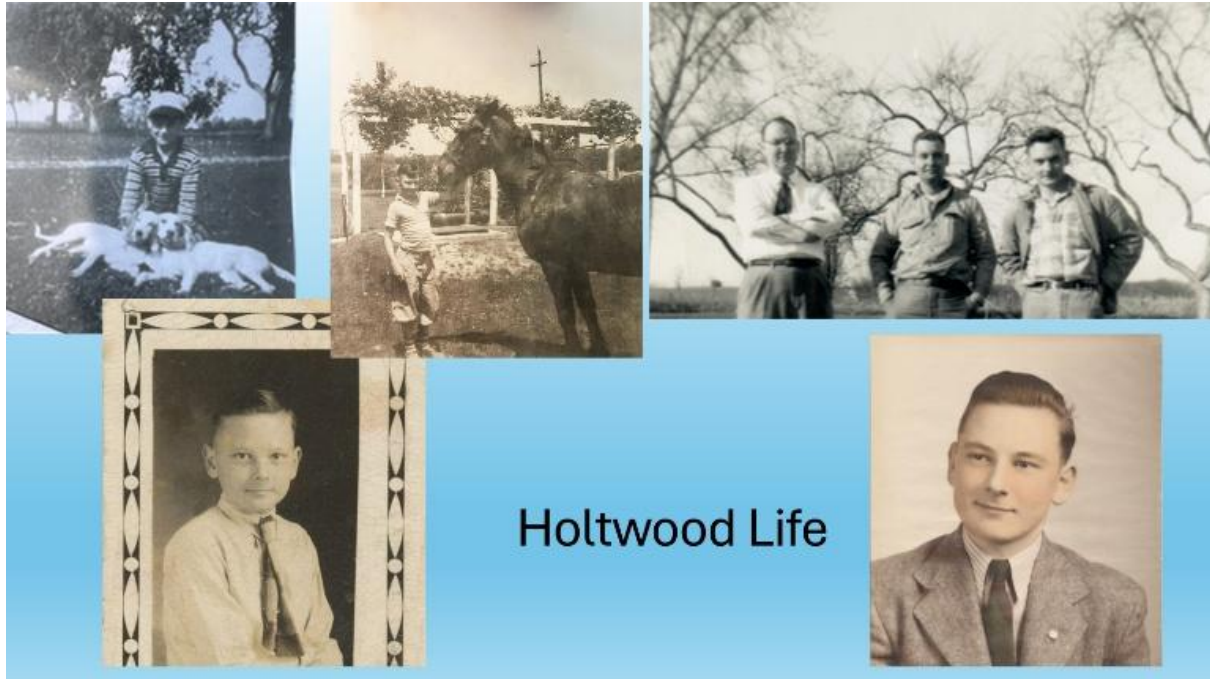


Written by Brian Shaub and read by Pastor Rita Carter at the Celebration of Life for Dad,  
Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren, 30 May 2025



Many distinguished people have been celebrated and interned on these grounds, in this church and in this cemetery. Today we recognize Melvin Shaub, my father, your grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, friend, and great citizen – Melvin - *A name with old English, Irish and French Origins meaning Chieftain, refined leader, a friend who brings people together.* I think he lived up to his name. We've heard or will hear the testimonies and the stories of my father. It's OK to cry, but definitely smile and laugh. So let me start.



Dad's life was typical of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Lancaster County boy of Pennsylvania. It was the year of Lindbergh's Solo Flight across the Atlantic in 1927, Dad was born on Monday Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Valentines Day. Growing up in Holtwood he loved his dog Topsy,



Bethesda Methodist Church

the family cow, the family horse (ol Doll), and the small family farm. He adored and respected his mother Clara and father Arthur and two older brothers Harold and Ralph, and his best lifelong friend David Feiler, and he loved Bethesda Church introduced to him by David. Dad attended Crystal Brook School where he had fun sledding, playing baseball, throwing the ball over the schoolhouse roof, and yes, at least some academics. Holtwood was a pure and simple life of the cooing of the Mourning Dove, sweet aroma of honeysuckle, a community of relatives, the flow of the great river, the Holtwood Dam and the Village and big steam locomotives. As a boy he had a special curiosity of building and tearing things apart and maybe reassembling (usually with his friend David). It was a time of radio and big band music, the depression, when fascism ran rabid around the globe. His community isolated him, but his community taught him to help one another, and there was a growing awareness that certain evil lay outside the community of Holtwood. This blend of family, community, discovery, and adventure bonded with respect of God's creation, of people and cultures around the world (yet little known to him) are the values his fellow community members 'honored' him *upon his graduation from Quarryville High School*<sup>1</sup>, by selecting him for the draft in mid-1945. It was the final and most brutal days of WW2, but it was also the next phase of his life – Phase 2 and Dad's introduction to the world. Certainly, his family dreaded young Melvin's

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<sup>1</sup> 'upon his graduation .... ' added on 15 July 2025

departure – when will the war end? Will we lose yet another Shaub boy to this terrible war? Dad was called upon by the nations of mankind's best to extinguish mankind's worst. So, he went.



