

# Bethel Community Eager, Progressive



Story and Pictures by  
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Around the middle of the 18th century, easing between hordes of Scots swooping down the mountains from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and other points North, came a handful of methodical, sturdy, industrious and religious Germans from the sea-coasts of South Carolina to hack out homes in the high and fertile hills of our present Fairfield County.

These restless immigrants



The Crooked Run Baptist Church now pre-empt's the site of the missing Bethesda auf der Morvan — Lutheran edifice.

man." From the early and rather sketchy records, it is evident that he leaned rather heavily towards the latter designated qualification, for we find him in the Spring of 1770 ripping off his coat, picking up his axe and flailing away at the handy pines, full bent on rearing up a meeting house. However, upon completing his task he undoubtedly still had a bit of the scholar left in him, for he stepped back, surveyed his handiwork and hung this resounding moniker on his off-spring, "Bethesda auf der Morvan!"

Even so, it appears that the curious Scots and other odd settlers were not entirely overawed, for the records inform us that from the very beginning, or soon thereafter, the doors of the very first Lutheran Church in this section of the State was thrown open to all denominations for their specific use and doctrines. Whether it came about by pressure or through the simple charity of Brother Martin is not now known, but for whatever cause it seems it did not work out for the best interests of the Lutheran denomination; because on that original sight we now behold a thriving Baptist congregation!

The Methodists also availed themselves of the good Brother's generous spirit: they too were wont to worship in those days between those same sacred

logs. Later on they meandered up the road a piece and reared themselves an edifice, designating it Bethel, and in turn giving the whole Community its present name . . . And sad to relate, there's not now a Lutheran church for miles and miles!

As the years slowly followed one another the German's, Scots and a smattering of Irish intermingled, intermarried and succeeded in crystalizing one of the staunchest of the 200 odd Communities in our State. Among the prosperous farmers of this healthy Community of Bethel we find names indicative of three national origins: Mann, Leitner, Trapp, McKinstry, Jennings, Mason, Irby, Cauthen,

Robinson and so on into the night.

Most of these names are meaningful to many Carolinians, some particularly so. For instance, Chappell O. Trapp, Esq., received the first teacher's certificate from the University of South Carolina and in those early days conducted in the Bethel Community one of the very rare free schools in the State. Others also followed trails of distinction too numerous to enumerate.

Mrs. John Fridy, the obliging Community Development secretary is very proud of the fact that Bethel ranked first among the State's 200 odd Communities in improvements in 1958 as

judged by the Clemson Extension Service. And what was also sort of important was that the Progressive Farmer presented Bethel a cool three hundred and fifty dollars along with their congratulations and a forth-coming illustrated article in their current March issue.

It may be a bit extraneous to say that the \$350.00 went smack back into community improvements!



The home of the Herbert Manns, the oldest standing homestead of that numerous clan. Two earlier ones have either burned or fallen down.



The Leitner homestead sits substantially on a knoll and is of a design peculiar to the 18th century settlers through the Carolina Piedmont.