weber, R. Knerr, F. Sattler, Interim, J. P. Flemmer, M. Schroeder, Interim, A. Brenning, C. Roemmich, Interim, R. Sanson, E. Greenholt, E. Lauer, R. Gayley, P. Weckle, Interim, Jeanne & John Tyler, to 1993.

Zion merged with a Presbyterian church and is now a thriving congregation know as Zion Presbyterian Church, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America.



**Zion Congregational Church, 9th & D, Lincoln, Nebraska**

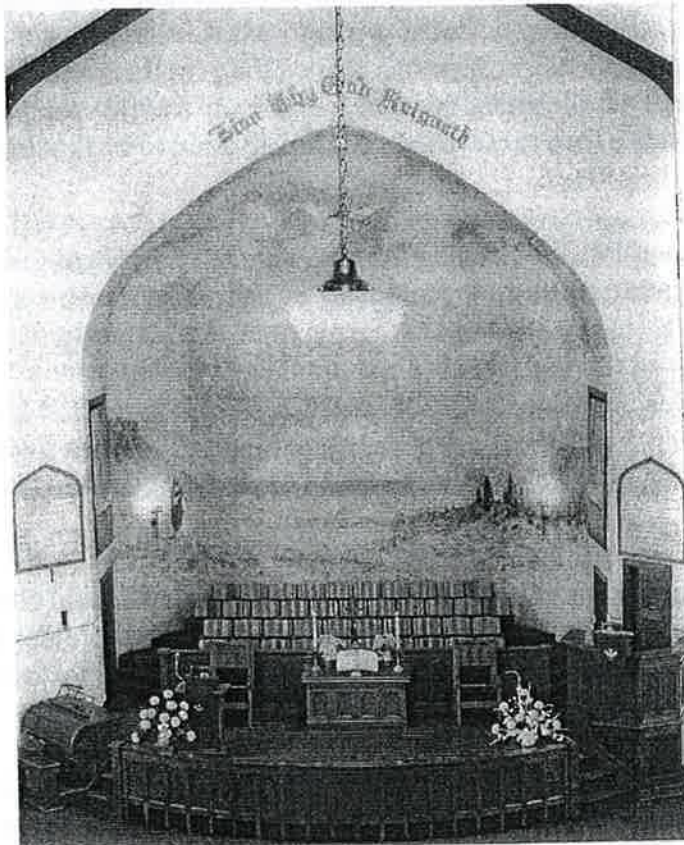
## **Zion Evangelical Congregational Church**

*Contributed by Katherine Donis Pabst and Rev. Harold Donis*

The original Zion Congregational Church was a white wood structure located at 419 F Streets. This church was organized by the American Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church, in America.

This was a densely populated area. There were over fifty children in the homes on E Street, between 4th & 5th Streets. By 1926, Zion had outgrown the F Street church, and purchased land on the corner of 9th & D Streets, where they built a new, much larger brick church. It was dedicated in 1927, and could easily seat 650 people.

On the last day in the old church, 505 people attended Sunday School.



**Interior of Zion  
Congregational Church  
1993**

Zion people loved to sing, and one of their Pastors, G. J. Schmidt, had an excellent singing voice, and encouraged all to sing. The Sunday School even had a band that accompanied the singing every Sunday morning for a number of years. Some of the musicians in this band were: Violin was played by Lydia Kehm, Leona Ostermiller, Esther Ostermiller, Eleanor Gettman, Marie Donis Helzer, Alex and John Dietrich. Ferdie Dell played saxophone. Eleanor Gettman played the oboe. Sam Klippert played trumpet. Elmer

Wilhelm, Harold Donis, and Henry Dietrich all played trombone. Reuben Heinz was the choir director, and he sometimes played the trombone in the band too. Katherine Donis Pabst played piano. Natalie Stromberger played the reed organ for the Primary Class.

