The seed sown in the Palatinate and Naussau, Germany, grew to become the United Brethren in Christ in America. Many of the German settlers in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia came from the Palatinate and Naussau, where the Otterbein family lived. When the ship landed at New York bringing Reformed missionary Otterbein in 1752, there were ships landing at Annapolis, Maryland, bringing others who later joined Otterbein to form the church. The first formal meetings of the movement were held after Otterbein began his pastorate at Baltimore. The minutes of these conferences have been translated and published by Dr. Joseph Henry Dubbs, and later by Rev. A.W. Drury, M.A.

The minutes of May 29, 1774, at Pipe Creek mention several classes. Baltimore, upper part of the city, had class leaders Leonard Harbaugh and Henry Weidner; the female members were to meet separately. Pipe Creek had two classes. Sam's Creek constituted a single class with leaders Adam Lehman and Martin Cassel. Fredericktown had one class and was to elect a leader. The members at Antietam met every Sunday in two classes, led by George Adam Gheeting and Samuel Becker and meeting alternately at the Church and at Conrad Schnebley's.

The October 2, 1774, meeting was held at David Schreiber's at Pipe Creek. All the former classes were passed. Conewago, in Adams County, Pennsylvania, formed a class but no leader was appointed. Sharpsburg, Maryland, formed a class with Mr. Stein, the schoolmaster, appointed leader. The friends at Funkstown and Hagerstown were to be visited and organized by Benedict Swope and Mr. Weimer.

June 12, 1775, a meeting was held at Frederick, Maryland. Those present included William Otterbein, William Hendel, Frederick Henop, Jacob Weimer, Daniel Wagner and Benedict Swope. All the former classes with the exception of Hagerstown were represented.

The October 15, 1775, meeting was held in Baltimore. All the former classes were mentioned, and the following classes were added: Hagerstown, Little Pipe Creek and Germantown (now Manchester), Maryland.

June 2, 1776, a meeting was held at John Ranger's. All the former classes were mentioned, with the addition of Beaver Dam and
Peter Reitenauer's. At this meeting a license to preach was given to Henry Weidner and signed by William Otterbein, William Hendel, Jacob Weimer and Benedict Swope. The latter was also ordained that same year; he was the step-father of Barbara Fritchie, the heroine of Whittier's ballad.

There are no minutes of any conferences being held from 1776 to 1789. The 1789 conference was held in Otterbein's parsonage at Baltimore. Those present were William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, George A. Geeting, Christian Newcomer, Henry Weidner, Adam Lehman and John Ernst. From this conference went these men to blaze the trail which resulted in the founding of the United Brethren in Christ, first in Maryland and then in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Canada.

Rev. John Hildt was one of the members of the Otterbein Church and a close friend of William Otterbein. He was born in Poland on September 21, 1775, and died in Dover, Ohio, on April 4, 1862. In 1800 he came to Baltimore, where he found friends who assisted him in business, and he became a tanner. Soon after locating in Baltimore he married Mary Weller, the daughter of a Baltimore ship owner. By this marriage he became the father of nine children. Mary died in 1825, and John later married Mary Wolgamuth, who died May 27, 1857, aged seventy-six years, two months and seven days. Rev. John Hildt, the eldest son, was born September 29, 1807. He married Maria Eliza Gloninger, daughter of Peter and Eliza (Keller) Gloninger, and settled in Dover, Ohio. Daniel Hildt, ... Rev. Francis Hildt was a minister in the United Brethren in Christ and died in 1859, in his fiftieth year. Another son, the Rev. George Hildt was a preacher in the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for fifty-five years and was at the time of his death, with one exception, the oldest minister in that conference. Of the daughters, Eliza, the eldest, married Rev. John Baer of the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and died May 17, 1875, at the age of seventy years. Mary, who never married, died at Dover, Ohio, in August 1862 at the age of forty-five. Eve was the wife of F.E. Keller who lived near Dover, Ohio.

