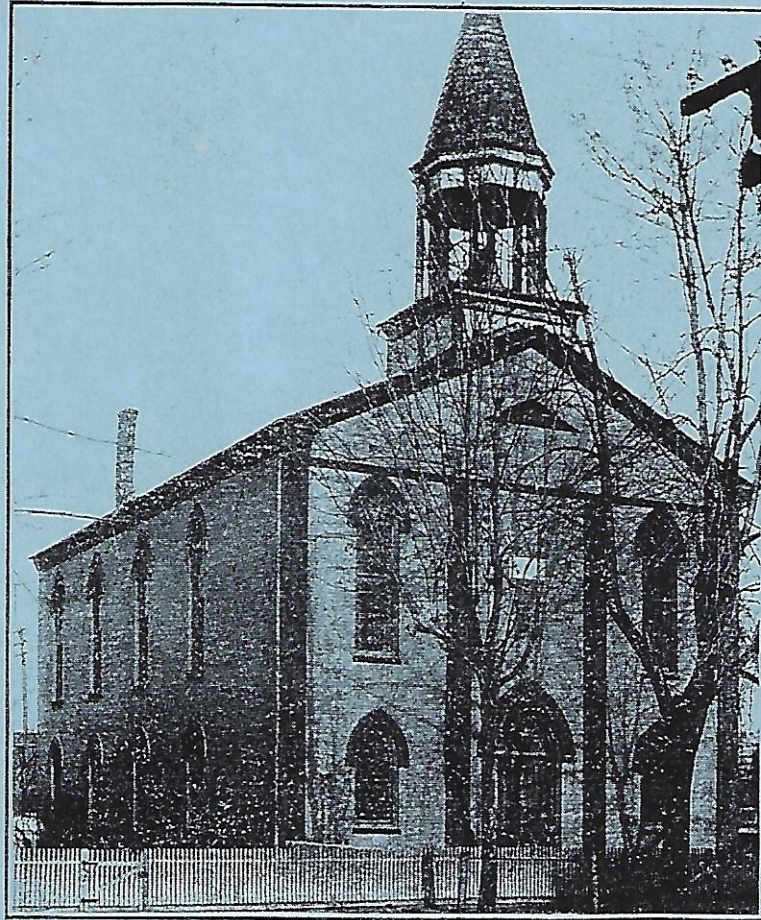


Our Beginning



St. Mark's United Methodist Church
Mount Joy, Pennsylvania
May 16, 1999

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This copy is a report of my research work on the history of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

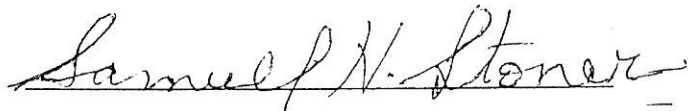
When I began my research in 1993, the pastor and I had discussed several goals that we should endeavor to reach:

First, that we secure information on those individuals and families, who were the primary leaders in the early formative years of the United Brethren denomination, and St. Mark's United (Brethren) Methodist Church, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

Second, that sometime in the near future St. Mark's Church should publish a current history book.

Third, that the materials gathered by Rev. Clair Wagner, Vera Albert and me be made available for the chosen author before he or she starts writing the new book. Also, instruct the individual to combine the information from the three contributors, into one simple story.

January 13, 1999

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Samuel H. Stoner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Samuel H. Stoner

THE HISTORY OF ST. MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Mount Joy, Pennsylvania

PREFACE

In preparation for this brief history of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, we want to acknowledge the existence of information which has already been assembled by numerous members of this congregation, pastors, and especially to the Rev. Clair Wagner, who wrote a very fine booklet entitled, "A Centennial History of St. Mark's Evangelical United Brethren Church," Mount Joy, Pennsylvania, 1860 to 1960." Also, to Vera Albert, who updated this history twenty-five years later, we offer thanks. We sincerely offer our gratitude to all those for their labors.

Since history needs to be updated, we want to do so by including additional information on the lives of those pastors and lay members who sacrificed of their time, talent, and substance in order to bring forth, by the Grace of God, a congregation for the purpose of establishing a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ in this community.

