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Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

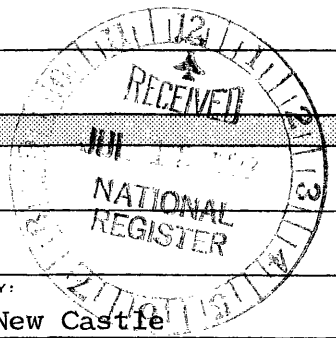
(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE: Delaware
COUNTY: New Castle
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: DEC 4 1972
DATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House
AND/OR HISTORIC: Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House



2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Main Street
CITY OR TOWN: Odessa

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Delaware	10	New Castle	003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building	☐ Public	Public Acquisition:	☒ Occupied	Yes:
☐ Site ☐ Structure	☒ Private	☐ In Process	☐ Unoccupied	☒ Restricted
☐ Object	☐ Both	☐ Being Considered	☐ Preservation work in progress	☐ Unrestricted
				☐ No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other *(Specify)*	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☒ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends
STREET AND NUMBER: Fourth and West Streets
CITY OR TOWN: Wilmington
STATE: Delaware
CODE: 10

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Public Building
STREET AND NUMBER: Rodney Square
CITY OR TOWN: Wilmington
STATE: Delaware
CODE: 10

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: 1938 ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Washington
STATE: D. C.
CODE:

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: DEC 4 1972
DATE:

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

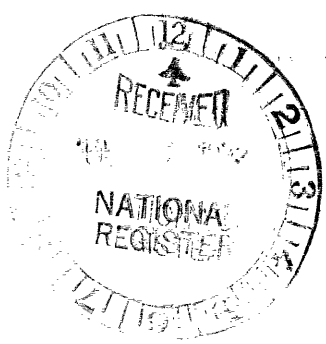
The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is a small brick structure, on a fieldstone footing, about twenty feet square. The North front is laid in Flemish bond, while the other walls are laid in common bond. The three-bay facade contains a pedimented gable and a small attic window that lights the upstairs "schoolroom." There were originally two doors, but the door and two windows in the south gable end have been closed for many years. There is one window in each sidewall, and there were originally cellar windows on both sides.

The bench pews have been rearranged to face south; they were originally arranged in two banks, facing inward, toward the stove, which has been replaced by electric heat.

Aside from rearrangement and new heating, the interior is essentially original.

A date-stone over the doorway states that the meeting house was "Erected and Presented by David Wilson 1785". Wilson was a merchant in Odessa, then known as Cantwell's Bridge; he was instrumental in obtaining indulgence from the Duck Creek meeting for the establishment of the Appoquinimink meeting in 1783, as successor to the Georges Creek Meeting.

The yard is divided into three parts by brick walls, the oldest of which encloses the Corbit burial ground immediately east of the meeting house.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Pre-Columbian	☐ 16th Century	☒ 18th Century	☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	☐ 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1785

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal	☐ Education	☐ Political	☐ Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric	☐ Engineering	☒ Religion/Philosophy	☐ Other *(Specify)*
☐ Historic	☐ Industry	☐ Science	_____
☐ Agriculture	☐ Invention	☐ Sculpture	_____
☒ Architecture	☐ Landscape Architecture	☐ Social/Humanitarian	_____
☐ Art	☐ Literature	☐ Theater	_____
☐ Commerce	☐ Military	☐ Transportation	_____
☐ Communications	☐ Music		_____
☐ Conservation			

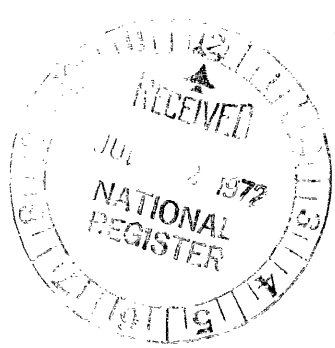
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is one of the smallest ecclesiastical buildings in America, regularly used for worship. Except for some minor changes that do not alter its character, it is a well-preserved survival from the eighteenth century.

The meeting house is set in a large yard, some distance from Route 299, near the Odessa historic district. Three blocks away is the Corbit-Sharp House, a Registered National Historic Landmark that was the home of one of the founders of the Appoquinimink meeting.

The Religious Society of Friends was active in St. George's Hundred from the seventeenth century until the Hicksite schism in the nineteenth century. Thereafter the society declined until the Appoquinimink meeting had only one member, who died around 1881.

Upon the death of its last member, the meeting's property escheated to the State, but in 1951 it was returned to a group of local Friends who organized the Appoquinimink Preparative Meeting, affiliated with the Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Greater Wilmington Development Council, A List of Delaware Heritage Buildings and Areas in New Castle County, 1963

J. Thomas Scharf, History of Delaware, 1609-1888, 1888, vol. II, p. 1006.

George Fletcher Bennett, Early Architecture of Delaware, 1970, p. 34.

Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Cortlandt van Dyke Hubbard, Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware, 1963, pp. 127 ff.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	39°	27'	24"	75°	39'	55"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .88

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Edward F. Heite, Historic Registrar

ORGANIZATION
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

DATE
May 4, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
Hall of Records

CITY OR TOWN:
Dover

STATE
Delaware

CODE
10

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name E. Berkeley Tompkins
Dr. E. Berkeley Tompkins

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 6-30-72

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert Van Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 12/4/72

ATTEST:

William S. Dunlap
Keeper of The National Register

Date 11.30.72

7. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is located on Main Street at the western edge of Odessa, New Castle County, Delaware. According to the minutes of Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, this tiny, one-and-one-half story, brick meeting house was built by 1783, a donation of a member. Situated near the back of a deep and narrow lot, the meeting house and cemetery are not very visible from the road. The lot is enclosed with a decorative brick wall that was constructed in at least three phases during the twentieth century.

Sited on the highest point on the lot, the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is small, three bay, one room building with a full basement and half story attic space. Measuring twenty-two feet four-and-one quarter inches by twenty feet, the building is constructed of bonded brick set on a substantial stone foundation.[1] The facade is laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers and the joints are decoratively struck. The remaining three elevations are laid in random common bond ranging from five, six and seven stretcher courses between header courses. The gable roof is perpendicular to the road and an interior end brick chimney rises at the ridge from the back wall. The first floor measures nine feet ten-and-one half inches from foundation to eave soffit. The attic story is eleven feet seven inches from eave soffit to peak of roof. The chimney rises from the rear wall an additional one foot-eleven inches from the peak of the roof.

The facade faces northeast, and is composed of a central, paneled, double leaf, single-width door flanked by wood 8/12 lite windows on the first floor, and a 6/6 lite, small, wood window centered in the gable end. Each window has decorative shutters with diagonal boards on the exterior with a paneled face exposed when open, and hand-wrought strap hinges and shutter dogs. A simple shingled pent eave divides the first level and attic story. Centered above the door and below the pent eave, set into the brick wall is a carved stone plaque that states, "Friends Meeting House/ Erected and Presented by / David Wilson 1785."[2] A small metal dedication plaque was applied to the brick

[1] All measurements for the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House were taken from measured drawings created for the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), delineated by Gretchen Townsend (Buggeln) for University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1987.

[2] The minutes of the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting follow the construction of the meeting house and note it was completed in 1793. The property wasn't transferred to the Quakers until 1800.

next to the entry stating "Drive and plantings/ in Memory of/ Margaret Mary Crook/ 1914-1948."

One window of similar design and detailing occurs in the center of the northwest and southeast elevations. At the basement level, the southeast elevation has a lintel larger than the existing vented opening, indicating the former access to the basement. The north end of this elevation also displays the electric meter box and service wires. The northwest elevation has a centered louvered window in the foundation to ventilate the basement.

The rear elevation displays three openings that have been closed over time. The arrangement is similar to the facade, with a windows flanking a central door. The windows were enclosed early in the history of the building as demonstrated by the use of glazed brick headers and similar mortar. The brick coursing in the patches lines up precisely with the courses in the rest of the wall. The rear door appears to have been cut into the wall at a later time and its enclosure also appears to have been completed at a later date, due to the size and type of bricks used and the composition of the mortar.

The basement of the building has a dirt floor and is excavated to an average depth of six feet four inches. The stone foundation walls and the brick relieving arch against the southwest (rear) elevation wall are the two most prominent features in the basement.[3] The stone foundation walls project slightly beyond the brick walls both to the interior and the exterior of the basement. The primary access to the basement, now closed, was through the southeast wall. The northwest wall is punctuated with a wood louvered, vented, square, opening.

The first floor contains only one room, the meeting room. The walls are plastered. The floor is composed of boards of even width, and the ceiling has been recently replaced. Interior window and door surrounds are simple in design and are composed of a board with a bead on the interior of the opening and a half round molding to the exterior. The most prominent feature in the room is the pair of two tiered facing benches which flank the enclosed rear door. The door framing is still evident on the wall between the two sets. The facing benches against the wall are set on a wood platform and have a high back of vertical planks attached to the wall with a simple round molding surmounting it. The benches on the first level display open backs with minimal horizontal and vertical support pieces. A set of built-in benches flanks the front door. Single level in height, they run the full width of the side

[3]The basement was not accessible to this researcher. The description is from the HABS drawings previously cited.

walls. The wall serves as the back for these benches, but the end piece designs are the same as the facing benches. The population benches form an aisle down the center of the room in front of the facing benches. Design features of all benches in the building is identical, whether against a wall or standing alone. Except for benches with backs to the wall, they all have open backs and side-wall details with simple molding for arm rest and simple bracket-shaped end detail at floor. Floor population benches are two feet eight inches tall and one foot two inches wide and seven feet nine-and-one-half inches in length. The steeply pitched, open, wooden ladder used to access the upper level is located in the north corner of the building. Three electric heaters, installed in 1968, warm the space.

