

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)**Colemanville/Martic Forge Covered Bridge**

The Colemanville/Martic Forge Covered Bridge is a contributing historic resource to the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is described as follows:

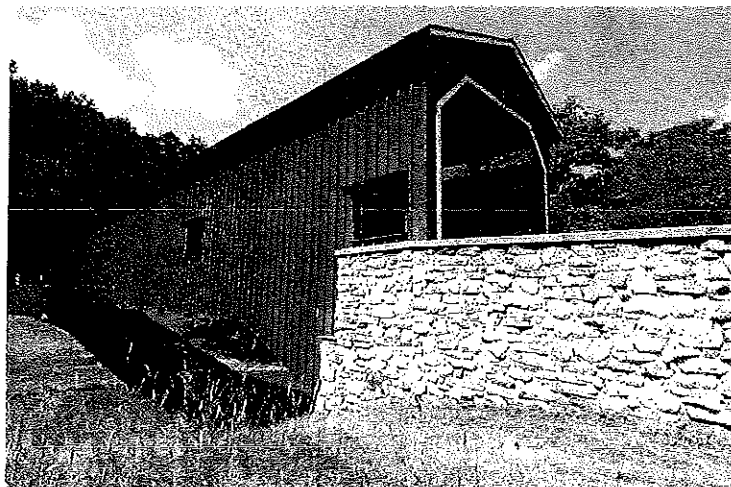
**History**

The Colemanville Covered Bridge was originally built in 1856 by James C. Carpenter at a cost of \$2,244. After being damaged twice by flooding, it was partially rebuilt in 1938 by Edmund Gardner and 1973 by David Esh. Lancaster county completely rebuilt the bridge in 1992 for \$350,000. During the restoration process, the bridge was raised by 6 feet (1.8 m) and moved west a few feet to protect it from damage in potential future flooding.

The Colemanville Covered Bridge is a covered bridge that spans Pequea Creek in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, United States. After Hunsecker's Mill Covered Bridge, it is Lancaster County's second-longest single-span covered bridge still being used. It is also referred to as the Martic Forge Covered Bridge and Pequea #12 Bridge.

The bridge has a single span, wooden, double Burr arch trusses design with the addition of steel hanger rods. The deck is made from oak planks. It is painted red, the traditional color of Lancaster County covered bridges, on both the inside and outside. Both approaches to the bridge are painted red with white trim.

The bridge's WGSB Number is 38-36-26J41 In 1980 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places as structure number 80003534J51 The bridge is located on Fox Hollow Road just south of Pennsylvania route 324 in Martic Township, Pennsylvania. It is located at 39°53'56.01"N 76°20'31.90"W (39.898892, -76.342194).



This is a recent photograph looking due northeast onto the Colemanville/Martic Forge Covered Bridge, which contributes to the historic integrity of the overall historic cultural landscape of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. Built in 1856, this scenic covered bridge was recently fully restored and was listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

This is a recent photo view of the interior of the historic Colemanville/Martic Forge Covered Bridge, located on Pequea Creek and within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. This view shows the heavy wooden Burr Arch Trusses, oak plank decking and cross-braced roof framing, all original.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)**Water-Powered Grist Mill(s) of [proposed] Conestoga Township Rural Historic District**

Throughout its history, within the current boundaries of Conestoga Township, five varied grist mills were built and operated from the early 1730s. In fact, one of the earliest grist mills in Lancaster County was erected here on Stehman's Run at Rockhill Mill. This Rockhill Mill was located on the "Great Conestoga Road," being the first historic road cut into Lancaster County in the very early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This first mill was apparently built by John Postlethwait around 1730 near the location of the first Lancaster County Courthouse sessions held at Postlethwait's Tavern before the courthouse's being moved and established in the Town of Lancaster, (now the City of Lancaster). This Rockhill Mill no longer stands today and is an historic archaeological site. The other grist mills that once stood within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District were the following:

- The Slackwater Burr Mill, established in 1805, demolished by a bridge construction over the Conestoga River in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- The Colemanville Grist Mill, once located on Pequea Creek, built prior to 1899, but since demolished, and an historic archaeological site
- Shenk's Grist Mill, once located on Grubb Hollow Run, erected by 1830, near Shenk's Ferry on the Susquehanna River, long fallen into ruin and collapse, and an historic archaeological site

The last remaining historic grist mill within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District is the survival of the exceptional Pequea Roller Grist Mill, now known on a more popular basis as Sickman's Mill.

