For a third of a century there had been a definite trend toward the formation of a new and distinct denomination. It was not the will and purpose of Otterbein and his associates that it be so. Nothing was farther removed from his planning. Their only desire was to kindle the fires of Pentecost upon the altars of the established churches, and bring the unsaved to their Lord. But, as these zealous preachers became more and more persecuted by their brethren of the established churches, and since their converts were not permitted to join the existing churches, and, again, because the lay-preachers called out and trained by Otterbein were not accepted and recognized, the break finally came and the birth of the new denomination took place September 25, 1800. On that date the famous "1800 Conference" was held at Peter Kemp's home, about two miles west of Frederick,
Maryland, at Rocky Springs. There the decision to become a denomination, to assume a denominational name, to name bishops, and to launch out with an aggressive denominational program was made.

It appears that George Adam Geeting was made secretary of the conference. He wrote the minutes on loose sheets, or in a private notebook. Just before his death in 1812 he copied the minutes in another book, which is still preserved.

We think it of sufficient importance to reprint the minutes of the 1800 conference, together with the words introductory to the entire series of minutes (up to 1812):

**PROTOCOL**

_of the_

**UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST**

_(Von Die Vereinigte Bruederschaft zu Christo)_

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

Do it, Lord Jesus, for the sake of thy suffering and death. Amen.

This book was obtained the 13th (of May) 1812.

Here now follows what the United Brotherhood in Christ Jesus from the year 1800—the United till 1800—have done in their annual conferences, how the preachers and church members should conduct themselves.

September 25, 1800, the following preachers assembled at the house of Frederick Kemp (father of Peter Kemp) in Frederick County, Maryland: William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, John Hershey, Abraham Troxel (Draksel), Christian Crum, Henry Crum, George Pfrimmer, Henry Boehm, Christian Newcomer, Dietrich Aurandt, Jacob Giesinger, George Adam Geeting, Adam Lehman.

Each person spoke of his own experience, and then declared anew his intention with all zeal, through the help of God, to preach untrammeled by sect to the honor of God and (the good) of men.

1. Resolved that two preachers shall go to Smoke's (Shamokin) and investigate whether D. Aurandt should baptize and administer the Lord's Supper.

2. Resolved that yearly a day shall be appointed when the unsectarian preachers shall assemble and counsel how they may conduct their office more and more according to the will of God, and according to the mind of God, that the church of God may be built up, and sinners converted, so that God in Christ may be honored.

3. The meeting was opened with prayer, then a chapter read, a short discourse delivered by Brother Otterbein, and then again closed with prayer.

Such are the simple minutes of one of the most momentous gatherings in the church life of America. However, there are some other sources from which we may glean authentic information concerning what transpired at this conference.
Newcomer's diary records the following: "Sept. 24, 1800. This day I left home to attend the conference. At Middletown I found Br. Draskel (Troxel), who had an appointment there, and tarried with him. After meeting we rode home with Br. Jacob Bowlus (Baulus), and staid for the night. 25th—This morning we set out early; came to Br. Peter Kemp's where the Conference is to be held; found Father Otterbein, Boehm, and twelve other preachers there. The Conference was opened with singing and prayer by Otterbein and Boehm; the former gave a powerful exhortation. Then were all the brethren separately examined respecting their progress in the divine life, their success and industry in the ministry. 26th—This afternoon Father Otterbein preached from Amos 4:12, Boehm spoke after him. After transacting some other business the Conference closed with prayer. Boehm, Fremmer (Pfrimmer) and myself rode to Bovey's, where father Boehm preached and we tarried for the night."

From Newcomer's account we learn that the 1800 conference was a two day session. Geeting's minutes indicate there were just thirteen ministers present. Newcomer's diary says there were fourteen present when he arrived, including Otterbein and Boehm. It is probable Newcomer traveled to the conference that first morning in company with Abraham Troxel and Jacob Baulus. We do not know if there were fourteen there in addition to these three or not. Geeting's minutes include Newcomer and Troxel, but omit Baulus. Another name is not mentioned that seemingly should have been on the list, Peter Kemp. Probably his presence was taken for granted by Geeting. Since the conference was in his home, by his invitation, he was certainly there. Another explanation for this omission is that he did not receive license until the following year.

