

Later, rural carriers were paid \$600 per year until July 1, 1905, when the pay was raised to \$720. In 1907, it was again raised to \$900 and to \$1,000 in 1911. Since then salaries have been based on mileage traveled and are contemporarily favorable.

During earlier years, John Curtiss, Waldo Propst, Paul Curtiss, Minnie Carson, Adeline Allen, Mae Timmons, Harry Simmons, and George Harrington were among those who served in the post office. The present complement includes a postmaster, assistant to the postmaster, one regular clerk, a substitute clerk, two regular city letter carriers, a substitute city letter carrier, two rural carriers, with substitutes, and two custodial laborers. The office is served by three star routes and a mail messenger from Fairmont. Mail service by rail was discontinued about 1939.

Early Rural Free Delivery service was provided by the following persons:

July 1, 1903		
Carrier	Where Born	Salary
Bert Bradley	Illinois	\$600
John Klink, Jr.	Illinois	600
Charlton B. Hyde	Iowa	600
Stanley F. Morrow	Ohio	600
William H. Forsythe	Indiana	Substitute
William Klink	Nebraska	Substitute
Henry Sheldon	New York	Substitute
July 1, 1905		
Bert Bradley	Illinois	720
Charlton B. Hyde	Iowa	720
John Klink, Jr.	Illinois	720
Stanley F. Morrow	Ohio	720
Henry Sheldon	New York	Substitute
William Klink	Nebraska	Substitute
1907-1909-1911*		
Bert Bradley		900
Robert M. Carson		900
Roy D. Hampton		900
John Klink, Jr.		900

\*Salary listed at \$1,000 in year 1911.

Other rural carriers included Pete Ertel, Clyde Propst, Henry Reinsch, Gleye McCaulley, Floyd Abbott, Linus Walter, and George Cruse.



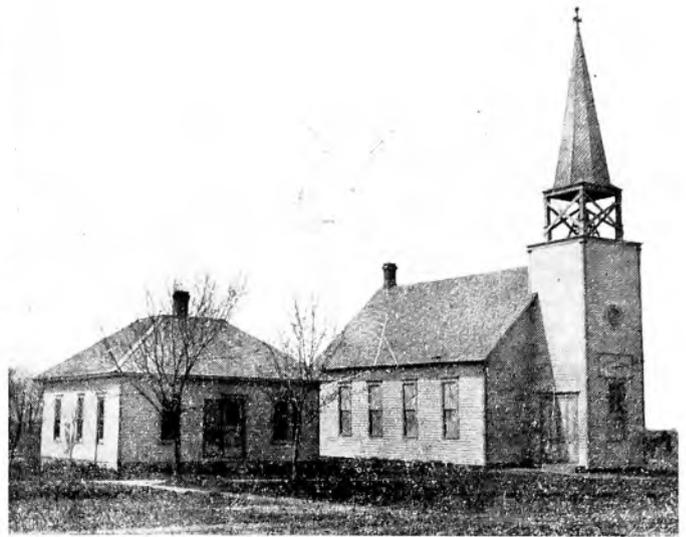
Courtesy Nebraska Signal

First airmail out of Geneva, May 19, 1938. Left to right: Pilot, Dr. George Hansen; Shickley Postmaster Amos Frieden; Geneva Postmaster George Koehler; Assistant Postmaster Paul W. Curtiss; Legionnaire William Dana. The landing field was on the Gilbert McPeck farm, 4 miles S and 2 miles W of Geneva.

## CHURCHES

The Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church was established and installed its first minister in 1925. The Wisconsin and Ohio Synods made several attempts to establish mission stations in Geneva. The Mission Board of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod finally decided to place a man in this city. After two candidates had returned the board's call, the Rev. Herman Kuckhahn accepted and was installed on October 4, 1925.

The installation and all services were held in the vacant West Ward schoolhouse until May, 1926. Starting that month, services were held in the vacant Free Will Baptist Church across the street.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and parsonage (former Free Will Baptist properties).