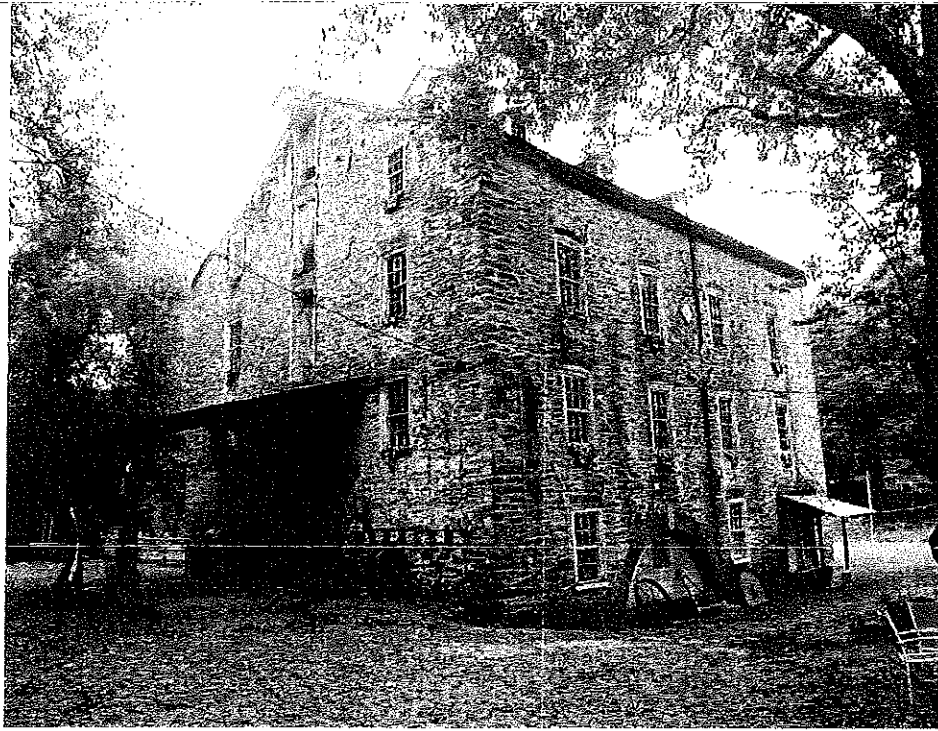
Pequea Roller Grist Mill, Pequea Creek, 1862, Daniel & Elizabeth Good, 40x60, 4.5, stone mill, BW & CS, p. 48, C-11 (Paes & Date Stone).

In 1756 Elizabeth Breneman sold land to John Stone and in 1765 the Sheriff offer[ed] for sale John Stone's mill on the Pequea (Barton). The first tax assessment lists of Conestoga in 1771 and 1772 lists [sic] Samuel Hess as owning a mill which he may have purchased from John Stone in c. 1765 (Tax). Christian Shenk (Schenk, Schank) was the owner of the mill by 1777 and continued to run it until 1820 when his son, Jacob, took over, and Jacob ran it until 1844 when after his death it was offered at a public sale and was at that time a 3 story stone grist mill and was sold to Benjamin Hess. In 1815 the mill was a stone grist mill 40 by 30 feet plus a stone oil mill and a one story saw mill (Tax).

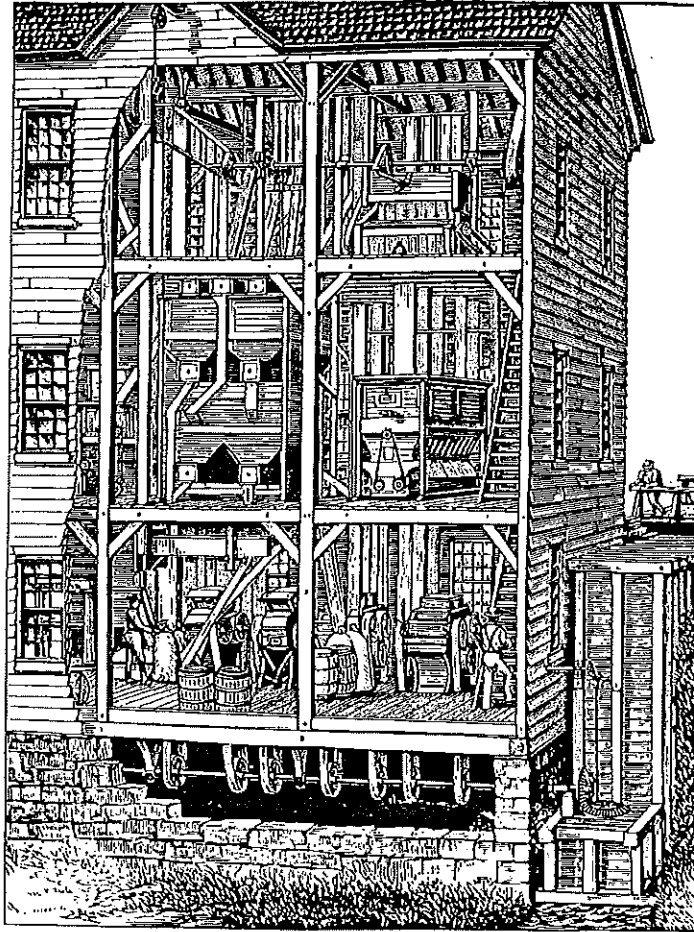
In 1824 the mill is shown on the Pequea Creek and the owner was Shenk (Map). In 1824 the sheriff offers Christian Shirk's grist mill for sale (Barton). In 1857 Daniel Good purchased the 3 story stone/frame grist mill [sic] at a sheriff's sale. This mill was listed as 30 by 45 feet, 2.5 stories high and built of stone (Barton, Tax & Deeds). The second mill was built by Daniel and Elizabeth Good in 1862 (Date Stone). Daniel Good was the mill's owner in 1864, William Good in 1875, and George L. Buckwalter in 1899 (Atlas). The mill is in good condition, and it has been a museum and camp ground for the last 25 years, called Sickman's Mill after a 20<sup>th</sup>-century owner. The mill dam went out in the heavy rains of January 1996.<sup>7</sup>

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Recently the Pequea Roller Grist Mill was purchased by a partnership who has been dedicated to the preservation and restoration of this historic grist mill. What is exceptional about this grist mill is the highly intact internal flour milling equipment dating mostly from the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century. This machinery assemblage is of high historic integrity. As such, the historic Pequea Roller Grist Mill is a significant singular historic resource that contributes to the historic integrity of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.