The Rev. Henry G. Spayth, our earliest historian, who joined the conference in 1812, gives the names of the ministers who were recognized as having been licensed previous to 1800, and who were absent from the conference of that year. The names follow: John Neidig, Frederick Schaffer, Martin Crider, Christopher Grosh, Abraham Mayer, G. Portenbaugh, David Snyder, Adam Riegel, A. Hershey, Christian Hershey of Penna., John Ernst, M. Thomas of Md., Simon Herre, Daniel Strickler, John Senseny, Abraham Heistand, and I. Niswander.

Neither Geeting nor Newcomer tell of the assumption of a denominational name at that conference and the election of Otterbein and Boehm as bishops. We get that information from the historical statement in the first discipline, prepared by the first General Conference in 1815. That statement in referring to the conference of 1800, said: "There they united themselves into a society which bears the name 'United Brethren in Christ,' and elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as superintendents, or bishops."

Since this statement was adopted as official by a General Conference composed of many who had attended the 1800 conference, we accept it as authentic and final.

The word bishop has never been used by the United Brethren in any sacerdotal sense. The office is purely administrative. Thus Otterbein and Boehm were officially selected to an office they had previously held by common consent. In the office of bishop they continued until their deaths.
OUR NAME

Let us now turn our attention to the name of the new communion, "The United Brethren in Christ." In the year 1457 a group of followers of the great Reformer, John Huss, came together and organized a society on the confines of Moravia and Silesia, at Lititz. They took the law of Christ for their guide, and the Apostolic Church for their model. They assumed the name "Unitas Fratrum," which means "The Unity of the Brethren," or "The United Brethren." This group in time became known as the Moravian Church. In 1728, United Brethren (Moravian) missionaries visited England, where they were instrumental in starting the most remarkable revival of religion among the English people on record. One year later a society for the propagation of holiness was instituted at Oxford, among whom were John Wesley and George Whitfield, who were destined to become flaming evangelists. These men came under the influence of the United Brethren (Moravian) missionaries. The conversion of Wesley took place in 1739, some years after he had been a preacher of the gospel, at a United Brethren (Moravian) meeting, and for a while he was a member of the group known as "The United Brethren Society in Fetter Lane, London."

Lighting their torches at the altars on which the evangelical fire had been kept burning brightly by "the United Brethren (Moravian), Mennonites and Waldenses," through long, long ages of persecution, the Wesleys and their coadjutors went forth with apostolic zeal and faith, telling the story of the wonderful love of God in Christ, and the merits of the atoning blood of Calvary. The Wesleys and their co-workers were English and their message was to the English-speaking world. But we shall see how God raised up Otterbein, a German, to light his torch from that same sacred altar and carry the light of the gospel to the Germans in the New World. It would be difficult to establish any organizational continuity from the United Brethren of Moravia, in 1457, down to the United Brethren in Christ, in America. Nevertheless, any casual student of church history can readily see the spiritual continuity. These primitive United Brethren, in the year 1735, sent missionaries to America. Claiming to be nonsectarian, their efforts were at once directed to bringing together the loose pietistic elements in all the established churches. They strenuously objected to being considered a denomination. Their evangelists could be, and were, identified with various communions.

The spiritual stream of this United Brethrenism that began to flow in 1457 in the Old World flowed through Isaac Long's barn in Lancaster County, Penna., at the memorable Whitsuntide meeting in 1766. Otterbein, Boehm, Geeting, and their associates were drawn into this stream and became the human founders of a continuing group to be known as the United Brethren in Christ. The very spirit and genius of the original United Brethren group was the spirit and genius of the group they founded. However, let no one get the impression the United Brethren (Moravian) group has ceased to function. Though still insisting it is non-sectarian in principle, it ranks as one of the honored and progressive church bodies of America. The Church of the United Brethren in Christ has no other connection with the United Brethren (Moravians) than that of spiritual
kinship. It might be said that the primitive United Brethren stream has flowed into at least three channels during these past one hundred and fifty years: the Moravian Church in America; the Methodist Church; and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Thus might we trace the origin of our denominational name as adopted at the conference of 1800. It has been pointed out that our church fathers added the words "in Christ" to our denominational name in order to avoid any confusion as to which body was designated.

