

# *Dedicated Lives*

## *A Hundred Years of Service*



### *Ruben and Nora Schwieger*

#### *The Story of Their Lives*

*By their children: Ruben Don Schwieger,  
Kathleen Vorhies, & Willa Rae Ferguson*

*Dedicated Lives*  
*A Hundred Years of Service*

*Ruben and Nora Schwieger*  
*The Story of Their Lives*

*By Their Children*  
*Ruben Don Schwieger, Ruth Kathleen Vorhies*  
*& Willa Rae Ferguson*  
*May 2021*

---

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the Saints of God, who pray, sacrifice, and send messages of hope and encouragement in support of the Missions programs of the Church of God based in Anderson, Indiana, and supported world-wide by Christians everywhere.

---

*A Biography*  
*Of*  
*Ruben and Nora Schwieger*

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	2
Chapter 1: 1890 – 1920 The Schwieger Family.....	7
Ruben’s Early Years.....	9
Chapter 2: 1889 – 1927 The Benson Family.....	14
Nora’s Early Years.....	17
Chapter 3: 1928 – 1935 Nora’s Young Adulthood.....	22
Chapter 4: 1920 – 1934 Ruben’s Young Adulthood.....	29
Chapter 5: 1935 – 1946 Ruben and Nora’s Marriage and Family.....	32
Dedication to Become Missionaries.....	38
Chapter 6: 1946 – 1947 Preparing for Missionary Service.....	41
The trip to Kenya.....	45
Chapter 7: 1947 – 1953 The first Term in Kenya.....	52
Six Months at Kima.....	52
Moving to Ingotse.....	55
School Responsibilities.....	57
Medical Concerns.....	61
Language.....	65
Building the Church at Ingotse.....	72
Living in Kenya:.....	77
Changes.....	80

---

Chapter 8: 1953 – 1967 Full-time Church Work in Kenya.....	82
Travels .....	92
Recreation, Fishing & Hunting.....	106
Chapter 9: 1967 – 1978 Retirement – Activities and Assignments .....	109
Special Assignment Missionaries - Cayman Islands:.....	113
The 1970’s .....	116
Special Assignment Missionaries – Australia: .....	120
Visiting Kenya Again .....	125
Chapter 10: 1978 – 1990 Sand Springs, Oklahoma & Work Missions.....	126
Chapter 11: 1990 – 2002 A Man of Enduring Faith .....	134
Chapter 12: 2002 – 2008 A Woman of Noble Character .....	141
Time Line for the Lives of Ruben and Nora Schwieger .....	149
List of Pictures .....	152
Index of People and Places.....	155

---

## Chapter 1: 1890 – 1920

### The Schwieger Family

Ferdinand was convinced of God's goodness and answers to prayer as he surveyed his new property, a 160-acre homestead in western Oklahoma. How could a penniless itinerant preacher and missionary come to possess such a place?

Ferdinand and Gertrude Schwieger had come to pastor the small congregation who worshipped in a clapboard building four miles north and half a mile west of the town of Hitchcock in western Oklahoma. The group of about 20 German families had settled in the area after immigrating from Russia. In their search for a pastor, they learned of Ferdinand and contacted him where he was preaching in Wisconsin. He told them he could not come as he had no money for a train fare. When they agreed to provide the fare, he said he would come.

After Ferdinand arrived in January of 1899, the congregation helped him obtain one of the few remaining homesteads that were still available seven years after the last land run and the government's homestead policy was established. Those that were left, however, were the least productive, the land that would not support much farming and would require hard living and even harder work to exist on.



#2 - Ferdinand, Dan, Gertrude, Ruth, Lydia, Rebecca



#1 - Ferdinand Schwieger 1899

Having scheduled several preaching assignments and experiencing weather and travel delays, on the way back to Wisconsin, Ferdinand finally arrived home and began packing and getting ready to move Gertrude, their daughters, Lydia, Ruth, and Rebecca, and their son, Dan to Oklahoma.

Finally, on July 12, 1899, Ferdinand noted in his dairy, 'Today we moved on to our homestead. As housewarming gifts, we received a cow and 12 hens from Brother Schuber, a horse from Brother Ludke, a harness and buggy from Brother Kriofsky, and a load of firewood from Brother Nuss.' Those gifts were lifesavers. The 'farm' was composed mostly of hard red rock, mesquite, and scrub brush. There was very little fertile soil.

Ferdinand, helped by friends from the church, built a rough 9x12 foot shed with a dirt floor and boards that had cracks in the walls and roof that let light, rain and snow in. Gertrude said that when it rained, they all sat on the bed, huddled under an umbrella. For about six months, the family lived in this crude shelter until November, when Ferdinand hauled better lumber from Kingfisher and built a nicer 14x20 ft. house.



#3 - The Schweigers' house on the Hitchcock homestead 1899-1915

It was in this house where the fifth child, Evelyn, was born in 1900 and then on April 29, 1902, the second son, Ruben Carl Schwieger, was born just days after Ferdinand returned home from a missionary journey to his childhood home in Prussia. He was gone for nearly nine months, leaving Gertrude and their small children to manage as well as they could with help from the people of the church.

## Ruben's Early Years



#4 - Gertrude Schwieger with Esther, Rebecca, Ruben & Evelyn

With husband and father gone on preaching trips to Kansas, the Dakotas, and east to Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio, and missions trips to Canada, Germany, Prussia and Russia, Gertrude and the children had to fend for themselves much of the time. Ferdinand did what he could to stock up on firewood, some commodities and seed for planting when the time came, so the young children learned very early that they had family responsibilities in the house and around the farm.

They could feed the chickens, help with the planting and harvest, and learn to milk the cow. When Ruben was born, nine-year-old Lydia and seven-year-old Rebecca were able to care for the baby quite handily. They had had a lot of practice already caring for little Ruth who was just four and Evelyn who was nearly two.

Both the older ones were a big help around the house relieving their mother from many tasks. As the other babies came along, and the children grew older, tasks and chores were passed down and organization of the family enabled them to manage fairly well. Still the help from neighbors and church folk was necessary and much appreciated.

In 1909, their father bought a "top carriage" to accommodate the growing family. It had two wide seats and a roof with a fringe. The children were very excited as they climbed all over the surrey, inspecting every detail. Seven-year-old Ruben was especially fascinated with the device up front that held the horse whip to drive the team of horses.



#5 - 10-year-old Ruben with Sam and Esther.

Ruben often wore overalls and worked hard in them around the farm, using the horses and wagon to haul produce, firewood, and supplies from town to the homestead.

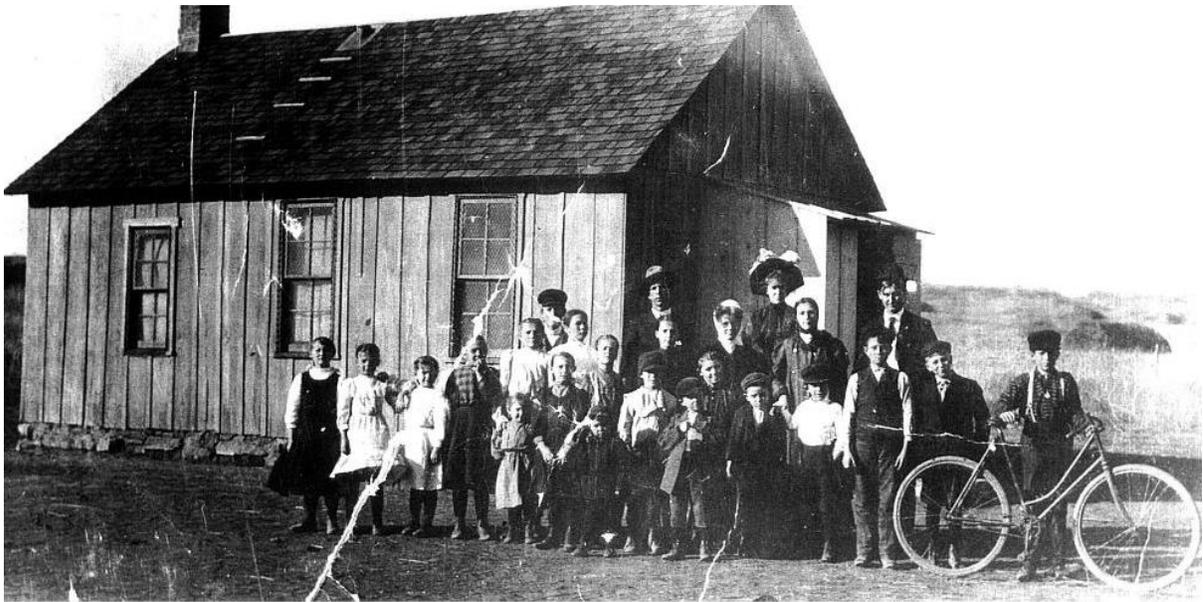


#6 - Ruben as a young teen dressed for church



#7 - Buggies parked at church

Gertrude insisted that all the children were in church every Sunday, driving them in the buggy, the five miles from the homestead, to the Okeene Church of God.



#8 – Red Valley schoolhouse

The picture of the Red Valley schoolhouse in about 1914 shows the children, teachers, and already quite-tall Ruben with a cap on, standing near the window and his brother Dan holding the teacher's bicycle.

Many of the students walked to school and, after a few years, parents arranged for wagons to pick children up near their homes and, at least in bad weather, the children rode to the schoolhouse. After the fifth grade at the Red Valley grade school out in the country, Rebecca and Dan went to the Watonga middle school for the sixth through eighth grades. While the younger children were still at the rural school, Rebecca and Dan returned to teach Ruben and the younger siblings. This experience may have been one of the first to influence Ruben to consider becoming a teacher as a vocation. Certainly, there is no indication that he had any other inclination.

The little bent-over Russian man, Christof Dreger, met Ferdinand at a meeting in Canada. After hearing about the Schwieger's plans to move to Oklahoma, he came by himself from Canada also in search for inexpensive land. He acquired the homestead just across the road from the Schwiegers' property. Christof was well educated and had taught Russian and German in the Polish-speaking high schools in Warsaw. Christof was old and lonely and soon adopted the Schwiegers as his family. Gertie befriended him and assisted him when he needed help. The children, however, thought he was strange because of his hunched over appearance and would find ways to tease him. They said he waved a butcher knife at them to chase them away. At other times, though, he was friendly to them and would give them slices of sausage he had hanging from a nail on the wall covered by a dishpan. When Christof Dreger died, Ferdinand and Gertrude learned that he had willed his property to her, so now they had a half section to care for and work. Some of the children had grown old enough to help on both properties.



#9 - Gertrude Schwieger,  
age 38, in 1911

Ruben remembered the time when his mother had just returned in the wagon from getting supplies in town. She laid his baby brother, Sam, in the back of the buckboard, while she unloaded her purchases. At that moment, something startled the horses, and they galloped off toward the barn. All his mother could do was drop down on her knees in the dust and cry out to God to save her baby. The buckboard came to a stop at the barn, with Sam still safely in the back, after a very bumpy ride.

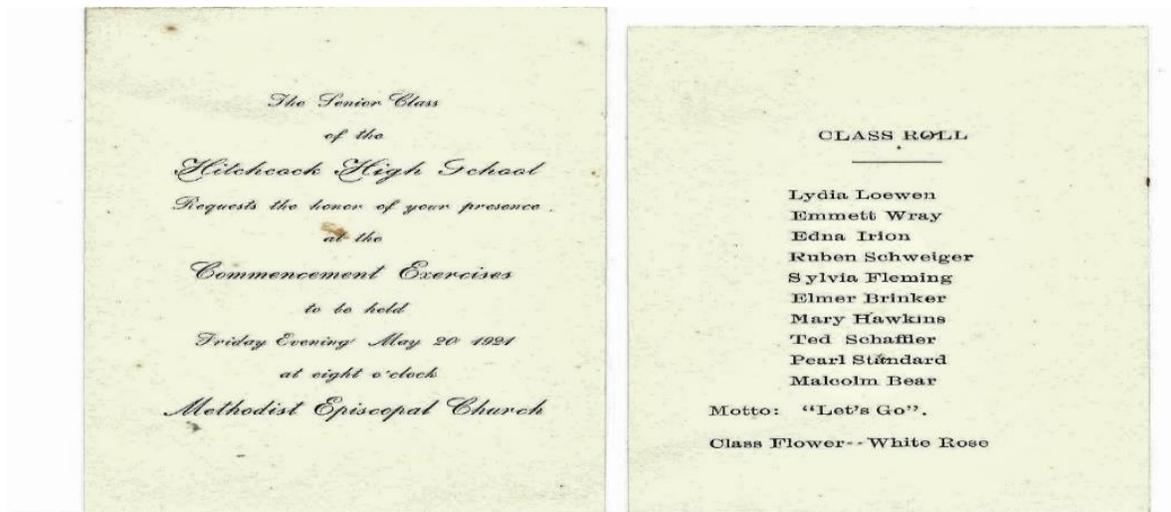
Ruben and Evelyn had responsibility for herding the growing herd of cows the Schwiegers owned. One day while out with the cows, they found an active bee hive which appeared to have a lot of honey in it. They quickly made big plans to retrieve the honey, sell it, and make a lot of money. Their plans all fell flat when they realized that they could not even get to the hive, much less get the honey out without many bee stings.



#10 - The Schwieger family in about 1920

Having grown as tall as his dad by age 18, Ruben is shown with the family. He often dressed in work clothes as he usually did. He liked bib overalls like his father's for work around the farm. After grade school in the country school, Ruben and his siblings attended classes in Hitchcock. In 1921, at the age of 19, Ruben graduated from Hitchcock High School. It is interesting to note that one of his classmates was Ted Schaffler, the brother of Clydena.

Dan had already finished high school, left the homestead, and married Tillie Stout on May 7, 1922. The couple moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma. That same month, on May 26, 1922, Ruben and Bertha Clydena Schaffler were married, and they moved to a rented farm near Hitchcock. The problem for Ferdinand and Gertrude was that their oldest son, Dan, would no longer work on the farm. Ruben now had a wife, was farming for himself, and was teaching at the Araphaho school. His very busy schedule did not allow time to help as much as was needed, especially when his father was away from home on one of his many evangelistic trips.



#11 – Ruben's High School Graduation

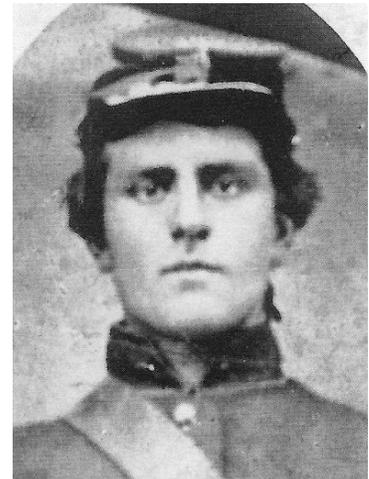
## Chapter 2: 1889 – 1927

### The Benson Family

The Benson family tree can be traced back to the year of 1621 when William Palmer, who was recently married to a widow named Ann, left England on the good ship *Fortune* bound for the New World. The *Fortune* was the second ship to arrive after the *Mayflower*. Ann and her first husband were scheduled to sail on the *Speedwell* from Southampton in 1620 along with the *Mayflower*. However, the ship was deemed to be unseaworthy, and their voyage was postponed. On board the *Fortune* were three groups of people, many of whom had tried to sail on the *Mayflower* the year before. The ‘Saints’ were church separatists going to America for religious freedom. The ‘Strangers’ were good members of the Church of England looking for economic opportunity in the new lands, and the final group were 18 young strong men brought along as indentured servants to do the hard labor of felling trees, building houses, and clearing land for farming.

The influx of the Fortune passengers may have made the difference in the survival of the few remaining Mayflower colonists. Few had survived the harsh winter that had decimated the group with starvation and disease. William’s daughter married an Englishman, Henry Rowley and the progression of descendants began: the Palmers, the Rowleys and then generations of the Hatch family to Cynthia who married Dwitt Brownell in 1850. Their daughter Ella married Andrew Ell Benson, Nora’s grandfather.

Andrew Ell Benson was born on March 23, 1844, near the town of Benson, Vermont, a village on the east shore of Lake Champlain across from Fort Ticonderoga. At the age of 18, he went over into New York state and enlisted in the New York Infantry and served with the Union army during the Civil War from 1862 to 1865. He was at Lookout Mountain in the “Battle above the Clouds”, fought in the battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, and Atlanta, and marched with General Sherman to the sea. At one battle, the rebels fired a bullet through his wool cap, missing him, but striking his cousin, Leroy Cummings, in the eye and killing him. Andrew was honorably discharged on September 4, 1865 with his company at Richmond, Virginia. In honor and in memory of his cousin, Andrew named his firstborn son Leroy.



#12 - Andrew Ell Benson

After the war, Andrew went to Wisconsin where he married Ella Brownell. They homesteaded in Jewell, Kansas, but had very difficult years on the farm there, and eventually moved to Independence, Iowa, where their son, Leroy Justus Benson was born on July 17, 1876. The family moved several more times, to Wisconsin again, then Nebraska, Kansas, and finally in 1893 to Oklahoma. Leroy stayed in Oklahoma, married Jennie Gillespie, and lived the rest of his life in or near the small town of Jones, just east of Oklahoma City.

The Gillespie family records go far back to Thomas Gillespie who was born in 1760 in the town of Edward, in Tazewell County, Virginia. The successive generations of the family stayed in Virginia until Samuel G. Gillespie married Mary C. Wilson on September 7, 1854, and soon thereafter moved to Gentry County, Missouri. While they lived in Missouri, ten children were born to the couple: Reese B., James Edward, Thomas Harve, Mariah P., John C., Mary C., Elizabeth R. M., Crockett, Sarah Virginia, and Samuel Boone. Sarah Virginia (Jennie), born on January 25, 1876 at Albany, Missouri, was next to last. The family moved to Oklahoma Territory and settled in Oklahoma County. Samuel was not in good health and died on November 16, 1891, leaving his widow with three children still living at home.



#13 - Mary Gillespie with her children, Jennie, Crockett & Boone



#14 - The crowd waiting at the starting line



#15 - The Land Run of 1895

Mary Gillespie was a widow, aged 58, her husband, Samuel, having died four years previously. It was up to her to stake a claim to a homestead when Oklahoma Territory was being opened for settlement. She was determined to own some of the free land that could be obtained in the Oklahoma Land Run of 1895. On the appointed day, thousands of settlers were gathered on the boundary line of the land the U.S. government had purchased from the Kickapoo Indians in Indian Territory. The line ran roughly east and west about 30 miles north of what is now Oklahoma City. When the gunshot sounded, everyone on horseback and in wagons and carriages surged forward to claim the best land. Mary, who was on foot, simply stepped across the line and drove her stake into the ground right there. The original homestead was a sand hill farm two miles east of Jones. Mary's children, Jennie, and her brothers, Boone and Crocket lived on the farm until their mother died in 1899.



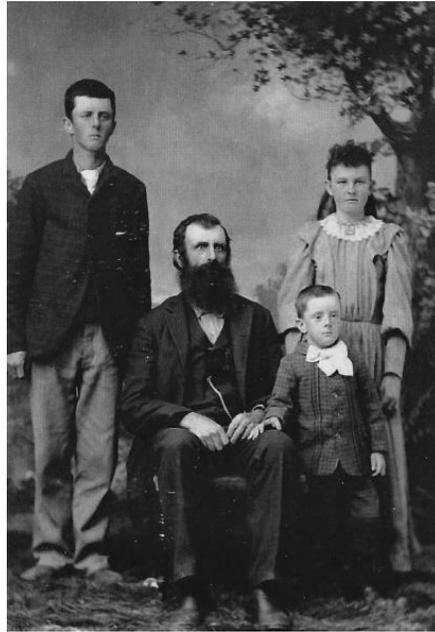
#16 - Leroy & Jennie Benson

After Mary Gillespie's death, Jennie (Sarah Virginia Gillespie) and Leroy Justus Benson were married on September 14, 1899 by a Court Judge in Oklahoma City. Roy had been too young to participate in the Land Run and acquire his own land, so the young couple rented land just outside Jones and started farming. In about 1906 they bought 80 acres 3 miles south east of Jones, land that was part of the Pottawatomie Indian tribal lands. The bottom land was suitable for corn, wheat, and alfalfa, and the upland was good for cotton. Roy also built his blacksmithing shop to work in the off season. Later he worked as a carpenter and, at one time, he hunted quail for the market.



#17 - Benson Family Portrait 1911

In the period from 1899 to 1909, five children were born to the couple: A baby daughter was still born, then Melvin Andrew – August 28, 1903, Frank Ellis – October 16, 1904, Lora Amanda – August 1, 1908, and Mary Elnora – December 11, 1909. During this time, Roy's father, Andrew Benson came to live with the family after his wife, Ella, had died. Roy's younger siblings, Agnes and Erling, had been sent back to Vermont to live with their aunt. Grandfather Andrew Benson died in 1912 of tuberculosis which he apparently contracted in the Little Rock Veteran's hospital.



#18 - Andrew Ell Benson & his children: Leroy, Agnes & Erling

### **Nora's Early Years**

Nora was born on Dcember 11, 1909, in the middle of a terrible blizard, in the small house on a hill about four miles east of Jones, Oklahoma. Her mother told her that it was so cold that they had to hang quilts over the doors and windows to keep warm. The doctor had difficulty getting out from town in his buggy, then had to use forceps for the delivery, leaving a small scar on Nora's temple. Shortly after Nora was born, her father built a new five room house. Nora's earliest recolections were of this new house with its spacious porches and the big cement cellar at the bottom of the back steps. The old house was then relegated to be a corn crib. One of Nora's vivid memories was when, during a severe summer storm or tornado, all of the family were hurried into the cellar and stayed there most of the night. The next morning when they came out into the daylight, the roof was gone from the barn.



#19 - The Benson family relaxing on the front porch in 1911  
Grandpa Andrew Benson seated in the rocking chair

The children all had age-appropriate chores, and Nora recalls being sent to the hen house to get the eggs. There were always setting hens in some of the nests, and she had learned how to avoid getting pecked. As she reached under one of the hens, she felt a black snake coiled up in the nest swallowing eggs. Nora ran as fast as she could to tell her mother, who killed the snake with her garden hoe. From that time on she was afraid of snakes. It was a fear that she still had to overcome when, many years later, she went as a missionary to Africa.



#20 - Nora, Melvin, Lora, and Frank

Many happy childhood hours were spent on the farm, making play houses under the trees, outlining rooms with rocks, using boxes for cupboards, and molding mud pies. One summer the girls turned the unused chicken coup into their permanent playhouse, playing house with their dolls and setting up a make-believe telephone office with nails on strings for the switchboard.

The children all started school in a one-room building about a mile and a half south of their home. One December there was a program at the school in which the children recited poems and were delighted to see a Christmas tree decorated with real lighted candles. Once, to everyone's amazement, they got to view a very crude, flickering "Magic Lantern" picture show. In 1916 three schools were consolidated and all housed in a new building with three stories and boasted 6 teachers. School wagons brought children to the building but, since the Bensons lived only one and a quarter miles away, Nora and her siblings had to walk regardless of the weather which was sometimes extremely cold.



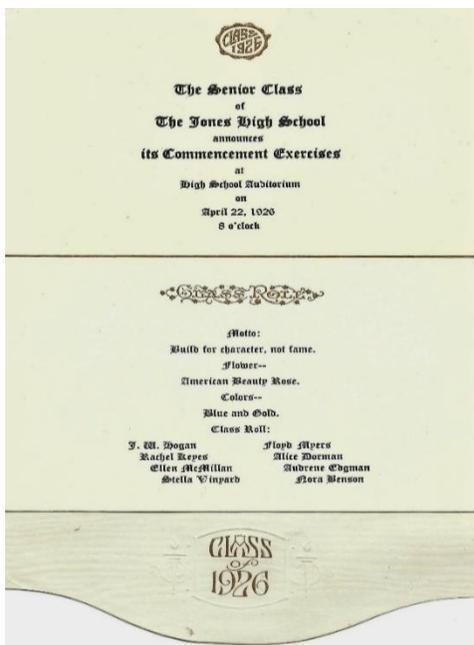
#21 - Roy and Jennie Benson with Lora, Nora, Frank, and Melvin in 1914

In 1918 Roy sold the farm and moved the family to Jones where there was only a three room school for all eight grades. After a year there Roy bought a 146-acre farm a half-mile north of Jones. Nora ran errands and did chores for the family, while Lora helped her mother in the kitchen and learned to cook. Nora spent her time learning to sew, making her first dress at age nine. As a result, she never learned to cook. She also started piecing her first quilt which helped her learn to run the treadle sewing machine. She finished the quilt some four years later.

On the farm they worked hard during the summer, wearing overalls, chopping and picking cotton, helping bale hay, and taking care of the animals. There was still time to read. Nora loved to read and consumed dozens of books her mother's friends loaned them, stories by Zane Gray and Horatio Alger and romantic novels by Mary J. Holmes. Her mother said, "When 'Noni' gets in a book, she never hears me when I call her."

When prices for farm products dropped significantly, the Bensons had to sell again and move back to Jones. Roy then decided to use his skills and knowledge and build houses.

By 1924, two or three nearby rural schools merged and a new building was built for the grades through high school. Lora was one of three in the first graduating class, the class of 1925. In high school on the girls' basketball team, Nora played guard or forward enjoying it more than Lora did. Roy and Jenny were very strict about the girls going away from home but did permit them to travel to away games. Nora remembered playing basketball in the round barn at Arcadia, a few miles north of Jones. In the summer the girls were allowed to go to 'play parties' which were like square dances. All through high school Nora dated Ray Keyser, a young man who was an orphan. His mother died when he was 7 years old and his father died three years later. He and his younger brother, Guy, lived with their aunt and uncle, Mr. & Mrs. W. F. Goff on a farm just north of the Benson land.



#22 - Commencement program



#23 - Nora - High School graduation

Nora and Lora attended Sunday School at the Methodist church in town before changing to the Christian Church where they and their mother became members. The girls were baptized in the First Christian church in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Lulu Linton was Nora's Sunday School teacher at the Jones Christian Church, but she was not only the teacher. She regularly planned parties at her home for the 8 or 10 teenagers in the youth group. Mrs. Linton was a published author and poet and became Nora's mentor, confidant, and special friend. They continued corresponding after Nora left Jones, went to college, and married.



#24 - Nora on the left at a Sunday School Party



#25 - Mrs. Lulu Linton



#26 - 1926 Melvin, Lora, Roy & Jennie Benson, Nora, Frank

## Chapter 3: 1928 – 1935

### Nora's Young Adulthood

Roy Benson had always planned for his daughters to go to college. Melvin had attended Oklahoma A & M college one semester at Stillwater, but ran short of funds and had gone to work in construction. His brother, Frank, had dropped out of high school. Following high school graduation, Lora went to Central State Teachers College in Edmond north of Oklahoma City, about 8 miles from Jones. Nora joined her there to begin college classes the fall of 1926. To save money on expenses, the sisters rented a room in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest, and were allowed to cook their meals in their room. While at college, Nora was a member of the Women's Athletic Association and joined the hiking club and participated in their gymnastics formations, complaining later that they always placed her on the bottom of the 'stands' while the slimmer, lighter girls were positioned above.



#27 - Nora is the 6th gymnast from the left in the formation with a girl on her shoulders

In the spring of 1927, Nora's mother died. She had not been well for a long time, and was finally admitted to St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City. The last few weekends of that college semester, Nora and her sister, Lora, rode the interurban, which ran from Edmond to Oklahoma City to visit their mother. When school was out, Nora arranged to sleep at a friend's house near the hospital and spent every day at her mother's bedside. The doctor allowed Jennie Benson to go home, and the girls were hopeful that their mother would recover. However, she died of heart failure that night, May 30, 1927. That summer was very difficult as the sisters tried to deal with their loss, and comfort their grieving father while keeping house for him. Their brothers had jobs that took them away from home, and were on their own by that time.

Around the first of July, Roy Benson decided that he would join his friend, Bert Deal, on a trip to the West Coast, taking Lora and Nora along. He had a cousin in Seattle who he wanted to see. He outfitted his old Chandler touring car for the long trip, taking camping equipment, bedding and kitchen utensils along, because there were no motels or places to stay in those days. Their six weeks-long trip took them past interesting sights: the desert, petrified forest, Grand Canyon, into Los Angeles and Catalina island. From there it was up to the Redwood forest and through Oregon to Seattle. The cousins took them to Canada. On the way back to Oklahoma, they saw the wonders of Yellowstone Park. Seeing these amazing sights apparently only whetted Nora's desire to see interesting places around the world whenever she had or could make the opportunity.



#28 - Lora Roy Benson Nora

As long as Nora could remember, she had very thick long hair. She usually wound it around her head or into buns over her ears. It was the style for women to wear hats to church, and finding a hat that would fit over her thick hair was almost impossible. Both she and her sister, Lora, hated their long hair, which their dad did not want them to cut. Finally after much pleading by the girls, Roy eventually relented and agreed to let them get their hair cut in a short fashionable style that was popular at the time. Nora never wanted to let her hair grow long again, and kept her hair short for the rest of her life.



#29 - Nora in Junior High School



#30 - Nora & Lora - before



#31 - Lora & Nora - after

Having completed the necessary college course hours in two years, Nora earned her Life Certificate for Teaching and was hired to teach first grade at the Jones school. She had fifty students including two little Polish girls who could not speak English. Nora divided the students into four groups, so was really teaching four classes of first graders.



#32 - Nora's teaching certificate



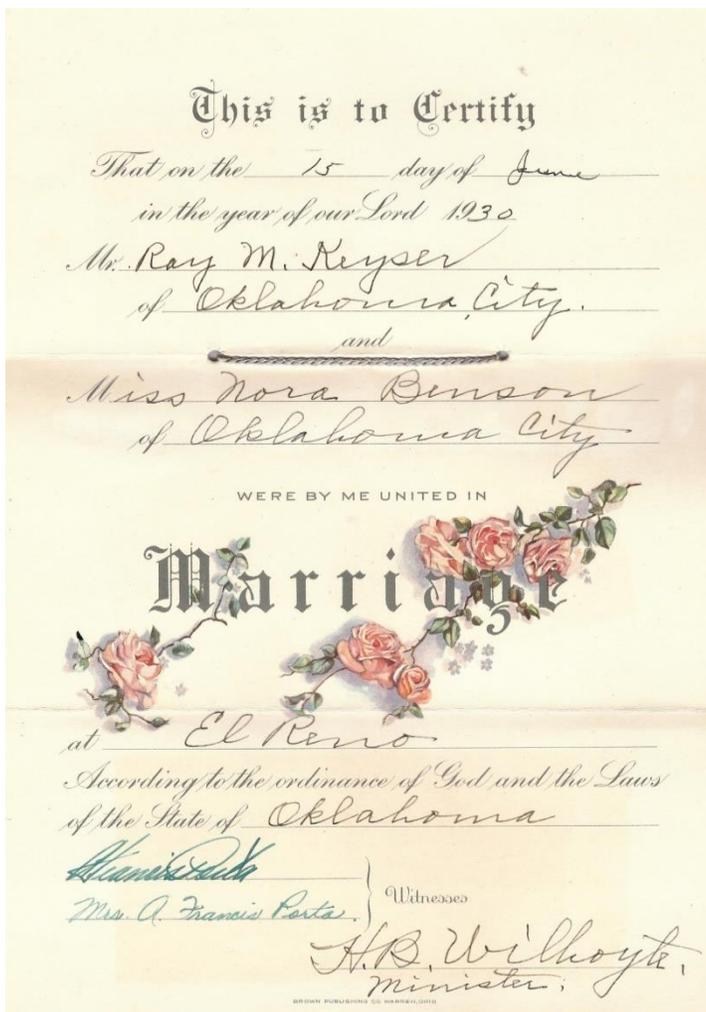
#33 - Nora and her class of 50 first graders at Jones School - 1927

After two extremely tiring years, she was relieved when her Uncle Erling wrote from Hawaii saying that he had teaching jobs lined up for both Nora and Lora. Both young ladies were considering accepting the offer. With a month to go before leaving however, Lora announced that she had decided to get married and would not be going to Hawaii.

Ray did not have a job and no prospects of getting one. Nora was concerned that Ray may not be willing to wait a year for her to return from Hawaii, so she decided that she and Ray should get married before she left. A month after Lora's wedding, Nora and Ray Keyser were married on June 15, 1930. Nora left for Hawaii the day after the wedding.



#34 - Nora and Ray Keyser



#35 - Ray and Nora's Marriage License

Nora travelled by train from Oklahoma City to San Francisco, and then by boat, the trip taking eight days. Uncle Earling and Aunt Ethel put leis of frangipani and carnations around her neck to welcome her to Hawaii. Since they were both taking summer classes at the University of Hawaii, Nora also enrolled in three classes.



