

*Reg. 1712
Sub. 11/1/81*

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory--Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Augsburger Amish/Mennonite Settlement *Thematic Resources*
and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number see individual Ohio Historic Inventory forms not for publication
city, town Trenton vicinity X vicinity of congressional district
state Ohio code 039 county Butler code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name see individual Ohio Historic Inventory forms
street & number _____
city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Butler County Courthouse
street & number High Street
city, town Hamilton state Ohio

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Ohio Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 2-3/81 federal state county local
depository for survey records Ohio Historic Preservation Office
city, town Columbus state Ohio

7. Description

<u>X</u> excellent	<u>X</u> deteriorated	<u>X</u> unaltered	<u>X</u> original site
<u>X</u> good	ruins	<u>X</u> altered	moved date _____
<u>X</u> fair	unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Settlement in Butler County is a thematic grouping of ten farmsteads, and seven buildings in the village of Woodsdale. The settlement is located along the west bank of the Great Miami River in the east half of Butler County and is approximately twenty-five miles north of Cincinnati. Each one of the farmsteads has a large two-story brick house that was constructed between 1834 and 1874. This particular house type has been identified in other parts of Ohio where Amish and Mennonite groups settled the frontier. Also included in the nomination are the bank barns, brick summer kitchens, brick smoke houses and a bake oven on the nominated farms. The seven brick buildings in the village of Woodsdale are also being nominated. After the Civil War, a small cluster of frame houses surrounded the Augspurger's saw mill and grist mill. The village was known as Augspurger until 1867 when the Beckett Paper Mill was incorporated, and the village's name was changed to Woodsdale. At this time, the brick buildings were constructed. They include five houses that are the Amish/Mennonite house type, and the other two are the school and the grist mill. The buildings on the ten farms and the seven brick buildings in the village are being nominated because they relate to the period in Ohio history when the Amish branch of the Mennonites under the leadership of the Christian Augspurger family influenced the construction of a grouping of distinctive houses and farmsteads in Butler County. They are located primarily in southeastern Madison Township, while three are in St. Clair Township and one is in Wayne Township. (See Maps I and II.)

The Amish/Mennonites were not the dominant religious group that sought an escape from religious persecution in the newly opened wilderness of southwest Ohio. That distinction belongs to the German Baptists or Dunkards who had come earlier and in greater numbers to Butler, Montgomery, Preble and Darke Counties. The German Baptists' presence, which remains strong in these counties today, may partially account for the single settlement of Amish/Mennonites in the floodplain near the Great Miami River. It may also be one of the reasons that the Amish settlement in Butler County was assimilated by the end of the nineteenth century, although a liberal branch of Mennonites still worship in Trenton today.

Six families of Amish/Mennonites had originally selected a site north of Collinsville in Milford Township of Butler County in 1819 upon their arrival from France. A few Amish families remained in the area when the Augspurgers moved to Madison Township. The Collinsville congregation met in members' homes, never built a meeting house, and virtually disappeared when their minister died in 1863. When the Augspurger families purchased land along the Great Miami River in 1829, a major settlement of Amish/Mennonites was established under the strong leadership of Christian Augspurger and his family that continued to the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite settlement, the most characteristic building type is the large brick two-story farmhouse that is found on the ten farmsteads (#1-8, 10, 11) and is used for five houses (#9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e) in the mill village. They all have balanced facades that feature the main entrance, heavy limestone foundations, common bonding brick patterns, a lack of ornamentation, and a basically rectangular shape. All fifteen of these plain houses are striking in their low, horizontal visage of stark simplicity which has been broken sometimes by the addition of a porch from various periods around the turn of the century. A few (#2, 3, 6, 7, 11) have either original or very early porches from before 1875. Five houses (#1-5) were built from 1834 to approximately 1857. After the Civil War, a second building spurt from about 1867 to 1874 resulted in ten (#6, 7, 8, 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 10 and 11) that have more variation in details of construction and appearance.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

3

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

Page 2

Of the fifteen houses included in the thematic grouping, all are examples of a house type found repeatedly among Amish and Swiss Mennonite settlements in Ohio, although the impressive house (#2) built by Christian Augspurger just before his death in 1848 has some Greek Revival details. Eight of the houses (#2, 3, 4, 6, 9e, 10 and 11) have a five-bay facade, although the house (#1) built by Christian Iutzi in 1834 may have had five bays originally. It appears in a sketch in the Atlas of Butler County from 1875 with five windows on the second floor of the facade. Two houses now have four bays. One is the above-mentioned house (#1) which is the earliest in the grouping, and the other is the Peter Schrock, Sr. house (#7) which has two front doors that are sheltered by a delicately trimmed original cut-out porch. Five houses that have three bays are located near the mill village and were built by the mill incorporators. They include the Frederick Augspurger farmhouse (#8), the Samuel Augspurger town house (#9a), and the mill workers' row houses (#9b, 9c, 9d). Seven houses (#2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9a) have handsome doorways with transom and sidelights.

Most of the houses (#1, 3, 4, 7, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, and 10) have gable roofs with massive end chimneys. Three houses (#2, 5, 6) that have an ell rear wing incorporate a hip roof on the wing side. Three later houses (#8, 9a and 11) have a more square-like shape with a truncated hip roof. A few of the houses that were built after the Civil War (#7, 8, 9a, 10, 11) were trimmed with decorative brackets at the roofline.