Mary Hildt, daughter of John, Jr., and Maria Gloninger Hildt, married Upton C. Deardorff, son of Christian Deardorff, who descended from the Deardorff family of the Adams County tract now known as Worley Nursery on US route 15 west of Dillsburg. Newcomer often held services there. I am grateful to Miss Bertha E. Deardorff of Dover, Ohio, the last descendant of Rev. John Hildt, Sr., living in the area. I visited her last summer and saw many pictures and pieces of furniture which at one time belonged to Rev. John Hildt, Sr.

Rev. John G. Pfimme, another of the old ministers, is of much interest. He preached in the open under a tree in 1792 near where Milton, Pennsylvania, is now located. Detrick Aurand also
preached there. These people were called "Pfrimmer people." Rev. Pfrimmer is said to have remarked that he could preach the devil out of hell. He later moved to Kentucky and then to Harrison County, Indiana, where he died in 1825.

The Reverends Christian Newcomer and George A. Geeting were two of the traveling preachers, and one should mention in passing some of their preaching places in the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania from Hagerstown to the Susquehanna River. This was all called the Hagerstown Circuit. The first stop was Mr. Wolgamuth's, the first house built in Middleburg -- the Mason-Dixon line passed through the house, the chimney in Pennsylvania. Preaching places near Greencastle included Snively, Union School House, Clay Hill, Shelly home, Kumler home, Winger, Peter Hawbaker, Guittners, Shipstown, Schoolhouse. Andrew Leymeister, at whose house Newcomer preached, lived within one mile of Marion and was the son of Wilhelm Leymeister of Berks County. Andrew was baptized February 18, 1750, and died in Peters Township, Franklin County. His wife Barbara Heck was born December 28, 1755 and died August 11, 1824. They are both buried in the Old Reformed and Lutheran Graveyard at Mercersburg. Their children were Jacob, John, Catharine, Philip (died young), George, Daniel and Philip. Descendants of these were members of the Lemaster, Marion and Chambersburg United Brethren churches.

Newcomer also preached and stopped with the Shivelys near Fayetteville, John Huber of Rocky Springs, the Hermans, and George Fetterhoff of Shippensburg. A class was formed in Shippensburg and a church building dedicated there October 25-26, 1828, probably with Newcomer and Geeting as the first ministers. I have not been able to learn in what part of the town the church was located, at what date the congregation disbanded, or what disposition was made of the church building. It may have been sold and converted into a dwelling; if so, it may yet be standing.

Another area church erected in the early days of the denomination was located three miles east of Shippensburg. Known as the "Stone Church," it was built in 1830. Thirty-four years later it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. After being in use until 1879, it again fell prey to flames. Again it was rebuilt, but the new building met the fate of its predecessors in 1890. At the time of the last fire the property was owned by the River Brethren, to whom it had been sold by the United Brethren after their ranks had been so depleted by the removal of many who had held membership there that the appointment had been abandoned.

Another nearby preaching place was the house of Jacob Rhoads and later the church-schoolhouse outside Oakville. This church was built of logs in 1816 or earlier and was also used for school purposes. There are eleven burials in the graveyard, which belongs to its successor, the United Brethren Church of
Near the Conodoguinet stood the David Snyder Church, which was built prior to 1818. After the death of David and Elizabeth Snyder it was called Brown's -- after William Brown, who was married to Sally Koch on February 7, 1820, by Bishop Newcomer and who lived with the Snyders. The church was later called Shellenberger's. William Brown was later elected Bishop and died near Otterbein, Indiana. In this connection it may be of interest to quote a letter of his son W.O. Brown to Rev. John Fetterhoff on the death of his father.

Otterbein, Indiana May 13, 1868

Father departed this life on Monday 11th, at seven o'clock. He suffered much pain for about seven weeks. The last four weeks he could not lie down at all. His disease was dropsy of the abdomen and leg. He was aware that his time had come. He said his days were numbered. His mind wandered some, but was clear at the moment of death, which was quite easy. He addressed me intelligently not half a minute before the final change.