Recent public-domain photo view, looking due northeast, onto the historic Pequea Roller Grist Mill, located along Pequea Creek, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. This historic grist mill is of exceptional historic integrity due to the very high survival of its latter 19<sup>th</sup>-century grist mill machinery. In this context, this is one of the best examples of a rural grist mill to survive in not only Conestoga Township, but in Lancaster County as well, and is likely eligible for individual listing onto the National Register of Historic Places.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

This late 19<sup>th</sup>-century illustration reflects the internal machinery that still survives intact in the historic Pequea Roller Grist Mill, today within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)**Historic Lime Kilns of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District**

The proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District appears to retain all of its historic Lime Kilns. One of these, the Spring Run Road Lime Kiln may prove to be of 18<sup>th</sup>-century origins, which if proven, would be rare for such a lime kiln to survive into the present. The manner in which these lime kilns were designed and operated is portrayed in the following quote from Amos Long's "Farmsteads and Their Buildings," (published 1972):

Dotting the rural countryside in limestone areas the farm limekilns at one time formed the basis of the domestic lime industry in America. Lime was essential in agriculture and industry from the time of the first settlements. The first settlers very early learned the value of lime and its many uses.

Most farm limekilns built by or for the farmer for his own use were isolated on a hillside, woodlot or land too rugged for cultivation. Many of the kilns had a warm exposure in order to help prevent strong winds from causing too rapid combustion. In addition to coal, large amounts of wood were required for the burning process.

Limeburning was often a cooperative affair. Neighboring farmers helped dig and haul the stone, cut and haul the wood or coal and contributed their labor as farm work permitted. The burned limestone was divided among those who contributed their time and materials or its [sic] was sold to neighbors or bartered for wood and other items of need.

Many of the limekilns, because of non-use or lack of maintenance have fallen together or have been demolished because of unsightly appearance or because of the demand for better utilization of the land.

Most limekilns were of a similar design. They were constructed from large, rough, native stones similar to those which were used for burning. In some areas ironstones were used in construction of the kilns. Construction was similar to that of a stone wall fence since no mortar was used in the joints.

In addition to being constructed on a hillside, the kilns were built into a bank. The front of the kiln was nearly vertical with a slight backward slope. Square or rectangular in dimensions, the bottom depth of the kiln varied from sixteen to twenty inches. The height of the kiln varied from ten to twenty feet and the top was constructed to meet the ground level in the rear.

The walls were usually extended from the sides to fit the contour of the slope and to support the roadway behind the wall leading to the top of the kiln. This roadway permitted the limestones and fuel to be unloaded from the dump carts or plank wagons directly into the shaft.

At the base of the kiln was a large opening. This larger or outside opening measured approximately six feet at the base, six to ten feet in height and thirty inches deep. The top of the opening varied from several feet to a few inches and in some kilns formed a point or a

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

triangular opening. A large, flat lintel stone was placed over some openings, while other openings were arched.

Within the larger opening at the base was a smaller aperture through which the fire was ignited, and through which air passed for combustion and through which the burned limestone was removed. These smaller openings were rectangular, square or tapered toward the top. They measured from eighteen to twenty-four inches at the bottom, from ten to sixteen inches at the top and from one and one-half to three feet high.

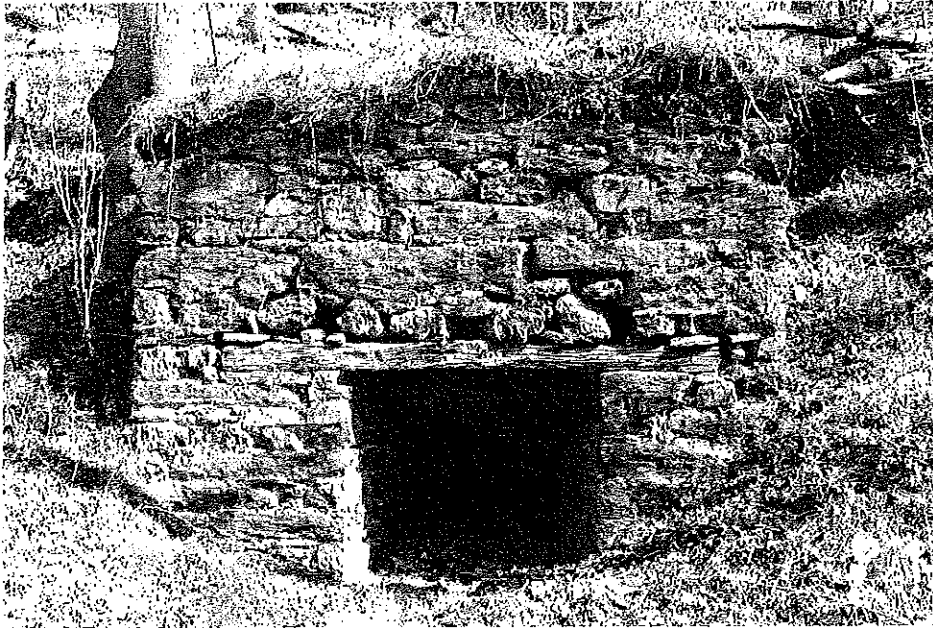
The cylindrical pot or shaft in which the limestones were burned measured from eight to twelve or more feet in diameter across the top opening and tapered to three or more feet at the bottom giving it a conical or egg-shaped appearance. The depth of the shaft varied from twelve to twenty feet. At the bottom of the shaft a trough arrangement aligned with the front opening of the kiln, located beneath the grate, and assisted in the unloading.