The interiors of these massive houses have several interesting features. The space of the rectangular section excluding the wing is almost always divided into two rooms down and a center hall. The large rooms were needed in the beginning for religious services because the Amish Mennonites in this settlement met in the members' homes until small meeting houses were built during the Civil War. Each of the downstairs rooms in houses (#2, 3, 4, 5, 7) is known to have a large fireplace with plain wood mantel and heavy unadorned woodwork. Others probably exist in houses that have not been inspected. One house (#5) had chair railing and wainscoting in the two front rooms. A large open stairway in the front hall of houses (#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9a, 10 and 11) usually has a solid wood bannister railing and square plain posts in the ballustrade, although the stairway in the John Kennel, Jr. house (#10) appears to have been changed. Near the rear of houses (#3, 4, 5, 7) was built a separate back stairway for the hired man. He lived upstairs in a room that was reached by the back stairway, and his bedroom was separated from the family sleeping area by a solid brick wall. More research is needed on the interiors of Amish-Mennonite houses for further comparison.

Included in the nomination are the six bank barns on the farmsteads (#2, 5, 8, 10, 11). There are two barns on the Christian Augspurger farm (#2) in Wayne Township. Six brick summer kitchens are on farms (#2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 11), and one frame summer kitchen remains on the farm (#6) of Christian Ehresman. Three brick smoke houses are on farms (#2, 4, 7, 8) and a brick bake oven is in the summer kitchen of "Christholm" (#11). This farm in Madison Township is also the location of the Augspurger family cemetery where a single monument now marks the burial place of Christian and Catherine, the early pioneers. Other details about the farms and the boundary descriptions are listed on the individual inventory forms that are included in the nomination.

Only the brick buildings in the village of Woodsdale are being nominated. Once a charming and picturesque hamlet, according to a sketch in the 1875 Atlas, it has been

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

AUG 3

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet #2

Item number

7

Page 3

subjected to years of neglect and the 1913 flood which destroyed many of the less substantial structures. The focal point of the village is the three bay brick house (#9a) built by Samuel Augspurger. It has a central front door on two sides, as does Frederick's house (#8) which is just north of the village. Once Samuel's town house had outbuildings that surrounded it, but now there are none that are distinctive. There are three row houses (#9b, 9c, 9d), a two story five bay general store and post office (#9e), a one-room schoolhouse with a gabled addition to the east (#9f), and the Augspurger grist mill (#9g) that was rebuilt in 1872.

There are other farmsteads in the survey area that are related to the Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County. On the farms are houses that were built of stone, brick or frame. In the village are frame houses of mill workers and mill sites. These buildings are not included in the nomination, but they were researched because they are important to the understanding of the thematic development of this religious group in southwest Ohio. They are not being nominated at this time because some buildings have lost their integrity through extensive remodeling or neglect, some have been torn down and are now sites, some were built after the Amish/Mennonites had abandoned the construction of the traditional house type, and some are on land that was never owned by Amish/Mennonites, but may have been built by Amish carpenters. A brief description of each building is needed to better demonstrate the compactness of this cultural group and to outline the methodology that was used in determination of eligibility. (See Map III.)

Two of the most unusual buildings in the thematic grouping are the stone houses in Section 18 of Madison Township. Christian Augspurger purchased this two hundred and fifty acres in 1829 and established his homestead named "Christholm". A stone house (A) was listed in the 1840 Tax Reappraisal records at \$400, and a sketch of a two story house with ten bays and at least four front doors appears in the 1875 Atlas in a vignette. The home place burned in 1873. On the same acreage, another stone house (B) was noted in the 1840 records. The full two stories of this nine-bay facade with four front doors was made of coarse uncut pieces of stone that may have been brought from the river. A fire in 1980 has entirely gutted this important house, burned off the roof and the front porch, and has left its white walls and chimney remnants reaching into the sky. Both stone houses were ideally situated on a small knoll that overlooked the river. Now the county has installed a landfill between the houses and the river.

There were thirteen brick buildings that once belonged in the thematic grouping. Jacob Augspurger, Christian's cousin, settled his family in Section 4 which was also along the river, but closer to Trenton. A two story brick house (C) was built by Jacob, but it has additions on all sides with a two story portico that now makes the back the front. An early brick house (D) that is adjacent to the Christian Augspurger house (#2) of 1848 is on a farm owned in 1852 by an older son, Joseph. It has additions on all sides, a two story portico over a black plastic broken pediment doorway and an aging swimming pool to the rear. The 1863 Augspurger Meeting house (E), a one-story brick building with a central doorway and three bays on the sides, was torn down in the 1930s. Also destroyed before most people can remember was the 1864 Hessian Meeting house (F). The brick saw mill (G) built by the Augspurgers in 1864 was finally washed down the river during the 1913 flood, and the brick three-story Beckett Paper Company mill (H) of 1868 burned in 1880.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Cult. Settlement in Butler Co.