The attic story is accessed by a ladder through a double-leaf hatch opening near the front of the northeast (facade) wall. The usable space is enclosed with knee walls running parallel to the roof ridge which display built-in benches, similarly detailed to those on the first floor, running the full length of the room on both walls. An access panel to the eave space on the northwest wall is interpreted as the slave hiding place. The floor has a hole for the stove pipe to access the chimney, off center near the middle of the room. The parged chimney displays a scar from the stove pipe access. The ceiling boards are of red cedar and are cupped. A six-over-six wood window in the center of the facade gable end lights the space. A square garret window filled with horizontal wood louvers, is located to the south of the chimney, and provides cross ventilation.

Some architectural features of the building indicate it went through a radical design shift early in its history. In the basement[4], a brick arched fireplace support is located at the center of the rear wall, under the current location of the rear door, and its location there raises questions. In the eighteenth century, Quakers were indifferent to issues of physical comfort in meetings "lest it divert the mind from more inward and spiritual exercise which all ought to be concerned in..."[5] In the nineteenth century, the use of wood stoves became prevalent to warm meeting houses. If there ever was a fireplace in the Appoquinimink Meeting House, it was removed prior to 1830. The minutes of the Camden Monthly have no reference to such a substantial undertaking there and the treasurers account books note in

[4]Account book of John Alston, Treasurer of the Appoquinimink Meeting from 1830- 1845 does not mention any expenses associated with this major structural change. No mention of this change, or any major change requiring substantial investment was mentioned in the Camden Monthly Meeting Minutes from 1830-1960.

[5]Wilson, p.36.

the earliest entries the purchase of "a cord of hickory for the woodstove... paid for stovepipe"[6]. The rear wall displays two phases of change over time. During the construction of the building, two windows were outlined in the rear wall but very soon filled in. The installation of the facing benches, which are an integral part of the design of the interior worship space of any meeting house, would have precipitated the closing in of the windows as the rear wall is higher than the proposed sill location. The rear door was cut into the elevation at a later date and then filled in again. The arrangement of two doors facing one another across the meeting room is repeated in the Camden Friends Meetinghouse (NR 1973) built in 1805. In 1930, Thomas Strain of Merchantsville, New Jersey visited the meeting house and described the interior of the meeting house, including that the rear door was closed in.[7] The stove was located near the center of the meeting room with the population benches facing east and west. According to the National Register nomination, the moveable benches were reoriented after the change to electric heat.

The number of Friends who attended Appoquinimink Meeting diminished throughout the nineteenth century when, by the early 1870s, when the only active member was John Alston. He attended until his death in 1874 and is buried in the meeting cemetery. Members of his family continued to make minor repairs to the building and to clean out the cemetery. The Camden Monthly Meeting, who officially owned the property spent their limited funds maintaining the graveyard and surrounding fence, but nothing was spent on the building. By 1892, the meeting house was in serious disrepair. A visitor to the property stated "...The fencing is in good order, but the house is in a dilapidated condition, and the floors are not safe to walk on."[8] In 1914, Alexander P. Corbit was asked to make some repairs to the Meeting House by the Camden Monthly Meeting.

Twenty four years later, the building was again in disrepair. In 1938, the rescue of the Friends Meeting House in Odessa was directed by James A. Finley, and funded by Ann Rosetta Evans and H. Rodney Sharp. The restoration architect was Albert Kruse, one of the foremost proponents of the Colonial Revival in Delaware. Two of his many

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[6]The account book of John Alston, entry dated February 10, 1836. Papers of John Alston, Including Diaries and Account Books, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

[7]Matlack, p. 644.

[8]An article from the Friends Intelligencer Jan. 2, 1892 as quoted by T. Chalkley Matlack in *Brief Historical Sketches Concerning Friends' Meetings of the Past and Present with Special Reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.* (np: Moorestown, New Jersey) 1938. p. 642.

projects include the restoration of the Old Dutch House in New Castle, and the addition to the Camden Friends Meetinghouse in Camden. While records documenting the extent of the work completed here have not been located, it is possible that much of the details on the building could have been recreated. Since this issue has bearing on the physical integrity of the building, comparative analysis of finishes in other rural meeting houses in the Delaware Valley was conducted.

Quaker Meeting Houses in the Delaware, southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey area were documented for a Historic American Building Survey project by the University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Design, which was undertaken from 1989-1995. The drawings created indicate that changes made to the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House were not extensive and appear to have been restorative in nature. Details of finishes, benches, window treatments and general design of these meeting houses were compared with the meeting house details extant at the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House. Consistency is evident when comparing the spacial arrangements within the buildings, the furnishing and fixtures within the group of documented buildings. While the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is the smallest of the group, all the buildings share a design aesthetic that has been preserved at this meeting house. The consistency of the facing bench details, the population benches, the shutters, and hardware details indicate that the work done in Odessa was conservative and aimed toward restoration.

Changes to the interior of the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House can be identified through visual inspection and from interviews with those who currently attend the meeting. The population benches appear to be of various ages but of consistent design. The configuration of the benches has changed from a square in which all benches faced the center, to the existing in which all the population benches face the elder (facing) benches. The old wood stove on the first floor was probabily the one purchased by John Alston in the 1840s. A photograph from the c. 1967 shows a very small wood stove in the center of the room with a pipe leading up into the chimney on the second floor. The rear wall of the facing benches appears to be of newer vintage, probably dating from the restoration in the 1930s. The ceiling in the second floor loft/school room area appears to have been replaced. It is of red cedar, a wood not commonly used in construction in Delaware in the eighteenth century.

Outside, the marked graves occur behind the building. The monuments are all low and simply designed, keeping with Quaker tradition. There are other unmarked burials on the property. Originally, the cemetery was enclosed

with a wood fence to keep out animals from neighboring pasture. The property is now delineated by a brick wall, approximately four feet in height with a stone cap. Built in three sections, the property was completely enclosed by 1956.

Prior to 1938,[9] the front of the meeting house lot was wooded. The current landscaping reflects a Colonial Revival theme. Plantings around the meeting house were completed in the 1940s and 1950s. Flanked by holly trees, Delaware's state tree, and a pink flowering dogwood, the meeting house drive has a line of mature trees on the western side. The perimeter wall was built in stages. The earliest section, constructed c. 1900, enclosed the Corbit Graveyard, with only a short run along the meeting house property. The second phase includes the eastern parcel boundary north of the graveyard wall. Constructed in 1938, this wall is brick with an arched hollow tile cap with vertical spikes laid between the tiles. Interrupted with a metal gate flanked by brick piers northeast of the front door of the meeting house, it continues north to the road. This section of the wall was constructed by the Corbit family who marked off their parcel of land in front of the previously enclosed graveyard with this wall design. The remaining walls enclosing the meeting house parcel were constructed in 1956. Of simple design, this wall is broken by a large simple double leaf iron gate at the front of the parcel flanked by wide piers with simple corbeled caps. The wall on the west side of the parcel displays a large opening that traverses two marked burials located directly on the property line. The full extent of the burials is unknown.

Circa 1900, the headstones of several Corbit family were removed from their original locations in the Meeting House cemetery and moved to the adjacent property. This neighboring parcel was owned by the Corbit family and contains all the subsequent family burials. This parcel was enclosed c. 1900 with a brick wall with stone caps connected with metal pins. The wall incorporates remnants of the stone foundation of an earlier building on the site.[10] Two cemetery monuments occur outside both enclosures in a neighboring farm field.

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[9] Matlack, p. 642

[10] This remnant wall was probably from the Quaker school, formerly located near the Meeting House. This was the first school to accept African-Americans in Odessa. Out of use by the Civil War, the building was used as the rectory for the Zoar Methodist Episcopal Church, located on a small parcel of land cut out from the Corbit property. The school building was torn down in the early twentieth century when a new parsonage was constructed.

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and was documented in 1938 as part of Delaware's HABS inventory under Survey Number DE-115.

The three identified resources on the property include the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House (contributing building), the cemetery (contributing site), and the perimeter wall (non-contributing structure).

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is located on Main Street, Delaware State Route 299 on the western edge of Odessa, St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware. The small building is set at the back of a deep lot at the edge of farm fields and is surrounded by a cemetery of burials, many unmarked, some with simple headstones. Tradition has passed down in Odessa that the meeting house was used as a station on the Underground Railroad. The religious community that utilized this meeting house included members that were ardently anti-slavery and acted on those beliefs, assisting escaping slaves at potentially great risk to themselves. One member, John Hunn, was sued by the owners of an enslaved family he assisted on their journey north. He lost his personal fortune in the resulting law suit. The other, Hunn's cousin John Alston, is documented as assisting slaves through the testimony of John Hunn. The issues in the Quaker faith surrounding the role of the individual in the abolition of slavery, including the actions taken by specific individuals, are reflected in this building, where those individuals came to explore and reaffirm their faith. The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was chosen to represent the contributions of these two individuals because their primary residences, once located across the road from each other on SR 299 near Middletown, no longer survive.

