

AUG 19 2016

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery

Other names/site number: Historic Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 114 Wise Road

City or town: Jackson Township State: PA County: Butler

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide   X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  A   B   X  C   D

	August 15, 2016
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>PA Historical and Museum Commission</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*Joe Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*10.4.16*  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious facility

FUNERARY/Cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

RELIGION/Religious facility

FUNERARY/Cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE/slate, BRICK, STONE/Sandstone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery consists of an early nineteenth century vernacular meetinghouse (46 by 33 feet) and adjacent cemetery on 1.3 acres surrounded on three sides by a stone wall. The meetinghouse is a contributing building, the cemetery a contributing site and the stone wall a contributing structure. The cemetery opened c. 1816 and the meetinghouse was built in 1825 north of the small borough of Harmony in Butler County, Pennsylvania. The meetinghouse sits at the crest of a gentle hill overlooking the Connoquenessing Creek to the south. It is located in a somewhat rural area with highways flanking it on the east and west. There is a grassy area immediately in front of the east elevation used for parking. Farther east a former dairy farm retains many of its outbuildings including a stone barn (Figure 1). Suburban housing developments are rapidly encroaching just beyond the farm. A depression in the land south of the meetinghouse once held a bridge, now submerged, which crossed the creek carrying a north-south road to the east of the meetinghouse until approximately 1936 (Figure 2). There are forested lands to the north and west. The gable-roofed, one-story rectangular meetinghouse was built in two sections, the original load bearing stone section of 1825 and a later brick addition completed by c. 1830. The building's gable end faces Wise Road and the main entrance faces east. All three contributing elements are in excellent condition and have integrity. The western portion of the cemetery beyond the abrupt end of the stone walls is part of the Grace Church of Harmony and, therefore, is not included within the boundaries of this nomination.

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## Meetinghouse

### *Exterior Description*

This meetinghouse is a one-story stone building with a one-bay brick addition at the southern end; there is no basement. Its gable roof is slate and there is a small interior-end brick chimney at the south wall. The slate gable roof was repaired in the 1990s when a central chimney was removed. Originally this small chimney vented a stove sitting in the middle of the sanctuary floor. The brick chimney rested on the main central wooden beam in the attic, but over the years its weight, along with insect damage to the beam, had caused the beam and the ceiling below it to sag. In the 1990s, the chimney was dismantled and the bricks were retained for future replacement. In addition to the removal of the chimney, the wooden beam was reinforced by placing a steel I-beam adjacent to its length; the latter change required that the ceiling underneath the beam be repaired. These changes are fairly minor because the chimney was very small and the work inside the attic is visible only in the attic.

The foundation of the stone portion is of long stone blocks; on the brick portion the foundation stones are scabble and drafted (a masonry technique in which an awl is used to pit the center of the stone and etch vertical marks around the perimeter making a decorative border) (Photo 5). Paneled wooden shutters were recently replaced throughout the building using the original oak shutters as a model. They have been appropriately fitted to close over each of the window openings; it is thought that the original shutters were added to the meetinghouse as the congregation dwindled in the late 1800's to secure the building.

### *East Elevation/Main Facade*

The east or main elevation has four bays, three in the stone portion and one in the southern brick section of the meetinghouse. There are two entries on this façade: the central entry consists of double wood-paneled doors set into a paneled recess with a rectangular diamond-paned transom above. The windows, flanking the central entrance, are double sash 12/8 paned and flanked by oak, paneled shutters. The original portion of the building is of hewn sandstone with dramatic adze marks (Photo 6) and straight-arched flared lintels above each of the windows and the door (Photo 1). The second entry on the long side, located in the brick addition, has double wooden doors with an arched upper panel and a five light clear glass transom above (Photo 3).

### *South Elevation*

The south or gable-end elevation is three bays wide and constructed of brick with a stone, scabble and drafted foundation (Photo 4). The brick is laid in a common bond and all three apertures have flat stone lintels. There is a double sash 6/6 window with paneled shutters at the southeast corner. Double wooden doors to the left are simple wooden slats with a five-light clear glass transom above. To the left of the doorway is a single four-paneled wooden door, which was originally a second window on this elevation, as indicated by the patching of the brickwork at the former sill level. It was probably changed to a doorway c. 1898 when the space was walled off to be used by the adjacent cemetery for storage. In the peak of the gable end there is a small wooden door with a stone lintel and sill, used to gain access via ladder to the attic. At the gable end above the south elevation there is a small brick chimney, which once served an interior

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stove, removed by the 1970s. Both gable ends have returning eaves, part of the subtle, handsome craftsmanship that elevates this seemingly simple building above the ordinary.

### *West Elevation*

The west elevation (Photo 7) has three double sash 12/8 windows in the stone portion and a fourth double sash 6/6 window in the brick section to the south. There is no entry on this elevation facing the cemetery as the pulpit is on this wall of the interior.

### *North Elevation*

The north elevation has three bays of double sash 12/8 paned windows similar to those on the other elevations of the stone portion of the meetinghouse (Photo 8). As on the south elevation, in the peak of the gable end there is a small wooden door with a stone lintel and sill, used to gain access via ladder to the attic. Above this door is a white oval datestone that reads "1825" in black lettering.

### *Interior Description*

The interior of the meetinghouse consists of three rooms, a large nearly square sanctuary (33 by 34 feet), in the stone section, and two smaller rooms in the brick addition to the south, a cloakroom and storage space for the cemetery. The sanctuary is well lit by its large clear glass multi-paned windows with sixteen-inch-deep stone window sills. It has white plaster walls and ceiling and plank flooring (Photo 10). Backless wooden benches on risers are placed against the north, east and south walls. Each riser consists of four twelve to fourteen foot long plank benches joined to a baseboard with footrests between. From the door placement it is assumed that men sat on the right and women on the left since there is a second entrance to the sanctuary on the south wall or left side of the sanctuary (Photo 2). All the benches face toward the west wall where there is a raised platform with a paneled desk-like pulpit on it. The pulpit, approximately six feet wide, is enclosed on the side facing the congregation and is open on the west side with an inner shelf. The pulpit is often referred to by Mennonites as the "Bench" since the Bishop, Minister and Deacon were all seated on a bench behind it. Low stairs provide access to both sides of the pulpit's platform. Both doors to the sanctuary have diamond panes in their transoms and the planks are joined in a chevron pattern on the interior of the doors (Photo 11).

The cloakroom in the brick addition has a bead board ceiling, plank flooring and simple double doors to the exterior, which are located on the south and east walls. There are hooks along the interior's north wall for hats and coats. The addition's interior space was divided into two rooms c. 1898 by a thin-walled north-south partition creating a separate room in the southwest corner. It is accessed only by an exterior door, which appears to have been a window originally. That small room is presently used as storage only.

The attic space is accessed only by ladder through small wooden doors in the exterior's gable ends; there is no interior stairway to it. Both the stone portion and the brick addition have no ridgepole, but a center beam runs the length of the attic floor, twelve inches wide and eight inches high, probably of red oak, with mortise and tenoned cross beams and rafters of four by four inches, some with bark remaining on them (Photo 12).

