



Mennonite Library & Archives Fresno Pacific University

E. J. Peters An Inventory of His Papers

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Creator: Peters, E. J., 1905-1973
Title: Papers of E. J. Peters.
Inclusive dates: 1905-1973.
Quantity: 0.5 linear ft.; 30 photographs.
Record Group No.: M189

BIOGRAPHY OF E. J. PETERS

E. J. Peters was a prominent agricultural, civic, and Mennonite Brethren church leader. Born in Waldheim, Sask., Peters moved to Kern County, Calif., in 1920, where he lived the rest of his life.

Peters began farming in 1936 and quickly rose to positions of responsibility in both the local and national agricultural industry. He served at various times as Treasurer of the Shafter Farm Bureau, Secretary-Treasurer of the Kern County Seed Potato Association, President of the Wasco Farm Labor Center, Director of the Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District, member of the California State Advisory Committee on Agricultural Education, member of the Potato Research Committee, and Director, President and Executive Committee member of the National Potato Council. His success as a potato farmer led to his inclusion in a *Life* magazine article entitled "Some New Millionaires: How They Got That Way" (3 Sep. 1951). His farming operations were incorporated under the name Maple Leaf Enterprises.

Peter was actively involved in civic organizations, particularly in Kern County. He was a member of the Exchange Club, a charter member and later President of the Wasco Rotary Club, Director of the Central Valley Empire Association, member of the Kern County YMCA Advisory Committee, Vice-President of the Kern County Farm-City Relations Committee, an Advisory Committee member of the Bakersfield League of Women Voters, Chairman of the Kern County Cancer Crusade, member of the America Cancer Society's Kern County chapter Board of Directors, and a member of the Finance Committee of the California State Chamber of Commerce. Peters was particularly involved in the Boy Scouts of America, serving as the Chairman of the North Kern District, Vice-President, Executive Committee member and President of Region XII, President of the Kern County Council, and a member of the National Executive Committee. Another outlet for Peters's civic interests was radio station KWSO in Wasco, founded by him in 1950.

Church activities played a major part in Peters's life. He was a member of the Shafter Mennonite Brethren Church, where he served as a Sunday school teacher, President of the *Jugendverein*, Trustee and Assistant Treasurer. Beyond his local congregation, Peters was at

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various times a Life Member of the Gideons, Chairman of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Vice Chairman of Hume Lake Christian Conference, Vice Chairman of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Board of Reference and Counsel, and Chairman of the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. Peters's most significant church leadership role was as Chairman of the Mennonite Brethren United States Conference Board of Education, 1954-1971. He played a major role in consolidating the Mennonite Brethren institutions of higher education under one national board, and was also instrumental in developing what is today Fresno Pacific University from a Bible institute to a liberal arts college.

For additional information on E. J. Peters, see Record Groups A280 (Mennonite Brethren General Conference Board of Education) and C240 (Mennonite Brethren United States Board of Education).

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

This record group includes correspondence relating to the Mennonite Brethren Board of Education, 1961-1971; the Mennonite Central Committee Trainee Program, 1970; Mennonite Economic Development Associates, 1959-1971; and the Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Nominating Committee, 1970-1971; scrapbooks pertaining to various aspects of Peters's life, 1905-1973; thirty photographs, most taken by Loomis Dean for the 1951 *Life* magazine article; and other miscellaneous documents.

RESTRICTIONS ON DUPLICATION

The photographs by Loomis Dean are copyrighted by *Life* magazine, and duplication is prohibited.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Box 1

- Mennonite Brethren Board of Education correspondence
 - General, 1961-1971
 - Tabor College, 1963-1971
 - Pacific College, 1964-1970
 - Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1961-1970
- Mennonite Central Committee Trainee Program, 1970
- Mennonite Economic Development Associates, 1959-1971
- Pacific District Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Nominating Committee, 1970-1971

Box 2

- Scrapbooks
 - General biographical, 1905-1973
 - Agriculture, 1974-1965
 - Radio Station KWSO, Rotary Club, 1949-1973
 - Boy Scouts, Fair Board, MEDA, Educaiton, 1948-1971

(Record Group M189: E. J. Peters Papers)

Photographs
Miscellaneous

Box 3 (flat)

Oversize photographs