



Madison County Genealogical Society



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The following article was found in the Meadow Grove News, Thursday, July 12, 1928 on page 1 and continued in that paper on the last page.

Emerick 47 Years Ago

Told by Chaplain Chas. H. Frady, Now a Resident of Long Beach, Cal.

(Taken from Nebraska History Magazine, by special permission of Nebraska Historical Society of Lincoln.)

I would be pleased to write an account of many Sunday schools which by Divine help, I planted on the front and in isolated communities, however, I cannot desist in relating one more, viz., the Emerick Union Sunday school in Madison county, Nebraska.

This settlement in its early beginning was supplied with two young unmarried ministers, following one after the other, who, by unwise conduct, so incensed the inhabitants that they declared, that a coat of "Tar and Feathers" would be given to the next minister of Christian agent that might enter the neighborhood. The threat was heralded widely. It was told me by many persons that it was not advisable to undertake to do anything for the community, but the time came when I felt impressed that it was my duty to make an effort at least. Thus late in October, 1881, on foot, I made my way thither. Upon reaching a point from whence I could look over the two valleys which embraced the settlement, I counted thirty houses. On my knees I prayed to God that the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus, might fully direct me for the task. I had no fear of receiving the coat of "Tar and Feathers" threatened; but just how to reconcile the people and to accomplish something beneficial and of eternal good for them, I left with God.

It was near sundown when I selected a plain home 16' x 24' in dimensions at which first to call. It proved to be the home of Mr. James Switzer. Reaching the house I knocked on the door, Mrs. Switzer answered. Before entering I told her my name and my mission, she replied that it was best for me, at once to retrac my steps, she believing that the neighbors might do violence to me. In answer I told her I was very tired and that it was late and I was hungry. She then said for me to come in and she would give me something to eat.

Chaplain Frady Feeds the Hogs

I remember the menu, from the barrel in the corner by the stove she brought forth a saucer of sauerkraut and from the cupboard a chunk of cold cornbread. I ate the same, then she insisted that I had better go. I noticed that she was about to go to milk the cows. Then I quickly took one pail and went along and milked two of the cows, then hearing the pigs squealing I carried the slop to them. By that time it was dark. I saw plainly that she did not know just what turn to make to get rid of me. She finally said that the house was small and she had only one bed in the room, that her children had to

sleep in the garret and that she had no convenience for me. I told her just to give me a cover of some kind and I would go out and sleep with the dog on the haystack.

She told me that her husband had gone to Madison and would be back she thought about ten o'clock. To amuse the children I told many a story. Finally I sang some old familiar songs to which she said, "I wish that Mr. Switzer was home, that he liked to sing so well." At last I had found the key to the situation. The clock struck ten, the dog gave one yelp and down the road he went. The children said, "Papa is coming." I told Elmer, a lad of about twelve years of age, that we would go out and unhitch the team and let his father come in the house at once. Doing so, I unhitched one horse in a jiffy and then told the boy to take the team to the stable. I followed Mr. Switzer into the house, immediately, before his wife could inform him as to who I was and my business.

Old Time Sons Win Favor With Pioneer

I talked so rapidly with him about things in general and about Pennsylvania, from which he emigrated, that his wife had no chance to get a word in edgeways. She got his supper ready and he "sat in" (as we say on the front) and as he had his mouth full and his ears open. I began to sing, he squared his chair around and said, "Gosh, that's fine." I handed him a copy of the "Gospel Hymns"; song after song we sang, quitting long after midnight then, he asked, "Who are you?" I told him and he said it was then too late for me to go. Mrs. Switzer went up into the garret and slept with the children and I snoozed with Mr. Switzer. In the morning, he suggested that I return from the neighborhood, but I told him if he and his good wife would allow me to return to their home at eventide that I would call upon his neighbors. They consented, provided I would assume my own risk.

It was enough said, I visited different homes from day to day for two weeks, went away to my appointments on intervening Sundays. I helped the men husk corn, chopped wood for the women, spoke words of cheer to the sick, and took down the names of persons, old or young, in the community, but kept out of the houses only when the men were present. I announced a meeting for the second Sunday. When the hour for service arrived Mr. Switzer and two of his children were all that came. Then he said it was no use to go further with the effort for the place, I told him that I would try two weeks more, which I did. At the appointed hour for the second meeting Mr. Switzer came and seven children but no adults. To my appeal, Mr. Switzer agreed to take charge of the Sunday School as superintendent and teacher.

Christmas in Emerick

I supplied the school in full and told him to advertise at once. "A great time for the coming Christmas," that I would look after presents for the people, that he was to get as large a Christmas tree as would go in the school house, to which he agreed.

I had the name of every individual in the settlement and their respective ages. The list of names I sent to a certain Sunday school in Chicago, and asked that they send to me a box by freight, such things as they would consider suitable for each individual.

