NINETEENTH-CENTURY PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE MEETINGHOUSES IN THE FRANCONIA AND EASTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCES: A STUDY OF HISTORIC MENNONITE WORSHIP SPACES WITH A FIELD SURVEY OF TWENTY-TWO NINETEENTH-CENTURY MENNONITE MEETINGHOUSES

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Table of Contents

Introduction
Chapter 1  Mennonite Beginnings: A Historical Synopsis
Chapter 2  Mennonite Worship Spaces in Europe
Chapter 3  Mennonite Migration to Southeastern Pennsylvania
Chapter 4  Mennonite Meetinghouse Architecture in the Franconia Area
Chapter 5  Field Survey
Chapter 6  Field Survey Observations and Recommendations
Conclusion
Acknowledgements
Bibliography
Appendix
Introduction

_We can never thrive if we cut altogether loose from the past._ ---John C. Wenger, Mennonite Historian

Growing up in a small northwest Ohio community I learned from an early age the importance of church and family. These two aspects of life were an influential and enjoyable part of my development as a person. Family time often merged with church time or with the community that was developed within the church. I have a great respect for the Christian-Mennonite faith in which I was raised. The examples and lessons shown to me through my nuclear family, extended family and church family have been very significant to my life.

The Mennonite church is a Christian denomination that has a distinctive history. A part of this includes the types of meetinghouses that have been built throughout the church’s history.

Doing research during my first year at Ball State University, I learned about the need for historic Mennonite meetinghouses and churches to be documented. I kept this idea in the back of my head for a possible thesis topic. The more I thought about it, the more excited I became about it.

The problem I found within the topic of Mennonite meetinghouse architecture is that there is no resource that documents a collection of historic Mennonite meetinghouse buildings found in

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the United States. I wanted to research how Mennonite meetinghouses in Pennsylvania were designed and built during the 19th century in order to have written records of the historic buildings. With the passage of time, historic Mennonite meetinghouses are disappearing due to lack of upkeep, church growth and the need for larger buildings, and urban sprawl. These meetinghouses need to be documented because they may be demolished and because they tell a story that needs to be remembered. By documenting a set group of them, I have shown how their history, architectural integrity, and their place in Pennsylvania Mennonite history is worthy of preserving the building. In producing this written document, I hope it gives people the opportunity to appreciate the significant character of these historic Mennonite meetinghouses. Historic Mennonite meetinghouses have a story to be told to this generation and to the generations to come.

In this thesis, I relate how European Mennonite History affected 19th century Mennonite meetinghouses in southeastern Pennsylvania. In order to have a better understanding of European Mennonite History and how it relates to Mennonite meetinghouses, I addressed several questions: Where did the first Mennonites live? In what areas of Europe have Mennonites settled? As Mennonites moved around Europe what type of worship spaces were used? Were these worship spaces similar to other religious groups’ worship spaces in the area? What building practices were borrowed from the regional area? What influenced the type of worship spaces they used? Did any building practices carry over from Europe to Pennsylvania?

A major part of my thesis was the documentation of twenty-two Mennonite meetinghouses in southeastern Pennsylvania. The meetinghouses surveyed were a part of the Franconia
Mennonite Conference\(^2\) and/or the Eastern District Mennonite Conference\(^3\) in the 19\(^{th}\) century. This documentation was through a field survey. The field survey form I used was an adaptation of a survey form taken from *Recording Historic Structures* edited by John A. Burns. Information that was recorded in the survey: Name, location/orientation, construction date, building plan/configuration, building materials, architectural description (windows, doorways/doors, roof, dimensions), interior plan/significant features (location of benches, type of pulpit/bench, balcony), outbuildings/cemetery/school, historical notes and photographs (each elevation, cemetery or other significant structure).

The following questions I kept in mind throughout my research (adapted from *Recording Historic Structures* edited by John A. Burns): What are the distinguishing features of a Mennonite meetinghouse? Is there a standard form? If there is, how has it changed overtime? Is there evidence of diffusion of either structural or stylistic building traditions, originating abroad or from within the region? How does the form or plan facilitate meeting function? What role did the larger Mennonite church have in determining the form?

\(^2\) The Franconia Mennonite Conference is the oldest conferences of the Mennonites in North America. In Mennonite polity, conferences are typically geographically-oriented, and historically the Franconia Conference consisted of congregations in eastern Pennsylvania and specifically those clustered in Montgomery and Bucks counties north of Philadelphia, along with a few others scattered in Philadelphia, Northampton, Berks, Lehigh, and Chester counties. (Today the conference includes forty-two congregations and several are located outside Pennsylvania.) The majority of meetinghouses addressed and studied in this paper were at one time, or still are, associated with the Franconia Conference. Several congregations that began in the second half of the nineteenth century were never apart of the Franconia Conference, but were, from their start, part of the Eastern District Conference, a ‘new’ Mennonite conference that resulted from an 1847 schism within the Franconia Conference. The Franconia Conference took its name from the location of its semiannual ministers’ meetings, held at the Franconia Mennonite meetinghouse, which in turn took its name from its location in Franconia Township, Montgomery County.

\(^3\) The congregations that left the Franconia Conference in 1847 became known as the Eastern District Conference. In 1860 they affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, a new national denomination. The Franconia Conference remained affiliated with [old] Mennonite Church body.
Chapter 1
Mennonite Beginnings: A Historical Synopsis

Mennonites stem from the Anabaptist wing of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Anabaptism was a geographically divided movement that emerged along two trajectories, one in Switzerland, south Germany, and Alsace and another in the Dutch low countries and across northern Europe to the Baltic Sea. By looking at the development of each, one gains a better understanding of the historical development of Mennonite worship spaces because both geographic regions influenced the history of the eastern Pennsylvania community that this thesis documents.

SWISS BRETHREN

The Anabaptist movement in Switzerland—a movement usually known as the Swiss Brethren—began in Zurich and was associated with early leaders Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and George Blaurock. These three religious men were inspired by the Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli, but grew frustrated that Zwingli’s reform agenda was too cautious. The radicals favored establishing a new church quite apart from the established Catholic and Protestant churches.

In 1523, Grebel, Manz and Blaurock began to doubt the direction Zwingli was taking the established church and began to break away from Zwingli’s following. The Swiss Brethren thought of the new church as being composed of believers who voluntarily accepted baptism
and were changed by this choice to be baptized into the church and body of Christ. This new commitment was to make a difference in how they lived their life. The church was to be a spiritual brotherhood separate from the state. They also held the belief that the New Testament addressed the idea that violence being used for any purpose was contrary to what Jesus Christ taught. Zwingli on the other hand wanted a state church that had a partnership with the state and supported infant baptism.

In 1525, the Swiss Brethren had their first believers’ baptism and when this happened Zwingli began persecuting them almost right away. The baptism was in January and within two weeks there were fourteen arrests.⁴

Persecution against those who re-baptized, known as Anabaptists, was swift. The Diet of Speyer of 1529⁵ ordered the execution without trial of any Anabaptist found within the Holy Roman Empire. Even though there was great persecution of the Swiss Brethren, which caused the members to disperse to rural Switzerland and to southern Germany, the movement increased in numbers. The last execution of an Anabaptist in Switzerland took place in 1614 but legal penalties and harassment continued through the 1600s and into the 1700s.

The basic reason that the Anabaptists were being persecuted was because of their refusal to have their children baptized and refusal to have the state tell them what to do in the church. This suppression and mistreatment was carried out by both the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches.

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⁴ Wenger, History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference, 3.
⁵ Diet of Speyer, 1529, the Imperial Diet at which the first imperial law was passed against the Anabaptists threatening death to anyone who did not recognize infant baptism.
During this time of persecution many Swiss Mennonites migrated from Switzerland down the Rhine River to the Palatinate region in Germany. The area of the Palatinate was in ruin from the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) that left the land ruined with no crops or livestock, with buildings demolished and inhabitants gone. Because people had left the area during and after the war, the government wanted the land to be developed once again so persecuted groups such as the Swiss Brethren where invited to come to the Palatinate to settle the land. With this invitation, they were promised limited religious freedom.

After 1664, the Swiss Brethren in the Palatinate were allowed to worship but with stipulations. They were permitted to worship in groups of twenty families but not in public meetinghouses. No new converts were allowed to join the Brethren by rebaptism. Even with these religious restrictions Swiss Brethren continued to migrate to the Palatinate region because of the unrelenting persecution in Switzerland.

**DUTCH ANABAPTISTS**

The Dutch Anabaptist movement emerged first in the city of Emden in the Netherlands in 1530. A key leader, though not the first leader, was Menno Simons. Menno was educated and ordained a Catholic priest, but began to question official church teaching after 1531 when he heard about the execution of a Dutch Anabaptist. Menno began to study Scripture so as to better understand why the Anabaptists believed as they did, even to the point of execution. As a result of his study, Menno became convinced that he was part of a religious system that was not what the scriptures described, and so, in January 1536, he joined the Anabaptists. As early as 1544 those who opposed the Anabaptists used the nickname “Mennonites” to label the
groups. In North America, Mennonite became an accepted name for Anabaptists who came both from the Swiss and Dutch groups.

The persecution of Dutch Anabaptists continued until 1575. They were hunted down and persecuted. The authorities were especially interested in capturing leaders of the movement. Subsequently it became a crime punishable by death for individuals to give food or lodging to leaders such as Menno Simons. It is said that the Dutch Anabaptists suffered through greater persecution than the Swiss but the persecution ended sooner than it did for the Swiss. During the years 1550-1600 some Dutch Mennonites fled to England, but more went east to the Vistula River Valley region of Danzig, which is in modern-day Gdansk, Poland.

Descendants of both of these two Anabaptist movements, Dutch Mennonites and Swiss Brethren, were represented among the immigrants who came to southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1700s, but the large majority was from the Swiss-Palatine stream. Only a few Franconia Mennonites described below trace their lineage to the Dutch Anabaptist movement.

One key theological feature of Anabaptist-Mennonite worship has some bearing on understanding their worship spaces. Historian C. Arnold Snyder has written that gathering the church for worship was itself a sacred act for Anabaptists.6 As a “believers church,” Anabaptists defined the church not as a state institution but as people who voluntarily met together. Thus, wherever the church met was holy and not the other way around. Unlike Roman Catholics, who understood the church as the institution that properly dispensed the sacraments, or the major Protestant reformers who defined the church as a space where listeners could hear the preaching of right doctrine, Anabaptists believed that the true church existed wherever

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believers gather together to read and interpret the Bible together and encourage one another. As a result, gathering for worship was very important for Anabaptists, but where they gathered was not terribly important. Catholics needed an altar and dedicated instruments for dispensing the sacraments and mainline Protestants wanted church building with prominent pulpits facing rows of pews. Anabaptists did not need any of those things, but preferred small and more intimate spaces where worshippers could see and hear one another. In this regard, theology and political reality reinforced one another. State authorities did not allow Anabaptists to construct large, public church buildings and their theology told them that such buildings were not necessary and even a hindrance to true worship. In Pennsylvania, the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference used the word "Versammlungshaus" – literally, gathering house or meetinghouse – a name that reflected this theology. Meetinghouses were centrally important to Mennonites, but they were important because they were places where the church (the people) met. The space by itself was not sacred and had little value when the congregation was not present.
Chapter 2
Mennonite Worship Spaces in Europe

In the historic development of the meetinghouse in the Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions one needs to keep in mind that the Anabaptists saw the church not as an institution, a building, a location but rather as a brotherhood of believers united by love. To them church was not Kirche (church) but rather Gemeinde (community), the voluntary association of believers in Christ, committed to follow their Master in daily discipleship. It was not an institution residing in a majestic cathedral or in the parish church, but a living (and probably lively) brotherhood and sisterhood of fellow disciples who had voluntarily separated themselves from both the world and nominal Christianity. ---- Jan Gleysteen

The spread of Anabaptists throughout Europe brought people together to worship even though they were persecuted. Persecution affected where and in what structures they would gather together. The following section describes where the Dutch and Swiss Brethren Anabaptists historically met for worship.

THE NETHERLANDS

As persecution of the Anabaptist-Mennonites was taking place in the Netherlands (1530-1575) they had no regular place to hold their meetings. Meetings were held in the woods, in the fields, on the seashore and sometimes in homes. Those who lived in Amsterdam were able to meet in their homes. For safety, meeting places where often changed and special messengers

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were assigned the task of traveling from one member’s home to another to announce the place and time of the next meeting.

From the beginning of Anabaptism until the end of persecution (1539-1575) Mennonites did not meet in special meetinghouses. Instead they worshiped outside, in the attics of warehouses, in barns or in other hidden places. At the end of this period they began to meet in homes of people in the congregation. After persecution ended they began renting places to hold their worship services. By 1600, groups began to buy warehouses that they would adapt for their worship space and by the second half of the 17th century almost all congregations in the Netherlands had a meetinghouse of their own.

After outright persecution came to an end, Dutch Mennonites could meet more openly in members’ homes, but even as late as 1654, however, they were not always allowed to have regular places of worship. In some locations no meetinghouses could be built until after 1688. Smaller congregations were able to use homes but larger congregations rented or bought warehouses that they would adapt for their worship space. By 1700 almost all congregations in the Netherlands had a meetinghouse of their own, although these spaces were often somewhat obscured from the street and were not allowed to look like church buildings in the style of the dominant Dutch Reformed Church. Before 1795, for example, Dutch Mennonite meetinghouses could not have towers or bell towers and their worship spaces could not open directly onto a main street. Thus, the buildings were to be hidden from the public’s view and entrances were from alleys. Not only were the meetinghouses to be hidden in the towns but those in the country were also not to look like a state church. Rural Mennonite meetinghouses ended up looking more like houses or barns.
The early 17\textsuperscript{th} century Mennonite meetinghouse in the Netherlands developed some basic characteristics. They were simple and unpainted with a square or rectangular plan and no basement. The windows were small and often placed high in the walls. The non-heated interior was usually a single cell but on an occasion there was a small room located in one corner in which preachers and deacons could meet before the services. The furniture was plain, having no chairs or pews, but only benches without backs. This basic design was the norm until the 18\textsuperscript{th} and early 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries. After 1796, government restrictions placed upon the Mennonites were lifted and churches could then be built on the street front and towers could be added although they were very rare. In the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century, some urban congregation introduced organs along with decorative stained glass windows.

Dutch Mennonites had moved into northern Germany during and after the time of persecution. As early as 1600 north German Mennonites had meetinghouses but they had to be discrete in how they met so as not to be discovered. Groups were meeting to worship together throughout the 1600’s in spaces that were basically part of private homes.

**SWITZERLAND/THE PALATINATE**

The Anabaptist Mennonites in Switzerland first met in caves and barns, and for several centuries their worship places remained irregular.\footnote{Snyder, *Following in the Footsteps*, 123-25, provides a description of outdoor and hidden Swiss worship meetings drawn from primary sources of the time.} Not until the 19\textsuperscript{th} century did they begin to build chapels.\footnote{The word chapel was used by the Swiss instead of church.}

The Anabaptist Mennonites living in South Germany during the period of the Reformation until the middle of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century needed to meet in secret because of the persecution happening...
during that time. When persecution was at its worst they would meet in the forests, or out-of-the-way farms.

In 1664, Charles Ludwig, Elector of the Palatinate, allowed the Mennonites to hold meetings in their homes if there were four or five families living in a single village. In this situation, members would take turns meeting in each other’s homes. In the latter part of the 18th century meetinghouses were being built. These meetinghouses needed to be built off the street and in the style of a farmhouse so as not to be recognized as a church. The meetinghouse in Eppstein (Photo #1), built in 1779, is one of the better preserved examples of the late 18th century.

Retaining most of its original characteristics, it has a low room, rectangular windows and a low pulpit\(^{10}\), with no seats for the preachers. On each side of the entrance a vestibule was built, one for the meetings of the preachers and the other for funerals. The congregation later needed more space in the auditorium so the vestibules were converted into auditorium space.

In the early nineteenth century all legal restrictions in the Palatinate (present day it is the states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Hesse, Germany) were removed from the Mennonites and churches began to be built in the style of the Reformed churches in the area. A few churches of this style were built in Altleiningen, 1811, Monsheim (Photo #2), 1820 and Uffhafen in 1829.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\) van der Zijpp, ”Meetinghouses,” (accessed January 19, 2012).
Northwest and northeast Germany were also areas of Mennonites settlement during and after the time of persecution (reformation). As early as 1600 Mennonites had meetinghouses in this area but they had to be discrete in how they met so as not to be discovered. Groups were meeting to worship together throughout the 1600’s in spaces that were basically part of private homes.

As noted above, that the majority of Mennonite immigrants who came to the area in Pennsylvania under study here were from the Palatinate or were Swiss refugees who were living in the Palatinate. Mennonite meetinghouse architecture in the Palatinate region can be categorized into three time periods: first, meetings held in homes until 1750; second, initial
meetinghouses built 1750-1800, and third, later churches to present day churches, built 1800-present. Descriptions of these respective time periods follow below.