Sunday School was organized October 18, 1925, with 23 children enrolled, divided into three groups. Meetings were held August 7 and 14, 1927, to organize a congregation. The five charter members were: George Everts, John Riel, John Wittmack, Thomas W. Boyes, and W. A. Domeier. Incorporation of the church was completed and signed December 6, 1928. In the spring of 1929, the congregation purchased the church and parsonage (the Free Will Baptist properties they had been renting).

Pastor Kuckhahn left Geneva March 29, 1929. Pastor Roy Vollmers accepted the call to Grace Church and preached his initial sermon on the first Sunday in Advent, 1929. He was succeeded by Pastor E. A. Breiling, who served from May 31, 1942, till October 6, 1946. During his pastorate in 1944 the interior of the church was redecorated and refurnished. This work was dedicated in a special dedicatory service on October 29, 1944.

The Rev. D. Grummert began his pastorate in Geneva on January 19, 1947. He served the congregation until July 11, 1954. In November, 1947, the congregation voted to establish a Christian day school. A building was acquired, renovated, and dedicated on August 28, 1948. The first teacher (not including the pastor, who did a good deal of teaching) was Miss Laverna Everts, who taught from 1947 to 1958. Later teachers were Sharon Becker and Judy Meyer (1958-63), Virginia Neidfelt and Phyllis Haas (1964), and Beverly Renike (1965 to the present). Enrollment over the years has averaged 28 pupils.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Grace Evangelical Lutheran parochial school, dedicated in 1948.

Later pastors have been the Revs. Paul E. Eickmann (1955-58), James Rockhoff (1958-63), Paul Seiltz (vicar, 1964), and David Fisher (1965-present).

—Mrs. Harlan Domeier

The **Christian Church** of Geneva was organized early in 1890. On June 25, 1890, Mertie Rhinehart, formerly Mertie Mack, and her husband, John H. Rhinehart, of Arapahoe County, Colorado, deeded to B. B. Mozee, J. H. Ballard, and J. S. Small, the trustees of the Christian Church in Geneva, the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Outlot 16 in the city of Geneva.

No records are available as to when construction of the building was begun, but the church was dedicated on June 7, 1893. The first financial records are dated January, 1893, but no names are given for clerk or treasurer. The first minister was a Mr. Henry, followed by E. J. Syas. There is no record of those who organized the church, but early membership rolls include Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Mozee, George Mozee, Rachel Yates, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Yates, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Yates, A. C. Wickizer, Mr. Selzor, Mrs. A. C. Tucker, Ike Ashton, J. H. Ballard, J. S. Small, W. E. Harrison, O. A. Merrill, Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Spivey, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Laing, A. G. Peck, Mrs. Humphreys, Walter Haskins, and Mrs. W. H. Cooksey. There was a Ladies' Aid Society and a Christian Endeavor. In 1904, 88 members were listed. The building was heated by coal stoves and there were kerosene lights. In January, 1905, electric lights were installed. A furnace was put in and sidewalks were laid the following year.



Congregational (United Church of Christ) Church buildings. *Top* (from Mrs. John Bixby): Original church building (1887). *Middle* (from Guy Brown, Jr.): Present church building—taken in 1966. *Bottom* (from Geneva Photo): Church school unit (1966).

10, 1886, and a notice of this organization was filed with the county clerk, October 13, 1886. In January, 1887, with pastors present from surrounding towns, the formal organization was completed and 27 charter members were received into the church. The Rev. Glen Taylor served as the first pastor, and services were held in the Town Hall. A gift of \$20 from a Sunday School in Connecticut, and another \$20 raised locally, were used to purchase a library of 90 books; this served as the first public library for Geneva. The first communion service was a gift from the First Congregational Church of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

With help from the Church Building & Loan Society of the Congregational National Council, the first church edifice was dedicated October 23, 1887. The lots cost \$500, and the building about \$3,500. This low cost was made possible by a great deal of the labor being donated. The women had organized in 1886, and as their project they raised funds for an organ which cost \$150, and also purchased the chandeliers, carpet, and pulpit set. The parsonage was built in 1912 at a cost of \$3,931.25.

