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History

of the

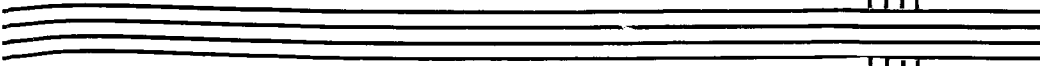
Prices Creek Church

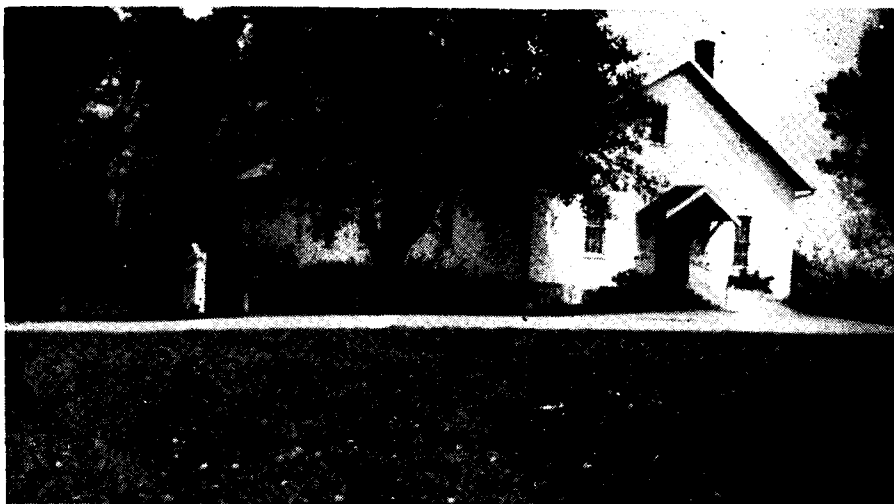
of the

Brethren

1791 - 1984

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Nature has provided a scenic backdrop of shady trees and a whispering creek to form a most picturesque site for the Prices Creek Church of the Brethren.



PRICES CREEK CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

This is a history of the Prices Creek Church of the Brethren of Southern Ohio. During the latter half of the eighteenth century (1700's) the good lands of the Southern Ohio were still occupied by the Indians, mainly the Miamis, the Shawnees and the Mingoes. In 1791 under Gen. Arthur St. Clair and in 1794 under Gen. Anthony Wayne the Indians were driven back so far that in the summer of 1795 we had the famous Ft. Greenville treaty with the Indians which made them forfeit to the whites their centuries old hunting grounds.

The United States government had just opened up the Ohio territory in 1787 under what was known as the northwest Ordinance. About the time it was opened, a few Brethren began crossing the Allegheny Mountains to explore in this new territory. The easiest and safest way of travel was to build a raft and float down the Ohio river. This method was used by our earliest Brethren. Many times they would stop where some smaller river had joined the Ohio and then unload and walk up that smaller river valley. Soon Brethren were scattered over the various parts of Southern Ohio. Adams and Clermont counties were scenes of earliest Brethren settlers. The first Church of the Brethren was organized at Stonelick in Clermont county. This organization took place in 1795 with fifteen members present. Thus the new field was opened and soon scores of families moved into this new, very much unoccupied territory.

Brethren people were among the first white settlers to occupy many of these lands. It is said that there were only nine houses in Dayton at the time the Brethren began to occupy the Miami valley. Lower Miami was organized in 1805 in this Miami valley section first.

Next west of the Miami valley group was the Twin Creek river valley. Brethren began to move into this valley even before Lower Miami was organized. For the next few years (or from 1805-1809), many Brethren families located in this Twin valley section. They moved to various parts of Preble county, but services were held in Samuel Teal's home from 1806 on instead of organizing a church. In 1809 the group near the Indiana-Ohio state line organized the Four Mile church in Indiana. Also that same year the Twin church was organized. Every since Ohio became a state which was in 1803, it is certain that the Brethren people have had an influence within the state. And this is especially true of Preble county where the influence of the Twin and Four Mile churches must have been felt.

There is another national force that has had its influence on the Prices Creek church. That is the National road. It was to be a main highway from east to west and was hindered by the railroad expansion. This National (free) turnpike was finished as far west as Indianapolis. So we can conclude that it must have been nearly as far west as Prices Creek about the year of her organization as a church. The church today is located just about two miles north of this old main national highway. This main thoroughfare has served to bring folks to the congregation and also has served as an easy means of exit when folks wanted to migrate to some other place.

In 1820 a few members settled along the Prices' Creek near where the present church now stands. This creek may have been named after some of the old line of Brethren people of the early Eastern church in Pennsylvania. It is not certain, but it could have been a Brethren Price family or one of a non-brethren background. It is probable that these few members settling near the creek at this time were either already members of the Twin church or soon did become affiliated with it. "And in the year 1832 twelve members came from Pennsylvania, including Elder Jacob Petry, the first minister of the church and three deacons, Samuel J. Wehrly, George H. Wehrly, and Henry Petry. Two years later or in 1834 an organization was effected, Elder John Hart of the Upper Twin church assisting, which formed the nucleus of the Prices' Creek church." *

Along with those twelve mentioned above was one called Catherine Miller, a widow with seven children. She had four sons and three daughters. Her fourth child was Levi, a lad of fourteen. The same year, 1832, she with her family and perhaps the help of a few friends built a small cabin in the middle of a section. It is of interest to note that Melvin Browns (members of the present church) reside at a residence built near where this cabin originally was located. Mrs. Miller worked with

* History of the Church of the Brethren of southern Ohio. p. 177

zeal and devotion for the church even though she was a widow in the land of wilderness. She lived until the age of ninety-one and at the time of her death she had five children, sixty-five grandchildren, and one-hundred thirty great-grandchildren living. Most of these were prominent people of the community at the time of her death and also many were members of the church.

Thus far we have only mentioned the organization which occurred in 1834. There was no church house for years so the people would meet around at the various homes where they were invited. These little humble cabins dotted the wilderness here and there. The meetings were usually held every four or six weeks. The members had gotten together and made benches from puncheons split from logs. In these were drilled holes into which were inserted legs. (Puncheons were logs split in two and smoothed on the split side. Thus the bench was really a half log that had been split and some pegs placed in it for legs.) These benches were transported from one place to the next wherever the meeting was to be held.

The meetings usually lasted all day. There was always preaching in the morning and then everyone stayed for dinner which was furnished by the people with whom you were meeting that day. After dinner the time was spent in a good social gathering or if there was some visiting minister, they usually called the meeting together and he was asked to preach to them again.

These were great spiritual feasts for the Brethren. After the day was far spent, the large crowds that had gathered began to wend their way home on foot, on horseback, or in the farm wagon filled with humanity.

