

To: Hazel & John
with warmest regards,

Ben Niebel

2/9/81

NIEBEL

A DYNAMIC FAMILY WITH A RICH HERITAGE

BY
BENJAMIN WILLARD NIEBEL
STATE COLLEGE, PA.
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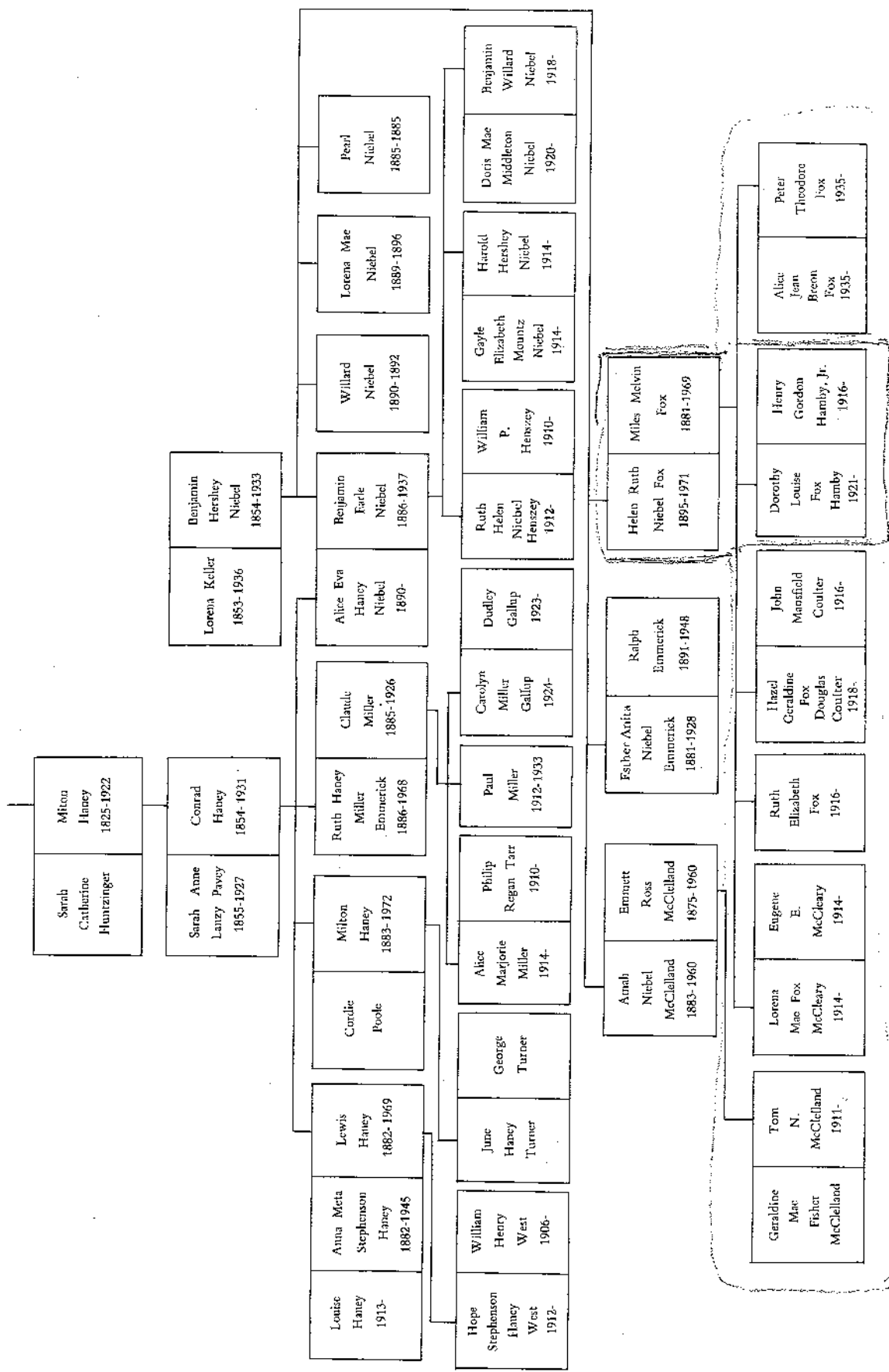


Figure 6-1 Dr. Benjamin E. Niebel, his brother, sisters, in-laws, and their families.