Continuation sheet #3

Item number 7

Page 4

For NPS use only

received

date entered

AVV 3

A brick house (J) owned by Jane Augspurger in 1875 has been covered on the outside with a layer of asphalt shingles in the 1930s and again with vinyl siding within the last decade. The Peter Schantz house (K) and the Christian Slonaker house (L) were torn down by the Miller Brewing Company, while the Peter Imhoff house (M) was removed as the town of Trenton expanded south. The last three large houses (N,O,P) in the study area were never owned by Mennonite families. The Henry P. Deutscher House (N) is an elaborate Victorian house that is individually eligible, but it does not relate to the thematic grouping because the man who built the house was of the German Reformed religion and a prominent industrialist in Hamilton. The other two houses (O,P) resemble the Amish/Mennonite house type, but the farms were owned by non-Mennonites from the settlement date. These two brick houses need further research, but they are slated for demolition when the four-lane highway to the brewery is constructed. A smaller brick house (Q), and the last one noted on the map, does fit the house type even though it was probably built by Joseph Augspurger, Christian's brother. Joseph purchased the farm in Section 7 in 1854, but it appears that he lived in the frame saltbox house that was listed in the tax records from 1853.

There is perhaps a bias in the survey and the methodology that causes the brick houses in a thematic grouping to seem to be more distinctive while the frame houses are pushed into the background. It is true that brick structures are more substantial, are more difficult to alter, deteriorate less rapidly, and are sometimes more architecturally noteworthy when they are built. However, in a thematic grouping of house types, frame buildings must be studied and considered for their historical value. In this Amish/Mennonite community where many of the farms were sold by 1900, and other people of different backgrounds and of no relationship to the immigrant German settlers, there was little compulsion to keep the properties the same as they had been through the years. Now since the arrival of the Miller Brewing Company, there is little incentive to put money into farm buildings that are in the path of housing and shopping development. While the brick buildings have been lost and neglected to a considerable degree, the frame buildings have been even more expendable. None of the frame buildings in the thematic settlement are being nominated, but the research assists in supplying information about the physical appearance of the area as it was originally and as it is now.

The first five frame houses (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5) that are listed on the map are still standing and are on land in sections 4,5,8, and 9. This land was owned by the families of Joseph and Jane Augsburger by 1855. They are two-story frame houses with few distinguishing marks and with a number of alterations. Many of the frame buildings are of a smaller scale and vary in plan from the identified Amish/Mennonite brick housing form. F1 varies from the Amish/Mennonite building type in its plan. It does not have the central hall and back stairway, characteristic of the other nominated buildings. The two houses (F6, F7) in the village of Woodsdale are shown in the 1875 sketch of the village, and one (F6) is listed as the residence of D.W. McClung, the secretary of the Beckett Paper Company. The final three houses (F8, F9, F10) have been demolished, the last two, victims of the Miller Brewing Company.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Cult. Settlement in Butler Co.

Continuation sheet #4

Item number 7

Page 5

Most of the farms are not zoned for agricultural use any more, and many of the farm-houses are used as rentals. The Miller Brewing Company has under construction a \$411 million plant on 1,088 acres of land in Sections 7, 18, 19 in Madison Township and in Sections 1, 12, 13 in St. Clair Township. (See Map IV) The land owned by the brewery once contained the meeting houses, the township school and several Mennonite farmsteads (K,L, F9, F10). Development plans for increased housing and shopping areas threaten the buildings on the farms.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory--Nomination Form**

For NPS use only	
received	
date entered	AUG 3 1981

Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet

#5

Item number

7

Page 6

farms. Many of the houses are receiving little maintenance because they are too large for convenience-minded transient tenants. The farms have outbuildings and large barns that are no longer productive and require continual attention because most are nearly a century old. The yards are ill-kempt with grass and weeds choking the flowers and shrubs that once graced the houses, but the large maple trees that are found on every farm are reminders of another more prosperous era. Although the home farm of Christian Augspurger (A, #11) holds the cemetery where the early pioneers are buried, the stones are broken or lost. The one-half acre burial ground is now marked by a single monument to Catherine and Christian Augspurger. The monument is encased with a six foot square chain link fence.

This nomination does not include any archaeological information although there have been surveys along the Miami River. One was conducted in 1976 by Dr. Ron Speilbauer, Department of Anthropology, Miami University. It was completed for the Hamilton Suburban Service Area, and just touched the southwestern tip of the Amish/Mennonite cultural settlement. There has been other work along the Great Miami River that has been conducted by Miami University. Some of the plans suggest utilizing the area along the river for recreational purposes in a Great Miami River Corridor Project.

The survey for history and architecture was begun in the spring of 1981 by Mrs. Doris Page and other members of the Trenton Historical Society. They were assisted by the Regional Preservation Officer, Fred Mitchell, located at Miami Purchase Association in Cincinnati and funded through the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. During the interim period when the Ohio Historic Preservation Office's regional system was being reorganized, David Simmons, National Register manager from the Columbus office, communicated with Mrs. Page concerning the project. Work was renewed in June of 1982 under the direction of the regional coordinator for Southwest Ohio. The survey of this cultural settlement under Mary Ann Brown, who is located at Wright State University in Dayton, attempts to approach the significance of the Amish/Mennonite house type and settlement pattern from a state-wide basis. With a previous collection of information about ethnic groups across the state that was begun as a portion of the Resource Protection and Planning Process (RP3) for Ohio, the entire area in Butler County and Southwest Ohio was researched through field visits, literature search and interviews with local historians. A literature search was conducted across the state for Amish/Mennonite settlements, but only a reconnaissance level of field work was completed for the house type in Ohio. However, extensive research materials were used from the Holmes-Wayne Counties and the Putnam-Allen Counties settlements for comparison of house types.