Because of accommodations, three special places took their turn holding the annual communion. These places were chosen because of their large barns which were used as places to hold the communion. The meal was prepared in large open kettles and then the tables were set in the barns. These three barns still stand and were Bro. Joseph Studebaker's place which is now occupied by Kelch Duffield. Another was that of Henry P. Wehrly which is now the Esta House place. The third was the Brethren home near the church now occupied by John Fitzwater.

In the year 1838 the church had, for the first time, the privilege of electing from their own groups a minister. They called Bro. John Olinger, who was a man of great promise. He died in 1847 so his ministry was very brief.

In 1848 Bro. Wendell Minnich was elected to the ministry. He also gave much promise of usefulness and was mighty in the scripture. His wife was Katherine, the daughter of Elder Tobias Kreider.

The growth was steady and the interest was good. Some years were more fruitful than others and so it was with souls being added to the church. 1849 seemed to be a plentiful year in the growth of the church for ten were added by baptism and several brought their church letters from other places. Thus the membership was increased to near forty. Also Taswell Gray was elected to the ministry this year. How many years he served, I do not know for no mention has been found of him after this date. But along with this rapid growth came the loss of the Elder, Bro. Jacob Petry, who died June 4, 1849. He had been the elder since the organization was effected in 1834.

Thus there was no resident elder for seven years. But these were not silent years in the life of the church. In the year 1850 the first church house was erected at Castine, Ohio. Its dimensions were 25 ft. by 35 ft. The timbers for its construction were carved from the forests near by. The floors and benches were made of puncheons. Services were held here regularly with an ever growing interest. In 1854 Bro. George Siler was elected to the ministry. In 1854 the first elder was ordained. Bro. Wendell Minnich was ordained to the eldership and presided over the church until his death in 1862. In 1857 they elected Bro. Alfred Ogle, who moved to Iowa just one year later.

One can see that since their smaller organization at the beginning, the church has been looking out and calling ministers from its own group and if death, old age, or moving interfered, others were called to serve. After Bro. Ogle moved away, the next year, 1859, the church elected two to the ministry. They were Bro. Resin Stephens and Bro. Samuel Petry. The church was making a steady growth and she ever

needed to look ahead for her leaders. The growth was so rapid that in 1864 the Castine house could no longer house them. So in that year another house was built on the west side of Prices creek. This house was built well from the many timbers surrounding the place. The original house stands today and is the main place of worship of this congregation. However, the building has been remodeled some five or six times since its original building.

The house was built so that the north end made a dwelling for the caretaker to live in. The books show that up until 1888 the caretaker received the sum of \$8.00 per year. North of the church today is a small piece of ground that may have been an orchard and yard for the caretaker.

The house was built well and from the best timbers. Today one marvels at the wonderful, large pieces which hold the ceiling of the main auditorium. Twelve and fourteen inch casing boards were used in the construction of the building. No veneer or hard pine was known or used.

Building a house did not stop their interest in the church for in 1865 they called Bro. H. P. Wehrley to the ministry and ordained Bro. George Siler. He was the elder then until the split in 1881.

It is interesting to note that we have no record of any elder being in charge of the church at the times when both the Castine Prices' creek houses were built. Also it is interesting to note that there is record of a new house being built on the east bank of Twin Creek at Castine. They said that the old one was too small so they built another one. The old house became a business building and is now a part of Shaeffer's Tin shop.

In 1867 Bro. Lewis Holtzmueller was called to the ministry. We don't hear much about the church until 1880. From general history we know that the after effects from the Civil war had their slowing processes on the church. Also the general brotherhood was beginning to argue about various questions. This led to the natural break in 1881 and in 1882. But the Prices Creek and Preble County churches were hurt most by the split in 1881 for there were few to go with the progressive church in 1882.

Bro. Daniel Garber was called to the ministry in 1880.

At a called council meeting on Sept. 4, 1881, Bro. George Siler, the elder, went with the "Old Order Group". He with quite a following left the Prices Creek Church of the Brethren. It was a terrible blow to the members left behind, the community, and the church. Bro. George Siler, Bro. H. P. Wehrley, Bro. Lewis Holtzmueller, and Bro. Daniel Garber were the four ministers who went with the "Old Order Group." Four deacons and forty laymen also followed making a total of forty-eight members.

Bro. Resin Stephens and Bro. Samuel Petry were the two ministers who stayed with the church. Bro. Nicholas Bucher, Bro. Jacob M. Petry, and Bro. Lewis Miller were the three deacons who stayed. These plus about seventy other laymen made up the probable seventy-five members who remained in the church. There may have been a few more with either group for in a "Record of the Faithful" by Howard Miller, he found that before the split there were 128 members listed in a report sent in for Prices Creek church. Without allowing for any gains or losses that leaves an error of five. However some of these might have died in that year or two during the dispute.

Following the lull created by the war and then the antagonism created by such a split in the church, many outsiders gained grounds and moved into the community. Thus life began to slip away from control of the Brethren people.

At the same council meeting that the forty-eight left, Bro. Resin Stephens and Bro. Samuel Petry were ordained to eldership. The group had been left without an elder. Bro. Stephens was asked to take charge and did so until 1893. Also in 1881 Bro. Luther Petry was elected to the ministry. He labored here nine years and then moved away not to return until in 1916.

The first few years following the split seemed to be dark ones, but brighter times were ahead. After a few dark years, in 1885, Bro. Joseph Longanecker located in the Prices' Creek church. He was the first minister they had received by letter since the organization of the church. In 1886 Henry Longanecker held the first series of meetings in the church. They lasted only one week but the spiritual uplift was great and

one accession was added. But with the close of the years 1886 and 1887 forty converts were received by baptism. Bro. Longanecker seemed to bring in the new life and enthusiasm that was needed.

In 1888 a Sunday school was started with Bro. Longanecker as superintendent. It soon grew and the people were enthusiastic. "I have seen old records in the homes of some of these families as I called in them a few years ago. These show results of their enthusiasm for the Sunday school."

Bro. Longanecker had a far-seeing eye in realizing that training would help the homes, and the church.

These older people of our day were not too near angels when they were young. One has told me that at one communion, a boy threw a cat in a kettle of boiling soup. Also we learn from the record that in 1890 two men were hired to keep order outside so the communion could be held inside. William Stout and Frank Rowe, sr., were each paid one dollar for the job in 1890.

One could easily conclude that there was certainly a place and need for religious training and the Sunday school was supposed to meet this need.

In 1892 Bro. Andrew Miller was called to the deacon's office and later in the same year he was called to the ministry. He served his entire life of eighty-nine years in this church. He was ordained in 1902, and his life on earth closed in 1938.

