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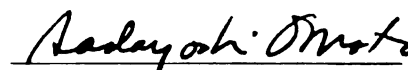
THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ZION HILL  
MEETINGHOUSE:  
RELIGION AND FORM

presented by

Thelma S. Rohrer

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in History of Art

  
Major professor

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ZION HILL MEETINGHOUSE:  
RELIGION AND FORM

By

Thelma S. Rohrer

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

### THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ZION HILL MEETINGHOUSE: RELIGION AND FORM

By

Thelma S. Rohrer

This thesis examines the Zion Hill House, a Brethren meetinghouse built between 1872 and 1885/88 in northeastern Ohio, as a product of religious, regional, local, and architectural history.

Although razed, the building is brought back to life through the original building specifications, financial accounts and recorded building events, denominational and congregational minutes, as well as photographs, remnants, and reconstruction drawings. The examination of similar structures, regionally and locally, provides a basis for architectural classification by form and architectural comparison by style. As a recordation, the only preservation method now possible, this work establishes a framework for the analysis and re-evaluation of remaining structures significant to the Church of the Brethren.

The Zion Hill House exemplified denominational characteristics, revealed regional alternatives, and adapted local architectural styling. It was the embodiment of early Brethren attitudes in a mature architectural form.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the Brethren community for the source of inspiration and for the right to question; to Dr. Donald F. Durnbaugh for generating interest in Brethren history, and without whose works, especially The Brethren Encyclopedia, this one would have been impossible; to the trustees and members of the Zion Hill congregation for the lending of materials; to my parents, Alice and Alpheus Rohrer, who continue to answer the phone; and, to James R.C. Adams, my closest friend, for his wisdom, criticism, and understanding.

My deepest appreciation goes to Dr. Sadayoshi Omoto for his probing questions and insightful views, his constructive advice and his encouraging manner, and especially for his ability to combine enthusiasm with critical thinking. Thanks also to the History of Art faculty at Michigan State University whose support was essential and to the readers of this thesis, Dr. Linda Stanford and Dr. Robert Anderson (Department of Religious Studies), whose remarks are valued.

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## INTRODUCTION

Frequently members of the Church of the Brethren, when asked about the group's architecture, respond with a brief laugh and reply in a tone of amazement, "Oh, I didn't know we had any!" Very little has been written on Brethren architecture, since the denomination is a relatively small religious group, and since the Brethren have traditionally avoided the exaltation of material things.

This study of the Zion Hill House, built by the Mahoning Congregation of the German Baptist Brethren (later named the Church of the Brethren) between 1872 and 1885/88, provides insight to the development of the first "established structures" of this denomination. This meetinghouse, like many others, was built during the denomination's expansion westward and during the period of greatest population growth in the denomination's history. Although no longer extant, the Zion Hill House was an unusually well-documented Brethren building. The 1872 building specifications and parts of the records by A.W. Longanecker, an initial trustee, are copied here in their original wording and spelling.

The aim of this research is to "preserve" the Zion Hill House through recordation and to, therefore, provide a

context by which the denominational architecture can be analyzed and defined. Several possible bases for understanding the architectural options and the developments of the northeastern Ohio Brethren are provided and brief comparisons to other denominations are made, confirming architectural concerns typical to the Brethren.

The fact that the Zion Hill House no longer exists, and that other Brethren meetinghouses in the region seem to be fast disappearing, causes one to wonder if the Brethren will only notice the uniqueness of their architecture once it is gone.



**PART I**

**ARCHITECTURE AND THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

## CHAPTER 1

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

#### Origins in Schwarzenau, Germany

The Church of the Brethren was organized in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany by Alexander Mack, Sr., when eight persons, including Mack, established "a covenant of good conscience before God" and were baptized in the Eder River (fig. 1). These German Baptist Brethren were originally known as Dunkers or Dunkards, a name derived from the German word "tunken," meaning to immerse. The Brethren began as part of the Pietist and Separatist Movements after the Reformation (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> They joined the Anabaptist tradition when they refuted the laws of infant baptism and began to practice triune immersion, baptizing only when the believer reached the age of discretion.<sup>2</sup> There is no record of the Brethren building a place of worship in Europe.<sup>3</sup> After the Schwarzenau/Eder fellowship was formed, they began meeting

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<sup>1</sup>Esther Fern Rupel, An Investigation of the Origin, Significance, and Demise of the Prescribed Dress Worn by Members of the Church of the Brethren (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1971), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism (London: The Macmillan Co., 1968), pp. 120-22.

<sup>3</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Brethren Encyclopedia, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, PA and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983), s.v. "Architecture," by Kenneth I. Morse, p. 48.



Fig. 1. View of the Eder River, Schwarzenau, Germany.



in their own homes which were suitable for small groups. The believers in the Marienborn area also met in homes; however, it is possible that the Crefeld group may have used a Mennonite meetinghouse. Open-air meetings were also occasionally held.<sup>4</sup>

#### Establishment in Germantown, Pennsylvania

Peter Becker (1687-1758), a former member of the German Reformed, led the first migration to America, landing in Philadelphia in 1719 and later settling in Germantown. The first congregation of the Church of the Brethren in America was organized on Christmas Day 1723, and chose Becker as their elder and held a baptism and love feast on the same day.<sup>5</sup>

A meetinghouse was not built in America until 1770. Prior to this the Germantown congregation continued the tradition of meeting in homes, the most important of which was the house of Christopher Sauer (Saur, Sower). Sauer was a reformed Lutheran who was so greatly influenced by A. Mack's teachings in Europe that he decided to follow the Brethren to Germantown in 1724. He built a large house of two stories, the lower floor for his shop and the upper

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence W. Schulz, A Mural History of the Church of the Brethren in Twelve Panels (Milford, IN: Board of Directors of Camp Alexander Mack, reprinted 1976), p. 8.

floor with movable partitions so that the room could be adopted for meetings. The Germantown Brethren met there from 1732 to 1760, during which time Sauer launched a printing business in the same house, which later became an outstanding press in America. In this house, the first Bible in a European tongue in America was printed, and the Sauer press was a "keen rival" to that of Benjamin Franklin.<sup>6</sup>

From 1760 to 1770, the Germantown Brethren met in the Pettikoffer House in an area known as Beggartown, since Pettikoffer had begged money with which to build his house. Eventually it was deeded to the Brethren and later served as a home for the aged.<sup>7</sup> Although the house was remodeled during those ten years, it "did not meet the full requirements of the Germantown Brethren for a house of worship."<sup>8</sup>

On July 8, 1770, the fifty-seven member congregation held its initial service in the first meetinghouse built by the Brethren in America.<sup>9</sup> It is a thirty-foot square, stone structure with a full basement for cooking for love

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Floyd E. Mallott, Studies in Brethren History (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1954), p. 62.

<sup>9</sup>The building remains the property of the denomination and, with additions and alterations, serves as an inner-city community center.

feasts, which had become an important feature of Brethren fellowship. An outside staircase reached an attic which was used "for storage and miscellaneous uses."<sup>10</sup> The building has been altered over the years, particularly with additions in 1896 and 1915.<sup>11</sup> From this "Mother Church" and through "evangelism and family growth," the Brethren gradually spread through the eastern states of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Westward Movement

The eastern Brethren, particularly those in Germantown, were persecuted during the Revolutionary War, leading to an even greater desire to move westward. The Sauer Press was now led by Christopher Sauer, Jr. who was suspected by both armies. His property was confiscated and he was subjected to extreme physical cruelty. Because he would not take an oath of allegiance to the King of England, the Germantown meetinghouse was commandeered by British soldiers to stable their horses, using the unbound printed

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<sup>10</sup>Mallott, p. 62.

<sup>11</sup>Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, s.v. "Philadelphia, PA, Germantown Church of the Brethren," by Ronald G. Lutz, p. 1016.

<sup>12</sup>William R. Eberly, The History of the Church of the Brethren in Northwestern Ohio, 1827-1963 (Hartville, OH: Northern Ohio District, [1982]), p. 1.

pages of the Sauer's 1776 edition of the Sauer Bible as bedding.<sup>13</sup>

Other Brethren were persecuted as well, mainly for the reasons of unwillingness to take an oath of allegiance or to bear arms.<sup>14</sup> Having been stripped of their possessions and their property confiscated they moved westward via the Ohio River by flatboat, and across the land in covered wagons (fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> They moved into Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois, as well as Kansas.<sup>16</sup> Again, their houses became the primary place for worship, since they hesitated "to build a church house lest the face-to-face fellowship be lost." Families took turns holding the meetings and serving meals to anyone who cared to stay.<sup>17</sup> This practice then became crucial to the designing of a church structure and would be continued in the tradition of the love feast and fellowship dinners.

The growth of the denomination was dramatic during the expansion westward. In 1795 the Brethren were in only six

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<sup>13</sup>Schulz, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>This map is based on illustrations in the following sources: Richard N. Campen, Ohio -- An Architectural Portrait (Chagrin Falls, OH: West Summit Press, 1973), p. 17; Durnbaugh, ed., The Brethren Encyclopedia, s.v. "Ohio Valley Migration," p. 1440.

<sup>16</sup>There were also very early settlements in California and the West Coast area. Eberly, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>Schulz, p. 14.



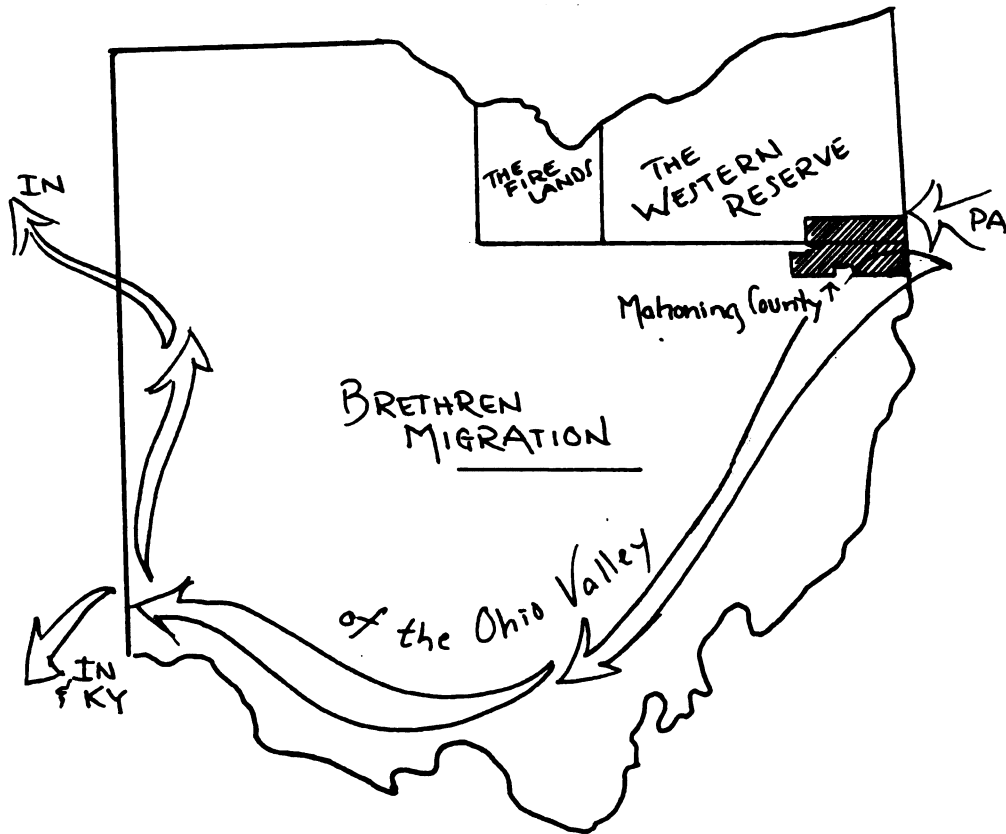


Fig. 3. Map of Migration into Ohio.

states and by 1900 they were well-established on the west coast. A closer look at the changes in the 19th century shows that in the forty years between 1800 and 1840 eighty-five congregations were formed. In the following decade, between 1840 and 1850, forty-one congregations were formed, thus doubling the previous decade's average. These early congregations did not always build meetinghouses right away, but when they did they frequently built more than one. Congregations continued to be formed at an increasing rate for the next eighteen years until 1900, resulting in an estimated three hundred additions. After the turn of the century, the West having been reached, congregations were not as frequently formed even though membership continued to grow.<sup>18</sup> With the increase of congregational size and the changing attitudes of the 20th century, the meetinghouse form would gradually be replaced. Buildings would be built less often, of more expensive and durable materials like brick, and in more populated areas.

#### Northeastern Ohio Settlements

The first Brethren migrated to northeastern Ohio between 1775 and 1800, settling primarily in Stark,

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<sup>18</sup>James H. Lehman, The Old Brethren (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1976), p. 343.

Tuscarawas, and Mahoning Counties.<sup>19</sup> The landscape and climate of this region are almost identical to Schwarzenau, Germany and farmland even more abundant. The earliest building project of the Brethren in this area is thought to have occurred with the construction of the small Paradise meetinghouse in 1841.<sup>20</sup> However, the majority of the Brethren meetinghouses in northeastern Ohio, particularly those which can be considered "established structures," were built between 1855 and 1905.

The population of the Brethren had almost tripled between 1860 and 1882, with the total number of Brethren in Ohio being estimated at 9,362. This was the most rapid period of growth in the history of the Church of the Brethren.<sup>21</sup> By 1904 the increased population sufficiently warranted the forming of a district organization to allow for greater interaction of the denomination at the regional level. The territory comprising the Northeastern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren was officially established by the 1904 District Meeting and remained in effect until 1962 when a motion to merge with the Northwestern District was passed. This first district consisted

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<sup>19</sup>Edgar G. Diehm, ed., The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio (Elgin, IL: Printed for the District of Northeastern Ohio by the The Brethren Press, 1963), pp. 222-23.

<sup>20</sup>Kermon Thomasson, "A New Museum That's Telling Our Story," Messenger 137 (October 1988):10.

<sup>21</sup>Mallott, pp. 105-108.

of thirty-two counties covering an area of 40,740 square miles and having a population of more than four million.<sup>22</sup> It is this area which is the focus of this study.

#### Henry Kurtz, Elder of the Mahoning Congregation

The Mahoning Valley and the Mill Creek Congregation, known as the Mahoning Congregation after 1842, became the home of Brother Henry Kurtz, "the most influential figure in 19th century Brethrenism (figs. 4,5)."<sup>23</sup> He was born in 1796 in Württemberg, Germany, and came to America at twenty-one, settling first in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, where he became a successful Lutheran pastor and school-teacher. In 1823, he was called to one of the largest churches in Pittsburgh, the German United Evangelical Church, a combined Lutheran and Reformed Congregation. However, Kurtz' interest in publishing, and particularly his interest in the restoration of primitive Christianity, resulted in his forced resignation from this parish in 1827.<sup>24</sup>

His move westward continued into northeastern Ohio, where he met Elder George Hoke, in Canton, the overseeing

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<sup>22</sup>Diehm, pp. 175, 234.

<sup>23</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Standing Tall: The Life and Witness of Henry Kurtz," Messenger 125 (April 1986):13.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.



Fig. 4. Henry Kurtz' Memorial Stone at Zion Hill

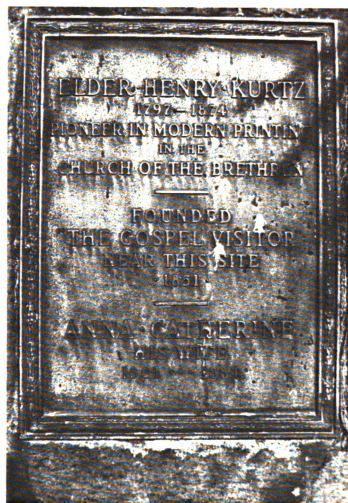


Figure 5. Henry Kurtz' Memorial Plaque at Zion Hill.

elder of the Mill Creek Congregation.<sup>25</sup> Kurtz was attracted to this "simple, disciplined life, based on New Testament teachings, and the example of the early church," as well as the Germanic heritage of the group. He accepted these concepts with fervor, and being unhappy with his infant baptism, was re-baptized in 1828, and renounced his Lutheran profession. He allowed himself to be called into the "free ministry" of the Brethren within two years.<sup>26</sup> In 1841, Elder Hoke appointed Kurtz to serve the Mill Creek Congregation on a four-week basis, an unusual circumstance, since Kurtz was not yet ordained. Kurtz' ordination to the eldership occurred in 1844, at which time he was given complete oversight of the church.<sup>27</sup>

This congregation, and the Brotherhood, profitted greatly from Kurtz' leadership for the next thirty years until his death in 1874. With a classical education, and a bilingual ability, he was extremely valuable to this small denomination in the midst of a language transition. He served in the important role of Clerk for nearly twenty of the Brotherhood's Annual Meetings, recording the Church's position on all issues.

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<sup>25</sup>Alice LaVern Rupel Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren (North Lima, OH: Printed by the Author, 1979), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup>Durnbaugh, "Standing Tall," pp. 13-14.

<sup>27</sup>Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, p. 9.

Kurtz "preferred printing to farming," and set up a printing press in the loft of a springhouse near Poland, Ohio, in 1851.<sup>28</sup> His objectives centered around religious teaching and discussion, and he began producing the Gospel Visitor (the forerunner of the Messenger, the Church of the Brethren's current monthly publication) and its German counterpart Der Evangelische Besuch, for the purpose of providing communication and unity between distant Brethren groups.<sup>29</sup> Out of this "concern for one-ness" and his "longstanding passion" for Brethren history, he published in 1867 The Brethren's Encyclopedia, often bound with the 1860, newly translated edition of Alexander Mack's writings in parallel text (fig. 6).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, 3 vols., s.v. "Henry Kurtz," by James H. Lehman, p. 712.

<sup>30</sup>Durnbaugh, "Standing Tall," p. 15; Elder Henry Kurtz, The Brethren's Encyclopedia. (Columbiana, OH: By the Author, 1867), n.p.



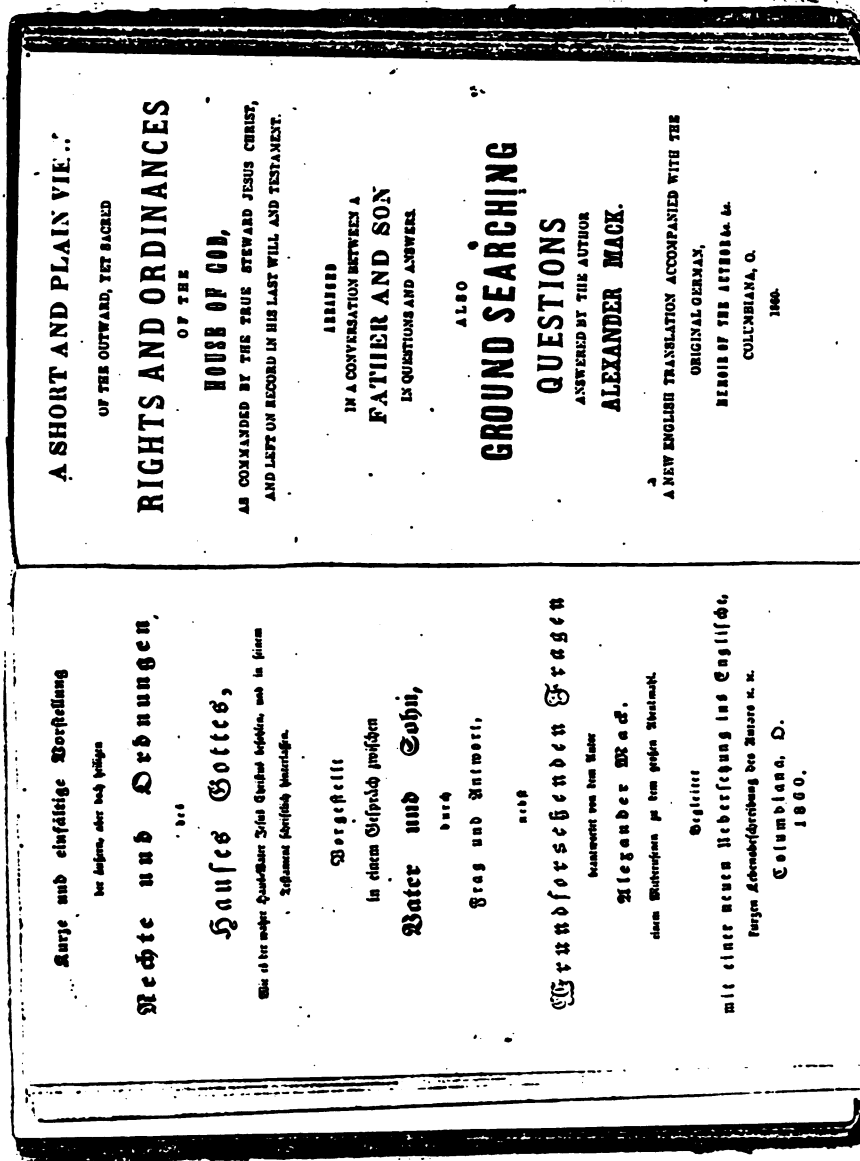


Fig. 6. Kurtz' Translation of A. Mack's Writings.

CHAPTER 2  
CHURCH POLITY CONCERNING ARCHITECTURE  
The Role of Annual Meeting

The Brethren have depended exclusively on a democratic style of government throughout their history. This style of organization reaches its highest development in the Brethren Annual Meeting, (known as Annual Conference since 1927) and, thus, it is "the final authority on all matters of practice and doctrine." The conference is open to all members "for the mutual discussion of common questions." Business is conducted by an annually elected moderator, whose position is considered the highest honor awarded in the denomination.<sup>1</sup> The Annual Meeting minutes, then, are the recorded position of the church based on a communal agreement of the interpretation of the scriptures, since the Church of the Brethren maintains "the New Testament as its only creed (fig. 7)."<sup>2</sup>

The exact origin of Annual Meeting is not clear but it is assumed that the early Brethren in America combined these discussions with their love feasts and common meetings. By

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<sup>1</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Brethren Encyclopedia, 3vols., (Philadelphia, PA and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983), s.v. "Annual Meeting" by Dennis L. Slabaugh, pp. 32-36.

<sup>2</sup>Point number seven from "The Brethren's Card," first published c.1887, as a one-page condensation of basic Brethren doctrine.

## The Church of the Brethren

### Formerly Called Dunkers

1. This body of Christians originated early in the eighteenth century, the church being a natural outgrowth of the Pietistic movement following the Reformation.

2. Firmly accepts and teaches the fundamental evangelical doctrines of the inspiration of the Bible, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the sin-pardoning value of his atonement, his resurrection from the tomb, ascension and personal and visible return, and the resurrection, both of the just and unjust (John 5: 28, 29; 1 Thess. 4: 13-18).