As an early nomination, the documentation for the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is not as complete as today's standards require. The property was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 under criteria A and C for its association with the Quaker faith and as a significant piece of 18th century ecclesiastical architecture in Delaware. This additional documentation is to supplement the existing nomination by expanding the criteria of significance to include Criterion B for the association with John Hunn and John Alston, and the area of significance to include Social History for the property's association with these individuals active in the anti-slavery and Underground Railroad movements in Delaware. The period of significance is expanded to 1783 through 1865 to include the significant dates of 1783 for the construction of the meeting house, 1845 as the date of the trial for John Hunn. Although somewhat arbitrary, the date of 1865 was chosen to end the period of significance because it reflects the end of the Civil War. The level of significance is expanded to statewide.

HISTORY OF THE APPOQUINIMINK FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Early southern Delaware Quaker meeting houses were named for nearby rivers. This building was named for the

Appoquinimink Creek, a branch of which flows to the south of the meeting house and whose landing in Odessa, to the east, was a major shipping port for the region. The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built as an indulged meeting in 1783 at the request of those attending the Georges Creek Meeting House, located approximately six miles north of Odessa. Attendance had declined at Georges Creek to the point that the meeting was officially laid down in the mid-1770s. A majority of the remaining membership at Georges Creek requested the relocation to Odessa, a location closer to their homes. The building and land at the western edge of town were donated by David Wilson, Sr., a wealthy Odessa merchant. The building may not have been constructed as a meeting house. Changes made to the rear wall indicate modifications were made early in the building's history.

In 1827, the Hicksite-Orthodox split in the Quaker faith divided the Appoquinimink membership. All the Meetings in lower Delaware sided with the Hicksite branch, and the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting was not an exception. While the majority of the membership approved, the Corbit family followed the lead of many of the wealthiest Quaker families who remained Orthodox. The Corbits attended the new Orthodox Meeting House in Wilmington.[1] The Corbits did not break all ties to the local meeting. Family members continued to be interred in the cemetery adjacent to the Appoquinimink Meeting House.[2]

David Wilson, Jr., son of the builder of Appoquinimink Meeting House, was treasurer of the Meeting until 1829 when bankruptcy caused him to relocate his family to Philadelphia, and then, to Indiana. John Alston, a devout Quaker and wealthy farmer who lived near Middletown, took over the duties of meeting treasurer. During his tenure of keeping the financial records for the meeting, the Georges Creek Meeting House was no longer used for worship and the building was rented out as a dwelling. Income from this rental funded a caretaker and a variety of improvements to the Appoquinimink Meeting House property, including the purchase of a new wood stove, the construction of a stable, the excavation of a well, and the ongoing maintenance of the wood fencing surrounding the

[1]This meeting house was demolished in 1907.

[2]This feeling of separation came to a head when, in 1914, Alexander Corbit walled off the family cemetery on the adjacent parcel from the meeting house property. (Camden Monthly Meeting Minutes, 1914) At about the same time, family members were disinterred from the meeting house cemetery and moved into the enclosure.

cemetery.[3]

In 1845, the Camden Monthly Meeting was having difficulty raising funds among the membership, and decided to sell those meeting houses no longer actively used for worship that were under its control. According to Quaker custom, all meeting houses are officially owned by the associated Monthly Meeting, the central organization of the individual preparatory meetings in a region that kept the official records for the entire group. Camden Monthly Meeting representatives decided to exercise their right to ownership of the Georges Creek property. Under protest from members of Appoquinimink Friends Meeting, they reclaimed the income from the rental and all surplus funds in the hands of treasurer John Alston. The Camden Monthly Meeting then sold the property for a substantial sum, with an easement granting access to the cemetery included in the deed. The negotiations to get the membership of the Appoquinimink Meeting to agree to the sale of the Georges Creek property, and transfer the surplus funds, took over a year to complete. The Camden Monthly Meeting also sold the Murtherkill Meeting House, which was no longer in use. The resources from the sale of these properties were spent on repairing the two most active meeting houses in the Monthly, Camden and Little Creek,[4] with the surplus invested with local banks.

John Alston continued to finance small repairs and a weekly caretaker to open the building for worship. By 1870, he was the only member to continue to attend the Appoquinimink Meeting. After his death in 1874, his family continued to clean out the cemetery, but worship at the meeting house ceased. With the fences no longer being maintained, animals from nearby pastures trampled through the cemetery, causing letters of concern to be written to the Monthly by interested passers-by. The cemetery was attended to because, by 1892, Joseph Truman, in a report to the Friends Intelligencer noted "the old meeting house near Cantwell's Bridge, Del,...seemed to be deserted and going to decay. ... There is a graveyard attached, and it is under the care of Camden Monthly Meeting. The fencing is in good order, but the house in a dilapidated condition, and the floors are not safe to walk on."[5] The Camden

[3]Account books of John Alston, Papers of John Alston RG5, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

[4]The Meeting House at Little Creek met the same fate after the Civil War. The meeting was laid down in 1864 and the property was sold to a Quaker neighbor, Daniel Cowgill. (Minutes of Camden Monthly Meeting 1884)

[5]Matlack, p. 642.

Monthly Meeting attempted to sell the Appoquinimink property. By 1895, four men were actively using and occupying the property, but could not come up with an acceptable purchase price. They were ordered to "Quit, Leave and Vacate and give us full and complete and peaceful possession of the Grave Yard, Meeting House and Vacant Lot now used and occupied by you (and belonging to the Camden Monthly Meeting)- on or before the March 25th 1896".[6] No further attempts at sale were recorded.

Although Alexander Corbit made some repairs to the building in 1914, the building languished in disrepair until the late-1930s. A movement began in Odessa to restore many of the most important buildings in the community to their former grandeur. Lead by H. Rodney Sharp, assistant to, and brother-in-law of, wealthy industrialist Pierre S. duPont, many buildings were rehabilitated or restored in Odessa. After completing college in 1900, Sharp had spent three years teaching at the academy in Odessa before going on the work for the Dupont Company. In 1938, the heirs of Daniel Corbit, owner of the grand Corbit-Sharp House (NHL 1967), were planning to divide the building into apartments. Sharp purchased and restored the house, along several other buildings in the area, including the academy building, and the Brick Hotel where he lived during his tenure in Odessa. The deteriorating Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was one of the first buildings brought to Mr. Sharp's attention by concerned citizens. The rescue of the Meeting House was directed by James A. Finley with funding from H. Rodney Sharp and Ann Rosetta Evans.[7] Albert Kruse, a local architect and Quaker, was the restoration architect.

The building was opened for worship in 1939 but the Quaker community feared the title to the property had escheated to the State of Delaware. In 1948, Margaret M. Cook requested the State restore the title to the Friends. By that time the designation for the regional monthly meeting had moved from Camden to Wilmington, who accepted title to the property, and Appoquinimink obtained status as a preparative meeting. In 1972, the property was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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[6]Letter to William Heller, John Heller, Joseph Heller and Henry Heller from the Camden Monthly Meeting written on 12 mo. 23rd, 1895. Letter in collection of the Camden Preparative Meeting, Camden, Delaware.

[7]The rescue of the historic fabric of this community was one of the earliest preservation projects in the state. A historic district, including these buildings, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, the same year Delaware joined the federal preservation program.

QUAKERS AND ANTI-SLAVERY

The popular myth of the Underground Railroad as a predominantly Quaker institution was critically explored in the 1960s by historian Larry Gara in his book The Liberty Line: Legend of the Underground Railroad and in the Bulletin of the Friends Historical Association, Quaker History. In his article "Friends and the Underground Railroad" (1962), Gara cautioned that over-emphasis on the role of the Quakers led to other misunderstandings about the quest for freedom. "By over-emphasizing the heroism of the Quaker conductors it has accorded to the fugitive slaves only the passive role of passengers or freight on the underground line. Many of those persons who ran away from slavery planned their own escapes and traveled towards the North with little or no assistance from anyone."[8] What is not disputed is that the Religious Society of Friends, known as the Quakers, produced many prominent abolitionists from their ranks.

George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, expressed antislavery sentiments as early as 1671. He believed the enslaved should be treated as indentured servants and freed after the cost of their passage across the ocean was paid for. He traveled to the Island of Barbados in 1671-75 to get a first hand look at the institution. He saw the slaves as souls ripe for conversion and set up worship meetings for them to attend. These meetings were outlawed by the colonial government in 1676 and two Quakers were heavily fined for violating the statute. In 1680, the Governor of Barbados completely outlawed Quaker meetings on the island.[9]

Through the eighteenth century, the Quakers in the colonial American became more vocal about the impropriety of Quakers owning or trading in slaves. In 1700, the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, echoing the sentiments of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting noted: "... that Friends ought to be very careful in discharging a good conscience towards them [Negroes and Indians] in all respects, but more especially for the good of their souls."[10] By 1743 a query about not encouraging the importation of slaves was added to the list of questions each monthly meeting must respond to annually. In 1758, the minutes of the Yearly Meeting reflected a consensus: "There appears a

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[8]Larry Gara, "Friends and the Underground Railroad", Quaker History, (Vol. 51, No. 1), p.18-19.

[9]Michener, p. 331.

[10]Ibid. p. 336.

unanimous concern prevailing, to put a stop to the increase of the practice of importing, buying, selling, or keeping slaves for term of life." This directive had great impact on the subordinate meetings in Delaware. It was quoted in the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting minutes when dealing with their few remaining slave holders.[11] By 1776, subordinate meetings were reporting good success with slaveholding members manumitting their slaves. The Burlington Monthly Meeting in New Jersey and the Thirdhaven Monthly Meeting in Maryland both reported much success with members providing terms by which to set their slaves free. Also in 1776, the Yearly Meeting took their harshest step and directed the monthly meetings to disown members that still had not provided for the manumission of their slaves.[12]

The position of the Quaker community was to set an example by their actions, not to demand similar action of others. As Larry Gara stated, "For a religious society to forbid slaveholding among its own members was one thing; to demand that all slaveholders free their slaves was quite another."[13] With this direction from the church hierarchy, it was up to individual members to follow their own conscience.