Home Meetings prior to 1750

The first time period was during the early persecution of the Reformation and the beginning of Mennonite church groups. As was mentioned previously the early church groups did not and could not have designated worship buildings because of the severe persecution and because – even after they were granted some toleration – state churches did not want any overt competition from dissenting sects. They met in fields at night, forests, caves, barns, anywhere they could discreetly gather to worship as a group. In some locations it was dangerous to even meet in homes for if the authorities discovered a gathering or heard of one that happened in a house they would come and set the house on fire. Individuals were tortured, imprisoned and put to death because of following or preaching the Anabaptist way.

The Thirty Years War from 1618-1648 brought much havoc to the area and left it in almost complete devastation. The need for workers to reclaim and cultivate the wasted land was very great. This is the situation that led to the invitation for Mennonites to come to the Palatinate.

The Palatinate region became an area of refuge for Mennonites driven out of Switzerland and other area countries. In the year 1664, the ruler of the Palatinate, Elector Karl Ludwig, invited the Mennonites along with Catholics, Lutherans and the Reformed to come to the region to help populate and redevelop the land after the Thirty Year War. Mennonites were not always the most desired group by Protestants and Catholics (because of their differing beliefs) but they
were hard working and supported one another in the work.\textsuperscript{12} This ethic of work may have attracted the Elector to invite the Mennonites to help restore his land to its productive use. With this invitation he included religious stipulations. They were allowed to have meetings for worship but not in public church buildings and with no more than twenty people. Other stipulations had to do with baptism (not allowed), a list of members of the congregations needed to be given to the authorities and it needed to be revised when newcomers came, no one outside the group was to be encouraged to attend and there was a protection tax they needed to pay to the government. During this time they found themselves gathering for worship in homes, barns and different areas of the countryside.

Even though the Elector did not extend a formal invitation for the Mennonites to migrate to the Palatinate until 1664, some Swiss Mennonite families had moved to the region as early as 1657. Horsch, \textit{Mennonites in Europe}, records that there were Swiss Mennonite and Quaker groups at Kriegsheim near the city of Worms in 1657.\textsuperscript{13}

In the years that followed the Elector’s invitation many Mennonites migrated to the Palatinate region. They were for the most part coming from Switzerland but Mennonites from Alsace, France and other surrounding areas also flocked to the region.

During this first period around the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century it is interesting to note that the congregations were not only meeting in each other’s homes but some of the larger congregations met in homes where families had designated certain rooms as worship spaces for

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the congregation. This began the movement from the worship space being just anywhere to a more permanent and selected place.

*Meetinghouses 1750-1800*

As congregations grew and Mennonites gained respect in the communities, the government could no longer put such stipulations on who could attend a Mennonite congregation. This made it possible in the second half of the 18th century that small Mennonite church buildings could be built. The government still regulated the appearance of these new churches. Paul Schowalter in ‘Mennonite Churches in South Germany’ explains “According to governmental regulations these churches were in no way to be distinguished from an ordinary dwelling so that they could not be recognized as churches and thereby gain adherents for the Mennonites.”

Because of these regulations the congregations built worship spaces that were usually small, one-story buildings with rectangular windows and no architectural embellishment. The Erpolzheim meetinghouse is a good example of this internal layout of the early meetinghouses. (Photo #3, 4) It was built in 1756 over a wine cellar and in 1952 was still being used by the Friedelsheim congregation. In 1779, a new meetinghouse was built for the Friedelsheim congregation. At one point the old one is described as quite dilapidated and looking like an ordinary peasant home with a chimney. Another meetinghouse of this time period is Eppstein that was mentioned earlier.


Erpolzheim meetinghouse exterior view (photo credit, Paul Showalter, in “Churches in South Germany”)
Erpolzheim meetinghouse interior view (photo credit, Paul Showalter, in “Churches in South Germany”)

The Palatinate Region with highlighted towns mentioned in text. (Map used by permission of cartographer Jan Gleysteen)
Churches built 1800-the present

The third time period for Mennonite meetinghouses in the Palatinate began in 1799, with the death of the last elector of the Palatinate, Karl Theodor. His death brought full civil rights for the Mennonites. Restrictions for church buildings were lifted and congregations made use of the ability to build their meetinghouses more like the churches around them. Churches with arched windows, pulpits and decorative entrances were now an option for them.

With these restrictions lifted, Mennonite congregations began changing their meetinghouse architecture. A minister’s bench with decorative carvings was introduced. This influence came from the Evangelical (Lutheran) churches in the area. What was even more common was the addition of the small room near an entrance (examples found at Monsheim and Oberstilzen) and in a few it was added to the front of the church. (Sembach 1770) It was the tradition for the ministers and deacons to meet in these rooms before the beginning of the church service. When they were all gathered together they would enter the worship space as one group representing a body of leaders.

During this third time period we see the transition from untrained to theologically trained ministers and its influence on 19th century church architecture. With educated leaders came the introduction of more ornate ideas of what a worship space should look like. In 1835 the church in Weierhof installed a new educated minister named Reeder. By 1837, they were celebrating the dedication of a new church building that was patterned after a Baptist church in Tottenham, England.  

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16 Schowalter, “Mennonite Churches in South Germany,” 16.
There are examples of others who came to minister at a new congregation and soon afterward a building project took place and a new church building was built or the old was remodeled. The characteristics of new 19th century Mennonite churches were similar to what was being built in other religious groups. They had high ceilinged rooms, high windows, elevated pulpits and an elevated platform in the rear of the church for an organ, piano or choir. The altar usually was patterned after the altar in the state church but had no cross or candlesticks. Some of the altars had a simple table, which kept with the Mennonite tradition, a black cloth spread over it and a bible and lectern placed on top of it. The seating arrangement was usually two rows of pews placed symmetrically on both sides of the center aisle, with men and women sitting on opposite sides. Some of the church buildings would have an area off the right of the congregation where the church council would sit.
Despite broad tolerance from the Elector, Mennonites in the Palatinate continued to be an oppressed people. The land they were first invited to come and refurbish was later required by the government to be sold back to the original owners at the original price. This was after they had taken time and energy to restore the land and buildings. When there got to be too many Mennonites in the area, the government required that a certain amount of Mennonite families needed to leave the area, for they did not want too many Mennonite families living in the Palatinate. Special taxes were placed upon them. Regarding the number of Mennonite families living in the area, Horsch explains, “An enumeration taken in 1739 revealed that there were three hundred and forty Mennonite families in the Palatinate. The government decided that the number had to be reduced to two hundred families. Various new measures of oppression were enacted and the annual ‘protection money’ was raised from six to twelve florins per family.”

Along with the requirement to sell their land and the heavy taxation, they continued to be a religious group that was not accepted in the region. This resulted in other degrading civil disabilities and religious intolerance during this era. Young men were barred from becoming involved in the craft guilds and were therefore unable to learn a trade. Mennonites could not

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live in cities without permission and they had limited land ownership rights. They were not
allowed to marry except with the consent of the local authorities nor were they allowed to have
their deceased buried in the public cemeteries. With all of this oppression, many Mennonite
families had a great desire to emigrate, and North America was attractive because it offered a
promise of religious liberty.

In 1681 an English Quaker, William Penn, received some land in America from King Charles II.
Penn envisioned this land, soon called Pennsylvania, as a refuge for the English Quakers who
were being oppressed, and Penn also opened his colony to other religious groups in Europe. He
looked for other religious groups that were being denied basic civil and religious rights that the
state churches were receiving. In inviting these religious groups to the new world he made
available a land where Mennonites and other religious groups would be able to live with
religious freedom.

Penn issued an invitation to Quakers and other persecuted religious groups in Europe. This
included the Mennonites along the German Rhine in areas such as Krefeld, and Kriegsheim
located in the Palatinate. The first to respond to his invitation was a group from Krefeld,
primarily Quakers of Mennonite background and one Mennonite family. On October 6, 1683
they arrived in Philadelphia and founded a new settlement about six miles north of Philadelphia,
which became known as Germantown.\footnote{Henry C. Smith, “Pennsylvania (U.S.A.),” Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (1959), http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/P4662.html (accessed October 12, 2011).} The village of Germantown was not a Mennonite
village but it does have the distinction of being the location of the first permanent Mennonite
community in America.
This first group of immigrants from Krefeld met together for worship and in the next fifteen years other religious groups came to Germantown and were welcomed to this ecumenical,
German-language. The group consisted of German Quakers, Mennonites, Lutherans and Reformed. Germantown was the location for not only the first Mennonite church in America but also the first Dunkers (today, Church of the Brethren), German Reformed and German Lutheran congregations and one of the earliest Methodist congregations. Immigrants continued coming to Germantown and as the village grew individual religious groups began meeting separately. Mennonites continued to emigrate from the Palatinate region and by 1690 there were enough families to start a distinctly Mennonite meeting on their own. In 1698, the group seems to have organized more formally as a congregation.

The Germantown congregation was the first Mennonite congregation to establish outside of Europe. After meeting in homes from the time they arrived in America, in 1708 the congregation built a log structure as their first meetinghouse. This meetinghouse stood until 1770 when it was replaced with a stone structure that remains to this day.

The first Mennonite immigrants were not wealthy but they were willing to make sacrifices in the early years regarding how they built their homes and business. They began to settle the area quickly by living in caves, building cellars and then homes on top. Many were weavers by trade and set to growing the flax and other material they needed to develop a business. Before long they were selling cloth and became known for their good quality cloth. They were hard workers and achieved respect and financial growth in the community and beyond. Because of their success, other Mennonites from Europe were encouraged to migrate to America.

As the region around Germantown became occupied and developed, immigrants began to move in other directions looking for other land to buy and develop. In 1702 Mennonites were settling

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along the Perkiomen Creek, 15 miles to the northwest of Germantown in what is now Montgomery County. This area became known as the Skippack settlement and developed into a large Mennonite presence. Immigrants came from South Germany and expanded the area on both sides of the Skippack settlement. This area grew with new congregations and settlements and branched out to include the whole of Montgomery County and parts of Bucks, Chester, Berks, Lehigh and Northampton counties. This area is the location of the Franconia Conference of Mennonite Church USA and is the targeted area of this thesis’s study.

Mennonite immigrants continued to come to America and from 1710 through the 1750s there was a continuous flow of newcomers from Switzerland and the Palatinate. Mennonite settlement expanded in Montgomery County and surrounding counties during this migration. After 1710 others headed west of Philadelphia to what is now Lancaster County. By the time of the French and Indian War (1755-1760) the number of Mennonites migrating to the Franconia area had slowed. Instead the new immigrants began heading farther west in Pennsylvania where there was cheaper land.
Chapter 4
Mennonite Meetinghouse Architecture in the Franconia Area

Historically Mennonites have taken the architectural ideas around them and adjusted to whatever new environment they find themselves. Mennonites who came from the Palatinate region in Germany were for the most part people who made a living as farmers or rural craftspeople and so their architectural influences came from the places they dwelled: barns, farm houses and schools. Cornelius Krahn, author of many articles concerning Mennonite architecture, relates in his article, ‘Architecture’, “Nowhere, however, has any characteristic or distinctive architectural style developed which was created by Mennonites.”

There were two major sources of origin and lines of development for Mennonite architectural patterns. They came from the Mennonites of Swiss background and the North-German Mennonites of Dutch background. The Mennonites of Swiss background migrated either directly from Switzerland to Pennsylvania or indirectly by way of the Palatinate region in Germany. This took place largely during the 18th century. As this group migrated and built in America they helped develop and accepted the existing Pennsylvania-German architectural patterns. This Pennsylvania-German architectural pattern was not only uniquely Mennonite, but shared with

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other religious groups from Germany. The North-German Mennonites of Dutch background settled in the Vistula River Delta near Danzig, Prussia (today, Gdansk, Poland). At the end of the 18th century, many North German Mennonites migrated into the southern parts of the Russian Empire (today, Ukraine) and from there, after 1874, to the U.S. plains and Canadian prairies. Because these Mennonites migrated to areas west of the Mississippi River, they are not a focus group for this study, although the types of meetinghouses they built in Danzig was a source of comparison for the study.

The Swiss and South German Mennonites who settled in Pennsylvania during the 18th century became an essential part of the developing Pennsylvania-German culture. There were different groups that came to Pennsylvania whose contributions, combined together, created the Pennsylvania-German culture. There were groups of Lutherans, Reformed, Mennonite, Moravians and other mystic and pietistic groups. The architectural patterns that Pennsylvania Mennonites followed were an essential part of this culture. This can be seen in the types of barns and houses they built. These structures were similar to those built in the area. They were not only similar to other Mennonite farm structures but also similar to those of Lutherans, Reformed and others.

Mennonite church architecture was different though, since Mennonites did not necessarily follow the church practices of other church people (Lutheran and Reformed) in their area, even if they shared similar ideas about how to build houses and barns. As noted above, it was against the law for the Mennonites in Switzerland and other European countries to build churches or special buildings for worship and so they had to worship in people’s homes, and in forests, caves or other hidden areas. There were no meetinghouses built in Switzerland, Alsace or France before the second half of the 19th century. However, Mennonites of colonial Pennsylvania
(1683-1776) were allowed to construct meetinghouses and first built them to resemble a typical home of the time. These were basic log or stone structures that were one-and-a-half stories. These first meetinghouses were sometimes also used as schools during the week, though eventually there were separate buildings constructed for each of these purposes.

It is unknown what the catalyst was that motivated the Mennonites to stop worshiping in their homes and to build meetinghouses. One may speculate that as they grew in numbers the need for a larger space was necessary, but a more significant reason may be the freedom they had to be able to build a worship space. For so many years in Europe they had been forbidden to build worship spaces, so when given the opportunity to build actual meetinghouses they did.

The early Mennonite meetinghouses had distinguishing characteristics. They were often made out of stone which would be white washed and later constructed with brick. Many of the brick and stone structures would be plastered. Early on, the building was very plain and similar to a school building. As the congregation would grow the building would grow in length. This is seen in the Franconia Mennonite and Deep Run West meetinghouses. Originally the meetinghouse had one entrance at the end or side. Later on two entrances were added, one for the men and one for the women. A small porch at the entrance was often extended across one entire side and sometimes also along the end of the meetinghouse.

The interior of the early Mennonite meetinghouse also had distinguishing characteristics. The traditional interior layout of the Dutch worship building was where the congregation would gather on three sides of the building around the preacher, who spoke from a desk or table. The table or desk would be raised slightly in some situations. This layout is seen in early Mennonite meetinghouses in the Netherlands and in Pennsylvania. The original interior woodwork and
furniture were left plain and unpainted. Men and women would enter in separate entrances and also sit on separate sides. Hats and bonnets were hung from racks with pegs that were hung from the ceilings above the benches. These racks are still present in a few of the meetinghouses surveyed. The ministers often sat at a table opposite the entrance. In later years, a long pulpit was introduced where the sermon was given. Behind the long pulpit there would be a long bench where all of the ministers would sit. In the mid-19th century when Sunday schools and other activities were beginning to be introduced, basements became a vital part of the meetinghouse structure.

The origin and development of the early Pennsylvania German Mennonite meetinghouse was most closely related to the meetinghouses of other plain peoples such as the Friends (Quaker) meetinghouse. The characteristics of Quaker architecture stemmed from the Midlands of England from which Quakers had emigrated and from the Netherlands. This basic type of Pennsylvania Mennonite meetinghouse structure and design spread to other parts of America—Virginia, Ontario and Ohio, with local adaptations made in each location—as Mennonites migrated from Pennsylvania to these places.

As to how southeastern Pennsylvania Mennonite meetinghouses were or were not influenced by their country of origin, Mennonite architecture historian, Cornelius Krahn, explains “It is possible though not likely that the early Mennonite meetinghouse of Pennsylvania was also influenced by practices common among the Mennonite of the Palatinate in South Germany. Until 1750 the Mennonites in the Palatinate had not yet been able to erect special houses for worship, and after this almost no emigrants crossed the Atlantic until after 1815. The first
church buildings in the Palatinate were plain one-story structures with rectangular windows that gave little impression of being ‘churches’. 

The early 19th century Mennonite meetinghouses in Pennsylvania were built in a simple rectangular shape with only one story or story and a half. By mid-century, Mennonites were building their meetinghouses to resemble meetinghouses of other groups at the time. These structures were often built on a basement foundation that rose above ground level with the main worship space accessed by climbing a set of stairs. This gave the structure a taller and larger feel. Several meetinghouses from the survey show this progression—Upper Milford (1876), West Swamp (1874), Second Mennonite (1898), First Mennonite (1881) and Eden (1894).

