

ABSTRACT

THESIS: 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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PAGES: 230

The richness of southeastern Pennsylvania Mennonite history and architecture is still evident in this survey of twenty-two nineteenth century Mennonite meetinghouses. This study was undertaken since no collection of these historic meetinghouses in this part of the United States has so far been documented via a field survey.

Through researching the beginnings of Mennonites and their meetinghouses in Europe the thesis examines European Mennonite worship spaces and factors that influenced the design and layout of meetinghouses in the United States. The theology of Mennonites themselves was one of those factors in how their meetinghouses were built and later evolved architecturally.

The majority of meetinghouses are being preserved in one way or another, with varying degrees of respect for their historical integrity. This survey seeks to create an awareness of the historical significance of these meetinghouses for Pennsylvania Mennonite and regional history. Some recommendations are given for further study and/or documentation needed for the preservation of these structures.