THE FOX FAMILY ENTERS THE NIEBEL LINE

Helen Ruth Fox, the youngest child born to the Reverend Benjamin H. and Lorena Keller Niebel was born in Des Moines, Iowa on December 15, 1895. Helen Fox lived with her parents in Des Moines and Le Mars, Iowa until 1905. That year her parents, her brother Benjamin and her sister Esther staked land claims in the state of Kansas. Here Helen lived with her mother and sister Esther in a dug-out for about one year. The living conditions under this environment were most primitive. However Helen, in later years, referred to this period as one of the most happy as well as adventurous years of her life.

In 1906 her father was elected executive secretary of the Missionary Society of the United Evangelical Church, which made it necessary for the family to move to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the headquarters of the church.

Helen was a graduate of the Froelich Conservatory of Music where she became an accomplished pianist.

While living in Harrisburg, she met and married Miles Melvin Fox a widower, with four young children. Helen proved to be an excellent mother and homemaker. She had a keen mind and boundless energy taking time to share her talents and creativity in church and community work. She will long be remembered for her musical capabilities. She was a master of ecclesiastical music and her arrangements of Christmas cantatas were used by several prominent churches.

Helen raised her four step-children and five children of her own in a manner that would be approved and endorsed by any good citizen. Eight of the nine children were graduated from college and all five of her own children became educators.

Helen passed away on April 27, 1971 and is buried by her father in the East Harrisburg Cemetery.

Miles Melvin Fox, the only son of William and Emma (Castle) Fox was born in Swatara Township, Pennsylvania on August 26, 1881. His formal schooling consisted of the eight years of "country school" followed by a session at Teachers Normal School.

Miles taught elementary school for one year and then at the age of twenty, he obtained employment as a molder at the Foundry of the Bethlehem Steel Company at Steelton, Pennsylvania. He stayed with the Bethlehem Steel Company until his retirement, advancing to the position of General Foreman.

Miles was well known through the corporation, not only for his technical "know-how" but for the productivity of his department. He had that unusual ability to stimulate trust, confidence and enthusiasm to all those that worked with and for him.

Like his wife, Miles was active in community affairs, especially the Church. He was Sunday School Superintendent, taught the Men's Bible Class and was a member of the official board for more than twenty years of the Grace Evangelical Church of Steelton.

Miles Fox died February 14, 1969 and was buried in the family plot in the East Harrisburg Cemetery.

THE FIVE CHILDREN OF MILES AND HELEN FOX AND THEIR FAMILIES

Lorena Mae Fox, the oldest of the five children born to Miles Melvin Fox and Helen Ruth Fox was born on August 11, 1914 at Penbrook, Pennsylvania. Like her mother, Lorena at an early age displayed considerable artistic and musical talent. She majored in Art and English at Edinboro College graduating with a B.S. degree in 1936. Two years later, on January 12, 1938 she married Eugene E. McCleary about whom we will learn more later.

Lorena was involved in the teaching of Art from 1937 through 1976. She taught at the following Pennsylvania schools: Columbia, Susquehanna Township, Harrisburg Academy, and Cornwell School District.

Some of the more significant contributions that Lorena has made that give an indication of the quality of her artistic talents include the following: Bronze relief of Professor Cooper, the Founder of Edinboro Academy in Erie County. Today, this plaque is mounted on a boulder on the campus of

Edinboro State College. Oil painting of Jesus the Good Shepherd, hanging behind the altar of the United Methodist Church in Steelton, Pennsylvania. Mural (done in oil) on the wall of the Guidance Room of the Cornwall Elementary School. Mural (done in acrylic) in the Primary Department of the Cornwall United Methodist Church. Two paintings (both in oil) in the lobby of the Cedar Crest Middle School in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. A set of twelve original prints of historical sites of Lebanon County in the Branch Bank of the Dauphin Deposit Trust Company in Cornwall. The design for bookplates for the Howard Dobbs Memorial Library of Rockwell, Texas.

Today Lorena continues to be engaged in her art and community work.

Eugene E. McCleary, husband of Lorena Mae Fox McCleary was born July 24, 1914 the son of Abram B. McCleary and Anna E. Buffington in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Eugene was graduated from Shippensburg State College with a B.S. degree in Secondary Education in 1935. He obtained a M.Ed degree from the Pennsylvania State College in 1949. He spent his professional life of 40 years in secondary education, retiring July 1, 1976.

During the World War II years, Eugene enlisted in the Navy as an Ensign in February 1944. His tour of duty was in the Pacific including Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, and Japan.

Today Eugene maintains an active interest in artifacts of early America.