It is interesting to note that when the Eastern District Mennonites began building their worship structures in the mid-19th century they took on some of the same characteristics as the German Mennonite churches did of that time. An example of this is the remodeling of the Krefeld church—the church from which the first Mennonites had immigrated to Germantown in the 1680s. The new Krefeld meetinghouse was setback from the street and was basically hidden. There was a portal to enter and it is one of the oldest monuments in the Krefeld wall. In 1843, a major renovation took place adding an apse and interior wood paneling with marble columns. These changes match those one sees in southeastern Pennsylvania among Eastern District meetinghouses built in the second half of the 19th century which included apses, wood paneling, and fairly ornate furnishings. Does this reflect how Mennonites become more involved with the broader society and accepted more ideas of what a worship space could look like? How is it that some Mennonite worship spaces began to have such features as apse, decorative wood

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21 Krahn, van der Zijpp, Kreider, "Architecture."
paneling, and balconies for organs or choirs and it began to happen around the same time period in both Pennsylvania and Germany?

With the above history given, is there a distinct Mennonite church architecture? Historically there may be one because over time Mennonites have taken on ideas of the culture around them. They began to meet where they could whether in woods, caves, barns, or houses. They learned to adapt to the situation around them and when they were able to build a specific structure for worship the predominant characteristic of the building was that it was simple. They focused their faith on the spiritual not on the material world and this was reflected in how they built and designed their meetinghouses. Mennonites believed that the church was the group or community, and although it was important for the community to have a place to meet, the building itself was less significant. The meetinghouse was a place to gather to worship God, but the gathered people are what made a meetinghouse a church.
Chapter 5
Field Survey

Field Survey Description

When deciding a geographical area to survey meetinghouses, one promising approach is to look at an area that had the earliest migration of Mennonites. The oldest Mennonite meetinghouse in the United States is in Germantown, Pennsylvania (built in 1770) so that was a good starting point. The Franconia Conference area was the region where the earliest Mennonite settlers headed when they moved out of Germantown. This was a natural progression to follow.

After considering the meetinghouses that were built in the Franconia Conference area during the past three hundred years, the survey focus was narrowed down to those meetinghouses which were built in the 19th century and which were still standing. This was the path chosen for no better reason than that it seemed to be the era from which the most Mennonite meetinghouses were still available to view. It ended up being a wise choice because of what happened in the Conference in the mid-19th-century.

In 1847, came the great schism of the Mennonite church in America. Not only did a rather substantial group break off from the mainline Mennonite church, but this new group along with its new ideas also began building its meetinghouses in new ways. The design and layout of the
Mennonite meetinghouse had stayed much the same for the first 150 years. The ‘new’ Mennonite group was more open to new ideas and practices than what the ‘old’ Mennonite group had been. They (the new) looked to the broader Christian church for inspiration in designing their new meetinghouses. This development became apparent while doing the survey.

The Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, Pennsylvania was contacted for information on meetinghouses in the Franconia Conference area that were still standing. Forest Moyer, project archivist, was very willing and helpful in putting together a list of such Mennonite meetinghouses/churches. From this list, the survey of twenty-two meetinghouses was compiled.

The survey was conducted on three days in June 2011 and two days in November 2011. A survey format adapted from the book *Recording Historic Structures*, edited by John A. Burns, was used. The following information was recorded from the survey: Name, location/orientation, construction date, building plan/configuration, building materials, architectural description (windows, doorways/doors, roof, dimensions), interior plan/significant features (location of benches, type of pulpit/bench, balcony), outbuildings/cemetery/school, historical notes, and photographs (each elevation, cemetery, or other significant structure).

What follows is the field survey of the twenty-two Mennonite meetinghouses surveyed. They are listed in alphabetical order by name of meetinghouse. Photos of the elevations follow in the appendix. Additional photos may be requested for viewing by contacting the author at jlamstutz@bnin.net.
Location of Philadelphia meetinghouses

Location of meetinghouses north of Philadelphia
Name: Alleghany

Construction Date: 1855

Location/Orientation: Horning Rd, Alleghenyville, Brecknock Twp., Berks Co., PA/faces west

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/four-bay, unequally divided three-cell structure

Building Materials: Stone/wood

Architectural Description: One story, four-bay-by-two-bay sandstone structure with side gable roof; sand stone foundation; walls one foot and six inches thick extending to peak of roof, with rough-cut stones, irregular courses and rough-cut irregular quoins; two entrances on west wall one in southern most bay, second in third bay with a window north of each entrance: south entrance to ladies cloakroom and nursery; north entrance to main assembly room.
**Windows:** Six-over-six double-hung wood covered with double wood shutters, wood sill, architrave surround; single wood shuttered window on north and south gable with wood sill and wood lintel.

**Doorways/doors:** Six-panel wood doors, flush with interior wall, stone sill, with wood surround, west entrance door with original German latches.

**Roof:** Side gable with red cedar shingles, slight eave overhang with small boxed cornice.

**Dimensions:** 35' X 27’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Three-cell, listed on the National Register of Historic Places 2009. Shows construction methods used by Pennsylvania German Mennonite congregations in the 1850’s with little change to the original design and furnishings. Interior stone walls plastered (ca. 1950), ceiling and room partition made with random-width unfinished tongue-and-groove pine boards, floor is covered with random tongue-and-groove pine boards. All furnishings are original: wooden benches, preachers’ bench, singer’s table with benches and pine board hat racks with cast-iron hooks suspended from ceiling joists.

**Balcony/gallery:** none

**Bench layout:** Southern half of assembly room benches run east to west with a center aisle; northern assembly half, benches run north to south with singer’s table in the center; preachers’ bench along northern wall.

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Two new outhouses along east wall/cemetery across road to the west

**History:** Alleghany Mennonite was a member of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. It is being included in this survey because of the significant simple Mennonite meetinghouse architecture it displays from the 19th century. It is on the National Register of Historic Places
(NR). In its nomination for the NR its significance is stated as “Without any ornamentation, the simplicity of the Meetinghouse architecture is an important example of the quality of design and workmanship and the simple lifestyle of the Alleghany Mennonites in the mid-1800s. Thus, it is one of the oldest surviving, least-altered and originally-furnished Mennonite meetinghouses in the nation and is an example of the primitive places of worship used by the early Mennonites.”

Mennonites first came to this area in 1745. Most likely a congregation was formed around 1760. They worshiped in homes until 1855, when they built this meetinghouse. Around 30 members of the congregation moved to Canada in the early 1800s. By the mid-20th century the membership was 10. The building is now used for special occasions and is a place to observe how early 19th century Mennonite meetinghouses looked.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** The building has its original windows, doors, furnishings and interior wood paneled wall. A unique feature is the rough-cut irregular stone quoins.

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22 National Register.  

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: #5 to 9

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  
Date Surveyed: 11/03/11
Name: Bally

Construction Date: 1899

Location/Orientation: Main Street, Bally, PA, Washington Twp., Berks Co. /faces southeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular plan/configuration unknown

Building Materials: Stone and wood

Architectural Description: One story with basement, four-bay-by-five-bay structure with stucco stone walls and front gable, stone foundation, concrete steps and landing to front entrance.

Windows: Original wood two-over-two double-hung with operational wood paneled shutters on three of the four southeast/northwest windows. Northwest wall: two wood two-light gable windows, over a louvered opening. Front southeast wall: ten-light fan gable window. Southwest/ northeast wall: newer wood one-over-one double-hung windows. All windows with wood sills and lintels.

Roof: New metal roof.

Dimensions: 40’X55’

Interior plan/Significant features: Interior plan unknown.

Balcony/gallery: Unknown

Bench layout: Unknown

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery southwest of structure

History: The early history of the Bally congregation is also the early history of the Hereford congregation. These two congregations were of one in the beginning. Mennonites began to settle this area in the 1720’s and began meeting for worship in one another homes as early as 1725. Spoken history tells that the first meetinghouse was built in 1732. By 1755, the congregation had grown to a point that they needed more worship space so the old meetinghouse was torn down and a new one built. The new meetinghouse is described in the History of the Hereford Mennonite Congregation at Bally, Pennsylvania as a “low log structure with walls made of planks for long preservation, weatherboarded and whitewashed. It presented a quaint appearance with its joists upon which the roof rested, extending across the sides of the building with pent eaves along the gable ends, corresponding to those on the sides.

24 Wenger, History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference, 117.
It was somewhat larger than the ordinary schoolhouse of those days.” In 1790, an addition was built to the north end to be used as schoolroom. There were folding doors placed between this new schoolroom and the main room for use in worship services. The benches used were backless and the pulpit was only a basic table. At a later date, better benches were added and the pulpit was raised a step above the floor. There were two entrances to the building. The last worship service was held in this meetinghouse in 1899. It was torn down and a new stone and plastered building was erected. The historic meetinghouse is presently being used as a church-sponsored community youth center for the town of Bally.

Bally church was originally known as the Hereford congregation but with the Oberholtzer schism of 1847 the congregation split. The group that continued with the Franconia Mennonite Conference became known as Bally Mennonite and the group that joined up with the Obverholtzer’s new conference retained the name Hereford Mennonite congregation. Both groups shared the use of the structure until 1851 when Hereford built a new structure and began meeting there. The Hereford meetinghouse is located just southwest of Bally meetinghouse. Bally congregation worshiped in the historic meetinghouse until 1971 when they built a new structure at the southern edge of town.

Architecturally Significant Details: Some of the original windows and wood shutters are present. Front southeast façade has original ten-light fan gable window. The entrance on the southeast front façade in the northern door bay has the original double wood four-panel doors with a two light transom. Door is set back with five-panel wood side surrounds and two panel wood above surround.

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 10 to 16

Surveyor: Janette Amstutz
Date Surveyed: 6/15/11
**Name:** Bertolet

**Construction Date:** 1846/1847

**Location/Orientation:** Colonial Rd., Upper Frederick Twp., Frederick, PA/faces southwest.

**Building plan/Configuration:** Rectangular plan/ single cell structure

**Building Materials:** Brick walls with rubble stone foundation

**Architectural Description:** One-and-half story, three-bay-by-five-bay structure with front gable roof; single cell structure with principle entrance being the center bay on the southwest wall. Southeastern wall: secondary entrance in center bay. Northwest wall: three-bay with three windows. All walls brick clad with northeast wall stucco over brick. Stone foundation: brick header course watertable. Brick walls: common variant with seven stretcher rows per header row.
**Windows**: Six-over-six double-hung wood windows with wood sills and lintels, operational wood paneled shutters. Attic gable: Two six-over-six double hung wood windows with wood sills and lintels.

**Doorways/doors**: Eight-panel wood doors with decorative threshold crown with stone threshold sill, one concrete step.

**Roof**: front gable slate roof

**Dimensions**: 30'X40'

**Interior plan/Significant features**: One cell with preachers’ bench along the third bay on northwest wall

**Balcony/gallery**: None

**Bench layout**: Moveable benches; presently one row of benches on each side of southeast entrance which extends to depth of entrance on southwest entrance; benches aligned in such a way to create a u-shape with the two entrances creating two isles.

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School**: Cemetery located south of meetinghouse

**History**: Group organized around 1846 by a few Mennonite families in the area from the Schwenksville congregation. The surviving building is the first and only building at this location. The burial ground on the site has been a private burying site for the Frey family for more than a century before the meetinghouse was built. The oldest legible gravestone marker is dated 1766. The first meeting in this meetinghouse was on May 23, 1847. In the 1847 Mennonite conference division, Bertolets chose to join the new Eastern conference and later the General Conference. It is of interest to note that the meetinghouse is located along a historical mile of road: South of the meetinghouse N.B. Grubb, prominent Mennonite leader in the late 19th
century and early 20th century, was born and raised. South of the meetinghouse is the farmhouse of Moravian Henry Antes, a renowned local religious and political figure of the 18th century, which was listed on the National Historic Landmark in 1992 and is restored and operates as a museum (open for tours by appointment only, 215-234-8953.) Another well-known Moravian leader of the time Zinzendorf visited Antes’ farm and preached there as well as General George Washington had headquarters at this farmstead during September 1777. In 1848, one of the first Sunday schools in a Mennonite meetinghouse was held here. Regular worship services ended here around 1920 because of small attendance. Because of the advent of automobiles the remaining members were able to travel to the Eden congregation in Schwenksville. Bertolets Burial Ground Association is responsible for the care of the meetinghouse and the burial grounds.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Original wood windows with original operational wood paneled shutters/hardware. Original slate roof with boxed cornice returns.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan](image1.png)

**Appendix Photos:** # 17 to 22

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/15/11
Name: Coventry

Construction Date: 1890

Location/Orientation: Old Schuylkill Rd and Speice Rd, East Coventry Twp., Chester County/faces southeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/ configuration unknown

Building Materials: Stucco over brick and stone

Architectural Description: One story, three-bay-by-four-bay stucco rough stone structure with gable roof. Entrance southeast wall center bay, flanked by wood shuttered windows. Field stone foundation two-and-a-half feet thick. Exterior basement metal entrance doors southwest facade. Name plate southeast wall gable: rectangular shape, stone with brick header trimmed, reads “Coventry Mennonite Church 1798-1890”.
**Windows:** Tall three paneled wood double shutters with hardware and wood sills and lintels. Shutters closed unable to see type of windows. Round one-light gable window southeast gable: four decorative wood keystones with decorative perimeter trim. Round one-light gable window northwest wall: six decorative wood keystones with decorative perimeter trim.

**Doorways/doors:** Double six panel wood doors with wood transom, wood surround with large plain wood lintel and large stone sill.

**Roof:** Steel covered front gabled with gable ends with mitered returns. Brick ridge interior chimney south wall.

**Dimensions:** 28’ X 40’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** unable to gain access

**Balcony/gallery:**

**Bench layout:**

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery on all sides of MH

**History:** Coventry was the first Mennonite congregation in the Pottstown area. Mennonite settlers came to this area as early as 1720; by 1751 they had constructed their first MH. In 1798, the Coventry congregation built another MH at the present location and in 1890 built the present structure replacing the 1789 one. Coventry shared a minister with Vincent Mennonite congregation and was the larger of the two groups but by 1890 it was dwindling in size. As a joint effort, a Sunday school was begun in 1882 with a local Church of the Brethren congregation. This venture lead to some disagreements with some of the leaders of the congregation, Sunday school was dissolved with many of the participants joining the Church of the Brethren congregation. This left the Coventry
congregation with only a few members. By 1914, services were discontinued at Coventry. Two factors lead to Coventry's decline: first, the insistence of the use of the German language, and secondly, its location of being at the far edge of the Franconia Mennonite conference. The cemetery surrounding the meetinghouse is no-longer managed by any Mennonites. The meetinghouse is presently being used as a storage space for the grounds keeping items used in the cemetery.

(The first Mennonite settlers who came to this area around 1720 were from Switzerland and the Palatinate.)

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Tall original paneled wood shutters closed over windows. Front façade has double six panel wood doors with wood transom, wood surround with large plain wood lintel, and large stone sill. Gable round one-light window trimmed with four wood keystones-one in each gable. Round gable window on northwest wall has six decorative wood keystones with decorative perimeter trim.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan](image)

**Appendix Photos:** # 23 to 28

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/15/11
Name: Deep Run West

Construction Date: 1849

Location/Orientation: 1008 Deep Run Rd, Bedminster Twp., Bucks Co., Perkasie, PA/faces northeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/unequally divided two cell structure

Building Materials: Brick and stone

Architectural Description: Two and a half story, three-bay-by-six-bay (1849), three-bay-by-eight-bay- (1949 addition to meetinghouse) structure unequally divided. Two-cell structure with larger western section constituting six-bays from west to east and the smaller east cell constituting two-bays including a secondary entrance. Foundation: rough-cut stone with irregular courses. Front northeast façade: primary entrance in center bay flanked by windows, porch with two square wood columns, two wood pilasters, wide cornice and metal hipped roof.
Southeast secondary entrance porch: two square wood columns, two wood pilasters, wide cornice with front gabled slate roof and newer black decorative metal rails on east and west edge. Brick walls: common variant with seven stretcher rows per header row beginning with header row upon foundation. Stone nameplate: southeast wall reads “The Mennonite Society of Deep Run & Plumstead A.D. 1849”.

**Windows:** Northwest/southeast walls: twelve-over-twelve double-hung wood windows with operational two-paneled double shutters with hardware, wood sills and plain wood trim. Northeast wall: twelve-over-eight double-hung wood windows flanking primary entrance with operation two-paneled double shutters with hardware. Second story northeast wall: three six-over-six double-hung wood windows with wood sills and wide wood trim. Attic northeast wall: two six-over-six double-hung wood windows with wood sills and wide wood trim.

**Doorways/doors:** Primary northeast entrance center bay: one double doorway with three-paneled wood doors, doorway set flush with interior wall with paneled wood surround—three-paneled side panels with two-paneled top panel. Concrete sill extends into concrete porch floor. Secondary entrance southeast wall eastern most bay: double three-paneled doors set flush with outside wall with plain wood trim and lintel and concrete sill.