Children and adults attended Sunday School, and Rev. Schmidt had ways to get them all to really sing out on the songs. He would let them sing the first verse of a song, then stop them and have all the girls and ladies sing the second verse, after which he would again stop them and ask the boys and men if they couldn't sing better and louder. If you couldn't sing loud, you were not considered a good singer, at Zion.

Children's Day was observed with a program similar to the Christmas program. There was special singing by the classes, pieces were spoken by the children, and the teachers always sang a special song which was selected by the minister.

A special Geburtstag Grüss (Birthday greeting) card was given to each child on the Sunday nearest their Birthday. Cards with a Bible verse were given out each week to be taken home and memorized by the following Sunday. Many mothers, or big brothers and sisters were responsible for their family member learning this verse, and many a child spent countless hours learning them, because their mother didn't want her child to be the only one in the class who didn't know their verse.

Each month ten families were responsible for cleaning the entire church. They put their names on a list; and when it was their turn, all of the members of their families who were able, worked on the designated day.

Discipline was applied when the deacons, Sunday School teachers, or the Pastor felt it was needed, in a sure and swift manner. A group of young men (teenagers) usually sat together on one side of the church. The deacons had the authority to tap or slap, as the situation warranted.

One young girl, who was a bit more advanced than the others in her Sunday School class, was told one Sunday to go to the next class which was for students a year or two older than she. She didn't want to leave her friends, so she remained seated. She was told to "move now," or go out the door.

Teachers we recall were: Frieda Giebelhaus, who was a nurse at the Orthopedic Hospital; Natalie Stromberger taught the Primary Class and accompanied their singing on the reed organ. Her father Alexander Stromberger was Sunday School Superintendent for a number of years.

Ladies Aid groups were active in all of our churches, and these faithful ladies worked countless hours to raise funds for their churches and various mission projects. At Zion, when a young lady was to be married, a representative of the Ladies Aid would ask the girl "her colors." That meant the colors the attendants in her wedding would be wearing, and

the color theme used at the wedding reception. Then material and satinette ribbon in those colors was purchased and a quilt (comforter) was made and presented to the bride as a wedding gift. One lady recalled satinette ribbon cost 59 cents a yard, and ten yards of material cost \$ 5.90, when she was involved in one of these quilt projects.

In the old Zion building on 4th & F, they had "Little Christian Endeavor," on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. for the younger (pre-teen) kids.

Young people were aware of the different German dialects spoken in their church, and often had fun mimicking some of them. They also would give German words English pronunciations, i.e. kanzel, (pulpit) was cancel, and Rahm, (cream) was ram.

Many of our German churches belonged to the "Conference." Zion often hosted "Gross Versammlung," when people from other parts of the country would gather for a weekend of meetings and services. Because of its size, Zion could provide space for the meetings and serve meals to those attending. The ladies were proud of their ability to do this, and they always had leaders who could plan, purchase and cook the food, and get it served in a timely manner. Women of all ages helped, and the leaders passed down their skills to the younger women who were expected to take over their roles later.

The church was filled for their services, and there was much singing and instrumental music, as well as piano accompaniment. Katherine Donis Pabst often played the piano at these meetings. People brought their musical instruments and played as a part of their own group and as one large group. Katherine remembers Mr. Shuman, from Salem Congregational Church on 9th & Charleston, who played a small trumpet, and it was beautiful. Johnny and Martin Kapeller also played musical instruments. John and George Helzer played accordian. They had what we would now call "jam sessions," during free time. One group from Michigan had their own band and they were very good.

There would be one General Meeting, when all of the important business of the Conference was conducted, but preceding the business, people from different parts of the country would stand and say, "Grüss from \_\_\_\_\_, (the name of their town or church). One man said, "Grüss from what sounded like Bojouran." Katherine said she couldn't understand where he was from until someone told her he was trying to say Port Huron, Michigan.

Young people at such an event could always have fun observing the older folks. Two men entering the front door of Zion Church were carrying their musical instruments in cases; a violin and an accordian. The gentleman greeting them said, "gehl du willst Heut' bloszen?" (So, you are going to blow today?)

