

Evangelical United Brethren Church History Dates Back to Era of Nehalem Valley Pioneers

The Vernonia Evangelical United Brethren church, which observed its 75th anniversary September 16, is the outgrowth of the desire of the first settlers here for spiritual nurture and growth.

The first settlers in this part of the valley were Mr. and Mrs. Clark Parker and family who came in the early spring of 1874. They settled about a mile below the present site of Vernonia on the place known in later years as the Andy Parker place. Later that same year, the Van Blaricom families came to the valley. This group included John Van Blaricom, a widower, and his sons, Henry, Phillip, Joseph, Hiram and John Jr., part of whom were married and had families, and daughters, Sarah Ann Sheeley and her husband Sol and Drusilla Baker and her husband Frank. They homesteaded in various parts of the valley, with Henry taking up land where the Guy Thomas place is now and Joseph taking up what is now a major part of the city of Vernonia. Hiram took land up Rock Creek and Phillip homesteaded up the Nehalem toward Kist. His daughter Anna was a small girl when the group came to the valley. After she was grown she became the bride of Hans Christensen and when she passed away this year at the age of 93, that took from this earth the last one of the original group to come to the valley. Many of their descendants still live here, however.

Other families that soon followed the Parker and Van Blaricom families were the Adams, Tuckers, Campbells, Spencers, Wilsons, Pecks, Hesses and others.

The earliest families came by way of Mountindale, over trails down Pebble Creek with their few possessions on horses and the family members walking. Pebble Creek was forded 13 times by the

early trail. In 1874, soon after the first families arrived, they began getting together for prayer meetings in the homes with Clark Parker and Henry Van Blaricom as leaders in the activity.

In 1876, a C. N. Plowman, a United Brethren minister, came into the valley and homesteaded and he organized a class and held regular services, first in the vicinity of Vernonia and then at other points in the valley.

Rev. Plowman was followed by a Mr. Parmer who lived on a homestead a mile south of town. He continued the work here. He was followed by a Rev. Black. A United Brethren elder, Rev. A. Bennett, frequently visited this area.

One preaching point of interest was the Harding house which was located two miles south of Vernonia on the place now owned by the Ed Crawfords. Sunday school was conducted there regularly.

In the middle eighties, the work of the United Brethren church deteriorated due to trouble in the general conference. In 1887, Mr. Plowman and Holford Jackson attended the conference of the Evangelical church with the purpose of persuading them to take over the work of the church here. The conference responded favorably and established a mission in Vernonia in 1887 and assigned as the first minister, Holford Jackson.

In 1888, James W. Ray was named as pastor and in 1890, the church was supplied by A. Marcham.

It was during the pastorate of Mr. Marcham that the building of a church was undertaken. Land was donated by Joseph Van Blaricom and subscriptions were solicited. A pledge of \$10 was large for those who pledged it had little idea where it would come from but before the building was completed, most of them had given many times that. Labor was donated and the building constructed served as the only church here until in the 1920s. It was used until 1924 when the new church on State avenue was built and the old church building was sold and converted into what is now the Cherry Tree apartments. The old parsonage, remodeled but still much the same, is now the home of the apartment manager.

At the anniversary observance, some of those who attended the old church recalled the long shed to the north of the church in which horses were stabled while their owners attended services. Oral Spencer Faulkner, sister of Bob Spencer, recalled the first little organ which she began playing for services when she was 11 years old.

In 1891 a Rev. M. Burlingame was assigned here. Some of his descendants still live in the St. Helens area. During that summer, a camp meeting was held on the banks of Rock Creek with Rev. L. S. Fisher as evangelist. At this meeting, many were converted and 28 joined the church.

This represented the permanent establishment of the church.

In 1892 another camp meeting was held at the same spot. Joseph Van Blaricom donated land for a camp grounds which was used each summer for many years. It was at the point where the James Caywoods now live, but the creek made a big bend there at that time so the contour of the land was entirely different. It was covered with maple and alder and some fir trees to make a beautiful grove. A tabernacle was built and some families erected cabins to live in during the camp meeting. Others used tents on the grounds. The meetings were held each summer until about 1920.

The grounds were also used for community affairs, such as Fourth of July picnics.

There was a nice gravel bar at the bend of the creek and baptismal services for the church were held there in connection with the meetings.