Also the same year, 1892, Bro. Henry Eby was called to the ministry but in 1907 he moved to the Bear Creek church.

In 1893 Bro. Resin Stephens moved away, so he resigned the job of presiding elder. In 1894 Bro. Thomas Kreider (of Pittsburg) was asked to be the presiding elder which he did until 1900.

On April 24, 1894, the first Sunday school was organized at Castine. The same year a new house was built at Cedar Grove which is about thirteen miles northwest of Price's Creek house. These moves naturally gave evidence of the enthusiasm and progressiveness and growth of the church.

In 1900 Bro. Joseph Longanecker was ordained and asked to preside over the church which he did until 1918.

After a brief stay at the Palestine church Bro. Stephens returned to Price's creek to spend his remaining days, for in 1903 he passed from this earthly life.

In 1902 two ministers were called by the church. They were H. H. Petry and Sylvan Bookwalter. Bro. Petry attended Manchester college for further preparation and was killed in an accident in 1904. Bro. Bookwalter spent most of his time at the Cedar Grove house and for much of that time he was the minister at that place. He was ordained in 1910. He was a member of the district missionary committee for three successive terms.

In 1903 the Price's Creek house was papered for the first time. Charles Stayton did the job at a total cost of \$41.85.

Annual running expenses were made up by gifts from the members which ranged from ten cents to five dollars per member. Each member's name was listed in a book along beside what he gave. It is interesting to note that the church gave regularly a sum of \$1.50 a gallon for the communion wine. Usually someone was paid 50c or 75c to put away or store the dishes after communion.

In 1907 Bro. Herschel Weaver was elected to the ministry. He spent some time in preparation at Manchester college and at Bethany. He was ordained in 1917 and took charge of the church in 1918.

In 1908 Bro. H. F. Richards was called to the ministry but soon moved into other fields.

In 1911 Bro. Oliver Royer was also called to the ministry, but he, too, moved into other fields.

This ends a period of recruiting for the ministry from her own ranks, except for Bro. B. W. Timmons who was called from the Cedar Grove house in 1921. Twenty-one years passed; there is a black-out from this source to the leadership of the church. Young men and women have spent their younger and earlier church days within the walls of this church and yet the church ceased to lay its hands upon them and call

them out. Without doubt this period of twenty-one years will be a black period in the history of the church as it is looked back upon in the future.

This does not mean that the church ceased to live and to function. Some ministers were received by letter. The church carried on her regular program. She called deacons to aid in the work. She made necessary repairs and kept the building in shape. Revival meetings were held. People were received into the church by baptism and by letter. Some would move into other congregations and be helpers there.

When there was a lack of ministers, the church went out and hired a part-time pastor. Many resident members are content and think the church program has moved along nicely. Looking from day to day and from within one could say yes to such an answer, but if one stands off and views the church from the historians standpoint, one is bound to say that the congregation has lost some of her once present missionary zeal.

Naturally one, who is concerned about Brethren and Christian people, is forced to ask the question, Why?

May I say, before I answer the question, this is not the only congregation of the Brethren, nor the Brethren is not the only denomination in which this has happened.

First, along about 1912 there ceased to be the pioneering "fad" that had existed up to that time. We were hastily turning to machines and a machine age. The war forced the issue and caused man to become more materialistically minded. Following the war economic justice did not prevail so youth who had had a religious training in which to ground their faith, turned to the material world and forgot to give to their children that which they prized so highly,—an unfaltering Christian faith. They did not forget to worship or attend services, but the church had lost its original place in their heart. Instead of holding first place, the church now held second place and one's occupation took first place. The children grew up in such homes. They were invited to become members of the church. Most of them accepted the invitation. To the girls it meant that they could wear the prayer veil and to all it meant that they could partake of communion. That was about all church membership meant to the youth. This was not enough, for to wear the prayer veil or to commune did not solve your problems in life. Thus many a youth went out to live his or her life as he pleased, but yet claimed that he had been baptized at one time so was a member of the church. Yet he had no interest in it nor seldom attended the church.

No one had the nerve to lay hands on some promising youth and say, "Now we want you to be a minister for the kingdom of God." For he knew that the youth would know that ones who called him wouldn't be willing to do it and what is more they wouldn't help him financially to do it.

To me this is a solid explanation as to why we Brethren have been more or less at a stand still for the last twenty-five years or more.

In 1914 Bro. Lester Heisey moved in by letter. He and his family spent their time with the Cedar Grove house. Here he labored for two years before he moved away in 1916.

In 1916, Bro. E. S. Hollinger moved in bringing his letter and took up the work that Bro. Heisey had left at Cedar Grove. He with his family labored here for over ten years and then he moved to another church to work. Bro. B. W. Timmons, who had been elected to the ministry in 1921, took charge of the work at Cedar Grove when Bro. Hollinger left in 1926. Bro. Timmons had received some training at Manchester college.

Bro. J. R. Robbins moved into the Price's Creek territory about 1917, but soon moved on to work elsewhere.

From 1917 on, Bro. Herschel Weaver gave untiringly of his time and talent to the church. He was such an untiring worker and was creating new zeal in the work here. But his efforts were confined to a few years because of his premature death.

The year 1917 brought Elder and Sister George Stump from the Palestine church. They had spent their boyhood and girlhood in this community and they moved back to spend their later years of life.

Following Bro. Weaver's death, Bro. I. G. Blocher was asked to take over the work. This he did until 1928.



The Castine church, which became a separate congregation in 1922. Rev. Glen Rust, of West Manchester, O., is now serving the Castine church as pastor, and the church is enjoying steady, permanent growth.

During this period in which Bro. Blocher was in charge, there were two outstanding things that took place. Since the beginning of the congregation the territory assigned to it was equal to about 180 sq. miles. Since 1894 we had the three houses in the congregation to serve this vast territory—namely, Price's Creek, Castine and Cedar Grove. We have already mentioned about the Cedar Grove workers but about the Castine workers we haven't spoken. Bro. C. C. Petry (who had also spent his youth in this community) came from the Four Mile church. He started definite work at Castine. Interest increased. In the year 1922 the people at Castine asked to become a separate congregation. This request was granted. A committee from the Castine church was given the privilege of visiting the members of the entire congregation and many willingly contributed cash or labor to help Castine get their church remodeled, so as to properly house a separate congregation.

The other outstanding incident during the time Bro. Blocher was in charge was that we had a few members to pull off following the 1926 break in the Brethren ranks. This was the small group called the Dunkard Brethren. A small group pulled off from the Price's Creek church. These, plus others who broke with other congregations, went two and one-half miles northwest of the Price's Creek church and built a new church house. The numbers that left were not significant, but the stir caused by the break halted progress for a year or two.

