

EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist Church, I am pleased to introduce volume VII of THE CHRONICLE. This volume departs from the usual pattern and is devoted in its entirety to reproducing the previously unpublished 1847-1852 journal of United Brethren circuit rider William B. Raber. This decision was based on the following considerations: (1) the geographic scope of the journal, (2) the prominence of William Raber within the Pennsylvania Conference of the United Brethren Church, (3) the paucity of such detailed accounts of pre-Civil War United Methodism in Central Pennsylvania.

Raber's well-written journal unfolds like a finely-constructed novel as it directs the reader toward its unexpected conclusion. For this reason, the manuscript should be read chronologically. The words are those of the author, and the only editorial changes permitted were for spelling or format. In addition, the text is presented without the distraction of explanatory footnotes or comments.

By Executive Committee action, volume VII of THE CHRONICLE is expanded to 144 pages in order to include eight appendices. Appendix A provides local background on the 1889 denominational split that divided the United Brethren denomination and affected many of the people and places appearing in Raber's journal. Appendices B-H provide cross referencing and additional notes on every name and place in the journal. They may be used as glossaries for the text or as stand alone readings that provide county by county insights into the development of the United Brethren church.

Finally, it is with great appreciation that we dedicate this volume of THE CHRONICLE to the memory of **Dr. Neil A. McNall**, former archivist of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. Born in Fairfax, VT, Neil received a bachelor of science in education with a major in history and a master of arts degree in history, both from the University of Vermont. He earned his doctorate in American history from Cornell University and taught at Westminster College and SUNY Albany before teaching for 32 years at Penn State and retiring as professor emeritus of American history in 1979.

An active member and the local historian of Pleasant Gap United Methodist Church, Neil served as conference archivist for twelve years following his 1979 retirement. His careful professionalism and gracious manner will be remembered by all he served. It is fitting that this particular volume is presented in his memory. Deciphering the handwriting, preparing the index, and researching the names and places in Raber's journal are tasks that Neil would have thoroughly enjoyed.

It is our belief that THE CHRONICLE for 1996 makes a significant contribution to local and denominational United Brethren history, and thus represents a fitting memorial to Dr. McNall. The Pleasant Gap church, Neil's wife of 53 years Kathryn (Kay) Heinrich McNall, and his children Jessica Bowman McNall and Lyndon Neil McNall join us in inviting you to enjoy the journal of Rev. William B. Raber.