Due to several mergers the denominational name has changed as follows: "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ" united with "The Evangelical Church" to form "The Evangelical United Brethren Church" in 1946. A second merger took place in 1968 which brought together two streams of spiritual life to establish "The United Methodist Church." They were "The Methodist Church" and "The Evangelical United Brethren Church."

In an early United Brethren church discipline (1889) under part I entitled, "The Church," these words are recorded. "In the eighteenth century it pleased the Lord our God to awaken persons in different parts of the world, who should raise up the Christian religion from its fallen state and preach the gospel of Christ crucified in its purity."¹

How soon men forget. Grass soon obliterates the tragic marks of great battlefields. Mighty deeds that thrill and stir one generation, are not felt by the next generation; thus, it is exceedingly important that the history of St. Mark's United Methodist Church be recorded to preserve their stories of deep religious truths which they based on Christ the Lord.

Chapter I

Since St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania was fostered or grew out of the former United Brethren denomination, a brief account of this ministerial group will be included in this chapter.

THE PREDENOMINATIONAL ERA

About the middle of the eighteenth century, it pleased the Lord to remember the German speaking people in America and especially those in the states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio. These people seldom had an opportunity to hear the Gospel of a crucified Savior preach to them in their native language.

Among others, he raised up such men as Philip William Otterbein, Martin Boehm, and Christian Newcomer in the state of Pennsylvania and George A. Geeting in the state of Maryland who were early leaders in this movement.

THE FORMING OF CONFERENCES

The first conference was held in William Otterbein's parsonage in Baltimore, Maryland in 1789 with the host chairing the meeting. A second conference assembled in Paradise Township, York County, PA., at the home of John Spangler in 1791. They deliberated on how they might labor most usefully in the Lord's work and appointed pastors in certain areas. The men who offered their services came from Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, and Moravian denominations.

What the historians wrote of as being the "Old" or the "Original" conference was confined to areas with the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. In 1829, the general conference appointed a committee to establish two districts. They recommended the following. "The Hagerstown District" shall consist of Virginia and the counties of Washington and Allegheny in the state of Maryland. The remaining northern part of the original conference (all of Pennsylvania) shall be called "The Harrisburg District."

In 1838 the Allegheny Conference was organized west of the Susquehanna River. An East Pennsylvania Conference included all of the U.B. churches east of the Susquehanna River and its west fork. When the German Conference was formed, the East Pennsylvania Conference changed. It included all churches east of the Susquehanna River and the northeastern branch.

After the merger of the Evangelical and United Brethren denominations in 1946, the name was changed to Eastern Pennsylvania Conference. Also, the boundary line included the former Evangelical churches in the Eastern Pennsylvania conference area.

A more recent boundary change occurred when the Evangelical United Brethren denomination united with the Methodist denomination in 1968. Today the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference is bordered on the north by Wyoming Conference, on the east by the Delaware River, on the south by the Maryland state line, and on the west, the Susquehanna River except for Dauphin County and Harrisburg city.

St. Mark's church has been in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference since 1946.²

A DENOMINATION WAS BORN

On September 25, 1800 in Frederick County, Maryland, at Peter Kemp's home, where thirteen ministers were present, they united themselves into a society which favored the name, "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ."³ William Otterbein and Martin Boehm were elected bishops and instructed to administer to the society according to their convictions.

It was not until 1815 when the first General Conference was called in Bonnet's schoolhouse near Mount Pleasant, Westmoreland County, PA. Christian Newcomer chaired the session and they established the group's official name, "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ."⁴ With three of the influential pioneers having died, Christian Newcomer was elected bishop. He, a man with organizational ability, had the body approve the first Church Discipline, "Book of Discipline," which contained the early Church Doctrines and by-laws. It was emphasized that "God is a God of order; but where there is no order and no Church Discipline, the spirit of love and charity will be lost."

THE PIONEERS

The first generation of leaders in the United Brethren Spiritual Movement were fine capable Christian men in their field of labor. Since the movement was not actually an organization but was embodied in and revolved about persons, we are including brief sketches on a few of the most prominent leaders.