Also I ought to mention that during this same period the Price's Creek house installed a new steam heating plant which added greatly to the value and comfort of the church.

Bro. Blocher lived at his home near Greenville while he was shepherd of the flock at this church.

In 1928 Bro. H. Jesse Baker was called to be the pastor of the church. He soon also became an elder. Along with being pastor, Bro. Baker taught school at the Monroe Township school. This kept him in close touch with the community. He also moved his family into the community by moving to West Manchester.

It should be noted that during the entire time that Bro. Baker had charge, the nation was in one of the worst depressions she has ever known. In spite of this there were souls added by baptism and letter. The work went forward to some extent. During this time, in 1934, the church had the grand privilege of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the organization of the congregation. Also during this period, some of the largest communions were held that had ever been held in the congregation. In 1934 some remodeling was done in the rear of the auditorium. This greatly added to the atmosphere and convenience for worship. In Aug. of 1937 Bro. Baker moved to Polo, Illinois. This left the church without a pastor or elder. Bro. Andrew Miller still resided in the congregation and was faithful in his church work but was in his 88th year. The depression was still on. Church giving had hit a new low. There were unpaid financial debts. The church seemed not to be able to agree on someone to call as pastor. For four months they filled the pulpit with ministers who were not already serving as pastors. Among them was a young man who was teaching school, the writer of this history. After he had filled the pulpit for some six or seven times, they agreed unanimously at council meeting to extend to him the call to finish out the pastoral year from Jan. 1, 1938, to Sept. 1, 1938. He accepted. Bro. E. R. Fisher of Trotwood had been chosen elder. Three months later the writer was hired to be pastor for the succeeding year and so on he was hired a year at a time until he resigned to attend Bethany in Sept., 1943.

On Jan. 1, 1938, when the writer took over, nothing vicious happened as some folks had probably expected. The members settled down, began to forget about all their depression ills and started giving more and attending services better. Soon the debts were paid, attendance was increasing, and interest in the church and missions was awakened.

During five years and eight months the average attendance increased over thirty and the offerings more than doubled. Forty were added by baptism and two on former baptism. There were twenty-two marriages. Sixteen people died. These were just the normal things that happen in any church.

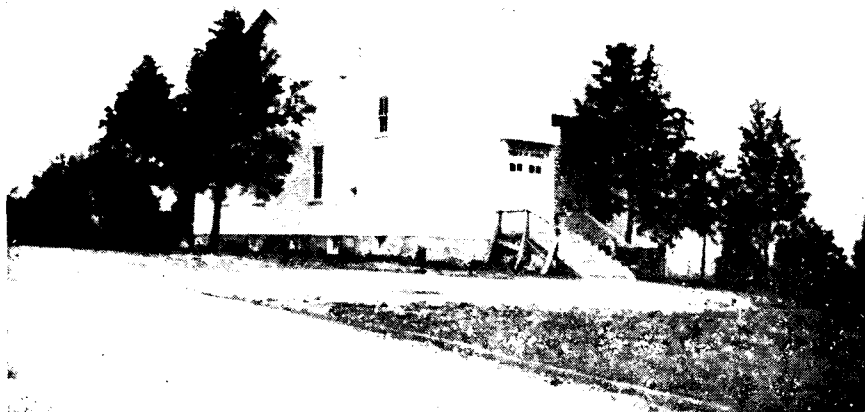
The things of unusual interest in this period were few and not many significant ones. The following May the pastor baptized the one who was to become his wife on June 1 of that year. The average attendance at the regular evangelistic meeting jumped to a new all time high of 166 in the year of 1941. In 1939 and 1941 the inside of the auditorium was remodeled. In 1939 a new platform and front were put into the auditorium, and in 1941 the rest of the auditorium was finished in rough ivory plaster to match the front. Venetian window blinds were added. To begin the remodeling program in 1939 the old horse sheds were sold and removed. This improved the yard and parking lot in an up to date way. In 1941 Cedar Grove became a separate congregation, and was served by Bro. Edgar Petry being pastor.

The men organized a Men's Work organization and became very active—one of the most active in the district.

The church needed new song books and they purchased Brethren Hymnals.

There are perhaps two things that definitely stand out in this period. One was that fourteen homes were united in our church, and about all of these active young married people became good workers in the church. The other is that on Friday, March 13, 1942, at the regular council meeting, two deacons, Bro. Charles Miller and wife and Bro. Elvin Spitler and wife were elected and at that same meeting Bro. and Sister Leland Emrick were called to the ministry. This is the first time of calling one from their own ranks to the ministry had been done since twenty-one years before. Leland and Ernestine left for Bethany immediately and will finish their training this year. In June, 1942, the pastor was ordained to the eldership, but Bro. Fisher was still the presiding elder.

In March of 1943, the writer and his wife presented their resignation to take place Sept. 1 of that year so that they could enter Bethany to receive more training.



The Cedar Grove church, the congregation of which became a separate unit in 1941, first being served by Rev. Edgar Peetry (now at Lima, O.) as pastor. Rev. Arno Holderreed, of New Paris, O., is the present Cedar Grove pastor.

The pastor was serving part-time and had been teaching school in the Four Mile community during his work of almost six years.

By Sept. 1, no successor had been selected as pastor. Bro. Engle and his family had moved into the community in Feb. of 1943. They had attended when possible, but they had not as yet brought their church letters. After Sept. 1, arrangements were made and Bro. Engle was called to be the pastor. The church had about reached the place where they wanted a full-time pastor, but they didn't succeed. Bro. Engle was secured on a part-time basis. They have started a parsonage fund and hope to establish a farm plan for part support. (That is, the minister will live on the farm and the Men's Work would do the farming and use the proceeds in helping to pay the pastor's salary.) Bro. Engle was installed at the time of the communion service of that year. The regular communion is always held on the fourth Saturday and Sunday of October. What a beautiful time this was for the installation of a new pastor. Bro. Engle sold his farm and purchased one nearer the church, so that the work could be better cared for. The church has also been observing communion on Thursday night preceding Easter.

One of the church customs that has dated far back into the preceding century is the Saturday communion. On the fourth weekend of October those who have lived at Price's Creek can rest assured that there will be a meeting there again. On Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m., there is a service, following which there will be dinner served to all who attend. Then about 2 p.m. there will be another service. These are all preparatory to the communion which will be held about 7:00 p.m., that evening. Then early on Sunday morning the folks will gather for morning worship after which about 8:00 a.m., breakfast will be served. Following breakfast comes the child-



An interior view of Price's Creek church as it is today. Remodeled in 1941 under the pastorate of the Rev. Kenneth Hollinger, the chancel was featured in one of the leading farm magazines as typical of American country churches

ren's hour of worship and then the regular morning worship will follow which is usually missionary centered. This custom was perhaps started to accommodate the members who covered the 180 sq. miles of the congregation's territory! They would drive in early Saturday morning, stayed for the great or "Big Meeting Day" and then after communion they would go home with some members who lived close by, and get up early Sunday and spend the morning at the church, go home with some of the members for Sunday dinner, and then late Sunday afternoon wend their way back to their own homes. Perhaps the chores for this one time in the year had been left in the hands of a neighbor. Today this communion service is used as a grand homecoming for all who ever lived there.

