

HERITAGE HORIZONS

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST HERITAGE COMMISSION

Celebrating a Rich Past ... Inspiring a Promising Future

FALL 2023

Heritage Commission Happenings

By Randy Tschetter

According to a familiar adage, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” The modern use of the phrase is generally attributed to Fred R. Barnard, who used it in advertisements that appeared on the sides of streetcars beginning in the early 1920s. It suggests that complex and sometimes multiple ideas can be conveyed more effectively by a single still image than by a mere verbal description.¹

In addition to hundreds of pages of written documents, the Archives of the Heritage Commission is home to a whole host of photos – thousands of which are in the form of slides (see photo). Recently, a friend helped us purchase and install an electronic scanner, which enables us to digitize, organize, and save the various photos from days gone by.



Many of the slides we possess came to the Archives from NAB missionaries who served in Cameroon several decades ago. They tell the stories of faithful men and women who compassionately provided medical care for people suffering with dreadful diseases, such as leprosy, and many other illnesses and injuries, as well as NAB missionaries who devoted themselves to providing quality educational opportunities for children, nurses, pastors, and others. At the heart of their efforts was the work of evangelism – sharing the Good News of God’s love and calling people to faith in Jesus Christ. Christian congregations were established, church buildings were erected, and schools and hospitals were constructed. A few of the photos we have scanned are below and on the next page.



Muddy Road

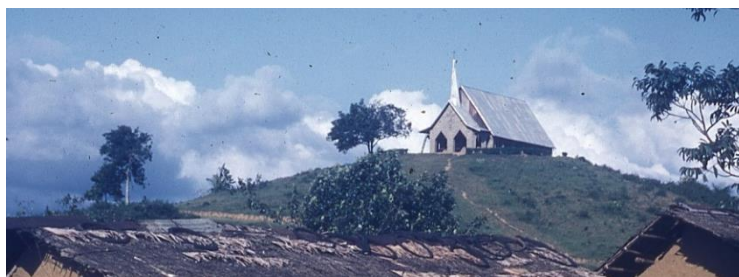


Baptismal Service



Builder

¹ “A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words,” Wikipedia, July 25, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_picture_is_worth_a_thousand_words.



Completed Church on Hill



Nurse Laura Reddig and Patient

Other Staff Activities

In May, Randy attended the NAB Retired Workers' Retreat held in Sumas, Washington, where he gave an historical overview presentation of the NAB Conference. One individual's response was something like, "I didn't think history could be so interesting." In recent weeks, he has been busy writing the Heritage Commission's contribution for *Onward*, the NAB magazine, and in preparing this newsletter.



Darlene Frueh, our administrative assistant, did some really good work updating an exhaustive spreadsheet of *Der SendBote* and *Baptist Herald* obituary information dating as far back as 1900. She quickly learned how to use our new

scanner and spends a lot of time digitizing and organizing these photos. When Randy needs help finding a file or document, he calls on Darlene.



Lana Fokken has mostly finished her task of scanning denominational and seminary documents. We are grateful for her persistence and great organizational skills. Some of the scanned items have already been added to the Heritage Commission webpage. Below is

a partial list of other documents that have been scanned and saved here in the Archives. Contact

us by phone or email if you need specific information about these or other documents. We are hoping to add some of these items to our webpage in the future.

Women's Ministries

For the Heart of a Woman (1992–2004)

Gleanings (1987–2008)

Heart of a Leader (2004–2005)

NAB Women's Missionary Ministry Fellowship

North American Baptist / Sioux Falls Seminary

Impact (1970–2018)

Profiles

NAB Conference

Intercessor (1998–2019)

NAB Link (1987–1995)

NAB Today (1996–2008)

Servant Link (2015–2016)



We are hopeful that by the time you read this, Luci Lengefeld will have rejoined us here in the Archives, following a little mishap involving her face and the sidewalk, to continue her work of writing and updating NAB church histories. You may contact the archives at

nabarchives@kairos.edu for historical information about specific churches.

