

MEMORIES of ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH - Established 1904

at N.E. 8th & Failing Street, Portland, Oregon

I recall attending "Sonntagschule" or Sunday School here when I was about twelve years old. My Uncle Jack Nagel was the Superintendent for many years, and Mollie Erdman was the Secretary. Some of the teachers were Jacob Greb, Henry Greenwald and Alex Smith. Our class was held in the back pews at the rear of the sanctuary since we did not have separate classrooms. Our Sunday School programs which were presented on Christmas Eve were recitations of German verses and jubilant singing of songs that we had memorized. How eagerly we anticipated receiving a small, striped paper sack of candy, nuts and an orange to take home -- our reward for our being good all year.

Pastor Elias Hergert directed the choir until he turned the responsibility over to his son, Solly. Lydia Danewolf Wilhelm Schultheiss played the pump organ and piano. Pastor Hergert and sons, Eli, Solly and Jake formed a fine quartet, and their sister, Mary Hergert Greenwald accompanied them on the piano. My Aunt Elizabeth Schott Nagel, Rosie Seibel and Lydia Nagel were the women's trio. Mr. Henry Danewolf who owned a grocery store, decorated the vacant lot next to his home at 12th & Failing Street at Christmas time. Our St. Paul's choir stood behind the lighted church in the center of the display where we sang carols in German, which was amplified through loud speakers for spectators to enjoy. One year he even won first prize in the city-wide lighting contest for his efforts.

Traditionally, when attending worship services, the men occupied the pews on the right side, and the women and children sat on the left side. I remember my Grandmother Amalia Schott always wore her black "Halstuch" or scarf to cover her head, but dressed up with a hat to attend the Easter services. The German hymnal books were printed without notes or music -- just the verses. But when the singing began, the harmony was beautiful! Some of the men brought their musical instruments to the prayer meetings and for special worship services. My Grandfather Jacob Schott played his Clarinet, and only wore his dentures for those occasions. Otherwise, they were stashed in his dresser drawer because they didn't fit properly, and he complained that they hurt too much. Also, the men took turns at firing up the furnace and ringing the church bell for Sunday services.

After the church was remodeled and enlarged, there was a "Kirchweih Fest" or Dedication Celebration on November 6, 1938. Guest Pastors came from out of state, and they spoke in both German and English from the new pulpit built by my Grandfather Schott who was a skilled carpenter who had learned his trade in the old country, in the village of Franzosen, Russia. I remember how special that day was for all who attended. The spiritual pride of the congregation gave proof that our church was the hub of what our ancestors brought with them to America -- the strong ethnic religion that sustained their lives in our community called "Little Russia."

As teenagers, we attended Sunday School and church every Sunday morning. Then in the evening we looked forward to "Jugendverein" or Christian Endeavor with our chums and schoolmates. During the summer vacation from public school and on Saturday mornings, Pastor Hergert instructed us in the German Catechism in preparation for our Confirmation on Palm Sunday. He quizzed us in front of the packed congregation, and being fourteen or fifteen years old, it was a very nervous time for us, but a milestone in our young lives, because we had reached accountability, and could now join the church.

My parents, Adam Jacob Schott and Emily Roth were united in marriage by Pastor Jacob Hergert in October, 1921. I was baptised in this church in 1923. My witnesses or Godparents were George and Rose Dietrich. My only sibling, Evelyn Schott Haftorson was baptised in 1928, and her two witnesses or Godparents were Conrad and Emily Glanz. I was confirmed by Pastor Elias Hergert on March 21, 1937 in a class of twelve. Although my other Grandfather Jacob Roth had chronic asthma, he managed to walk all the way from 13th & Mason Street to see me confirmed. Afterwards, he joined us at our home on 7th & Failing Street for a traditional "Broda" dinner.

I continued attending St. Paul's Church until I was married in the Presbyterian faith to Kenneth Millar in January, 1946 and moved to Oregon City, Oregon where I still reside. To this day, when I sing all of the old familiar hymns at my church, the verses race through my head in German. My Christian heritage began in my home, and was nurtured at St. Paul's Church. I will always carry these memories in my mind and close to my heart.

Submitted by:

Virginia Schott Millar (Age 79)
121 Harding Blvd.
Oregon City, OR 97045-3224
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