#36 - Nora on board the ship



#37 - Nora and Aunt Ethel Benson in Hawaii

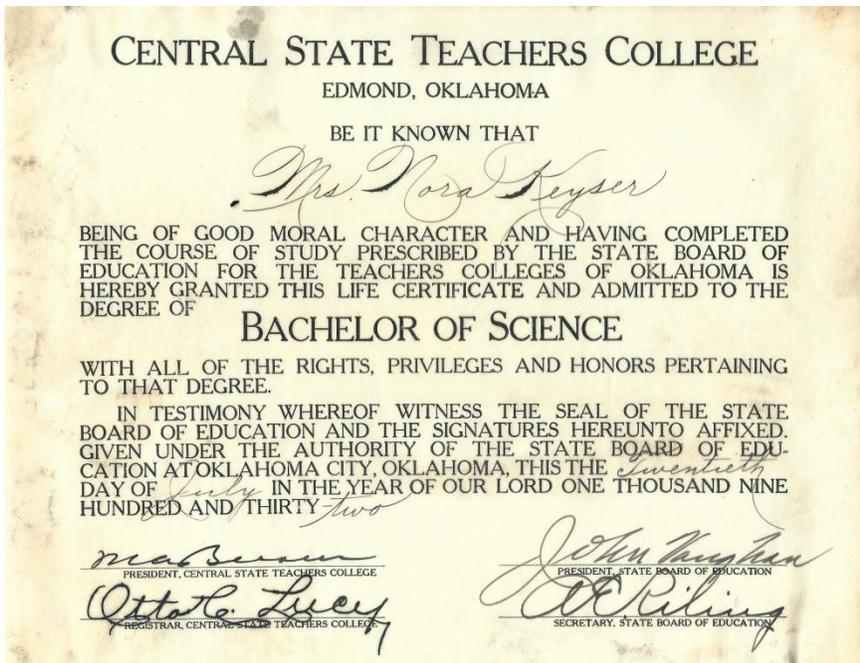
In late August, they all went by pineapple barge to Molokai, where all three were to teach, the Bensons at a large school in the village of Kaunakakai, twenty miles over the escarpment near the sea, and Nora at the plantation. Nora's assignment was teaching plantation officials' children on the Libby Pineapple Plantation. Her class consisted of six children: two Caucasian, two Philippino, and two Chinese. She shared a small house with Helen Amorino, a young Portuguese public school teacher.

As her first year came to a close, she was offered a contract to continue teaching there, but she decided to return to Houston, Texas where Ray had found a job. Nora was met at the train station in Houston by two of Ray's friends, who told her that her husband had an accident on his motorcycle and was in the hospital with a badly broken leg. She stayed three months in Houston, most of the time visiting with Ray. Toward the end of the three months, they were advised that, since the leg had not healed, it would need to be re-broken and reset. During the surgery Ray went into shock and died.

With no husband and no job, Nora decided to return to the Central State Teachers College, to complete her degree, and then, after graduation, look for job. She majored in home economics and English. In the fall of 1932, she found a good teaching position at Lacy west of Hennesey. She enjoyed her year there and would have liked to stay on.



#38 – Nora at college



#39 - Nora's Bachelor of Science degree

However her stepmother, Miss Sallie, had become an invalid, and her father needed her help at home. Nora returned and found a low paying job in Jones, teaching third grade. The depression had hit Oklahoma hard, teachers salaries were cut in half, and times were difficult. In addition, Miss Sallie's daughters interfered with Nora's efforts to care for her. Because of the stressful situation at home, Nora started looking for a job in another town.

Before long Nora heard that a Home-Ec/History teacher was needed at Waukomis, about 60 miles north and a little west of Oklahoma City. She found out that the new Superintendent there was Ruben Schwieger and remembered that he had been in one of her classes at Edmond. She applied and was readily hired to fill the position.

## Chapter 4: 1920 – 1934

### Ruben's Young Adulthood

During his teen years, along with his brothers and sisters, Ruben had rebelled against the strict conservative teaching of the German Church of God. However, as the birth of their first child approached, he began to feel God speaking to him about his bad habits. When revival meetings were held in the Hitchcock high school gym, Ruben and Clydena attended with all the Schwieger family still in the area. In one of the services they became born-again Christians. Ruben often told of that experience saying that when he walked out of that service, he took the cigarettes out of his pocket and threw them as far away as he could. He also had a habit of cursing and using bad language. Both bad habits ended at the moment he walked out of the school building. Those who knew him over the years recognized that characteristic of his character. Whenever he made a decision, he acted on it decisively.



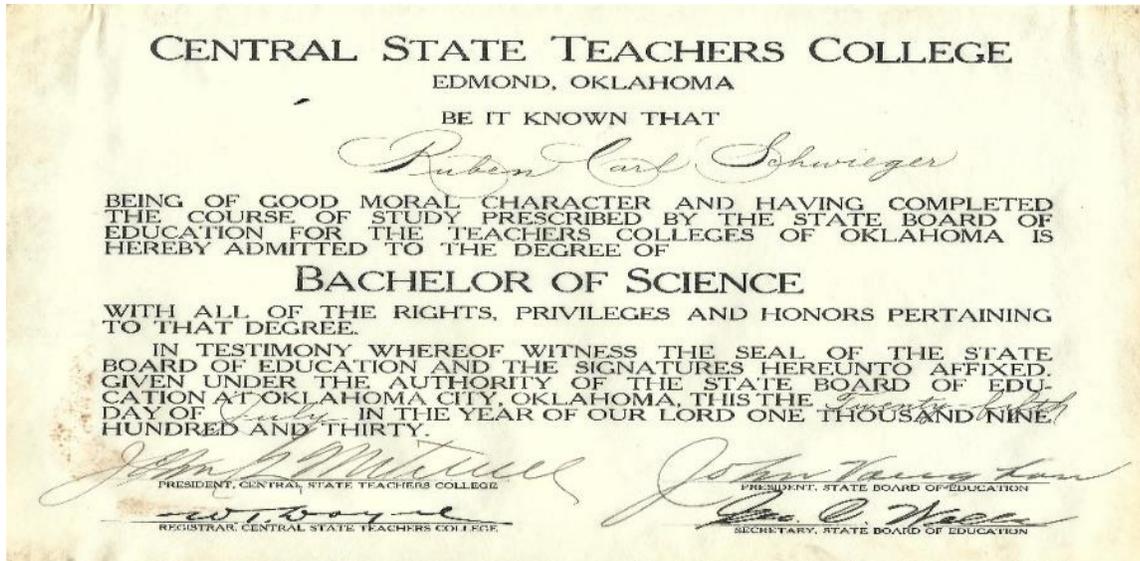
#40 - Betty Jo about 7 yrs. old

The Schwiegers lived on a rented farm, not far from the Schafflers', where Betty Jo was born on March 2, 1923. A few months later, they came home one evening to find that their house burned to the ground: They had lost everything. They then moved in with Clydena's parents and stayed until they found another place to live. Ruben was farming for himself and also helping out on his parents' homestead as much as possible. He continued teaching at the rural Arapaho School. Clydena did not like the idea of farm life.

In 1926, they decided to leave farming and country school teaching and attend Central State Teachers College in Edmond. They left their little girl in the care of their land lady while they were in classes. Ruben took several jobs so they could meet their expenses. He tutored other students, learned how to cut hair and worked in a barber shop, and milked ten cows by hand every morning at 4 AM and again at 4 PM, for which he was paid minimum wage plus a quart of milk. During his last year he was hired to teach freshman algebra. Completing his degree in two years and three summers, Ruben found a position teaching high school mathematics and wood shop class in Waukomis. Clydena, having earned her degree, also got a teaching job there but lost it when, in the depression, only one person in a family could hold a teaching position. She then worked as a seamstress, altering mens' suits in a clothing store.



#41 - Ruben Schwieger in 1928



#42 - Ruben's Bachelor of Science degree

Shortly before school started in the Fall of 1934, Ruben and Clydena, with their almost twelve year old daughter Betty Jo, and Ruben's sister, Irene, took a trip to Portland, Oregon to visit Ruben's parents. On the way home, near Baker, Oregon, Ruben had an accident with the car which turned over. Clydena was killed, Ruben was severely injured, and Betty Jo had a broken arm and cuts on her face. Irene was not hurt. After a few days waiting for Ruben to regain consciousness and strength enough to travel, the three were able to return to Oklahoma by train.



#43 - Clydena Schwieger



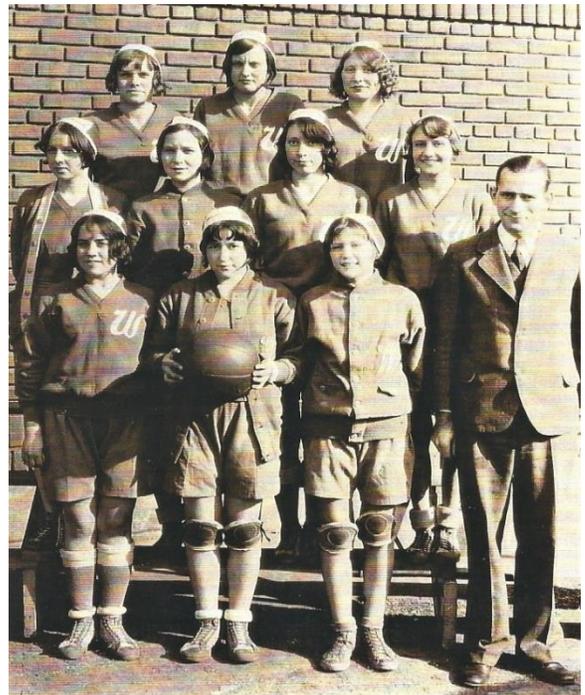
#44 - Betty Jo Schwieger



#45 - Betty Jo and her Dad

Ruben started that school year a very lonely man trying to teach classes and be a mother and father to Betty Jo, whose arm was still in a cast. It was not long after he accepted the principal's position that he added the responsibilities of Superintendent to his already busy schedule.

In addition he was the girls' basketball coach and had to travel with them to away games. When the basketball season began, he asked the new teacher, Nora Keyser, to accompany the team as the girls' chaperone.



#46 - Waukomis Girls Basketball Team

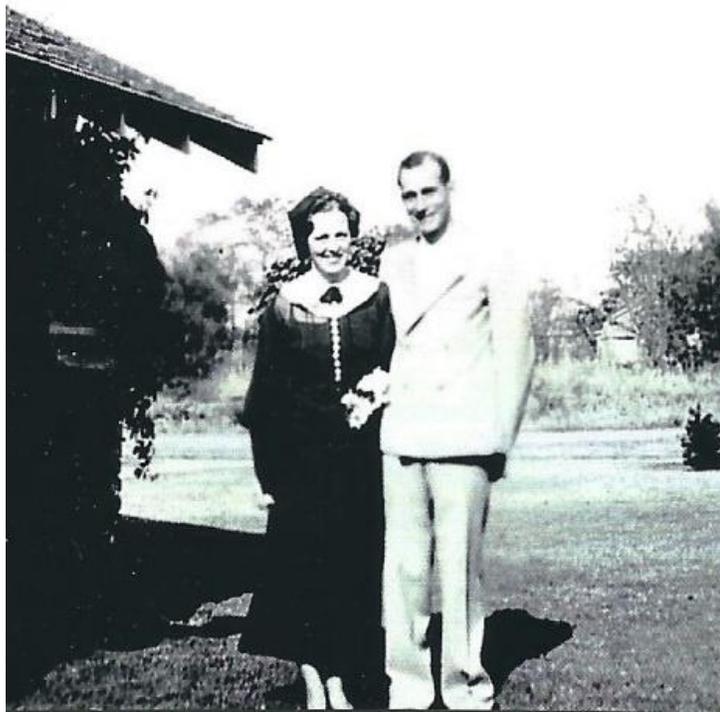


#47 - Nora Keyser

## Chapter 5: 1935 – 1946

### Ruben and Nora's Marriage and Family

It was not long before their casual friendship warmed into romance. Before the school year was out in May, they were engaged and planned to be married as soon as summer school was over. Ruben had rented a different house in Waukomis, and the wedding was held in the living room the afternoon of August 25, 1935, with the pastor of the Methodist church officiating. Nora wore a dark blue dress with a white collar, and a corsage of white gladiolas pinned at her waist. Those present for the ceremony were Betty Jo, Nora's sister, Lora, her husband Lloyd Lambert, and their 1 year old daughter, Carolyn, Ruben's brother and his wife, Dan and Tillie Schwieger, and Nora's father Roy Benson. Following the service everyone enjoyed a lunch that Lora and Tillie had prepared. That evening after their guests had gone home, many good friends from the community stopped by to offer their congratulations. Ruben and Nora did not have a honeymoon trip before the school year started, but later they enjoyed sightseeing at the Royal Gorge in Colorado and fishing at Lake Cabresto, New Mexico.



#48 - Ruben and Nora Schwieger Wedding Picture

In September, Ruben began a master's degree program at Philips University. Because the Depression was still affecting Oklahoma, the policy was that schools could not hire two teachers from the same household. Nora lost her job. In the spring, some people in the community found fault with Ruben because he would not allow the school gymnasium to be used for dances. The pressure was such that he lost his position as superintendent, and it was necessary to look elsewhere for teaching positions.

Ruben heard that a position was open in Dacoma, one hundred miles to the west, so he went there to apply. He was hired, rented a house, and moved the family on a hot day in August 1936. After they arrived and settled in, Nora was offered a job to replace the primary teacher who was leaving. The next year, she went back to teaching Home Economics and English in the high school. One of her students for a class was Betty Jo. After two years, she grew tired of teaching and wanted to start a family. Ruben was again appointed as superintendent.



#50 - Betty Jo's High School Graduation



#49 - Betty Jo, Ruben, and Nora

In the spring of 1940, Betty Jo graduated from high school and was excited about her plans to attend Anderson College in Indiana in the fall. On May 12, Nora and Ruben's first child, Ruben Don, was born. Ruben and Nora were elated when their first baby was a healthy ten pound boy. They wanted to name him after his Daddy, but Nora did not want him called 'Junior', so they agreed that his middle name would be 'Don' instead of 'Carl', his father's middle name. With joy they took the baby home from the Alva Hospital, and rejoiced with friends and church family in the Dacoma church.



#51 - Nora, Ruben, and Ruben Don

However, it was not long before their little boy began to lose weight and became ill. He could not keep his milk down. Immediately after nursing, the milk would be forcefully thrown up. The doctor did not know what was causing the problem. He said that the baby was probably allergic to his mother's milk, which was completely illogical, and told her to make a formula with cow's milk. When that did not help, he suggested that she try to give him goat's milk. The baby was not getting any nourishment and was starving. Ruben and Nora rushed their baby back to the Alva Hospital, where he was admitted, and fluids were given by injection. At that time, doctors did not have the advantage of x-rays and ultrasound that can readily confirm the diagnosis of pyloric stenosis, a muscular stricture at the outlet of the stomach, that can easily be released with surgery.

Ruben Don did not improve and the doctors, saying that there was nothing more they could do, tried to prepare the Schwiegers for the baby's eventual death. Ruben and Nora, greatly alarmed, decided that healing by God was their only hope and called all the congregations in Oklahoma and some in Kansas to join them in fervent prayer for their son's life. God did work a miracle, an event the doctors had never seen. The baby had wasted away to less than 6 pounds, when one day, he was suddenly able to drink successfully. From then on Ruben Don consistently gained weight, and developed normally. Ruben and Nora then began to believe that their boy's life had been spared, because God had a special work for him to do. They often told Ruben Don that as he grew up and he began to believe it too.



#53 - Ruben Don 5 months old



#52 - Ruben Don 1 year old

The next year, Ruben was asked to go to Comanche and take the assistant superintendent's job. It turned out that it was not a pleasant place to live. They were crowded in a too-small house, and the church was formal and cold. They were expecting another baby, so when Ruben learned of a job opening in Hobart as principal of the high school, they decided to move again.

The Schwiegers moved to a rented house in Hobart the week before school started. On the first day of classes, September 7, 1942, Ruben Don's sister Ruth Kathleen was born. Before Nora and the baby came home from the hospital, Ruben bought a nice two-bedroom house about a block away, just across from the school, and moved everything into it.



#54 - 417 N. Lowe Street, Hobart, Oklahoma



#55 - Ruben Don and Kathleen with their father



#56 - Ruth Kathleen

A little more than a year later, on October 15, 1943, Willa Rae came into the family.



#57 - Nora with Ruben Don,  
Kathleen & Willa Rae



#58 - Willa Rae

The five years in Hobart were good ones. Ruben became superintendent again and then principal for the junior college which was added to the high school. He found time to hunt quail and ducks and could hardly wait until his five-year-old son could learn to shoot the 22 rifle and go hunting with him. Ruben and Nora went fishing in the river, stock ponds, and the Hobart reservoir, and the children used their small poles as though they were really fishing. Ruben bought a cow, they called Blossom, that gave abundant fresh milk morning and evening for the children.



#59 – The Schwiager family in 1945

In 1946, Ruben and Nora bought a quarter section of wheat land in Kiowa County, Oklahoma, as an investment. They rented the farm to a neighboring farmer who planted and harvested wheat on the property, and returned a portion of the wheat income to them. He also used part of the land for pasture.

Ruben also purchased a barbershop combined with a shoeshine business in Hobart, hired a barber, and barbered himself on Saturdays and during the summer. He belonged to the Kiwanis Club and was active in other community activities. The family, at first, attended the Methodist church, but soon learned that there were people in town who were acquainted with the Church of God and wanted to meet together.

Ruben and Nora were instrumental in raising up the Church of God congregation. They had worked hard. They conducted cottage prayer meetings, visited homes, and gathered up children, took them to Sunday School, and took them home again. Besides being Sunday School superintendent, teaching the adult Bible class, and directing the youth, Ruben also preached Sunday morning and evening, until the church got its first pastor. The pastor although a good preacher soon felt called elsewhere and so the work again fell to Ruben and Nora, until God sent another man. Ruben wrote in his book, *Paths for God* that during this interim period something began to happen within him. He seemed filled with restlessness and dissatisfaction. He was no longer getting the satisfaction he had received from academic successes and athletic victories or teaching and administration at the school. Although he was well liked by the student body and got along well with the teachers under him, he began to feel that his time as school administrator was being wasted. He wrote that a still small voice kept saying over and over to him, 'If you would work this hard in Africa many more souls could be won to the Lord.' It was always Africa, never any other field.



#60 - Ruben Schwieger at the Church of God at Hobart

## Dedication to Become Missionaries



#61 - Lima Lehmer

While still in Dacoma, Nora had been working with the Women's Missionary Society. And shortly after coming to Hobart, was elected state president of the organization that year the missionary study was on Africa, and she was responsible for taking the visiting missionary to Africa, Lima Lehmer around to various churches rallies, and meetings in southwestern Oklahoma. Through this study and the time spent with Lima, both Ruben and Nora learned that missionary help was needed in Africa. They began to pray that God would send helpers into that field. They didn't dream that they were praying for themselves.

The map of Africa in Ruben's office took on new meaning for him. Every time he looked at the map his eyes would follow the line made by the Nile River running down from Egypt in the North until it reached its head waters, the great lake, Lake Victoria. There, bordering the lake on the South and the East was Kenya. Kenya, he knew, was where the Church of God mission stations were located. He began to read everything he could find about Africa, particularly about Kenya. It was unfortunate that, at this time, very little written material was available about the mission work in Kenya.

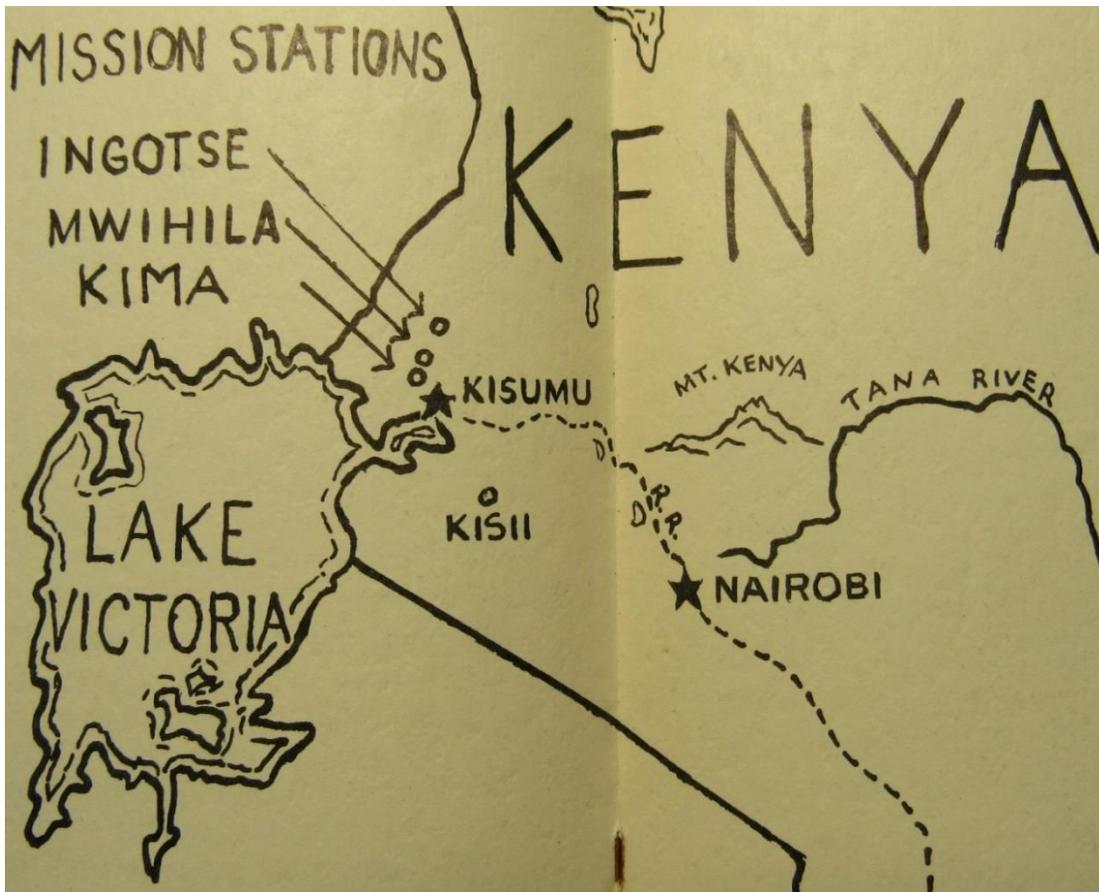


#62 - Map of Africa, Kenya highlighted

For a while Ruben kept the feeling that God was calling him to be a missionary a secret. Neither did he tell anyone why, all-of-a-sudden, he was taking such a great interest in Kenya. He was certain that his wife would never agree to leave the conveniences and comfort of a modern home and, with him, take the three small children to **dark Africa** (as some called it). He knew, however, that it was Nora's nature to succeed in whatever task she undertook and knew she would make a good missionary. So, he began to pray that God would make her feel as he did, about going to Africa.

Miss Lehmer was very enthusiastic about missionary work, and during her visit told them that although she was a nurse, the thing that weighed most heavily on her heart was the boys' school. She told that Sidney Rogers had started a boys' school at the Kima station. When he left to take up work in the States, the school had been left in the hands of Herman Smith who was then the mission secretary. She said that there was talk of moving the boys' school some place where there was more land so that students could be trained in agriculture. Ingotse was the place that was being considered. "Ingotse" she said, "is a place forty miles north of Kima, where a ten acre plot of ground was given by Chief Ambani Sakwa several years ago to our Missionary Board for a mission station. There are some African farmers who have agreed to sell thirty acres of their land, which joins the mission plot, provided the boys' school would be moved there from Kima. The fact that there were no buildings that the school could use at

Ingotse at the time did not seem to bother Miss Lehmer. When she saw that Ruben was beginning to get interested, she said, “Why don’t you come out to Kenya and be the principal of that school.”



#63 – Ingotse location

Ruben thought that since he had been raised on a farm and had farmed as a youth and had eighteen years’ experience in teaching and school administration, he might qualify for heading a mission school. The longer he pondered the things that were happening, the more he became convinced that truly God was calling him to be a missionary in Kenya. In his prayers and devotions, he committed himself wholly and completely to the will of God and service in Kenya. He still had not said anything about this to Nora, but was so thoroughly committed that he made up his mind that he would go alone, if she would not agree to go to Africa. He felt strongly that the scriptures spoke directly to his situation. *“So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple?”* Luke 14:33 And *“. . . everyone that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my namesake shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”* Mathew 19:29.

Ruben was overjoyed when, after he had summoned the courage to tell Nora of his commitment, she said, "I have already made the same commitment, but I just could not gather up the courage to tell you." That same day they got a letter off to the Missionary Board offering to be missionaries to Kenya.

Later Ruben wrote that the Devil began to work on his mind by putting scenes on a screen, as it were, a lot of scenes: their home, his job, the possibility of a raise in salary the following year, an opportunity for advancement, his aged parents, a host of friends, and the little church in Hobart we had helped to raise up. Over against all these, the Devil placed a dark Africa with its disease, ignorance, superstition, and heathenism, all intended to get their focus off their calling. The scripture that helped him at that point was: *"Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."* James 4:7. 8

Ruben wrote additionally that it was not long until the Devil tried to work through friends and their own relatives. They began to tell him how foolish it was to 'drag' three small children to Africa, that the children would grow up as heathens, be deprived of the proper association with children of their own race, and that they would be misfits when they returned to the States. Ruben told the naysayers that he was sure that the Lord would look after the children, and that nothing could change his mind. The bank president, Bob Kelsey, asked, "Why would you leave a good job and take your family to a place like Africa." Ruben answered, "Only a true Christian would be able to understand." That answer must have bothered Bob, for he asked it again each time Ruben and Nora visited Hobart on every one of their furloughs.



#64 - Gertrude Schwieger

Among those who stood by Ruben and Nora, though, were Ruben's parents. They also had been missionaries, preaching in Russia and Germany and also among the German people in western Canada. They gave Ruben and Nora their whole-hearted blessing. Before they sailed, they went to see his parents at their home in Portland, Oregon, not expecting to see them alive again after being gone five years.



#65 - Ferdinand Schwieger

Both Ruben and Nora lost loved ones while they were abroad. Soon after they arrived on the field, they received word of the sudden death of Ruben's oldest brother, Dan. During their third term, Nora's father, Roy Benson and Ruben's older sister, Rebecca, both died. It was hard to accept these losses, but they discovered that, as Paul said, "The Grace of God is sufficient."

## Chapter 6: 1946 – 1947

### Preparing for Missionary Service

As Ruben and Nora began to get ready to go to Africa, they realized that there were many problems to be dealt with. In their excitement of being called to be missionaries they had not given much thought to the complications connected with the disposing of the things they had accumulated during eleven years of married life, and deciding what to take and what to leave.

During the international camp meeting in Anderson, Indiana, in June of 1946, they had had an interview with the Missionary Board but were a bit disappointed. The Board could not give them a definite answer. It may have been that there were also other prospective missionaries who were being interviewed. Months dragged by and they had given up hope when in January of 1947, they received a letter from the Missionary Board telling them that they had been appointed, but that the date of sailing was not yet known. The Board evidently knew that it would not be very long before they would be going, because they said, "Go ahead and build some crates in which to ship your things." Nora began to lay out some things they needed to take. The women of the Oklahoma State Women's Missionary Society began to gather linens and make clothes for the children. There were dresses for the girls in all sizes, shoes, socks, underwear, coats, sweaters, sheets and blankets, quilts, towels, buttons, toothpaste, razor blades, needles, pins, soap, and even some food stuff.

They were told to get passports and that presented another problem. They were required to show their birth certificates, but Nora did not have one, in fact she had never had one. She asked her father to go with her to the State Health Department in Oklahoma City to vouch for her, supplying the date and place of her birth. She was then issued an official 'delayed' certificate of birth in January 1947.



#66 - Schwieger Family Passport Picture January 1947

In February 1947 an urgent letter from the Board asked if Ruben and Nora could be ready to sail the latter part of April. Though it would be difficult, they replied that they could. Ruben's first concern was to get released from his teaching contract which was binding until the first of August. They decided to sell their house and furniture at auction and put the barber and shoe shops up for sale. They would try to find a new car to replace their old one. All of this was much easier said than done.

When the Schwiegers were getting ready to go to Africa, for some reason they wondered if they should continue to wear their wedding rings. Perhaps some old fashioned, ultra conservative person said something about it not being appropriate for missionaries to wear jewelry. Rather than offend anyone or possibly risk losing their rings in Africa, they decided to take off their rings and put them in the bank safety deposit box for safe keeping while they were gone the first five years. However, when they got to Kenya, they noticed that Margaret LaFont and other missionary women were wearing their engagement and wedding rings. When they returned to Oklahoma in 1953, they went to the bank and were dismayed to discover that the rings were missing. They never found out what happened, maybe a relative had somehow obtained a key for the bank box and took the rings. Ruben wanted to replace Nora's ring. The whole family went into a jewelry store, and Nora picked out a new gold wedding band. She laughed about it, saying she wondered what the jewelry store clerk thought about a man and his wife buying a wedding ring with their three children, ages 11, 9 and 8 along!

As they worked on the preparations for leaving, they began to realize that they knew very little about Kenya, the living conditions, schooling for the children, whether a car could be of use in the work to be done, type of furniture that was used there, and what things were available on the market there. So, they barraged the Missionary Board and missionaries both on the field, and on furlough with letters full of questions. They soon learned that they would need a car, and take steel rather than wooden furniture, pressure lanterns, a refrigerator, an iron which operated on kerosene, and clothing for five years. They were told that the Board had no money to help them buy these things, but could only help with the shipping.

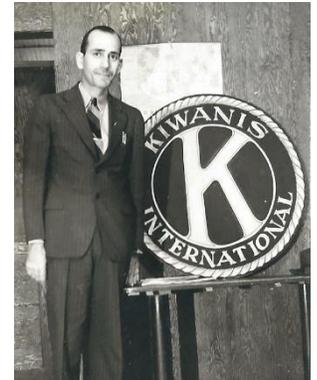
They were advised not to try to take a piano, because of the climate and abundance of termites. As advised, Ruben quickly began to make wooden boxes 3ft by 3 ft. by 1½ ft. for shipping. They were amazed at how much they could get into each box, but had to specially design boxes for the ironing board, brooms, and Nora's long-handled garden hoe she insisted on taking. She said, "I want a garden in Africa; it will be difficult for me to live without flowers."

The shoe shop was sold to the man who was operating it and the barbershop was sold to the previous owner. They then engaged a local auctioneer to sell the newly remodeled house, and the furniture Ruben had made. They were apprehensive about the sale and especially sad about selling Nora's treasured piano.

They were not troubled about letting the trusty old Chevrolet go, but there were no new cars available except at a high price on the black-market. Ruben wrote that the Lord intervened. Just three days before they were to leave, he got word that some new Chevrolets had just arrived in Oklahoma City and that, though his name was far down on the waiting list, he could get one. On the way to New York City to

catch the boat, they stopped in Oklahoma City, and traded their car in on a new four door black Chevrolet sedan. The money received from the sale of their things was just enough to pay the difference. In talks given at farewell events at the Kiwanis Club, churches, and schools, Ruben relied on what little he had been able to read about Kenya and the society and schools where he and Nora would be working. He found out later that he had made some big blunders, telling things that were not true. He then resolved to make corrections when he returned to Hobart for furlough.

After the house and furniture were sold and shipping crates taken to the freight depot, they felt they were a family without a country. After staying a night with friends, they stopped by the little church on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hill Street the next morning. The pastor, Brother Pound, who was mowing the church lawn, saw them coming, left the mower, went into the parsonage, and quickly came out. With tears streaming down his weather-worn cheeks, he pressed a small package into Ruben's hands. Opening the package, they found Thompson's Chain Reference Bible which Ruben used for the twenty years in Kenya. It remained one of Ruben and Nora's most precious gifts.



#67 - Kiwanis

Taking leave of the pastor, they drove to Oklahoma City, traded cars, stayed overnight with Ruben's sister, Irene, then left for Anderson, Indiana. When they arrived, no one but the receptionist, Miss Renbeck, was present in the Missionary Board office. Miss Renbeck was able to locate Dr. C. E. Brown, the president of the Missionary Board, who met with them briefly and prayed with them for a safe journey to Kenya. Miss Renbeck then gave them last minute instructions about visas for Egypt, which were to be picked up in New York, yellow fever shots which were to be obtained at the Armed Services Center, and shipping instructions for the boxes and the car they were to leave with Keating and Co. She also gave them information about their trip on the ship to Egypt, and money for expenses and salary. She told them that they would be able to stay one or two nights in the missionary home in New York City. In Egypt they would stay with a missionary family, the Neffs, in Alexandria. After they arrived in Alexandria, arrangements could hopefully be made for a flight from Egypt to Nairobi.



#68 - Betty Jo

They were able to get done with what the Missionary Board needed to give them by early afternoon and drove on to Betty Jo's home in Dayton, Ohio for the night. They would not be with her again for five years, and would not see their first grandchild until he was almost five years old.



#69 - Betty Jo & Jack Hutchison

Then, realizing that their time was extremely limited, they drove the rest of the way to New York City the next day. The time in New York was confusing, difficult, and scary; they became more and more afraid that they would miss the boat.

