

## **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES HISTORY SLIDES**

During the mid-1970s, a Florida Witness and elder, who was a personal friend of the ruling body of Jehovah's Witnesses, and who had long-time family connections with the Watch Tower Society going back to its second president, J. F. Rutherford, took upon himself a project to locate historical photos representing the early years and growth of the Watch Tower Society. After spending much time and expense, he obtained photos rarely, if ever, seen by Jehovah's Witnesses, and put together, in chronological order, a slide-show containing eighty-eight slides which lasted for nearly three hours.

Not sponsored or advertised by the Watch Tower, but through word of mouth, hundreds of Witnesses and their guests came to see the slides shown, it is thought, some three times in rented facilities in Florida and Atlanta. Those who saw the show were thrilled with seeing photos never seen before of people and properties they had only heard about. Soon, details of the exciting events came to the attention of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses at their world headquarters in Brooklyn, NY. Contacting the producer and narrator of the slide-show, the Florida elder, Governing Body member, Leo Greenlees, expressed interest in obtaining the slides and equipment used to show the slides along with the script which the narrator used to describe to the audience what they were seeing on the screen.

Wanting to please the group's leaders, the complete slide show was donated to the organization never to be seen again. About ten years later, in 1984, when Leo Greenlees was dismissed from the Governing Body for wrong-doing, the entire slide-show was found on the floor in the back of Greenlees's closet in his former apartment at headquarters in Brooklyn, NY.

It is understood that the slide-show is now in the archives of the Writing Department at the Witnesses headquarters. A copy of the five page script for the slide show is found below. Although the slides will not be available to view, the script contains little-known information about some of the subjects shown in the slides who are of historical interest to those who are researching the history of the early leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses.

## H I S T O R Y   S L I D E S

- 1- Russell. Quite young, probably one of first pictures of this nature of him
- 2- A. H. Macmillan. 1901, started pioneering.
- 3- C. J. Woodworth. He and George Fisher were professors in a correspondence school in Scranton, Pa. Began serving God in association with C. T. Russell at the turn of the century.
- 4- Geovanni DeCecca, 1904, with four pioneer sisters. Sister Mary L. Cob (to DeCecca's right) brought him the truth. Baptized in 1906.
- 5- J. F. Rutherford, about the time he came into the truth in 1906. He was a corporate lawyer. Waited five days in Pittsburgh to see Brother Russell and asked if he should continue his job and donate the money but Russell replied that he thought the Lord would be better pleased with his time than his money.
- 6- 1907. Baptism at Niagara Falls. Brother Russell did the baptizing. Sister Rutherford told Sister DeCecca that Brother DeCecca held the umbrella for two hours while he did the baptizing.
- 7- Henry Ward Beecher's home, purchased by Russell in 1909. Lincoln visited Beecher at this, his home, toward the end of the Civil War, sending him on a mission to England, instrumental in stopping the War.
- 7a- 1910. Brother Russell and Rutherford on a world tour to establish whether or not the missionaries of Christendom had done good. Their conclusion was that they had not. The results of this tour have proven useful as recently as a couple of years ago, in which this study was referred to in the Watchtower article, Worldwide Witness or Conversion--Which? On this tour Rutherford complained in Russell's presence, "A person can't even get a good shoe shine around here," at which Russell immediately bent down and shined Rutherford's shoes with Sister Russell's handkerchief. Rutherford said later, "You can be sure that I didn't complain anymore."
- 7b- 1910. Brother Littlebridge (second in) brought Sister DeCecca the Society's books but she did not come into the truth until 1914 when she saw the Photo Drama.
- 8- C. T. Russell, about 1912 when he started the Photo Drama.
- 8a- 1914. Christmas at Bethel. Here is where Russell made the historic statement on the morning of October 1, 1914, "The Gentile Times have ended."
- 9- 1916. Last picture of Russell before he died on October 7, 1916, at the age of 63.
- 10- J. F. Rutherford, at time of assuming presidency following the election at Pittsburgh. Upon arriving at Brooklyn Bethel there was some disturbance but Rutherford took a principled course and firmly gave the leadership needed at the time.
- 11- Rutherford and his wife. Sister Rutherford had fallen down two flights of stairs when she was 18 months old and as a result became an invalid in later life. Brother Rutherford carried her up and down the stairs on her last stay at Bethel for three months in 1920 but it was so hard on her that Brother Rutherford arranged a home for her in California. Rutherford's belief was that if he had not made these arrangements, Sister Rutherford would have died from the hard situation in Brooklyn.