Some of the shafts in later limekilns were lined with firebrick throughout. The space between the stone or firebrick lining and the outside walls was filled with native field stones of all sizes.

The following recent photographs record the current physical remains and conditions of the

- Spring Run Road Lime Kiln
- Stone Hill Road Double-Arched Lime Kiln(s)
- The Promised Land Christian Camp Lime Kiln
- Single-Arched Lime Kiln also located off of Stone Hill Road, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District

It is unusual that it appears that a rural township like Conestoga Township retains all of its known documented 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century historic lime kilns. As such, this grouping of historic lime kilns contributes to the overall historic integrity of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Recent photograph of the early, possibly 18<sup>th</sup>-century, Spring Run Road Lime Kiln within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. (source: [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com), Photographer John Stoltzfus)

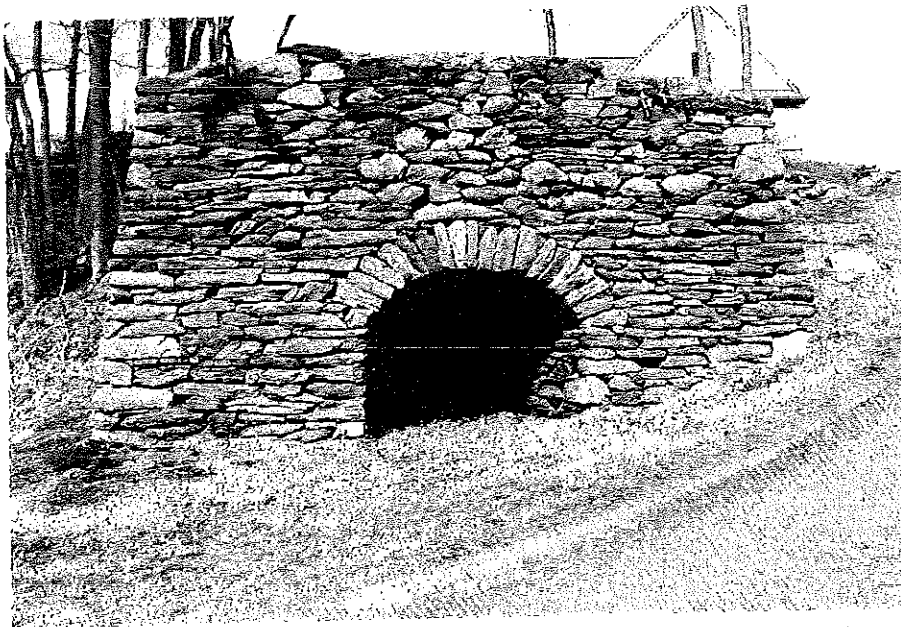


Recent photograph of the Double-Arched Lime Kilns located on Stone Hill Road within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District (source: [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com), Photographer John Stoltzfus)



**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Recent photograph of the Promised Land Christian Camp Lime Kiln within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District (source: [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com), Photographer John Stoltzfus)



Recent photograph of the Single-Arch Lime Kiln located off of Stone Hill Road, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District (source: [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com), Photographer John Stoltzfus)

**Historic Family Burying Grounds within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District**

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Peter Hiller, who researched and wrote "The History of Conestoga Township," contained as a chapter within "The History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of the Pioneers and Prominent Men," edited by Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, (published 1883), reported that the following 11 individual family Burying Grounds were then visible and extant within Conestoga Township.

**Burial Grounds-**In giving these the oldest dates as recorded upon the gravestones can only be given. Nearly all of them were set apart for his purpose many years before, but we have no means at our command of ascertaining the length of time they have been established.

- On Valentine Warfel's farm, near Safe Harbor, the older grave marked is that of F. Menart, 1774.
- On George J. Fehl's farm, near Slackwater, are stones marked Andreas Fehl, died in 1783; Andreas Fehl, Jr. died 1795; the latest burial, Catharine Lenhardt, Sept. 28, 1880. This lot contains about fifty burials.
- On Christian E. Miller's farm burying-ground, on road from Conestoga Centre to Shenk's Ferry, first marked burial was made in 1797, name illegible . Contains about twenty.
- On Jacob Bausman's farm, near Colemanville, the oldest marked grave is that of Barbara Stehman, Jan. 17, 1793; Henry Steman, April 16, 1793, aged forty four years; Peter Warfel, March 27, 1802; Peter Warfel, Jr., Feb. 6, 1803; George Warfel, Sept. 14, 1804. Latest burial Adam Warfel, October, 1859. Contains about one hundred and fifty bodies.
- On Samuel Hamish's farm graveyard at Shenk's Ferry. This ground contains no stones to mark the graves, except the members of the Shenk family who have died lately.
- On Elizabeth Kendig's farm, on the road from Conestoga Centre to Slackwater, the oldest marked grave is that of Henry Hackman, who died in 1776, aged fifty-one years; the cemetery contains about seventy-five graves.
- On Jacob Stehman's farm, on the road from Conestoga Centre to Slackwater. This burial-ground was established in. 1806 by the Stehman family. John Stehman being the first person buried there in that year; Elizabeth Keller, who died in 1880, being the last.
- On Benjamin Good's (now Frank Warfel's) farm near Colemanville; this ground contains about twenty burials.
- On the Abraham Bucbalter (deceased) farm, near Conestoga Centre; contains about fifty burials.
- On John Hess' farm, on the road from Conestoga Centre to Marticville , a graveyard was established in 1841, and contains twenty graves.
- On Jacob Hamish's farm, on the road from Conestoga Centre to Lancaster, a graveyard was established about the year 1790, and contains about fifty graves.

