

Henry John Thiessen was born to John Peter and Helena Ratzlaff Thiessen on March 1, 1889 near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. In April, 1900 his parents moved to Rosenberg, Texas because of his father's health. There they built a house and had just completed it when the Galveston storm of September, 1900 drove the sea 50 miles inland. Many people lost their lives, including some of the neighbors. But the Thiessen family had found safety in a granary half full of corn which was more secure than the house which had been built on stilts.

In 1908, the family moved to Gotebo, Oklahoma and began to farm. Here Henry worked with threshing engines and also in the oil fields.

In 1916, Henry went to Lambert, Montana and worked as a threshing engine operator. He and his nephew also rented his brother Isaac's farm.

But in the Fall of 1917 he got the message that he had been inducted into the army. Due to the short notice he had only enough time to pack a few clothes and hurry to catch the train. He was first sent to Seattle, Washington for a short time. Later he was transferred to Deming, New Mexico and then to New Jersey. Here a flu epidemic hit and many died. From there Henry was sent to England and to France. After the armistice was signed he was stationed in Germany for six months.

After his time in the army Henry returned home to Oklahoma and took up farming. During the Christmas season of 1921 he became acquainted with Anna Heinrichs. On July 9, 1922 they were united in Holy Matrimony by Rev. H. H. Flaming. Together they farmed first southeast of Corn, Oklahoma and then later they farmed west of Weatherford. In 1934 during the Great Depression they bought a farm west of Colony, Oklahoma. Here Henry farmed and also wrote Farmers Union Insurance. The Lord gave them three children: Ruth, Ella and Arthur, whom they raised here on the farm.

Henry accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and was baptized in 1921 by Rev. H. H. Flaming. At that time he joined the Mennonite Brethren Church at Corn where he remained a faithful member until his death.

Because of Henry's health, Henry and Anna moved to Corn on September 1, 1951. Here he hauled drinking water for residents in Corn and continued to write insurance. He had several surgeries but the one in July, 1980 left him with a serious problem. That December he suffered a light stroke. Because of this and other complications the doctor suggested that Henry should move into the Veterans Center at Clinton, Oklahoma. The staff there took good care of him. Henry came home for Christmas of 1981, but in January he became very ill. The Lord saw fit to strengthen him for a time. He had a number of these low times. He enjoyed it so much when he felt good enough to come home.

Henry wanted so much to celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary. The Lord granted him that privilege as many friends joined them on July 4, 1982 to celebrate. It was a happy day for Henry. Soon after that he grew weaker and entered the hospital on July 30. Uremic poisoning and heart congestion set in. Even in his last days he longed for his Bible and appreciated so it much as one of the children read to him Psalm 23.

On August 6, 1982 he breathed his last and went to be with the Lord. All his trials and pain are over. He was 93 years and 5 months old. He leaves to mourn his wife, Anna, of the home, Ruth Blair and her husband, Thomas,