SLAVERY IN DELAWARE

Historically, the government of Delaware was sharply divided over the issue of slavery, causing a stalemate that culminated in the state being among the last to ratify the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which didn't occur until 1901.[14] Slavery was a part of Delaware's history from the founding of the first Swedish colonies in the seventeenth century. Unlike its neighbor to the west on the eastern shore of Maryland where large

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[11] Ibid. p. 346. Minutes of the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting held 22nd day of 9th month 1781. The subject of the minute was Jonathan Hunn. Also, a committee of three individual Yearly meeting members were appointed to travel and speak on this issue. An anti-slavery tract written by John Woolman, was included in the papers of John Alston that were donated to the Friends Historical Library in Swarthmore by John Cowgill Alston in 1948.

[12] Michener. p. 350, 351.

[13] Larry Gara, "Friends and the Underground Railroad", *Quaker History.* (Vol 51, No.1) Page 5.

[14] The ratification of the three post-Civil War Amendments happened early in the term of John Hunn (1849-1927), son of the abolitionist mentioned in this document, who served as the first Republican governor of the state from 1901-1904.

plantations maintained slave populations in the hundreds of individuals, Delaware farms were small. The types of agriculture practiced required more seasonal labor, and most farmers did not own slaves, but those who did typically owned few individuals.

To balance the pro-slavery forces, two strong religious groups in the state were vocally anti-slavery; the Religious Society of Friends, and the Methodists. Delaware was a hotbed of evangelical Methodism during the colonial period and into the nineteenth century. Many slaves were manumitted in response to the anti-slavery preaching of ministers such as Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garretson, and Harry Hosier.[15] For example, Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was a slave of Benjamin Chew, a wealthy land owner who owned property and slaves in both Philadelphia and Dover, Delaware. During a financial setback, Chew sold Allen to Stockley Sturgis, a farmer in Kent County, Delaware. A traveling Methodist preacher converted both master and slave with his eloquent preaching, and Sturgis agreed to manumit Allen, allowing him to work for wages to purchase his freedom.[16]

By the mid-nineteenth century, the divisions in the state had created a dichotomy of policies that minimally restricted manumissions, had strong prohibitions on importing and exporting slaves, but still protected chattel slavery within its borders. During the nineteenth century, Delaware had the highest percentage of free African-American population of any slave state. Despite the efforts to encourage individual slaveowners to free their human property, slavery remained in all three Delaware Counties until the Civil War, with the highest concentration in Sussex, the largest, most southern, and economically, most agriculturally based of the three Delaware counties.[17]

CENTRAL DELAWARE MONTHLY MEETINGS AND ANTI-SLAVERY

All Delaware meetings were under the auspices of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and subject to their decisions and Discipline. Despite the anti-slavery stance of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, before the American Revolution

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[15] Williams, *Garden of American Methodism*, p. 113.

[16] Ibid, p. 145.

[17] Essah, p.77.

many Delaware Quakers owned slaves. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting codified the growing anti-slavery sentiment within the faith when, in 1776, it mandated that owning slaves was contrary to Discipline. Delaware's Monthly Meetings began enforcing the new rules by forming committees to talk to those members still owning slaves, and by disowning those who continued to act contrary to Discipline.

Members of the wealthy Corbit and Hunn families were taken to task for their continued ownership of slaves by the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting.[18] On August 24, 1771, the Georges Creek Preparative Meeting brought a complaint to the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting against William Corbit, a wealthy resident of Cantwell's Bridge[19] for "...Purchasing a Negro Slave Contrary to the direction of the Yearly Meeting...".[20] The Monthly Meeting of Friends appointed a committee to speak with him about his breach of discipline. Seven months later, on March 28, 1772, the Duck Creek Monthly minutes noted his disownment:

> William Corbitt appeared here but not in a disposition likely to make satisfaction. Notwithstanding the endeavors of friends to excite him there to Wherefore this meeting denies him having any right of sitting in our meetings of Business or contributing to the affairs of this Church Agreeable to the direction of the yearly meeting in... Buying and Selling Negro Slaves of which the said William Corbitt being present, is devised to take notice.[21]

Another Quaker in the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting was disowned for purchasing a slave contrary to discipline.

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[18]Duck Creek Meeting was located near Smyrna, Delaware in Kent County. It was the designated Monthly Meeting until 1830 when that designation was transferred to Camden Meeting.

[19]Earlier names for the community now known as Odessa, Delaware include Cantwell's Bridge and Appoquinimink Bridge.

[20]Minutes of the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, held 27th of 8th month 1771.

[21]Ten years later, William Corbit sent a letter to the Duck Creek Monthly meeting held at Duckcreek November 24, 1781 apologizing for his wrongdoings including marrying out of union and owning a slave. He noted that the slave had been compensated for the time he was owned by Corbit. He was reinstated after a committee of the Monthly met with the former slave to see if he felt justly compensated. The former slave was satisfied, and then Corbit, along with his three young sons were welcomed back into membership.

Jonathan Hunn (1729-1792),[22] a wealthy Quaker whose property was located at Forest Landing at the confluence of Tidbury Branch and the St. Jones River near Camden, Delaware, had been disowned for purchasing a slave named Caro. Freed after two years of slave labor, Hunn paid him for his services over that period. As part of the reinstatement discussion, a committee of the Monthly Meeting questioned Caro, who still worked for Jonathan Hunn, as to his treatment. On September 22, 1781, the committee reported to the Monthly Meeting with its final recommendations:

> We the committee appointed in the case of Jonathan Hunn who some years past bought a Negro Man (named Caro) contrary to a Rule of the Yearly Meeting of 1758, and for which he was dealt with by Friends and placed as directed, by said Rule now report that we have had a reasonable opportunity with Jonathan and said Negro who was set free and discharged in about two years after said purchase and that he appears fully satisfied and so far from expecting or desiring restitution for the two years from Jonathan Hunn that he acknowledges himself under obligations to him and esteems him his Benefactor- On the whole as Jonathan Hunn appears to us in a more favourable disposition than thereto fore and hath at different [times] offered papers to Friends to make Satisfaction, we are of the mind that his offering under all circumstances of the present case, might be accepted as such and he reinstated as he stood before the transgression which however we submit to the meeting. 9th month 19th 1781 [signed by Ezekiel Cowgill, Robert Holliday, Fennwick Fisher and John Cowgill][23]

DELAWARE QUAKERS: INDIVIDUAL ACTION, AND ANTI-SLAVERY

Along with others in the pre-Civil War years in this country, there were two distinct paths which Quaker members could choose to proceed down concerning the elimination of slavery, a legal and an illegal path. For many years, activist Quakersin Delaware chose the former. Throughout the late eighteenth century, Delaware Quakers made many petitions to the legislature to abolish slavery in the State, but the politically strong slave holding interests in the state thwarted these efforts. Quaker influence was strongest in the northern part of the state where the majority

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[22] Jonathan Hunn was the grandfather of the subject of this documentation, John Hunn.

[23] Minutes of the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting of Friends, held 22nd of 9th month 1781.

of the population of Friends was located. The Abolition Society of Delaware, a sister organization of the Abolition Society of Pennsylvania, was active in the Wilmington area in the early-nineteenth century. Formed after the passage of the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law and Delaware laws prohibiting the import and export of slaves, the society members worked with people who felt they were unjustly enslaved. Working through the court system, the Acting Committee of the Abolition Society, worked with the attorney the Society had on retainer, to review cases for sufficient evidence to bring them before the federal court at New Castle. There were other abolition societies in Kent and Sussex Counties but they were not as active as the Wilmington society.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN DELAWARE

The illegal way or path of civil disobedience was to assist individuals' escape to the north. The 1793 Federal fugitive slave law made it illegal to assist those fleeing bondage. The few records that survive of slaves that escaped to the north passing through Delaware indicate they were mostly from the eastern shore of Maryland and southern Delaware. In this area the Underground Railroad consisted of an informal trail that connected a series of free black settlements, and larger communities with powerful and prominent Quaker families who maintained strong anti-slavery traditions.

Throughout the twentieth century, descriptions and analysis of Underground Railroad activities in Delaware have been surprisingly consistent. As in many places, the oral tradition is a major source of information relating to this illegal activity. While other routes may have existed and other methods of leaving the state may have been employed, the land route that led from Camden in Central Kent County, through the Middletown/Odessa area, to Wilmington, and then on into Pennsylvania, is the most extensively documented in the state. This documentation takes the form of transcribed oral tradition, correspondence, and federal court documents. First researched by historians Wilbur Siebert and Marion L. Bjornson in the early twentieth century, these historians focused on the activities of the white population in the assistance of escaping slaves. Closer inspection of the information shows clearly the role that African-Americans played in the Underground Railroad in Delaware.

