BIRTH OF A BOOK
(Nine months in a Cemetery)
by Lorraine Franz Edwards

Have you ever heard a parent tell a child that they were "an accident"? Some of us, on the other hand, know that, "With God, there are no accidents."

"Conception" of a book regarding the LaVerne Evergreen Cemetery was a surprise to me -- but not an "accident."

From the outset, proper diet and exercise were important. Gallons of water were consumed pacing the length and breadth of the cemetery. During those long walks winter barren trees and brown lawn turned to spring green. Easter lilies decorated the graves in March. Summer heat gave way to autumn colors. It's winter again and poinsettia plants decorate the drab lawn.

As the months went by, the book grew larger. I'd add the history of the cemetery. We'd identify the names of all the veterans that served in the Confederate, Civil and Spanish wars, plus World War I and World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

The book was quite obviously an integral part of my life; even the casual acquaintance was aware that I was "expecting." If I wasn't proofing or writing (or computing) I would muse over formatting and /or aesthetics. Almost every waking hour (and often in my dreams) I nurtured thoughts of the new creation that would be born.

Having gone through first and second trimesters (reading tombstone inscriptions and entering the data into the computer), I was in the final weeks; the end was in sight.

The book was large and awkward but checking the accuracy of each inscription was vital. The "labor" seemed endless!

Final preparations were made and we started rolling toward the delivery room. Shortly after nine p.m. on Tuesday, December 26, 1989 a two pound book was born. A "homely" child -- compare to beautiful cousin genealogical publications -- but gorgeous in the eyes of this author. Here are a few vital statistics: soft cover; 270 pages with 65 page index; over 3400 names; illustrations and pictures. Church of the Brethren members, and pioneer families are listed. The Godparents are an IBM-compatible computer and WordPerfect software. Among the relatives, the oft-repeated names are Arnold, Barnhizer, Bixby, Blickenstaff, Bradley, Brooks, Brubaker, Dailey, Davis, Hanawalt, Lewis, Horning, Johns(t)on(e), Martin, Maxwell, McClellan, Michael, Miller, Moomaw, Morris(on), Neher, Poore, Raley, Roberts(on), Rothrock, Royster, Schrock, Smith, Sneed, Stone, Studebaker, Torrey, Tangeman, Thomas(on), Walker, Weaver, Wheeler, White, Wolf(e), Wood (s), Wright, Yoder, Young, Zimmerman(n) and Zug.

Costs! Are you aware of how much it costs to birth a book? For all my planning and preparation I was shocked when I got the bill! Forget the diapers and bottles; forget the congratulation cards and best wishes. It's going to cost a fortune to launch this infant into society.