3. Observes the following New Testament rites: Baptism of penitent believers by trine immersion for the remission of sins (Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 38); feet-washing (John 13: 1-20; 1 Tim. 5: 10); love feast (Luke 22: 20; John 13: 4; 1 Cor. 11: 17-34; Jude 12); communion (Matt. 26: 26-30); the Christian salutation (Rom. 16: 16; Acts 20: 37); proper appearance in worship (1 Cor. 11: 2-16); the anointing for healing in the name of the Lord (James 5: 13-18; Mark 6: 13); laying on of hands (Acts 8: 17; 19: 6; 1 Tim. 4: 14). These rites are representative of spiritual facts which obtain in the lives of true believers, and as such are essential factors in the development of the Christian life.

4. Emphasizes daily devotion for the individual, and family worship for the home (Eph. 6: 18-20; Philpp. 4: 8, 9); stewardship of time, talents and money (Matt. 25: 14-30); taking care of the fatherless, widows, poor, sick and aged (Acts 6: 1-7).

5. Opposes on Scriptural grounds: War and the taking of human life (Matt. 5: 21-26, 43, 44; Rom. 12: 19-21; Isa. 33: 7-12); violence in personal and industrial controversy (Matt. 7: 12; Rom. 13: 8-10); intemperance in all things (Titus 2: 2; Gal. 5: 19-26; Eph. 5: 18); going to law, especially against our Christian brethren (1 Cor. 6: 1-9); divorce and remarriage except for the one Scriptural reason (Matt. 19: 9); every form of oath (Matt. 5: 33-37; James 5: 12); membership in secret, oath-bound societies (2 Cor. 6: 14-18); games of chance and sinful amusements (1 Thess. 5: 22; 1 Pet. 2: 11; Rom. 12: 17); extravagant and immodest dress (1 Tim. 2: 8-10; 1 Peter 3: 1-6).

6. Labors earnestly, in harmony with the Great Commission, for the evangelization of the world, for the conversion of men to Jesus Christ, and for the realization of the life of Jesus Christ in every believer (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; 2 Cor. 3: 18).

7. Maintains the New Testament as its only creed, in harmony with which the above brief doctrinal statement is made.

Fig. 7. "The Brethren's Card."

the middle of the 18th century the pattern of calling one large yearly meeting ("Big Meeting" or "Grosse Versammlung") seemed to have resulted out of practicality. No minutes or records exist from these earliest meetings.<sup>3</sup>

There has never been a specific location for these Meetings since there is a general concern for reducing, or at least rotating, the burden of travel for members in different areas. Therefore, due to the variability of meeting places, the structure in which the meeting, worship and fellowship activities take place is selected solely on the basis of adaptability of space. The meeting places have ranged from meetinghouses, barns, tents, college auditoriums, and fairgrounds, to today's convention halls in major cities, with acoustics always being an important consideration.

The Northeastern Ohio District has hosted a total of seven Annual Meetings, all between the years 1822 and 1881, including the Annual Meeting of 1872.<sup>4</sup> The 1871 Annual Meeting Minutes record the decision to meet in northern Ohio the following year with "information in regard to place... [to] be given in due time." A Brother from Philadelphia was

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<sup>3</sup>Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Edgar G. Diehm, ed., The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio, (Elgin, IL: Printed for The District of Northeastern Ohio by The Brethren Press, 1963), pp. 222-28; Durnbaugh, The Brethren Encyclopedia, s.v. "List of Annual Meetings/Conferences," p. 1506.

appointed to "confer with the railroad company in regard to obtaining half-fare privileges."<sup>5</sup>

On a smaller scale, District Meetings and Congregational Council Meetings are also held. The Annual Meeting of 1856 recommended a plan for the several congregations in a district to hold a meeting. However, no records of these meetings were permitted, since there was a concern that District Meeting rulings might supersede those of Annual Meeting. Eventually minute taking was allowed and the prohibition of publishing of these minutes was lifted in 1876, the year of Kurtz' Encyclopedia.<sup>6</sup>

Meetings of the Northeastern Ohio District were also held annually, first on a rotating basis between congregations and then on a regular basis at the Zion meetinghouse of the Tuscararwas congregation, located ten miles south of Canton. This approximately thirty-five by eighty foot building, which later became the Camp Zion Auditorium, was built in 1865 and 1871 also typified frame structures of the early Church of the Brethren in this region (Appendix A, fig. 47).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Brethren Designed for the Promotion of Peace and Harmony of the Brotherhood [1778-1876]. Published by the authority of the Annual Meeting, May 26-27, 1874. (Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1876), p. 371.

<sup>6</sup>Diehm, pp. 175, 177.

<sup>7</sup>Diehm, p. 191. The building and grounds were sold sometime around 1963, turned into a steak house and later became part of a horse ranch. The building burned in 1988.

### Rulings on Architecture

By 1872 there had been only two directly related Annual Meeting rulings on the subject of meetinghouses.<sup>8</sup> Apparently the building of the first meetinghouse in 1770 in Germantown and subsequent structures of the denomination generated discussion in the young Brotherhood. A query was brought to Annual Meeting in 1828 in which Article 14 questions:

Whether we may build meeting-houses?

And, concludes:

Considered, to leave it over to every church to do as they deem good.<sup>9</sup>

In 1855 the issue was again addressed, questioning this time, not the allowance of building, but its purpose. Article 14 of that year asks:

Is it conforming to the world to build meeting-houses?

The answer by the Brotherhood interestingly notes:

No, if built without unnecessary ornaments, and only for the worship (and service) of God.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Elder Henry Kurtz, The Brethren's Encyclopedia (Columbiana, OH: By the Author, 1867), s.v. "Meeting-houses," p. 146. There are no additional minutes regarding meetinghouses in the Minutes of Annual Meetings of 1178-1876.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes of Annual Meetings, p. 168.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 188; Editorial comment by Elder Henry Kurtz, The Brethren's Encyclopedia, p. 146.

Although the rulings by the church are few, their tone is direct and clear. The meetinghouses, if built, should be conservative and serviceable. Therefore, specific instructions on design and construction are, of course, not given. However, more common were issues concerning the following of the New Testament rites which the Brethren observed, including baptism by immersion, feet washing, the love feast, the Christian salutation (the Kiss), and the issue of dress.<sup>11</sup> These indirect issues and rulings on actions which were to take place within the building will become determining forces on the building's form.

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<sup>11</sup>Points three and five from "The Brethren's Card."

**PART II**

**THE MEETINGHOUSE AS AN ACCEPTABLE FORM**



## CHAPTER 3

### THE BRETHREN FIND IT NECESSARY TO BUILD

Not having had a European building precedent, the Brethren's architectural options for a place of worship were opened once they landed in Philadelphia. Like many other groups seeking religious freedom, the Brethren desired a meeting place which would be an appropriate expression of their faith. An "appropriate" building was perhaps most important not for what it was to be, but for what it was not to be. The Brethren were much like the Colonists from England in that:

If they were not overly hostile to architecture as a fine art, then they were largely indifferent to it. As a result, most colonists did not wish to indulge the celebratory nature of architecture and were usually careful not to stray too far from immediate concerns of function and technique.<sup>1</sup>

Among the resulting options of colonial houses of worship were churches, chapels, manor houses, halls, cloisters and meetinghouses.<sup>2</sup> The meetinghouse was considered most appropriate by the Brethren.

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<sup>1</sup>David P. Handlin, American Architecture (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Harold Wickliffe Rose, The Colonial House of Worship in America (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 8.

## New England Meetinghouse Options

The New England meetinghouse, a product of the reaction against the "pomp and ritual" of the Church of England, is the "one original contribution to seventeenth-century American colonial architecture."<sup>3</sup> It is generally square in plan, thereby omitting the long nave leading to an altar and replacing the altar with a pulpit which was situated in the middle of the hall. These buildings often served both religious and secular functions (an interesting concept in a new area seeking separation of church and state!). Old Ship Meeting House built in 1681 in Hingham, Massachusetts, serves as the only remaining example of this type of structure.<sup>4</sup>

### Old Ship Meetinghouse

Old Ship was built by a congregation with Presbyterian influence, and which later became Unitarian. This, and its location in Hingham, a short distance from the Pilgrim's landing site at Plymouth, establishes the building as a product of Puritan influences. The name, "Old Ship," is derived from the building's resemblance to a ship, by its "hull-like" structuring and by the captain's walk in the

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<sup>3</sup>Handlin, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

"turret." Exposed, curved timbers and "knees" support the roof high above the square meeting room, creating an additional degree of vastness to the interior. The meeting room was provided with galleries, boxed pews and a high pulpit as early as 1755. Additional remodelings occurred to the structure over the years and in 1791 the 110-year-old building was voted to be torn down. Fortunately, the plan was not carried out and Old Ship was eventually restored in 1930.<sup>5</sup> Old Ship, remains as an example of New England meetinghouses, which was built by Puritans "who had turned their backs on the 'Popish idolatry' of earlier European churches, especially rejecting stained-glass windows, stone tracery, towers, buttresses, and polished pews."<sup>6</sup>

But even the Puritan meetinghouse was too elaborate for the Brethren, for despite its "stark simplicity," it still included "a small communion table, a high pulpit with a sounding board above it, a steeple with a weather cock, and bells to summon worshippers." Similar meetinghouses used by the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans were prominently located and, therefore, familiar to the Brethren. However, these models often included elevated pulpits and religious

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<sup>5</sup>Rose, p. 204.

<sup>6</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Brethren Encyclopedia, 3 vols., (Philadelphia, PA and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983), s.v. "Architecture" by Kenneth I Morse, p. 48.

ornamentation, thereby being considered too ecclesiastical to "serve the needs of a plain people at worship."<sup>7</sup>

### The Quakers

The meetinghouses of the Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, served as a more suitable architectural option for the early Brethren in this country. The Quakers, who worship silently, without ministers and without liturgy, need no pulpit, stand or altar and the buildings' interiors are as plain as their exteriors.<sup>8</sup>

### Germantown Mennonites

The Mennonite group at Germantown, Pennsylvania was especially influential to the colonial Brethren's view of building options for a meeting place in a new land. The Mennonites, who originated in Zurich under the leadership of the former Dutch priest, Menno Simons, were also part of the Anabaptist Movement. Being considered subversive by both the Protestants and the Roman Catholics of Europe, they too, spread across central Europe and located in Crefeld, Germany along with the Brethren before fleeing to America.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

The Mennonites arrived in Germantown in 1683, forty years before the Brethren, and built "a community log church" in 1691.<sup>9</sup> This building was replaced in 1708 when the first Mennonite meetinghouse in America was built as an "established structure" on that site. However, the 1708 meetinghouse was replaced in 1770, again on the same site and, interestingly, in the same year as the building of the first Brethren meetinghouse.

The influence of the Mennonites on the Brethren's building attitudes and practices in Germantown would have been unavoidable. Both meetinghouses are located on the same street, now Germantown Avenue, and the two groups would have probably shared workers. Furthermore, since the Mennonites had built earlier meeting places, and the Brethren had not, the colonial Brethren would have had a keen interest in the type of building deemed suitable for a similar "low church" religious group.

Both the Mennonite and the Brethren meetinghouses in Germantown are simple, one-story structures with gable roofs. They are made of irregular field stone common to the colonial builders, and featured plain, twelve-over-twelve light windows on the sides and front. A single entrance at the end of each building, under the gable, leads to an austere one-room interior.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Rose, pp. 75, 351.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Although the colonial Brethren appeared to be dependent on the building traditions established by the Mennonites in Germantown, the meetinghouses of the Brethren eventually evolved into an architectural form unique to this denomination.

## CHAPTER 4

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A BRETHREN MEETINGHOUSE

Characteristics unique to the Brethren meetinghouse become increasingly apparent throughout the 19th century, isolating this denomination's architecture from all other religious groups, including the Mennonites. Since Annual Meeting rulings on architecture are few and non-specific, it must be understood that these changes in the development of Brethren architecture are directly dependent on the interpretation and expression of the New Testament rites as practiced by this denomination.

A typical 19th-century Brethren meetinghouse has been described as:

. . . a plain rectangular structure with a loft for overnight guests, a main floor for assembly, and an attached kitchen for the preparation of the love feast. Furnishings consisted of simple benches, clear glass windows; the absence of ornamentation marked these structures as built exclusively for the worship of God. A long bench and table designated the place of the elders and deacons. The congregation gathered with the men on one side and the women on the other, intent on praising God, hearing the admonition of the elders, and sharing with the saints. Schoolhouses were often used as meetinghouses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., The Brethren Encyclopedia, 3 vols., (Philadelphia, PA and Oak Park, IL: The Brethren Encyclopedia, 1983), s.v. "Meetinghouse" by Richard E. Allison, p. 811; Floyd E. Mallott, Studies in Brethren History (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1954), pp. 60, 80-81.

Key elements of this description are expressed by the words or phrases: plain, rectangular, loft for overnight guests, main floor for assembly, kitchen, absence of ornamentation, and elders' bench.



## CHAPTER 5

### BRETHREN MEETINGHOUSES IN NORTHEASTERN OHIO

#### Classification by Form

The northeastern Ohio meetinghouses of the Church of the Brethren conform almost completely to the general denominational description of a typical 19th-century meetinghouse, while also revealing regional specialization. First, many of the northeastern Ohio Brethren meetinghouses differ from earlier examples in that they generally do not appear to have had kitchens or functional lofts included in the first building phase. In this region most of the congregations continued to meet in homes or barns for love feasts even after the initial structure was built, rather than adapting the assembly hall to a communion room.

The history of meetinghouse building in this area can be gleaned from the biographical sketches of congregations in Edgar G. Diehm's book, The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio and The Brethren Encyclopedia (Appendix A). Two items of development can be seen by reviewing these brief histories of frame structures built by the Brethren in northeastern Ohio between 1855 and 1905. First, the buildings can be placed into categories by their developed, or "mature" forms. Second, trends of this development can be identified by the types of building phases which occurred throughout this region.

The placement of these meetinghouses into categories can be made by applying the system presented by Virginia and Lee McAlester in their book, A Field Guide to American Houses.<sup>1</sup> The basic component of a Brethren meetinghouse, after Germantown and consistent throughout this area, is the rectangle. The varying uses of the rectangle result in three categories:

1. The single rectangle, approx. 40 x 30 feet.
2. The simple, linear plan, resulting from joining two rectangles end to end.
3. The compound T-plan, produced by the second rectangle being placed perpendicularly to the first.

The original form of every meetinghouse, except the West Nimishillen and Mohican Houses which were built as a completed forms, matches the description of the first category. Most of the buildings reached their "mature" forms between 1875 and 1890 with the addition of a structure of almost equal size to the first. The primary purpose of the addition was to provide a communion or fellowship room and necessary Sunday School space. The need for a large communion or fellowship room, as an attachment to the original structure, is so directly related to the unique

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<sup>1</sup>Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). Of special interest to this work, is the section entitled "Form: The Shape of American Houses," pp. 20-31.

practices of the Brethren love feast that it would have been unprecedented by other religious groups in this region.

The difference between the second and third categories is slight since the purpose of the additions was the same. If the desired size of the addition was less than the width of the original structure plus two doors, the linear plan seems to have been preferred. Whereas, if the additional space needed neared or slightly exceeded the original structure, the compound T-plan was used. The T-plan for a large addition made the space less drawn out and, therefore, more functional, and it created an aesthetically pleasing form. Variances from this rule concerning the placement of an addition can be explained by the dependency a pre-basement building has on its immediate landscape in this hilly region.

Developmental trends in the architecture of Brethren meetinghouses in northeastern Ohio continued after the addition of the communion room. It appears that if a meetinghouse did not receive an above-ground addition by 1900, it never would, since basements were becoming popular and could serve the same purpose.

These categories and trends of development prove that the building of the meetinghouse form by the Brethren was not practiced after 1904, thus ending an early architectural form.

## Locations and Names

Geography is a factor in the naming, locating, and siting of a Brethren meetinghouse. All of the early congregations in northeastern Ohio derived their names from the surroundings rather than from ecclesiastical origins as can be seen by such names as Sugarcreek, Chippewa, and Ashland, for example, as well as by the Mill Creek or Mahoning Congregation. Furthermore, many of the congregations met in more than one place, with each house of yet a different name, thereby disassociating themselves from the building. Ecclesiastical names such as Zion, referring to Jerusalem or heaven, and Bethel, meaning a house of God, were used only after a geographic association, in this case Mahoning Congregation, had been made.

The location of a Brethren meetinghouse has traditionally been rural and often on land made available by one or more of its farmer members. A significant geographic aspect important to the Brethren is the necessity of a nearby water source for the practice of immersion baptism. A meetinghouse is, therefore, often located on a plat of land near a small creek, stream or lake. Today, structures which have the advantages of indoor plumbing and built-in baptistries are not as dependent on the geographic aspects of a site as they were in 1872.

The position of a meetinghouse on its site is also primarily determined by matters of practicality and faces east only when circumstantially possible. Factors such as cemeteries, driveways and shade for the horses during long services were considered as well as the design of the interior space. This attitude of practicality to the direction of a meetinghouse extends to the interior as well, allowing the interior to be rearranged as needed.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOCAL RELIGIOUS BUILDING OPTIONS

One method by which the characteristics of the early Brethren may be further confirmed, is by examining similar religious architecture in the region. The cost of a building, the materials used, either wood or brick, and the building rate of different local denominations reveal their attitudes towards the importance of a meetinghouse. These comparisons can be made by reviewing the structures built in Fairfield and Beaver Townships, now in Columbiana and Mahoning Counties, respectively. The Zion Hill House was originally considered part of Fairfield Township, Columbiana County, before being redistricted to Mahoning County in 1846.<sup>1</sup> The Brethren of this area shared a history with other rural religious groups such as the Friends and Mennonites, as well as more urban Roman Catholics and prominent business families.

#### Fairfield Township

Fairfield Township was organized in 1805 as Township 12, Range 12, at the northern border of the county. The entire area of low rolling hills, many streams and fertile

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<sup>1</sup>Mahoning County was formed from parts of Trumbull County, to the north, and Columbiana County, to the south.

soil is extremely suitable for cultivation and fruit growing. The village of Columbiana, located in Fairfield Township was laid out in 1805 by Joshua Dixon and was incorporated in 1856, with George Lamb as mayor. Being both commercial and agrarian, this area attracted prominent individuals, such as Nicholas Firestone, forebearer of the famous Firestone family of rubber and tire fame, from Virginia in 1803 as well as Henry Kurtz.<sup>2</sup>

The attitudes held by the Brethren in Fairfield Township about the importance of a meetinghouse are revealed by comparing the building rate of the Brethren to other local groups. One might assume that the date of an "established structure" is in relatively direct relationship with the date of the group's original settlement in an area. However, the exact opposite has been discovered. The religious makeup of Fairfield Township shows that the Friends outnumbered the other early settlers, arriving around 1803 and building a log meetinghouse by 1820. The Mennonites followed and built a log meetinghouse by 1828, designating it "for the use of people of their faith in [Fairfield] township and of Mahoning County." In 1873 the Mennonites replaced their log house with an "unpretentious structure of brick." Roman Catholic settlers arrived as early as 1838 and held worship on the McAllister farm until

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<sup>2</sup>Harold B. Barth, History of Columbiana County, Ohio, 2 vols, (Topeka and Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Co., 1926), p. 78.

a log church could be built in 1841. Only seven years later, in 1848, they built a brick structure costing \$10,000.<sup>3</sup>

### Beaver Township

In the adjacent Beaver Township the situation was similar to that of Fairfield. Fertile farmland surrounded the small "pleasant" village of North Lima, which was founded in about 1826 by James Simpson. It did not grow rapidly, however, and by 1879 only had a population of about 300, owing its existence "wholly to the demand for a local trading point."<sup>4</sup> In the History of Columbiana County of 1879, Horace Mack records that the town has:

. . . three fine churches . . . . The one in the west district is of brick, 32 by 40, and was built in 1868, at the cost of \$2500. The east house is of the same material, 36 by 48, and cost to build, in 1871, \$2700. There is also, a village-hall, the old Evangelical church having been altered for this purpose in 1876.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-83.

<sup>4</sup>Horace Mack, History of Columbiana County, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of some of the Prominent Men and Pioneers (Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign & Co. [Lippincott], 1879; Reproduction ed., Unigraphic, Inc., Evansville, IN, 1976), p. 290.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



By comparison, local schoolbuildings, also of brick, cost \$2700 to \$3500.<sup>6</sup>

The settlements of various additional religious societies reached beyond the village of North Lima to other areas of Beaver Township. Along with the Brethren, were groups including Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, Evangelical, and Methodist congregations.

The Lutheran and Reformed congregations united their efforts as early as 1808 to build a "small log meeting house" for the purpose of providing a place of worship for the future congregations of both sects. The original log structure was later replaced by a frame building which served both groups until 1860, when separate interests prevailed. The Reformed Congregation, known as Mount Olivet Reformed Church, erected a brick building for its exclusive use in 1860-61. This new structure seated 450 persons and cost \$5000 to build.<sup>7</sup>

The Paradise congregation was a result of members who left the North Lima Lutheran and Reformed congregations in 1849 and joined to establish a place of worship nearer their homes. A "plain frame house," 32 x 40 feet, was completed in the same year.<sup>8</sup> The job had gone to the lowest bidder, Michael Vollnagel for \$426 with a request that the structure

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

be finished within four months. A folk drawing by a member shows this frame building, although out of scale, to have had a single entrance and lancet windows, providing proof of stylistic options available to the neighboring Brethren (fig. 8).<sup>9</sup>

The 1849 Paradise meetinghouse burned in 1880, only thirty-one years later and was replaced in 1881-82 by two separate structures for the respective congregations. The "new" Paradise Reformed meetinghouse is made of brick which was fired on-site by the members of the church and which cost \$3000.<sup>10</sup> The Paradise Lutheran meetinghouse, a frame structure on Western Reserve Road cost \$2500 and its construction was considered to have made the area a "more desirable place in which to live."<sup>11</sup> Mennonite meetings were held as early as 1815 in a log schoolhouse and were led by Jacob Overholtzer, hence the name Overholtzer Mennonite Church.<sup>12</sup> By 1825, the number of members was sufficient to justify erecting a 30 x 36 foot hewn-log meetinghouse. This

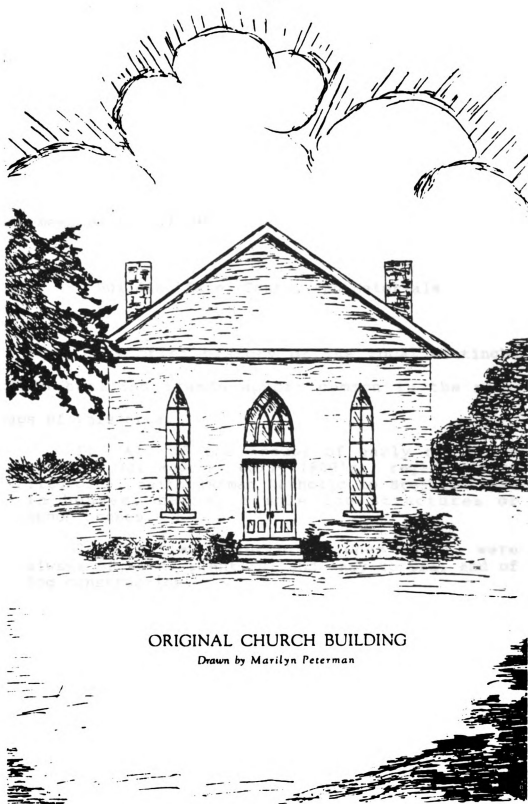
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<sup>9</sup>"Paradise Evangelical Lutheran Church: 125th Anniversary, 1849-1974," program for Sunday, October 6, 1974, p. 5; "Paradise Reformed Church: Centennial," program for Sunday August 21, 1949, pp. 7-10, 12.

