

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - DATA SHEET

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: 160 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66-00-07729-00-8 Block 012 Unit 003

County: 1. Montgomery 091 2.

Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2.

Address: 1215 Union Meeting Road Historic Name: Union Meeting House

Other Name:

Owner Name/Address:

Owner Category: ☒ Private ☐ Public-local ☐ Public-state ☐ Public-federal

Resource Category: ☒ Building ☐ District ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object

Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 3

USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2.

UTM A. C.

References: B. D.

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Religious Architecture
B.
C.
D.

Particular Type: A.
B.
C.
D.

Current Function Category: Subcategory: Code:

A. Religious Architecture
B.
C.
D.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A.
B. C.
D. Other:

Exterior Materials: Foundation Roof standing seam tin
Walls stucco Walls
Other Other

Structural System: 1. 2.
Width 3 bays / 25 feet Depth 35 feet Stories/Height 1

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ca. 1814 Additions/Alterations Dates: ca. ca.
Basis for Dating: x Documentary Physical
Explain: Tax records

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. _____ 2. _____ Associated Individuals: 1. _____ 2. _____
Associated Events: 1. _____ 2. _____ Architects/Engineers: 1. _____ 2. _____
Builders: 1. _____ 2. _____

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: ☒ Yes ☐ No Context(s): _____
 Contributes to Potential District Yes No District Name/Status: _____

Classification: This largely unaltered meeting house and walled burial ground are a Class I resource.

THREATS

Threats: x 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain:

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Robert Wise Date: 6/16/2000
Project Name: Whitpain Township Historic Resource Survey
Organization: Robert Wise Consulting/Whitpain Township Telephone: (610) 722-5818
Street and No.: Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 North Valley Road
City, State: Paoli, Pa Zip Code: 19301
Additional Survey Documentation: n/a
Associated Survey Codes: n/a

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
NARRATIVE SHEET 89C

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Historic/Other Name: Union Meeting House

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Union Meeting House was built by the Reformation Church in 1814 according to the date stone. It is a 25 x 35 front-gabled building covered with stucco with three bays and one story. The entry door is arched for an original fanlight now replaced. There is a small chimney at the rear of the building. There are two one story additions to the south side of the building. Behind the meetinghouse is a burial ground with a stonewall.

Associated resource:

- (1) Cemetery
- (2) Stone Walls

Classification: This largely unaltered meeting house and walled burial ground are a Class I resource.

Union Meeting Church

By Elizabeth M. DeVincent
Photography by George S. Peck

The Union Meeting Church is located on Union Meeting Road below Hoover Road in Blue Bell. The deed conveying the land containing one hundred and twenty-one perches was given on September 4, 1813, by James and Elizabeth Buck to the trustees of the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church.

The next year a stone meeting house was built. The date-stone says "Union Meeting House," built 1814. The pastors of the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church preached here every two weeks. However, the intent of having a Union Meeting House was to accommodate ministers of all the Christian denominations when not in use by the Methodists.

During the excitement and at the time the division among the Friends took place, Edward Hicks frequently preached within its walls.

The building was remodeled in 1882 under the direction of the Reverend G. S. Schaffer. The cost was a thousand dollars and the church then had a seating capacity for two hundred and fifty people.

For quite a period during its earlier history, it was a flourishing society but later its membership was seriously decimated by deaths, removals, and other causes. The entire membership by 1884 did not exceed twelve people. Shortly thereafter the remaining congregation joined the Bethel Church in Worcester.

The graveyard is behind the church and the names most common on the tombstones are those of Zimmerman, Supplee, Brown, Smith, Fitzgerald, Shaeff, Kibblehouse, Roberts and Beck.

This church remained vacant for many years, the only activity being a World War I military burial in 1918 of a man from Norristown. The cemetery deteriorated and was densely overgrown. The church was desecrated and vandalized to the point that it would have met the same fate as the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, if it were not for the appointment of five trustees who were called upon to save the structure. Of these five only two are remaining, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Walter Shaeff, Jr.

In 1947, the church was rented to the Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Extensive work was done to restore the building to useable condition and the cemetery to its former appearance. It is now a building that is an asset to the community.

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