Some see in the dramatic words of Otterbein to Boehm at their first meeting, "We are brethren," the background for the name. And we should bear in mind that a variety of names was tried out before the one we now have was adopted. Some of these designations were as follows: "The Liberty People," "The New Reformed," "The New Mennonites," "Otterbein's People," "Boehm's Followers," "Society of United Christians," "German Methodists," "The United Brotherhood" and "The Unsectarian People."

Perhaps in a chapter proposing to show how the church branched out in the period beginning with 1800 we have used too much space tracing our denominational name. But the name was selected in that year and we feel the discussion fits in here about as well as anywhere.

**BRANCHING OUT**

Prior to 1800 the United Brethren preachers were, for the most part, farmers who gave a portion of their time to preaching. Their preaching was done largely in communities adjacent to their homes. They made themselves available for service under the direction of the leaders and as the Spirit directed. Only a few gave full time to the work. Indeed, this condition continued for quite a number of years. An example will suffice. In 1830, the year before the division of the mother conference, there were sixty-seven names listed as preachers of the conference, but only eighteen were listed as "Itinerants for the Year."

However, little by little, the work began to branch out. Some of the preachers moved with their families into Ohio, as did many of our stalwart laymen. As they went, they established appointments which later became churches. Newcomer was probably the first real circuit rider to take to the open road and blaze trails. He kept a diary, or journal, detailing the high-lights of his travels. This diary begins with October, 1795, and this is probably the beginning of his itinerant ministry. The first entry in his diary tells of his visit to Huntingdon and Center counties in Pennsylvania. In 1799 Newcomer, accompanied by Abraham Troxel, made a journey into western Pennsylvania, touching points in Fayette, Washington, and Somerset counties. In 1801 two of our ministers settled in that section. They were John G. Pfrimmer and Mathias Bortsfield. A little later they were joined by Christian Berger. These ministers started a great revival that swept over the section of Pennsylvania in which they had settled. In 1804 Abraham Troxel located at Mount Pleasant, and soon that neighborhood became a strong United Brethren center. In 1810 Troxel and John Bonnet, a Mennonite, erected a building to be used both for worship and school purposes. It came to be called "Bonnet's School-house," and it was here that the first General Conference of our Church was held in 1815.
Newcomer made numerous trips over the Alleghenies, sometimes alone, but usually accompanied by such companions as Geeting, Joseph Hoffman, and others. And we must not forget that from the original conference area, which then consisted principally of Washington and Frederick counties in Maryland, our evangelists were going in all directions: westward, as we have pointed out; northward in the Cumberland Valley, and including visits to York and vicinity; southward in the Shenandoah Valley into the area now occupied by Virginia Conference. A generation passes and we see flourishing societies of United Brethren at work in the sections which were destined to become strong denominational centers and even conferences. As early as 1810 so many preachers of our conference had settled in Ohio that they decided to form what is now Miami Conference. It was too far for them to travel horseback, over rough roads, back to the mother conference sessions, so they broke loose and formed a new conference. There were thirteen preachers at the first session of Miami Conference, and two exhorters, some of whom were probably licensed by Newcomer, and had never attended a session of the mother conference. Nevertheless, the nucleus of the group came from our conference. In 1808 Rev. J. G. Pfrimmer, a member of the conference who had lived near Harrisburg until 1801 and in western Pennsylvania since 1801, pressed his way into Indiana and there established the first societies of the United Brethren in that state. Pfrimmer was a surgeon as well as a minister, and was noted as a musician. He took with him the first piano ever to find its way into Indiana. The first Sunday School in that state was organized by him in 1820 at his home, Corydon, Harrison county.