<sup>10</sup>"Paradise Reformed Church: Centennial," pp. 9-10. Today, the church is called Paradise United Church of Christ.

<sup>11</sup>Bicentennial History of Beaver Township, 1976 (North Lima, OH: Beaver Township Bicentennial Committee), [p. 60].

<sup>12</sup>Today, the church is called Midway Mennonite Church, referring to its central location.



ORIGINAL CHURCH BUILDING

*Drawn by Marilyn Peterman*

Fig. 8. Paradise Lutheran/Reformed Meetinghouse.

house served until 1871 when it was replaced by a 40 x 50 foot "neat brick house."<sup>13</sup>

Another Mennonite society, the Metzler Mennonite Church began meeting in an 1835 log meetinghouse on a farm lot set aside by two of its members.<sup>14</sup> A second house, a brick structure, is recorded to have been built by three of the group members in 1876.<sup>15</sup>

#### Building Rate, Costs, and Materials

From this brief history of the local meetinghouses, certain building trends appear common to the religious groups of this area.

1. All of the groups of early religious settlers (of approx. early 1800's), regardless of liturgical faith (Roman Catholic to Brethren) met in houses, barns, simple log structures or schoolhouses.

2. Initial structures, when built, were always of wood, plentiful and easy to use, and of log construction.

3. Later structures were either of brick (showing it as a building option reflecting the geographic influence of clay soil) or of advanced frame construction (reflecting the acceptance of new building methods).

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<sup>13</sup>Mack, p. 291.

<sup>14</sup>Today, the congregation is known as the North Lima Mennonite Church.

<sup>15</sup>Bicentennial History of Beaver Township, 1976, [pp. 55-56].

However, here the building trends of religious groups diverge. Once the religion is settled in an area, the initial shelter-like structure is replaced by an architectural form characteristic of that faith. Here, what was a "common denominator" to the area splits according to the religious groups' amount of desired association with or emphasis on inner faith with that of outward expression.

It is not suprising then, that it was the Roman Catholics, the last group to settle in this region and who also originally met in a barn, who were the first to build an "established structure." Costing \$10,000 in 1848, the expense of this brick building exceeded all later structures by other religious groups in this period. For comparison it should be remembered that the "second" or "established structure" of even the earliest settlement groups, like the Brethren in 1872 and the Mennonites in 1873 and 1876, did not appear until the 1870s, costing not more than \$2700. The "established structures" of the succeeding settlement groups, like Mt. Olivet Reformed and Paradise Lutheran, built between 1860 and 1882, cost an average of \$3750.

Therefore, the building date of a religious group's "established structure" is dependent on the amount of emphasis placed on the structure by that group, regardless of the group's date of settlement (fig. 9). The more "high church" a denomination, the earlier an "established structure" was deemed necessary and the more acceptable a

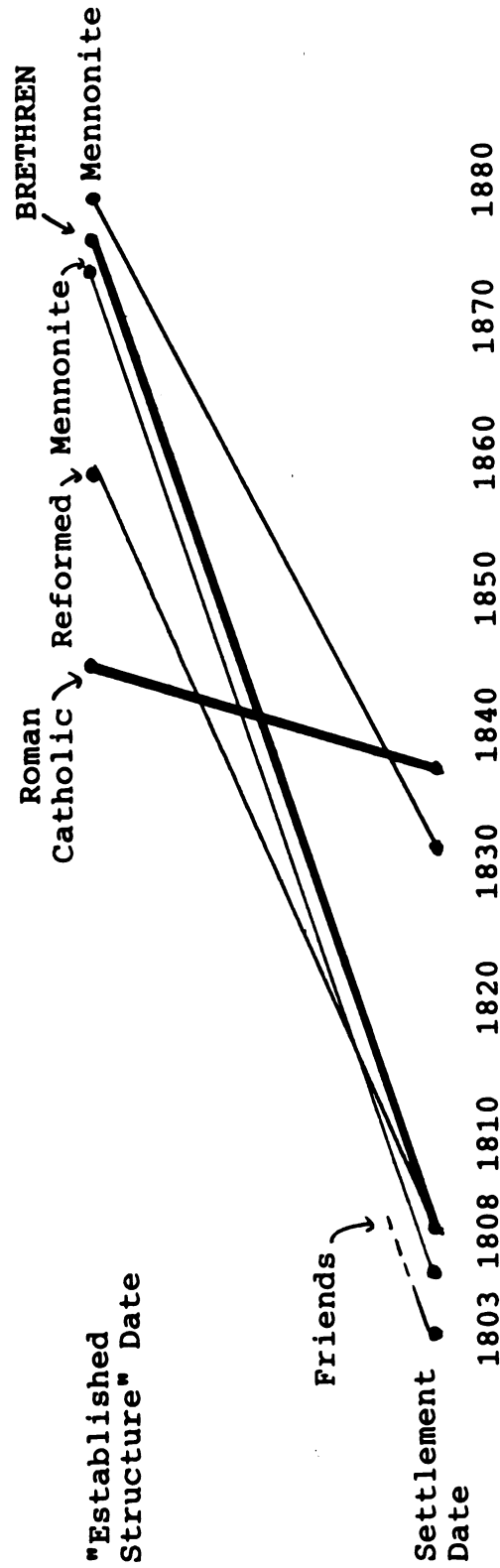


Fig. 9. Building Rate of Local Religious Groups.

greater expense. Local materials available included both wood and brick, with the majority of the religious groups switching from log to brick construction for their "established structures."

PART III

THE ZION HILL MEETINGHOUSE FROM 1872



## CHAPTER 7

### HISTORY OF THE THE ZION HILL MEETINGHOUSE

#### Deeding of Land

The Zion Hill Meetinghouse was built in 1872 by the members of the Mahoning Congregation, previously known as the Mill Creek Congregation and later as the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren (fig. 10). These early members, who settled in the area as early as 1808 and continued the practice of meeting in members' homes, included John and Susanna Myers.<sup>1</sup> On February 4, 1822, the Myers donated two acres of land to the trustees of the church, designating it:

. . . for the use of the German Baptist Congregation or Society, . . . for the purpose of erecting thereon a meeting house by Said society and for a burying ground for the use of said society and Congregation for ever, and also for the purpose of erecting thereon a Schoolhouse for the Education of Youth, . . . .<sup>2</sup>

The schoolhouse, however, was never built. The deed is recorded in Lisbon, Ohio, since Beaver Township was a part of Columbiana County until Mahoning County was formed in 1846 (Appendix B).

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<sup>1</sup>Alice LaVern Rupel Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren (North Lima, OH: Printed by the Author, 1979), pp. 1, 21.

<sup>2</sup>Deed Record, Vol. 7, Columbiana Courthouse, Lisbon, Ohio. Indexed under "Meyers," pp. 414-15.

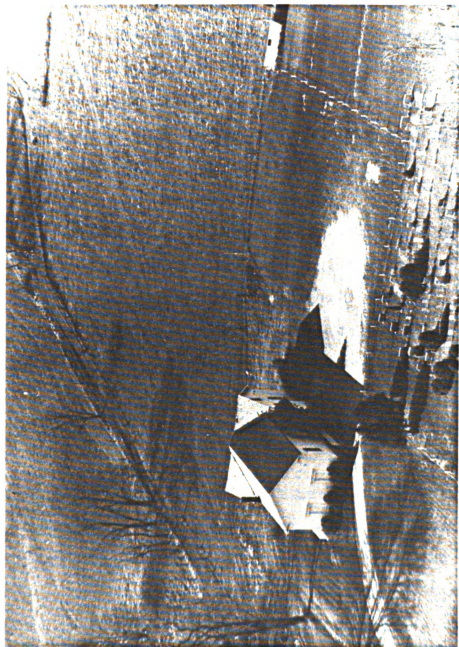


Fig. 10. Zion Hill House, Aerial View after 1935.

## Location

The land for the church, having been given by members who were farmers, was naturally rural and is characteristic of the land acquisition practices of the early Brethren. The site was especially desirable since it is located on a hill with drainage suitable for a cemetery and a nearby creek for baptisms. The creek, called Mill Creek, provided the original name for the congregation.

The availability of water is crucial for the Church of the Brethren, whether it be for baptisms, for the cooking of the love feast, or for feet washings. One of the earliest Mill Creek baptismal sites was approximately a ten minute walk south of the church off of Old Route 46.<sup>3</sup>

## The Decision to Build

Official council meeting minutes preceding March 4th, 1905 have apparently been lost, since this entry states: "The previous minutes were read and approved . . . ." <sup>4</sup> However, the annotated accounts of A.W. Longanecker, an original trustee to the deeded land, provide insights to the progress towards building (fig. 11). Recorded out of

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<sup>3</sup>Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

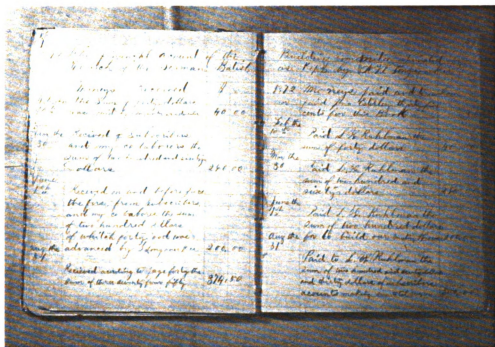


Fig. 11. A.W. Longanecker's, "Treasurer's Book."

sequence in a bound ledger book, Longanecker apparently took it upon himself to compile important events ranging from the collection of building subscriptions to the death of Henry Kurtz. Since such information would generally have been part of council meeting minutes rather than financial records, it can be assumed that minutes of the Zion Hill Church prior to 1873, Longanecker's last entry, were probably not kept.

Following the Brethren's initial settlement pattern of meeting in members' homes, the Mahoning Congregation apparently had been holding meetings in a log meetinghouse of unknown origin in Springfield Township.<sup>5</sup> By 1872 apparently the size and the means of the congregation had increased enough to warrant the building of an established structure. Although no attendance records were kept and memberships were not recorded until 1905, a list of subscribers to the building project exists indicating the number of core units (singles or families) of this congregation.<sup>6</sup>

This decision to build and the means to fund the building project naturally occurred simultaneously for the

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<sup>5</sup>A.W. Longanecker, "Treasurer's Book: Zion Hill Church, 1871-1874," [p. 8].

<sup>6</sup>Zion Hill Church of the Brethren Council Meeting Minutes, September 5, 1905. A motion was made and passed that, "the the clerk was instructed to make a list of all the members of the Mahoning Church (motion made that all help)."

frugal Brethren. Longanecker prefaces the list of subscriptions with this explanation:

A list or Coppy of names recieved by the Brethren for the purpose of building a house of worship for the use of the Brethren on the Brethren Burying Ground situated in or adjoining the Farm of Samuel Harrold Beaver tp. Mahoning co, Ohio Also showing the amount Subscribed by Each person and sevrel payments recieved by the Building committee chosen by the church in council at the Residence of Eld Henry Kurtz Columbiana on the 20. day of March in the year 1872 and the names of the Building [committee] chosen were Jonas Hoke, Abraham Detwiler, Alfred W. Longanecker and Samuel Longanecker.<sup>7</sup>

Seventy-seven subscriptions were pledged, including the church treasury paying \$10.53, ranging from one dollar to one hundred dollars and totaling \$1328.50.

Most of the members met their commitments by paying over a period of time, and labor was considered as payment for those families who offered their carpentry and masonry services. On such occasion a receipt would have been made, like the one for the Wilderson's:

This is to certify that I have received of A.W. Longanecker the sum of forty-four dollars in cash for labor performed in building foundation walls, two pair of step stones, flues according to contract whitch was ninety five dollars deducting my and Jesse and Freeman's subscription leaves said ballence and in case said flues are not high enough we are make them higher free of cost given this the 20 day of September (1872)

[signed] Jacob Wilkerson<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Longanecker, [pp. 10-11].

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

Only two pledges were not paid, one of five dollars and one of fifty dollars, both of which are appended, "of which we never got a cent AWL."<sup>9</sup>

### Building Specifications

There does not exist, nor has there been any reference to, any drawings or other architectural services concerning this building. The low cost of the building reveals that it was not considered a complex structure, either in design or in construction, and architectural services would have only been seen as an unnecessary expense for the early Brethren. However, an unsigned and undated, detailed list of building specifications has been found. These specifications state:

The Building committee duely appointed by the church in council will recieve Proposals for Building a house to be dedicated to the worship of of God on the Brethrens Burying ground situated in the farm of Samuel Harrold of Beaver township Mahoning co ohio upon a foundation wall to be Erected on Said grounds. Size of Building to be thirty by fourty feet Highth of Building to be 15 feet in the clear in its inside, Size of sills 8 by 10 in of Oak or Red beach wood, one Gert to Run the length of building in the centre 8 by 10 in oak. Joice to be good Strong Oak or Red beach 2 by 8 in placed 16 in from center to center and brigid in the middle. Form of frame to be of the following style.

Corner posts to be 6 by 8 in well braced below studing to be 2 by 6 in to be placed at not over 16 in from center to center uper joice to be the whole length of 2 by 9 in timber a suitable piece of timber laid on uper joice for head of size of rafters 2 by 6

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., [pp. 10-21, 32-33].

Rafters to rest upon and rafter to be spiked to the same and studying one Pair of Rafters to Each of studing of proper Pitch Size of Rafters 2 by 6 in Collar Beams to be 16 feet long 2 by 5 in and piece of timber to be spiked to the top of Rafters collar beam and joice below Size. 1 Piece 2 by 4 in and no piece of timber to be spiked to have less than two spikes at the joint to be spiked

Flooring to be good oak well seasoned no Board to be more than six in wide. Wash Boards to run around the inside [14] in wide Sideing to be of good seasoned yellow Poplar or Pine not less than one half in thick Cornice to be Rail Road Style projection at sides to 15 in wide and an O G moaldding to be 5 in wide Frieze to be 18 in wide and plain moaldding under the Bracing. Roof lath to be 1 by 2 in of sollid wood Shingles to [no 1] yellow or Red pine or good Shaved oak Shingles trees to be cut now or after the middle of August if oak not to be mutch over 18 in long and 5 in to the the weather

Three [windows] to be put on each ring side and two on the back part of the house and one in the front of the house right in the middle nine windows in all sash to be made to raise and lower and good sash locks to all the windows the window frames to be faced

Ttwo good pine doors 1 3/4 in thick 3 feet wide 7 feet high of four panels Each three hinges and a good heavy lock Keys to suit boath lock if possible

To be ceiled over head in a good workman order withdry lumber Sided to be plastered two coats of of good lime mortar and a coat of hard finish flues ditto good painted Roofing tin be put around flues in the roof to prevent leaking

Seats to be back seats with strips on top and placed to seat the house as required and suit stoves ac The Speakers Stand to be placed between the doors to fill the space between them of a proper hight and width paneled front shelf in the same for hats Books ac with a seat suited to the same the whole to be placed on the common floor.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>This was typed from a photostatic copy since the original has been lost within the last fifteen years.



Notable is the tone with which these specifications were written. The conditional terms such as "good Strong Oak," "good pine doors," and "in a good workman order" are perhaps not unfamiliar terms in the 19th century, but they reveal more than just period literature. They are also specifically Brethren attitudes since they further stress the importance of solid and "honest" construction, and avoid the matters of decoration and style. For example, there is considerably more attention given to when the wood shingles should be cut, than there is to the pattern in which they might be laid.

These specifications, were apparently written up by the council-appointed Building Committee, elected March 20, 1872 at the home of Henry Kurtz and consisting of the prominent congregational members Jonas Hoke, Abraham Detwiler, Samuel Longanecker, and Alfred W. Longanecker.<sup>11</sup> The specifications were formulated irrespective of the final builder and only after these objectives were well defined, were the proposals on how to meet accepted.

#### The Role of L.H. Ruhlman

The 1872 building, having been planned by a building committee, was not the work of an architect, but rather the

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<sup>11</sup>Longanecker, [pp. 10-11].

product of willing workers led by head carpenter, Lewis H. Ruhlman.<sup>12</sup>

Ruhlman, does not appear to have been a member of the Mahoning Congregation and, perhaps, not even Brethren as one might assume. Since membership records of the congregation were not kept prior to 1905, Ruhlman's non-membership status cannot be proven, but can be inferred.<sup>13</sup>

Lewis H. Ruhlman, born c. 1832, was the grandson of George and Margaret Riggle Ruhlman, well-to-do farmers from Pennsylvania, and the son of a prominent businessman (Appendix D). Lewis H.'s father, also named Lewis, moved his family to Mahoning County in 1831 and set up the largest of eight distilleries in Beaver Township. Lewis H.'s brother, Ephriam, continued in this line of business, opening a hotel and tavern in North Lima in 1846, and later became a town official and school director. Ephriam, born on November 29, 1821 in York County Pennsylvania, was the third of ten children and is known to have been raised in the German Lutheran faith.<sup>14</sup> Lewis H., however, was the ninth child in the family, born approximately eleven years

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<sup>12</sup>The name of L.H. Ruhlman has previously been transcribed from the original documents as "L.W.," an error in the reading of A.W. Longanecker's handwriting which is not supported by public records. See Appendix D.

<sup>13</sup>Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, Council Meeting Minutes, September, 9, 1905.

<sup>14</sup>Prof. Ewing Summers, ed., Genealogical and family History of Eastern Ohio (New York and Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1903), pp. 788-89.

later and after the family had moved to Ohio. He too, could have been raised in the German Lutheran faith since the Lutheran and Reformed groups had been active for at least twenty-four years in Beaver Township by the time the Ruhlman family moved there in 1831.

Although there are few records specifically mentioning Lewis H., a 1903 Eastern Ohio history considers the Ruhlman family to be "among the most influential citizens in Mahoning County."<sup>15</sup> The business ventures of the Ruhlman family became a major part of the town's history, with the "North Lima Business Directory" of the 1874 Atlas of Mahoning County listing Lewis H.'s nephew, L.B., a physician, as the Justice of the Peace, and Lewis H.'s brother, Eli H. as "Proprietor of Steam Sawmill and dealer of all kinds of Produce." Eli's ownership of a sawmill would give support to Lewis H.'s interest as a carpenter. Additional acknowledgements of the Ruhlman family since 1874 include another brother, William H., as a "Retired Storekeeper" who, along with a John Ruhlman, was an incorporator of the Youngstown and Suburban Railroad organized in 1902.<sup>16</sup>

Involvement in such elaborate business dealings would not have been impossible for a typically rural Brethren member in the 1870s, but would have been rare. However,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 789.

<sup>16</sup>Bicentennial History of Beaver Township, 1976, [pp. 3-5].

Lewis H.'s younger brother, Eli, was probably just the link needed for Lewis H. to become head carpenter of the Zion Hill House. There is little written on Eli (since Ephriam was a much more public figure), but apparently he joined the Mahoning Congregation of the Brethren and became active as a deacon, trustee and Sunday School superintendent.<sup>17</sup> Eli is also listed in Longanecker's record of subscribers for the building of the Zion Hill House, a list which would have undoubtedly been comprised of only church members.<sup>18</sup>

The same explanation which shows Eli to have been a member of the Brethren, provides reason as to why Lewis H. was probably not. Had Lewis H. been a member, and as interested and involved in the building as he was, he too would have been listed as a subscriber even if the amount pledged were taken as a deduction as had been done for the Wilderson family. Furthermore, references to Lewis H. Ruhlman in Longanecker's financial accounts would have addressed him as "Bro.," if he had been a member in all, or at least some, of the instances. This is not the case. The style of the recordings concerning the builder is formal and

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<sup>17</sup>Horace Mack, History of Columbiana County, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of some of the Prominent Men and Pioneers (Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign & Co. [Lippincott], 1879; Reproduction ed., Unigraphic, Inc., Evansville, IN, 1976), pp. 292, 321.

<sup>18</sup>According to Reuben Coy, a long-standing member of the Bethel Church of the Brethren, in an interview on December, 22, 1988, Eli Ruhlman was associated with the Bethel Congregation after the 1915 separation of the Mahoning Congregation.

business-like. The last mention of Lewis H. Ruhlman in the history of the Zion Hill House is found in Longanecker's entry on January 4, 1873, which states:<sup>19</sup>

Paid L H Ruhlman the sum of seventy five dollars and thirty seven cents being ballence due him on an artic[l]e entred into by us

And thirteen dollars and and fifty cents for extra work and Glass left at the house

we paid LHR as agreed the following total sum of in the following payments \$1188.50

1st	40.00
2	260.00
3	200.00
4	300.00
5	100.00
6	189.10
7	10.53
	75.37
	13.50
	<u>1188.50</u>

The transactions began on February 10, 1872 and were apparently recorded in March, after thirty-five cents had been paid for the ledger.

Since Ruhlman appears not to have been a member of the Mahoning Congregation, it confirms the idea that, although the early Brethren were community focused, they were not communal. The 1872 Brethren were willing to go outside of their group to achieve the desired end--a house not only "dedicated to the worship of God" but also in "a good workman order," as stated in the building's specifications.

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<sup>19</sup>Longanecker, [p. 29].

Lewis H. Ruhlman died at the age of sixty-three and is buried in the Summers Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in Springfield Township, Mahoning County (fig. 12).<sup>20</sup> The land for the cemetery was donated by John Summer, the Revolutionary Soldier buried there, and was used by the early Brethren in that area, sometimes being called the Kurtz Cemetery.<sup>21</sup> The gravestones in this cemetery date from 1809 to approximately 1896 and appear to include both Brethren and non-Brethren names.<sup>22</sup>

### Building Events

A.W. Longanecker records the progress of the building in 1872 by stating that:

the meeting house of witch this Book gives an account was completed thus far that we had a communion meeting in our old house over in springfield tp. (for I suppose the last time

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<sup>20</sup>Columbiana County Chapter, Ohio Genealogical Society, compiled by members, Columbiana County, Ohio: Cemetery Inscriptions (n.p.: n.d.), vol. 7, p. 579; Mack, p. 321.

<sup>21</sup>Henry Kurtz and his wife, Anna Catherine, were originally buried here but were re-interred at Zion Hill when the cemetery ceased to be maintained after the Bethel meetinghouse across the street had been moved to a new location. The Children of the American Revolution have since restored the cemetery and it is now in the care of the Springfield Historical Society.

<sup>22</sup>Columbiana County Chapter, Ohio Genealogical Society, p. 579.



Fig. 12. Gravestone for L.H. Ruhlman.

since the Brethren saw it fit to sell it The Buyer taking possion the following monday.)<sup>23</sup>

The first meeting in the "new house" was apparently a two-day affair held:

. . . on Nov. the 2nd and the next day . . .  
a rany like day . . . [and] on Sunday the 3rd.

