

Gardner Newsletter

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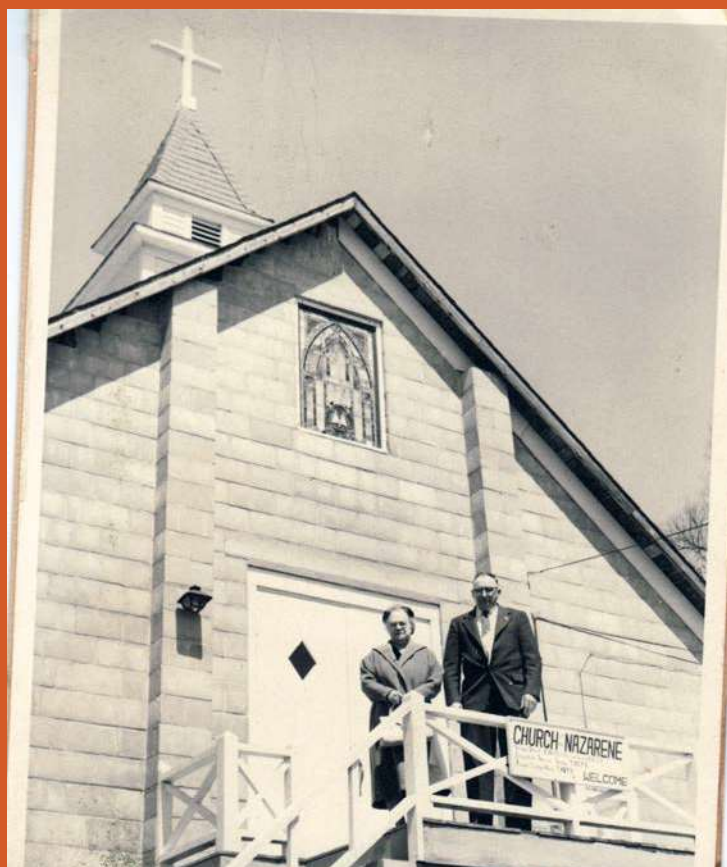
Happy
Thanksgiving!



Merry Christmas!

2024
HAPPY NEW YEAR

East Charleston's Community Christmas Tree – 1948



WILL AND OLIVE GARDNER STANDING AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE NEWLY BUILT EAST CHARLESTON CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE THAT THEY FOUNDED



EAST CHARLESTON CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE AS IT LOOKS TODAY

CHRISTMAS IN EAST CHARLESTON, VT - 1948

In the Charles Dickens tale of *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge is taken back in time by the Ghost of Christmas Past. They returned to a time when Ebenezer was happy and content, full of the Spirit of Christmas. Let me be your Ghost of Christmas Past and take you back to the year 1948 when the Town of East Charleston, VT enjoyed its annual Community Christmas Tree.

In 1948 there were three churches in East Charleston: Plymouth Congregational Church pastored by Rev. C. F. Maw, the Pentecostal Church pastored by Rev. Floyd Green, and the Church of the Nazarene

pastored by Rev. Merrill Ladd. By that time, the recently formed Church of the Nazarene had yet to be built and they were meeting in the old Moulton residence. As pictured here, the newly built Church of the Nazarene stands in East Charleston right near the Plymouth Congregational Church. You can see church founders, Will and Olive Gardner, standing in the entrance way.

As you read the program for the annual event, as recorded in Richard A. Colburn, Sr.'s book, *The History of a Country Church, East Charleston, VT – 1841-2007*, you will be transported back in time when the Spirit of Christmas was experienced and felt by the whole community. Wouldn't it be wonderful if

Christmas in East Charleston-1948 (continued)

that same spirit of cooperativeness and collegiality could unite cities and towns today like it did in East Charleston back then?

"The Gardners" were well represented at that event. Olive Gardner, and her daughters, Elinor and Beulah, sang together as a trio. I wonder which song they chose to grace the event.