This documentation, done in 1883, presents that there are 11 individual Family Burying Grounds, all located on their respective single-family farmsteads, beyond the cemetery burial grounds of the churches within Conestoga Township. Today, these Family Burying Grounds are still extant, but in varied decaying conditions and obscurity.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Recent archaeological and historic resource survey field work conducted for the proposed Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline project has confirmed and documented the survival and current conditions of the

- Christian E. Miller's Farm Burying Ground, containing confirmed burials as early as 1797.

Of special note is the recent and continuing concerted effort by descendants of the Hess Family to carefully clean up and sensitively restore the David (or John) Hess Farm Burying Ground, which is illustrated by the enclosed photograph and citation from their family's website via rootsweb.ancestry.com.

As a combined historic resource, there appears to be a high survival of the sites and remains of these 11 Family Burying Grounds, set within their original single-family farmstead settings. Although often obscured and in varied conditions, these burying grounds still survive, and as a group, contribute to the understanding and meaning of the historic cultural landscape of the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.



Recent photograph looking due west toward the site and remains of the Christian A. Miller Farm Burying Ground, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

**Physical Description and Integrity** (Item 38 continued)

Recent photograph and close-up of one of the upright tombstone markers within the Christian A. Miller Farm Burying Ground, dating from 1827, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.



Work completed for 11/10/2001, David Hess Farm Cemetery.

The cemetery project is not done, in fact we are planning to continue the work in the Spring of 2002. Ongoing will be the maintaining of the site, (weeds cut down) and the resetting of some of the stones that are badly leaning. Long-term plans are to look into the possibility of having a fence or stone wall built around it and a memorial marker with a dedication to David Hess [Sr.] and all his descendents.

Downloaded public-domain photo view from 2001 of the careful restoration efforts of descendants of the Hess Family, restoring their ancestor's Burying Ground, located on the David (and John) Hess Farmstead, within the proposed Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

### The River Corner Mennonite Meeting House

The River Corner Mennonite meeting house within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District is a religious building that manifests the theological framework of the Mennonite faith, far different from other Christian-faith churches, i.e. Protestant and Catholic. The following describes the embodied symbolism of the River Corner Mennonite meeting house that was built in 1883 within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District.

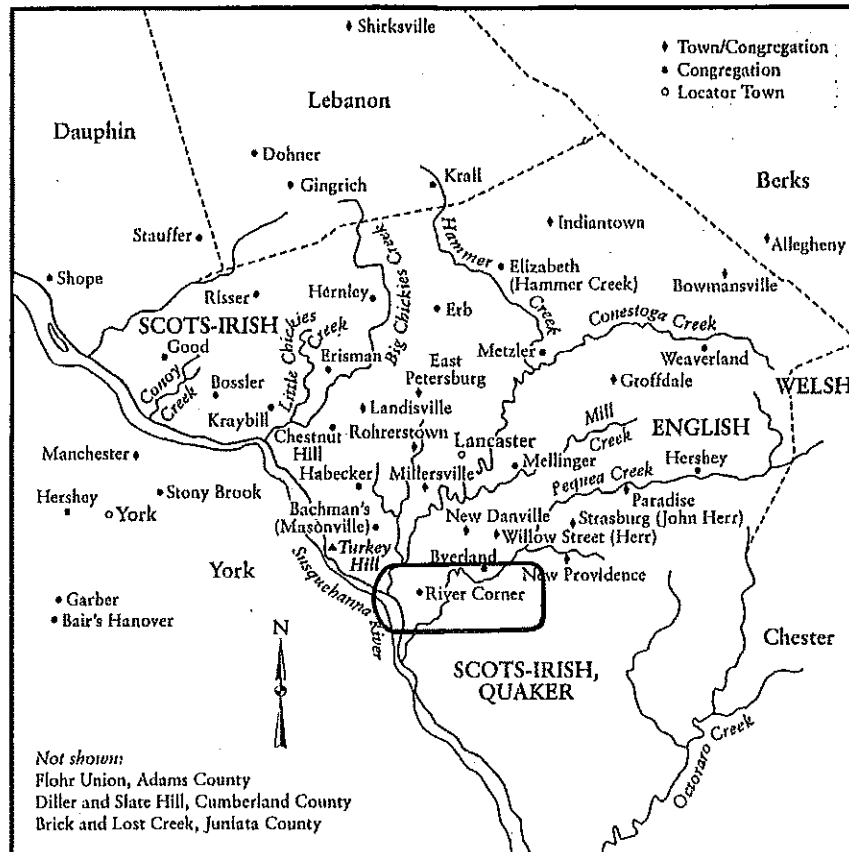
In the ecclesiastical traditions that have identified with the Anabaptist or radical wing of the Reformation- Mennonite, Amish, Hutterite, Brethren in Christ and others-buildings of meeting and worship have had an ambiguous and paradoxical status in relation to the sacred. Architect Rudy Friesen characterizes the Mennonite worship space as having "no separate 'holy' area, no mysticism, and no strong spatial direction.... The church is a gathering of believers in Christ and the church building is merely a shelter in which believers worship together.