Special attention was given to the fact that it was exactly fifty years since the deeding of the land to the completion of the congregation's first established structure.<sup>24</sup>

#### Additions and Remodelings

The 1872 structure was expanded and remodeled over the years. The most major addition occurred in either 1885 or 1888, relatively soon after the initial building project (fig. 13 and Appendix E). There are no records or specifications known for this addition and even the date has been subjected to memory.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Longanecker, [p. 8]; After twenty-three years of use by the congregation, the meetinghouse was remembered in a pageant celebrating the congregation's centennial, as having been sold as a barn for hay; Alice LaVern Rupel Rohrer, "A Charge to Keep I Have," act 1, sc. 5., p. 23.. Performed Saturday, November 4, 1972.

<sup>24</sup>Longanecker, [p. 8].

<sup>25</sup>Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, p. 25.



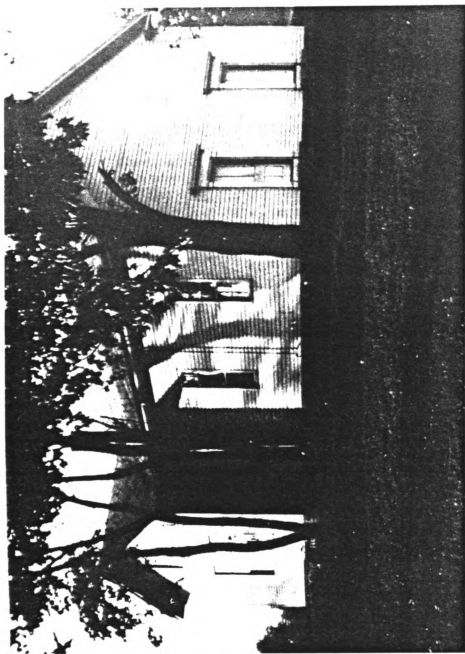


Fig. 13. Zion Hill House, 1872, with 1885/88 Addition.

This addition nearly doubled the capacity of the 1872 structure and "completes" this Brethren meetinghouse. The purpose of this addition was to provide a more suitable space for the love feast and its preparation, as well as Sunday Schools.<sup>26</sup> Since the three-part love feast includes feet washing, the agape or fellowship meal, and communion or the eucharist, a large, open space was necessary. Provisions for sub-spaces or classrooms could be made by the use of complex folding door systems. The preparation of the fellowship meal, a simple meal of beef, broth and bread mixed together to make sop, requires a kitchen which was finally included in this addition. The exterior of the addition, now the "back" of the building, shows the steam door above the back entrance which vented the kitchen.

The direction of the sanctuary was also changed at this time, moving the pulpit to the west end. The added room was, therefore, behind the speaker rather than at the back of the sanctuary and cannot be mistaken as resulting from an increase in population.<sup>27</sup> Two reasons for changing the sanctuary's direction may have been to lessen the distraction caused by latecomers, who could now enter at the

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<sup>26</sup>Elder Henry Kurtz, The Brethren's Encyclopedia (Columbiana, OH: By the Author, 1867), s.v. "Sabbath Schools." The entry is in reference to the ruling of the 1857 Annual Meeting on the allowance of church education.

<sup>27</sup>The purpose of this room did change in the 1970s when the accommodation of larger crowds was necessary, thus allowing the building to be used much longer than otherwise possible.

back of the room, and the possibility of including a baptistry for public viewing at the front.

The 1872 structure and its 1885/1888 addition, in retrospect, can be seen as first and second "phases" of a building project. The term "phases" might be debatable only because there does not seem to have been a conscious planning for the second phase at the time of building the first. However, in size and in concept, these two structures, when joined, form an example of a mature meetinghouse suitable for the Brethren in the late 19th century. The addition of the second phase is the product of a congregation with renewed economic stability, anticipated membership growth, and an interest in church education. It was, therefore, the product of the congregation's changing needs to have more appropriately defined spaces which also typify the northeastern Ohio Brethren's development of the T-plan structure.

The next change to the building occurred more than forty years later. In 1933 a basement was dug under the 1872 and much of the 1885 or 1888 parts and was accessible from both interior and exterior stairwells. The following year the north entrance was added and the sanctuary was remodeled in 1935 (fig. 14). It was with this remodeling that the direction of the sanctuary was returned to the east and the front doors plastered over on the inside. A two-step platform was built at the front of the sanctuary to

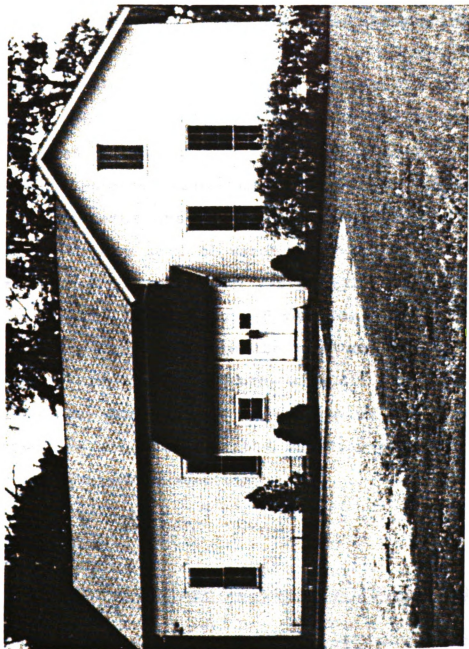


Fig. 14. Zion Hill House, after 1935.

elevate the pulpit. A new hardwood floor was finished and the previously painted walls were wallpapered.<sup>28</sup> If the height of the ceiling can be determined by wall paper rolls, it is said that the wall space above the wainscoting was two rolls wide.<sup>29</sup>

The changes to the building during the 1950s were primarily non-structural, with the exception of completing the excavation under the southwest corner. Items of improvement such as aisle carpet, blinds and storm windows were the concerns instead. The problem of installing a baptistry (a large pool of water suitable for adult baptism by immersion) in the ninety-one-year-old building was confronted in 1963 and solved by locating it within the 1935 platform at the front of the sanctuary.<sup>30</sup>

In 1970 the 1872 structure, with all its additions and changes, was converted to classrooms as the congregation directed its attention to the building of a new 40 x 80 foot, two-level brick sanctuary.

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<sup>28</sup>Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup>This statement is commonly attributed to Martha Eagleton, long-standing member of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren.

<sup>30</sup>Baptisms were performed in Mill Creek until the 1920s and then at the Columbiana Christian Church.

## Demolition

The existence of the Zion Hill House was threatened between 1956 and 1964. Council Meeting reports show that although the building was constantly being improved with excavated storage spaces, insulation, and the addition of the baptistry, it was also rapidly deteriorating. After 1956, repair of the c. 1885 slate roof was a constant concern and the replacing of feet washing buckets (which were conveniently used for catching drips in the attic and would break when allowed to freeze), became increasingly irritating. By 1961 the south sill of the church had been considerably weakened by termites, and a five-year guaranteed extermination program was purchased for \$500.<sup>31</sup>

The Congregation felt that the building was becoming so much of a maintenance problem, that on January 14th, 1964, at Quarterly Council, the Church Board presented a recommendation:

. . . that council appoint a committee of Five to study the possibility of relocating or rebuilding the church building . . . and report its progress at the April 1964 council.<sup>32</sup>

The proposal was passed and the committee elected. The focus of this study committee shifted somewhat from the original issue of "relocating or rebuilding" to an overall

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<sup>31</sup>Zion Hill Church of the Brethren, Council Meeting Minutes, January 17, 1956 to January 14, 1964.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., January 14, 1964.

"study of the future of Zion Hill" as can be seen from comparing the Council Meeting minutes to the Study Committee's questionnaire (Appendix D). This letter to "Members and Friends of Zion Hill" addressed equally the aspects of "Location and Building" and "Practices and Beliefs."

On July 13, 1965, the Study Committee's report to council proposed, as part of Zion Hill's long-range plans "to either relocate or rebuild in four years." A motion was made to accept the recommendation, and was "passed with a unanimous vote."<sup>33</sup> In either case, relocating or rebuilding on the site, the demolition of the original 1872 structure was a foregone conclusion--it was now only a matter of time.

The Study Committee was released on September 25th, 1966. On January 10th, 1967, a motion for a five-person "general building committee" passed unanimously. A Special Council was called on Sunday, the 22nd, resulting in the election of: Russell Pine (mason, member), Robert Barnes, Sr. (businessman, member), Wilbur Detwiler (retired businessman, deacon), Alpheus Rohrer (teacher, deacon), and Donald Clark (carpenter/builder, member).

Again, questionnaires were sent out, this time specifically addressing the issue of building. Each was comprised of four questions concerning: 1. location, 2.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., July 13, 1965.

capacity, 3. how soon to proceed, and 4. a guideline for possible giving in the next five years and was followed by either a request for explanation or a space for comments (Appendix D). There were thirty-three responses out of approximately one hundred which were "handed out." What may initially appear to be a poor response rate is actually a very complete one, since the questionnaires were apparently given to all members but were probably returned on an average of one per family or unit.

The results of this questionnaire, presented by the Church Building Committee to Council on April 11, 1967, concluded that at that time a slight majority wished to rebuild on the original site. Many, however, indicated that either choice of rebuilding or relocating would be acceptable. The suggested locations, should a move be made, are all within one or two miles of the original site. The 1967 report showed such a slight increase in the recommended building capacity, that size was obviously not the reason for initiating a building program. Functional space for new activities (ie. Sunday School), however, was a concern.<sup>34</sup> The question of how soon to proceed with the building project ranged from "immediately" to ten years, frequently considered to be dependent on the availability of funds. The general attitude of the responses towards this

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<sup>34</sup>The size of the congregation more than doubled between 1969 and 1970, changing the criteria for the new structure from that which was originally intended.



building program was to move ahead, but in a conservative manner.

The symbolic value of the original Zion Hill House was apparently not considered. The Committee's Report on the questionnaire shows no record of there being any concern to save the "old building," as it was now beginning to be called, since it could no longer serve a physical use. Although disappointing, this is not surprising when one is reminded that the traditional Brethren view towards material things is one of de-emphasis for fear of misplaced worship.

The 106-year-old structure was razed in July 1978 with the help of members of all ages, who were encouraged to collect and "buy off" remnants of interest or use (figs. 15-17). Later that same year, the replacement of the Zion Hill meetinghouse with a new 44 x 110 sanctuary was justified (fig. 18).



Figs. 15, 16. Demolition of the Zion Hill House.





Fig. 17. Frieze Board from the 1872 Zion Hill House.



Fig. 18. Cornerstone for the 1978 Sanctuary.

CHAPTER 8  
ANALYSIS OF THE ZION HILL HOUSE  
Structuring and Construction

The Building Specifications of the 1872 Zion Hill House provide the basic description of the original building, emphasizing the quality of construction over style. The building was 30 x 40 feet, a basic rectangular form characteristic of a 19th century Brethren meetinghouse and matching the first category description of this denomination's architecture in northeastern Ohio. The length of the building was dependent on the height of a tree since single 8 x10 inch hand hewn oak beams served as sills and supports.

The structuring of the Zion Hill House can be compared to contemporary barn architecture (fig. 19).<sup>1</sup> The settlers in eastern Ohio, including Mahoning County, built barns with an interior design relating more to the Germanic than Britannic custom--"closed spaces versus open spaces."<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the Brethren, being of Germanic heritage, would have been familiar with such construction, but it was another thing to have incorporated it in a house of worship.

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<sup>1</sup>Hay loft of a dairy barn belonging to Jerry and Pearl (Hartley) Burlingame, South Avenue Ext., North Lima, Ohio. Visited December 24, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>Donald A. Hutsler, The Log Architecture of Ohio (Columbus: The Ohio Historical Society, 1977), p. 50.

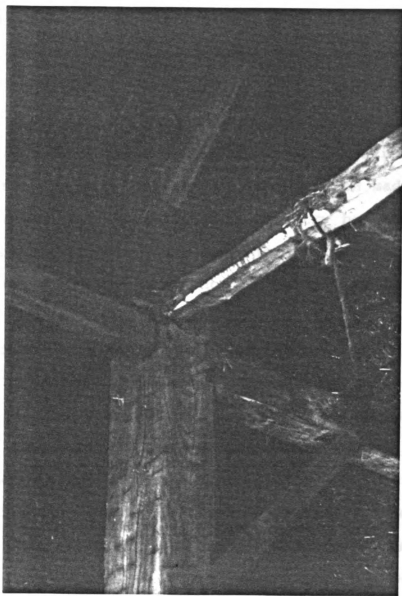


Fig. 19. Local Barn with late-1870s Structuring.

Two reasons support this usage by this denomination. First, the Brethren had previously held their meetings in barns over an unusually long period, thereby accepting this type of architecture as an appropriate form. And, second, an interior of "closed spaces" would have provided the necessary structuring to support an attic, without affecting the openness of the assembly room on such a small scale.

The Zion Hill House is a "braced-frame structure" and reflects the dramatic changes in construction made possible by the the growth of the railroad industry between 1850 and 1890. The railroads were responsible for bringing new building materials and construction techniques to otherwise isolated areas.<sup>3</sup> This new construction method of the "braced-frame" is a modification of the traditional post and girt method, combines adzed beams with lighter, sawn studding.<sup>4</sup> The heavy corner posts and horizontal timbers were hand hewn and had mortise-and-tenon joints (fig. 20), complete with round wooden pins (fig. 21). This traditional method of building was then combined with a new, faster method, using lighter, closely spaced studding which could be nailed into place. The newer method, when fully developed, eliminated the hewn joints altogether and became

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<sup>3</sup>Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-37.

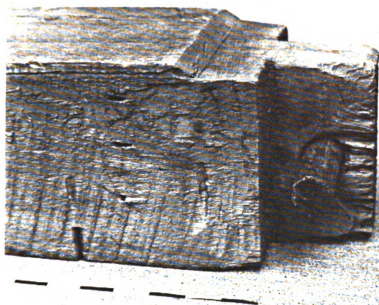


Fig. 20. Beam End Showing Mortise-and-tenon Joint.

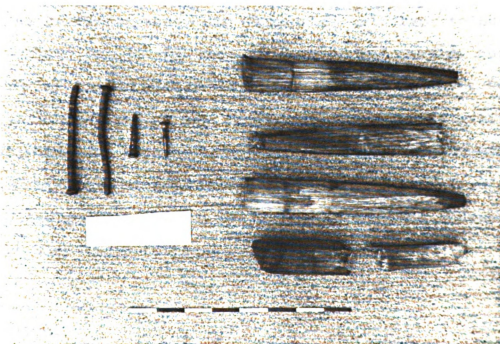


Fig. 21. Square Nails and Round Wooden Pins.



known as "balloon framing."<sup>5</sup> The exterior side of the studding was covered with siding "not less than one half in[ch] thick," as specified, whereas, the interior was covered with lath and plastered with "two coats of good lime mortar" (fig. 22).<sup>6</sup>

Frame construction was considered durable, although it may have lacked a sense of permanence desired by other local religious groups who opted for brick; it was now especially suitable for the practical Brethren. Commercially sawn lumber was increasingly abundant in this region, providing a less expensive form of construction. The lumber for the Zion Hill House would have undoubtedly come from the sawmill owned by Eli Ruhlman, a member of the Mahoning Congregation and brother to the builder.

The Brethren, then, can be seen as reluctant to build a meetinghouse out of the fear of loss of fellowship, but the methods of construction employed in the Zion Hill House, show an acceptance of new ideas. Materials made available by railroads and machines were preferred over the frequently used brick option provided by the soil content of this region and practiced by other religious groups. Durability was not sacrificed for practicality.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Exposed lath from the attic interior of the Reading Church of the Brethren, Homeworth, Ohio. Visited June, 15, 1988.

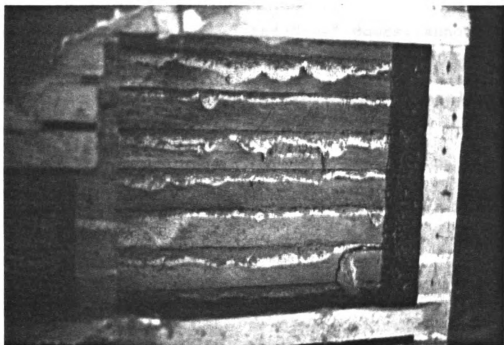


Fig. 22. Frame Construction, Lath and Plaster, detail.

### "He" and "She" Doors

The separate entrances on the front of the building, commonly referred to as "he" and "she" doors, announce the division of the interior space from the outside. Each door leads directly to the respective aisle, funneling one (hopefully) to the proper area. At the Zion Hill House, and in general, the men entered the building through the left door and the women through the right. Children also attended Meeting, and were to follow their respective parent through these "He" and "She" doors.

These two "good pine doors" differed from the front doors still visible at the Reading Brethren meetinghouse less than 30 miles away. The Zion Hill doors more closely matched the Reading House communion room door, with its four panels and overall proportioning (fig. 23).<sup>7</sup> The specifications require the doors to be three feet wide and seven feet high, thereby matching the unit ratio of a classical temple's floor plan of:  $l = (w \times 2) + 1$ .

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<sup>7</sup>Interior view of the north door from the communion or fellowship room at the Reading Church of the Brethren.



Fig. 23. Reading House, North Door, Interior, c.1860.

## Windows

The number of windows is the only area in which the finished building did not match the specifications. The central window between the "He" and "She" doors, at the east end of the building was not included. The reason for the omission of this window "in the front of the house right in the middle" has never been explained, but a hypothesis can be made.

The most probable explanation is that it would have created difficulty in the arrangement of the interior space. A central window might have been a good idea from the outside and was quite suitable to "the mind's eye" while writing up the specifications. However, once the work at the site began, it must have been realized that the window would have faced due east, thus allowing for an uncomfortable glare behind the pulpit during morning worship. Since the addition of stained glass or draperies was unthinkable for the early Brethren, the function of the interior determines the position of the architectural elements, such as doors and windows, on the facade.

The remaining eight windows of the 1872 structure were divided, like the doors, with the larger parts on top (fig.

24).<sup>8</sup> These sash windows were subdivided into plain glass panes of nine over six lights, creating a visual rhythm to the otherwise plain side and back elevations. The original windows were replaced during the 1935 remodeling with two evenly divided double-paned sash windows of "Florentine" glass (fig. 25). This type of window replacement is characteristic of the remodeling choices made by the Brethren in northeastern Ohio and is frequently seen on those remaining structures.

### Plan

The plan of the Zion Hill meetinghouse was not clearly stated by the Building Committee when writing up the specifications. It was a simple plan--so simple in fact, that the idea of the interior space was so well understood by the Committee that it was only a matter of defining the space by construction. The rectangular room of the the 1872 structure reflects its purpose as a worship area for both men and women of a conservative religious group (Appendix E). The plan is divided in half, not thirds as in a basilica or even a "Quaker plan" church, by the center of the middle row of pews rather than the aisles. The two

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<sup>8</sup>The original windows and the replacement windows, as well as a frieze board and full length beam, are the property of Donald Clark, Deacon and previous Building Committee member of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren. Visited December 24, 1988.

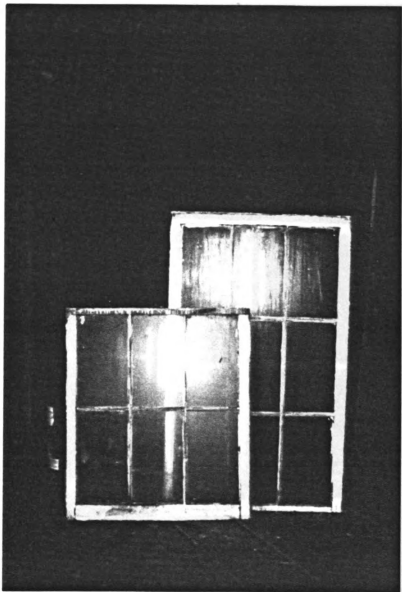


Fig. 24. Original Windows from the Zion Hill House.

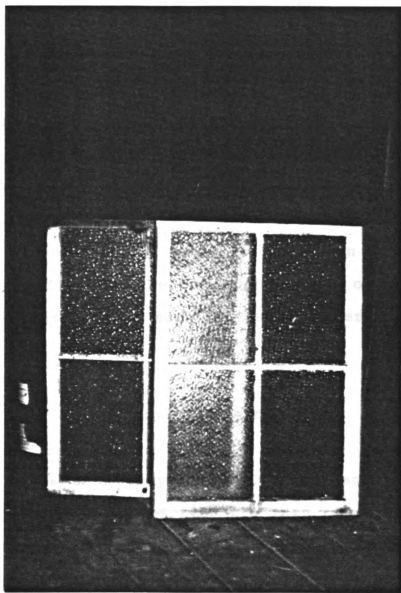


Fig. 25. Replacement Windows from the Zion Hill House.



aisles then provide a means of access to these respective areas.

Although meetinghouses are often thought of as being square in plan, Old Ship for example, the rectangular form better suited the Brethren. It is not only easier to build, but the manner in which services were conducted is reflected in the plan. The early Brethren at Zion Hill did not have a raised platform so that everyone could see from all sides, neither were they "silent" like the Quakers with no speaker. The rectangular plan for the Brethren, instead, was preferred since there was generally more than one speaker or elder at the front of the room. This type of plan allowed the congregation to see each of these speakers from most of the seats.

### Sanctuary or Assembly Room

The terms sanctuary, assembly room, and meeting room have all been used to describe the main room in a Brethren meetinghouse. The entire interior of the 1872 Zion Hill meetinghouse formed the sanctuary since there was no division for a narthex at this early date. A simple hat and peg rack would have sufficed for these simple Brethren. The most important aspect of the room, according to the specifications, was the sturdy, wide plank "good oak well seasoned floor." Plain plastered walls were broken up by

wainscoting not more than thirty inches high and, by its shallowness, stresses the function rather than the decoration of the wall surface. The ceiling of the assembly room was originally panelled with plain, smooth boards of varying widths similar to an 1870s interior door from a local house (fig. 26).<sup>9</sup> Paneling of the 1880s, especially used for the folding doors separating the assembly room from communion room, was of regular, narrowly-spaced boards, often placed on the diagonal, and highly varnished (fig. 27).<sup>10</sup> Paneling was a preferred material for the early Brethren because of its simplicity and durability. It also provided a necessary variation of materials in an otherwise austere interior. Variations of line, texture, and even color, were found in the acceptable forms of the ceiling, wainscoting, and speaker's stand.

#### Platform, Pulpit, and Pews

The most interesting statement in the building specifications is the concluding line: ". . . the whole to be placed on the common floor." Already noting the

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<sup>9</sup>Interior door from "the old house" of the late Samuel Rohrer, now located in the basement of Alpheus Rohrer's house.

<sup>10</sup>Sections of the old folding doors which have been cut apart and re-used in the attic of the Freeburg Church of the Brethren. Visited June 15, 1988.



Fig. 26. Paneling from the 1870s, detail.