The link between the clandestine travelers and the hospitable safe houses along the way was the conductor, and two known conductors in Delaware were both African-American. The two individuals who were documented to travel through the Delaware side of the Delmarva Peninsula were the nationally famous conductor Harriet Tubman, and

Samuel D. Burris, who was prosecuted along with John Hunn and Thomas Garrett under the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. Both of these individuals frequented the Middletown/Odessa area on their way north with those they were assisting escape. Harriet Tubman, known as "the Moses of her People", escaped from her master's plantation in Bucktown, near Cambridge on the eastern shore of Maryland. Letters documenting her passage through Delaware are collected in William Still's book on the Underground Railroad and in the collected letters of Thomas Garrett, the Wilmington Quaker who assisted over two thousand escaping slaves on their way north. A letter from William Brinkle, an African-American resident of the Camden area mentioned her passing through, and Thomas Garrett noted interactions with Harriett Tubman on nine occassions. Harriett Tubman recounted those she stayed with on her travels through the Delmarva Peninsula to Wilbur Siebert. She specifically mentioned staying with Sam Green near the Maryland state line in Sand Town, Kent County, Delaware, and William and Nat Brinkley and Abraham Gibbs in Camden, also in Kent County, Delaware.[24] Another conductor, Samuel D. Burris was a free black who lived in the Camden area. John Hunn notes in the letter he wrote from South Carolina to William Still for his book that Burris brought hundreds of escaping slaves to his door. It was who Burris carried a letter from Hunn's cousin, Ezekiel Jenkins of Camden when he arrived with the Samuel Hawkins family and four other men at his house on December 27, 1844. After the Hawkins' were taken to the New Castle Jail, Burris travelled with the other four escaping slaves to Thomas Garrett, with a letter from John Hunn explaining the plight of the Hawkins family. All three men were prosecuted by the owners of the Hawkins family for assisting with their escape. Burris was to be sold into slavery for a period of seven years as punishment. His contract was purchased by a member of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society. Burris stayed in Philadelphia for a time, and then moved to California for the remainder of his life.

As the lower Delaware hub for Underground Railroad activities, Camden had many factors in its favor. There were thriving free black communities in Camden and in nearby Star Hill, and it was home to a strong Quaker community that was actively anti-slavery. Two of the Friends who attended meeting at Appoquinimink, John Alston and John Hunn, had strong familial ties to Camden.

JOHN ALSTON

[24]Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in the Southern States*. unpaginated.

Born in 1794, John Alston was a wealthy farmer and a meticulous record keeper who became the treasurer of the Appoquinimink Meeting in 1830. The only existing records for the meeting are the ones he kept, and they describe an active, functioning meeting until 1845, when the assets he accounted for were taken over by the Camden Monthly. Alston was a cousin and mentor of John Hunn, and was responsible for the young man's relocation to the Middletown/Odessa area. Alston hired many free African Americans to work for him, and the labor contracts he wrote remain in his papers. Hispersonal library contained anti-slavery material. Among the papers donated to the Friends Historical Library was an anti-slavery tract by John Woolman, a member of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and an officially sanctioned leader in this cause.

In 1841 John Alston finished his new house. The construction of the impressive brick dwelling had consumed his life for over a year. He had rented out all his land and focused on the daily tasks of overseeing carpenters and brick masons. He had a deadline. He wanted the house ready for company when friends would be traveling though the area to attend the Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia. There may have been other travelers he was concerned about as well. As was his custom in the journal, a prayer was offered each month. The end of the entry for April 16, 1841 closes with this prayer:

> O Lord My God Entreat me to redeem and preserve me bless and keep me and mine and enable me to keep my hart [sic] and house open to receive thy servants that they may rest in their travels that this house that thou has enabled me to build may be holy dictates unto thee of the pilgrims rest.

By the early 1850s, John Alston was thinking of marriage. He and John Hunn's younger sister, Elizabeth Alston Hunn approached the Camden Monthly meeting about marrying in 1852. Miss Hunn withdrew from the arrangement shortly thereafter, married a non-Quaker, and was disowned by the Camden Monthly Meeting. In 1856, John Alston, at age 62, married Lydia Cowgill Wilson, the widow of Robert Wilson of Thirdhaven Meeting (Easton, Maryland). Upon her first husband's death, she moved with her two children back to the area, living with her relatives at Cowgill's Corner, near the Little Creek Meeting House. John and Lydia had three children. John Alston died in 1874 and was buried at Appoquinimink Meeting Cemetery near his three year old daughter, Lydia Cowgill Alston, who had passed away in 1865. His surviving children, Susan Alston Bowes and John Cowgill Alston, continued to maintain the cemetery into the twentieth century. Lydia Cowgill Wilson Alston died in 1899 and was buried with the Cowgill family at Little Creek Friends Meeting Cemetery. John Cowgill Alston donated

his father's papers to the Friends Historical Library in 1948, shortly before his own death. He is also buried at Appoquinimink Friends Meeting.[25] John Alston's house survived into the late twentieth century. By then named Oaklawn, the building was demolished in the early 1970s.

There are two known documents connecting Alston to active participation in the Underground Railroad. In 1871, John Hunn recounted two stories for the readers of William Still's important work documenting the Underground Railroad. Molly, whom he met while she stayed with John Alston, was a slave escaping from Smyrna, Delaware.[26] The other document is the letter of introduction written by Ezekiel Jenkins of Camden for the conductor Samuel Burris who was guiding the Hawkins family and four others through Delaware in late December 1844. This letter was addressed to either John Hunn, John Alston or Daniel Corbit.

JOHN HUNN

Born on June 26, 1818, John Hunn was the son of Hannah J. Alston and Ezekiel Hunn. He was the grandson of Jonathan Hunn of Forest Landing, a port at the confluence of the St. Jones River and Tidbury Creek, in the vicinity of Camden. The Hunn family operated a large mill and iron foundry complex at Forest Landing, and, leased several outlying farms to tenants, owned commercial establishments in Camden, and owned sailing vessels kept at port at Forest Landing.

An orphan by the age of three, John was well provided for by the large estates left by his father and grandfather. His mother had died in 1819, shortly after the birth of his younger sister, Elizabeth Alston Hunn. At the death of his grandfather in 1820, the substantial estate provided him with sufficient property and income to get an education.[27] His father, Ezekiel Hunn, passed away in 1821, leaving John in the care of an aunt, and then with his half-sister,

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[25]Birth, Death and Marriage Records & Minutes of Camden Monthly Meeting.

[26]Still, p. 719.

[27]Along with providing for his relatives, Jonathan Hunn's will also provided for additional land for the Camden meeting house for the purposes of a graveyard, and income from a rental property was given to the "Camden School for Colored Children" for a period of ten years. (Kent County Probate Records, Will of Jonathan Hunn.)

Patience after her marriage. It was in 1824 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that Patience married George Washington Jenkins, of Camden, Delaware.[28] Patience Hunn Jenkins was very devout and felt called to the Quaker ministry early in her life. Like other sanctioned ministers in the faith, she traveled to other meetings to share her vision of the gospel. It was her influence that helped to bring young John back into the religious community and eventually to become a minister himself.

The five surviving children of Ezekiel Hunn shared his substantial estate. John was sent to a Quaker academy in Bordentown, New Jersey. Afterwards, he joined his elder half-brother Ezekiel in apprenticeship to Townsend Sharpless, a wealthy and very prominent Quaker merchant in Philadelphia.

In 1835, at age 17, his Quaker membership was officially transferred to the Cherry Street Meeting in Philadelphia. To learn the mercantile trade, Townsend Sharpless set up a business for John and Ezekiel as silk merchants in Philadelphia. Ezekiel, the elder of the two, thrived in this environment, but John did not. In 1837 he wrote John Alston, his cousin whom he had never met, about apprenticing to him to learn farming. His proposal was accepted, and John Alston sold him a farm across the road from his home farm between Middletown and Odessa in southern New Castle County. While in Philadelphia, John met, and later married, a non-Quaker, Mary Allen Swallow, and was disowned by the Cherry Street Meeting. In 1840, he officially apologized to the Meeting, and asked to have his membership transferred back home to Camden, Delaware, which was granted. Ezekiel remained in Philadelphia and went on to marry Townsend Sharpless' daughter. The business prospered with a new partner under the name of Hunn and Remington Silk Merchants.

By 1840, John Hunn was working on his own farm. Alston's account books show that he was the source of a variety of goods for the Hunn farm and home, including seed corn, flax seed, sheep, potatoes, cloth and rope. He also allowed Hunn to borrow his farming equipment.[29] The John and Mary's first child was born in 1843 and named John Alston Hunn.

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[28]Delaware Gazette, 8/24/1824 p.3,c.6.

[29]Account Books and Journals. Papers of John Alston, RG5, Friends Historical Library.