In June, 1925, the old church building was torn down. A gift of \$5,000 from Miss Nancy Beggs started the drive for a new building. Again with the help of the National Congregational Building Fund, the present church building was completed at a cost of \$56,000, including the \$7,500 pipe organ. The dedication services were held on November 26-28, 1926. At the Silver Anniversary service of the present building, November 25, 1951, the new stained-glass windows were formally dedicated.

During the 80 years since its organization the church has increased its membership to more than 400 with a



Photo from Dr. Edith Ridpath  
Christian Church on the day of dedication in June, 1893.

In 1904, E. M. Johnson, a student from Cotner College at Bethany, Nebraska, served the church as minister, and after his graduation was resident minister for several years. Later ministers were J. B. McDonald, J. A. Beattie, E. L. Pettus, D. G. Wagner, Carl E. PerLee, and P. B. Cope, who had been field man for the Child Saving Institute at Omaha for the past 25 years. Later ministers were Clerin Gunewalt, Glen McRae, George P. Clark, H. Darling, Oscar Grover, and H. S. Souder.

During the depression so many families moved away that during the war years and for some time after, the church was closed. About 1952, it was reopened under the leadership of H. B. Milliken, president of Nebraska Christian College at Norfolk, Nebraska. The last two ministers were Olive Atwood, who lived at Sutton, and also had charge of the Christian Church there, and Harold Fox, a student pastor from the Norfolk college. For the past 10 years the Church of Christ has been using the properties.

—Mrs. Edith Ridpath

The **Geneva Congregational Church** organization was started at a meeting in the home of F. H. Briggs, September

Sunday School numbering from 125 to 130. Two robed choirs, the Pilgrim Fellowship, Laymen's Fellowship, and Women's Fellowship are active in support of and participation in the church program. All loans and grants have been paid, and additional improvements and equipment have been provided, including the upkeep and remodeling of the parsonage.

The Congregational fellowship is founded not on a creed but on the fundamental principle of a brotherhood of Christians, each one sincerely believing in God, following Christ with all sincerity, and striving to serve the interests of his fellows with all diligence. While maintaining their independence of action and their control of their own affairs, Congregational churches exercise great care that the essential spirit of fellowship with other congregations shall be maintained. Throughout the years the Geneva church has been a member of the Blue Valley Association, the Nebraska Congregational Conference, the General Council of Congregational Churches, and the National and Nebraska Councils of Churches.

Following is the list of pastors serving the Geneva Congregational Church:

1886-1887, Glen Albert Taylor; 1887-1890, Henry Wannamaker; 1890-1893, Henry J. Zercher; 1893-1895, James Brereton; 1895-1897, P. H. Hines; 1897-1910, Thomas Griffiths; 1911-1913, Corwin Vincent; 1913-1915, Frank Babcock; 1915-1919, B. A. Warren; 1919-1923, James A. McKeeman; 1923-1934, David Tudor; 1934-1935, Clarence Parr; 1935-1937, Edward W. Day; 1938-1940, J. P. Hohenstein; 1940-1942, Phil B. Wahl; 1943-1948, Isaac Cassel; 1948-1952, William Bohi; 1952-1958, L. C. Werner; 1958-1966, Robert Kasper; 1966—, Delano Spitzer.

—Mrs. Marieta Kerl

People of the United Brethren denomination began coming to Geneva around the turn of the century. Because there was no United Brethren church there, many of its members united with other churches, maintained an inactive membership in their former home churches, or dropped out of any church affiliation whatever. The Martland, Strang, and Bethel churches were in outlying territory. (Bethel later became known as "Chelsea" because of its location in Chelsea township.)

Several appeals were made to the Nebraska U.B. Conference to begin a church in Geneva, but it was not until the 40th session of the conference in September, 1911, that Presiding Elder W. O. Jones was instructed to investigate the matter again. Accordingly, on October 26, Dr. Jones visited the field with a view to establishing a church in Geneva. Mr. I. N. Beeson, formerly of the Martland community, was one of the first persons contacted. Elder Jones made another trip in January, 1912, and found other interested people. On February 25, Bishop Weekly, Rev. F. W. Brink (pastor of the Strang church), and Elder Jones called the people together for the first meeting, which was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Nelson; "some 15" were present.