People from all of the churches sometimes met at Immanuel and played and sang together. Immanuel Reformed was known for its music.

**Recollections of the New York Avenue German Congregational Church**  
(founded as Free Evangelical Lutheran Church)  
Hastings, NE

*Philomena Wagner Lebsock*

Many couples met at church. Some as early as in Sunday School, in Confirmation classes, Christian Endeavor meetings, or at special events in a church. This is a story of one couple who shared nearly sixty years of life together.

Philomena Wagner Lebsock grew up in Hastings, Nebraska. Many Germans from Russia in Hastings lived near what was then known as the Free Evangelical Lutheran Church, located on the corner of West B Street and New York Avenue.

Rev. Suffa served this congregation from 1907 to 1910. In 1909, a new church building was built. It then became known as the New York Avenue Congregational Church, and is affiliated with the United Church of Christ today.

John Lebsock worked in his father, Jacob Lebsock's grocery store on 4th and F Streets in Lincoln. Mr. Lebsock was active in the Brotherhood, and often visited other congregations when they hosted "Gross Versammlung," or Brotherhood Conference. John would sometimes accompany his father to these meetings.

One time he attended the Brotherhood conference in Hastings with his father and stayed at the home of Bill Gettman, a neighbor of Philomena. Bill was President of the Christian Endeavor group at their church.

John and his father ate supper at Philomena's uncle George Hoff's house. After they had eaten, Johnny told his father he would see him later, because he was going to Christian Endeavor at 6:00 p.m.

Philomena went to the Christian Endeavor meeting on this particular Sunday and took a seat at the front of the room. Johnny Lebsock came in and asked Bill Gettman where he should sit and he told him to go down in front and sit beside that young lady seated there. They visited some before the meeting started.

There was a church service that evening at about 7:00 p.m. and after the service Johnny and his father went to the depot to catch the train back to Lincoln. The train was full. Johnny's father was able to get on, but there was no room for Johnny. He didn't know where to go, so he went to Philomena's house to wait for the next train, which left Hastings at near midnight.

They began corresponding and Johnny soon became a regular passenger on the train, "No. 3," from Lincoln to Hastings on Saturday afternoons. They would see each other for a



while on Saturday nights after Philomena got off work at 9:00 p.m. at the Woolworth Store. They attended church on Sundays, and after dinner they would visit until time for Johnny's train back to Lincoln. This went on for nearly four years before Johnny asked Philomena to marry him. They were married at the home of Philomena's parents, June 16, 1940.

They then lived in Lincoln, where Johnny worked for Raymond Brothers Clark and Graingers, both wholesale grocers. Philomena worked at the Woolworth store on "O" Street.

Philomena and Johnny had no children, but gave much love to their many nieces and nephews, and made a host of friends together. Johnny passed away in January, 1999, but still lives in the heart of his lovely wife and all who knew him.

**My Fondest Memories -- New York Avenue Congregational Church**  
Hastings, Nebraska  
*By Ardyce Welch*

When I was very young, I remember one year in our home when there was a beautiful Christmas tree with lights and decorations. Next year, there was nothing except a red wreath in the window. My mother was sad because we could not have a joyous celebration. I knew something bad had happened, that many men did not have work, hard-earned savings were suddenly and completely gone and that some children were sent up town each day with a little tin pail to receive free milk. But I was too young to actually understand the Depression.

During the next several years, Christmas Eve at church was an especially wonderful occasion. It was bright, cheerful, and gladdened the hearts of all. Some weeks before Christmas, each Sunday School child was given a piece to memorize. The youngest one had only a line or two and the length of the piece increased with the ages of the children. The older children might put on a play and often there was a children's chorus (usually girls only) to sing some songs in German. We memorized our pieces, recited them for our parents and teachers, and practiced in the church to speak out loud and clear.