One of these distinctive Mennonite traditions is that of the *Bethaus* (literally, "house of prayer"), the term used widely to describe the building tradition that emerged in the seventeenth or eighteenth century in the Vistula Delta of Poland and Prussia, and spread eastward to Russia and later to the Americas. By contrast the Meetinghouse tradition, which derives from the Swiss, South German and Pennsylvania German term *Versammlungshaus*, has become very widespread in English usage. A first set of chapters of the present volume explores the sources and characteristics of these traditions and their transformations: in Central and Eastern Europe (Gross, Visser, Schritt, Friesen); in Pennsylvania and beyond (Ruth, Horst-Martz); and in the "diaspora" communities of Central North America (J. Janzen, Sprunger) and of South America (Klassen).

The Bethaus and Meetinghouse traditions reveal a remarkably congruent set of features that one may appropriately call a "classical" Anabaptist-derived Mennonite tradition of building for worship and meeting. The most striking features of these buildings, some of which are described in this special issue, include the following: (1) the congregation is seated in a face-to-face arrangement, usually with the long side of the building serving as the "front" or center of worship; (2) the (usually collective) leadership is seated along this side, either behind a table from which they speak while seated, or on a bench against the wall behind a "pulpit;" (3) the "pulpit" is either a raised place on the table or rail, or is centrally located between the bench and the congregation; (4) the congregation is usually divided along gender lines, including gender-separated entrances; (5) the interior decoration is usually plain, except for scriptural motto hangings and floral motifs which may echo the central placement of the Bible and the use of flowers in worship; (6) the building's exterior is of simple functional design, with ample clear windows allowing abundant sunlight to flow into the gathered assembly.<sup>8</sup>

## Physical Description and Integrity (Item 38 continued)

The following illustration page portrays the location of the River Corner Mennonite meeting house, within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District in the Lancaster area from 1711 to 1819. The lower historic photograph, taken of the River Corner Mennonite Meetinghouse records this important religious structure as built in 1883, adhering to the aesthetic criteria for meeting houses of the Plain Anabaptist faiths that had evolved by the 18<sup>th</sup> century both in America and Europe. The River Corner Mennonite Meetinghouse still stands and remains the Center of the Mennonite Community in Conestoga Township, into today.



Lancaster Area Mennonite Congregations, 1711-1819



The River Corner Mennonite meetinghouse in southwestern Lancaster County was built in 1883. In *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* (1931), historian Martin G. Weaver commented, "This meetinghouse is one of the most beautiful buildings of Colonial architectural design in the lower end of the county, and should be preserved for a long time." LMHS.

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| Key # | 862230        |
| ER#   | 2014-0935-042 |

**Conestoga Navigation Canal**

The Conestoga Navigation Canal is located in major part within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. The site and varied remains of this historic canal are located along the southern bank of the Conestoga River, within the township. The history of the Conestoga Navigation Canal is provided in detail in the history section of this form. As to what physically remains, at present the highly visible remains of Canal Lock No. 6, located near the Village of Safe Harbor, within Conestoga Township, are visible and being protected. Future research could reveal the general physical survival of other canal prism and tow path sections that may survive today.

**Conestoga Township Rural Historic District - Integrity**

At present, the historic integrity of the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District appears to be high. A leading factor in this observation is that this rural area is over 90% zoned for agricultural use, and has been used for agriculture for almost 300 years in places. Further, within these zoned-for-agriculture lands, at present, 27 farms have committed their properties to Farmland Preservation under the Lancaster County Farmland Trust. Also, the associated villages and hamlets within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District appear intact, based on careful study of current aerial photography.

## History and Significance (Item 39)

Key # 862230

ER# 2014-0935-042

Provide an overview of the history of the property and its various resources. Do not substitute deeds, chapters from local history books, or newspaper articles. See page 14 of the Instructions for detailed directions. Continue on additional sheets as needed. Suggested outline for organizing this section:

- History [Summarize the evolution of the property from origin to present]
- Significance [Explain why the property is important]
- Context and Comparisons [Describe briefly similar properties in the area, and explain how this property compares]

## History

### Conestoga Township 1712 to 1790

Conestoga Township was established in 1712 as part of Chester County, and it originally encompassed all the land within present-day Lancaster County. The size of Conestoga Township was greatly reduced when it became part of Lancaster County on August 5, 1729. The area of present-day Conestoga Township had already been initially settled by the Swiss- and German-origin Mennonites between 1715 and 1717. At the behest of the grand jury and other residents of Lancaster County, the King's Highway was laid out from Postlethwait's Tavern in Conestoga Township to Philadelphia in 1733. This early road provided both a means of travel for settlers of Conestoga Township, as well as an economic boon for this township and county. Postlethwait's Tavern was originally chosen as the place to establish the county seat. In relation to Lancaster County's early history, Postlethwait's Tavern (today an historic archaeological site) was the location of this county's first county courthouse. The first session of court held here was on August 5, 1729. The county seat was established in 1733 further east in today's City of Lancaster.

The historic settlement between the years of 1712 to 1729 within today's Conestoga Township still remains not fully-researched and confirmed. Further research in Chester County's archives and records may reveal new documentation as to who the first permanent settlers were in Conestoga Township. Tradition holds that the first settlers were Swiss and German Mennonites who were following the earliest Mennonite settlements in Lancaster by 1710 in the Willow Street area in today's Pequea Township, just several miles due northeast of today's Conestoga Township.

