

Pastor Carl J. Renhard (1870-1947), a great man with an uncompromised vision of building a better world.

Prelude...

*"Sänd ditt ljus och din sanning!
Låt dem leda mig,
låt dem föra mig till ditt heliga berg
och till din boning,
så att jag får komma till Guds altare,
till Gud, min glädje och fröjd,
och tacka dig till lyrans klang,
Gud, min Gud."*

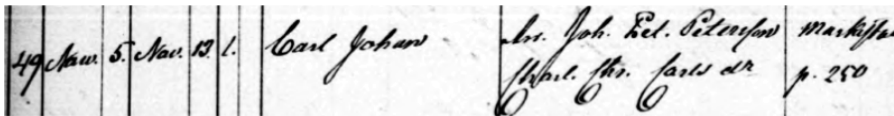


Carl J. Renhard

Psalter psalm 43:3-4, requested by Rev. Renhard to be read at his funeral at First Immanuel Church, Portland, Oregon, June 4th, 1947.

The journey to Portland...

Carl Johan Renhard's parents, Johan Peter Pettersson and his wife, born Charlotta Christina Carlsdotter, came from Småland, Sweden. He was born in Höreda Parish, on November 5, 1870, and lived there until his family emigrated to America, when he was nine. As a very young man he arrived in Polk County, Nebraska, in 1897, where his parents bought a farm near Stromsborg.



They became members of the Swedehome Nebraska Lutheran Church where he was confirmed, and there he also met his future wife Ann-Louise (Anna) Victoria Hult.

His parents hoped their son would become a minister, so according to the approved plan for Swedish Lutheran higher education in Nebraska at that time, he began his education at Luther Academy in Wahoo, Nebraska. He now made his parents' goal his own, and there was no stopping him. After he graduated at Luther Academy with honors, he continued at Augustana College and Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, from which he graduated in 1896. He continued his education at Augustana Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1899.



Rev Carl Renhard,
Evangelical Lutheran Synod of N
America



1899 graduating class of
Augustana Theological
Seminary

Shortly after completing his education, he married his high school sweetheart, Anna Victoria Hult, in Swede Home, Nebraska in June 1899. His first pastoral call was to St. Louis. At the Lutheran Conference held July 28, 1904, he was recommended to be Rev. Skan's successor in Portland, Oregon, a small congregation of 235 members. He was totally unknown to the congregation, but having the recommendation of the president of the conference and other pastors, the call was unanimous. The salary was \$1,000 and did not include a parsonage. He accepted and arrived in Portland on a Thursday morning, December 1, 1904. The new pastor, his wife and two little boys, were well received and welcomed by the congregation.

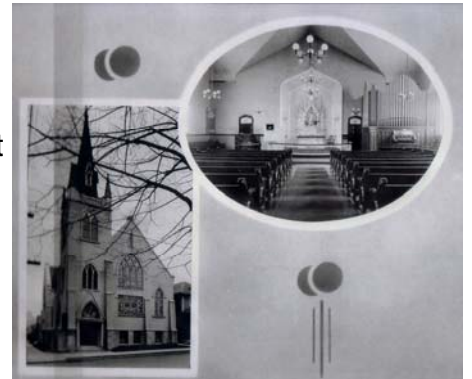


Wedding 1899

The man and his destiny..

The congregation in Portland found a pastor quite different from his predecessor, Rev. Skans, and in many ways a contrast, but they came to hear him and hoped for the best. As a person he was a dynamic dreamer, endowed with faith and conviction enough to carry through any project he believed in. He told them to build a new parsonage and a new church. And they did!

The old church and lot, at Burnside and Tenth, was sold; a new lot was purchased at the corner of Irving and 19th Street in Portland. In 1905 a large, beautiful church, First Immanuel Lutheran Church, was built. A parsonage was built next to it. The congregation now consisted of 500 members. The twentieth-century church in Gothic style features a tall corner spire. The sanctuary's stained glass windows represent a number of Christian symbols in memory of former members of the congregation and include numerous Swedish inscriptions.



First Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1905
Photo: Swedish Society Linnea

The church interior is designed in the “classical Lutheran austere” style with a beautiful altar piece that reminded the immigrants of the churches in the land they left behind.



Altar piece
First Immanuel Church

Many of the stained glass windows have Swedish text in them. First Immanuel Church continues to provide the community with Swedish holiday events such as **Julotta**, a Swedish service held early Christmas morning (*otta* is the time which is slightly before dawn). The **Julotta** service is held in the Swedish language, and is frequented by many in the Swedish community.



Stained glass windows
With Swedish text

Quite often he worked against staunch opposition, but built for the future, with the Immanuel Church is a vivid example. However, Renhard's optimism always seemed directed to newer and bigger projects, and while sitting in his newly constructed parsonage next to his new church, he began planning for a hospital. In the summer of 1910, Rev. Renhard resigned his position at First Immanuel Lutheran Church to devote his time to fundraising for the construction of Immanuel Hospital, on lots purchased on Albina, east of Willamette River. In 1909, the foundation of the Emanuel Hospital was established, a Christian charity, taking care of the sick.

An often repeated question, “How come Emanuel is spelled the way it is?”. One of the potential explanations to the mystery can be found in the first month of operation 1912 meeting minutes referred to “Immanuel Hospital” after the church, but the minutes of the January 23 meeting referred to “Emanuel Hospital”. The word “Emanuel” is most frequently translated from the Hebrew as “God is with us”.

The Emanuel Hospital was another of his dreams. Could he possibly have envisioned the tremendous future that this dream would have?



The first Emanuel Hospital building
Photo: Outreach Emanuel Hospital

An institution is but a shadow of a man. Is this true of Emanuel Hospital? Certainly someone must have had the vision to provide the means or instrumentation for filling a need which was thought to be of paramount importance. The need was for a hospital facility especially for Scandinavian people in and near the city of Portland. How long the vision had lingered in the mind of Rev. Carl J. Renhard, the writer has no information. On September 14, 1909, a little group of men were called to a meeting which became the forerunner or starting point of what is now the largest Lutheran hospital in the United States.

It is said, "God is good to the beginner", and Rev. Renhard had many friends in the medical profession and they all rallied with him for the new hospital.

The following names are of men who declared themselves interested in the proposition and willing to serve as members of the temporary board: Rev. C.J. Renhard, Rev. B.S. Nystrom, Rev. J.E. Nordling, Rev. H.E. Sandstedt, J.W. Hawkins, A.L. Morland, C.L. Larson, F.O. Carlson, A.J. Staffanson., Sven Peterson, Anton Hendrickson and N.P. Hult.

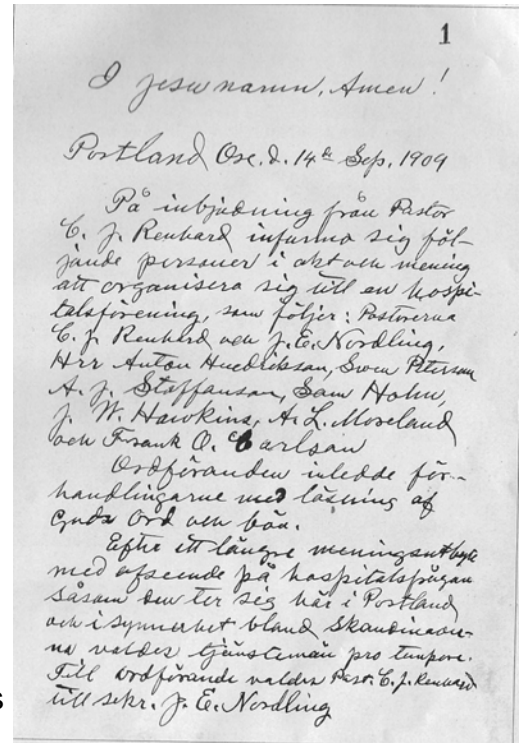
These men were the founders of the Emanuel Hospital. Active work was begun in 1912 with the temporary building on 10th Street, in Portland. After he resigned from the Immanuel Church in 1910, he moved his family to Colton, where he served the Colton Church until the hospital opened in 1912.