PHILIP WILLIAM OTTERBEIN was born June 3, 1726, in Dillenburg, Nassau, Germany. He was educated for the ministry and was a house-teacher for a short time. At twenty-two, he received an assignment as a teacher in the Herborn School. By 1749 he was ordained a pastor. However, his pietistic and conservative views caused problems within the Reformed Church. By 1752 he received an invitation to go to America as a missionary which he accepted and dedicated the remainder of his life to this work in the new world.

The same year he arrived in Lancaster, PA., he became the pastor of the First Reformed

²History of the East Pennsylvania Conference - U.B. by Gible P. 570

³ Ibid P. 9

⁴ Ibid P. 11

Church. His ministry was primarily with city people in this country. After serving several pastorates, he finally accepted a call from an independent church in Baltimore, Maryland today as Otterbein Church where he served for forty years. During his later years, he served as bishop of the United Brethren movement.

Otterbein was a scholar, teacher, theologian, pastor, and administrator. While in Baltimore, a strong friendship developed between him and Bishop Asbury of the Methodist Church. Furthermore, when Asbury was ordained a bishop, he asked his friend William to be in the service.

Another friendship which lasted within one year of his death began in an unusual way. Martin Boehm was conducting a great meeting at the Isaac Long farm in Lancaster County, PA. 1767. Otterbein was present when Boehm preached a great evangelistic sermon. After the speaker had finished, William rushed up to him, grasped his hand, and said "Wir sind Brüder." "We are brethren." This amazing remark was the beginning of a spirit which eventually led to the full bloom of a new denomination known as "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ."

William Otterbein departed this life on November 17, 1813 and was buried at Otterbein Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

MARTIN BOEHM'S father was a Swiss Mennonite and settled in Conestoga Township, Lancaster County, PA. He bought three hundred and eighty acres of land near Willow Grove. Jacob married Barbara Kindig and to this union ten children were born. The youngest son was named Martin, who was born November 30, 1725. In 1753 he married Eve Steiner and began farming the old homestead. Early in their marriage they built a new house and converted the old log house into "Boehm's Meeting House" where religious services were conducted occasionally.⁵

Having united with the Mennonite Church by 1756, the congregation elected him as one of their pastors. By 1761 he was advanced to the office of bishop of the Mennonite Church in the same area.

God's spirit moved Martin to serious Bible study and prayer. He had a joyful experience which left him with a testimony that changed his occupation, his life, and the homes of many neighbors and homes beyond Lancaster County. This witness brought criticism and finally expulsion from the Mennonite denomination.

Martin was an Evangelist and won many of his former Mennonite friends and neighbors to Christ. He also led many Mennonites into the United Brethren movement. However, it has not been found to verify that he preached in the area of Springville or Mount Joy, PA.

The writer has no knowledge that Boehm ever organized a congregation for the United Brethren Church. His wife and children joined the Methodist Church and helped evangelize.

⁵"History of the East Pennsylvania Conference - U.B. by Gible P. 15

Boehm's Chapel in 1791. True, Martin was involved in the Methodist Church work but he remained loyal to his United Brethren Denomination and its leadership. He served with his friend, William Otterbein, as bishop of the new founded church until his death in 1812. He is buried in the cemetery beside the chapel at Willow Street, PA.

CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER was the first circuit rider in the best sense of the term. Otterbein, Boehm, and Geeting had parishes or responsibilities near their homes. "Newcomer took to the open road and blazed countless trails through the primeval wilderness."⁶ He spent about fifty-three years on horseback as a circuit rider ministering to people's spiritual needs and as superintendent and bishop. Newcomer was an organizer. During his last thirty-five years, he kept a diary which has since become famous. Bishop Newcomer made his last trip west into Ohio on horseback when he was eighty-one years old.

This servant of God formed a "Class" of eight members on September 17, 1816, at the home of Christian Herr in Manor Township. This was the first known "Class" in Lancaster County.

