



## Fifty Years of Teaching the Bible = Phyllis Utter

By Mary Masonholder Wilson  
Gazette Staff

Many people have never gone to Sunday School for fifty years, let alone teach it that long. But that is just what Phyllis Utter has done. Utter, a member of the Columbus Junction United Methodist Church, started teaching Sunday School when her own children were young.

Phyllis at first taught the three-year-old class for ten years, and this was in the former Methodist Church building on the corner diagonally across from the current church. Then she moved into the teaching position for the J.O.Y. class, the adult group. She held this position for over forty years. Now she is retiring from teaching. She plans to keep on with her weekly Bible study group and will still serve on the prayer chain, but she feels it is time to give up the role of instructor.

The Methodist Church would like to give back to Phyllis Utter

some of what she has given to the other members. In honor of her fifty years of teaching, there will be a celebration brunch held at the church on Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:15 A.M. until 10:30 A.M. Everyone is invited to come, not just church members.

Utter was very reluctant to talk about this feat. She has been a very quiet, unassuming person. She did not want any fanfare, nor notoriety. She said, "I taught Sunday School all those years because that's what I thought the Lord wanted me to do." She went on to say, "I always taught from the Bible, I did not teach social mores. There is so much truth in the Bible. It tells what life is really about. The Bible always intrigued me so, and understanding it—sometimes you don't understand—you just believe."

Join the Methodists and others as they honor Phyllis Utter for her fifty years of teaching Sunday School. Utter commented, "I hope



I have made a difference." There is no doubt that she has!

## Columbus Day Update

A feature that we are planning for this year's Columbus Day celebration is a timeline of past businesses. Dee Gentzler has formed a committee to locate where former businesses were in downtown Columbus Junction. The committee has decided to use the year, 1949. We used that date because it seemed like a good year to start because the war had been over for a few years, and many returning servicemen were now in various businesses. The committee is presently researching these businesses, what they were named, what type of businesses they were in, and where they were located.

Signs will then be placed throughout the business community locating these businesses. Hopefully many will be able to find where the businesses were, and any other interesting information on these long-time businesses. There may be discussions as to whether we are correct in the businesses, and where they were actually located. There are many names that are no longer here, but jogging our memories will help us in reliving our history.

This should be a fun event, and the Gazette would like to thank Dee Gentzler in helping us put together this timeline for the Gazette, and hope you have fun in helping us research our history.

## Gazette photo collection available

We are having a problem at the Gazette with used photos. We have boxes of old photos that have been left at the Gazette. Several go back many years, and some of them are current. With today's digital cameras, many people now are easily able to reproduce these photos for the newspaper, and are never retrieved. We don't want to simply throw these photos away, however space is becoming limited. We are asking the public to stop in at their convenience, and feel free to look through the photos. We will put an area in the basement for you to feel free to browse the photos. Possibly there will be a picture that you know, or would like to have.

On Columbus Day we will have the photos on a table outside of the Gazette window for you to take your time to go through. As we said before, there will possibly some photos that you might be able to use, or know someone who would like the photo. We just can no longer keep boxes of photos that have been abandoned, or are not identified. These include past school pictures, family photos, engagement photos, and anniversary photos.

Here's an opportunity to relive your past, take a piece of history with you, and help us clean out our files. Come down on Columbus Day and take your time in browsing our collection, certainly there will be someone that you know in our collection.

## The Story of Lawrence Herrick: Chapter 9

By Mary Masonholder Wilson

Major Lawrence Herrick is now, as our story goes, buried in the cemetery of Reugny, France, the site of his plane crash. The people of this small village have time and time again defied the Germans by paying homage to the deceased pilot by putting flowers on the grave, having a funeral, and revering this young American man they did not even know. What gave them this courage? Why did the crash of Lawrence Herrick make them become so brash?

Quite frankly, I don't have the answer to these questions, and probably never will. However after visiting Reugny this past May, I think I can give you my "gut response": It is simply this: The French people had just "had it" with the Germans. They could suffer no more the tyranny of the German boot.

What courage these brave people had to defy the Germans! My admiration for them knows no boundaries. My love and affection for them will never end. I wish I could tell you about each and every one of them I met in May, but today, I will concentrate on a few; a few that I think will represent to you the stamina of these people and the hardships they endured. Some of them are the descendants of those in the original story.

Also, perhaps the most important point in their bravery is that war was an everyday occurrence for these people, but the blowing up of a nearby train, a deafening explosion in mid air of an airplane, plane parts and debris falling from the sky, a

parachute floating to earth, and a dead pilot were not the everyday routine. This was THEIR deceased pilot; it was THEIR plane parts, and most of all, it was THEIR MOMENT IN THE WAR.