On Christmas Eve, we filled the church. Children sat in the front pews with their classes, proud parents and grandparents behind them, men and boys on the right side; women and girls on the left. In the back was a Christmas tree, decorated and lighted. The church seemed filled with light, warmth, and excitement.

After an opening hymn and prayer, one of the older boys who had already been Confirmed stood up on the riser and gave the opening speech of welcome, both in German and English. Then each child, starting with the youngest, stepped up and recited his/her piece. Hymns and prayers, both in English and German were interspersed with the program.

Then a couple of men passed out sacks of goodies to the children. The sacks looked so big to us and were filled with candy and nuts.

On rare occasions it was too cold, windy, and the snow too deep for small children who had to walk 9 or 10 blocks. It was a great disappointment not to be able to go to church on Christmas Eve, but we did not dare to argue with our parents.

Church bells spoke to us. Each church on our side of town had a bell that could be recognized by its tone, how loud it sounded and location of the sound. The bells were rung about 10 minutes before a service to tell people to get on the way to church, and again just as the service was about to begin. Most people did not have a radio to get the correct time, most did not have a telephone to call for the time, so the bells were important. Our bell was also rung at the end of the main morning service when the Lord's Prayer was said. This always seemed to me to be such a sacred moment. Perhaps it was also a way of telling the women that services were concluded and it was time to get dinner on the table.

Many women with families attended church at some time other than the main service. Sunday School was at 9:30, and the woman of the house probably was a teacher. The main service was at 11:00; prayer meeting at 2:00; Christian Endeavor at 6:00; and evening service at 7:30.

Bells also told us the news. It pealed joyfully at the end of a wedding; tolled when a person of the congregation died and again at the funeral. One soft, misty, spring evening we had just finished supper. The children were on the front porch, my mother was in the kitchen clearing up, and my father was out back taking care of the chickens. Suddenly, a young man came running up the sidewalk and onto the porch. He asked where our father was and we told him. He jumped off the side of the porch and ran around back. We were shocked. JUMPING OFF THE PORCH WAS FORBIDDEN and here was an adult doing it. He was old enough to know better. We heard the back door open and my father and the young man ran away. We went inside to find out what was happening. My mother was in the kitchen crying softly. She told us that our grandfather had died. My brother started to cry and so did I, even though I wasn't quite sure why, except that everyone else was crying. I was too young to immediately realize what had happened. Soon my mother told us not to cry any more and to listen and count because the church bell had started to toll for him and we were to count, one ring for each year of life.

When we heard a bell toll, we could identify which church bell it was and by counting the rings, could often know who had died. I still miss church bells telling us the news.

I remember when the church gradually changed to using English instead of German. This was not an easy time and sometimes became confrontational. When I started Sunday School, most of it was in English. The main service, afternoon prayer meeting, and evening services were in German. By the time I was old enough to go to Christian Endeavor it was entirely in English. There always was a Sunday School class of adult men

and a class of women that used German, but most of the hymns, prayers, and class instruction was in English. One Sunday, as we were just about to say the Lords' Prayer, which was always in German, one of the women teachers stood up and asked why we couldn't use English because the young children did not understand German. The Sunday School Superintendent was no doubt shocked that a woman WOULD DARE SPEAK OUT IN CHURCH AND ASK A QUESTION. He replied that they didn't want to deprive the children of their heritage and started the Lord's Prayer in German. The woman chimed in audibly in English and soon the younger children joined in in English. That was the end of German in Sunday School, except for the adult classes.

Later, the preacher changed the main morning service by shortening the sermon in German and then repeating it in English. Even later, they changed to English Sunday School, followed by English Church, then German church service, German afternoon prayer service, English Christian Endeavor, and German evening service. By this time, it was the mid-forties and men and women began sitting by each other instead of men on the right and women on the left. I moved away and have no idea when all services were completely in English.

The following song was the closing of our main Sunday service. Although we used an organ, the last song was sung unaccompanied, with people harmonizing. We actually never heard of "So nimm denn meine Hande".