He insisted that if in heathen religions, a Buddhist has his temple; a Confucius has his pagoda; a Jew has his tabernacle or temple or synagogue; then Christians must have their churches where they can worship Jehovah God.

Christian Newcomer was born in Bareville, Lancaster County, February 1, 1749 of Mennonite parents. He and his family moved to Beaver Creek, Maryland, in the spring of 1775. He died here in 1830 and is buried in the old Dunkard church cemetery.

No information has been found indicating that he had personally visited Springville or Mount Joy areas where Glossbrenner and St. Mark's churches were organized. His death preceded their time of organization.

THE EARLY LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT OF THE U.B. CHURCH

In the embryo stage of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the leadership was not interested in leaving their former denominational groups. However, as time passed the second generation of itinerant preachers (especially Rev. Christian Newcomer) were interested in forming what was known as "Societies" and later "Classes." (To unite with a class, you had to agree that leaders could register your name into the Society's membership record book.)

Since the pastor may have from six to thirty local classes to serve in his circuit, a simple organization was followed in individual classes as follows:

A class leader was chosen by its members. The leader's duties were to live a pious life, carefully study the Holy Scriptures, instruct new members, and counsel those who have problems.

⁶"History of the Pennsylvania Conference - U.B. by Holdcraft P. 30

When a member was sick or delinquent as Christians, he scheduled a prayer meeting to help meet his needs spiritually. On occasion, he would conduct a funeral in the absence of the assigned pastor.

Each class had expenses. They elected one or more stewards. Their duties usually included collecting contributions to support the traveling pastors and keep a record of each member's giving. Furthermore, he had to secure and prepare the elements for the Lord's Supper.

The first appointed officers for St. Mark's church were George Geyer, Jr., class leader and Samuel S. Royer, first steward.

When building lots and church buildings became a necessity for local classes, a trustee board was elected. They were the legal representatives of the class.

The faithfulness and sacrifices of these officers brought success in their ministry, to their communities, and the cause of Christ.

THE BIRTH OF CONGREGATIONS IN OUR AREA

The planting of United Brethren churches along what was known as the Harrisburg-Lancaster Turnpike came with the spiritual labors given by the second and third generations of itinerant preachers. The earlier men traveled along the east shore of the Susquehanna River from Columbia to Harrisburg. They would turn east through Hershey, Annville, Lebanon, on to the Shaefferstown and Denver communities, and into the Ranck and New Holland areas with stops at the Abraham Hershey, Sr. farm on Eden Road, Lancaster, PA. Often they would visit Martin Boehm's old log meeting house. From there, they would go toward Wright's Ferry (Columbia) on their way home through the Cumberland Valley. Rarely did they fail to visit the Abraham Hershey, Jr.'s farm at Turkey Hill (now the dump) and Christian Herr's home on Hostetter Road in Manor Township before crossing the river. Occasionally they would reverse their itinerant tour by starting at Harrisburg. Thus the early laborers did not preach in the center of this circle. By 1813 men such as Otterbein, Boehm, and Geeting had died and Newcomer may have been among our people once or twice in the Elizabethtown area but he died in 1830.

OUR MESSENGERS

Who were the messengers in our community? Three men who had met the earlier pioneers were John Neidig, Jacob Roop, and Daniel Peiffer. The latter may have come from Maryland or Virginia but settled in Rapho Township near Eby's United Brethren Church following his retirement. These men brought young preachers who zealously proclaimed Christ as Savior.

The enclosed sketches will reveal what they believed and how they advanced the United Brethren movements's story of Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of mankind.

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Neidig, who were of the German Reformed faith, lived in Berks County, PA. When their son John (born April 10, 1765) was about five-years-old, the family moved to Swatara Township in Dauphin County. Here the family attended the Mennonite church. Later as a young man, John was converted and the Mennonite church accepted him by lot to serve as one of their pastors.