I happen to know that one of Grandma Gardner's favorite hymns is "Ivory Palaces." As our family's greatest musical maven – Cousin Geri Rosser – can attest to, "Ivory Palaces" lends itself well to a trio arrangement.

Someone should ask Aunt Beulah if she recalls that specific moment in time and see if she remembers the name of the hymn selection that she and her mother and sister sang together.

What follows is Richard Colburn's reporting on East Charleston's

annual Community Christmas Tree on December 23, 1948:

"The real spirit of Christmas was shown in East Charleston on Friday evening when the three churches in the community joined together at Plymouth Church for the Community Christmas Tree. The program which was presented to about 175 persons follows: Hymns, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

"Someone should ask Aunt Beulah if she recalls that specific moment in time and see if she remembers the name of the hymn selection that she and her mother and sister sang together."

led by Rev. Floyd Green. Welcome and prayer by C.F. Maw. Scripture and prayer by Rev. Merrill Ladd. Duet: "Whispering Hope" by Rev. and Mrs. Floyd Green.

Recitations by Ronald Worth, Gertrude Hinton, and Ernest Hinton. Hymn, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" led by Rev. Green. Recitation by Larry Hosford. Song, "Merry Christmas" by Betty Leland. Reading, Mrs. Esther Greer. Songs, "Winter Wonderland," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Sammy Hebard, Betty Leland, Rae Hopkins, and Jeannine Major.

Recitation by Norman Davis. Song, "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" by Ruth Wheeler. Reading by

Mrs. Lester Harding. Recitation by Elvin Colburn. Trio by Mrs. Will Gardner, Elinor and Beulah Gardner. Hymns, "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Silent Night" led by Rev. Green. Benediction by Rev. Ladd.

Santa Claus entered while the audience sang "Jingle Bells" and was assisted by Rev. Green and Rev. Ladd in distributing the gifts from the well-laden trees. Refreshments of sandwiches, cake, cookies and coffee were served in the vestry by the ladies."

By the early 1950's, my sisters and I came to live with Grandma and Grandpa Gardner at the old homestead on Ten Mile Square Road. The Church of the Nazarene that you see pictured on Page 2

was under construction at the time. I remember attending Sunday School and hearing Rev. Merrill Ladd preach sermons at the Moulton house.

As a child, I was particularly impressed by the music that Grandma Gardner played as the pianist for the church. "Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling" was one of my early favorites. During Sunday School the children were enthralled with all the Old Testament Bible legends: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, Joseph, Moses, King David and others.

Grandma Gardner illustrated these stories by using cutouts of the Bible characters and placing them on a flannel board – sort of a primitive PowerPoint presentation – but every bit as powerful and memorable.

Christmas in East Charleston-1948 (continued)

Let's inject a bit of humor into this story. Speaking of all these characters in the Bible, I wonder how some of Grandma Gardner's Sunday School students, now grown up adults and grandparents themselves, who weren't paying attention then and who are now asked to recall these stories might respond when requested to repeat them. Perhaps their reporting might go something like this:

"The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, "Guinnesses," Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, once asked, "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Jacob, son of Isaac, stole his brother's birth mark. Jacob was a patriarch who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob's

sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

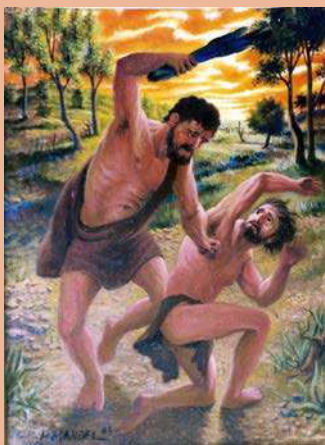
Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 500 wives and 500 porcupines."

I hope you've enjoyed re-living this Christmas celebration from 1948. Let's make this year's Christmas celebration every bit as memorable as that one was. Merry Christmas!