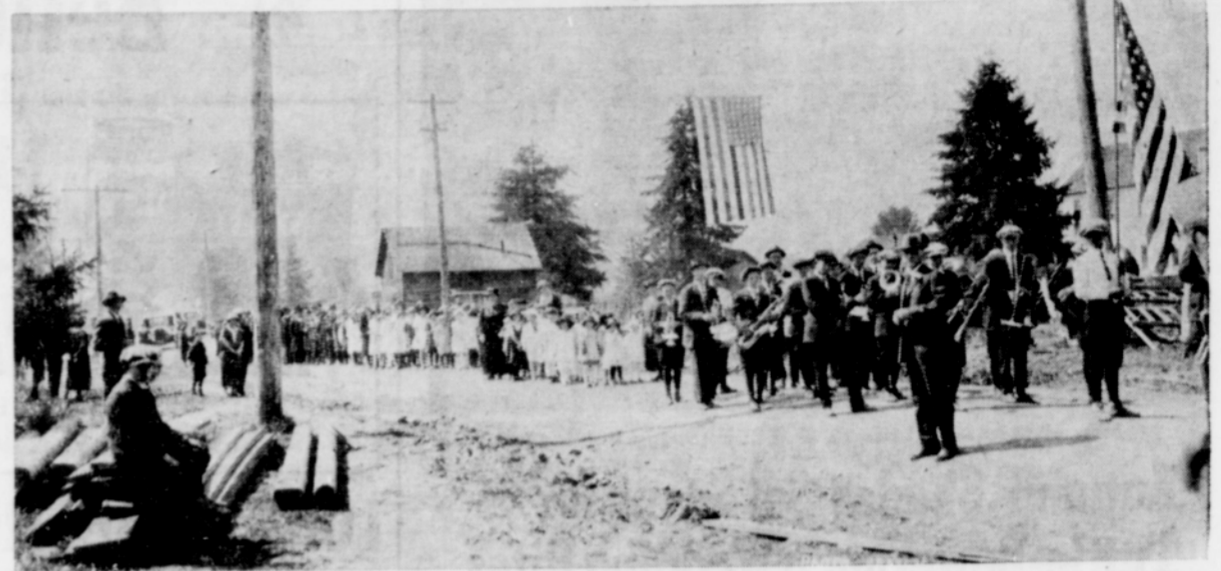
As the years passed, many others came into the valley who were associated with the church and active in keeping the work going. Included were the Malmstens, the Keaseys, the Dallases, the Norths, and others whose efforts were untiring.

The "little church on the hill" served the community and congregation well until the coming of the "big mill" brought a great influx of population. About that same time, other denominations began to seek a foothold here and some who had worked in the Pioneer church but had been raised in other faiths withdrew and began work in the new churches. This all took its toll but newcomers to the community stepped in to fill the gap and the work flourished and grew.

In 1924, the present church was built on State street by the Repass brothers as contractors and the congregation moved to it in May of that year with a march from the old church to the new one.



HERE, the congregation pauses before the new church edifice to be dedicated that day, May 11, 1924



THE picture above, taken May 11, 1924 as the congregation of the Evangelical church was marching from the old church on the hill to the new church for the dedication. The locale is on State street approaching the church from the turn off Bridge street.

During the years the mill was here it served as a community church and center for many activities. Rev. H. G. Hermann was pastor at the time the church and the parsonage at the corner of State and North streets were built.

In 1930, the Oregon-Washington conference of the Evangelical church met in Vernonia in the still-new church. Overnight accommodations were in the homes of members and meals were served in the church social hall, with all the women of the church working hard, long hours.

In recent years, the United Brethren church and the Evangelical church have merged and the name for the church today is Evangelical United Brethren combining both groups that exerted so much influence in the early church.

The 28 ministers who have served during the 75 years of the church are M. H. Jackson, 1887; James W. Ray, 1888-89; A. Marcham, 1890; M. Burlingame, 1891; R. D. Streyfelder, 1892-93; F. W. Launer, 1894-95; G. McElroy, 1896; F. M. Fisher, 1897-98; G. M. Stroup, 1899-1900; C. C. Snyder, 1901; J. C. Emmel, 1902; Morris Heverling, 1903-04, 1918 and 1921-22; J. C. Coleman, 1905; A. E.

Meyers, 1906-07; A. Weinert, 1908; Ezra Maurer, 1909 to 1913; Samuel Conklin, 1913-15; 1916-17, supplied; G. Hartzell, 1919-20; H. G. Hermann, 1923-24; W. F. Rademacher, 1925-26; G. W. Plummer, 1927 to 1932; D. H. Kauffman, 1933; A. N. Glanville, 1934; H. R. Scheuerman, 1935; to 1942; Allen Backer, 1942 to 1949; Paul Sisler, 1949 to 1953; F. M. Knowl, 1953 to 1959; Earl Tousley, 1959; Raymond Targgart, present pastor,

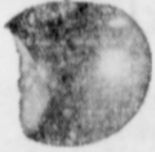
who came here in 1960.

Some other sidelights brought out at the anniversary were that Sunday school was held at Pleasant Hill and other surrounding points until roads and travel became easier. At one time in the early 1890s, Dr. Poling held a camp meeting at Pittsburg. Early ministers were in a sense circuit riders going as far down the river as Jewell and up Rock Creek and to other points.

Vernonia Eagle

4 THURSDAY, SEPT. 27, 1962

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4-H Club Girl To Seek Title

A 4-H club girl will be selected to reign as Miss P.I.P. at the Pacific International parade, Saturday, October 13 in Portland. The Portland Junior Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the Miss P.I.P. contest and will select a 4-H club member from the contestants participating from Columbia, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and Clark county, Washington.

One girl from each county will be chosen to represent her county. From these five girls the Portland JC's will select a princess with the other four girls being her court. In Columbia county a 4-H girl from each club may be chosen to compete, this club member to be selected by the club. These club members will then submit their permanent 4-H club record and a statement from their teacher or principal giving their rank in their class.

This must be submitted to the county Extension office in St. Helens by Tuesday, October 2. From these applications, one contestant will be picked to represent Columbia county in the Miss P.I.P. contest. Any 4-H club girl is eligible to compete.

Large Group Here for Delta Kappa Gamma

One of the largest meetings ever held by Tau chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma sorority, honorary organization for women in education, was held here last Saturday. Luncheon was served by the ladies of the PTA to 47 members from throughout Columbia and Clatsop counties after which they adjourned to the home of Mrs. Harry Sandon for their meeting.

Seven new members were initiated during the afternoon.

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