Like Martin Boehm, he believed in experimental religion. When he was rejected by his church leaders, he associated with the early United Brethren movement. Christian Newcomer's Journal states that Newcomer visited John Neidig's home (in what is now known as Oberlin) twenty-four times. The Oberlin United Brethren Church was the first congregation east of the Susquehanna River to erect a church building (1793).⁷

John Neidig married Mary Bear of Lancaster County. The union produced six sons and two daughters. John was a faithful and active pastor of the East Pennsylvania Conference which he attended as early as 1791. During the years of 1812, 1820, and 1826, he was overseer of the Lancaster Circuit.

Records reveal that Neidig was an active preacher in the Springville Society (Mount Joy Township) and Eby Society (Rapho Township) in Pennsylvania and contributed to establishing therein United Brethren congregations.

One of the individuals upon whom he had a profound influence in the Springville area was George Geyer, Sr. Ellis and Evans' book "the History of Lancaster County" states that John had preached here by 1829 and George was ordained by the United Brethren group in 1833. Not only did John serve the Lancaster Circuit but he pastored the old Otterbein Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

John's life and ministry came to a close January 14, 1844. His body was laid to rest in the Oberlin United Brethren Church cemetery.

Jacob Roop, known by many as Father Roop, began his long and fruitful life in the old Roop homestead March 1, 1782 in Highspire, PA. He knew many of the first generation United Brethren preachers and leaders whom he loved and respected. This man found Christ under the preaching of John Neidig in 1814. His first license was signed by Christian Newcomer in 1820. In 1833 he and George Geyer, Sr. were ordained by the East Pennsylvania Conference.

Jacob's first itinerant assignment was in Dauphin County and later in Lancaster, Lebanon, Halifax, Myerstown, Pinegrove, and Hummelstown. While serving the Lancaster Circuit, he ministered in the Springville and Eby areas. As a result the Geyer family was influenced by him. This servant of God died December 2, 1875 and is buried in the Highspire cemetery.

In Lebanon County the Hans (John) Light family contributed years of service to The

⁷ "History of the East Pennsylvania Conference - U.B. by Gible P. 243

Church of the United Brethren in Christ. His labors brought growth and spirit. He had a son Felix, who was born November 11, 1767 in Lebanon, PA. He became successor to Martin Kreider in Lebanon County.

Felix and his wife, Barbara Sherk, were Mennonites. However, they joined the family of five children, John, Casper, Joseph F., Mary, and Anna, and became part of the United Brethren movement. While Felix was a Mennonite preacher, he gradually became an active itinerant preacher in this new movement at forty years of age. As an evangelist he preached in Manheim, Springville, Eby, Mount Joy, and Lebanon County areas.

His sons, John and Casper Light frequently accompanied their father on preaching services among the Dutch people. Ellis and Evans states they conducted services in the old Springville log schoolhouse by 1829.

This servant of God died January 23, 1841, and was buried in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery, Lebanon, PA.

John Light (born November 4, 1802) was the eldest son of Felix Light. When he had accompanied his father on preaching tours in Lebanon, Berks, Lancaster Counties, it was natural for him to become a minister in the East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Brethren in Christ.

From 1842 to 1844 he was pastor of the old "Light Meeting House" in Springville. He labored as an Evangelist and did effective work for Christ. At an early age, he died and brought his life to an end and he is buried in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery.

Another son of Felix Light was Casper, born September 7, 1804, in Lebanon. In 1833 he was ordained by the East Pennsylvania Conference with two other ministers, George Geyer Sr. who share in the interest as related to our church.

It is said that Casper had a fine quality singing voice. He gave leadership in worship services both in directing the music and in preaching the sermon.

During the formative years of the Springville (Florin) area churches, his leadership were vital in bring them to maturity. Casper was presiding elder of the Springville Circuit from 1842-1844 and 1850-1851 and the Lebanon Circuit from 1846-1851. He presided at the dedication sermon when the Eby Church of the United Brethren in Christ was dedicated in 1851.

Death came to him August 2, 1857 and he is buried in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery.

One of the venerable ministers of the early conference was Rev. Daniel Light. He brought great influence and strength to the community both before and after his death. Eby, and St. Mark's United Brethren churches were founded.