In another chapter we shall present biographical sketches of many of the great denominational leaders in other areas who began their ministry in the original conference. The story of their lives and adventures is romance of the finest type. How we do wish we had time and space to amply narrate the many definitely known achievements of these heroes of the early church! And we must never lose sight of the fact that the mothers and wives entered fully into the sacrifices of those noble pioneers. They managed farms, did the chores, even worked in the fields, and braved the dangers incident to those untamed wilds in order to release their preacher sons and husbands to the work of the itinerant ministry. Indeed, when the plaudits are given in heaven, the mothers and wives of the circuit riders may have higher honor accorded them than the men themselves.

**CHURCH BUILDINGS**

One of the evidences that the church fathers did not intend to start a new denomination during that third of a century ending with 1800 is the fact that, although there were scores of preaching appointments, there were only three church buildings erected by and for the United Brethren. The Otterbein church, Baltimore, after outgrowing two smaller church houses, had built its third building in 1785; the Geeting Meeting House was built sometime prior to 1774; and Neidig's Meeting House at Oberlin, near Harrisburg, Pa., in 1793. Up to the time of the division of the original conference in 1830-1831, only twelve more United Brethren Church houses were known to exist in the entire denomination. The authority
for this is “Landmark History of the U. B. Church” by Eberly-Albright-Brane. These churches were as follows: Hagerstown, Md., 1805; German-town, Ohio, 1806; Oakville, Pa., (Roth’s) 1816; Corydon, Indiana, 1818; Light’s (Salem), Lebanon, Pa., 1820; Chambersburg, Pa., 1822; Littlestown, Pa., 1823; Sherk’s, near Grantville, Pa., 1825; Shopp’s (Shirmanstown), Pa., 1827; Herr’s, Annville, Pa., 1828; Greencastle, Pa., 1828; and Dres-bach’s Church, near Circleville, Ohio, 1829.

There was considerable opposition to “classing” in the first quarter century following 1800. There were many who thought it wicked to “number Israel.” Few records of any kind were kept. The very simplest type of organization, if any, was maintained at the preaching appointments. This attitude accounts largely for the lack of church building in that generation. Bishop Newcomer was the pioneer organizer. Wherever he preached he sought to have recorded the names of those who belonged to the United Brethren, and leaders appointed to shepherd them between the visits of the itinerant preachers. In this manner was created the office of class-leader. Many of these class-leaders developed into local and full-time ministers. It is related that Bishop Newcomer conducted a revival in Greencastle in 1816 and had a number of converts. To conserve the fruits of his efforts he stitched some sheets of paper together and made a book for recording the names of his converts, this being the first church record for our Greencastle church. Everywhere he went, he did this, often stirring up bitter opposition to his “classing,” as it was termed. He was in advance of all his brethren in the matter of organizing congregations, and for the most part his zeal was unencouraged and unappreciated. The Muskingum conference in 1819 excoriated Bishop Newcomer for his activities in organizing congregations and threatened to take some action against him for it. Nothing serious came of the flare-up, however, and Bishop Newcomer went on with his organizing and encouraged others to do likewise. The result was that the generation after his death was marked by the erection of hundreds of churches throughout the denomination.

FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE

It appears that the old conference decided to form a book of Discipline. Work was done on it at the conferences of 1812 and 1813, and it was approved by the conference of 1814. The Miami conference of 1814 expressed dissatisfaction with the Discipline as adopted. Dr. Drury facetiously remarks: “They may have been opposed to some of the statements in the Discipline, or, what is more likely, they may have been dissatisfied because they had nothing to do with the forming of the Discipline, etc.” And so the Miami conference of 1814 called for a General Conference to reconsider the whole matter. If the mother conference had been presumptuous in working out a Discipline without proper consultation, the Miami conference certainly was not lacking in the same sort of initiative, for the latter group not only called the General Conference to assemble but went so far as to designate the place of meeting and worked out the plan of representation. The mother conference accepted the situation and commissioned her representatives. The first General Conference convened in Bonnet’s Meeting House, Mount Pleasant, Pa., the home of Abraham Troxel,
June 6, 1815. Newcomer presided as bishop and according to his journal entered upon his duties with fear and trembling. There were some tense moments, from all accounts. Jacob Baulus was made secretary, and he concluded the very brief minutes with this paragraph: "The Confession of Faith and the Discipline were considered, in some respects enlarged, some things omitted, on the whole improved, and ordered printed." In another chapter of this book we present the names of our representatives to the first and all succeeding General Conferences.