16. Das Vaterunser. Vater unser, der Du bist im Himmel. Geheiligt werde Dein Name. ~~Dein Reich~~  
 Komme. Dein Wille geschehe wie im Himmel, also auch auf Erden. Unser täglich Brot gib uns heute. Und vergib ~~es~~  
 unsre Schuld, als wir vergeben unseren Schuldigern. Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung. Sondern erlöse uns von ~~dem~~  
 Uebel. Denn Dein ist das Reich, und die Kraft, und die Herrlichkeit, in Ewigkeit. Amen.

17. Pastor: Lasset uns beneiden den Herrn. Gen.



18. Die Gnade unsres Herrn Jesu Christi.



XVIII.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEMORIES

### Sunday School at the City Mission

The Peoples City Mission was founded by the churches of Lincoln in 1907, to provide food, clothing, and shelter to transient men. It was located on South 9th Street, just South of O Street for many years, and is now located at 110 Q Street, and also operates a family shelter. The Mission director, and Pastors from the City, provided counseling and ministered to those seeking help. The Mission held Sunday School classes on Sunday afternoons for years, and many of the children of German immigrants from Russia attended.

Katherine Schmall, a young woman who lived at 215 West F Street, would gather a large group of children from her neighborhood on Sunday afternoons, and lead them single file along the railroad tracks, past the switch tower, under the big water tank used to fill boilers on the steam engines, and then up the alley between N and O Streets to the Mission building on 9th Street. Sometimes on bitter cold winter days they would crowd into the switchman's shanty and warm up.

At the Mission, the children learned Bible stories, songs, and played games. There were Christmas and Easter pageants, picnics, and sometimes trips to Pioneers Park by bus. After the meetings or programs, the best part of Sunday at the Mission was being allowed to "run loose" on the sidewalk in front of the Mission building, until Katherine was ready to lead them home.

One time, Katherine arranged with the switch tower operator to bring the group up into the tower to watch the switchman pull the levers that "threw the switches" so incoming trains and switch engines would be on the right tracks into and out of the main rail yard at 7th and P Streets. There was also a telegraph, and they saw the switchman send a message to dispatchers at stops along the main rail line.

There were five teenage boys, "Honsey" Becker, "Chingou" Dietrich, Tillie Alt, Pete and Heiny Lorenz, and Hank Grasmick who went to Sunday night church services. These services were for adults. The services were not of special interest to these guys, because they had all been to church that morning, but the Rev. Hinkin, the Mission Director, had three teenage daughters, and the Hinkin family lived in an apartment on the upper floor of the Mission building.

## THE GERMAN SINGERS

*Katherine Donis Pabst and Clara Wertz, Contributors*

In August, 1984, Katherine Donis Pabst invited people from several German background churches to meet one Sunday afternoon at Ebenezer United Church of Christ to sing German songs. She felt the music our people sang in our German churches was dear to us and that it shouldn't die with the present older generation.

Twenty-eight people attended that first meeting and learned two German songs: "von meinem Heiland," and "Eine goldne Krone ist im Heimatland." (About my Savior, and There's a Golden Crown for me in Heaven.)

The group soon grew to 55 members. People who worked in retail, clerical workers, managers, tradespeople, ministers, railroad employees, business owners, teachers, doctors, homemakers, and college professors, enjoyed singing, laughing, and sharing memories these songs rekindled. It soon became a family. Spouses who did not sing, sat together at the back of the room listening and participating in the conversations and fun. The group averaged forty-two singers at each meeting. All ages, from an 8-year old to several who were ninety plus years of age.



*\*Accompanying photo courtesy of "The Picture Man," 4230 Progressive Av., Lincoln, NE 68504*



Shortly after the group was organized, they were asked to sing at a neighborhood event at Park School. They declined the invitation because they felt they were not good enough to sing for an audience. That soon changed.