Some "Flannelgraph" Illustrated Bible Stories Grandma Gardner Taught in Sunday School



Adam and Eve



Cain and Abel



Abraham and Isaac



Joseph and his brothers



Moses parting the Red Sea



David and Goliath

Week Two of "The High Altitude Diaries - 2022"

In the Winter 2023 issue of the newsletter, we introduced a new series of articles, "The High Altitude Diaries" – 22 years later from when they were first introduced in 2000. Week Two of Jean's day-by-day diary chronicles Jean and Miguel's visit to their home in Spain in 2022. Ironically, as I write these words, they are, again in 2023, at their home in Posada De Valdeon, Spain. Jean and Miguel will arrive back in Bakersfield, California on October 20, 2023.

Week Two of Jean's 2022 diary is presented here in this issue. Look for Weeks Three through Five to appear in future issues.

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

Arose around 8:00 a.m. Had my usual "continental breakfast," - a cup of tea, bagel and cream cheese. Did some washing and hung clothes out to dry. There was a threat of a storm, but was hoping the clothes would dry.



**Miguel, Jean, and Ruth Anne
making a pit stop on their way to
Posada de Valdeon from Madrid**

Miguel and I were invited for dinner at Miguel's brother's (Honorino) and his wife's (Santa) house. We had a lovely dinner and visit. Walked home, watched a little news, and went to bed.

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

This is a big day. Woke up early. Our cousin, Ruth Anne Metcalf, is coming for a ten-day visit. So excited for her to see this beautiful place!

She has arrived in Madrid; however, her check-in luggage did not arrive. She gave them the information and they will deliver it up here - hopefully, soon. From the airport, she got a train which took her to Leon and we picked her up there. We had a nice "la

cena" (dinner) then headed north for another two and a half hours.

We had a nice talk on the way home. It has been

raining off and on all day in northern Spain. But much rain is welcome even in these northern mountains.

When we arrived home, we visited some more and had a little snack. Then we went to bed. It's been a long day, especially for Ruth Anne.

Thursday, September 15, 2022

We got up around 7:30 a.m. Ruth Anne slept in a little longer. She was very tired after the long trip. While Miguel and I were eating breakfast, Fidel, (Miguel's brother) came over to check on something that needed to be done on the house.

Miguel planted some grass seed. Ruth

Anne got up and I made her a small breakfast. Then Miguel's nephew, Felix, (Miguel's sister's son) came over for a visit. He said he would like to take us tomorrow to "Fuente De." This is a cable car that goes to the top of a tall mountain. It's in another province called "Santander, which is north of here.

Miguel and Ruth Anne went walking to town to ask someone about her lost suitcases which might arrive tomorrow. She's also going to find out the WiFi number for the area. While they are gone, I'll do a little washing and ironing.

In the late afternoon, Miguel took us

for a little ride down to the lowest town in the valley called "Cain." It's the end of the road for vehicles, but you can go hiking down through a trail which ends in another Spanish state, Asturia.

The peaks are awe inspiring! When we came back it was dark and the winding road is very scary, but we made it home in one piece.

Friday, September 16, 2022

Miguel's nephew, Felix, came by in his land rover to take us to "Fuente De." He knew I liked rural back roads and - boy - did we go on a rural back road to Fuente De!

Week Two of "The High Altitude Diaries - 2022"

It was 4-wheel driving all the way through the "Picos de Europa." We saw two large deer and stopped to watch through the binoculars. It took us about two hours of bumpy, bumpy terrain.

We finally got to Fuente De which has a cable car (teleferico) that goes to the top. The view was spectacular, but it was foggy at the top. We had lunch, looked around a little bit and came back down. We went on the same rural road back home.

We met a shepherd watching 1,000 sheep along with numerous dogs. He had a big tent and he lives there night and day. He said he arrived with the sheep in the spring and they'll all go back when

there's no more snow.

We finally arrived home. It was an exhausting, but a very nice adventurous day. When we got home, I made a little

The "Teleferico"

soup accompanied by sliced tomatoes and some fruit. It is 10:00 p.m. and time



for bed.