The survey methodology included courthouse research through abstracts of titles in the recorder's office, tax reappraisal records from 1840, 1853, 1859, 1870 in the auditor's office, and early survey maps of Butler County from 1836 and 1855. Researchers from the Trenton Historical Society interviewed members of the Mennonite congregation, Augspurger descendents, former residents and neighbors, former ministers, and present occupants and owners of the houses in the study area. The literature search produced a number of local histories and atlases, newspaper articles, and histories of the Mennonites in Butler County. A state-wide view was gained from previous surveys and from materials about Amish and Mennonites in Ohio. All literature sources are listed in the Major Bibliographical References #9.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1834-1874 Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Christian Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Settlement in Butler County is a thematic grouping of ten farms, and seven buildings in the village of Woodsdale. The farmhouses, farmstead buildings and the mill village buildings of this religious immigrant sect are historically important because their appearance on the rural landscape in southwest Ohio marks the settlement of an ethnic community of Amish/Mennonites and the influence of their strong leader, Christian Augspurger. The buildings were constructed during the period from 1830 to 1880 when the Amish branch of the Mennonite Church and the Christian Augspurger family were the most dominant forces in the community. Their strong religious convictions carried into their complete way of life as they built their houses in a plain manner and in a traditional vernacular style that has been identified in other Amish communities in Ohio. Although the strict branch of the Amish/Mennonites is no longer present in this part of Butler County or in Southwest Ohio, the farms and buildings they left behind are evidence of their contribution to Ohio's rich heritage. The ten brick houses on the farms and the five brick houses in the village are architecturally significant because they represent a typical house type found in Amish/Mennonite communities across the state. A permanent colony of the Amish branch of the Mennonite Church was established in Madison Township in 1829 when Christian Augspurger came with his brother, Joseph, and his cousin, Jacob, and their families to the west bank of the Great Miami River. They built the large two-story brick farmhouses marked by simplicity and plainness from 1830 to 1874. Ten of the farms with the brick houses are included in the nomination. The immigrants with the strict beliefs also built bank barns, brick summer kitchens and smoke houses, and bake ovens. Those that remain on the farmsteads that have the brick houses are included in the nomination. Also included are seven brick buildings built from 1867 to 1872 in the mill village originally known as Augspurger and later named Woodsdale. Five are houses, and the other two are a school and a grist mill.

The family of Christian Augspurger first came alone to Butler County in 1818. They became discouraged and returned to their home in Strasbourg, France, the same year. In the spring of 1819, they came again and purchased land in Section 14 of Milford Township near Collinsville in Butler County. Accompanying them this time were six other Amish families that included a brother, Joseph, and a cousin, Jacob. The Christian Augspurger settlement in Butler County was the third group of the Amish branch of the Mennonite Church to settle in Ohio, but it was the first whose members had come directly from Europe. There were two earlier settlements in eastern Ohio. One was located in adjoining townships of Sugar Creek in Tuscarawas County and in Walnut Creek in Holmes County.¹ It was established in 1808-09 by Jacob (John)² Miller and Jonas Stutzman of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. They bought farms in the U. S. Military District land that had opened for settlement in 1799 after a survey that had begun in 1797. This land lay directly south of the Greeneville Treaty Line which had been established in Ohio in 1795. The second settlement, just north of the Treaty Line in Sugar Creek Township of Wayne County, began when Jacob Yoder moved from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, in 1817.³ Wayne County lay in the Congress Lands that had been surveyed from 1799 until 1804 when settlement began. (See Map V.)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

AUG 3 1982

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet

#6

Item number

8

Page 2

In the southwestern side of the state next to Indiana, settlement was later in the rural area north of Cincinnati. Christian Augspurger was one of the first settlers in the Miami Valley on Congress Land that had been freed from Indian threat by the Greenville Treaty. This part of the state had been surveyed from 1798 to 1801 when the rich fertile farmland on the west side of the Great Miami River was settled primarily by the first wave of German-speaking Protestant immigrants that came to Ohio. They sought in America freedom from religious persecution and a chance for land. Although Christian Augspurger originally settled in Milford Township for about ten years, there is little visual imprint of that settlement today. It was when the three Augspurger families separated from the Collinsville group and moved about fifteen miles to the east in the floodplain of the Great Miami River that an impact occurred. It was specifically the strong influence of Christian Augspurger and his family of twelve children that has given the Amish lands in Madison Township an identity, while the families of Joseph Augspurger and Jacob Augspurger stood in the shadows. Christian's family remained leaders in the community until about 1880 when the decline of the Augspurger Church also began.

This Amish settlement in Butler County differs from other Amish-Mennonite communities in the state for two reasons. A major difference is that by 1900 the strict members of the religious group had been assimilated and had sold most of their farms. In the rest of the state, a settlement area is still identified as an Amish-Mennonite community and many of the farms are owned by descendants of the immigrants. Another difference is that in Butler County where a single settlement developed under the leadership of Christian Augspurger, many of the houses were constructed of stone and brick. In researched communities across the state, the Amish house type is most commonly of frame. It may have been that Christian modified the house type to reflect his years on one of France's finest and largest farms of five hundred acres, and because of an extended stay in Paris that was arranged for him by Marshal Henri Bertrand, one of Napoleon's generals, who sought information on farming. In any event, research on thematic groupings is difficult and does not always produce black and white pictures of what happened. However, the construction of the buildings in the Amish Mennonite settlement in Butler County chronicle the founding, growth and zenith of the community and hints at its disintegration. The buildings will be described in the following pages to show their relationship to the history of the Amish community.