**Roof:** Front gable slate roof with snow guards, three-part entablature-cornice, frieze, architrave.

**Dimensions:** 39’ X 55’ (1849) 1949 addition added approximately 20’ in length

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Smaller cell serves as foyer with larger cell being worship space. Walls are one-and-a-half feet thick and interior walls plastered.
Balcony/gallery: Balcony above smaller east cell.

Bench layout: Two rows facing west with center and side aisles.

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery east of meetinghouse

History: Deep Run meetinghouse was built in 1849. The group that built this meetinghouse was originally a part of the Deep Run church that is located just a short distance away. The division of the Mennonites in 1847 was the catalyst for Deep Run splitting. The members who were united with Oberholtzer desired to continue meeting in the original Deep Run building offering to meet every other Sunday in order for both congregations to use the facility. Problems arose when the Franconia group began meeting every Sunday therefore not letting the Oberholtzer group meet in their meetinghouse. In 1847, this new group, “Mennonite Society of Deep Run and Plumstead,” purchased land and built their own meetinghouse.

This new building is significant in that it was built with a rather high pulpit which was uncommon to Mennonite meetinghouses of the time. This action shows how unrestricted this new group of Mennonites were. The exterior still retains the original brick, windows, wood shutters and slate roof.

Architecturally Significant Details: Original double-hung wood windows with operational two-paneled double shutters with hardware. Double doorway with three-paneled wood doors, doorway set in flush with interior wall with paneled wood surround: Three-paneled side panels with two-paneled top panel. This meetinghouse is one of the first built in this style within the Mennonite church. It was built soon after the Schism of 1847 and is a good example of what was to be built in the new conference of Mennonites. The taller structure to encompass a balcony, and raised pulpit area with decorative wood work are distinguishing characteristics.
Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: #29 to 32

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 6/14/11
**Name:** Delph-Herrehous/Herrite  

**Construction Date:** 1814/rebuilt 1855  

**Location/Orientation:** Indian Creek Rd between Mill Rd and Schoolhouse Rd, Franconia Twp., Montgomery Co., Harleysville, PA. /faces southeast  

**Building plan/Configuration:** Rectangular plan/configuration unknown  

**Building Materials:** Stucco covered stone  

**Architectural Description:** One story, four-bay-by-two-bay stone structure with gable roof. Two main entrances along southeast façade with wood double shuttered windows west of each entrance. Ridge of southeast and northwest walls flare outward to meet roof edge. East wall: two wood double shuttered windows, one gable single wood shuttered window. North wall: three evenly spaced wood double shuttered windows. West wall: identical to east wall. Wall depth 1’-6.5”.
**Windows:** Wood sills and lintels, wood paneled shutters with original hardware.

**Doorways/doors:** Two doorways on southeast wall, located in the second and fourth bays: single door entries with plan, beveled-joint surrounds and plank doors. Entry way—door recessed, hung on interior wall, entry wall—recessed, trimmed out in painted wood with added concrete slab floor.

**Roof:** Side gabled and covered with square slate tiles. Ridge chimney located off center.

**Dimensions:** 35'2"x20'2"

**Interior plan/Significant features:** unable to view interior space

**Balcony/gallery:** unknown

**Bench layout:** unknown

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery across road to southeast

**History:** The Herrehouse was built in 1855 to replace a meetinghouse that was torn down near Harleysville. The original 1814 structure was taken down and then rebuilt, 1855, in the present location. This new meetinghouse was built by the Delp’s family cemetery and now sits across the road from it.

The group that originally met in this meetinghouse was given the name of Funkites after Bishop Christian Funk (1731-1811). They withdrew from the Franconia Conference (Mennonite Church) in 1778 because of their empathies with the seceding American colonies and willingness to pay the special war tax. The Franconia conference favored the continued loyalty to the British Crown because of a previous oath of allegiance. This withdrawal from the Franconia conference is considered the first schism among the American Mennonites. Funk’s out spoken words in support of giving an oath of allegiance to the seceding colonies and his support of paying a
special war tax cost him and his followers by being excommunicated from the Franconia conference. After the revolution had ended Funk and his congregation were invited to be reconciled to the Franconia conference but he refused. He rejected the invitation to be admitted as a transgressor.

The Funkites, as they became known, were never reconciled back into the Franconia Conference. In the years following Funk’s death 1812-1815, the Funkites built four or five meetinghouses in Montgomery County. The Herrehaus is one of those meetinghouses. It was torn down and rebuilt in the present location in 1855. The Funkites were without a true leader and gradually became weaker and smaller as a group. Overtime they would unite with other religious groups such as the Church of the Brethren, Reformed Mennonites, and a few joined the new group of Mennonites from the schism of 1847.

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 33 to 37

Surveyor: Janette Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 6/13/2011
Name: Eden

Construction Date: 1894

Location/Orientation: 609 Main Street, Schwenksville, PA 19473/Faces southeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/configuration unknown

Building Materials: Brick and stone

Architectural Description: One-and-a-half story, three-bay-by-five-bay brick structure with front gable roof. High stone foundation: rough-cut stone with irregular courses, northeast foundation wall with outside concrete basement stair entrance (later addition). Southeast façade: main entrance in center bay flanked by tall windows, new concrete steps and ramp. Red brick walls: common bond with twelve stretcher rows per Flemish bond row (header-stretcher), double row moulded brick water table located five brick courses above stone foundation, corner brick pilasters with brick pilasters between each bay, upper part of walls
with brick corbeled edges between pilasters. Southeast wall date and name plate reads “Eden Mennonite Church 1894.”

**Windows:** Four-over-four double-hung wood gothic sash windows, aluminum storm windows with aluminum surrounds up to arch of sash, aluminum covered wood sill with double row round topped brick arches. Eight-light fan window on southeast wall with aluminum covered wood sill with quadruple row round topped brick arch with outer header row. Foundation windows: two-over-two double-hung wood windows with stone sill and flat stone arch, aluminum storm windows.

**Doorways/doors:** Main southeast entrance: double five-panel wood doors with arched wood transom, quadruple row round topped brick arch with outer header row. Northeast foundation entrance: newer one-light steal door with side light and large single light transom, stone slab sill with flat stone jack arch with center keystone. Southwest foundation entrance: newer steal paneled door with three-upper-lights.

**Roof:** Steep pitched front gable asphalt shingle with mitered returns and dentil moldings. Southwest foundation entrance shed roof.

**Dimensions:** 60’ X 45’-6” (original structure)

**Interior plan/Significant features:** ca. 1910 single cell, raised stage area with decorative wood pulpit and chairs.

**Balcony/gallery:** unknown

**Bench layout:** ca. 1910 two rows benches with wide center aisle running northwest/southeast, northeast side in front two benches perpendicular to other benches.

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** None
**History:** The Eden Mennonite congregation was known by several other names in the past, Zieglers’, Mine Hill, Gottshalls’ Eden and presently New Eden. The group officially became a congregation in 1847. Before 1818 Mennonites in the area worshiped every four weeks in a building that was also used as a school. This was located at the Keely Church grounds and was also used by the Lutherans and Reformed. In 1818, the Mennonites organized into a congregation and built their own stone meetinghouse. A second meetinghouse was built out of brick in 1851, and replaced the 1818 meetinghouse. A third church building which is the present one was built in 1894. This structure was built across town from the original two buildings.

The entire congregation left the Franconia Conference in the Oberholtzer division of 1847 becoming a part of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

A Sunday School was first organized in 1851 but faced much opposition so it was forced to close. In 1867, it was successfully introduced again.

Membership began declining in the mid-20th century so in 2000 the congregation decided to develop a new congregation at the present location and gave it a new name, New Eden Fellowship.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Corner brick pilasters with brick pilasters between each bay. Upper part of walls with brick corbeled edges between pilasters. Wood gothic sash windows topped with double brick row arches. Main entrance: double five-panel wood doors with arched wood transom, quadruple row round topped brick arch with outer header row. Foundation windows and doors have stone slab sills with flat stone jack arches with center keystones. The style of building is a good example of how the Eastern District Conference of Mennonites began building their worship spaces in the mid to late 19th century.
Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 38 to 42

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 11/04/11
Name: First Mennonite of Philadelphia, presently Lewis Temple of God in Christ

Construction Date: 1881

Location/Orientation: 509 Diamond St., Philadelphia, PA/faces south

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/ configuration unknown

Building Materials: Brick, wood

Architectural Description: Two-story with crawlspace foundation three-bay-by-four-bay front gable structure. Walls: Common bond red brick walls with brick dentil work along cornice. Front façade: brick pilasters between each bay, molded brick water table between pilasters, corbelling brick along gable edge and decorative brick course between first and second story. Date and name stone above front entrance reads “First Mennonite Church Founded 1865.” Date stone southwest corner “1881.” Decorative iron gates on foundation ventilation openings.

Windows: Many windows boarded over and louvered glass added to some of original windows. South façade: two second-story windows with seventeen-over-fifteen
arched stationary wood sashes with round brick lintel with keystones and stone sill, center bay once had window but now bricked in, first story with nine-over-nine stationary wood sashes with stone sill and lintel. Other facades: first story multi-light and colors, rounded arch wood double hung with stone sill and lintel. Second story multi-light with brick rounded arch lintel and stone sill.

Doorways/doors: Primary entrance south façade: round arched with brick and stone keystone with recent addition of protruding walls encasing original entrance with new wood double doors embellished with crosses.

Roof: Front gable, not able to discern type of shingles.

Dimensions: 34’ X 57’

Interior plan/Significant features: Unable to gain access to interior or view from windows.

Balcony/gallery: Unknown

Bench layout: Unknown

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Sixteen-foot wide brick addition to east of structure, unsure of purpose.

History: First Mennonite Church of Philadelphia, (General Conference Mennonite Church) was formed in 1865. The Mennonites of the time that lived in the city of Philadelphia were tired of traveling outside the city to attend worship services so a group formed, meeting first in a small chapel. The congregation joined the Eastern District Conference in 1872. Originally all the services were in German but by 1914 they were using the English language. The issue of what language to use caused discord around 1874 and about one half of the members withdrew their membership and joined the Moravian Church with some of them later returning. In 1880, they saw the need and had the desire to build a new building and soon after in 1881, they
constructed the present building at a cost of $9,000. The congregation continued to grow in numbers and by the latter half of the 19th century the membership had grown from the original 35 members to over 200 in 1890. By 1915, there were 465 members. As the congregation grew in numbers they felt the desire to outreach in a new area of the city. In 1894, they established a mission which developed into Second Mennonite Church of Philadelphia.

Historically this congregation is significant in its progressive view of women and leadership. In January 1911, Ann Allebach was ordained here. She was the first women to be ordained in a Mennonite congregation in the United States. Ms. Allebach moved on to New York City where she was very involved in church ministries. It took another 60 years until another woman was ordained for ministry in the Mennonite church in the United States. First Mennonite Church had a women pastor, Ms. Mary E. Bakewell from September 1929-April 1930. This was during a time when women were not really accepted in pastoral roles. Another example of the congregation encouraging women for leadership was at the 70th anniversary of the congregation. At this anniversary celebration, in 1935, a young woman, Wilhelmina Kuyf was ordained for missionary service. She traveled to China with the foreign Mission Board of the Mennonite General Conference.

As families and individuals moved out of the city into the suburbs in the mid-20th century the congregation decreased in numbers. The membership in 1957 was 173. In 1959 the congregation built a church in Huntingdon Valley as a result of membership moving to the suburbs.

\[26\] Gingerich, Stoltzfus 1999, pg12.
Architecturally Significant Details: Brick pilasters between each bay, molded brick water table between pilasters, corbelling brick along gable edge. Decorative brick course between first and second story. Original multi-light, multi-colored two story windows. Iron fence post-remnant of iron fence that encircled building originally.

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 43 to 47

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 6/14/11
Name: Flatland (presently called The Redeemed Christian Church of God Quakertown)

Construction Date: 1837

Location/Orientation: 180 W. Thatcher Rd, Quakertown, Bucks County, PA/faces southwest

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/configuration unknown

Building Materials: Stone

Architectural Description: One and a half story, four-bay-by-three-bay stone structure with gable roof and field stone foundation with vented crawl space. Main southwest entrance: stone gabled later addition with verge board, cornice and cornice mitered returns. Walls: uncut stone with irregular courses, some newer sections with rough cut stone and regular courses. Southeast wall: three window bays with a door in the northern fourth-bay. Gable ends: two gable windows, oval stone name and date plate in north gable trimmed with red brick with four keystones, reads “P. Martin, G. Landes, J. Benner, 1837.” West wing: stone foundation,
northeast and northwest walls stucco over stone, south wall rough cut stone with regular courses, southwest front with gable entrance bay, northwest wall with external gable-end straight chimney.

**Windows:** Nine-over-six double hung wood windows with aluminum architrave surround and sill and aluminum storm windows. West wing northwest wall: double one-over-one with stone sill. North and south gable: two single sash four-light wood windows with plain surround and wood sill. Southwest entrance: round nine-light gable window with decorative keystone trim.

**Doorways/doors:** Primary doorway located in newer southwest gabled entrance: newer metal double doors with lower vertical panels with nine-lights with aluminum covered surround and concrete sill. Southeast entrance: single metal paneled door in northern most bay with aluminum architrave surround with concrete sill. Northwest entrance: newer double metal door with lower vertical panels with nine-lights and wood plain surround, concrete sill and three concrete steps.

**Roof:** Gabled, asphalt shingles with ridge cap, snow guards on east face and mitered returns on west wing and gabled entrance.

**Dimensions:** 40’ X 30’ (not including west wing)

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Not able to gain access

**Balcony/gallery:** unknown

**Bench layout:** unknown

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery located southwest of structure

**History:** The Flatland meetinghouse was built in 1837 by members of the Springfield and Swamp congregations. Flatland was built so that some members would not need to travel so far
for worship at the Springfield and Swamp meetinghouses. They were a part of the Franconia Conference. Trustees, Jacob Benner and John Landis purchased the acre land for $5. In the north wall is a date stone of 1837 with the names P. Martin, G. Landis, and J. Benner. George Landis was the first ordained resident minister and Jacob Benner was the ordained deacon.

When the great schism of 1847 took place the congregation left the Franconia Conference and sided with Oberholtzer’s new conference. Those members who desired to stay with Franconia conference most likely began attending nearby Saucon or Springfield congregations.

Membership at Flatland was only at its most around 75 attendees.

This meetinghouse is significant for its traditional meetinghouse shape, stone walls and original windows. The addition was respectfully done, not taking away from the integrity of the 1837 structure.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Walls with uncut irregular courses stone. Original double-hung wood windows. Detail of stone nameplate. Stone slab door sill on northeast wall (second-bay from south) shows location of previous entrance.

**Site Plan:**

[Site Plan Image]

**Appendix Photos:** # 48 to 50

**Surveyor:** Janette L Amstutz

**Date Surveyed:** 6/14/11
Name: Franconia

Construction Date: 1892

Location/Orientation: 613 Harleysville Pike, Telford, PA / faces southeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/configuration unknown

Building Materials: stone walls, stone foundation

Architectural Description: One and half story, seven-bay-by-three-bay stone structure with side gable roof. Northeast Wall: two windows with doorway gabled hood door on wall’s north end, two six-over-six double-hung wood windows in gable and gable end with mitered returns. Southeast Wall: west end two windows followed with double wood paneled door, three windows followed by double wood paneled door. Southeast porch: shed roof porch supported with eight wood posts. Northwest Wall: basement entrance double doors with gabled door
hood in northwest corner. Southwest Wall: no longer visible because of later addition to
original structure.

**Windows:** All windows (except gable windows) double hung wood nine-over-six with
wood lintels and sills, window shutter hardware visible but shutters missing.

**Doorways/doors:** Southeast wall: two doorways located in third and seventh bays,
double-door wood paneled with wide lintel and carpeted stone sill. Northeast wall: one
single wood paneled door with gabled doorway hood. Northwest wall: one recent nine-
light double-door located in first bay of northwest wall with shed roof door hood.

**Roof:** side gabled, slate shingles, brick internal gable end chimneys

**Dimensions:** 1882: 59’X70’, 1917: 59’X106’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Interior has been altered from original; newer lights,
carpeted with carpeting running up along the wall by about three feet and a new concrete floor
was added at a later date. It is now used as a fellowship hall with a kitchen added to the newer
southwest end.

**Balcony/gallery:** none

**Bench layout:** benches no longer present

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** cemetery located northwest of church

**History:** The earliest Franconia meetinghouse was built before 1748 and functioned as both the
school house and worship space. (Franconia congregational history tells from the early deeds
that land was donated for a cemetery and meetinghouse in 1729.) The building was replaced
by a stone structure in 1833, enlarged in 1866 and then razed in 1892. A new meetinghouse
was built in that year and enlarged in 1917. The 1917 addition provided the space to seat up to

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27 Paul M. Lederach, *Surrounded by Many Witnesses, Franconia Mennonite Congregation 275th
1,000 people. Franconia Mennonite congregation has been the location of the semiannual sessions of the Franconia Mennonite Conference since 1769.

