

BETHEL MENNONITE CHURCH OF HYDRO



In 1901 & 1902 approximately 15 Mennonite families from Nebraska and Kansas, originally from South Russia-Ukraine and Prussia-Poland, first came to this area. In 1902 they founded The First Mennonite Church of Caddo County and began meeting in the home of Gerhard Dick who lived just across the canyon to the east. By 1904 members were meeting in the first location of Mound School Dist. 150 about 1 mile north of the Dick farm.

In 1905 the first and only church building was constructed at this site, at a cost of \$400, on land donated by a church member and labor donated by other church members. Shortly thereafter a schism arose among the members and divided the congregation primarily along lines of their ethnic origin. The Dutch Mennonites from Nebraska returned to Mound School and began meeting as Bethel Mennonite Church of Hydro and the remaining members stayed in the new building. In 1910, after several years of farming hardships and some migration back to Kansas, the congregations reunited at this site and retained the permanent name of Bethel Mennonite Church of Hydro.

The official language of the congregation, until WWI, was German. Subtle social pressure from the community and normal recognition of our national language slowly worked its way into the church and by WWII, virtually all activity was conducted in English.

Electricity and propane heat was added to the church building in 1945. In the later 1940s major interior remodeling was completed with hardwood covering the original wood floors and oak pews replacing the original handmade benches.

In 1963 a new building, covered with native cut stone from the mound about 1 mile northwest of here, was erected in northeast Hydro. Again land was donated and construction was largely by church members. The initial wooden building at this site was dismantled. In 1965 the stone marker at the front of this site was constructed of the same stone.

On June 7, 1905 Cornelius Wiebe died and was the first person buried in this cemetery. That grave is located near the entry on the left. In the year 2006 there are approximately 62 grave sites in the cemetery and the congregation is still meeting in Hydro with an official membership of 100.