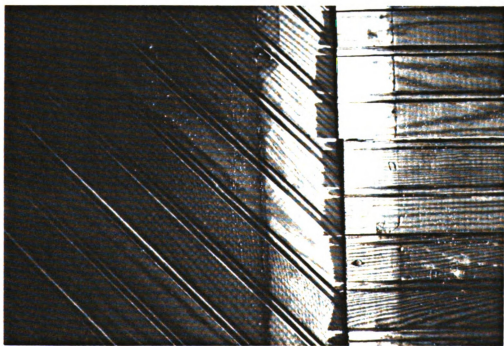


Fig. 27. Paneling from the 1880s, detail.

Brethren's resistance of "popish idolatry," the Mahoning Congregation refused to accept the elevation of the speaker's stand until the 1935 remodeling.<sup>11</sup> The equality of the members amongst themselves and before God was to be maintained.

The "pulpit" in most churches is more accurately called a "speaker's stand" in the Brethren meetinghouse. The speaker's stand used by Henry Kurtz, Elder of the Mahoning Congregation, is a low, wide cupboard-like stand with paneling on the front and sides and a hat and book shelf in the back (fig. 28).<sup>12</sup> The stand would have remained uncovered except for a Bible and an occasional hymnbook. "A seat suited to the same" would have been a bench of the same width, accommodating three people, and probably with ends and a back to match the other pews.

The pews were simple, plain board benches with slightly slanted straight backs (fig. 29). The strips on the top of the benches, listed in the specifications, served as both a hand rail and a hand rest. Although the the sanctuary was divided in half, men and women on respective sides, the Zion Hill pews did not have a central divider as was often popular.

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<sup>11</sup>Alice Lavern Rupel Rohrer, A History of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren (North Lima, OH: Printed by the Author, 1979), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Kurtz' pulpit, as it is now known, and the straight-backed pew are property of the Zion Hill Church of the Brethren and are currently located in the garage.

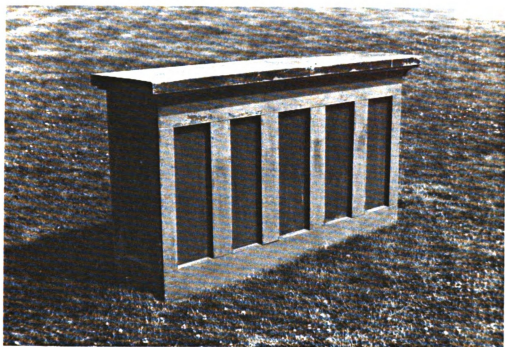


Fig. 28. Elder Henry Kurtz' "Pulpit," c.1872.

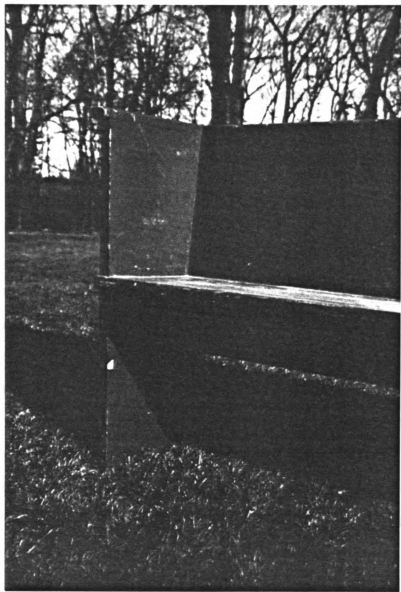


Fig. 29. Zion Hill House Pew End, c.1872.

## CHAPTER 9

### LOCAL INFLUENCES: THE QUESTION OF STYLE?

#### Western Reserve Greek Revival

What? Pilasters? If function and form are so important, and "plainness" is competing for the position next to godliness, how on His humble earth did those pilasters get there?

For the Brethren of the Mahoning Congregation and northeastern Ohio who would have been well acquainted with the Annual Meeting rulings of 1855, it is interesting to see what escapes the judgement of "unnecessary ornament." What is "necessary" and what is "ornament?" And would not "unnecessary ornament" be redundant for the early Brethren? Apparently not! Perhaps then some ornament was acceptable --and dare one suggest even subconsciously necessary?

The Zion Hill House, located in Mahoning County, shares its architectural history with the larger region to the north called the Western Reserve (fig. 3). The development of the Western Reserve took place just as the Greek Revival began and it has been noted that:

Nowhere in the the Nation is there a more impressive heritage of Greek Revival architecture, in all its mutations, than in Ohio where it flourished with the great westward migration of "fortune seekers . . . ." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard N. Campen, Ohio--An Architectural Portrait (Chagrin Falls, OH: West Summit Press, 1973), p. 12.

Moreover, nowhere "save the Western Reserve, did these original influences remain pure."<sup>2</sup>

The settlers of this region have been described as:

. . . not the picturesque pioneers of fiction; they were solid citizens with the polished background of New England or Maryland or Virginia behind them, who read widely . . . , men brought up on the Bible and Shakespeare and Milton . . .<sup>3</sup>

The Greek Revival style, therefore, was well-suited to the people of this region whose rapid settlement, cultural interests and quickly established government brought about desires for a cultivated and formal architectural style. The tradition of architectural classicism in the Western Reserve includes the many works of Jonathan Goldsmith (1784-1847), "the finest builder/architect of the early Western Reserve," whose early works are primarily in the Federal style and later works, Greek Revival. This interest in classicism continued to be expressed for many years in the Western Reserve, particularly in examples of formal architecture such as McKim, Mead, and White's Butler Art Institute.<sup>4</sup>

The "Western Reserve Style," a commonly spoken term, defines rectangular structure with a gabled roof and:

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<sup>2</sup>Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 280.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Richard N. Campen, Architecture of the Western Reserve: 1800-1900 (Cleveland, OH: West Summit Press, 1973), p. 222.



. . . corner posts or pilasters, broad frieze boards with low cut windows cut into them, and large box cornices."<sup>5</sup>

Although not a terribly unusual combination, it does describe the majority of houses in the area and served as a reference for later buildings. Public buildings such as churches, schools, and courthouses show the gabled end developed into a gable front.<sup>6</sup>

The ecclesiastical examples of the Greek Revival are many and varied throughout Ohio, but the association of some of the religious structures with this style has not gone without attack. There have been buildings previously regarded as "a most impressive monument of Greek Revival architecture" which have since been denounced as not exemplifying the style at all, and not even following the Greek proportions.<sup>7</sup> It has, therefore, been concluded that:

The truest expressions of Greek Revival in Ohio's ecclesiastical architecture are those relatively small and unpretentious, white frame churches most commonly found in the rural communities of the Western Reserve.<sup>8</sup>

The Zion Hill House served as such an example.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Campan, Ohio--An Architectural Portrait, p. 28. The ecclesiastical examples with which Campan questions the associations with the Greek Revival style are The Chapel and St. Peter's in Chains, both of Cincinnati. His comments are in direct response to Hamlin's remarks in Greek Revival Architecture in America, pp. 285-87.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

### Zion Hill Adaptations

The Zion Hill House was located in a very rural area just a few miles southeast of Western Reserve Road, the line which is generally considered the southern border of the Western Reserve. Although the Zion Hill House definitely matched the description of a "small and unpretentious white frame" structure, it did not incorporate the often looked for "box tower" and spire associated with Greek Revival.<sup>9</sup> It did, however, resemble a Greek temple even more closely by this omission and by its classical proportions.

The form of the Zion Hill House matched the classical proportions whenever functionally possible. The front of the building was constructed, as stated in the building specifications, as thirty feet wide and with a height of "15 feet in the clear in its inside." With these dimensions aided by its hilltop location, the facade served to introduce one to the remaining structure much like a classical monument (fig. 30).<sup>10</sup>

The floor plan of this rectangular building, formed by the building's length and width, falls short of the Greek's

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Photograph is from the ground breaking ceremony for the 1970 sanctuary, showing members of the Building Committee.



Fig. 30. The Zion Hill House as "Monument."

ratio but can be explained by two factors. First, the Brethren would have only built as much building as was needed and would have added on only as required. Second, the length of the primary beams of a frame structure in the 1870s were largely dependent on the height of trees and did not often allow the structure to exceed forty feet during the first building phase. The pitch of the roof was also slightly altered from the Greek original, but again, the Brethren attitudes toward practicality and usefulness provide the explanation. The increased pitch of the roof is dependent on the use of the inner space (ie. the attic), which followed the Brethren tradition of providing an area adaptable for occasional lodging, and on desire for solid construction against the elements, like rain and snow.

In detail, the elements of the Zion Hill facade further match the Greek ideals and the Western Reserve interpretations. The two front doors to this meetinghouse, which needed only to accommodate single persons rather than couples, were made to exactly match the proportions of a classical temple's floor plan of  $l=(w \times 2)+1$  with their 7:3 dimensions. These doors were then flanked by pilasters, a Roman interpretation of Greek columns and associated with the Greek Revival style, complete with fluting, base, and capital. Structurally unnecessary, these wooden pilasters visually "supported" a plain, wide lintel and were topped with a simple cornice board. The proportions of the doors,

as well as the depth of the frieze board, also visual rather than structural, were stated in the building specifications written by the building committee. The pilaster detailing can be assumed to be the work of the builder, Lewis H. Ruhlman, who would have probably consulted accessible and increasingly popular builders' handbooks.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that the Zion Hill House is a frame structure incorporating Greek Revival elements is not rare for this region, but it does defy the stone tradition of the classical model. Timber is an abundant material in northeastern Ohio, and its usage identifies the settlers as "rugged, independent, self-reliant, inventive and hardworking."<sup>12</sup> This association of resourcefulness, labor, and self-sufficiency would have been important to the early Brethren when considering a building material. As a frame structure, however, it does make the frieze, lintels, and pilasters "applied decoration" rather than "structural necessities."

Why then would the Brethren of the Mahoning Congregation have included elements of the Greek Revival style in their house of worship, especially at such a late date? Answering first the issue concerning date, it should be remembered that if the Western Reserve area mirrored the

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<sup>11</sup>Campen, Architecture of the Western Reserve: 1800-1900, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup>Campen, Ohio--An Architectural Portrait, p. 17.

national architectural stylistic changes as generally considered, the Greek Revival period lasted from 1820 to approximately 1850.<sup>13</sup> The Zion Hill House, built in 1872, post-dates this by more than twenty years and was built during a time when Gothic Revival experienced great popularity. Gothic Revival was particularly suitable for meetinghouses and churches by its obvious references to Medieval cathedrals, which could now be translated to a smaller scale by the invention of the jigsaw. This new style flourished and spread from towns to country throughout the Western Reserve, with three notable examples located in the southeastern section. As early as 1849 the Paradise Lutheran/Reformed meetinghouse (fig. 8), included tracery windows in an otherwise simple, white frame building. A more prominent building is the St. James Episcopal Meeting House of Boardman, Ohio, built in a Puritan Gothic style in 1862 (figs. 31-34).<sup>14</sup> The third frame building, and second remaining example, is the 1882 Paradise Evangelical Lutheran meetinghouse located on Western Reserve Road (figs. 35-40). This meetinghouse, which replaced the burned 1849 structure,

<sup>13</sup>Hamlin, pp. 279-280.

14The meetinghouse was moved to its current site in the Boardman Park in 1972, due to the construction of Edward J. DeBartolo's Southern Park Mall.

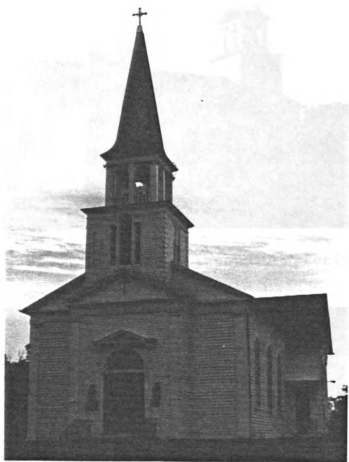


Fig. 31. The 1862 St. James Episcopal Meeting House.



Fig. 32. St. James Episcopal, Exterior.



Fig. 33. St. James, Interior towards Entrance.



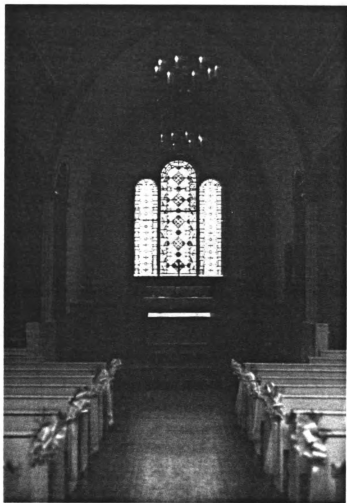


Fig. 34. St. James, Interior towards Altar.



Fig. 35. The 1882 Paradise Evangelical Lutheran Meetinghouse.



Fig. 36. Paradise Lutheran, View of Side.



Fig. 37. Paradise Lutheran, Exterior, detail.

incorporated and elaborated on salvaged bits of the original stained glass windows (fig. 38).<sup>15</sup>

#### Comparison with Paradise Evangelical Lutheran

A comparison of the Zion Hill House from 1872 and 1885/88 to the Paradise Evangelical Lutheran, derived from its 1849 predecessor, provides a means by which available options and preferences of architectural style are defined according to denominations. Both meetinghouses represent "mature" forms of their respective denominations, meaning that they were completed by the turn of the century and remained without major alteration for nearly a hundred years or more. Both meetinghouses are located in rural areas in or near the Western Reserve and within approximately ten miles of each other, thereby sharing the agricultural and architectural influences of the region. The structures are both rectangular, white frame buildings, with front entrances at the gable end.

Here, however, the differences of the two meetinghouses become significant, being determined by the denominational interpretations of architectural suitability to religious need. The two major differences result from the formality of the religious group and the heritage of its

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with Rev. Stanley Webster, minister of the Paradise Evangelical Lutheran Church, December 23, 1988.

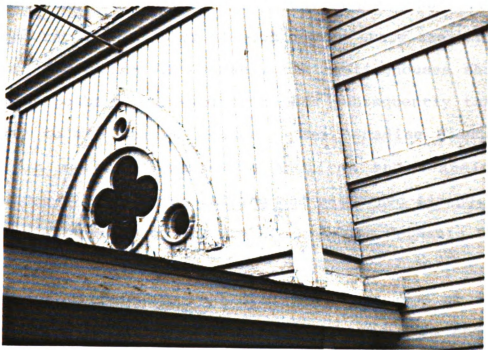


Fig. 38. Paradise Lutheran, Detail of 1849 Window.

members. Although both are Protestant groups, the Lutheran faith is considered "high church," based on the emphasis of liturgy and hierarchical structuring, whereas the Brethren belong to the "low church" tradition, emphasizing fellowship and democracy. And, whereas both groups trace their history to the Reformation in Germany, the meetinghouses show the different paths which each faith has subsequently taken on its way to the United States. The Paradise Evangelical Lutheran meetinghouse shows Anglican and Scandinavian influences by its timber ceiling and patterned siding, while the Zion Hill House of the Brethren remains Germanic through its heavy structuring.

These differences regarding the importance of liturgy and congregational heritage affect both the form and style of these meetinghouses. The form of the Zion Hill House, in its "mature" or completed state after 1885/88, included a large, open fellowship or communion room for the Brethren love feast, complete with kitchen and attic. The Lutherans had no need for this additional space and did not "append" their building. Structurally, the attic required by the Brethren necessitated a flat ceiling for the sanctuary or assembly room, closing off the apex rather than allowing for the open, "Anglican" tradition of a slanted timbered ceiling used by the Lutherans (fig. 39, 40). The sanctuary of Paradise Evangelical Lutheran is divided in halves rather than thirds, as in the Zion Hill House, emphasizing the

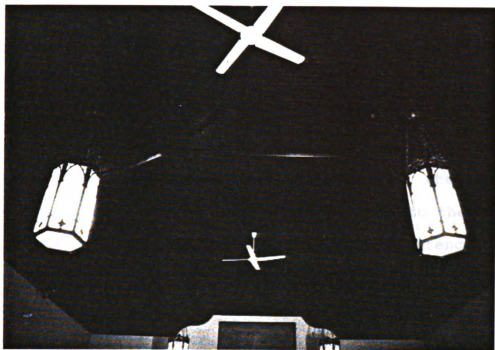


Fig. 39. Paradise Lutheran, Timbered Ceiling.



Fig. 40. Paradise Lutheran, Interior towards Altar.



pulpit at the front of the room rather diverting one's attention to the equality of "the common floor." This creation of the pulpit as focal point in the Lutheran meetinghouse is further stressed by the use of a single, central entrance. The separate "He" and "She" doors balanced on the facade of the Zion Hill House, in contrast, serve to visually reduce the importance of the speakers' stand by automatically placing it off center to the entrant.

Style is the most readily apparent difference between these two meetinghouses. The difference between choosing elements of Greek and Gothic Revival was more than superficial for these two religious groups. The Lutheran accepted the emerging Gothic Revival style as early as 1849 and continued its usage with the 1882 building. It was a suitable style for the denomination with a "high church" tradition and for the congregation near the Western Reserve, which provided both the Greek and Gothic Revival options. By choosing and continuing to build in the Gothic Revival style, the congregation of the Paradise Evangelical Lutheran was following the national trend of changing architectural revival styles in the late 19th century. The Brethren, therefore, were not.

One might assume that the unwillingness of the Brethren to accept this change was due to their rural background, but that is too simple an answer since both groups had country meetinghouses. More significant is the

fact that the implications of ecclesiology associated with the Gothic Revival style were simply unsuitable for the Brethren of the Mahoning Congregation or anywhere else.<sup>16</sup> The building committee for the Zion Hill House, when writing the specifications, would have known of the changing local preferences for Gothic Revival, but simply could not have accepted them on religious grounds. On the other hand, the Greek Revival elements of proportion and detail were included in the building specifications, not only because they remained common in the Western Reserve and were ingrained in the committee members' minds, but because these elements continued to represent solidity of humanity and of government. Therefore, although the early Brethren shunned the idea of style and of "unnecessary ornament," the Mahoning Congregation did provide the reason and the allowance for the builder to incorporate elements associated with the Greeks on the basis that these architectural associations were in accordance with their basic religious principles.

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<sup>16</sup>If a white, frame meetinghouse used by the Brethren is in the Gothic Revival style, as in Adrian, Michigan, for example, it has, to this date, been found to have been bought, not built, by the Brethren.

## CONCLUSION

Heritage or hindrance--will the Brethren be able to recognize the value of their architecture? This religious group experienced tremendous membership growth, westward expansion, the establishment of congregations, and the building of many meetinghouses in the late 19th century. It is perhaps an unsurpassable "peak" in the history of Brethren ideology and building. However, since the traditional beliefs of this religious group have also included non-materialism, thereby devaluing architecture, the frame meetinghouses of over one hundred years are being destroyed at an increasingly rapid rate. One wonders if there will be any example left for the members of the 21st century. Preservation does not equal "canonization," if the term can be applied to a building, just as symbolism does not equal transubstantiation. And, a house of worship would not need to become "a worshipped house." Since the Zion Hill House of 1872 and 1885/88 has "justifiably" been destroyed, only the preservation method of recordation can serve as a basis for analyzing the specific building data and understanding the historical, denominational, and architectural context of this meetinghouse.

The Zion Hill House was an architectural form dependent on the religious ideals of 19th century Brethrenism in America. The early Brethren, like the early Christians, met

primarily in member's homes and were reluctant to give up this practice. However, established houses of worship did become necessary as the membership grew and as travelling distances increased.

The primary factors which influenced the form of a religious structure built by the Brethren included this nomadic tradition of primitive Christianity, the decisions of Annual Meeting, and the awareness of available building options. Having met in houses initially, and valuing the functional use of space over external decoration, the Brethren sought a building type designed from the inside out. Form always took precedence over style in the minds of the early Brethren.

The direct role of Annual Meeting, the governing body of the Church of the Brethren, in the area of meetinghouse and church architecture has been relatively minor. However, the rulings on indirect issues, such as leadership, baptism, and love feast, have become the determining force in the designing of this "low church" structure, the priorities of which are based on functional forms rather than ecclesiastical decrees.

There being few direct mandates and no European architectural precedent for this religious group, the early Brethren in America were open to new ideas. The options available, particularly the meetinghouse form, were welcomed and adapted. The rectangular form was preferred in

northeastern Ohio and found there in three variations. The Zion Hill House, a T-plan structure, was an example of the largest and most fully developed Brethren meetinghouse form of this district.

The Mahoning Congregation, responsible for the creation of the Zion Hill House, can be seen as a denominational microcosm of that period. By the time of the building of the Zion Hill House, in 1872, the history of the Brethren can be divided into three phases or generations. Following the origin of the sect in Schwarzenau, Germany, and the new settlement in Germantown with increasing dispersion, Kurtz can be seen as ushering the Brethren into their third generation, with his emphasis on unifying the denomination through the printed word. His publishing of Brethren journals and The Brethren Encyclopedia, gives reason to believe that he was among the most well-versed members on Annual Meeting rulings--the recorded position of the church on contemporary issues. He would, therefore, have been completely knowledgeable of and almost assuredly in agreement with the rulings of Annual Meeting concerning meetinghouses precisely at the time of the building of the Zion Hill House. Furthermore, having dismissed his Lutheran background, and with an interest in community and the Brotherhood, Kurtz, as Elder of the Mahoning Congregation would have had deep convictions about the manner in which he was to lead this "flock" during their first building phase.

The Zion Hill House, as a product of lay persons lead by a head carpenter, further emphasizes the early Brethren's interest in function over an architectural style. The fact that Lewis H. Ruhlman was probably not Brethren suggests three things. First, that the Mahoning Congregation sought the best available carpenter, even if outside their membership, due to the strong desire for excellent construction. Second, the Zion Hill House was, a very typical frame meetinghouse of the Church of the Brethren and that the builder, irrespective of religious association, was capable of fulfilling the requirements of the client. And third, as a more urbane professional craftsman and business man, Ruhlman would have been sensitive to the local high architecture in the Western Reserve style of Greek Revival, and would have included details of such in a simple, yet pleasing manner on the Zion Hill House. Therefore, not only was the 1872 Zion Hill House characteristic of the structures of the northeastern Ohio Brethren, but it also showed the acceptable incorporation of aesthetically pleasing architectural refinement which was common locally.

This aesthetic influence of the builder, which is especially obvious in the refinement of details on the Zion Hill House, was found to be acceptable to the members of the Mahoning Congregation. The Greek Revival style, of national popularity between 1820 and 1850, has remained

strong in the Western Reserve area, but was no longer a frequent choice for religious buildings by the 1870s. It was Gothic Revival which became the prevailing religious architectural style due to its association with ecclesiology, but it was exactly that association which made it unacceptable for the early Brethren.

In contrast, the plainness of the Zion Hill House, has led many people, including its congregation, to assume that their building had no "architecture." The sheer simplicity of one building compared to the ornamentation of another must not be confused with the validation of an architecture characteristic of a group (figs. 41, 42). This examination of the Zion Hill house serves to define Brethren architecture in northeastern Ohio by both form and style. The Zion Hill House had a "completed" or "mature" T-shaped plan, dependent on the group's interpretations and practices of New Testament rites which require the additional communion or fellowship room. The disregard for the popular Gothic Revival in the 1870s, provides the stylistic basis by which the Zion Hill House can be more closely linked to other simple meetinghouses, built by the Brethren at greater distances throughout northeastern Ohio, than to local religious buildings of other faiths. The result is an architectural style unique to this denomination in this particular region.