The start of the problems was when Ruben, completely unfamiliar with the big city, parked the car in a small parking lot near the office of Sara Markis, where he was to pick up the passports and other documents. It was mid-morning when he left Nora and the three small children in the car and took a bus to the Egyptian Embassy to get our visas. It took much longer at the Embassy than he expected and then, when he took a bus back to the place where he thought he had parked the car, there was no parking lot and no car. He had left the parking tickets with Nora and did not know the name of the lot or anything about its location. He was lost and wandered about looking for hours becoming more and more frantic. It was time to get the Yellow Fever shots which were obtainable on the other side of town at a place that closed at 2:00 p.m.

Ruben finally saw a policeman across the street, ran to him for help, and frantically tried to explain. The policeman tried to calm Ruben down but explained that he had walked that beat for years and that there was no parking lot in the neighborhood. Ruben then asked where the Markis office was. "It is in that building right there," the officer said. Ruben rushed into Sara's office and learned that there was, indeed, a small lot just recently built for employees, behind the building. Running quickly outside and around to the lot in back, he found the car, and the family who had been waiting in the car for hours without food or water, and looking for Ruben back every minute, knowing that the ship was leaving the next day at noon and they still didn't have their yellow fever shots. Later Ruben wrote that he believed he had the best and most patient wife of any man in the world. "Nora never fussed at me a bit for being lost," he said.

Ruben got into the car without stopping for lunch, dashed across town to the Army Service Center, only to find out that they were too late to get the Yellow Fever shots that day. Now he became despondent because he could not see how they could get the shots, take the car to Keating for shipping, and find a way to the ship which was to sail at noon the next day.

However, he did not express his fears to Nora and the children. The children were always happy, and Ruben did not want to spoil their happiness in anyway. Furthermore, Nora was confident that they would be able to sail when the time came. So it was that the majority of the family went to bed happy that night in the Missionary Home, but Ruben lay awake, worried and sleepless, waiting for morning to come.

Ruben got Nora and the children up early, in time for a good breakfast, but he could not eat. They made a dash again to the place for Yellow Fever shots only to find out that the doors did not open until 10:00 a.m. This meant several hours of waiting, waiting that was especially difficult for Ruben. He wrote later that he was never good at waiting. As soon as the doors opened, they rushed in noting that the other people who were also waiting for their shots seemed to wonder why the family was in such a hurry. As soon as they got the shots they dashed off to Keating. Because there was so little time, they asked a man in the office there, a complete stranger, to please drive them to the boat and then return the car to Keating Company so they could prepare it for shipping. He kindly agreed to their request and, since he

knew the city, he got them quickly to the dock and they saw that the ship was still at the pier. They were intensely relieved!

With a hurried "Thank You" to the driver and with their hands full of luggage, they hurried up the gang plank just as the sailors started to take it in. How thankful they were to have made it onto the ship, but they still had a feeling of uneasiness. They had left the car in the hands of a complete stranger who could have driven it off and sold it and they would have been none the wiser.

Ruben, in writing about this later, recalled the saying "The Lord looks after the simple". He wrote further that the saying must be true because the car arrived in Kenya just a month or so after we did.

### **The trip to Kenya**

The family hurried on board just before 2 PM on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1947, and the ship sailed at 3 PM. Everyone stood on the deck until the skyscrapers in the New York Skyline and the Statue of Liberty faded out of sight. The scramble for luggage began as everyone tried to claim their bags from the heap of suitcases, trunks and boxes that had been piled on the promenade deck.



#70 – Statue of Liberty

The ship the family sailed on was called, the 'Saturnia', an Italian troop or hospital ship, one of the first to be converted back into a passenger ship after the Second World war. The Schwiegers assumed it would have been refitted to carry civilian passengers. To their dismay, they discovered that it was still a "troop" ship. All the passengers were assigned to large cabins, probably hospital wards during the war, on the main deck as far down in the ship without being in the engine room or in the water. From these rooms, they had to climb steep ladders to the dining hall. Ruben and Ruben Don slept in bunk beds in Cabin #7 with sixty other men. Nora and the girls were in Cabin #3 with thirty six other women.

There were no chairs or benches in the rooms or on the ship's deck. There also were no places for the family to get together except at meals. There was no library nor a place to play games, and no other children were on board. The three or four books that Nora had brought along were read so often that the children had them memorized. Ruben Don found some discarded match sticks and gum wrappers on the deck and made things to play with. All they could do was to lie on the bunks and sleep or wait for meal time. Ruben recalls reading the Bible through again during the voyage.



#71 – Saturnia steamship

After two days at sea, they found among the twenty five hundred passengers on board, two other missionary families that were going to Africa. One man and his wife and little daughter were in route to the island of Madagascar. The other couple were Richard and Carol Atkins. Ruben and Nora were pleasantly surprised to learn that the Atkins were returning to their station at Tenwek, a World Gospel Mission, only about eighty miles from where they were going. The Atkins had already been there and were able to answer many questions about Kenya. The trip suddenly became more interesting

Nearly all the people on board the ship were Italian or Greek Catholics or had no religious preference. The Catholics, who far outnumbered the rest, were given a place on the crowded ship to hold Mass on Sunday but the Protestants had no place for worship. The captain of the ship was not very sympathetic either, so it was some time before they were permitted to use a small room for services. Richard Atkins took turns with Ruben in conducting devotions there.



#72 - Willa Rae, Ruben Don, & Kathleen on board the ship

Finally after fourteen days there were shouts, someone had seen land! It was the Rock of Gibraltar. It was the first thing that really interested the children, especially Ruben Don, so gave him his first significant geography lesson as the ship passed through the Straits and on to Italy. It is doubtful that the geography made much of an impression on Kathy and Willa Rae.

A day later the ship landed at Genoa, Italy, about halfway across the Mediterranean. Passengers not getting off at Genoa weren't allowed off the ship so entertained themselves watching the loading and unloading cranes and stevedores, as well as those who got off and others who came on board. As they sailed down the coast a day later, more geography was to be had. The ship stopped in Naples and those on board could see Mount Vesuvius. Ruben Don was intrigued with the story about the eruption of the volcano, Pompeii, and its people buried in ash.

Several days later, with the only land seen at a distance being Cyprus, the ship finally came to the port for Alexandria, Egypt. Ruben told Nora and the kids that when they got off the ship, each should hold on to suitcases tightly and look for the missionary who was supposed to meet them. That wasn't much help, Ruben Don thought. *'I can't see much above people's waists. What does a missionary look like? Would he be one of the men wearing a white dress like a woman?'* He did not know that long white robes were the traditional dress of Egyptian men.

While the boat was docking, Ruben and Nora thought they spied someone who might be Thaddeus Neff waving from the wharf, but they were quickly overwhelmed by the crowd and could see no one who might be there to meet them. Suddenly, for the family, the whole world had changed. What, for several weeks, had been boring, uneventful, and tedious was now a cacophony of sound and movement, color, and chaos. It seemed, to people from rural Oklahoma, that there were a thousand people dressed in turbans and long white gowns all shouting in a strange language. They were pushing and shoving, carrying boxes, suitcases, or trays of food, candy, and cigarettes. Dozens of them, it seemed, crowded around the Schwieger family as they came down the gang plank onto the dock.

Missionary Thaddeus Neff knew how to work the system. He watched the gang plank and saw only one bewildered family with three small children come down. He then elbowed and shoved his way toward the ship. As the Schwiegers started to make their way through the crowds and confusion, they heard a man shouting, "Imshi" and finally saw a tall American looking man push through to them. He said, "Schwiegers, I presume." and, laughing, shook hands with each of the family, saying, "Welcome to Egypt and welcome to Africa. I am Thaddeus."

He then introduced the men from the Egyptian Church of God he had with him. They helped the grateful Schwiegers find their way to and through customs. Brother Neff noticing Ruben's fountain pen in an outside pocket, said, "Better put your pen in the inside pocket of your coat. I have just now had mine taken, while I was waving to you from the dock. The pickpockets here are quite skilled."



#73 - Thaddeus & Katrina Neff

To Ruben, Brother Neff then said, “Brother Schwieger, I and Ibrahim, my helper here, will take your suitcases, and you should carry the girls. This young man,” referring to Ruben Don, “can keep up with us as we need to move through the crowd so we can get to the car. Just keep pushing through and say firmly, ‘Imshi’ to anyone who tries to sell you something or grab at your clothes and pockets. There are many pickpockets around and others trying to get your attention. Then, too, there are those who will insist on taking you somewhere, carrying something for you, or otherwise just bother you. Imshi! means, ‘Go away!’, ‘Leave me alone!’, or as we used to say in the States, ‘Get lost!’ Don’t worry about sounding mean and harsh. It will be understood that you are serious.”

Since there were no ships passing through the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea to Mombasa in those days, the Missionary Board had asked Ruben to try, after he got to Egypt, to get a plane from there to Nairobi. The family stayed with Brother and Sister Neff for a week waiting for a booking on a plane, but no planes were leaving Alexandria for Nairobi, Kenya. Although they were anxious to be on the way, the family enjoyed the stay in Alexandria very much. Ruben spoke in several churches and Brother Neff took the family to see many interesting things in and around Alexandria. When it began to seem hopeless to get a plane from Alexandria, it was suggested that Ruben try Cairo.

The Schwiegers took the train to Cairo. There were about as many people hanging on the outside of the train as there were inside and the conductor had quite a time trying to collect fares. Possibly one of the most interesting things they saw along the way were threshing floors. The wheat harvest was just on and farmers used the same methods of separating wheat from the straw as Abraham did thousands of years before. Most of the way the train passed through irrigated fields which reminded them of California.

The trip on the train was the first for all, and was a highlight for the kids particularly. In the three hours or so before dark, then the couple of hours of light the next morning, the family was treated to scenes that were likely unchanged since Bible times. Water buffalo carried burdens on trails between villages and rice paddies while others went round and round operating primitive pumps to raise water over small levees for irrigating fields or threshing grain on threshing floors.



#74 - Threshing floor in Egypt

The slow-moving train pulled by a steam engine belching black smoke and cinders, seemed to stop at every village for streams of people to disembark and other masses to get on. At the stops, hawkers crowded to the open windows of the train’s compartments aggressively selling all sorts of snack food, fruits, drinks, and a variety of items: cigarettes, handkerchiefs, pencils, and knick-knacks. Everyone seemed to feel the need to shout about their wares or in greetings to friends and relatives. It was loud, chaotic, and fascinating.

Cairo, the next morning was another view of chaos, at least to the uninitiated, which the Schwiegers all were, all, that is, except missionary Wilbur Skaggs. He drove from the train station in one of the few cars on the streets crowded with people, herds of sheep, one-man two-wheeled carts, and camels all apparently going somewhere in all directions and all at once. Skaggs always had one hand pressing the horn and, at times, actually bumping people or sheep gently out of the way. The orders of the day seemed to be, push your way in the direction you want, move out of a camel's or car's way just enough not to get hurt, and shout over the car horn and camel's bellows to make as much noise as possible.

Once out of the center of the city, the streets on the way to the suburb of Maadi, were a little less crowded, but cars were still given the least respect. The animals and citizens still had right-of-way. The mission house in Maadi was where Wilbur and Evelyn lived with their eight-month-old son, Russell. It was another time of waiting with nothing to do, no toys or other children to play with. Nora sewed a little suit for the baby by hand. Russell grew up to be a missionary in Egypt where his parents had served.

Both the Skaggs and Schwiegers had no extra money for trips, shopping, or other activities, but with the Skaggs' help, they were able to visit some ancient and Biblical sites and had some never to be forgotten experiences. Two special events were Ruben Don's seventh birthday, May 12, and the trip to the Pyramids to celebrate. Evelyn and Nora somehow obtained the ingredients necessary for baking a cake for the birthday.



#75 - Evelyn & Wilbur Skaggs

The problem was that Ruben Don never liked cake very much and must have not shown proper appreciation for their efforts. He even expressed his dislike for cake. Years later when he served on the Missionary Board with Evelyn, she said that she had always thought that he was the most spoiled, unappreciative little boy she had ever known. She couldn't believe that he had turned out to be a missionary. All had a good laugh over that.

The seemingly endless wait in Cairo was hard on all. The kids played in the sand of the yard with hermit crabs which abounded in the yard and areas near the street. Nora sewed a little suit by hand for the baby. All the while, Wilbur and Ruben had the frustrating job of trying to find a way to get us on a plane to Nairobi. Each day they would go to the BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) offices in the center of Cairo to check for a flight. Each day they would be told, "We do not know when a flight will come through, but please come back tomorrow. We will have word for you then."

Among some of the interesting things, was a ride down the Nile River in a felucca. The water of the river was a sky-blue, and the wind was just right to fan a cool breeze in the evening twilight.



#76 – Felucca on the Nile River

They rode camels at the Pyramids, Ruben Don on one by himself. His guide said that the camel's name was Missouri. The girls were too small to ride by themselves, so Nora took Kathleen on her camel, and Willa Rae rode with her father.



#77 - Ruben & Willa Rae, Ruben Don, Nora & Kathleen

The children remembered little about the trip to Kenya the first time, but Ruben Don did remember going up on the inside of one of the Pyramids to see the tombs of one of the kings. He was greatly impressed by the dark passageways and a sarcophagus in one of the chambers.

Finally, the day came when there were enough people who wanted to go to East Africa, or just plain wanted to get out of Egypt, that a plane was chartered. The Schwiegers were among the passengers on the list, but their happiness soon took another nosedive. When they got to the airport and were about to board the plane which was getting ready to take off, they discovered that their passport had not been returned to them. Ruben rushed back to the office and the clerk said, "You have been in Egypt longer than your visa is good for; you will have to pay a fine". Ruben was only too glad to pay the fine and was able to get back to the plane in time for the flight.

They arrived in Nairobi the next morning too late to catch the day's only train going to Kisumu, so they went to a hotel for the night. At the British hotel, they experienced some East African customs that seemed very strange to them. The evening meal was served from 7:30 pm. to 9:00 pm.; they were used to eating supper at 6:00 pm. They looked over the menu trying to figure the shillings into dollars, and everything seemed very expensive, so they ordered sandwiches in order to save on expenses. They found out later that the full meal was included in the hotel bill! Then, there was tea brought to them in bed at 6:00 am. A porter just walked into their room and set the tea on the stand, by the bed. They did not care for tea, let alone at six in the morning. Furthermore, thinking they had to pay for it, made it even less appreciated. The man bringing the tea could not understand them, and they could not understand him, so he just left the tea. However, when he started off with their shoes, Ruben objected, and grabbed the shoes away from him. They often wondered what he thought. He was just taking the

shoes out for a free polish. Later they learned that the shoeshine was also part of the room cost. The shoes would be shined to perfection and left at the door.

The culture shock continued on the train going to Kisumu. As they boarded, a porter asked if they wanted bedding. This was 11:00 a. m. and the Schwiegers thought they would be in Kisumu and on out to the mission by supper time, so why rent bedding? They said, "No, we do not want bedding" not knowing that it would take nineteen hours to travel the 250 miles from Nairobi to Kisumu, the train would climb to over nine thousand feet in the middle of the night, and they would nearly freeze in the unheated train compartment. They put on all the clothes they had, and still could not keep warm. The porter also asked them before the train started, if they wanted dinner. They said, "No thank you" again, not realizing that it was also included in the train fare. It was late the next morning before they had anything to eat.



#78 - Herman Smith

The train had arrived in Kisumu at the shore of Lake Victoria just after dawn. Herman Smith and Frank LaFont met the Schwiegers at the station, packed them into Smith's old Plymouth, and started the 20-mile journey over rough dirt roads to Kima. Because of the hairpin turns in the road and the many great granite boulders near the mission station, a person who has not been to Kima does not realize that he has arrived until he is there.



#79 - Frank LaFont

## Chapter 7: 1947 – 1953

### The first Term in Kenya

#### Six Months at Kima

Rounding the last bend in the road they were met by a chorus of two hundred or more voices breaking the still morning air. These were songs of welcome to the new principal of the boys' school, and his wife who was to teach in the girls' school. The students chanting an African song together with some of the teachers, led a procession onto the mission compound and to one of the homes where the missionary women welcomed them again, this time with a wonderful breakfast of bacon, eggs, and hot biscuits.



After a round of welcomes and introductions to the other missionaries at Kima, the Schwiegers were shown about the mission and the house where they were to live until the time when they would move to Ingotse. The house was very large, had not been lived in for some time, and was dark and gloomy inside. The inside was finished in dark cedar and the lower floor was hemmed in on both the front and back by long verandas extending nearly the entire length of the house.

#80 – First Sunday @ Kima

They had their first scare that night. The LaFonts had invited them over for supper, and it was rather late when they returned to the big house to sleep. There were no electric lights on the station, the only gleams of light came from someone's coal-oil lamp or candle. As they entered the veranda door of the dark house, two men with spears rose up and said, "Mirembe". They did not know that the previous occupants of the house had arranged for the two night watchmen with spears to sit just outside the bedroom window. Neither did they know what "Mirembe" meant. This shock just about scared Nora to death. Even though the two men were the night watchmen, and "Mirembe" just meant "hello", Ruben and Nora decided then and there that the watchmen would do their watching elsewhere.

A few days later Mr. Smith said to Ruben, "Today I am turning the school over to you, it is your shauri now." 'Shauri' is a very common word in the Swahili language. Herman was saying, "The school is now your responsibility." This began Ruben's work with the boys' school.

Although he had taught school in the states and been superintendent of small schools and principal of larger ones, Ruben found the Junior Secondary boys' boarding school at Kima under the British educational system vastly different from what he had been used to.

Ruben soon realized that the boys were not really boys, but nearly grown men around twenty years of age. In school they slept on the floor, ate corn meal mush, and had very crude tools and classroom equipment to work with. In those days, there was one good thing about the students. There were few discipline problems, because a place in school of any kind was at a premium. There were many boys waiting in the wings desperate to go to school, and one of them would quickly take the place of a boy who was expelled. Knowing this, the boys nearly always stayed on their best behavior.

The school had a rule that church attendance on Sunday for every boy was compulsory. The boys were also required to attend chapel every morning. When Ruben understood this, he realized that here was a great opportunity to win the 'boys' to Christ. He made a covenant with God, that with His help, he would do his best to win to Christ every boy who went through the school. The 8th form (grade) was as far as the boys could go in this school. This meant that every year thirty-five boys, the limit of enrollment for one class, would graduate, and thirty-five new boys would be taken in. At the end of the five-year period while he was in charge of the school, Ruben was able to report that, by the grace of God, every boy who left the school had become a Christian.

The first six months seemed to fly by. While Ruben was busy becoming acquainted with his responsibilities in the boys' school, Nora taught home economics classes in the Bunyore Girls' school. They enlisted the help of a young Kenyan girl to look after the girls. In their spare time from schoolwork those first few months, the Schwiegers began to help with village and mission church work. As often as possible they would go to Ingotse forty miles from Kima, to work on the old vacant house which was to be their home when they moved there .



#81 - Willa Rae - caretaker - Kathleen

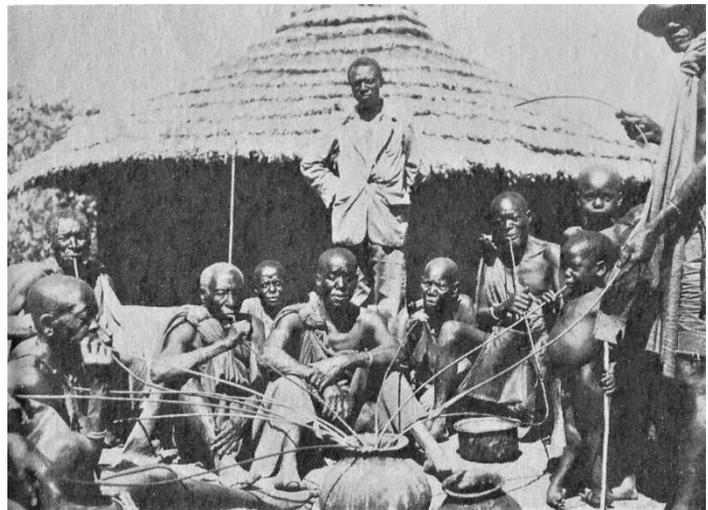
As time would allow, Ruben often went with Mr. Smith sharing in his work with the African church. One day Herman said, "Bwana, (the Swahili term used for Mister) would you like to go with me to dedicate a village church building?" Of course, he was glad to go.

By this time, Ruben had learned two words in the-local dialect, the greeting, 'Mirembe' (peace be unto you) and 'Nobulahi' (it is alright, or you are doing well) and naturally he tried to use these new words whenever there was an opportunity. When they arrived at the little village church, Ruben noticed two old men sitting outside, close to the building. By their appearance he knew they were not Christians. Each had just an old blanket draped over one shoulder. Each of the men was making something with his hands, something that appeared to be very well crafted. They were weaving small objects using fine strips of bark or reeds. So, wanting to be friendly and make himself known, Ruben approached the old men, shook hands with them, and said, "Mirembe". Then patting one old fellow on the shoulder, and pointing to his weaving, he said, "Nobulahi muno", (What you are making is good, very good). Herman began to smile and said, "Do you know what these men are making?" When Ruben said, "No".



#82 - Ruben looking at a beer stick

Laughing, Bro. Smith said, "They are making beer suckers or strainers. You just put your blessing on beer straws." He went on to describe a native beer drinking party. The men sit around in a circle on the ground or low stools with a large clay pot of beer in the center. Each drinker has a long hollow stick with a little woven strainer on the end submerged in the beer. The strainer is to prevent the mash from coming up into and clogging the long straw as the beer is sucked up. Ruben wrote later, "This was the first of my many embarrassing moments."



#83 - Native beer drinking party

The next one came not many days later. It was customary that, as soon as possible, new missionaries were asked to speak in the big church at Kima. On these occasions the big church which seats about two thousand would be full of people.

When Ruben was asked to speak, God directed him to the familiar text from Galatians chapter 6 verse seven. *'Be not deceived: God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.'* As many preachers did, he tried to put the concept in a modern form and said, "It may be best understood as, 'Don't kid yourself.'" quoting this text from a modern translation. Not knowing the language, Ruben had no way of knowing how the phrase would be translated. The missionaries told him later that the translation was, 'Don't have any more children.' And that was a bad social error because having many children was the only and best way for families to survive. Ruben wondered how many other similar or worse errors he made in those first years but, because of the love and politeness of the people, he was never told about them.

## Moving to Ingotse

On the 24th day of December 1947 the Schwiegers moved to Ingotse. Though the names of many locations in Kenya have special meanings, the name Ingotse does not. For example, Kijabe means the place of buffalo, Elukho means the place of a rock, and Nyanza the place of water. Ingotse is just a name given to a location in Butso, which is the area occupied by the Butso tribe, one of ten or so people groups generally referred to as the Luhya.

Ruben hired an old truck and driver to carry the boxes and furniture from Kima, where the family had lived for six months, to Ingotse. They drove 30+ miles north through the town of Kakamega, and on 2 miles further on the main Kisumu-Eldoret road, before turning west for 7 miles to the mission. On the ten acres of land, was a big old house which had been built by an earlier missionary named Bill Bailey.



#84 – Unloading cates from ‘lory’



#85 - William Bailey

At the lower end of the ten acres was a three-room primary school building James Murray had used for a school for neighborhood children. There was also a long low building that Mrs. Bailey had used for a “hospital”. And near the center of the plot and to one side there was a rock and mud church building with a grass roof. Other than an ox stall, a corn crib, and a small brick house that had served as a lying-in ward for the sick people, there were no other buildings.

Just after the first of the year, Ruben took Ruben Don on the train from Kisumu to Kijabe so he could start school in the second three-month term at Rift Valley Academy. He was placed in the first grade even though he had completed about six months of first grade already at Hobart, Oklahoma.

While at Kima, Ruben had spent the time getting to know the staff and students of the boys’ school and planning the construction of the buildings that would be necessary to accommodate the staff and students at Ingotse. The school would be located next to the abandoned mission station on the 30 acres provided by the chief and the community.



#86 - William & Lilly Bailey & their family

William and Lilly Bailey had a large family, and had built a large house with two bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, and large living room downstairs and six bedrooms upstairs. The first story was made of sun-dried brick laid up in mud. The upper story and half had walls made of two by four studding, lathed, and plastered with clay inside and outside. The roof was made of cedar shakes and in quite good condition, with no leaks during the heavy storms of the rainy season.



#87 – House built by the Baileys



#88 - James & Ruth Murray

James and Ruth Fisher Murray had been living at Kima, where all three of their infant children had died and were buried. James had helped start the boys' school and both he and his wife taught there. Ruth also operated the printing press, which produced teaching lessons and Sunday School literature. After William Bailey and his wife retired in 1934, the Murrays moved to Ingotse. Two years later Ruth died from Typhoid fever, and just four years after that, James died from blackwater fever, a virulent form of malaria. They also were buried at Kima.

The house needed a lot of work, but the Schwieger family moved in anyway. There was no other place to stay while they got the house fixed up. The biggest issue was the 8 ft. high anthill in the middle of the kitchen. The termites had obviously eaten one section of the kitchen cabinets and were working on one of the doors and its frame. So, with jembes (heavy short-handled grub hoes) and shovels, Ruben and local helpers removed probably a ton of termite mound. He then rebuilt the ruined section of cabinet, and repaired the door with lumber from the packing crates.

### School Responsibilities

Ruben's first task relative to moving the school was to finalize the purchase of the thirty acres of land for the school. This had to be authorized by the District Commissioner (a colonial administrator) who, after receiving Ruben's letter, sent a message saying that he planned to be at the mission on a certain day to conclude the transaction.

When the appointed day came, not only were the District Officer and a dignified old lady there, but most of the community. The meeting was a 'Baraza', (Kenyan Court) and, since the event had to do with land, the whole community turned out. The District Officer read from, and had translated, a paper stating the terms under which the original ten acres were set aside by the chief for a mission station. In the paper it was stated that all the trees went with the land, so they belonged to the mission.

That document also settled the issue for the old lady who had come to Ruben and said, "I have come to get the money for my trees". She then had pointed out some very large trees which grew on the ten-acre mission site. She had continued saying, "My husband, who is now dead, planted those trees, therefore they are mine", quoting an unwritten local law; '*Whoever plants a tree, to him it belongs, regardless of where and when it was planted*'. Ruben learned later that she was the first wife of the chief who had given the land for the mission station.

The task of bringing one hundred and five boys to a place like Ingotse, to a site which was nothing more than sandy and rocky soil literally covered with bush, to feed them, clothe them, house them, educate them and look after their every need seemed an almost impossible task. But Ruben, with the assurance he got from the scripture, '*With men that is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*', tackled the job.

Ruben Schwieger's basic operational philosophies can be attributed to growing up on a farm. Even though it was not much of a farm, it was enough of a rural setting, far from town, to qualify in the sense that, if any problem developed, it was up to the family; father, mother, and/or the kids to solve it. And, in Ruben's case, since his father was away much of the time as an itinerant preacher, church planter, and missionary, many tasks around the property fell to him.

Thus, the philosophy, which determined responses to situations that developed on the isolated mission station, was embodied in a couple of statements of belief:

1. There is a solution to this problem; we just have to find it.
2. I can fix that.



#89 – Hauling water with team of oxen

The first buildings that were needed were a classroom block and a teacher's house. Until teachers' houses were completed, two of the African teachers lived in houses on the mission, and two lived in their homes some distance from Ingotse.

Ruben started with the small three-roomed building which the primary school had used, designating it for classrooms. The old building which Mrs. Bailey had used as a lying-in ward for sick and an old ox-stall, would be dormitories. For a building to house the required carpentry and tailoring classes, and the kitchen and dining hall, he took down a corrugated iron building at Kima and reconstructed it at Ingotse.

The government had provided a small grant of one thousand pounds to build a classroom block. Rain water collected from the roof was stored in the tank.



#90 – Boys' School Classrooms

Ruben Schwieger soon found out that four yoke-of-oxen owned by the mission had been left in the care of an old man by the name of Rupia who lived a few miles from the mission. With these oxen, a walking plow, and a hundred and five boys, each with a jembe, they cleared off a patch of ground where the classroom block and offices would be built and also a plot to plant vegetables, cabbage, corn, and sweet potatoes for the boys' food. Ruben was amazed at how much work a hundred properly supervised boys could accomplish.

After three months, there was a visit from the Provincial Education Officer who made the remark, "I have never seen a wilderness turned into a Garden of Eden in such a short time".

To accommodate all of the students and staff of the school, it was necessary to build latrines. Although the latrines across the country were simply holes in the ground dug 8 to 10 feet deep, covered by a floor with a hole in the center, Ruben Schwieger thought this would be an opportunity to bring the school up to a higher standard. He would put a bench with a seat hole in each of the latrines like the outhouse he and the family used at the mission house. That would prevent the spillage and nastiness around the hole, something that was a problem keeping clean.

Problem solved, right? No, the boys simply climbed up on the seat, squatted there, and the same mess was just raised 18 inches off the floor. In order to solve the new problem, Ruben placed a board at a slant above each seat so the boys would have to sit; it was impossible to squat. Second problem solved, right? No. Again the boys would not sit, and could not squat, so messed on the floor in front of the bench. He gave up; this time he could not 'fix that'. He took the benches out, so the boys could use the hole in the floor as they were accustomed to, and then nearly everyone was happy.

It would not be accurate to think of Ruben Schwieger as a perfectionist, but there were some things that bothered him intensely. He embarrassed Nora greatly many times when, in someone's home, he would straighten a picture on the wall. Pictures, walls, bricks, tables, and chairs that were supposed to be level needed to be 'fixed', leveled and straightened. He had always been able to see, at a glance, that something was not level or square or, as he often said, 'not right-with-the-world'.

As he came to check on the construction of the school or church buildings, the bricklayers or carpenters would 'quake in their boots', or bare feet as was the case with most of the Kenyan workers. Without a level or even a plumb bob, he could see that the wall or door frame was not plumb. They soon learned that if the product was not 'right', they would have to tear down their work and start over. It was the same when he was teaching his son how to saw boards to help him or build something for himself. He would say, "You need to learn to see when the cut is 'square with the world.'"

There were four major buildings that needed to be built: a classroom block containing four classrooms and three offices, two dormitories, and a tailor/wood shop. In addition, there was a need for several teacher's houses. The first building to be built was the classroom block with the essential water tank to collect rainwater from the roof. Except for the teachers' houses, each was to be a brick building roughly 50 ft. long and 20 ft. wide.

At the beginning of the intensive building project to construct adequate buildings for the boys' school, Ruben had a hard time with the brick layers in particular. The brick layers moved too slowly in his estimation. They would each lay about 150 bricks per day.

Ruben could quickly see that, with the thousands of bricks to be laid, just building the walls was going to take three or four times the time he had planned on. One day he said to the head of the bricklayers, "You need to work much faster, in America a bricklayer can lay a thousand bricks in a day." Kristofa just shook his head, "Bwana," he said, "That is impossible."

When Ruben expressed his frustration to Frank LaFont, who had also been building for the Girls' School at Kima, Frank said, "If you are getting over 100 bricks a day, you have good men. Do not make them quit by demanding more. Have you taken a good look at the bricks they are using? They might be 3 in. wide at one end and 4 at the other. Our bricklayers back in the States probably could not lay a hundred of these either. Then look at the mortar, it is too thick, then too thin. We can not sift the sand very well, so it has small rocks in it. Anyway, that is what we all have to work with."

When Ruben got back to the worksite, he did, indeed, take a closer look at the materials and bricklaying process. It was just as Frank had said. The problem of bricklaying bothered Ruben, and he worried about it for a time. As usual, his focus centered on solving the problem. His basic philosophy guided his thinking: 'There is a solution to this problem. Through prayer and work, I can find the solution.' He decided, finally, on three initial efforts: get better bricks; get better sand; and make a better sifter. Fortunately, there was no shortage of good cement.

After several trials, Ruben crafted a better sifter that was a combination of different kinds of wire mesh. He made inquiries, and found brick makers who were using better molds and better clay and building the best firing towers. He even offered to build better molds for a brick maker who fired good bricks but did not have the tools to make good molds. Finally, he explored creek and riverbeds and made deals with landowners to get better sand. Gradually the bricklaying got better, so much so, that Kristofa was amazed. He and his crew were doing much better work and more quickly, though it was still agonizingly slow in Ruben's view. Although he had partially solved that problem, there were still many others to work on.



#91 - Firing bricks

One of them was lumber. Podo was a fairly soft wood that was suitable for window frames, doors, and rafters. The problem was that it was harvested, sawn into lumber, and sold quickly without being thoroughly dried. It was rough sawn and still had sap in it. Hammering a nail into it sometimes produced a small spray of sap onto the board around the nail hole. This meant that for finished work, a great amount of hand planing had to be done. There were no power planers available, and the wood had to be dried as much as possible before being worked.

There were also techniques that could be used to nail rafters together in such a way that cross-members and bracing would prevent the joists and rafters from twisting and warping as they dried in place. If this was not done carefully, the warping would cause the galvanized roof to develop waves and then leak.