The Franconia congregation has an Alms book that has been in use since 1767. The Alms book is a signed record by the ordained men of Franconia and four other congregations in the Franconia Conference. (See J. C. Wenger, "Alms Book of the Franconia Mennonite Church 1767-1836," Mennonite Quarterly Review X, 1936, 161-72.)

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Original double hung wood nine-over-six windows with wood lintels and sills. Original wood paneled double-doors on southeast facade. Double entrance on southeast facade. Shed roofed porch along the southeast facade. Gabled door hood on northeast wall.

**Site Plan:**

**Appendix Photos:** # 51 to 56

**Surveyor:** Janette Roth  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/13/2011
Name: Frick's

Construction Date: 1882

Location/Orientation: East Orvilla Road (between State Rt. 309 and Clymer Road), Hatfield Twp., Montgomery County/faces northeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular plan, single cell structure

Building Materials: Brick and wood

Architectural Description: One story, three-bay-by-two –bay structure with side gable roof, fieldstone foundation with concrete plaster, brick header course watertable, brick walls common variant with seven stretcher rows per header row and southeast wall main entrance flanked with shuttered windows.

**Doorways/doors:** Southeast entrance with double wood two-panel doors flush to interior wall, wood paneled surrounds with wood architrave surround and stone slab sill.

**Roof:** Side gabled, slate with projecting eaves, gable ends with mitered returns.

**Dimensions:** 24’X35’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Single cell

**Balcony/gallery:** None

**Bench layout:** Unknown

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery located north east of structure

**History:** The present Frick’s meetinghouse was rebuilt in 1882 using material from the original structure that was built in 1812. In the years 1820-1880 the original structure was not used but only when there was a burial in the cemetery. With this infrequent use the structure became run down. An interest developed in 1882, concerning the state of the original building and the desire to save it. A new building was built using the materials from the old. Great care was taken when removing the bricks and they were able to clean and reuse them in the new. Around 1900 a new slate roof was put on.

During the years of World War II, an interest in its preservation again arose in the community. The stories from the war of destruction and death caused individuals to want to find a way to restore and build up instead of tear down as the war was doing. This sparked the desire to preserve the Frick’s meetinghouse.

In the early years, there were many baptisms in the Neshaminy Creek, which borders the meetinghouse/burial ground property.

Ulles explains in his book, *Frick’s Meetinghouse and Burial Ground*, the reasons for Frick’s preservation as “These are the values for which we preserve Frick’s Meetinghouse and the
memories of its builders: the simplicity of lives built on trust in Jesus Christ; the nonresistance of lives relying completely upon God; the beauty of lives adorned by the Spirit; and the serenity of souls at rest with their Creator and Savior. To these values Frick’s calls us, amid the business and confusion of a world threatened by atheism, nationalism, hatred and nuclear annihilation.”

28

Architecturally Significant Details: Windows covered with operational two-panel wood shutters. Gable end windows with single operational wood board and batten shutters. Entrance with double wood two-panel doors flush to interior wall, wood paneled surrounds the width of the depth of the walls, wood architrave surround and stone slab sill. Original slate roof with projecting eaves, boxed cornices and gable ends with mitered returns.

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 57 to 60

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz
Date Surveyed: 6/13/11

Name: Germantown

Construction Date: 1770

Location/Orientation: 6133 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA/faces southwest

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular

Building Materials: Stone, wood

Architectural Description: One story, three-bay-by-three-bay stone structure with gable roof and field stone foundation. Walls: Uncut fieldstone with irregular courses, thick medium aggregate mortar and larger stone quoins. Date stone front façade reads “1770.”

Windows: Twelve-over-twelve double hung wood with wood sill and plain trim. Operational wood shutters with iron hardware. Front gable: eight-over-eight double hung wood with wood sill and plain trim. 1908 addition: two-over-two double-hung


Roof: Front gable, slate shingles with wide eaves and boxed cornice.

Dimensions: 30’ X 35’ (1770)  30’ X 65’ (1770/1908 addition)


Balcony/gallery: None

Bench layout: Two sections of wood pews create center aisle.

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery located south of meetinghouse.

History: The Germantown Mennonite meetinghouse is the location of where the first Mennonite congregation met in America. It is located along with its ancient burial ground, along a historic avenue in Germantown, North Philadelphia. The congregation celebrated its first baptism and communion service in 1708, but congregational life began at least as early as 1690. In the beginning, the Mennonite settlers worshiped with the German Quakers. The year 1707 brought a new group of Mennonites from the Palatinate region. This group of Palatinate Mennonites kept to themselves during the first year in America and in 1708, joined up with the first Mennonites. They built a log meetinghouse in 1708, and continued meeting in that structure until 1770 when they built the present standing stone building, which is the oldest Mennonite meetinghouse in America. An addition to the back of the meetinghouse was added
in 1908. The meetinghouse was still in use as worship space up until the early 1990’s and is now used as a Mennonite historic museum. The congregation that met here was originally a part of the Franconia Mennonite conference but in 1863; it was reorganized and become a member of the Eastern District Conference, General Conference Mennonite.

It is historically significant as being the oldest Mennonite meetinghouse in America and for being the location of the first Mennonite conference session in America in 1725. At this session the Dordrecht Confession was approved as the official confession of American Mennonites.

The Mennonites that joined the Germantown settlement in the early 1700’s came from areas in Germany (Dutch speaking) and areas in the Palatinate (German speaking). Of these two groups of immigrants, the Palatinate group was the one that stayed within the Mennonite faith, worked in the beginnings of the new Mennonite congregation at Germantown and then settled further out into Skippack.

The Germantown Mennonite settlement never prospered significantly, it seems that the number of baptized members never surpassed 100. This could have been the result of there being a strong Quaker presence in the area and it is apparent that the majority of Mennonite immigrants were coming from the Palatinate region in Germany. These immigrants were for the most part farmers and were looking for land to develop and farm so they moved further out into the surrounding areas.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Walls are uncut fieldstone with irregular courses, thick medium aggregate mortar and larger stone quoins. Double hung wood windows with wood sill

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29 The Dordrecht Confession was a statement of religious beliefs adopted by Dutch Mennonite leaders at a meeting in Dordrecht, Netherlands in 1632.
and plain trim and operational wood shutters with iron hardware. Primary entrance with two-paneled double wood doors with stone sill and plain wood trim and gabled door hood.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan]

**Appendix Photos:** #61 to 67

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/14/11
Name: Groveland /Plumstead (presently named Central Bucks Christian Fellowship)

Construction Date: 1886


Building plan/Configuration: Original structure: Rectangular/unequally divided two-cell structure

Present structure: Compound/unequally divided multi-cell structure

Building Materials: Stone, concrete, wood

Architectural Description: One-story, three-bay-by-four-bay structure with uncut irregular course stone foundation, stucco stone walls and side gabled roof. Southeast wall: basement entrance with concrete stairs. Northeast wall original structure: stone date and name plate reads, “Plumstead Mennonite Meeting House Rebuilt 1886.”
Windows: Nine-over-six double-hung wood with wood sill and plain trim and aluminum storm windows. Southwest gable: one six-light single wood sash with wood sill and trim and one wood louvered with wood sill and trim.

Doorways/doors: Main northeast entrance: double wood with nine-lights on upper half and concrete sill. Southeast wall basement entrance: double four-light wood with wood panels on lower half.

Roof: Cross gable with asphalt shingles and cornice returns. Asphalt shingle covered shed roof over basement exterior entrance. Southwest and northeast chimney: external straight gable-end covered with plaster.

Dimensions: 30’ X 48’

Interior plan/Significant features: Interior plan is altered form original and no longer contains historical elements. Original converted into foyer and classrooms and new worship space added.

Balcony/gallery: none

Bench layout: Original: Four tiers with two sections of benches along southwest wall, two tiers with one section of benches along west wall, one section of benches on floor level parallel with west tiers

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery southwest of meetinghouse

History: Plumstead/Groveland was a branch of the Deep Run congregation. Those who attended here in the 19th century where members at Deep Run and Doylestown congregations and this meetinghouse was originally built for the convenience of these members. Services were held here in the morning only every fourth Sunday of the month. In 1927, a Sunday School was started here that met every four weeks. Like many other meetinghouses in the
Franconia Conference a schoolhouse was located near this meetinghouse. The school was named Groveland; therefore, the meetinghouse began to be called Groveland.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Uncut irregular course stone foundation, stucco stone walls. Original nine-over-six double-hung wood windows with wood sill and plain trim.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan Image]

**Appendix Photos:** # 68 to 70

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/14/11
**Name:**  Hereford

**Construction Date:**  1851 and 1897

**Location/Orientation:**  121 Barto Rd., Bally, Berks Co., PA/faces northeast

**Building plan/Configuration:**  1851—rectangular, 1897 addition—rectangular, 1933 addition

(created ‘H’ plan with previous structure)

**Building Materials:**  Stone, brick, wood

**Architectural Description:**  1851 structure—single story structure, five-bay-by-three-bay with rough field stone foundation with irregular courses, moulded header brick water table, and red brick walls with common variant with nine stretcher rows per header row.  Northwest wall: original primary entrance in center bay.  1897 addition—single story three-bay-by-four-bay structure to southeast wall of original structure, cut field stone foundation with regular courses, red brick walls with common variant with eleven stretcher rows per header row beginning with
header row on foundation, rectangular apse on southwest wall with gable roof. Brick wall detail: corners of walls brick protrudes a header depth and three stretcher brick wide creating corner pilasters, wall center bays brick protrudes a header depth and corbelling of brick along roof line on side bays.

**Windows:** 1851 structure—nine-over-six double-hung wood with wood rectangular engaged sills and lintels and operational wood paneled shutters with metal hardware. Basement windows: louvered glass. 1897 structure—southeast wall center bay round tracery with three header brick course round lintel and wood rectangular sill. Outside bays: two single hung five-over-four round wood with rectangular sill and two brick course round lintel. Gable row (one row in each gable): three single hung round wood with two side windows one-over-one and taller center two-over-one with wood rectangular sill and single header brick course round lintel. Apse: single gable one-over-one single hung round wood with wood rectangular sill and single brick course round lintel.

**Doorways/doors:** 1897 structure—Southeast entrance: two step concrete stoop, cut stone threshold, double wood paneled doors with round wood paneled transom and two course header brick lintel. Northeast entrance: double wood paneled doors with four-light rectangular transom and wood engaged lintel topped with single header brick course.

**Roof:** 1851 structure—gabled with slate tiles and snow stoppers, 1897 structure—cross-gabled with slate tiles and snow stoppers, large square brick chimney northeast corner.
Dimensions: 1851 structure was at least 41’ long (unable to measure total distance because of additions) X approximately 45’ wide

Interior plan/Significant features: unknown

Balcony/gallery: none

Bench layout: unknown

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery northeast of structure

History: The early history of the Hereford congregation is also the early history of the Bally congregation. These two congregations were of one in the beginning. Mennonites began to settle this area in the 1720’s and began meeting for worship in one another homes as early as 1725. Spoken history tells that the first meetinghouse was built in 1732. By 1755, the congregation had grown to a point that they needed more worship space so the old meetinghouse was torn down and a new one built. The new meetinghouse is described in the History of the Hereford Mennonite Congregation at Bally, Pennsylvania as a “low log structure with walls made of planks for long preservation, weatherboarded and whitewashed. It presented a quaint appearance with its joists upon which the roof rested, extending across the sides of the building with pent eaves along the gable ends, corresponding to those on the sides. It was somewhat larger than the ordinary schoolhouse of those days.” In 1790, an addition was built to the north end to be used as schoolroom. There were folding doors placed between this new schoolroom and the main room for use in worship services. The benches used were backless and the pulpit was only a basic table. At a later date, better benches were added and the pulpit was raised a step above the floor. There were two entrances to the building. The last worship service was held in this meetinghouse in 1899. It was torn down and a new stone and

30 Wenger, History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference, 117.
plastered building was erected. This is the present Bally meetinghouse that is used for a community youth center.

In 1847, the Mennonite schism took place and divided the Hereford congregation. The group that took sides with Oberholtzer (more progressive, less conservative) was to be known as the Hereford congregation. The smaller, in numbers, group stayed with the Franconia Conference and were known as the Bally congregation. These two congregations continued meeting in the 1755 meetinghouse alternating the Sundays they would gather for worship. By 1850, the Hereford group had grown in numbers and needed a larger worship space. They purchased land not far from the historic meetinghouse and built a new structure in 1851.

The new brick meetinghouse had a basement foundation with the worship space on the first floor. In 1897, a new sanctuary was built onto the south side of the 1851 structure. A Sunday School wing was added to the north end of the 1851 structure in 1933.

A very interesting but tragic story in this congregation’s history is that of Annie Funk. Ms. Funk was the first Eastern District (General Conference Mennonite) and first women missionary to be trained for mission work. She was serving in India. In 1912, she received word that her mother was very ill and it was advised for her to travel home. The last part of her journey home was travelling aboard the new steamship, Titanic. The story goes that she gave up her seat on a lifeboat to a woman who had children on the lifeboat. There is a memorial marker in her honor in the Hereford Cemetery.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** 1851 structure: Red brick walls with moulded header brick water table. Original nine-over-six double-hung wood windows with wood rectangular engaged sills and lintels and operational wood paneled shutters with metal hardware. Slate roof with
snow stoppers. 1897 structure shows the shift of how Eastern District Mennonites began building their meetinghouses in the mid to late century. There is a rectangular apse on southwest wall with a gable roof and brick wall detail: corners of walls brick protrudes a header depth and three stretcher brick wide creating corner pilasters, wall center bays brick protrudes a header depth and corbelling of brick along roof line on side bays. Round tracery window with three header brick course round lintel. Double wood paneled doors with round wood paneled transom and two course header brick lintel. East entrance with double wood paneled doors with four-light rectangular transom and wood engaged lintel topped with single header brick course.

Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: #71 to 75

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 06/15/11
**Name:** Herstein Historic Chapel

**Construction Date:** 1803

**Location/orientation:** 364 Neiffer Road, Schwenksville, PA /faces east

**Building plan/configuration:** Rectangular plan/unequally divided three-cell structure

**Building Materials:** Stucco over sand-stone

**Architectural Description:** Single-story, four-bay-by-two-bay structure, front gable roof, unequally divided three-cell structure with the larger cell being the western section and eastern section containing entrance divided into two smaller cells. Walls: one-and-a-half feet thick. Belfry (1917): eastern roof ridge. Chimney: single straight brick interior on north wall along larger cell.
Windows: Double-hung six-over-six wood with wood sills and lintels, hardware for shutters but no shutters. West wall: double-hung two-over-two wood. Gable ends: wood diamond shaped trimmed with header bricks.

Doorways/doors: Newer six-paneled wood with simple wood shouldered architrave trim.

Roof: Front gabled with asphalt shingles.

Dimensions: 27’-6” X 50’

Interior plan/significant features: Two cells flanking front entrance with hall to larger cell.

Balcony/gallery: none

Bench layout: Two rows of wood benches facing west with one center aisle.

Outbuildings/cemetery/school: Cemetery: north of structure, rubble uncut red sand-stone wall with irregular courses and irregular stone cap around perimeter of cemetery.

History: Herstein was an outreach of the Skippack congregation. The structure was initially used as a school and a meetinghouse for the Mennonites in the area. The cemetery was at this location first and the meetinghouse was built around 1803. In 1917, the meetinghouse was enlarged. During the 19th century the highest number of members was around 30. There have been different attempts to revitalize a congregation for this historic meetinghouse in the 20th century but in 2007 the most recent congregation ceased to exist and closed the doors.

Architecturally Significant Details: Double-hung six-over-six wood windows with wood sills and lintels, hardware for shutters but no shutters. Cemetery wall with rubble uncut red sand-stone with irregular courses and irregular stone cap around perimeter of cemetery.
Site plan:

Appendix Photos: # 76 to 79

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  Date Surveyed: 6/15/11
Name: Lower Skippack

Construction Date: 1844

Location/Orientation: 892 Evansburg Rd, Skippack, PA/ faces southwest

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/ six-bay unequally divided four-cell structure

Building Materials: Stucco over stone

Architectural Description: One-and-a-half story, six-bay-by-four-bay stucco covered stone structure with gable roof. Unequally divided four-cell structure with larger northern section constituting five-bays and three smaller bays located along the south wall. Foundation: unknown type of material. Southwest wall: main entrance center third-bay flanked with windows with hipped roof porch and square columns, west edge of porch four-paneled wood
rail with twenty-five-light wood stationary window above. Northeast wall: secondary entrance western most bay with gabled door hood with asphalt shingles.

**Windows:** First story: twelve-over-twelve double-hung wood with architrave, wood sills, operational three-paneled wood shutters with hardware and newer aluminum storm windows. Northeast wall: two new one-over-one double-hung wood with architrave. Gable ends: two six-over-six double-hung with architrave.