Rev. Peiffer was born in Germany October 21, 1785 and came to America sometime prior to 1815. The conference granted him an exhorter's license. By 1820 he was issued his elder's orders (1819 or 1820). Where he first lived when he came to this country is not known but it appears that he may have lived in the Maryland or Virginia area. During the years of 1819-1820, he was assigned as a junior pastor on the Hagerstown Circuit. He was stationed as senior pastor of the Virginia Circuit in 1820-1821. From 1821-1826, he continued as an itinerant preacher serving part of this period on the Lancaster Circuit. He retired to Rapho Township, Lancaster County, PA.

As pastor of the Lancaster Circuit, he visited the home of Rev. Abraham Hershey, Jr. at Turkey Hill near Creswell, Manor Township. Here he met Rev. Hershey's daughter, Barbara, who he married September 6, 1825. Sadness came to their family when Barbara died quite young on December 26, 1836 leaving Daniel responsible for their offspring. He then located in the Eby church area.

Daniel's second wife was the widow of Jacob Eby. Her maiden name was Esther Shoemaker, a sister of Christian Shoemaker, Sr. who was involved in organizing Salem United Brethren Church in Manheim, PA. Christian, Sr. and Esther were cousins of Bishop Jacob Erb who was assigned as the itinerant preacher of the Lancaster Circuit in 1823 and 1825. While serving as bishop, he and Daniel were good friends. This saintly servant of God had a profound influence on the life of Rev. George Geyer, Sr. and his family. As neighbors, they lived within two miles of each other in the Mount Joy area. These men labored together during those years when Glossbrenner United Brethren Church was maturing as a society and later as a class or congregation. It is possible that Rev. Geyer's wife, Catherine, may have been a sister of Daniel. Therefore, they could have been brothers-in-law.

The Religious Telescope listed the fact that these men labored to establish United Brethren Camp meetings in the area. Bishop Erb supported their efforts by speaking at the annual camp meeting services on the farm of John Hossler who lived near the Eby United Brethren Church. Additional camps were conducted annually on Rev. George Geyer's farm and on the property which his son, Jacob, owned next to the Geyer United Brethren Church in Dauphin County.⁸

In fact, these three men - Peiffer, Erb, and Geyer influenced the annual conference to hold its annual session (ministers and lay members) in the Eby church area on March 1, 1841. For convenience sake, the session was called to order in the Rapho Township schoolhouse which stood on the east side of Strickler Road near where Route 283 now by-sects the same. Jacob Erb was the officiating bishop of the session.

Daniel Peiffer died on September 20, 1868 and his body is interred in the Eby church cemetery.

LOCAL INDIVIDUALS AND CONGREGATIONS

⁸Ibid P. 70

It is not possible for a child to be born by the natural process without parents. Neither can a congregation be born unless there are individuals or families who have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. The United Brethren movement in the Springville, PA. area very likely could not have existed had it not been for individuals inspired by the Holy Spirit such as the Rev. George Geyer, Sr. and his family who dedicated their lives and possessions to Christ and the people within their community.

The father, George Geyer, Sr., was born June 14, 1777 and died August 5, 1859. Where he was born is presently unknown but he is buried in the Camp Hill Cemetery in Florin (Springville). Little is available concerning his parents and relatives. However, he was a person who could develop friendships easily among his family, neighbors, church, and denomination.

While still a young man, he met and married Catherine Peiffer, who may have been an older sister of the Rev. Daniel Peiffer, a member of Eby United Brethren Church, Rapho Township, Lancaster Co., PA. George, Sr. and Daniel were close neighbors and friends. Both men were itinerant preachers of the United Brethren movement. Peiffer was ordained in 1820 and Geyer received his licence and ordination by 1833. Their relationship began prior to 1839 when Glossbrenner United Brethren Church was organized in Springville.⁹

In the will of Rev. George Geyer, Sr., the Geyer children are listed as follows: Elizabeth (Geyer) Lickty, Samuel, John, George, Jr., Emanuel, Anna, and Catherine (Geyer) Winters.¹⁰ (A few of these names were arranged according to age.)