Mr. Switzer did his best in charge of the school, the interest increased and a goodly number enrolled. Christmas drew near and the tree was set up in the school house; the people wondered what would follow. When the day before Christmas arrived and the Sunday School Missionary had not shown up and there were no presents in sight for any one, Mr. Switzer told me that he felt like finding a hole somewhere to crawl into and not to come out of it before "ground-hog day." The noon hour came and the missionary hove insight with a box about four feet square in the back part of his gospel wagon, full of presents from the Chicago Sunday school. The afternoon was occupied in putting on the tree (which was not half large enough) part of the nice things, the others were put on the floor beneath the tree. At length Christmas Eve was at hand. All the people came, but two-thirds

of them could not get in the house. Songs were sung, prayers of thankfulness were made, and then the presents were given out to those both inside and outside of the schoolhouse, not one person was missed, from Grandma and Grandpa to the youngest child. There were suitable presents for all, even expectant mothers received bundles of clothing for their unborn babes. At last all the people had been served, the old threat was forgotten and my untiring effort for them realized. Then I knew that they could not say "No" so I announced a meeting for the next day, Christmas. The same was well attended and services continued for several days.

A Prayer Eighteen Miles Long

On the evening two days before New Years an old veteran of the Civil War, Father Nye, who had been an inebriate for many years came to me and asked if there was Salvation for him. I read to him the declaration of Jesus as found in: John 6:37; Matthew 10:32: 1 John 1:9. He accepted Christ, then he told me that he and his aged wife were in need of eatables to live on. In answer to my inquiry he said the only thing he had to sell to buy food was a shoat of about eighty pounds. I told him that the next morning at four o'clock I wanted him to get out of bed, feed his team, load the shoat in his wagon, eat his breakfast and start for town, Battle Creek, eighteen miles away, at five o'clock; that he should pray all the way there, sell the shoat, buy his groceries and other necessities and get back home in time to be at the three o'clock meeting in the afternoon, that I would be in prayer for him until the time for him to start for town in the morning.

He consented. I continued in prayer throughout the night for him. Shortly after four o'clock, from a home nearby where I was stopping, I heard the shoat squealing and when the clock struck five I heard the wagon moving off. I praised God!

Promptly at three o'clock, time for meeting, Father Nye was at hand, his face shining and he related his victory saying, "I prayed all the way to town, prayed until I sold the shoat, prayed until I purchased the groceries, prayed until I got by the saloons and out of town on my way back, then I could pray no longer but began to sing, "Hallelujah!" until I reached home." An eighteen mile prayer followed by an eighteen mile song. Praise the Lord! Seemed to me it was sufficient to regenerate any soul.

New Years day Brother Charles Rouse, a devoted man who desired to enter the ministry came to assist. My duties demanded that I should go. I left the meetings in his care which continued for a time. At the close he organized a church (Methodist Episcopal) having thirty or more members and he was appointed their pastor.

Fifteen years afterwards I revisited the Emerick settlement and held services for the people in their church building. I walked through the little cemetery back of the building and counted sixty graves in which lay the mortal remains---in most instances those whom thru the help of God I got into the Sunday school as mentioned.

A Trip Into Emerick

Accompanied by Col. Elley the writer made a trip into Emerick Tuesday where he attended the sale of August Borgmeyer. This was one of the largest sales held in this county in a number of years as the total sum aggregated nearly \$7,000. The sale was in charge of Col. Tim Preece of Battle Creek and Col. Elley of this city. Charlie Smith of Tilden, a former Madison boy and Will Harvey of Newman Grove were the clerks.

The day was an ideal one which brought out what was claimed by the residents of that locality the largest crowd seen in a number of years under similar circumstances. Everything sold well and Mr. Borgmeyer was well pleased.

"Paddy" Miles was there and he told us confidentially that stranger things have happened than that he will move back to Madison. Smith Grant, who has untiring faith in the future of Emerick, says he don't know why it is but every time he comes to Madison the town looks better to him. Caleb Hickson was also there. He says he is not ready to move to Madison yet, as he is now raising a large herd of full blooded Poland China swine and that he will be in evidence at the coming Madison county fair and will be otherwise heard from in the Poland China business in the near future, but that it's the best town in the state for its size just the same. Lawrence Wells, a former Madison man, who went up to Emerick and got rich says he doesn't know any place that he would prefer to live than Madison should he wish to leave the farm. Frank Duchacek and Anton Ganser, two old timers in this neck-of-the-woods were in attendance and looked as prosperous as men who had railroads to sell. Fred Reugge was over from Tilden and while he did not do a great deal of bidding he ate more than any man at our table with the exception of Tim Preece.

We are pleased to meet our old friend, Wm. Hoffman, of Grove who had just returned from Pennsylvania where he went in hopes of bettering his health and to him probably we owe a vote of thanks for coming to our rescue when we were about to be strung up to a tree when we made the statement that within a few years the Emerickites would be riding on trolley cars to Madison doing their shopping, attending theater parties and eating midnight lunches. It was Mr. Hoffman who said that it was just as reasonable to think the trolley cars would be installed in this county at this time as it was for one to make that prediction for his old Pennsylvania home 20 years ago and which now is a fact, which statement caused Jim O'Brien to land on Al Jones' solar plexus and remark, "Are you sorry you sold your land". At this juncture Mrs. Borgmeyer very kindly suggested that I come into the house and eat some supper which I did and I want to say that should any of the Star-Mail readers have a chance to eat at the Borgmeyer home they should avail themselves of the opportunity.

Source: The Madison Star-Mail, February 15, 1907, page 4.