The next official visit of the elder was made April 13, 1912, in company with Rev. Charles Melville, pastor of the Beatrice church. Unfavorable comment upon the project by the city paper had a tendency to discourage some people and only a few were present. However, the names of 24 persons were secured who agreed to unite with the church if and when it should be organized.

Negotiations were begun with the Baptist people for the purchase of their unused property at what is now the corner of 11th and G Sts. The elder gave his report at the next conference, held in Lincoln in September, 1912, and a definite agreement was made for the purchase of the Baptist property for \$3,500. (\$500 of this amount was to be donated by the Baptist church.) The Rev. C. J. Melville was assigned to the Geneva mission and preached his first sermon to an audience of about 50 persons on Sunday night, September 29, 1912. Regular services were held each Sunday morning and evening throughout the conference year. The Sunday School was also organized at this time.

The Reverend C. Z. Mower became pastor in 1915. Other pastors of the church in chronological order of their services were J. J. Charleston, W. E. Wolfington, F. R. Baber, L. E. Strickler, E. H. Pontius, E. W. Thompson, H. E. Miller, H.



Photo from C. J. Moss  
The United Brethren Church congregation organized in this building in 1912. It had formerly been a Baptist church.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal  
United Brethren church at NE corner of 11th and G Sts., remodeled into present brick structure in 1917.

J. Plymessenger, H. A. Dierdorff, A. W. Swanson, Glenn Cain, E. D. Sell, Maude V. Mann, Milford Vance, Wayne L. Schreurs, Dr. Walter Bachman, Fred H. Stevens, and Clifford Bahr, who is now serving as pastor. E. H. Pontius, E. W. Thompson, H. J. Plymessenger, and Maude V. Mann will be remembered as having served over the longer periods of time.

After the yellowish frame building was remodeled in 1917 into the present brick structure, its membership reached a peak of 282. For various reasons the number has since declined to about 100 resident members.

In the early thirties it seemed advisable for the pastor to serve both the U.B. and Chelsea churches on alternate Sundays, although Sunday School was maintained in each church every Sunday. Not until the latter part of Miss Mann's ministry was a preaching service held each Sunday morning in both churches. The time was 10 o'clock at the country church and 11 o'clock in town. Miss Mann also conducted Monday afternoon services each week at Rose-lawn Home, and later E.U.B. pastors also continued those services, which seemed much appreciated by the residents. The pastors also take their turn every fourth Sunday conducting services at the Girls' Training School.

The merging of the Evangelical and United Brethren denominations became effective in the Nebraska conference in 1956 and our church became known as the Evangelical United Brethren or "E.U.B." By action of the local conference the Chelsea church was merged with the Geneva church in 1954, and the Geneva church became owner of the Chelsea church property. Several families of the Chelsea congregation retained their membership in the E.U.B. church. Others went elsewhere.

—Mrs. Oscar Nelson

The **Methodist Church** was one of the major churches of the pioneers. When the first session of the Nebraska Conference adjourned April 8, 1861, there were 21 Methodist ministers in the entire state. There were only four Methodist church buildings, and no preacher could boast of serving a charge that provided him a parsonage.

The Rev. George W. Gue was the first resident Methodist preacher in this county. He arrived in the early summer of 1871 and preached the first sermon in Fairmont in the new Burlington station. In the spring of 1872 the Methodists built in Fairmont the first Methodist church in the county.

The Rev. Mr. Gue also made arrangements to build a church 7 miles S of Fairmont, probably on Turkey Creek, where he preached during the winter of 1871 and 1872. Although the church was never built, this "Class" was the nucleus that, a little later, became the Methodist Church of Geneva.

On Easter Sunday, 1873, a Sunday School was organized in the home of Henry Stanley, attended by the Walter Churchill family, the Sam Range family, and possibly others. This was the beginning of the organized Methodist work that was later called the "Chelsea Appointment" on the Geneva Circuit.