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### **Stone Wall and Cemetery**

A four foot, three inch tall stone wall of random-laid sandstone encloses the cemetery on three sides (Photo 8), leaving the western edge open to the cemetery of Harmony's German Evangelical and Reformed congregation, now Grace Church of Harmony. An opening flanked by squat stone square columns highlights the metal gate at the southeast corner of the building. The gate is a single piece of wrought iron with small decorative flourishes at the top (Photo 3). This gate opening is the only one along the length of the stone walls, although the entire western portion is open to the adjoining cemetery. The wall itself is a contributing structure and is finished with an eight inch tall concrete peaked cap ornamented with lines at the base (Photo 8). The cemetery slopes gradually away from the meetinghouse to the west and the wall is shorter in sections where the ground has risen. The stone wall terminates on both the north and south sides by simply sloping to the ground, there is no column at the end of the wall's run (Photo 13).

The cemetery occupies approximately .8 of an acre and contains 410 identified graves and an estimated 650 to 700 total burials dating from 1815 to 1955. There are veterans from the War of 1812 to the wars of the twentieth century with markers of granite, sandstone, marble and zinc. Several of the inscriptions are in German. The graves are laid out in vague rows facing toward the meetinghouse (Photos 9 and 13). Only the double door in the south elevation of the meetinghouse leads directly to the cemetery from the interior.

### **Assessment of Integrity**

The Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery retains integrity. The building is an excellent example of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Pennsylvania German architecture in western Pennsylvania and has seen few changes over the years.

**Location:** The property retains integrity in regard to location. Its location is unchanged since construction began.

**Design:** The property retains integrity in regard to design. Its exterior design features, including simple lintels and wide sills, scabble and drafting on the foundation of the brick addition and diamond pattered transoms and paneled doors have not been altered. The only exterior changes have been the replacement of a window with a door on the south elevation in ca. 1898, and the removal of a central brick chimney in the 1990s, both relatively minor alterations. In addition, interior design features, including the large open sanctuary, chevron paneled doors, simple plaster walls, plank flooring and paneled pulpit, have not been altered. Interior changes have included the installation of a wall in the brick addition to create another room in ca. 1898 and the replacement of part of the ceiling when the central chimney was replaced in the 1990s, both of which are fairly minor alterations. The design of the cemetery and stone wall also has not been altered.

**Materials:** The property retains integrity of materials. The meetinghouse's brick and stone walls, interior plaster walls and ceiling and wood flooring, as well as the stone wall and cemetery markers have not been removed or altered. A steel beam was added to strengthen the meetinghouse's ceiling beam but it is not visible.

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**Workmanship:** The property retains integrity in regard to workmanship. Its workmanship has not been altered and is apparent in the sturdy stone and brick construction and unpretentious finishes throughout.

**Feeling:** The property retains integrity in regard to feeling. With its sturdy brick and stone construction and unpretentious finishes, it continues to exhibit the feeling of a simple early 19<sup>th</sup> century Mennonite meetinghouse in western Pennsylvania.

**Setting:** The property retains integrity in regard to setting. The lot retains its original proportions, topography and location and the immediate surroundings remain rural. More recent highway construction and suburban development have begun to encroach on the area, but they have not compromised the property's overall setting.

**Association:** The building retains integrity in regard to association. Even though the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery is no longer used for regular Mennonite meetings, its association with the congregation is apparent in its simple unpretentious workmanship and finishes.



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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

1825-c. 1830

**Significant Dates**

1825; c. 1830

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery meets National Register Criterion C for Architecture as a significant example of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Pennsylvania German architecture in western Pennsylvania. Although executed in an unpretentious manner, in keeping with Mennonite beliefs, the property exhibits a quality of craftsmanship that makes it significant locally. The craftsmanship is evident on the exterior with the meetinghouse's sturdy stone and brick construction, simple lintels and wide sills, diamond-patterned transoms, paneled doors and scabble and drafting on the addition's foundation, and, on the interior, with its chevron-paneled doors, paneled pulpit, unembellished plaster walls and ceiling and plank flooring. It is also evident in the stone wall and cemetery west of the meetinghouse. While the property is associated with the westward migration of the Mennonite faith, more research is needed to establish its significance under Criterion A for association with that migration. The property meets Criteria Consideration A and D because it is occasionally used for church reunion services and because it contains a cemetery. The period of significance begins in 1825 with construction

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of the original section of the meetinghouse and ends in ca. 1830 with the construction of the brick addition.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Summary History**

#### *The Harmonists*

The Harmonists owned the land on which the meetinghouse now stands between 1804 and 1815. They were a pietist group that followed their charismatic leader, Johann George Rapp (1757-1847) from Iptingen in the Duchy of Wurttemberg to Butler County, Pennsylvania, in 1804. They bought four thousand acres along the Connoquenessing Creek from Baron Detmar Basse, a former German ambassador to Paris who purchased 10,000 acres in the area in 1802 to found his own barony. Despite the Harmonists' belief that the Second Coming was imminent, they built more than 130 buildings in what became the village of Harmony and its environs. The houses varied from log to brick and stone as the settlers prospered. They employed both traditional German building techniques such as "Dutch biscuits" as insulation as well as English techniques such as Flemish bond brickwork and fanlit doorways.<sup>1</sup> Typical of the period, the Harmonists employed whatever materials were locally available including sandstone, lumber and clay for bricks.

#### *The Mennonites*

When the Harmonists moved their settlement to Indiana in 1815, seeking a more direct water route for trade and better land for grape-growing; they sold nine thousand acres in and around the village of Harmony to Abraham Ziegler, a forty-one year old blacksmith from Lehigh County. He agreed to pay \$100,000. The debt was paid after Ziegler's death in 1836 by his sons who resorted to the courts to collect the money. In general the Mennonite religion urges settling differences through collaboration rather than force and the law courts were perceived by the elders of the congregation in the 1830s as a means of force. The eldest Ziegler son, Abraham Ziegler, Jr. was excommunicated, but he decided that "while they might deny him the sacraments, the church was open to the public and he would attend as usual."<sup>2</sup> Once the land was cleared of all encumbrances "all parties concerned reape'd rich rewards."<sup>3</sup>

Ziegler was joined by several other German Mennonite families from Lehigh County, including members of the Moyer, Boyer, Wise and Rice families. They began working the lands formerly held by the celibate Harmonist sect and soon after 1815 opened the burial ground on the northern

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<sup>1</sup> A "Dutch Biscuit" is a small piece of wood encased in clay and straw and slipped between joists as insulation. Frederick Reichert Rapp's house has the English touches and still stands at 523 Main Street in Harmony. Frederick Rapp was the adopted son of George Rapp; he trained as a stonemason and designed many of the village's buildings over the years.

<sup>2</sup> Shetler, Sanford Grant. *Two Centuries of Struggle and Growth, 1763-1963: A History of the Allegheny Mennonite Conference*. Published by the Allegheny Mennonite Conference and distributed by the Herald Press of Scottsdale, PA, 1963, pp. 316-317.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, Robert C., et al. *History of Butler County, Pennsylvania*, (Chicago: R. C. Brown & Company, 1895), p. 412.