W.O. Brown

The Joseph Knegi home at Big Spring was another preaching place and where the conferences of 1811 and 1822 were held. This building was destroyed by fire a few years past.

The home of Rev. Abraham Mayer, four miles west of Carlisle, was one of the earliest preaching places in the valley. Preaching was done there in 1796 by Rev. Mayer, the first native-born United Brethren preacher in Cumberland County. Many great meetings were held there by Otterbein, Boehm, Newcomer, Geeting and others. Bishop William Brown was happily converted in May 1812 at a big meeting in this house. The house still stands and is good for many years. Here I think we should give a family line of Rev. Abraham Mayer.

The founder of the family was Melchior Mayer, born in 1495, who in the middle part of the sixteenth century was military chief of the Free Imperial City of Ulm. His time of office was during those stirring days of the struggle of the new Protestant church in Germany against the power of the foreign Emperor Charles V, who vainly tried to crush the new religious freedom of thought so dearly purchased. Ulm was one of those cities that held out for this right of religious freedom which was finally, at least partially, achieved in 1555 in the "Religious Peace of Augsburg." Hans Gorg (John George) Mayer, son of Melchior, was born at Laningen and married Anna Maria Kupfer.
Rev. Johannes Melchior Mayer, son of Hans Gorg, was born in Ulm on September 11, 1636. He married twice. The name of his first wife, to whom no children were born, is not recorded. His second wife Sara Frank, daughter of John Bartholomew Frank, was born January 21, 1651, and died August 6, 1711. Johannes Melchior Mayer died April 26, 1703.

Rev. George Bartholomew Mayer was born at Ulm on March 6, 1681. Christopher Bartholomew Mayer was born at Carlsruhe Baden in November of 1702 and came to America by way of the Hague, where the right of citizenship was conferred on him, and settled in the Maryland colony with his wife and four children. He landed at Annapolis in 1752, but did not tarry there long and soon went to "Monacacy Station" or "Fredericktown" in the western part of the province. He died within six months after his arrival in America and was buried November 21, 1752, in the Lutheran graveyard at Frederick. After their father's death, the family dispersed. George Ludwig Mayer, the oldest son and the father of Rev. Dr. Lewis Mayer, went to Lancaster.

Abraham Mayer went to Cumberland County, where Rev. Abraham Mayer was born and died (on October 28, 1826). He is buried in the Bear graveyard on a high bluff near the Conodoguinet Creek due north from Plainfield. It may be of interest to give the record taken from his Bible in German and translated into English.

On March 29, 1785, I, Abraham Mayer, married Anna Becker. On January 12, 1786, Elisabet was born. A son, Abraham, was born on June 20, 1787. A daughter, Barbara, was born February 12, 1790. A daughter Christina was born June 17, 1792. In the year 1794 an the 22nd of November, was a daughter Ana born to us. On June 9, 1797, a son Johanus. In the year 1799, on November 29, was a daughter Maria born to us. In the year 1802, on October 8, was a son Benjamin born. In the year 1805, on April 23, a daughter Catherine was born to us. In the year 1807, on September 29, a daughter named Susanna was born. In the year 1810, on the 13th day of November, a daughter was born to us and named Sophia.

There was also a church at Newville, built in 1868 and abandoned in 1893. There was another church at Churchtown, Post Office Allen, built in 1849 and abandoned in 1893. Both of these buildings were taken down in 1893 and the bricks used to build the United Brethren Church on South Street, Carlisle. The seats from the Newville Church are still in use at the West Hill Church on
In the spring of 1843 the Pennsylvania Conference convened in Fetteroff Chapel, Franklin County, and Rev. J.S. Kessler was assigned to Hershey Station, Cumberland County. This was a new station set apart from the Carlisle Circuit at this conference session and was composed of one appointment. In addition to preaching regularly at this place during the year, Rev. Kessler explored much of the adjoining territory. He set up six or eight appointments, held revival meetings at some of them, and organized several good societies -- namely, Boiling Springs, Churchtown, Middlesex, Carlisle, Mt. Zion on the Mt. Tabor Charge, Red Schoolhouse and others.