Barely had the community been organized in their new land in Madison Township when over one hundred Mennonites from the area around Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, joined the Augspurgers and bought land. This event was one of four impacts that contributed to the deterioration of the cohesiveness of this religious group. At once, conflict arose because the Hessian Mennonites came from a different German-speaking state, did not put as much stress on simplicity and plainness and were not as strict in the exercise of the ban, or excommunication of disobedient members. The congregation divided in 1835 with the Augspurger group from Alsace becoming known to outsiders as the "Hook and Eye Mennonites" while the Hessians were called the "Button Mennonites" because of the way they fastened their clothes. The earliest houses were built at this time. They include the two stone houses (A,B) on Christian Augspurger's home farm, "Christholm". A brick house (C) on the Jacob Augspurger farm is listed in the 1840 Tax Reappraisal records with a value of \$400, and was probably built by Christian's brother before his death in 1846. The oldest house in the group that is being nominated is the Christian Iutzi brick home (#1). It was built in 1834, according to the History of Butler County of 1882. When the leader of the group approached a retirement age, he contracted with

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet

#7

Item number

8

Page

3

Gideon Beaver, a well-known builder from Rossville (now a part of Hamilton) for the construction of a house (#2) in adjoining Wayne Township on the northwestern fringe of the Amish settlement. The house was completed in 1848, the same year that Christian Augspurger died. This event was the second major impact the community sustained.

By the time of Christian's death, he owned nineteen hundred and seventy-five acres of land in Butler County.⁵ Most of it was in this settlement area. As the land was parceled out to Christian's six sons and six daughters, two brick houses were built before 1853 on land that he had previously owned. One house (#3) was built by his son, John, in Section 8, and the other (#4) was built by Anna Augspurger and her husband, John Kennel, Sr. in Section 7. Another house (#5) was probably built soon after the same John Augspurger bought the land that lay in between the two farms that had belonged to Christian. A fourth house (D) was built at this time and resembles the other three. It was constructed in Wayne Township by Joseph Augspurger on land that adjoined his father's retirement home. Joseph inherited the home farm and purchased the land to the west in 1852. For about a decade, building was interrupted by the third impact, the Civil War. It was at this time that the first Amish Conference was organized in Ohio in 1862. Since Mennonites are opposed to war and have been conscientious objectors since their arrival in America, it was probably necessary to reinforce their views as a political body. The Augspurger congregation participated in the various sessions of the Amish Conference as a strong representative. During this time the Hessian congregation adopted more liberal views, encouraged the education of their children in public schools and incorporated independently in 1863 as the Apostolic Mennonite Society in Butler County. This splinter group which was known in other parts of Ohio as the Apostolic Mennonite Church officially separated from the Amish body. Meeting houses (E,F) were built for both congregations during the Civil War years of 1863 and 1864 as the practice of meeting in the homes of members declined. It appears that the families of Christian and Jacob, for the most part, remained faithful members of the Augspurger congregation, while Joseph's family became active in the Apostolic Church. That assumption is difficult to make because each of the immigrant Augspurger families had a boy named Jacob and Joseph, and two of the original families had sons named Christian and John. After the Civil War ended, a flurry of house construction lasted from about 1867 to 1874.

Five brick farmhouses (#6,7,8,10,11), and seven other brick buildings (9a, 9b,9c,9d,9e,9f,9g) were constructed in the village by 1874. At the same time, a new minister was urging the Augspurger congregation to build a closer relationship with the Hessians who had a more liberal viewpoint toward private enterprise and profitable business ventures. Two of Christian's youngest sons, Frederick and Samuel, incorporated in the fall of 1866 with William Beckett, William Woods, Adam Laurie and William Chatfield to form the Beckett Paper Company of Woodsdale. Samuel Augspurger had enticed the company from Hamilton to extend the paper mill business to Madison Township by selling them some of his real estate. The village of Augspurger was renamed Woodsdale in 1867 and soon Samuel and Frederick built large houses (#8, 9a) in Sections 18 and 19 where the village was located. The paper mill (H) was built in 1868 "through the influence of Samuel Augspurger, one of the most influential business men at that time in Madison Township."⁶ Soon followed the construction of the mill worker's row houses (9b,9c,9d) the mill office and general store (9e), the schoolhouse (#9f), and the grist mill (9g) which was rebuilt in 1872. An earlier saw mill (G) and grist mill had been built by the Augspurgers in 1864. At the height of their influence around 1875, the Augspurgers and their descendents owned three thousand, six hundred and sixty three acres of land in Butler, Warren and Preble Counties.⁷

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County, Ohio
Continuation sheet # 8 Item number 8 Page 4

A few other Amish families came to Butler County before mid-century, but since land was no longer available for purchase by the immigrants, the settlement in Southwest Ohio was basically a center for future colonies in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri where land was still open.