The excessive Florida heat, humidity and bugs met Dad upon his arrival to Camp Blanding in Summer 1945 for training of the invasion of Japan or Mongolia, an invasion that never occurred because the war ended. Instead, dad was shipped to Italy with the 350<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment known as the Blue Devils, part of the 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He entered on the first peacekeeping ship into Europe in fall of 1945 passing off the coast of Morocco – seeing the lights in the distance he wondered ‘who are those people, and what are they like?’. And he was probably by the rail chumming into water.



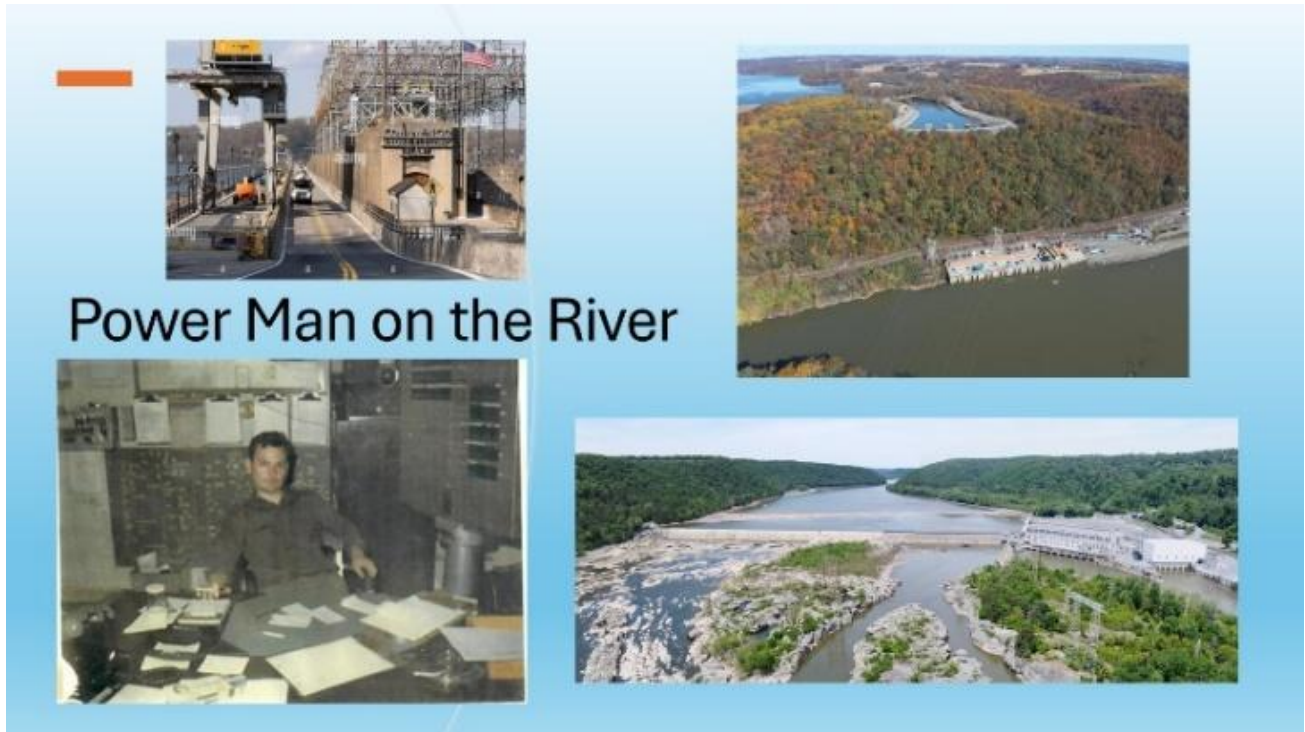
While in Naples, Italy and later in Trieste he witnessed the dichotomy of hunger, poverty, homelessness, devastation, the abyss of inhumanity yet also the founding of a new democracy, of a helping hand, kindness, the phoenix of a new civilization -- in that place that would become a better way, and a way that he would live his life.

Through all this, Dad often said the Army was one of the most enjoyable times of his life, but certainly it influenced how he would live his life, and he didn't let his short tenure as a soldier define his life as a military guy. He simply did his duty when his country called. That set Dad up for Phase 3 of his life – a returning soldier working on the Pennsylvania Railroad (driving spikes which he said was more difficult than the Army). He also acquired training as an electrician at Stevens Trade.