Where the Geyer family first lived is not known but an early deed (1827) verified that George Sr. did own property in Florin (Springville) lot No. 184 (first listing of lots). In 1834 he sold it to his son, John. It is possible that the Glossbrenner people may have met in this house prior to the erection of their first church building. When Rev. Geyer, Sr. purchased the farm the writer does not know. However, by 1834, he was living on the farm in Mount Joy Township on what is now Sportsman Road. In his final years, he lived in rent in Florin and was cared for by a Nancy Geyer according to the account record of his estate. His son, George, Jr., lived on the farm and did the farming during the years of his father's inability to do so. On April 1, 1860, George Jr. bought the farm from his father's estate.¹¹

Rev. Geyer's wife, Catherine, was born May 1, 1778 and died around 1848. She and her husband had been active in the organizing of a "Class" later known as Glossbrenner United Brethren Church. She shared with him both in his evangelistic labors and in rearing a family who were actively involved in organizing other United Brethren classes in the vicinity of their homes. Likewise, other members of the Glossbrenner church were active in assisting in establishing new classes.

⁹"The East Pennsylvania Conference Minutes" - Our Faithful Departed List

¹⁰ Will of George Geyer Sr., - Lancaster Courthouse

¹¹Account Record of George Geyer, Sr.'s Estate - Lancaster Courthouse

THE GEYER CHILDREN

There were numerous small villages which had grown up where narrow country roads by-sected the Harrisburg-Lancaster Turnpike. Five of the Geyer sons and one grandson were active in organizing seven "Classes" and especially in erecting church buildings.

Samuel Geyer, the eldest son, purchased a sizable farm in Mount Joy Township about one mile east of Elizabethtown just north of the Elizabethtown Road where North Ridgeview Road by-sects it. He and a neighbor, Rev. David Gingrich, were active as trustees in founding a "Class" in 1853 which became known as St. Paul's United Brethren Church, Elizabethtown, PA. Samuel Geyer was born November 11, 1806 in Mount Joy Township and was buried January 25, 1881.

John Geyer, the second son, had lived in Springville (Florin). He was born on October 13, 1809, in Mount Joy Township and died December 23, 1881. He was buried in Camp Hill Cemetery. Since he owned and sold land in the village, he could have been called a realtor. The Lancaster County Atlas of 1864 reveals that he owned many plots in the Florin area.

He married Elizabeth _____ who was born June 19, 1818 and died May 13, 1882. They had one son, George A. who was interested in real estate and Glossbrenner church. Like his parents, he was involved in his church. George A.'s son, the Rev. Harvey K. Geyer, was ordained by the East Pennsylvania Conference having been recommended by the Glossbrenner church. He ended his ministry at Middletown, PA.

Here was another loyal family who gave so much to the United Brethren movement.

Among the list of charter members of the Glossbrenner church, are the names of George Geyer, Sr. and wife Catherine; John Geyer and his wife, Elizabeth; and later George Geyer, Jr. and his wife became members. When Glossbrenner's first building was erected in 1842, George Jr.'s wife, Mary Ann Eby, may have been a member of the Eby United Brethren Church.

Now, let us turn to a third son of George Sr. whose name was Jacob Geyer. When his father wrote his will, he included the names of his sons, Samuel and Jacob, as the executors of his estate. Jacob was born October 10, 1813 and was buried September 28, 1889 in the Geyer Cemetery.

In 1837 Jacob married Anna Kauffman who was born July 18, 1817, and died November 8, 1881. They had the following children: Catherine (Geyer) Gingrich, Abraham, George, Anna, Martha, and Michael. Abraham's granddaughter, Helen Taylor, still lives in the old Jacob Geyer homestead near the Geyer church. She and her daughters are members of this congregation.

As a young man, Jacob bought the old Gingrich farm located on Geyer Church Road in Dauphin County. It is not certain whether or not he ever was a member of the Glossbrenner church. However, he was involved in selling the land where both the old Geyer church and cemetery were located.