Disaster struck the Augspurger entrepreneurs, Frederick and Samuel, on June 24, 1880. This fourth impact occurred when fire destroyed the Beckett Paper Mill. There were attempts to reorganize, but the paper mill (H) was never rebuilt. Other heavy investments of Samuel Augspurger who had also put money into three macadam turnpikes, had helped throw an earthen dam across the Great Miami River, and had bought land on a canal that linked the Ohio River with Lake Erie forced him into bankruptcy. He also lost his town house and his father's home farm (#11). When fire had destroyed the stone house on "Christholm" (A), he had rebuilt a square brick house (#11) in 1874. Even though his wife was able to buy back the home farm with her family's money, he was so devastated that he refused to live with her. It was also at this time that a minister in the Hessian Church built his house (#10) with decorative brackets at the roofline and adorned the arched windows with stone hood moulds and keystone and "angel-wing" shutters. There may have been some speculation by members of the Amish branch of the Mennonite Church at that time that the new generation had become too worldly and had strayed from the cherished Amish values of a devout religion, an agrarian way of life and a cohesive family and community. The doctrines that stressed plainness and simplicity were dissolving throughout the community so that by 1897 the Augspurger congregation merged with the Apostolic Mennonite Society. In another ten years, the Apostolic Mennonites across the state reunited with the General Conference of Mennonites in North America. By this time, the Augspurger congregation had been submerged into yet a more liberal group, and their identity was lost. The country meeting houses had been determined to be inadequate, and the construction of a church in the small town of Trenton was considered. The dedication of the new brick building with basement, kitchen, and Sunday School rooms took place in 1908. Neither the church in Trenton nor the 1900 parsonage are included in the nomination. The building style of the church contradicts the Amish traditions that frown upon Sunday School, evening and protracted meetings and church conferences and missions. It is a typical church style selected by Protestants in Ohio around 1910.

The meeting houses (E,F) have been torn down through the years, and all but one (#7) of the farms has been sold out of Mennonite ownership. Four farms (#3,4,5,8) and the village buildings (9a,9b,9c,9d,9e,9f,9g) were sold between 1889 and 1900 as the Amish branch of the Mennonites was merging with the Apostolic congregation. Three farms (#1,2,10) were sold between 1906 and 1913 when the church was being built in Trenton and the congregation was merging with the General Conference of Mennonites. One farm (#6) was sold in 1924, and "Christholm" (A,#11) was sold for the second time out of Mennonite hands in 1965. Only the house (#7) with the two front doors that was built by a minister in the Augspurger congregation is still in Mennonite ownership. It is surrounded by apartment buildings that were constructed in 1981, and the bank barn on the farm was torn down in 1982.

Information about other Amish branches of the Mennonite Church in Ohio is incomplete, but a strict segment of the Mennonites came from the area around Alsace, France, and Basel, Switzerland, to northwest Ohio about 1833. The Black Swamp in Putnam and Allen Counties had been surveyed and ready for sale after the Treaty of St. Marys in 1818.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Christian Augsburg Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet

#9

Item number

8

Page 5

3

This treaty created reservations for the Shawnee and Ottawa Indian nations north of the Greenville Treaty Line of 1795. However, few pioneers were willing to settle their families until the Indians were removed. As the Indians began leaving in 1831, land became available for approximately \$1.25 per acre. Soon after, the Mennonites came to the rich flat wet land after a brief stay of a year or two in Wayne or Holmes County. They were accustomed to accepting inferior land which could be transformed into lush green fields with their traditional and conservative farming methods. They had thrived upon the wasteland in Russia or Canada for a century in exchange for religious freedom.

A study of the vernacular house types of the Mennonites who settled in Putnam and Allen Counties around Pandora and Bluffton revealed approximately fifty large two-story frame houses that looked alike. They typically have five-bay facades, one-story shed roofed porches that span the front, gabled roofs and brick lining behind the frame siding. One group of thirty-one farmhouses, of which two have brick exterior walls, dates from 1843 to 1880. They bear a striking resemblance to the brick farm houses in the Butler County area. They share the same features of size, shape, scale, solidarity of construction, lack of decoration and some similar interior details. This Amish-Mennonite house type is also found in Wayne and Holmes Counties, and is most often constructed of frame. There is a second house type that has been identified in the Allen and Putnam Counties settlement in northwest Ohio. It dates from approximately 1870 to about 1890, and more closely resembles the frame houses that were built in the Butler County Mennonite settlement. The sixteen houses that were built later in the surveyed area around Bluffton also have a two-story rectangular appearance with plain features and gabled roofs. They differ from the first group of buildings in the survey because they have a sharper pitched roofline, longer and narrower windows with some trim, and a more upright appearance. On the farmsteads in the entire study area are numerous bank barns and outbuildings. More details of this study can be obtained from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Three more Amish-Mennonite groups that settled in Ohio before 1850 have been identified during research for this nomination. A group of Swiss Mennonites from France settled in German Township in Fulton County, and in Brady and Springfield Townships in Williams County in the late 1830s. The land lies along the Michigan border and was surveyed as late as 1820-21. A second settlement was reported along the Champaign and Logan County line in the 1840s. It is known that a Mennonite school and several congregations still exist around West Liberty. The last community seems to have been made in Clark and Madison Counties around Plain City. Little research has been attempted in the rural areas around these reported Amish/Mennonite settlements, and it is not known if the house type exists on their farms. Although other Amish communities may have been established in Ohio during the last half of the nineteenth century, the opportunity for the Amish to impact the rural landscape with their ethnic buildings and farmsteads had probably passed by 1850. By that time most of the land in Ohio had been filled up by earlier settlers who may have had a different house type and cultural impact. However, it must be noted that when the Amish families increase their land holdings today, they often alter the existing house or build a new house in the typical traditional style.