## The Early Family Years

As a young man who, with the help of his friend Jack, Dad found his beautiful bride, *Ethel Mae Gochenaur of Millersville*<sup>2</sup>, eventually producing a family of four children.



As a young Dad, he worked at RCA, then at Holtwood Power Plant and with the help of his friend Jack (again), he started a lifelong career at Philadelphia Electric at Conowingo and Muddy Run Power Plants. He often spoke with fondness of the work he performed on the river and the work family he had at Philadelphia Electric – at all hours to provide power to millions of people. He once restored power after a blackout to the City of Philadelphia – this required perfect timing of the power in the grid to the power coming out of the powerhouse by synchronizing two levers at

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<sup>2</sup> 'Ethen Mae Gochenaur of Millersville' added 15 July 2025

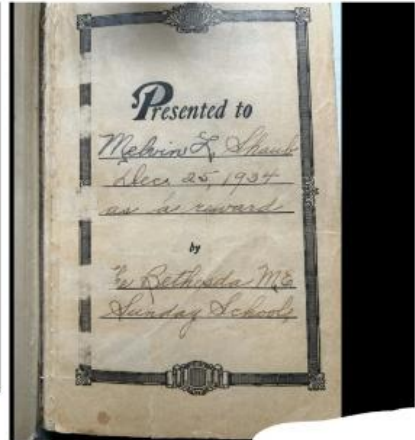
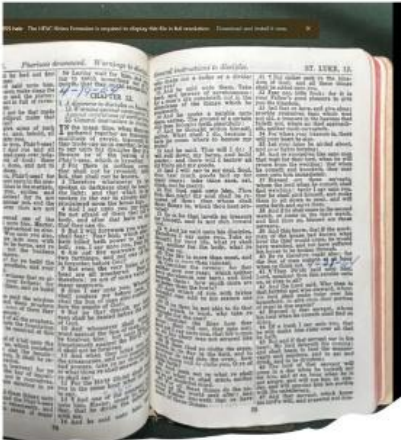
once – failure was not an option, think of the pressure on this young man, and he did it. He was known for his unique culinary skills – by cooking up dinners often in the middle of the night for his shift, the odor penetrating the rumble and oil smell of



the powerhouse.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention his small electrical business of wiring houses, barns or garages or whatever – he and his little green 51 Ford Pickup and later a white van, were known in the community.

When he started his new job with Philadelphia Electric, he was taking correspondence courses for his new work, he was building a house for us in Wakefield, we moved twice (2<sup>nd</sup> time to our new house) and was helping mom with a new baby on the way. He worked hard to support his family, and we didn't realize the pressure he endured by making a living and protecting us from the abyss he had previously witnessed in the depression and in Italy. He led the PTA, conducted fund raisers for school, helped build a community – we never had a concern about not having a home, or food, clothing, and we took vacations and traveled so we too, could learn, see, experience the miracles outside our own, small world. He worked hard but often because he found the hard way to complete a job and not necessarily the most efficient way – what I call **The Shaub Way**, that is doing things the hard



## Home Life



way. In conjunction with his bride, my mother, they inculcated these values in us, including the **The Shaub Way**

We had a dog called Petie, another named Heidi, and a cat he always called Muzzy (he called all cats Muzzy, and sometimes us too). He taught us by example – do what's right, work hard but enjoy.

And we read the Bible and had devotions almost every night and yes, we went to Bethesda Church – the one introduced to dad in the early 30s by David. He taught me how to wire an outlet, catch a baseball, how to safely handle a gun and ride a bike, and even to spell electrician and he inspired me to play a trumpet like he did as a boy. He also taught me from experience to not light a bar-b-que using kerosene, and he taught me how NOT to paint.