Saturday, September 17, 2022

After breakfast, Miguel went outside to water the grass seed. Hopefully, it will germinate before we leave. Miguel and Ruth Anne went to the National Park headquarters, which is behind our house. It's like a mini-museum. They watched a film about the history of this area.



Miguel and his sister, Teresa

I stayed home and ironed. While they were gone, Miguel's sister and brother-in-law came over and brought fruits and vegetables. Our family and friends keep us well supplied with food.

Today is Miguel's sister's (Teresa) birthday. She is one year older than Miguel (76) and she looks great. She and her husband invited us to "Los Picos," a very busy bar to have a celebratory "trago" beverage.

Later in the day, Miguel went with three of his

school buddies to the mountains to hear the rutting of the bull deer. While they were gone, Ruth Anne and I visited "Yoli" (Yolanda), Miguel's cousin. She showed us her "Casa Royal" which is a bed and breakfast.

One day, Miguel and I might turn our home here into a bed and breakfast. We had a great day and I'm sure we'll all sleep well tonight.

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Today is Sunday - church day. The service begins at 11:30 a.m. The name of the church is "Santa Eulalia." She is the patron saint of this town. There were only a few people in attendance. Women sit in front and the men sit in the back.

After mass, which lasted about 30 minutes, we all gathered at the "Picos Bar" for a "refresco" and visiting. Afterwards, we walked to Miguel's cousin's and her husband's hostel for

a visit. After that, we walked home for "la cena."

Ruth Anne's suitcase is supposed to arrive at 5:00 p.m. today; so, on the way home, we stopped outside the "Cumbres Hotel" where her luggage was going to be delivered. While we waited outside, this nice English couple drove up and asked if the hotel was open. It wasn't, but I asked the owner of the hotel if the elderly woman could use the restroom, and



The National Museum next to Jean and Miguel's home in Posada de Valdeon



The mountain peaks of Posada de Valdeon

Week Two of "The High Altitude Diaries - 2022"

she said she could.

Finally, after five days without her things, Ruth Anne was elated that they had arrived. Around 8:00 p.m., we had company. Miguel's cousin and her daughter arrived for a visit. We walked next door to the museum (which is not fully completed) to view a painting on the cement wall. It's a male and female "rebeco."

Later on in the evening, we watched a Spain versus France basketball game on T.V. Spain won and Miguel was happy.

Monday, September 19, 2022

We woke up early and had breakfast. Miguel went walking uptown to the bakery and bought freshly baked bread and some other small things they sell, such as milk and toothpaste; in other words, the bare necessities. That is the only store in town besides the pharmacy.

Ruth Anne walked up to the pharmacy. While they were both gone, I did some washing and started "la cena". Honorino, Miguel's brother,

and Miguel's brother-in-law popped in on me bringing me more vegetables. They wanted to see Miguel. I thanked them and they seemed to know where he was. (He was at Abascal.)

We had a nice "la cena" of roasted chicken (which Migel's niece, Maite, sent us). She also sent fresh out-of-the garden Italian green beans, potatoes and gravy, as well as tomatoes



Miguel taking a nap



Gonzalo Family Graves

and cucumbers. For dessert, we had rice pudding.

After eating and doing the cleanup, Miguel took a nap and I went outside in the sun to read my e-book.

Around 5:00 p.m., we were scheduled to go with Miguel's sister, Teresa, and her husband, Casemiro, to go visit the cemetery where the relatives are buried. The cemetery is on a steep hillside with the peaks

Week Two of "The High Altitude Diaries - 2022"

towering over it.

After visiting the cemetery, all four of us stopped to visit Honorino and Santa. They started laying out the food, which we weren't expecting, such as ham, chorizo, cheese, bread, lamb, drinks, and cookies. I didn't have to fix any food when we got home.

(Stay tuned for Week Three in a future issue.)



Jean and Miguel's home in Spain - 2022



Miguel in the Village of Cain at the bottom of the valley.



Village of Valdeon pictured from the side of Jean and Miguel's home



Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year to all family members, friends, and subscribers to the Gardner Newsletter. See you in 2024!