

MARGARET ADELAIDE SHIELDS

Margaret Adelaide Shields was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to Edgar and Emily Shields. She grew up on Church Street with her two siblings, Lee Shields Butterfield and Trudy Shields Ward. Her family belonged to Central Moravian Church and she graduated from Moravian College. When she married Boyd King, she moved several times over the years but she would always come back to Bethlehem to visit and attend church.

Margaret, better known as Peggy, kept many of the traditions of the Moravian Church with her family. It didn't matter where she lived, New York, New Jersey or Maryland, she would find a church in her new location as there weren't any Moravian Churches nearby. But she would come back to Bethlehem and bring each new baby to be baptized at Central Moravian Church. Every Sunday mother would make sure we attended Sunday school and church. My brothers served as altar boys and my sister and I were in the choir. To this day we attend church regularly and are strong in our faith no matter what church we attend. Mother would be proud of what she taught us.

Moravians believe in helping those in their communities and beyond with food, shelter and education to enrich their lives. Mother belonged to the Soroptimist Club and Lioness Club. She also helped distressed people by letting their children live in her home while the parents looked for work and a place to live. To this day, my siblings and I carry on with this practice. We belong to the Lions and Lioness Clubs, the American Legion, the Elks, the Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and the Fraternal Order of Police. Each of these organizations' mottos is to serve. Several of us have opened our homes to help others in times of need.

Because Moravians have a great love of music, mother taught us to love classical music. Several of us went to the Moravian band camp in New Jersey. We enjoy listening to great music and attending concerts and belong to the Moravian Music Foundation.

At Easter, mother would bring her family to Bethlehem for the Easter sunrise service at Central Moravian, whenever it was possible. When it wasn't, she would send my sister and me to represent the family. She would also keep the tradition of making a Moravian Sugar Cake for the family and guests.

By the beginning of November, we knew it was time to start preparing for the making of Moravian Christmas cookies. My brothers would hunt for the black walnuts that had fallen and would bring them home to dry. The making of cookies was a family project that required us to roll, cut and bake the very thin, crisp cookies with the very special cookie cutters. It was hard to wait for Christmas so we could eat those special treats. Mother had large tins full of the different types of cookies to be doled out to guests and sent to our teachers in a gift wrapped shoe box. And most of all, we got to have some too.

In the middle of December, it was time to hunt for moss for the putz to go under our tree. We had a great time working on and putting up the tree, making sure all the scenes under the tree were set up so that each one would be lighted with a flick of a switch. Each of us would take turns memorizing the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus from the Gospel According to St. Luke until we had it perfect.

Then on Christmas morning we got to hear the story and see the associated light display in all its glory. One of my brothers would operate the light switches for each of the scenes. As mother taught Sunday school at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, she would invite the Sunday school to come by and see our putz and hear the story. The Moravian star hung proudly at the entrance of the front door for all to see.

Mother would try and get everyone together to travel back to Bethlehem to attend Lovefeast on Christmas Eve at Central Moravian. It was a very special time to hear the trombone choir, singing Christmas carols and lighting the beeswax candles. If we weren't able to get to Bethlehem, mother made sure we had beeswax candles in the house to light in the window on Christmas Eve.

When mother passed away, she left part of her estate to two Moravian churches, Central Moravian and St. Paul's Moravian and to Moravian College. She wanted to make sure they would be able to carry on their work,

Although my brothers, sister and I live in different locales, we still practice most of the traditions that mother taught us and her grandchildren. My sister-in-law and I try to bake the Christmas cookies. My brothers and I hang up a Moravian star at our entrances. I always have beeswax candles to light on Christmas Eve in my window. All of this combined brings back memories of growing up with a Moravian woman and the legacy she left us.

Submitted by:

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