The secretary's concluding statement does not necessarily state that the Discipline was adopted. It was ordered printed, probably with the idea in view of submitting it to the church for informal acceptance. The second General Conference met two years later at the same place. At this session an obstreperous minority opposed the adoption of the Discipline and Confession of Faith, but finally became reconciled. Through the courtesy of the Misses Grimm of Rohrersville, Md. the conference historian possesses a copy of the Discipline of 1817.

The mother conference had, in 1814, elected Newcomer bishop for three years. No bishops were elected at the General Conference of 1815. Newcomer and Andrew Zeller were elected bishops in 1817. Following the 1817 General Conference that body has met every four years down to the present.

DIVISION OF THE OLD CONFERENCE

Various names had been applied to the original conference before the division in 1830, such as the Eastern conference, the Hagerstown conference, the Old conference, the Mother conference, etc. The General Conference of 1829 ordered "that the Hagerstown conference district shall consist of the State of Virginia and the counties of Washington and Allegheny in Maryland, and the remaining part of the Hagerstown conference district shall in the future constitute a new conference district, to be called the Harrisburg conference district." The churches in Frederick county ignored the mandate of the General Conference and remained with the southern group. The old conference, in 1830, in its last session before the division became effective, adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, that in the future the Hagerstown conference shall have the old protocol (record book), and that the Harrisburg conference shall procure a new book." The next item recorded is the statement: "Bishop Kumler gave to William Brown two dollars with which he shall purchase a new protocol for the Harrisburg conference and shall transcribe from the old into the new all important proceedings."

"The claim of the Hagerstown (now the Virginia) Conference to be the original conference might be based on its being given the old name, its being awarded the old protocol, and the Harrisburg district being called a new district. Something might be made of the fact that the conference district included Hagerstown, in and about which so much of the history of the Church centered. The claim of the Harrisburg (later the Pennsylvania) Conference to be the original conference might be made to rest on the fact that within its territory were included Baltimore and Frederick county, Maryland, where the beginnings of church character were assumed."
A person entirely disinterested might say that the antiquity was split lengthwise.” (Drury).

Had the Western Maryland churches remained with the Virginia group the Pennsylvania Conference would have considerable difficulty supporting its claim to being the original conference, but since this territory is now affiliated with Pennsylvania Conference there should be no question as to the propriety of the claim. And we can see no reason why our Virginia brethren cannot with justice claim the same antiquity with us.

Although designated as the Harrisburg and Hagerstown Conferences, respectively, by the 1829 General Conference, we find the groups designated by the 1833 General Conference as the Pennsylvania and Virginia Conferences, respectively.

THE CHURCH IN WESTERN MARYLAND

It is generally conceded that Maryland is the native soil of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It was in Maryland that Otterbein spent forty-four years as a pastor, five in Frederick (1760-1765), and thirty-nine in Baltimore (1774-1813). It was in Carroll County, Md., that the famous “Pipe Creek Conferences” were held in 1774, 1775 and 1776. These conferences, presided over by Otterbein, were of pietistic ministers of the Reformed Church who were yearning for a more abundant spiritual life. They called themselves “The United Ministers,” although retaining membership in the Reformed Church. The story of these “Pipe Creek Conferences” may be found elsewhere in this volume. The first church ever built for the United Brethren was erected near Keedysville, Washington County, and was called the “Geeting Meeting House.” The building was erected sometime prior to 1774, because it is referred to in the Pipe Creek Conference minutes of May 29, 1774. The first conference of Otterbein’s new movement preachers was held in Baltimore in 1789. Similar conferences were held at the great Whitsuntide meetings at Geeting’s Meeting House annually until 1799, with the exception of the conference of 1791 which was held near York, Pa. In 1800 the preachers assembled at Peter Kemp’s, near Frederick, and decided to launch out as a regular denomination. Otterbein and Boehm were elected bishops at this conference, and the name “United Brethren in Christ” was adopted. Of the thirty conferences held before the division of the original conference sixteen were held in Maryland. When the General Conference of 1829 ordered the original conference divided, which division became effective in 1830, the protocol, or conference minute book, was awarded “the Hagerstown Conference,” and the “Harrisburg Conference” was instructed to secure a new book. This indicates the fact that the churches in the Western Maryland area were considered the original group.

