

A DIARY OF ELIZABETH CASSEL CLEMENS

Part I. May - December, 1909

Editor's notes: Elizabeth Cassel Clemens was the wife of Jacob N. Clemens. Each day she faithfully wrote about her activities and her observations of the flow of life about her. The diary, from which this passage is taken, was recently placed by its owner, Edna Schlosser Christophel of Harrisonburg, Virginia, Elizabeth's granddaughter, in the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives. The passage here is printed as she wrote it, word by word, with the original spelling.

Mrs. Clemens' writings give the reader a glimpse into the everyday life of the community in which she grew up and raised her own family. Historian John L. Ruth comments, "The Elizabeth Clemens diary gives us access to the mind and soul of a spiritually influential woman in the Towamencin Mennonite congregation at the beginning of this century. It is rich in social, religious, and economic data. Elizabeth's role as mother of one of our best preachers, Jacob C. ("J.C.") Clemens of the Plains congregation (Lansdale) gives the diary further importance. We are fortunate indeed that the family have preserved this personal record."

One observation from her record is the importance of the church as a socializing agent in the community. This was especially true for women. Other observations can be drawn from her writings as well, but we shall let you, the reader, discover them for yourself.

* * * * *

May

- 1 Saturday rain. high water. Leakm... was here in the afternoon.
- 2 Sunday Cool We was in Meeting Frank Moyer Abraham Landis and their wives and Rine Landis and wife and 2 other women 8 in all were baptized. and taken as members in our Meeting may the good Lord bless them is my prayer.
- 3 Monday pleasent it was our wash day and we cleant our cave to ...
- 4 Tuesday Edna went to Eliases to clean house I begin papa summer suict
- 5 Wednesday we planted dalles and sowed some flower sweed today getting warm
- 6 Thursday very warm Edna helpt to plant potatoes at eliasies I cleant my chiffreon and sewed at papas clothe...
- 7 Friday we finish cleaning up stairs our horse Toney was very sick has indigestion was over heated in the forenoon in the plow is all right again
- 8 Saturday the trees are gettin in bloom every thing looks Spring life
- 9 Sunday Norman and Edna was in Skippack Meeting 2 Young girls where baptized Andrew Mack the oficating Minister and at Abraham Beans for dinner We we[re] at Henry Godshalk in the afternoon
- 10 Monday it was our wash day w[e] have 22 vests for this week
- Tuesday 11 Cool frost at night
- 12 Wednesday thay planted corn to day Cool at night
- 13 Thursday Norman plowed for Henry Godshall in the afternoon we finish our vests
- 14 Friday getting very very warm We cleant our Shandey and ...
- 15 Saturday warm we was ...Franconia in the afternoon..... here Minister....

* * *

Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania



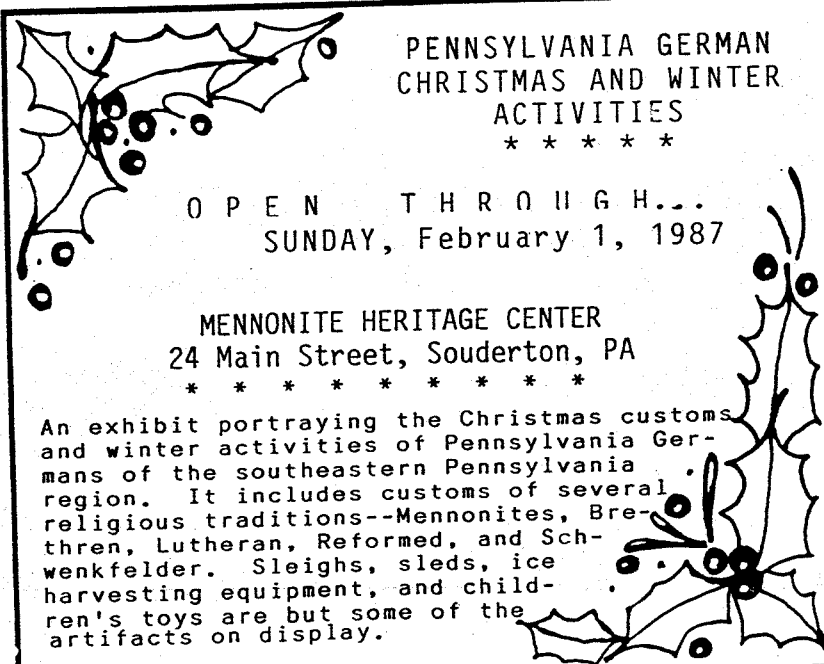
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NEWSLETTER

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PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN
 CHRISTMAS AND WINTER
 ACTIVITIES
 * * * * *

O P E N T H R O U G H . . .
 SUNDAY, February 1, 1987

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTER
 24 Main Street, Souderton, PA
 * * * * *

An exhibit portraying the Christmas customs and winter activities of Pennsylvania Germans of the southeastern Pennsylvania region. It includes customs of several religious traditions--Mennonites, Brethren, Lutheran, Reformed, and Schwenkfelder. Sleighs, sleds, ice harvesting equipment, and children's toys are but some of the artifacts on display.