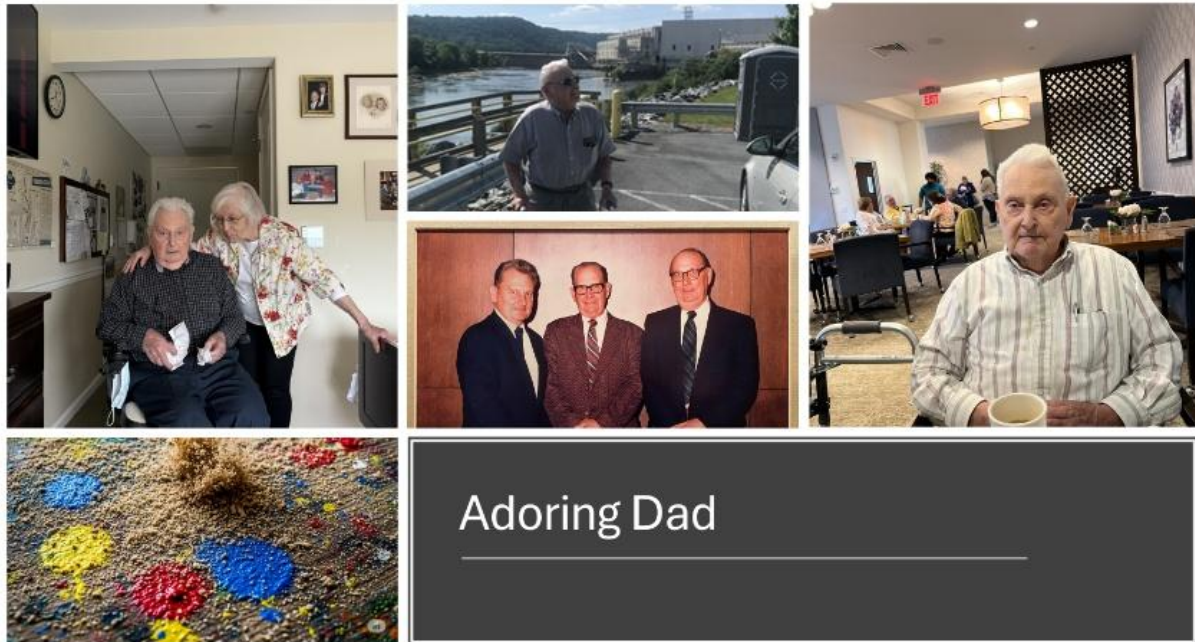
And did I say he loved a fun time – the picnics, the New Years Parties that he and Mom hosted. I can still hear his laugh.

During the Autumn of their lives (or phase 4), he and mom traveled to virtually all four corners of the earth but not to conquer, not to get a banner or snap a photo and check in for Facebook, but to learn, listen, share, see, experience, taste – and with the many mission trips of building, feeding, sharing the Word.



Oh, what a life he had. And he found out what those people were like in Morocco, and most countries in Europe, Russia, China, Africa, and Israel, Jordan, and later in South Korea, Vietnam, and Japan.

I witnessed true love when I saw how he took care of mom during her health struggles. And upon his bride's passing he entered the final phase – perhaps the



most adoring in which he provided affordable and decent housing to others because he loved to work on his rentals while providing a place to live for others, more travel, he visited and spent time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren – thirteen last count, we took trips together, he helped for years with Meals on Wheels, and he loved working at Manheim Auto Auction driving all kinds of cars – never losing his sense of adventure and wonder, his love of life, bonded with the duty to help others. People amazed dad – how interesting they were, their habits and traits, and their humor. He always looked forward to something – a party, more

travel, working on a house, or just more volunteer work, buying another watch or a simple bowl of ice cream.



In the earlier years, dad and I sort of went our separate ways and through God's will I was brought back to Lancaster to what I know now was to bond better with my father and for me to have the privilege to know what a great man he was, and the privilege of learning from him – the experiences, his desire to help, his adventures (in which we now shared), and sharing of scripture. He often wondered why life had to end with such a condition – his weakness, pain, immobility, yet I observed an amazingly quick and bright man of 98, who could listen, offered advice, with common sense and who made me a better more caring person. He had '**fatheritis**' – the condition of him being the dad, always paying when we eat out, of being in



charge – and that was OK. He took many of his elderly friends to the doctor, he cared for them, took them for rides in the country and at least one time to hit the casinos in Maryland in what I call *The Old Guys Great Adventure*.

Today, we memorialize our dad, our grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, our



friend who brings people together, a Brethren. He lived his life well and he is missed yet we can see his traits and personality in his own family – the way he spoke, his little habits, how he cleared his throat, how he liked ice cream, and pretzels, his innate engineering abilities, painting, common sense, his opposing opinions (he liked to debate), his curiosity and discovery, his caring of people and most importantly his quiet love for our country and of our God.

All these characteristics are apportioned to Cindy, Phyllis, Gail, Brian, Hannah, Sarah, Adam, Ben, Billy, James, Baily, David, Ronin and Winter, Jennifer, Ellie, Grace, Abby, Kevin, Emmit, and Adalyn. Look, listen and see - his humor, his curiosity, his stride, his caring, his hair sticking up, paint on his clothes, and thoughtfulness, his engineering approach, love of music, cars, a fun time, and .... The Shaub Way. And I say that as others have passed this way, we cherish our loved ones in such a way that we too can learn from them, know the ways of old and our family, of old Holtwood and Crystal Brook School, Bethesda Church, and the phases of life. And may he now rest in peace in the hands of Jesus, with Ethel, Art, Clara, Ruth, Bessie & Roy, Harold & Eileen, Ralph & Helen, Ben, Clarence, Belva, Joseph, David, Chester, Hapfi, Bill, of course ..... Jack and many others. May God continue to bless us all.