With the Pennsylvania churches organized as a separate entity, the Hagerstown Conference began more intensive work in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. At the time of the division in 1828 there was only one circuit in Virginia. The expansion took place rapidly, and gradually the name “Hagerstown Conference” gave way to “Virginia Conference” by common consent, it seems.

The Western Maryland Churches were affiliated with Virginia Conference from 1831 to 1887. At the session of Virginia Conference, held
in the Keedysville, Maryland, Church, March, 1887, the Maryland Churches, having previously voted on the matter in the respective quarterlies, decided to withdraw from Virginia Conference and organize, or re-organize their original conference. The previous General Conference had passed an enabling act. The roll was called and those desiring to go with the Maryland group arose when their names were called and went down-stairs into the Sunday School room, while those preferring to remain with the Virginia Conference remained in the main auditorium. Bishop J. Dickson presided over the Virginia Conference while Bishop Jonathan Weaver presided over the Maryland Conference. Thus two separate and distinct annual conferences were in session at the same time in the same church, a very unique situation.

During the fifty-six years the Maryland and Virginia preachers were together as one conference thirty-one sessions of the conference were held in Maryland. During the Civil War, because of the picket lines along the Potomac, it was necessary for the Maryland and Virginia ministers to hold sectional conferences. However, this did not imply a rift over the matter of slavery. For several decades before the war the Religious Telescope had been publishing stirring anti-slavery articles by the editor and contributors. The Virginia preachers resented the attitude of the Religious Telescope and in 1847, in session at Geeting’s Meeting House, decided by an 18 to 4 vote to publish their own Telescope, boycotting the denominational paper. It may or may not be significant that the four negative votes were all from Maryland. It was not until the latter part of 1854, however, that the first issue of “The Virginia Telescope” appeared. The paper was short lived, as the presiding elder, Rev. G. W. Statton, was not in sympathy with it, and used his influence against it. In the terrible war United Brethren soldiers of the North fought United Brethren soldiers of the South, without doubt. And United Brethren preachers resigned their pastorates and shouldered arms for the cause they thought just. It is related that after the war one of Mosby’s Guerrillas became a United Brethren minister and presiding elder. When he went into the old Thurmont Church (then known as Mechanicstown) to preach and hold Quarterly Conference, several ex-Union soldiers arose and stamped out.

In fairness to our brethren from below the Potomac it should be said they did not all uphold slavery as an institution. Many who fought for the Confederacy were opposed to slavery. They felt that states where slavery was non-existent should not dictate to states where it did exist; they felt their property was being confiscated without indemnity, and that if these states wanted abolition they should bring it about by the purchase of the slaves to be freed. They felt, too, that the North was proceeding to the “end” by the wrong “means.” Many southerners felt it was unwise to release all the slaves at one stroke without adequate plans for their future. And most of us today feel that all the Civil War accomplished could and would have been accomplished within a generation, without bloodshed.

After the war, the Virginia Conference of 1866 met at Rohersville, Md. The concluding paragraph of the conference minutes, written by the secretary, Rev. C. B. Hammack, is as follows: “Though this conference was severed by the war for four years, yet, thank God, that severance was only geographical, not sentimental: and therefore when we met again
we were of one mind and one heart. All was love, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Brethren, may it ever so continue with us as a conference."

Among the Western Maryland congregations that were flourishing at the time of the division of the old conference were Antietam (Geeting's Meeting House, Keedysville), St. Paul's (Hagerstown), Chewsville, Wolfs­ville, Mechanicstown (Thurmont), Boonsboro, Rohrersville, Jerusalem (Myersville), Georgetown (Walkersville), Baulus' Chapel (Middletown), Rocky Springs (near Peter Kemp's in Frederick county).

The histories of these old churches will be found in their proper places in this volume and may be read with profit in connection with this chapter. Also, in the chapter on "Fragments Gathered Up" will be found a number of facts and fancies concerning this territory.

