



Marker Text

United Brethren among earliest settlers in eastern Indiana during territorial period. Original structure, built 1831, one of first United Brethren churches in Indiana. Evangelical United Brethren Church joined Methodist Church to become United Methodist Church, 1968. Listed in National Register of Historic Places, 1995.

Report

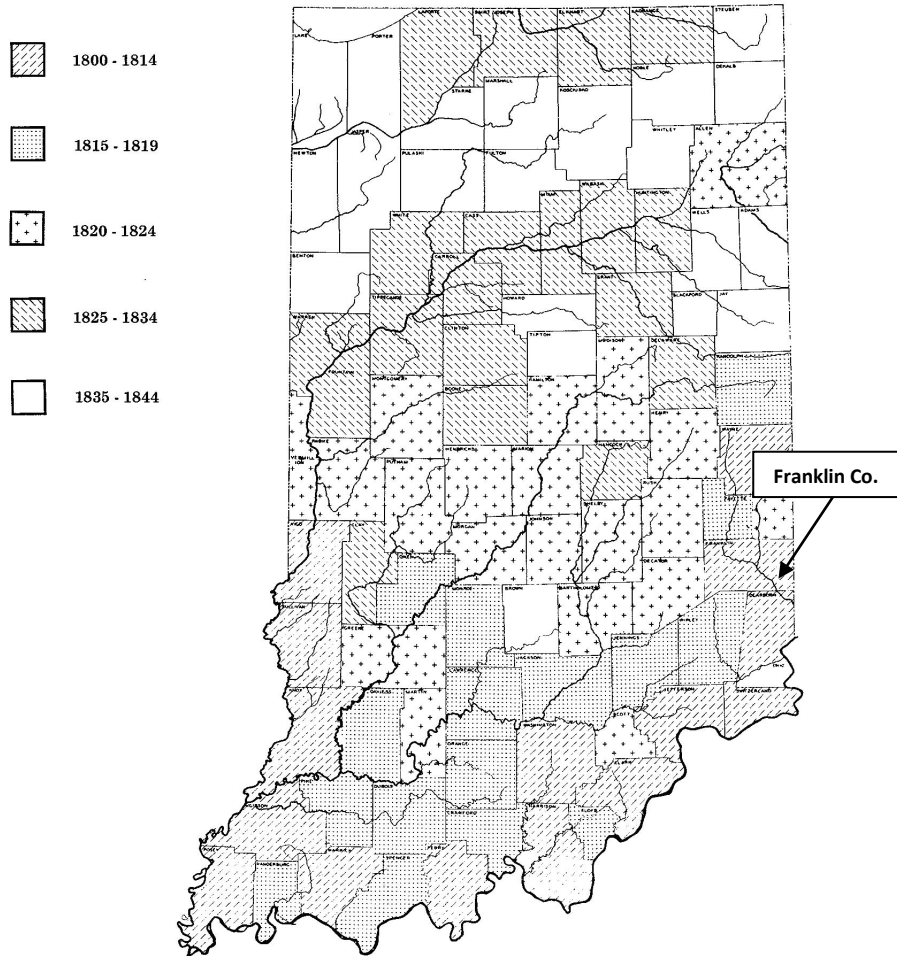
IHB now avoids the use of subjective and superlative terms such as “first,” “earliest,” and “most.” Such claims are often not verifiable and/or require extensive qualification to be accurate. That is the case with this marker’s assertions that the United Brethren were among the earliest settlers and that the church was among the first in the state. Some clarification is necessary:

- The United Brethren referenced on this marker are the “United Brethren in Christ,” separate and distinct from the Church of the Brethren and the Moravians (who were also known as “United Brethren”).¹
- According to an authoritative secondary source, the first United Brethren church in Indiana was established in 1812 in Corydon by John Pfrimmer. Pfrimmer “organized at least 15 churches” before 1820.² An earlier secondary source suggests that there were at least 48 congregations organized from 1812-1830.³ The United Brethren was an “almost entirely rural church” whose adherents frequently practiced their faith in private homes and borrowed spaces, such as school houses.⁴ This suggests that the “organization” of a United Brethren church should not be considered synonymous with the construction of a building. It is plausible, but has not been verified with primary sources, that the building was “one of the first” United Brethren church *buildings* in Indiana. Considering the number of churches established from 1812-1830, it would be difficult to substantiate a claim that the church *community* that built the Old Franklin United Brethren church was one of the first.
- Adherents to the United Brethren tradition did begin settling during the territorial period, and Franklin County was among the counties settled and established before statehood in 1816 (see map on reverse).⁵ In that sense, the marker text is correct in its assertion that the United Brethren were among the “earliest settlers in eastern Indiana,” although the location might more correctly be termed “southeastern.”
- It bears noting that Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Cambellites, and Moravian missionaries all established churches in the lower part of the state prior to 1812, well before the establishment of the first United Brethren church.⁶

Regarding additional points in the text, the United Brethren did merge with the Methodists to form the United Methodist Church in 1968,⁷ and the site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.⁸



24.1995.1 Old Franklin United Brethren Church
Franklin County
Marker Text Review Report
02/15/2012



Adapted from Gregory S. Rose, *The Southern-ness of Hoosierdom*

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Figure 1: Establishment of Indiana Counties from *Broadside: Indiana, the early years*, Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987.

¹ Donald F. Carmony, "Kingdom Church," *Indiana Magazine of History* 29 (1933), 144. L.C. Rudolph, "Moravians," in *Hoosier Faiths: A History of Indiana Churches and Religious Groups* (Bloomington, 1995), 245-55.

² Rudolph, 248.

³ Adam Byron Condo, *History of the Indiana Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (1927), 20.

⁴ Condo, as quoted in Rudolph, 251.

⁵ See also the "Statehood" issue of [The Indiana Historian](#), p. 3

⁶ Chelsea L. Lawlis, "Settlement of the Whitewater Valley, 1790-1810," *Indiana Magazine of History* 43 (1947), 28-

38. Chelsea L. Lawlis, "The Great Migration and the Whitewater Valley," *Indiana Magazine of History* 43 (1947),

134-36. Chelsea L. Lawlis, "Migration to the Whitewater Valley," *Indiana Magazine of History* 43 (1947), 234-36.

The Moravian Indian Mission on the White River: Diaries and Letters May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806, Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed. (Indianapolis, 1938). Parish records indicate that a Vincennes Catholic church was active as early as 1749.

⁷ *Minutes of Indiana Conference South the United Methodist Church* (Indianapolis, 1968), 56.

⁸ [National Register of Historic Places](#).