The Hershey Church was built before 1840 on land owned by Rev. Abraham Hershey, patented September 10, 1835, patent book H, volume 33, page 460, on file at the Capitol in Harrisburg. His son Jacob married the daughter of Christian Klepper and inherited 130 acres adjoining his father from his father-in-law on February 7, 1832. The Hersheys came to Cumberland County from Lancaster County. This Rev. Abraham Hershey was a nephew of the Rev. John Hershey, near Hagerstown, and a cousin of the Lancaster County Hersheys: Rev. Abraham Hershey, Rev. Abraham Hershey, Elisabeth Hershey Erb (the mother of Bishop Jacob Erb).

The Pennsylvania Conference was held in Hershey Church on March 11, 1847, opened by Bishop Hanby. There were twenty-five members present and nineteen absent; Jacob C. Smith was elected secretary. Bishop John Dickson was a candidate for the ministry and received his license Friday morning March 12. Hershey pastor Rev. Kessler received for his year's salary the large sum of $150.00.

At the old Hershey Church there were many revivals. Many were added to the church during these meetings who have since migrated to the western states and have carried with them the joy, imparting influences of that which they first experiences at Hershey Church. Let me quote from the record of a one Isaac Neidig who was with the party described.

In the spring of 1850. When we were all ready to start the whole company numbered thirty-five big and little. The company consisted of Isaac and Jonathan Neidig and families, Jacob Hershey and family and his father Rev. Abraham Hershey and mother and son-in-law, John Neidig and family, Samuel Frantz and family, Dr. Hershey and sister, Jacob Klepper and family, Mother Erb and her two sons Christian and Jacob, Jarey Griner and others. Isaac Neidig's brother John, who married Rev. Abraham Hershey's daughter, took passage on a canal boat at Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania, for Pittsburgh. The Neidigs and Hersheys took cars on the Pennsylvania Central, which was finished only 60 miles from Harrisburg, to Lewistown, then we took passage on the canal boat to Pittsburgh.

Meanwhile, his brother John Neidig and company took passage at Pittsburgh on the Steamer 'Belle of the West' for St. Louis, Missouri. The company consisted of John Neidig and family, Abraham Funk and family, Yordy family, Cramer family and A. Rubant. Nearly the whole crowd was from near Harrisburg. On their way some distance from Cincinnati, Ohio, on the Ohio River, their boat took fire and burned up with a great loss of life and property. Quite a number were burned to death, and some jumped overboard and were drowned. As it happened near midnight, a number escaped in only their night clothes. Some lost all they had in goods. John Neidig and his son-in-law and all the children got out safely in their night clothes. They lost all their goods and sixty dollars. Abraham Funk lost all his goods, and some of his family were badly burned. In the Yordy family, nearly all were burned to death -- the father, the mother, and some of the children. Bretzes had a large family; all were lost but two small children. After another day or two they took passage on another boat and arrived at Muscatine, Iowa.

The Rev. Abraham Hershey and company took passage at Pittsburgh on the boat 'Mt. Vernon Finance' from St. Louis to Muscatine. This party left Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on April 7, 1850, and arrived at Muscatine, Iowa, April 27, 1850. Some of the party went to Lisbon, Iowa. Nearly the whole company of Hersheys and Neidigs were United Brethren. The first summer, in 1850, they built a little brick church 36 feet by 50 feet with a basement under it. It was finished to hold meetings in it the same fall and winter.

These removals from Hershey Church were the start of the abandonment of the station. I visited Muscatine a few years past, as well as Lisbon, where Rev. Christian Hershey from Lancaster County had settled in 1847. He received his license to preach, signed by Otterbein, in the Peter Kemp home at Frederick,
Maryland, in 1801. Rev. Abraham Hershey died in Muscatine on May 5, 1852, at the age of 83 years. After his death, the farm in Cumberland County was sold. The church was kept until 1857, when it was abandoned; the Harmony Hall School now stands on the spot where stood the Hershey Church. The name of Hershey Station was changed to Carlisle Circuit in April 1853.