Rabbit Hill Baptist Church in Leduc, Alberta – A Sending Church



Originally known as Heimthal German Baptist Church, today's Rabbit Hill Baptist Church near Leduc, Alberta, was founded on September 26, 1892. Heimthal was a German name of a district in Volynia, Russia, from which many of the founders of the church had come. It was one of the earliest German-speaking and Baptist churches north of Calgary.² When the Rabbit Hill church commemorated its 50th anniversary in 1942, Pastor Adam Huber recalled: "When pioneers arrived, they found only trees and bush. For years they busied themselves cutting down trees and pulling and burning roots while satisfying their hunger with rabbit stew. In fact, they regarded the abundant provision of rabbits in the same way the Israelites fed from the manna in the wilderness."³ Presumably the name Rabbit Hill **refers to a series of hills in the area that were home to an abundance of rabbits.** The earliest official reference to the name goes back to settlers at the end of the 19th century.⁴

The Heimthal / Rabbit Hill church began with a flourish and had grown to more than 200 members by 1894 before a majority of its members (some 140) and the pastor transferred their membership to another Baptist church closer to where they had settled. Despite their disappointment, Rabbit Hill recognized a need for beginning a church to immigrants in nearby

Edmonton and to offer practical ministry of teaching immigrants to read and write in their new English-speaking surroundings. By 1900, Rabbit Hill was recognized as the "Mother" in the formation of the Alberta German Baptist Association.⁵ Rabbit Hill has not grown into a mega-church, but the impact of pastors who served and those who have been sent to other fields has touched the lives of hundreds of people around the world with the good news of the Gospel. Rabbit Hill might well be known as a "sending" church.

Foremost among those sent from Rabbit Hill Baptist Church was missionary Minnie Kuhn, who served as a nurse and midwife in Nigeria and Cameroon for more than thirty years. In



eulogizing Minnie in 2003, Dr. Willi Gutowski wrote, "Minnie was above all, faithful. She worked around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if necessary." In spite of chronic back pain, Minnie "always had a smile on her face" as she attended to hospital duties or traveled over horrible roads to provide healthcare at traveling clinics. Minnie understood the health needs of the African women, and physicians like Dr. Gutowski trusted her medical judgement. She was also a diligent student of Scripture and an excellent Bible teacher.

Rev. Peter Schroeder served as the pastor of Rabbit Hill Baptist Church from 1958 to 1960. Some years later, Peter and his wife, May, served as NAB missionaries to Nigeria. Peter's

² Edward Link, *Find Us Faithful – Celebrating 100 Years of Ministry* (Edmonton, AL, Canada: Rabbit Hill Baptist Church, 1992). 1.

³ Link, *Find Us*, 17.

⁴ J. B. Spurr, *The Edmonton District Directory for the Year*

1895: *Containing Full and Authentic Information, Statistics, Tables, Maps, and Guide to Northern Alberta.*

<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/2234.html>.

⁵ Link, *Find Us*, 9.



experience as a pastor and his skills as a carpenter benefited many on the mission field.⁶

Trudy Schatz was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, but spent some of her growing-up years at Rabbit Hill. Her father, Rev. Henry Schatz, was the pastor of the church from 1937 to 1940 and baptized Trudy in Leduc when she was 11 years of age.



Trudy went on to serve as a missionary nurse in

Cameroon, where she was involved in healing ministries for thirty-four years – especially at Banso Baptist Hospital.

More than thirty full-time, interim, and student pastors have served the Rabbit Hill congregation in the past 131 years. Today's congregation is small, but building on many years of serving and sending, the congregation continues to serve God under the leadership of Pastor Laurie Lafleur. Thanks be to God!



Looking Ahead

NAB (Snowbirds) Gathering

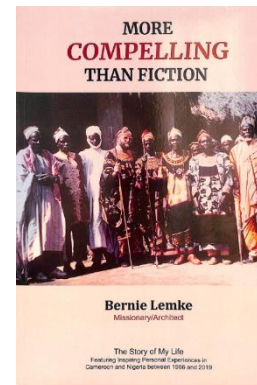
- **February 20, 2024**, in Phoenix, Arizona.
- This is a good opportunity to connect with NAB friends and acquaintances.
- Randy will be sharing about NAB history.
- Contact Ted Faszter (tedfaszer@gmail.com) for details.

NAB Triennial Conference

- **July 11–14, 2024**, in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- The Heritage Commission will have a featured display near the entrance to the convention center.
- Contact Randy if you have suggestions or might be able to help with transportation of display items.

⁶ Link, *Find Us*, 49.

Some Interesting NAB Stories



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