**Doorways/doors:** Southwest primary entrance: double five-panel wood with single light transom, flush with interior wall, plain wood surround and concrete sill. Northeast secondary entrance: narrow double wood batten with architrave trim and stone sill.

**Roof:** Front gable, asphalt shingles, aluminum cornice with cornice returns

**Dimensions:** 50’ X 65’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Unequally divided four-cell space with large worship space constituting northern five-bays, three equally divided cells along southwestern wall with primary entrance in center bay. Significant feature: white painted paneled wood preachers bench and pulpit.

**Balcony/gallery:** None

**Bench layout:** Two rows facing northeast

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery, maintenance building, recreation building.

**History:** Lower Skippack congregation was one of the most influential and powerful congregations in the Franconia Conference in the mid-19th century.

Lower Skippack congregation was originally referred to as the Skippack congregation. The Mennonite settlement in this area of Montgomery County was developed in 1702. The first meetinghouse of the Skippack congregation was built in 1725 and a new building was erected in
1844. Three years after this new meetinghouse was built the Oberholtzer division took place in the Franconia Conference. Skippack congregation was a part of this conference and a group from within that sided with Oberholtzer took control of the meetinghouse. The group within Skippack that decided to stay with Franconia Conference built a new meetinghouse in 1848 and took the name of Upper Skippack. As a result of this name change for the Franconia group the Oberholtzer group took on the name of Lower Skippack.

Once again, in 1851, there was disagreement at Lower Skippack which could not be resolved in the new conference. By 1861, the Oberholtzer conference expelled the minister, Henry G. Johnson and the majority of the members left the group along with Johnson. A small group of congregates stayed with the Oberholtzer conference but by 1886, the membership had died out. This allowed the Johnson Mennonites to begin meeting once again at the Lower Skippack meetinghouse.

The present congregation at Lower Skippack is now affiliated with the conference called Alliance of Mennonite Evangelical Congregations.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Twelve-over-twelve double-hung wood windows with architrave, wood sills and operational three-paneled wood shutters with hardware. The main entrance with a double five-panel wood door flush with interior wall with single light transom and plain wood surround.

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32 Johnson was dismissed from the church because of his belief in the literal observance of footwashing. (John 13:1-17) The group that left with Johnson later became known as the Johnson Mennonites.
Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 80 to 83

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz

Date Surveyed: 6/16/11
Name: Methacton/Worcester

Construction Date: 1873


Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/unequally divided two-cell structure

Building Materials: Stone, wood

Architectural Description: One story, three-bay-by-six-bay, stucco stone structure with stone foundation and side gable roof. Southeast wall: three entrances—from the south located in second-bay, fourth-bay and sixth-bay with window in each bay in-between. Southwest wall: preacher/deacon entrance.
**Windows:** Six-over-nine double-hung wood with wood sills and architrave trim and paneled wood operational shutters with cast-iron hardware. Gable: Two four-light single wood sash with wood sill and architrave.

**Doorways/doors:** Southeast wall: Second-bay—two-paneled double wood, flush with interior wall with wall width wood surround and gabled door hood. Fourth and sixth-bay—four paneled single wood, flush with interior wall with wall width wood surround and gabled door hoods. Southwest wall: two-paneled double wood, flush with interior wall with wall width wood surround and gabled door hood.

**Roof:** Side gabled, with asphalt shingles, boxed cornice and returns.

**Dimensions:** 44’ X 36’


**Balcony/gallery:** None

**Bench layout:** Three sections of backed wood benches with aisles at southeast entrances.

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery north of meetinghouse

**History:** Methacton also known as Worcester is one of the oldest congregations in the Franconia Conference. Mennonites began meeting in this area as early as 1739. The historical records do not give a specific date when the first meetinghouse was erected but it was between 1739 and 1771. In John C. Wenger’s book, History of the Mennonites of Franconia Conference, he quotes a Mr. Heebner as describing this first meetinghouse as being “a substantial stone
pointed structure. The only thing to designate the spot where it stood is the remaining wall of one side of the building upon which a row of sheds rest. It was a good type of colonial structure for a rural community, being about 24 feet by 22 feet in size and containing one door and seven windows. The interior walls were plastered, the ceiling prominently displaying the huge joists. The building was used for worship until 1805 or 1806.\textsuperscript{33} There was a second meetinghouse erected around 1805 and is described by Wenger as “...also of one story, built of pointed stone, with a board partition dividing the main auditorium from the vestibule. The benches were a bit higher along the sides of the room. At first the building had an open fireplace, later a wood stove.”\textsuperscript{34} The third and present meetinghouse was erected in 1873. In 1948 and annex with a basement was added and in 1970 there was another addition which provided a fellowship hall, kitchen and classroom space. This third structure still retains the simple wood benches and hat hooks hanging from the ceiling. A long hall on one side of the building was used by women to nurse and care for their children. The door along the road was an entrance for the deacons and ministers to enter through. A long pulpit/preacher’s bench (pulpit raised with seating for four to five ordained men.) This pulpit was the original to the pre 1771 building. It is said that this is the oldest pulpit being used in a Mennonite MH on this continent.\textsuperscript{35}

The land that was deeded for the building of the Methacton meetinghouse specified that the land be used for a worship building and a school house to teach children of the Anabaptists as

\textsuperscript{34} Wenger, \textit{History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference}, 108.
well as those in the community. The meetinghouse continues as a place for teaching children in the community by having an active preschool on the premises.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Southeast façade: three entrances—first entrance with two paneled double wood doors, flush with interior wall with wall width wood surround and gabled door hoods. Second and third entrances with four paneled single wood door, flush with interior wall with wall width wood surround and gabled door hoods. Windows are double-hung wood with wood sills and architrave trim and have paneled wood operational shutters with cast-iron hardware. Four-light single wood gable windows with wood sill and architrave.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan](image)

**Appendix Photos:** # 84 to 88

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/14/11
Name: Saucon

Construction Date: 1847

Location/Orientation: 6639 N. Main St., Coopersburg, Upper Saucon Twp., Lehigh Co., PA/faces south

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/configuration unknown

Building Materials: Brick, block stone

Architectural Description: One-story, three-bay-by-four-bay painted common bond brick structure with front gable roof, south wall stuccoed. North wall--enclosed basement entrance with shed roof and plain wood door, external single straight chimney.

Windows: New one-over-one double-hung vinyl windows with decorative light dividers, aluminum covered sills and trim, aluminum storm windows and decorative paneled shutters. South/North wall: gable 22-light wood fan light with wood sill and trim, north fan light with brick lintel, original panel shuttered window in center bay on north wall.
Doorways/doors: Main entrance center bay with pointed arch opening, double six-paneled wood doors with fifteen-light pointed arched fan light, flush with interior wall with paneled wood surround and concrete sill.

Roof: Front gabled, asphalt shingles, wide eaves with boxed cornice, cornice returns, curved frieze board and verge board.

Dimensions: 50’ X 40’

Interior plan/Significant features: unequally divided three-cell with larger cell worship space.

Balcony/gallery: None

Bench layout: Unknown

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: Cemetery north and west of structure

History: The first meetinghouse to be built was a log structure in 1738. That building was replaced in 1741, and then one hundred years later in 1841, the present building was built. The 1738 building had a swinging partition which separated the meeting area into two different spaces, one for school and the other meetings. At one point in the 18th century more than a dozen Indians worshiped regularly in the services here.

In 1782 a schoolhouse was built on the church grounds near the highway. It was abandoned when the Penn Schoolhouse, a public school, was built by the township. In 1847,(or 1841 conflicting records) a stone meetinghouse replaced the old building. An addition to the building occurred in 2000.

After the Oberholtzer division of 1847, the Franconia Mennonites continued having a congregation here although it was very small. Towards the end of the 19th century there were still meetings held here but very few people attended. The General Conference Mennonites
took ownership of it and in 2002 the new Alliance of Mennonite Evangelical Congregations (AMEC) took ownership.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** South/North walls: gable 22-light wood fan light with wood sill and trim, north fan light with brick lintel, original panel shuttered window in center bay on north wall. Main entrance: pointed arch opening, double six-paneled wood doors with fifteen-light pointed arched fan light, flush with interior wall with paneled wood surround. Wide eaves with boxed cornice, cornice returns, curved frieze board and verge board.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan Drawing]

**Appendix Photos:** # 89 to 93

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/15/11
**Name:** Second Mennonite

**Construction Date:** 1898

**Location/Orientation:** 2962 N. Franklin St., Philadelphia, PA/faces east

**Building plan/Configuration:** Rectangular/ unequally divided two-cell structure

**Building Materials:** Stone, brick, wood

**Architectural Description:** One-story two-bay-by-five-bay structure with high stone foundation and front gable roof. Stone foundation: rough stone with irregular courses topped with header course of red brick. Walls: red brick with seven common bond courses for every one Flemish bond course, brick pilasters on corner and dividing each bay. Front façade: Pilasters do not extend height of wall taper off in corbel, pilasters capped with stone, parapet on gabled roof. Date stone “1898” northeast corner.
Windows: Paired one-over-one double –hung wood with wood sill and three header course brick pointed arched lintel (original pointed arch window covered with steel siding). Basement: paired double-hung wood with stone slab sill and lintel and east basement wall two twenty-glass block with center ventilation block and stone slab lintel. Front façade: tracery with stone slab sill and three header course brick pointed arched lintel.

Doorways/doors: Front façade: newer metal paneled double doors with concrete sill and brick lintel with three arched header courses (original pointed arch covered with steel siding). North wall: plan single metal door with three header course brick pointed arched lintel (original pointed arch covered with steel siding).

Roof: Front gable with fish scale slate shingles.

Dimensions: 34’ X 67’

Interior plan/Significant features: Unequally divided two-cell space with smaller space in northeast corner used as foyer area, larger cell worship space. Worship space: plastered walls, tongue and groove wood cathedral ceiling, platform along west wall with wood spindled banister wood pulpit and two ornate wood chairs, three-pronged iron coat/hat hooks along south wall of foyer cell, signed/sealed deed of property on east wall.

Balcony/gallery: None

Bench layout: Two sections of wood pews create center aisle leading to front (west) of worship space.

Outbuildings/Cemetery/School: None

History: Second Mennonite congregation was a mission of First Mennonite church of Philadelphia in 1894. After meeting in several locations, the present building was built in 1899
when the group became officially organized. At this time there were 36 members with Silas M.
Grubb serving as their pastor. Until 1912, the congregation was supported by the First
Mennonite Church. The congregation had a membership of 190 by 1915.

In 2002, the congregation left the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference
Mennonite Church (GC) and became a charter member of the new Alliance of Mennonite
Evangelical Congregations (AMEC). This departure was for reasons concerning faith and
doctrine that were being established within the new merging of the GC and Mennonite Church.
(These two Mennonite conferences merged and formed the new Mennonite Church USA.)

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Gothic styling, beautiful wood planked ceiling, and layout of
stage area. Stage area has wood planked wainscoting along the front wall, wood spindled railing
separating the stage from the pew area and two original ornate wood chairs. This interior
design was common with other mid to late century General Conference church buildings. Front
façade with brick pilasters on corner and dividing each bay. Pilasters on front façade do not
extend height of wall but taper off in corbel, pilasters capped with stone, parapet on gabled
roof. Tracery window on front facade with stone slab sill and three header course brick pointed
arched lintel. Windows and door openings have arched brick lintels.
Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: #94 to 97

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz

Date Surveyed: 6/14/11
Name: Springfield

Construction Date: 1824

Location/Orientation: 1905 Pleasant View Rd., Coopersburg, Springfield Twp., Bucks Co., PA/faces southeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/unequally divided multi-cell structure

Building Materials: Stone


Windows: Nine-over-six double hung wood with wood sills covered with aluminum and wood architrave trim, wood paneled operational shutters, and aluminum storm
windows. Gable ends: two attic four-light single sash with wood sill and trim, covered with aluminum.

**Doorways/doors:** Front (southeast) wall: second bay from west, double eight-paneled wood door flush with interior wall with four-light transom and wood paneled wall width surround with wood trim and corner blocks and stone slab sill. One concrete step covered over with wood for ramp and two-by-four wood rail.

**Roof:** Side gable with asphalt shingles.

**Dimensions:** 30’ X 40’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** 1824 structure used as worship space with 1952 addition an extension of worship space and added rooms for office and classrooms. Paneled wood preachers’ bench along west wall.

**Balcony/gallery:** None

**Bench layout:** Three sections of benches which create two aisles toward preachers’ bench.

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery southwest of structure

**History:** The very early history of Springfield is unknown but early documents state that Mennonite settlers reached this area before the middle of the 18th century. The present building was built in 1824 and is shown in a date stone on the southeast wall along with the names J. Moyer and A. Sliefer. The congregation was a part of the Franconia Conference up until the Schism of 1847 when they split into two groups. Part of the congregation stayed with Franconia Conference and the other joined the newly formed Eastern District Conference. Both groups continued sharing the meetinghouse meeting in their designated group every other

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37 Wenger notes in his book on page 129 that the date stone is on the north wall but when this meetinghouse was surveyed it was found to be on the southeast (south) wall.
week. This continued until 1948 when the Franconia group dissolved. The group that associated with the Eastern District Conference continued meeting here and in 2002 left the Eastern District Conference and joined the newly formed Alliance of Mennonite Evangelical congregations (AMEC).

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Walls: one-and-a-half foot thick, rough-cut stone with irregular courses. Windows: double hung wood with wood sills covered with aluminum and wood architrave trim and wood paneled operational shutters. South wall entrance has double eight-paneled wood door flush with interior wall with four-light transom and wood paneled wall width surround with wood trim and corner blocks and stone slab sill. Iron fence along road and cemetery.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan Image]

**Appendix Photos:** # 98 to 104

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/15/11
Name: Swamp

Construction Date: 1847


Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/ 1847 configuration unknown, 2011 divided into classrooms.

Building Materials: Stone, wood

Architectural Description: One-story four-bay-by-five-bay (1847 structure), four-bay-by-seven-bay (later historic addition) with stone foundation and front gable roof. South wall: double front entrance in center two bays. Walls: uncut stone with irregular courses, west, north and east walls covered with stucco. Date ‘1847’ etched into stone.
**Windows:** West and east walls with nine-over-six double-hung wood with wood sills and architrave, paneled operational wood shutters with hardware. North wall: two sets of paired nine-over-six double-hung wood. South gable: two wood louvered. North gable: one center nine-light single wood sash with wood sill and architrave.

**Doorways/doors:** South wall historic main entrance: two entrances one in each of center two bays, wide eight-panel wood door flush with interior wall with wood panel surround and five-light transom, cut stone slab sill.

**Roof:** Front gable, slate shingles with eaves, single partial exterior gable-end stucco chimney.

**Dimensions:** 1847—36’ X 42’-6” Later addition—36’ X 69’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Unknown original plan, presently divided into hall with classrooms on each side.

**Balcony/gallery:** none

**Bench layout:** unknown

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery located south and east of original meetinghouse.

**History:** The history of Swamp congregation dates back to the early 18th century when a gentleman by the name of Valentine Clemmer migrated to this area of Pennsylvania from Germany. He was a Mennonite bishop and helped with the organization of a Mennonite congregation in this part of Bucks County. The first meetinghouse was erected in 1735 and was used until 1790. This first meetinghouse was built about a mile west of the present day West Swamp Church. There is a historical marker commemorating the site. This first meetinghouse was torn down and then rebuilt at the present site of West Swamp Church in 1790. The Schism of 1847 came and with it most of the members of the Swamp churches sided with the new

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conference. Those who desired to stay with the Franconia Conference built their own meetinghouse at that time. This 1847 structure is what is being used today.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Uncut stone walls with irregular courses. North façade: double front entrance in center two bays with wide eight-panel wood door, flush with interior wall, with wood paneled surround and five-light transom, cut stone slab sill. Slate roof.

**Site Plan:**

![Site Plan](image)

**Appendix Photos:** # 105 to 110

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 6/14/11
Name: Upper Milford

Construction Date: 1876

Location/Orientation: 6450 Kings Highway South, Zionsville, Upper Milford Twp., Lehigh County, PA/faces northeast

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/ five-bay, unequally divided cell structure

Building Materials: Stone, brick, wood

Architectural Description: Two -story, three-bay-by-five-bay brick structure with front gable roof and stucco stone foundation. Front northeast wall center bay entrance flanked by tall narrow windows. Red brick walls with beveled brick water table located three brick courses above stone foundation, common bond with nine stretcher rows per one course Flemish bond. Corner brick pilasters with brick pilasters between each bay. Upper part of walls with brick
corbeled edges between pilasters. Stone date and name on northeast wall above main entrance, written in German difficult to transcribe. Brick apse with slate roof on southwest wall. Recent brick additions to southwest of original building.