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hillside overlooking the village of Harmony. The Mennonites chose to build individual farmsteads rather than holding property communally as the Harmonists had done. The land adjacent to the Connoquenessing Creek was fertile and had already been cleared by the hard-working Harmonists leaving the rolling hills suitable for farming. As the 1883 history of Butler County, Pennsylvania, states, the region's ". . . soil is well adapted to agriculture, and its mineral wealth, though as yet little developed, is extensive. . . . The township was originally covered with a heavy growth of valuable timber, consisting of black walnut, chestnut, the usual varieties of oak, etc. The alluvial bottom lands of the Connoquenessing are here broad and level, and contain some of the choicest farming lands in Butler County. . . . A pleasanter location for a town it would be impossible to find . . . ."4

Unlike the Amish who live in essentially closed communities, most Mennonites do not; therefore, when Ziegler found he needed workers to operate some of the Harmonist industries he had purchased in 1815, he recruited German-speaking non-Mennonites to the village as well as fellow religionists.

#### *The Mennonite Congregation and Its Decline*

Founded in 1816, Harmony's Mennonite congregation originally shared space with a German Evangelical and Reformed congregation at the Harmony village church building built in 1808 for the Harmonist sect at 538 Main Street.<sup>5</sup> Early images of that church show a high steeple/clock tower and pointed arch windows, neither of which was repeated on the Mennonite meetinghouse of 1825 (Figure 3). Sharing worship space was a common practice in early Germanic denominations: "the building was utilitarian, not a sacred symbol or monument."<sup>6</sup> Besides worship space, congregations would also often share meetinghouses and cemetery grounds specifying that "people of all faiths might use their building for funerals, and also that they might bury their dead in the meetinghouse ground."<sup>7</sup> While Mennonites were generally pacifists, they were also tolerant and accepting of other's beliefs, which explains the presence of many military veterans' burials in the adjacent cemetery.

Being so far from their brethren in eastern Pennsylvania, the Mennonite congregants began to intermarry and drifted away over the next seventy-five years causing the small congregation to dwindle and ultimately to close to regular meetings in 1902.<sup>8</sup> In a 1950 article for the publication, *The Mennonite Community*, a descendant of one of Harmony's Mennonite settlers explored the question of why this congregation failed. He noted several factors. First, since the original Mennonite settlers were all farmers, craftsmen to operate the mills and manufactories

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 205-206.

<sup>5</sup> The 1808 Harmonist Church has been nearly obscured by a 1929 addition. It is now owned by Grace Church of Harmony, a non-denominational community Christian Church and owners of the portion of the cemetery outside the boundaries of this nomination.

<sup>6</sup> MacMaster, Richard K. *The Mennonite Experience in America: Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America 1683-1790*. Volume 1, (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1985), pp. 187 and 190.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ruch, Shelby Miller. *Harmony*. (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing Company, 2009), pp. 8-9, 27, 29.

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were lacking. "In time, Ziegler brought in the necessary personnel to operate the various shops. These were recruited largely from other German-speaking church groups such as the Reformed and Lutheran churches. While this tended to steady the economy . . . all three groups worshiped in the Rappite church. The Mennonite young people began to intermarry freely . . . and many were lost to the church."<sup>9</sup>

A second factor was the intransigence of the leadership. When Abraham Ziegler, Jr. was excommunicated for resorting to the courts to settle his father's estate, a rift began in the congregation, and although Zielger, Jr. was eventually reinstated, Steiner notes that the issue led to serious "misunderstanding and strife became a more or less perennial problem thereafter."<sup>10</sup> Yet the town prospered because of the integrity, frugality and industry of these early Mennonites. Steiner quotes a leading citizen of Harmony as stating: "The Rappites (Harmonists) left; the Mennonites stayed and built."

Steiner ascribes the eventual closing of the meetinghouse in 1902 to a lack of spirituality, in the form of an indifference to the younger members and an inability to engage them in the spiritual mission of the church. The sermons were delivered in German until 1902 and the backless seating was never updated. He ends by saying "Their failure was not that they did not contribute and build a good American community, for they left a posterity of industrious farmers and successful businessmen. They left a church building, strong and sturdy, remarkably well preserved through all these 125 years. But what they did not leave is vastly more important – a living church organism . . ."<sup>11</sup>

### *Property History*

Ten years after opening the cemetery, the Mennonites built their meetinghouse on the eastern edge of it. It is now among the oldest Mennonite meetinghouses west of the Allegheny Mountains. According to Mennonite historian Wilmer Swope it is "the best example in America, unadulterated of the early American Mennonite meetinghouses surviving."<sup>12</sup>

After a few more years of successful farming the meetinghouse was expanded c. 1830. Nonetheless, the domestic scale of the meetinghouse reflects the fact that the earliest Mennonite gatherings were held in the houses and barns of their members.<sup>13</sup> It was a centerpiece of their lives. After it closed in 1902, occasional reunion and memorial services were held in this meetinghouse during the twentieth century (Figure 4) and after World War II the building was

<sup>9</sup> Steiner, James A. "A Church That Built a Community but Failed Its Purpose." *The Mennonite Community*, October 1950, pp. 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Swope, Wilmer. "Traditional Mennonite Meetinghouse Features," one-page paper written in 1992 and held in the archives of Historic Harmony, Inc., Harmony, PA.

<sup>13</sup> Clouse, Jerry, "Religious Landscapes," in *Architecture and Landscape of the Pennsylvania Germans, 1720-1920*, ed. Sally McMurry and Nancy Van Dolsen, 181-207. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 188. The Hans Herr house of 1719, a rectangular, stone dwelling with double sash multi-paned windows and a gable roof was used as a meetinghouse as well as a dwelling until 1849.

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available with the permission of Historic Harmony, the non-profit group that owns and cares for it.<sup>14</sup>

Today, the Harmony Mennonite meetinghouse retains the dignity of its simple, rural origins, and the architectural integrity necessary to evoke its early nineteenth century building date. In addition, many of the early family names of German origin are still represented in the area and the building is used for weddings and reunions. The core beliefs of simplicity, peace and good works would still be recognizable in the meetinghouse if settlers from the 1820s returned to Harmony.

### **Mennonite Background**

Mennonites had been settled in eastern Pennsylvania for nearly one hundred years when Ziegler and his group of co-religionists came west. Mennonites in the nineteenth century traditionally chose to live in rural places and farm rather than moving to urban and industrializing areas, so this section of Butler County suited their needs. They divided the land and created a series of subsistence farms. Without the large number of workers in the earlier Harmonist community, the buildings of the village were left nearly vacant as the new owners built substantial barns and stone houses on their individual farms. Using intensive Germanic farming techniques such as crop rotation and fertilization, the local Mennonite farmers eventually had a surplus, which they shipped via the Pittsburgh-Mercer-Erie Road (now Perry Highway/U.S. 19) and on the Connoquenessing Creek.