The church has been definitely remodeled in 1907, 1918, 1934, 1939-41.

We are told that in 1920 the official board was made up of ten deacons and eight preachers. Probably three or four of these ministers would be classed today as retired ministers. With the fact that there were three houses in the congregation, that does not leave the official board so large as it would at first seem to be.

In separate charts I have listed the deacons who have served the church and also a list of the ministers.

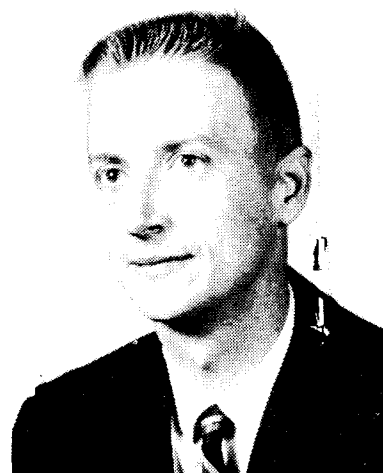
One thing that must be noted before I close this history—sometimes we are sure a church can not go forward without an elder. I certainly would not advise doing without one, but the extremely interesting thing is that no record has been found of where there was an elder in charge of the congregation during the building of 1. the first house at Castine, 2. the house at Price's Creek, and 3. the house at Cedar Grove.

Besides many of the members moving out into various congregations there is one church that is especially built up in large majority from these three houses. That of

PRICE'S CREEK CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN PASTORS



REV. KENNETH HOLLINGER
MARCH 1938



VERNE H. LEININGER
OCTOBER 1971



REV. HENRY T. BARNHART
AUGUST 1946



CLARENCE PRISER
DECEMBER 1959



REV. ROY ENGLE
MAY 1943



REV. W. W. SHOEMAKER
OCTOBER 1960



EDWIN RODABAUGH
OCTOBER 1956



TOM CLEVENER
NOVEMBER 1980



PAUL KINSEL
AUGUST 1982



REV. DELMAR MOYER
DECEMBER 1955



DEAN MOUK
MARCH 1983

which I am thinking is none other than the present Richmond, Indiana, congregation. The Brethren people that wanted city life moved there and established a church, and these three churches have kept feeding it.

May I express a bit of personal feeling and thanks in this last paragraph to the church which so graciously took me in as their pastor (while I was young and inexperienced) and for the cooperation the members had and gave to me while I attempted to serve them in my weak and humble way. May these churches continue to grow in the ways of Christ.

In 1934, Prices Creek Church of the Brethren celebrated its 100th Anniversary. In July 1984, Fifty years later the congregation planned a Sesquicentennial Celebration.

In 1946 the first book on the History of the Prices Creek Church of the Brethren, was written by Rev. Kenneth Hollinger, with Rev. Henry T. Barnhart serving as pastor from September 1946 — August 1955. Two hundred copies of the first publication were printed, at a cost of \$100.00.

One project the congregation tried was to run a church bus to get people to church that had no transportation. This lasted for a short time.

Something new for our church was the printing of the bulletins for each Sunday. The bulletins were sent to the shut-ins each week so they would know about the week's activities.

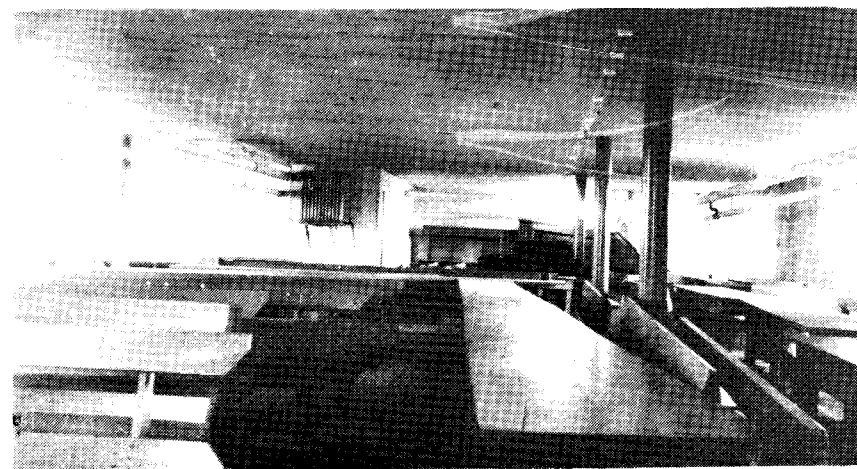
In 1947, the Sunday School rooms in the rear of the church were redecorated and at that time more Sunday School rooms were added. Our church was growing!

Remember the outside toilets? Well in the fall of 1947 the church installed indoor facilities. In addition the public address system was added to the church. Then in 1978, a new public address system was given by the Friendly Helpers Sunday School Class. A device was added to the system where the hard of hearing were able to have earphones on during the service.

In 1947, the church purchased the Ware Farm, which was west of Central Road. This house served as the church parsonage, and the ground was farmed by a work group of the church. In 1953, the Flora Spitler Farm was also purchased.

From 1948 to 1959, we all were working hard improving our church. Some worked on the outside of the church tearing down the old wood shed in 1948, the revising of the parking lot in 1952, and the Church Yard Beautification project, which planted shrubs around the church in 1953.

Others were busy helping to remodel. The 1951 project was the most extensive attempted, costing nearly \$12,000. A new well was drilled, the basement was lowered eight inches and a new concrete floor poured. A baptistry and modern kitchen were also added. The basement will now seat 210 people at the table. The Home-builders Sunday School Class had a plan to take out Silver Dollars and use the



interest as a way of making money for the needed improvements. Speakers for the public address system were placed in the basement, along with timer lights on the church sign and cross.

There was a need for more folding chairs and hat and coat racks, which were purchased in 1951. In 1953 more chairs and a chair truck were added. My, we are growing !! Membership was up to 165.

The days of not locking everything you owned were over when in 1951 the church had the need to put the first locks on the church doors.

