

Forty Fort Meeting House
Forty Fort, Pennsylvania
Luzerne Co.

HABS No. Pa-²¹~~2-1~~

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. Pa-2

Historic American Buildings Survey
Thomas H. Atherton, District Officer
139 South Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

FORTY FORT MEETING HOUSE
FORTY FORT, PENNSYLVANIA
Pa-21

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The old Forty Fort Church was projected and subscriptions were made for its building in the year of 1806; and during the winter of 1806-7 the stone foundation and the timber for the superstructure were brought upon the ground.

During the summer of 1807 the timber was framed and the general building completed, so that the interior finish of the pews, pulpit, etc., was completed during the winter of 1807-8 and the whole edifice was ready for occupancy about the first of June, 1808.

The architect and builder was Joseph Hitchcock. Gideon Underwood, a cabinet maker and first-class carpenter, made the pulpit.

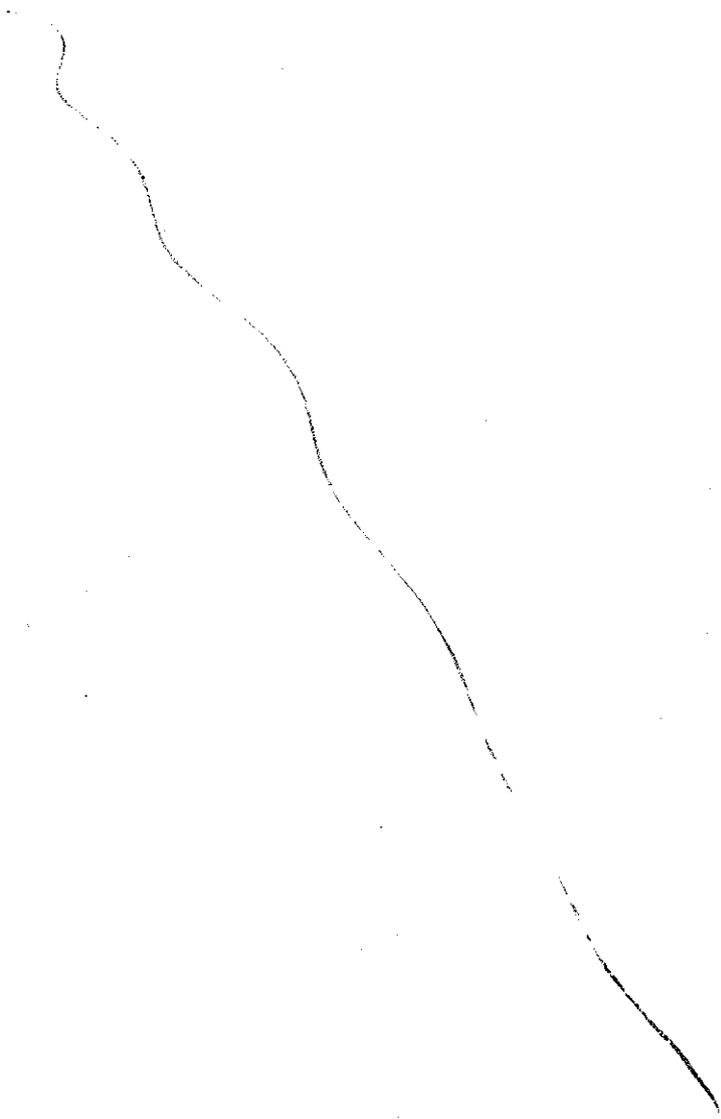
The quaint style of construction and arrangement of pulpit, pews and gallery is peculiarly noticeable, and suggests the inquiry as to whence came this style of architecture.

The interior of the old edifice merits a description:- Against the side opposite the door is a pulpit, curiously panelled, the rail of which is about twelve feet above the floor. It is approached by a winding stair. Fronting the pulpit are two rows of high pews, with doors, each pew seating seven or eight persons. (The pews were built at the charge of the owners--those of greatest honor were each side of the pulpit, and on each side of the door opposite the pulpit.) Against the four walls are square enclosures slightly raised above the pews, with benches all around. Each window has twenty-four small panes of glass. The Gallery runs around three sides and is reached by two flights of winding stairs in the corners. The gallery is supported by turned wooden pillars about ten inches in diameter. The gallery is broad, with a level floor, and from its rear part the spectator could just see the head of the preacher. The timbers in the frame project through the plastering into the room and some show the hewed surface, though most of them are cased. Against some of them are the rude brackets upon which candles can be set--in fact no more modern method of lighting has ever been provided. The building is longer than it is wide. There are three windows on the ground floor of each end, and four on the sides. Also a smaller square one with round top immediately behind the pulpit landing. The interior woodwork has never been painted, though the walls and ceiling are whitewashed.

The building committee consisted of Benjamin Dorrance, Daniel Hoyt, Elijah Shoemaker, Lazarus Denison and Luke Swetland.

The lime used in its walls was hauled with teams from Lime Ridge.

On June 3, 1922, the Colonial Dames supervised some repair work on the church and have continued to keep it in repair.



Author. Frances Douane

Approved,

District Officer. Thomas H. Arthur

Rev. Sept. 21. 36 HCO