In the Mennonite tradition there are three levels of leadership all chosen from the congregation if they are “sober, blameless, monogamous, and in the case of the bishop, skillful at teaching.”<sup>15</sup> The bishops’ role is to perform baptisms and communions and they often reside in other places; the preacher or minister is local and chosen for his communication skills; and the deacon is in charge of the congregation’s property and administering funds to the poor.<sup>16</sup> The Mennonite Deacon at Harmony from 1823 to 1875 was John Ziegler, who would have then been in charge of the building of the original meetinghouse under the supervision of the Mennonite Bishop John Boyer (1762-1828). Boyer was originally a Mennonite pastor at Bally in Berks County, Pennsylvania. The Mennonite meetinghouse there, called the Hereford meetinghouse was built of log in 1755 and enlarged in 1790. It has the simple rectangular shape and gable roof of the Harmony meetinghouse and is now used as a community center rather than a meetinghouse.

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<sup>14</sup> Historic Harmony, Inc. was founded in 1943 as the Harmonist Historic and Memorial Association and was reorganized in the 1960s; the name was officially changed in 1991. It owns three National Register-listed buildings in the village of Harmony as well as five other historic properties in and adjacent to Harmony and operates a museum and archive there.

<sup>15</sup> MacMaster, p. 196.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 202.

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### **Architectural Significance**

#### *Characteristics of Mennonite Meetinghouse Architecture*

The earliest stone Mennonite meetinghouse in continuous use, the Germantown Mennonite Meetinghouse at 6119 Germantown Avenue in Germantown, Philadelphia (Figure 5), dates from 1770.<sup>17</sup> Like the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse it is a one-and-a-half story masonry building; however, unlike the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, it is front-gabled. Later Mennonite meetinghouses featured more standardized architecture, as noted by architectural historian Jerry Clouse:

“By the late eighteenth century, a general pattern for Mennonite meetinghouses appears to have been established. The typical meetinghouse was a one-and-a-half story masonry, side-gabled structure with a five-to-six-bay façade and a two-to-three-bay depth. Generally, two bays of the façade were doors, one used by women and one used by men.<sup>18</sup>”

The Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse generally follows this pattern but is smaller (with a four-bay façade) and, while it features two entrances on its facade, its original section had only one entrance in the façade, with one in the side elevation. The 1847 Bertolet’s Mennonite Meetinghouse (Figure 6) on Colonial Road in Upper Frederick Township, Montgomery County, also generally follows the pattern, but lacks the two entrances in the facade. Like the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, it is a side-gable, one-and-a-half story building that features an entrance on its façade and a three bay (including a second entrance) side elevation. Unlike the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, however, Bertolet’s Meetinghouse was never added on to and is entirely made of brick. In addition, it features a symmetrical five-bay façade and lacks the more elaborate lintels and sills seen on the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse. The later, 1855, Alleghany Mennonite Meetinghouse (Figure 7) at 39 Horning Road in Brecknock Township, Berks County, like the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, generally follows the pattern but is smaller with a four bay façade. Like the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, it is a side-gabled stone building with a four bay façade featuring two entrances; however, unlike the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse, it was never added on to, does not feature a side entrance, and lacks the more elaborate lintels and sills seen at the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse.

#### *Local Architectural Context*

As mentioned previously, after purchasing the land from the Harmonists, Abraham Ziegler and his fellow Mennonites from eastern Pennsylvania for the most part settled on farms outside of Harmony. On these farms, they built substantial houses which tended to be two stories and four to five bays wide, featuring symmetrical facades and slate gable roofs. They also tended to feature detailing such as subtle quoins and stone lintels and sills.

<sup>17</sup> Moss, Roger W. *Historic Sacred Places of Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Clouse, Jerry, p.189.

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Some Mennonites, however, chose to settle in Harmony, building symmetrical three to five bay, predominantly brick buildings with slate gable roofs such as those at 510 Main Street (Figure 8) and at 636 Wood Street (Figure 9). These featured some ornament, including stone lintels and sills and somewhat elaborate entryways. The Mennonites also built frame three to five bay buildings with slate gable roofs and symmetrical facades, such as that at Liberty Street (Figure 10), and that at 309 Monroe Street (Figure 11).

### *The Meetinghouse's Architectural Significance*

The Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse is a well-crafted single-story vernacular structure that, like the vernacular stone houses built by the Mennonites, is a stone and brick, gable-roofed building. It has no battlements, no stained glass windows, no belfry, just a white plastered interior with simple tiered benches. Because the builders were Mennonites of Germanic heritage, however, the structure is solidly built with subtle architectural touches. What distinguishes it is its simplicity, reflecting the Mennonite belief that a communal building should be strictly utilitarian, not a symbol of their religion or a reflection of their wealth. One of the basic tenets of the Mennonite faith is that the simple life is better; that a church needs no soaring tower to proclaim Christ's presence, it simply needs a sturdy roof and a dignified pulpit. This simplicity is reflected in Mennonite services. They needed no hierarchy or vestments for their services, just a group of like-minded people willing to hear God's word.

This meetinghouse, while simple, is not simplistic; its craftsmanship is evident in its sturdy stone and brick construction, simple sandstone lintels and sills, eaves returns, paneled doors and entryways and the scabble and drafting on the addition's foundation. Architectural elements on the interior such as the deep window sills, paneled pulpit, smooth plaster walls and ceiling and plank flooring lend distinction to the structure. The substantial stone wall surrounding three sides of the adjacent cemetery adds to this distinction and the meetinghouse and cemetery are an integral part of the rich architectural heritage of the region. While there are subtle touches of ornament in the meetinghouse such as the diamond panes in the transoms above the doorways, and the chevron patterning on the interior of the doors, these touches merely reinforce the fact that the builders were restrained in their use of more elaborate embellishment and could have used more if they had been asked to do so by their clients.

### *Local Comparisons*

There are no other Mennonite meetinghouses from this period extant in western Pennsylvania. There are two known Society of Friends (Quaker) congregations with meetinghouses, but they postdate this Mennonite meetinghouse. The form of the Harmony meetinghouse is similar to that of the German Evangelical Protestant Church of Pittsburgh from 1819 (Figure 12). Images of that congregation's second church show a brick, three bay structure with a gable roof similar to the Mennonite meetinghouse, but unlike the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse the entry is in



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the gable end rather than on the long side. The scale and massing of the building, however, is similar to that of the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse.<sup>19</sup>

Because there are no other Mennonite meetinghouses of the same time period in the area, comparisons to nearby Mennonite-built stone farmhouses best illustrate local building techniques. The first predates the meetinghouse by nine years. Its owner, John Boyer (c. 1762-1828), was among the first Mennonites to join Abraham Ziegler in Harmony and he acted as the first Mennonite Bishop for the congregation (Figure 13). He was the first Mennonite bishop to the Harmony congregation and his descendants remain in the area. He was given ten shares of capital stock in the Harmony Farm Company and conveyed 1,080 acres in an 1818 deed.<sup>20</sup> In 1816 he commissioned a two-story, gable roofed, sandstone house just over half a mile northeast of the future meetinghouse site.<sup>21</sup>

This house features the same sturdy stone construction seen in the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery but, as a residence, it is of a much larger scale than the meetinghouse. In addition, with its subtle quoins and large brick end chimneys it lacks the meetinghouse's intentional simplicity. The owner of this house could, to some degree, display his wealth in the architecture; however, the builders of the meetinghouse were constrained by the tenets of their faith to create a solid, but unpretentious structure.