**Windows:** Northeast wall: first floor one-over-one double hung wood with wood engaged sill and ornate brick hoodmolds flanking main entrance. Second floor center bay: two-over-two double hung round arch paired wood with wood engaged sill and ornate brick hoodmold, flanked by two-over-two double-hung round arch wood with similar sill and hood. Southeast/northwest walls: first floor—two-over-two double-hung segmental arched wood with wood engaged sill and ornate brick segmental hoodmold, second floor—five-over-four double-hung round sash wood with wood engaged sill and ornate brick hoodmold. Gable ends: northeast gable—single eight-light wheel window brick header trimmed with brick hoodmold, southwest gable—single eight-light wheel window brick header trimmed.

**Doorways/doors:** Northeast wall: paneled double wood with paneled wood arch and round ornate brick hoodmold. Southeast wall: new multi-light wood door, southernmost bay.

**Roof:** Front gable with slate shingles, wide curved wood cornice and verge board covered with aluminum, ridge lighting rods, newer single brick external gable-end chimney.

**Dimensions:** 40’ X 60’

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Unequally divided space with larger space being for worship/ Raised platform for pipe organ (1877), apse area, exposed wooden rafters.

**Balcony/gallery:** Balcony at northeast end
**Bench layout:** Two rows of backed wood pews with center aisle

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery southwest of structure

**History:** Many Mennonites who immigrated to Germantown from the Palatinate region in Germany continued to migrate further out settling in three main areas: Skippack, Swamp, and Deep Run. Upper Milford congregation is an extension of the Mennonites of the Swamp Settlement. Mennonites began meeting as a group in this area as early as 1735 but the congregation was not formally established until 1740.

The first meetinghouse built for this group was a log structure. The exact date is unknown but it was most likely between 1735 and 1740. This first log structure was divided into two parts: one side was used for a school and the other for worship. Before the building of this first meetinghouse they most likely had worship services in each other’s homes. 39

In 1816, a stone building was erected to replace the log structure. This new stone building was like the earlier in that it was built with two parts, one for worship and one for the school. In 1843, the stone building was remodeled by building the walls higher, adding a new roof, rafters, joists, floor, windows, and doors. The present building built in 1876, included a basement, worship space, and a gallery. Some ideas that were used in this new building were new to Mennonite meetinghouses of the time: It had a large curved cornice and a raised platform for a pipe organ. To this day the large curved cornice is a significant historic detail.

During the early years of the twentieth century the building incurred several changes. Electric lights were added in 1922. In 1932, the arrangement of the pews was changed from having two

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side aisles to one central aisle. With the introduction of the automobile, many of the horse sheds around the church were torn down in 1930 with the remaining torn down in 1969.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** Corner brick pilasters with brick pilasters between each bay. Upper part of walls with brick corbeled edges between pilasters. Brick apse with slate roof on south façade. Windows and entrances have ornate brick work. (See above for detailed descriptions.) Roof covered with slate shingles, with wide curved wood cornice and verge board covered with aluminum. (Aluminum covering is not significant but it is protecting the original cornice and verge board.)

**Site Plan:**

Appendix Photos: # 111 to 116

**Surveyor:** Janette L. Amstutz  
**Date Surveyed:** 11/03/11
Name: West Swamp

Construction Date: 1874

Location/Orientation: 2501 Allentown Rd., Quakertown, Milford Twp., Bucks Co., PA/ faces southwest

Building plan/Configuration: Rectangular/single cell

Building Materials: Stone, wood

Architectural Description: Two-story, three-bay-by-four-bay structure with front gable roof and stone foundation. Front southwest entrance in center bay flanked by windows expanding the first and second story (new gabled entrance ca.1960.) Stucco stone walls. Structure with several gabled additions towards east and northeast keep to original shape and size. First story educational classrooms, second story worship space.

Windows: Southwest wall (Ca.1960 addition): large multi-colored and light Palladian with two lower center hoppers flanked by tall fixed multi-colored/light windows, all with wood sills and label molds. First story: newer one-over-one wood with wood sill and
plain trim. Second story: Multi-colored/light with lower section hopper window.

(Windows changed ca.1960)

**Doorways/doors:** Southwest wall: newer (ca.1960) paired double wood with lower half paneled upper half multi-colored/light, multi-colored/light fanlight encased in rectangular transom and concrete sill.

**Roof:** Front gable with asphalt shingles, cornice returns and single brick internal gable-end chimney.

**Dimensions:** 45’ X 60’ (1874) 45’ X 73’ (ca. 1960)

**Interior plan/Significant features:** Southwest wall addition (ca. 1960): entrance with divided stair. Original (1874): first story classrooms, second story one room for worship with long center wood pews and side aisles.

**Balcony/gallery:** none

**Bench layout:** Two rows wood pews with wide center aisle (ca. 1960.)

**Outbuildings/Cemetery/School:** Cemetery southeast of structure.

**History:** There were Mennonites in Milford Township of Bucks County as early as 1717. This Mennonite community most likely met in homes for worship and according to tradition the first meetinghouse was built in 1735. The location of this first meetinghouse was about one-half mile east of the present West Swamp building. There is a historical marker at that location presently. It is about midway between the present East Swamp and West Swamp meetinghouses. In 1771, the congregation built a second meetinghouse about a mile east of the first building which is the present day East Swamp church. The group continued as one congregation but held services alternately in both the East and West Swamp buildings.

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Eventually they would form two distinct groups and met in their own meetinghouses. In 1790, the first West Swamp meetinghouse was razed and moved to a new location and rebuilt which is the present location of West Swamp meetinghouse. This 1790 structure continued to be used as a worship space and a school until 1819, when a stone structure replaced it. The 1819 meetinghouse continued to be used for a worship space and school until 1873. The present plastered stone structure was built in 1873 and continues to be used as a worship space.

In 1847, John H. Oberholtzer (leader of the Schism of 1847) began to organize Bible instruction classes in this congregation. When the Schism of 1847 took place, the congregation joined with the new movement leaving the Franconia Conference and later becoming a part of the Eastern District Conference. The congregation continued to grow during this time, as they increased in size, in 1877 they organized into two groups which are known as East Swamp and West Swamp. They continued to have the same minister until 1921. West Swamp continues as a member of Eastern District Conference of Mennonite Church USA.

**Architecturally Significant Details:** There are not any original architectural details left in this structure other than the basic form of having classrooms on the first story and worship space on the second story.
Site Plan:

Appendix Photos: # 117 to 118

Surveyor: Janette L. Amstutz  
Date Surveyed: 6/14/11
Chapter 6
Field Survey Observations and Recommendations

The design and layout of the Mennonite meetinghouse stayed much the same for the first 150 years of Mennonites in the United States. In 1847, came the great schism of the Mennonite church in America. Not only did a rather substantial group break off of the mainline Mennonite church, but this new group, along with its new ideas, also began building its meetinghouses in a new way. The ‘new’ Mennonite group was more open to many ideas and practices than what the ‘old’ Mennonite group had been. They (new) looked to the broader Christian church for inspiration in designing their new meetinghouses.

After surveying twenty-two Mennonite meetinghouses, there were several observations that developed. Over the course of a hundred years (all structures except Germantown, 1770, which is the oldest Mennonite meetinghouse in the United States) these meetinghouses were built in similar ways up until the schism of 1847.\(^\text{41}\) When the Mennonites in Franconia conference split,

\(^{41}\) The division of the Franconia Conference of 1847 was led by the minister, John H. Oberholtzer. This division is referred to as the Schism of 1847. Oberholtzer desired more progressive attitudes, milder discipline and a more open-minded and cooperative attitude toward other denominations. Sixteen ordained men withdrew from conference during this division, including the senior bishop who was the conference moderator. Around a fourth of all the members of Franconia Conference most likely withdrew their membership in 1847. The new Mennonite conference was formed in 1860, and was known as the General Conference Mennonite Church. The congregations that left the Franconia Conference in 1847 are referred to as being a part of the Eastern District Conference. This new group, later to be a part of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Eastern District, maintained five meetinghouses (of the studied group): Upper Milford, Skippack, East Swamp, West Swamp and Flatland. Of the studied group of meetinghouses that had parts of the congregation agree with Oberholtzer, four decided to worship on alternate Sundays from the Franconia Mennonites: Saucon, Springfield, Worcester and Hereford. The Oberholtzer group at Deep Run erected a new church building right away.
creating a ‘new’ group of Mennonites, their more liberal theology not only affected how they did church polity but it also affected their understanding of what a worship space/building looked like. The ‘old’ Mennonites (Franconia Conference) who continued on in the Franconia Conference continued to build their worship spaces as they did before in a more traditional meetinghouse form. In the mid- to late-century, the New Mennonites (Eastern District Mennonite Conference) were building their churches in a way that reflected what was being built in other denominations of the time. The Old Mennonites were still building the basic rectangular shape with two entrances for men and women. This can be seen in the Franconia meetinghouse built in 1892 (photo below), a Franconia Mennonite Conference congregation. Compare this to the Eden meetinghouse built in 1894 (photo below), an Eastern District Mennonite conference congregation. The Eden meetinghouse has a steeper roof, rounded windows and brick pilasters whereas Franconia is still holding true to the rectangular windows, double entrances and shuttered windows (wood shutters no longer exist but the original hardware is visible).
Franconia Mennonite meetinghouse

Eden Mennonite Meetinghouse
Most of the meetinghouses surveyed were in basically good physical shape and are still being used as worship spaces. There are ones that have had additions to them, some more adaptable than others. Six of the meetinghouses are being preserved as they originally were and have no regular congregation meeting in them. These tend to be used for special occasions only, such as hymn sings, family gatherings and historic appreciation activities.

Two of the twenty-two meetinghouses surveyed are in disrepair and would benefit from some upkeep in order to preserve the distinguishing architectural elements. First Mennonite Church in Philadelphia is a late 19th century building that was part of the Eastern District Conference. The other is Coventry meetinghouse in East Coventry in Chester County. Coventry was part of the Franconia Conference. These two meetinghouses (First Mennonite is not a typical meetinghouse and actually should be classified as a ‘church’) were built nine years apart from one another, 1881 and 1890 respectively. Both have changed ownership in the twentieth century and are no longer affiliated with a Mennonite conference. Both are in disrepair.

One of the objectives of this thesis is to encourage the preservation of historic Mennonite meetinghouses in the surveyed area. The two meetinghouses mentioned above are in the most need of restoration, which would preserve them.

The charter members of First Mennonite Church of Philadelphia began meeting together in each other’s homes in 1862. This congregation was the first Mennonite group since Germantown that formed in the city of Philadelphia. A few years later they began meeting in a rented chapel and by 1881 they had built “the largest (and fanciest)” church in the Eastern District Conference, according to John L. Ruth, Mennonite historian. This new church building

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42 Ross L. Bender, “It was large and fancy,” *The Mennonite* (May 13, 1986): 212
was made of red brick and stood very tall. The tall rounded windows, brick pilasters and heavy brick corbelling along the front façade distinguished it from the Franconia Mennonite Conference meetinghouses.

There are three significant happenings in First Mennonite’s history that are noteworthy. It is significant not only for being the first Mennonite church in Philadelphia (in the 19th century), but also for the rate that it increased in members. As was stated before, a group of Mennonites began meeting in 1862 and by 1872, the congregation had doubled in size from its original membership of 33. This was a significant growth, but after the calling of pastor Nathaniel Bertolet Grubb (N.B. Grubb) there was a momentous period of growth. N.B. Grubb pastored at First Mennonite from 1882 to 1921, and during this time period, in 1890, there were 204 members. Out of the 204 members, 139 came to the church during the time Grubb was pastor. By 1921, the number had more than doubled to 458. This growth was partially because of the outgoing and very personable individual that Grubb was. The other influencing factor was that of evangelistic crusades that were just beginning to take place.

A second significant part to First Mennonite’s history is the emphasis the congregation put into church planting. The leaders from First Mennonite started worship services in Souderton, north of the city, for members who lived in that area. Eventually this group of members became a separate congregation and built their own church building in 1893. This new congregation was called Zion Mennonite Church. In 1899, a second church plant was located in the city and became known as Second Mennonite Church.
The third and most significant part of First Mennonite’s history, in this writer’s view, is the progressive view of women in leadership. In January 1911, Ann Allebach was ordained here. She was the first woman to be ordained in a Mennonite congregation anywhere in the United States. Ms. Allebach moved on to New York City where she was very involved in church ministries. It took another 60 years until another woman was ordained for ministry in the Mennonite Church in the United States. Another example of First Mennonite’s progressive view of women in leadership is that they had a woman pastor, Ms. Mary E. Bakewell, from September 1929 - April 1930. This was during a time when women were not really accepted in pastoral roles. One more example of the congregation encouraging women for leadership was at the 70th anniversary of the congregation. At this anniversary celebration, in 1935, a young woman, Wilhelmina Kuyf was ordained for missionary service. She traveled to China with the foreign Mission Board of the Mennonite General Conference.

First Mennonite reached its highest membership in 1928 with 484 members and soon after this, it slowly declined in membership. Members began moving out of the city and by 1950, a fifth of the 250 members lived outside the city limits.43 The 1950’s brought about a population shift in the neighborhoods around the church.Historically the neighborhoods where mostly white and at this time African Americans and Hispanics began moving in. This encouraged the “white flight” out of the city into the suburbs.44

Currently the Mennonite denomination is active in Philadelphia. Throughout the 20th century additional Mennonite conferences, other than Eastern District and Franconia, were involved in

43 Bender, “It was large and fancy,” 213.
44 First Mennonite eventually purchased property in a northern suburb of Philadelphia, Huntingdon Valley, and built a church building there in 1959.
mission work in the city. Lancaster Mennonite Conference has had and still does have a strong presence there. As of 1999, there were twenty-two urban Mennonite congregations consisting of eleven language groups.45

At the present time, the First Mennonite church building is no longer owned by any Mennonite group. Lewis Temple of God in Christ is the present owner and group who use it for a worship space. Realizing this, how is this building going to be encouraged to be preserved? Does the present owner wish for the building to be in better repair? How active and large is the present group and would they be open to restoring their structure?

If the present owners of this historic building were willing to sell it, what would need to happen for its preservation? It would be interesting to investigate and discover if there is a group or individuals (maybe someone from the Mennonite denomination) who may have connections with its history and be interested in repairing it so that it may be useful for future generations. One idea relating to its significance to women in ministry could be to utilize its space as a shelter or work empowerment center for women--some sort of location to encourage women in leadership in the community and beyond. If Lewis Temple would not be interested in selling or moving to another location, how could the interested party still encourage its preservation?

It was not mentioned before, but the First Mennonite Church has an attached wing that is three stories high. If the church building was restored, this wing could also be rehabilitated to hold housing for the above mentioned women’s shelter. As another idea, a space like this may be inviting for one of the Mennonite mission agencies to use as living quarters for church groups to stay at when they are doing service assignments in the city.

Lewis Temple may not be interested in leaving this property but they may be interested in having some entity buy the structure and restore it, with Lewis Temple continuing to worship there but not being responsible for repairs and upkeep. It could work out for Lewis Temple to rent from new owners at a very reasonable cost and the attached wing be developed into apartments for which the new owners would be responsible.

How could the preservation of a turn-of-the-century building be an asset to this neighborhood community? By taking something that is run down, needing repairs, and giving new life to it, it could trigger a self-pride in one’s community. This may encourage the cleanup improvements to other area buildings. It may create jobs for local people, depending on how the building would be reused.

First Mennonite of Philadelphia was not only the first 19th-century Mennonite church building in the city, but it also was the first location where a woman was ordained in a Mennonite conference. These two happenings are significant to Mennonite history, and the site where they took place is worthy of consideration for preservation.

Coventry congregation is the oldest Mennonite congregation in Chester County and some say it was the largest for some time. Mennonite settlers came to the Pottstown area (Chester County) as early as 1720 and built their first meetinghouse in 1751. In 1789, the congregation chose a site about a mile from this original building to construct a new meetinghouse. The new site also incorporated a burial ground. For a third time, the congregation built a meetinghouse to replace the 1789 structure. The new meetinghouse was built in 1890 and continues to stand today but is suffering from deterioration. During the 19th century, Coventry began to decline in

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membership and closed its doors in 1914. Though the building does not have a worshiping congregation, it still would benefit from some upkeep and envisaging of what the building could become.

Coventry meetinghouse contains several architectural characteristics of Mennonite meetinghouses that were being built in the late 19th century. Though this congregation was affiliated with the Franconia Conference, one is able to observe characteristics of building choices in the Coventry meetinghouse that were being used in the Eastern District Conference. The shape of the building is similar to the traditional meetinghouse, but the roof line is taller and steeper. The windows with operational shutters and doors are rectangular as in the traditional form. However, the placement of a single entrance on the gabled end of the building is in keeping with a few Eastern District meetinghouses of the day. One could compare it to the Eden meetinghouse in Schwenksville that was built in 1894.