A brief historical account of each of the brick buildings that are included in the nomination has attempted to relate each farmstead and the village to the dominant influences of Christian Augsburg and the Amish/Mennonite religion. The brick buildings (#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11) on the farmsteads and those (#9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 9f, 9g) in the village of Woodsdale have been selected for nomination to the National Register. They

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement of Butler County

Continuation sheet

#10

Item number

8

Page

6

have been determined to be most characteristic of the thematic grouping because they are less altered, they were more substantial and architecturally noteworthy when they were built, and most were constructed by Christian or one of his twelve children. A few were also built by prominent members and ministers of both the Augspurger and Hessian churches. Two stone houses (A and B) have been destroyed by fires. Fourteen brick houses or buildings (C,D,E,F,G,H,J,K,L,M,N,O,P,Q) that have been altered, destroyed or do not relate to the theme are not being nominated. The frame houses (F1,F2,F3,F4,F5,F6,F7,F8,F9,F10, many built by the families of Joseph and Jacob Augspurger, are not included in the nomination.

The survey of the properties that relate to the Amish/Mennonite settlement in Butler County was begun after the Miller Brewing Company decided to locate in St. Clair and Madison Townships. As the plant was under construction and some of the large brick and frame houses were being demolished, the research was begun to document the impact of the religious group. Although the results of the survey will be available to the public through the Trenton Historical Society, there is little hope that the adverse impact of the Miller Brewery will be eased. The study may add information about ethnic settlements that will increase the understanding and perhaps help preserve other Amish communities in the state. The nomination may also be incorporated as a study unit in Ohio's Resource Planning and Protection Process (RP3).

FOOTNOTES:

1. Betty Miller. Amish Pioneers of the Walnut Creek Valley. Wooster: Atkinson Printing, 1977, pp. 4-5.
2. A History and Biographical Cyclopaedia of Butler County, Ohio. Cincinnati: Western Biographical Publishing Co., 1882.
3. Op. Cit. Miller, pp. 4-5.
4. Op. Cit. A History . . . of Butler County, p. 601.
5. Ibid. pp. 600-1.
6. "The Beckett Paper Mill at Woodsdale," an article from a Hamilton newspaper c. 1913, (in the possession of the Trenton Historical Society.)
7. Op. Cit. A History . . . of Butler County, p. 601.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet #11

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual Ohio Historic Inventory forms

Quadrangle name Trenton

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References see individual Ohio Historic Inventory forms and USGS map

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual Ohio Historic Inventory forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Southwest Ohio, Wright State University
name/title Mary Ann Brown, Regional Preservation Coordinator, Ohio Historical Society
Mrs. Doris Page, Trenton Historical Society

organization date November, 1982

street & number Millett Hall telephone 513-873-2815

city or town Dayton state Ohio

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification



The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature W. Ray June

title SHPO date 5/23/84

For HCPRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.	<div style="text-align: center;">  date <u>8-3-84</u> </div>
Keeper of the National Register	<div style="text-align: center;">  date _____ </div>
Chief of Registration	date _____

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Christian Augspurger Amish Mennonite Cultural Settlement in Butler County

Continuation sheet

#12

Item number

9

Page

2

Amstutz, P. B. Historical Events of the Mennonite Settlement in Allen-Putnam Counties, 1978.

Atlas of Butler County, 1855.

Atlas of Butler County, 1875.

Atlas of Butler County, 1895.

Atlas of Butler County, 1914.

"The Beckett Paper Company", a Hamilton paper, c. 1915.

Butler County Courthouse, Hamilton, Ohio

Recorder's Office, 1800-1982.

Tax Reappraisal Records, 1840, 1846, 1853, 1859, 1870.

Centennial History of Butler County, 1906

Churches in the Buckeye Country, 1953.

Evening Leader, "Brewery is Not Ready to Brew or Hire Yet", St. Marys, July, 1982.

Grubb, Rev. W. H. Mennonites of Butler County, 1916.

Hostetler, John A. Amish Life, 1954, reprint, 1974.

Hostetler, John A. Mennonite Life, 1952, reprint 1980.

Map of Butler County, Survey by James McBride, 1836.