A second Mennonite-built house of the same time period in the area is the David Stauffer house of 1839 (Figures 14 and 15). This property was built by another of Abraham Ziegler's early Mennonite colleagues who agreed to raise sheep and be paid for his wool by being given more land for farming. Ziegler was having trouble paying off the debt to the Harmonists for the Butler County land and so he worked out the deal with several early settlers that if they allowed him to sell their wool at a profit to the Harmonists in Indiana, he would pay them in land.<sup>22</sup>

Like the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery, the Stauffer house features sturdy stone construction. Like the Boyer House, it is also of a much larger scale. It featured decorative elements that included large end chimneys and a decorative two story porch. It, to a greater degree than the Boyer House, expresses the owner's wealth with its detailing. The meetinghouse, however, could not feature such pretentious elements and still reflect the basic tenets of the Mennonite faith.

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<sup>19</sup> These images were found in the archives of the Smithfield United Church of Christ, 620 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh PA 15222. The congregation was founded by German settlers in 1782 as the German Evangelical Protestant Church of Pittsburgh and its earliest records are in German, and later in both German and English.

<sup>20</sup> Shetler, p. 316.

<sup>21</sup> Ruch, Shelby Miller. *Window on the Past: A Look Back at the 19th -century Life in Harmony & Zellenople, Pennsylvania*. (Chicora, Pennsylvania: Mechling Bookbindery, 2008). p. 29. The house at 295 Perry Highway is privately owned but under an easement held by Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation to preserve it.

<sup>22</sup> Brown et al., p. 412.

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*Conclusion*

Harmony's Mennonite meetinghouse of 1825 illustrates an early link in the continuing Germanic influence in western Pennsylvania. The congregation chose to build a simple single-story stone vernacular structure reflecting their belief that the building itself is strictly utilitarian, not a symbol of their religion or a reflection of their wealth. The meetinghouse has no belfry, no stained glass and a white plastered interior with simple tiered benches. Because the builders were local Mennonites of Germanic heritage, the structure is solidly built as were their stone barns and houses.

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[http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Harmony Mennonite Church %28Harmony, Pennsylvania, USA%29](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Harmony_Mennonite_Church_%28Harmony,_Pennsylvania,_USA%29), accessed May 1, 2013.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):**  N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property**  1.3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 40.809167 | Longitude: -80.128056 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery corresponds to Butler County tax parcel number 180-4F-100-15-0000, housed at the Butler County Courthouse in the City of Butler.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all resources historically associated with the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery. The cemetery beyond the ends of the stone wall was and is the property of the Grace Church of Harmony, formerly a German Evangelical and Reformed Congregation.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Lu Donnelly  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 510 South Linden Avenue  
city or town: Pittsburgh state: PA zip code: 15208-2847  
e-mail donnaelly.lu@gmail.com  
telephone: 412-441-3027  
date: March 2016

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property:	Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery
City or Vicinity:	Jackson Township
County:	Butler
State:	PA
Name of Photographer:	Lu Donnelly, John Ruch (Photo 12)
Date of Photographs:	March 31, 2014
Location of Original Digital Files:	510 South Linden Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15208; Historic Harmony, Inc. 218 Mercer Street, Harmony PA 16037 (Photo 12)

0001 of 13: Looking Southwest; North and East elevations of the Meetinghouse

0002 of 13: Former exterior door, now on the interior of the South elevation of the stone portion of the meetinghouse. Note the door is paneled on the exterior, but has diagonal boards on the interior. Photographed from the center of the sanctuary looking South.

0003 of 13: South and East elevations, looking Northwest from the Southeast corner of the meetinghouse showing the brick portion of the building.

0004 of 13: South elevation, brick portion. Looking North from the cemetery South of the meetinghouse.

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0005 of 13: Detail of foundation masonry on the South elevation, "scabble and drafting."  
Looking North from the cemetery South of the meetinghouse.

0006 of 13: Detail of corner of West elevation showing stonework with stone cemetery wall  
in the background. Looking East from cemetery West of the meetinghouse.

0007 of 13: West elevation of the meetinghouse before shutters were re-attached. Looking  
Southeast at the Northwest corner of the meetinghouse from the cemetery.

0008 of 13: North and East elevations of the meetinghouse with the stone cemetery wall in  
the foreground. Looking South from the front yard of the meetinghouse.

0009 of 13: View of cemetery from the South side of the stone wall Northwest of the  
meetinghouse. Looking East showing irregular rows of grave markers in cemetery.

0010 of 13: Interior of the meetinghouse sanctuary. Looking Northwest with bench/pulpit  
along the West wall.

0011 of 13: Interior of the meetinghouse sanctuary, looking East at the inside of the main  
entry doors on the East elevation showing the diagonal boards creating a chevron pattern;  
exterior of these doors is paneled.

0012 of 13: Interior of attic space showing trusswork, looking North from southern end,  
showing stone end of North elevation. Photo by John Ruch for Historic Harmony, with  
permission.

0013 of 13: End of the run of stone wall along the North border of the cemetery, looking  
North from the fourth row of the cemetery.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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Figure 1: Looking East from the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery; former Shantz (Shontz) farm; stone barn c. 1835. Beyond this farm is a 1990's era group of tract homes illustrating the suburbanization of the area.

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Figure 2: Looking South from the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery; open land with the village of Harmony in the distance.

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Figure 3: Harmonist Church, sometimes referred to as Rappite Church, built in 1808 at 538 Main Street, Harmony, Butler County, Pennsylvania. When the Harmonists left for Indiana a German Evangelical and Reformed congregation shared this church with the Mennonites before they built the meetinghouse south of Harmony village. Now owned by Grace Church of Harmony and greatly altered.