At present, it appears that varied German and Swiss Mennonite families moved and permanently settled in today's Conestoga Township by the 1720s. At present, it appears that the following families were amongst the earliest Mennonite settlers from the 1720s to 1776. These families are listed as the Eschleman, the Miller, the Hess, the Martin, the Shank (or Shenk), the Hoffman, the Groff, the Huber, the Warfel, the Brenneman, the Mosser, the Sohower, the Shaffer, the Albright families, and possibly more.

The illustration below is an artistic portrayal as to how the Postlethwait's Tavern may have looked, based on limited period descriptions and oral tradition. This historic tavern was the location of Lancaster County's first courthouse from 1729 to 1730. Today the historic archaeological site of the Postlethwait's Tavern remains undisturbed, located alongside Long Lane in Conestoga Township, near Stehman Run and the Postlethwait and Fehl individual Family Burial Graveyards.



## History and Significance (Item 39)



The settlement of Swiss and German Mennonites to America, and then specifically into Lancaster County and Conestoga Township, was caused by the persecution of Mennonites in the Swiss and German states, beginning there in 1700. In order to understand the context of the Mennonite emigration to America and to this locale, the following brief history portrays the sequence of historic events that caused this movement of pacifist Anabaptist Mennonites.

The roots of the Anabaptist Mennonite people began in the 1500s in Europe, during the religious foment of the Reformation. During these times, the Mennonites suffered often-severe persecution, imprisonment, torture, and even death by execution for their beliefs, beginning in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525. The following quote from the Richard K. MacMaster's book, "Land, Piety, Peoplehood: The Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America, 1683-1790," provides the following concise portrayal of the beginnings of the Anabaptist Mennonite people and their system of faith:

From the first days of their movement, Anabaptists had known persecution and martyrdom. The movement began in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525, when two young university students named Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz and others became impatient with Ulrich Zwingli, who was their teacher and friend as well as a popular preacher and Protestant reformer in that city. The students and their friends were impatient because they believed their teacher was moving too slowly with reform. From 1523 to early 1525 Zwingli and other leaders, with the encouragement of the Zurich city council, held three public "disputations," with debates lasting as long as three days at a time. At first Zwingli was contending with Catholics, but during the year 1524 he found himself disputing more and more with Grebel, Mantz, and their allies.

## History and Significance (Item 39)



A contemporary print of Menno Simons, (b. 1496-d. 1561), the religious leader and founder of the Mennonite faith of Christianity. Menno Simons converted to Anabaptism around 1536. Simons was very active in organizing congregations of Anabaptists in German states of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. His writings and sermons provided the foundations for the system of Mennonite religious discipline and practice(s) that reach into today's Mennonite's international community, and within the historic rural Conestoga Township Mennonite community.

Within this turmoil, the Anabaptist movement would evolve the Mennonites, whose signature pacifist origins evolved during this time.

Most Anabaptists were pacifist; however, particularly those whom later Mennonites have preferred to count as their spiritual forebears. Pacifist Anabaptists believed that Christians should be willing to suffer and die for their faith rather than inflict suffering and death on others.... The symbol of the true Christian life was to be the cross, not the sword. Thus in place of force and destructions [Conrad] Grebel called for what became a strong emphasis of Anabaptism, namely "Gelassenheit," or yieldedness. This emphasis came partly from medieval mysticism, and partly from an ascetic dualism between the church and the world that was a heritage of medieval monasticism.<sup>9</sup>

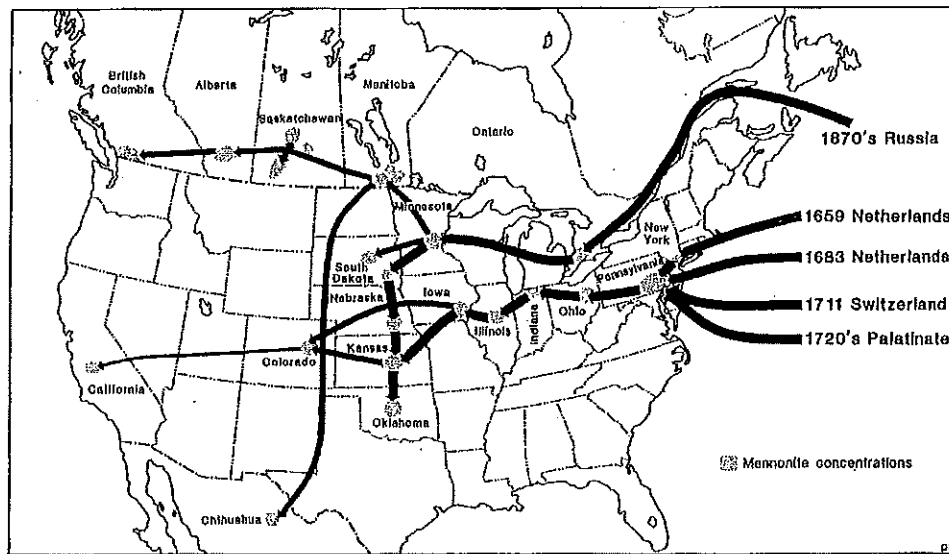
This "Gelassenheit," or yieldedness, became and remains a daily devotional disciplinary attitude that served (and serves) to guide the actions of the individual Mennonite and provided a focused sense of intellectual and spiritual energy as they would settle within Lancaster County and in today's Conestoga Township. The

## History and Significance (Item 39)

Gelassenheit also created a sense of community cohesion and a system of mutual aid that provided the settlement generation of Mennonites in Conestoga Township with a significant social means to successfully and quickly settle and focus on agrarian expansion.