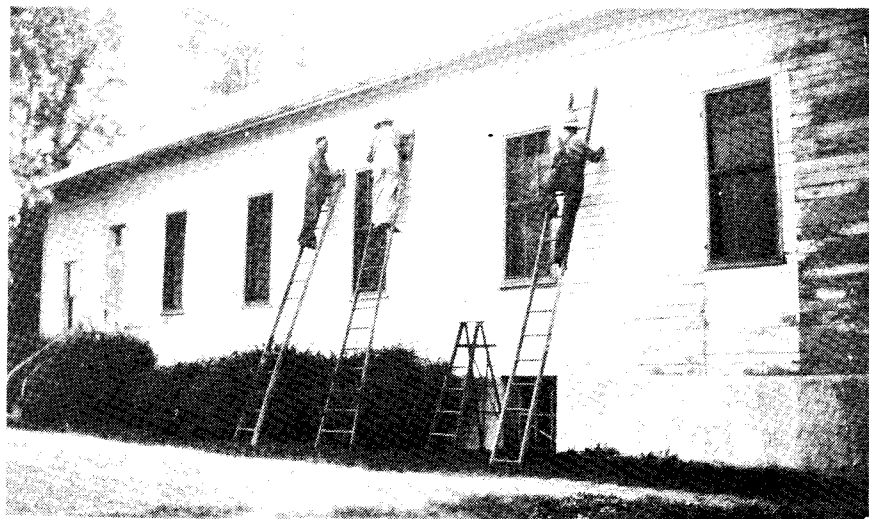
The Samuel Harris Family donated an organ to the church in 1951, then in 1954 an electric organ was purchased. It took several years before another organ was purchased, in fact the last one was purchased in 1967.

In 1950, Children for the first time were allowed to take part in the worship service. There was a nursery available for the mothers and babies in the back of the sanctuary in 1952. In 1970, Harlan Snyder came up with a very good idea for the nursery. He donated sound-proof paneling that was put in the nursery after a decision was made to move it to the basement where it is presently located. It is equipped with built-in cupboards and lots of toys.

The improvements were numerous from painting the church and putting in new hard wood floors in 1955, to adding new windows and blinds, down spouts and eave troughs in 1957. The American Flag was put in the sanctuary in 1951.

The church auditorium had a new look in 1959 when the choir platform was built, and the donation of the new pulpit chairs. Then in 1965 the blue drapes were replaced by the red velvet ones. In 1975 the auditorium was painted by Ron and Linda Smith.

We have gone through many song books. In 1953 we purchased the Tabernacle Hymnal #4 or the Green Hymnal, then in 1960 the Brethren Hymnals were purchased. We used the Red Brethren Hymnal so much we had to rebind them in 1974. These are the books we presently use in our weekly services.



Almost every man in our church has helped paint the outside of our church at one time or another. In each of the years 1953 and 1962 a coat of paint was added to the church. Then in 1963 the roof was painted. Again the paint brushes were manned in 1967 to paint the tower. The tower and south side of the church were aluminum sided in 1970. The rest of the church was sided in 1973. Don't put the paint burshes away yet, the entryway to the building was spruced up in 1984

In 1959, the idea of selling the church Farm and Parsonage and buying the land beside the church was voted on and passed. A new parsonage would also be built there. The Loren Van Ausdals were contacted. They agreed to sell us one and one-half acres for \$1000.00 in October.

In April 1960, a committee consisting of Lucille Miller, Mary Cabiness, Bud Harrison, Paul Bortner and Harlan Snyder was elected to plan the new parsonage. The church farm and parsonage were sold to Mr. Reke. On May 25, 1960, the new land was marked by a line on the south side of the church. Stakes were set for the new parsonage. By November 1960 the parsonage was done except a few finishing touches. The Dedication Service was held October 9, 1960. The keys were presented to Rev. Warren Shoemaker by Edwood Harrison. In 1966 the new Parsonage was paid in full! !

In the fall of 1954, the church road signs were donated and placed at the roads. The Homebuilders Sunday School Class painted and hung some new church signs in 1984. The Homebuilders have been a very active group of people all through the years. They were granted permission to have an Ice Cream Social in 1957, but the social never took place until 1983. There was another new project in 1967 when some brave souls displayed a live Manger Scene outside the church. Then in 1976 the class presented the church with a Redwood sign bearing the church name. This was built by Bill Jones. This group of people bond their friendship and ideas over the monthly dinners at church. There is always time for a laugh or two. This ambitious bunch have compiled and published two different cookbooks. The first edition in 1980, then a special one, entitled the "Sesquicentennial Cookbook" in 1984. Their funds were used to purchase a recording system in 1981 for the church. This enables us to record the services and send them to the Brethren's Home and other shut-ins. That way those members can enjoy our services, too.

The members of our church have been interested in the Great Outdoors. So when Woodland Alters was acquired in 1960, the members were quite pleased. Eddie Leas, Sr. made plans for an All Church Camp in 1962. This took place in the Summer of 1963 at Camp Sugar Grove, and then again in the summer of 1971 at Woodland Alters.

As the children grew older they spent some of their summer vacation going to camp. Even this year, the church will send about 12 of our kids to Woodland Alters to learn if they can live for a week without television, and learn a lot about themselves.

In 1962, Ware's Chapel, West Manchester E.U.B., and Prices Creek met for a 2 week session of Bible School. Every since then it has been known as the "Monroe Co-Operative Bible School".

The church building was again improved. In 1965, four more class rooms were made in the basement when heavy curtains were placed along the east wall and

across the Baptistry. Baseboard heat was installed throughout the whole church interior. In 1967, the speakers in the tower were attached to the organ as the music could greet the members and friends as they came into church. In 1968, the church held an auction and sold the antiques of the church. That sale took in \$61.00. In 1971 another sale was held to sell the unused benches and dishes, and \$48.50 was collected.

Twenty-one new pews were purchased in 1971 for \$3175.00. In the fall of that year the old church pews were sold to members and families of church. In 1973 the side steps, rail and door were replaced.

The Youth of the Church have helped out in many ways. They have grown in their spiritual life as well as physical life. In 1969 the second Sunday in June was designated as Youth Sunday. The Youth helped the Preacher by participating in the worship service. In 1979 the First Youth Breakfast was started. The menu included pancakes and sausage. At noon there was also a carry-in dinner. The money from this first breakfast bought Jodie Pettit a remote control television set.

In 1983 the breakfast menu was changed to sausage gravy and biscuits, along with plenty of sausage patties. I think the breakfast will continue as long as the church has Youth.

In 1970 when the Youth included Nate Garber, and Dennis Bowers, they presented a detailed plan to build a Volleyball court, Four Square, and Shuffleboard. This plan passed the council vote and these were acquired for \$314.00.

In 1975, Reverend Leininger and wife Phyllis, started the Primary and Junior choir, along with the Bible Club. This still continues in 1984. The children enjoy learning about the Bible and memorizing verses for points. These points are accumulated and prizes are awarded.