Some time in the early summer, possibly in May, 1875, the Rev. George H. Wehn was requested by his presiding elder, Dr. J. B. Maxfield, to take charge of the new work at Geneva. In Rev. Wehn's words: "After a few visits to Geneva, finding a few faithful ones who stood by to secure the material, we succeeded in building a small two-story parsonage into which we moved, moving up from Hebron in the midst of the Conference year." The records show that a bond for a deed for Lot 2, original city of Geneva, was filed June 25, 1875. The lot was purchased from David Lee for \$400.

1885; but at this service pledges were taken to cover all outstanding obligations.

The Conference year 1885-86 was a great success. Seventy-three persons joined the church.

The very next year, added improvements were necessary, as shown by the Minutes of September, 1887: "As a result of a wonderful revival last year the building was found to be too small, was enlarged, improved and paid for. At the beginning of this year the trustees found the building still too small and enlarged it at an expense of \$2,000. Valuable improvements were made on the parsonage and all paid for so that now we have a fine church building, with tower and bell, and class rooms finely furnished." It is interesting to note that while the enlarged church was valued at \$5,000, the parsonage was valued at \$6,000. This year the membership more than doubled and the Sunday School nearly doubled.

While the Rev. Mr. Barker was pastor, the new parsonage was built on the north of the church lots at a cost of \$1,800. The old parsonage property was sold July 7, 1893, to Lulu Bruner. This is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Kelch at 1045 I St.

In 1902 the present brick edifice was built and dedicated by Dr. Claudius B. Spencer on December 28, 1902. The parsonage was modernized in 1909. Lot 38, adjoining 39 on the west, was presented to the church by M. Bolton on August 31, 1921.

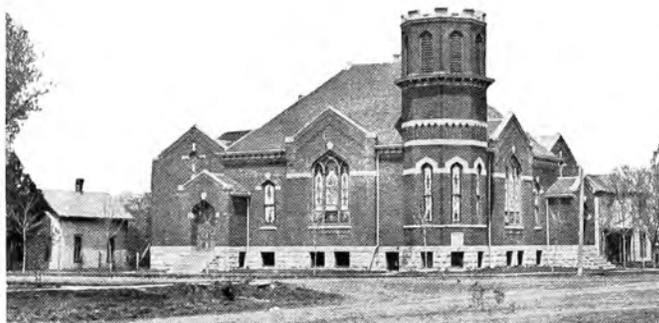


Photo from Ruth Linnert Marions

Methodist Episcopal Church used from about 1880 to 1902. It was located on corner of 10th & H Sts.

Geneva appears first as a regular appointment in the minutes of the conference session held September 15 to 23, 1875, when Mr. Wehn was appointed pastor. At this early date all general religious meetings were held in the courthouse, which had been completed in May, 1873. Mr. Wehn conducted a revival meeting that winter and reported 175 converts. Most of these converts united with the newly organized Methodist church, though a good number joined the Presbyterian and Baptist denominations.

The Conference Minutes of October 10, 1878, remark: "Geneva is moving with their might in the erection of their much needed church. \$500 have been borrowed and \$800 raised by subscription." The deeds for Lots 39 and 40, original city of Geneva, were filed for record in September, 1878. Lot 39 was sold to the church by Julius E. Spear for \$40 and Lot 40 by Joseph E. Dean for \$45. On account of the unpledged indebtedness this church was not dedicated until



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1902 on corner of 10th and H Sts.

The church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1926 with a five-day Semi-Centennial Jubilee. The celebration began Wednesday evening, April 21, and continued through Sunday, April 25.

In the autumn of 1936 work was completed on the excavation of the church basement. This project provided a beautiful and useful room.

In April, 1939, the unification of all Methodist churches occurred at the General Conference. As a result of this merger, the name of the local church was changed from "First Methodist Episcopal Church" to "First Methodist Church of Geneva."

Further conforming to the new organization, the former Ladies' Aid Society and Foreign Missionary Societies reorganized on September 4, 1940, as the Women's Society of Christian Service.

A new pipe organ, a memorial to Alfred H. Elder and Mrs. Lulu M. Barker, was dedicated on Mother's Day, 1943. Later, chimes were added through gifts by the A. H. Fulton family and the congregation. These chimes were in commemoration of the men and women of the church who had served the nation during World War II.