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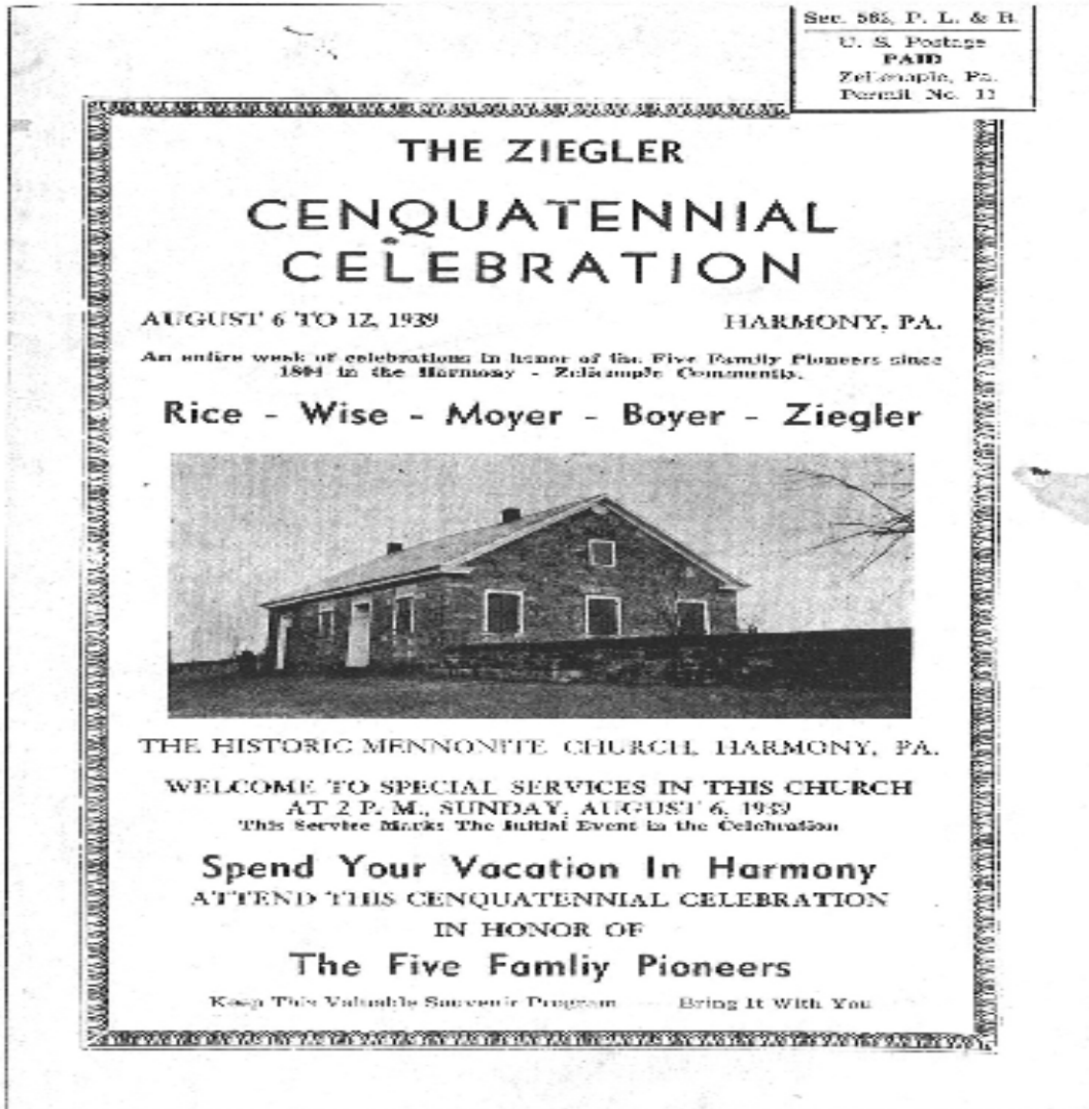


Figure 4: Flyer announcing a week long reunion in Harmony with the opening ceremony at the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery. It illustrates one of the twentieth century uses of the building after the congregation closed for regular services in 1902.

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Figure 5: 1770 Germantown Mennonite Meetinghouse, Germantown, Philadelphia  
(<http://www.meetinghouse.info/photo-gallery.html>, accessed August 8, 2016).

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Figure 6: 1847 Bertolet's Mennonite Meetinghouse, Colonial Road, Upper Frederick Township, Montgomery (from PA SHPO Files).

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Figure 7: 1855 Alleghany Mennonite Meetinghouse, 39 Horning Road, Brecknock Township, Berks County (from PA SHPO Files).

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Figure 8: Mennonite-built house at 510 Main Street in Harmony (from PA SHPO Files).



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Figure 9: Mennonite-built house at 636 Wood Street in Harmony (from PA SHPO Files).

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Figure 10: Mennonite-built house on Liberty Street in Harmony (from PA SHPO Files).

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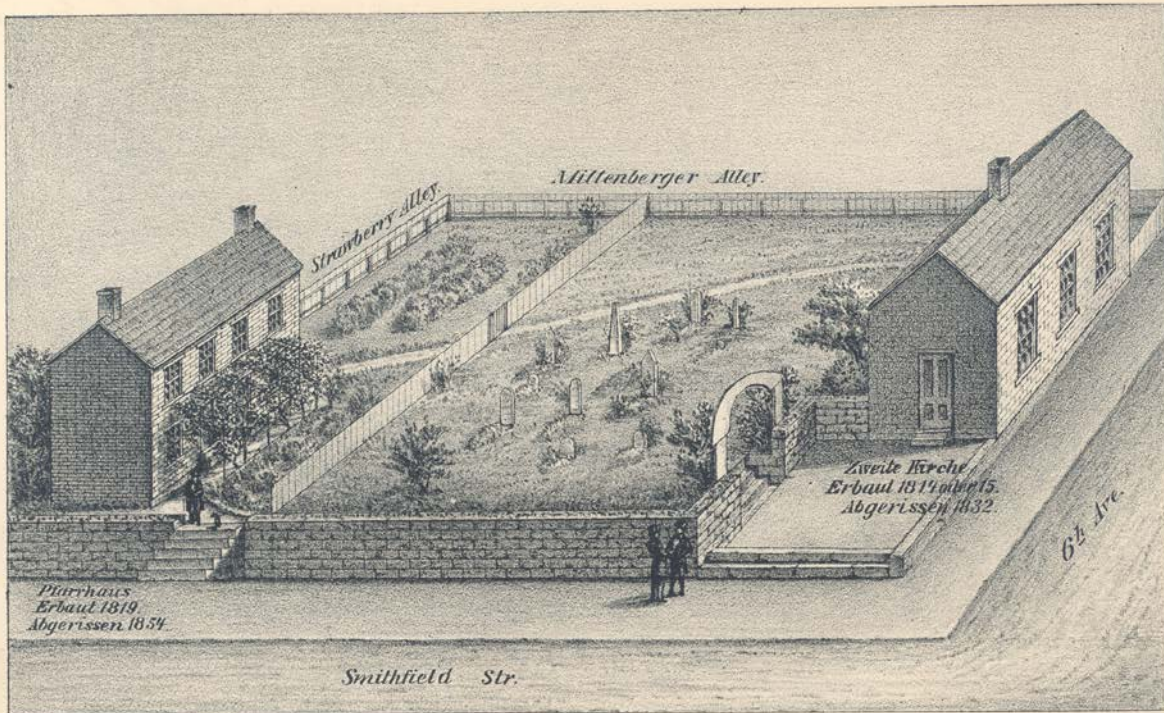
Figure 11: Mennonite-built house at 309 Monroe Street in Harmony (from PA SHPO Files).

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ANSICHT DER ZWEITEN KIRCHE MIT PFARRHAUS UND TÖDTENHOF.