Excerpts from the diary of Elizabeth Cassel Clemens (1850-1920), wife of Jacob N. Clemens, of Mainland, Lower Salford Township, Montgomery County. They were members of the Towamencin Congregation. This is the oldest Mennonite woman's diary in the MHEP Collection.

-Wed., Feb. 20, 1901: "Sewed quilts together. I made a shird for Norman."

-Thurs., March 7, 1901: "We made our Sausage."

-Tues., March 12, 1901: "Was our wash day"

-Wed., March 13, 1901: "Bought some quilt lining and musling. gave 25 cents a yard for sheeting and 15 cents a yart for pillow cases."

-Mon., March 18, 1901: "Made one of Lizzie's quilts in the frame. I and Lizzie begin quilting."

-Tues., April 2, 1901: "We plant our onions and some potatoes and peas in the garden today."

-Tues., April 23, 1901: "I was at vest making."

-Wed., May 8, 1901: "We finish our vests and iront our wash. I plant cucumbers and beans in the garden."

-Fri., May 17, 1901: "We plant our first Sweet corn and water melons at evning."

-Thurs., June 13, 1901: "I made a calico dress for me today... I plant our sweetcorn and lima beans and watermelons over."

-Mon., June 17, 1901: "I boild soap in the afternoon."

-Sat., June 22, 1901: "I was in the store in the evening. bought a pair of shoes for Edna gave 1.25."

-Sat., July 7, 1901: "This was a very warm week. the heat trobelt me very much."

-Fri., July 26, 1901: "I made a black Lawn dress for me."

-Sat., July 27, 1901: "to day was the Mainland picknic. that is no good[!]."

-Tues., August 28, 1901: "We made some picklily today. the corn and beans are plenty this Summer."

-Thurs., Sept. 12, 1901: "We made some Sider and boilt some applebutter over."

-Sat., Sept. 14, 1901: "President Makinly Died last night at Bufflow."

-Wed., Sept. 18, 1901: "We cant 2 baskets of peaches for Lizzie. Git 20 cans."

-Wed., Oct. 9, 1901: "We cleant our garret rooms today and thay [men] are husking corn."

-Mon., Oct. 21, 1901: "I was in Store in the forenoon. bought things for Lizzie. we made a comfordable in the afternoon."

-Thurs., Nov. 14, 1901: "We made sausage for John for the the Market."

-Wed. Dec. 4, 1901: "We killed a hog for John."

-Thurs. Dec. 5, 1901: "We made Sausage and boilt Soap in the evning."

-Tues. Dec. 10, 1901: "We witewashed our dining room and porch and killed a hog."

-Wed. Dec. 18, 1901: "We made sausage and schrappel and cleant our Shandy."

-Christmas, 1901: "Our Children was all at home exept Jacobs [J.C.Clemens]. Hannah [Jacob's wife] has scarlet fever. Leahanna is there to waite on her. May the good Lord bless them with that new born Christ is my prayer."

-Wed. Jan. 1, 1902: "Mant thanks for the many blessing we recevid last year and may the good Loard bless us in the new year. We have Meeting. Rev. Jacob B. Mench was there. taught an earnest sermon."

[On the occasion of her son's, Jacob C. Clemens, ordination to the ministry at the Plains Mennonite Meetinghouse:]

-Wed. Nov. 14, 1906: "Our beloved son Jacob was chosen by Lot to a Minister of the Gospel. May the good Lord bless him is my prayer."

-Sun. Nov. 18, 1906: "We was in Meeting... this Sunday will never be forgotten when one of our children has to enter that Holy pulpit and stand before God and men and teach from his holy word."

Elizabeth Cassel Owens Diary, 1901-1903

- 2/19/1901 - made duck ch? sewed pepper & tomato seat
2/20/1901 sewed quilt together; made skirt
3/7/1901 "we" made ^{our} "sausage"
3/12/1901 was "our" wash day
3/13/1901 bought some quilt lining & musling. 2.5¢ yd for sheeting 15¢ yd pillow cases
3/14/1901 sewing quilt lining & make pillow cases & a sheet
3/18/01 made one of Lezzie's quilt in the frame
4/2/01 plant onions & some potatoes & peas
4/10/01 Clean out our garret rooms
4/23/01 I was at vest making.
4/30/01 1st warm spell for this spring we worked in the garden
5/8/01 finished vests, washed wash. I plant cucumbers & beans in the garden
5/17/01 plant first sweet corn & water melons
6/6/01 planted Celer & some flowers
6/13/01 I made a Cape dress for me today
~~6/17/01~~ replanted corn lima beans & watermelon
6/17/01 I boiled soap in the afternoon
6/22/01 Sat. was in store - bought pair of shoes for Edna, \$1.25.
7/6/01 This was a very warm week the heat troubled me very much.
8/28/01 made some pickles today the corn & beans are plenty
9/12/01 we made some sides & boiled some apple butter
9/18/01 we cant 2 baskets of peaches
10/9/01 Cleaned garret rooms (fall cleaning)
11/14/01 we made sausage for John for the market
11/27/01 we made our sausage & scrapple today
12/5/01 we made sausage & I boiled soap in the evening
12/7/01 I finished my soap