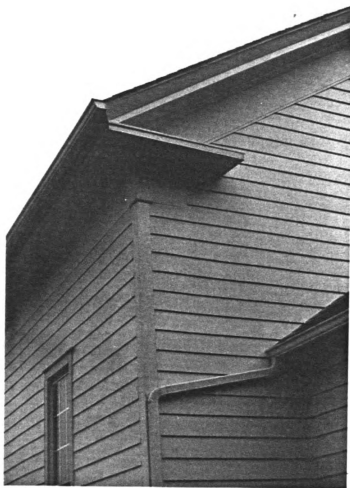


Fig. 41. Gable End of the Brethren Bethel House.



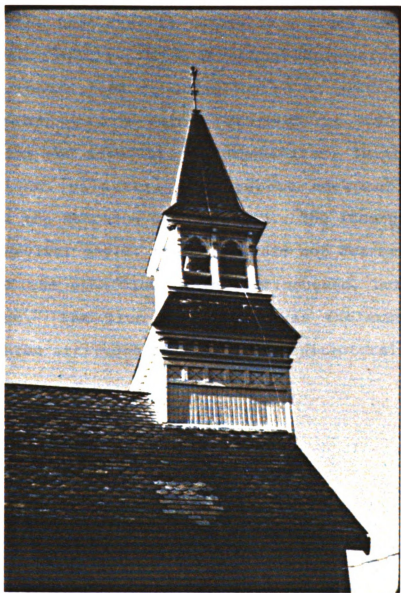


Fig. 42. Paradise Evangelical Lutheran Meetinghouse Tower.

Symbolically the building also functioned well for the Brethren. Although it was most assuredly not a conscious decision on the part of the congregation or the building committee, the fact that it resembled a Greek temple is not to be taken lightly. The denomination, being uniquely democratic, could find no objection to an association with Greek architecture--an architecture symbolic of republicanism and idealism. Ornamentation, in the form of non-functional pilasters, did become acceptable to the Brethren of the Mahoning Congregation. The incorporation of the Greek Revival style, therefore, did not detract from the function of the otherwise plain meetinghouse, but added to its meaning. The Zion Hill House was the embodiment of early Brethren attitudes in a mature architectural form.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
NORTHEASTERN OHIO BRETHREN

The following building histories of the early frame meetinghouses built by the Brethren before 1905 in, what is now, the Northeastern Ohio District of the Church of the Brethren have been gleaned from congregational histories in the following sources:

The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio, edited by Edgar G. Diehm.

The Brethren Encyclopedia, edited by Donald F. Durnbaugh.

Additional sources and items of information or application made by the author are specifically noted.

Like family histories, these building histories are arranged according to their founding congregations and include, in roughly chronological order according to official date of organization, the following:

The Nimishillen Congregation  
The Sugarcreek Congregation  
The Mahoning Congregation  
The Ashland Congregation  
The Chippewa Congregation  
The Danville Congregation  
The Owl Creek Congregation  
The Mohican Congregation  
The Tunker Society  
The Tuscarawas Congregation  
The Sandy District  
The Bristolville Congregation

## THE NIMISHILLEN CONGREGATION

The Nimishillen Congregation was the first Brethren congregation to be established in northeastern Ohio. Organized in Stark County in 1804, the congregation split due to size in 1825, but did not build a meetinghouse until 1856. This first meetinghouse was a brick structure and was retained by the East Nimishillen Congregation after the three-way territorial division of the original congregation in 1868. The two other congregations formed were Springfield (now, Akron Springfield), which built a brick structure in 1871, and the West Nimishillen Congregation (now, Mt. Pleasant), which built a frame structure in 1877. In 1904 a frame structure was built in Kent as a mission point from Springfield.

## The West Nimishillen House

The history of the West Nimishillen House began by a member deeding land for a church and a cemetery. A building committee of six was appointed and within the year a 40 x 80 foot structure had been erected.<sup>1</sup> This was an unusually long building and few structural changes have

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<sup>1</sup>As a result of this study, this meetinghouse can be considered to have been constructed as a "mature" form, by an established congregation, and at a relatively late date for an initial structure.

been necessary. A "new slate roof" was put on in 1902 and a sliding partition was installed to separate the assembly room from the communion room. In 1922-23 a basement was dug for the installation of a furnace and in 1924 a second story was added over the communion room for Sunday School rooms. The sanctuary was redecorated in 1926 and remodeled in the early 1940s to include a platform at the front end of the sanctuary. By the early 1950s the excavation of the basement was complete and included a new kitchen and restrooms. In May 1953 an 18 x 18 foot entrance tower was built at the northeast corner of the building. It was the only major change to the exterior design of this white frame building in 112 years.

### The Kent Church

The 1904 Kent Church is the most recent structure relevant to this study. The Kent Congregation was formed by members of the Springfield Congregation who had moved to Kent, a distance too great for frequent commuting. The group first met in a Free Methodist Church "but soon felt the need for a church house of their own."<sup>2</sup> Marvin Kent, the owner of much of the city's land and after whom it is

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<sup>2</sup>The fact that the group originally met in an existing church, rather than a house, barn, or schoolhouse, provides a reason for the change in terminology from "meetinghouse" to "church."

named, offered the choice of several sites to the congregation as a gift.

In 1923, the nineteen year old stucture was moved back from the street, a basement was dug, and the entire building extensively remodeled. The building originally had two front doors, one on either side of the pulpit "as was the custom at the time of the construction." These doors were replaced by a central double door and the pulpit was moved to the other end of the sanctuary (figs. 43, 44).<sup>3</sup> Electricity was added at this time and a furnace installed, replacing the two coal stoves located at the sides of the building.

In 1946 the congregation made a small addition to the back of the structure which was completed, with the help of a group of East Nimishillen members, in a single day. A major remodeling was done in 1947, costing \$10,500 and including the addition of a balcony, a choir loft, new hardwood floors and a new pulpit. By 1953 the growing congregation decided that an enlargment of the forty-nine-year-old building was not feasible and a new building site was purchased. With the completion of a new, two-story building, the "Old Kent Church" was no longer needed and the congregation voted that the building be sold.

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<sup>3</sup>Photograhs taken by Eldon Strasbaugh of the building's exterior in the Spring of 1943 and of his father, George, on Nov. 2, 1942.



Fig. 43. Kent Meetinghouse, Exterior after 1923.



Fig. 44. Kent Meetinghouse, Interior with Paneled Doors.



## THE SUGARCREEK CONGREGATION

The Sugarcreek Congregation (now, Baltic) was organized about 1805, first meeting in homes for "almost all day services" and then sharing a Union Meetinghouse with the Mennonites. By 1871 the need for a Brethren meetinghouse was felt and a building committee of four was appointed. A 1914 congregational history describes the building only as "a neat little church" built on farmland. Further references state that love feasts were held on a rotating basis in members' barns, suggesting the limited size of this original structure.

The Sugarcreek Congregation then met in two additional buildings, probably white frame structures, before constructing its present building, the Baltic House. Another Union Meetinghouse was built for the Brethren, United Brethren, Amish, Mennonites, and Winebrennerians in 1878 and in 1884 the Bunker Hill House was completed. Since 1898 neither of these buildings have been used by the Brethren and the status of their existence is unknown.

## The Baltic House

The Sugarcreek Congregation, now the Baltic Church of the Brethren, continues to hold services in its 1898 frame meetinghouse. Having not experienced large fluctuations of

attendance or membership, the congregation has not found it necessary to make many changes to the structure beyond those of minor improvements. The exterior of the building continues to be a simple, rectangular white frame structure with a gable roof of a nearly forty-five degree pitch. The interior of the building is particularly interesting today since the original wooden partitions, which separate the assembly room from the fellowship room, still function. These partitions are attached to winches in the attic by ropes and can be raised or lowered according to the desired distribution of space.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE MAHONING CONGREGATION

The Brethren arrived in the southern section of Mahoning County (organized in 1846) in 1808 and were referred to as the Mill Creek Congregation until the official organization of the Mahoning Congregation in 1842. After meeting in houses and a log structure in Springfield, the congregation built two meetinghouses. The Zion Hill House was built in 1872 and the Bethel House in 1873. The congregation met in both buildings on an alternating basis for forty-two years. In 1915 a territorial split separated

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<sup>4</sup>Kermon Thomasson, "A New Museum That's Telling Our Story," Messenger 137 (October 1988):10.

the Bethel and the Zion Hill Congregations into two "sister" churches, thereby dissolving the Mahoning Congregation.

The two buildings were very similiar but their histories have ironic twists. The Zion Hill House, a good example of regional Brethren architecture, and perhaps the best documented Brethren building in northeastern Ohio, no longer stands, while the Bethel House, which serves a fairly stable but small membership, exists but on a new site and with less documentation.

### The Bethel House

The Bethel House is a white, rectangular frame building with a moderate-to-low pitched gable roof terminating at the sides with turned back corners (figs. 45, 46). Originally there were separate entrances for the men and the women on the front end of the building with a central window on the main floor and an attic window above. There are three large windows on each side and two on the back. Other than minor improvements, the building remained basically unchanged for seventy-four years. In 1947 the Ohio Water Service bought the property to make Evans Lake and moved the building two miles east to a larger lot. A basement was added wth the money received from the move.

Today, the addition of a massive entrance area to the front of the building, which contains an office and a



Fig. 45. Bethel House, Exterior, front.

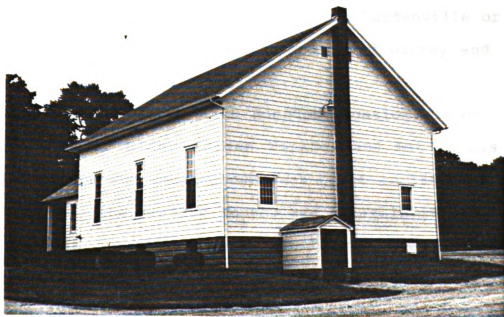


Fig. 46. Bethel House, Exterior, back.

nursery, covers much of the facade, including the original entrances and distorts the buildings proportions. However, most of the front wall does remain, and the placement of these original doorways is detectable through the plastering. Aluminum siding now covers most of the building, but has been applied in a respectful manner. The original nine over four light windows have since been replaced with those of six over six, similar to the change at Zion Hill.

#### THE ASHLAND CONGREGATION

The early Brethren moved into Ashland County between 1800 and 1825, first meeting in houses for preaching and all-day love feasts. The Ashland Congregation divided itself into three mission points: the Loudenville or Plum Run Congregation in 1856, and the Ashland Dickey and Maple Grove Congregations in 1860.

The Loudenville or Plum Run Congregation was organized in the home of Elder Morgan Workman and met in his barn until the Plum Run meetinghouse was built in 1863. A union meetinghouse, the McFalls House, was built in 1870, and the Henry Creek House was built in 1873. The Loudenville Congregation was disorganized in 1932 after many members had moved away. None of the three buildings was retained by the Brethren.

In 1853, seven years before the formal organization of the Ashland Dickey Congregation, a meetinghouse had been built on the property of Elias Dickey. He and his wife deeded it to the Brethren in 1856 for fifty dollars. It was replaced only twenty-one years later, which suggests, along with the early date and the minimal cost of the structure, that it was not a building completely suitable for the late 19th century Brethren.

### The Ashland Dickey House

The 1877 replacement structure was called the Ashland Dickey House, probably the same name as the first, and is now known as the Ashland Dickey Church of the Brethren. The building is a plain, white frame structure with narrow wood siding and long windows on the sides. Sunday School was first held by the Ashland Dickey Congregation in 1873, but was not entirely considered in the new building plans of 1877 since individual classrooms did not appear to be a priority at this early date.

Few changes were made to the building until 1958, when a fellowship hall, a kitchen, and restrooms were added. In the early 1960s new hardwood floors were put in the sanctuary and the adjoining back room. A baptistry was not installed until after 1963.

### The Maple Grove House

The Ashland Congregation established a mission point, the "Beeghley Church" around 1850, which was officially organized as the Maple Grove Congregation in 1860. A meetinghouse was built the same year on land donated by John Myers. It was a small structure and the growing congregation soon demanded the additional space of a communion room, a Sunday-school room, and a kitchen. The building was remodeled in 1914, a basement dug in 1941, and the upstairs remodeled again in 1942. The 1960s brought major changes to the building, beginning with the addition of a vestibule which included a stairway to the basement. In 1962 a new brick and stone building was erected which included a sanctuary, a large fellowship hall, and a kitchen. The old building was converted to classrooms and was, thereby, considerably altered.

### THE CHIPPEWA CONGREGATION

Edgar G. Diehm, in his book, The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio, states that:

All records previous to the division of the old Chippewa congregation in 1877 are lost.

The congregation was organized sometime after 1819 and held services in houses, barns, and schoolhouses until 1868. In that year the Beech Grove House was built primarily by the

members of the congregation and on donated land. By 1877 the large territory covered by this congregation had become so burdensome that a three-way split was agreed upon, thus forming the Chippewa, Wooster, and Orville Congregations. The two Chippewa and Wooster Congregations provided three buildings for this study, but the Orville Congregation was disorganized in 1880, shortly after the separation. The two buildings associated with the Chippewa Congregation are the Beech Grove and the East Chippewa Houses; the Wooster Congregation's building is called Paradise.

#### The Beech Grove House

The Chippewa Congregation kept the 1868 Beech Grove House and added a communion room to the original structure in 1885. In 1910 a committee was appointed to investigate the cost of remodeling the deteriorating fifty-two-year-old structure or of rebuilding. Following the committee's report, the decision by council was to build on the original site. Five persons were elected to a building committee and a new structure was completed in 1912.

#### The East Chippewa House

The East Chippewa House was the result of a 1890 decision to build and cost approximately \$2500 to \$3000.



This meetinghouse became the the permanent home of a new congregation by the same name, after its separation from the Chippewa Congregation in 1921. Since that year, considerable changes have been made to the building. Between 1921 and 1941, a basement, central heating, and a new entrance were added, and the interior was remodeled. In 1951, after the recommendation of council, an eight-person remodeling committee was appointed. The remodeling included the enlarging of the 1890 structure to include classrooms, a large fellowship hall in the basement, a kitchen, and restrooms. It also include the bricking over of the entire structure and was completed in 1953.

#### The Paradise Meetinghouse

The Wooster Congregation, the other continuing sector of the Chippewa Congregation, is better known as the Paradise Church. The Paradise meetinghouse of 1841 is thought to be the earliest Brethren meetinghouse in northeastern Ohio.<sup>5</sup> It was a brick building, constructed on farmland donated by the congregation's elder. Thirty-two years later, in 1873, a frame structure, which took the name of the first, was built on the same lot. Bricks from the original building were used for the new foundation. The building was "rebuilt" in 1898. The demands of the 20th

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

century have provided reasons for the extensive remodeling to this meetinghouse, particularly with the addition of a basement and classrooms in 1952.

#### THE DANVILLE CONGREGATION

The Danville or North Bend Congregation first met in the home of Joseph Workman. When the group grew to a size which could no longer be accommodated in his house, Workman partitioned off two sections of his barn, furnishing one with rough seats, to serve as a meeting place. The section with the seats would have been the meeting room or "sanctuary," in a very broad sense of the word, leaving the additional section to serve as the communion room or fellowship hall. The congregation was formally organized in 1822, after which Workman donated two pieces of land, designating one for a cemetery and one for a building. In 1850 a building was erected and served until 1892 when it was declared unsafe and was abandoned.

#### The North Bend Meetinghouse

A son of the original donor purchased a large amount of farmland north of Danville, reserving a hill site for a church and a cemetery. The structure which remains today was built in 1870 and is called the North Bend Church, named

after the winding road nearby. An addition was built in 1893 to accommodate a growing Sunday School and in 1910 the building was enlarged and completely remodeled. Another major remodeling occurred in 1962 and included the digging of a basement which provided space for a kitchen and additional classrooms.

### The Valley Church

Around 1881, approximately eleven years after the building of the North Bend Meetinghouse, the Danville Congregation built another meetinghouse four miles south of Danville. It was known for a brief period as the Valley Church, but services were discontinued in 1910 after families had moved to other areas. The building was finally sold in 1927.

### THE OWL CREEK CONGREGATION

The Owl Creek Congregation provides what appears to be another typical history of Brethren building. The Congregation was organized in 1823 with approximately fifty or sixty members, some of whom had come to this area as early as 1808. After meeting in homes and schoolhouses, the congregations built its first meetinghouse in 1854. The 1881 Knox County History states that:

The German Baptists built a church about 1850. It was a substantial frame building 40 x 60 feet, about one-fourth mile north of Ankenytown . . ."

### The Owl Creek Meetinghouse

The 1854 building was replaced without stated reason by a "new and commodious one" in 1899. This same building exists today, but with significant changes. A circle drive created around the church in 1931, changed the main entrance to the sanctuary from the front of the building to the new vestibule on the east side. The pulpit was then placed where the main entrance had been. In 1942, a second floor was built over the three rooms at the rear of the building, adding Sunday School rooms and a balcony. The building was raised in 1955 for the addition of a basement, which included a fellowship hall, kitchen and a new heating system. By the late 1950s, new north and south entrances had been erected and a baptistry installed.

### THE MOHICAN CONGREGATION

Organized around 1830, the Mohican Congregation was named for a stream which runs through the community. The group met in members' homes until the first Mohican House was built in 1855. It was built on land donated by a member for a meetinghouse and cemetery. This meetinghouse, which

became the place of worship for 162 members in 1881, became the property of the Progressive Brethren in the denominational split of 1881-82, requiring the "conservative" group to build another meetinghouse.

### The Mohican House

The remaining seventy-eight members built the second Mohican House in 1884 and it is this building which remains property of the Church of the Brethren today. The building was considered to be a large structure at the time of its construction since it included both an assembly room and a communion room.<sup>6</sup> The structure was remodeled by its members between 1956 and 1968 with the major improvement being the excavation of a basement.

### The Black River Meetinghouse

The Black River Congregation was located within the borders of the Mohican congregation, but at a distance too great to have a common history. The Black River Congregation was organized in 1845, meeting in houses and barns until a building was built in 1867. This structure

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<sup>6</sup>Like the West Nimishillen Church, this structure can now be seen as having been constructed as a "mature" form, again by an established congregation, and at a relatively late date. The Mohican House serves as an example of the "T-plan" and the West Nimishillen House, the "linear plan."

also became the property of the Progressive Brethren during the 1881-82 division.

However, a second meetinghouse had apparently been built in 1868. This second Black River Meetinghouse is what exists as the Black River Church of the Brethren today. The building was enlarged and remodeled in 1900, with additional remodeling done between 1946 and 1950.

#### THE TUNKER SOCIETY

##### The Richland House

The Brethren who organized in Richland County between 1830 and 1840 became known as the Tunker Society. They rotated their meetings between two members' houses and a schoolhouse until a small meetinghouse was erected in 1858, on land donated the previous year. However, the two-day love feasts continued to be held in homes and barns until 1898, when a thirty foot addition was made to the original building. This additional space provided the room for the love feast as well lodging for overnight guests. In 1948 the meetinghouse was moved back on its lot, being raised to fit over a newly excavated basement, and a vestibule added.

## THE TUSCARAWAS CONGREGATION

The Tuscarawas Congregation was organized between 1836 and 1840, meeting in houses, schoolhouses, and the leader's barn. This congregation built two frame meetinghouses before its territorial separation in 1874. The Zion House was built in 1865 and the Eden House followed in 1873.

In about 1868 the congregation purchased a building, the Mt. Zion House, from a Methodist Episcopal congregation in West Philadelphia. The Mt. Zion Congregation merged with the New Philadelphia Congregation in 1929, allowing the building to be moved to Camp Zion after 1937 and converted into Taylor Hall dormitory.

### The Zion House

The 1865 Zion House, a basic rectangular structure, was lengthened in 1871. It was a very well-known structure to the early Brethren in the region, as the home of a prominent congregation, and to more recent Brethren as the Old Camp Zion Auditorium which it became in 1936 (fig. 47). The building is described in the five-person Search Committee's report to District Conference, concerning the securing of a permanent meeting place for District

Conference. This full report is included in Diehm's book, The Church of the Brethren in Northeastern Ohio, from which the following is excerpted:

. . . the Zion Church property of the Tuscarawas Congregation . . . [has an] approximate size thirty-five by eighty feet, . . . is in good condition and could be arranged at a meager cost to adequately care for the meeting of the District.

As a conference center, the expanded eighty foot main floor, was used for holding business meetings. The full basement, which had been excavated sometime earlier, became the camp's dining room. The building and grounds were sold when the Eastern and Western Districts merged to form the larger Northern Ohio District in 1963 and a more central camp location was desired. The 123-year-old frame structure is known to have burned in 1988.



Fig. 47. Zion House (Camp Zion Auditorium).



## The Eden House

The history of the Eden House, built in 1873, is less traumatic than that of the Zion House, although the building has been severely altered. The original white, rectangular structure was reroofed in 1889 with metal roofing, probably of the standing seam type. Due to low membership, the building remained unchanged until the 1920s. During this decade many non-structural changes occurred including the repainting of walls and ceilings, the installation of an eight inch platform, and the reduction of the pulpit to a width of three feet. Curtains were hung to create classrooms and the window shutters were removed. Electricity was also added at this time and the gas lamps, which hung on wires suspended from the meeting room ceiling, were replaced with new electric ones. Between 1941 and 1943 the originally plastered walls and ceiling were covered over with wallboard and an arch over the pulpit was created. In 1949 the seventy-six-year-old building was "newly remodeled," a full basement constructed, complete with kitchen and restrooms, and a twelve foot addition was made to the front of the building.

The renovations of 1954 resulted in the covering of the original six-inch pine floorboards with a new hardwood floor and improvement to the basement. At the July 1961 council meeting, the congregation called for a committee to look for

a new building due to inadequate educational facilities. Two council meetings later, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to build a new building and in 1962 the adjoining two-level sanctuary was completed. The old sanctuary was then converted to classrooms and the facade of the original building was "slightly remodeled" and bricked over.

#### THE SANDY DISTRICT

Between 1830 and 1850 approximately fifty members of the Mahoning Congregation moved west to Knox County, joining with a few earlier arrivals (c.1810) to form the Sandy District/Congregation.

The Sandy District of the German Baptist Brethren are known to have met in four different buildings. They built two of the four, one brick and one frame, and the other two buildings were a schoolhouse and a mission, whose "basic German Baptist architecture suggests it might have been built by the Sandy Congregation."<sup>7</sup> Both of the structures known to have been built by this congregation, the brick and

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<sup>7</sup>Elaine Hahn Bonar, ed., A History of the Reading Church of the Brethren including the Sandy District of the German Baptist Brethren (Alliance, OH: Jarman Printing Co., 1975), p. 57. The basis for this attribution of the Sandy District's Liberty Church established in 1860, can now be questioned. The picture of the building presented in the history shows two side, rather than front, entrances, a characteristic more common locally in Quaker meetinghouses.

the frame, exist today as the Freeburg and Reading Churches of the Brethren.