A quarterly conference was held at Springville, predecessor to the Boiling Springs Church, on March 24, 1860. On motion, the Carlisle appointment was dropped in consequence of not having a suitable place to preach. From this time until 1891, there was no class in Carlisle. The Grace Church in Carlisle was formed by Rev. W.J. Houck, assisted by Rev. A.R. Ayres, on May 10, 1893. The cornerstone of this church was laid by Rev. J.W. Kiracofe and the building dedicated by Bishop E.B. Kephart on January 14, 1894.

As much has been written about the different churches, I have refrained from writing of them. I will instead say more about the founders, many of whom came from Germany: Wyand, Schneider, Kumlers, Hawbaker and many others. The Hoffman brothers (Valentine, George and Daniel) no doubt knew Otterbein when he was at Tuplehocken; they lived there before Valentine went to Rockingham County, Virginia, and George (the father of Bishop Joseph Hoffman) settled in Pfoutz Valley, now Perry County, Pennsylvania. Later David Long came from Lancaster County to the Pfoutz Valley, adjoining the Hoffman tract; the conference of 1816 was held at his home -- which was at that time in Cumberland County, but is now in Perry County. Daniel Hoffman remained in the area of Tuplehocken.

Valentine Hoffman of Rockingham County was the father of George Hoffman, who was converted under Otterbein's preaching in the woods meeting on his father's farm. George later married and went to Augusta County, Virginia, taking his religion with him. He lived to be 92 years of age, and Bishop Glossbrenner preached his funeral service. John Ruebush, the Hammocks, the Kiracofes (of eight boys, six became preachers) all started from Mt. Zion Church in Augusta County. Valentine Hoffman is the ancestor of many preachers. His grandson George Hoffman received his license to preach at Shopp's Church near Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania, in 1830.

I hope I have by this paper contributed some little to the history of the United Brethren Church.
FOOTNOTES

1. John W. Kiracofe of Boiling Springs, an extremely active lay person in the United Brethren Church, died in 1967. Along with his friend Rev. Paul Holdcraft, he was one of the longtime moving forces within the Pennsylvania Conference's Historical Society during the mid 1900's. His father, Rev. John Wesley Kiracofe, served in the United Brethren Church for over 50 years and is one of the six Kiracofe brothers who became preachers and that are mentioned at the end of this paper. Typical of his meticulous attention to detail and his interest in matters genealogical, this paper was discovered by the editor of THE CHRONICLE in 1985 among a box of Kiracofe's effects on loan from his son. For what occasion the paper was written, the exact year it was prepared, and whether it has ever before appeared in print are not known.

2. The author is correct in calling the work a "movement." Like Luther and Wesley before him, Otterbein had no intention of starting a new denomination. His intention was rather to provide a framework within which like-minded evangelicals, mostly within the Reformed and Mennonite churches, could minister among the German-speaking settlers.

3. The village of Pipe Creek is no longer in existence. Paul Holdcraft's 1939 History of the Pennsylvania Conference indicates that it probably stood along Little Pipe Creek, between Westminster and Union Bridge, near the present village of Linwood. David Schreiber, mentioned in connection with the October meeting, conducted a store there between 1767 and 1791.

4. This 1774 class represents the first organized United Brethren work within the present Central Pennsylvania Conference. Unfortunately, the class appears not to have endured, and information about it is sketchy.

5. Although formal organization and naming of the group as the United Brethren in Christ did not take place until 1800 at the Peter Kemp home near Frederick, this 1789 meeting is considered to be the first regular annual conference of the denomination and all Pennsylvania Conference sessions were numbered accordingly.

6. This begins the first of the paper's several genealogical digressions. Even though they interrupt the account of the development of the United Brethren Church, such digressions have not been edited out of THE CHRONICLE. They not only represent both a major interest and a significant effort of J.W. Kiracofe, but they also give background insight and specific information not readily available elsewhere.