The next year, Friedens Lutheran Church at 6th and D Streets was having a German Christmas Advent service. Pastor Wolff asked the German Singers to come and sing a few songs, since the service was on the same Sunday they were meeting at Ebenezer, which was just a few blocks from Friedens. They went, and it was a beautiful service. The church was full, and the German Singers felt honored to have participated. This started what became a wonderful tradition; the German Singers singing at Friedens the second Sunday in Advent.

During the next 13 years, the German Singers sang at nursing homes, senior centers, special church services in Lincoln and the surrounding area, anniversary observances, church and service club meetings, ethnic festivals, and family reunions. They made two tape recordings of their favorite songs.

They were honored to sing at the funerals of several of their members. Often after these services, people would tell them it was a comfort to hear the old German songs again.

As the group aged they helped each other with transportation, help up and down stairs, and finding the right page in their song books.

The German Singers no longer sing publicly, but do meet occasionally to sing their favorite songs, and enjoy some wonderful fellowship, for you see, they are family.

### **Longfellow Extravaganza**

*By John "Jeff" George*

Longfellow Elementary School was the non-religious hub of activity for the "Gas House" area of Lincoln. During a semester a number of programs were presented for the artistic edification of the neighborhood, they were faithfully attended by most of the neighbors.

A yearly program was usually presented to showcase the talents of the students such as poetry readings, artistic efforts, singing groups, instrumental solos, crafts, etc. One memorable presentation occurred when the principal and teaching staff decided to put on a full-fledged production requiring participation of students from kindergarten through the 6th grade. This production required help from many of the parents and any volunteers that could be mustered.

The production had a full script, costumes, scenery, a musical score and whatever was required to bring it to fruition. The neighborhood seamstresses busied themselves with the sewing of costumes, neighborhood handymen constructed many of the props, and a local

seed and nursery firm supplied potted evergreen trees to help portray the sylvan setting that was essential to the musical story.

The story took place in a mythical fairyland forest with most of the animals having speaking parts or sounds. It even boasted a fairy queen who was the only "human" in the story. Teachers were each assigned to direct certain scenes of the extravaganza. The participation of the students, teaching staff, and neighborhood mothers and fathers assured the success of the production and excitement ran high waiting for "opening night."

The fairy queen had a voluminous white gown made of some airy, flimsy material complete with wings, a headdress with a tiara and a wand ensconced with butterflies. She was played by the tallest girl in school and made a very regal and pretty queen. Costumes were made to represent the forest animal as well as could be done with the limited materials on hand or that could be afforded. Costs were borne by the neighborhood citizens.

Some of the animals were obscured by the scenery and their parts were represented by squeals, grunts, or howls. Myself and three other 4th graders were costumed in a green chambray "suit" completely covering our bodies, except for eyeholes, which were covered with a cardboard set of spectacles with attached cardboard antenna. I think we really looked like green bears.

Transitions between scenes were handled by a kindergarten chorus with piano accompaniment. Speaking parts were few since this was really a musical. The "queen" had most of the speaking parts. Movement onstage was held to a minimum, the most movement was done by "us" grasshoppers that had to intone, "Your grandmother knows, Your grandmother knows," at a certain point in one of the songs, as we hip-hopped across the leaf strewn stage.

I can still remember the tune and part of the lyrics which went; "Your grandmother knows the most wonderful things, as all your real grandmothers do; For they really are fairies uncommonly wise, etc., etc. For a time I really believed grandmothers were fairies (not to be construed with the modern meaning of fairy.) The production went rather well if you overlooked some stumbling of lines and off-tune notes in the singing. We deserved an Academy Award for effort anyway. The neighborhood was impressed and talked about it for quite some time. Why not? These were their kids putting on the show.

The show almost became a disaster before it started when the "Fairy Queen," spotted her throne onstage. It was a lichen covered tree stump. A stool was used during rehearsals, so she had never seen it before. She stamped her feet and regally said she would not sit on that dirty old log with her fancy gown. Panic, panic. My mom ran home, (we lived only five houses away from the school,) and brought a couple of yards of the green chambray left over from making the grasshopper costume I had to wear, and she draped it over the stump. Someone brought a fancy round cushion to top it off, and the program was saved!