## Medical Concerns

Within a couple of hours of the Schwiegers' arrival at Ingotse, they were alarmed by a sight they would never forget. The yard of the old house they were carrying boxes into was nearly filled with people, but not people who were there out of curiosity or to welcome them. They were sick, burning up with malaria fever, or had legs covered with ulcers. There were children too, many with their toes full of jiggers. Nora quickly realized that because there had been no missionaries stationed at the mission for some time, there had been no kind hands to treat the sick, no loving hearts to share a concern for the sorrowing, no outstretched hands to help in time of trouble, and no sharing of food in time of famine. Now new missionaries had come, and they were expected to help those who were suffering. Nora had had no training as a nurse. But she, like Ruben was a problem solver. Her major in college was Home Economics, and she did have a course in first aid, so she could at least help, although she knew that what was really needed was a doctor, a registered nurse, and a lot of medicine.



#92 - A badly burned child

There was always an open fire, for cooking and warmth, on the floor of a native house. Often children would fall into the fire and be seriously burned.

Obviously, none of that was available! So instead of unloading furniture, she pulled a sheet from one of the boxes, tore it into strips to use for bandages, found soap and water, washed sores, and bandaged them. Calling Ruben to help, she dug jiggers from the children's toes, painted the resulting holes with iodine and gave what quinine and aspirin they had to those with fever. They then had prayer for all of them and sent them home. Not many words were spoken because they did not know the language, but smiles, clean bandages, and prayers need no words. That was the beginning of a work which was to take most of Nora's time for the next five years, caring for the sick from the area around Ingotse, sometimes treating as many as a hundred people in one day. Often she would work late into the night preparing medicines, even washing



#93 - Nora treating an ulcer

That was the beginning of a work which was to take most of Nora's time for the next five years, caring for the sick from the area around Ingotse, sometimes treating as many as a hundred people in one day. Often she would work late into the night preparing medicines, even washing

out old dirty bandages, so as to have enough for the next day. People came with ulcers, burns, snake bites, intestinal worms, eye infections, and malaria. Nora tried to teach them the importance of cleanliness and not putting native remedies such as cow dung on scratches and scrapes.



#94 - Nora's clinic under the rubber tree



#95 - Nurse Vera Martin with patients at the new dispensary

For two years Nora took care of the sick people under a large rubber tree next to the house. The Women's Missionary Society ladies of Oklahoma, gave them money to build a small clinic about three hundred yards from the house. The building with two rooms, one for examination and the other for medicines and equipment, also contained a porch with benches for patients who were waiting. It, too, was quickly overcrowded, but at least Nora had a decent place to treat patients.

Ulcers, very large and deep open sores, were the most common complaint. Three-fourths of the patients had ulcers on their legs and feet. And at first when Nora told the patients to wash good with warm water and soap and to come for treatment at the first sight of a sore, they laughed her to scorn. Part of the problem was a lack of warm water and soap in most homes. Nora discovered that sulfur powder was a miracle drug for healing the large open sores and kept a supply on hand. With ripped up sheets for bandages, she wrapped hundreds of leg ulcers that she had treated with sulfur. As time went on fewer and fewer came with ulcers. After ten or fifteen years there were actually very few people with this type of ulcers.



#96 – Ulcers on leg

At first it was difficult for her to understand what the sick people were saying to her, and even more difficult for her to convey to the patients the instructions about how to take the medicine and the importance of cleanliness that she wanted to stress. To her great delight, there was a small naked boy who came to the clinic every day, not for treatment, but just to watch the missionary treat the sick. Nora soon discovered that somehow this little fellow could understand what it was she was trying to say to the patients, and he could translate into Olutsotso. This helped a great deal, so Nora gave the boy some clothes which he proudly wore to ‘work’.

Soon, however, Nora saw that she could no longer cope with the host of people that came for treatment every day, so she secured the help of a young lady named Marita, who had been to school and could speak English. She happened to be the first girl in the community who refused to let the witch doctor pry out her four lower front teeth, which was the custom in those days. She related that when it came time for her teeth to be removed, she ran away. Her father, who had become a Christian, did not force her to come back for that operation. Marita was a faithful helper in the dispensary for many years.



#97 - Nora's helper - Marita

Generally speaking, the Kenyans had very good teeth. Their diet contained very little sugar, if any, and plenty of roughage. However, on occasion, an older person would come to have Nora treat him or her for great pain in the mouth. There was nothing she could do but give aspirin. The usual problem was an abscessed molar. The people had never heard of a ‘daktari ya meno’ (tooth doctor) and anyway, there was none within 50 miles. Ruben decided to see what he could do to help Nora with the patients who had tooth problems.

Checking around with other missionaries and clinics, Ruben found some discarded dental forceps. Not really knowing how to extract an offending tooth, he went ahead and offered to pull the bad tooth of the next person who came with that problem. He first asked the person if he could pull her tooth and she said, “Ndio. Mara moja!” (Yes; Right Now!). He braced her head on his thigh, held it steady with his left hand, got a good grip on the tooth, and pulled it out. She did not make a sound. He then gave her a piece of rolled up cloth to clamp down on the empty socket. Ruben helped her stand up, gave her the offending tooth, and a couple of aspirin. With a little blood in her mouth, she thanked him over and over and said she was so happy that Butso now had a ‘daktari ya meno!’ (a tooth doctor). Apparently, she was quick to share around the community the news of her lack of pain and ability to eat normally again, because others came to Ruben when they needed help.



#98 - Ruben pulling a tooth

There were always problems to solve and both of the Schwiegers accepted the challenge. ‘We can fix it.’ They frequently said to each other. Checking with hospitals and clinics, Nora learned about medications, like sulfur powder for treating ulcers, and where she could obtain them. From doctors, nurses, and books about African diseases, she learned how to detect and treat various ailments, and how to create different kinds of bandages and wound coverings. Things like marshmallows, ketchup, mayonnaise, and peanut butter were not available, so Nora figured out how to make them. They repaired doors and windows, finding ways to seal them to keep insects, rats, and snakes out. They also learned of ways to remove the hives that bees created in the walls of the mission house. A topper for the back of the pickup was needed, so Ruben built one.

An acute need for a reliable source of water created another issue. Filling tanks by roof runoff from the school and mission buildings depended on rain which, during the dry season, was non-existent. Ruben learned all he could about gravity driven ram pumps. There were no waterfalls anywhere nearby, so Ruben experimented with damming small streams, but nothing worked until he discovered a large spring just a mile from the mission. There they could get a good supply of water for both the school, and the mission. This time the dam worked, providing enough drop to power the pump. Thus, with the help of God through nature, Ingotse now had a reliable and sufficient water supply.



#99 - Gravity driven ram pump

In most churches in the early days there were no chairs or benches. Most worshippers sat on the floor or perhaps on a half log. Certainly, there were no backs on the wooden benches that began to replace the logs in some of the larger churches. Ruben Schwieger thought 'I can fix that' at least for the new church at Ingotse. He spent many hours designing and building benches with back-rests and put them in the new building. Everyone was amazed, no one had ever seen benches like these. It was not long before this design was copied for other churches.



#100 - New church benches built by Ruben

### Language

Her daily total immersion in the local language by necessity in treating the patients at the clinic, enabled Nora to learn Olutsotso quickly and more practically than she would have from a text or in a class. Of course, she first learned the local names for various ailments and a good deal that was not in any textbooks. By listening carefully, repeating the strange sounds, writing down phonetic spellings, she quickly learned the vocabulary and how to speak the language. Later she checked out her grammar and spelling when a mimeographed text, compiled by missionary Grace Donohew became available.

Grace Donohew was a gifted linguist and began one of the first efforts to develop a complete text on the Luhyia language, with a vocabulary, dictionary, grammar, and pronunciation guide. She and her husband, Wick, lived at Kima, where Wick worked with the Church and was the mission secretary.



#101 - Grace and Wick Donohew

When Nora could, she would go to Kima to consult with Grace, and try to learn more of the language, but it turned the other way around. Grace quickly realized that Nora knew a great deal more about how the language was spoken and used in the villages, and how it did not always match the theoretical grammar. There were idiomatic expressions that either had not shown up or did not show up in the texts

that were being written. As a result, it was not long until Nora was called by the Language Development Committee to attend their meetings, and advise them on the Olutsotso variations in Luhya. Soon she was asked to serve on the team which was translating hymns in order to create a hymnbook for the Church of God.

For Ruben, the language story was very different. While they were at Kima where there was a good teacher for them, they started studying Luhya, the local tribal language. Actually, there were about a dozen small people groups who spoke Luhya with varying degrees of differences in certain words or expressions. After a few words of greeting anyone could tell which tribe the person came from. For example: In Bunyore, (Kima Mission area) people would say, 'Oriena?' asking how a person is. In Butso, the word was, 'Kariena?'

Ruben was immediately involved in teaching and administration in the boys' school, all in English. His time for study was very limited, and he had little opportunity to practice. To compound the problem, he was often dealing with businesses and businessmen who were not Luhya speakers. The trade language was Swahili. Very few Swahili words corresponded to Luhya words. His German was fairly good but of no help at all in Kenya. The necessity of using Swahili became even more important after he moved the school to Ingotse.

There he had no language teacher and even less time to dedicate to language learning. He found translators to help with sermons, work in the churches, and in managing the construction projects. He grew very close to and, appreciative of, an excellent translator, Ellison Eshitemi, who worked and traveled with him on a full-time basis. They became very good friends, as well as colleagues. Ellison translated teaching materials which were then mimeographed so people could have copies to take home after training classes. In preaching, they worked so well together that the sermons were, in effect, preached twice. Those who understood a little English got a double blessing.

As a result, Ruben never learned enough of either Luhya or Swahili to preach or teach in them. He often wished he had his son's ability in Swahili; Ruben Don had the advantage of learning it and a good part of Luhya from children on the mission station and from his friends at school. Ruben often found himself giving instructions to workers on the mission using two or three English words, some Luhya, and Swahili all mixed in together. A German word sneaked in occasionally too. It was undoubtedly amusing to the men when he would say, 'Pesi sana, hurry up, sasa hivi, zer gut' ('Very quick, hurry up, right now, very good.')

Communication with compounded language issues was usually a good source of amusing incidents. In the midst of a very busy day at the dispensary for Nora and Marita, the LaFonts arrived from Kima for a visit. Frank, Margaret, and Ruben went down to dispensary to see if they could be of any help to speed up the treatments, so that Nora and Marita could wrap up the day's work. Just as they got there, word came that, some distance down the path to the nearest village, a man who was on his way to the dispensary had collapsed. Giving them a thermometer, Nora asked Frank and Ruben to go and see if they could find the man, and take his temperature. That was first thing she would have to do anyway. She and Marita would follow soon, and Margaret would come too if she wished.

Frank and Ruben took the thermometer, and started down the path, and soon came to a mud and grass hut where a man was sitting outside in the sun. It was common practice to carry their sick out into the sun when they were ill, because they felt there was healing in the warm rays of the sun. Since the missionaries could not communicate with the man and he looked sort of sick, they just walked up and placed the thermometer in the man's mouth. He did not resist so they just stood and waited for the nurses to come. When Nora, Marita, and Margaret came. Marita started to laugh and explained that they had put the thermometer in the wrong man's mouth!



#102 - Frank & Margaret LaFont

When the Schwiegers reached Kenya, they were faced with the problem of schooling for their son. He was then seven years old and had completed most of the first grade before they left Oklahoma. The only school available to missionaries' children was Rift Valley Academy at Kijabe, two hundred and fifty miles away. Without even asking whether their little boy could enter the school, Ruben decided to take him there on the train, because their car had not yet arrived. However, he had written to Paul Lehrer, the principal, saying that they were coming. When they arrived at the train station some miles from the school, Mr. Lehrer was there with his old International pickup to meet them, even though it was 4:00 am.

The road from the station to the school was the worst road Ruben had been on for a long time, and driving it in the dark made it seem even worse. All he could think was, 'What on earth ever made any person choose a place like this for a school'? However, when the sun came up, he understood why the place was chosen for a mission site and for the location of a school. It was on the side of a ridge of hills over 7000 ft. altitude, with lovely trees and flowers in profusion, and always cool. There was clear spring water in abundance coming to the school by gravity from springs high up in the hills. There were no mosquitoes, and the view of the great Rift Valley thousands of feet below, was breath taking. With field glasses one could see herds of antelope on the plain beyond the ribbon of paved road winding its way up the escarpment towards Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, forty miles farther South.



#103 - Rift Valley Academy - classrooms, dining hall & dormitory

That morning Ruben enrolled Ruben Don in the first grade. Since the school year in Kenya began in January instead of in September like they do in the states, it was necessary for him to repeat the last part of the first grade. Ruben thought that the thing that took the greatest amount of God's grace, during their years on the mission field, was sending their children so far away to school.

When the children were small, they did not seem to mind it very much, because they were anxious to go to school and to be with other children. The Schwiegers had also tried to prepare the children for being away from home and Mom and Dad. Nora told Ruben Don that he must be like little Samuel in the Bible who went to live in the Tabernacle to become the Lord's helper, a story she had read to him many times. As the children grew older, it became as hard for them to leave as it was for their parents to send them away. They loved their home and their parents, and they realized how long it would be before they would be home again.



#104 - The train station in Kisumu



#105 - Willa Rae, Kathleen, Ruben Don

Every three months on the Kenyan school calendar, the first of January, May, and September, the children of missionary families in western Kenya, would board the train in Kisumu. The trip to Kijabe took all night. The children then spent three months at Rift Valley Academy, which was a boarding school for the children of European missionaries. At the end of March, July and November, they would make the return journey from Kijabe to spend a month of vacation with their parents.



#106 - The EAR & H train from Kisumu to Nairobi

While Nora was busy treating the sick people and, at the same time, making a home for Ruben and the two small daughters, Ruben was busy getting the schoolhouse built, teaching wood shop, mathematics, and English in the 8th Standard (grade). Beside that he had administrative tasks and the responsibility of looking after the boarding facilities. This latter part was no easy task. Each boy required two school uniforms, two blankets, food, and school supplies.



#107 - Nora treating a sick baby  
Note the make-do bottles for medicine

In the beginning, the government required schools to teach carpentry and tailoring to all three Standards. That made it convenient, because the tailoring teacher and his upper division class could make the school uniforms and save the money that would have been required to have a professional tailor make them. The wood shop teacher and students could build and repair desks and perform other carpentry chores around the school.

School was not without its amusing incidents. There was a boy in the 6th standard who was always sick, and finally he had to be dismissed and sent home. The boys always took great delight in using big words as soon as they learned some English so, it was not long after this boy had been sent home, that Ruben received a copy of a letter the boy had written to the District Commissioner, evidently seeking employment. The letter began, *'Dear D. C. I am glad to inform you that I am no longer horizontal, but I am now perpendicular'*.

The Schwiegers saw God's healing power often the first five years at Ingotse. Not only in their own family when Ruben Don was healed from rheumatic fever and Willa Rae from polio, but in the lives of many local people too. It was not uncommon for people to bring a sick person to the Schwieger's house late at night, perhaps to make the sickness seem more desperate.

One time late in the evening, a couple brought their little baby to the mission, because he was very sick. Nora wrote later: 'When I examined him, I knew I could do absolutely nothing for him. They had heard that I could give people injections which they call 'tsindani' ('the needle'). When Ruben came to see what the problem was, they said to him the same thing, "Nataka sindani, Nataka sindani", (We want a needle.) though in Swahili. I told them a "tsindani" would not help, even if I had any medicine.'

“I told Ruben, ‘I examined the sick baby and believe it is nearly dead.’ I then told the parents that I was not a registered nurse and could not give injections. Even if I could, I would not do it because the baby was very nearly dead, and the slightest shock would kill it. Both parents still insisted on an injection, but when they saw that it was impossible, they were very sad. I asked them if they would like Bwana Schwieger to pray for the baby. They finally agreed so he did, and I gave them a baby blanket to wrap the baby in, as they had nothing for the baby and very little themselves. I told them to bring the baby back the next morning. The parents walked away with their heads down probably saying, ‘If we only could get a tsindani’.” Early the next morning the parents came back with a well baby, thanking the Schwiegers who told them that God had answered prayer and healed their baby that night.”

On another occasion, Ruben was down in a well helping to brick up the sides, when one of the bricklayer’s sons rushed up to say, "Hurry home, father, my younger brother is dying". Ruben and Shadrack dropped everything, and ran as fast as possible the 1/2 mile to the home. There they found that the boy had lost consciousness. When they laid hands on him and prayed, he immediately came to and began to mend. The next day he brought lunch to his father who was again down in the well laying bricks.

Although Nora and Ruben had almost more than they could do with taking care of the sick, running the school, constructing buildings, and teaching, they had a burden for the lost. To deal with a part of the burden, Nora began to have worship and devotional services each morning with the sick people before starting to bind up their wounds. Nora realized quickly that the many people who came to the mission to have their physical ailments attended to were not having their spiritual needs met. There were no churches or pastors in the villages from which they came. Often, the distance was such that they would not walk to Ingotse for church on Sunday.



#108 - Nora's sewing class under the rubber tree

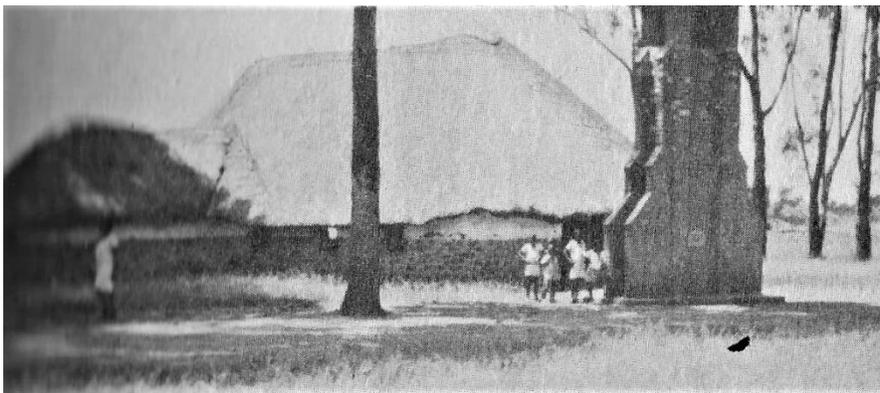
She arranged for short breaks in the treatment times, so that she could present the Gospel message in that informal setting to a captive audience. When possible, she would arrange for the pastor of the Ingotse church or Ruben to come to talk about God's provision for healing of body and soul. Many were saved as a result of this ministry, and some returned to their villages to begin churches there. Ruben began to have Bible classes for all who would walk for miles to come to the mission once a week. Some walked a round trip of fifteen miles to attend the Bible classes. One dear lady, although she was in late pregnancy, never missed class. These classes often provided opportunities to discuss some difficult issues, issues that were very troublesome to persons attempting to live Christian lives in a society struggling with traditional customs.



#109 - Nora's sewing class

One day there was a lesson on sacrifice, and Ruben was asked about a man in the village who had committed a crime and was to sacrifice an ox and distribute a piece of meat to each member of the clan. The question was: 'Should a Christian accept the meat and by doing so, would that person be supporting the idea that sins could be forgiven by sacrificing animals?' The lady, a new Christian, who posed the question, asked that the group pray for her, so that she could act as a Christian should and be an effective witness to her clan.

The first Sunday Ruben preached in the church building at Ingotse, he could not see even to read the text. The church building was made of low rock-and-mud walls, with a huge over-hanging grass roof, one door and two small windows. It was on this first Sunday that he said to himself, "With the help of the Lord, I am going to build a new church building here."



#110 - The old Ingotse church built by William Bailey in 1925.  
The Bell Tower built by James Murray in 1937.

## Building the Church at Ingotse

The Schwiegers were distressed by the condition of the church building where the Ingotse area people came to worship on Sunday. It was a mud building and very old. The mud had fallen out of the wooden sticks holding up the roof in some places, and the thatched roof had rotted away in places and had been eaten by termites in others. To enter, an adult had to bend nearly double and then sit on rickety split log benches. Even with a bright sun outside, it was too dark to read inside. Only the lay pastor had a New Testament. The congregation had memorized most of the songs and sang lustily. The African people love to sing. The tunes to the songs and hymns the Schwiegers knew were largely unrecognizable at first, but they gradually got used to the tunes and the words, and began to sing along too. Nora soon unpacked her small accordion, and began to accompany the singing. Gradually the congregation mostly adjusted their tunes to somewhat match the originals.

A short time later Ruben was visiting with Lima Lehmer and inquiring about the Murrays, because the Butso people were always mentioning them. She told him the history of their work in Butso and their sacrificial service there. James and Ruth Murray had been living at Kima where all three of their infant children had died and were buried. James helped start the boys' school, and both he and his wife had taught there. Ruth also operated the printing press to produce teaching lessons and Sunday School literature. They came to Ingotse in 1934. However, Ruth died in 1936 from typhoid fever, and four years later, her husband, James, died of blackwater fever. Both of them had literally given their lives in unselfish efforts to save and help the people living around Ingotse, always working under the most adverse circumstances. It was Brother Murray who began the primary school, and he taught, fed, and housed the twenty boys who were enrolled.



#111 - James & Ruth Murray



#112 - Salvaging rock from the old church

It was not long before Ruben and Nora helped the church leadership begin planning for the construction of a new building. From Lima Lehmer, they learned that, on his deathbed, Brother Murray had told Lima that his wife had a small life insurance policy, and that he wanted all of that money to be used to build a permanent church building at Ingotse. Immediately the picture of a new church building began to form in Ruben's mind—a building to be built in memory of Brother and Sister Murray. Lima suggested that Ruben write to the Board asking permission to use the money as Brother Murray had requested. The Missionary Board graciously granted Ruben's request, and sent the money within a short time. It was not enough to build the type of building that would be a fitting memorial to such great souls. Gradually as friends and churches in the States became aware of the project, other funds were received, and the vision began to become a reality.

On the hill where the boy's school's main building was now being constructed, there were a lot of granite stones. In fact, that was most likely the reason the chief had donated that land for the school. Corn could not be grown there, and houses could not be built there either. Ruben quickly realized that the rock could be put to good use. He could use the granite for the foundations of the school buildings and the church building too. The rock was right there, and there would be no cost involved in obtaining and moving it. The church men and women could provide the labor.



#113 - People carrying rocks for church foundation

Everyone, (men, women, and children,) who came to church on Sunday was asked to bring a rock, a rock as big as they could carry. The women who were used to carrying quite heavy loads on their heads, brought amazingly heavy rocks, and the children gleefully got into the act. It was quite a sight to see, lines of a hundred or more people arriving for church, each one carrying a rock. It was not long before there was a huge pile of rocks on the site chosen for the building. Ruben hired masons to construct the foundation, but surprised them when they finished it by instructing them to continue with the rock to build walls up to window level. From there up, brick was used to complete the walls. That meant that the only cost for the foundation and half the walls was mortar and labor. The normal cost for building the whole wall of brick was cut in half.

Nora and Ruben drew the plans for the building, and started out on faith, knowing that the love which the Church had for the Murrays would supply much of the labor and the rest of the money.



#114 - Cornerstone for the new church



#115 - C. Lowry Quinn

During the second year the Schwiegers were at the mission, the Murray Memorial Chapel was completed. Missionary Board President, C. Lowry Quinn was on hand to help lay the cornerstone and dedicate the building. When they learned that some of the money had come from the Murrays, they said, "We have never heard of a man giving a gift after he has died! He loved us very much".



#116 - Ruben inspecting brick walls

At first, there wasn't enough money to put on the desired metal roof, so they put on a grass roof. Many in the congregation along with Nora and Ruben found a place with plentiful roofing grass and had workdays for cutting and bundling the grass. A 'fundi' was hired to tie the grass bundles to the rafters and form it into a beautiful serviceable roof.



#117 - Nora helping cut grass for the church roof



#118 – Ingotse church under construction

Soon after the church was dedicated, a sound film was produced at Ingotse called, "Tower for Tomorrow". This tower is also a memorial to Brother Murray. He built it in 1937, and placed the bell in the top where it continues to ring faithfully not only for church services, but also to call the boys to school each day.

The text Ruben used in preaching the dedicatory sermon was: *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth': Yea sayeth the Spirit, they may rest from their labors, and their works shall follow them. Revelations 14:13.*



#119 - Bell Tower – 1937  
Built by James Murray



#120 - Murray Memorial Chapel completed in 1948

A few years later, the congregation had saved some money and there were gifts from friends who had seen ‘Tower for Tomorrow’, so Ruben began plans for a metal roof. There was also a need for additional space for Sunday School, small meetings, an office, and storage space. It was decided to build on a room to meet these needs, and put the iron roof on all at the same time.



#121 - Murray Memorial Chapel

## Living in Kenya:

Ruben wrote about learning many valuable lessons during his time in Kenya. One was from the soldier ants who marched to the stream where he was installing the ram (water pump).

The three-inch-wide column of ants came to the edge of the water. With their powerful pincers, several of them attached themselves to blades of grass on the bank, bent them over and allowed the next rank of ants to crawl over them, making themselves into a bridge. This allowed the army to cross over to the other side over their bodies. For Ruben Schwieger, it was a model of how the Church should give their lives in service to God and others.



#122 – Army ants

Actually, there were many lessons for Ruben on patience. One day the school workmen were sawing wood with a small cross-cut saw. When he saw that they were not getting the job done quickly enough, he said to the men, "Let me show you how to cut wood." Ruben sawed very fast for a few minutes, and then handed the saw back to the man and said, "See, that is the way to cut wood." The workman took the saw rather reluctantly, and said in a voice which matched his slow movements, "Yes, Bwana, but we have to do this all day long." Ruben realized, then, how foolishly he had acted and walked away, rebuked for his impatience, having learned a lesson.

Another time at a filling station, the attendant was extremely slow getting around to operating the pump. As usual Ruben was in a hurry. He said to the attendant, "Let me do this while you are thinking about it." He grabbed the pump handle, pumping as fast as he could, ignoring the attendant who was trying to stop him. When he went to pay, the station manager said, "Did you really want to fill your tank with diesel?" It was a costly mistake, and Ruben then had to pay to have the tank drained, for the diesel he had wasted, and for the tank of petrol (gasoline).

Another example of expensive impatience occurred when Ruben built a foundation for a thousand-gallon tank to catch rainwater. Impatient for the cement mortar to set, he decided to allow the rain water from the afternoon downpour to run into the tank. In the middle of the night, the family heard a crash outside the bedroom window. The cement had not had enough time to set, the foundation crumbled, and the tank was destroyed.

Ruben Schwieger had begun to learn his lesson on patience and, confessing his fault, prayed diligently for the Lord's help in overcoming this weakness.

Education of the children also became a concern. Ruben Don was in his second year at RVA where there was no room for Kathleen when she was ready for the first grade. They learned that thirty miles away, the Friends missionaries were starting a school for their children and that they would welcome another little girl to join the only child in the beginners class. The next year, there was room at RVA for Kathleen but not Willa Rae, so Nora taught her first grade at home.

It was during that year, that the Schwiegers received a letter from RVA saying that Ruben Don had contracted rheumatic fever, and would be sent home for at least two months of bed rest. Ruben recorded that the most heart-rending moment he ever had was loading Ruben Don into the car at RVA and driving away, leaving Kathleen, only seven years old, standing there in the schoolyard, alone, two-hundred and fifty miles from home.

The next school year had all the indications of being a happy one. All three children would be going to RVA. As they were getting ready to go to school, a polio epidemic struck. In December, Willa Rae came down with the dreaded disease. She lay all night crying, saying, "Daddy please pray for my head, please pray for my head". After much prayer, she finally became quiet and slept. When she got up and tried to walk, her right foot and the right side of her face would not function properly. The Schwiegers thought she might be able to go back to school with Ruben Don and Kathleen, but the doctor advised that she remain at home for further recovery. When the children took their physical examinations for returning to Kenya a year later, Ruben Don showed no trace of a weak heart and no one could tell that Willa Rae had had polio.

Russell Renz, who had come from the States to take Ruben's place as principal of the boys' school while the Schwiegers went on furlough became sick in March. The disease paralyzed both of his legs, and he and his wife were flown back to the States, ending his very brief missionary career. Luella, the six-year-old daughter of the Goodricks, missionaries at Kima, also contracted the polio virus and was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life.



#123 - Velma & Russell Renz



#124 - Schwieger family passport 1952

The Schwieger family adopted Boots as a puppy soon after they got settled in the big house at Ingotse in 1948. Boots was their favorite pet. During each furlough, he had to stay behind in Kenya, but was always there waiting for his 'people' to return. He lived to the age of 15 years.



#125 - Ruben Don and Boots



#126 - Ruben and Nora at Ingotse

## Changes

During the Schwiegers first furlough, May 1952 to July 1953, many significant changes took place in Kenyan society. The Mau Mau uprising seriously affected the central part of the country endangering the colonial government, European settlers, and schools. Rift Valley Academy was located in the area greatly affected, and Ruben Don returned to a school compound surrounded by a ten-foot-high barbed wire fence, with machinegun emplacements manned by British soldiers. The school had decided not to let small children return, so another school had to be located for Kathleen and Willa Rae.

A small school for missionary children in northern Tanganyika on the southern shore of Lake Victoria agreed to take the girls, who rode the Victoria Lake steamer to school and back every three months. After two years at Mara Hills school, when the Mau Mau 'emergency' was over, RVA was again opened for all children. For the rest of their schooling, all three Schwieger children attended school together and eventually graduated from RVA high school there.

The Ministry of Education had also made some major changes. Junior Secondary schools were abolished and intermediate and high schools established. The government took over responsibility for all schools, but allowed missions to continue providing staff and administration.

When Ruben returned to Ingotse, he found that a Kenyan had been appointed interim headmaster, the government education funding had been cut in half, and the boarding grants from the government were being decreased gradually, so that the school would become a day school instead of a boarding school.

The Provincial Education Officer told Ruben that he could return to the headmaster's position if he wished, and was given two weeks to decide. After prayer, Ruben felt that God was opening the door to a new path of service, giving him the opportunity to go into full-time church-related work. He notified the PEO of his decision, and made the major change in direction.



#127 - Nora leading a Bible Study for a group of village women

Another government policy change was that only medically trained persons would be allowed to operate medical clinics, including the one Nora had created. Thus Nora, as well, was free to devote her time to work with the women in the Church and develop a Sunday School ministry. For her it was an opportunity to expand and develop a ministry to women more fully.



#128 - Nora teaching the women to sew

During their first term, the Schwiegers had often become a bit impatient because the work of the school and clinic kept them from spending as much time as they would have liked with the work of the Church. Now they were free of those time-consuming tasks, and were thrilled with the new challenges. Their burden for the lost and the Church, never far from their minds in the first five years, now became foremost.



#129 - Nora teaching Bible stories to the children with flannel graph pictures she had drawn

## Chapter 8: 1953 – 1967

### Full-time Church Work in Kenya

In 1947 when the Schwiegers came to Butso (the name given to a location which is approximately thirty miles long and ten miles wide occupied by people who speak 'Olutsotso'), there were thirteen small struggling Church of God congregations. No congregation had a permanent building. It was still little changed when they returned from furlough in 1953. Now that they had full time to give to the Church, they began to determine what they could do to be most effective in building the Church. First Nora and Ruben requested and were granted permission from the Mission staff and Missionary Board to be released from the school and medical responsibilities so they could focus on strengthening the Church. With their new mandate in hand, they then asked all the Butso church leaders to come to the mission for Bible classes, pastoral training, and discussions about the Butso Church and its future. They realized that, initially, missionary leadership was critical, but that indigenous leadership was an even more critical need if the Church was to grow and develop.

Three concerns were immediately evident. There were serious needs for Bible teaching, for places to worship, and for evangelism, bringing the Church into more communities. It was impractical, sometimes impossible, for people to walk all the way to Ingotse, meet for a couple of hours, and walk back home the same day. There were no local resources and no funds in the congregations for building church buildings. There were also transportation difficulties in getting workers to new locations to evangelize. The Schwiegers and church leaders decided that, at the beginning, the Schwiegers would bring the Bible classes to central, easy-to-walk-to villages. In those classes and on Sundays, they would teach tithing and church money management, and assist Christians to witness in the community and beyond. While Ruben was teaching the men, Nora would teach and help the women with their concerns.

Where they had to walk greater distances, they would carry their bedding, Bibles, song books, and Christian tracts, and make their way to far away villages where there were no roads. They knew that people would be honored to feed them and give them a place to sleep. Often, they slept on smeared cow dung floors. In one place, Ruben was offered a small bed, but persuaded one of the pastors to take the bed instead, because he reasoned that the floor looked more comfortable.