In 1980, the Youth Sunday School Class donated tape recorders to the Brethren's Home. The residents can listen to the tapes that were also purchased, along with the Sunday Services that are taken up to them.

In 1983, the Youth Fellowship planted popcorn. The year was not good for the popcorn or the area farmers. But the farmers didn't give up and neither will the Youth. The Youth have been very active the past few years. The advisors since 1980 have been Dennis and Luanne Bowers, and Dean and LeAnne Miller. The Youth never forget the Mom's on Mothers Day, and a baby sitter is never to far away, and they do the dishes when the Homebuilders Class can catch them. This is an awkward age to go through but the Youth Fellowship, Jr. Hi's and Choirs do a great Job.

Linda Overholser represented our church, in 1958, at the National Youth Conference in North Carolina. When NYC was held in 1962, again our Youth were there with the help of Lew and Marilyn Dershem, Harlan and Emma Snyder, and Warren and Dottie Shoemaker. Youth attending were Jack and Fanny Overholser, Jerry Bortner, Mike and John Dershem, Karen, Janet and Sandra Snyder, Kitty and Wayne Shoemaker, Claudette Oakes, Beth Ellen Richards, Mike Sheets and Eddie Leas, Jr. This took place in Estes Park, Colorado. Cornell University hosted NYC in 1966, those youth attending were Linda and Sandra Harrison, Connie, Chriss and Phillip Elleman, Joellen Leas, John Dershem, Dennis Petry, Lois Bortner, Janet Snyder, Rosie McRoberts, Wayne Shoemaker, and Phillip Sheets.

The older youth were Ed and Mary Jo Leas, and Bud and Grace Harrison. The Youth had two representatives to go to National Youth Conference in Estes Park, Colorado in 1982. Dwight Smith and Krystal Jones spent a spiritual uplifting week in the mountains.

Just mention FOOD and that seems to be a common bond with the members of our church. The year 1957 started the All Church Picnic in July of each year, and

in 1978 the first "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner" was held. This is an interesting way to learn more about the Brothers and Sisters of the church. You have to participate to understand what we mean.

Then there is always the Mother-Daughter Banquet, and the Father-Son-Family Night.

The Brethren's Home has been a part of our Church for many years. Since 1937, it has served as a retirement center for the elderly. The original building has had several additions. In 1952 the 2 story building on the west side was added, then the 1962, 1966 and 1972 additions which included a nursing care building and a new residential section. Different groups in our church do a lot of volunteer work at the Home. The Women's Fellowship go up once a month to fold linen and mend their clothes, they have even had Block Parties and Picnics there, too. The Junior High Group, under the direction of Bonnie Jones, go up to play Bingo the first Saturday of the month. The Youth Fellowship had a Halloween Party for the whole Home in 1983. What a wild group of scary creatures!

They take Holiday Fruit Baskets to the Friends and Family of Prices Creek. Whether you are young or old, it is a pleasure to go to the Brethren's Home.

Women's Fellowship has been very active all through the church years. They have served meals at sales, church meetings and funeral dinners. Thelma Bigham has been trying to teach the younger women the art of Quilting. Other ways the Women's Fellowship have served is by monthly work at the Brethren's Home, by helping to send articles to missionaries, by canning food, by helping to replace things in the church, by holding fruit sales for the Brethren's Home, by knotting blankets and making up baby bundles for the needy.

Bread and Cup Communion is held in January and July of each year. The Common cup was used until 1947 when individual communion cups were purchased.

Prices Creek is one of the few churches that still has the Love Feast. We have services in the morning, then a noon meal consisting of Chicken and Noodles, Fresh Fruit, and pies. Services are again held in the afternoon. The evening celebration is the Foot Washing Service. Sunday Morning starts out with a breakfast of Beef Broth and Bread, Fresh Fruit and more pie! Ooh, remember the apple butter and bread? As a child growing up in the church, the memories of this weekend is something you always cherish and will never forget. One of the many activities of that morning is washing dishes and trying to figure out what happened to your favorite peanut butter pie, then it comes to mind that it was Bud McRoberts who was in charge of the storing and serving of them.

In March of 1983, Dean Miller, Luanne and Dennis Bowers, Jim Bigham, and Larry Shiverdecker drove to Virginia to move Dean Mouk and family to be the new preacher. He delivered his first Message to us on Palm Sunday. He has put a lot of work into his weekly messages, along with the busy schedule of the other church meetings. He is a member of the Monroe Township Ministerial Association and the Darke County Ministerial Support Group. It is great to have a minister that can preach a good Sermon but it's even more rewarding to have one that can sing like a bird.

It is in this Spirit that we give THANKS. It is with this thought we go "Onward in Our Brethren Heritage".

Ministers and Elders in the Church

Jacob Petry — moved here in 1832. Was elder until his death, June 4, 1849.
 John Olinger — elected in 1839. Died in 1847. Was the first minister the church elected.
 Wendell Minnich — elected 1848. Ordained 1856. Was elder until death in 1862. Was first elder ordained.
 Taswell Gray — elected 1849.
 George Siler — elected 1854. Ordained 1865. Served as elder until split, 1881.
 Alfred Ogle—elected 1857. He moved to Iowa in 1858.
 Resin Stephens—elected 1859. Ordained 1881. Moved away 1893. Died in 1903.
 Samuel Petry—elected 1859. Ordained 1881.
 H.P. Wehrly— elected 1865. Lewis Holtzmueller—elected 1867. Daniel Garber—elected 1880. These three with Elder Siler went with the Old Order group in 1881.
 Luther Petry—elected 1881. Moved away in 1890 and back in 1916.
 Joseph Longanecker. — letter 1885. First minister to be received by letter. Ordained in 1900. Served as elder to 1918. Moved.
 Andrew Miller—elected 1892. Ordained 1902. Died 1938. He spent his entire life in the church and for it.
 Henry Eby —elected 1892. Moved away in 1907.
 Tobias Kreider—absentee elder 1894 — 1900.
 H.H. Petry—elected 1902. Died in 1904.
 Sylvan Bookwalter— elected 1902. Ordained 1910. Later moved away.(at Cedar Grove)
 Herschel Weaver—elected 1907. Ordained 1917. Elder 1918—1920. Died 1920.
 H. F. Richard — elected 1908. Soon moved away.
 Oliver Royer— elected 1911. Soon moved away.
 Lester Heisey — letter elected 1914. Moved away in 1916. (Cedar Grove)
 E.S. Hollinger—letter 1916. Moved away in 1926.(Cedar Grove)
 J.P. Robbins—letter 1917. Soon moved away.
 George Stump—letter 1917. Retired minister.
 C.C. Petry—letter 1917. Served at Castine.
 S.A. Blessing—absentee elder 1920 — 1922.
 B.W. Timmons—elected 1921. Elected at Cedar Grove, served there.
 I.G. Blocher—letter 1922. Served as elder to 1928. Served as pastor from 1923 to 1928.
 H. Jesse Baker—letter 1922. Served as pastor and elder to 1937.
 G.O. Stutsman—absentee elder for 5 months of 1937.
 E.R. Fisher — absentee elder since Dec. 1937.
 Kenneth W. Hollinger—letter 1938. Served as pastor until 1943. Ordained to eldership, June 1942.
 Edgar Petry—letter 1940. Pastor of Cedar Grove Church.
 Leland B. Emrick—elected 1942 attended Bethany. Installed 1943.
 Roy Engle—letter 1943. Served as pastor until Sept. 1946.
 Henry T. Barnhart— served as pastor 1946—1955.
 Delmar Moyer— served as interim pastor Dec. 1955—Sept. 1956.
 Edwin Rodabaugh—served as pastor 1956—1959.
 Clarence Priser—served as interim pastor Dec. 1959—Aug 1960.
 Warren Shoemaker— served as pastor 1960—1971.
 Vern Leininger—served as pastor 1971—1979.
 Tom Clevenger—served as interim pastor from Oct. 1979—June 1980. Then served as pastor until July 1982.
 Paul Kinsel— served as interim pastor from August 1982—February—1983.
 Dean Mouk— Now serving.