As the Portland area was growing by leaps and bounds, it was only natural that the Renhard family would grow as well. Over the period 1906-1915, the Renhard family was blessed with seven children: Eskil, Juilius, Doris, Martin, Bertil, Marcus and Sigrid.

In 1906, Rev. Carl J. Renhard, the Portland minister, the leading force in the founding of Portland's Emanuel Hospital, established the Oregon Swedish Colonization Company in an attempt to encourage more Scandinavian Lutherans to move to the Pacific Northwest. Renhard was looking for people who were Swedish, Lutheran, and Republican.

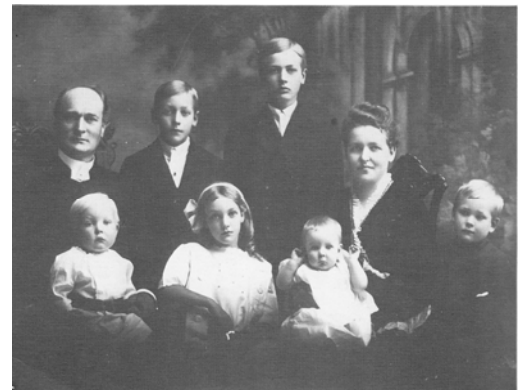
In 1907 the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Carlsborg congregation was formally organized in Hult's home. During the following years the white frame church was built. The congregation changed its name from Carlsborg Evangelical Lutheran to Colton Lutheran in 1945.

One local report in regards to Colton Swedish Lutheran Church stated that, "*it is the Swedes who built up this community and it is the little church and the faithful congregation that has functioned as the unifying bond which has made accomplishments possible*".



First page in the original language of the Board meeting which launched Emanuel Hospital

Photo:Columbia Conference 1893-1943



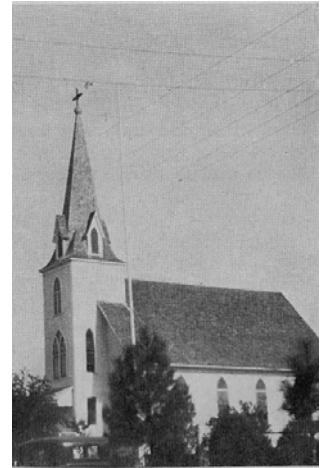
The Renhards with six of their children: Back row: Julius and Eskil standing. Front row: Carl with Bertil on his lap, Doris, Anna with Marcus on her lap, and Valdemar by her side.

Most of the original settlers came from Nebraska, particularly Oakland, Wakefield, and Omaha. One of the more outstanding families was the Hults (his wife's family) from Swede Home Lutheran Church near Stromsburg, Nebraska. Nils P. Hult became a successful lumberman and built the first lumber mill in the area. Two thousand acres of land were purchased to be made available to the settlers.

The Renhard family would not be isolated in Colton. The Hults had already become established there, as well as Renhard's parents, the Johan Petersons, the P.O. Chindegrens, the Nordling family and several other Swedish families from the Midwest.

Life was not easy in the new surroundings. It was primitive compared to the years in Portland and St. Louis, but it was a new adventure, and there were things to be done. One of the top priorities was a new and larger house, and plans were started soon after arrival in Colton. It was completed about two years later. During this time Rev. Renhard served the Colton Lutheran Church.