1902

- 1/14/02 I boiled some citrons in sugar
2/11/02 I made a new futon-bed & ^(cushions) cover from duck feathers
3/8/02 I made bonnets for Susie & Leahana
3/18/02 I made a gingham bonnet for Edna

(2)

- 3/28/02 I sowed some celery & late cabbage seed today.
- 4/1/02 I made oval hats for Willis.
- 6/2/02 I plant my truck patch over & begin to make Norman a coat.
- 6/4/02 I made a pair of pants for Norman, long ones, the first and finish his coat.
- 6/25/02 I cant some currants
- 6/30/02 I cant " cherries
- 7/3/02 I was very dizzy in the morning cant do no work today
- 7/7/02 I cant some green grapes. I have the netelwork very bad.
- 7/9/02 I cant some raspberries
- 8/25/02 I made some grapeapple jelly today
- 9/22/02 I cant some peaches and corn today.
- 9-25-02 70 lbs. sausage
- 9-28-02 52 birthday.
- 9-29-02 Made Cider
- 9-30-02 made applebutter
- 10-6-02 made calico dress.
- 10-9 went to city with baby.
- 10-13 Tuesday is wash day.
- 10-14 Made scrapple
- 10-17 put red beets in.
- 10-19 picked apples made cider.
- 11-14-02 cleaned kitchen cupboard.
- 11-15 shopping in Sunderland.
- 11-18 killed pigs.
- 11-19 made sausage & scrapple
- 11-21 "I made my dollies out today" ? to dry
- 12-4 boiled soap.
- 12-15 killed 2 pigs
- 12-24 made sausage ... ready for Christmas

1903

- 1-6 killed a pig.
- 1-9 boiled soap.
- 2-5 made sausage.
- 2-9 cut carpet rags sowed cabbage, tomatoes, ...
- 2-25 cut carpet rags
- 3-5 "
- 3-9 " finished Norman's pants(?)
- 3-12 planted vegetables
- 3-19 "
- 4-1 killed 2 pigs
- 4-23 plant early potatoes
- 4-28 potatoes

1903

- 5-3 sowed flower seeds
- 5-19 made a pair of pants
- 5-22 cleaned kitchen and Shandy.
- 7-17 cleaned some tin ware
- 7-22 ironed wash
- 7-23 made a pair of pants
- 8-1 picnic... don't like... wrong God's people don't need them... such enjoyments
- 8-5 I was in Store
- 9-2 boiled apples ⁱⁿ butter get 20 pots _{sugar}
- 9-19 Sat. Stew my baking day
- 9-21 dog Bingo was sick
- 9-23 boiled applebutter
- 9-24 made pickilly; sent some tomatoes
- 9-25 Fri. my baking day.
- 10-6 cleaned ~~parlor~~, sleeping room, put stove in parlor.
- 11-9 " large cupboard.
- 11-17 " back porch.
- 12-3 made sausage
- 12-15 cutting carpet rags.
- 12-23 in the store
- 12-28 busy patching barn bugs
- 12-30 made a new dress

1904

- 1-9 work day; in the store in afternoon
- 1-10 made 2 dresses
- 1-23 killed pigs
- 3-8 work day
- 3-12 milked in the evening
- 3-22 washed two weeks worth in afternoon
- 3-28 made some seed packs?
- 3-29 work day
- 4-7-1 made a coat
- 4-15 planted cabbage
- 4-18 worked in garden; planted white lilies around house
- 4-19 washday
- 4-20 made a calico dress
- 4-26 washday
- ~~4-29~~ 4-30 in store in afternoon
- 5-2 washday
- 5-2 cleaned up store; bought matting and shadling
- 5-3 put matting in

(4)

- 5-11 Cleaned cellarway
5-13 planted sweet corn
5-16 washday
5-17 ironed wash, planted dahies
5-19 cleaned sleeping rooms, finished
planting corn
5-20 cleaned kitchen + dining room
5-21 baked
5-24 washday; planted sweet corn and
beans
5-25 ironed wash
6-1 worked on a suit of clothes
6-3 put new carpet in front room
6-8 finished suit of clothes
6-13 washday
6-14 ironed wash
6-15 cleaned the back parlor
6-21 workday
6-24 at the store in the forenoon
6-27 washday
7-5 washday
7-12 ironed wash; planted last sweet corn
7-18 workday
7-19 ironed wash
7-25 washday
7-27 ironed wash
8-1 planted celery
8-7 washday
8-16 ironed wash; dug early potatoes
8-22 washday
8-26 canned corn
8-29 washday
8-30 ironed wash
9-15 boiled apple butter
9-16 " "
9-19 washday
9-27 ironed wash

1906, Nov. 14- (Wed.) *Our beloved son Jacob [Clemens] was chosen by Lots to a Minister of the Gospel. May the good Lord bless him is my prayer.*