## Welfare Society

*From our conversation with Al Brehm*

The Welfare Society Hall was a popular place to hold wedding receptions and dances. Usually the couple were married in the church and then the wedding party and all of the guests went to the Welfare Hall for a dinner, or lunch, followed by plenty of beer and dancing.

There were several small bands that played for the dances. Philip Sterkel had a band and he and "Pod" Greenwalt played accordions. Fred Klippert played hackbrett (hammered dulcimer), and Joseph Rohrig played tuba. Hans Klein and George Kaufman also played the hackbrett. Gottfred Schumacher played some, but he was known for making a good hackbrett, and made them until he was well over 90 years old.



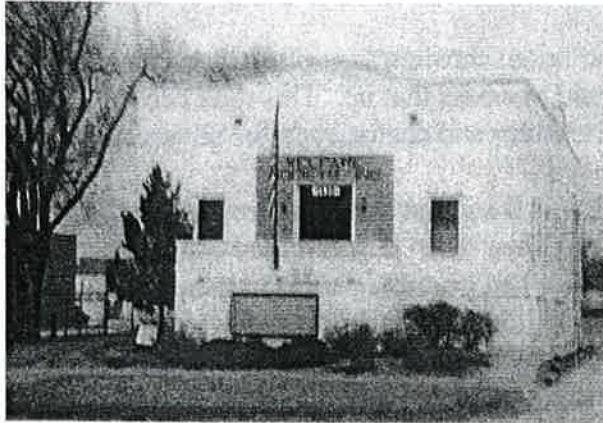
**Wedding Picture of Adam Loos  
and Katherine Schleiger**

For a dollar, they would play any song you wanted them to play. You'd put a dollar on a drum and dance and dance all night. When their horns got too hot, they poured whiskey into them.

The brides, or maybe the groom would have a long ribbon on their dress/jacket, and if you wanted to dance with the bride/groom, you had to pin money on the dress/jacket.

There was one lady, what was her name? She always sang. When it was about halfway through the evening, she would get loaded and would really sing.

The breakfasts at the Welfare started after I got a call from a guy named Chick Lugenbill. He worked for H. P. Lau. He asked me what I did on Wednesdays. I said nothing, just sit at home. Well, he said, we're having breakfast at Denny's Restaurant on Wednesday mornings--Conrad Schleiger and me. Why don't you come up. That's where we got started. I said if we can have breakfast at Denny's, why don't we have breakfast at the Welfare Hall. We asked, and they told us to go ahead and have it there, and we've been doing it ever since.



**Welfare Society, Inc.  
1430 North 10th Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska**

I did a lot of the cooking when we first started. I fried a case of eggs every Wednesday morning. We had bacon, 10 pounds of it, and we used to buy ham, and serve ham and eggs a lot of mornings. Fred Schmidt made the coffee for a long time. Scotty Schleicher used to give a prayer.

Now they just have rolls and coffee. They have no officers, but Rev. Harold Donis now gives the prayer and sometimes tells a humorous story. Average attendance is 100.

## **Ideal Hall**

*Contributed by Mollie Grenemeier*

Wedding receptions and special occasions such as showers, anniversary observances, and other events to be celebrated, were not allowed in the churches until the late 1940's or early to mid-1950's.

In early 1939, Mr. Pete Grenemeier felt our people needed a place to get together for parties, so he opened Ideal Hall. In December, 1939 it became reality when Christmas and New Year's parties were held there. It was located in the two hundred block of North 9th Street. There were two floors. The basement was used for cooking food and eating. The first floor was used for dancing and games.

Many wedding and bridal showers took place there; also money making projects. The rent was \$10. How could one pass that up. This took care of the cost of the dishes, cooking kettles and utensils, tables and chairs, even the silverware.