It seems that in one moment the people of Reugny had their "token of strength," and it was a dead body. They had their reason to strike back, and strike back they did. One witness told me, "The pilots and the sound of their planes gave us hope. They were our only hope."

The Germans terrorized these village people in ways we can only imagine. One day while my family and I were in Reugny, I went to buy a bottle of wine. As I looked at the various vintages, I would ask the price and the lady there would tell me. I finally made my selection and went to pay. The lady now told me only half the price that had originally been quoted. When I pointed this out to her, she said to me, "We love you. One day during the war the Germans just shot my grandfather for nothing. My family stood there in horror as it happened. We cannot thank you enough for liberating us." I was dumbfounded. Even in the year 2012, gratitude is still felt toward our American military people.

Or another time, I was standing on the day of the ceremony looking at the many people. A lady walked up to me, smiled, and said, "My grandfather's name was on the list to be shot the next day if the presumed second pilot of Lawrence's plane was not turned in by morning." Once again, I did not know what to say. I simply gave her a hug and we talked for a few minutes. How did these people live day to day in this fear?

Others told me of family members taken by the Germans. Some were never seen again. Some were made to do jobs against their will, some jobs that would probably end in their death. Food was scarce, al-

though these rural people had more to eat than those in cities, daily existence was still very difficult. Life was lived in fear, each day was uncertain. The human spirit can only take this so long.

The homage paid to Lawrence Herrick started from his very first moments in death— From the people who pulled his body to the side near the grape vines: The doctor from the sanatorium who tried to see if there was anything she could do: The people who carried his body on a wooden ladder to a near-by farmhouse\*: The man who built Lawrence's coffin.

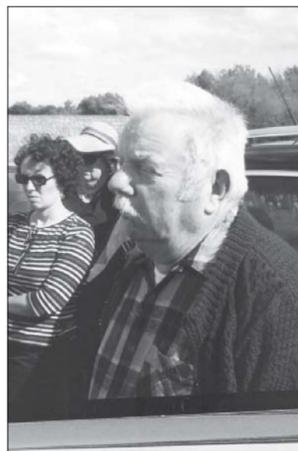
The coffin maker, Mr. Jacques Boucher, is still alive today and we met him in May. He is very old and very frail, but he wanted to meet us, and family members helped him into the room and to stand. He told us, "I did my best. I built a wooden coffin in the way I knew how, and I placed his body in the best I could. The body was not in good shape and I was as gentle as I could be." It was obvious that he had treated Lawrence with reverence, and on this day almost 68 years later, he was still moved by this simple act that he had done. We, too, were moved; not only by what he had done, but that we were standing in the presence of the man who was the last person to hold Major Lawrence Herrick.

Perhaps these small acts, small to them, but oh so very big to my family, were what got the French people moving on a "train of defiance," a train that was picking up more steam with each moment. While in Reugny, I noticed that many people often referred to Lawrence as the "handsome young pilot." Did he exemplify to them the atrocities of war? The atrocities that they were then living daily and could no longer stand to bear? The atrocities of a handsome young man whose life was cut short trying to save them?

I can only speculate as to the reason for their courage and defiance. I will never know. Perhaps they will never know. But these French people rose up against the Germans, and the Germans backed down. To my knowledge, no punishment was rendered unto them, and I have nothing but respect and wonder for them. I thank God for them.

Lawrence Herrick had a leaving of life that not many soldiers get. What a comfort it is to know what happened to him in death. What an honor it is to know how these people bonded with him, protected him, and paid tribute to him. No fallen soldier could have asked for more.

(As always, thanks to the people of Reugny for this information, but most of all, thanks for being the brave, wonderful people that you are.) What happened at the ceremony in May? Where is Lawrence Herrick now? To be continued.



\*Pictured is Mr. Duchemin, who at age ten was tending his sheep below the exploding plane. Major Herrick's body was taken to his farm home on the wooden ladder. This picture is taken at the crash site, and Mr. Duchemin is explaining what he saw.

## Briefly -

### City of Council to meet

The City of Columbus Junction will hold a regular Council meeting today, Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. in the New Civic Center/City Hall.