The Schwiegers knew that cow dung-smeared floors were usually of hard earth with the topping made of a mixture of clay and cow dung. When aired and dried, a well smeared floor is difficult to distinguish from one of cement. It is smooth, every bit as hard, and even about the color of cement. A properly smeared floor was a protection from jigger fleas. These very small black fleas lived in dust and attacked people's bare feet by burrowing under the skin, usually around the toenails. When they have laid a bag of eggs, the feet begin to itch like fury. The maddening itch can be ended only by carefully digging out the flea and the



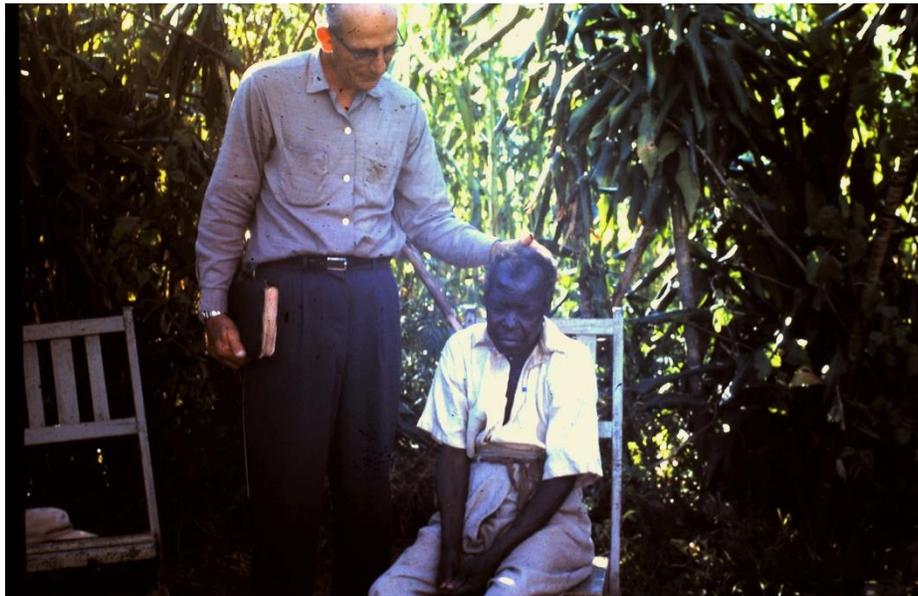
#130 – Foot infected by jiggers

bag of eggs, so as not to burst the bag. If the eggs are released and hatch, the fleas multiply, setting up a serious infection that could even cause a person to lose a foot.



#131 – African women quilting

Eventually Ruben and Nora settled on a schedule they found effective. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, they would go to a village where from 9:00 am. until 11:00 am. Nora would meet with the women of the village, teaching them how to sew, all about the Bible, Christian life in their homes, and how to work in the Church. Ruben and the pastor or other leader would visit homes in the community and return at about 11:00 am., and then teach a Bible lesson to all who would come from the village. They followed the same procedure in another village nearby in the afternoon. In that way they were able



#132 – Ruben praying for a sick man

to meet with all the churches in four or five weeks. They would, then, start the circuit again. They often would also go to a village for a weekend, and before preaching on Sunday, they would conduct informal education with church leaders and others from surrounding areas. The home visits gave Ruben opportunities to pray for the sick, to help with family problems, and often help someone find Christ as his or her personal Savior.



#133 - Baptismal service at the river

The pastors and people in the Church were very anxious to learn, so that the Schwiegers had big crowds everywhere they went. Everyone recognized that these missionaries wanted to teach, and taught in unusual and interesting ways. Ruben and Nora were educators at heart. They taught with stories from the Scripture using flannel graphs and familiar objects. It was much different from the rote repetition practiced in the schools.

Usually around Easter time, those who had become Christians and taken classes during the year, would be scheduled for baptism. The Church leaders would find a river or dam up a creek and come together for a mass baptism. There were often several dozen candidates and large crowds would gather, especially if the event was near a road where many people walked.

Working with the congregations and leaders was like starting at the most basic beginnings in all facets of Christian life. The pastors, though very sincere, had no training. Some did not have even a primary school education and could not read. Many did not have a copy of the Bible or New Testament. That lack was compounded by the language issue. The only Bibles available were expensive and were in Swahili. The Luhyia people did not speak Swahili, except in a very limited way to buy and sell, and then would speak that language only if absolutely necessary. There was very little written in Luhyia; the people communicated orally. As missionaries began to translate the Scriptures and songs into Luhyia, the Gospels became available first, then Psalms and gradually other books. That did not help immediately, because most people could not read anything, much less their own language. This began to change as more young people went to school. Furthermore, all the schools were in English from Standard I (1<sup>st</sup> grade) on up.

Ruben discovered that churches had practically no financial arrangements. Money, of course, was generally scarce and the church people had very little. On a good Sunday, the offering in a typical church was 1 shilling (about twenty U.S. cents). It was understood that the pastor could have whatever came in as offerings, and no account was kept of the money or other gifts. Some churches collected harvest offerings, some of which also went to the pastor or to unfortunates in the congregation.

On one occasion, two men came excitedly out of the ‘bush’ (very rural and backward area) and said they would like for Ruben to conduct a funeral. He followed the men to the place where two large groups of people were gathered, one group off to the side separated from the other. They were dressed a bit differently, and most of them had spears, sticks and clubs and all were wailing. The second group sat quietly under a tree, surrounding the corpse of a woman who had died before she could give birth to a baby. This second group was singing some Christian songs. The spokesmen explained to all of the people that this was the new missionary who had come to help them solve their dispute. Then he told Ruben what their problem was. The husband of the woman who had died was a Christian, but the woman was not a Christian. The heathen relatives were demanding that the baby be removed from the body of the dead woman and be buried in a separate place as their custom was. The Christians maintained that the woman be buried as she was. What does the missionary say? Quietly Ruben asked God what to do. He always believed that he and God were in this work together, and he was making *Paths for Him*. The answer came. "Bury the woman as she is!" and this is what was done, without any further arguing.

Ruben and Nora were blessed with good health most of their lives including their twenty years in Kenya. They lost no days of work due to malaria or any other of the many diseases endemic to East Africa. They always felt the Lord’s protection and care when there were various accidents, even those that did require hospitalization or time off from their work.

There were not many snakes at Ingotse, but on one occasion, Ruben cut a stalk of bananas. While carrying it to the house, he noticed a green mamba, coiled up between two hands of bananas. The poisonous snake did not even attempt to strike his hand which was only a few inches from it.

On a trip to bring a supply of kerosene to the mission, a truck sideswiped Ruben’s pickup, not hurting



#134 – Ruben’s red pickup

him, but damaging the pickup and spilling some kerosene. The ‘panel beaters’ (body shop) in Kisumu said that they could repair the back fender, but could not paint it red like the rest of the truck. That color of paint was not available. They painted the repaired fender black and the other back fender black to match. When Frank LaFont and Herman Smith saw the red truck with two black fenders, they had a good laugh. Who would drive a red truck with two black fenders?

One time Ruben did miss preaching at a revival service. He had stopped at the Mwihila station to help saw up some of the trees with his chain saw. When the blade went through a bent limb, the end sprang up in his face, breaking his nose, bending his glasses, and knocking him down backward. After his bruised face healed, he was left with no scars and his nose was straight.

Another accident occurred while he tried to get the mission tractor started. When he hooked up the spare battery, the tractor started on its own. His foot was caught under the back wheel which knocked him down, ran over the length of his leg, across his midsection, and over his shoulder just missing his head.

Nora took him to the hospital where the doctor said, "Amazingly, you have no broken bones or internal injuries, only some bruises which will heal in a few days."

The Schwiegers were presented with some unusual and puzzling situations that came from being involved with traditions and superstitions deeply embedded in the culture where they worked. They were glad when these encounters provided opportunities to share the Gospel and to model Christian behavior and faith.

During a Bible class a man related that there was a tree that had blown down in a storm, and then rose up again all by itself. Because the local people regarded any unusual phenomenon as the work of evil spirits, Ruben felt it important to investigate and asked to be taken to the tree after class. One of the men said "I know that it is a Spirit in that tree that caused it to rise again, and the spirit causes other things to happen in that community. A pure white goat appeared one day." He continued, "A little boy ran after it and the two disappeared. A big rock also disappeared. The people of the village live in fear of the spirit."

After the class some of the men guided Ruben to the tree. Afraid to disturb the Spirit, a spokesman, in a hushed voice, said, "This is the tree." It was evident to Ruben that the tree must have been blown down by a strong wind, but not completely uprooted. When the women came and cut off all the branches for firewood removing the weight from the top, the tree had raised back up partially and assumed a leaning position. He tried to reassure the villagers that the tree's changes in position were due to natural events and that spirits did not dwell in trees, but some people were still not convinced

"Pray for us", one mother said, "that God will drive the devils away that come into my hut at night and fly around and keep me awake". When asked what these devils looked like. She said, "They are just little black things with wings, and they scare me so. I know they are sent to bring some evil to me". When Nora asked about bats and described them to her, it became clear that she regarded bats as demons or evil spirits.

In addition to fear of the spirits and ascribing natural occurrences to demons and witchcraft, there were difficult practical problems for missionaries to try to help with. A young mother in one of the churches presented the Schwiegers with her serious situation. She and her children were slowly starving, because her husband had gone to the city to work, and was not sending any money back home. Ruben and Nora found the man's parents and firmly reminded them that they would have to repay the dowry unless the young man took care of his family. It was not long before the mother and children began receiving the financial support they needed to live on.

A polygamist with seven wives called Ruben to come and help him become a Christian. Ruben told him that, according to the teachings of the Bible, a Christian should have only one wife. If he were to become a Christian, he would have to remain with the first woman, who was his legal wife, send all the rest away, and support them but not live with them. He said that would be too hard. Ruben told him that, with men things seemed impossible, but that with God everything was possible. The man, however, went away sorrowful, not willing to pay the price. Ruben Schwieger did not know then that, what he told the man, would later become the rule of the General Assembly of the Church of God in East Africa regarding polygamists who became Christians.

The letter handed to Ruben was addressed to 'Mr. Sika, missionary, Ingotse'. Many Kenyans could not pronounce 'Schwieger', let alone spell it. The brief letter said only, 'Bwana you must speak at the wedding of Brown Tsuma at 10:00 A.M. sharp tomorrow morning at the Ematioli Church.' The typical bluntness Ruben attributed to a literal translation of phrasing that would have been much more polite if stated in Luhya. He sent a note back accepting the 'invitation', saying he would be there 10:00 A.M. the following day.

There was no one at the church when they arrived, but a man came to say, "The bridal party will soon be here." Thinking the wedding was off, they were getting ready to leave after noon when another person came and said, "Come over to my house for tea, I am sure the wedding will start soon". Finally, at 2:00 P.M. the bridal party arrived in a truck. The bride and the groom were in the front seat with the driver, and the back of a truck decorated with sunflowers, sweet potato vines and banana leaves was filled with singing girls.

Everyone climbed down from the old truck, brushed off the dust which had accumulated on their clothes during the journey. The bride, dressed in a long white gown carrying a bouquet of flowers in one hand and a black umbrella in the other, the groom, and the witnesses were ushered into the church where the preacher waited. Everyone else stayed outside while the preacher filled out a marriage certificate, and hunted through a jar of assorted sizes of rings to find one that would fit the bride.

Ruben was not sure what his role was, but after the preacher performed a short ceremony, an interpreter said, "Now is your chance". Schwieger took the opportunity to speak briefly on 'Love', love in the home, love of husband for his wife, and wife for her husband, love of parents for their children and vice versa. He had no idea if that kind of a message was expected, but the crowd's response made him believe that he had done a good thing.

Invited to another event which Ruben and Nora understood to be a wedding, they were perplexed at seeing no bride and groom. This time they had someone who could explain the situation. The man said, "No. This is not the actual wedding; it is what we call the girl's feast. The wedding will not be for a couple of weeks yet. The girl has invited her relatives and close girlfriends, and has prepared a feast for them. You have been invited to speak and, in your speech, you are to tell all of the nice things you know about the girl". Ruben's problem was what to say? He had never seen the girl before and knew only that she was one of our pastor's daughters. He generalized, talking about all the nice characteristics good girls and women have as described in Proverbs 31. The message may not have meant much to the bride, but her parents were pleased.

Another puzzling wedding situation developed when Kristofa (Christopher) stopped Ruben's car on the road one day. After the usual greeting he said, "I have an urgent request to make". Continuing he said, "I have been everywhere trying to hire a car to take my niece and her husband-to-be to our pastor to get married. Could you help me?" Ruben readily agreed.

It was very late when Ruben and Nora reached his home. There they found his tearful niece dressed in her wedding gown and weary of waiting all day. They quickly helped her into the car and drove to the fiancé's place, only to find that they would have to drive on to another place. It was dark by the time

they found the fiancé and arrived at the run-down church where the wedding was to be. Then there was another long wait while the pastor was found and brought in with a dim lantern. Finally, the old feeble pastor, who had no rings, pronounced the couple husband and wife, and the Schwiegers, feeling sorry for the young couple, and were able to take them to where they would spend the rest of their first night.

Nora and Ruben were able to help significantly grow and strengthen the Church all across Butso. In time a handful of small struggling congregations grew to 30 then 50 and, finally, not long after they left Ingotse in 1967, the Church leadership reported 90 congregations in that area. Soon they were in demand to work with the churches that had been formed by Luhya people in cities and towns across Kenya. Many people had left their rural villages and farms to find work in the cities and towns. During school holidays (April, August, and December), Ruben Don was able to accompany his father to the cities of Nakuru, Naivasha, Kericho, and Kisii. They would meet with the congregations on Sunday and with the church leaders in the evenings or Saturdays when they were off work. Occasionally they would stay in members' homes, but most of their homes were not large enough for company. If necessary, they would find a hotel or guest house in the area, and spend a week with each group. These in-person visits were always exciting events, and the people really appreciated and readily accepted down-to-earth teaching.

In the late fifties, Obed, a Christian from the Kima area, began evangelistic work among the Kisii people about 100 miles south of Kima. Following his lead, missionaries, Lima Lehmer and Lydia Hansen would travel to Kisii, and stay for a week at a time to teach and preach and start churches. They built a small safari house at Ibeno, nine miles south of the town of Kisii. Ibeno eventually became a mission station where a Bible Training School was established.

Later Sam and Jane Betts served there for four years. Simon and Mae Robinson, pictured, followed them, but at this particular time there were no missionaries stationed there. When the Kisii Church called Ruben to come minister there, he took a translator, Obed and three Luhya pastors, and journeyed to Ibeno, making it headquarters for ten days of evangelistic work. He wrote, 'This evangelistic trip was one of the high lights of my missionary experience. From the very beginning God began to work, saving and healing people.' Obed was a great help since he knew the area local customs and the Kisii language.



#135 - Mae & Simon Robinson

As was the case in some of the remote areas of Butso, to reach many of the places they had to walk, carrying bedding, Bibles, song books, and Christian tracts in Swahili. They knew that the people would feed them and give them a place to sleep. Here, too, they slept on smeared cow dung floors most of the time.

Word quickly spread so that at every village, the people of Kisii had been notified in advance that missionaries were coming. Every place they went, large crowds gathered. Usually, Ruben would preach the first sermon, and then two of the pastors who came with him would stay and conduct two more days of meetings. Ruben would go on with the translator to another place and prepare the way for the next two pastors. In this way, the team moved over the area, making it possible to have several days of meetings in ten different places scattered over the entire Kisii area.

At one village, while the team was having tea, a woman such as Ruben had never seen, and would never want to see again, came and said that she had heard a missionary was there and she wanted to be prayed for. She wore just a rag about her hips, and because of the disease of elephantiasis affecting her breasts, they were several times the normal size. She was hobbling along with a cane, and with her shaven uncovered head, she really made a sight to behold. The team left their tea and laid hands on her to pray for her healing. Then Ruben said to her, "We are going to have services here under the trees tomorrow, and we would like you to come". She said, "I would like to come, but I am ashamed to come dressed like this". When Ruben asked, "Would you come if I got you a dress?" She said that she would. He thought, 'Now where was he to get a dress? If this place were near home, I was sure that my wife would give her one of her dresses or perhaps I could find one in a shop somewhere, but here in the wilderness? I began to feel that I had spoken out of turn. It was not unusual in Kenya even in those days to find some Indian shops here and there even in most remote paces. So, I asked some of the men from that area if there were any Indian shops anywhere nearby'. Ruben found a dress at a duka (small shop) and gave it to the lady. She was delighted and the next day came to the meeting where she became an excited Christian.

In thinking about financing in churches, Ruben formulated a plan for teaching tithing and financial management that included organizing and presenting a program for churches across the country. He talked with Wick Donohew, the mission Secretary, and Frank LaFont, who was working with the churches in Bunyore. Both agreed that the plan was workable, and Ruben was given the privilege of travelling to most of the Churches of God in Kenya and Uganda to help churches set up the system. He talked and preached tithing so much during this time that, when people saw him coming, they said, "Here comes 'Bwana likhumi' (Mister tenth)". As they implemented the system, congregations began to grow and prosper not only financially, but became awakened to the need for pastors' institutes, revival meetings, and the training of secretary-treasurers. New fields of service began opening for many in the Church.



#136 - Women bringing their offerings of corn to the church  
Women traditionally carry very heavy loads on their heads.

Often a church would specify a certain day when tithes from farm produce and farm animals could be brought to the church. On the appointed day, people would arrive with baskets of corn, a calf or two, and goats. They would also bring eggs and chickens. As soon as money began to come into the church treasury, the church began to think about obtaining windows, doors, and benches for their buildings. Through revivals, and regular village visitation, the number of churches in Butsotho doubled.

When there was a nucleus to work with, an application was sent to the Local Native Council asking for permission to build a building. Often the person who brought the group together, donated a plot of land where the building would be located. When permission was granted, the missionary was called to 'measure' the building. That involved staking the land where the building would be placed and laying out the site for digging the foundation. The first building erected was always small and made of mud and grass. Small holes were left in the walls for windows and a larger hole in one end for a door. This type of a building was made by digging holes in the ground with a panga (a machete), about two feet apart into which poles tall enough for walls were placed. Then a framework of poles was erected on top upon which grass was laid for the roof. This done, reeds or small branches were woven in and out along the posts which formed the walls to hold the mud.



#137 – Wall poles being installed



#138 – Women carrying the mud

The women folk usually did the mudding by digging up some earth, pouring in water and treading it with their feet until it became a thick sticky mixture. This mud was then carried by hand and pressed in between the reeds to form a solid wall. The second and third coats of mud were thrown against the wall, and each hand full smoothed over with the fingers of the hand being used as a trowel, until the walls became as smooth as cement. When dry, they were almost as hard. After the walls were done, a hard clay floor smeared with a clay-and-cowdung mixture would be prepared.

While it was the work of the women to do the mudding, it was the men's work to cut and tie grass bundles for the roof. Stems of grass would be tied into small bundles about the size of a man's wrist. The 'fundi', a skilled worker, would then place these small bundles of grass on the roof and tie them with strips of bark or rope. The process was somewhat like putting on shingles. After the bundles were all properly placed and tied, the 'fundi' would go over the roof again smoothing the ends of the grass with a special board, which was like a trowel but notched on the lower side. It took a skilled workman to put on a nice grass roof.



#139 – Mudding the wall

When the Schwiegers began working with the churches, there was not one permanent church building in all of Butso, not even on the mission station. The few small church buildings were of mud and thatch construction. Inside there were no chairs or benches. At the front there was usually a homemade chair and a table for a pulpit. These were brought from the pastor's house each Sunday morning. As the tithing system began to work, the people started to use some of the money for doors, windows, and benches and give a small salary to the pastor.

Nora used the improving of the church buildings to a great advantage in teaching the women. Especially during the rainy season, they moved inside for their classes. As the women began to earn money from their sewing, Nora encouraged them to set aside a portion of the funds to start building funds for the local churches.

The construction of the first permanent church building in Butso took place in the small village of Ebushili, where the little mud and thatch building had collapsed. The congregation asked if Ruben would help them plan a semi-permanent building of brick or stone with a grass roof, or mud walls and iron roof. He told them that theirs was a good idea, and that he would help. Ruben said, "Here is what I will do. If you will agree to build a permanent building, I will furnish the doors and windows, and will give some help with the iron for the roof." The congregation worked hard, and it was not long before they had a brick building with a cement floor and an iron roof. Other congregations asked for the same agreement, so that, in twelve years, almost all the congregations had permanent buildings. Some used the half-rock, half-brick plan used on the Murray Memorial building at Ingotse, and some built with all rock when that was available.

When Wick Donohew retired, Clair and Retha Schultz came to Kima to replace the Donohews. Brother Schultz served as Mission Secretary and developed a five-year Church Advance program similar to the one he had led in Trinidad. The program was begun in 1964. With the church building efforts well underway, the Church was able to devote its attention to advancing in ministry and evangelism.



#140 - Clair & Retha Shultz



#141 - Ruben Schwieger with Butso Elders  
Shadrack Shitseswa Paulo Tsuma Fanuel Shiloli

### Travels

The interest in and enjoyment of travel and seeing unique and interesting sights started with Nora. Her trip with her father and sister while she was still in college, started her on a life-long quest. That trip took them from rural Oklahoma to Los Angeles and Catalina Island, up the coast through the redwood forests, to Seattle, and Canada. Coming back, they visited Yellowstone Park and saw Old Faithful. While in Hawaii, she toured several islands, and worked on one of the massive pineapple plantations.

It was not surprising, then, that Nora and Ruben, tried to take advantage of the unique opportunities for interesting experiences and sights available to them in Africa and on their way back and forth to the States. First of all, they enjoyed travel within Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. There were many unusual things to see as well as places of special significance and interest along the way. Seeing some of these sites did not require long trips.

About 8 miles from Ingotse, there was a near spherical rock, probably 60 ft. in diameter. It appeared to be so precariously balanced, that anyone could push it off the huge, partially buried rock it rested on. In fact, several men teamed up and all pushed, but could not move it.



#142 – Spherical rock



#143 – The Crying Stone of Ilsei

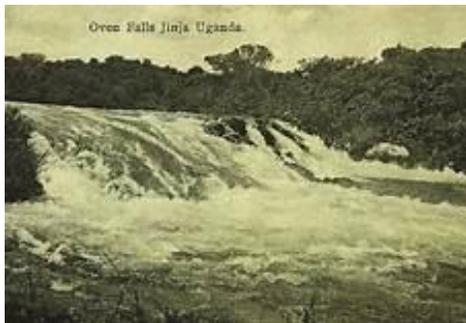
Another unusual sight can be seen perched on a ridge about two miles south of the town of Kakamega. “The Crying Stone of Ilsei” is a large boulder balanced on a column of rock, with water flowing from a groove at the top. It resembles a gowned figure perpetually in tears, flowing from head to toe.

Down on the plains, they came across a miles-long crack in the earth caused by an earthquake the night before.



#144 – Crack from earthquake

Not far into Uganda there were three waterfalls of note, all on the Nile River. Traveling west, the first two were near each other at Jinja. Owens Falls and nearby Ripon Falls were the start of the White Nile where Lake Victoria spills out to start the western branch of the great Nile. This branch flows north into the great Sudan swamp and joins with the Blue Nile coming out of Ethiopia at Khartoum in Sudan.



#145 - Owens Falls



#146 - Ripon Falls

The third was Murchinson Falls. There was a narrow iron bridge over the river where people could stand and watch the whole Nile flow beneath them through a gorge that is very deep but only about 20 ft. wide. It is quite a sight.



#147 - Murchinson Falls

During their first term, the Schwiegers, with the LaFonts, who felt much the same way about travelling to see interesting places, took the first of two major trips in Africa. The first was through Uganda, across the Nile River and into Congo, to visit with missionaries and to see the pygmies. The trip involved crossing many rivers on platform rigged dugout canoes that would be poled across carrying the cars one at a time. At one place, the natives along the road were holding out baskets of ripe strawberries for sale. The fresh strawberries were an irresistible treat, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.



#148 - Nora with the pygmies in the Congo



#149 - The LaFont family at the Blue Nile River



#151 - The Spectacular Victoria Falls



#150 - Dr. David Livingstone

The second major trip in Africa was a nearly 5000-mile round trip south through Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia to Victoria Falls and the David Livingstone memorial. From there they went on into Southern Rhodesia to the Zimbabwe ruins, and the site of an ancient civilization.



#152 - Zimbabwe Ruins

Travel home for the first furlough took them through the Red Sea and Suez Canal, and halfway across the Mediterranean to Genoa, Italy. From there they went by train north to see the leaning Tower of Pisa, then on to a tour of the sights in Rome, the Pantheon, Colosseum, catacombs, and, near the Appian Way, the prison where Paul and possibly Peter were held. They also visited St. Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican and St. John's cathedral where devout people climbed the 50 steps up on their knees, offering a prayer for each step.



#153 - Nora & the children in Rome



#154 - St. Mark's Square in Venice

From Rome, they went by train to Venice to see the canals and ride on one of the gondolas. In St. Mark's square they saw the stately arcades and restaurants spilling out into the plaza, the Basilica de San Marco, and, in the center, a huge bell tower.

The trip across the English Channel brought them to London, where Nora wanted the family to see Madame Tussauds Wax Works, the tomb of David Livingstone in St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace and the changing of the guard, and Trafalgar square, in addition to the Royal Botanic Kew Gardens, just outside of London. All of these sites were of great interest, because having been in Kenya, a British colony, they had heard much about special places in England.



#155 - the Queen Mary

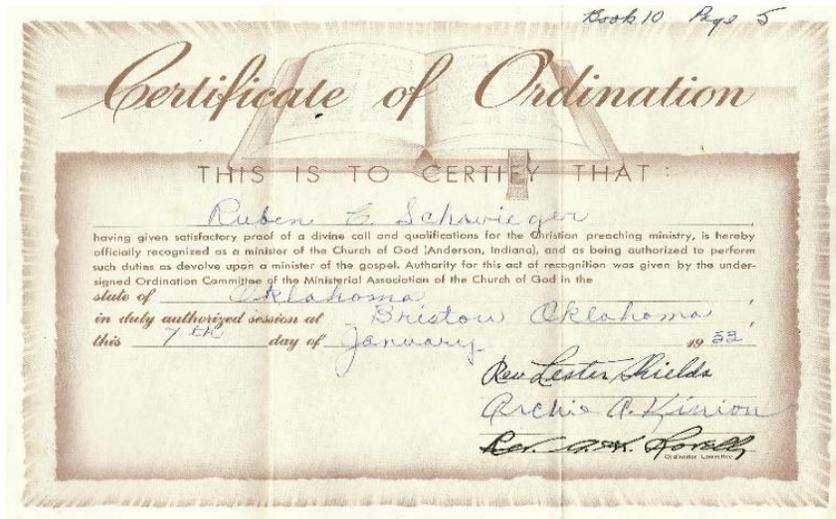
From London, they took the train to Southampton to catch the Queen Mary with rooms on "C" deck and, sailing into New York, passed by the Statue of Liberty.

The 1952-1953 year was spent traveling from their home base, the Bristow, Oklahoma campgrounds to all the churches in Oklahoma and others in surrounding states. On a trip to see Ruben's parents in Portland, Oregon, there were additional churches to visit along the way in Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. At the Oklahoma State Camp meeting at Bristow in August, 1952, Ruben Schwieger was ordained with the prayers of dedication given by dear friends and fellow ministers.



#156 – Ruben’s Ordination

Seated: Ruben C .Schwieger, Kenneth Gable and C. S. Trunbull  
 Standing: Archie Kinion (hand on Ruben’s head) 2<sup>nd</sup> man?, 3<sup>rd</sup> man possibly K. D. Byers  
 Far right: A. G. Lovell saying prayer.



#157 - Ruben's Certificate of Ordination

On their return to Kenya in 1953, air travel was possible but more expensive than travel by sea. When the Schwiegers suggested that they travel by ship to South Africa, around the Cape and up through the Indian Ocean to Mombasa, the missionary Board agreed, and said that fellow missionary, Irene Engst, would accompany them on the African Lightning. During her first term, she had treated the sick in a small clinic at Mwhila. Now she was returning to work with the women. Ruben hoped to load their new car on the same ship and have it to drive back to western Kenya when it was off-loaded in Mombasa.



#158 - Kathleen Irene Nora



#159 - Ruben Don with the catch of the day



#160 - Irene Engst

There were only 12 passengers including Irene and the Schwiegers. Ruben and Ruben Don often sat with the captain at meals and told fishing stories. He enjoyed deep sea fishing and told them that they could use his equipment at the first port in Africa, Walvis Bay, where fishing was good. They waded out as far as they could and caught a nice sea bass, before the incoming tide drove them back to shore. That evening the cook prepared the fish for the passengers' supper.

At Cape Town, they toured the city before going up Table Mountain to get good views of the beginning of the Cape and of Cape Town itself. From Cape Town, they sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and turned north into the Indian Ocean. On the last leg of the sea voyage, they stopped at Port Elizabeth, then Durban, and Portuguese speaking Lourenco Marques in Mozambique, and finally arrived in Mombasa. Finding that the unloading and processing of the car would take several days, they took the train to Nairobi and on to Kisumu, where the LaFonts met them and took them to the mission.

Before returning to Kenya in June of 1953, Ruben Schwieger had been given permission by the Missionary Board to build a new residence on the Ingotse Mission. The old house built by William Bailey had deteriorated to the point that it was unsafe to live in. He built this three bedroom home first, and then about two years later, a new two bedroom house was completed for the nurse.



#161 - The Schwieger's home surrounded by tall shady eucalyptus trees

#162 - Ruben and Nora relaxing at the kitchen table for lunch before going back to work



During the first term on the mission field, Ruben built an amazing number of buildings on the Ingotse mission station including the Murray Memorial Chapel and the medical clinic. The buildings constructed for the Boys School campus were: a classroom block, two dormitories, a dining hall, two teachers' houses, and a tailor and wood working shop.

Especially precious to the Schwiegers were the relationships that developed between them and the other missionary staff. There were, of course, periodic staff meetings, but those and the other socializing among the families became the foundation for wonderful, shared experiences, and the development of close family-like relationships. Children called the adults ‘aunt’ and ‘uncle’ and the adults called each other ‘brother’ and ‘sister’. These titles were not just because they were customary in the Church of God, but because, in an important sense, they were real expressions of the actual situation.

The Schwieger children, for example, had never met most of their biological aunts, uncles, and cousins, and certainly had not spent sufficient time with those they had met, to get to know them. Growing up in Kenya meant that the only real ‘family’ they had were the mission staff. For the Schwieger family who lived by themselves on the isolated station at Ingotse a significant distance away from the others, the occasions that brought them together were treasured.



#163 – 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary

On August 25, 1960, Kathleen and Willa Rae, with the help of Vera Martin, the nurse living at Ingotse at the time, planned a reception for Ruben and Nora in honor of their twenty fifth wedding anniversary. The girls baked and decorated the cake, and Vera dressed the Brallier children up as miniature bride and groom. All the missionaries from Kima and Mwiwila came for the party, and the special celebration was enjoyed by everyone.

On several memorable occasions, Ruben and Nora invited the whole missionary staff to come to Ingotse, where they had planned just-for-fun social events: a carnival with outdoor games and grilled hamburgers, a Halloween party with funny costumes, and a Christmas dinner. Nora raised turkeys and baked one for the feast.



#164 - The Missionary Staff circa 1954

Back row: Ruben Schwieger, Wick Donohew, Lydia Hansen Jane Ryan, Frank LaFont, James Yutzy  
Middle row: Nora Schwieger, Velma Schneider, Jewell Hall, Elsie Gaulke, Margartet LaFont, Grace Donohew  
First row: Carl & Clare Kardatzke, Merlene Huber, Lima Lehmer, Ruth Sanderson  
Seated: Irene Engst, Hazel McDilda, Donna Yutzy, Naomi Sweeny, Linda Yutzy, Glenna Yutzy  
Not present: Vera Martin, Dr. David Gaulke

The get-together times were typically wonderful times of sharing and telling stories. The children would often try to stay awake to hear the stories but fall asleep, then in the morning fuss at their parents for not keeping them awake. Frank LaFont and Herman Smith were the most entertaining. They liked to laugh and told humorous stories about experiences they'd had. Everyone laughed with them even though they had heard the stories many times. Ruben got in on the story telling too, but never felt he was as good at it as they were. A couple of stories Ruben liked to tell were:

*About the man who cut off his finger while using his power saw. When his friend came to see him and comfort him, his friend asked him how it happened, He said, "Here let me show you just how it happened". He turned on the saw and cut another finger off!*

*Another was about the young boy who went to hunt rabbits with his uncle. When he came home, he was all excited to tell his dad about the hunt. He said, "Daddy, we saw a thousand rabbits under one bush!" When his dad looked a little skeptical, he said, 'Well it was at least a hundred'. Still his dad seemed unbelieving, so he said, 'Actually it was two rabbits, dad'. His dad then said, 'OK, that's really good,' There was a long pause, then the boy said, 'Well dad, we thought we saw a rabbit under that bush.'*

The most laughs were when stories were shared about each other. Frank's favorite was on Ruben. He was walking past the LaFont's front porch going down to the school and stopped to tell Frank that there were some boys who were misbehaving, and he needed to get them straightened out. He knew that they were testing the new principal to see what they could get away with. Frank told him again, 'They need a good caning'. That was a beating with a cane, a common practice. Ruben protested, 'This is not the Middle Ages. Now we talk to students and reason with them. No. I will not beat them.' One day, Frank was on his back porch and saw Ruben come stomping by, grumbling and mumbling to himself, heading for the mission workshop. Frank called out, 'Where are you going, so fast and so angry?' Ruben shouted, 'I'm going to make a paddle!.' In a short time, Frank saw me coming back and said, 'What is that in your hand?' Ruben held up the paddle and said, 'One of these boys needs a lesson, and I'm going to give it to him with a paddle!'

