Written by By: Dr. Paul Bremer, Rehoboth Christian School Archivist
Friday, 23 October 2015 08:58





Early Christian Reformed missionaries searched for a location for a mission in the southwest and in late 1902 found Smith's Ranch about 6 miles east of Gallup. It included 320 acres, a house with 7 rooms, a well, windmill and a few out buildings. They named the place Rehoboth.

They added a dining room and kitchen to the Smith Ranch home and used its original rooms for housing mission workers and other activities. They called the building the Mission House. Fire was always a danger for buildings at the mission in its early years because water was scarce and the climate was dry. While baking bread, the heat of the oven caused a fire and within an hour the entire structure was destroyed in 1914. The mission realized that a new Mission House was needed.

John Spyker and his wife Jennie came to Rehoboth in 1912; he was a retired builder and supervised the building of the new Mission House in 1915. The cement blocks used were produced on site. The mission raised money, received some money from insurance for an earlier loss, and received a gift from a Gallup merchant to the build the new building.

The building consisted of a dining room that could accommodate 120 people and a kitchen for the school and hospital that was nearby. The second floor included 10 rooms and a bath. The Mission House served the needs of the campus and visitors who stopped to visit Rehoboth as they travelled to the west. The Rehoboth Archive has guest books signed by many of the

visitors. The basement served as a commissary.

On three separate occasions the Mission House survived a fire. On December 31, 1931 at 4 am an overheated furnace chimney caused a fire. The temperature outside was 10 below zero. People remembered that Jacob Bosscher fought the fire in his pajamas.

During an evening worship service on Sunday March 22, 1936 lights went out on campus and someone said, “Fire in the Mission House.” The heavy snow, strong wind and darkness made the situation look serious. A short in an electrical circuit caused the fire. Some Native American boys helped fight the fire by hauling water in a hose cart. The commissary was damaged but the building survived.

On August 4, 1942 a fire in the Mission House destroyed a large supply of provisions. People in the building fled to the second story and went out on the roof of a side porch because the stairway and hall of the building were filled with smoke. They were stranded on the roof until Dora Hofstra brought a ladder that made it possible for them to escape.

People who planned and built the Mission House served the needs of their own time but also looked to the future when Rehoboth would grow and serve more people. Rehoboth now has a Fellowship Hall that offers food service and a dining hall. Today the Mission House contains the main choir room for the school, a piano/keyboard lab and a practice room. The second floor is still used to house some teachers, volunteers and visitors. The service of the building goes on as it enters its second century.

Please join us in celebrating 100 years of God’s faithfulness at the Rehoboth Mission House. We will be hosting an all-school anniversary celebration on Oct. 30 at 2:30 p.m. Additionally we will turn the mission house into a coffee house on Nov. 17. Members of the Rehoboth choir will be performing. Lastly on December 17, Rehoboth alumni from the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s are invited to a luncheon at the mission house at 11:30 a.m. A formal invitation to follow. For more information on the upcoming mission house events, please contact Rachael Kass at rkass@rcsnm. org.

Rehoboth Christian School, PO Box 41 Rehoboth, NM 87322, Phone: 505-863-4412,

www.rcsnm.org