Soon after the division of 1829 the Hagerstown Conference felt the need of two presiding elders, one for the Maryland area, the other for Virginia. There were no bridges over the Potomac in those days, thus making this plan the more advisable. The presiding elders assigned to the Maryland section are listed here: 1832-1833, W. R. Rhinehart and Henry Burtner; 1833-1834, William Brown; 1834-1836, H. Burtner; 1836-1837, J. Rhinehart; 1837-1838, — — — — — — —; 1838-1842, W. R. Coursey; 1842-1843, J.J. Glossbrenner; 1843-1844, J. Markwood; 1844-1845, J. B. Houck; 1845-1848, W. R. Coursey; 1848-1849, J. Rhinehart; 1849-1853, J. Markwood; 1853-1854, J. Ruebush; 1854-1857, Jacob Bechtel; 1857-1859, W. R. Coursey; 1859-1861, H. B. Winton; 1861-1862, J. Markwood; 1862-1863, W. R. Coursey; 1863-1865, J. Tobey; 1865-1869, G. W. Statton; 1869-1870, J. W. Howe; 1870-1873, H. A. Bovey; 1873-1875, D. D. Keedy; 1875-1876, J. W. Howe; 1876-1878, J. Ruebush; 1878-1880, W. O. Grimm; 1880-1882, J. K. Nelson; 1882-1884, J. W. Howe; 1884-1886, C. M. Hott; 1886-1887, A. M. Evers.

Following the formation of the Maryland Conference in 1887, the following presiding elders served until 1901, when Maryland Conference was merged with Pennsylvania Conference: 1887-1893, A. M. Evers; 1893-1899, G. J. Roudebusch; 1899-1901, L. O. Burtner.

The secretaries of the old Maryland Conference were as follows: 1887-1896, W. L. Martin; 1896-1897, J. T. Spangler and W. L. Martin; 1897-1898, J. T. Spangler; 1898-1899, J. E. B. Rice; 1899-1901, J. E. B. Rice and W. L. Martin.

THE UNITED BRETHREN AND THE METHODISTS

The United Brethren and the Methodists have always enjoyed the most pleasant relations. Their spirit, polity, and even their history are almost parallel. The two denominations were getting their foothold on American soil at one and the same time and their leaders enjoyed the finest kind of Christian fellowship. Indeed, it is doubtful if the two groups would have continued apart had it not been for the fact that the United Brethren were almost exclusively German and the Methodists just as exclusively English.

The old Otterbein Church in Baltimore was originally known as the Second German Reformed Church. Otterbein's predecessor in the pastorate of this church was the Rev. Benedict Schwope, who served the con-
gregation from 1771 to 1773. Schwöpe and Otterbein were old friends and were like-minded in their desire for spiritual life in the church of their choice. Schwöpe was also friendly to and in full sympathy with the Methodists who were trying to get started in Baltimore. Accordingly, when the Rev. Joseph Pilmoor, a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, sought a place to organize the first Methodist Society, or Church, in the city of Baltimore, the Rev. Mr. Schwöpe promptly offered his church, the Second German Reformed, as the place for the organization meeting. The meeting was held June 22, 1772. Since this church later became known as Otterbein's Church, because of his thirty-nine year pastorate, it becomes a matter of great interest to all United Brethren that so significant a meeting as the one referred to should have been held there. Otterbein became pastor in 1774 and rebuilt the church. Ten years later the present structure was built on the same site. Robert Strawbridge was one of the founders of American Methodism. There is a strong tradition that he was ordained by Rev. Benedict Schwöpe.