### New Hours for Main St. Gifts

Beginning Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Main Street and Gifts and Antiques will be open Wednesday through Friday from 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### Class of CCHS to hold reunion

Attention Columbus Community Class of 1982 (and parents): Some of us have been making plans for our 30<sup>th</sup> year class reunion. We still need some addresses; if you can help—that would be great! We want to find as many classmates as possible. Our plans are: Columbus Day Weekend—Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. meet and greet at Rumors and Excuses; Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> watch parade at Rumors and Excuses, 5-8 p.m. dinner at the Thirsty Camel, then go to an exclusive location for a night of fun. Any questions or addresses please call Deb (Sands) Halstead at 319-750-2636.

### Colonial Estates Assisted Living week

Colonial Estates is celebrating National Assisted Living Week 2012! Today: Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, they are holding the second annual pie contest. Make your favorite pie and bring it in. Assisted Living tenants will judge the pies and the winner will receive a prize. On Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, they will hold the third annual Cruise In from 5-8 p.m. Join us for Maid Rites, Coke and cake. Bring your hot rod, classic car, or antique tractor to Colonial Estates or just come and enjoy the fun! Please call Sarah at 319-728-2276 if you have any questions.

### Jack Cecil Columbus Day Car Show

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jack Cecil Columbus Day Car Show will be held on Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> from 8-noon. Registration ends at 10 with awards at 11:15. Bring your hot rod, custom, muscle or classic car or truck, even motorcycle to join in raising money for a local family impacted by cancer. This is held in conjunction with the Columbus Day Celebration. Come join the festivities, join in the parade after and have fun with the crowd. We are asking a \$20 entry donation to help raise funds. Top 25 awards, Best of Show, special awards also. Door prizes are being sought. For more information contact Curt Larkin 641-990-4436 or [curt.larkin@johnston.k12.ia.us](mailto:curt.larkin@johnston.k12.ia.us). Special invite to the class of '82 to bring out your special rides and relive some of the "high school" spirit during your reunion!

### Columbus Day Ideas

Please submit ideas for the Columbus Day theme or for the Columbus Day Distinguished Citizens to Sue Johnson at Plants and Things or John Carpenter at the GAZETTE office by Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Columbus Day will be celebrated on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Flu Shots at Senior Center

Flu shots will be available at the Columbus Community Senior Center on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, from 10:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M. The vaccine is covered by Medicare and LCPH can bill traditional Medicare coverage Part B. If you have Medicare coverage through an HMO such as United Health Care we are not set up to bill for the vaccinations. The cost of a vaccination is \$30 per person and we are happy to provide you with a receipt to submit to your insurance carrier for reimbursement.

### Conservation Board to meet

The Louisa County Conservation Board will hold a regular meeting today, Wednesday, September 12, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at the Langwood Education Center.

### Cooks Night Out

The first community-wide "Cooks' Night Out" will be held on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Letts Methodist Church, in Letts, IA. Everyone is invited to come and participate. There will be movies, games and crafts for the kids and time to meet and greet your neighbors. Supper will be served from 5 to 7 p.m. with no charge for the meal. For additional information contact Fran Thompson at 319-726-4171, Joyce Guldenpennig at 319-726-3441 or the Church office at 319-726-3641.

### Historical Society Fall Festival

On Saturday, September 15, 2012, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Louisa County Historical Society will hold its Fall Festival. The meal (eat in or carry out) will include: creamed chicken on biscuits or loose hamburgers, cole slaw, baked beans, pie and desserts. Area craft vendors from Wapello, Burlington and Columbus Junction will be attending. Come visit the museum and displays, come eat (a free will offering will be accepted), come look and buy. Help to support YOUR Louisa County Historical Museum in Wapello, Iowa. Thanks for attending the FREE museum stops on Sunday, August 5, 2012!

### P.E.O. to meet

P.E.O. Chapter C.X. will meet on Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Linda Pierce with Jenny Humphreys as co-host. The program will be the sister supper. Please bring an appetizer to share.

### Shellbark Club to meet

The Shellbark Club will meet on Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 at Pizza Hut in Mt. Pleasant. We will meet at Spring Run Church at 10:45 a.m. to carpool to Mt. Pleasant.

### Thomas/Williams Reunion

The Thomas/Williams Reunion will be held on Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at the home of Joyce McCullough in rural Conesville. Lunch will be at 1 p.m. Tableware, beverages and rolls will be provided. Bring your lawn chairs. There will be a tent, so don't let the weather keep you from coming.

### U of Iowa Mobile Clinic

The University of Iowa's Mobile Clinic program will be holding upcoming clinics in Columbus Junction to provide physicals, health screenings, health education and other services. The clinics will be on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Wilma Sime Roundy Elementary School.

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