This map illustrates the routes of settlement entry and times of Mennonite migration and then subsequent movement across America and Canada and into Mexico.

Figure 1-2. Mennonite migrations to and within North America



SOURCE: Map drawn by Pamela Schaus. From Redekop (1989), 18.

By 1700, there were concentrations of financially successful Mennonite merchant and professional families in Holland. Holland at this time was a place of noted social and religious tolerance and provided a safe haven for not only Mennonite communities but other persecuted Protestant faiths. But these conditions of tolerance were not the case in Germanic and Swiss states, to the south. Persecution of Mennonites in these states renewed, especially in the Swiss Canton of Bern.

This renewed persecution was the main cause for the emigration of Swiss and German Mennonites to America, into Pennsylvania and especially into Lancaster County. Their movement was actually highly disciplined and well-planned. This was mainly due to the organization of the Commission for Foreign Needs, established in 1710, who organized a Fund for Foreign Needs. "Thanks largely to the Commission, the departures of Mennonites, Amish and Schwenkfelders from Europe were exceptionally well-organized and financed, compared to eighteenth-century German emigration."<sup>10</sup> This organizational framework is at the root of the Mennonite Community's rapid and successful settlement within Lancaster County and within the Conestoga Township Rural Historic District. Well-organized and adequately financed, the historic settlement of Conestoga Township by Swiss- and German-origin Mennonites would occur quickly and spread rapidly within Conestoga Township in the early decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest well-documented Mennonite family that settled in today's Conestoga Township was the family of Benedict and Anna Eschleman, who purchased 600 acres of land on June 5, 1727. The Eschleman's became very successful first-generation settlers in Conestoga Township. The history and physical description of their historic farm is enclosed within this Historic Resource Survey Form. Benedict Eschleman's economic success provided the means for him to support the building of the River Corner

## History and Significance (Item 39)

Mennonite Meeting House in 1760. Benedict Eschleman donated the land for the River Corner Mennonite Meeting House and paid for and built a hewn-log Meeting House, which would stand to 1828.

From the 1720s to 1780, Conestoga Township was essentially a rural farming community of single-family farms and varied water-powered rural industries. The following list of taxables from 1780 gives us the first broad profile of the Conestoga Township rural community; keeping in mind, however, that in 1780, future Pequea Township was still a part of Conestoga Township. Further research needs to be done to discern which of these individuals then resided in Conestoga Township and Pequea Township of today.

### Taxables in Conestoga in 1780

Leonard Albright (weaver), 140 acres, 2 horses, 3 cows, total value at £600  
 John Beecher, 77 acres, 2 horses, 3 cows, total value £2000  
 Martin Bare, 180 acres, 6 horses, 8 cows, total value £10,000  
 Isaac Brenneman, 150 acres, 2 horses, 3 cows, total value £3500  
 Daniel Brenneman, 100 acres, 4 horses, 6 cows, total value £4,000  
 Christian Burkholder, 110 acres, 3 horses, 3 cows, total value £2000  
 Isaac Burkholder, 70 acres, 2 horses, 1 cow, total value £1950  
 Jacob Becht, 40 acres, 1 horse, 2 cows, total value £800  
 Melchoir Brenneman, Jr., total value £4,000  
 George Buk, 1 horse, 2 cows, total value £500  
 John Bare's estate, 100 acres, total value £4,000  
 John Bauman, total value £1200  
 Simon Brand, total value £290  
 Isaac Brenneman's estate, 100 acres, total value £2250  
 Matthias Brown, 1 cow, total value £250  
 Isaac Brenneman's estate 100 acres, total value £2250  
 Matthias Brown, 1 cow, total value £250  
 Jacob Bier  
 Melchoir Brenneman, 100 acres, 2 horses, 3 cows, total value £6,000  
 John Crommel, 40 acres, 1 cow, total value £450 (land now part of the village of Conestoga Centre)  
 Robert Collins  
 John Eshleman, 100 acres, 3 horses, 3 cows, total value £6000  
 Henry Dirr, 1 cow, total value £250  
 David Eshleman 180 acres, 4 horses, 10 cows, total value, £9200  
 Benedict Eshleman, 360 acres, 4 horses, 10 cows, total value £11000 (Land now owned by C. E. Miller, C. Hamish, G. A. Tripple, and others)  
 Ulrich Friel, 2 horses, 2 cows, total value £800  
 William Folch, total value £2000 William Folch, Jr., total value £ 150  
 Andrew Fehl, 100 acres, 2 horses, 2 cows, total value £2600. (Now George J. Fehl's land, originally John Postlethwait's)  
 Jacob Feit, 2 horse, 2 cows, total value £3600  
 John Gochenour, 50 acres, 2 horses, 2 cows, total value, £1600  
 Adam Gaul, 90 acres, 2 horses, 2 cows, total value £1800  
 Abraham Hess, 70 acres, 2 horses, 2 cows, total value £1600  
 Samuel Hess, 344 acres, 3 horses, 5 cows, total value £8800