- 12- 1916. Sister DeCecca came to Bethel; her sister, Kathryn, came to Bethel in 1920. Their maiden name was Harris.
- 13- Brother DeCecca in his Prince Albert coat, white vest. Required for speaking appointments, Photo Drama ushering, etc.
- 14- "Mischievious" (Sister DeCecca's description) poses of Brother DeCecca
- 15- Brother DeCecca meeting Grace Harris (DeCecca's left) when she came for a visit to Bethel in 1916
- 16- Sister DeCecca came back to Bethel 2 weeks later after going home and in 10 weeks was married to Brother DeCecca
- 17- Brother and Sister John Bogard were married in April, 1926
- 17a- Brother DeCecca with Italian group about 1917
- 18- Van Amburgh, Rutherford, MacMillan, Martin, Robinson, Woodworth, Fisher, DeCecca--all sentenced to prison, June, 1918
- 19- Raymond Street Jail--Every one of the seven went there at first in June, 1918, but DeCecca transferred to another jail the next day in Long Island City. Two weeks later the others were sent to Long Island City and DeCecca sent back to Raymond Street jail. Couple of weeks later (July 4) 7 started trip to Atlanta Federal Penitentiary; Brother DeCecca on July 21, after U.S. checked his record in Italy, which was good
- 20- The house of Sister Miles in Atlanta, Georgia, where Sister DeCecca and Sister Robinson stayed so they could visit their husbands
- 20a- Brother and Sister DeCecca after his release. He was sent to visit all the Italian congregations and took Sister DeCecca with him
- 20b- Brother Rutherford after release from prison in 1919, just before the Cedar Point, Ohio, convention with a group of "pilgrims"
- 21- 1919 Cedar Point, Ohio, after release of 8 men in March, 1919. Brother DeCecca is in the foreground, shading his eyes, according to Sister DeCecca. When the 8 returned to Brooklyn, a welcome feast was arranged and everyone was asked to bring chicken and cake (a must) and whatever else they wanted. The Golden Age announced at this assembly--7,000 subscriptions were taken in one hour at Cedar Point after the announcement. Rutherford asked Martin if they could make 1 million in a year (Martin did not know exactly what he meant) but before the year was over, they printed over 4 million of one issue alone, the famous #27 issue, carrying a full report on who was responsible for the unjust imprisonment of the 8 men
- 21a- 1919. Group at Cedar Point convention. Brother DeCecca present
- 22- Printing press (Battleship) at Myrtle Avenue plant (1 floor)--1920
- 23- Factory force in 1920
- 23a- Night crew that helped print the 4 million #27 Golden Age in 1920
- 24- 1920. Macmillan (Martin saw him off) went to Israel on a maiden voyage of a Jewish ship, taking Brother Rutherford's place who had been invited to take the trip, compliments of the line, but Rutherford had to go to Europe instead.