May 7, 1950, the church observed its 75th anniversary. Rev. Ben Wallace was the pastor. An echo organ was installed in the spring of 1950, the gift of the late Mrs. William Kilburn. In 1954, a new Baldwin No. 10 electric organ replaced the first electric organ.

A new parsonage was completed in April, 1956, and the cornerstone placed June 2, 1956. The basement of the parsonage was planned to be used for the nursery department of the Sunday School.

In the fall of 1965, a fund-raising campaign was held to obtain money to build an educational unit.

The following pastors have served the Geneva Methodist Church:

G. H. Wehn, May, 1875-Oct. 1876; J. A. Chapin, Oct., 1876-Oct., 1879; R. C. Johnson, Oct., 1879-Oct., 1880; O. P. Sheldon, Oct., 1880-Sept., 1881;<sup>1</sup> C. M. Hoppeter, 1881-82; F. B. Donisthorpe, 1882-83; E. J. Willis, 1883-84; A. L. Folden, 1884-85; G. M. Couffer, 1885-88; G. H. Moulton, 1888-90; J. A. Barker, 1890-94; Duke Slavens, 1894-95; F. A. Stuff, June, 1895-Sept., 1898; O. W. Fifer, 1895-98; F. A. Colony, 1898-1901; E. M. Evans, 1901-03; G. W. Abbott, 1903-05; L. G. Parker, 1905-07; C. M. Shepherd, 1907-09; J. W. Embree, 1909-10; C. L. Myers, 1910-13; W. L. Austin, 1913-17; R. H. Thompson, 1917-24; D. T. Morton, 1924-25; H. G. Langley, 1925-27; Harold C. Capsey, 1927-31; W. H. Shoaf, 1931-38; William Kilburn, Sept., 1938-Oct., 1940; W. B. Pardun, Nov., 1940-Sept., 1944; Elmer L. Peterson, Sept., 1944-Oct., 1945; Ben F. Wallace, Nov., 1945-Sept., 1951; Frank E. Pfoutz, Sept., 1951-June, 1957; Alden Sears, June, 1957-June, 1964; Dr. Frank Jackman, June 1964-June 1966; Orlando K. Lee, June 1966-present.

**St. Joseph's Catholic Church** was founded later than the other churches. The first Mass was said in Geneva in 1878 by the Rev. F. Lechleitner of Crete. Since there was then no church building here, Mass was offered in the Longly hall. Only six Catholic families were here—John J. Burke, Nicholas Longly, Joseph Schaubel, Patrick Doud, Joseph Weis, and John Thoma.

During that summer a church was built in the rural parish of St. Mary's on Turkey Creek and for the next 20 years Geneva Catholics attended Mass there, except on those rare occasions when Mass was said here.

The first resident pastor was the Rev. Bernard Ulbrick, who served the parish from January, 1898 to August, 1900. During the next year the parish was attended from Hebron by the Rev. A. Petrasch and the Rev. C. A. Becker. Four lots were secured in South Geneva and the first church was built, also the rectory, which is now the Sisters' convent.

In August, 1901, Father Becker was appointed by Bishop Bonacum as second resident pastor with St. Mary's at Shickley as a mission. In 1908, Father Becker had the church enlarged at a cost of \$13,000 and in 1912 the parochial school was built, also at a cost of \$13,000. The School Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to teach and have been here ever since. The sisters live in the former rectory, Father Becker having built the present parochial residence during the summer of 1913 before their coming. Thus under his leadership all four buildings were erected and on his departure for Lawrence, late in 1915, the treasury showed a balance of nearly \$1,000 on hand.

The next resident pastor was the Rev. Geo. Agius, D.D., J.C.D., who remained here during the next 11 years. Msgr.



Photo from Mrs. Rena Kamler  
St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Parochial School.

<sup>1</sup>From 1881 to 1938, all dates run from September to September except as otherwise noted.

Agius, a man of deep learning, had received his education in Rome where he was a classmate of the late Pope Pius XII. He was a prominent member of the State Historical Society and author of a number of historical works, among them a history of the Lincoln Diocese written for the Golden Jubilee celebration thereof in 1937.