Another event they laughed a lot about, caused them to call Ruben the 'great hunter' who killed animals with his foot. When he came limping to a meeting one time, they asked him what was wrong with his foot and he told them that, late one evening, he heard a commotion on the back steps. In his stocking feet, he ran to the back door to find that some animal was attacking the dog. He yelled at the animal, probably a hyena, and kicked it hard with his bare foot. It quickly ran off and the pup was okay, but not his foot. He had broken a toe or two and sprained his ankle.

They also laughed a lot, at Ruben's expense, because of the expressions and words he used. When there was a difficult task to be done and questions about how to do it, he would say, 'You have to hold your mouth right.' He called an obnoxious, troublesome person, a 'honyock'.

When he heard a difficult-to-believe story, He would ask, 'Are you right sure about that?' When someone would comment about flavor of some food, Ruben would say, 'Well, it makes the cheese more binding.' If he encountered a person who did a good job or produced a well-crafted item, he liked to say, 'Just Perfect'. If he had made a trip for some purpose that turned out not to get the job done, he called it a 'water haul'.

The source of some of these sayings, was not clear, but many were likely from rural Oklahoma, and were amusing to persons from other parts of the States. Frank was from California and Herman was from Indiana, so Oklahoma expressions seemed odd to them.

There were stories Ruben told on himself, too. The others laughed when Ruben related that, "Mister-I-can-fix-that" shot a hole in the ceiling of his house, and the bullet came to rest in an upstairs bed. The firing pin on the gun had broken and Ruben had made a new one. When he tried out the new pin, he nearly shot down the house.

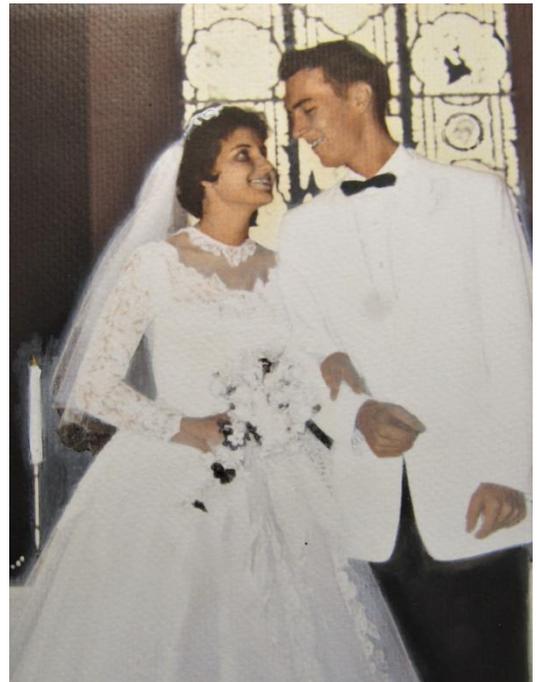
Finally, at the end of their third term, a shortwave radio set was provided for each mission station, so missionaries could share information back and forth station-to-station. They did not meet the need for personal contacts, so the missionaries used the staff meetings and, when possible, purely social visits to keep relationships strong.

The Schwiegers' travel and sightseeing were not only international; they travelled across 25 states, spoke in a total of 136 churches and camp meetings in one of their furlough years. In fact, their itinerary was so tight and far flung that they were not able to attend the funeral services for Ruben's parents held in Portland, Ore., in 1959.

Ruben Don had graduated from RVA in July, 1958, so they timed the second furlough to bring him back to the States to enroll in Anderson College. Dr. Adam Miller from the Missionary Board had been in Kenya just months before and told Ruben Don that he could take pre-engineering courses then transfer, after two years at AC, to an engineering school. The Schwiegers then made the missionary furlough apartment in Anderson their base of itineration for the year. Ruben Don lived there for the year, saving on college food and housing costs. Kathy and Willa Rae also stayed in the apartment, walking about two miles each day to and from the local high school downtown.

In the summer of 1959, Kathleen and Willa Rae travelled with their parents, visiting churches and camp meetings in Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, and Ruben and Nora also had meetings in Oregon and Washington. Although she had only one year remaining in high school, Kathleen decided that she would return to Kenya to graduate from Rift Valley Academy.

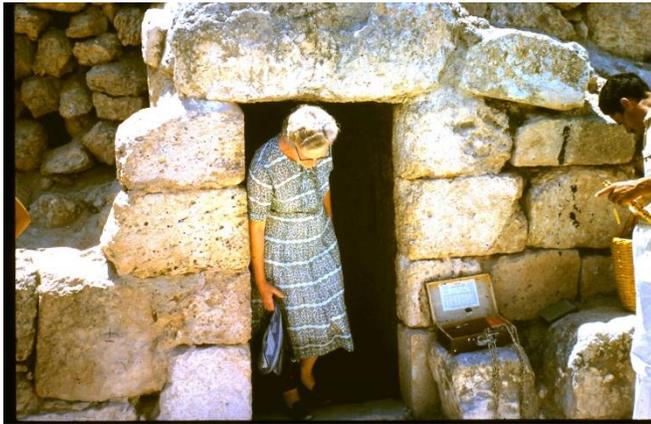
The Schwiegers took their last furlough in 1962-63. That fall, Willa Rae would be enrolling in Anderson College, from which Ruben Don was graduating. They attended the wedding of Ruben Don and Jenny Livingston on August 5, 1962 in Anderson, Indiana.



#165 - Jenny & Ruben Don Schwieger

Years before in 1953, the Schwiegers and the Livingstons were preparing to return to their respective fields of service, Kenya and Panama. The families met while packing in a shared space in the Missionary Cottage on the Anderson campgrounds. Jenny and Ruben Don were only thirteen at the time, so the Schwiegers did not really know her. While she and Ruben Don were dating at college and planning to get married they had only letters from Ruben Don telling about his girlfriend. Ruben, especially, was concerned about what kind of person she was. They did not even have a picture of her! Was she the right person for their son to marry? They were so relieved when they met her just days before the wedding and found that she was 'just perfect'. They readily started calling her 'Daughter' and treating her as such.

In planning their travel back to the States for furlough, Ruben and Nora had always longed to visit the Holy Land to see the places where Jesus lived and where He died for the sins of the world. In Jerusalem they saw the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Garden Tomb, the Wailing Wall, viewed the Dome of

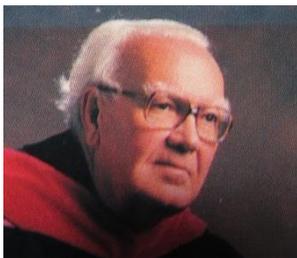


#166 - Nora at the tomb where Lazarus was raised

the Rock from a distance, walked among the ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, and visited the Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives. They were disappointed to find that many of the holy sites were enclosed in elaborate church buildings. They were taken by bus to Bethlehem and went into the Church of the Nativity to see the spot deep in a cave where it is thought that Jesus was born. They also rode the bus on the road to Jericho, mentioned in the story of the Good Samaritan, stopping at Jacob's well, and had the opportunity to float in the Dead Sea.

Other furlough travels to and from Kenya and the United States enabled the Schwieger family to visit Rome with its Coliseum, Pantheon, and ancient aqueducts, and ride in a gondola on the canals of Venice. They saw the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa. They visited Athens to see many sites such as the Parthenon, the Acropolis and the Forum on Mars Hill where the Apostle Paul gave his address on the 'Unknown God', and many other places of antiquity. Also there were stops at the World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium; the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Alps in Switzerland, and the tulip fields in Holland. All these experiences enriched their lives and added to the facts the children learned in their history books at school.

The Schwiegers' itineration in 1963 included churches in Ohio, where they visited with Betty Jo and family, and Indiana then westward to churches in Enid, Clinton, and Dacoma, Oklahoma. From there they headed for Arizona, stopping at a church in Las Cruces, New Mexico, before journeying on to Tucson where Ruben Don and Jenny lived. Ruben Don was in the graduate school of the University of Arizona and Jenny was teaching fourth grade.



#167 - Charles Ludwig

They had a good visit with Charles Ludwig, pastor of the First Church of God in Tucson. Brother Ludwig had grown up as a missionaries' son in Kenya at the Kima mission station. He was a prolific author of books and articles about Kenya. Brother Ludwig took Ruben to the radio station and newspaper office for interviews about Kenya and his experiences there.

The next church meetings were in Phoenix where both Ruben and Nora conducted services, before returning to Indiana. June of 1963 found the Schwiegers packing to go back to Kenya, and visiting the Anderson Camp meeting, where Ruben Don and Jenny were being commissioned as missionary teachers for the Secondary School at Mwhila. After the commissioning service, the older and younger Schwieger couples met with the Missionary Board President, Lester Crose, for a debriefing and instructions for the elder couple continuing service and the younger couple just beginning. Ruben Don and Jenny were instructed to be their own independent thinkers and not be seen as following along with their parents on every issue before the mission staff. Ruben and Nora thought that the Board really did not know the kids very well. Ruben Don had always been an independent thinker, and their brief time with Jenny indicated that she was too.



#168 - Lester Crose

To return to Kenya in July, Ruben and Nora flew from Indianapolis to New York and then on to Copenhagen with Olive and Savos Joannides, missionaries to Greece. From Copenhagen they went to Bochum, Germany for the International Church of God convention. There they met Daudi Otieno and Samuel Wakhu, church leaders from Kenya.

As their final term of missionary service drew to a close, friends in Indianapolis and Anderson offered to let them live in houses they owned, and other friends and relatives suggested that they locate near where they lived. Since they had grown up in Oklahoma, had many friends and some family there, the Schwiegers began thinking that they would prefer to return to their home state.

They were working with a Christian travel agent in Nairobi to plan a route with possible stops in Israel, Athens, Rome, Amsterdam, London, and Belfast. They were scheduled to leave Nairobi on April 30, but the departure was delayed one week because of the Jewish Passover Feast holiday in Israel, so much of their proposed itinerary was not possible. Nora had always wanted to see the tulips in bloom in Holland in May, so they made sure to include that their stop in Amsterdam. The Schwiegers arrived back in the States May 11.

## Recreation, Fishing & Hunting

As was the case with many missionaries on furlough, Ruben and Nora were asked questions about Kenya and what they did 'over there'. The most common question was the one they liked least; 'What's it like over there?' How could they answer that? Sometimes someone would be clearer and ask, 'What do you missionaries do for recreation?' That one they were glad to answer.

There were many relaxing, restful, and/or recreational activities available in East Africa: mountain climbing, photography, swimming, golfing, tennis, camping, hunting, fishing and sight-seeing. The travel itself to those activities was very recreational. Even on short trips, they would pass through different tribal areas and encounter different lifestyles, ways of making a living, and dressing. Houses were built differently from tribe to tribe. The scenery also varied widely from vast grassy plains, dense forests, thorn bush infested regions, and semi-deserts to snow-covered mountains, high ridges, deep valleys, and great rivers and lakes, not to mention the miles of sandy beaches on the Indian Ocean shore. There was wildlife to be seen both inside and outside of the many great national wildlife parks. There was also a proliferation of colorful birds and lizards of many sizes from tiny geckos to great crocodiles. In some areas there were beautifully colored bushes, trees, and flowers.

Experiencing the foods of Africa was also an adventure. The Schwiegers came to enjoy the most common food, obusuma (ugali) which is prepared from corn meal and eaten with various kinds of meat and vegetables. They most enjoyed the fruits; pineapple, papaya, a variety of kinds of bananas, passion fruit, mangoes, oranges, tangerines, nuts, including cashews and peanuts, from which they made their own peanut butter. Kenya also produced some of the best tea and coffee in the world.

The recreation the Schwiegers participated in most often was travel and camping especially where they could see, photograph, and hunt wildlife or fish. Especially memorable were sail fishing in the ocean, and hunting certain animals for meat for the school and hospital.

On one of Ruben Don's school holidays, Ruben and Ruben Don decided to go with some fellow hunters on a lion hunt. The place they chose was in Kenya's Northern Frontier. They drove north from Nairobi past Mt. Kenya to a remote town called Garbatula and on past several miles to set their camp. During the night they heard lions roaring and were sure that lions were nearby, and would come for bait and the hunt would be successful. During the several days they were there, they caught a glimpse of one lion running away in heavy brush, but they never came close to shooting one. Ruben later said, "It was a water haul." All they brought back to camp was a barrel of water to use for cooking and washing.



#169 - Mt. Kenya

The sail fishing was more productive. The family camped on the beach, chartered a fishing boat and each of the three caught good-sized sailfish, Jenny catching the largest. While on that trip Ruben and Nora with Ruben Don, Jenny, and 8-month-old Kevin were also able to visit Malindi, 70 miles north of Mombasa. Malindi was known to Arab mariners who came there for centuries B.C. in search of gold, ivory, and slaves. In modern times Malindi has become a vacation spot for the wealthy, boasting fine hotels, beautiful sandy beaches, snorkeling for breathtaking views of the coral gardens, and opportunities for sail fishing.



#170 - Ruben Jenny Ruben Don

In Oklahoma, Ruben's hunting was primarily for quail and ducks. Occasionally he would go to Kansas for pheasant. He hunted birds in Kenya too, guinea fowl and hawks. Most of the guinea fowl hunting was around Ingotse where flocks would ruin people's gardens, and hawks would snatch Nora's chickens and turkeys.



#171 - Bird hunting



#172 - Kathleen, Ruben Don, & Willa Rae holding a large bird their Dad shot in Masai land.

Camping/hunting trips were to areas designated by The Kenya Wildlife Service. A license that provided permission to hunt a wide variety of antelope as well as zebra, warthogs, buffalo, and crocodiles was required. Hunters were usually after antelope for meat, and zebra for the hides. When Ruben came to Kenya, he was surprised to learn that there were over sixty antelope species but no deer. The smallest antelope was a Dik Dik, about the size of an Oklahoma jack rabbit. The largest, a bull eland, can weigh as much as a ton.



#173 - Dik Dik



#174 - Eland



#175 - Nora Kathleen Willa Rae Ruben Don in front of tent

## Chapter 9: 1967 – 1978

### Retirement – Activities and Assignments

Contemplating retirement from missionary service was very disconcerting. The Schwiegers started packing, but with many questions in mind. A first important one, where would they settle back in the States? Having no answer and realizing they could not find an answer until they got back, they had their belongings sent to Nora's sister, Lora's, home in Sumner, Oklahoma.

Retirement from international missionary service at age sixty-five was Missionary Board policy which the Schwiegers believed to be a good one. Early in their time in Kenya, they had witnessed the difficulty the long-term missionaries, John and Twyla Ludwig had experienced at the time of retirement. The Ludwigs refused to retire, returned to Kenya, and tried to establish a new mission they called, The Seventh Trumpet. In the process, they alienated not only the Missionary Board and many churches in the States, but Kenyan church leaders, and former missionary colleagues. The Schwiegers certainly did not want anything like that to happen with them, though the desire to continue in missionary service was strong. Perhaps there would be other ways to serve the Church, maybe even internationally.

Still, it was not easy to disconnect. Ruben and Nora were in good health, very active, and working as hard as ever as Ruben approached the age limit. He would be 65 in 1967 but the shock of an abrupt ending to more than 20 years living and working in Kenya was going to be difficult to handle. The ties with colleagues, many friends, neighbors, and especially the people of the Church would have to be broken. They would try to keep in touch with letters, but knew that even those connections would soon become minimal and disappear.

It would be very hard to break the bonds which united them to their fellow missionaries. With them Ruben and Nora had shared their burdens, prayed with and for each other, traveled and camped together, and agonized and prayed about mission problems together. They had served on committees together, worked in revivals and conventions together, and shared the same burning desire to see God's work advance in East Africa. The Schwiegers would have to say goodbye at least for a short time, to Ruben Don and his wife, Jenny, and two small grandchildren who had been born at Mwhila Hospital, where Ruben Don and Jenny were serving as missionaries in the schools and in churches at Mwhila, Lugari and later in Kisii.

The Schwiegers would have to say 'goodbye' to the joy of living in Kenya, enjoying its climate and opportunities for camping, hunting, and viewing the wildlife in this modern Garden of Eden. Gone would be coping with the interesting cross-cultural experiences of helping people become Christians, guiding them in Christian living, marrying their young people, and helping them find physical and spiritual healing. They would no longer be advisors, counselors, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. One old father, talking to Ruben about his troublesome son, said, *"Who else can I go to? The missionary taught me about Christ. He taught me about the church and even taught me how to farm."*

It would be sad to say, 'Mulindwe' ('Farewell' in Luhya) to the little half naked children who picked the wild raspberries for a few pieces of candy and some coins. It would be difficult to say 'Kwaheri' (Swahili for 'goodbye') to the mission workmen, who helped with just about every type of work that can be found on a mission station, digging foundations, cultivating corn, cutting firewood, lighting lanterns, cutting grass, digging latrines, etc. It would be hard to say farewell to the night watchmen who watched (or slept) while they slept, and the host of people who were so patient when they blundered in trying to speak their language, or those who were calm when they became frustrated with the pace of life in Kenya.



#176 - Ruben Schwieger giving farewell gifts to the mission workmen

It would be hard to part with the Church. They had loved the Church and had given their lives for it. They had been delighted when the number of congregations grew from thirteen to thirty-four, most having permanent buildings which replaced the mud and grass hut structures.

They also had been thrilled when trained pastors were installed, Sunday schools created, and vital women's ministries established. All these bound them close to the Church and the bindings were hard to break.

In a portion of the preface to Ruben's book, *'Paths for God'*, Daniel Wako, an official for EASCO in Nairobi, wrote the following:

*I have known the Schwiegers for the twenty years they have been in Kenya. In his first missionary assignment as headmaster of the Kima (later Ingotse) mission school, I had the privilege of working under him for several years. Those, like myself, who knew the Schwiegers well enough and saw how devoted they were to the establishment and development of Ingotse school, must have been astounded or baffled to see them switch over so readily and smoothly to full-time church work. Rev. Schwieger's description of their achievements in church work are very modest. To my knowledge, in the last two decades, no missionary couple has done more in extending the church to new areas and in reviving languishing congregations than the Schwiegers.*

The Ingotse congregation people from all across Butso came to Ingotse for a special Sunday farewell service and a feast following to say farewell to the Schwiegers. As usual gifts were given to bless and thank the honorees. Some asked that Ruben and Nora change their plans and stay or, at least, promise to come back to Ingotse after a short time away. Nora was presented with some specially sewn decorative cloths and Ruben with the beaded cap of honor to wear like a tribal chief.



#177 - Nora and Ruben Schwieger retiring in 1967

Retirement for the Schwiegers in May 1967 was just a change in location. They were, perhaps, just as busy and as active as they had been in Kenya. Initially it was because their basic criterion for choosing a place to live was locating near a strong Church of God congregation. They thought highly of pastor, Archie Kinion, who prayed the dedication prayer at Ruben's ordination service and now pastored the Sand Springs, Oklahoma church. Since they had visited, preached there, and were acquainted with some of the people, Sand Springs became an obvious choice.

The congregation was talking of starting a new church on the south side of the Arkansas River near the little town of Prattville and that project appealed to Ruben and Nora. The Schwiegers decided to buy a little 2-bedroom house in Prattville, and help with starting the new congregation. The house was too small, so Ruben decided to build an attached garage which he could use as a workshop.

The Schwiegers spent the month of March 1968 in Florida travelling and speaking about missions in churches throughout the state, then in April, doing the same in Oklahoma. When they were at the church in Oklahoma City, the pastor, Brother Atwell, asked Ruben to accept a pastoral care position with the church in OKC, but Ruben declined.



#178 – 1<sup>st</sup> house in Prattville



#179 - The Schwieger family in 1971

Ruben Don and his family had returned from Kenya, and when he was offered a position in the Mathematics Department at Anderson College, decided to stay in Anderson. He had one course remaining to complete his master's degree at the University of Arizona so flew to Tucson to take that class during the summer.

In May 1968, Kathy graduated from nursing school and scheduled her wedding for the 18<sup>th</sup>. Ruben and Nora drove to Indianapolis to attend Kathy's marriage to Paul Vorhies at the Glendale Church of God in Indianapolis. After a short honeymoon trip to Brown County, Indiana, Kathy and Paul moved to Oklahoma, and stayed with Ruben and Nora in their little house in Prattville for a few weeks, until they found an apartment in Tulsa. While Paul attended the Spartan School of Aeronautics, Kathy worked as an operating room circulating nurse at Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital.



#180 - Paul & Kathy Vorhies

That fall Ruben and Nora travelled across south central Canada, and spoke about missions in churches, tracing many of the Canadian travels of Ruben's father, Ferdinand Schwieger.

### **Special Assignment Missionaries - Cayman Islands:**

Though they had left full-time service as missionaries the Schwieger's hearts were still in missions. As much as possible they kept in touch with dear friends on several mission fields and avidly read the monthly *Missions Magazine*. So, they became aware of further opportunities to serve overseas and decided to take advantage of those they could. The first possibility the Schwiegers found was a need for interim pastors on the island of Cayman Brac for the 1969-1970 year. Volunteering for the assignment, they were appointed as 'Short-term Missionaries' by the Missionary Board. They rented their house for the year and left for the Caribbean.



#181 - Ruben and Nora

On their way, the Schwiegers stayed in Georgetown, Grand Cayman with missionaries, Dewey and Thelma Johnson, overseers of four Church of God congregations on the island, who showed them around the island and gave them the first experience eating turtle steak. After two days on the main island, they were taken to Cayman Brac on a small 24 passenger two prop plane. Sister Scott from the church came to meet them in the church's old Ford station wagon and took them to their new home, a three-room parsonage built on the back of the church building.

The Schwiegers' task was to build up the church, both in attendance and spiritual strength, and get the building in good repair. They were immediately very concerned about the congregation. Many of the congregation, which typically had about 70 in attendance, had slipped away to 25-30 while the church had been without a pastor for more than a year. The few remaining members were not really faithful, some were sick much of the time, others worked hard and were too tired to come to church. Also, as was common in the Caribbean, the husbands of many of the women were away, working on cargo ships at sea, leaving wives and children on the island for months at a time.

The Schwiegers devoted their time to getting acquainted, visiting people, sharing the Scriptures, encouraging, praying with them in their homes, and inviting them to come to church. Ruben preached in the Sunday morning services then Ruben and Nora conducted Sunday school for adults and children in the evening. The work seemed to move very slowly and was at times discouraging, but attendance grew gradually with 70 present on Easter and 75 on Mother's Day, for a program presented by the Sunday School children. A Junior Youth group began to develop with Bible study and craft activities. Nora taught the girls basket weaving with palm leaves and Ruben helped the boys with some simple wood working.

In July two young ladies from Anderson College came to help conduct a Vacation Bible School. In August, Brenda Cherrington held a week of special meetings where 3 people were saved, and another made a firm commitment to the Church. August saw a revival with Bro. Tharp from Grand Cayman, and 8 girls from the Junior Youth group were saved at the Crusade for Christ on the island in December. Ruben then started a Pastor's class for the new Christians to help them and a young man understand their new-found faith, learn about Christian living, and prepare for baptism.



#182 – Church of God on Cayman Brac

Ruben and Nora were quick to see needs at the homes they visited, so spent time assisting where they could. Ruben helped clean cages for chickens, quail, guinea fowl, and pigeons for the elderly Tibbets. He and Nora took the old leaky roof off Sister Ebank's outside kitchen and replaced it with some used corrugated iron sheets. While Ruben helped one of our church men plaster a cistern he was building, he had a chance to counsel him spiritually. In their spare time, they worked on the church building making some windows and redesigning the shutters so they would protect the windows during storms. To further assist the church financially, Nora wove baskets of palm leaves and Ruben made decorative items of seashells they picked up on the beach. These were taken to a shop where they would be sold to tourists and the money given to the church.

Living on this small island was different from anything they had known. Since nothing much grows or is produced on the island, people had to depend on supplies being brought by ship from Grand Cayman on an every-other week schedule depending on the weather. It was supposed to bring gasoline, lumber, hardware, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, and other groceries but, if fresh vegetables were shipped in, they were usually in poor condition. The Schwiegers were given eggs, and they could get plenty of fish and chicken. There was a small cistern next to the parsonage for drinking water and a well for household needs. Ruben tried to fish from the shore with some success, but the best fishing was when a man invited him to go out in his boat. To celebrate their 34<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, Nora and Ruben hired a boat to go fishing near Little Cayman, a small island about 6 miles away, where they caught a lot of fish and had a wonderfully relaxing time.

Nora and Ruben had an especially memorable Christmas because Ruben Don, Jenny, their children, and Willa Rae came on the three-days-a-week mail airplane. Knowing the food situation, they had brought fresh fruit and vegetables from Miami. The family spent a memorable week together, visiting, swimming, fishing, and exploring the island. During the Christmas evening program, Jenny sang carols, and gifts of candy were given to the children and New Testaments to each family.

A few weeks before they were to leave Cayman Brac, the Schwiegers decided to make the one-hour flight to Kingston, Jamaica. The city and coastline reminded them of Nairobi and the coast in Kenya. They stayed with missionaries, Kenneth and Sue Jo Good. Since Ken was busy at the time, Sue Jo took them to sightseeing: The Hat & Straw Market, Spanish Town, the Arawak Indian ruins, the Botanical gardens, the Bauxite mines which produce aluminum ore, and on a drive to see miles and miles of coconut, banana, and sugar plantations. They were also able to visit, and Ruben preached in two of the 90 Church of God congregations on the island, all a result of the work of missionaries George and Nellie Olson. They also visited Ardenne High School where Ruben spoke to 780 students in chapel. They all stood at attention in the auditorium which is used for recreation and does not have bench seats or chairs. Ruben also preached in two of the churches on Sunday.

As they completed their ministry on Cayman Brac, Ruben found a safe beach where the wind and the current were not strong, and baptized the 9 young people who had accepted Christ as their Savior. Following the baptism, there was a communion and foot washing service at the church. Ruben and Nora felt that the events were a fitting climax to their service for the Lord in Cayman Brac.



#183 - Ruben baptizing a youth

## The 1970's

Returning home in March 1970, the Schwiegers began to plan specifically for building a home. The location of the new South Sand Springs Church of God building had been selected, and so they began to look for land in that area. On the east side of 129th W. Ave. just three blocks north of the church plot, they found 10 acres for sale. They purchased land with their good friends, Cecil and Eunice Coale, who also wanted to build a new home.



#184 - 4507 S. 129th W. Ave. Sand Springs, Oklahoma

June & July 1970 were spent obtaining the necessary paperwork from the city and county Planning Commissions for construction of 46th Street down the center of the property, putting in city sewer lines, surveying the lots for houses along the street, and getting blueprints made. The city permits provided for four lots on each side of the street, one for their own house and three lots for building houses to sell. Construction of the Schwiegers' and Coales' houses did not get started until late in the summer. Nora drew the house plans and Ruben contracted out most of the construction work but did the finish work himself, building cabinets and bookshelves, etc. completing the house by January.



#185 - Nora planting a tree

When the Schwiegers moved into their new home, they began immediately to work in the yard planting trees, flowers, and making a space for a garden. They dug up a small silver maple tree and a cedar tree growing on the property of friends to transplant in the front yard and bought 2 peach trees and a cherry tree for the back yard. Nora had always wanted her own pecan tree, so they dug up 3 native pecan trees and brought them home. It would take several years before the nut trees began to bear, so they obtained permission to pick up nuts every fall at the property of church friends who had a pecan grove and sold nuts. They could pick up as many nuts as they wished and give half to the owner of the trees. They would take their half to a local farm store to be cracked, then in their spare time, they would pick out the nut meats.

Ruben tilled more than half of the back yard to make their garden. Always impatient, he could not wait to begin planting in the early spring, and then would often dig up a few seeds to see if they had germinated. They worked together planting and cultivating potatoes, sweet corn, green beans, tomatoes, peas, lettuce, onions, and okra. Nora canned many quarts of vegetables every summer, and many quarts of fruit in season. Ruben would help Nora by peeling fruit and cutting corn off the cobs as she worked.



#186 - Schwiegers' back yard garden

Ruben built a nice workbench in the garage of the new house, and arranged his tools there for the finishing work inside the house, hanging the closet doors and constructing the cabinets, bookshelves, etc. It was cramped but served him well for a while. Later, he added on to the metal garden tool shed outside the back door by the cellar, making a separate work shop with work benches and moved his tools out of the garage. The concrete pad of what had been the dog kennel made a good floor for his new work space where he spent many happy hours, repairing things and building all kinds of things out of wood – coffee tables, step stools, bird houses, and many other useful things. He had reluctantly sold his bird dog, Dot, when he no longer had the stamina to walk long distances over rough terrain hunting quail in the fields near their home.



#187 - Nora in the cellar

Nora had insisted that they have a storm shelter because they lived in Oklahoma's 'tornado alley'. So, Ruben dug a six by eight-foot hole for a storm cellar. He hit bed rock at five feet and could go no deeper. He built steps, concrete block walls that extended two feet above the ground, a sturdy door, and poured a concrete roof over the cellar. He then installed shelves along the walls to accommodate the canned food.

Not long after the house was completed, the Salvation Army purchased 30 acres next door on the north. They built a large building as a center for meetings and facility for collecting and distributing used clothing, household goods, and furniture. As there were always donated items they could not use, they had a large dumpster for the discarded material. The dumpster was placed on their lot just across the wire fence from Ruben and Nora's house.

The Schwiegers noticed that often still usable items were thrown into or beside the trash dumpster, things that could be repurposed, furniture that could be easily repaired, and aluminum cans. Furthermore, the WCG at the church was collecting cans to sell for money for missions. Ruben and Nora would go over, get the aluminum cans and whatever else might be useful, and pick up the broken furniture that could be repaired.

One day a stranger who was leaving the Salvation Army building saw Nora poking through the dumpster and, thinking that the little old lady was poor and probably homeless, came over and gave her a \$20 bill. Nora simply said, "Thank you." and put the money into the WCG fund. Ruben would take the furniture to his workshop, make the necessary repairs, and put them aside until his next yard sale for additional money for missions.

Nora always wore her old-fashioned sun bonnet when she was out in the garden. One afternoon she saw the children over at the Salvation Army day care playing outside. She heard one child say, "Look, there is the 'Thanksgiving Lady'!" Nora was pleased since she indeed wanted to be a "thanksgiving lady".

As was their custom, the Schwiegers attended campmeetings whenever possible. Nora wrote, 'I was introduced to my first camp meeting experience about the year of 1938 when I was asked to attend the State Camp Meeting which was held that year at Shawnee, Oklahoma. I went principally to teach a children's class, but I got to enjoy the preaching of F. G. Smith, writer of *'What the Bible Teaches'* and one of the greatest pioneers of the Reformation. From then on, my love affair with State and National Camp Meetings has continued. During the years of itineration work for the Missionary Board, we have attended Camp Meetings all over the United States and Canada and have memories of good preaching in the meetings.' That habit brought them to the June National Camp meetings in Anderson in 1970 and 1971 when they stayed with Ruben Don and Jenny.



#188 - Nora in her sun bonnet



#189 - Willa Rae & Darrell Ferguson

At the 1971 meeting, they met Darrell Ferguson who became Willa Rae's fiancé in July. They then returned for the Oct. 2, 1971 wedding at the Glendale Church of God in Indianapolis.

Betty Jo and Jack Hutchison lived in Columbus, Ohio where Jack was head of the Doctor's Hospital. They and their children, Randy, Jo Lynn, Chris, Dena, and Jeff were heavily involved in the Hilltop Church of God, and helped Rev. Oral Withrow significantly in establishing a new congregation, the Meadow Park Church of God. Jack served on the Board of Trustees of Anderson College where both he and Betty Jo had received their bachelor's degrees. Betty Jo was a gifted writer of Christian Education curriculum, and national Chair of the Christian Education Department for the Church of God.



#190 - Betty Jo & Jack Hutchison

Ruben and Nora had attended Anderson Camp Meeting in June 1974 and were planning to go home by way of Downers Grove, Illinois, where Darrell & Willa Rae lived after moving from Indianapolis. They wanted to welcome their newest grandchild, who was due to be born on June 7. However, first babies often have their own time schedules and was late. Neil was not born until 2 weeks after Ruben and Nora needed to be back in Oklahoma for a previous commitment. Later, they made a special trip back to Illinois, so that Ruben could take part in Neil's dedication service.

Nora decided to become a member of the Home Economists Club in Prattville. She thought it would be a good way to become acquainted with some ladies in the community and develop friendships. The ladies met every month to learn about subjects of interest to home makers. On one occasion, Nora gave a program and demonstration of making home-made lye soap. In 1997 she was voted Extension Club 'Member of the Year'.



#191 - Nora with her county fair ribbons

One of the activities the club members participated in was the annual county 4H and home economists fair and Nora began entering her jars of canned fruits and vegetables, jellies, home-baked bread, cookies, and cakes, and craft items in the fair. She often won blue ribbons and premium prizes. One year she had forty four entries, and earned thirty three ribbons and first place for her quilt.

