

EDITOR'S PREFACE

On behalf of the Historical Society of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, I present volume XIV 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 with a major historical paper that reaches back to the eighteenth century, two nineteenth century stories of life in Central Pennsylvania, and an examination of the twentieth century progress of women in the ministry - all under the theme of "expanding frontiers."

The major historical paper was the one of the last produced by Dr. Charles F. Berkheimer before his death in December of 1968. This monumental work discusses the spread of Methodist circuits into the Pennsylvania frontier from the very beginning until the death of Asbury in 1816. Only Dr. Berkheimer could write with such accuracy and authority a paper covering every corner of the conference. This comprehensive presentation is all the more impressive when one considers the additional research required because the entire Northern Tier had just entered the Conference in 1962. Readers looking for a readable account of the dynamics involved in the spread of Methodism across the Conference will not be disappointed.

The manuscript records of Jacob Aurandt, grandson of United Brethren pioneer John Dietrich Aurandt featured in last year's issue, tell the story of personal frontiers. This account of the efforts of one man to enlarge his own boundaries as well as those of his beloved denomination will be an encouragement to those considering calls to various formal and informal ministries.

The eleven nineteenth century letters from New Cumberland PA to Toledo IA are a story within a story. The introduction to the letters tells how they were discovered, why they are important to Central Pennsylvania Methodism, and the part they play in a much larger picture. Readers interested in the dynamics of post-bellum American religious, social and economic life will enjoy following the 1867-78 daily affairs of an extended family as they consider transition from Pennsylvania to the mid-western frontier.

But there still are frontiers to conquer. The final article discusses the history of licensing and ordination of women in the Central Pennsylvania Conference and its predecessor conferences/denominations. While gender is no longer the barrier to ordination that it once was, considering the steps required to eliminate that barrier (and the pioneering women involved in that struggle) is an appropriate way to reflect on where we have been and what present-day barriers still exist.

Now we invite you to expand your frontiers as you read the articles gathered together under that theme for this year's volume.

Monroe Julius Shearer, Sr.
(1897-1989)
and
Edith Diehl Shearer
(1894-1988)

Beginning in 1993, *The Chronicle* has chosen to dedicate each journal to a Central Pennsylvania Conference individual whose life as reflected Jesus Christ and inspired others to live for Him. This year as we consider the theme “expanding frontiers,” we choose to honor a parsonage couple. Monroe and Edith Diehl Shearer knew how to expand their own frontiers and how to encourage their children and parishioners to do likewise.

Monroe Julius Shearer was born in 1897 at the home of his parents, near Spring Grove PA. Edith Diehl entered this world in 1894 at farm of her parents near New Oxford PA. They met on a blind date at the square in Hanover PA and were married in 1916. For almost 30 years they operated a small farm near Jefferson [Codorus] PA, raised a family, attended Bethlehem United Brethren Church, and grew spiritually. Three of their children entered the UB/EUB/UM ministry, and another married a pastor. Countless others testify of being encouraged to reach their spiritual potential by Monroe and Edith.

In 1944 the door opened for Monroe to supply the Mt Victory-Gardner’s charge as a lay speaker for the remainder of the conference year. Even though it meant many 70 mile round trips from the farm, he and Edith were willing to expand their frontiers. He obtained a license as a probationer, continued to serve the charge after Conference, and eventually completed the Conference Course of Study. Monroe Julius Shearer was ordained an elder in 1949 at the age of 51 and continued serving churches for another 26 years. His final service record lists

1945-48	Mt. Victory-Gardner’s
1948-54	Dillsburg
1954-59	chaplain, Quincy Orphanage and Home
1959-62	Emigsville
1962-67	Chewsville MD
1967-68	one year “retirement”
1968-75	Pleasant Grove

Edith made the transition to pastor’s wife with creativity and grace. She served as a Sunday School teacher, pianist, organist and flower arranger – not to mention the numberless hours spent in food preparation for entertaining at home and for meals in the various churches and communities where they ministered.

The Chronicle thanks the friends and family of Monroe and Edith Shearer who have made it possible to dedicate this volume in their memory.