When he was transferred to Plattsmouth in 1927, he was succeeded by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Patrick J. Healey. The years of Msgr. Healey's pastorate, 1927 to 1939, will long be remembered as the period of the great depression, when the little parish of 77 families had a hard struggle to keep both the church and the school going.

When, in 1939, Msgr. Healey was appointed pastor of Falls City he was succeeded by the Rev. James Gilroy, who remained in charge here until his death in 1949. During his pastorate the parish almost doubled in population due to the large number of Catholic soldiers stationed at the Fairmont Air Base. After the closing of the air base the parish dropped to its lowest enrollment, 74 families. Thus membership has remained fairly constant. Enrollment in the school had dropped to 19 pupils, threatening its existence. But in 1947 a steady improvement began and as of May, 1967, there were 82 students in attendance, and the Sisters and their students have won many honors in the county and in the state. New slate roofs were placed over the church and school during Father Gilroy's time.

Upon the death of Father Gilroy the present pastor, the Rev. Paul Ulenberg, was given charge of St. Joseph's. In 1950, repairs and improvements to the amount of \$35,000 were made on the parish plant. Also in 1950 the Golden Jubilee of the parish was observed with an outstanding celebration with the Most Rev. Bishop Lorris B. Kucera presiding.

—Miss Nellie Sheridan

The **Faith Mennonite Church** is the newest religious group in Geneva. In November, 1964, the first steps were taken toward organizing a Mennonite Fellowship. With help from the Henderson Mennonite Church, as well as from the Northern District Conference, and with counsel from the General Conference of Mennonites (with central offices in Newton, Kansas), this group began meeting regularly on March 14, 1965. Their first meeting was in the Meeting House of the Meridian Courts, and here they held their worship services for more than a year.

In the summer of 1965, the group extended a call to Albert Gaeddert to come and serve them as pastor. He accepted the call, and the Gaedderts moved to Geneva in late August. Steps were taken toward the organization of a congregation, and also toward incorporation. November 21, 1965, was observed as Membership Day, at which time 23 persons formed the original charter membership.

Early in 1966, the group began to discuss plans for building their own edifice in which to worship and to meet for the church's teaching programs. The plans rather quickly produced action. A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, May 29, 1966. The very next week, work on the building began, and by early December the building was ready for occupancy. The church was dedicated on Sunday, December 11, 1966.



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.  
Faith Mennonite Church, built in 1966.

The group chose the name of "Faith Mennonite Church," which replaced the earlier name of Geneva Mennonite Fellowship.

During the sessions of the Northern District Conference in June, 1966, the Faith Mennonite Church became a member of the District Conference, and filed application with the General Conference Mennonite Church to become a member of this larger body of 55,000 souls.

Our heritage stems from the Anabaptists, one of the groups that developed during the Reformation days of the sixteenth century. Our group is named after Menno Simons, who gathered together in Europe the groups that came out of this heritage and underwent severe persecutions for their beliefs. To accept the challenges of living as disciples of the Master is one of the principles that we set for ourselves.

—Albert Gaeddert

The new **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church** at 16th and Oak Sts. began with a meeting of 25 families with Dr. E. G. Fritschel in the Rialto Theater in Geneva on October 29, 1961. This meeting voted to form a congregation, and elected a steering committee, consisting of Harry Carlson, Lawrence Wattles, and Dr. D. C. Anderson. The building committee were M. M. Rosen (chairman), Henry Fangmeier, Edward Reinsch, Dick Deets, and Lawrence Wattles.

Pastor Leon Bauer of Carleton was asked to serve the group. The first service was held on November 11, 1961, in the Geneva City Auditorium, with 63 persons present. Preparations for the formal organization of a congregation were begun at once. By January 14, 1962, the necessary steps of incorporation, adoption of a constitution, election of officers and of a church council were completed.

Some time in mid-February, the Rev. Otto Hesla, regional director of American Missions of the American Lutheran Church, met with the congregation to explain the home mission program. Shortly thereafter, Prince of Peace was certified as a "Package Mission." Arrangements were then made for the purchase of the plot on which the church unit now stands.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, with parsonage at left (1965).