### The Reading House

The 1860 frame structure, called the Reading House, was the first building built by this congregation and was followed by the brick Freeburg House in 1882. The Reading House is believed to have been built in 1860 even though the land was not deeded until 1861.<sup>8</sup> The building was originally forty feet square but was more than doubled by a 50 x 40 foot addition seventeen years later, making it the "largest in the township" and "one of the largest in the denomination," (figs. 48-50).<sup>9</sup> The addition, the larger part, was added to the front of the older building for a sanctuary, thereby "completing" the form of Reading House in the reverse order of the Brethren's general practices as seen by this study.

The interior incorporated large dividers, like those at Baltic, which were used to separate the two congregational

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<sup>8</sup>The donor of the land is disputed since the congregation's 1975 history questions Diehm's attribution and states that it "remains a mystery." Bonar, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>This addition, therefore, "completed" the form of the Reading House in the reverse order of the Brethren's general practices as seen by this study. This result be attributed to the congregation's rapid growth which required a more immediate need for the meeting area than the fellowship space.

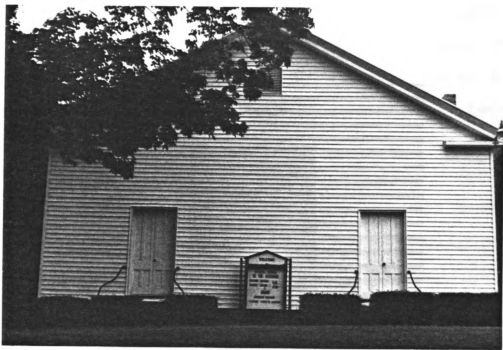


Fig. 48. Reading House, Facade.

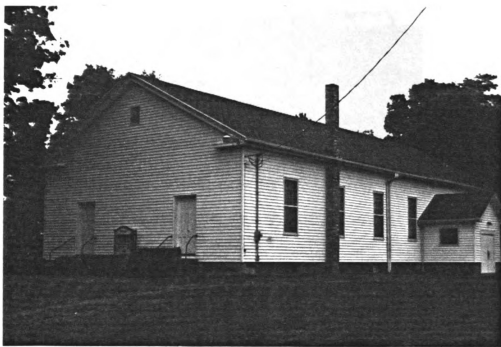


Fig. 49. Reading House, View from Road.



Fig. 50. Reading House, Front Entrance Doors.

rooms but have been covered over during remodelings. The main interest of the facade are the two doors, separating the men from the women, which led to separate aisles on the inside. The speaker's "bench" was originally placed at the front of the auditorium between the two doors. Today, a pulpit stands in the same place, but the interior has been remodeled, covering over the inside of the front doors.

Other changes, mostly to the interior, have been made over the years and are well-recorded in A History of the Reading Church of the Brethren including the Sandy District of the German Baptist Brethren, edited by Elaine Hahn Bonar in observance of the congregation's 150th anniversary. Some of the notable changes to the building are recorded in the Council Meeting Minutes which began in 1883 and are representative of the trends of alterations done to Brethren buildings.<sup>10</sup> The 1896 council approved the papering of the Reading House walls and the whitewashing of the ceiling, however, in the following council it was requested that the purchased paper be returned for plainer paper! The roof was replaced in 1902, with the committee doing the work "instructed to use the best of material." In 1915 the exterior, including the shutters, and the back part of the interior were painted for \$135.50. Ten years later the shutters were removed and discarded.

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<sup>10</sup>The set of Minutes from 1896 to 1900 became the property of the Freeburg Congregation in agreement with the congregational separation of that final year.

In the early 1930s the sanctuary was repapered and a curtain hung to divide the communion room in half during footwashing. The direction of the sanctuary was changed from the original south end to the north, with a low platform being built for the pulpit.

The 1940s brought about another change of wallpaper, requiring sixty-six rolls for the ceiling and forty-two for the walls. The "old chimney" at the back of the church was torn down and the roof repaired where it had been. In 1945 and 1946 electricity put in and a new furnace was installed. A special council was held on January 30, 1955 to discuss various remodeling ideas. A motion was presented to change the pulpit to the west side of the auditorium and to place the seats in a semi-circle. In the discussion that followed, the pastor expressed his dislike of windows before and behind him during a service.<sup>11</sup> The decision to remodel was deferred with an agreement that "an architect help with plans." The direction of the sanctuary apparently did not change and in 1961 a false ceiling was suspended, requiring the tops of the windows to be paneled over. The project cost approximately \$580. Five years later the sanctuary was "beautified" by plastering the back wall, repapering the whole sanctuary and covering the wainscoting with paneling --all for \$1150.

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<sup>11</sup>This same idea is crucial to understanding the variance from the building specifications in the construction of the Zion Hill House in 1872.

Since 1975, the kitchen has been redecorated and a large side entrance facing the parking lot has been added.

#### THE BRISTOLVILLE CONGREGATION

The Bristolville Congregation dates to 1837 and the group experienced significant growth in the 1860s. In 1868, John Strom, a carpenter of Swiss ancestry who had attended the Sandy Congregation, moved to Bristolville. Desiring a place of worship in the small community, he built the first meetinghouse of this congregation. It was a simple, white frame structure. In 1937, the meetinghouse was moved onto a new foundation on land aquired near the original site. Disaster struck during Sunday school one morning in 1943, when smoke was noticed pouring into the room. The seventy-one year old building was rapidly engulfed in flames and completely destroyed.



APPENDIX B  
ZION HILL DEED

The land for the Zion Hill House and cemetery was donated by John and Susanna Myers on February 4, 1822. The deed is copied here in its original wording from:

Deed Record, Vol. 7. Columbiana County Courthouse,  
Lisbon, Ohio. Indexed under "Myers," pp. 414-15.

## Deed

John Myers  
to  
Henry Myers, Abraham Stauffer, Daniel Crumbacher,  
Trustees

To all whom these presents may come, be it remembered, that John Myers and Susanna his wife of the county of Columbiana in the State of Ohio, as well for and in Consideration of the desire which they have of promoting the Gospel of our Blessed redeemer Jesus Christ, as of one dollar Lawful money of the United States to them in hand paid by Henry Myers, Abraham Stauffer and Daniel Crumbacher of the County and State afore said, Have, given, granted Bargained and sold, and by these presents do give, grant bargain and sell Unto the said Henry Myers Abraham Stauffer and Daniel Crumbacher Trustees, and to their Successors, in trust for the use of the German Baptist Congregation or Society all the folowing piece or parcel of ground, bounded as follows, to wit Beginning at the corner stone in the west half of the Section number thirty three in Township number thirteen of range Number two in said county, and running thence West fourteen perches and twenty two links to a corner Stone, thence North fourteen Perches and twenty two links to a corner Stone, thence East fourteen perches and twenty two links to a Corner stone, thence South fourteen perches And twenty two links to the place of Beginning containing one acre and Sixty two perches, for the purpose of erecting thereon a meeting house by Said society and for a burying ground for the use of said society and Congregation for ever, and also for the purpose of erecting thereon a Schoolhouse for the Education of youth, The Lot or piece of Land thus sold is part of the Section before mentioned, for which there is a Patent granted unto the Said John Myers his heirs and assign by the United States dated the Fifteenth day of August in the year of our Lord one Thousand eighthundred and seven, as by the said Patent, reference being therunto had, Will more fully and at Large appear, And the said John Myers and Susannah his wife do covenant, grant and agree to and with the said Henry Myers, Abraham Stauffer and Daniel Crumbacher the Trustees aforesaid and with their Successors in Office, that the before Described and sold Lot of one acre and Sixty two perches of ground for the Use of a burial ground, schoolhouse and meeting house aforesaid and To no other purpose whatever they the said John Myers and Susannah His wife their Heirs and assigns will warrant and for ever defend Against all claims whatsoever to the end that the Gospel may be Promulgated therein as the Lord in his providence may direct and permit In Testimony whereof the

said John Myers and Susannah his wife have Hereunto set their hands and seals the fourth day of February in the year Of our Lord, one Thousand eight hundred and twenty two

Sealed and delivered in the presences of John Crumbacher Barbara C Crumbacher Jos[?] M[örinz] Susanna Myers. The State of Ohio Columbiana County.

This Personally appeared the above named John Myers and Susannah Myers his wife before me the undersigned [Seal] one of the Justices of the peace in said county and severally acknowledged The foregoing instrument of Conveyance to be their act and deed for the purposes therein Contained, and desired the same to be admitted to record as such The said Susannah being separate and apart from her said husband And made acquainted with the nature and Contents of the same, did declare that she did of her own free will and accord sign seal, and as her act And deed deliver the same without any Compulsion from her said Husband, given under my hand and seal the fourth day of February Anno Domini one Thousand eight hundred and twenty two, Abraham Stauffer JP

Recorded and compared the 7th day of February 1822  
J[oseph] Springer recorder

APPENDIX C  
GENEALOGY OF L.S. RUHLMAN

Charted according to information from: William Powers, member of the Mahoning County Genealogical Society; the Genealogical and Family History of Eastern Ohio by Prof. Ewing Summers; the History of Columbiana County by Horace Mack; the Columbiana County, Ohio: Cemetery Inscriptions, vol 7., by the Columbiana County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society; and, the Good Hope Church: Records of the German Lutheran and Reformed Congregations by Margaret Simon Miller.



## APPENDIX D

### ZION HILL BUILDING COMMITTEES

The questionnaires to the congregation and the reports of those surveys to council of the Zion Hill Buildings for the first and second phases of the "new building" are presented here in there original wording and spelling as taken from the mimeographed handouts.

Dear Members and Friends of Zion Hill,

For some time, concern has been expressed regarding the situation of Zion Hill, specifically; the loss of the young people to the church, lack of growth of the church, and the seemingly inability to attract new families and hold them for Christ and Church.

At the January 14, 1964 Council Meeting, a Study Committee of five persons was elected to make a study of the future of Zion Hill. Therefore, to sound out the feeling of our members and friends, this Study Committee is asking you to check the following items that best expresses your belief. More than one can be checked. Remember, this is NOT a commitment, but a sample feeling of the congregation.

I. LOCATION AND BUILDING:

1. I prefer to continue the necessary repairs, as needed.

Yes

No

Comments:

2. I prefer to see an extensive remodeling and modernizing of the present building.

Yes

No

Comments:

If "YES" to above question, would you support financially above your regular committment to the church?

Yes

No

Comments:

3. I would prefer to relocate and build.

Yes

No

Comments:

4. I would prefer to merge with another Church of the Brethren congregation.

Yes

No

Comments:

II. PRACTICES AND BELIEFS:

1. Are you satisfied with the present church program?

Yes            No

Comments:

2. Are there practices of the Church that you are not in agreement?

Yes            No

Comments:

3. Are there practices of the Church that you would like to see changed?

Yes            No

Comments:

4. What would you suggest for making the church program more interesting to young people and families?

5. I am a member of Zion Hill Church

6. I am a friend of Zion Hill Church

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your reply. You need not sign, unless you so wish.

Any other comments:

The Study Committee: Howard Bomberger, Hazel  
Bartholomew, Emerson Snyder, Adin  
Kauffman, Louis Kletzly



## REPORT OF STUDY COMMITTEE      JULY 14, 1964

The Study Committee wants to express its deep appreciation to all who sent in their check-list questionnaires. Many hours were spent by the Committee going over every questionnaire and comment. Yet, in the summary comments below, the Committee realizes a thought or two may have been overlooked or included in a general comment which does not fit your idea exactly. Your pardon and understanding is asked - EVERY COMMENT IS IMPORTANT.

## SUMMARY OF YES AND NO QUESTIONS:

## Location and building:

1. Continue necessary repairs on present building"  
Yes- 25    No-15    Left blank- 8
2. Prefer extensive remodelizing and modernizing of present building?  
Yes-19    No-19    Left blank-12
3. Support financially the above?  
Yes -14    No-14    Blank-28
4. Prefer to relocate and rebuild?  
Yes-19    No-19    Blank-12
5. Would support financially the above?  
Yes-20    No-4    Blank-26
6. Prefer to merge with another Church of the Brethren congregation?  
Yes-2    No-36    Blank-12

## PRACTICES AND BELIEFS:

1. Satisfied with present church program?  
Yes-34    No-7    Blank-9
2. Practices of the Church not in agreement?  
Yes-14    No-27    Blank-9
3. Practices and beliefs like to see changed?  
Yes-8    No-30    Blank-11

## SUMMARY OF COMMENTS, GROUPED IN ORDER OF MOST TIMES MENTIONED:

- | No. times: | Comment:   |
|------------|--|
| 10         | Pay parsonage off first.   |
| 8          | Youth have more part in S.S. opening, worship, & programming.            |
| 6          | Invite other Christians to take part in our Love Feast.                  |
| 5          | Programming that meets needs of more people and hold them to the church. |
| 4          | Have nursery for babies.   |
| 4          | More social and fellowship affairs.                                      |
| 4          | Outside choral groups, special music, more pep in our singing.           |
| 2          | More guest speakers, other religious speakers.                           |

- 2 Don't relocate, due to cemetery and sentiment.
- 1 Teacher training sessions.
- 1 More visitation of members by deacons and members.
- 1 Sunday evening programs once or twice a month.
- 1 More deacons, in order to have 7
- 1 Prefer the King James Version of Bible over the RSV.
- 1 New members on nominating committee.
- 1 Expert advise before major repairs or changes of building.
- 1 Give responsibility to new members.
- 1 Deacons not be elected for life but for a certain no. of years.
- 1 Sell church building and parsonage and relocate both.
- 1 Have Feet Washing service after the Supper.
- 1 Willing to go along with the majority in decisions.

Out of 135 questionnaires sent out, 56 were returned.

Out of the 68 letters mailed out, 30 were returned.

Respectively & prayerfully presented: the STUDY COMMITTEE:  
Howard Bomberger, Hazel Bartholomew, Emerson Snyder, Adin Kauffman and Louis Kletzly.

QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

By action of the Church Council on January 10 and open ballot on January 22, [1967,] the following CHURCH COMMITTEE was created:

Russel[l] Pine Chairman  
Wilbur Detwiler  
Donald Clark

Robert Barnes  
Alpheus Rohrer

The committee met February 11, 1967. After a period of discussion, the committee felt that they desired to have your response to several questions and that you will want to express yourself for the development of the church and the Lord's work. Any comments and suggestions that you have to offer will be appreciated.

I. In regards to location, which do you prefer[?]

☐ Present location ☐ Relocate

Please give reason for your answer.

II. For what capacity should we build? The present seating about 110.

☐ 150 ☐ 200 ☐ 250 ☐ 300 other

Comments:

III. How soon do you feel that [we] (should, can) build?

Comments:

IV. In the next five years how much do you feel you could give toward the building of a new Church? This is not a commitment, only a guide for the committee. \$

Comments:

Please return no later than March 26, to Pastor or Committee.

## Church Building Committee Report

April 11, 1967

We had 33 responses returned from approximately 100 questionnaires handed out.

- I. In respect to location 18 voted to remain at present location, 12 voted to relocate, 3 no response or no choice. Even those that voted, many indicated that the other choice would be acceptable.

Among the reasons for their choices are the following:

Relocate:

1. Poor access to present location.
2. Proximity to cattle and farming.
3. Poor visibility of church, hard to find.
4. The need to be in an area of population growth.

Present location:

1. The property is ours.
2. Relative quiet.
3. Lack of money.
4. Parking space.
5. Close to parsonage.

Suggested locations:

1. Present location with variation of position
2. On Route 46
3. By the parsonage
4. On knoll south of Kletzly's.

- II. For what size should we build?

15 said 150 capacity  
 11 said 200 capacity  
 4 said 250 capacity  
 1 said 300 capacity

Some of the comments included: Build in such a way that some of the classrooms can be used for overflow crowds. Build with plans for future expansion. Build to have private access to classrooms.

- III. In regard to how soon should or can we build?

The responses covered a period from immediately to 10 years from now.

7 said within the next 3 yrs.  
 3 said when funds are available  
 2 said when we have 2/3 of the cost.  
 3 said when we have 50% of the cost

- 2 said when we have 1/3 of the cost
- 1 said get the site by 1968
- 1 said when the present church is filled.

IV. The response to contributions:

- 7 had no comment.
- 3 said their income was indefinite
- 2 said they would continue giving at their present rate.
- 17 gave a figure with some saying they may be able to give more than this. One person reached out a little farther by giving a figure and "faith". The amount available in five years is \$16,000.00, plus!

We discussed two future activities:

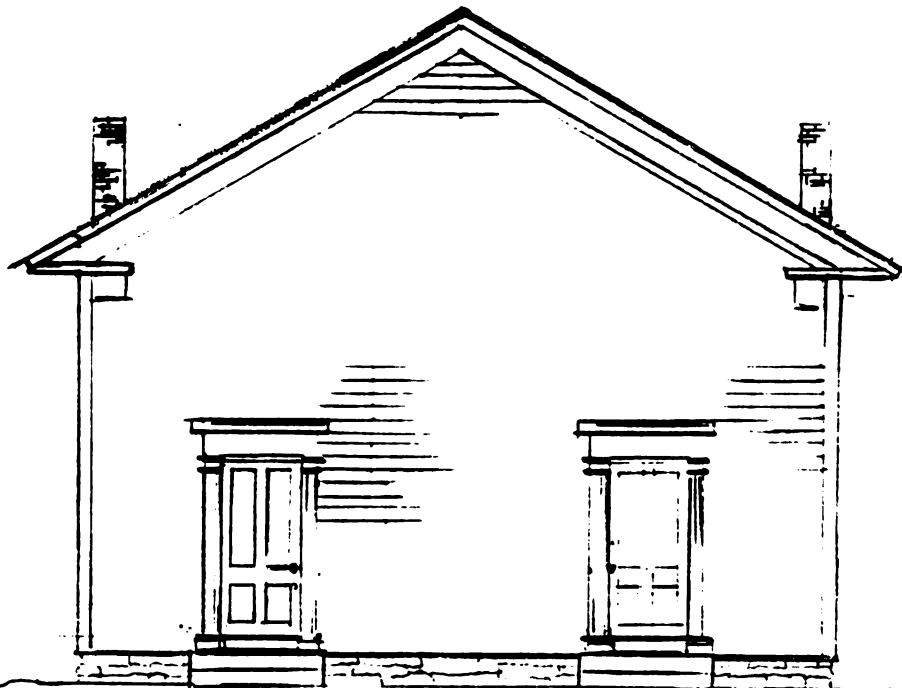
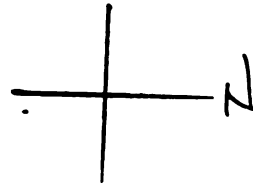
1. There is an individual who gives his services at cost to a church to study relocation sites. This person has information on the location of shopping plazas--when and where they will be located. He also knows the provisions given in these areas for religious activities. Bro. Shankster is to find out who it is and other pertinent information.
2. It was suggested that we get George Smith, an architect of North Lima, to look at our site to see if he felt it would be feasible to build at this location.

[handwritten ammendment by Alpheus Rohrer noting council's order to proceed with points 1 and 2, and as follows:]

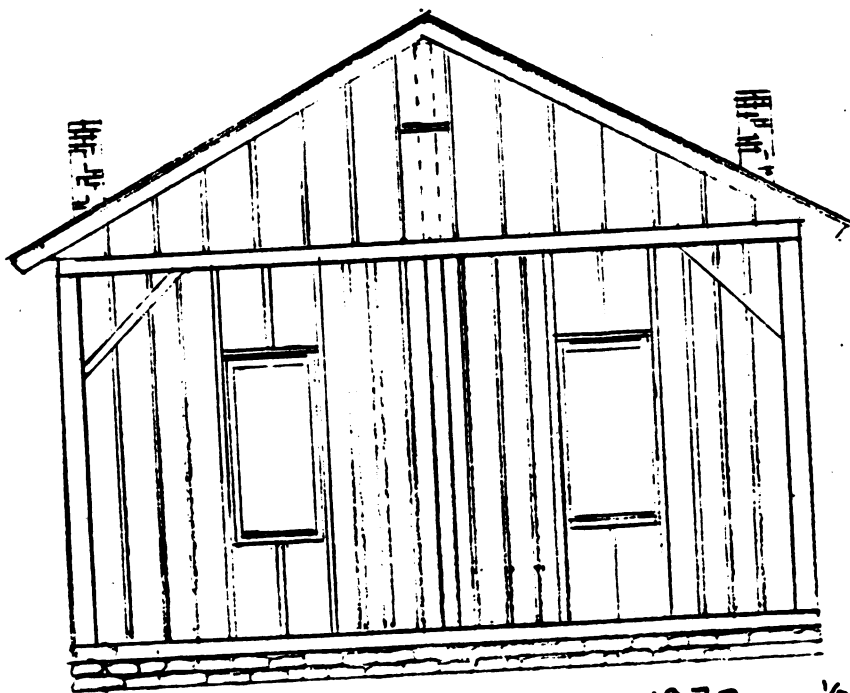
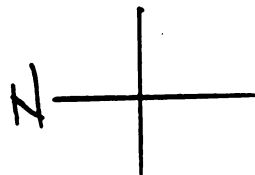
Check with land owners for possible acquisition of land. Merle Witmer [adjacent farmer].

APPENDIX E  
RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS

The following drawings are the work of Alice LaVern Rupel Rohrer and the author. They are on a scale of: 1/8 inch equals 1 foot, and are drawn according to the building specifications, photographs, and memory when necessary.

