

# Brethren in Christ celebrate their Bicentennial

## Church was founded here

The Brethren in Christ are doing what seems to be impossible in this day and age—preserving their heritage from the past and using it to be, not only up-to-date, but actually ahead of their times.

Last Sunday at their local churches and next month at their General Conference at Messiah College, the Brethren in Christ are celebrating the 200th anniversary of their founding in a farmhouse near the mouth of the Conoy Creek.

At the same time, many members of the church are reading a most contemporary book by one of their members, entitled **Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger**.

Like a modern Jeremiah, the author of this book, Ronald J. Sider, warns of the possibility of nuclear attacks by the poor nations on the rich nations, if the gulf between the starvation of the former and the gluttony of the latter continues to widen ("Desperate people do desperate things.").

As a way to avoid such a holocaust, Sider advocates that rich Christians in the West begin to practice their religion, by eliminating their wasteful and unhealthy consumption of fuel and food, and giving what they save to the starving peoples of the Third World. The book is well documented with statistics, expert economic opinions, practical suggestions, and Scripture.

This very modern book is grounded in the history of the Brethren in Christ. The frugal life-style espoused by Sider requires "radical non-conformity," the simple, disciplined living of Anabaptists, like the Amish or strict Mennonites. It also requires a spiritual conversion like that of the Methodists or born-again Christians.

According to J. Wilmer Heisey, Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions of the Brethren in Christ, the combination of these two traditions—Wesleyanism (John Wesley stressed the importance of adult conversion) and Anabaptism—give the Brethren in Christ their distinctive religion.

The Brethren in Christ were originally called River Brethren and had their beginning near Stackstown in what is now Conoy Township. According to Myron Dietz, who teaches church history at Mennonite High School in Lancaster, the River Brethren grew out of the powerful revival movement that swept up and down the thirteen colonies in the mid and late 1700's.



J. Wilmer Heisey

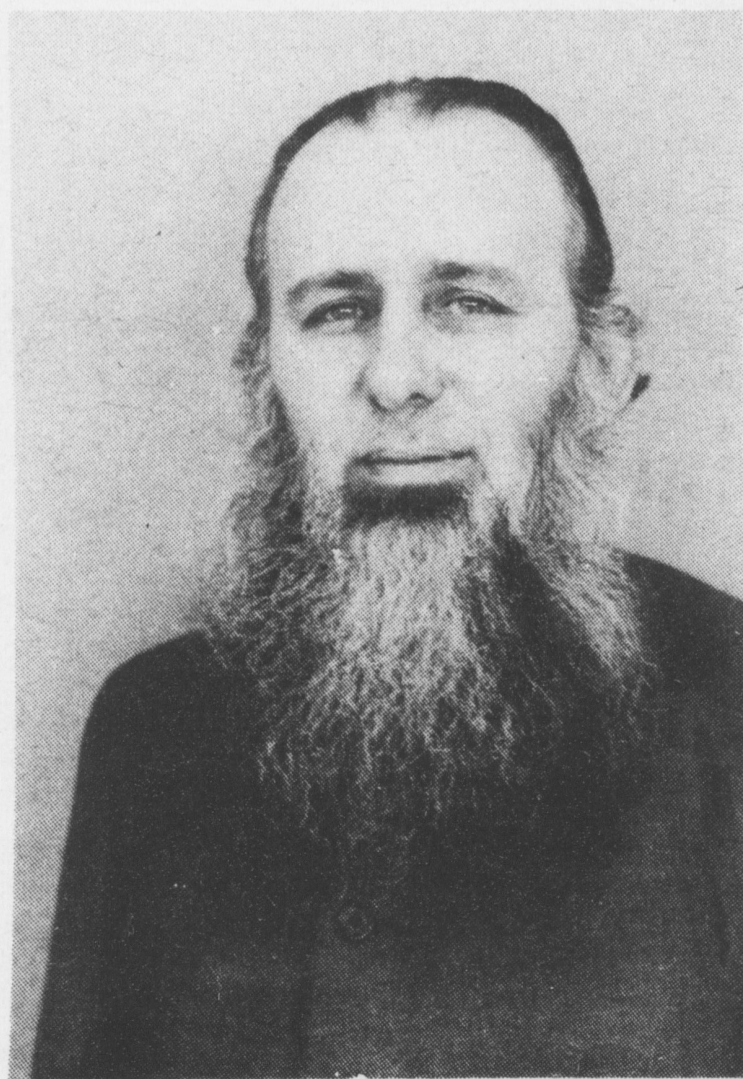
Jacob Engle, a Mennonite who lived near the present village of Stackstown, and some of his neighbors experienced moving "rebirths" in their religious lives during that revival movement (of which John Wesley was the best known leader). Unlike many of their contemporaries, however, who joined the new Methodist and United Brethren churches being organized, Engle and his brethren did not want to give up their Anabaptist, non-conforming way of life, including their distinctive garb and their non-participation in wars.