Two children were born with the union of Eugene and Lorena McCleary.

Twins, Eugene E. McCleary Jr. and Helen Ruth McCleary were born on December 23, 1941. Eugene Jr. graduated from Cornwall High School in 1960 where he earned 14 varsity letters in football, basketball, baseball and track. As a junior, he set the Pennsylvania state record in throwing the discus. This record he broke his senior year. As a high school senior he was selected to the All-America track team and was the recipient of the county student athlete of the year. He enrolled at the University of Miami where he captained the track team his senior year. Eugene Jr. passed away on June 15, 1974.

Helen Ruth McCleary graduated from Cornwall High School in 1960. She studied painting under Samuel Pratt in Lexington, Virginia. In 1960, she met and married Jack Eugene Ditt. In 1962 he graduated from the University of Richmond with a B.S. degree in Business Administration. Jack and Helen Ditt have three sons: Jack Eugene Ditt Jr. born April 28, 1961, David Arthur Ditt born September 9, 1962, and Mark Abram Ditt born July 2, 1966.

Ruth Elizabeth Fox was born January 6, 1916 at Highspire, Pennsylvania. Like all the Fox children, she too inherited the artistic capabilities of her mother. Ruth graduated from the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing in 1937 and from the Magda School of Dress Design in 1948. In 1959 she earned her M.Ed from Bridgewater State College.

Ruth has had a most interesting professional life, dedicated to helping humanity. From 1937 to 1939 she worked as a registered nurse in the various departments of The Presbyterian Hospital. Then from 1939 until 1943 she organized the treatment for the ill and physically incapacitated people in the Evangelical Home in Philadelphia. In 1943 Ruth answered the call for service and joined the Armed Services. She spent two years on the U.S. Hospital Ship Larkspur. This ship, during the World War II years sailed to many ports in North Africa, Italy, France, and England to pick up and care for the wounded of many nationalities, both "friendlies and unfriendlies". After V.J. Day, Ruth volunteered to go to the Pacific theater. She spent the next year on the U.S. Mariposz and was discharged on July 10, 1946.

Soon after graduation from The American University, Ruth went to Braintree, Massachusetts where she taught and later became the supervisor of the Home Economics Department in the Braintree Schools until her retirement in 1976.

In her retirement years, Ruth continues to be productive. She has provided the author of this manuscript much assistance in gleaning facts from old family records and church files.

Hazel Geraldine Fox was born in Highspire, Pennsylvania on June 30, 1918. She was salutatorian of her class at Steelton High School, graduating in 1936. In 1943 she received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education from Millersville State College. The same year she married Earl Graeme Douglas, a young mechanical engineer with the Steelton operation of the Bethlehem Steel Company.

Hazel and Earl had three children. After all three children were in school, she returned to school and earned 60 graduate credits in mathematics at Eastern Nazarene College, Bridgewater State College, and Boston College. While living in Braintree, Hazel became very active in the Unitarian-Universalist Church. She was the first woman to be elected to the presidency of the Parish of All Souls' Church and served for the period 1972 to 1975.

In 1972 after the untimely death of her husband, Hazel took a position as Director of Mathematics for the Secondary Schools of Milton, Massachusetts.

On August 10, 1974, Hazel married John Mansfield Coulter.

Today Hazel continues to be active. She is presently an Information Volunteer at the Smithsonian Institution, sings with the Air Force Officers Wives' Club choral group, the Skylarks, and is on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Chapter of ARCS (Achievement Rewards for College Scientists) Foundation, Inc.

Earl Graeme Douglas was born in Hull, Massachusetts on July 29, 1918. His father, James Earl Douglas was the son of an old Boston family. His grandfather, James White Douglas was a very successful builder in Hull and his grandmother Maude Azanath Hayes was a direct descendant of the Greenleafs of New England. Earl Douglas was graduated from the University of Maine in Mechanical Engineering. He worked for the Bethlehem Steel Company, the Quincy Shipyard, and the consulting engineering firm of Stone & Webster. He was stricken with a fatal heart attack while at his office on January 24, 1972.

John Mansfield Coulter, the second husband of Hazel Geraldine Fox was born on April 29, 1916, the son of a prominent Columbia, South Carolina family. His mother, Della Richards Coulter was the State Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. John was graduated from the University of South Carolina and joined the Army Air Corps in 1941. After serving 26 years in the military, he retired as Colonel and has been a Director at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Bruce Graeme Douglas, eldest son of Hazel Fox Douglas and Earl Graeme Douglas was born on December 18, 1947 in Boston, Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin "with distinction" having completed the course in Water Resources Management and Regional Planning for a Master of Science degree. He is employed by Fairfax County, Virginia as an Environmental Planner.