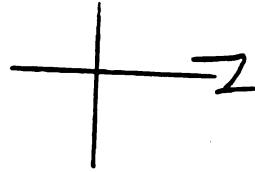
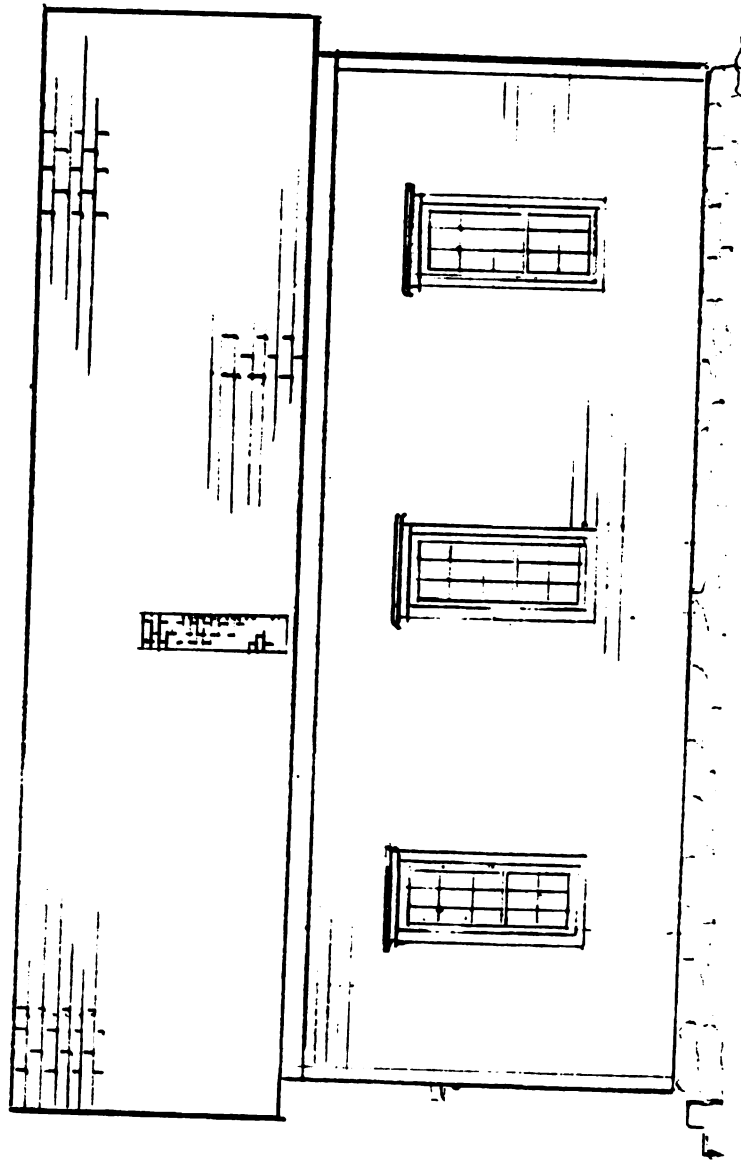


ZION HILL, 1872  $\frac{1}{8}"=1'$

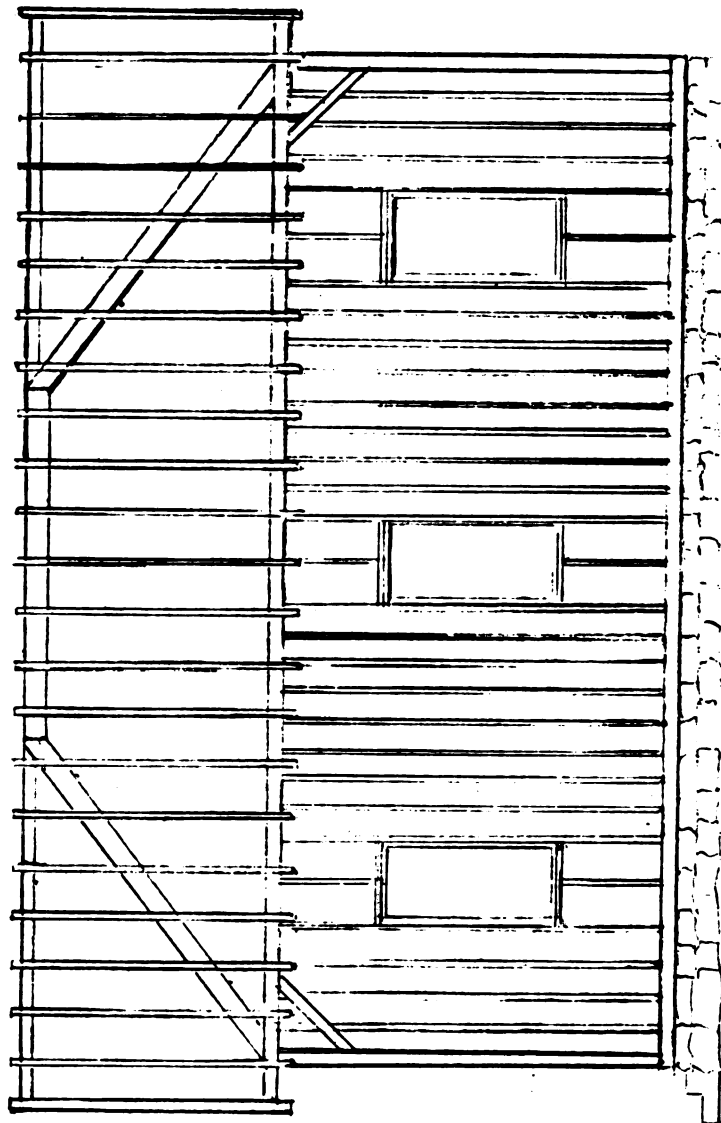
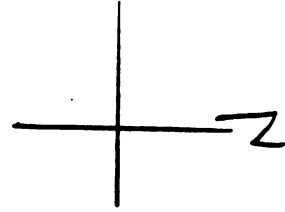


ZION Hill, West Elevation, 1872  $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$

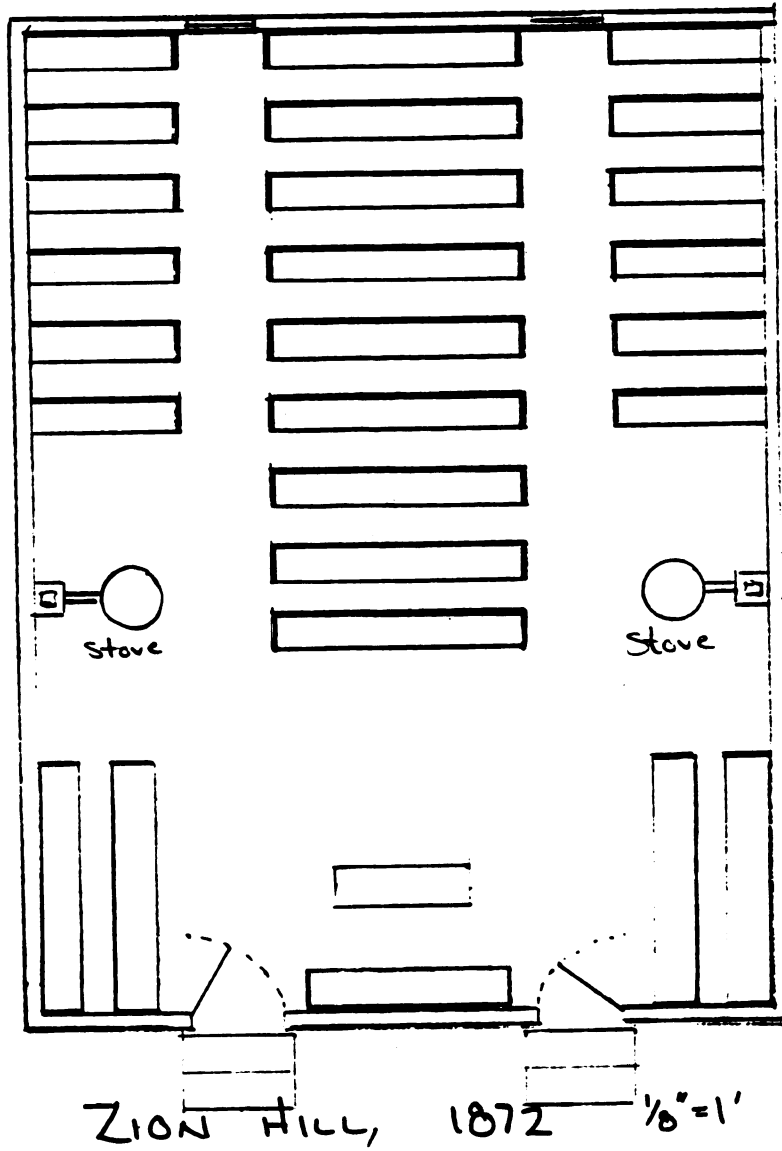
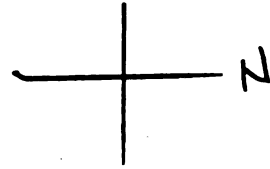




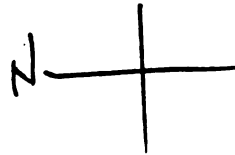
Zion Hill, Side Elevation, 1872 1/8"=1'



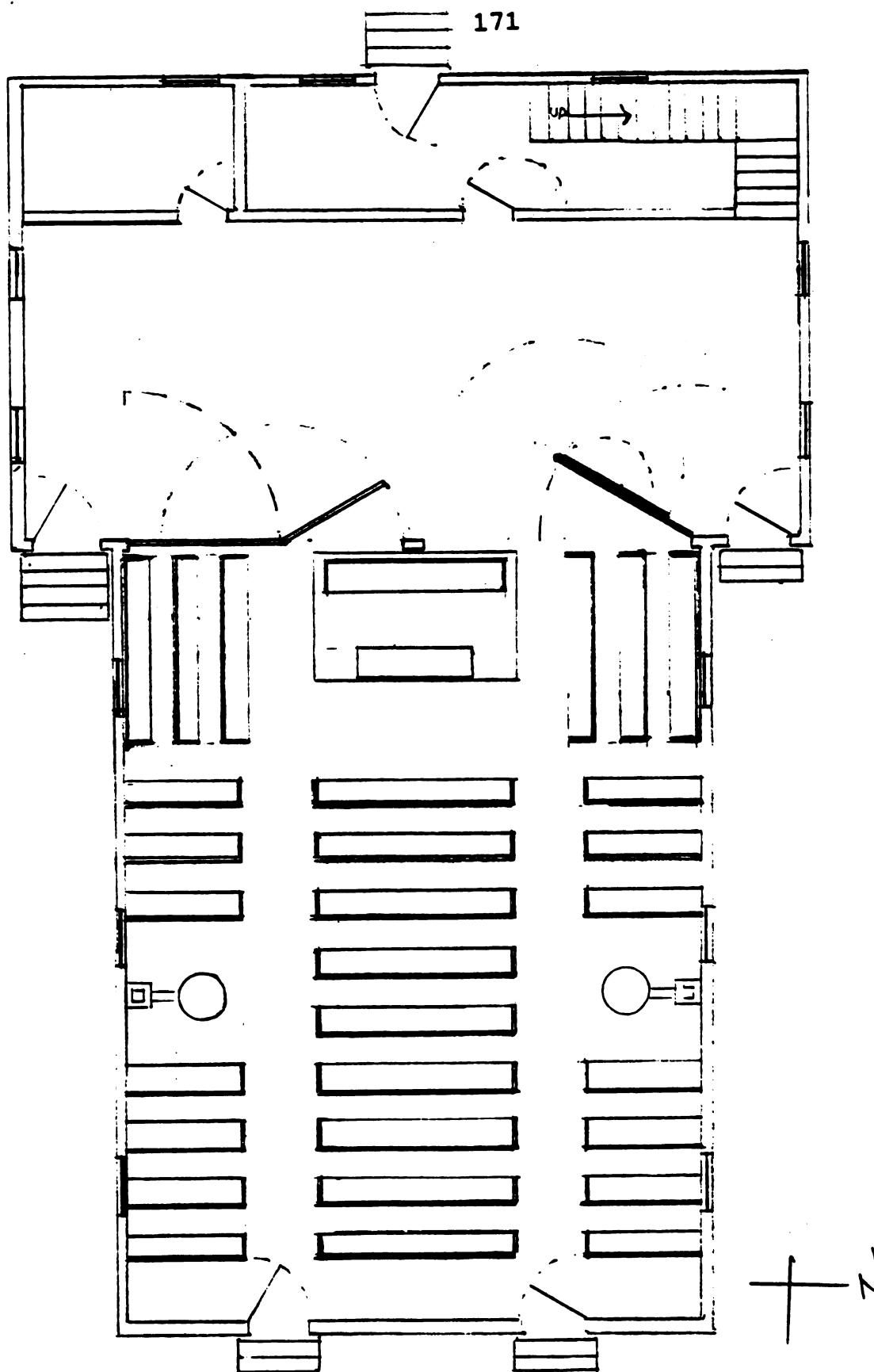
Zion Hill, Side Elevation, 1872  $\frac{1}{8"}=1'$



170

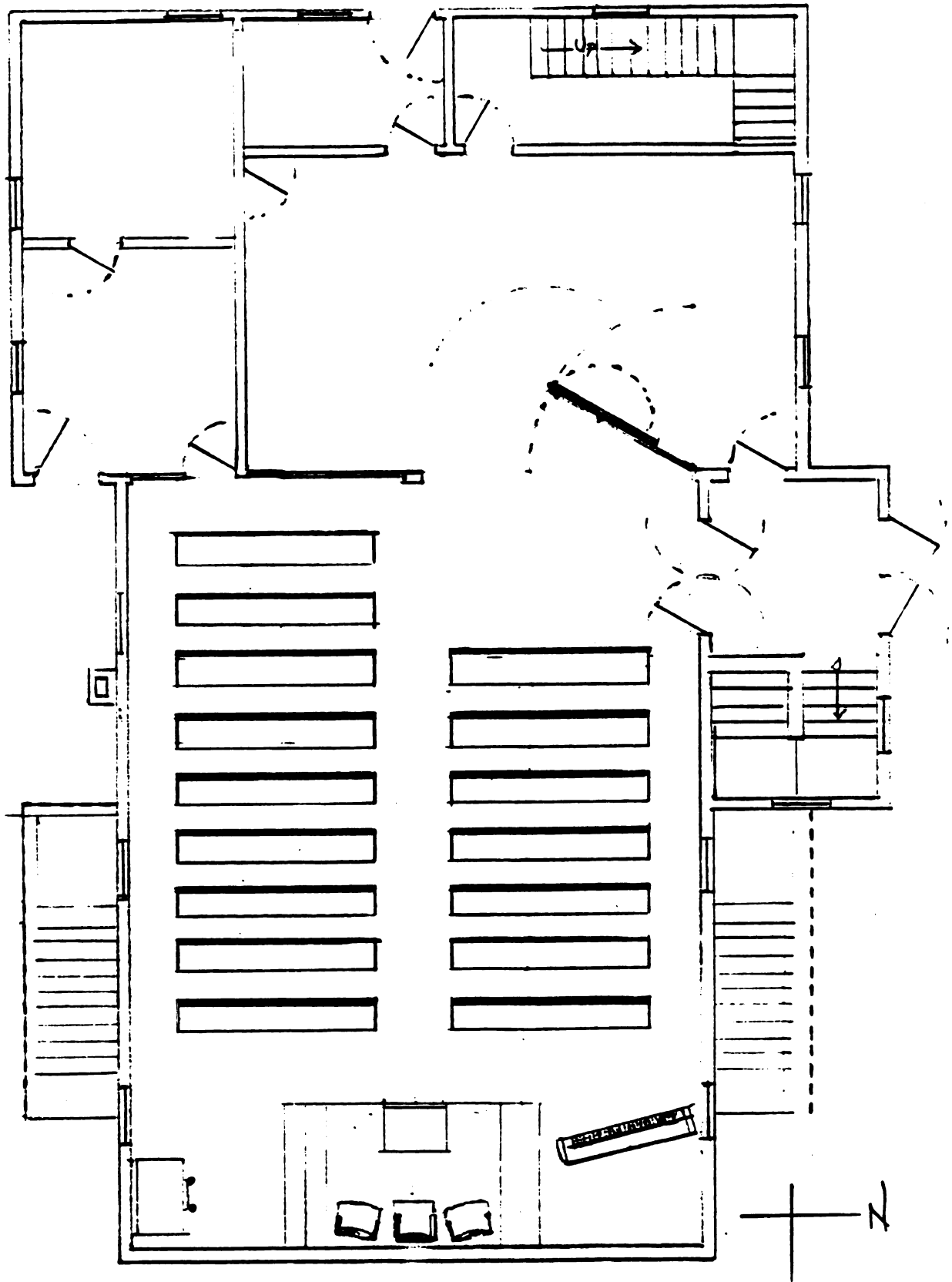


ZION HILL 1885 - 1888(?)

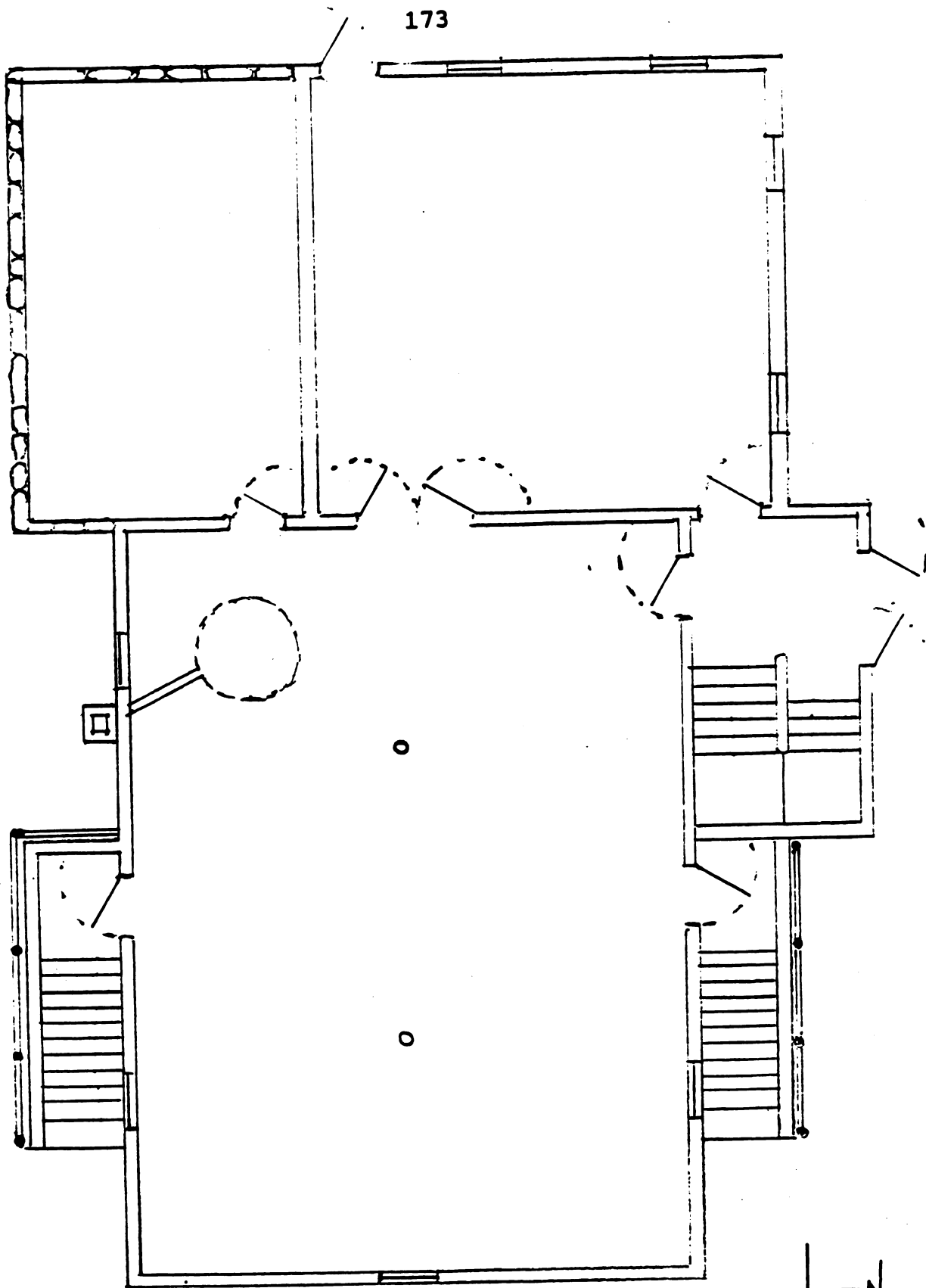


ZION HILL, 1885 or 1888 (?)  $\frac{1}{8}''=1'$

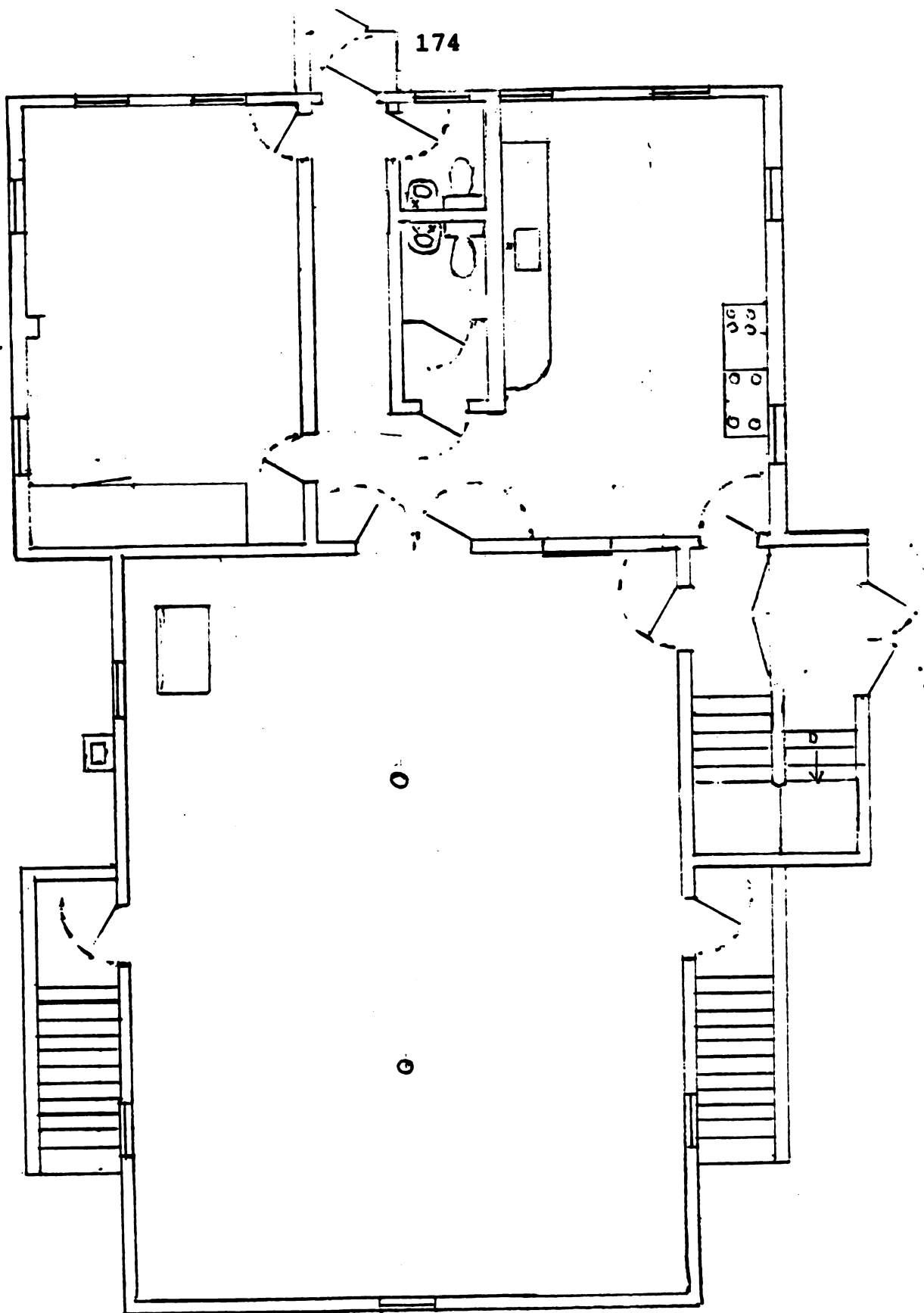
172



ZION HILL, 1933, '34. '35 '8-1'



ZION HILL BASEMENT, 1933-35 1/8"=1'



ZION HILL BASEMENT, 1952    1/8"=1'



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