As years went by, gradual changes began to take place in the practices of some of the River Brethren. At first, the Brethren held their worship

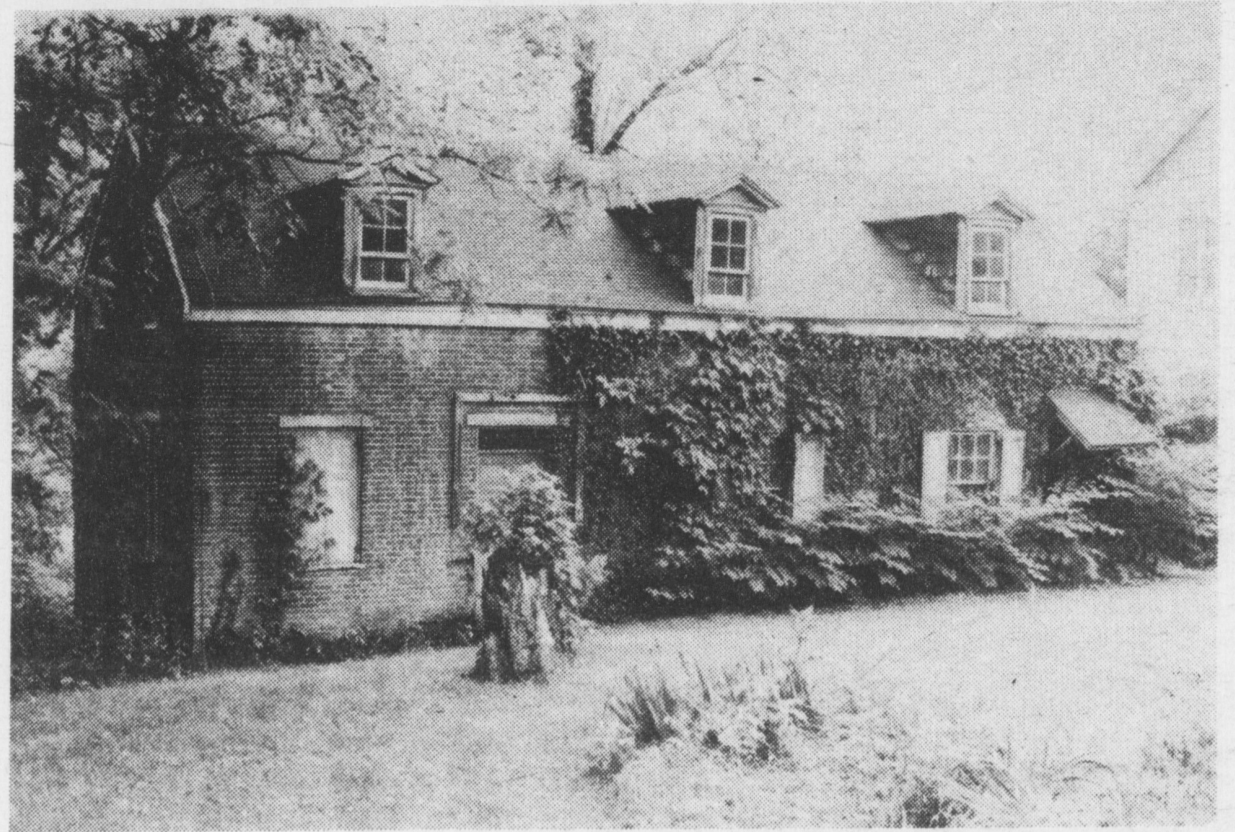
services in their homes, but in the 1850's a group led by Mathias Brinser built a meeting-house and were therefore expelled by the rest of their brethren. They formed a new church called The United Zion's Children.

Shortly afterward, a conservative group in the remaining church, most of whom lived in York County, felt that their brethren across the Susquehanna were growing lax in their practices, and set up their own more strict group called The Old Order River Brethren. The Old Order came to be popularly known as "Yorkers," and their more liberal brothers as "Donegallers." The proper name taken by the "Donegallers" was Brethren in Christ.

[continued on page 3]



Myron S. Dietz



In this house, now owned by Mrs. Guy S. Hoffman, near Stackstown, Jacob Engle and others organized the River Brethren around 1778.

## Maytown launches drive to buy new ambulance

### from the Maytown Ambulance Association

The Maytown Ambulance has launched a fund drive to purchase a new ambulance. Over the Memorial Day weekend the ambulance crew collected \$66.73. To those who helped us, we thank you. To those who did not help, here is your chance to help.

