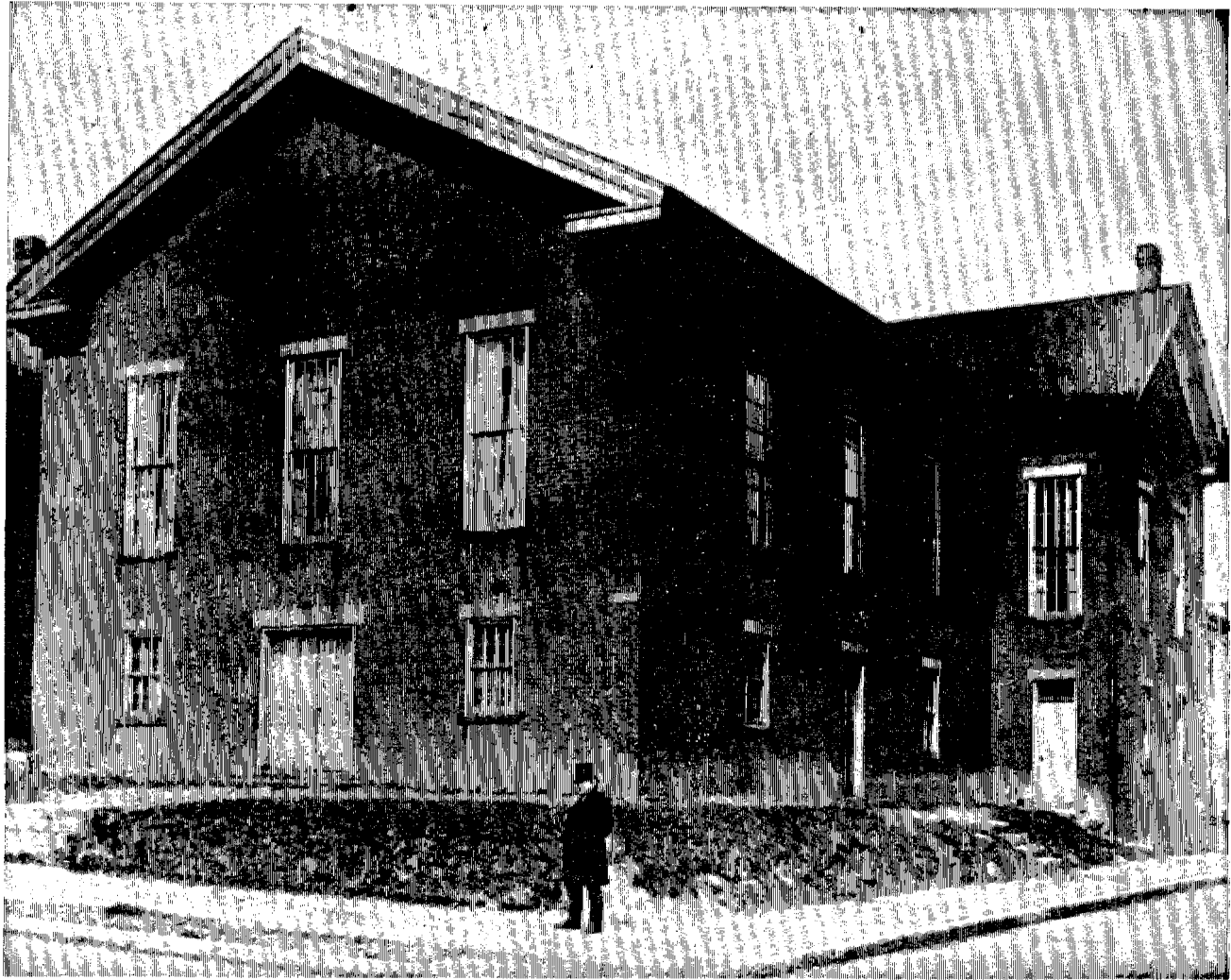


# This Is The Mansfield That Was



When the Rev. Francis J. Ruth came to Mansfield in September, 1831, he found three Lutherans—a tailor, the tailor's wife and a bellows maker. By 1832 a Lutheran congregation of 15 was meeting in the old courthouse then located in Central Park. In 1835, the Rev. George Leiter, the first resident pastor, helped his congregation, in partnership with the German Reformed congregation, purchase the old Methodist Church on East Third St. near Adams St. Sermons were delivered alternately in German and English. The English Lutherans bought out the share of the German Reformed congregation in 1840 and legally organized as First English Lutheran Church on May 4, 1850. The English Lutheran congregation, to keep up with the westward growth trend of the city, purchased part of a lot on the northwest corner of South Walnut and West Second Sts. The city had a volunteer fire station and city office building on the remainder

of the property. The Lutherans built a brick church, pictured above, and dedicated it Oct. 16, 1853. Gas lights were installed in 1863. The rest of the lot, extending to West Luther Pl., was obtained from the city in 1867. Two years later fire fighting equipment was purchased for the church. The congregation, led by pastor Dr. H. L. Wiles, shown in the picture, bought property at the southeast corner of South Mulberry St. and Park Avenue West in 1881 where they erected their present First English Lutheran Church. It was dedicated Oct. 21, 1894. The old church in this picture was sold in 1886 and served other church congregations. The building was razed to make way for an automobile dealership operated by Roy Herring. The site is now the Mansfield-Leland Hotel parking lot across from the city building. (Photo from collection of Robert S. Kuhn, courtesy of Richland County Historical Society.)