When John Hunn first heard of the Underground Railroad is not known, but his first active participation with assisting escaping slaves occurred on December 5th, 1844, at 7:00 AM. He recounted:

> ...as I was washing my hands at the yard pump of my residence,... I looked down the lane, and saw a covered wagon slowly approaching my house. The sun had just risen, and was shining brightly (after a stormy night) on the snow which covered the ground six inches. ...On closer inspection I noticed several men walking beside the wagon. This seemed rather an early hour for visitors, and I could not account for the circumstance. When they reached the yard fence I met them, and a colored man handed me a letter addressed to Daniel Corbit, John Alston or John Hunn; ... The letter was from my cousin, Ezekiel Jenkins, of Camden, Delaware, and stated that the travelers were fugitive slaves, under the direction of Samuel D. Burris (who handed me the note). The party consisted of a man and his wife, with their six children, and four fine-looking colored men, without counting the pilot, S.D. Burris, who was a free man, from Kent County, Delaware. This was the ... first time I had ever been called upon to assist fugitives from the hell of American Slavery. The wanderers were gladly welcomed, and made as comfortable as possible until breakfast was ready for them.
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> ... They were all very weary, as they had traveled from Camden (twenty-seven miles), through a snowstorm. ... In Camden they were sheltered in the houses of their colored friends. Although this was my first acquaintance with S.D. Burris, it was not my last, as he afterwards piloted them himself, or was instrumental in directing hundreds of fugitives to me for shelter.[30]

An announcement offering the reward for capture of the wife and children of Samuel Hawkins, along with William Chestnut and William Hardcastle, of Queen Anne County, Maryland, had already reached Middletown. Hunn's neighbor, Robert Cochran, and his son noticed the unfamiliar group and contacted the marshall in Middletown. Samuel Hawkins produced papers supporting his claim of being free. A will was also produced indicating his wife was also free. The Hawkins family was taken to New Castle jail to sort out the issue in front of a judge. John Hunn wrote a letter to Thomas Garrett which was delivered by Samuel Burris who traveled to Wilmington with the other four men in his party. Garrett met the group in New Castle. The presiding judge reviewed the documents presented to him and pronounced there was not enough evidence to detain the Hawkins family as escaping slaves. Thomas

[30]Still, p.715-719.

Garrett arranged for a carriage to take the wife and small children, while the rest of the party walked into Wilmington. The entire party traveled on, uneventfully, into Pennsylvania and freedom.

The owners of Samuel Hawkins children and of his wife sued John Hunn and Thomas Garrett for assisting their property to escape. The fines levied under the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 provided a $500 penalty per person due to the owner of the escaping slave. John Hunn did not contest his participation and was fined $2500. Thomas Garrett did protest, and the subsequent trial found him guilty with a penalty invoked of $3500. Samuel Burris was also prosecuted. He was to be sold into slavery for his part in the escape, but was purchased from the auction block in Dover by a Philadelphia anti-slavery activist.

The fine was sufficiently large to require the seizure and sale of all of John Hunn's property, both in the Middletown/Odessa vicinity and in Camden. Meanwhile, the Hunn family grew. Elizabeth Alston was born on October 6, 1846 and Jonathan, who grew up to be the first Republican Governor of Delaware, on June 23, 1849. On March 20, 1850, John Alston Hunn, the oldest child, died, and was buried at the Appoquinimink Meeting Cemetery. The judgement was paid that year, too, and John Hunn, with his family moved to the Camden area to live with relatives. Their fourth child, Hannah Alston, was born there on November 17, 1851.

In 1852, Mary and their three surviving children asked to be joined in membership with the Camden Monthly Meeting of Friends, and were accepted. Mary died on October 1, 1854 and was buried at Camden Meeting Cemetery. On November 13, 1855, John Hunn married his cousin-by-marriage, Anne E. Jenkins, in the home of his sister and her second husband, Patience and Jabez Jenkins. It is quite possible that his activities on the Underground Railroad continued after his return to the Camden area. Local tradition talks about the participation of the Hunn family assisting escaping slaves. Hunn family homes in the Forest Landing area include Great Geneva and Wild Cat Manor.[31] It is not known precisely where he lived during this period. He was very active in the Camden Monthly Meeting, serving as a delegate throughout the 1850s and as clerk from 1854-1856. He maintained his ties to Appoquinimink, taking on the repair of the fencing in 1853. In June 1852, he traveled to the territory of

[31] Great Geneva was listed in the National Register in 1973. At the same meeting of the Delaware State Review Board, Wildcat Manor was determined not eligible because of the number of changes to the building. Still extant in 1997, the building has not been reevaluated since1973.

the Northwest Fork Monthly Meeting with his sister, Patience H. Jenkins, to preach about the evils of slavery and opression. In a reminisence published in the *Friends Intelligencer* in 1898, one of the members of that monthly recalled the visit, and the appearance and preaching of John Hunn:

> The two came together and visited our meetings in Caroline [County, Maryland], and though a mere boy, I well remember that he preached, and it then appeared to me that he was the most remarkable man I had ever seen or heard. He was handsome, tall and in person finely developed, -- "a Nature's nobleman." His hair was as black as a raven, his manner the most courteous and humble, and as gentle as a child. I still remember his text; my impression is that the sermon was the first he ever preached: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive, recovery of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."[32]

On November 28, 1854, the Southern Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders appointed John Hunn a minister.[33]

In 1862, after the successful assault on the fortification of Port Royal Harbor by the Union Navy, the slave-holding population fled the Sea Islands of the South Carolina/Georgia border. Approximately 10,000 slaves were left on the Sea Islands. Once the source of the most valuable cotton produced in the South, the Sea Islands were isolated from mainland. A Philadelphia philanthropic organization, the Port Royal Relief Association, under the direction of Reverend J. Miller McKim of Philadelphia organized volunteers to work among the newly freed slaves. John Hunn traveled there, leaving Philadelphia on October 21, 1862, accompanying Charlotte Forten, a teacher, Philadelphian, and the daughter of a wealthy and prominent, free African-American family, and his daughter,

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[32]Siebert, Wilbur *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*, Volume 1. Materials Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus. Located in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

[33]"Historically, men and women who were recognized as being unusually inspired by the Spirit of God and provided most of the vocal messages in meeting for worship. Ministers were formally designated or 'recorded' by the monthly meeting, and regular meetings of ministers and elders, called Preparative Meetings of Ministers and Elders or Select Meeting were held to consider the spiritual life of the meeting." *Guide to Genealogical Resources at Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College*, Glossary; Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA p. D-1 - D-11.

Elizabeth.[34]

Life on St. Helena Island changed dramatically after the Federal occupation. By 1863, a garrison of five thousand soldiers was stationed on one end of the island. After word spread that St. Helena was free, escaping slaves from nearby islands arrived in great numbers.[35] John Hunn initially ran a store for the society and worked on setting up the Seaside plantation on St. Helena to produce crops again. By 1870, Hunn's son Jonathan, along with his wife, Sallie Emerson Hunn joined him on St. Helena.[36] Elizabeth (Lizzie) was a teacher among the freed slaves, and was mentioned in the diaries kept by other teachers on St. Helena, including Laura Towne and Charlotte Forten. John Hunn, Jr., invested in limestone as a fertilizer, and his time in South Carolina provided him with a substantial fortune.

Neither the store nor the plantation John Hunn ran fared well financially. Some who came to the Sea Islands during Reconstruction came to help and were very religious people who felt there was good work to be done there. Sometimes referred to as members of Gideon's Band, those included in this group were, among others, John Hunn, Laura Towne, Charlotte Forten, Richard Soule and H. G. Judd. Some came who were motivated by other factors. Historians of this topic tend to emphasize the corruption of those put in power in this vulnerable situation. In the midst of the influx of unscrupulous "carpetbaggers" to the Sea Islands to take advantage of the land give-away and the slave population, John Hunn stood out as one of the "local officers who managed badly but were apparently honest."[37] Called "Father Hunn", "Friend Hunn", and "Brother Hunn" in various accounts, John Hunn's work on the Underground Railroad and prosecution were known to at least some of those he met on St. Helena. One account of Hunn's activities was described in Edward L. Pierce in his book *Enfranchisement and Citizenship (Boston 1896).* As quoted by Theodore Rosengarten:

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[34]Billington, p. 117.

[35]Rosengarten, p. 257.

[36]Rose, p.78.

[37]Ibid, p. 396.

"Friend Harris [sic]," once was "fined in Delaware three thousand dollars for harboring and assisting fugitive slaves," wrote Edward L. Pierce, paying Harris lighthearted respect, "but now he harbors and assists them at a much cheaper rate."[38]

John Hunn remained in South Carolina into the 1880s. His correspondence with William Still for his book on the Underground Railroad was sent from Beaufort, South Carolina in 1871.[39] More research is needed on this period of John Hunn's life. He returned to the Camden area by 1884 when he is noted again in the minutes of the Camden Monthly Meeting.

John Hunn and his wife Annie lived in Wyoming, Delaware, with relatives. In 1893, he responded to a letter from Wilbur Siebert, a professor at Ohio State University, who was researching those who participated in the Underground Railroad. He told Siebert that he was "Supt. of the U.G.R.R., from Wilmington down the Peninsula."[40]

John Hunn died on July 6, 1894 at age 76. Annie E. Hunn died on September 1, 1894. They were buried side by side in the Camden Meeting Cemetery. John Hunn kept a journal of his activities with the Underground Railroad and noted to William Still that he had helped hundreds on their way north. But, for reasons unknown, he had his son destroy it in front of him when he was on his death bed. His son, John Hunn Jr. recounted the event in Conrad's History of Delaware (1908) which states: "... but the senior Hunn said, the issue was closed, and inasmuch as some of the actors in the affair were yet alive, and might be compromised thereby, he thought it best to cover the whole episode with oblivion..."

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[38]Rosengarten, p.256. John Hunn and Thomas Garrett were the only Delawareans prosecuted in this manner. Other references state similar familiarity with Hunn and the Underground Railroad. See Rose, P. 366-7.

[39]Still, p. 713.