The plans were well under way for starting the new Church of God building west of Prattville. Ruben was on the building committee and took an active role in designing and planning, fund raising, and purchasing land, for the new church building.

The proximity of the Church made it possible for them to walk to church easily and to become heavily involved in the strong congregation of about 150. For the church, they were able to build a strong missions and outreach program that made South Sand Springs one of the most effective missions-supporting churches in Oklahoma. Several times during the seventies and eighties, Ruben was asked to be interim pastor; each time he was happy to be back in ministry, full-time, part-time, or volunteer; it did not matter. He and Nora loved the Church and had strong desires to serve the Lord through the Church.



#192 - South Sand Springs Church of God

### **Special Assignment Missionaries – Australia:**

In early 1977, the Schwiegers were contacted by the Missionary Board and asked to take on a short-term missionary assignment in Australia and agreed to go to serve as replacements, for Ken and Sue Jo Good who would be serving in South Korea for the 1977-1978 year. The ministry needed was work with the Church and assistance for the missionaries in outreach to people in Sydney and surrounding areas.

In Portland, Oregon on the way to Australia from Tulsa, Ruben and Nora visited for two days with Ruben's brother, John and family and with his sister Fern and her family, none of whom they had seen for almost ten years. Fern took them to the airport for their flight to Honolulu, their first flight on a 747, which was half empty.

In Honolulu they met with church administrators from Anderson, Steel Smith, Don Johnson, Missionary Board President, William Reed, Tom Smith, and Oral Withrow, to receive a briefing on what their responsibilities would be. Apparently, there were some confusing issues with personnel, and they needed to make a determination whether the Missionary Board or Home Missions Board were to guide the ministries of the Church in Australia. After the meetings, there was a brief time for sightseeing, so they walked through the international bazaar, and visited the zoo and Paradise Park.



#193 - Don Johnson

On the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup>, after a prayer service, Bro. Reed and his wife took them to the airport for their onward flight. They gained a day crossing the international date line and arrived at 5:30 am in Fiji on April 1. During their two days on the island, they took a tour through the country and saw that much of the country was planted in sugar cane. They followed that with a small boat trip up the Nandi River, drinking coconut milk with their lunch. In the afternoon they sailed on a fishing boat to uninhabited Turtle Island where sea turtles came to lay their eggs in May and June.

On April 3, they arrived in Auckland, New Zealand where they again had a little time for looking around and touring that included a beautiful city park, the Transportation and Communication Museum, and the zoo where they saw a kiwi bird.

On arrival in Sydney, Australia the next day, they were met by twenty people from the church, including the Chilvers, and the missionaries, the Goods, the Dunns, and the Bradleys. The following day they were taken to Camp Berachoh, about 30 miles northeast of Sydney. The national campmeeting was in session there and Ruben was asked to preach every day and on Easter, the concluding day. On April 12, the Schwiegers went with others on the church bus about 60 miles up to the Blue Mountains to see some scenic canyons and Old Sydney, the first settlement in Australia, dating to 1810. They found it very interesting. For his birthday, the church people gave Ruben a Halley's Bible Hand Book, and two round-trip tickets for train and ferry boat rides to the zoo as well as entrance tickets. From the zoo, they could see the famous Opera House.



#194 - Fitzroy Falls

On another day Lloyd Chilvers took us 120 miles south along the coast to Wollongong. Here they met Brother and Sister Haines and together drove to see The Blowhole, on their way to Shoalhaven River where they visited the Aborigine Mission. This mission cares for about thirty children. They returned by way of Kangaroo Valley where Fitzroy Falls, 265 feet high and about 20 feet wide, empties into the Valley. They really wanted to see more of Australia, perhaps even Alice Springs, but realized that the continent was so vast, and their time was limited so decided against any more sightseeing trips.

The plan was that the Schwiegers would stay with Brother and Sister Chilvers in their home until the Goods left in July to go to South Korea. Ruben and Nora would then live in the Goods' home. In the meantime, they worked with the Goods, got acquainted with the work they had been doing and learned what the Schwiegers' responsibilities would be. Filling in for the Goods included being in charge of a once-a-month chapel service for 600 public high school students and giving religious instruction to 150 students at a time in regular class sessions. The students were often noisy and disrespectful, but once when Ruben showed slides of Kenya, they applauded. Extra preparation time was required for two evening Bible courses Ruben also taught at the Bible School. Once at one of the primary schools, the Scripture class teacher was ill, so Nora was asked to fill in, but the children were unruly. The cataloging and labeling of the books in the Bible School library had never been done so Nora took on that task. She also worked in the church-sponsored bookstore selling Bibles and religious literature.

For the Schwiegers, the schedule of ministry activities grew quite full. In May, they were asked to pastor the church in Queensland while missionaries, Andy and Becky New, took their two-week vacation. To Murwillenbough, they rode the train, through rolling green pastureland with many cattle, and saw their first wild kangaroo. From the train station, Andy and Becky drove them the remaining 40 miles to Surfers Paradise. Before the News left, Ruben helped Andy remove the seats from the church bus and outfit it for the New's two weeks of camping at the end of the travelable road in Queensland.



#195 - Andy & Becky New

In early June around the first day of winter in Australia, the Schwiegers hosted a group of 13 Tri-S students from Anderson College, helped prepare their meals and accommodations and organize their tasks and transportation. The team worked on the Campgrounds, landscaping and planting grass and had charge of several church services and twice presented programs at the high school. One of the girls was a ventriloquist and, talking through her little dummy, brought some especially good messages to the students.

In July, Ruben and Nora moved into the Goods' home, and had the use of their small Austin car. Although the Chilvers had been kind and gracious hosts, they were glad to live on their own and cook their own meals. They didn't enjoy the bland, mostly boiled Australian food. In August, Don Johnson, accompanied by his wife, Betty Jo, came to participate in the board meetings of the Church of God Association. The aim was to coordinate financial support through the Missionary Board and help the Australian church become self-sufficient. Nora helped prepare all the meals for those attending the meetings.

Church work was very difficult in Australia. Ruben noted a study showing that only 2 % of the population claimed to be Christians, and many of those were not really born again. Australians had a very affluent society and generally did not seem to be interested in religious things. They seemed also to be somewhat resentful of Americans coming to evangelize in Australia.

September saw Ruben travelling north 300 miles with four pastors where they were joined by another pastor for a church planning meeting. The day he returned he joined Nora at Berachah campgrounds where they held a family camp. The families stayed in tents and cooked their own food. The Schwiegers planned and conducted Bible studies, prayer and devotions, and creative activities, and their efforts were rewarded by the response. Following the family camp, Ruben and Nora stayed on to work on the camp facility. Men of the Church came to help with the construction of 12 ft. x 15 ft. 8 bunk log cabins, to replace the tents for the upcoming youth camp. Nora named the first cabin, 'Brown & Williams Cottage' after the Oklahoma friends who gave \$500 to start the project. She then painted a name sign for the cabin.

As December approached Ruben and Nora helped with various other projects. This included the Math Ave. Church of God women's group raising money to add an extra Sunday school classroom to their church building. Nora made cakes, cookies and marmalade for the bake sale and Ruben made some wooden step stools to be sold at their bazaar stall. The ladies were happy with the \$254 raised.

Shortly after the first of December, the beginning of summer for Australia, the school year ended so Ruben completed the last of the Scripture classes, and they began planning for their return to the States.

Leaving Australia in January of 1978, they planned to see and experience places where they hadn't yet been. They began in Manila, Philippines. They were met at the Manila airport by good friends, Rolando and Bernie Bacani and their family, who took them to a restaurant and then to the Cultural Center in downtown Manila on the Bay for a delightful program of music and folk dances. The tickets were compliments of their daughter Virginia who worked in government social services.



#196 - The Bacani's with Nora and Ruben

They were housed in the church guest house run by an elderly couple who prepared breakfast for them every day. They visited the Church of God elementary school where Nora talked to the children and Ruben spoke to 550 students in the high school chapel. They also spoke at the Bible Institute and an evening prayer meeting.

Saying farewell to their dear friends, the Bacanis, and after frustrating dealings with immigration due to an error in the tickets' departure time, many questions, and extra terminal tax charges, they flew from Manila to Osaka, Japan. They took the airport bus to Sannomiya station and waited in the cold until Bro. Eikamp came and accompanied them on the electric train to Kobe and then in a taxi to their home at Tarumi. Sleeping on tatami mats in the Sunday School room of the church was another first for the Schwiegers. On Sunday, they sat in on the English-speaking Sunday School class, and Ruben preached to the congregation of about 20 people.

A young couple from the U.S., missionaries, Mike and Debbie Kinner, spent the next day with them until Brother. Eikamp took them on the train and bus to Osaka airport for the flight to Tokyo. In the Osaka Airport, a security guard confiscated their table knife, hair clippers, and scissors, putting them in a sealed envelope to be returned to them in Tokyo.

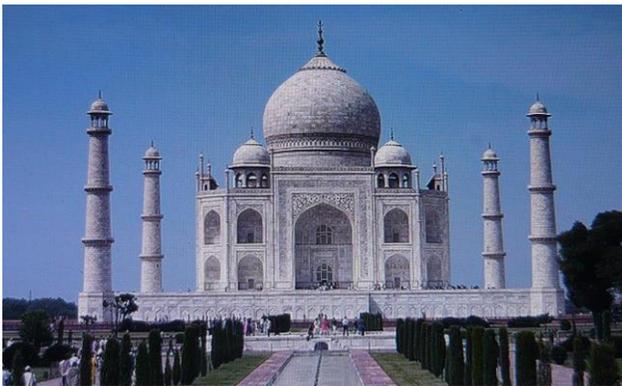
On January 23, 1978, their third stage of flights began, Tokyo, Japan to Calcutta, India. On arrival in Calcutta, they were taken by taxi to the Hindustani International Hotel where both the taxi driver and the desk clerk overcharged. The next day they boarded a small plane filled with German tourists and flew to Bhubaneshwar where Asim Das and Sidney Johnson met them at the airport.



#197 - Asim & Mamata Das

After lunch, Asim's brother, a doctor, took the Schwiegers to see some famous caves outside of Bhubaneswar and some ancient temples, before driving them the 20 miles to Cuttack. At the Shelter, they slept in an upstairs room. The next morning Asim showed them around the Shelter where they saw 37 girls eating breakfast on the floor in the dining room even though they had tables and benches. About a mile from the Shelter, Ruben and Nora visited the Church of God and its pastor.

Nora had always wanted to see the Taj Mahal so, with Asim's help, they got train reservations and left for Agra. They thought that a train ride through India would give them another perspective on India, but they weren't prepared for the distance and time it took to get to Agra. It required two nights and a day-and-a-half on the train without any food or anything to drink except 1 cup of tea each they made themselves on the second night. The only available food they saw being prepared on the streets and on train station platforms with dirty cups and contaminated liquids, which would have exposed them to many kinds of disease.



#198 - The Taj Mahal

Reaching Agra, they found a taxi that agreed to take them to the Taj Mahal for a short look-around and walking tour. Finally, they got to see the Taj Mahal - the world's most extravagant and memorable mausoleum. Shah Jahan commissioned it to be built in Agra, India, in 1632 as a memorial for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in childbirth. Some 30 years later he was laid to rest beside her in the center of the building.

Their flights from Agra to Delhi and from Delhi to Bombay involved several delays, a taxi ride that included pushing the car to get it started and, in Delhi and Bombay, their reserved hotel rooms being given to others. Had they known about the delays, they would have taken the time to do some sightseeing. Instead, they wasted time walking around or taking rickshaw rides. Finally, after a long ride through Bombay, they reached the airport and, after being cheated again, they got on another delayed flight, this one bound for Nairobi.



#199 - Nora riding in a Rickshaw in India

## Visiting Kenya Again

At Nairobi's Kenyatta Airport, after a long wait for luggage, missionary Nasser Farag with Naftali Tsuma drove the Schwiegers to the Church of God Mariakani Centre where they dropped off Naftali, then they drove on to Methodist Guest House to meet Marilyn Farag and have tea. The next morning, Monday, January 30, with the Farags, the Schwiegers began the trip to Kisumu, stopping in downtown Nairobi, Naivasha for lunch, and in Nakuru, a good place to buy souvenirs.

They noticed few changes in Kisumu as they passed through on their way to Kima where missionaries Bucks, Sharps, Farags, Van Alystines, and Carolyn Ackerman, had arranged a meal for them. Staying at Kima for two days, they slept in the Sharp's apartment in the old Ludwig house where they had lived for six months after their arrival in Kenya 30 years before.

On the way to Ingotse, Nasser took them through Kakamega, where they were surprised to see how much the town had changed. It now had high-rise apartment buildings, two large banks, a town hall, a large city market, and many shops stretching more than half-way out to the Ingotse turnoff, two miles from town.

Coming to their 'home' began a round of visits in each of which they were warmly welcomed. While they walked around Ingotse noting its run-down appearance, that is, except for the Church building, they were able to see old friends, Shadrach, Marita, Pilisila, and others, except for Andrea. Next, at Eshienda, was a reception, welcoming ceremony at the church, and an invitation to tea and a dinner of chicken and obusuma at the home of Jaflet and Dorika. Following that another dinner was held at the big new home of George and Perusi Abura.

Before returning to Ingotse there was a quick trip to Mwihila for dinner with Carolyn Ackerman and the Van Alystines. Then after an over-night stay with the Farags in Kakamega, the Schwiegers visited three churches on Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. First the Isongo church where Joash and Felesia Baraza were pastors, then, just beyond the mission, the Wanga church where the congregation was meeting for worship under a tree, because Pastor Frederick had the brick walls of a building up only 4 feet.

Finally, at Ingotse, they attended the service at the mission church they had built.

The 11 am service at the Ingotse church:

(Nora wrote.)

*"Nasser Farag let us out at the entrance to the walkway and we were walked up the path and into the church, marching in like at a wedding, with the people singing.*

*Inside the Sunday School room, the leaders gathered in a ring for prayer, Then we filed in and filled chairs on the stage. There followed the usual welcome with many words from them and greetings from us. After several numbers by a choir from Mungulu, Ruben preached a sermon. After the sermon, Butso presented us with a pottery coffee set made at Kakamega Pottery, as well as gifts of chickens, eggs, pineapples, simsim and peanuts."*

## Chapter 10: 1978 – 1990

### Sand Springs, Oklahoma & Work Missions

Darrell & Willa Rae had lived in Downers Grove, Ill. for almost seven years, but in 1978 Darrell was becoming tired of so many out-of-town trips, flying out of O Hare airport, so often for his work as a consulting engineer with Pitometer Associates. He was considering looking for a different job that would keep him at home with Willa Rae and their two little boys. When Ruben heard that Darrell had applied and interviewed for an engineering job with the City of Tulsa Water Department, he immediately started praying that Darrell would be offered the job, and began searching for houses that would be just right for them. His fervent prayers were answered, and in the spring of 1979, the family moved to Oklahoma one week after the birth of their daughter, Diane. Ruben and Nora were away at the time, travelling and speaking in churches in Canada, but left a key to their house for the family to stay in until they could move into the home they had purchased. The Schwiegers and Willa Rae and Darrell were thankful all through the following years for the privilege of living close by each other as they had found a house just four miles south of the church and close to the street Ruben and Nora lived on.

During the 1978-1979 year, while Ruben Don was Head of the Mathematics at Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas, he served as the week-end pastor for the church in Herrington, a congregation his grandfather, Ferdinand, had established. In Kansas, they were close enough for occasional trips to Oklahoma and for hunts for Ruben and Ruben Don, quail hunts around Sand Springs or pheasant hunts in western Kansas.

The Schwiegers had always lived frugally, growing much of their own vegetables, canning, freezing meat and other items bought on sale, and preparing their own food. In addition, they repaired furniture and re-purposed things people had thrown away. These they sold in periodic yard sales to obtain money to support mission's projects. The Lord had blessed them, too, with a small monthly income from Social Security, and farm rental and oil royalties from a quarter section of western Oklahoma land they had purchased in the 1940's. As they completed building the houses behind theirs, they sold them and the lots, receiving a good profit.

This extra money the Lord provided enabled them to support missions in a variety of ways. Through the 70's, 80's and 90's many churches, including theirs, were involved in workcamps; sending teams to various mission fields to assist missionaries and local churches in important building programs and maintenance on mission stations. Knowing that getting men and women on to the mission field made great impacts on their own Christian lives, the Schwiegers felt that they could continue to assist in supporting missions by becoming involved in this important ministry. They saw that persons involved in these experiences were often strengthened in their own faith and became strong supporters of missions.

So, Ruben and Nora began finding ways to send people to the field by paying their ways or supplementing what they could put into the cost of the trips. A prime example was a young man, Don Riley, who was their former pastor's son-in-law. Ruben mentored Don each week, and Nora assisted Paula, and the children, in a number of ways as well as mentoring the whole family. Don was searching for his way in life and serving as lay associate pastor in a deaf and handicap ministry when Ruben and Nora convinced him to join a work camp that Ruben Don and Jenny were leading to Tanzania. At Babati, the team was to build a conference center for the Church.



#200 - Paula & Don Riley

The Schwiegers told Don that they would pay his way. They marveled at the way the Lord used that trip to help Don recommit his life to ministry to the Lord, and to give him and his family a calling to missionary service. To make a long story short, Don, Paula, and their four children went to Tanzania as missionaries, helping to develop the Church among the Masai and, later, becoming Regional Directors for Africa during their twelve years on the mission field.

The eighties, essentially coinciding with Ruben's eighties, were even more busy years for Ruben and Nora. They were still very energetic and enjoyed good health. They ate fresh vegetables from their



#201 - Nora with her flowers

garden and included servings of fruit with every meal. Nora was an excellent cook, baked all their bread, and prepared all their meals at home. They very seldom ate at restaurants, but, when they were traveling, they would enjoy a hamburger. The only problem with that was the cost. One time Nora exclaimed to Willa Rae, "How can you pay 5 dollars for a hamburger? That is outrageously high!" Ruben and Nora never had a credit card of any kind and could not imagine how someone could pay with anything but cash or a check. Ruben, however, kept a meticulous record of every penny spent or received along with a note detailing the transaction.

Nora kept busy with her garden, raising flowers and vegetables, harvesting fruit from their trees, canning and making items for the church bazaar where money for missions would be raised. In season Ruben and Nora harvested pecans from their trees and others, giving away and selling bags of shelled nuts. Nora also took time to help care for children from the Hissom Memorial Center mental health facility when they were taken on outings and shopping trips.

Not only did the Schwiegers support missions in multiple ways they also got involved themselves. When they learned that Ruben Don and Jenny were planning another work team, this time for Colombia in South America, they asked if they could be part of the team. They were readily accepted and, with the team, flew from Miami to Bogota, Colombia in the summer of 1981.



#202 - Building a brick wall



#203 - Setting the corner stone

The team stayed in an apartment donated by a lady in the church and traveled each morning out to the work site in a suburb of Bogota called Catalina Kennedy. The project was to build a three-story church building on a corner lot in the city. In two weeks, the team completed the first-floor structure and laid the concrete roof which would be the floor for the second story. Ruben laid brick for the walls and set the corner stone.

Returning to Sand Springs, Oklahoma, their home, the church building, and a few houses were just on the edge of open country. Across the road in front of the house were several farms and a large cattle ranch and, for several miles, no other development. To Ruben's delight, he often saw coveys of quail along the road and on the farms where he went to fish in stocked ponds. He had always wanted to hunt with trained bird dogs and saw an opportunity to do that if only he had a good bird dog. It wasn't long before he bought a bird dog puppy and trained her for quail hunting. He named the new puppy "Dot" because she had a large brown spot on her shoulder. Dot needed a kennel, so he poured a concrete slab on the east side of the cellar and built a dog pen there. Her training went well, and she developed into a fine bird dog. He had obtained permission from property owners in the area to hunt on their land and when Dot was ready, he spent many enjoyable hours hunting with her and often had a successful hunt

bringing home enough for a good meal or two. He enjoyed eating the quail almost as much as hunting them.



#204 - Ruben in his work shop

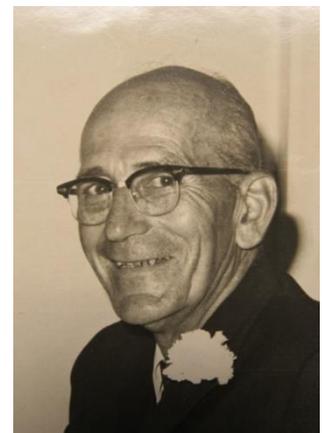
Ruben enjoyed having something to make or fix. If anyone asked him to fix or build something, he would get right out to his shop and start working on it right away. That was true of others' projects as well. Ruben was 81 when Willa Rae and Darrell decided to build an addition to their house, Ruben was there bright and early every day to help frame the walls.



#205 - Framing the new family room addition

Both Nora and Ruben liked to read, Nora more than Ruben. They subscribed to the Readers Digest and enjoyed that and books they found, were given, or from the church library. Nora usually spent the evening hand quilting a beautiful cotton quilt or cutting out quilt blocks for her next project, while Ruben read the Bible. They had a small television but watched it only for the national and local news from 10:00 to 10:15 each evening. As the sports news began to come on, Ruben would quickly go to the TV, snap it off (There was no remote control.), and go to bed.

Ruben and Nora now had a full complement of grandchildren. Betty Jo's five were grown and away from home, Ruben Don had two, Kevin and Donna, who had graduated from Anderson College and left home for jobs, Kathy had two, David and Karen, and Willa Rae had three, Neil, Joel, and Diane. They took opportunity to visit their children and grandchildren as they were able, and always had gifts to bring and found some way to help. They also were delighted with great-grandchildren when they were able to see them.



#206 - Ruben



#207 - Ruben with Neil, Joel, and David



#208 - Nora with grandson Kevin and great Grandchildren Logan & Whitney



#209 - Neil getting a professional hair cut



#210 - Ruben & Nora with Grandchildren David and Karen

In Port Huron, Ruben was up on a ladder helping Paul make a shed on the side of the garage. When they visited Paul and Kathy, David and Karen asked Grandma to make raised donuts and Ruben took the kids fishing showing them how to bait hooks and use a rod and reel. At Ruben Don's home, Ruben repaired a door and did extra cleaning while Ruben Don and Jenny were at work. Years before, they had taken care of Kevin and Donna while Ruben Don and Jenny were in Guatemala leading a work camp.



#211 - Family visit in 1982

Kathy with daughter Karen, Ruben & Nora, Ruben's sister, Evelyn, Willa Rae & children Neil, Joel, & Diane, Nora's sister Lora & husband Lloyd Lambert

In June 1984, Nora and Ruben joined a work mission team going to Jamaica. In the mountains, about 60 miles from Kingston, they worked on a church building in the town of Frankfield. The team of 8 people stayed about a mile from the church, in a large house that had been used by early missionaries, the Olsons. While the five men constructed a reinforced concrete slab roof, 20' by 40', over the baptistry and several rooms at the back of the church building, Nora and the two women painted the interior rooms. The men then helped finish the painting outside. When they completed their work, national leader, Brother Lawrence, took them to Dunn River Falls on the north coast of the island.



#212 - At home in 1989

In honor of Ruben and Nora's Golden Wedding anniversary, a reception was planned by their children and grandchildren for the afternoon of August 25, 1985. A dinner was enjoyed by family members at noon at Willa Rae and Darrell's home, and then everyone joined a host of friends in the church fellowship hall for the reception. Ruben Don and Jenny were on a short-term mission assignment in Japan at the time. Betty Jo, Kathleen and Willa Rae decorated the table with a lovely bouquet of yellow roses and white carnations and served a tiered wedding cake decorated with yellow roses and gold wedding bands. Special guests were Ruben's sisters, Evelyn, Irene and Fern, his brother, Sam and his wife Margaret, and Jack's mother, Sydney Hutchison. Nora's sister, Lora, and her daughters, Carolyn Burns and Anne Barnard were able to come too.



#213 – Ruben & Nora with cake



#214 - 50th anniversary



#216 – Ruben & Nora by Mendenhall Glacier



#215 - Vera Martin

Ruben and Nora were especially happy to see Vera Martin

again. She was the missionary nurse who lived at Ingotse with them for several years. Several people gave Ruben and Nora money gifts which they used to finance a memorable trip to Alaska, to visit Nora's niece, Janis and her husband, Eldon, in Juneau. While there, they went fishing for coho salmon with Eldon, and visited the State Museum and Mendenhall Glacier.

During their early retirement years, they were seldom sick other than occasionally having a cold. However, Ruben did develop hernias twice and each time he had surgical repairs. One time, he began suffering with severe abdominal pain, and reluctantly agreed to go to the emergency room, his reluctance overcome by persuasive pressure exerted by Nora, Willa Rae and the LaFonts who were visiting. Gall bladder disease was diagnosed, and laparoscopic surgery removed the gall bladder. Because he was in such good physical condition, he bounced back quickly from each of the surgeries.

When Nora had any time, she spent it making quilts. Over the two decades of the '80's and '90's she made hundreds of quilts, each one different from the others. She visited quilting museums and fairs and looked through quilting books for special designs and often made classical ones. When double knit fabric in many bright colors was popular, people began giving her their colorful scraps and clothing made from this durable fabric. She kept this fabric, sorted by color, in large boxes in the garage. Always seeing the possibilities of making something useful out of discarded items, she would wash the garments, take the buttons and zippers off, and cut the cloth into quilt blocks.



#217 - Nora with a 'Loves Ring' quilt

When she was making a quilt to give to specific individuals such as visiting missionaries, she chose colors she thought the person would like. She donated quilts to the Sand Springs Welfare organization to be given to needy families. Others were made especially for the ladies of the South Sand Springs church to sell at the annual WCG bazaar to raise money for mission's projects. She pieced and hand quilted heirloom quilts of cotton fabrics for family members and especially for each grandchild's wedding gift.

In November of 1989 at age 87 Ruben began to have heart trouble. A cardiologist determined that Ruben was having a heart attack and advised that surgery should be started immediately. He said that Ruben's chances for coming through the surgery were low because of his advanced age, but without the surgery, he would not survive. Since Ruben was in such good health, the doctor thought it was worth the risk. However, he would leave it up to Ruben and Nora to make the decision. They discussed it briefly, prayed, and then told the surgeon, they trusted God whatever the outcome, and that they wanted to have the surgery. A quadruple by-pass was done. It was a very traumatic surgery to undergo, but Ruben did well, and was allowed to go home a little over a week later. It took many months for Ruben to regain his strength.

## Chapter 11: 1990 – 2002

### A Man of Enduring Faith

By the end of 1990, Ruben was fully recovered from his heart surgery and back to his normal activities, puttering in his workshop, gardening, and mowing the yard. He and Nora were doing pastoral care for seniors and shut-ins for the church, so they visited shut-ins, seniors, and those in nursing homes often taking gifts, cards, and jars of canned goods. Ruben, in his 90's, liked to say, "We really need to visit these old people who have no one to care for them." Ruben was still driving their car for this ministry, to the grocery store occasionally, and to church when the weather was bad. Much later, after a couple of fender benders, and a bad accident when he turned to enter their driveway, but right in front of an oncoming car, Ruben said he would not drive anymore. He called Willa Rae to ask if Darrell would come, get the car, and sell it. From then on, they relied on Willa Rae to get their groceries and take them to their appointments. Darrell and Willa Rae drove them to church every Sunday.



#218 - Sam Irene Fern Evelyn Ruben John

In May 1991 Ruben and Nora invited Ruben's brothers, Sam and John, and his sisters, Evelyn, Irene and Fern to come to their home for a reunion. It was a beautiful day and the six remaining siblings had a wonderful time reminiscing about times past and catching up on present activities.

In June 1995 Betty Jo wrote to her dad and Nora saying, "I have completed turning over the Meadow Park women's ministries to my loyal assistant, and our governing committee has agreed to her leadership for the future. I had been doing that for 7 years. I am also trying to turn over the senior adult work. And I am on the committee searching for a minister of worship and music."

In the 90's, Nora suffered from osteoporosis which caused pain in her back and eventually caused her to be bent over. She routinely took Tylenol for relief, medication to control high blood pressure. Because she had some small patches of skin cancer on her arms, she was always careful to wear long sleeved shirts and her old-fashioned sun bonnet to protect her face from the bright Oklahoma sun when she was gardening or tending to her flower beds.

In 1996 Ruben and Nora were able to attend David's and Karen's weddings where they gave them money gifts and Nora gave each a large hand quilted bedspread she had made.

As Ruben approached his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, April 29, 1997, Nora wanted to plan a special celebration for him. As discussion progressed about the occasion, it was decided to make it a surprise and invite as many family members to come as possible. Invitations were sent to all the relatives for a big family reunion, and permission was given to use the church fellowship hall for a dinner. Betty Jo and Jack came and were met by their oldest son, Lee and his wife, Laurel. Ruben Don and Jenny with their family including Kevin, Kim, Logan, and Whitney, as well as Donna and Delores Beaty were there. Kathy and Paul came with son David, Kelly and baby Ashley, and daughter, Karen and Shane, and Kelly's grandmother, Marge Inbody. Darrell and Willa Rae's family included Neil and Jenny, Joel and Stefani, and Diane. Other special guests were Ruben's sisters, Fern Ripple and Irene and James Shahan. Richard and Miriam Lambert and Amanda also came making 35 in all. Ruben was surprised to say the least, especially when his sister Fern came all the way from Oregon to help him celebrate his birthday. Dinner was served, followed by a large birthday cake with 95 sparkling candles. Among other things, Ruben received gifts of a wooden cane cut in the shape of a saw, and a painting of four generations of Schwieger men done by Donna. It was a memorable evening enjoyed by the whole family.



#219 - Ruben's 95th Birthday

Nora's girls, Betty Jo, Kathleen, Willa Rae and granddaughter, Jo Lynn, hosted a Birthday Tea to honor her on December 11, 1999, on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. All of the ladies from South Sand Springs church were invited to the occasion at Willa Rae's home. There was a selection of cookies and sweet treats to go with the tea served in Nora's collection of beautiful bone china teacups. Each guest brought one or two stems of pretty fresh flowers, which were all combined into several large colorful bouquets for Nora to enjoy later at home. All the ladies found a collage of pictures showing scenes from Nora's life very interesting.



#220 - Willa Rae Nora Ruben Don Kathleen in November 2003

Early in the new century, Ruben began to have difficulty swallowing. The muscles in his throat would not function properly, and any liquids, like his favorite coffee, trickled down into his windpipe instead of going into his esophagus threatening to choke him. The only solution was to place a gastric tube through the abdominal wall into the stomach, and give him the necessary nourishment by regular liquid feedings through the tube. Purchased food supplements were too expensive to use long term, so Willa Rae and Nora prepared a recipe in the blender using ground chicken or tuna, vegetables, and milk and gave it to Ruben three times a day. They were concerned that he would miss being able to eat meals, but he was patient and insisted he did not feel hungry or miss the pleasure of tasting and chewing regular food.

Darrell and Willa Rae went by every Sunday morning to pick up Nora and Ruben to take them to church. Parking the car near the front of the church, Willa Rae would go in and get the wheelchair for Ruben to ride into the sanctuary, as he was not strong enough to walk that far. Ruben and Nora always sat in their usual place on the left side near the front. His hearing aids did not seem to help very much, but they both enjoyed being in the service and did not want to miss the hymns, the sermon and joining the fellowship of their friends in the congregation. Sunday afternoons at home were spent writing letters to children, relatives and long-time prayer partners. Ruben always sat at his typewriter and used the "hunt and peck" method. Later Nora would read through the page and correct his typing errors. Nora wrote her long, newsy letters in her beautiful penmanship. People always commented about the pleasure they remembered in receiving her personal letters.

100 years old! Ruben was so excited on the morning of April 29, 2002 when he awoke to find that he had actually made it to his hundredth birthday. It was indeed a milestone to be proud of. Arrangements were made to have a professional photographer come to the home to take pictures of Ruben and Nora. Announcements had been sent out to several churches and to all the relatives and friends we could think of, inviting everyone to attend a reception in his honor.



#221 – Ruben age 100



#222 – Nora age 93

Knowing that there would be much excitement connected with the event, several relatives came a few days early to be able to spend more one-on-one time with Ruben.

His sister Fern, and her daughters Sherry Lady and Kathleen McDaniel and her daughter flew to Tulsa from Oregon. Sherry's daughter, Julie, accompanied them bringing her little adopted baby along. Ruben's other sister, Irene, was brought from Oklahoma City by her son, Ronny Shahan and his wife, Shirley. Ruben's nephew, Lee Schwieger travelled from Arkansas, and Jack and Betty Rhea Warhurst and their son, William, flew in from California. What a happy reunion it was for Ruben, who thoroughly enjoyed seeing everyone again.



#223 - Ruben sister - Irene Nora sister – Fern



#224 - Ruben Don, Kathleen, Ruben, Nora, Betty Jo,  
and Willa Rae April 29, 2002

The day of the party was made more festive by a balloon bouquet sent by former missionary Hazel McDilda. One balloon announced, "Never Too Old to Party!"