- 25- 1920. Rutherford (Martin saw him off too) went to Europe via boat, of course, on Society business, to visit the branches as Brother Knorr still does
- 26- First airplane Rutherford flew in. Never flew across the ocean--seeing this plane helps one appreciate why
- 26a- Rutherford at the airplane with a man named Driscoll who later opposed him
- 26b- Bethel dining room, 1921
- 27- September, 1922. Cedar Point, Ohio. Advertise, advertise, advertise the King and his Kingdom. Sister DeCecca was in this picture. *arranged some to be in picture*
- 28- 1923. Hippodrome in New York City. Had a lot of special meetings here, such as when Russell returned from his world tour of 1910 *the day*
- 29- 1923 (Same). Harp of God released at this assembly.
- 30- 1924. Columbus assembly. Third of the seven trumpet blasts of Revelation *from 1924*
- 31- 1924. Italian group that attended Columbus convention. These foreign-language congregations existed in the United States until 1938, when a move toward greater unity in the organization was taken with their being disbanded. Lately, quite a number of Spanish, French and Italian congregation have begun again in the U.S. and Canada
- 32- 1925. Bethel Family Christmas
- 33- 1926. Bethel Family Christmas--no tree. Brothers a little disappointed when they saw no tree but Sister DeCecca said, "But we had discussed this matter for four years (Brother Riemer was the first one to question it), so they should have been expecting it." *Last celebration*
- 34- Riemer, Martin, Wise on the top of Bethel in the 1920's
- 35- Remegio Cominetti, about the year 1926. The only Italian of the Bible Students who took a completely neutral stand regarding the Italian armed forces during World War I
- 36- Brother Rutherford liked to pitch in on various things, such as carving this turkey about 1925
- 37- About 1926. Brother Rutherford always very fond of children, being very kind and loving toward them (evident in 1941 at St. Louis). Never talked "baby-talk" to children, always tried to teach them new words when around them
- 38- About 1926. Rutherford drove this Lincoln, contributed to the Society by Brother Hilliard of Hammond, Indiana. The opposition outside Bethel made quite a fuss over this, but Rutherford pointed out that the brother directing the Polish work in Detroit had a limousine, but the President of the whole organization didn't even have a wheelbarrow
- 39- 1927. 117 Adams Street, demolition in preparation for new printing plant. Negotiated for property that Squibb later built on, but could not get it. However, Squibb had monumental problems with achieving a firm foundation for their buildings here, whereas the 117 Adams Street property was much better to build on. Would have been extremely difficult for the brothers had they got the Squibb property. Now have both--seems to the governing body to have been Jehovah's direction
- 40- Construction begins

- 41- Some of the young men who came to Bethel about this time: Tedesco, Knorr, Markus, Suiter and Hannan
- 42- 1928. Detroit convention. Last Trumpet blast. Group with Brother DeCecca
- 43- 1936. Brother Rutherford and his secretary in Glasgow, Scotland *Bornie*
- 44- 1937. Columbus, Ohio, Brother DeCecca
- 45- 1941. Probably last picture of Rutherford after delivering Children talk at St. Louis. Thought this was going to be his last talk but gave another that afternoon. Suffered greatly from cancer and died a few months later in January, 1942
- 46- 1941. Rutherford with Knorr and Covington in St. Louis, before the Children talk
- 47- 1942. Knorr, president. Great emphasis on education. Gilead graduation at library of Gilead School when located at Kingdom Farm
- 47a- Gilead School graduation today. Drama about Daniel and Belshazzar
- 48- Amphitheater at Kingdom Farm
- 48a- Entrance to main building at Kingdom Farm
- 49- 1951. Washington, D.C. national convention
- 50- 1955. Rome "Triumphant Kingdom Assemblies"--Brother DeCecca had a talk
- 51- 1969. Palazzo Dello Sport, Rome
- 52- 1969. Rome, Brother Franz
- 53- 1969. Rome, Brother Knorr
- 54- 1969. Missionary dinner in Italy
- 55- 1969. London Branch
- 56- 1969. London, Sister DeCecca in the Royal Box at Wembley Sports Stadium
- 57- c. 1967. Brother and Sister DeCecca and Brother Macmillan *Nov 63*
- 58- Sister DeCecca and Bogard as they are today
- 59- Knorr today, in Nigeria with Larson
- 60- Larson today, factory manager
- 61- Knorr playing baseball--1964
- 62- Present Brooklyn Factory buildings
- 63- Installing a new 60" double delivery Cottrell press about 1959
- 64- Erecting new MAN presses, 1968-1973
- 65- A new MAN press in operation
- 66- Rolling the magazines for congregation orders
- 67- Books bound, to be packed and shipped
- 68- Careful planning of work for whole country and world
- 69- Much correspondence--over 1,000 letters a day
- 70- First Watchtower Farm home

## HISTORY SLIDES

- 71- First Watchtower Farm factory, including some residence
- 72- Latest Watchtower Farm home, with dining room for 500
- 73- Entrance to residence
- 74- Entrance at night
- 75- Same
- 76- Lobby of residence
- 77- Dining room of Watchtower Farm
- 78- Kitchen of Watchtower Farm
- 79- Watchtower Farm family eating
- 80- 124 Columbia Heights today
- 81- Library used by Gilead School at Brooklyn and members of Bethel Family
- 82- Bethel shoe shop
- 83- Brooklyn Bethel Kitchen
- 84- Sister DeCecca's table today
- 85- Bethel Garden
- 86- Same
- 87- Sunset on New York harbor, looking from Bethel
- 88- Manhattan, across from Bethel, after dark