The church stands on the south side of State Highway 211 next to the local high school. In nearby Colton Cemetery are the graves of the Rev. Renhard (1870-1947); his wife, Anna (1874-1945), and other members of the Hult family. On Hult Road west of town is the Lutheran Pioneer Home, a nursing home started by the Hults. The Luther Cornay Chapel has the original pews and altar curtain of the Colton Lutheran Church.



Colton Lutheran Church

Rev. Renhard served as Superintendent of Emanuel Hospital until 1915, when he became President of Coeur d'Alene College, at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. He served there until 1918 when he became Lutheran Camp Pastor at Fort Lewis, Washington State. In 1919, he again became pastor of the Colton Church, serving until 1922, when he accepted a call to Grays Harbor parish, serving Aberdeen and Hoquian, Washington. He served at Grays Harbor until 1935, when he resigned and moved back to Colton, to make his home. In 1936, he became pastor at Brush Prairie, Washington and served there until his failing health forced his retirement in 1945. This was the year when his beloved wife, Anna, died. After that time he made his home with his son, Eskil, in Colton, Oregon.



Carl and Anna Renhard

During his lifetime he always took an active role in promoting the welfare of Scandinavians who came to the west to make their homes. He devoted his last years to growing fruit, perhaps his greatest hobby. He was a lover of music. In his college years he was a member of Augustana orchestra and continued as a member of various orchestras and bands when time permitted. Rev Renhard's great interest was fostering new projects and building for the future the welfare of the community and the churches he served. He felt the greatest pride in the establishment of Emanuel hospital and its subsequent successful growth and service to the community.

Pastor Renhard lived with his son and family in Colton, as mentioned, but was back as a patient in the hospital he founded, eight times before his rugged physique yielded to the Reaper on the 31st of May, 1947. A funeral service was held in the Immanuel Church which he built, and his body was brought to Colton for burial in the community, which he sponsored.



May the peace which he seldom felt while sponsoring a cause, now be bestowed on his memory.

In memory of a great man that Portland is very proud of, we are able to summarize some of Carl Renhard's contribution to the Scandinavian community's health-care needs.

1. The original hospital (1912).
2. First building on the present site (1915) and addition in 1918.
3. The Nurses Home (1921)
4. The first main building (1926)
5. The main building with addition of North and East wing (1931)
6. East extension to Maternity section (1942)

Prolog...

Rev. Carl W. Södergren wrote in the North West Pioneer and Preacher an Appreciation over his friend Carl J. Renhard.

"It was in 1941 that I first saw this big man with the flaming eyes and bushy eyebrows, and the solid chin and gaunt figure. Here is a man to be reckoned with. He was at the time already more than seventy years of age but his eyes were not dimmed and his strength was unabated. I was to discover that he had been and was indeed a giant on the earth in those days..."

The story of his life was a colorful saga of a rugged individualist and personality strategically used by God for the promotion of His Kingdom: Immigrant, Student, Pastor, Builder, Colonizer, Organizer, Hospital Administrator, College President, Military Camp Pastor, Farmer, Historian - all of these, and through it all, a Leader and Promoter in both Church and Community in both Urban and Rural Life"



Story written by Leif Rosqvist, the editor of New Sweden newsletter in Portland, based on information provided by Bruce Renhard the grandson to Carl J. Renhard, and from the First Immanuel Lutheran Church and Augustan College library staff.

References and directions for more information:

English text to the Psalter psalm 43:3-4. Go to Google Search and type in Psalter psalm 43:3-4, Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me...and search under Biblos, New international version

Fifty Years of the Columbia Conference, 1893-1943. Historical glimpses of Lutheran Mission work in the Pacific Northwest under the auspices of the Columbia Conference of the Lutheran Augustana Synod.

Gold and Green Timber. A history of Nils Peter Hult Family, Colton, Oregon 1978.

Outreach, Emanuel Hospital 70 years of service, 1912-1982.

Augustana Theological Seminary Library for photography's

Pillars of Swedish Heritage: The Churches, by Leif Rosqvist www.newsweden.org