

January 25, 1985

To whom it may concern,

The saying, "You can't judge a man by the letters he writes," holds true of a letter written by Rufus M. Beachy to his brother Moses. To the surviving children of Moses it seems only right that future generations who were not acquainted with our uncle, Rufus Beachy and may be reading letters written to our father by him, should know something about the writer of the letters. Only the No.1 in this set of letters written to Moses M. Beachy from 1921 through 1927 portrays the kind, compassionate and concerned nature of its author. The attitude depicted in the No.16 letter is totally out of character and foreign to the fine Christian gentleman I knew as my Uncle Rufus. Therefore I have requested that some recollections of him should be filed along with the letters.

Respectfully,

Mary Elizabeth Yoder

## MEMORIES OF RUFUS M. BEACHY

Rufus, the oldest son of Manasses J. Beachy was born January 30, 1867. He was a quiet lad who seldom became involved in the pranks of his younger brothers, Lewis, Moses and Alvin. However, he spent so much time reading that his father was concerned lest his oldest son would not turn out well.

As an adult, Rufus like his father, was a man of far above average intelligence. He was quiet, unassuming, deliberate and honest in all his dealings. On December 23, 1888 he was married to Lydia, daughter of Emmanuel Hershberger. For some years they lived on the Beachy homestead.

However, Rufus's heart was not in farming. Since the education required for a medical doctor was not sanctioned by the Old Order Church of which he was a member he satisfied his hunger for knowledge by educating himself to be a veterinarian. A two-room office was erected on the Beachy farm for his practice and for many years Rufus served as the very successful and highly respected Vet in the Casselman Valley region. He and his wife, Lydia also became widely known for their services in tailoring of mens' suits and overcoats. (Mostly Amish but an occasional lay-back.)

Of the three sons born to Rufus and Lydia one died in infancy and John passed away at the age of three years, leaving only Jonas to grow to manhood.

My oldest brother, Noah, born March 1, 1897 remembers a period of time when Uncle Rufus and his family lived in the farm house with our parents as well as when Rufus's lived in a tenant house on the farm. He can not remember that Rufus and our father ever in their lives "fell out" or quarreled. Apparently they did have occasional differences of opinion, for he does recall th at they sometimes argued about matters.

Over the years Father relied heavily on Rufus's advice in his farming, financial and church-related problems. Besides our father relying on Rufus's advice, Jonas Tice, having had no Dad to advise him, relates that he could always go to Rufus whose advice usually turned out to be good. Undoubtedly Father missed having his brother close by when he and Lydia moved to Meyersdale, Pa. where they continued Vet and tailoring services. Rufus then drove the 14 miles to Grantsville, Md. with horse and buggy to serve his patrons.

Their son Jonas and Elizabeth Yoder, daughter of Moses Yoder were married July 22, 1912 and lived on a farm near St Paul, Pa. until she was stricken with cancer. After a lengthy illness she passed away in January of 1921. Jonas and Amanda Yoder, daughter of Lewis S. Yoder were married the following summer. They lived in Meyersdale close by his parents.

Early on the morning of April 6, 1922 Jonas took his mother, Lydia, his uncle, Sam Hershberger and his wife, Elizabeth to the Meyersdale B & O Railroad Station to take a train to Scottsdale, Pa. Tragedy struck a double blow when Lydia, thinking that her train was coming hastened to cross the railroad to get on board and was run over by a fast freight train. Jonas in his heroic effort to rescue his mother was struck and hurled clear from the train but instantly killed. Rufus apparently had a premonition of the tragedy. When a message bearer told him that he had bad news for him Rufus exclaimed, "My wife is gone! is she?"

For some reason Rufus was unable to shed tears. Through this overwhelming sorrow he had neither the relief or release of tears. On the day of the double funeral his strong body shook with dry sobs but he shed no tears. Jonas and Amanda's daughter, Elizabeth (Mrs. Sam Yoder) was born a month after his tragic death. Amanda later married Ezra Yoder, son of Moses Yoder.

Now that his helpmeet was gone Rufus needed assistance with tailoring. Maude Beachy (preferably called Mandy) from Ohio came to Meyersdale to help him, and eventually became his wife. On July 17, 1928 a daughter was born to them who died the following day. Then December 7, 1929 shortly before Rufus' 63rd. birthday their son Eli was born.

Uncle Rufus and my father always enjoyed each other's company. Among my childhood memories of Uncle Rufus are the Sundays when he and Father sat in the living room discussing scriptures and other matters as they loved to do. On the call to dinner, Rufus, tall and erect but more round shouldered than Father, followed him out to the long dining table. After the blessing Rufus adjusted his chair and tucked his long, graying beard, which reached all the way down to his trousers, into his vest to keep it clean and out of his way. Now, he was ready to enjoy a hearty meal, especially the pickles he loved so well. It was fascinating to see him eat his pie with his knife. (Probably because my nurse sister considered this both impolite and unsanitary. Yet she never protested when Uncle did it.)

Dinner over, Father and Rufus retired to the living room for more fellowship and possibly some napping. Rufus always sat on a rocker, his hands resting on his tummy, his fingers entwined and his thumbs twirling around each other. He was soft spoken and although he had a keen sense of humor I never heard him burst out in loud boisterous laughter. A mischievous twinkle about his dark eyes and a soft rumbling chuckle were ample evidence of his enjoying a good clean joke.

Our uncle was careful and conscientious about his language, avoiding not only profanity but dirty talk and shady jokes as well. Catherine J. Miller shared with me a tribute which her father, Jonas B. Miller, long time editor of Merold der Warheit, paid to Rufus concerning his clean speech. Jonas said, "Rufus Beachy had the cleanest tongue of any man I ever knew."

Unlike his three brothers, who were ordained bishops and eloquent speakers, Rufus did not like to speak in public. He shied away from giving testimony in church services and often went outside when testimony time came up, supposedly to avoid being asked to give testimony. However he was willing to share his opinions and give advice when occasion called for it.

During his life time Uncle Rufus experienced two splits in the church in the Casselman Valley. At the time of the 1895 split he and his wife Lydia went with the old order group. The second time in 1927 Rufus and Mandy went with the Beachy group.

Rufus's son, Eli was but a little boy when his father's health began to fail. He now lives in the Lancaster, Pa. area where he moved with his mother when she married John A. Stoltzfus, bishop of the Weavertown Church.

Rufus was afflicted with hardening of the arteries and the complications that go with that ailment. As time went on and he grew worse his doctor remarked that he could keep nothing from Rufus because he knew too much about the human body and his own condition. As the illness progressed his once brilliant mind became quite disoriented. He died August 31, 1935 at the age of 68. In order to accomodate the crowd his funeral was held at the large Summit Mills Brethern Church where his wife and son's double funeral had been held.

Compiled by Rufus Beachy's youngest niece  
Mary Elizabeth Yoder