Figure 12: German Evangelical Protestant Church (right) in downtown Pittsburgh. It was the second church built for this denomination; built in 1819 and demolished in 1854. This building illustrates the iconic western Pennsylvania vernacular meetinghouse form – gable-roofed, one story, and three bays wide. The illustration is located in the archives of the Smithfield United Church of Christ, 620 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh.

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Figure 13: The first Mennonite Bishop of Harmony, John Boyer (1762-1828) commissioned this house in 1816. The house is located at 295 Perry Highway and is privately owned but under an easement held by Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation to preserve it.

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Figure 14: Stone vernacular house built for David Stauffer (c. 1794-1856) in 1839. He raised sheep for Abraham Ziegler who then sold the wool to the Harmonists in Indiana. In return for his shepherding Stauffer received the land surrounding his farmhouse, which is located approximately four miles north of Zelienople west of Route 19 (HABS PA-414, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa0200/pa0221/photos/131444pv.jpg>, accessed April 29, 2016 .

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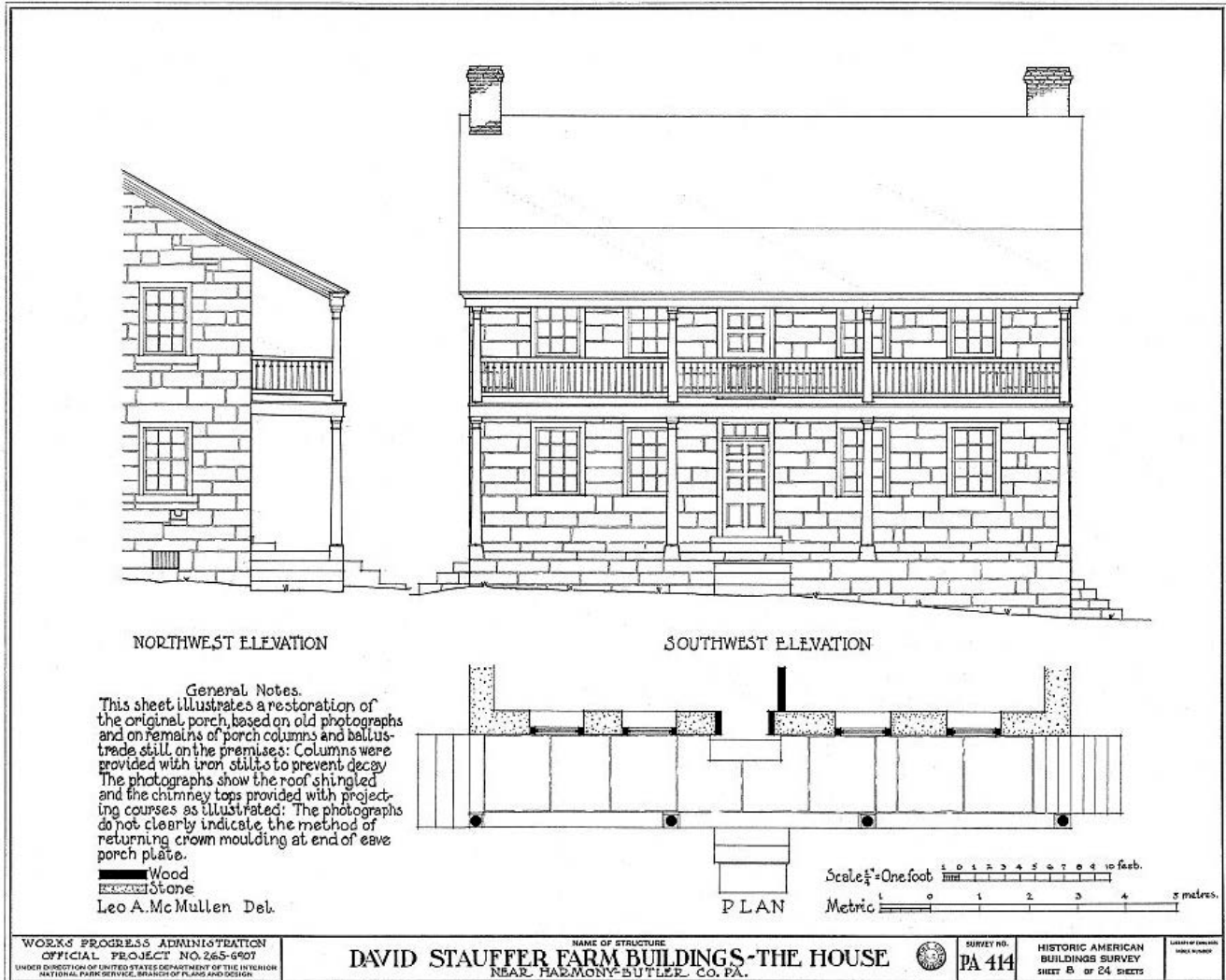
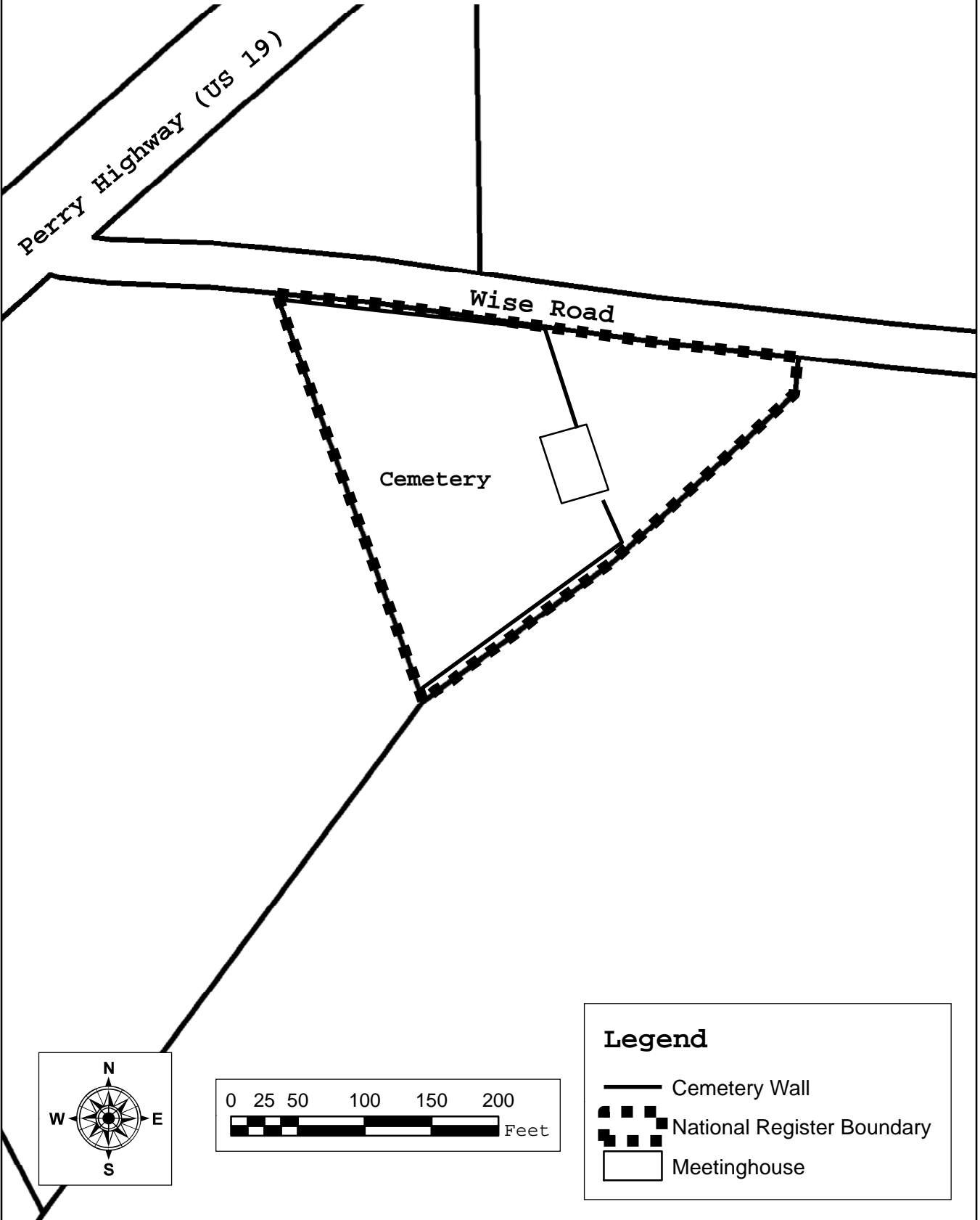