It will be of interest to trace, briefly, the history of the First Methodist Church of Baltimore, which was organized in the predecessor of the Old Otterbein Church, as indicated above. For several years the group had no church house. In 1774 a chapel was built in what was then called Lovely Lane. The site is now occupied by the Merchants' Club and is known as 206 E. Redwood St. In this chapel the first Methodist Conference to be held in America was held Dec. 24 to Jan. 3, 1784-'85. At this conference Francis Asbury was ordained to the bishopric of the new denomination. Asbury and Otterbein were great friends and Asbury insisted that Mr. Otterbein should have a part in his ordination. This occurred in the Lovely Lane Chapel, Dec. 27, 1784. In addressing a Methodist Conference on one occasion, the late Dr. C. E. Fultz, former superintendent of Pennsylvania Conference, made the facetious remark that "All the Methodist preachers are in the line of Apostolic succession from our Otterbein." The Methodists soon outgrew their meeting house and in 1786 erected a more commodious one on the corner of what is now Light and Redwood Streets. This building was destroyed by fire in 1796 and another was built on the same site. The congregation was compelled to relocate in 1872 because the City of Baltimore wanted to widen Redwood Street. The congregation then purchased a church building on the N. E. corner of Charles and Fayette Streets which had been abandoned by the congregation that had just completed the building of Mt. Vernon Place M. E. Church. In 1887 the great First M. E. Church, also known as the Goucher College Church, costing $250,000, was built at St. Paul and 22nd Streets. This congregation traces its ancestry right back to the group that organized at the old Second German Reformed (Otterbein) Church, on Conway Street.

There were many gestures of brotherly love and good will that passed between the Methodists and United Brethren in those early years. At the great camp-meetings especially the spirit of Christian union was exhibited. Newcomer makes many references to his cordial relations with Methodists and in 1809 went to see Father Geeting to discuss the possibility of church union with the Methodists. As a result he was sent to the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in Harrisonburg, Va., in March 1810, to make overtures to that body. As an outcome of the meeting
a series of brotherly letters passed between the conferences. An agreement was reached whereby the Methodists and United Brethren would work together. The Methodists would have free access to all United Brethren meetings, and vice versa. Methodists would have the privilege of using all United Brethren preaching places on Sundays when the United Brethren preachers had no appointments there, and vice versa. This arrangement, while a beautiful Christian gesture, did not advance the church of the United Brethren. Practically all of the Methodists' converts joined the Methodists, and many of the United Brethren preachers' converts joined the Methodists. The explanation is that the younger generation preferred to unite with the English speaking group. In very many instances the United Brethren were crowded out. Finally, the death in 1816 of Asbury, who had championed Church union, brought all negotiations looking to church union to a stand-still. Shortly after this, a prominent presiding elder, in his excessive zeal for Methodism, declared he would recognize the terms of union no longer, and that the members of the United Brethren church could have free access to Methodist love-feasts and class-meetings on one condition, and that was, by joining the M. E. Church. So far as we have record, there was no retaliation on our part.

In the early years of the church it was not thought to be incongruous to belong to two societies (churches) at the same time. Otterbein retained his membership in the Reformed Church until death, although a bishop in the United Brethren Church; Boehm, a bishop in the United Brethren Church, in his old age allowed his name to be put on a Methodist class book so he could partake of the communion in the neighborhood Methodist Church, a privilege which otherwise would have been denied him; Lorenz Eberhardt, whose biography appears elsewhere in this volume, was a loyal preacher of the United Brethren and sustained the same relation to the Methodists, at the same time. And so it was with many others, ministers and laymen. We can understand this better if we remember that in those early years the M. E. and U. B. churches were looked upon more as societies than as churches. In the first quarter of the 19th century the United Brethren were often alluded to as "German Methodists."

As we see it now, our church held on to the German language too long. Some of our churches used the German language exclusively until the turn of the twentieth century, and it was not until the World War that the Old Otterbein Church capitulated to the English tongue.

In April, 1813, Christian Newcomer, our first Apostle of Christian Unity, visited the conference of the Evangelical Church, then called "The Albrights," for the purpose of promoting a union of that denomination with ours. A commission was appointed, but after a number of meetings, over a period of years, the negotiations came to nought. As most of us know, in more recent times there have been efforts to unite with the Congregationalists, the Methodist Protestants, the Reformed Church, and the Evangelical Synod of North America. These efforts, for various reasons, have come to nought.
The Ordination of Francis Asbury in the Lovely Lane Meeting House, Baltimore, Md., December 27, 1784. Philip William Otterbein, standing in center, assisted Bishop Thomas Coke in the Ordination.