There may be several reasons for a Franconia Conference congregation to build a meetinghouse that was different from the norm. One possible reason is that it was located on the geographical edges of the conference, and it may have not felt the pressure to conform to certain unspoken expectations. A more influential factor was the Vincent meetinghouse that was located not too far from Coventry. In 1889, the Vincent congregation, the Mennonite congregation located nearest to Coventry, built a new meetinghouse. If one compares the two meetinghouses that were built only one year apart from each other, there are similarities that show how even congregations within the Franconia Conference were beginning to slowly change their traditional meetinghouse design. The Vincent congregation built a new brick structure that had a steeper than normal roof line. John L. Ruth in his book, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship*, speaks to the idea of a new building trend at Vincent. “It was gossiped that the
reason the roof on the new Vincent meetinghouse was so fancily steep was that this would make it easier to sell to another denomination in case, as it was feared, the Mennonite congregation would die off." This had happened with the congregation in Phoenixville. They had built a new meetinghouse with a steep roof and later in the congregation’s history they ended up selling their building to the Lutherans. Was the Coventry congregation having the same idea? They were dwindling in size at that time, as was the Vincent congregation. It is all speculation whether or not Coventry took architectural ideas from the Vincent meetinghouse, yet since they were built so close in time and proximity to one another, one could deduce that there was some influence.

Coventry meetinghouse is no longer owned by Mennonites. The burial ground around the meetinghouse is being used by Mennonites and others from the area. The cemetery has a group of trustees who maintain it, but is there a group that is designated to maintain the historic meetinghouse? One of the trustees was contacted several times to set up an opportunity to view the inside of the meetinghouse, but the individual would not return phone calls or respond to messages. One wonders, speculatively again, if the interior of the building is in such disrepair that the trustee is embarrassed to have anyone see the inside?

Coventry meetinghouse would benefit from having a group of trustees or preservation group that would be interested in maintaining it. In the recent past, a metal roof was put on which protects it from the elements and keeps it from deteriorating inside. The exterior plastered walls are deteriorating because of water runoff from the roof and water pooling along the foundation. A simple remedy for this would be to add guttering of some sort and get the water away from the structure. Are there any family groups that have ties to the Coventry congregation, who

would be interested in forming a preservation group specifically for this meetinghouse? Is there a local preservation group either in East Coventry or Pottstown who would see the benefits to restoring this structure?

If a group could be found to restore and maintain the Coventry meetinghouse, there would be different possibilities to how the facility could be used. This is what happened with the Frick’s meetinghouse near Telford. There was a group of individuals that understood the significance of Frick’s meetinghouse and how that significance related to their own history. This interest brought them together to form a trustee group that cares for it. The meetinghouse is still used for special occasions, one being an annual hymn-sing in the summer.

Coventry meetinghouse sits in the middle of a beautiful cemetery with trees and grass. The setting is quite serene. Imagine for a moment some possible outcomes for Coventry if some people cared for it. There would be family reunions held here for descendants of those who were active and prominent in the history of Coventry. It would be an available wedding site for couples who would enjoy getting married in an historic meetinghouse. Area school children would take field trips here to hear stories of early settlers to the region. Area churches and groups would be able to hold special events here, such as hymn-sings or historical society gatherings.

A final suggestion for reuse of the Coventry structure would be to enhance the setting for families who choose to bury their deceased in the cemetery. Having a usable structure to hold small funerals or memorials right close to the burial site would be a most agreeable benefit.

The above mentioned meetinghouses, First Mennonite of Philadelphia and Coventry, would benefit from a group of individuals who are interested in Mennonite history and Mennonite
meetinghouse preservation. Would there be such a group that identified its mission to be the preservation of all the surveyed meetinghouses? Having a regional Mennonite meetinghouse historical society that shared an interest in all these surveyed meetinghouses would be one approach to encourage and see to their preservation.

Local preservation groups or historical societies that are concerned with the preservation of local landmarks and history, but not limited to those of Mennonite affiliation, may also be interested in these surveyed meetinghouses. A more in-depth study of each of them would show the place in local history that they (the congregations and meetinghouses) represent. Mennonite meetinghouses are significant to local history in general as well as to Mennonite history in particular.
Conclusion

When setting out to do research for the documentation of Mennonite meetinghouses in the Franconia and Eastern Districts in Pennsylvania, this thesis proposed to also research the movement of Mennonites in Europe before they migrated to Pennsylvania. The Anabaptist groups that developed into the Mennonite denomination spent many years moving around Europe because of the persecution that was inflicted upon them by the government and by state churches. As groups of Mennonites moved around from Switzerland to Germany (the Palatinate region) and to the Netherlands, they were forced to meet for worship in obscure locations because of threats on their lives. Their movement from place to place saw them meeting in caves, forests and fields and later meeting in one another’s houses, barns and warehouses. In this process they learned to adapt to the situation they were in, continuing to find a place where they were able to worship as a group of believers.

Having a better understanding of what the worship spaces were like in Europe helps one understand why the Mennonites’ first worship spaces in Pennsylvania were designed as they were.

The reader of this research may very well ask the question, “Is there a distinct Mennonite church architecture?” Historically, there may have been such a thing during the 18th and 19th centuries, but through the survey one notices that some Mennonites have taken on architectural concepts of the cultures around them. This is apparent with the Eastern District
Mennonite Conference that started up in the mid-19th century. As Eastern District Mennonites broke away from the Franconia group, they began to take on architectural designs from other religious groups.

In the article, “Sectarian Ideology and Church Architecture,” C.A. Heatwole, relates that when immigrant religious groups first build their worship space in the new land, they use ideas from their region of origin. The design and style used is reflected from the tradition that they brought with them. Heatwole continues, “Over time, however, the immigrants and their descendants acculturate. Links with the ancestral homeland and its traditions weaken; at the same time, social and economic ties expand beyond the bounds of the immigrant group.” This seems to be what happened in regard to the change in Mennonite meetinghouse architecture in the studied area in Pennsylvania. They first met in their homes (as in the Palatinate), but as they became more settled they began building special spaces for worship. These first meetinghouses looked very similar to how they built their homes. The interior of their meetinghouses was influenced by their brethren in the Netherlands and took on a Dutch Mennonite appearance.

With the schism of 1847, a group broke away from the more traditional Mennonite group that had been settling the area from the early 1700’s. The Mennonites who broke away from the more conservative group began leading a life that was more open to the world around them. This thesis proposes that they began interacting and socializing more with non-Mennonite people and were therefore exposed to new ideas concerning ‘church’, reflected then in the type of worship spaces they built. Around the mid-19th century they began building worship spaces that took on the architectural characteristics of other denominations. Up until this point the Mennonites had been basically a unified group in the type of meetinghouses they built.

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48 Heatwole, pg 77.
This thesis set out to do a field survey of twenty-two 19th-century Mennonite meetinghouses in order to provide more documentation of their existence. In the process, it became clear that the survey was only touching the surface of what could and should be done in documenting these meetinghouses. It would be beneficial to have more extensive study and documentation completed on these same meetinghouses.

When designing this field survey, John A. Burns’ book, *Recording Historic Structures*, was consulted. Burns explains the conception and application of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). This includes methods for recording historic properties as well as several case studies. Within the Burns book cited, the chapter entitled *Recording Vernacular Building Form*, by Catherine L. Lavoie, begins with an informative explanation of why vernacular buildings, such as 19th-century Mennonite meetinghouses, should be surveyed and recorded. Lavoie begins her chapter by saying,

> At the inception of the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1933, the documentation of regionally specific vernacular structures and more commonplace building types constituted the backbone of the program. While landmark structures are important as exemplary models of architectural style or as venues for conveying seminal events in our nation’s history, alone they present a skewed perception of our culture. Vernacular building forms more accurately exemplify the diversity of ethnic heritage, lifestyles, and folkways in the United States. The significance of vernacular structures resides not so much in their individual merit as in their ability to reflect larger patterns in our nation’s historical and architectural development. Therefore, it is important to record for the HABS collection exemplary or representative examples of various vernacular forms.  

Mennonite meetinghouses do represent a specific ethnic heritage in the United States. They also reflect a progression in their built form, a form that adapted other regional architectural ideas for their own context.

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Further documentation of the twenty-two surveyed meetinghouses could happen through HABS. Undertaking HABS would include more detailed documentation with measured drawings of the floor plan, elevations of front and side, structural elements and essential details such as windows, shutters, doorway hoods, doors, interior bench layouts and any other architectural specifics. This type of documentation would make available the specifics of these historic meetinghouses in the event that something destructive would happen to their historic integrity.

Yet another more contemporary and beneficial method of detailed documentation would be the use of a 3D scanner. The 3D camera would give a very detailed survey of the meetinghouse. This type of documentation is very thorough and takes into account all the details of the building. The three dimensional scans may then be imported into AutoCAD to produce 2D drawings, 3D record drawings and volume/surface calculations. The use of a 3D camera to document the surveyed meetinghouses would provide very detailed documentation, an archive of existing conditions and assist in the restoration of the historic structure. This is a fairly new way of documenting historic buildings, but it seems to be a very exciting and comprehensive option.

In the process of doing research and completing the field survey another idea arose that would help develop interest in this topic. The idea of a driving tour incorporating the twenty-two meetinghouses came about. This driving tour is in the process of being developed and designed with a graphic designer as an interactive website. The driving tour will include several different routes to guide an individual in visiting the meetinghouses and other interesting points along the way. A mobile phone application for the meetinghouses will also be developed, giving easier access to locate the meetinghouses.
At the outset of this study the main concern of the thesis was to encourage the preservation of historic Mennonite meetinghouses in the studied area. In carrying out the field survey there is now a more detailed description of the twenty-two historic 19th-century meetinghouses that relates their historic and architectural worth. This may inspire others to preserve the history that is present in these built structures. Viewing the built structures of the past gives those who live in the present an avenue to try and understand what has taken place before. It is hoped that a deepened knowledge of historic meetinghouses of the Mennonites in Franconia and Eastern District Conferences will generate a passion for their preservation.
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Appendix

Map used by permission of cartographer Jan Gleysteen.
Map #2: The Palatinate Region with highlighted towns mentioned in text. Map used by permission of cartographer Jan Gleysteen.
Map #3: Map used by permission of cartographer Jan Gleysteen.
Map #4: Pennsylvania (shows the location within the state of the twenty-two meetinghouses surveyed.)
Map #5: Location of Philadelphia meetinghouses.

Map #6 Location of meetinghouses
Photo # 1: Eppstein meetinghouse 1779 (photo credit to Paul Showalter in “Churches in South Germany”)

Photo #3: Erpolzheim meetinghouse exterior view (photo credit, Paul Showalter, in “Churches in South Germany”)
Photo #4: Erpolzheim meetinghouse interior view (photo credit, Paul Showalter, in “Churches in South Germany”)
Photo # 5: Allegany northwest view, camera facing southeast

Photo #6: Allegany southeast view, camera facing northwest
Photo #7: Alleghany entrance doorway, camera facing east
Photo #8: Alleghany cemetery, camera facing southwest

Photo #9: Alleghany, camera facing east
Photo #10: Bally southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #11: Bally northeast view, camera facing southwest
Photo #12: Bally northwest view, camera facing southeast

Photo #13: Bally east view, camera facing west
Photo #14: Bally southeast entrance (northernmost), camera facing northwest
Photo #15: Bally southeast wall window (northern most bay), camera facing northwest
Photo #16: Bally southeast gable window and date stone, camera facing northwest
Photo #17: Bertolet southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #18: Bertolet southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #19: Bertolet north view, camera facing south

Photo #20: Bertolet northwest view, camera facing southeast
Photo #21: Bertolet southeast window, camera facing north west
Photo #22: Bertolet southwest entrance, camera facing northeast
Photo #23: Coventry southeast view, camera facing northwest
Photo #24: Coventry east view, camera facing west

Photo #25: Coventry northwest view, camera facing southeast

Photo #26: Coventry southwest exterior basement entrance, camera facing northeast
Photo #27: Coventry southeast entrance, camera facing north
Photo #28: Coventry northeast foundation, camera facing southeast
Photo #29: Deep Run northeast view, camera facing southwest

Photo #30: Deep Run southeast view, camera facing northwest
Photo #31: Deep Run northeast entrance, camera facing southwest

Photo #32: Deep Run northeast window, camera facing southwest
Photo #33: Delp southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #34: Delp north view, camera facing south
Photo #35: Delp southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #36: Delph southeast entrance (southernmost), camera facing northwest
Photo #37: Delp southeast shuttered window, camera facing northwest
Photo #38: Eden east view, camera facing west

Photo #39: Eden south view, camera facing north
Photo #40: Eden northeast basement/foundation wall, camera facing northwest

Photo #41: Eden brick detail, camera facing northeast
Photo #42: Eden southeast wall, camera facing northwest
Photo #43: First Mennonite southwest view, camera facing northeast

Photo #44: First Mennonite date stone, camera facing north
Photo #45: First Mennonite south wall, camera facing north
Photo #46: First Mennonite north wall, camera facing southeast
Photo # 47: First Mennonite fence post detail, camera facing north
Photo #48: Flatland east view, camera facing west

Photo #49: Flatland southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #50: Flatland northeast gable date stone, camera facing southwest
Photo #51: Franconia southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #52: Franconia northeast view, camera facing southwest
Photo #53: Franconia northwest view, camera facing southeast
Photo #54: Franconia northeast wall window, camera facing southwest
Photo #55: Franconia interior southeast window, camera facing southeast
Photo #56: Franconia southeast entrance (northernmost), camera facing northwest
Photo #57: Fricks south view, camera facing north

Photo #58: Fricks west view, camera facing east
Photo #59: Fricks northeast view, camera facing southwest

Photo #60: Fricks E. Orvilla Rd view, camera facing southeast
Photo #61: Germantown south view, camera facing north

Photo #62: Germantown southeast view, camera facing northwest
Photo #63: Germantown northwest view, camera facing southeast

Photo #64: Germantown northeast view, camera facing west
Photo #65: Germantown northwest window, camera facing south
Photo #66: Germantown northwest closed shuttered window, camera facing southeast
Photo #67: Germantown southwest main entrance, camera facing northeast
Photo #68: Groveland southwest view, camera facing north

Photo #69: Groveland northeast view, camera facing southwest
Photo #70: Groveland southeast view, camera facing northwest
Photo #71: Hereford northeast view, camera facing south

Photo #72: Hereford southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #73: Hereford apse southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #74: Hereford round tracery window, camera facing southwest
Photo #75: Hereford southeast entrance, camera facing northwest
Photo #76: Hersteins southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #77: Hersteins north view, camera facing southwest
Photo #78: Hersteins west view, camera facing northeast

Photo #79: Hersteins cemetery stone wall, camera facing north
Photo #80: Lower Skippack southwest view, camera facing northeast

Photo #81: Lower Skippack northwest view, camera facing southwest
Photo #82: Lower Skippack southwest view, camera facing northeast

Photo #83: Lower Skippack preachers’ bench, camera facing northeast
Photo #84: Methacton southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #85: Methacton southwest view, camera facing northeast
Photo #86: Methacton northwest view, camera facing southeast
Photo #87: Methacton southeast entrance, camera facing northwest
Photo #88: Methacton southwest wall window, camera facing northeast
Photo #89: Saucon southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #90: Saucon south view, camera facing north
Photo #91: Saucon north view, camera facing south

Photo #92: Saucon south gable window, camera facing north
Photo #93: Saucon south wall entrance, camera facing northeast
Photo #94: Second Mennonite northeast view, camera facing southwest
Photo #95: Second Mennonite east view, camera facing west
Photo #96: Second Mennonite interior view, camera facing west

Photo #97: Second Mennonite interior, camera facing southwest
Photo #98: Springfield southeast view, camera facing northwest

Photo #99: Springfield south view, camera facing north
Photo #100: Springfield northwest view, camera facing southeast

Photo #101: Springfield iron fence, camera facing southwest
Photo #102: Springfield window southwest wall, camera facing north east
Photo #103: Springfield southeast wall entrance, camera facing north
Photo #104: Springfield date stone, camera facing northwest
Photo #105: Swamp south view, camera facing north

Photo #106: Swamp west view, camera facing east
Photo #107: Swamp north view, camera facing south

Photo #108: Swamp south wall entrance doors, camera facing north
Photo #109: Swamp date stone, camera facing north
Photo #110: Swamp meetinghouse sign, hangs on an interior wall of addition
Photo #111: Upper Milford north view, camera facing south

Photo #112: Upper Milford northwest view, camera facing southeast
Photo #113: Upper Milford southwest view, camera facing northeast

Photo #114: Upper Milford southwest wall with wide curved wood cornice and verge board and wheel window, camera facing northeast
Photo #115: Upper Milford window detail, camera facing southwest
Photo #116: Upper Milford name and date stone on northeast wall, camera facing southwest
Photo #117: West Swamp southwest view, camera facing northeast

Photo #118: West Swamp south view, camera facing north