The Ambulance Crew is having a Chicken Bar-B-Que

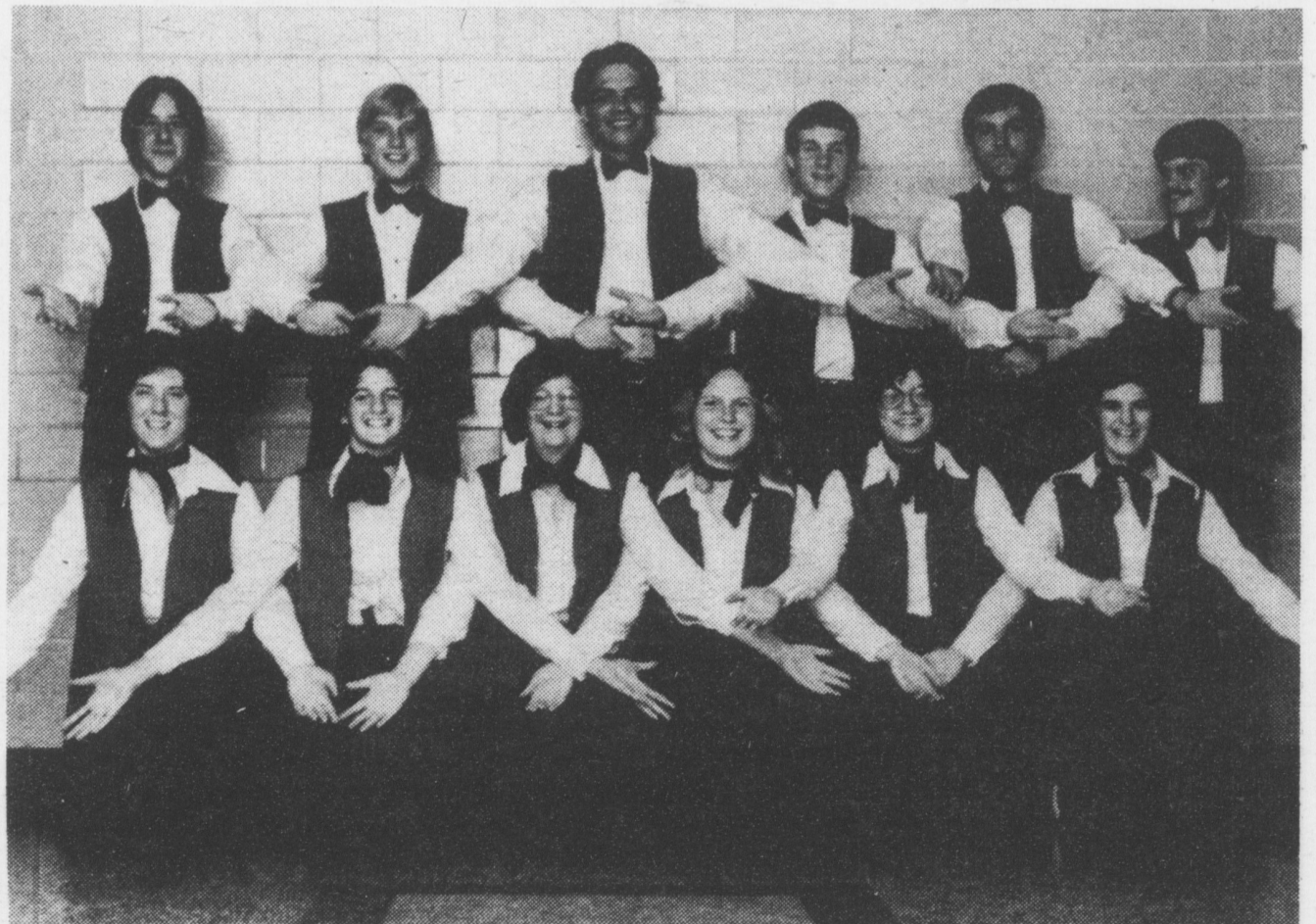
Saturday, June 10, from 3:00 to 6:00PM. Take-outs can only be picked up at the Maytown Fire House between those times.

Please do not take this fund drive lightly, we need your help. Maytown has well trained and certified EMT's and we take our job seriously. We want to serve you with the best medical care we can give. With the limited space in our

present ambulance we can not carry all the equipment we need and are trained to use, thus hindering the care we are trained to give YOU.

Please come out June 10th and support the ambulance crew. We don't take our responsibility lightly, neither should you. We are working with life and death, it could mean your living or dying.

## Here they are, whoever you are



The Donegal Rhythm Singers

A few weeks ago the Times got this letter:

### Susquehanna Times:

Do you realize you haven't had one picture of the Donegal Rhythm Singers in your paper this year?! Why not get a group picture this Sat. night at the Donegal High School!

Why did the Columbia News have a picture of the Nat'l Honor Soc. in their paper (4/11/78) & not the Susquehanna Times? Let's get with it!!

[no signature]

As you can see, we have complied with the request. We caught the Rhythm Singers at the Command Performance last Saturday

night. The Times wishes to apologise to those persons whose names were inadvertently left out of the list of people (in last week's Times) who participated in Command Performance; especially Ted Hershey, who we heard flew in from Ohio or someplace equally distant to take part.