His son, Abraham, and his descendants were loyal members who gave their time, talent, and financial support to the United Brethren denomination.

The fourth son of George Sr. was George Geyer, Jr. who played a major roll in the early history of St. Mark's United Brethren Church in Mount Joy, PA.

This man's life was rather ordinary during his early years but later he became an inspired leader. George, Jr. was born November 14, 1815 in the old Geyer home. He was profoundly influenced by his home atmosphere and the ministry of his parents. George Jr. had natural leadership ability which he was encouraged to use by his parents and his churches. He was a member of Glossbrenner and Eby's during their formative years and a charter member of St. Mark's.

George Jr. married Mary Ann Eby, who was the daughter of Clarence Eby, Sr. Mary Ann was born February 6, 1827 on Brenneman Road in Rapho Township just east of Eby church. Converted at an early age, she may have helped to organize Eby United Brethren Church. However, she did assist her husband in establishing the St. Mark's church group in the old Geyer farmhouse.

This couple was known to have moved to Mountville, PA. where Mr. Geyer drove team. They soon moved on a farm on North Strickler Road near Hossler Road. This was in the Eby church area. Possibly about 1849 this family moved into the old Geyer homestead on Sportsman Road near the Cove because George, Sr. was no longer able to farm. George Jr. bought the farm from his father's estate April 1, 1860 which was the same year that St. Mark's congregation was organized.

In 1874 George Jr. bought the old Hoffman log house just south of the Funbar property on North Barbara Street, Mount Joy, and lived there with his wife until 1884 when an investment he had made went bad.¹² As a result of his financial problems, he lost the Geyer homestead and his log property on North Barbara St. in 1884. The family moved to a Manheim, PA. Address where he died on January 17, 1893 and is buried in the Camp Hill Cemetery.

This couple was blessed with four children - Henry, Annie (Geyer) Wright, Jonas, and Clarence. These children were reared under the United Brethren church influence and they were active in the formative years of the St. Mark's congregation. Several held major positions as leaders in this young group both prior to and following its organization.

Henry E. Geyer, eldest child of George, Jr. was born February 25, 1848. He chose to be a member of St. Mark's United Brethren Church, served as superintendent of the Sunday School, and wrote a history of St. Mark's church. This was read before and adopted by the Quarterly Conference on April 2, 1881.¹³ Unfortunately this early history of our congregation is lost as of

¹² Deed - Lancaster Courthouse

¹³ Quarterly Conference Minutes of the Lancaster Circuit

this time.

Also, Henry E. Geyer was one of three men who owned and operated the foundry and machine shop on North Barbara Street, Mount Joy, PA. Among the things they manufactured was agricultural machinery.

Henry married Harriet G. Smiley. They lived in the little frame house on the south side of his parents on North Barbara Street. It is possible that this frame building may have been on the lot where the Eli Hostetter home was built and was relocated next to the old Hoffman log house. Henry later went to Harvey, Ill. and shared in starting a United Brethren church in this town.¹⁴ He then moved to Dayton, Ohio, where he died following a train-car accident.

Annie E. Geyer, George Jr's second child, was born March 23, 1852. She married Thomas G. Wright, a school teacher.

The third child born to George, Jr. was Jonas E. Geyer. His birth date was November 3, 1853. This son married Mary Hoffman, daughter of Benjamin Hoffman. He died while living near Maytown, PA. On April 7, 1915.

George Jr. and Mary Ann's fourth child, Christian, was born April, 1858. He was reared on the farm near the Cove, graduated from Lebanon Valley College in 1882, read law and was admitted to the Columbia County Bar in 1885.¹⁵ Later he held a government position in Harrisburg, PA.

Another son of George Sr. named Emanuel moved to Madisonbury, Ohio, and shared in helping to organize a United Brethren Church there.

What an amazing story! A father, five sons, and one grandson helped to organize seven United Brethren churches and St. Mark's was one of the seven congregations.

¹⁴ "Booklet" - Office of the Archives, Central PA. Conference

¹⁵ "A Short History of the Eby Family in America" by C. W. Eby