



THE LUND COVENANT CHURCH (above) was organized on April 3, 1892, with O. P. Forsman, great-grandfather of Creighton "Peco" Forsman, as the first chairman. It is located 10 miles south and four miles west of Oberlin. The present building was constructed in 1942, the year of the church's 50th anniversary.

—Doug Mason photo

Alabama couple visits country church

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A lifetime dream of Creighton "Peco" Forsman of Silverhill, Ala., became a reality recently when he and his wife Irene came to visit the Lund Covenant Church, where his great-grandfather, O.P. Forsman, served as the first chairman.

The couple came to Oberlin after he called Pastor Doug Mason and made plans to visit the church in the Lund community southwest of Oberlin.

"My great-grandfather came to America from Sweden in the early 1880s," said Mr. Forsman. "He first worked in Rockford, Ill., to earn money enough to send back to Sweden for passage of his brother, Leonard; his father, Per Eric Forsman, and his bride-to-be, Anna Bolin. They all came, but Anna wouldn't marry O.P. until she earned enough money for a sewing machine."

"They were married in 1883. O.P. heard of the homesteads available in the west and over Anna's protests, they came to Decatur County in 1885. Per Eric had a homestead, which was rather ambitious as he was in his mid-60s and was alone, and O.P. had a homestead some distance north."

However, he said, O.P. couldn't make a go of his homestead so joined forces with Per Eric at his place.

During their visit, Gail Marcuson showed Mr. Forsman and his wife the location of the Forsman place, as well as the original site of the Swede Home School, where many of the Forsman children were students.

"O.P. and Anna Forsman had great faith in God, and along with several other Swedish families, established the first church in 1892 with O.P. as the first chairman. He was also a director of Swede Home School for a time and served on the school board."

According to the history of the church, written on the 100th anniversary in 1992, the pioneer immigrants from Sweden began homesteading in this virgin prairie area of Kansas as early as 1880.

"As pioneers filtered in here, the Great Designer saw fit to stir hungry hearts of the community for spiritual fellowship with one another and with their God," it says. "As a result, cottage prayer meetings and informal worship services were held in the homes of these pioneers."

There was no "Lund" when the first sod church was built. The post office was at Shibboleth, southeast of the present church site at the joining of the north and south Prairie Dog Creeks. The post office was established sometime in 1878 by an old Civil War soldier, Dan Boughman, but when it was found that the Rock Island Railroad would not go through Shibboleth, the post office was closed and later Mr. Boughman started a post office west, across from the church, and gave it the Swedish name of Lund, since several settlers came from that area in Sweden. The post office opened on June 30, 1892, and closed Dec. 14, 1907.

The first prayer meeting was held



OLOF P. AND ANNA FORSMAN are shown with their first two children, Esther and Peter. The picture was taken in Rockford, Ill., before they left for Kansas in 1885.

in 1885 at the "Per" Noren home, on the corner across the road west of the church. The O.P. Forsman and Wallin families were among those present.

Another meeting was held the same year in the summer of 1885 in the O.P. Forsman home. To these early meetings, the friends brought their dinners, though often meager, and had a community meal in the home.

On Nov. 3, 1892, the Swedish Mission Friends Church was organized in the Lund area. On April 2, 1900, the church voted to join the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America.

It was during the pastorate of the Rev. J.O. Lonquist, 1945-1948, that the name was changed to Lund Covenant Church.

At the time of organization, O.P. Forsman served as the first chairman. John Sall was the first lay preacher, deacon and Sunday School teacher.

Peter W. Thoren became the Sunday School superintendent and a deacon the first year in 1893 and was also a lay preacher. Other lay leaders were Nels Anderson and John Wennermark.

The first pastor to receive a call to the church was the Rev. J.P. Pohlhammar in 1893. He was paid \$25 a month with room and board and served both the Lund and Herndon churches. All services were in Swedish.

The first sod church was built in 1880 by volunteer labor and the sod was cut right where the church stood. Many fleas lived in the dry grass between the sod and the dirt floor, and the fleas would jump from the floor onto the congregation's legs.

The second church was also made of sod, but had three pane-wide windows, which made a vast difference in the admission of light. It was said that when the first members got into the new sod church, it was "like moles getting into bright sunlight."

The first frame church was replaced by the present church in 1942 and the basement was completed in time for the congregation to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Charter members included Mr. and Mrs. Olaf P. Forsman, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Sall, Mr. and Mrs. Anton Lundquist, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Nels Wickland, Mr. and Mrs. Erland C. Rydquist, Mr. and Mrs. Svant T. Marcuson, Miss Sustava Noren, Mr. and Mrs. Peter W. Thoren, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Magnuson, Mr. and Mrs. Carl A. Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Per W. Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Erick Westvall, Mr. and Mrs. Lars A. Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Nels Anderson.

Throughout the years, the church building has been remodeled into a modern structure.

"In 1903, great-grandfather O.P. Forsman traveled from the Lund community to Silverhill, Ala., to find a place to move his family," Mr. Forsman said. "His wife Anna and their 10 kids remained at Lund until they sold the farm for \$1,000, then they made the move. My grandfather was Arthur Forsman, one of the 10 children."

"When they arrived, it was Christmas Eve, and the family attended their first service at the Silverhill Covenant Church, and my wife and I still attend that church. It presently has a congregation of around 110."

Mr. Forsman, a retired insurance salesman, said that the population of Silverhill is around 800.

"As I visited the Lund church and community of which O.P. and his family were a part," he said, "I am humbled by those who have kept the faith the past 107 years. My wife and I were made to feel like family by the Lund Covenant Church, and Oberlin's 125th anniversary celebration was an added bonus which showcases a fine community of close neighbors. Thanks for having us!"



THIS PHOTOGRAPH of the O.P. Forsman family (above) was taken at the Elite Studio in Oberlin on Feb. 27, 1902, before they moved to Silverhill, Ala. Shown are (back row, from left) Lydia, Esther, Peter, and Ellen, and (front row) Leonard, Elma, Olof Peter, David, Walter, Hulda, Anna Erika and Arthur. Arthur was the grandfather of Creighton "Peco" Forsman. Creighton "Peco" and Irene Forsman (below) of Silverhill, Ala., enjoyed a visit to the Lund Covenant Church recently. His great-grandfather, O. P. Forsman, was an early settler and served as the first chairman of the church.