That afternoon a host of friends and relatives came to congratulate Ruben on his birthday at the reception held at the home of Darrell and Willa Rae. Former Kenya missionaries, Harley and Bonnie Richardson, and Lydia (Hanson) and her husband Robert McDonald were there. An Indian man, Mr. Jadmaker Barvis, who used to work at Samji Harji's store in Kisumu, Kenya, was pleased to see Ruben again. All of Ruben and Nora's grandchildren gathered around them for a group picture. Ruben was tired but enjoyed all the attention he received.



#225 - Ruben and Nora's Grandchildren

The week of the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration the last part of April was an exciting, happy time with so many people visiting and offering their congratulations. Ruben thoroughly enjoyed seeing his sisters again and everyone else who was there, and often relived the memories. Daily life settled back into the normal routine. Nora was very capable in taking care of most things. Ruben could get around the house when he needed to, using his walker for balance, but spent most of his time sitting in his recliner, reading his Bible or watching activities out the front window and napping. He had all the things he used on the little end table by his chair, his Bible, books to read, Kleenex and his Vicks “sniffer”, and the tape recorder on which he played hymns or sermons that Ruben Don had given and recorded.

Still not taking any medicine or seeing any doctors, and being fed through the tube, Ruben was still alert and in fairly good health. There was a TV in the living room, but reception was poor at best, and besides there were no programs of interest to either Nora or Ruben. He always looked forward to the mail delivery, to see if there might be letters from Ruben Don or Kathleen, or maybe from his sister, Fern. Even the junk mail gave him something to look at. Willa Rae came by every day to check on them and see if they needed anything from the grocery store. She helped Nora hoe weeds in the garden and prepare the liquid mixture for Ruben’s gastric feeding.

Darrell and Willa Rae were planning to be gone on a much-anticipated trip to England and Scotland the last three weeks of May. They had really scheduled the tour for September the previous year, but security measures surrounding the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 on the World Trade Center in New York City had cancelled all flights abroad, so the trip had been postponed and reservations made for May 2002. There was much discussion about whether they should leave for the extended trip when Ruben was so old. He was doing surprisingly well at the time, and Nora insisted that she could cope by herself. Anyway, Diane was living at home, working at the hospital as a dietician and would be close by, so Darrell and Willa Rae finally decided to go on the trip as planned. Whenever possible, they sent e-mails to their family, and one day they received a disturbing message from Diane.

Grandma called Diane and said that Grandpa was sick, and she thought he should go to the emergency room. Diane drove Ruben and Nora to Tulsa, where the doctors admitted Ruben for treatment of pneumonia. Since Diane was working at that hospital, she would take Nora to stay with Ruben every day until he was released. He was at home recovering when Darrell and Willa Rae returned from their trip the end of May.

After experiencing this setback, Ruben seemed slow in regaining his strength. He spent more time in his recliner, even sleeping in it at night instead of going to bed. During the next weeks, he became weaker, and a hospital bed was brought and set up in the living room where he would not feel so isolated. When he became bedfast, hospice nurses visited several times a week, and provided necessary medications and a suction machine to keep his airway clear. Nora started sleeping on the living room sofa so that she could be nearby if he needed help, and Willa Rae was there constantly to help care for him. His body, unable to digest the food, finally rejected the liquid tube feedings, and so they were stopped.

Kathy and Paul, who had moved to Lawton, Oklahoma, came for a short visit, and then Ruben and Jenny drove down from Evansville, Indiana the first week in July. Ruben's condition had not changed in several days, so after two days, Ruben and Jenny decided to return home. On the evening of July 9, Darrell, Willa Rae and Diane were with Nora when Ruben's breathing became very labored, and he passed peacefully to his heavenly home.

Ruben's funeral was held on Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002, at South Sand Springs Church of God. Rev. Paul Owens gave the opening remarks, with scripture readings, prayer and obituary by former pastors Dave Williams and Loren Stephenson. A special song, 'Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful One', was sung by Wanda Alexander and Steve Peters, accompanied by Christina Martin on the organ. Tributes were given by family members, Ruben Don Schwieger, Betty Jo Hutchison, and Kathleen Vorhies. A violin solo was played by Shirley Palmer followed by the benediction spoken by Rev. Paul Owens. Burial was at the Woodland Memorial Park in Sand Springs.

*What is a century?*

*Why it is a hundred years, you say.*

*Well then, what is a hundred years?*

*Why it's the years our friend Brother Schwieger has lived.*

*Well, what then does that mean?*

*It means a hundred years of love so true,  
And a hundred years of service too,  
A lifetime spent proclaiming God's great love,  
A lifetime giving joyous praise to his God,  
A lifetime of faithfulness to God and family,  
A life well lived, that's what it means!*

*Well then, what is a life well lived?*

*It's being a blessing for all the days gone,  
and those to come,*

*It's looking forward to the crown he has won!  
It's continuing to abide in his Savior's love,  
Enjoying the love of family and friends,  
Who hold him oh so dear!*

*Brother Schwieger, you have blessed our lives.*

*May God grant you joy and peace until the day*

*He calls you home!*

*Poem by Betty Stephenson for Ruben's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

## Chapter 12: 2002 – 2008

### A Woman of Noble Character

When Ruben died, Nora said to Willa Rae simply, “Our work is done”. They had made his comfort their sole focus for several weeks and had spent many hours taking care of him together. In the days that followed, Willa Rae spent as much time as she could with her mother to ease the loneliness. Nora wrote many thank you notes and letters recounting the events of the last few weeks for relatives and friends.

As had been their habit for many years, every morning when she finished her breakfast, Nora read the Scripture for the day and readings from the daily devotional booklets they regularly received in the mail, “The Upper Room”, the “Daily Guidepost” and “Pathways” published by the Church of God. She prayed for all her family and the concerns and needs of the day. That being done, she tended to her summer garden and canned a few vegetables. She finished a quilt she had started and looked through the boxes of fabrics to choose colors for a new one. When she got tired, there were always books to read. The evening closed as the day began, with Bible reading and a prayer

The fall of 2002, Nora welcomed the birth of a new great-grandchild. Joel and Stefani’s second son, Luke, joined his brother Liam, on September 20. Nora was pleased to hold him when he was just a few days old, and later Ruben Don and Jenny came to spend Christmas with Nora and Willa Rae and Darrell’s family. The new year brought more happiness to the Oklahoma relatives with the marriage of Nora’s grandson, Neil, to Mary Bridgewater, on April 12, 2003. Kathleen and Paul stopped by Sand Springs on their way from Booneville, Missouri, where they lived, to pick up Nora and bring her to Edmond for the wedding.

Deloris Beaty and Darlene Detwiler, former missionary nurses in Kenya, surprised Nora with a visit, staying several days, and enjoyed reminiscing and remembering happy times. Lasting friendships had been made while serving and working for the Lord with other members of

the missionary staff those many years ago.



#227 - Nora in garden



#226 - Nora in her sun flower garden

Darrell mowed the yard every week and Nora settled into a routine of gardening that summer, enjoying planting the seeds and watching the plants coming up and growing. Nora enjoyed just walking around the yard, looking at each plant and noticing which ones were in bloom. The cucumbers Willa Rae had planted in her garden did really well, so she brought many of them to Nora and they worked together making many

quarts of Ruben Don's favorite sweet chunk pickles. She had them all ready to give to him when he came the next summer.

Nora was on hand for a Diane's bridal shower, given by Stefani and Mary, preliminary to the beautiful wedding of granddaughter, Diane, to Matthew Smithson August 6, 2004. The wedding, officiated by Diane's Uncle Ruben, was followed by a reception planned for two hundred guests by Willa Rae and Darrell.

Time went by quickly because Nora was always busy sewing double knit quilts and picking up many pounds of large pecans from the tree she had planted many years before in the front yard. Darrell and Willa Rae took the pecans to the farm store to have them weighed and cracked, then Nora spent many hours that winter picking out the nut meats. Nora was not really interested in shopping, so she would make a list of groceries she needed, and Willa Rae went to the store to buy the things she asked for. Willa Rae did all her banking and other errands.



#228 - Nora picking up pecans



#229 - Nora's 95th birthday

A special birthday party at Willa Rae's home was planned for Nora's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. The ladies of South Sand Springs church were invited for a cookie exchange and birthday party on December 11, 2004. Kathleen, Diane, Willa Rae, and Mary Ferguson were joined by Nora's niece Carolyn Burns, and her nephew Richard Lambert and his wife Miriam.

In the spring of 2005, Darrell and Willa Rae asked if Nora would like to go to see Betty Jo. They decided to stop first in Booneville, Missouri and pick up Kathy and take her along. The first stop was in Evansville, Indiana, where Ruben was the head of the Mathematics Education Department at the University of Southern Indiana. They drove by the historic mansions and the park along the Ohio River front. Ruben and Jenny's son, Kevin, and his wife, Kim, were especially anxious for his grandmother to come to their home in Lebanon, Ohio, and his daughter, Whitney, wanted to show off her horse. Leaving there, they went on to Columbus, to visit Betty Jo and Jack, who had sold their home and moved into an assisted living apartment. Betty Jo had begun having unexplained problems in which she was unable to speak the



#230 - Nora & Ruben Don

words she wanted to say. Jack also experienced limited mobility and was in a motorized wheelchair. Nora stayed overnight in their guest bedroom and enjoyed a memorable visit with Betty Jo.

The very next month, Darrell needed to travel to Pennsylvania to assist his mother with some of her concerns. He suggested that Nora and Kathy might like to go on another trip to spend a few days with Betty Jo. Darrell left Nora, Kathleen, and Willa Rae at the home of Dena and Stan Pyle in Columbus, Ohio, while he drove on to Pennsylvania. It was a special reunion with Nora and Betty Jo and their daughters. One evening while they were there, everyone helped Kris celebrate her April birthday.



#231 - Willa Rae Betty Jo Nora Kathleen

In October 2005, Darrell and Willa Rae planned a sightseeing trip to New York state and Pennsylvania. Rather than leaving Nora home alone, they asked her if she would like to go and stay with Kathleen while they were away. She was happy to do that, so they took her to Booneville, Missouri, left her with Kathy, and headed for Pennsylvania. When on October 18, Nora began having severe chest pain, Paul and Kathleen took her to the emergency room where they were told she was having a heart attack. Nora stayed in the hospital for several days and then was released to Kathy's care. She was recovering when Willa Rae and Darrell returned to take her home with them.

Nora was so glad to be back in her own home again, and although she was weak, she began to feel better. She used a four-prong cane to steady her as she walked and rode in a wheelchair from the car into the church building on Sundays, or to offices for doctor's appointments.

At home again, Nora was included in the activities of Willa Rae and Darrell's family. Darrell's mother, Mildred had agreed to sell her home in Pennsylvania and move to Oklahoma to live with her son, who could



#232 - Nora & Willa Rae

help her cope with her failing eyesight. The grandchildren welcomed the attention of two great-grandmothers, and Mildred and Nora enjoyed each other's company. Everyone welcomed sweet baby Lily, who was born to Joel and Stefani on June 13, 2006. Birthdays of each family member and special holidays like Christmas, were even more exciting with the expanding family. Neil and Mary announced they were expecting their first baby in a few months. However, Nora received a shock and was grieved when she was told that Mildred had died suddenly of a massive stroke the evening of September 19, 2007.

That winter there was a severe ice storm that caused devastation and widespread power outages from broken tree branches falling on the electric lines. Nora's favorite pecan tree was ruined, and her house was very cold with no heat. Darrell and Willa Rae insisted that she come to stay with them until power was restored. They did not have electricity either, but they did have a fireplace, and at least could keep the living room warm. She reluctantly agreed to leave her home, but only on the condition that she be allowed to return as soon as possible. Electricity was back on in five days, but it took weeks for all the broken tree branches to be cut up and burned.



#233 - Nora

One day in the spring, Willa Rae discovered that a stray cat had taken up residence in the tool shed next to Ruben's workshop. Nora adopted the friendly black cat with a white tip on her tail and was glad to have a cat in the house again. In a few weeks, Nora and Willa Rae watched four kittens being born, and then enjoyed the endless entertainment of the antics of a mother cat and her babies. Joel's children could not wait until they could take their first choice, a tabby kitten named "Pete", home with them. Homes were found for the others, but the cat stayed and became Nora's faithful companion.

Nora enjoyed the friendship of all the church ladies, who loved her dearly, and participated with them in all the activities planned by the Women of the Church of God. There was always a monthly meeting planned with a potluck supper followed by a program. Over the years Nora had served in the offices of Spiritual Life Director and Missionary Education, telling stories of her experiences in Africa, giving meaningful lessons, and inspiring the members by her Godly example.

Fund raisers for missions projects were scheduled two or three times every year. The winter usually was chosen for a bean and corn bread dinner, served with slaw and pies for dessert. Springtime seemed to be ideal for a chicken and noodle dinner, accompanied by homemade yeast rolls and homemade pies. Other fund raiser projects were an annual craft "Bazaar and Bake Sale" and sometimes a yard/rummage sale. All the ladies joined in these efforts and made lasting friendships while working together for a common cause. Nora taught the ladies how to make egg noodles and always contributed some of her delicious home-baked breads, glazed donuts, and pies for the dinners and bake sales, and many of her beautiful, colorful quilts were displayed for sale at the Bazaar.



#234 - WCG auction



#235 - Nora with WCG friends

One year Nora had learned how to make yarn dolls in many colors. She would braid the hair and sew it to a plastic doll face. Then she crocheted the dress and hat. People thought the dolls were very cute and bought them, the money going into the missions fund. Nora thought she had made around 400 dolls.



#236 - The Year of the Dolls



#237 - 'Around the World' quilt

The time came when Nora was no longer able to sew the double-knit quilts. When all the blocks were sewn together, the finished quilt was just too heavy for her to handle. Willa Rae helped spread them out on the backing and tied the layers together, but Nora's much used sewing machine remained silent in the sewing room. Nora wanted to remember the quilts she had made, so Willa Rae hung many of them out on the clothesline and took pictures of them for her.

Although she had had cataract surgery some years before and now wore glasses, Nora enjoyed very good eyesight all her life and it stood her in good stead. She was able to read easily and fast. Being unable to get out and walk very much, Nora spent most of her time reading, an activity she had always enjoyed ever since she was a girl, when her mother had to tell her to put the book down and get busy with her chores. Willa Rae would go to the local public library and pick out books she thought her mother would like, especially historical novels and interesting stories. She would return with a stack of books, and by the end of the week, Nora would be ready to send those back to the library and get more. Willa Rae came by every day, to sit on the old carved wooden African stool by her mother's glider rocking chair and visit with her.



#238 - Nora

Late one Saturday night, Nora called Willa Rae, saying that she was experiencing severe chest pain and felt she was having a heart attack. Darrell and Willa Rae called an ambulance and rushed over to her house. The paramedics arrived quickly and determined that Nora was suffering from a collapsed lung rather than a heart attack, but said that she should still be taken to the hospital. Darrell and Willa Rae followed the ambulance and stayed with her while she was admitted. Nora was treated in the hospital for two days and Willa Rae stayed with her. When she was discharged, Willa Rae drove her home and helped her get comfortable.

Throughout the summer, Nora stayed at home managing fairly well, but by fall she was becoming noticeably more frail. Ruben and Jenny came to visit and told her about the work team they were taking in the upcoming trip to Trinidad. Joel had decided to join the work mission team to help build a concrete security wall around the Church of God Bible school there. After Ruben and Jenny left to return home, Nora became weaker as her heart was stressed, and she was soon confined to her bed. Nora's granddaughter, Jo Lynn, flew in from North Carolina to stay two days and show her love and concern. They spent the time together, with Nora talking about some of her memories. She really did not have much of an appetite and craved only cold water and ice chips.

The day before the work mission team was to leave for Trinidad, Ruben called his mother to say goodbye. Nora insisted that they not cancel the trip saying, "God has told me that I will be going soon. I know you are leaving tomorrow for your work camp in Trinidad, but you must not cancel your mission trip to come to the funeral. I am just an old bag of bones, and everyone here can take care of things."

Willa Rae was staying with her mother around the clock and called Kathy the next day to tell her that she needed to come, as there was not much time left. Soon after Kathy came, Nora wanted Kathy to take her outside in the wheelchair, so she could tour the yard and see her flowers one more time. Later that evening, their mother asked Kathleen to sing a hymn that meant a lot to her.

*Ho! everyone that is thirsty in spirit,  
Ho! everyone that is weary or sad,  
Come to the fountain, there's fullness in Jesus,  
All that you're longing for, come and be glad.*

*Child of the Kingdom, be filled with the Spirit,  
Nothing but fullness thy longing can meet,  
This the enduement for life and for service,  
Thine is the promise, so certain, so sweet.*

*I will pour water on him that is thirsty,  
I will pour floods upon the dry ground,  
Open you heart for the gift I am bringing,  
While you are seeking Me, I will be found.*

On the afternoon of October 23, 2008 Nora passed peacefully to her heavenly home and joined Ruben in the presence of their eternal Father. Willa Rae and Kathleen and several other family members were present, and Ruben Don was called.

The funeral service was held on October 27 at South Sand Springs Church of God, with Rev. J. R. Putnam officiating. Shirley Palmer played "Amazing Grace" as a violin solo and Wanda Alexander sang the hymn, "Him That is Thirsty", both accompanied by Christina Martin. Since Ruben was not able to be present, his written tribute to his mother was read by Darrell. The presence of many family members and friends at the service, numerous cards and messages received, and lovely floral arrangements given, showed how much Nora was loved and would be missed by all who knew her.



## Time Line for the Lives of Ruben and Nora Schwieger

### Ruben:

- 1902 - Ruben Carl Schwieger born in Hitchcock, Oklahoma April 29 (2<sup>nd</sup> son, 6<sup>th</sup> child of 14))
- 1921 – Graduated Hitchcock, OK High School (class of ten)
- 1922 – Married Clydena Schlafler
- 1923 – Ruben and Clydena were born again, Betty Jo born on March 2
- 1929 – Lifetime Teacher's Certificate from Central State Teachers College
- 1930 - Bachelor of Science degree from Central State Teachers College, teaching position in Waukomis
- 1934 – Clydena died
- 1935 – Married Nora Keyser August 25
- 1936 - Masters of Education degree from Phillips University

### Nora:

- 1909 – Mary Elnora Benson born in Jones, OK. December 11, (2<sup>nd</sup> daughter, 4<sup>th</sup> child of 4)
- 1927 – Graduated Jones High School
- 1928 – Received Life Teaching Certificate from Central States Teachers College  
Teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade in Jones, OK
- 1930 – Married Ray Keyser To Hawaii for teaching position on pineapple plantation
- 1931 – Husband Ray died Nora returned to college in Edmond, OK.
- 1932 - Bachelor of Science degree from Central State Teachers College teaching position at Lacy.
- 1933 - Teaching position at Jones.
- 1934 - Teaching position at Waukomis
- 1935 – Married Ruben Schwieger August 25

### Ruben and Nora:

- 1935 – Both taught at Waukomis
- 1936 – Taught at Comanache
- 1938 – Both taught at Dacoma
- 1940 – Ruben Don born May 12, Betty Jo graduated high school and left for Anderson College
- 1942 – Teacher/Superintendent in Hobart, OK Ruth Kathleen born September 7
- 1943 – Willa Rae born October 15 Ruben, pastor of the Hobart Church of God
- 1947 – Left as missionaries to Kenya
- 1952 – Left Kenya for the U.S. returning by way of Europe Ruben ordained in Oklahoma
- 1953 – Returned to Kenya by way of South Africa
- 1958 – Returned to U.S. from Kenya by way of Europe
- 1959 – Returned to Kenya
- 1962 – Returned to U.S. by way of Israel and Holland
- 1963 – Returned to Kenya
- 1967 – Returned to U.S. Retired from formal missionary service.
- 1968 – Bought a home in Prattville, OK Served a month in Florida travelling for missions
- 1969 – Special Assignment Missionaries in Cayman Brac for a year
- 1970 – Returned to Oklahoma

1972 – Built a house near South Sand Springs Church of God  
1977 – Ruben served as interim pastor of SSS Church of God  
1978 – Special Assignment Missionaries in Australia for one-year  
1979 – Returned from Australia by way of the Philippines, Japan, and Kenya  
1981 – Participated in Workcamp in Colombia, South America  
1983 – Ruben served as Interim pastor at SSS Church of God  
1984 - Participated in Workcamp in Jamaica  
1989 – Ruben suffered a heart attack and had 4-bypass-surgery  
1990 – Toured southern Canada for missions  
2001 – Ruben required a feeding tube  
2002 – Ruben died July 9

**Nora:**

1938 - Teaching at Dacoma  
1948 – President of Oklahoma Womens Missionary Society  
2004 – Fund raising activities with WMS  
2005 – Heart attack - hospitalized  
2007 - Collapsed lung – hospitalized briefly  
2008 – Nora died Oct. 23

**Ruben’s Family**

Children of Ferdinand & Gertrude Schwieger

Lydia Esther  
Rebecca Augusta  
Daniel George  
Ruth Ida  
Evelyn Louise  
Ruben Carl  
Esther Helen  
Samuel William  
Luella  
John Ferdinand  
Arthur  
Irene Gertrude  
Fern Mae  
Raymond

**Nora’s Family**

Children of Roy & Jennie Benson

Baby daughter – still born  
Melvin Andrew  
Frank Ellis  
Lora Amanda  
Nora (Mary Elnora)

Children of Ruben and Clydena Schaffler  
Betty Jo

Children of Ruben & Nora Benson  
Ruben Don  
Ruth Kathleen  
Willa Rae

Children of Betty Jo & Jack Hutchison  
Randall Lee  
Jo Lynn  
Kristen Kay  
Dena Marie  
Jeffrey Dean

Children of Ruben Don & Jenny Livingston  
Kevin Lee  
Donna Kay

Children of Kathleen & Paul Vorhies  
David Christopher  
Karen Anita

Children of Willa Rae & Darrell Ferguson  
Neil Andrew  
Joel Matthew  
Diane Elaine

**Post Scripts:**

Betty Jo Hutchison died on November 14, 2010  
Jack D. Hutchison died on January 16, 2011  
Paul E. Vorhies died on August 9, 2020

## List of Pictures

Person or Place	Picture Number
African Lightning.....	#158
Australia.....	#194
Bacani, Rolando & Bernie.....	#196
Bailey, William & Lilly.....	#85, 86
Baptism.....	#133
Benson, Andrew.....	#12, 18, 19
Benson, Frank.....	#17, 20, 21, 26
Benson, Leroy & Jennie.....	#13, 16, 17, 18, 21, 26, 28
Benson, Lora (Lambert).....	#17, 20, 21, 28, 30, 31, 211
Benson, Melvin.....	#17, 20, 21, 26
Betts, Janie & Sam.....	#164
Benson, Ethel.....	#37
Cayman Brac.....	#182, 183
Crose, Lester.....	#168
Das, Asim.....	#197
Donohew, Grace & Wick.....	#101,164
Engst, Irene.....	#158, 160, 164
Ferguson, Willa Rae & Darrell.....	#57, 58, 59, 66, 72, 76, 77, 80, 81, 84, 104, 105, 124, 134, 163, 172, 175, 220
Adulthood.....	#179, 189, 224, 229, 231, 232, 235
Gillespie, Mary.....	#13
Hanson, Lydia.....	#164
Hobart, Oklahoma.....	#54, 60
Hutchison, Betty Jo & Jack.....	#40, 44, 45, 49, 50
Adulthood.....	#68, 69, 87, 94, 95, 161, 176
Ingotse Boys School.....	#89, 90
Ingotse Church of God.....	#110, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 120, 121
Johnson, Don.....	#193
Kenya.....	#62, 63, 169
Keyser, Ray.....	#34
Kinion, Archie.....	#156
Kisumu, Kenya.....	#104
LaFont, Frank & Margaret.....	#79, 102, 149, 164
Lehmer, Lima.....	#61, 164

Linton, Lulu.....	#25
Ludwig, Charles.....	#167
Martin, Vera.....	#95, 164, 215
Murray, James & Ruth.....	#88, 111
Neff, Thadeus & Katrina.....	#73
New, Andy & Rebecca.....	#195
New York City.....	#70
Okeene, Oklahoma.....	#7
Quinn, C. Lowry.....	#115
Red Valley School.....	#8
Renz, Russell & Velma.....	#123
Rift Valley Academy.....	#103
Riley, Don & Paula.....	#200
Robinson, Simon & Mae.....	#135
Rome, Italy.....	#153
S. S. Saturnia.....	#71
Schwieger, Clydena.....	#43
Schwieger, Esther.....	#4, 5, 10
Schwieger, Evelyn.....	#4, 10, 211, 218
Schwieger, Ferdinand & Gertrude.....	#1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 64, 65
Schwieger, Fern.....	#218, 223
Schwieger, Irene.....	#10, 218, 223
Schwieger, John.....	#10, 218
Schwieger, Rebecca.....	#2, 4, 10
Schwieger, Ruben Don & Jenny.....	#51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 66, 72, 76, 77, 80, 84
.....	105, 124, 125, 134, 135, 159, 165, 170, 172, 175
Adulthood.....	#179, 220, 224, 230
Schwieger, Sam.....	#5, 10, 218
Schultz, Charles & Retha.....	#140
Skaggs, Wilbur & Evelyn.....	#75
Smith, Herman.....	#78
South Sand Springs Church of God.....	#192
S. S. Queen Mary.....	#155
Vorhies, Kathleen & Paul.....	#55, 56, 57, 59, 66, 72, 76, 77, 80, 81, 84,
.....	105, 124, 134, 153, 163, 172, 175
Adulthood.....	#180, 211, 220, 224, 229, 231
Walvis Bay.....	#159

## List of Pictures of Nora Schwieger

Childhood.....	#7, 20, 21, 29
Young Adulthood.....	#23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31
Work & Family.....	#33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 47, 48, 49, 51, 57, 59
Travel to Kenya.....	#66, 77, 80, 84, 124, 153, 158, 166
Treating Sick People.....	#93, 94, 107
Teaching Women & Children.....	#108, 109, 117, 127, 128, 129, 131
At Ingotse.....	#126, 162, 163, 164
Travel & Recreation.....	#144, 148, 171, 175, 196, 199
Retirement.....	#177, 184, 185, 187, 188, 191, 201, 212, 213, 214
.....	216, 217, 222, 226, 227, 228, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238
Family.....	#179, 208, 210, 211, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225, 229,
.....	230, 231, 231

## List of Pictures of Ruben Schwieger

Childhood.....	#4, 5, 6, 8,
Young Adulthood.....	#10, 41
Work & Family.....	#45, 46, 48, 49, 51, 55, 59, 60, 66, 67
Travel to Kenya.....	#76, 77, 80, 82, 84, 124
Building the Church.....	#100, 116
At Ingotse.....	#98, 126, 162, 163, 176
Church Work in Kenya.....	#132, 133, 141, 156, 164
Travel & Recreation.....	#170, 171, 196
Retirement.....	#177, 184, 185, 204, 205, 206, 212, 213, 214, 216, 221
Mission Trips.....	#181, 183, 202, 203
Family.....	#179, 207, 209, 210, 211, 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225

## Index of People and Places

Ackerman, Caroline .....	125
Anderson, Indiana .....	41, 103, 118-119
Araphaho School .....	13
Athens .....	104
African Lightening .....	98
Alexandria, Egypt .....	43, 47-48
Alva, Oklahoma .....	33-34
Atkins, Richard & Carol .....	46
Australia .....	120-123
Bacani, Roland & Bernie .....	123
Bailey, William & Lilly .....	55-56, 71, 99
Baptism .....	84, 114
Beaty, Deloris .....	135, 141
Benson, Leroy & Jennie .....	14-24, 32, 41
Benson, Lora (Lambert) .....	17, 26, 32, 109, 131, 150
Betts, Sam & Janie .....	88
Bogota, Columbia .....	128
Bristow, Oklahoma .....	96
Brown, C. E. .....	43
Brussels, Belgium .....	104
Bunyore, Kenya .....	66
Butsotso, Kenya .....	55, 82, 88, 91, 111
Cairo, Egypt .....	48-49
Capetown, South Africa .....	98
Cayman Brac .....	113-115
Chilvers, Lloyd .....	121-122
Coale, Cecil & Eunice .....	116
Comanche, Oklahoma .....	35
Crose, Lester .....	105
Dacoma, Oklahoma .....	33, 38, 104
Das, Asim .....	123-124
Detwiler, Darlene .....	141
Donohew, Wick & Grace .....	65-66, 89, 91, 101
Dreger, Christof .....	11
Edmond, Oklahoma .....	22-24, 28-31
Eikamp, Arthur .....	123
Engst, Irene .....	98, 101
Farag, Nasser .....	125
Ferguson, Darrell & Willa Rae .....	36, 41, 46, 53, 112, 115, 118, 126, 129-132, 135-147, 150, 152
Gillespie, Mary .....	15
Good, Kenneth & Sue Jo .....	115, 120-121

Grand Cayman.....	113, 115
Hanson, Lydia.....	88, 101, 138
Hawaii.....	25-27, 120
Hitchcock, Oklahoma.....	8, 13, 29
Hobart, Oklahoma.....	35-37, 55
Hutchison, Jack & Betty Jo.....	29-33, 43, 112, 118, 129, 132, 134-135, 138, 140-143, 150
Ingotse, Kenya.....	38, 55-56, 61, 79, 92, 99, 100, 111, 125
Ingotse Boys School.....	38, 57-60, 99
Ingotse Church of God (Murray Memorial Chapel).....	71-78, 91, 99, 125
Jamaica.....	115, 131
Johnson, Dewey & Thelma.....	113
Johnson, Don.....	120
Kakamega, Kenya.....	93, 125
Kenya East Africa.....	3, 8-43, 67, 77-78, 80, 85, 89, 92, 98-99, 103-106, 109, 125
Keyser, Ray.....	20, 26-27
Kijabe, Kenya.....	55, 68
Kima, Kenya.....	3, 8-39, 51-58, 60, 65-66, 78, 91, 104, 125
Kinner, Mike & Debbie.....	123
Kinion, Archie.....	97, 112
Kisii, Kenya.....	88
Kisumu, Kenya.....	50-51, 55, 68, 85
LaFont, Frank & Margaret.....	42, 51, 60, 66-67, 89, 101-102, 132
Lehmer, Lima.....	38, 72-73, 88, 101
London, England.....	96
Ludwig, Charles.....	104
Ludwig, John & Twyla.....	109
Martin, Vera.....	62, 100-101, 132
MauMau.....	80
Medical Matters.....	61-64, 69-71
Missionary Board.....	38, 40-41, 43, 73-74, 82, 99, 105, 109, 113, 120
Mwihila, Kenya.....	85, 105, 125
Mombasa, Kenya.....	98, 107
Murray, James & Ruth.....	54-55, 71-75
Nairobi, Kenya.....	48-50, 68, 98, 105, 125
Neff, Thadeus & Katrina.....	43, 47-48
New, Andy & Rebecca.....	122
New York City.....	42-45, 105, 139
Nile River.....	49, 93-94
Okeene, Oklahoma.....	10
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.....	42-43, 112
Polio.....	78
Quinn, C. Lowry.....	74
Reed, William.....	121
Renz, Russell & Velma.....	78

Rift Valley Academy.....	55, 67-68, 78, 80, 103
Riley, Don & Paula.....	126
Robinson, Simon & Mae.....	88
Rome, Italy.....	95, 104
S. S. Saturnia.....	45-46
Schaffler, Clydena.....	13, 29-30, 150
Schwieger, Dan & Tillie.....	11, 32, 150
Schwieger, Evelyn (Falkenstein).....	9, 12, 132, 134, 150
Schwieger, Ferdinand & Gertrude.....	7-12, 40, 96, 103, 113, 150
Schwieger, Fern (Ripple).....	120, 132, 134-135, 137, 150
Schwieger, Irene (Shahan).....	132, 134-135, 137, 150
Schwieger, John.....	120, 134, 150
Schwieger, Ruben Don & Jenny.....	33, 34, 41, 103-108, 115, 126-132, 135, 136, 138, 140, 142, 147, 150, 152
Schwieger, Sam.....	10, 12, 132, 134, 150
Sharp, Jim & Dot.....	125
Shultz, Charles & Retha.....	91
Skaggs, Wilbur & Evelyn.....	49
Smith, Herman.....	38, 51-54, 102
Smith, Steel.....	120
Smith, Tom.....	120
South Sand Springs Church of God.....	116, 119, 120, 140, 147
S.S. Queen Mary.....	96
Van Alstyne, Eugene & Barbara.....	125
Vorhies, Kathleen & Paul.....	35-36, 41, 46, 53, 103, 112-113, 129-132, 136, 138, 140-143, 150, 152
Wako, Daniel.....	111
Walvis Bay on West African coast.....	98
Waukomis, Oklahoma.....	29-31
Withrow, Oral.....	118, 120
Women’s Missionary Society/Women of the Church of God.....	38, 41, 62, 117-118, 133, 144-145

This book contains material found in other books by the authors:

“Paths for God” by R. C. Schwieger 1967

“Taking a Walk” by Darrell & Willa Rae Ferguson 2016, 2018, 2020

“Paths for God – Revised” by Ruben Don Schwieger, Ruth Kathleen Vorhies,  
and Willa Rae Ferguson 2020