[40]Siebert, Wilbur *The Underground Railroad in the Southern States*, Materials Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus. Located in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Less than 1 acre (approximately .88 acres)

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	18	442762	4367457

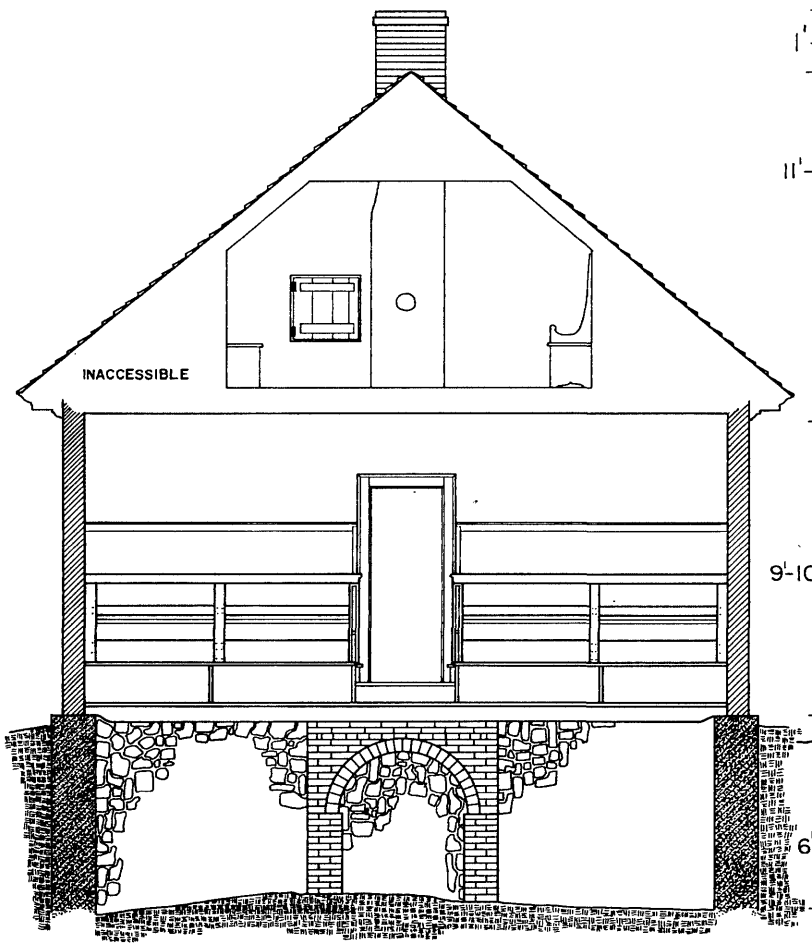
Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is bounded on the north by Delaware State Route 299, and on the east, west and south by adjoining property lines.

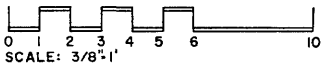
Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the property is the lot historically associated with the property. It includes the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House (contributing), the cemetery (contributing) and entry drive enclosed by a perimeter brick wall (non-contributing). The adjacent Corbit Graveyard parcel, although now owned by the Wilmington Meeting, is not included in this nomination because it was not historically included with the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House property.

TRIM LINE



SECTION A-A'



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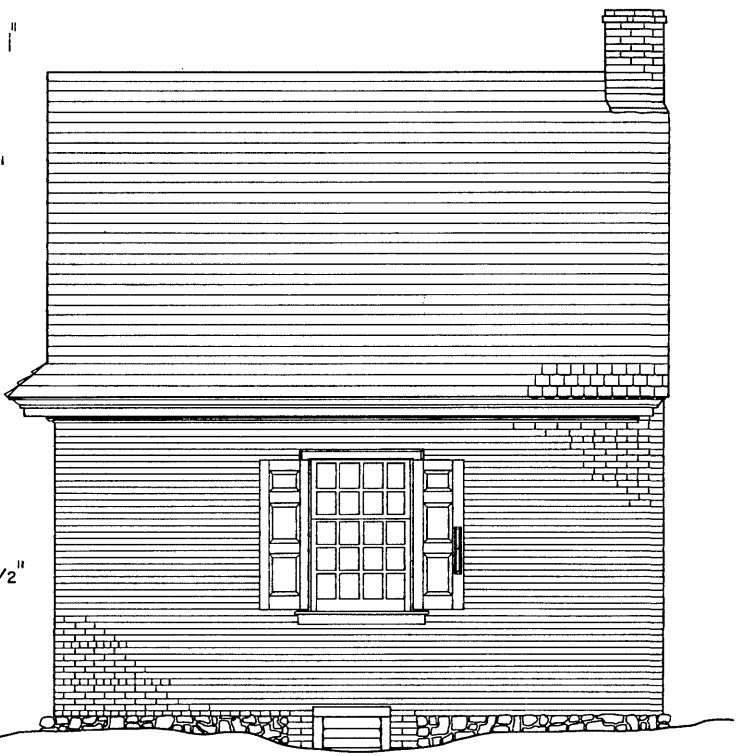


NORTHWEST ELEVATION

KEY

- EARTH
- STONE
- 1ST PERIOD BRICK
- 2ND PERIOD BRICK
- 3RD PERIOD BRICK

DRAWN BY: GRETCHEN TOWNSEND, 1987

CHAE - UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
APPOQUINIMINK FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE
ODESSA, NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE

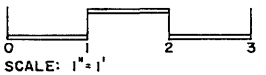
SURVEY NO. DE-115

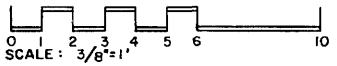
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF 4 SHEETS