Deborah Nancy Douglas was born on June 6, 1949 in Boston Massachusetts. She attended Syracuse University, Bridgewater State College and Eastern Nazarene College. On August 23, 1969 she married Richard James Harper of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Richard was graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering with "highest honors". Currently Deborah and Richard live in Readfield, Maine where Richard is an electrical engineer for the New England Telephone Company. This couple has one daughter, Laura Hazel Harper born on November 10, 1977 in Waterville, Maine.

Christopher Fox Douglas was born on October 3, 1951 in Boston, Massachusetts. He was graduated from the University of Maine in Orono with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, following in his father's footsteps. On May 22, 1978 he married Patricia Ann Libby of Orono, Maine. Today Christopher and Patricia live in Tucson, Arizona where Christopher works as an engineer for the Duval Mining Company at their Sierrita Copper Mine.

Dorothy Louise, the youngest daughter of Miles Melvin Fox and Helen Ruth Niebel Fox, was born at Steelton, Pennsylvania on May 2, 1921. Dorothy, like her sisters, proved to be an excellent student in the classroom and had diversified interests including athletics, music, and artistic.

On March 6, 1942, during her second year at Albright College she married Henry Gordon Hamby, Jr., a pilot with the 6th Transport Squadron stationed at Middletown, Pennsylvania.

Dorothy and Henry had three sons, Henry Gordon III, Miles Melvin, and William Orton. We will learn a little about these sons shortly.

Dorothy was a good mother and active citizen, spending considerable time in church work. She was church soloist at Albrook AFB, Canal Zone, at Torrejon Air Base in Spain, and at Zion Episcopal Church in Rome, New York. At the Kitland AFB in New Mexico, she directed both the Senior and Junior Choirs. Here, under Dorothy's direction, the Senior Choir was awarded first place in the Air Research and Development Command Chapel Choir competition. As her husband was re-assigned, Dorothy immediately became active in local church work. She directed the women's choral groups at Kirtland and at Sandia Base, New Mexico, at Torrejon and at Griffis AFB in New York. For four years she directed the church choir at Epiphany Episcopal Church in Grove City, Pennsylvania. For ten years, Dorothy was a Gray Lady with the American Red Cross, serving as chairman of Gray Ladies and also as Chairman of volunteers in both Madrid, Spain and Rome, New York.

After continuing her studies at the University of South Alabama, she received her B.S. degree in Library Science from Slippery Rock State College in 1970. She then completed 33 hours of graduate work in English literature. She was co-librarian and subsequently became head librarian at New Castle Senior High School in New Castle, Pennsylvania.

Today Dorothy continues to lead a full life. In Williamsburg, Virginia she is able to pursue most of her interests. She is a member of the Bruton Church senior choir and is active in other parish organizations. She is also a volunteer in the Williamsburg Community Hospital Auxiliary where she inaugurated the Patients' Library.

Henry Gordon Hamby, Jr. Col. (retired) USAF, husband of Dorothy Louise Fox, was the youngest son of Henry Gordon Hamby, Sr. and Ida McGregor. He was born January 10, 1916 at Dawson Springs, Kentucky. His grandfather, Washington Irving Hamby, volunteered in the Kentucky Cavalry of the Confederate States of America at the age of eighteen, serving under General Nathan Bedford Forrest. He fought in the Civil War for two years as a private; however, the remainder of his life he was always addressed as "Colonel" by his fellow townspeople. He, like many other soldiers of the Confederacy, named his sons after Southern generals. After the Civil War, Washington Irving discovered a potent mineral springs and operated the Hamby House and Hamby Well. Thus came the addition of the word "Springs" to the town originally called Dawson. Because of the Hamby water, Dawson Springs became the vogue as a local watering place at the turn of the century. Today the Hamby Well has been declared a National Historic Site.

Henry Gordon Hamby was graduated from Murray State University and then went to pilot training school. In July 1941, he was commissioned in the Army Air Corps. During World War II, he served in North Africa and England as Squadron Commander of the 315th Troop Carrier Group. He dropped 82d Airborne parachute troops on Brittany on D-Day and Polish parachutists over Nijmegen. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Army Commendation, Air Force Commendation with 3 oak leaf clusters and the Polish Cross of Valour.