Then came World War II and our friends were going off to the service. We started having going- away parties. Then when they returned, we had parties to welcome them home again. It was fun. We had costume parties in those days. We didn't buy costumes--there was no money for that. We made them out of what we had. If anyone came all dressed up, he had his tie cut off! We talk about it and though it's sixty years later, we still laugh. Yes, we're old timers, and those were the good old days.

A party then cost \$5.00 a couple, and included food, drinks, and music. We even had a crystal ball on the dance floor ceiling. There was also a piano, and when someone would play, we would all gather around and sing. Mary Alt often played. It was the "poor man's country club." Usually about a hundred people would show up at a party. They would eat, drink, and dance the night away. A juke box provided the music, unless the people renting the hall hired a band. If someone got too much to drink, he or she was taken home. We never had any bad things happen at these events. What a blessing.

In the late 50's or early 60's, the building was demolished. There is a gas station there now.

Mary and Henry Alt now live in California. They have been members of AHSGR for many years. I will never forget those good times at Ideal Hall. Oh, what fun we had.



## A Family Poem

*From Mr. & Mrs. Johannes Reifschneider by F. A. Lorenz*

*Contributed by Hermann Reifschneider*

Translated from the original German by Robert Meininger

This poem was written by the unforgettable editor of the "Welt Post," who died in Russia and was published for the first time in 1920. It tells the story of one of the Reifschneider families. They faithfully attended Salem Congregational Church. Their joys and sorrows were replicated in many of our immigrant families' lives.

### **"Where does the soul find the homeland of Peace?"**

This concerns Johannes Reifschneider of Kukkus,  
Who also left his homeland in Russia.  
But long before, he looked all around,  
And chose Maser's Kathrina, for a bride.  
Yes, yes, yes, yes, this is the only one,  
Who can be the best helpmate for him.

A little girl, Maria, came as a gift,  
Just as she was heartily longed for,  
And then, as a dividend, came Jacob, a son,  
Who is employed these days as a mechanic.  
A year later came still another,  
The little son Johannes, and so they were three.

Heinrich, Katy, and Albert, came next,  
To show how a family can grow.  
Still, since all men will surely die,  
A terrible rent took place in the house.  
O, how painful was the suffering,  
The mother of the children died!

Oh mournful event that breaks up the marriage!  
The father is a widower, the children orphaned.  
It comes just when life sparkles so bright.  
Tears, cries, anguish, and loss,  
Are mixed every hour with the daily bread.

A year creeps by, the wound not yet healed;  
Worries weighed down with a heavy load,  
On the father and children constantly;  
The mother and caregiver was missing.  
Then a turn comes along in Reifschneider's life,  
Mrs. Kraus accepted to give him her hand.

Four years have gone by, since the bond was made,  
Many changes took place in this time.  
First Elsa Helena came to make them glad,  
But death took her too soon from their midst;  
Again, there was pain and sorrow,  
Change brings us woe constantly felt.

The youngest of the sprouts, Hermann Leroy,  
A superb child, in English a "boy,"  
Came just five months ago to the family,  
And reigns in the house as their treasure.  
Oh, how wonderful, sweet and great,  
Is the fate of people with children in their lap!

And now, looking back I feel I must say;  
Children at home are just an ornament.  
If they are brought up right for the needs of the world,  
As the Father in heaven would want it.  
So parents, do your duty,  
Or you can't receive the promises of God!

**Thank you for letting us share our memories with you. In closing, we'd like to share a song that was always sung at the end of the German Russian services and Prayer Meetings:**

So nimm denn meine Hände  
Und führe mich  
Bis an mein selig Ende  
Und ewiglich!  
Ich mag allein nicht gehen  
Nicht einen Schritt.  
Wo du wirst geh'n und stehen  
Da nimm mich mit.

Take thou my hand and lead me,  
Until the end.  
In life and death I need thee  
O blessed friend!  
I cannot live without thee  
Not one brief day,  
Lord be thou ever near me,  
And lead the way.