Figure 15: Southwest elevation drawing of the stone vernacular house built for David Stauffer (c. 1794-1856) in 1839. Note the elaborate two-story front porch (HABS PA-414, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/pa0221.sheet.00008a/resource/>, accessed April 29, 2016 .

Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery  
Butler County, PA

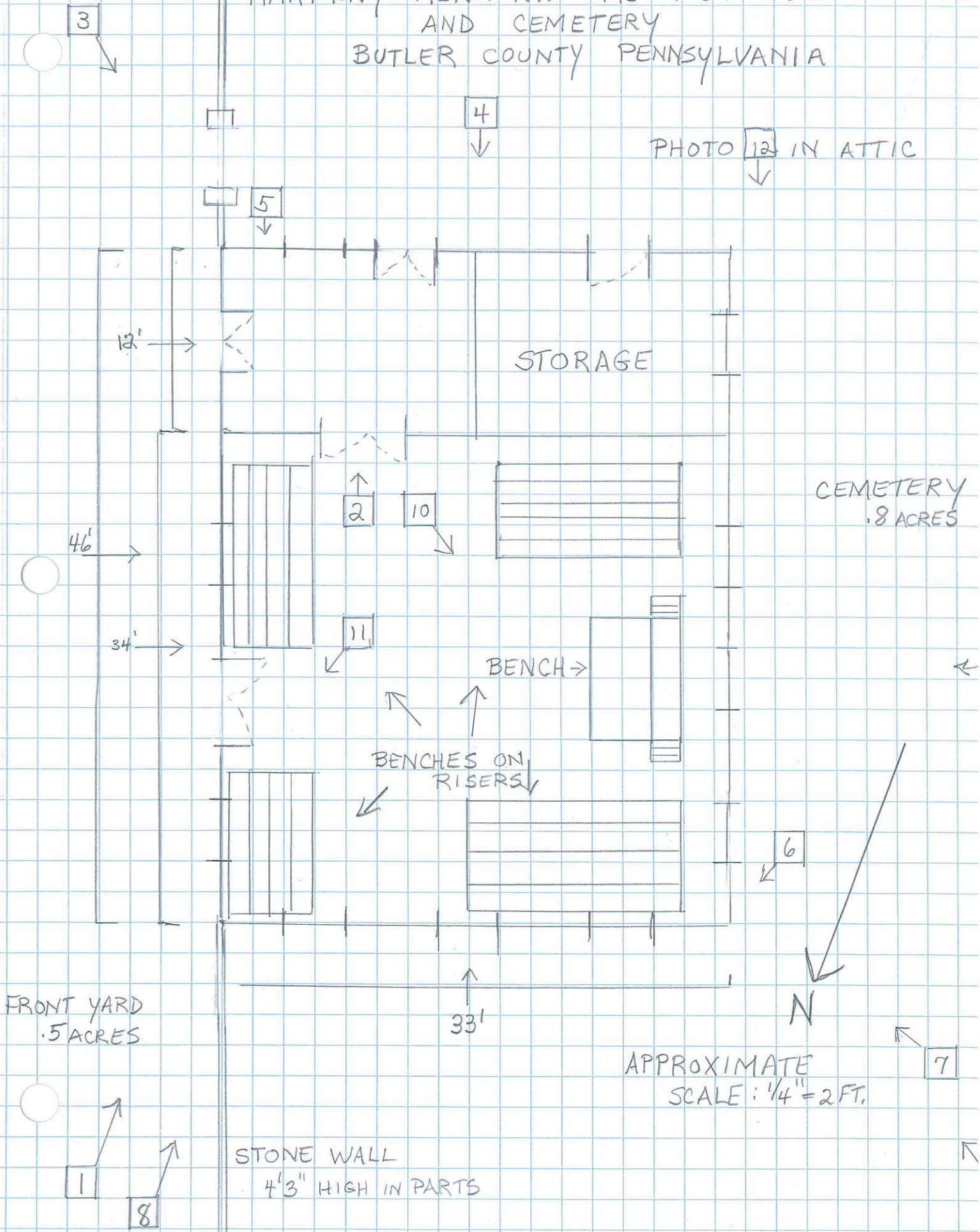




# FLOOR PLAN

HARMONY MENNONITE MEETING-HOUSE  
AND CEMETERY  
BUTLER COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

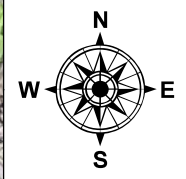
PHOTO 12 IN ATTIC



Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery  
Butler County, PA

Latitude: 40.809167  
Longitude: -80.128056  
NAD 1983

0 1,500 3,000 4,500 6,000  
Feet





















1825











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: PENNSYLVANIA, Butler

DATE RECEIVED: 8/19/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/19/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/04/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/04/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000697

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 10.14.16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





Pennsylvania  
Historical & Museum  
Commission

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 19 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

August 18, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW, 8th floor  
Washington D.C. 20005

Re: NR nomination discs

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following nomination forms are being submitted electronically per the "Guidance on How to Submit a Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on Disk Summary (5/06/2013)":

St. Thomas Memorial Church, Allegheny County, PA  
Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery, Butler County, PA

The enclosed discs contain the true and correct copy of the nominations for St. Thomas Memorial Church and Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse and Cemetery. The proposed action is listing in the National Register.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations please contact Keith Heinrich at 717-783-9919.

Sincerely,

Keith T. Heinrich  
National Register and Survey

Historic Preservation Services  
Commonwealth Keystone Building  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093  
[www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)  
*The Commonwealth's Official History Agency*