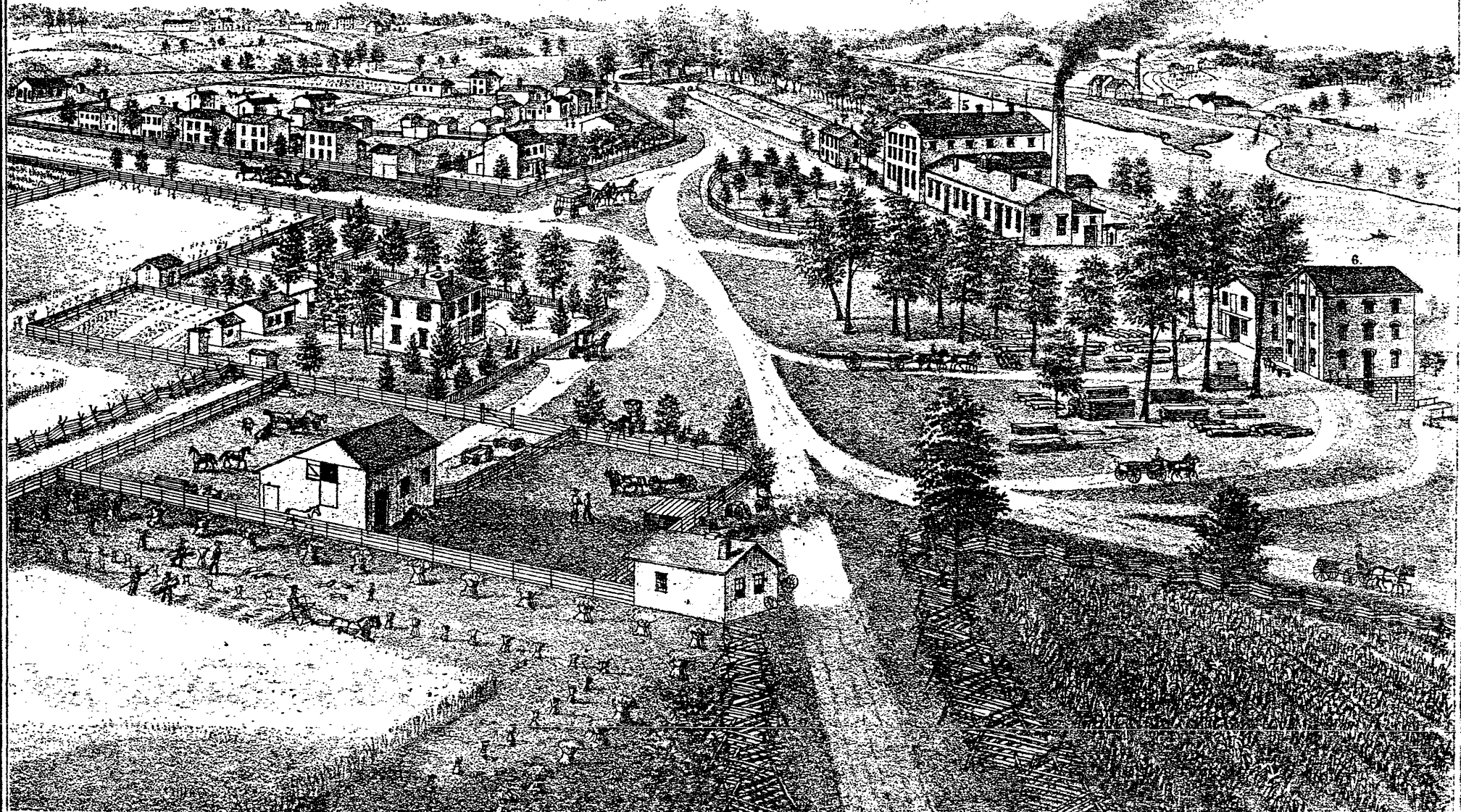
Miller, Betty. Amish Pioneers of the Walnut Creek Valley, 1977.

Smith, Clifford Neal and Smith, Anna Piszczan-Gzaza. Encyclopedia of German-American
Benealogical Research. New York and London, 1976.

Western Biographical Publishing Co. A History and Biographical Cyclopaedia of
Butler County, Ohio, 1882.

Manuscript Population Schedules, U. S. Population Census, 1850. Hubert Wilhelm, 1980.

1875



1 SCHOOLHOUSE. 2 PAPER COS ROW. 3 AUGSPURGER'S RES. 4 M^{rs} CLUNG'S RES. **WOODSDALE.** 5 PAPER MILL. 7 OFFICE, STORE & POST OFFICE 6 AUGSPURGER'S GRIST & SAW MILL.
 9f 9b, 9c 9a 9g
 9d is off the map
 IN MADISON & ST. CLAIR TWP^s BUTLER CO. OHIO.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received 6/20/84
date entered 8/3/84

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 2

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Augsburger Amish/Mennonite Settlement Thematic Resources
State Butler County, OHIO

Cover 8/3/84

Nomination/Type of Review

Determined Eligible Date/Signature

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. | Augsburger, Christian, Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Eligible Patrick Andrus 11/1/84</u> |
| | DOE/OWNER OBJECTION | | Attest | |
| 2. | Augsburger, Frederick, Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 3. | Augsburger, John, Farm No. 1 | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 4. | Augsburger, John, Farm No. 2 | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Patrick Andrus 11/1/84</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 5. | Augsburger, Samuel, Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Patrick Andrus 11/1/84</u> |
| | | | Attest | |
| 6. | Ehresman, Christian, Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 7. | Iutzi, Christian, Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 8. | Kennel, John Jr., Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 9. | Kennel, John Sr., Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Carl D Shell 8-3-84</u> |
| | | | Attest | <u>William B. Bushong</u> |
| 10. | Schrock, Peter Jr., Farm | Substantive Review | Keeper | <u>Patrick Andrus 11/1/84</u> |
| | | | Attest | |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received 6/10/84
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 2

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Augspurger Amish/Mennonite Settlement Thematic Resources
State

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 11. Augspurger Grist Mill Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 12. Augspurger Schoolhouse Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 13. Augspurger, Samuel, House Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 14. Mill Office and Post Office Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 15. Mill Worker Row House
(Kennedy Rd.) Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 16. Mill Worker Row Houses
(Wayne-Madison Rd.) Substantive Review *for* Keeper Patrick Andrus 11/1/84
Attest
- 17. Keeper _____
Attest
- 18. Keeper _____
Attest
- 19. Keeper _____
Attest
- 20. Keeper _____
Attest