

*I spent many summers at the Emaus Orphanage with the Rickabaugh's and the 35 or 40 children. I was 10 years old when I start spending summers there. My father Robert R. Frank and Richard Rickabaugh were close friends all their lives. They were in business together for many years. Mr. Rickabaugh had a daughter and a son close to the ages of my sister and me.*

*In 1960 Richard and Mary Rickabaugh became the house parents of Emaus Orphanage and this was Mr. Rickabaugh passion leaving his job with the railroad and becoming a farmer. He invited me to spend the summers with them, I loved to plant and grow things. My mother-in-law later in life often called me a frustrated farmer. Later in 1962 my parents were name assistant house parents for the Rickabaugh's time off and vacations. My parents and I did not live in the orphanage full time then. The Emaus Orphanage was founded by George Frey as you all know. A trust was setup after his death on the residents of Middletown to pay a percentage on their property taxes to provide income to sustain the children. Not to sustain individuals in a retirement home setting as Frey Village does today. Of course, from what I understand this is still being collect and people are still paying it.*

*The orphanage was a small farm within the city limits of Middletown Pennsylvania. The only animals that were raised in those days there were 250 Rhode Island Red chickens all year. Two hundred Turkeys were raised from April until September, for Holiday sales. Hundred capon roosters were raised every year. Over 160 to 200 brown eggs were collected each day of the year.*

*Mr. Rickabaugh always stated you had to have potatoes planted on Good Friday so our harvest would be bountiful. There was 7 Acers of fruit trees and grape arbors that were attended to all year long. The fruit trees were sprayed, pruned, grass mowed, pick, caned, (for their use) or sold in season. There was an old apple cider press for us to make and sale apple cider in season. That season lasted longer when things were store in the root cellar between the main house and summer kitchen (that was used for storage at that point in time). It was 55 degrees all year around, it was great when summer temperature climbs high. Mr. Rickabaugh planned and planted a large garden for the orphanage and for sale in season. Of course, the eggs were for sale all year, just 50 cent per dozen. They planted 5 acres in sweet corn, honey and cream was Mr. Rickabaugh's favorite every year. When the sweet corn came in, we would load up the Plymouth station wagon with children and corn and sale it at the shoe and coat factory downtown, and it only cost 50 cents a bakers (13) dozen. From these sales most of the children's clothing was paid for, not to mention other needed items.*

*All the children went to Middletown Area Schools. In the summer when the children were out of school and the farm work was abundant. The children were required to work from 7 am to noon, after lunch was their time. The children ranged for 5 to 18 years old. The older would operate the tractor in preparing the fields for planting and spraying of the fruit trees. The younger children would gather the eggs, feed the chickens and thing of that nature. The dining room and kitchen were large to prepare all three meals a day for 40 some people. There was a maid and a cook to aid Mrs. Rickabaugh, and girls and boys were required to help with outside and inside chores. As a child these were the best summers of my life, I lived on a farm. The community loved the children, they gave them free passes to the Middletown Swim Club, the Elks Movie Theater, it is still in operation today I hear. Sunday everyone went to St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. This is a Fact one of the alumni became a Pastor there. Of course, that was forgot when the time came to close the orphanage. These children were well taken care of and loved.*

*Then in July of 1964 Attorney Paul Clouser announced the closing of the Emaus Orphanage by September of that year. The Orphanage did not burn down. The only fire i know of was the barn 100 yards behind the main house, approximately, 8 or 9 months prior to its closing. Cause was an electrical problem. They left one of the cinder blocks walls up after the fire to support the one side of the basketball court hoop. Emaus Orphanage was demolished to make way for Fry Village and prophet. I repeat myself. Emaus Orphanage did not burn down, it was demolished for profit. September 1964 my family moved into the empty Emaus Orphanage to be grounds keeper and watch over the property. The orphanage board of directors Paul Clouser Chairman stated the Emaus Orphanage was not profitable any longer and these 34 to 40 Children were either placed in foster care of the state or sent to live with relatives. The statement was made that none of the children who were raise here ever amounted to anything in their lives. As I said before they forgot about the pastor.*

*By the end of August of 1964 there were only two children left in the home. The first part of September all the farm equipment and most of the furniture was auctioned off. The fields were rented out to the Odd Fellows Home for their farmer to raise crops. They had a true farm with milking cows. My family was left with a small horsepower Bolens tractor to mow all of the grass in the summer and remove snow from the sidewalk leading to the Middletown Area High school. It was very hard to get any type of financial support to keep thing up, because they were planning to destroy it, and*

*breaking George Frey's will. Eliminating the Emaus Orphanage all together providing more income in pockets of these board members in some way or another. In all the time I spent at Emaus Orphanage the board of directors never once showed up at any time, not even at Christmas that I know of. In October 1964 Mr. Rickabaugh and his wife and son became house parents at Milton S. Hershey Homes, Hershey Pa. I am sure glad Paul Clouser did have his office in Hershey.*

*At this time my father and mother acquired another son, and I got the brother I always wanted. My brother John Zeiders and brother and close friend after 60 years and hoping many years to come. My mother and father took him as a foster son and our lives were changed for the good. John was 5 or 6 years old when he first entered Emaus Orphanage. The state would not allow him to return his father after it closed. It was a running joke with my mother her two sons were only 5 months apart. By the way he did become something. He retired from the United State Air Force with 22 years of service. His last duty station was Air Force One, and he retired from Air Born Express. He has been married for 51 years to his wonderful wife and has two children, and grandchildren. He didn't go very far in life according to some people.*

*In the fall of 1968 shortly after my brother and I graduated from Middletown High School, my family was asked to leave Emaus Orphanage. The demands were getting stricture from Mr. Clouser. We moved back to our old home in Susquehanna township. I don't know why other than greed this wonderful historical orphanage was destroyed. This building was one of the grandest buildings in the city, county, and state of Pennsylvania. The Emaus Orphanage building should have been a landmark as a historical place and restored. There is and was enough land to build Frey Village around this wonderful place of history. This type of action against an orphanage in today's world would have people enraged. When rich people talk poor people listen and lose out in the end. They say it was done to make way for progress. But in their eyes, it was only 40 or so children. My brother and I found out later many these children went from Emaus to worst places. I believe because of mans greed.*

Note: This memory was left as provided by Mr. Frank. No editing was done.