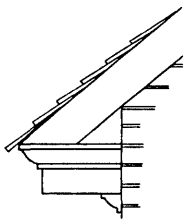
TRIM LINE

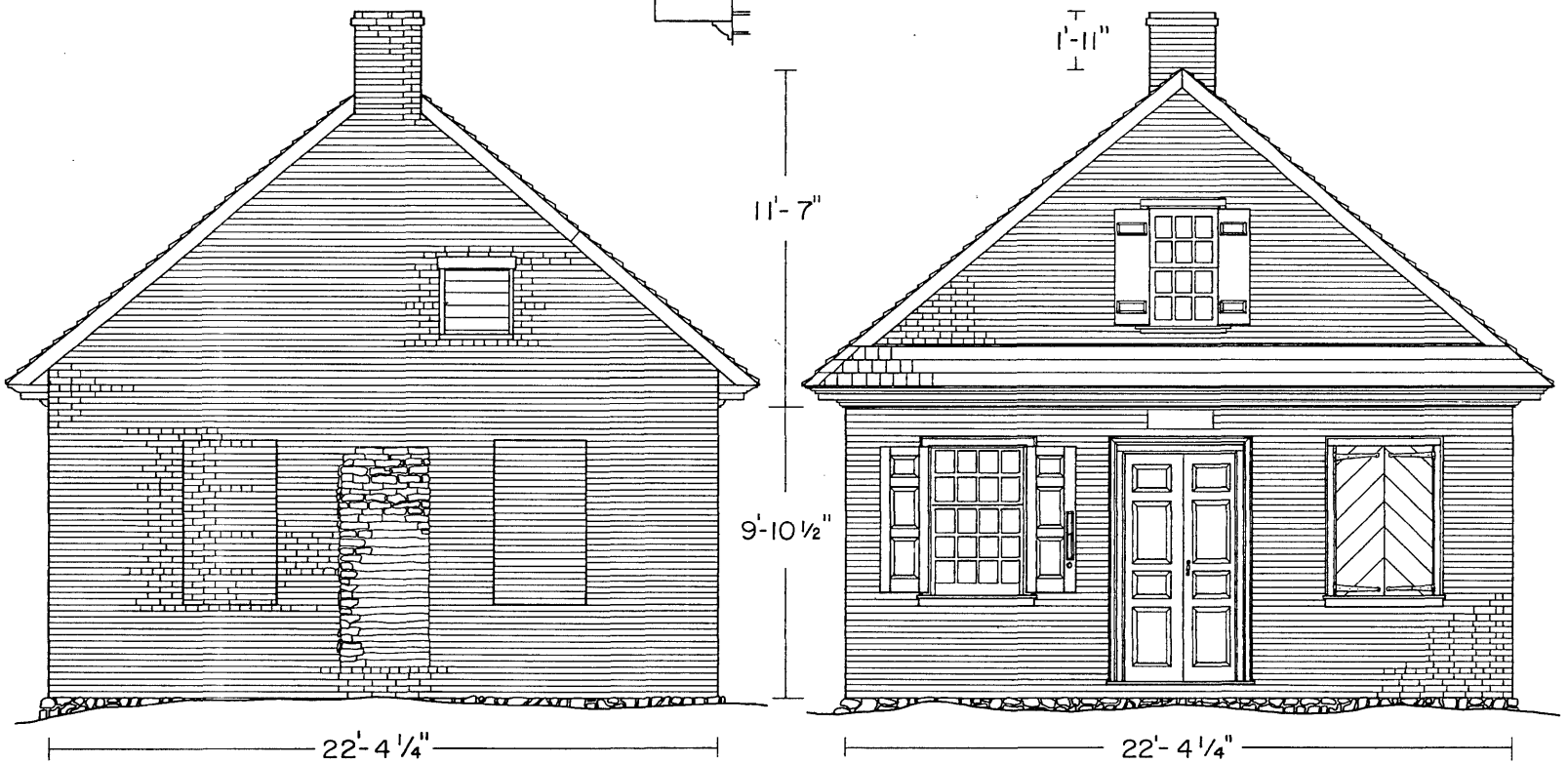
TRIM LINE

DETAIL - CORNICE MOLDING









SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

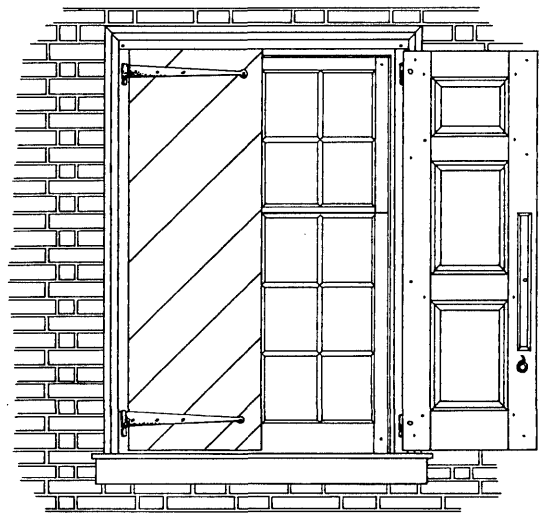
NORTHEAST ELEVATION

DRAWN BY: GRETCHEN TOWNSEND, 1987

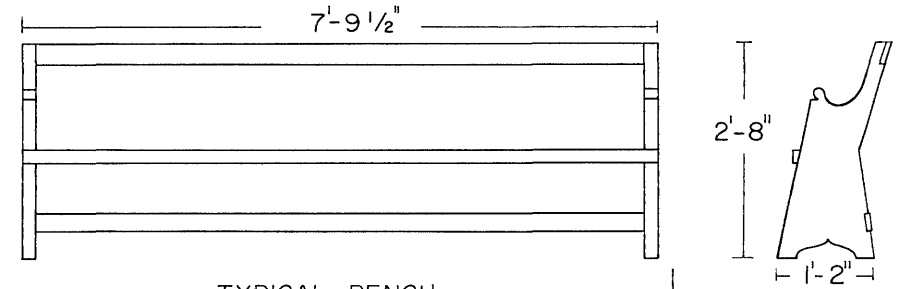
CHAE - UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE APPOQUINIMINK FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE ODESSA, NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE	SURVEY NO. DE-115	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY SHEET 2 OF 4 SHEETS

TRIM LINE

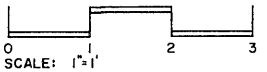
TRIM LINE

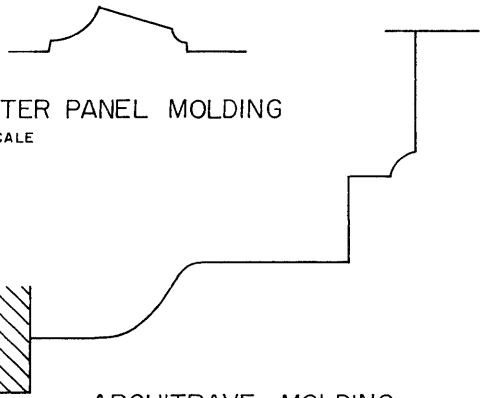


WINDOW, NORTHEAST ELEVATION



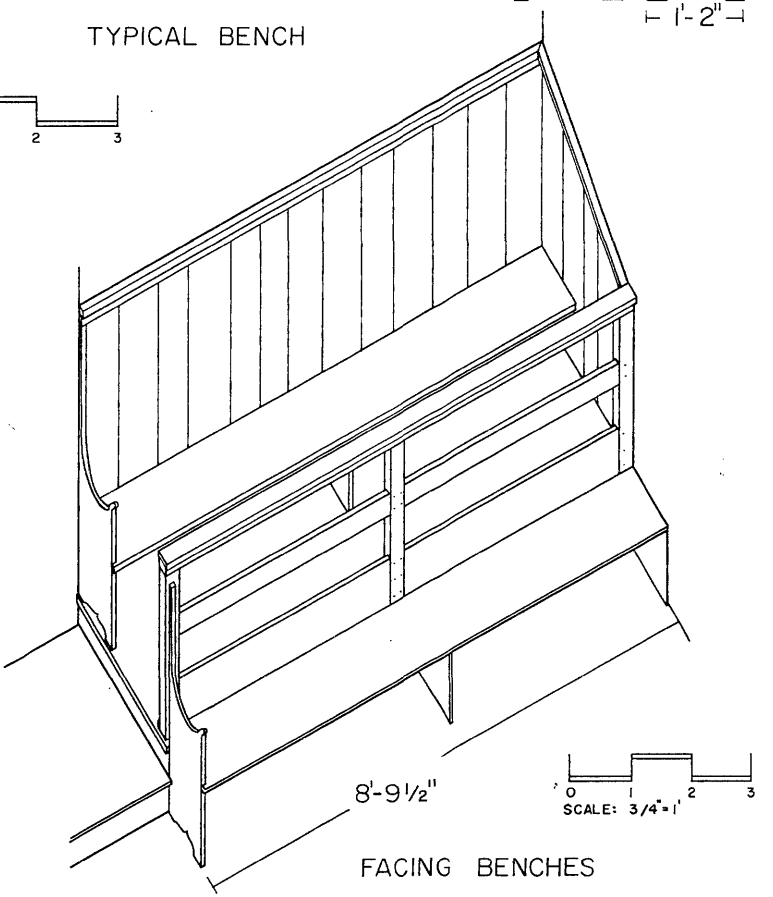
TYPICAL BENCH





SHUTTER PANEL MOLDING
FULL SCALE

ARCHITRAVE MOLDING
FULL SCALE



FACING BENCHES

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TRIM LINE

TRIM LINE

KEY

EARTH

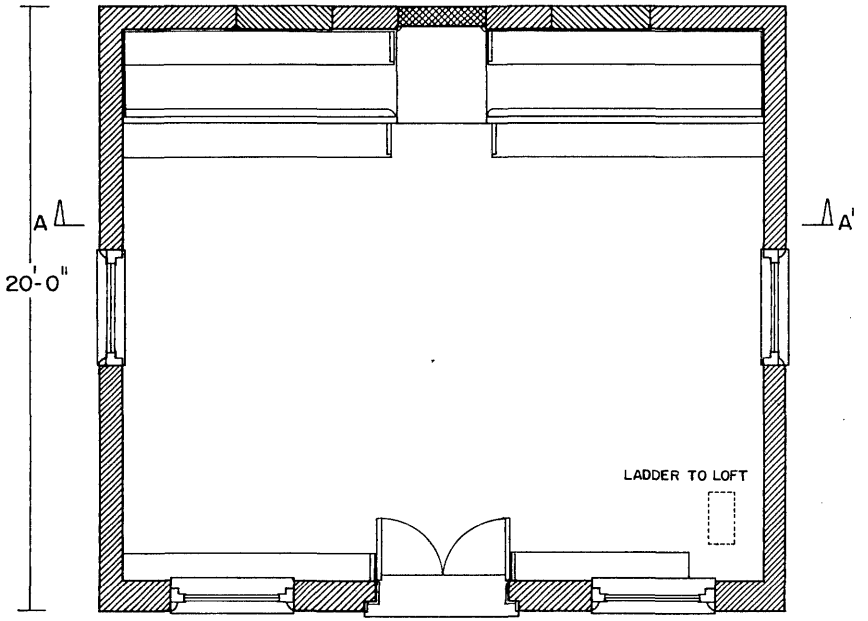
STONE

1ST PERIOD BRICK

2ND PERIOD BRICK

3RD PERIOD BRICK

N



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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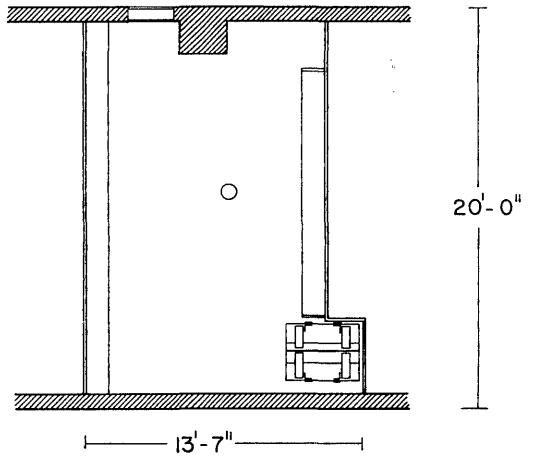
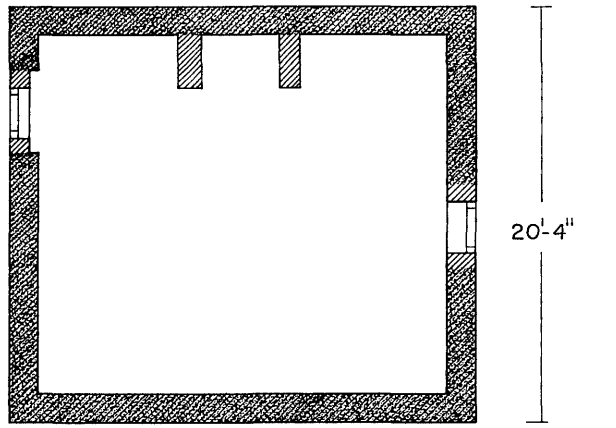
LOFT PLAN

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 10
SCALE: 1/4"=1'





CELLAR PLAN

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SCALE: 1/4"=1'

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CHAE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE APPOQUINIMINK FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE ODESSA, NEW CASTLE COUNTY, DELAWARE	SURVEY NO. DE-115	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY SHEET 1 OF 4 SHEETS

TRIM LINE

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting
House
Main Street, Route 299
Odessa, New Castle County, DE

Tax Map 1"=100' N