EDITOR’S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XII of THE CHRONICLE. For over ten years, the society has produced a mix of scholarly, entertaining, informative and inspiring stories of United Methodism connected by some theme. This volume continues that tradition.

United Methodism owes its existence to circuit riders whose names have long since been forgotten, to small congregations that have given unselfishly of their collections to missions and their children to the ministry, and to countless un-named lay persons who have faithfully filled the pews and pulpits over the years. This volume of THE CHRONICLE celebrates some of the little-known people, places and peculiarities that make up our spiritual heritage.

The volume is dedicated to Jennie Paull Gardner. Her picture appears prominently in the May 1964 issue of Church and Home, the national magazine of the Evangelical United Brethren denomination – but the selection was for her steady devotion and not for any spectacular deed. She lived to the age of 107, as of January 2001 the oldest person ever to reside at Bethany Village – but the quality of her life was more noteworthy than its quantity. From Christian Endeavor to United Methodist Women, from teaching Sunday School to ministering in music, Mrs. Gardner gave of herself to her family, her church and her Lord. We are pleased to present this volume of behind-the-scenes stories in her memory.

The first half of volume XII is three pairs of articles – two accounts of little-known women, two nineteenth century tales worth re-telling, and two stories of forgotten churches. Each article in its own way reminds us that God is at work in the commonplace, and that our heritage is collection of ordinary occurrences woven together by the Master.

While the first half of volume XII celebrates unheralded laity, incidents and congregations, the second half of volume remembers otherwise forgotten clergy that once labored within the conference boundaries. The remarkable 1890-91 newspaper columns by Dr. Emory Stevens, “Pages from the Past, Methodist Voices in Jersey Shore,” contain little-known information about scores of pastors. The series is remarkable for both its content and its appearance in a secular publication.

The volume continues with a tribute to Dr. Silas Comfort Swallow – once nationally prominent and one of the most celebrated members of the Conference, but now merely a footnote on the pages of secular and ecclesiastical history. His story is seen through the perspective of two modern articles published in the Harrisburg Patriot-News. We thank the Patriot-News for permission to reprint the 1965 Beers and 1999 Bradley articles in this form.

The concluding delightful and self-explanatory interview with 98 year-old Dr. Vic Hann recounts his days at Williamsport Dickinson Seminary.
A GODLY WOMAN
JENNIE PAULL GARDNER

by a grandson, who is now himself a grandfather

Jennie Paull Gardner lived an active life to the ripe old age of 107. During those years God gave her remarkable health – she had very few physical problems, and she was never admitted to a public hospital. Her only medical confinement occurred during the last few weeks of her life, at the Health Care Center of Bethany Village in Mechanicsburg PA. She went to her eternal reward March 22, 1989.

Born January 18, 1882, in Reading PA, she was the youngest of eight children born to Rev. Henry E. and Julia Ann Ensey Paull. Her father was a Baptist minister who had migrated from England in 1859. In 1894 the family moved to Lancaster County PA, where Rev. Paul served the Pequea Baptist Church. When her father experienced health problems, he followed the advice of his doctor and retired from the active ministry.

In 1899 the family moved to Uriah, Cumberland County PA, where her father had bought a farm. It was here that Jennie met her husband, Charles M. Gardner – known to his friends as “Hovis.” Charles and Jennie – whom he called “Jenks” – were married in 1903, and they were my grandparents. Five daughters were born to this family, and one of these was my mother.

Grandpa and Grandma farmed at Uriah until 1936 when, due to after-effects of the Great Depression, they were unable to continue. The family moved to the nearby Adams County village of Gardners, where Charles secured a position as a mechanic at the Musselman apple-canning plant.

Being a PK (preacher’s kid), Grandma Jennie had a strong Christian background. She was also a woman of many talents – wife, mother, cook, singer, pianist, Sunday School teacher, and church choir director. An effective organizer and leader, she served as president of the local Christian Endeavor and Women’s Missionary societies.

Her musical ability apparently came from her father’s side of the family, as he was a good singer. Her singing and giving poetry readings -- all her life she loved to memorize poems – began in Lancaster County when she would go along with her father to Temperance meetings and participate in the program. In addition to serving a church, her father was the Temperance representative for two counties.

Fortunately she married a man who also had music in his blood, and this musical ability carried through to their daughters. The Gardner Family sang many times in their home church and for neighboring congregations. Grandma’s singing and piano playing continued to near the end of her earthly life – in fact at her 105th birthday party, attended by many of her family, she sang a solo. Her ability to
remember poetry also continued throughout her life, and she was able to repeat from memory the 2½ page typewritten story “Aunt Melissa on Boys” well past her 100th birthday.

Grandma Jennie’s talents extended outside the home and church. Starting in 1918, her husband and father-in-law and some other men farmed wheat for several summers and falls in Saskatchewan, Canada. At least once, she followed the men to cook and rough it – not an easy task with four youngsters. After her children were older and/or married, she started as a seasonal worker at the M.E. Knouse apple processing plant in Peach Glen in 1928. Undoubtedly ahead of her times, she was a supervisor, or forelady, of ladies preparing apples for canning – a seasonal position she held for over 30 years.

There are many ways to leave one’s mark in history. The extended Gardners family is the namesake of the Adams County community of that name and the former Gardners United Methodist Church of York County. It is to Jennie’s father-in-law Uriah Gardner that the Cumberland County community of Uriah and the present Uriah United Methodist Church owe their names. But Jennie Paull Gardner left the name of Jesus imprinted on all she did and on those with whom she came in contact. She was an inspiration to all who knew her. I am pleased to have this part in dedicating to her memory this 2001 volume of THE CHRONICLE, which celebrates the faithful behind-the-scenes workers to whom each one of us owes so much.
Finally, one of the most revealing indicators of the true character of a life is the effect it has on those who see it in action twenty-four hours a day – the family. Jennie Paull Gardner and her husband Charles were the parents of five daughters. Velma, their oldest, lived only seven months in 1904 before dying of cholera. The other four daughters were faithful members of Uriah Church through their youth and early adulthood. A talented and well-traveled quartet, they spread the gospel in song in churches throughout southern Cumberland and northern Adams counties.

Though marriages and careers eventually separated them geographically, their closeness as a family and dedication to church activities remained with them all their adult lives as a testimony to the influence of their parents. Pauline Gardner Nell (1905-2000) was an active member of the Baptist church in Panama City, Florida, where she lived to be near her daughter. Julia Gardner Trump (1907-1987) was taught the kindergarten class for many years at Uriah Church, where she was also a leader in the Women’s Missionary groups in the Evangelical, Evangelical United Brethren, and United Methodist denominations. Marion Gardner Coulson Duron (1909- ) has returned to reside in an apartment on the Gardner homestead and attend Uriah Church with the present generation of Gardner descendants. Jean Gardner Reaser (1916-1998) married a Lutheran pastor and was active in all areas of Lutheran church activities.

May this volume of THE CHRONICLE, as it tells the stories of some of the little-known people, places and pastors that have informed the Central Pennsylvania Conference over the years, challenge us all.