He was graduated from the Air War College in 1951 and the American Management Association in 1956. During his professional career, he served in the Air Research and Development Command, Strategic Air Command, and the Air Logistics Command. He was Base Commander at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, and at Mactan Air Base in the Philippines. He retired from the Air Force in 1969 and became Director of Development at Slippery Rock State College in Pennsylvania. In 1977, he again retired and with his wife Dorothy pursues many of his interests in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The oldest son of Henry and Dorothy Hamby was born March 1, 1943 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The family line was preserved and the new addition was named Henry Gordon Hamby III. He was salutatorian of his class at Cornwall High School, Pennsylvania and in 1965, was graduated from the Air Force Academy. He earned a M.S. degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Air Force Institution of Technology.

During the Vietnam conflict, in the period 1966 to 1969, Henry Gordon Hamby III was attached to the 315th Troop Carrier Group in Japan, flying C-

124S in Southeast Asia. Later, during the period 1971 to 1972, he served a tour in Vietnam flying the HH-1 helicopter in connection with air rescue work. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 7 oak leaf clusters, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. Following his graduation from the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia, he was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland with the 1st Helicopter Squadron.

It was on June 26, 1965 that Henry Gordon III, who had been nicknamed Tack, was married to Patricia Richardson, daughter of Harold Richardson Colonel (retired) USAF and Annette Keane. Patricia was born September 4, 1943 and attended Marymount College. Patricia and Tack have three sons: Henry Gordon Hamby IV born at Tachikawa, Japan on April 7, 1968; Harold Christopher Hamby, born at Enid, Oklahoma on February 7, 1979; and Jonathan Andrew Hamby, born at Dayton, Ohio on March 2, 1973.

The second son of Henry and Dorothy Hamby was named Miles Melvin Hamby. He was born on April 17, 1948 at Fort Clayton in the Canal Zone. He graduated from the University Military School in Mobile, Alabama, and attended the University of South Alabama for one year. In 1971 he graduated from the Air Force Academy and completed his pilot training the following year at Enid, Oklahoma. He flew C-130s with the Military Airlift Command at Pope Air Force Base at Yakota, Japan.

The youngest of the three sons born to Henry and Dorothy Hamby was born May 15, 1950 in Washington D.C. He was named William Orton Hamby. William was graduated from Braintree High School in Massachusetts and from Cornell University in 1975. William is an architectural designer employed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He has done interior design for the Olin and Mann libraries of Cornell University. On August 14, 1977, William married Mara Witzling. Mara was born September 21, 1947, the daughter of Morton Witzling, a Civil Attorney in Manhattan and Estelle Chasan of Russian descent. Mara earned her PhD degree in Medieval Christian Art from Cornell University and today is an Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire. William and Mara have one son, Benjamin Witzling Hamby, born July 18, 1978 at Dover, New Hampshire.

Peter Theodore Fox, the youngest of five children and only son of Helen Ruth and Miles Melvin Fox was born in Steelton, Pennsylvania on January 23, 1935. Peter, as his sisters, inherited a rich artistic talent. He also was athletically inclined, as were all the Fox children, and he performed well in the classroom.

In January 1960 he graduated from Millersville State College. He then accepted a teaching and coaching position at Middletown Pennsylvania high school. He subsequently was promoted to the Head of the Industrial Arts Department at this High School.

Peter has proved to be an artist with his wood carvings and custom made furniture. He is also proud of the work he has accomplished as a track coach. His area of specialty has been the field events (shot, discus, and javelin) where he has coached five young men to State championships.

Peter is married to Alice Jean Breon who was born February 28, 1935 in Fidler, Pennsylvania. Alice is a direct descendent of Jacob Stover, Jr. who donated land for the first public school constructed in Centre County, Pennsylvania. This was in 1789.

Peter and Alice have three children: Barbara Catherine Fox, born October 17, 1953, Peter Theodore Fox, Jr., born August 17, 1958, and Hilde Ann Fox, born October 13, 1964.



Figure 6-17 Family reunion—back row—1. to r. Miles Fox, Esther (Niebel) Emerick, Ralph Emerick, Amah (Niebel) McClelland, Tom McClelland, Helen (Niebel) Fox with Dorothy, Rev. Niebel with Hazel Fox, Mrs. B.H. Niebel, R.E. Niebel, Harold Niebel, Mrs. B.E. Niebel, Ruth Fox, Lorena Fox, Ruth Helen Niebel, Benjamin W. Niebel