A ground-breaking service for the new building was held on November 4, 1962, and three days later construction began. Good weather enabled rapid progress, and the building was finished by mid-February, 1963. It was dedicated at special services on the morning of Sunday, March 19, 1963, at which time 550 members of the congregation and friends joined in the two services.

In early 1968, the congregation numbered 300 members. The Rev. Woodrow Wilson, who became pastor of the church in June, 1966, is still serving us.

## SCHOOLS

### A History of School District 75, Geneva by Howard W. Hamilton

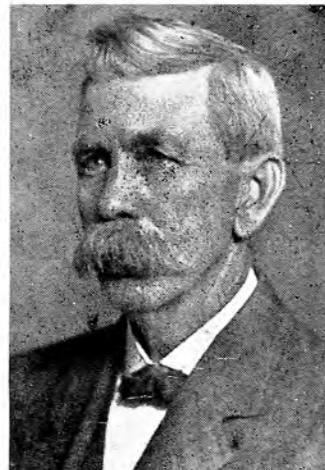
The history of the Geneva public school, District 75, might well be prefaced with a reminder that the school was established within a short time after the county was officially organized and Geneva was named the county seat (as described earlier).

In June, 1871, the county seat was surveyed and recorded. In June, 1872, some of the lots were sold at auction. The new town developed slowly for two years, even after a courthouse was built in 1873. In 1875, however, the town improved rapidly and by January 1, 1876, it had a population of 140.

On February 1, 1876, the citizens, foreseeing a need for a school, organized a school district. The district included land in four townships: Chelsea, Madison, Stanton, and Geneva.

Although no enrollment figures for the first school are available, the annual report on file in the office of the county superintendent, signed by Director J. B. Thompson, shows there were 15 males and 24 females in the district between the ages of 5 and 21. The report for 1877 shows the district received \$88.50 from the county and \$510 from other sources. The teacher received \$88.50 while \$510 was paid for a building, leaving the district owing \$1,154.15. The levy was 25 mills. This report, also signed by J. B. Thompson, showed there were 34 males and 36 females in the district between 5 and 21. There were three men teachers and one woman teacher. Salaries totaled \$145 for the men and \$35 for the woman. The value of the school was fixed at \$930 and the lot \$125.

Emma McKelvey Johnston headed the first school in Geneva in 1876. John Chase also taught three months of the term. In 1877, J. H. Sager taught three months as did J. B. Lewis. Emma McKelvey Johnston taught the school three months in 1878.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

J. H. Sager, one of first teachers in Geneva Public School.

Others listed as heading the school before a superintendent was elected were as follows: 1879-80, Charles Fort; 1880-81, H. W. Caldwell; 1881-82, D. B. Huston; 1882-83, Jesse Hesseltine.

The first superintendent of the Geneva school was C. C. Heltman, who apparently became head of the school in 1882. He served until 1888.

Superintendents following Mr. Heltman until the present time were as follows: 1888-94, H. L. Chaplin, deceased; 1894-95, George Thornbrook, deceased; 1895-97, Robert J. Boyd, deceased; 1897-1901, J. L. McBrien, deceased; 1901-08, Charles W. Taylor, deceased; 1908-12, R. W. Eaton, deceased; 1912-15, Earl M. Cline, Lincoln, Neb.; 1915-18, Earl L. Meyer, Alliance, Neb.; 1918-19, G. W. Hansen; 1919-23, L. W. Weisel, deceased; 1923-24, J. P. Rigg, Grand Junction, Col.; 1924-27, R. W. Kretsinger, Oakland, Cal.; 1927-32, L. S. Devoe, deceased; 1932-45, H. B. Simon, deceased; 1945-61, Glen E. Felix, Jefferson County, Colo.; 1961-64, M. M. Rosen, Alliance, Neb.; 1964—, Bernard Blifernich.

Although the Geneva school had operated since 1876, the district actually had no title to the land on which it operated a school until 1887. At that time the State of Nebraska executed a deed to District 75 in the names of Daniel Lynn, Charles C. Miles, and Joseph H. Springer to Outlot 17 in Geneva for \$1,000. The deed, dated May 25, 1887, was signed by Governor John W. Thayer and attested