Deacons & Deaconesses

1832	.....	Samuel J. Wehrly
1832	.....	George H. Wehrly
1832	.....	Henry Petry
1849	.....	Nicholas Bucher (by letter)
1859	.....	Jacob M. Petry
1865	.....	Henry Hoff
1865	.....	Jesse Petry
1880	.....	Levi Miller
1880	.....	Andrew Wehrly
1881	.....	Albert Coning
1881	.....	M. F. Petry
1882	.....	M. M. Petry
1892	.....	Henry Hovatter
1892	.....	Andrew Miller
1892	.....	Daniel Hoff
1892	.....	Joseph Shaffer
1892	.....	Lewis Richards
1896	.....	Jacob Petry
1898	.....	John Wortenbaker
1898	.....	N. T. Saylor
1911	.....	George Miller
1911	.....	C. A. Baker
1918	.....	W. V. Petry
1919	.....	Robert Wolford
1919	.....	Willis Wandle
1927	.....	William Grossnickle
1929	.....	Ezra Deaton
1929	.....	Earl Petry
1929	.....	C. C. Longanecker
1934	.....	Amos Hollinger
1934	.....	John Smith (moved in, by letter)
1934	.....	E. C. Burnett
1942	.....	Charles N. Miller
1942	.....	Elvin N. Spittler
1951	.....	Harlan and Emma Snyder
1951	.....	Kenneth and Mary Cabaniss
1951	.....	Edwin and Mary Jo Leas
1968	.....	Paul and Irene Bortner
1968	.....	Roy and Vera McRoberts
1968	.....	Dale and Lucille Miller
1984	.....	Chester and Anna Bowers
1984	.....	Jeanette Elleman
1984	.....	Nate and Beverly Garber

S. K. Miller, Clerk
Prices Creek Church

Dear Stanley:

I have had Helen to recopy The History Of The Prices Creek Church so that your copy would be plainly read and not so dim. Also I had her to insert some of my pen comments on the other copy that I presented to Bro. Barnhart. I was very sorry that I did not have this better copy to present last month when I was there. I am suggesting three things: 1., that the copy I gave Bro. Barnhart be given to Castine since they are directly interested in Prices Creek History; 2., that the other dim copy I am sending be given to Cedar Grove since they are also interested in History; 3., that this plain

blue copy be for the Prices Creek Church and be filed with the clerk's records. I would suggest that you do something about bringing it up to date and keeping it up to date. Churches and especially Churches of the Brethren have been too careless about our records.

An interesting footnote that could be added about folks moving from the Prices Creek community and migrating west over the National road might be inserted about this interesting experience I had after I had written the History. I was called to hold a week's meeting preceding Easter 1945 at the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren in southern Indiana. This church is located 13 miles south of Brazil, Ind., which is on route 40. In this small congregation I found a very elderly minister by the name of John C. Mitchell. He told me that when he was 2 years old he and his folks left the Prices Creek congregation and journeyed westward over the Old National road. They journeyed to the beautiful river valley near Brazil, Ind., and then moved down that river valley a few miles and homesteaded there. It was around his father's family, plus a few other members that had moved in there too, that the churches of the Brethren in that community were started. But the middle aged minister who was then serving the church was Alfred Campbell. (He looked enough like the Campbells in Dixon and Israel townships to be their brother.) He said that his grandfather had come from Eaton, Ohio. Although his father was still living, the father was not a member of any church but they had made it possible for their son, Alfred, to go to a Brethren college for a while and there he joined the church and later became a minister. Thus the Maple Grove church really dates back to the Prices Creek congregation. It was spread to Indiana by members of the Prices Creek congregation moving out over route 40. (It is interesting to note that Mrs. Don Gorbet whose husband served the Eldorado and West Manchester U. B. churches recently, was a granddaughter of Bro. John Mitchell. No one knows how many more churches throughout Indiana, Illinois and other states west, may have had some of their main and beginning members from the Prices Creek congregation.

I hope that this feeble effort of mine will create an interest in the hearts of the members of your congregation and others to take more interest and do more about making and keeping church records.

With Best Wishes for the Building and Growth of the Kingdom of God, I am

Sincerely,
Kenneth W. Hollinger.

Membership

- 1834 — 20 members
1849 — 40 members
1880 — 128 members before the split
1881 — 75 members after the split
1921 — 280 members Three houses
1925 — 165 members after Castine became a separate congregation
1930 — 186 members
1940 — 225 members before Cedar Grove separated
1942 — 177 members after Cedar Grove separated
1944 — 155 members At Prices Creek many have been lettered out, some moved away, and some just realized they needed to take their letters with them.
1944 — 382 members Total for the three churches:
Castine, 154 Cedar Grove, 73 which began with 20 members
1953 — 165 members
1960 — 134 members
1961 — 151 members
1972 — 231 members
1978 — 243 members
1981 — 209 members
1984 — 186 members

I AM GREATLY INDEBTED TO:

1. History of the Church of the Brethren of Southern Ohio to 1920.
2. To the paper written by Chester Emrick for the centennial celebration in 1934.
3. To Bro. S. K. Miller, clerk, for checking some dates and names in the clerk's books, and for supplying information.
4. To a host of members who have contributed in thought and deed to my knowledge of the congregation while I served as their pastor.

—Kenneth W. Hollinger.