7. A line of the original manuscript seems to be missing.

8. i.e., State Line

9. Kiracofe's information at this point undoubtedly comes from a reference in Christian Newcomer's diary to his attending the dedication of a new meetinghouse in Shippensburg on those dates. Homer Kendall's 1966 History of Messiah Evangelical United Brethren Church of Shippensburg, however, makes it clear that
there was no UB church in that town before 1866. It appears that Newcomer attended the dedication of the original First Church of God (COG) building. There was a great spirit of cooperation between the UB and COG denominations, and it was UB Bishop Jacob Erb who administered adult baptism to Rev. John Winebrenner when he finally broke with the Reformed Church to found the COG. In addition, early UB preacher Samuel Huber wrote of this period, "I preached to the Winebrennerians in Shippensburg every four weeks -- for one year."

10. The River Brethren is the former name of the Brethren in Christ (BIC) denomination. Despite the details given by Kiracofe, the editor has been unable to identify this site or congregation in any UB or BIC records. There were UB churches in Mainsville and Cleversburg that were both sold in 1892, and it's possible this reference could be to one of those.

11. If Kiracofe is accurate at this point, the reference to the church at Oakville as "United Brethren" and not "Evangelical United Brethren" dates the manuscript prior to 1946. This and the reference two paragraphs later to the fire at the Knecht home as "a few years past" place the writing of the paper about 1945.

12. Kiracofe was prophetic at this point. The Mayer house still stands in excellent repair on the south side of route 11 a short distance west of Carlisle and east of the Good Shepherd Community United Methodist Church. This home and the one of Rev. Abraham Hershey, on the north side of route 11 a few miles east of Carlisle and opposite Harmony Hall Road, are two little-known but significant United Brethren structures that have been preserved and restored by subsequent owners.

13. The reference here is clearly to the John Bear graveyard. The editor has talked with caretaker Mr. Galen Bear and has seen a list and plot of all known burials there -- the first of which was in 1834. J.W. Kiracofe's genealogical research is usually impeccable, however, and one hesitates to dispute with such an authority. One possibility is that Rev. Abraham Mayer was buried in the Henry Bear graveyard, which stood in a field a few miles west of Plainfield and whose records and tombstones have been gone for many years. If the John Bear graveyard was the only commonly known Bear cemetery at the time, Kiracofe may have assumed it was Mayer's final resting place without actually checking the site. In any case, the location of Rev. Abraham Mayer's grave is currently unknown to the Conference Historical Society.

14. Properly, this should read "second cousin."

15. The editor also visited these Iowa locations to see what remained of the efforts of these United Brethren pioneers. In Lisbon, the only United Methodist congregation is former Methodist Episcopal. Over the years, the UB congregation dwindled. In 1921, the United Brethren and the Reformed congregations merged to form an independent Federated Church. In 1935, the Evangelical Church of Lisbon also disbanded and most of its members were received into the Federated Church. Although the congregation
worshipped in the former UB building, most current members seem to be from Reformed ancestors and little is known about the United Brethren pioneers who migrated there from Pennsylvania.

16. David Long was the brother of Isaac Long, in whose Lancaster County barn Otterbein and Mennonite minister Martin Boehm met on May 10, 1767, to begin the movement that became the United Brethren Church.
Abraham and Jacob Hershe home, on US 11 east of Carlisle near Harmony Hall Road. The house was built in 1839 with bricks made in the back field and served as the UB preaching place before the Hershe church was built. Photograph taken in the early 1940's by John W. Kiracofe.
"Virginia to wit

In Augusta County Court July 27th 1863.
John W. Kiracofe produced credentials of his ordination and also of being in regular communion with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. This day appeared in Court and together with John Kiracofe his Security entered into a bond in the sum of fifteen hundred dollars payable and with condition as prescribed by law, which bond was acknowledged in open court by the obligors thereto and ordered to be recorded. And therefore the said John W. Kiracofe is duly authorized to celebrate the rites of matrimony according to law."